

## 56 Comment &amp; Analysis

## Media Matters

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## Sisomo stories will enthral audiences

Special to Gulf News

Ask any spotty undergraduate for observations on the communications landscape of the 21st century, and he or she will tell you the most important thing that's happening is the explosion of multimedia in the form of the internet, mobile phones, in-store marketing and other forms of so-called non-traditional media.

And you'll probably get the same answer from any management consultant — though he'll take six months to come up with the same answer — if you can distract him long enough from writing you the seven-figure invoice for his fee.

Meanwhile, all around us you find people trying to sell ludicrous new-media gimmicks that will allow you to reach your audiences at such cutting-edge, impactful, inspiring moments as...when they're going to the toilet in night clubs.

Such is the fearful frenzy in the face of fashionable new media packaging, you'll sometimes even come across apparently rational marketing clients who suggest that economical media choice is the only decision that matters.

There will be nuances in their views but they'll pretty much all agree on one proposition: TV Is Dead.

Strange, then, that last year in the US, the most developed market, the internet media spend accounted for a massive...er... 5.4 per cent of the total. (Data from Zenith Media).

**Viral advertising**

But don't get me wrong: I'm not for a minute against viral advertising on the internet, or mobile phones, or in-store screens, in taxis, on supermarket trolleys or on the sides of buildings. On the contrary, I relish it.

Soon the drama and excitement that can be unleashed by the sight, sound and motion of moving pictures is going to be everywhere. But the enormous elephant-in-the-corner question is: what are marketers going to put on these increasingly video-friendly media?

That's the question your management consultant, your media planner or the undergraduate can't answer.

For all the furore about media convergence, and new technologies and op-

portunities, marketers need to converge on one crucial, central idea: making emotional connections with people. This is the convergence that matters, because it is focussed on what consumers need and desire.

What they desire overwhelmingly is simplicity, the simplicity of sight, sound and motion or, as it is beginning to be called, "sisomo".

Making great content for screens is one of the most exciting new creative opportunities of the coming decades. So what does sisomo mean for the communications business? It means the ability to tell stories on screen and this demands a new breed of creativity.

**Love of the screen**

Sisomo storytellers need a love of the screen, wherever it is. They need inquiring and curious minds, and an appreciation of how the past, present and future can be blended.

Are there any simple rules for storytelling? W. Somerset Maugham said: "There are three rules for writing the novel...unfortunately, nobody knows what they are".

But there are, perhaps, some guidelines: emotion on screen is what makes it memorable and inspiring. One can recognise that the screen is a magic medium with such power that it can convey emotions and moods that no other art form can tackle and that music plays a vital role. Like the stories that humans have always relished, sisomo stories must be able to enthral audiences time and time again. Today the only test for a TV commercial is, would I want to see it again? Humour — and its partner, brevity — are crucial.

Happily, all these skills are second nature to advertising creatives, whose short films lasting 30 seconds (otherwise known as TV commercials) have become the staple of television in the past.

And one certainty remains in the future: people will always relish great stories. The challenge will be spreading sisomo experiences across all those screens to tell those stories with emotion, authenticity, passion and commitment.

No management consultant has yet managed to do that.

The writer is the regional creative director of Saatchi & Saatchi.



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## Net neut

Unless the principle is o

Telecoms regulation is not generally a subject that sets pulses racing. Yet as America starts to overhaul its outdated telecoms rules, the issue of 'net neutrality' has done just that. Unless this principle is defended, say its proponents, the very future of the internet could be in jeopardy.

Net neutrality is the principle that network operators should give equal treatment to all the traffic on their networks. The idea has deep roots: it