# Impact of Communication Technology on Global Creative Trends

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## ABSTRACT

*This study attempts to explain how communication technology impacts global creative trends. We explore global creative trends based on award-winning creative topics presented at the 2016 Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity . After analyzing award-winning topics, five main creative trends were selected with the keywords: technology, story-telling, social media, causes, and humor. The 2016 Cannes Lions Festival demonstrated that technology (i.e., virtual reality, artificial intelligence) has expanded the limits of creativity. Story-telling is still considered to be effective for raising audience attention. Social media enhances consumer engagement while nurturing future consumer relationships. Supporting social causes allows companies to garner goodwill from the public. Humor is powerful when it appropriately appeals to both products and customers.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity (or Cannes Lions) is held each June in Cannes, France. Formerly, it was known as the Cannes Lions International Advertising Festival. The new name reflects the notion that this event is about more than just advertising. The Cannes Lions, the largest gathering of worldwide advertising professionals, designers, digital innovators and marketers, is a global event for those working in the creative communications, advertising, and related fields. The annual gathering was inspired by the Cannes Film Festival, which has been held each June since 1946 in Cannes, France. A group of cinema screen advertising contractors established the International Advertising Film Festival [1] as a means to promote advertising in cinemas—the only audiovisual medium then available to advertisers outside the US. The first festival took place in Venice, Italy, in September 1954 [2]. The advertising festival moved to Monte Carlo in 1955, then Cannes in 1956. It alternated between Venice and Cannes until 1984, when Cannes became its permanent home [2]. Around 11,000 registered delegates from more than 90 countries join the Cannes Lions to celebrate the best of creativity in brand communication and to help professionals keep up with the global creative trends. In 2014, the Cannes Lions offered two days of content to explore and debate the essential and unique issues relating to the world of healthcare communications. This was the Cannes Lions way of recognizing the importance of the healthcare and pharma advertising industry. Since then Lion Health has been awarded in the areas of pharma winners and health and wellness winners.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 2016 Cannes Lions & 5 Creative Trends

From June 18 to 25 of this year (2016), approximately 13,000 attendees visited Cannes, France, for seven days to participate in Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity [3]. Award ceremonies were held in three categories—Lion Health (18-19 June), Lion Innovation (21-22 June), and Lion Entertainment (23-24 June). Lions Health is dedicated to life-changing creativity, showcasing and inspiring ideas that transcend especially challenging boundaries. With insights from thought-leaders, marketers, specialists and scientists, Lions Health connects global healthcare and pharmaceutical professionals, allowing them to share successes, problem-solve and do business. Lions Innovation is dedicated to enabled creativity, exploring data and tech as catalysts for ideas. Lions Innovation kick-starts collaboration between start-ups with game-changing products, investors with backing power, brands with customer needs, and storytellers that can bridge the gap. Lastly, Lions Entertainment is dedicated to unskippable creativity, crafting culture from content and reframing customers as fans. Lions Entertainment brings together the players in sound and vision – platforms, labels, studios, talent, makers, agents and agencies – to drive authentic integration and create compelling partnerships with brands [4].

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## 2.2 Five Creative Trends in 2016 Cannes Lions

The Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity has been enjoying growing popularity and becoming an important venue not only for people from the advertising industry but also for people from various backgrounds. For the 2016 event, Eric Schmidt (CEO, Google), Maurice Levy (CEO, Publics Groupe), Ban-Ki Moon (Secretary-General, the United Nations), David Droga (CEO, Droga5), Sir John Hegarty (CEO, BBH), Brian Chesty (Co-founder, Airbnb), David Copperfield (magician), and many others visited Cannes, France. Organizers reported that in 2016 Cannes Lions received approximately 43,000 total award entries [4]. Digital craft lions, the entertainment lions for music, and the entertainment lions have been newly added to the 2016 Cannes Lions. Based on the winners from these three categories, five creative trends emerged. The trends were explained with one of five key words-technology, story-telling, social media, social issues, and humor.

### 2.2.1 Technology meets creativity

Technology has been transforming what we have long thought of as creativity to the next stage, by eradicating barriers to creative excellence. Technology has transformed human experience. VR (virtual reality) and AI (artificial intelligence) have become major players in the 2016 Cannes Lions. VR has been recognized as a creative medium by providing consumers with enhanced experiences.

For instance, *The New York Times* won the Grand Prix in the Entertainment and Mobile categories for *The Displaced*, a virtual reality film shot by Vrse.Works, and for the NYT VR app that goes with it, both of which put viewers directly inside the global refugee crisis [5]. Over one million subscribers received complimentary Google Cardboards with their Sunday paper last year, enabling them to experience the devastation through the eyes of three children in South Sudan, Ukraine, and Syria. VR made it possible to create a truly remarkable experience for people to engage with storytelling.



Fig. 1. New York Times - The Displaced, the New York Times' virtual reality film

The Grand Prix winner in the Innovation category went to Google's DeepMind AlphaGo project. AlphaGo, an artificial intelligence program, won the ancient game of Go against Lee Se-dol, the world's best professional (human) player [6]. The winning of AlphaGo took the world by surprise because AI experts and ordinary people believed a human would prevail over AI in the extremely complex ancient board game. Korean player, Lee Se-dol managed to win only one game out of five.
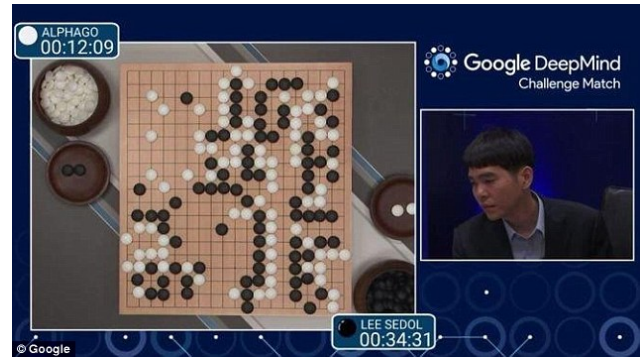


Fig. 2. Google - DeepMind Challenge Match against Lee Se-dol

Other than VR and AI, data is used to enhance art and culture. After almost 400 years, a new portrait 'by Rembrandt' was unveiled in Amsterdam. The portrait was created by art historians and technicians using data and facial recognition techniques from 346 of Rembrandt's paintings [7]. This creative use of data earned AIG two Grand Prixes at Cannes in the Cyber and Creative Data categories.



Fig. 3. ING – The Next Rembrandt

### 2.2.2 Story-telling meets creativity

Story has the ability to create and share compelling narratives. For that very reason, story-telling has been frequently used in advertising. The relationship between story-telling and creativity can be compared to the relationship between Oreos and milk. When they are separate, they are still nice. But when they are put together, they are magic. Today, people can sense advertising immediately. Story-telling has the power to hide a marketers' persuasive intent and make consumers curious about their story. Thanks to digital technology, story-telling has become more sophisticated.

"House of Cards" is a Netflix's successful TV series. Netflix has decided to run the Frank Underwood campaign for the 2016 US presidency. A website and social media pages have been put up for this campaign. According to a recent poll, Frank Underwood is more popular than all the other candidates put together [8]. A fictional candidate became more popular than real candidates. For this campaign the Netflix received Titanium Grand Prix in the 2016 Cannes Lions [8].

Fig. 4. Netflix - Frank Underwood Campaign for US
Presidency

Honda created a remarkable work mixing visual and sound to tell its history — a two-minute spot of an intricate paper-flipping journey where we can watch the evolution of Honda cars [9]. The story gathered more than 5 million views on YouTube, proving corporate communications can still work. This ad is constructed from thousands of paper illustrations stitched together with stop-motion filming. It was shot on a large table - acting almost like a physical map of the company's history - and the pages are flipped and swapped out by hand in thousands of separate shots.
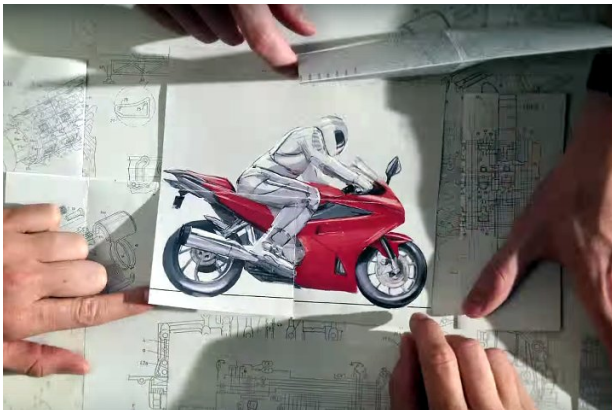


Fig. 5. Honda - The History of Honda made by Paper

In Spain, the Christmas lottery is more of a group affair than other lotteries. It is traditional for people to share the winnings by buying shared tickets with colleagues, friends and family. Leo Burnett's Madrid office captures this sentiment beautifully through the story of Justino, a lonely overnight security guard at a mannequin factory [10]. Justino passes the time by playing with the mannequins, and setting them up in poses for the factory's daytime staff to enjoy. And in the end, they repay his kindness in an unexpected way [10]. The video attracted more than 5 million views.



Fig. 6. Justino – Christmas Lottery

### 2.2.3 Social media meet creativity

Social media help marketers find new potential clients by using users' own shared information to identify interest. Rather than reactively targeting users who search for a certain term, advertising through social media proactively targets relevant users before they even begin their search. Social networks have become a good option for advertisers because of the advanced targeting options, reliable conversion tracking, and prevalence on mobile devices. In the 2016 Cannes Lions social media proved its ability to engage with consumers.



Fig. 7. Airbnb - #LIVEINTHEMOVIE Campaign

During the 2015 Oscars, Airbnb asked its community to tell which movie they wanted to live in [11]. Airbnb received thousands of references to match with Airbnb listings. Airbnb's request generated more user-generated social conversations than any other brand. This great idea helped Airbnb earn Silver Lions in the Mobile category.

Burger King created a campaign on the platform that leveraged its burgers' own selling point which is flame grilling [12]. "Snapking" invited Snapchat users to draw grill marks on images of competitor chains' patties and send them to the BK Argentina account. Those who played received a free voucher for the real deal. The campaign got 4.1 million fans of other restaurants to participate, and the vouchers were claimed within the first 48 hours of the campaign.

Fig. 8. Burger King – Snapking Campaign

The most instagrammed icon in Australia is the Sydney Opera House but only 1% of those who take a photo go inside. The Sydney Instagram account turned photos into real time invitations through the app and the #comeonin [13]. In 4 weeks, over 5 million people saw the inside of the famous opera house. They experienced music, theater, animation, and so on
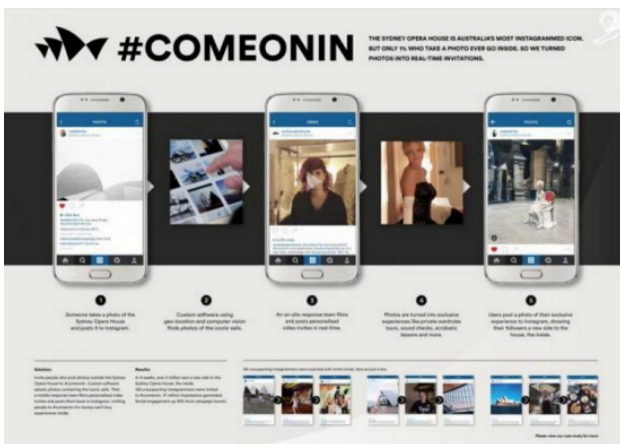


Fig. 9. Opera Sydney - #COMEONIN

### 2.2.4 Social issues meet creativity

There are many issues in the world that need attention. Social issue ads are encouraging people to stop and think. Advertising is often used to inform the public about a social issue or to influence their behavior. Social issue advertising campaigns are successful in raising awareness. In the 2016 Cannes Lions many social issue ads also raised a great deal of attention as well as awareness of great causes. For instance, Doritos has produced a rainbow version of its snack food, for a very limited series [14]. Within 24 hours, every bag had been sold and $180,000 had been donated for the association, It Gets Better Project. Goodby Silverstein & Partners created this campaign and generated more than a billion media impressions in less than 12 hours.



Fig. 10. Doritos – Rainbow Doritos Campaign

Many in the world are very concerned about air pollution. To increase awareness of air pollution, a digital startup company, Plume Labs based in London, created a pigeon air patrol project [15]. The company equipped 10 pigeons with connected sensors to share in real time data on air quality. The campaign generated more than 2,000 media spots and the app was created thanks to crowdfunding.
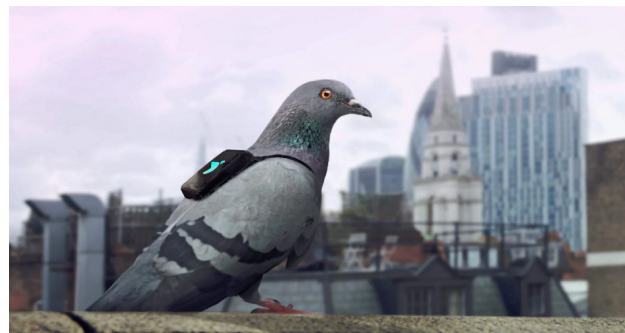


Fig. 11. Plume Labs – Pigeon Air Patrol

As part of National Blood Week, NHS Blood and Transplant have launched a campaign to get more people to give blood. NHS Blood and Transplant needed over 204,000 new donors to come forward to replace people who can't donate anymore and to make sure we have the right mix of blood groups. After facing a drop of 40% of blood donor registrations, NHS Blood and Transplant decided to visualize the issue to draw the attention by making the letters of blood types disappear from society [16]. Publications, brands, and celebrities created an impressive call to action. As a result, more than 30,000 donors registered in 10 days.

Fig. 12. NHS Blood & Transplant – #MISSINGTYPE Campaign

**2.2.5 Humor meets creativity**

Many of the most memorable ad campaigns use humor. Advertisers use this appeal because they know that audiences want to be entertained, but not pitched to. Audiences are likely to pay more attention to a humorous commercial than a factual or serious one. The key to humor advertising is assuring that the humor is appropriate to both product and customer. Humor strategy in advertising was one of the key issues in the 2016 Cannes Lions.

Windex, a glass cleaner, has created a Tumblr and video featuring birds who protest spotless glass—a real hazard for them [17]. In the ads two concerned birds present a PSA about the menace of glass that is washed so clear by Windex that it becomes impossible for birds to see. They suggest using a Smudge Stick, otherwise known as glue stick, to smudge up spotless, clear glass. They demonstrate by marking every mirror, glass table, picture frame, and window in the house.



Fig. 13. Windex – Smudge Stick Campaign

In November 2015 Xbox celebrated the launch of Rise of the Tomb Raider in the U.K. with quite a sadistic stunt in London [18]. It challenged eight Lara Croft fans to stand on a billboard and get pummeled with harsh weather, as voted for by the public watching online. Last person standing would be the winner. The winner earned a trip inspired by Rise of the Tomb Raider.



Fig. 14. XBOX – Survival Billboard

**3. DISCUSSION**

To explain global creative trends, we should preface the discussion with a reasonable explanation on why Cannes Lions dropped 'advertising' from its original name, "Cannes Lions International Advertising Festival." Since 2011 Cannes Lions has used its current name "Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity." In 1954 there was only a single category for film, covering television and cinema ads, which attracted 187 entries from 14 countries and just 130 delegates [1]. However, more than 13,000 attendees and 43,000 entries were recorded for the 2016 Cannes Lions. As of 2016, as discussed above, there are three main categories—Lion Health, Lion Innovation, and Lion Entertainment along with 24 sub-categories. The number of award categories has been extended to reflect the rapidly changing media environment, thanks to digital media. As shown by the five creative trends, technology and digital media have become driving forces in influencing the content of marketing communication. Thus, advertising cannot sufficiently explain the creative evolution occurring in marketing communication. Is it possible that the concept of advertising could become obsolete? What does seem to be certain is that technology and digital media will continue to change the landscape of the advertising industry and creativity ecosystem.

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