

Influences of Internet Technology on People's Entertainments

-Taking Marvel as an Example

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Abstract: As it is known to all, network technology continues advancing, people's ways for entertaining become more and more diverse. In order to follow this trend, entertainment corporations adapt different strategies to not only make themselves survive but also gain more profits. Up to now, some researchers have discovered that people's recreations change their forms of manifestations in the market. Nevertheless, how their improvements based on internet technology has not been specifically and comprehensively analyzed. This essay aims to explore the relationship between Marvel's business performance and Internet technology improvements by searching for and then analyzing the data in Marvel's business. The research results show that Marvel's business performance is positively influenced by its rational and innovative adaptations toward Internet technology improvements, including investing more sorts of entertainment productions in terms of different online medias and fully utilizing online marketing. In the future, Marvel can earn more profit by continuing extending its product line and mix according to technology developments and its latent customers' potential preferences.

Keywords: Entertainment, business, Marvel, Internet technology, development

1. Introduction

As it is known to all, network technology continues advancing. People's entertainment ways have been greatly changed through the past century. At first, people relaxed by reading comic novels in their leisure time; when television was invented, they began to watch TV shows and TV series; nowadays, people are able to subscribe online or purchase cinema tickets...In order to follow this trend, entertainment corporations adapt different strategies to not only make themselves survive but also gain more profits. Take BlueArc as an adverse example. BlueArc used to be proficient in making three dimensional cartoons in China, and its cartoons occupied a more than a half market domestically. However, it became unpopular. One of the reasons is it insisted on making TV cartoons while other companies started to enter Internet animations. This essay specifically focuses on Marvel. Recent studies have shown that "Marvel Entertainment LLC takes content originality as the core, and derives other products, including various film and television animations, mobile phone animations, game animations, animated movies, etc. In addition, it also includes related anime books, toys, costumes

and other anime-based derivatives” [1]. However, how Marvel’s adaptations and performances influenced by network technology is still a research gap. It is necessary to study this because Marvel can provide other entertainment corporations with directions and references. Regarding the development multimedia technology, web technology, big data technology, programming technology, and database technology, this essay will review and analyze Marvel’s history, business strategies, revenue statistics, and its consumers’ perspective.

2. Internet Technology on People’s Entertainments

2.1. Multimedia Technology

From 1939, Marvel made comics and directly sold them. At first, the comic books sold very well, and Marvel raised to its peak at 1950s, predicting to sell 100 million copies. “In 1954, psychiatrist Frederick Weithem published a journal denouncing the ubiquity of violence and adult themes in comic books, causing turmoil in the comic book industry” [2]. In 1986, in order to survive, Marvel had to sell its copyrights to other corporations (see Figure 1).

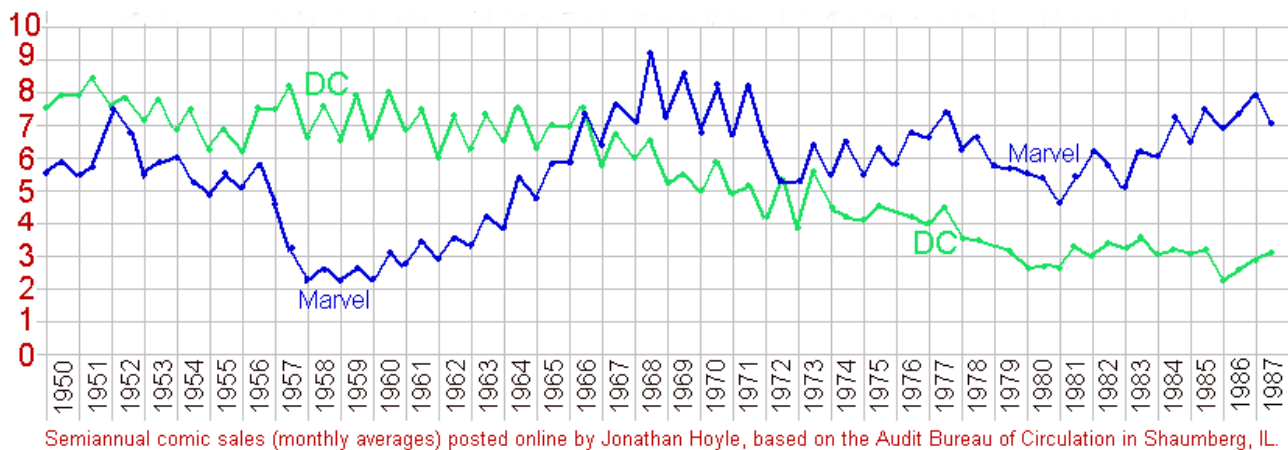


Figure 1: Comic sales from Marvel and DC, 1950 -198

In 1996, Marvel's market share dropped to 25%. At that time, comic books were no longer as popular as before. On the other hand, electronic devices became increasingly popular. Moreover, “comics journalism outlets reported perceived troubles for Marvel's sales throughout the year, with hyperbolic headlines suggesting that DC Comics' sales were so good that Marvel should feel ‘humiliated’” [3]. Therefore, it was necessary for this bankrupting company to provide its new kind of products. Marvel soon discovered the opportunities and determined to release electronic comics. From 2007, electronic comics were successfully published. This extended the comics market and offered Marvel a chance to catch its breath, but this is not enough. After all, in order to survive, it sold its copyrights. “In addition to Sont’s acquisition of the sliming rights of Spider-Man, Universal Pictures took the Hulk, Lionsgate won Thor, Captain America, and Humanoid, and 20th Century Fox swallowed all the characters of the Deadpool and X-Men series” [4].

Since film industry was becoming prevalent, Marvel bought back its copyrights one by another from 1997. Around 2008, it decided to create its own movies as its comics’ recomposition, “finding the right balance between creating innovative films and retaining enough continuity to make them all recognizably part of a coherent family” [5]. Based on the popularity in the previous comics era, Marvel’s first film Iron Man did not make Marvel disappointed. It surprisingly gained a global box office of \$585,174,222. It created an influential movie IP and marked the growth of Marvel. Over the following decades, Marvel continued creating movies of various superheroes. Their box offices are

listed below respectively. There is no doubt that Marvel’s revenue turned out to be much higher than it was in comics era.

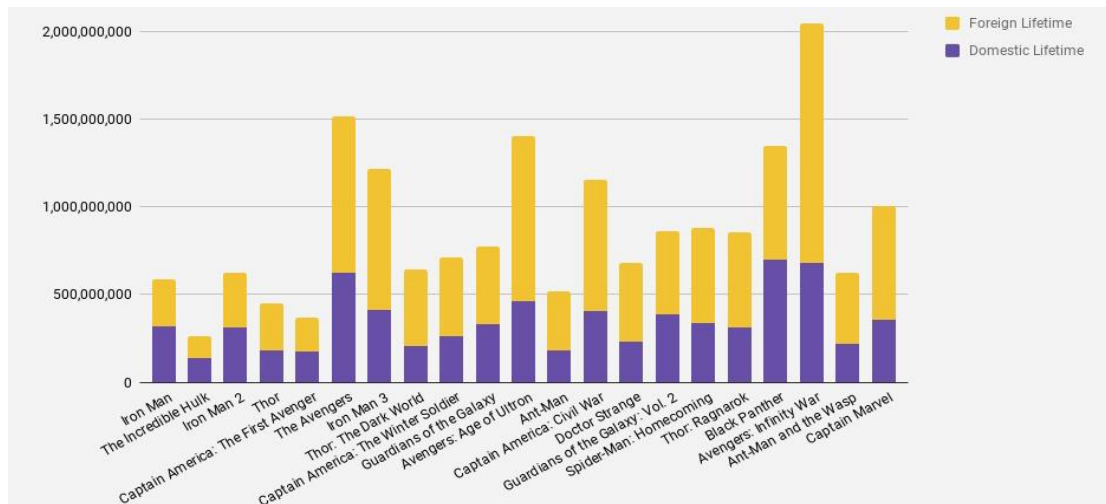


Figure 2: Marvel Cinematic Universe – Domestic / Foreign Box Office

Based on the story line of movies, Marvel also provided customers with TV series. In 2013, Marvel presented Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. In the meantime, IPTV became prevalent. With the increased functions in TV and Marvel’s cooperation with streaming media companies, it was convenient for people to watch TV series at home, which assisted Marvel to raise the views. These derivative TV series enhance Marvel’s brand, especially among its loyal film customers. “In the process of community construction, fans strengthen the cognition of boundaries through derivative consumption and text production, and further form a sense of belonging and identity within the group under the action of ‘emotion’” [6] (see Figure 2).

2.2. Web Technology & Big Data Technology

Thanks for the advancement of web technology, Marvel established its official website in the beginning of 21st century. There people can detect the upcoming movies, TV series, and games, etc. People can search for their interests as well. Later, Marvel also created its official blog in Microblog and Twitter. The big data spread Marvel’s information and helps Marvel bring its fans together so that they are able to communicate with each other. Whenever new movies or TV series will be presented, Marvel sends promotional posters and pilot trailers in advance. Marvel also interacts with its viewers by releasing interesting questions. In addition, “The leading actors of Marvel movies have successively opened personal blog, through personal fan interaction, publish movie-related content and share their lives” [7]. In order to appear more frequently in front of its potential consumers, Marvel plugged into YouTube, a contemporary popular video website. Marvel’s official website and accounts in different platforms are authoritative to be trusted by their visitors. They strengthen Marvel’s appetency, global impact, and brand awareness.

Based on its mature IP, “Marvel combines market advantages to vigorously develop peripheral products for movies and comics, and puts hero images into the market” [8]. It is true that Marvel’s collaboration with well-known companies like MINISO and ANTA helps it obtain a huge amount of profit, it does not mean network marketing plays no role in reaching such a profit of nearly 6 billion dollars annually in average. As more shopping apps and websites are created, it is quite convenient and usually money-saving for people to purchase items. The big data contributes to market

segmentation according to the population's age, gender, location, and lifestyle by recommending different related merchandises to distinct segments.

2.3. Database Technology & Programming Technology

In a film making process, when shooting crew's work are done during the production stage, other bunch of crew enter the post-production stage. The footage are sent to a team, and the team should edit the footage, mix the sound, add special effects, and compose the sound tracks. With the help of database technology, teams' working efficiency is significantly improved. For example, certain models of special effects can be stored and retrieved from database, which means workers can avoid wasting time and effort on repeated productions; team members are capable to share their divided tasks in a easier way. "The first factor was the introduction of digital effects in the 1990s that enabled feature film visuals to come closer to comic book art than matte paintings and model effect shots ever could" [9]. Since the improved database technology makes the videos more shocking and saves cost for Marvel, Marvel can afford more details in its masterpieces. For instance, in order to present the original version of Hulk, the actor had to paint his whole body green. Although this visual effect was reasonable two decades ago, it is far less advanced than the following Hulk who had a vivid aberrance process.

Marvel has concentrated on games for many years. In 1982, Marvel made its first game, Spider-Man. The images were composed by two dimensional pixels with little details, and the game was extremely monotonous. Fortunately, computer games were very popular in the 1980s. Up to now, Marvel's games are advanced. They are mainly three dimensional. The characters have more actions, such as various fighting skills, not just moving forward and backward. The developing programming technology provides Marvel games with these complicated functions. It also helps fix bugs and thus improve the games' qualities. Like films mentioned above, the game-making process is also more efficient because of the mature database technology. Moreover, since database allows servers to operate more steadily, it is able to store more players' data and process the data more quickly and safely. Database technology and programming technology contribute to the success of Marvel games as visual marketing. "This use of visual marketing means that the retail space devoted to video games can also function as advertising" [10].

3. Conclusion

People's entertainments become varied. This is inseparable of technology's advancement. From it was first established, Marvel grows from only selling comic books to providing various kinds of entertainments. Since the last century, Internet technology has constantly developed in various aspects. Marvel always make adjustments in time and keeps up with time and technology. It knows what sorts of Internet technology have great prospectives and then makes good use of them. Internet technology itself propels Marvel to be so profitable today. Meanwhile, Marvel's excellent adaptations is also indispensable for being so competitive among a number of other entertainment industries. It knows what its potential customers would prefer and develops products related to them. Every steps it takes are solid enough to build a strong base for the following steps. Therefore, Marvel makes a significant progress with technology. Otherwise, it would have similar consequences as BlueArc. In the future, Marvel can learn more about other countries Internet mechanisms and communicate or cooperate with other countries' companies so that it can expand its global reach. Marvel can also diversify the platforms to advertise, like Bilibili, which allows it to acquire more customers in China. This essay provides other entertainment corporations with references to be competitive and profitable. They should construct a steady IP and follow technology innovations in time. This essay only mentions there is a positive relationship between Marvel and Internet technology. However, it does

not make a precise regression analysis since statistics are limited. The following studies can make statistics about Marvel films' and TV series' view rate, Marvel games' download number, and its related merchandises' daily sales, etc. After that, they can consider possible causes of Internet technology on Marvel's performances in different products and eventually make regression analysis.

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