**Chapter 6**

**Chapter Overview**

Chapter 6 begins by defining interactivity, a key feature that distinguishes digital media from its analog predecessors. It then examines the historical development of user interfaces, the Internet, and the World Wide Web. The following section looks at video games, their history, types, industry, and trends. The chapter also discusses gamification, virtual reality, and the ethics of interactive media.

After reading the chapter, you should be able to do the following:

* Define the elements of interactivity.
* Explain the importance of interactivity in terms of modern media.
* Describe the historical development of user interfaces, the Internet, and the World Wide Web.
* Explain how digital distribution empowers audiences to act as distributors themselves.
* Describe why user interface is important to mass communication.
* Explain how emerging trends will affect user interface and the way we use media.
* Discuss relevant similarities in today’s video game industry with older media.
* Explain what virtual reality is and how it can be used by media and other companies.
* Identify some of the ethical issues related to interactive media.

**Review/Essay Questions**

1. Discuss how interactivity plays a role in digital online media and how it has changed our perceptions and use of media. Consider how well media companies utilize interactivity and ways that it could be used better.

2. Briefly outline how the video game industry currently works and compare relevant aspects of it to other major media industries such as recording labels, television, and the film industry.