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**INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY: A BOOM FOR
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Information Technology: A Boom for Research in Sports and Physical Education

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Abstract – From the founding of the Olympic movement in the late 19th century at the height of the Industrial Revolution through the beginning of the Information Age in the 1970s, channels of media distribution evolved from primarily written tracts in publications to electronic broadcasting. The changes in the mode of information distribution and the underlying technology over time caused the message content being promulgated to similarly change. As there were comparatively few channels available for the distribution of content during this period, a relative few individuals served as “gatekeepers” on the flow of information. These gatekeepers, such as editors and producers, exercised extraordinary control over what information entered the public domain through a process that was largely autocratic. The Information Age has changed the paradigm of information dissemination, and in so doing, has democratized the process of sharing information. The participation of the public-at-large in the development and dissemination of information that shapes humanistic ideas has grown in scale to a size unprecedented in human history. Since the advent of the Internet, this human discourse has changed over time driven both by the application of new technologies together with the exponential growth in that portion of the population that has access to them. Perhaps the most significant development in this movement was the development of the World Wide Web (the web). As the web has moved from comparatively static Web 1.0 content through the development of Web 2.0 social media applications to the beginning of Web 3.0 practices, there have been significant changes in how humans use computer technology to interact with one another. Despite the positive changes that have been brought about by the development of these technologies, such as a democratization of the information sharing process, there are still negative aspects to social media applications. There will also be significant challenges ahead in the development of new communication technologies that must be overcome before the full promise of the Internet can be realized by all.

Key words: Olympic movement, social media, Internet, web, technology, humanistic ideas

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INTRODUCTION

Human play, as embodied in sports, is one of the most important expressions of human culture. It can be said that the games people play in a society are a reflection of the society as a whole. It can also be said that communication is the one dominant attribute that distinguishes human beings from every other species on the planet. Thus, the intersection of communication and sports in the human experience is an important one.

The Olympic movement is considered to be one of the largest social movements in human history. Nowhere else do the countries of the world gather in one place as they do during the Summer Olympic Games. While the peaceful gathering of the world's youth for sports competition is the embodiment of that intersection of sport and communication, this fact underscores the importance of the media in conveying Olympic values and ideals. In many respects, it is a relationship

between the Olympic community and the media that allows the Games to be conducted on the scale that they are.

This presentation will briefly examine the evolution of this relationship from the founding of the Olympic movement at the height of the Industrial Revolution to the dawning of the Information Age. The discussion of the early days will necessarily be brief as the primary focus of this presentation is on the ways that technology, and more specifically the Internet, is driving the communications process and with it the dissemination of the human ideals. There will be a discussion of some of this new media and the presentation will conclude with some of the challenges before us, as we look to the future being wrought through technological change.

EVOLUTION OF MEDIA

As has already been noted, the Olympic movement was founded at the height of the Industrial Revolution in the late 19th century. The founder of the Olympic movement, Baron Pierre de Coubertin, authored many articles arguing for the establishment of a modern Olympic Games. An example of this effort was the publication of an essay in the "Review de Paris" in June 1894 – on the very eve of the first Olympic Congress – setting out his vision for the establishment of a modern Olympic Games (Guttman, 1992).

Writing in the 19th century was a lengthy process, meaning that 19th century writers faced a much longer period than happens today, between researching, writing, and receiving payment for their work. Only the best educated individuals, usually from privileged backgrounds, had the time, expertise, talent, inclination, and financial backing to undertake this effort (Harper, 2007). Illustrated news weeklies or monthlies were among the primary means of communication and dissemination of the news in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This medium was also one that was particularly well suited to the audience that de Coubertin was trying to reach. The founders of the Olympic movement were well educated and well-to-do. Therefore, the message to this audience leant itself well to the tenets of the early games that they should only be open to amateurs; those who participated in sport as an avocation as opposed to a vocation (Guttman, 1992).

However, the on-going Industrial Revolution was bringing about important society-wide changes that allowed sports to flourish. This included a population migration from rural to urban centers, increases in disposable income accompanying a rise in the middle-class and eventually, more leisure time that allowed more recreational activities, among them participation in and the viewing of sports events.

Concurrent with the rise in the middle class was a wider distribution of newspapers, many of which began to include sports coverage. Sports coverage did, in fact, become one of the ways that newspapers in larger metropolitan areas competed with each other. As interest in sports generally, and local teams particularly, began to appear in newspapers, the amount of space given over to this content expanded over time. As there were no broadcast media in these early days, the newspaper sports coverage of the day was largely descriptive play-by-play recaps of the sports events.

Eventually, however, broadcast media was introduced to the communications mix and began to usurp the role historically played by the newspapers. First radio, and later television, allowed the audience to experience the sport events as they occurred with their play-by-play broadcasts. Thus, the role of the newspapers and weekly or monthly sport-themed news magazines began to evolve from reporting the

play-by-play, now done by the broadcast media, to more reporting of "behind the scenes" activities or analysis of the athletes, teams and events.

There are two lessons to be learned from this experience. First is that as technology evolved and new forms of communication emerged, message content carried in the channels of distribution changed as well. So, too, is this the case today; as technology evolves, so does the nature of the message content being distributed.

The second lesson concerns the role of "gatekeepers" such as editors or producers in the public communications process. During this early period, there were comparatively few media outlets. In Europe, countries might have one or two "national" newspapers, plus those in the metropolitan areas. In the United States, there was no general national newspaper until the advent of "USA Today" in 1982. While larger metropolitan areas may have as many as five news dailies, most of the country had smaller markets that could support no more than one or two. In terms of electronic broadcasting, the available air time for sports was typically limited, since most outlets aired a variety of content. Also in the early days of television in the United States, there were only three major television networks. Because of the limited availability of channels of distribution, editors in the newsroom or producers of over-the-air broadcasting wielded enormous power in determining what their audience would read or hear. The selection process for media was typically driven by market concerns; but in any case was decidedly autocratic.

THE INFORMATION AGE AND RISE OF THE INTERNET

Human civilization has moved from the Age of Industry to the Information Age. While the general consensus is that the dawn of the Information Age is the 1970s, the changes wrought to society through technological change really accelerated with the creation of the World-Wide-Web (the web). As changes in technology changes channels of communication and message content, a brief discussion of the underlying technology is in order.

The early 1960s saw experimentation with computer technology that established the protocols for what became known as the Internet in 1969. This feat was followed by the development of Hypertext Mark-up Language (HTML) in 1989 that became the basis for the development of the web, though it was not until 1993 that the web was introduced to the public-at-large.

Most early websites were a series of static web pages connected by hyperlinks that could be internal, which provided structure to a website, or external leading to other websites based on whatever criteria the webmaster decided. The

underlying computer technology such as processors, memory, and connectivity limited the content of these early web pages. Most hosts, or the site where the web content was posted, were initially personal computers (PCs) adapted for this purpose, although eventually specialized computer devices called “web servers” evolved. Over the years, the capability of these website servers has changed dramatically as has the role of the webmaster. Today, virtually all commercial or professionally developed websites are dynamic with the web content contained in a relational database called “the backend.” Most websites also have a variety of plug-in applications, such as secure financial transaction software for ecommerce, called “middleware,” and the front facing graphic interface that people see when they arrive at a website. Webmasters have evolved into web developers and the skills required for maintaining a website can vary significantly between those working the backend and those designing the frontend.

On the recipient’s end were similar technological limitations by PC’s that had their processor capability expressed in numbers such as the 286, 386, 486 and Pentiums. In terms of connectivity, bandwidth has increased exponentially with a succession of changes from dial-up modems to ISDN and now broadband. Thus, early on the limitations of technology necessarily limited the content; e.g. the message.

Over the past 30 years, society has experienced a fundamental change in the way information is created and disseminated. From its rudimentary early beginning, the interface between computer technology and users has evolved to a point where virtually anyone can create “media content” and post it to the web where it can be accessed and read by anyone in the world with access to the computer resources to do so. This has led to another fundamental and extraordinarily significant change: a process of democratization. No longer can gatekeepers such as the editors or publishers of the old media exert autocratic or monopolistic control over the flow of information into the public sphere. There are, however, both positives and negatives to this state of affairs as we shall see in our ensuing discussion of the evolution of the web.

Web 1.0 – The Inaugural Web

During the formative days of the web, strategies for the dissemination of information could be broadly classified as “push” versus “pull.” Push refers to the proactively sending out or distributing messages across the Internet most commonly by email from one user’s account to another. One of the ways in which email was used as a precursor to today’s Web 2.0 applications, such as blogs and social networking sites, was the listserv. A listserv was a group of individuals typically bound together by a common interest who signed onto an email list to receive

messages on a topic of mutual interest. When an email was sent in bulk to the list, anyone in the group could respond to the sent message which subsequently went to everyone else in the group. In so doing, an online discussion and sharing of ideas would ensue.

Unfortunately, the widespread abuse of email has gradually restricted its utility as a medium of communication exchange beyond personal messages. Both marketers and criminals seized upon email as a means to try and sell their wares or dupe people into giving up money which gave rise to the spam phenomenon. Unfortunately, spam is still a plague on the Internet with an estimated 48.5 billion messages sent everyday largely through networks of compromised computers called botnets. In March 2011, one of the largest of these, the Rustock Botnet that was sending as many 13.82 billion spam emails each day, was finally taken down by the authorities (Slashdot, 2011). Partially as a consequence of this abuse, more and more people are seeking out alternative channels for the sharing of electronic communications, such as through the messaging capabilities of Facebook or Twitter.

The other concept is that of “pull” in which individuals actively seek out web content utilizing web browsers and devices such as search engines. The key to this strategy is to insure that this web content is properly optimized and has appropriate tags, so it becomes more visible on the web and easier to find.

Education is the most powerful vehicle for the transmission of human ideals. It is in the realm of education that the Internet has had a profound impact. The advent of the Internet and the worldwide web has fundamentally changed the paradigm of education; a paradigm that had essentially been unchanged since the 16th century. Early on, the Academy embraced this change and developed a distance education program that can be defined as asynchronous, transformational, and computer mediated. This means that the Academy’s students can pursue their studies across the Internet using computer resources at any time and from any place without the faculty and student needing to present online at the same time. While removing impediments to learning created by time and space, the institution has transformed the traditional educational experience of the lecturer in the classroom to learning activities distributed through the web in which learning outcomes and course objectives are satisfied.

There has been a lot of skepticism with respect to the efficacy of online education. The validity of the model has been validated by the Academy’s own research among which has been the comparison of comprehensive examination results between resident and online students. The institution’s accrediting

agency, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, reviewed and approved the Academy's distance education program in 1996, and currently more than 85% of the Academy's students report that they have learned as much or more through online education as they did in resident study. The Academy is also pleased that more than 96% of its students would recommend the Academy's online education programs to friends or colleagues.

Illustrative of this approach to education is the Olympic Values Education Program (OVEP) that was prepared for distance learning delivery by the Academy under a grant from the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in 2008. Through the web, the OVEP program is available to anyone in the world who has access to the Internet, and further utilizing emerging technology, such as the Google Universal Translator, albeit with some inherent limitations, it can be accessed in any one of 52 different languages. The online OVEP course can be reached at students.ussa.edu/Olympic_values. I should also note that the Academy recently completed another such cross-cultural academic offering with the preparation of a bachelor's degree course entitled the "Shaolin Philosophy of Kung Fu." The basis for the course is a 1,500-year-old manuscript that was translated from the ancient to the modern version of Chinese and then into English. The Academy's Department of Instructional Design then refined the English and placed it into an online course environment. In so doing, East meets West, the ancient meets the new and we come full circle insofar as the modern English course can be translated back into Chinese with the universal translator function built into the Academy's Course Management System (CMS).

Very important in the supporting of student education and the dissemination of human values is access to libraries and research resources. In 1997, the Academy was among the first organizations to put online a peer-reviewed research journal – The Sport Journal. This Journal is provided subscription-free to the public and is accessed on average about 15,000 times per week. As a matter of interest, all of the papers from last year's International Olympic Academy (IOA) were posted to The Sport Journal site in a special Olympic edition of the Journal. From the comfort of their own homes, the Academy's students can use the Internet to access more than 57,000 libraries in 112 countries that have more than 70 million holdings and 270,000 unique journals through the institution's library portal on its website. However, access to educational resources, such as libraries, are not restricted to students in universities. Very early in the development of the web, the Encyclopedia Britannica posted its entire body of work online and made it available on a subscription basis. Today, there are a myriad of libraries to which the public has access free-of-charge, such as the Alabama Public Online Library. Organizations such as Google are digitizing the holdings of entire research libraries with the ultimate intent of placing these online for ease of access; though inevitably at a price.

Web 2.0 – The Social Web

The rise of participatory information sharing through the Internet has truly revolutionized the dissemination of information using web 2.0 techniques. With the advent of the social web, the creation of content has evolved from the efforts of a comparative few in the media professions to a model that maximizes the contributions of the multitudes. With about 400 social media platforms available and an untold number of blogs being authored, the proliferation of communication channels, both public and professional, and private and amateur, allow for the contribution of millions of people sharing a public conversation unprecedented in the human experience. One of the most important consequences of the proliferation of these platforms available to virtually anyone with access to the Internet, is the democratization of media content. What people can see and hear has been taken out of the hands of the gatekeepers and placed into the hands of society at large.

It is not possible within the constraints of this presentation to cover all aspects of the social web, so the author has selected five representative examples beginning with a discussion of Wikipedia. If the Encyclopedia Britannica, long acknowledged as a definitive compendium of human knowledge, represents Web 1.0 technology in which content is simply posted and accessed by people through subscription, Wikipedia represents a web 2.0 application because of its collaborative nature insofar as anyone can submit articles for inclusion.

Ironically enough, I have turned to Wikipedia for a definition of itself, though I should note that at the Academy there is a prominent notice posted on the library portal that Wikipedia is not considered an appropriate source of citations for research papers for reasons that will be explained. By its own definition, Wikipedia is a free, web-based, collaborative, multilingual encyclopedia project supported by the non-profit Wiki Media Foundation. Its 18 million articles (over 3.6 million in English) have been written collaboratively by volunteers around the world, and almost all of its articles can be edited by anyone with access to the site. Wikipedia was launched in 2001, and has become the largest and most popular general reference on the Internet ranking seventh among all websites on Alexa.com (a web statistics reporting site) and boasting 365 million readers. (Wikipedia, 2011)

The reason that Wikipedia has not been widely accepted in academic research has its roots in its early days. The articles submitted at that time frequently were not carefully researched, often inaccurate, and sometimes posted with malicious intent. It is significant to note that many of these issues have been addressed through the use of anonymous reviewers who examine submissions from the general public for both accuracy and appropriateness. Nonetheless, it still remains a very

important resource insofar as researchers, especially the youngest, still access Wikipedia as a point of departure in their research to give them ideas on where to go for additional information.

For those of you who have entries in Wikipedia, it is worth your time to periodically check the content to ensure that someone has not submitted inaccurate or even malicious information. Further, and especially given the reach of Wikipedia, it affords organizations the opportunity to promulgate their missions and activities. For example, in the entry on Olympia, the article posted there cites its role in the ancient Olympic Games and presents a chronology of the site by era to the present day. It does not, however, mention the IOA. A submission could be authored for consideration and inclusion on how Olympia serves as the site of the IOA along with a description of the IOA's mission and function.

One of the true phenomena of the last few years in Web 2.0 technology is the rise of Facebook as suggested by Internet usage statistics posted on Alexa.com. In April 2011, more than 40% of all global Internet users visited Facebook on a daily basis, a rate of usage that has remained consistent over the past three months.

Facebook represents the power of social media as individuals sharing common experiences are provided a platform through which these experiences or interests can be shared. As friends beget friends, the media content on Facebook expands in ever increasing circles. This content is not limited to posts or messaging, but also includes YouTube video clips, decidedly unscientific opinion polls, and games. Additionally, the messaging function built into Facebook has, in many circles, replaced email as the preferred means of interpersonal electronic communication.

Facebook can be a double-edged sword, as the most decorated Olympic athlete of all time found out much to his chagrin. This individual, who won a record eight gold medals in the 2008 Beijing Olympics, suffered the consequences of the posting of a photograph to Facebook of him consuming illegal recreational drugs. This incident sullied his image and reputation and cost him millions of dollars in endorsement revenue. The irony is that the picture posted was not posted on his personal Facebook page, but on that of another individual who happened to be at the same party. In this instance, the interconnectivity of the medium produced dire consequences for a sports hero and role model. This incident also underscores the need to be circumspect with what one posts to social media sites. A good guideline is not to post anything you would not want to see in a newspaper. It is not uncommon for prospective employers, among others, to search out Facebook pages in an effort to gain insights on a given individual.

Another extraordinarily popular site, and one already mentioned, is YouTube. Founded in February 2005, viewership on YouTube exceeded two billion views per day in May 2010. YouTube allows viewers to watch and share originally created videos and provides a forum for people to connect, inform, and inspire others across the globe and acts as a distribution platform for original content creators and advertisers large and small (YouTube, 2011). Alexa.com reported in April 2011 that YouTube is the third most visited global website receiving just over 26% of daily website visits over the past three months.

YouTube, whose web interface is available in 42 languages, can be accessed by anyone, although those individuals who want to post content on the site must be registered. For regular users, the time limit for any one post is 15 minutes. Posting video content there can be accomplished from a wide range of devices from computers to mobile phones. YouTube video posts spread across the entire Internet by appearing as links in emails, posts on other social media platforms, such as Facebook and in blogs. Periodically, a video on YouTube will "go viral," which simply refers to a phenomenon in which the content captures the public's imagination and is promulgated through a vast array of distribution channels.

However, sites such as YouTube pose a recognized threat to the business model of many sports organizations. The blogging and social media rules of the IOC specifically proscribe the posting of "moving images" or sound. While these guidelines can be enforced on accredited individuals to the Games, such as national delegations or the media, it is much harder to do with spectators seated in the stadium. Modern 3G or 4G phones can easily capture video of sporting events from the stadium seat, and the video can be uploaded to YouTube through a user's account. While such activity violates the terms of service for registered account holders, the process for removing the content and terminating a user's account can sometimes be a lengthy one. In the meantime, to the extent to which the video has been accessed and distributed through posts on other social media web sites or platforms, it can never be removed from the web in its entirety. Obviously, this is a major issue for media companies that may pay as much as billions of dollars for exclusive media rights to the event.

Another social media phenomenon is Twitter and, in fact, the Winter Games in Vancouver were cited as the first "Twitter Olympics" (Mann, 2010). The Twitter posts, called tweets, of the athletes provide insights into their physical and mental preparation for competition, their reactions to being in the Olympic Games and other aspects of the Olympic experience that simply were not possible in the past through traditional media outlets. Twitter allows for the sharing of the human experience with an unparalleled

immediacy and intimacy with potentially vast audiences that is not tempered with the interference of a gatekeeper. Many tweets generated by Olympians at the Vancouver Winter Games can be found on the web by simply “Googling” Olympic athlete tweets.

However, as was the case with Facebook, Twitter can also be a double-edged sword. There have been instances where athletes have posted comments denigrating their competition, the officials, and even their teammates or coaches. These actions can create dissension on teams and when comments go viral, they can take on a life of their own and stir considerable controversy and unfavorable comment in the press. This has occurred frequently enough that some teams ban their athletes from using Twitter, while other teams such as that of the Australian Olympic Team provide their athletes with training on the appropriate use of the medium.

Lastly, I would like to touch on “blogging” as a medium for the dissemination of the human experience. A blog can be thought of as an online diary, open to the public, and onto which an author can write on any topic they choose and to which anyone who reads the post can, in turn, reply. These blogs typically focus on a particular topic such as politics or sports and there are blogs on virtually every topic imaginable. Taken altogether, these blogs are referred to as the “blogosphere.”

With all of the attention that this form of human endeavor engenders and the emotion that it evokes, sports are a common topic in the blogosphere. As one might expect, the blogging commentary related to sports can be both positive and negative. Frequently the authors of blogs do not have the professional or academic preparation to speak knowingly about which they write. The unfortunate thing about blog posts that are inaccurate is that they often carry more weight than they deserve. Illustrative of this situation is the phrase, “it must be true, I read it on the Internet.” The Academy is seeking to address this situation in some small measure through its decision to change one of our online publications, *The Sport Digest*, into a blog. Through this effort, Academy faculty and other well regarded individuals in the profession generate articles on a host of issues surrounding the sport profession. These posts have a basis in fact or are otherwise well-reasoned and as is the case with other blogs, afford the readers an opportunity to respond to the issues.

Web 3.0 – The Semantic Web

While the term Web 2.0 has entered the lexicon, Web 3.0 will be the next step in the evolution of the Internet. A common, agreed upon definition for Web 3.0 has yet to emerge but a consensus is building that it will be a combination of technology through which the entire web is turned into a database combined with the marshaling of human resources. New computer languages such as HTML5 will allow computers to read online content and so will facilitate the

identification and indexing of the web, a process that will make content more accessible.

Beyond the changes in technology, renowned web futurist Clay Shirky argues that for the first time in history the web has provided the tools to harness society’s “cognitive surplus.” Essentially, the cognitive surplus is derived from the trillions of hours of free time that the residents of the developed world enjoy and that has steadily increased since World War II. Increases in gross domestic product, education, and life span have provided riches of free time but that prior to the Internet was squandered in non-productive pursuits. The Internet democratized the tools of production and distribution and the Internet made the benefits scalable: value comes from the combined cognitive surplus of millions of individuals connected to a network that allows collaboration. (Davis, 2010).

Shirky is an example of this dynamic at work. In the course of researching this paper, the author continuously came across references to Shirky and his theories of cognitive surplus. As more authors agreed with the concept than those that did not, it suggests that these theories are gaining traction and apparently have some merit. Through this process of review and debate, concepts and theory are continually refined adding to the body of knowledge through which the human condition can be enriched.

CHALLENGES

With all of its potential to elevate human discourse and to assist in the dissemination of human ideals, many challenges remain. This can fall into three broad areas as follows:

The first is economic. There exists in a very real sense a digital divide in which a vast proportion of the world’s population remains without access to computers or the Internet. In many respects, the Internet still remains a world of the “haves and have nots.” In some respects we have almost come full circle to the human condition of when Olympic movement first began in the late 19th century in which access to information was the domain of the privileged few. This fact has been recognized and there are efforts to address this imbalance through the production of low-cost machines to allow the underserved populations without the necessary economic resources to gain access to the Internet.

A looming issue is a social one. Governments all over the world took note at the “Jasmine Revolution” in Tunisia and the events in Tahrir Square in Egypt and the role that Web 2.0 applications played in mobilizing the population to overthrow the political establishment. In the most populous country of the world, the two most globally accessed websites everyday cannot be reached at all. So in a very real sense, we could be headed to a world of two Internets; one in which the flow of information is free and unfettered, and another where access to

information resources are tightly controlled or restricted to what the government believes to be “politically acceptable.” (McMahon, Bennett, 2011). In the West, the Internet has played a role in self-censorship resulting in societal fragmentation and polarization insofar as people have a tendency to seek out and read only that information that reinforces their points of view. If the ability to share information is deemed to be a strength, impediments to the free flow of information can only be deemed to be a detriment in a future of shared human values.

The last issue is technical. Computers as we know them – those bulky desktop machines and even portable laptops – are going away. What is going to occur in the future will be a proliferation of smaller devices such as tablet computers, iPhones, and Androids that provide access to the Internet, but where the information that they generate is stored on the Internet itself (also called the cloud). However, all of these devices require wireless connectivity and the amount of electromagnetic spectrum through which these connections are made is a finite resource. In June 2009, the U.S. Government took back that portion of the electromagnetic spectrum through which analog television signals were broadcast. This spectrum was subsequently auctioned off to telecommunication providers and others such as Google. But the fact remains that in the not-too-distant future this bandwidth will also be exhausted. All of this is setting the stage for a time in which data consumption will be metered as is any other utility and subject to the laws of supply and demand (Gruman and Kaneshige, 2008). Thus, if the digital divide was created by economic conditions, the situation can be exacerbated by “metered Internet access.”

The solution will be found both in the technical, such as content providers better streamlining their services, or through the creation of better means by which access is gained, such as twisting the wireless signals.

CONCLUSIONS

Information technology has unquestionably changed human society in ways that can scarcely be imagined. From early experiments in the 1960s to today, the Internet, as embodied in the web, has over 171 million web hosts. Assuming an average 100 pages per website (the Academy website has more than 800 pages) would yield an estimated 17.1 billion pages of web content, the vast majority of which can be accessed by anyone. Research shows that the Internet, excluding the deep web, is growing by more than 10 million new static pages every day. (Metamend, 2011). Thus, the Internet spans virtually the entire gamut of the human existence and can be a powerful medium for the conveying of humanistic ideas. It has provided a vehicle that can educate and entertain us and can serve to make society more

cohesive. In so doing, it has created an environment for public discussion unequalled in human history but at the same time, it can also serve to isolate us from each other. People can immerse themselves in an environment where the virtual becomes reality and normal communication with others slowly becomes lost. In any case, the evolution of the Internet has brought about a democratization of media content and has created an environment in which all can participate. It is, as the title of a popular novel suggests, “A Brave New World.”

APPLICATIONS IN SPORT

On our way to Web 3.0, it is critical that we participate in this powerful medium and spread humanistic ideas and Olympic values across the world. The Internet has provided a vehicle that can educate and entertain us and can serve to make society more cohesive. However, despite the potential to elevate human discourse, challenges remain, such as the digital divide that prevents much of the world's population from accessing the Internet, tightly controlled or restricted access by some governments, and technical obstacles that limit wireless connectivity. In any case, the evolution of the Internet has brought about an unprecedented democratization of media content and has created an environment in which all can participate and make a difference.

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