

Elżbieta Perzycka

University of Szczecin

Association of Education Science Culture

PROFESSIONAL RATING OF DIGITAL INFORMATION'S – „INTRO” IN COMMUNICATING COMPUTER ART IN REFERENCE TO P. M. LESTER THEORY

Abstract

What does it mean professional rating of visual information? The question in the text is caused because the modern man is capable of experiencing and co-creates the digital image of reality. He has access to many devices and software, at the same time is able to reach a lot of information. Because of that we chose to take every task the most possible easy and fast way by shortcuts. This happens mostly because we don't have much time to try all the new available propositions. From all the multiplicity we pick only those that we consider important at this moment. What decides the pick? What competences do we need so the choices turn out to be good? The text that I wrote answers this questions. The selective information's we get are known as INTRO. Those are the introductions to something bigger, but are they important for us? What kind of message do they have? Why should we be professionally prepared to properly read the visual statements in the INTRO format?

Key words: visual communication, technology, perspective, context.

PROFESJONALNA OCENA INFORMACJI CYFROWYCH – „INTRO” W KOMUNIKACJI SZTUKI KOMPUTEROWEJ W KONTEKŚCIE TEORII P. M. LESTERA

Streszczenie

Co to znaczy profesjonalna ocena informacji wizualnej? Pytanie postawione w tekście spowodowane jest tym, że współczesny człowiek coraz bardziej doświadcza i współtworzy cyfrowy obraz rzeczywistości. Dostęp do wielości urządzeń i programów, a tym samym do ogromnej ilości docierających informacji powoduje, że coraz częściej wybieramy uproszczenia, streszczenia, tzw. skróty skrótów. Dzieje się to najczęściej z uwagi na brak czasu, aby w całości poznać wszystkie dostępne nowe propozycje. Z wielości wybieramy tylko te, które uznajemy za ważną w danym momencie. Co decyduje zatem o wyborze? Jakie potrzebujemy kompetencje, aby wybory były dla nas dobre? Przygotowany przeze mnie tekst odpowiada na te pytania. Docierające do nas wybiórcze informacje noszą nazwę INTRO. Są to wprowadzenia do czegoś większego, ale czy ważnego dla nas. Jakie są? Jaki przekaz zawierają? Dlaczego powinniśmy być profesjonalnie przygotowani do odczytywania komunikatów wizualnych przekazywanych w formie INTRO?

Słowa kluczowe: komunikacja wizualna, technologia, perspektywa, kontekst.

In common sense INTRO is the beginning, introduction. In music INTRO is the name of the soundtrack that opens an album or a single song ... In literature INTRO is an introduction, a narrative visualizing the narrated story. In cinematography INTRO is a preview, the beginning of what is to happen, what we will participate in. It may be a trailer or a preview from the last episodes. In computer games INTRO takes the form of a short animation introducing a player into the game. INTRO is something that initiates, opens, awakens the senses, engages the mind, emotions and encourages them to want more. It becomes a kind of enslavement of the subject with the object of cognition. It is the magic of interaction between art and its recipient.

Visuality, visualization and communication of computer art - even though their presence can be seen in many cultures, their understanding is different. In this paper I would like to focus on what is INTRO in computer communication in reference to the work of Paul Martin Lester¹ (visual communication theory) and Eric Berne² (transgressive communication theory). Why computer?

The computer connected to the network is the window to the world. It provides its user with not only visual and auditory manifestations of art, but also symbolic, audiovisual, intermedia and multimedia symbols. Not only in 2D, but also in 3D. It is therefore a source of multiplied communication of art with computer users, network users. Jean Robertson and Craig McDaniel³ expressed the view that the strategies of contemporary art have undergone a substantial and unified change in recent years. Many transcendental forms of hybridity are being added to the dominant attributes of contemporary art. Among others, these are: inter-, or hyperactivity, on the one hand, and trans-media strategies on the other. Together they form heterogeneous structures, internally differentiated both in terms of structure and material. Robertson and McDaniel concluded that the processes that had the greatest impact on these changes after 1980 were the development of new media, and after 1990 computers. The deeper diversification of creative attitudes, as pointed out by Ryszard W. Kluczyński, is also connected with the most important feature of activity - interactivity. This is the characteristic of contemporary cyberculture (a term now commonly used to describe a **computer age culture**), and it is also one of the most important features in communicating virtual reality⁴.

Using the benefits of computer art brings not only the possibilities, but also some limitations. Therefore, one should ask a question: who and for what reason exhibits art in the network? What is the understanding of the creators and recipients of computer art? How

¹ P.M. Lester, *Visual Communication, Images with Messages*, Cengage Learning, 2014, https://books.google.pl/books?hl=en&lr=&id=kakWAAAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PR7&dq=info:C9mtq76OQQAJ:scholar.google.com&ots=fTKbjaKaDV&sig=9-DoeMh06w6njKlGoP_VujyyFUo&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false [06.02.2017].

² E., Berne, *W co grają ludzie. Psychologia stosunków międzyludzkich*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 1997.

³ J. Robertson & C., McDaniel, *Themes of Contemporary Art.: Visual Art After*, Oxford University Press, 1980.

⁴ R.W. Kluczyński, *Estetyka sztuki nowych mediów*. Project co-financed from the European Social Fund under the Human Capital Operational Program, <http://www.medialarts.pl/download/skrypty/Estetyka-sztuki-nowych-mediow.pdf>, [06.02.2017].

computer art communicates with the creators and recipient? Without getting into the problem. When responding briefly, it can be said that today, as a result of technology and network development, we are dealing with a common culture, promoting a wide spectrum of diverse art products and a sophisticated culture addressed to experts. Should they be separated? Should we speak of high culture and low culture, valuable and less important? About what develops and what destroys mind, emotions ...?

First of all, if you notice a danger, you must first notice it. The dangers of communicating computer art are not due to lack of instrumental competence, but lack of cultural competence. It was noted by Paul Martin Lester. Interpretation of computer art, in which the image, sound, symbol is subjective. In order to objectify it, we must understand the importance of its depth by analyzing the meanings communicated by the creator⁵.

Communication is one of the fundamental aspects in human life and, as M. Hetmański points out, its connection with information is obvious and natural⁶.

The concept of communication is not defined in an unambiguous manner. J. F. Sztuka and J. Sztuka explain it as sharing information⁷. The act of communication can also be considered in a variety of ways, in particular as verbal and non-verbal, unilateral or bilateral communication. It should be emphasized, however, that the obligatory element for communication is that it always occurs in some space⁸, and each communication process consists of several essential elements. They are closely interrelated and determine the dynamic and transactional nature of the message. Constant elements of the process include: context, participants, message, channel, noise, and feedback.

When referring to Lester's work, INTRO of computer communication can be viewed from at least six perspectives. If INTRO is a miniature of the whole, then it collects the whole, and is included in the whole. Therefore, in order for INTRO to be worthwhile, one has to look at the whole of what has become its existence. Therefore, the prism of understanding INTRO of computer communication has the following perspectives:

Personal perspective. The recipient of computer art has his own opinion on what art communicates. This is based on one's own understanding of art. The vision of thought depends not only on the message. It refers to individual values. Sometimes it can be in conflict with cultural values. One can talk about several aspects of personal involvement in the process of communicating computer art.

First of all, every person, as a participant in the communication process, is a product of its individual experience, feelings, ideas, moods, activities (profession), religion, etc. For this reason, the message sent and received cannot have the same meaning. R. Verderber⁹ believes that the participants in the process differ in three basic elements: attitude to others, sex and

⁵ P.M. Lester, *Visual Communication. Images with Messages*, Wadsworth/Thomason Learning, Belmont 2000.

⁶ M. Hetmański, *Świat informacji*, Wydawnictwo Difin, Warszawa 2015, p. 81.

⁷ J. F. Sztuka, J. Sztuka, *Kształotowanie otoczenia. Wzornictwo przemysłowe, komunikacja i reklama wizualna*, Politechnika Częstochowska, Częstochowa 2005, p. 26.

⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁹ R. Yerderber, *Communicate*, Wadsworth Publishing Company, 2010.

culture. Participants always have a specific attitude towards other participants in the communication process, which affects the perception of communicated content, thoughts and feelings. Erick Berne went further in his description of meanings. Participants of transactional communication enter the roles of the Parent, Adults and Children during each communication act. The Inner Parent is a culturally encoded set of rules and instructions shaped most often by the family home during the first years of human life. This is an image of the surrounding world seen through the eyes, experiences and the mind of the nearest people. The messages spoken from the perspective of the parent in the theory of Eric Berne have a specific direction of speaking, and show what „should” and what „has” or „must” be done.

The Inner Child is a participant in the communication process, which is guided by the desire to learn, discover, experience something new. The child confronts what is communicated by parents and/or other close people with what they discover themselves. In the role of a child, a participant can take different attitudes, including: 1) I - Submitted Child; 2) I - Rebellious Child; 3) I - Spontaneous Child. As a participant in the communication process, the child brings emotions, both positively marked in his messages: joy, love, adoration, as well as negatively: sadness, anger, hostility, hatred. The messages contain the expressions: „I would like to”, „I hate”, „why me”, „why do I have to”, „I will not do it”.

The balance of the communication between the Parent and the Child is the role of an Adult. An adult can be compared to a computer that processes data from the external and internal world. He listens to the advice given by the Internal Parent and listens to the needs and reactions of the child.

In the communication process between the sender and the recipient, the central place is occupied by the **message**. As a communication it is a complex structure consisting of meanings, symbols, coding and decoding, form and organization. Therefore, when analyzing INTRO in computer communication, it is extremely important to understand who the participants of the communication process are and what and how they communicate. In formalized processes, these roles are usually unambiguously defined and non-interchangeable, while in the case of informal communication, they are simultaneous and interchangeable.

At each stage of the communication process, we deal with the so-called interference. The concept of noise was first introduced to the theory of communication by C. Shannon and W. Weaver as a source of interference¹⁰. Noises may be external, internal and semantic. Each of them can block the communication process at the decoding stage. External noise is related to the external environment of the communication process, such as inadequate temperature (heat or cold), damaged radio, television, computer receiver and even a damaged book, newspaper, poster¹¹. The damage affects every medium that transmits message. Internal

¹⁰ C.E. Shannon, W. Weaver, *The Mathematical Theory of Communication*, The University of Illinois Press, Urban, 1964, pp. 9-12. Por. S.R. Olson, *Teoria komunikowania: ponowne rozpatrzenie kwestii*, [in:] B. Dobek-Ostrowska (ed.), *Współczesne systemy komunikowania*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, Wrocław 1998, s. 48.

¹¹ A. Kozłowska, *Oddziaływanie mass mediów*, Szkoła Główna Handlowa w Warszawie, Warszawa 2006, pp. 31-35.

noises are feelings and psychological predispositions of participants in the communication process, such as headache or toothache, fatigue or distraction, but also feelings of anger, hatred, stereotypes and prejudices. The semantic noise is a consequence of the intended or unintentional misuse of meaning by the sender, which blocks its precise decoding by the recipient. The meaning of words in verbal code depends on the experience of each participant in the communication process, so people can decode individual fragments or the entire message in a very different way. Bearing in mind the INTRO, which is a miniature of the whole, it collects the whole, it is also appropriate entirely to pay attention to the feedback. The recipient's response to the message after its decoding provides us with information on how INTRO has been received and understood.

Historical perspective. Analyzing the problems of computer art and undertaking its historical embedding, it is worth noting that its evolution has been evolving over the years, but these were not events that should be regarded as very distant in the time space. At the same time, it is important in this approach that learning about the history of a chosen medium (computer, smartphone, tablet, ect.), including its changes in the field of technology and philosophy that have occurred over the years, determines the understanding of current trends that are related to it. Consciousness in this respect is considered essential during the creation of visual messages, what is more, it is also important in the process of constant changes in information technology in the context of its future use.

Therefore, it can be assumed that the historical perspective of visual communication allows to show not only the process of the evolution of information technology, but above all, various conditions related to these changes. First of all, these are the **technical conditions** indicated by P. M. Lester related to the continuous technological progress that is being made in the changing society. They are directly related to the **philosophical aspects** that are the foundation for changes in this area. It also seems important to expand the catalog of **conditions to those relating to political issues** related to the transformation of visual messages and ways of presenting them in this area. The political issue also involves modifications in both **the perception and the use of media in church doctrine**, which are also worth considering in the historical perspective. Analyzing the evolution in the field of information technology and visual communication which is indispensably connected with it, it is also necessary to include a **legal approach** that will eventually show modifications in the scope of the legislator's activities related to undertaking and implementing adequate legislative actions allowing for protection of participants and the content of visual messages in the particular historical periods¹².

An understanding of computer art can depend on the usability of the technology. Then we are dealing with historical conditioning, in which the historicity of the communication concerns such a communication situation, in which participants refer to other episodes that have occurred in the past seen in INTRO. When referring to computer art we can talk about intermedia and multimedia. These concepts cannot be used interchangeably, because they

¹² P.M. Lester, *Visual... op. cit.*

have different histories and heterogeneous structures. Higgins's understanding of intermedia is connected by at least two different media arts that, despite their being in the intermediary association, still function as parallel media. Visual poetry, happening or environment are some examples of it. The value and the possibility of artistic action are coherent. Multimedia do not create permanent relationships. Individual co-occurring media are loosely and temporarily linked together. But both have a conceptual connection created by combining media art. Their understanding in this way emerges from the merging of the art media and not from the media arts. It was only after 1990 that a new understanding of multimedia combined with computer platforms emerged. In addition, we should consider temporal changes in the aspect of perceiving the meaning of the computer concept itself. The turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was characterized by striving first of all to master technological processes in terms of information. However, the second half of the twentieth century was aimed at making processes of information technology to allow for organizational, as well as socio-political development¹³.

Text, sound, graphics, animation, digitally-linked video can provide different types of expression. This is achieved through digital immanence and programming languages. In this sense multimedia is derived from computer arts. The historical perspective confers the type of the INTRO phenomenon.

When receiving INTRO, it should be borne in mind that in the perspective of Paul Martin Lester¹⁴, the historical perspective allows showing a specific sequence of events, unique circumstances pertaining to a specific medium, which may in turn not only favor its development, but also promotion. It is important, therefore, that the evolution, in the field of visual communication using information technology, should be considered through the presentation of the history of typography and the history of graphic design - from the pre-Gutenberg period to the digital age.

Technical (aesthetic) perspective. Use of communication tools: the light, color, position and form of the message can be improved indefinitely on the basis of e.g. feedback. This makes the manifestation of computer art look better/worse than in reality. INTRO is a kind of channel for communicating the creator with the recipient through computer art. The channel in the communication process is understood as the means of transmission and the means by which the message is transmitted from the creator to the recipient.

We can talk about several aspects of this context. The direct physical aspect is determined by the environment, i.e. the temperature, light, accompanying sounds, the place and time of the process, that is, generally speaking, the external atmosphere. In the case of the intermediate physical aspect, there are also conditions of the transmitter, e.g. the digital context, and it will be the appearance and size of the screen, i.e: graphic layout, color saturation, type of font used, arrangement of elements, etc.

¹³ J. Wołoch, *Stan prawa informatycznego*, Wydawnictwo Forum Naukowe, Poznań – Wrocław 2001, p. 7.

¹⁴ P.M. Lester, *Visual... op. cit.*

People in direct communication can use all five sensory channels: hearing (verbal symbols), sight (nonverbal signals), touch, smell, and taste. In modern computer communication these channels are reduced to sight and hearing, although it may not be for long. If neuronal computer art is spread (through neuroplasticity of the brain)¹⁵, INTRO will adopt the multi-sensory dimension.

The ethical perspective is the moral responsibility of the creator of the message, or computer art, which connects the creator, the recipient and the manifestations of art. It refers to the way in which process participants perceive each other, among others through kindness, hostility or lack thereof, formality or directness of the situation and how it affects the meanings that are created as a result of the analysis of this process. On this basis, messages are created.

The message takes the central place in INTRO. It is the communication of the sender and the receiver. The message, also called the communication message, is a complex structure that includes meanings, symbols, coding and decoding, form and organization. By creating INTRO you cannot forget that in the transactional communication process, participants play the role of creators and recipients simultaneously. In formal processes, these roles are usually identified uniquely and not convertible, and in the case of informal process, they are simultaneous and interchangeable. This perspective is categorized into six categories: categorical imperative, utilitarianism, hedonism, golden measure, golden rule, and curtains of ignorance.

The perspective of culture (semiotic perspective) - is the identification of computer art identities. This perspective is a system of knowledge that is involved in a relatively broad group of people, combines beliefs, values, symbols, as well as behaviors recognized by this community. The cultural aspect has a specific effect on receiving messages in other aspects. It can be stated that the reception of messages in INTRO is culturally conditioned by reading the meanings of contexts: personal, technical, historical and ethical.

The horizontal and vertical meaning of INTRO is also evidenced by the fact that the issue of information culture is defined as the sphere of human activity that accompanies a man from the earliest years of life, as soon as he begins to realize the existence of information and the possibility of its deliberate use¹⁶. In this sense, it is not important in which historical period a person is functioning, although undoubtedly the importance of information increased along with technological progress from the cultural embedding of the development of information and communication technologies¹⁷. In broad terms, the issue of information culture can be perceived in a dualistic way: on the one hand as theoretical determinants of the information competences of participants in the communication process, on the other hand it is a striving to establish methods that will eventually allow effective

¹⁵ M. Spitzer, *Cyfrowa demencja*, Dobra Literatura, 2013.

¹⁶ H. Batorowska, *Kultura informacyjna w perspektywie zmian w edukacji*, Wydawnictwo SBP, Warszawa 2009, s. 9.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*.

dissemination of informational manifestations of this culture¹⁸. The social functioning of a human being in this context can be considered in relation to the surrounding technical civilization and the associated multiplicity of threats, because then it is a premise not only of social progress or the pursuit of cultural freedom, but also improvement of human life conditions, which may as a consequence generate a sense of happiness in it¹⁹.

Critical perspective - the most mature; computer arts are subjected to critical criticism, which takes into account the social interest, not the individual audience. Every person, as a participant in the communication process, is the product of his or her own experience, feelings, ideas, moods, occupations, religion, etc. For this reason, INTRO as the message sent and received cannot have the same meaning. R. Yerderber²⁰ believes that participants in the process differ in three basic elements: attitude towards others, gender and culture. In critical terms, communicators always have a defined subjective attitude towards the other participants in the process, which affects the perception of the communicated content (thoughts, feelings, forms).

Conclusion

When we consider INTRO in the context of computer art communication, we will understand what media phenomenon we are in contact with. An attribute selection always depends on the artist's attitude primarily, and the INTRO features are conditioned by the choice of media that an artist uses in his or her creation. The perception of information by humans is of an integrated character, expressed in connections between the visual and auditory apparatus²¹. These dependencies are used during the use of information technologies, which are tools and methods used to communicate and manipulate information²². When INTRO emerges from computer-generated multimedia, the computer assumes the parent position, the control position. The artist therefore manages not multimedia, but a computer. We can say that the computer in computer art becomes a metamedium, but under one condition - when the environment for the artist becomes computer technology rather than the computer itself. The used multimedia is derivative to the computer, and it is in the center. The computer is metamedium for INTRO, and computer technology is the environment for creating computer art. The artist communicates computer art with the principles of digital communication using media tools for creating a message - a piece of art. In this text this piece of art is INTRO.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 10.

¹⁹ H. Batorowska, *Podobieństwo w różnorodności*, [in:] H. Batorowska (ed.), *Kultura informacyjna w ujęciu interdyscyplinarnym. Teoria i praktyka*, Wydawca Uniwersytet Pedagogiczny im. Komisji Edukacji Narodowej w Krakowie Instytut Bezpieczeństwa i Edukacji Obywatelskiej Katedra Kultury Informacyjnej i Zarządzania Informacją, Kraków 2015, p. 9.

²⁰ R. Yerderber, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

²¹ B. Hoffman, *Surdopedagogika w teorii i praktyce*, Wydawnictwo Wyższej Szkoły Pedagogicznej, Warszawa 2001, p. 214.

²² W. Gogolek, *ABC o Internecie*, Wydawnictwo „Innowacje”, Goleśzów 1998, s. 6.

INTRO of film, music, poetry, computer games, or any other computer art, which is as demanding for the author - the artist as the complete message for which it was created.

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