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The Chronicles of the Chatline and Partyline

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Lifestyle Trends

ABSTRACT: The Chronicles of the Chatline and Partyline is a Historical Research study regarding the use of telephone communication. The Partyline is a telephone network that enables people to discuss various issues with other individuals in a circuit with no privacy. On the other hand, the Chatline is a communicative system used to converse about particular topics of interest. A review of literature, patents, and an internet search through various engines was performed to obtain information about the history and properties of the Partyline and Chatline. This investigation illustrates the formation of the telephone for cultural and business purposes as it progressed into conference calls, instant messaging, telephone counseling or advising, blogosphere, social media, and videoconferencing.

Keywords: Telephone, Telegraph, Communications, Wire, Transmission, Calls, Chatline, Partyline, Telecommunication, Squirrel Lines, American Bell, Alexander Graham Bell, Lifestyle Trends

I. INTRODUCTION

Communication is the act of transmitting information from one place, person or thing to another to convey a message. It is the act of conveying information, where there is a mutual understanding with the use of signs, gestures, semiotics, and notions. This model involves a sender and receiver (s) to perceive a thought, feeling, idea or some sort of message that they can comprehend. Schultze, Q. J. (2001) explained "The word communication comes from the Latin communis, which means to share to make common or even to have 'possession of a common faith'. When we communicate, we create, maintain, and change shared ways of life. Communication enables us to cultivate education, engineering, business, the media, and every other aspect of human culture." The methodology behind this hypothesis involves a sender, a message and a receiver to complete a communication task. However, media is a form of communication that allows individuals to influence people widely. It is also the plural form of medium, which is a communication outlet, that sends or receives a message through technology.

Radio, Television, Cinemas, Internet, Telephone and Publishings are different mediums that comprise mass media. Mass media is the communication used through technology to capture the attention of a mass audience. It is the exchange of information to a population in order to convey a message. In whatever way, this composition will address the usage of the telephone and its properties. The Chicago School of Media Theory Theorizing Media since 2003 (n.d.) clarified, "The modern-day telephone, a device that captures, transmits, and receives sound (usually in the form of conversation) to other telephones, is a device whose origins are actually quite old." The telephone is a communication invented to transmit voice through the use of wires. In the early ages of our world, many entrepreneurs attempted to create such a technology to communicate through the use of wires. Many scholars expressed that some inventors had successfully created a device on unknown dates, but Antonio Meucci of Italy was credited to be the first inventor of the telephone in 1871, according to the United States (U.S.) Patent Office. He has credited the inventor of the telephone, due to his blueprint submission to the U.S. Patent Office, but lack any demonstrations of such technology. Although Charles Bourseul, Innocenzo Manzetti, Elisha Grey and Johann Philipp Reis also tested the travel of sound through wires, Alexander Bell was granted the patent by the U.S. Patent Office in 1876, as the first entrepreneur to invent and patent the telephone in the world. The invention of the telephone was influenced by the service of the telegraph, which was invented and patented in 1837, by Samuel Morse. The telegraph is a communication service used to transmit messages through wires by breaking the electric current line. This technology challenged entrepreneurs to invent a device, which roaring sound can travel through wire privately.

Gardiner Greene Hubbard, Alexander Bell's father-in-law, established the American Bell Telephone Company in Boston, Massachusetts on July 9, 1877, as American Bell began its adventure. Wu, T. (2012) clarified that Bell was a professor and amateur, while Hubbard became his main investor and President of the

Bell Company, due to his dislike of Western Union's monopoly over the telegraph industry. Western Union's expansion to the telephone industry led Bell to seek more help to rise against their competition. "Against tiny Bell, Western Union brought overwhelming advantages: capital, an existing nationwide network of wires, and a close relationship with newspapers, hotels, and politicians." (Wu, T., 2012) Yet, Theodore Vail was the first business mogul that Bell brought aboard the American Bell Telephone Company to acquire long telephone lines, for a subsidiary of Bell's American Telephone and Telegraph Company (AT&T). Vail, a business mogul known for monopolizing America, was brought aboard AT&T to compete with growing independent telephone companies forming around the country. Therefore, J. P. Morgan secured funds for Vail's AT&T long-lasting, long-distance telephone lines for customers to connect with friends, family and loved ones, as the American Bell Telephone Company continued to monopolize the telephone/telegraph industry in the late 1800s.

Even so, The Master Switch (2012) explained, in 1904, farmers of small towns on the West Coast of America connected one another through telephone wires as their "first social technology" to oppose the Telegraph as a communication outlet with one another. These farmers created cheap low-tech telephony systems from low budget wires that ran along the top of their fences from one property to another called, "squirrel lines". "Typically, the rural telephone systems were giant party lines, allowing a whole community to chat with or listen to one another. Obviously there was no privacy, but there were benefits to communal telephony other than secure person-to-person communications." (Wu, T., 2012) These farmers had a tight-knit network, where they could converse with one another about various local and cultivation issues that may arouse within their communities. Being opposed to Bell's service, they incorporated "Burch's Mesa Telephone Company offered its customers daily broadcasts of weather, train wrecks, and murders, the interval of programming announced by ten short rings." (Wu, T., 2012) These farmers also had a telephone service that offered local news at a specific time according to their preferences from a live operator. Although the telephone line ran along their property fences across barbed wires, they communicated very well and informed users with local news and up-to-date information.

II. METHODOLOGY

There are thousands of local Chatlines or Partylines available throughout the country themed by race, sexual preference, spiritual needs, and many other social interests. For all of that, some of these telephone services are free, pay-per-minutes or a flat rate to enter their system once dialed. Thorough research was conducted to find the origins of the Chatline and Partyline through textbooks, literature reviews, and internet search engines to find the history behind this communicative phenomenon. The information found will share insight into its originates, current state, and progression into the future.

III. RESEARCH QUESTION

A lot of organizations offer advice, companionship and other social needs via telephone service. The development of these research questions for the Chatline and Partyline derived from the inquiring exploration of Chatline and Partyline influence upon its audience.

The first research question goes as follows: What is the influence behind the Chatline and Partyline?

The second research question goes as follows: What principles constitute one's subscription or to call a Chatline and Partyline?

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

Chatline

Finding Topics in Dynamical Text: Application to Chat Line Discussions (2001) is a study regarding the topical discussion within a chatline environment. This study was conducted to analyze the informational flow from textual data in an Internet Chatroom. The algorithm theoretical framework was applied to a CNN chatroom on January 18th, 2001 to derive information. Data was recorded from CNN Newsroom's chatline over a 24 hour period to apprehend the topic of discussion to measure information exchanged and its time correlation. "The data was cleaned by omitting all user names and non-user generated text. The remaining text stream was split into overlapping windows of about 750 characters." Estimation of 3200 participants was analyzed during this observation as seven main distinctive topics were found. These topics ranged from values within the United States, the presidential election to common current problems of youth. Bingham, E., Kaban, A., & Girolami, M. (2001) found meaningful topics within the chatroom that would suggest a secular conversational change in these discussions. However, it is unknown if the chatline moderator influenced any of these topics, but a natural extension assisted in carrying the topographic structure of these discussions. This is a great study regarding a chatline within a media moderated environment. It was useful due to the investigation of the topic amongst a vast audience, however, it analyzes a later digital environment than the historical chatline/party line.

Chat Line for Adolescents with Type 1 Diabetes: A Useful Tool to Improve Coping with Diabetes: A 2-Year Follow-Up Study (2011) examines the influence a diabetic patient has upon another patient through verbal communication on a chatline. This study was performed to evaluate the effectiveness of group communication in a chatline environment with 193 children between the ages of 10 and 18 diagnosed with type 1 diabetes for 1.2 to 6 years. Iafusco et al. (2011) explain, "Self-management of type 1 diabetes is crucial to obtaining metabolic control that will prevent the microvascular complications of the disease. This requires continuous training and education on the part of the patient. Traditionally, this is done in the physician's office, or through face-to-face educational programs and support groups." A statistical analysis was applied to respondents that participated in the recruitment process through scheduled appointments at a medical center in Naples, Italy. These patients partook in weekly chatline sessions for two years, every Friday for 90 minutes within a group of 10 - 50 other participants per session, moderated by a physician through an instant messenger computer program. This evaluation investigates the educative process of the participants' Diabetes Quality of Life for Youth Inventory (DQOLY) during routine monthly appointments. These patients completed a 15-minute interview session, including a questionnaire to assess a diabetes management program, and demographic data over a 2-year duration to observe the progression of their educational program. Their monthly visit also assessed their quality of life, glycemic control, and improvement or adjustment to their diabetic treatment. This examination was perfect to analyze the communication amongst individuals that shared a common medical condition. The chatline was used as a support system to help manage one's current condition, as well as, give advice to others that may encounter issues that someone else overcame. However, this chatline is within a digital environment, which constitutes a later progression of the chatline.

After Action Review Tools for Team Training with Chat Communications (2009) investigates the chat line logs of After Action Review (AAR) training session within a digital communication environment in a training domain. The Air Force Research Laboratory has a Training Research Exercise (TREX) that provides real-world training scenarios for mission-ready warfighters in air or space. The TREX helped soldiers develop full team participation and effective communication while executing missions within kinetic or non-kinetic conditions to reach successful goals. A quantitative approach was applied to this study with the use of AAR, TREX, and Intelligent Diagnosis Assistant (IDA) to assess intelligence and coordinate planned mission exercises within time-sensitive situations. The IDA is a keyword-based software that measures identified tags within each mission exercised and directed by the Air Force. Ramachandran et al. (2009) justified the method behind the AAR as, "The initiating report typically establishes a segregated planning approach to address the problem. The team then examines the problem in sequence with other planning tasks or a sub-team may be tasked to examine the issue in parallel with other team activities." However, the participants of this assessment are able to review the results in isolation for the correction of mistakes made. "The isolation approach allows the team to review actual process versus doctrine, while the context of workload offers insight into time delays, distractions, errant information sources, and overall cognitive effort." Therefore, this training methodology enhances personnel of the Air Force communication, while executing kinetic missions in the air or on the ground. *After Action Review Tools for Team Training with Chat Communications (2009)* also found that lessons were learned through communicating within a digital environment. Ramachandran et al. (2009) suggested the United States Air Force conduct further research for more possible keywords associated with their missions, a deeper analysis for different missions using the IDA for tagging and knowledgeable, but versatile instructors for interpersonal chat communication with trainees during these exercises. *After Action Review Tools for Team Training with Chat Communications (2009)* concluded, "Initial experiments are planned for the coming year, to test out the utility of the chat analysis methods and visualization tools in the fundamental goal of helping instructors perform after action review quickly and incisively. The design is specifically intended to operate as one of the potentially several applications used in after action review for different forms of playback or other indications of exercise events and trainee actions. The underlying methods for automatically detecting and differentiating threads of operational conversation could theoretically apply to many training domains, where common features of unique keywords and definable roles and communications patterns are present." Ramachandran et al. (2009) investigate the communicative process of professionals during military personnel during exercises within air and space. It exemplifies the effectiveness of their training as the Air Force learns how to communicate efficiently through distance with digital technologies. However, this is a fairly recent study as I am investigating the history of the chatline or partyline.

The Marketing and Consumer Behaviour of Audiotex Chatlines (2006) inquires the quantified effects of chatline advertisements and marketing strategies upon the Singaporean youth. The Audiotex chat services provide telephone and short message service (SMS) communication platforms that allow users to enjoy their telecommunication systems. Participants 18 years of age and older were able to connect via telephone, using a 1-900 prefix, to indirectly exchange verbal recorded messages or SMS with other participants on the service. This telecommunication facility is free for females with "marketing gimmicks" offering raffle drawings, competitions, and other giveaways for participating within their community. Lim, L. & Banu, P. (2006)

conducted an ethnographic framework to find one's attraction to the Audiotex chat service within the Singaporean culture. The behavioral modeling theory embodied procedures used to analyze media content as Singaporean youth attempt to identify with current social standards. On the other hand, a quantitative research survey with open-ended questions was given to youth below 18 years of age under their teacher's supervision and approved by the local police department. "The survey comprised of questions on personality traits and investigating the advertisement awareness, mobile ownership, usage and opinions of chat services, and their respective advertisements. Two open-ended questions were included to find out teenagers' response towards the positioning of chat advertisements and their preference between telephony communication and SMS." Also, a research of direct experience with the usage of the Audiotex chat services assisted in gaining further insight into sexual solicitation, prostitution, and drug trafficking on the chatline in a natural setting. *The Marketing and Consumer Behaviour of Audiotex Chatlines (2006)* found many respondents became aware of the Audiotex Chat Service through marketing tactics and advertisements in the traditional, social, and digital media. The majority of respondents used this service during their spare time with their allowance, while other unsuspected teenagers used free service because it will appear as a local call on their parents' phone bills. This is a perfect analysis of a modern chatline environment. *The Marketing and Consumer Behaviour of Audiotex Chatlines (2006)* examine the chatline environment, its attraction, and surveyed underage users for information on their social interactions. This study was conducted in Singapore where laws may vary but it is relevant to current chatline issues in the United States.

Partyline

Apparatus for Selectively Alerting Party Line Subscribers (1988) is an explanation of the technical invention of a partyline service that was patented on February 2, 1988. This study was created to obtain a telephone service that notifies subscribers by alerting them through the telephone system called the Central Office (C.O.) or PBX. The C.O. conducts a single communication wireline that connects multiple subscribers through code ringing or different types of ring tones via telephone. "The apparatus comprises means for detecting whether a ringer signal received from the telephone line is meant to alert a given subscriber party, and means for coupling the ringer signal to subscriber alerting equipment when an appropriate ringer signal is detected." The creation of this partyline service was offered to subscribers by full selective, semi-selective, or coded ringing alerts with the use of incoming calls without false alerting other subscribers within the network. There are five diagrams illustrating the various planned services for subscribers to communicate within the system. It also gives an explanation of DC and AC voltage that is used to create a variety of ringtones and alerts. Grundtiseh, M. R. (1988) concluded, "a party of subscribers is to be alerted only when a ringer signal having a particular DC voltage component is applied to the appropriate wire (TIP or RING) of the telephone line." *Apparatus for Selectively Alerting Party Line Subscribers (1988)* is a blueprint and official patent of a partyline system. This network clarifies the intention of notifying subscribers through different ring tones. It correlates with the Chronicles of the Chatline and Partyline due to its historical invention.

Willis, B. D. (1932) clarified the creation of the Lockout Party-Line Telephone System represented by Mesne Assignments. This assessment was filed on May 23, 1930, but patented on March 23, 1932, in Chicago, Illinois, as one of the early partylines in the United States. This system was invented to improve their current partyline's network, a lockout circuit was added within their partyline's format to prevent a secondary caller from accessing a call in progress. The signal of the battery will complete a call, but the reversal of the battery will block another caller from interrupting a call in progress with "a busy condition" on the line. When Line 1 and Line 2 connects to exchange or terminate communication within a Trunk Circuit (TC), the connector device called the Line Switch (LS) intertwines both lines to complete the call. The LS is an analog rotary bank that stores and connects available lines with access to a Connector Switch (CS), which can link additional subscribers to the conversation. A Magnetic field and relay within the network will send energy to a connecting Line(s), giving the caller "a busy condition", indicating that Line 1 is in use. "In a telephone system, a party line having a plurality of substations thereon, battery reversing means on said line, means responsive to the connection of any substation with said line for operating said reversing means, and means controlled by said reversing means for rendering said line busy to any other substation and for giving an indication thereof of said busy condition." This patent of 1932 illustrates the invention of a busy signal with the telephone system. It is history and exhibits the design of an early partyline.

The United States Patent Application Publication: US 2004/0264669A1 describes the engineering of an advanced telecommunication network that will allow two or more callers to participate within a group chat at the same. This system was a general chat forum on the internet, where several people from different geographical locations can converse without coordinating a specific time and place to conduct a conference call. However, to have a private telephone conversation with another individual on the system, they would have to enter a private chat forum. The methodology behind this telecommunication technology is the connection between two or more callers within a local call station. The first telephone caller is received by the first call

station within the telecommunication link, it provides an area party line link as a second telephone call connects to the receiver in the first call station. The two telephone callers are then transferred to the central call bridging station to establish a connection between the callers. These callers are then connected within an area party line, as other callers join into their conference by completing the same process. Denny et al. (2004) simply explained “Embodiments of the present invention provide area party line Service for users of telephone Service So that chat forums may occur through the randomly placed telephone calls into the area party line Service. Accordingly, the telephone caller can make use of a party line when desired but can continue to benefit from private line telephone service when an area party line call is not desired.” This patent gives great technical detail of how telephone callers are connected through a network to establish a partyline. It also is a good contribution to the Chronicles of Chatline and Partyline, because it gives a description of a partyline's connection procedures.

V. DISCUSSION

A chatline is a themed telecommunication environment that enables callers to participate in topical discussions. These forums allow subscribers to express and find information regarding social and moral issues that may be unavailable via in-person communication. On the other hand, a partyline is a telephone service provided by an organization, which allows users to call into a switchboard to converse with one another, or whoever calls in separately as well. A partyline typically operates within a public domain, where two or more callers are able to have various discussions for entertainment purposes. The chatline and partyline both function similarly but differ objectively as they serve opposing purposes.

Partylines were established in the late 1800s as the telephone became more accessible to the public. However, the cost to own a telephone was practically free because users had no privacy once obtaining a telephone. Once a user opens their telephone, the user has the ability to perceive and convey messages to another person on the connecting telephone lines within their community. Party line (telephony). (2019, November 3) explained, “Party lines provided no privacy in communication. They were frequently used as a source of entertainment and gossip, as well as a means of quickly alerting entire neighbourhoods of emergencies such as fires, [7] becoming a cultural fixture of rural areas for many decades.” The AT&T long-distance service became popular to Americans because a lot of families used their service to ensure the privacy of their conversations for an additional monthly charge.

As technology began to advance during World War II in the late 1930s, the telephone system expanded in the United States along with the enhancement of television and radio broadcast. Americans were able to contact their local radio, television and other companies to inquire for business purposes. Anyhow, the inventions of the partyline emerged as entrepreneurs set about to patent their telecommunication system and launch their local partylines. Dempsey, J. (2018, July 27) made clear that “Party lines carried on well into the 70s, but the technology was deemed ‘a victim of progress’ but the last party line was not phased out until 1991 in Woodbury, Connecticut. “ Then Chatlines emerged to serve those individuals who sort for specific needs with a flat rate charge or pay-per-minute.

As Chatlines become popular, entrepreneurs started investing in these services to accommodate for people seeking social desires. Individuals that searched for specific information or personal aspirations were drawn to these services to fulfill their desires. Chatlines was created for religion, physical conditions, sexual preference or arousal, and age groups to help satisfy the needs of those who lack certain attributes. Some chatline was free, but most of the available services charged a fee which made many of these entrepreneurs become rich. “From 1997 to 2002, she [Youree Dell Harris] was a virtually inescapable presence on television—the embodiment of a carnival stereotype that annoyed native Jamaicans, who bristled at her exaggerated accent. It was nonetheless effective: Roughly 6 million calls came in to Miss Cleo over a three-year period, with \$1 billion in telephone charges assessed.” (Rossen, J., 2019, February 14) Although some Chatlines charge a fee, there are thousands of local chatlines available that anyone can call to satisfy their social or moral desires. However, the advancement of technology-enabled chatlines to evolve within the digital world through the use of *Instant Messenger*, *Online Chatrooms*, and the *Blogosphere*. The Blogosphere was created in 1999 as the century turned into a new millennium it is widely known as Social Media to us today. Furthermore, we shall see the advancement of the Partyline and Chatline in the future as America begins to Videoconference one another through advanced technologies.

VI. CONCLUSION

The telephone is one of the first communicative devices invented to transmit information for mankind. It evolved shortly after the telegraph became a popular tool used to connect one another regardless of their geographical locations. These technologies were both invented by entrepreneurs in the 1930s as tests, however, they were not patent nor demonstrated at conventions for scholarly review for credit. Similar to the Telegraph, the telephone was patented by a professional that was more business inclined than others. The Telegraph was patented in 1844 by Samuel F. B. Morse, while Alexander Graham Bell demonstrated and patented the

telephone in 1876. The partyline emerged along with the invention of the telephone, there was no dial tone nor busy signal once a user's telephone line was opened for operation. Wolf (2010) discussed the communication methods farmers used to gain up-to-date information within their communities by using squirrel lines. Squirrels lines were closed-circuit systems that allowed telephone users within the network to discuss information with other users in the same network, however, there were no privacy, dial tone or "busy conditions". Therefore, I believe this type of telephone network was available around the country during the early invention stages of the telephone. This closed-circuit telecommunication system was a partyline. After the American Bell Telephone Company gained competition from independent service providers around the country, Americans were able to enjoy sophisticated telephone service as Chatlines emerged for various social, cultural and moral issues.

Today, there are thousands of local partylines that Americans are able to call free of charge. These partylines are used for entertainment purposes, where people discuss various topics and share information with others of similar interest from various geographical locations. On the other hand, there are Chatlines available for specific purposes with the prefixes of 1-800, 1-900, 1-888, and 1-887 for a surcharge. These services are available to satisfy the particular needs that individuals can not find within their inner circles. Instant Messenger, social media and the blogosphere are the digital aspects of the Partyline and Chatline that enable individuals to use digital technologies to interact with one another. In the future, Americans can be seen conducting more video conference calls, as technology advances with 5G speeds and 360 cameras.

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