The Declining Necessity of Television Stations: The Rising New Media

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I   Introduction

a.   Rationale

The rationale behind my research is my background of social science. The rapid change in the media has made an extreme impact on American society at least in three respects. First, there are substantial employees related to the TV stations and the Internet. If the importance of the TV stations decrease, work construction changes dramatically in the U.S. Secondly, as the Internet becomes more necessary, the digital divide problem will become more serious. The widespread use of the Internet happens only among the people who have wealth enough to buy computers. Third, the Internet could stimulate social mobility. People can express their ideas without tremendous money by using the Internet, which means people get the opportunity to improve their standard of living.

b.   Background

According to Sam Schechner and Rebecca Dana, who wrote "Local TV Stations Face a Fuzzy Future", local TV stations are facing troubles. First, revenue for the TV stations is declining. This is mostly because the number of the TV users is decreasing, which means investors and sponsors stop investing money in advertising on TV. Actually, the research based on BIA Financial Network shows the revenue decline.

Fading Out

Revenue for all TV stations, including networks' affiliates and independent stations

$24 billion

20

16

12

8

4

0

1990   '95   2000   '05   '09

Note: 2008 is a preliminary estimate; 2009 is projected

Source: BIA Fianancial Network
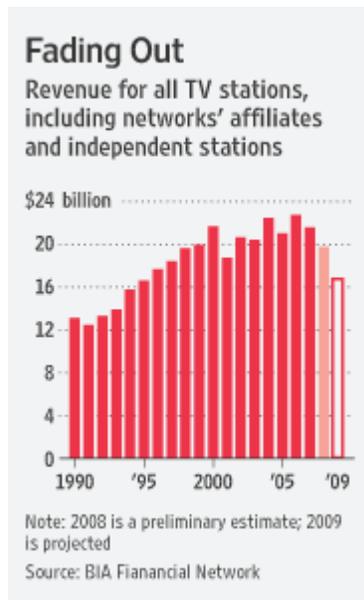
Secondly, TV stations are in a downward spiral: declining revenue, cutting programs, cutting employees, programs becoming boring, the number of the TV users decreasing, and declining revenue again. Sam Schechner and Rebecca Dana said "Executives at some major networks are beginning to talk about an option that once would have been unthinkable: eventually taking shows straight to cable, where networks can take in a steady stream of subscriber fees even in an advertising slump." In short, Networks intend to abandon the TV stations.

The third point made by Sam Schechner and Rebecca Dana is that TV stations have to compete with cable. Their main work is to broadcast programs from the major Networks—ABC, NBC, or FOX — or from independent studios, such as Los Angeles production studio, universal studio, or Disney studio, which means their nature will be similar to that of cable. Moreover, Sam Schechner and Rebecca Dana said the "networks' parent companies started buying or launching cable networks of their own beginning in the 1980s." This means that the TV stations' importance is shrinking.

On the other hands, there is also a survey which supports the durability of TV stations. In an article in the *Media Dialy News*, Joe Mandese claimed that Americans regard TV as the most credible

media (2008). Citing an ARAnet survey, which offers relevant data to inform your business initiatives, he reported that people regard TV as the most credible media. The ARAnet study which surveyed 1,005 adults, assigned credibility scores ranging from one for "not at all credible" to 10 for "extremely credible" to seven types of media. TV ranked most credible with a score of 6.6, followed by 6.3 for daily newspapers, 6.0 for radio, and 5.6 for online.

However, there are also positive opinions toward the Internet. For instance, Ramanujam (2009) published a graph which shows that the number of Internet users is increasing dramaticaly.
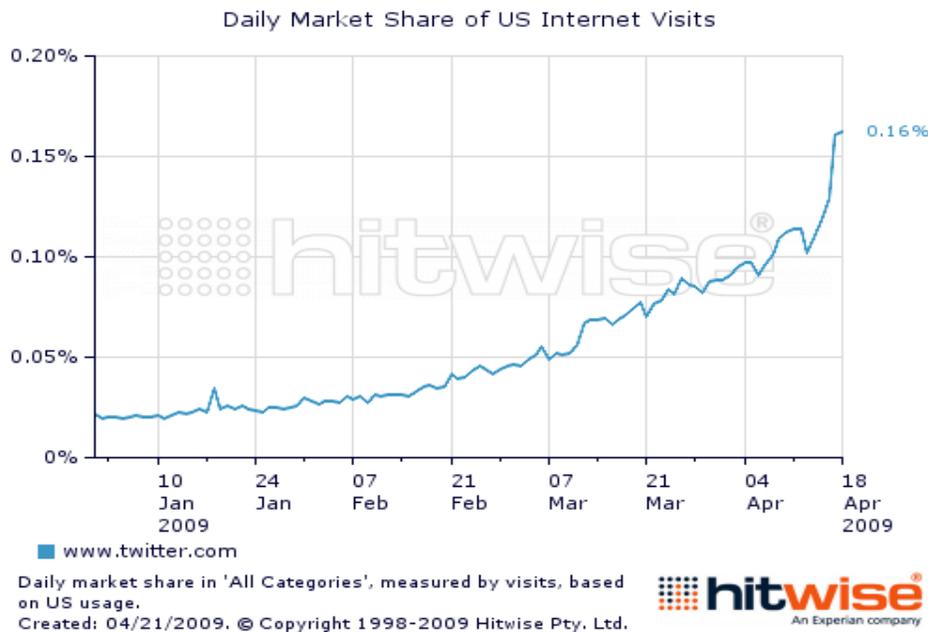
Moreover, in an article in the web-based magazine, "News and Politics" (2010) gives a graph which shows that university students use the Internet more often than any other source of news by a substantial margin.
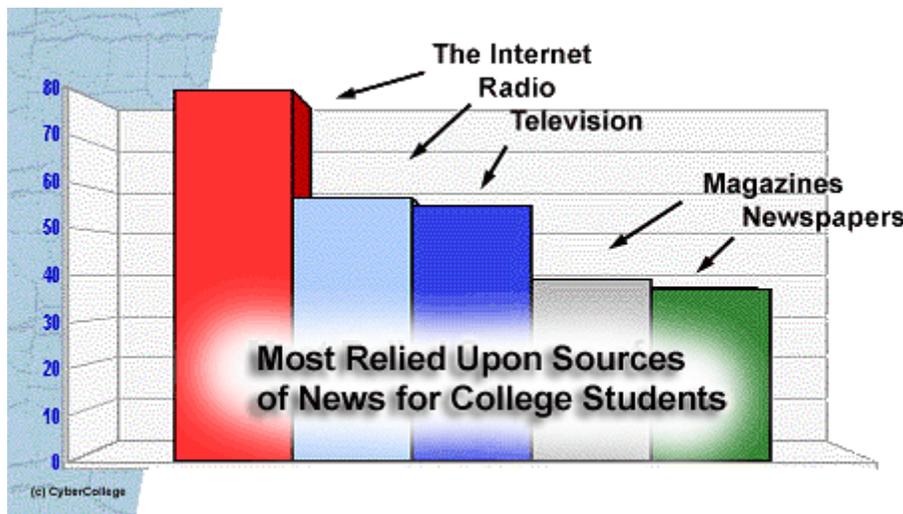
Ⅱ Method

    a. Hypothesis

My hypothesis is that: Americans don't care if the Internet replaces TV stations. There are three reasons. First, through the Internet, people can get considerable information, content, and any other services. By using TV, we can only watch programs which TV stations decide, which means, we are less free to choose content when we use TV than when we use the Internet. Secondly, the Internet is getting to replace the TV as a media giant. SONY, Google, and Intel have combined their technology to make "Internet TV". The Internet TV enables users to reach screens where they can easily edit and access their favorite channels, shows, and websites. In addition to these fundamental reasons, I expect that most Americans intend to use the Internet more often than TV because of its convenience.

    b. Research Design

I conducted interviews on August 16 and 17, 2010 at Palo Alto, Stanford shopping center, and dormitory. I asked 20 people. In these interviews, I tried to control for the following factors: equality between the number of male and female, the number of those who have different income, and each generation.

    c. Sample Design

I interviewed to people who live in America, because I research about the media movement in America. So I didn't divide people in by their ethnicities, although I paid attention to the equalities as I mentioned.

    d. Survey Questions

I made questions along with three goals. First, questions 4-6 are used for figuring out people's feelings about the Internet and TV in terms of expectation. On the other hand, hypothesis questions 8-10 show how the media are important for people. Secondly, I intend to figure out effect of TV commercials by question 7 because TV stations live on profit of TV commercials. Finally, question 14 is used for figuring out people's opinions for my hypothesis: Americans don't care the Internet replace TV stations. Of course I gather information what web sites or TV programs people like and, if there are some unique points, I analyze it.

    e. Additional Details about the Process

In my survey, I mostly asked people who were sitting on benches, because I wanted them to spend more time talking about their thoughts or experiences. Moreover, I intended to observe how well people understand my questions. I think they were not so familiar with my topic.

Ⅲ. Analysis

    a.Detailed Results

ⅰ. Description of Groups

I interviewed 20 people: 12 males and 8 females.

Age

10% 10%

35%   30%

15%

Under 18

19-30

31-45

46-60

60-

Monthly income

20%

45%

15%

20%

Less than 1000_USD

1000-4000_USD

4000-8000_USD

more than 8000_USD
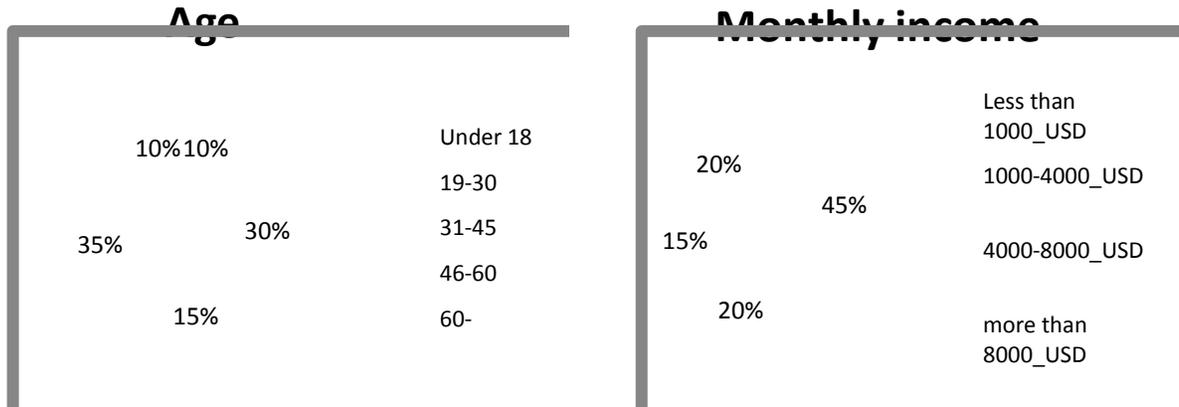
First, people under 18 who I asked occupy 10% of the proportion which the number of people I interviewed. People who are 19-30 years old occupy 30% of that. People who are 31-45 years old occupy 15% of that. People who are 46-60 years old occupy 35% of that. People who are over 60 years old occupy 10% of that. Secondly, people whose monthly income is less than 1000_USD occupy 45% of that. People whose monthly income is 1000_4000USD occupy 20% of that. People whose monthly income is 4000¥8000USD occupy 15% of that. People whose monthly income is more than 8000USD occupy 20% of that.

I divide people into "younger group" (under 18 and 19-30) and "older group" (31-45, 46-60, 60-) in order to point out differences between younger people and older people. Moreover I divide into "general income" (people who earn less than 4000USD) and "higher income" (people who earn more than 4000USD) in order to show if the results depend on their income or not. Finally, I write down opinions which participants gave me.

ⅱ. Survey Result

First, I analyze the whole of the results.

4. Do you expect more innovation of the Internet technology?

10%

90%

■ Yes
■ No
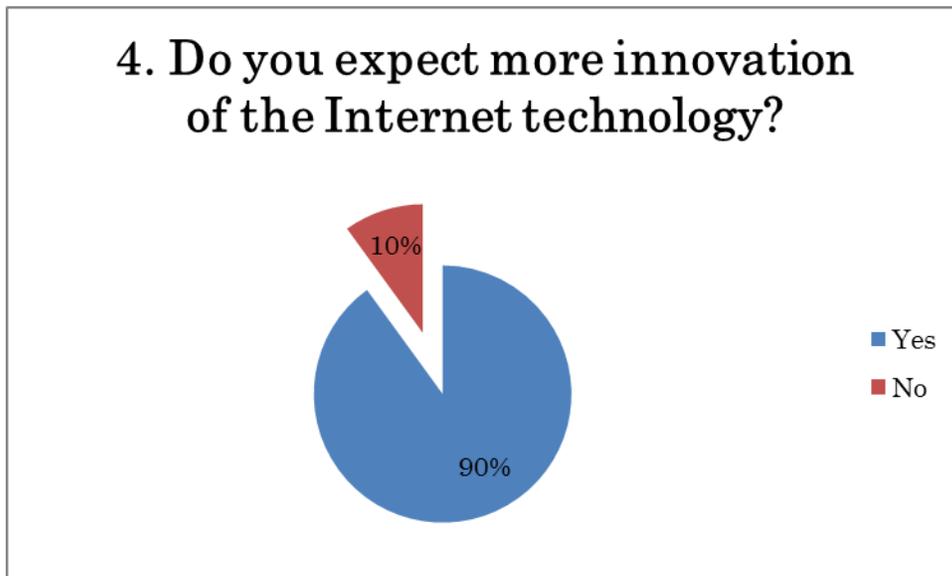
This graph sows that 90% of the people I interviewed anticipate further innovation of the Internet technology. I think the reason why people anticipate more innovation is mostly that nowadays the internet technology is developing radically nowadays.

5. Do you expect more innovation of TV?

35%

65%

Yes

No
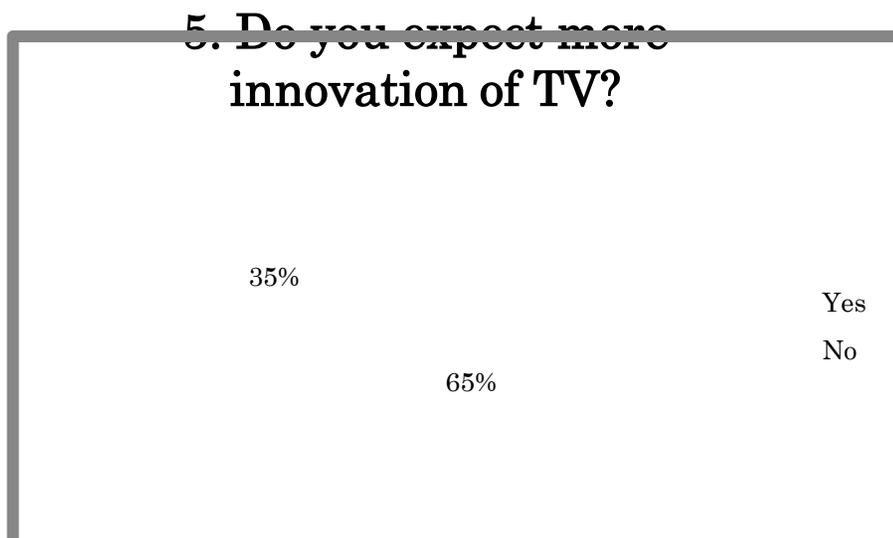
This graph shows that 65% of the people I interviewed anticipate the innovation of TV as well. The proportion of people who anticipate the innovation of TV is larger than I expected. I think this result may be due to the latest innovation, '3D TV', which enables people to watch TV in what appears to be three dimensions.

8. If the Internet were gone, you would

	be at a totally loss	feel uncomfortable with the idea	mind, but not so much	not care at all
■ 8. If the Internet were gone, you would	7	8	5	0
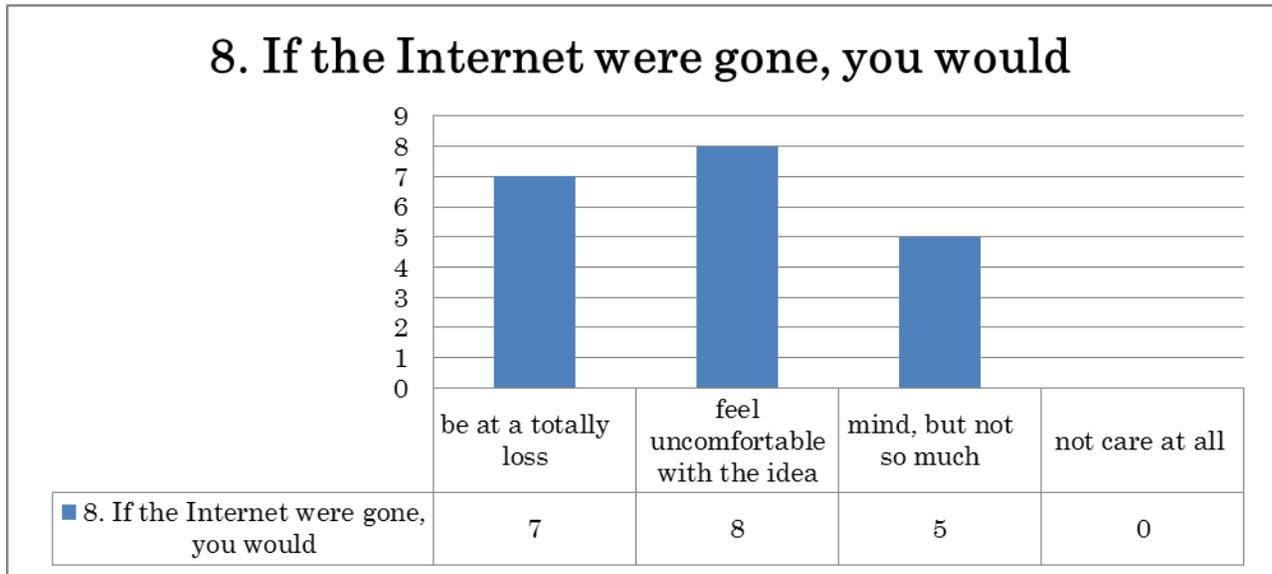
This graph shows that the Internet is essential for most people. Seventy-five percent of the people I interviewed are afraid of the Internet disappearing. Most people claimed to use the Internet to get information that is important for their lives.

9. If TV were gone, you would

	be at a totally loss	feel uncomfortable with the idea	mind, but not so much	not care at all
9. If TV were gone, you would	4	7	6	3
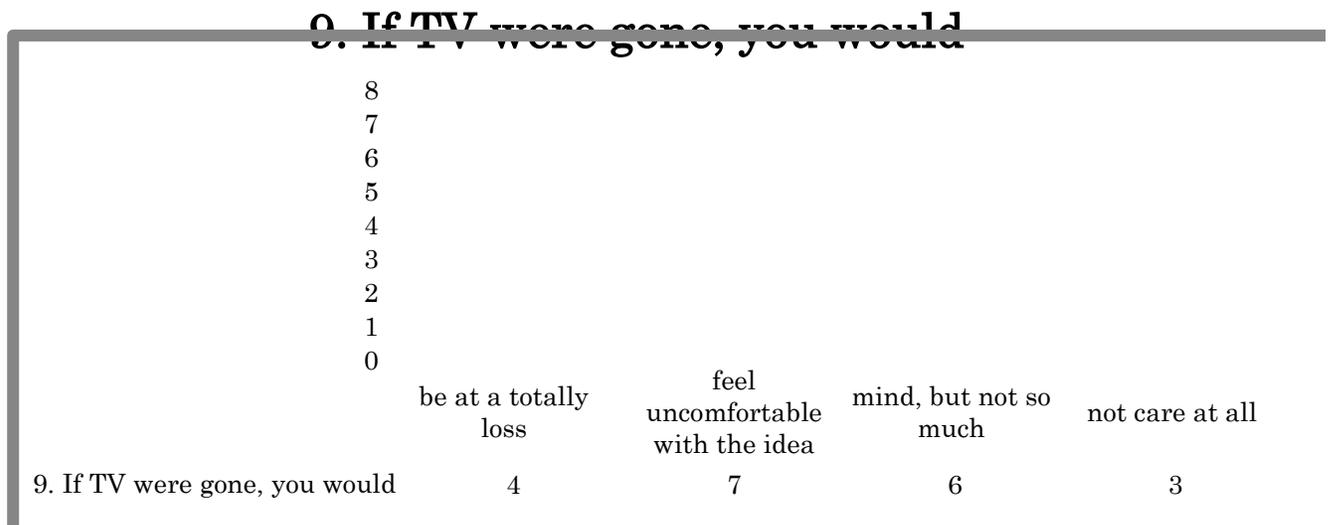
This graph shows that at least a half of the people I interviewed would not mind the disappearance of TV so much. This is mostly because people don't have to get content or information through TV. Actually, some people said that they don't usually use TV at all.

These four graphs show that people have more positive attitudes toward the Internet than toward TV. The proportion of people who anticipate the innovation of the Internet is 25% larger than the proportion of people who expect innovation of TV. In addition, there is nobody who wouldn't be bothered at all by the Internet disappearing. At the other end of the spectrum, the number of people who would be at a total loss without the Internet is only four. These results mean that people regard the Internet as more essential and useful than TV.

Secondly, I analyze results in terms of age.

8. If the Internet were gone, you would

	u-18	19-30	31-45	46-60	60-
3.5					
3					
2.5					
2					
1.5					
1					
0.5					
0					
be at a totally loss	2	2	0	2	1
feel uncomfortable with the idea	0	3	2	3	0
mind, but not so much	0	1	1	2	1
not care at all	0	0	0	0	0
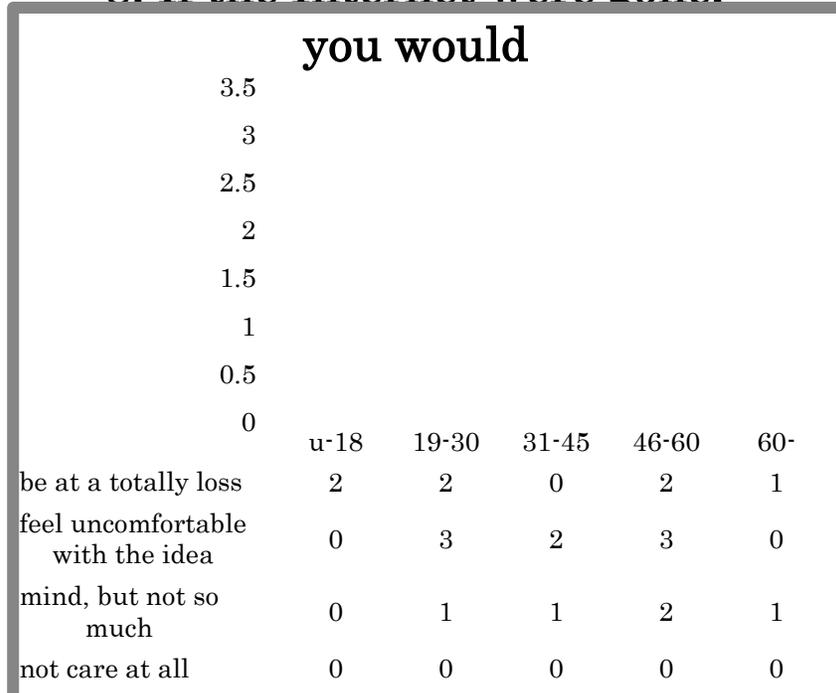
This graph shows that the about 88% of the younger group at least feels uncomfortable with the disappearance of the Internet. I think this is because the younger group has been used to using the Internet since their youth. On the other hand, the proportion of the older group who at least feels uncomfortable with the disappearance of the Internet is 75%. This shows that older group is less afraid of the Internet disappearing than the younger group.

This graph shows that the younger group regards the Internet as more important than TV. People under 18 regard the Internet as important, and they represented their negative feelings toward the disappearance of the Interne. The older group answered that they would 'be at a total loss' less often than the younger group. I also asked the reasons. Then, almost all older group indicated TV's ease of use. In addition, although I asked people what they would think if TV were gone, the results didn't show noticeable difference between the generations. I think this is because most people don't mind TV so much.

Third, I analyze results in terms of income.

9. If TV were gone, you would

|	less than 1000USD	1000-4000USD	4000-8000USD	more than 8000USD
■ be at a totally loss	2	2	0	0
■ feel uncomfortable with the idea	2	1	2	2
■ mind, but not so much	4	0	1	0
■ not care at all	0	1	0	2
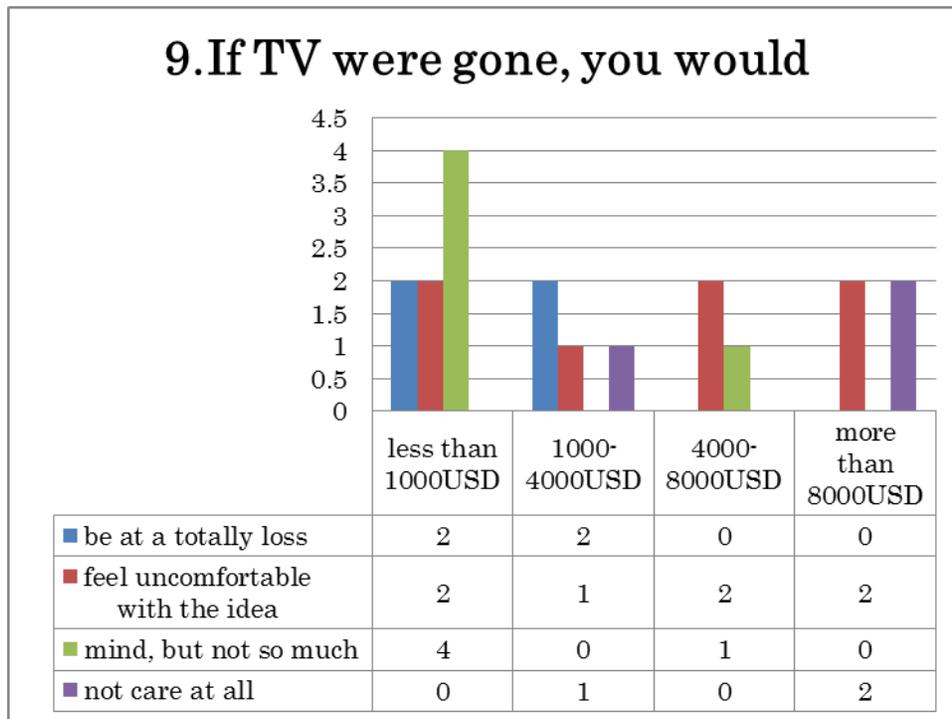
This graph shows an interesting point. Respondents in the general income group respect importance of TV. In contrast, the higher income group, especially people who earn more than 8000USD per month, would not care about the disappearance of TV as much as people with average or lower incomes.

Fourth, I mention the kinds of web sites which people use most often.

■ 13. Which kinds of web sites do you use the most often?
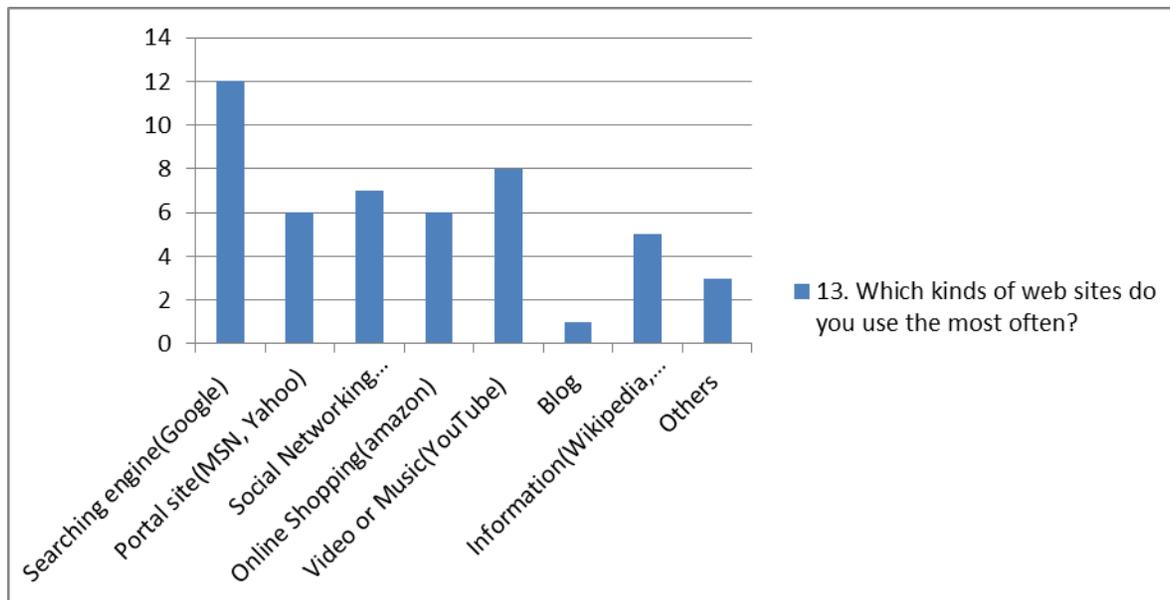
In this graph, searching engine sites are the most popular kind of web sites. This shows that people mostly use the Internet not to communicate but to get information. Moreover, the second most popular kind is video or music websites, which means people also get entertainment on the Internet.

Fifth, I analyze the result of question 10: If TV stations were replaced by web sites, you would… As I mentioned, by this question, I could ask people what they think about my hypothesis.

10. If Tv stations were replaced the web sites, you would

be at a totally loss	feel uncomfortable with the idea	mind, but not so much	not care at all
1	4	7	8
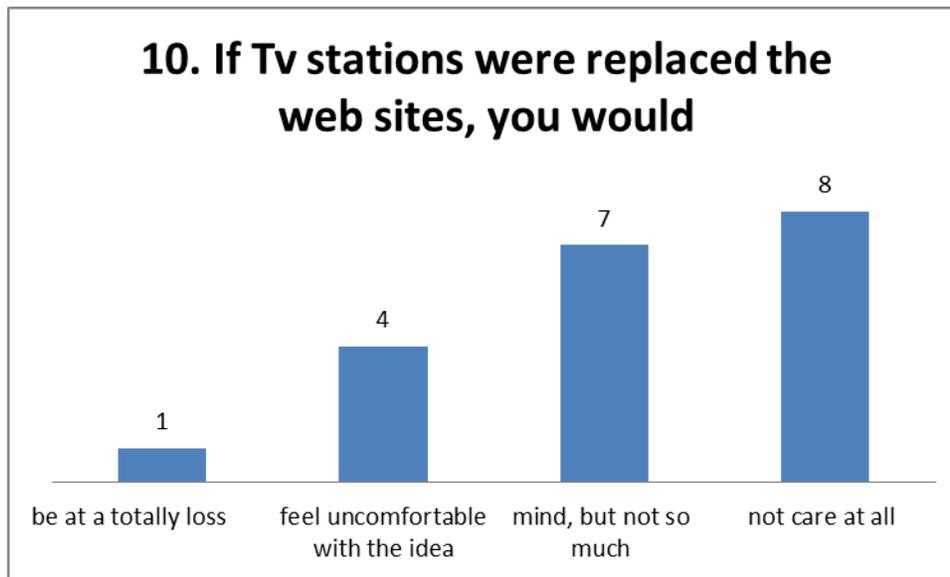
This graph obviously shows that people wouldn't mind if media which broadcast contents are TV stations or not. Although a person answered "be at a total loss", he said he doesn't have anything available to the Internet. So, at least, I could say that 75% of the people don't mind disappearance of TV stations so much. This result supports my hypothesis.

Finally, I analyze some opinions. Fortunately, I met some specialists about my topic in my survey. They gave me a lot of clues to think my topic deeper. Moreover, I connect their opinions to my conclusion.

First person

・Gender: male
・Age: 19-30
・Occupation: Developer (system engineer).
・Income(per month)：more than 8000USD

He pointed out my luck of knowledge about my question. He said the question three "which do you prefer, the Internet or TV" is confusing question. He used this words "form factors", which means factor which decides hardware's form, function, or use. According to his explanation, the Internet's form factor is the size and input device, which means that we use the Internet on computers in order to seeking information actively. On the other hand, TV is output device, which means that we use TV in order to accept information passively. So he can't compare them because they are different things, he said.

However, most other people didn't notice his indication, which means majority confuse the difference. Although his indication makes sense, I think it doesn't influence most people's thought so much.

Second person

・Gender: female
・Age: 31-45
・Occupation: Software product manager.
・Income(per month)：more than 8000USD

She thinks that if TV stations were replaced by the web sites it would be just change of standard. She also said this changing must happen as our living change. Actually, she doesn't have TV, on the other hand, she use the Internet more than 6 hours per day. In addition, she expects that journalism standard will change because of the media changing. If the source of information becomes variety, we can get more information and analyze facts in more perspectives, she said.

Third person

・Gender: male
・Age: 46-60
・Occupation: Company executive.
・Income(per month)：4000-8000USD

He doesn't think that TV station will be replaced by the Internet, because there are needed the local TV, he said. The major networks, ABC or CNN, don't deal with local incidents or news, which makes people so confused. Moreover, if the number of TV stations decrease, we can't compare some credible information in different view. I asked him 'Isn't information on the Internet credible?,' then, he answered 'NO.' In short, he means that losing TV stations means losing need information and credible sources.

Last person

・Gender: female
・Age: 19-30
・Occupation Stanford student.
・Income(per month)：less than 1000USD

She regard 'personal experience', process which people can choose anything actively, as positive, but she doesn't have good feelings toward the situation that TV stations are replaced by the websites. She offered some reasons.
First, the media changing makes the TV industry—its scale is enormous— die off, which causes tremendous economic confusion. As the depression of car industry caused confusion in America, the bad effect will happen to large extent if TV stations collapse. Secondly, the situation makes our culture less human. She thinks that humanity of our culture will be lost because people are excluded from the process broadcasting contents more. Finally, the situation makes too much personal experiences. For instance, if you dislike news and can choose everything you want, how often you watch news? She express this thing as 'free choice make narrow mind.' Perhaps, thanks to TV stations, we have watched many programs even if we have not been interested in them. As my second example—woman who is software product manager—, some people might think that free choice make us more active. However,

she, one Stanford student, regards this opinion just as an ideal. Actually, as long as people are open minded, free choice works well. However, in our society, the number of people who are open minded is so small. From these reasons above, she doesn't think that the replacing work well.

ⅲ. Description of interview discourse

I interviewed for 12 hours total. I asked people who sat or kept standing because I want to know their opinions and feelings. I spent 5-10 minutes asking questions and talking. As I wrote, I interviewed at Palo Alto, Stanford shopping center, and in the dormitory. In addition, when I asked the open-ended question "what would you say if all TV stations were replaced by the Internet," most people say "although I'm not sure, I think…" or "this is a difficult question" I think this is because they have not thought of this question.

Ⅳ. Conclusion

   a. Conclusions

First, my main conclusion is that people don't regard TV stations as more important than the Internet. According to my analysis, people tend to expect the Internet to progress and develop more and more. However, people regard TV as more important than I expected. So, I think my hypothesis was extreme to some extent. Secondly, younger people would choose the Internet more than the older group. This is because they are used to using TV more than the younger people. Third, people who earn higher incomes tend not to mind whether TV stations disappear. I think the reason is that they have enough money to accept radical changes in life. Finally, I noticed that the replacement of TV with the Internet might make a bad influence on our society. On the other hand, it might not even happen because the difference in their forms makes them non-interchangable. Most people, however, think that the Internet replace TV successfully as I expected. However, in the long term, such a replacement shouldn't happen, I think, because the media changing make our society too personal one. For instance, if we could attend all classes on the web sites, we wouldn't have to go to school. If we could get any meals by the Internet, we wouldn't have to go to stores or restaurants. In the end, we wouldn't have to go out own room. Actually, the spreading personal media, PC, mobile phone, or even mp3, cause problems by reducing opportunities to communicate face-to-face. I think this problem deprives our culture of humanity. Therefore, I think we should be conscious of not only the Internet's convenience but also its dis advantage.

   b. Limitations

In my survey, there are two limitations. First, the number of people who I could ask is limited. So, some results of survey became not enough credible to analyze. If I could interview more people, the result would more reliable. Secondly, I think I couldn't explain my topic to people completely. Of course I made effort, for example, I explain my topic with my rough drawing. However, I think I ought to prepare to explain my topic more.

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STANFORD
UNIVERSITY   American Language and Culture Program

・Gender: male / female

・Age: under18   19—30   31—45   46—60   60—

・Occupation _____.

・Income(per month) : □ less than 1000USD □ 1000-4000USD □ 4000-8000USD □ more than 8000USD

1. Do you use both the Internet and TV?

   YES / NO: □Only the Internet □Only TV □Neither

2. How long do you use it per day?

   The Internet:

   □Less than 1 hour   □1~2 hours □3~4 hours □5~6hours □More than 6 hours

   TV:

□Less than 1 hour   □1~2 hours □3~4 hours □5~6hours □More than 6 hours

3. Which do you prefer, the Internet or TV?

   □The Internet   □TV

   If you choose the Internet, why? (Please check all apply)

   □interesting(the web sites)   □useful   □convenient   □connection with other devices(mp3, USB, and so on)

   □cool   □communications   □mobile(lap top)

   □others: _____.

   If you chose TV, why? (Please check all apply)

   □interesting(the TV programs)   □easy to use   □generally, the biggest screen in your room

   □credible   □cool   □live coverage

   □others: _____.

4. Do you expect more innovation of the Internet technology?

   YES   /   NO

5. Do you expect more innovation of TV?

   YES   /   NO

6. If you could use the Internet on TV, would you want to use it?

   YES   /   NO

7. Have you ever wanted to buy merchandise because of TV commercials?

    YES / NO

    What was the merchandise?

    _____.

8. If the Internet were gone, you would

    4.be at a totally loss   3.feel uncomfortable with the idea

    2.mind, but not so much   1.not care at all

9. If TV were gone, you would

    4.be at a totally loss   3.feel uncomfortable with the idea

    2.mind, but not so much   1.not care at all

10. If TV stations were replaced the web sites, you would

    4.be at a totally loss   3.feel uncomfortable with the idea

    2.mind, but not so much   1.not care at all

11. Have you represented your ideas through blog, Twitter, YouTube, and so on?

    YES: through ☐blog   ☐Twitter   ☐YouTube   ☐Facebook

    ☐others _____.

    NO

12. Which kinds of TV programs do you like the most?

    ☐News ☐Drama ☐Movie ☐Comedy ☐Music ☐Documentary ☐Quiz show

    ☐Talk show   ☐others _____.

13. Which kinds of web sites do you use the most often?

    ☐Searching engine(Google)   ☐Portal site(MSN, Yahoo)

    ☐Social Networking Service(Facebook, Twitter)   ☐Online Shopping(amazon)

    ☐Video or Music(YouTube)   ☐Blog ☐Information(Wikipedia, Official sites)

    ☐Others _____.

14. Do you expect more innovation of the Internet technology?

    YES / NO

15. Do you expect more innovation of TV?

    YES / NO

16. What would you say if all TV stations were replaced by the Internet TV?

    _____

    _____.