The Role of the Media Industry When Participation is a Product

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Book section

1. INTRODUCTION

Many media are changing their production and distribution routines— especially through social networks—because of the increasing opportunities for audience participation in more and better ways which still are not optimised by media. This chapter focuses on how media industries are reacting to this process and how audience participation is becoming not just a way to improve media products, but also a product in itself. Where does the media end and where the audience begin? This question is underlined by Humphreys (quoted in Peck and Malthouse 2011, 96) to explain a coproduced landscape, within which audience and media are interchanging their roles constantly. This chapter deals with one of the consequences of this process: the perspective of participation seen as a product. Specifically, the chapter will focus on the following research question: How are the strategies of media companies reshaped when participation is a product? There is a clear research gap in this field and the aim of this work is to develop the idea of participation as a product or commodity for the media industry and to explore its main implications.

This chapter addresses the transformations around the value chain and revenue mechanisms, the relations with audiences and changes in their roles, the types and phases of audience participation, the production processes and the storytelling routines. Participation is improving media in many ways, but the idea of innovation coming from non-professionals is anything but new in media studies. Already in 1967 Marshall McLuhan pointed out the reason why the professional environments are not so flexible in terms of innovation when compared to amateurs: "The amateur can afford to lose. The professional tends to classify and to specialize, to accept uncritically the ground rules" (McLuhan and Fiore 1967, 93). In those same years, "the debates about participation were omnipresent in a wide variety of societal fields," which had as consequence that in communication and other fields, "participation is still used to mean everything and nothing, [and] remains structurally undertheorized . . . " (Carpentier 2011, 13–14). For this reason, participation, understood as a product, can help to build a new theoretical framework more useful for media companies. Almost half a century after McLuhan's statement, media companies are attempting to manage a growing flow of participation coming from social media and other networks. This chapter is structured assuming a reality within which that flow of participation is an inherent part of media industry.

There are different theoretical approaches to consider when exploring the phenomenon of participation in the media industry, especially if we consider this concept in a wide sense— presence, co-deciding and co-producing—and taking into account that participation has often been described similarly to concepts like access or interaction (Carpentier 2011, 28). Moreover, there are many types of participation that the audience can perform in/ with the media. For instance, participation in online newspapers can be studied through five different stages: access / observation, selection / filtering, processing / editing, distribution and interpretation (Singer et al. 2011, 18; Domingo et al. 2008). During all those stages, the power negotiations between audience and media are present, from the most closed stage (selection and filtering) to the more open (interpretation). Probably, by far, the most recognised form of

participation has been the creation of content by audiences, known as UGC (user-generated content). UGC is present in most of the treatises on participation in media, with key concepts such as "prosumer," a term generally attributed to Alvin Toffler in his works of 1970–1980 (Bruns 2009; Ritzer 2009) and useful in describing the changing roles adopted by producers and consumers during distribution and consumption of media content. In fact, "the experience of and surrounding the product" (Ritzer 2009) could be considered as a product itself made by users. In media and fan studies, this phenomenon has had many opportunities to be developed and researched. The prosumer is relatively new within mass media and, at the same time, a reason why the media landscape is changing. Regardless of whether users actually are aware of being producers, they are, in fact, producers. In other words, they are "produsers" (Bruns 2008). In the same way, we could say that, regardless of whether users are aware of being a commodity for media, they are one, because of their actions, relations, links and data—in short, their participation. Audiences are changing and not just in terms of participation, the key point is that "media are now used anyhow, anyplace, anytime" (Livingstone 2004, 3).

Consumption redefines participation and vice versa. This fact implies not only the redefinition of participation, but also the redefinition of media itself. How are media facing participation? The cross-media strategies and narratives of the media industry, such as transmedia storytelling, are directed at a growing involvement and engagement of the audience, transforming audience members into guests, partners, co-authors, and, finally, a product or commodity. The well-known idea of social media that if you are not paying for it, you are not the customer, you are the product, could move into the realm of the media industry. For instance, and as happens in the publishing industry, "the actual increase in access, interaction and participation of authors and readers means an increase of the control that the system, through profiling software and data mining, may have on the users" (Pasquali 2011, 213). More than facing participation, media companies are dealing with multiplatform media production, under a process highly connected to the concept of convergence (Quandt and Singer 2008). The content flow between several platforms is a consequence of what Jenkins (2006) calls convergence culture. Usually, such convergence has been seen as containing a tension between those who think of it as just a technological development and those who define convergence "in terms of fundamental changes in storytelling" (Dailey, Demo and Spillman 2003, 3). This work is closer to that second notion of convergence.

Close to cross-media content, and from the perspective of narrative studies, the concept of transmedia storytelling is used to describe the process where there is "a particular narrative structure that expands through both different languages and media," but it is "not just an adaptation from one media to another" (Scolari 2009, 2). More than that, in transmedia processes "each medium does what it does best" (Jenkins 2003). Different stories in different media aim to improve the same narrative universe. In other words, it is collaboration among stories, characters and media. In media newsrooms, such models exist that can measure the collaboration at different levels, such as "cross-promotion, cloning, coopetition (cooperation and competition), content sharing and full convergence" (Dailey, Demo and Spillman 2003, 3). The strategies of media companies and the new stakeholders will be analysed within the domain of participatory culture. Here, audience is defined by its capacity of doing, and it will be introduced as part of the triple- revenue source mechanism for media. The cross-media

processes will be defined from the always-on audiences, the pro-active role of audiences and the kind of products created to be re-created. A clear example of this phenomenon happens within the fan culture, where the strategies used to gain attention and involvement are increasing the complexity of narration, in an immersive process, commonly known as transmedia storytelling. The scope of this chapter includes drawing a perspective of participation from the new media landscape, because "the media industry is a fascinating object of study, as it is arguably the most directly affected by the consequences of the interactivity" (Deuze 2006, 691). Most studies concerning participation begin from the point of view of the audience, an analysis of participation as product implies a different point of view, from the media industry itself.

2. CROSS-MEDIA PROCESSES AND PRODUCTION IN MEDIA MARKETS

In the current scientific literature, many concepts are used, often in a loose and overlapping way, which can require more careful definitions to increase their effectiveness. This is a problem that often occurs in the social sciences but it is particularly evident in the case of cross-media, mostly confused with concepts such as multimedia, pluralmedia, intermedia or transmedia. Multimedia can be defined as the coexistence of multiple media in a context of consumption that may involve users' multisensory experience. Usually, six different types of multimedia are distinguished: (1) weak link: arising from the juxtaposition of different independent media; (2) intrinsically related to a specific type of communication, as in the case of the video clips; (3) native: as in the case of contemporary cinema; (4) additive: deriving from a meaning effect, as in the case of special effects; (5) limited, as in the case of the associative writing style (as occurs, for example, in encyclopaedias, both traditional and hypertextual); (6) interactive, in which the basic dimension is represented by the relationship between producer and consumer (the last one being the central point of the relation itself).

Hypermedia, instead, is constituted by the relation between multimedia and the hypertext dimension. The integrated application allows more multimedia content on a single digital device: in this category we can frame the service providers and, above all, the logic of cloud computing. Transmedia can be easily represented by the "crossroads narrative" involving many different media, often customised: Here we take on board the logic of transmedia storytelling, which has repeatedly been written about by Henry Jenkins (2006). Cross-media, however, represents a shift of paradigm: no longer and not only the dynamics of convergence (Negroponte 1995), but also, its opposite, the development of the logic of disintermediation with the rise of new participatory audiences, which are, essentially, always connected. In relation to audiences, we cannot forget the conceptual distinction between access, interaction and participation, a scientific taxonomy used by Carpentier (2007) and others. Usually, scholars subdivide the "access" concept into three steps: (1) Access 1.0, in which the use of the media for public service represents a typical example; (2) Access 1.1. This can be defined from a community media perspective, as "the processes that permit users to provide relatively open and unedited input to the mass media" (Lewis 1993, 12). It is the logic of non-mainstream and alternative media (Pasquali and Sorice 2005); (3) Access 2.0 provides the opportunity to have the produced content published and / or broadcasted, and, at the same time, to have the skills

to receive content and provide feedback (Carpentier 2007). Access, of course, in all three of these definitions, is not yet "interaction". Some authors have made a semantic superimposition between interaction and involvement (De Blasio and Sorice 2010). Involvement is one of the concepts commonly used in reception studies and in the analysis of the consumption process. In particular, it emphasises the relational and affective aspect implied in the reception process and it is connected to the question of balanced power. There is no co-decision making in interaction, whereas involvement is a path towards the concept (and practice) of the relational community. In this frame, the media consent to give a community different foundations: not only the spatial community but also the relational community. This facilitates a possible shift from ascribed belonging to affiliative belonging. In effect, relational communities are based upon involvement and performance. The cross-media system, in other words, is placed in an interstitial space between the old mass communication, the logic of broadcasting, the bi-directional exchange of communication and interpersonal relationships. In this framework, cross-media narratives are very different from those realised in the hypermedia and / or multimedia fields. In cross-media, in fact, stories and characters are defined by independent modules: they operate as independent files that can move in different directions.

The producers themselves have to build products planned for use as modular elements, combined and dismantled in a theoretically infinite process. Cross-media products, in other words, are created in order to be continuously re-created, in other media and on all available platforms. At the same time, programming software is intrinsically human-based, since cross-media makes sense only as part of a communicative flow in which the users are not simple recipients but can also play an important creative function. Cross-media represents a revolution in the processes of designing computer systems that tends to reduce apparent complexity in favour of social architecture. The design process, in other words, becomes human centred. If, from the point of view of production, cross-media forces companies to establish forms of collaboration and synergy, from the audiences' point of view they have developed, in the last years, some general trends: (a) the adoption of easy-to-use publishing platforms; (b) the development of a pseudo-community composed of groups of users (who are also content producers); (c) the emergence of forms of informal tutoring offered to neophytes by "experts"; (d) the explosion of the phenomenon of recognition and visibility of "authors" who are present only in the frame of the web. The similar phenomenon of file sharing can be easily redefined as a result of the scenario just described. From the point of view of the relationships between first-level manufacturers and audiences (second-level producer), the success of phenomena such as "mobisodes," the "webisodes," and even certain forms of marketing, such as those, for example, represented by the sneak peeks, may be placed in this context.

In the cross-media scenario, audiences take on different functions: from text knowledge (in a wiki logic) to the production of subtitles and captions (subbers), from specialised research of information about the specific place of production (set, networks) and on the web (spoilering) to all the forms of remakes, rewriting, contamination, circulation and mashup. It is absolutely clear that these new audiences play an important role in contributing to the creation of a new cultural public sphere, an essential segment of the mediatised public space, as defined by Dahlgren (2000). The audiences' transformation also involves the media capacity to adapt

themselves to the new social frame; in other words, it is an important topic for democracy studies, too (Dahlgren 2001). On the economic front, cross-media promotes the development of both convergence economies and a scale economy, where it is possible to envision some very strong forms of integration within media asset management logic. This is clearly evident in the strong relationship between production and aggregation of contents, technical production (usually having as its main purpose the integration of the different platforms) and distribution. Crossmedia, in other words, seems to improve the linkages between the different steps involved in the value chain of the media industry (Wirtz 2011); the outcome of this process is a deep transformation of the value chain model into a bow-tie value chain model, in which the "traditional" media companies (and particularly broadcasting-based companies) become the middle point of a new value chain. In this bow-tie value chain model, an important role is played by audiences: in fact, they are not simply active but they can perform a pro-active role in the frame of a participatory consumption style (which, in some cases, can even support new forms of civic engagement).

It is absolutely clear, indeed, that the cross-media experience involves audience interactivity; it can be personal (as happens with mobile devices, handled games, the iPad and even some forms of interactive fiction) or shared (as happens with multiplayer games or some experiences of crossmedia storytelling as in the case of some innovative web series). Cross-media requires a pro-active role to be played by audiences and, at the same time, they need to be competent in realising the combination of stories and interpretative tools. In other words, as audience members become part of the cross-media experience, they have more control over what happens and, as a result, might therefore influence the cultural consumption process. A useful example can be found within the various innovative web series such as Stuck (see Stuck channel on YouTube), which constitute both a reframing of television and a reshaping of traditional audiovisual grammar. They evoke a new public, less spectator and more active; a public that is able to, for example, surf the net, interact with blogs, and act in a Facebook group as a co-author. Small net miracles (such as Stuck) survive and offer a strong resistance to the traditional media industry; at the same time, they aggregate people in experiencing a new form of civic engagement. The new storytelling is more about engagement, creation and re-creation. Across multiple channels and platforms, every day more stories are designed to be edited, shared and distributed by their audiences. Without this process, the product would not be finished and users would not get that extra special sense of belonging to a community.

3. STRATEGIC CHALLENGES OF MEDIA COMPANIES IN REDEFINING THE VALUE CHAIN IN A PARTICIPATORY CROSS-MEDIA ENVIRONMENT

The participatory culture is a substantial phenomenon in the context of the contemporary media industry. It entails many ambiguities in the roles of those taking part in the processes of the media industry. The changes are not restricted only to the organisational culture within media companies, but take place at the interface between the industry and the audience. According to Couldry (2009, 438), one-way senders, specialist media producers, and one-way receivers, 'mere' audience members have become less common in their pure form, while hybrid sender/receivers are now more common. Thus, being an 'audience' only captures one segment of the contemporary media experience, as an increasing part of the relationship of the audience with the media is 'doing': messaging, sharing, tagging, tweeting, Facebooking, gaming, chatting, commenting, reviewing, editing, posting, uploading (Merrin 2009, 24). Audience agency comprises different levels of participation, varying from 'creators' to 'spectators' and 'inactives'—'participation' is therefore an ambiguous concept (van Dijck 2009, 45–46; Carpentier 2011, 13–14).

The participatory culture leads to a situation where professional media processes are strongly connected with audience members, or 'users,' active Internet contributors (van Dijck 2009, 41). While the participatory dimensions of the media culture have been quite extensively discussed and theorised in the field of media studies, the strategic challenges that the changing practices entail for the business corporations of the media industry continue to be a relatively under-researched and inadequately understood problem area (Chan-Olmsted 2006). The media industry operates in a dual product marketplace, where most sectors of the industry simultaneously seek to manufacture and sell two completely different products to two completely different sets of customers—they sell content to audiences and they sell audiences to advertisers (Napoli 2009, 163; Chan-Olmsted 2006, 3). However, in the operational environment affected by the participatory culture, the audience commodity is a "prosumer" commodity, as, in addition to being a commodity sold by the media (Smythe 1977), the activity and the contents produced by the audience are commodities (Fuchs 2010, 191–192). In this sense, the media industry can, in fact, profit from a triple-revenue source mechanism. At the same time, there are opportunities to reduce costs by utilising the users as free labour that produce and market content seemingly out of their free will. Content generation and interaction in social media appears to be quite meaningful to the users (Mørk Petersen 2008), and its meaningfulness is not diminished by the fact that their work can be utilised by media companies. As Terranova (2000) has noted, free labour is not necessarily exploited labour.

When considering the audience as a new labour force, it is important that, increasingly, the strategies of media companies include the implicit activities of the audience and their intra-audience processes (Villi 2012). Media companies are part of different markets, value chains and complex relationships. In this section, we utilise a value chain analysis in order to carry out a vertical deconstruction and disaggregation of the industry processes and relationships (Doyle 2002), where the changes and challenges of the crossmedia and participatory audiences affect the whole business environment of media companies. When examining the media industry, the traditional and simplest decomposition of the value chain is based on three stages:

production, packaging and distribution. Wirtz (2011) provides a five-stage model including advertising placement and aggregation and technical production as well as the above mentioned three. The content elements are packaged into a marketable media product (e.g., magazine or television channel) and these media products may be repackaged and sold as channel packages provided by distributors, or magazine packages sold by publishing companies towards advertisers. In distribution, media companies have several options and a wide range of platforms to deliver content to audiences. The value chain differs between different media sectors and new sector specific actors appear (e.g., programme traders in the television market, web designers, web hosting providers). Internet media companies typically do not adopt all the stages of the value chain. Their main focus is typically on the compilation and, above all, on the packaging of content (Wirtz 2011). However, these value chain models deal only with companies that are based in one media sector. In the participatory cross-media environment, we need to reconsider these models and search for models that take into consideration multimedia and cross-media elements that include wireless networks and other new platforms as well. For example, a multimedia value chain model introduced by Wirtz (1999) already includes technology-driven value chain members (such as companies that offer navigation or interface facilities) as value-added service providers. The multimedia context is further emphasised by Sabat (2002) in his value chain model of the mobile wireless environment, where more specialised roles and entities appear and the traditional media companies act as content sources. An important element of the strategic challenges faced by media companies is to understand how to capitalise on both the explicit and implicit participation of the audience (Schäfer 2011).

Explicit participation describes how audience members produce media texts and artefacts. At the same time, they take part in the processes of the media industry in a more implicit way, by 'merely' using the services and platforms offered in social media. An example of implicit participation would be when a user connects his or her Spotify account with Facebook and thus information about his/her music consumption is automatically marketed to their Facebook friends. However, many would probably object to calling this type of activity participation at all. Nevertheless, these more implicit forms of user activity—those that are more about sustaining connections and 'togetherness' (Carey 1989) than producing content— play an important role for the media industry. According to Marshall (2009, 81), the successful operation of the media industry is in fact as much about media production and distribution, as it is about facilitating the maintenance of social connections among its audience. Preexisting social networks have become fundamental to the sustainability of media, and, therefore, media companies need to accept the convergence of media and communication, where the communicative (interpersonal) dimensions have invaded, informed and mutated the media elements (Marshall 2009, 86–88). Placing stress on the communicative dimensions of participation does not require deep co-productory relations between the audience and journalists. Journalists can still remain journalists and audiences can remain audiences (O'Sullivan and Heinonen 2008, 367–368). The core of the journalistic process, the actual production of the story, stays out of the reach of the audience (Domingo et al. 2008). The focus is more on directing the professional content to such channels that enable efficient sharing and intra-audience connections. This is rather a question related to the whole

infrastructure of publishing rather than about journalists reaching out for participation with and within the audience communities.

If journalists and audience members collaborate, it is about collaboration in community building rather than content production. The key question is how the communicative dimensions of the participatory culture should be taken into account within the strategies of media corporations. Cross-media publishing and production is increasingly about offering possibilities for interactivity. Companies need to focus increasingly on facilitating the functioning of social networks and audience communities (Villi 2012). Furthermore, they need to direct their efforts to community building on different platforms, as audience communities circulate and communicate cross-medially. The communication of the audience becomes a revenue generator for media organisations (Napoli 2010, 511–512); interactivity is productive (Andrejevic 2009, 47) and the social relations are commodified. This situation requires ambidexterity when focusing both on content production and on the novel task of nurturing audience communities. The concept of ambidexterity describes a situation where companies should be able to pursue both incremental and radical changes simultaneously; they should be able to, at one and the same time, maintain efficiency in their existing operations and support effectiveness in their new business development (Birkinshaw and Gibson 2004; Raisch and Birkinshaw 2008). The operational environment for companies in many sectors of the media industry, such as the print business, also necessitates ambidexterity, because the companies need to sustain their traditional print publishing business by pursuing incremental innovations in their well-established operations, and, on the other hand, at the same time, they need to be able to expand their operations into the online environment (Järventie-Thesleff, Villi and Moisander 2012). An increasing number of media do not tie their business to a particular format or flavour of media (Lovinger 2010, 15). In this sense, magazine publishers, for instance, should not be just magazine publishers, but rather producers and distributors of content and, importantly, also facilitators of community activities.

Communication is not only about the transmission of information, it is also about the creation and maintenance of community, as the ritual view of communication, as Carey (1989) emphasises. Thus, the strategies of media companies do not only need to deal with cross-media, but also with 'cross-communication.' By cross- communication, we refer to the communication and sharing processes in such audience communities that spread out over different media and platforms. In each case, the participatory and communicative audience acts an important element in processes of the media industry. Adding the cross-media aspect to the value chain model leads us to a bow-tie value chain model, where a media company becomes the middle point of the value chain, and as a consequence of cross-media production, it needs to handle and manage a large number of suppliers (professional content on different platforms, as well as non-professional user-generated content) and a large number of distributors and other service specific market players (e.g., network providers). In the middle of the bow-tie it is the 'traditional' media company itself, which is the intersection between the growing number of value chain members. The increasing number of actors around the media company can be depicted in the form of a bow-tie, where the value chain is narrowing towards the media company and then enlarging again towards the increasing number of value chain participants. Thus, it is possible to conclude that the media industry value chain in the multimedia and digital environment has more stages than ever before. The

three traditional main stages (production, packaging, distribution) have to be reconsidered and down-streamed into more specific stages. At the same time, we may observe a convergence between the different stages, as, due to vertical integration processes (instead of focusing only on the core competence strategy), companies may cover and control more stages of the supply and value chain. Not only does the number of value chain members increase, but as crossmedia production entails horizontal integration, it also requires multilevel value chain management. Actions of the participatory audience appear in the value chain in several phases: when the audience is creating content, when they are editing or reediting the available content and when they are disseminating the content to other audience members. Of course, users' content creation and editing are often interrelated, for example, when they are writing a blog facilitated by a media company that uses the blog content as part of its professional offering. However, they also may add content by re-editing pictures, videos or texts and sharing those online. This means that the traditional media industry value chain has to be updated, not only through the inclusion of user-generated content (UGC), but also of user edited-content (UEC) and user-distributed content (UDC). Audience members take part in the core process of media companies as a result of being enabled and empowered by an infrastructure that encourages them to participate. However when the business-to-business (b2b) market (e.g., content and advertising trading), technology support and development phases appear (navigation, valueadded services, technical production, web hosting, etc.), the audience and user participation is less obvious.

The following diagram (Figure 11.1) summarises the integrated model of the participatory cross-media value chain in the media industry. 'Crossmedia companies' obtain their content and services from an increased number of providers and may work with various companies providing editing services. At the same time sources of design services and content traders also remain present in the value chain. In the middle of the value chain, the cross-media company appears as one central organisation. Then, during the content distribution and dissemination phases, through the new digital platforms, the traditional media companies may face the need to engage special technical support and the need to provide value added services as well as their core content. Alternatively, the media industry should consider a deeper use of copyleft licenses—such as Creative Commons—in order to provide users with some more professional ways of distribution and more flexible ways to edit and share product. At this point we should remember that this kind of a license does not focus on issues of ownership—old paradigm—but, rather, on circulation of content—new paradigm. We need more studies to develop the idea of copyleft licenses within the professional sphere, within a paradigm of complementation with copyright licenses, and not substitution. Platforms and channels of content distribution are becoming more complex and multi-channel. In order to be able to reach their audiences, media companies have to be able to provide access to different end-sets and navigation among the contents; for example, they routinely need to have web hosting for their content. Parallel to the cross-media and cross-platform processes, the participatory audience also influences the processes. The audience acts in content creation (user-generated content), for example, blogging on an online newspaper platform; content edition (user-edited content), for example, reshaping the content, or parts of the text, or even remaking video content; and, last but not least, in the distribution processes (user-distributed content), for example, sharing professional media content via Facebook or Twitter (Villi 2012).
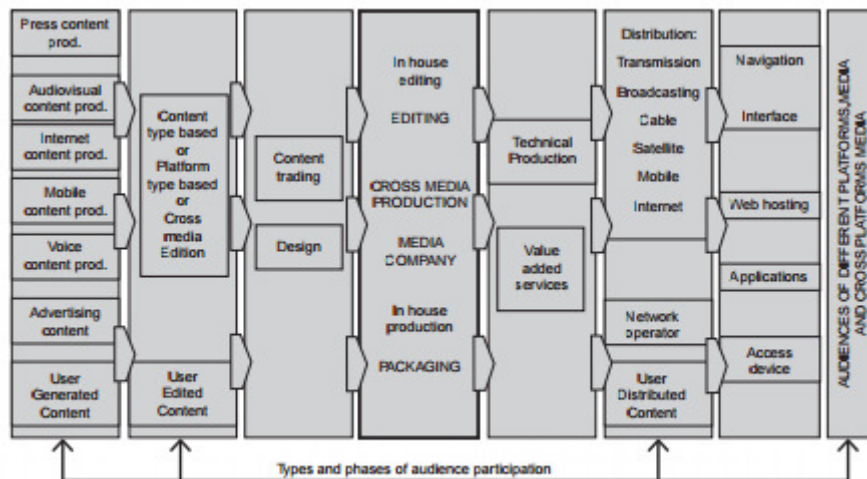
Figure 11.1 Integrated model of participatory cross-media industry value chain.

One key feature of the changing value chain is that the emergence of new stakeholders leads to new market opportunities being opened in the crossmedia environment. At the same time, media companies have to be able to manage this complex, multilevel value chain, as well as the presence of the participatory audience. It is possible that all the old, so-called legacy media companies are not able to fulfil all these roles in order to keep up this development and thus are not able to distribute their content through all the platforms their audience members are using (web, mobile, other digital platforms). In parallel, the employees of media companies need new knowledge and skills to meet the requirements of the participatory cross-media environment. This often means that previously separate roles, responsibilities and tasks merge together (writer, editor, producer). The staff in media companies needs to be able to handle and manage UGC, cooperate with UEC and utilise UDC. Our claim is that especially UDC needs to be more strongly incorporated into the value chain, as peercommunication among the audience, the intra-audience connections, has a growing significance in the consumption and distribution of professional media content. It is not reasonable for media companies to assume that audience members will automatically find a way to their sites only by force of habit or with the help of search engines. Rather, they come to the sites increasingly by following the 'recommendations' and 'likes' of their peers.

Audience networks play nowadays a major role as distribution networks in their own right. Thus, the platforms and services that the audience networks use in their communication are essential for the UDC operations of the media. Facebook in particular has emerged as an important channel for distributing media content (Olmstead, Mitchell, and Rosenstiel 2011, 2; Newman 2012, 15). In fact, we are already seeing examples of UDC integration, such as the Economist magazine having developed a process for seeding different content into Facebook pages, Twitter feeds and Tumblr accounts, introducing a more frequent online publishing schedule, as well as educating staff about the value of getting involved in conversation with the audience (Newman 2011, 17–25). Among the various external stakeholders, advertisers and media agencies undoubtedly have significant influence over commercial media companies, as they are their main source of revenue. Participating audiences as consumers are actively influencing the marketing activities of firms and brands. In the new dominant logic of marketing, firms are constrained to engage in complex processes of exchange with their

consumers who are enabled to directly and publicly share their positive and negative messages. Those media companies which are able to provide inspiring and motivating spaces for participatory audiences to contribute in, will have a structural advantage to become market leaders (Nyiro˝, Csordás and Horváth 2011). This indicates that advertisers and media agencies will expect cross-media solutions from media companies, and audience participation in the dissemination of their messages will possess a new value for advertisers. So, those who are able to answer such needs of the owners of advertising budgets are in a better position to obtain advertising revenue. In allocating advertising budgets and measuring media companies' performance, the audience measurement market research companies are the key stakeholders. When measuring commercial media companies' performance and allocating advertising expenditures, the audience measurement results and data are crucial in the market players' decisions. Media companies also need to have reliable and appropriate audience information in order to be able to sell their airtime or advertising space in the market. As Napoli (2011) states, traditional audience measurement needs to move beyond audience exposure. Napoli emphasises the importance of the examination of new dimensions of behaviour: recall, engagement, or emotional response. The turn towards more qualitative approaches to understanding media audiences is now seen as inevitable and it requires more cross-pollination between traditionally disparate audience research traditions (Napoli 2011). Audience measurement has to be ready to cover cross-media consumption and audience participation within a media market where production, as well as participation, is becoming more complex and flexible every day.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The cross-media landscape is one of the most visible consequences of media convergence. In such an environment, the audience binds the cross-media puzzle playing different functions within a strong context of participatory culture, where media are starting to sell activities and contents made by users. Consequently, if relationships are being commodified, media companies need to design strategies to facilitate social connections. Within this media landscape, the following summary highlights some of the main media strategies explored in this chapter:

- **Promoting the sharing of content more than the creation of content.**
  Although this fact implies growing tensions between production and sharing (for example, from the point of view of ownership and copyright), the benefits of a solid structure to develop the user-distributed content holds better prospects for media in the long term than does user-generated content.
- **Maintaining social connections and building communities.**
  Social connections as tools for generating a sense of belonging among the users, and connecting all these activities with new stakeholders, such as audience measurement market research companies. Audience measurement needs to offer reliable data about cross-media consumption and audience participation.
- **UDC needs to be strongly incorporated into the value chain of the media industry.**
  Media employees need to be able to handle the new kinds of relationships and data.

- **The new paradigm is cross-communication: communication and sharing processes in communities, spreading and adapting information on different platforms.**
  An example of these processes is the fan experience, where the strategies to gain on audience involvement are growing with the amplification of stories in a dispersed but immersive narrative universe (transmedia storytelling).

As this chapter has described, the triple-revenue mechanism of media companies still remains under-developed, because there is a lack of approaches that consider participation as a product, which requires professional strategies to be adequately utilised. The cross-media landscape is not just redefining production or storytelling, it is changing the nature of audience itself, which prefers non-finished products where the users can develop improved stories. Those media companies with the best options to edit and share their products will have the best audiences, able to update and improve every product at every moment.

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