Summary of J.David Bolter & Richard Grusin’s “Remediation”

In their paper, Bolter & Grusin discuss the making of media as *remediation*, in which the new media is on a spectrum of *Immediacy* to *Hypermediacy*. *Immediacy* refers to the disappearing, or making transparent, of old features and functions. *Hypermediacy*, the opposite pole on the spectrum, is when the new media multiplies pre-existing medium converging feature and functions into a new single form. In explaining their perspective and defining *remediation*, they lean on the works of several other published intellects in their field.

The paper was published in 1996, yet “the logic of *immediacy*” applies to emerging technology now just as much as it did when it was being written. The prime example of this for Bolter & Grusin was virtual reality (VR). This is an immersive experience that offers broad strokes of technical achievement and sensory responses. Yet, all of the features and functions were transparent to the user inside virtual reality. The controls were integrated. The artifacts were hidden once plugged in, and the experience really relied on the active perspective of the user rather than limitations of the technology. They support this logic with Jaron Lanier, one of the first commercial VR developers, and Meredith Bricken, an interface designer. They continue to paint a picture using the mouse as another example stating, “The mouse (and the pen-based interface) allow the user the immediacy of touching, dragging, and manipulating visually attractive ideograms.”

The “logic of hypermediacy” is exemplified by the works of Douglas Englebart and Alan Kay. The possibility to multi-task with multiple “windows” “opened onto a world of information made visible and almost tangible to the user.” Even the word windows offers an impression that visibility multiples with the more windows you open. In this way, the technological advances used by tiled windows lean towards hypermediacy on the spectrum.

*Summary by G. James Mitchell*

Bolter, J. D. & Grusin, R. A. (1996). Remediation. Configurations, 4(3), 311-358. Retrieved from https://muse.jhu.edu/article/8107