

Social Media and Documentary Cinema: the Arab Spring, the Wall Street Movement, challenges and implications for documentary filmmakers.

Fritz Kohle, MA, 2011, Phd student at Edinburgh University, Scotland and lecturer at NHTV, University of Applied Sciences, Breda, Netherlands.

Abstract:

Used by millions on a daily basis Web 2 and social media have become part of our lives with Facebook arguably developing into the largest online group with some 800 million users – or one seventh of the worlds population.¹ This paper reviews social media and provides a general overview of the same from the perspective of an independent documentary filmmaker. The paper investigates use of social media during the Arab Spring and Wall Street Movement² and compares social- with traditional media. Using the example of the documentary “Be fruitful and multiply”³ the tools social media offers are examined and their applications are discussed. Web 2 is the accumulative sum of print, radio, TV and film, offering an ever-increasing amount of content. Documentary filmmakers are exploring the full potential of social media, which offers an alternative to the traditional commissioning process; content development and distribution as well as fund raising strategies are fundamentally changing. New forms such as the web-documentary are emerging. The paper concludes by examining future trends for social media and potential applications in documentary filmmaking.

¹“*Statistics / Facebook*”, 26/11/2011, <http://www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics>, Facebook

²“*Occupy Wall Street / NYC Protest for World Revolution*”, 26/11/2011, <http://occupywallst.org/>.

³“*The Philippine Reproductive Health Bill / A documentary about the Philippine reproductive bill*”, <http://film-and-television.com/>. F Kohle, A Cuevas, 2011