Digital Technology in Filmmaking

Maxime Chambreuil

maxime.chambreuil@insa-rouen.fr

1   Subject

Investigate the new digital technology and its possible effects on filmmaking and viewing. Think about this new technology in light of the way VCRs, personal videotape recorders, home computers, DVDs and the Internet already have impacted the images people make and view.

2   Essay

2.1   Investigation

If you consider recents movies, you will have many difficulties to find one where there is no special effect. Does it come inside a successful movie receipe ?

When I think about the intrusion of digital technology on filmmaking, two movies comes to my mind : "Shrek" and "Final Fantasy", which have been made only with synthesized images. The main difference between those films is that "Shrek" is like cartoon because there is no human being. I mean that there is no role for an actor or actress. In "Final Fantasy", human being have been created, motion and feelings reproduced thanks to computers.

We can easily imagine how qualified we should be to do so. I don't really know how they are paid but their fees must be very expensive. We should be very generous to get the best result and a large part of the budget should be dedicated to this part.

On the other hand, the use of a digital technology high qualified technician means that you don't need actors, actress, make-up team, uniforms, studios and premises, technicians for lights, sounds and videos, etc... I let you imagine how much money, time, and stress you can save in doing a movie with a computer.

Furthermore, there is more and more films and fewer and fewer art houses. So the general trend is to produce a cheap movie to take the least possible risks and maximise the profit if it works.

2.2   Physical support and Materials

In addition to that, new support and materials have arrived on the market : DVD, Video tape recorder, connectors between VCR and computer, etc... In a word, all necessary equipment is available to rent a movie, reproduce it and keep it at a ridiculous price.

2.3   Distribution

Concerning the distribution, there are established networks on the Internet and IRC chat rooms, where you can find movie you want. Moreover, Internet service provider sells a high rate connection with ADSL, which enables exchange of important volume of data. They mostly invest in high tech equipment and R&D in order to design new materials and protocoles and absorb those transfers.

As for data, new algorithms and codecs are found to compress video and audio data. Some product implementing those algorithms can be found in your supermarket, and enables anybody to understand how it works and how to compress a movie.