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Digital Media Foundations
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<u>Digital Media and Comic books</u>

Let's admit it, whether we want to or not: we are living in the digital age, and this advanced technology like computers, smartphones, tablets, and things of the sort are here to stay. Ever since the digital revolution began which brought in the invention of digital computers, computing power and the size of storage has had a major increase in the past decade and technology and this ability has been given to many electronic devices whether they are hand-held like phones and tablets or not like drones or big computers. While some may believe this to be a downside in society, a lot of other people believe that there are many benefits to the digital age. In fact, where as many professional people's jobs have had them do much tedious work in the past, with a computer they are able to speed up the process in regards to deadlines and assignments , and among these professionals are people who have worked and still work in the comic book industry who hold the occupation of comic book artists, editors, colorists,letterers, and even the writers who come up with both the written and visual narrative of these iconic stories and characters that will be memorable for years to come.

In today's world, I doubt that you will find new graphic novels and individual comic books that was not digitally edited or use as an aid for the making of whatever book it may be. When the golden as well as the silver age of superheroes and comic books began, writers and artists like Stan Lee, Jack Kirby, Steve Ditko, Bill Finger, Bob Kane and many other creative geniuses created stories centering around triumph, tragedy, hope,science fiction and used the only things that were available to use: typewriters,pencils, brushes, pens, inks and dyes. Though these methods were simple, they were able to captivate audiences, both old and new and sell these comic books off the stands, and in result, these comic books were in high demand. Though these people proved to be successful, they were limited by their era of time and from the 30's all the way up to the 90's everything was done by hand andin result there was months and weeks of hard and tedious work in store for people who worked for DC, Marvel, or any other comic book company in general.

So what was the solution to this hard and tedious work for pages of written and visual storytelling that can easily be cut in half only if these people had the technology to do so? Well as mentioned before, this is a digital age and writers such as Bryan Edward Hill explain how it was before computers were used and how after computers were integrated into the creative process of creating comic books. He states, "You were writing long form by hand or on a typewriter," said Hill. "Editing required you to do physical labor, as you had to use Wite-Out, cut things, and reglue things. Now, you can just cut and paste on your computer." With computers alone, we can see that things that used to take hours to do now take minutes and you can easily edit things and always rewrite drafts and scripts online rather than on strictly paper. He then talks about the programs he uses as Hill states, "I use Scrivener to vomit an idea, then I collect JPG images," said Hill. "It could be character designs, it could be

real world photography. Sometimes I'll put a slideshow on repeat. I'll make a playlist on Spotify. All of it's going at the same time, and I'm getting the ideas out." This quote shows that computers and their programs like photoshop and a Wacom Clintiq tablet can allow these comic creators to both revise their work whenever they want as well as multitask.

       Now that we can see the wonders that digital media and the computer does for the writers, inkers as well as artists also benefit from these now easily accessible and affordable tools to be the best that they can be at their profession. Amrit Birdi who happens to be an illustrator who has done work for some high end clients thinks things like dropbox among other forms of media is a rather valuable and useful tool. Also, as I mentioned before , using computers can save a whole lot of time as he goes on to state, "We can do a graphic novel in four months vs. year in a half,That's attractive to publishers, writers, to everyone."Birdi also goes on to praise various programs such as Adobe Illustrator and clip studios and states "If I didn't like a page, I had to redo the whole thing. Now, I can copy panels, so I don't have to begin again from nothing."From what we learn from Amrit Birdi and his experience in the comic book industry time is money, and don't let it run out on you...these forms of digital media save tremendous amounts of time and time is clearly money in this type of business. As for letterers, Chris Eliopaulos who has done a lot of work for Image Comics and Marvel comics and goes on to say, "I've created my fonts in Fontographer and now FontLab," said Eliopoulos. "I use Microsoft Word to open scripts and copy the text. The lettering is done in Adobe Illustrator where I've also created a bunch of word balloons of different types. I use Adobe InDesign to layer the lettering onto the art. I work on an iMac and use a Wacom Cintiq. In total, the cost of all those things runs in the thousands of dollars. When I started, I used a $1.29 pen holder, a box of pen nibs costing $10, a $15 bottle of ink and a $5 Ames Guide."

       With the mix of both digital and print media, let's not forget about streaming platforms. When these comic books are finished and ready to be sold,most of the time they will be released in print form,becoming available for both newcomers and old time fans alike. However, many of these publishers also have deals with many companies and release their content on apps where people can easily access both old and new comics such as Comixology, Marvel Unlimited, DC universe and many other streaming platforms. In addition, many of these apps have these motion comics that are animated unlike their hard copy print counter parts. An example of this is a line of web comics called Marvel infinite where users of the app get to experience and read these stories in a way that they haven't before. Overall, creating comic books is an art as well as a process. With all of these forms of digital media and tools that are both easily affordable and accessible, these comic creators have the ability to hone and better their craft and mix styles of both old and new together to create both the perfect written as well as visual narrative for both new and old fans alike, thus saving time, making more money, and being the best in which they can be for years to come.

Works Cited

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