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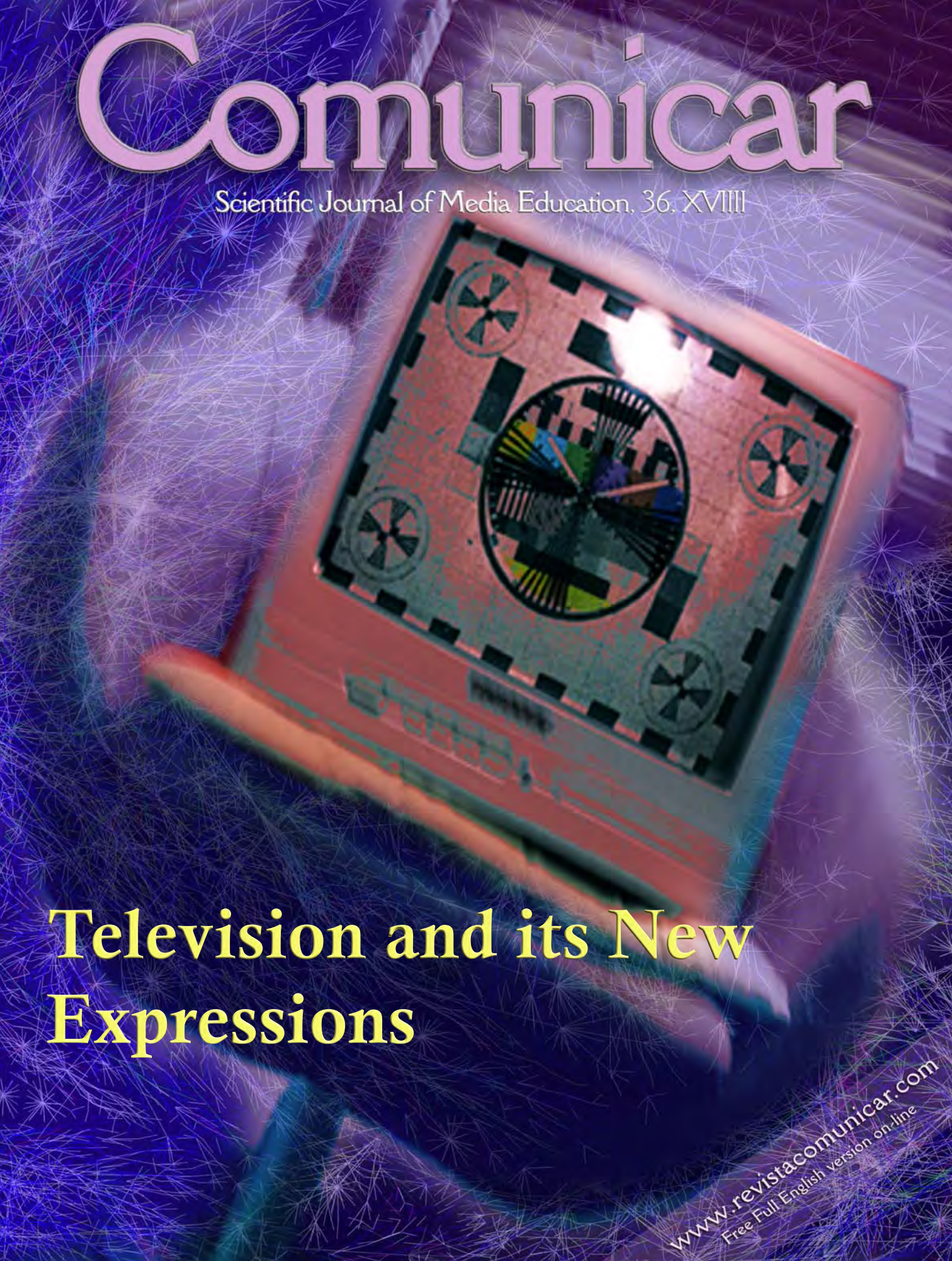

# Television and its New Expressions

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# Editorial

Editorial

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## Children and young people: the new interactive generations

### Niños y adolescentes: nuevas generaciones interactivas

*Dr. J. Ignacio Aguaded-Gómez*

There is no doubt that we are living in an age of profound and revolutionary changes in society. Experiencing these changes day-to-day, we are not conscious of the transformations that technologies in general and communication technologies in particular are making. Even though we can all access these new communicative relations and interactions, it is children and young people who experience them more fully because they were born and grew up surrounded by screens with these technologies; in fact, they are an «interactive generation» that exists —coexists— completely with numerous devices to hand.

The computer successfully competes with the television set for the attention of these new generations; 95% of 6- to 9-year-olds and 97% of 16- to 18-year olds have computer access, and home Internet connection is 82% for children over 10. The pattern is similar for that other device that defines this new generation —and perhaps the most revolutionary for its accessibility, ubiquity and universality— the mobile phone, owned by 83% of 10- to 18-year-olds, and by 100% of those who are 17 and older.

All this is evident in Xavier Bringué and Charo Sábada's «La Generación Interactiva en España. Niños y adolescentes ante las pantallas», The Interactive Generation in Spain. Children, Young People and Screens, (Madrid: Ariel/Fundación Telefónica), a text we use as a base, as it contains a macro-study by the Foro Generaciones Interactivas that analysed 13,000 individuals across Spain, involving 113 schools —the survey can be found on www.generacionesinteractivas.org.

The study shows that this generation is precocious in the use of technologies that are increasingly within reach and widespread. Before the age of 10, many Spanish girls and boys —as in almost any part of that world mistakenly called developed— have access to all kinds of screens: more than half already have a mobile phone; three quarters habitually use Internet and 9 out of 10 play videogames on a regular basis. Television, Internet, videogames and mobile phones are now their «daily habitat», an unrivalled universe that gives them a range of uses that goes far beyond the conventional «mass media» screens we have identified with up to now. This multi-screen generation —as Bringué and Sábada point out— uses media to «communicate» (e-mail, SMS, chat rooms...), «know» (web sites, downloads...), «share» (social networks, photos, videos...), «play» (online gaming, radio and digital TV) and «consume» (on-line shopping). This is also an independent, self-taught generation. For the first time in History, children do not need their elders to learn; what is more, they prefer to find out for themselves how the new media work, acquiring skills that are beyond the grasp of the older generations. This has ushered in the «dormitory universe», an exclusive space for sole access —or with friends and peers— to multi-screen consumption: 36% have a computer in their bedroom, 45% have their own TV. Above all, this is the generation of the «mobile phone», the most widespread device that has become «the supreme medium» —as was TV in the 70s—its

Photo: La Generación Interactiva en España. Ed. Ariel

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# Editorial

Editorial

screen ever wider with voice and data communications, online videogames, social networks, Net surfing with all the experiences that entails, music, personal organizers and multiple apps; and now they are not just conventional mobile phones but smart phones —intelligent devices that bunch e-mail contacts, a personal organizer, a la carte TV, music, infinite podcasts… All this for a «multi-area generation» that has bypassed the linearity of the discourse and is comfortable with the «mosaic culture» of hyperlinked Web surfing, but which can perform many tasks at the same time: simultaneously studying and surfing the Net, listening to music and playing a videogame online and, of course, accessing a social network that allows them to communicate with hundreds of contacts.

This brief description of a new generation is not a fulsome tribute to this supposedly hyper-communicated generation —which could also be hypo-communicated— nor is it harsh criticism in the face of the challenge of technologies which — whether we like it or not— have put us well and truly on the spot. We cannot remain on the sidelines with regard to media; we have to learn to «live» with them. So, in the face of diluvian or apocalyptical attitudes, —very frequent in parents and teachers, unfortunately— we can only instruct the new generations from a positive, intelligent standpoint which, without renouncing the use of these media, is aware of their risks and potential. We need families and educators who are aware of this new reality, intelligently prepared for the new media, not only for the marasmus of new terms or the latest devices but also for the simple skills required to accompany their children on this new adventure of communicative interaction that takes place in their very bedrooms and invades all corners of their lives. No demonizing, no consecration…no dichotomic, impractical or unconstructive attitudes. Mobile phones, videogames, TV and Internet…are a consubstantial part of their lives and those of their peers. So, it comes down to educating young people in the critical use of these media, at their side as we alert them to the risks, discover the creative potential of these media and help them to control their languages and discourses, because this is the only way to ensure that this interactive generation exists as active subjects aware of their reality. This journal and its publisher, Grupo Comunicar, is also involved in this task, along with the Foro Generaciones Interactivas, with the conviction that today's commitment to education with regard to the screens of the new generations is essential for preparing new citizens for a world that is increasingly linked-up. The key question is whether the school as institution and the family as environment are moving in the same direction. If the answer is no, then the alarm bells should surely start to ring.

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Comunicar 36

# Dossier

## Special Topic Issue

# Television and its New Expressions

## La televisión y sus nuevas expresiones

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# Introduction

Presentación

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# Television and its New Expressions

## La televisión y sus nuevas expresiones

**Ph.D. Claudio Avendaño**
Universidad Diego Portales (Chile)

Television is perhaps the most symbolic invention of the 20th century. Television's various dimensions transform it into a complex reality open to analysis from different angles: knowledge, technology, society, culture, politics, semiotics and narratives among others. As a mass media from the industrial era, television takes on many of its particularities, and is projected onto this century in which –it is said– we are experiencing structural change. In many countries around the world it is the basic means of communication through which individuals are entertained, informed and learn, and in this sense it is transversal to the internal workings of social systems, maintaining a focus on consumption in both developed and developing countries (euphemistically speaking). It is accessible to those with material resources that exceed their immediate needs and to those who barely survive. The majority of homes have one, regardless of the religion of the viewers, be they from single-parent, two-parent or same-sex homes, or whether they live in the country or the city. Television genres have broken away from film genres, and there is a proliferation of new genres which, as they become more successful, are globalized and consumed across the world's North-South divide.

It is true that the emergence of information and communication technologies (ICT) has captured the attention of specialists, researchers and non-specialists alike, and their growing importance has impelled the development of analytical proposals that seek to understand their expansion and social uses. ICT have been developed and implemented much more quickly than other communication technologies: their rapid innovation (they say that what Internet develops in three months takes the industry one year), new business models and wide variety of uses have supposedly eclipsed the industrial media of the last century, to a greater or lesser extent. Yet television continues to be the main mass media, although consumption is tending to decrease in some countries, especially among children and adolescents, precisely the social space that ICT have colonized.

This century is witnessing changes in the communicational system, due in part to industrial and cultural convergence, appropriations and various social uses which are generating an info-communicative system at individual and industrial levels that seeps into the daily media consumption of the individual and organizations, constructing a new symbolic-technological scenario in which each medium and ICT is finding its locus in individuals and social collectives.

This is also a time for creativity in media-influenced cultures. Languages are created and recreated at continental communication level due to the development of new ICT devices, but also because of the observation of individual and group consumption, appropriation and information distribution

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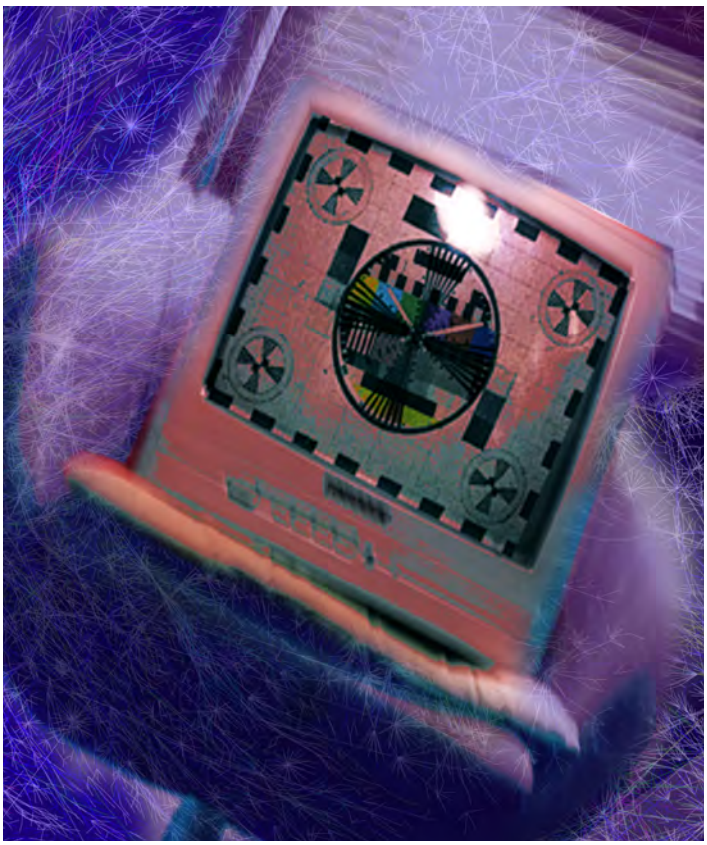
# Introduction

## Presentación



practices. Interactivity no longer occurs just in the ICT world; television and other industrial media forms have had to leave their sets and offices and go down to the street to observe and listen to the new habits that are being generated. In the info-communicative system, there is an evident shift away from a focus on the self to a focus on the «other» in order to capture the interest and loyalty of individuals in the new economy of attention. This has led to the current burgeoning use of ethnography, although we cannot forget that the precursors in this area were Brazilians who have used it to analyze their soap operas for decades.

This context of change in the sector has led to a renewal of communications policies; since the initial proposals of Luis Ramiro Beltran there has been a lot of movement in this area but progress has perhaps been less concrete than expected. The subject has been debated since the end of the last century, often in technical terms but equally as often in socio-political terms, based on the digitalization of television media. What started off as a technical issue now considers policy designs that span various positions, some closer to the interests of industry and others to individuals. Obviously the issue is more complex and has several relevant dimensions; and it is no less true that the characteristics that society assigns to television are what is ultimately being debated. While some have tried to dominate the debate with technical jargon, individuals and groups have begun to mobilize around this issue. A recent, relevant example is legislation for the sector in Argentina. If we all consume television, then why can't we, as citizens, decide its future as well?

As indicated, television is a central media form that is transforming as society changes. Although there is no consensus on the direction of the mutations we are experiencing at the macro- and micro-social level, there is at least agreement on the terms of the debate. On the one hand, decisions are increasingly placed on the shoulders of individuals, whereas just a few generations ago it was the groups and communities they belonged to that were the main actors in the ideas and expectations of a better future, and it was said: «you have to change society in order to be happier». Today we probably need to see society as overshadowed by institutionalized individualism, in the sense that Beck proposes. On the other hand, new issues are now at the center of public concern: the environment, cultural diversity and gender rights, among others. It is not that the issues of the last century are no longer valid –such as inequality and social injustice– it is that new realities mean different readings at the individual and social group level. It is within

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this context that we situate the articles of this monographic report in the latest edition of «Comunicar».

Let us review the authors' contributions.

The relationship established by teenagers with television is, and has been, a central topic of academic research and public debate. Quiroz (Universidad de Lima, Peru), using data obtained qualitatively and quantitatively in different urban areas of Peru, offers us an up-to-date perspective that reveals the wide-ranging use of television by this age group, especially by subjects in the provinces. For these adolescents, television is an integral part of their daily media consumption, and they do not establish distinctions between «new» and «old» media, since digital platforms and television play an equal part in their daily lives, based on their individual needs. Parents and teenagers value this audiovisual media type since it allows them to connect to different realities beyond their local communities, as a result broadening their subjective and cultural horizons, and also allowing them to learn (for example, on cable television) beyond school and teachers.

Television obviously has an industrial dimension that is necessary to understand in order to shed light on its evolution and future. Mastrini and Becerra (Universidad de Buenos Aires and Universidad Nacional de Quilmes in Argentina) offer valuable, interesting data on the extent of concentration and structure in television in Latin America's Southern Cone nations (Argentina, Chile and Uruguay, as well as Brazil). The trend points to a concentration in media structure that is complex and multi-dimensional. Factors that have generated this situation include industrial convergence resulting from digitalization and, especially, the emergence of Internet. Current media exploitation requires sustaining fixed costs that imply enormous capital outlay, and television is also a highly globalized media form that exceeds the limits of nation-states' authority, which merits changes to legislation. This is especially relevant as the growing media concentration of the last five years starts to affect cultural diversity and pluralism in those countries. The panorama presented by Mastrini and Becerra offers ample material for the public debate that has already begun in Argentina, and which is being generated in Chile and Uruguay.

The article by Phillipi and Avendaño (Universidad Diego Portales, Chile) deals with new challenges in this field from the Communication and Education perspective, based on transformations within the info-communicative system, as a particular result of digitalization and cultural convergence. The naturalization of the communications media, especially by teenagers and children, has generated conditions for allowing the subjects to develop their expressive habits. However, we must consider the subjective dimension of the construction of narratives and, at the same time, the growing participation in the debate on public issues, so as to create a stronger connection between the motivations of the subjects and the public space. The authors propose the development of «communicational empowerment» which, along with integrating and promoting the formation of communicative competences, can help narrate reality and life experiences from a personal and collective point of view. That is, participating in conversations and narrations that lead to social inclusion through the use of digital platforms based on daily life.

The vast majority of television news programs that talk about individuals in various parts of the world present news of natural disasters which destroy lives and natural resources and, in many cases, change the landscape. The attention and emotion invested in this type of information is discussed in the paper by Souza and Martinez, based on the earthquake that hit Chile in February 2010. In addition to a screen analysis that shows how Chilean television approached the issue, they include the perceptions and opinions of subjects on the television coverage of the earthquake. The guiding concept of the article is «emotional hyper-activation», which constitutes a form of television representation that uses the logic of spectacle, although situated along the informative line. Television has a double functionality: on the one hand «self-centered», giving more importance to capturing and keeping audience, so characteristic of a highly competitive television system and on the other, «socially-centered», guiding the actions of subjects in an environment that is not only destroyed physically but also confusing in terms of the appropriate actions needed to remain calm after the catastrophe. This is a highly valuable, original and innovative paper on a topic that is not much studied, because it approaches the issue from a double dimension: media representation and reception of disasters.

Lull and Neiva (University of San Jose in California and University of Alabama, USA) develop a central conceptual issue of communications and television phenomena. From a Darwinian perspective, they analyze the relationships between biological conditions and culture/communications and, on a

broader dimension, socio-cultural situations. The properties of culture –in which symbolic communicational processes are developed– allow us to go beyond cultural determinism, even overcoming perspectives generated by analytical frameworks of cultural imperialism and social contagion that have reappeared within the context of globalization. The communicative processes framed within the cultural realm, even in environments of dictatorship or media concentration, allow subjects to generate new proposals of meaning, especially using digital technology. Cultural innovation forms part of the conditions of existence and, in this sense, communications can contribute to the creation of conditions for a more inclusive and harmonious social life.

Just as James Lull has made significant contributions to research in television reception processes, in Latin America Valerio Fuenzalida (Pontificia Universidad Catolica, Chile) has contributed to the understanding of the relationship between television and education from the audience perspective. In his article, he presents an overview of the region with regard to the importance of subjects' education through television, which breaks free from the restricted view of education promoted by traditional schooling. His proposal –supported by empirical research during the 1980s– facilitates understanding of the different television genres from an educational point of view, from news to soap operas, including docu-reality shows, among others. In Latin America, television has helped people and groups to learn how to face life's challenges, given the low educational effectiveness of other social agencies. It is not about learning rational school topics dating back to the Age of the Enlightenment. In the home, subjects have developed educational expectations about television, as they connect proposals of television meaning to their existential realities, to their subjective private spaces. The article explores the spaces with most educational meaning, based on the appropriation of television by subjects.

Rincon (Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá, Colombia) deals with a fundamental issue in future television: new contents. The changes taking place in the info-communication system have a central component in culture, in the changing direction of meaning; just as some contents disappear, others open up new spaces for narrative experimentation and the search for new aesthetics according to new subjects and changing environments. Digitalization also offers the possibility of working creatively on multiple screens, with space for television stories based on the identities of groups that so far have had no television presence.

An issue that is always worthy of debate and research is the meaning of public television in the near future. These types of media inherent to the paradigm of public service, especially in the last century, have never before faced so many challenges and opportunities as presented by digitalization. Medina and Ojer (Universidad de Navarra and Universidad de San Jorge, Zaragoza, Spain) analyze the case of the BBC as an enriching public television experience in an age in which the market tends to close spaces not only to the public, but also to the third sector of communications. In this scenario of communications policy design and review, we must analyze these innovations in the public sphere in order to achieve a progress based on the possibilities offered by digital platforms.

Emotions are a fundamental aspect in the television experiences that we have and will have in the future. Fernandez, Revilla and Dominguez (Universidad Complutense and Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, Madrid, Spain) look at these from a social, discursive perspective, specifically based on focus group findings. This paper distinguishes between different dimensions in the complex emotional relationship between subjects and proposals of television meaning. This article can generate new practices in the area of individual education and training on television since, through adequate educational-communicative strategies, individuals can understand their own emotional registers in their interaction with television.

Finally Noguero, Aguilera and Borges (Universidad de Malaga, Spain) provide results and analysis of mobile TV from the perspective of teenagers. In this article, the multiple screens through which the television experience is lived will find information and a useful model for approaching this emerging Internet-generated reality. Here we question the (in)ability of the television industry to create contents according to the new forms of cultural consumption of today, especially those based on the characteristics of young people.

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# A New Meaning of Educational TV: from School to Audience's Everyday Life

## Resignificar la educación televisiva: desde la escuela a la vida cotidiana

RESUMEN

A través del análisis de la recepción de diversos géneros televisivos latinoamericanos, surgen dimensiones de una conceptualización de lo educativo –desde el punto de vista de los sujetos instalados en sus prácticas sociales cotidianas– más vinculada a lo afectivo que a lo cognitivo, conocimiento generado por la escuela formal. En este sentido, la programación televisiva es «re-significada» como educativa a partir de las necesidades de las audiencias, situadas en ambientes hogareños particulares. Los estudios de recepción muestran la calificación recurrente como «programa educativo» hacia espacios que, según la denominación académico-profesional, son periodísticos, magazines de entretenimiento y ficcionales. Esto plantea una oportunidad para las organizaciones y profesionales de la televisión, en términos de contribuir a mejorar la calidad de vida de las personas y, especialmente, de los niños y adolescentes. En el contexto latinoamericano, los retos de la televisión pública se sitúan en desplazar el eje desde lo propagandístico/coyuntural hacia procesos comunicacionales audiovisuales que den cuenta de las necesidades verbalizadas en diversas investigaciones en la región, especialmente para los grupos sociales que viven en condiciones de vida carenciadas, no solo en lo económico, sino también en ambientes marcados por la inseguridad y la exclusión étnica.

ABSTRACT

When analyzing the reception of different Latin American television genres, it can be seen how education is conceptualized –from the point of view of subjects inserted in their daily social practices– as more greatly linked to affectivity than to cognition, thus distinguishing it from knowledge generated through formal schooling. In this sense, television programming has come to be redefined as educational, based on the audiences' needs in each of their different home environments. Reception studies show that various programs are frequently classified as «educational programs», including news/journalistic programs, entertainment and fictional shows. This presents an opportunity for organizations and professionals of television to contribute to the improvement in the quality of life of their audience members, especially children and adolescents. With regards to the specific challenges that Latin American public television face, it is necessary to shift the axis from propaganda/situational to audiovisual programs that take into account the verbalized needs of various research projects in the region, especially for social groups that suffer not only financial disadvantages, but also those dealing with insecurity and ethnic exclusion.

KEYWORDS / PALABRAS CLAVE

TV, recepción, resignificación, telenovela, TV infantil, género televisivo, audiencia, exclusión social.
Broadcasting TV, reception process, meaning from the audience, telenovela, children's TV, audience.

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## 1. Introduction

Both in Europe and Japan, TV (especially public television) was originally conceived as educational, in the way that it aided formal instruction in schools in countries devastated as a result of World War II. The initial idea of teaching through open and generalized public TV has since then evolved towards a more efficient model of instructional TV, operated by specialized and segmented channels; in this way, open television would appear to have lost its educational function. Reception studies on Latin American audiences show that various programs are frequently classified as «educational programs», including news/journalistic programs, entertainment and fictional shows. This article will discuss research on the audience's new understanding of what is «educational».

## 2. New educational meaning for the audience

During the 1980s, the Chilean research center CENECA, created during the period of dictatorship (1973-1990) and supported by international aid, carried out research studies on television reception in rural areas of Chile, as well as in lower-class urban sectors in the capital city of Santiago, which were aimed at boosting active reception. The perception of TV by male and female adolescents and adults was studied throughout the country; perceptions were compared among base groups and leaders of these groups. Several complementary techniques were used to collect data: surveys, on-site focus groups, and individual interviews.

### 2.1. The resignified meaning of reporting

The program «Special Report», a journalistic reporting show, was first aired on TVN (a national channel operated by the dictatorship) in 1984 and achieved high ratings in the sectors being studied. It was appreciated by poorer sectors that, ironically, were very critical of the informative services of TVN, a channel known for its pro-dictatorship propaganda. This appreciation and perception of the journalistic program as being educational forced researchers to work with the groups in order to understand the semantics verbalized by the same audience (they discarded the possibility of disqualifying the audience's interpretation as «uninformed» or «abnormal»), and they concluded that the «educational» classification of the program was made up of two complementary aspects:

a) The topics or contents presented on the show were important for dealing with and improving the daily life of the family of the audience; thus the content considered educational was different from the curricular topics presented in formal schooling.

b) Secondly, the way the program was created and produced was considered educational, where the opinions of a journalist, television host or academic expert were not so important as the those of people who the audience believed were more like them; the experiential/testimonial form of expression appeared highly attractive, believable and was considered educational (Fuenzalida & Hermosilla, 1989).

This «educational» classification could be contrasted with the negative perception by members of the middle and upper classes, who saw the show as sensationalist, or yellow press. Reinterpretation, reclassification and resignification were academic terms that emerged to explain the audience's perception of «educational» content.

### 2.2. The program «Tierra Adentro» (Inland)

It was possible to redesign this program (aired in post-dictatorship Chile by TVN and then by other channels) with information obtained in the previously mentioned studies on television reception in rural areas. The analysis of the narrative structure led to the concept «Competitive reporting», a narrative form that presents the actions taken by a person to face situations that he or she must resolve; it puts the focus back on the subject and his or her actions; that is, the prominence is focused on the acting subject rather than on the narrator, or on experts, or social work agencies, or public agencies. From its first design inspired by a thirst for innovation, where the protagonists/speakers teach rural audiences, the program evolved to present «on-site» protagonists/speakers, highlighting their actions and creativity.

The program wanted to bring to the TV screen the physically expressed role of the rural speaker in order to broaden this role for the audience, through recognition and identification, as a way to generate empowerment through communications. Highlighting the role of working-class subjects was a means to promote their activities and creative initiative. The stimulation of empowerment through recognition and identification is considered indispensable in cultures where the working classes have been traditionally represented as being passive, resigned to fatalism, and incapacitated.

This fatalism and incapacitation have deliberately been promoted by some social leaders that attempt to show them as the only «saviors» in social situations of adversity (Fuenzalida, 2005).

### 2.3. Understanding genre: docudrama

In 1993 TVN began to air on prime time the police docudrama «Mea Culpa»; the program was a dramatization of real crime cases, in which criminals often appeared on screen to repent of their criminal behavior. The most common denomination of TV docudramas alludes to a hybrid between the informative genre (that documents a real event related to serious misfortunes) and a story represented fictionally by actors, which narrates the uncertainties and insecurities regarding the case. In Latin America, the genre is created by following the narrative form of a soap opera.

Rating measurements indicated that the docudrama «Mea Culpa» was very popular, especially with the working class sectors. Qualitative reception studies showed polarized perceptions. Members of the upper classes perceived the program as sensationalist, tear-jerking, and believed it should be taken off the air since it could cause damage. The middle and working classes, although critical of some aspects of the program, saw it as realistic, with the potential to prevent crime, as well as educational. At times, parents admitted having called their young children to come watch the program and discuss it is a family, since they saw it as a program that would teach about real life and its dangers.

The interpretation of the program as educational, this time in the genre of docudrama, once again pointed towards the fact that it was perceived as educational because the topics related to the real lives of the audience and because it followed a testimonial/experiential storytelling structure.

Later reception studies on other docudramas showed that the audience often participates in family discussions, comparing their own life experiences with the fictional experiences of the real people-characters represented, and often have group discussions about what they would do in similar situations. There is a cognitive-emotional relationship of recognition. The fictional/real plot provides an intra-textual representation of situations that are relevant to their own lives – that is, the representation contains analogy and verisimilitude. The topics presented, the speakers, and the testimonial/experiential narrative structure are considered to be realistic for audiences that involve themselves in the text. Along with the process of recognition, there is also a process of emotional-cognitive identification, as defined by Jauss (1982) to explain the receptor's identification with fictional characters, that is, their own experiences (of the audience) with the experiences of the other (fictional).

> Research indicates that the audience does not value programs that are construed in an academic and harsh emotional tone of «teaching ignorant people»; on the other hand, the audience appreciates communication with a caring, inspirational and energetic tone when talking about housework and difficulties at home. Moreover, they highlight brief segments with useful information to help resolve the various needs at home. When the audience feels appreciated and accompanied by the program, this also translates into acceptance and confidence in the professional content.

### 2.4. Documentary reality

This genre, which has been introduced recently and has received wide acceptance on primetime television, has also been interpreted by the audience as going in the «educational» direction, but also at times a deliberate use of these new interpretations. The documentary-reality shows a substantial preservation of its informative-documentary character; it presents topics that affect everyday people (as in docudramas) such as diseases, vices, mistakes, cheating, jails, and reinsertion into society. However, the narration is not represented by unknown actors: the narration is like a documentary with the on-screen presence of the same subjects that suffer misfortunes, with their names, homes and daily lives. The subjectivity of the particular individual, which appears extra-textually,

provides an audiovisual narration and representation of a problem that is not only individual but also more general, and therefore allows the identification of a wider audience, through analogy and plausibility. The presence of the same affected person in the audiovisual narration, with an extra-textual life, represents the factual nature and provides the documentary/indicative meaning to the extra-textual reality of the events. They are narrations of real and difficult cases, in which the topic is presented in a personalized manner, that is, from individual subjectivity, and not from the conceptual generalization of a topic taken from existential life. This personalized narration makes it attractive and provokes a greater understanding of the contents.

A «television education», as opposed to curricular schooling, carried out in lucid-emotional audiovisual language could help enhance capabilities such as empowerment and reliance, which nowadays are considered to be indispensable to overcome social adversity. These new perspectives with educative materials of Latin American audiences could also be useful for television channels throughout Africa and Asia whose television audiences have daily problems in the home which are much closer to those of Latin American than those of developed countries.

### 2.5. Morning shows and service programs

Another genre includes morning shows that tend to accompany housewives while they perform their housework. There is evidence that they at their best they offer a mix between entertaining company and educational help for certain home needs, in order to improve the quality of family life and resolve problems at home, and to deal with psychosomatic diseases, poor sexual and emotional relations, domestic violence, low school performance, drugs and others; but also social problems such as poor quality health, education, safety and other services.

These genres have become popular in morning television programming in Latin America, with examples of both good and bad production (Fuenzalida, 2000). The sensationalism of some programs, and even complicity with corrupt politicians (Fujimore and Montesinos in Peru, both currently in prison), cannot cause the general condemnation of these genres, since there are some programs that are well done, entertaining and responding to the educational expectations of the audience.

Research indicates that the audience does not value programs that are construed in an academic and harsh emotional tone of «teaching ignorant people»; on the other hand, the audience appreciates communication with a caring, inspirational and energetic tone when talking about housework and difficulties at home. Moreover, they highlight brief segments with useful information to help resolve the various needs at home. When the audience feels appreciated and accompanied by the program, this also translates into acceptance and confidence in the professional content.

Many channels broadcast other service programs that are focused on topics of health, legal consultation, searching for missing people, affective relationships, conflict resolution and others. The structure is different from the morning shows: they present topically-segmented contents, with a relatively empathetic host that receives questions and testimonies from people that come on the show or call in. There are sensationalist programs, which are accused of buying testimonies or paying actors to fake on-screen confrontations; these sensationalist programs are often interpreted by the audience as more or less comedic shows. Programs appreciated as educational have, on the other hand, hosts that demonstrate traits of reliability, affective warmth, seriousness, consultation with qualified professionals, and an emotional tone that tries to communicate assertiveness and positive energy to the audience. Clearly the audience puts into play their ability to empathize with the host, to recognize situations that affect their daily lives, and to identify with people/speakers whose testimony is considered useful for learning to face similar situations.

### 2.6. Exploration of female identity in soap opera fictions

An important part of female educational expectations has to do with seeing the issue of female identity expressed on TV, the exploration of different possibilities for women to live and to act. This is a topic of not only an intellectual and academic nature, but rather one that vitally affects female existence.

Before presenting some of the cases of educational interpretations in soap operas, we should first review the changing perceptions of gender. In effect, the soap opera has been shown by Latin American TV since the 1980s within an atmosphere of strong disapproval: it is stigmatized by the cultural elite as a third-world primitive narrative; the male audience makes fun of the stories directed towards women; the first feminist criticism considered it to be alienating for women; and social leaders have repeated this criticism. Carlos Kunde (1988) synthesizes these points of view in his criticism of soap operas on the Red Globo de Brasil (a Brazilian television channel): they are perceived as a pleasurable form of anesthesia or sedative in order to preserve the daily alienation of the exploited worker and the submission of the Latin American woman. Latin America in the 80s experienced a process of gender revision, led by Jesus Martin Barbero from Colombia (1992): he investigated its origins, which seems more tied to melodramatic pop culture and oral narrative; under this new perspective, the soap opera has slowly moved away from its image as sub-literature or bastardization of the written narrative.

One of the most important conclusions of some reception studies is that the fiction of the soap opera allows for the exploration of situations and characters related to the daily lives of women and families: events, aspirations, possible models, or alternative courses of action. Recognition and exploration of situations, and identification with characters, are processes that the audience actively carries out as a result of the soap opera narrative and in dialogue with their own experiences. In this broader sense, it is possible to talk about the «educational» resignification done by the audience with regards to soap operas. Some studies on soap opera reception allow these educational interpretations to be illustrated.

Fadul (1993) along with other Brazilian researchers, when examining 25 years of Brazilian soap operas, have shown the introduction of new female roles in the fictions, and conclude that the soap opera provided an early introduction to the modern day controversies on female identity, much more so than the written press. Fadul has documented how the soap opera has provoked a more specific discussion within families about the aspirations between girls and their mothers, and the consequences of these new forms of life in the post-ponement of pregnancy and birth control (Fadul & al., 1996; Hornik & McAnany, 2001).

In Uruguay, Rosario Sánchez has studied the reception of Brazilian soap operas through in-depth interviews with some women (Sánchez, 2000). The reception shows the process of in which the audience gets involved with or distances itself from the text; this process refers to confrontations with the own lives of the audience and on topics that resonate strongly with them. In this sense, it is the environmental culture that will define the topics of greater confrontational interest: submitting to or dominating a situation, traditional women versus modern day women, and the path to liberation through learning for some of the characters.

A reception study on the Mexican soap opera «María Isabel» (aired by Televisa) by Mexican-American teenagers is indicative of resignified inter-pretations, based on the lives of the viewers. These were second generation immigrants in the United States with permanent cultural ties to their relatives in Mexico and with exposure to Mexican television programming, particularly soap operas. The heroine of the soap opera was an indigenous young girl who is inserted into the life of the Mexican aristocracy in Mexico City, but without wanting to lose her own original indigenous identity. The young viewers saw the situation of the heroine of the program from their own complex emotional experience of being inserted into U.S. society but without wanting to forget their Mexican roots. (Mayer, 2003).

## 3. Education in children's shows

Another case is the educational re-conceptualization of children's TV programs. According to infor-mation on the ethnography of child consumption at home, children return psycho-somatically exhausted from school (performance situation), due to long days, and they are sometimes frustrated and humiliated by their poor performance, by violence among classmates or by teachers. This exhaustion is certainly accentuated in poor and undernourished sectors. When coming back home from school, the existential/situational emotional state of the children in front of the TV is primarily to rest and relax both physically and psycho-logically. Mothers typically feed their children at this time, while the children eat and relax watching TV, sometimes simultaneously playing, fighting, reading or

doing homework, etc. Neurobiology indicates that the move from a performance situation to another of rest is accompanied by a biochemical change in the para-sympathetic autonomous nervous-motor system: the system stops secreting adrenaline and other neurotransmitters appropriate for attention and tension associated with performance activities, and then, begins to secrete endorphins and serotonins, neuro-transmitters for psychosomatic situations of relaxation and rest. Television consumption at home is then coupled with rest.

But also the manner of producing children's tele-vision is changing, and this implies different symbolic representations of the child and the adult within the text (Mannetti, 1998). There is evidence of a move away from the structural form developed initially for children's programs, in which an adult directed (present on screen or off-camera voice) the children's television program. This model was taken from school: the adult teacher that teaches the child, who must passively learn knowledge from the adult. The new programs symbolically represent children in an active and protagonist role, carrying out activities and tasks in which they show themselves to be capable of creative initiative and intelligent problem-solving; «Bob the Builder» (US, 1999) and «Dora the Explorer» (US, 2000) are emblematic of these changes.

An analysis of various children's programs, especially animated, shows other recurrent structures. Television works with playful-dramatic structures that constitute generative models, in the sense that they are the creative basis of many programs; these generative models constitute playful-symbolic forms of representation of the child within the text (Fuenzalida, 2005).

Some children's shows that kids enjoy watching are based on a basic generative model of the clumsy adult character who poorly or clumsily performs activities that, as an adult, he or she should perform well. The structure is even more eloquent when representing child characters that carry out activities that the clumsy adults cannot. This structure appears in the series «Inspector Gadget»: the adult inspector is a klutz, despite all of his surprising gadgets; it is his young niece (Penny) and her dog (Brain) who resolve the police cases. Film has used this structure very successfully and enthusiastically in movie series like «Home Alone». In many cartoons we find another very basic generative structure that is notably attractive for children: the fight between weak and strong. This is the traditional structure of «Tom and Jerry», and with the incessant attempts of the cat Sylvester to catch the canary (Tweety Bird). The structure appears in cartoons about sports competitions where the weakest confront the strongest and most deceitful boys. Chaplin used this model of circus clowns and took it to his short films, where he appeared as a weak little man fighting against a giant, and other physically enormous characters. Children's identification with the playful-dramatic plots of cartoons is related to the reinter-pretation done by psychiatrist Bruno Bettelheim on traditional fairy tales; these are attractive because they confirm the ability of the child-weak person to survive in a complex, adverse, violent and a hostile world where children can be abandoned by their own parents or devoured by ogres and witches. For Bettleheim, the playful nature allows children to understand their emotions, strengthening their sense of self while suggesting positive reactions before adverse and violent situations, allowing them to overcome their worries, feelings of despair and weakness, lack of affection and insecurity (Bettelheim, 1980).

### 3.1. Education in new children's TV programs

The most traditional concept of what is considered «educational» in children's TV programs was defined by adults, and was associated with schooling: «educational and quality» programs were considered as those directed at improving children's performance in school (pre-school, reading, numbers, scientific information, etc.) and certain socially desirable values.

The playful-dramatic structures mentioned come into contact, on the other hand, with the motivations and affective needs of the child. While watching these entertainment shows for psychosomatic rest, through humoristic pleasure of recognition and playful identification, the child can feel formative attitudes of happiness and strength for growing in the world. These TV programs can, then, precisely boost affective and attitudinal areas that are mostly neglected in school and family formation. It is possible to notice the influence of these new post-rationalist and post-Cartesian conceptualizations that highlight the value of emotion in anthropogenesis: the conscience begins as a feeling under Damasio's theory (2000); according to this author, the human-ontogenetic structure is existentially bi-perceptual: emotional and rational; the mere rational-linguistic conscience is not enough for proper human and social life.

In this way, the concept of the formative potential of children's programs has become disassociated with cognitive contents and formal schooling educational forms (and therefore from the TV representation of

the professor/host), and is assuming more of the development of social and affective aspects, such as self-esteem and confidence in their own abilities to confront the challenges of growing up and overcoming adversity, through identification with the characters on children's TV shows.

### 4. Reception of education, television, entertainment

Research on over 20 years of reception of genres reformulated as educational by audiences requires a re-conceptualization of the relationship between open TV –fictional entertainment– and education. Ethnographic research within the Latin American home shows cultural-educational expectations that are accentuated in the working and middle classes; this is not related to the formal schooling of children or to the systematic training of adolescents or adults, an instructive function that is considered to belong exclusively to the school and other formal agencies. These educational expectations, on the other hand, are associated with learning to solve problems and adversity that emerge in daily home life (Fuenzalida, 2005). This «educational» reformulation presents some important characteristic changes.

a) First, it breaks with the initial synonymy between TV education and formal schooling, while presenting expectations to learn about existential situations in the home and problem-solving related to the daily lives of the audience.

b) Second, learning occurs from within the spatial-temporal situation of reception – entertainment and more through emotional identification than through analytical-conceptual reasoning. Unlike formal schooling and professional training, these situational educational expectations are woven within television entertainment, and not within curricular systemizations. In television shows, the testimonial experience (fictional or real) is more valued as educational by the audience than conceptual presentations by academic experts with general rules. The new understanding of the human cognitive-emotional bi-perception restores entertainment's potential for playful-reflexive pleasure. Entertainment is appreciated for its potentially productive aspect, as an exploratory experience of other possible situations and behaviors.

c) Third, learning requires the participation and active interest of the audience in relation to the topic presented; interaction with the program and the involvement of the audience is key, and it does not support the old assumption of a passive and alienated receptor before a dominantly and deterministically omnipotent text.

d) Fourth, the study on home audiences shows six concepts related to the reception processes, concepts that were once discarded in academic theory about audience/TV interaction. These are:

• The importance of the concept of the reception situation, such as the socio-cultural space-time from which the audiences are interpreting what they see. In the past, the receptor appeared abstract, without socio-cultural insertion or characteristics. The reception processes brings up the social context from which the receptor interprets and the cultural capital of the audience, with whose resources they interact with the television text. The concept of the situation of reception also offers useful rules for producing texts that are appropriate for audiences situated in different space-times.

> One of the most important conclusions of some reception studies is that the fiction of the soap opera allows for the exploration of situations and characters related to the daily lives of women and families: events, aspirations, possible models, or alternative courses of action. Recognition and exploration of situations, and identification with characters, are processes that the audience actively carries out as a result of the soap opera narrative and in dialogue with their own experiences. In this broader sense, it is possible to talk about the «educational» resignification done by the audience with regards to soap operas.

• The concept of intra-textual representation of the audiences themselves within the genres and programs; in the audiovisual language, representation is analogous-indicatively and substantially through the «signifying body» (Verón, 2001). This semiotic type of indicativeness explains that many sectors of the audience appreciate the experiential representation of problems and particular situations embodied in testimonial subjects, more than verbal speeches with general laws, typical of academic abstraction.

• The processes of intra-textual readings of the audiences regarding singular programs; intra-textual readings about the program announcers, but also the intra-textual activity of comparing statements and receptors, according to the socio-cultural capital and situation of reception.

• The concept that describes the receptive processes of recognition (or non-recognition), a concept that has a cognitive touch where the receptor subject compares his or her own condition intellectually or rationally (from his or her cultural capital) to the iconic-indicative representation.

• The process of identification (or not) with the subjects represented in the text; the conceptualization of Jauss (1982) appears to be the best heuristic tool for understanding the affective processes that empirically occur in groups from the audience. This conception that is defined as the experience of oneself (receptor) within the fictional experience (different) is what best describes the complex comparative (emotional-fruitful) and educational-entertainment process.

• The processes of resignification and interpretation by the audiences; active processes, where the audiences interact with the texts and read them from their own cultural capital and situations of reception. They are not, thus, passive readings, inexorably imposed from the text, but interactive re-readings from the complex situations of reception of the audiences (ages, cultural capital, existential problems, etc.).

## 5. Home and TV: changes and limitations

The re-conceptualization about what is «educational», which has emerged from the daily lives of the Latin American television viewer, shows an overlapping of TV and home. This overlapping occurs in the broader cultural context of the current reformulation of home as a significant existential situation for audiences. To this effect, there are at least four macro-influences in the West that come together to influence the reinterpretation of the home:

a) In comparison to the steam energy tied to industrial production (1775), one century later, Edison conceived the development of electrical energy tied to the home. Later, the telephone, radio and phonograph began to be incorporated into the home, and after World War II, there was a massive trend to equip the home with appliances. Electrical equipment tends to constitute the home as a center for entertainment; with the Internet, the home also has become a center for work and network communications.

b) The birth control pill in the 1960s separated Eros from conception and introduced a drastic change in sexual behavior and concepts. Film and TV massively represented the new eroticized body in physical/audiovisual signifiers, introducing bi-perceptual awareness (cognitive-emotional) of the audio-visualized body and sexuality. The new anthropological concept restored value to the body, sex and pleasure.

c) In the 1980s, there was a political-ideological crisis that dethroned the concept of the public space as the only place for psychological and historical realization; instead of conceiving the space and subjectivity of private life as historical-psychological alienation, renewed value was given to subjectivity and private life, as well as family and interpersonal emotional relationships.

d) Visibility and legitimacy of the home through the TV and publicity, fiction, daily programs; there was a surge of «lifestyle» home channels, such as Casa Club TV, Gourmet, People+Arts, Utilísima, Food & Wine, Home & Health, The Body Channel, etc.

These influences together tend to give value back to private home life and discredit the concept developed during the Enlightenment about the home as an existential situation of psychological and historical alienation. The limits between private and public life have been diluted and interpenetrate each other: important problems that occur within the private sphere receive visibility and become public problems, as is the case of domestic violence.

Within this Western context of culturally reformulating the home, Latin American shows some particularities: it is a region that has reached a level of 90% homes with television. But the region also shows insecurity and crime, with the highest homicide rates in the world, according to UN-Habitat. The region also exhibits the greatest income inequality in the world. There are still strong ethnic exclusions; public services do not manage to overcome colonially inherited problems such as mistreatment and deceit of the people. The Latin American home, the situation of reception of television broadcasting, is very different

from homes in North American countries; poverty affects 34.1% of Latin American homes, that is, 189 million people; 76 million of them live in destitution, with access to less than 1.25 dollars a day, the limit determined by the World Bank to define destitution (CEPAL, 2009). This context helps us understand the educational expectations towards the TV to face difficult daily problems. The new conceptulization of what is educative-television opens two windows of opportunity tele-vision which is effectively contributing to Latin American audiences with their own characteristics and necessities:

• On the one hand, the possibility to make mass-reception television programs in diverse entertainment genres with themes pertaining to the problems and necessities of the audience's daily life.

• On the other hand, children's television representing awareness or rather the exploration of the children's own emotions, the enhancing of their self-esteem, and securing, through fictional identification, of the self-confidence in their internal capabilities of growth and achievement. Digital technology allows a national public channel that is targeted at the child audience.

A «television education», as opposed to curricular schooling, carried out in lucid-emotional audiovisual language could help enhance capabilities such as empowerment and reliance, which nowadays are considered to be indispensable to overcome social adversity. These new perspectives with educative materials of Latin American audiences could also be useful for television channels throughout Africa and Asia whose television audiences have daily problems in the home which are much closer to those of Latin American than those of developed countries.

But the same Latin American context also shows the limits of the educational expectations that the audience places on TV. Television has the real possibility to help people and groups that affect adversity in their home lives, and this educational possibility of TV is consistent with a recent trend in social action that wagers that –more than measuring the shortcomings of the poor– we should diagnose their abilities and resources, in order to strengthen them and convert them into active subjects of their own survival. But this potential of TV does not mask the fact that the region requires important macro social and political changes. These limits must be recognized, although it will not be possible to develop them in this text. We will refer you to other texts in which we also present the expectations of the Latin American audiences with regards to political action, and where Public TV clearly appears as a form of communication that must abandon its traditional function of propaganda for current dictators, leaders and governors; it must, instead, assume the function of communicating in favor of the audiences, contributing to an improvement in the quality of regional politics with important renewed political communications (Fuenzalida, 2007).

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# Communicating Culture: An Evolutionary Explanation

## Hacia una nueva conceptualización evolutiva de la comunicación «cultural»

ABSTRACT
Whether gathering around bonfires, watching TV, or sitting in front of computer screens, the pressures of Darwinian natural selection have forced individuals into tight patterns of interdependency, welded together by communication links. Can the information-sharing behavior of our species ever be brought into broader perspective and eventually foster greater harmony for all humankind? The authors argue that the answer to this question is «yes». Culture provides the necessary space for social negotiation and change. Advanced communication ability is the means by which this necessary cultural work is perpetually accomplished. A non-deterministic understanding of culture must be acknowledged from the outset. Cultural life differs greatly from biological conditions. Even under repressive conditions, culture is not determined the same way viral infections ravage biological bodies or computers. Technological advances in communication do not simply reinforce and intensify top-down, dominant cultural messages as theories of imperialism, memetic transmission, or social contagion contend. The pace of cultural development over the past 10,000 years has been particularly fast compared to any other time since hominids split from our common ancestor with chimpanzees millions of years ago. Our species' unique skill as communicators in the dynamic technological and cultural environment of today offers real hope for retrieving the primordial affinities that unite us all.

RESUMEN
Ya sea reunidos alrededor de una fogata, viendo TV o sentados frente a la pantalla del computador, las presiones de la selección natural darwiniana han forzado a los individuos a ceñirse a cerrados patrones de interdependencia, los que a su vez han sido estructurados mediante lazos comunicacionales. ¿Puede ser analizado este hábito de compartir información de nuestra especie desde una perspectiva más amplia y, eventualmente, fomentar una mayor armonía para toda la Humanidad? Los autores sostienen que la respuesta a esta pregunta es afirmativa. La cultura proporciona el espacio necesario para la negociación y el cambio social, y la habilidad de comunicación avanzada es el medio por el cual este trabajo cultural necesario se logra perpetuamente. Una comprensión no-determinista de la cultura debe ser reconocida desde el principio. La vida cultural difiere mucho de las condiciones biológicas; incluso bajo circunstancias represivas, la cultura no evoluciona de la misma manera que las infecciones virales devastan los cuerpos biológicos o los ordenadores. Así los avances tecnológicos en la comunicación simplemente no refuerzan e intensifican verticalmente los mensajes culturales dominantes, como sostienen las teorías del imperialismo, la transmisión memética, o el contagio social. La marcha del desarrollo cultural, durante los pasados 10.000 años, ha sido particularmente rápida, comparada con cualquier otro lapso desde que los homínidos se separaron de nuestro común ancestro con los chimpancés, hace millones de años. La habilidad única de nuestra especie como comunicadora, en el dinámico entorno tecnológico y cultural actual, es una esperanza real para recuperar las afinidades primordiales que nos unen como seres humanos.

KEYWORDS / PALABRAS CLAVE
Evolution, evolutionary communication, culture, meme, cultural transmission, cultural development.
Evolución, comunicación evolutiva, cultura, transmisión cultural, desarrollo cultural.

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## 1. Communicating culture: an evolutionary explanation

«You're the leader of a primitive village. If you want to survive in a hostile world, you must evolve! In «The Adventures of Darwin» you will drive the evolution of your village from a small group of simple primates to a powerful, intelligent colony of humans. Lead your tribe on adventures, teach them to hunt, teach them to build, and teach them the simple power of language...». The Sony PlayStation video game, «The Adventures of Darwin», encourages gamers, many of whom are in their early formative years, to see the world through evolutionary eyes[1]. In a simple but cogent way, the game highlights the important link between emerging forms of ancient social organization and the empowering force of human communication. Over the millennia our ancestors acquired an unequaled ability to share information, form and maintain social relationships, innovate, and develop advanced civilizations and cultures because we became the most skilled communicators on Earth.

Driven by the relentless pressure of natural and sexual selection, the emerging modes of human communication steered human evolution in productive directions and accelerated the speed with which social and cultural change occurs. Communication complexity evolved with social complexity. Two factors motivated the synergy: 1) communication ability makes high level social interaction possible, and 2) effective social interaction greatly increases an organism's prospects for survival. The defining characteristics of modern civilization developed because of evolutionary advantages brought about by language and other forms of advanced communication marks «perhaps the only clear distinction between people and other species» (Wade, 2006).

It wasn't always so. A fortuitous progression of biological mutations and behavioral changes eventually endowed humans with the capacity to express themselves in sophisticated ways and coordinate their efforts to survive. This development helped change the status our species from that of scavenger and the prey of larger and faster beasts to innovator and successful predator. Beneficial variations developed to further advantage and continue to do so. Every major stage in the development of human communication represents a vital evolutionary transition (Maynard Smith & Szathmáry, 1995).

## 2. Within, without

Whether gathering around bonfires, watching TV, or sitting in front of computer screens, selection pressures and the biological requirements of reproduction forced individuals into tight patterns of interdependency welded by communication links. Can such time-tested and productive loyalties ever be brought into broader perspective and eventually overcome in order to bring about greater harmony for all humankind?

Genes replicate. People imitate. Genes don't think about what they're doing. People presumably do. Nature and culture do not make up separate spheres of life; culture stems from nature. But processes of biological and cultural change differ in fundamental and important ways. That's where the hope resides.

Biological replication is comparatively direct. Among sexual species, genetic information passes from parent to offspring as sequences of DNA and transmission takes place only once—at the moment of conception. Once the seed is planted, nature does the rest of the work. Success of the organism depends largely on the physical tolerance and nurturing qualities of the parents, especially females, and sheer good luck. In this sense, biological inheritance is passive. Cultural transmission, on the other hand, occurs when information that exists outside biological organisms passes from one generation to the next through social communication. The process is far less straightforward than genetic replication. While biological mutations are random and selected post hoc, cultural choices are motivated from the beginning.

Culture is hard won. It resists change, especially for the short term, but is not set in stone. To the contrary, «culture provides the necessary space for negotiation and change. Advanced social communication ability is the means by which this work is accomplished». Some ideas perform evolutionary functions more effectively than others. Ultimately those ideas will be selected. Directed cultural evolution –or cultural development– operates with the power of conscious reflection and reason.

Our biological selves are not determined by genes and our cultural selves are not dictated by tradition. They travel an uncharted course together adapting to environments that are also changing in a never ending process of biocultural feedback (Johanson & Edgar, 2006). As Geertz (1973: 48) described it, «Between the cultural pattern, the body, and the brain, a positive feedback system was created in which each shaped progress of the other»).

Genes make up stretches of DNA that contain instructions for making protein molecules[2]. They function like a recipe for biological growth and

behavior. The ingredients and cooking process, however, are set by the environment (Richerson & Boyd, 2006: 9). Gene-culture interaction may even help explain one of the great mysteries of human behavior—how the psychological dispositions of individuals and the internal cultural patterns of groups shape consciousness and prompt people to act in specific ways[3]. Human behavior appears to shift over time from that which is learned by observation to something that is programmed and stored in the brain by genetic assimilation learning (Pinker & Bloom, 1990). Those behaviors that afford a fitness advantage will be repeated and selected. The resulting genetic structure then reflects the inculcated behavior and helps direct its future deployment.

As Steven Pinker, a key proponent of this idea, points out, «genes can't pull the levers of our behavior directly. But they affect the wiring and workings of the brain, and the brain is the seat of our drives, temperaments, and patterns of thought» (Pinker, 2009: 26). Because a person has an inherited genetic tendency for obesity, for example, doesn't mean the individual will become obese. The environment also contributes to the way behavior unfolds, but in Pinker's words, «the environment is not a stamping machine that pounds us into shape, but a cafeteria of options which our genes and our histories incline us to choose» (Pinker, 2009: 29).

A fortuitous progression of biological mutations and behavioral changes eventually endowed humans with the capacity to express themselves in sophisticated ways and coordinate their efforts to survive. This development helped change the status our species from that of scavenger and the prey of larger and faster beasts to innovator and successful predator.

### 3. Memes

More than thirty years ago, Richard Dawkins put forward the idea that organic life's basic unit explains evolution's long term outcomes: «They are in you and in me; they created us, body and mind, and their preservation is the ultimate rationale for our existence. They have come a long way, those replicators. Now they go by the name of genes, and we are their survival machines» (Dawkins, 1989: 20).

The title of his book, «The Selfish Gene», reveals Dawkins' argument. Rather than looking at human evolution from the point of view of the individual organisms or particular groups that have survived, we should think of evolution from the perspective of the genes that have been passed on from generation to generation over the millennia. Of course biological inheritance and genes alone don't explain the totality of human evolution. Wrestling with this very issue in the same volume, Dawkins briefly introduced the meme as a way to conceptualize, if not fully explain, the presence, proliferation, and appeal of certain cultural themes and traits. The question is profound. Why do some cultural ideas inspire enduring widespread acceptance and utility? Drawing illustrative parallels between genetic replication and cultural transmission, Dawkins (1989: 192) speculated on how cultural ideas might establish and maintain their influence: «Just as genes propagate themselves in the gene pool by leaping from body to body via sperms or eggs, so memes propagate themselves in the meme pool by leaping from brain to brain via a process which, in the broad sense, can be called imitation».

Since the publication Dawkins' groundbreaking work, the meme has found a place in scientific reasoning and the English language. The Oxford English dictionary defines a meme as «an element of culture that may be considered to be passed on by non-genetic means, especially imitation». Some social scientists talk about memes when describing the rapid circulation of cultural phenomena. The meme has seeped into contemporary popular culture. The meme is a succinct, catchy, and sensible descriptor of a huge and unwieldy idea.

Its attractiveness, however, can mislead. Dawkins (2006a: 191) himself does not claim that memes resemble genes precisely or that any theory of memes adequately explains how cultural transmission takes place. Genetic replication is not the same as social imitation. «I am not saying that memes necessarily are close analogues of genes, Dawkins explains, only that

the more like genes they are, the better will meme theory work». He proposed the concept of the meme as a way to describe a reproductive agent capable of spreading ideas and producing cultural patterns. More than thirty years after introducing the concept, Dawkins (2006b) again made it clear that he «never wanted to push [memes] as a theory of human culture, [but] almost as an anti-gene point– to make the point that Darwinism requires accurate replicators with phenotypic power, but they don't necessarily have to be genes».

### 4. Memes, Viruses

Despite Dawkins' warnings, the meme has become a meme itself –an idea that has caught on. But if memes exist, how do they travel, enter individual minds, and affect consciousness? The American philosopher Daniel Dennett argues that the passing of cultural ideas from one person to another corresponds to the way multicellular organisms first came into being (Dennett, 1995). Although scientists have yet to explain with certainty how multicellular organisms appeared on Earth, the best guess is that various parasites invaded and inhabited the original unicellular organisms as they reproduced asexually in the primeval soup. This merging of unicellular organisms gave rise to biological symbiosis and engendered the first signs of multicellular life. Dennett suggests the same kind of evolutionary template structures the way memes invade and accumulate in human minds. A process of assimilation enables the transfer of cultural elements from one person to another leading to creation of widespread cultural themes and social norms. The meme, in Dennett's memorable phrase, is a «data structure with attitude» (Dennett, 2009).

The British psychologist Susan Blackmore defines the very existence of modern cultures as «the legacy of thousands of years of memetic evolution» (Blackmore, 1999: 182). Memes «are instructions for carrying out behavior, stored in brains», she argues, much the same as «genes are instructions for making proteins, stored in the cells of the body» (Blackmore, 1999: 17). Blackmore focuses her writing largely on the causal mechanism of memetic transmission proposed by Dawkins – social imitation. From her perspective, learning how to copy each other's actions gave early humans superior ways to think and set the stage for cultural transmission and development. The imitator-sender encodes a message; the receiver-imitator decodes one. Ideas underlie actions, so memetic imitation has content, not just form. The meme performs simultaneously as a set of instructions for cultural transmission and as a unit of shared cultural meaning – complementary roles that actualize when individuals communicate with each other.

> Any idea of cultural transmission as a virus, therefore, should be put to rest. The magic of social contagion resides not in a virus, a meme, or a network. All forms of cultural transmission have one thing in common: it is communication activity operating under selection pressure. Contagion has a selective goal on the part of all its participants, whether they realize it or not. Communication gave rise to the first common gene pools and cultural tribes.

Social imitation constructs, empowers, and enables the spread of memes from person to person. But memetic cultural reproduction involves more than the social transference of information. The most scientifically dubious and controversial claim about memes is that they have the potential to take on lives of their own. Those ideas that resonate throughout social systems turn into free –floating cultural elements– memes. Therefore the meme must be understood as a bifurcated socio- cultural phenomenon that can only be described adequately with a compound definition: «memes are cultural ideas that inhabit the minds of individual human beings who pass the ideas along to others but they also function independently from their human hosts». From the songs you can't stop singing in your head to fantasies dreamt up about heaven and hell, the impact and staying power of particular cultural elements attest to the psychological and social influence of the meme.

Selection principles underlie memetic transmission. The best human imitators of ideas survive while others die away (natural selection). Imitation

ability, or more broadly communication skill, becomes a key criterion for choosing mates (sexual selection). Some memes survive at the expense of other memes (memetic selection). The rough similarity between genetic and cultural replication demonstrates the potency of memes. If biological evolution can be understood by examining DNA that has passed through time, then cultural priorities should be revealed by studying the discursive and pragmatic themes of social life that survive. From this perspective, memes function as commanding motivators of cultural transmission. They could rightly be called «selfish memes» (Distin, 2005).

Culture is an extremely nebulous concept. Memes –the constituent elements of culture– must be similarly confounding. No one has ever seen a meme. That fact alone, though, shouldn't surprise or discourage. No one had seen a gene either until DNA was discovered in the middle of last century. But the abstract concept of the gene had been anticipated more than a hundred years earlier in studies of pea plants conducted by the Augustinian monk Gregor Mendel in the former Austrian Empire. Mendel believed some systemic principle of biological particularity underlies the inheritance of plants and probably animals too. Genes later became identified as that agent and genetics developed as the system that governs the inheritance of biological organisms. Scientists have isolated the physical phenotypic patterns of genetic transmission and the mechanism that creates those patterns –stretches of DNA.

So far we don't have the same kinds of insights or achievements when trying to explain how and why some cultural traits develop and endure while others do not. The most we can say is that successful memes serve as analogues to successful genes so long as we think of the outcome of culture transmission macroscopically – widely-accepted values and practices that broadly differentiate one social group from another. But memes signify broadly. A meme can refer to a tiny bit of material culture – a regional sauce used for cooking, for example– or it can represent the least material dimension of culture– the idea of God. Memes reside in everything that surrounds and prompts us to think and act in certain ways. The idea of a vegetable is a meme, for instance, and so is vegetarianism. An aluminum can is a meme, and so is recycling. A linen blouse is a meme, and so is fashion. Some of the ideas in our worlds and in our heads (sauces, gods, vegetables, vegetarianism, cans, recycling, blouses, and fashion, for example) get copied with such frequency they come into high relief and persist over time.

Like genes that require a secure home from which to operate –the double helix configuration of DNA nested within a biological carrier– memes need help too. They require vehicles to carry them around and help spread their influence. The notion of a carrier that houses and mobilizes memes, however, may not adequately represent the functional complexity and capability demanded of the host. Cultural transmission requires continuous exchanges between the articulating agent and its cultural milieu, so the terms carrier, vehicle, or medium seem too limiting for the job. «Interactor» expresses the idea better (Hull, 1988; Aunger, 2002). A meme must not only reside somewhere and move about but also interact advantageously in cultural contexts that are loaded up with other memes competing for attention. The most common and useful interactors are people. People acquire, embody, transport, communicate, and give credibility to the cultural materials and ideas they host.

Every cultural artifact and belief –from simple items like eating utensils, bookmarks, shoes, and shopping carts to the most imposing cathedrals, temples, mosques, and gods they claim to represent– embody and transmit multiple memes. For example, an eating utensil references kinds of food, family life, and ways of eating among other meanings. Schools, religious organizations, political systems, civic groups, media institutions, and all other social institutions harbor, endorse, and disseminate a variety of abstract memes. Cultural meanings inhabit even more metaphysical realms – gender roles, dietary restrictions, funeral rituals, folkloric traditions, academic theories, «ad infinitum».

### 5. The wide scope of memetic transmission

Just as genes function in gene pools, where individual genes become viable and influential because of their association with other genes, memes act in concert too. Dawkins refers to these mutually-reinforcing cultural associations as a memeplex (Dawkins, 2006a: 196-200). For example, the automobile belongs to a memeplex that contains many diverse memes having to do with general concepts of machinery, transportation, freedom, responsibility, style, licensing, and regulation as well as specific brands, logos, advertising campaigns, and so on. Today's automobile descends from invention of the wheel, discovery of the axle, fusion of the drive train with the combustion engine, industrialization of the assembly line, refining of petroleum to produce gasoline, and other phenomena. Another familiar and useful example is the telephone. We recognize the

telephone as personal communications technology. But the telephone was designed originally as an aid for the hearing impaired and later became a surveillance and information tool used during wartime. Each cultural moment remains in the modern telephone today. It continues to serve as a hearing aid, an essential piece of military equipment, and an information-sharing, consumer-driven communications medium facilitated by fiber optics, satellite technology, and the worldwide telecommunications industry. Distilled remnants of foregoing types like those present in the automobile and telephone persist in the biological world too. That fact helped Darwin figure out crucial aspects of common descent with modification. Darwin's law of reversion describes how the «long lost character» of previous generations appears in the offspring of animals many generations down the line (Darwin, 1859/1979: 201).

Cultural artifacts and ideas never succeed solely on the basis of their functional qualities. They project powerful symbolic meanings that accompany and often exceed the significance of whatever practical purposes they serve. Every artifact and idea is nested within a cluster of potential meanings that radiate omni-directionally through social interaction. The complex ecology of a meme can be hegemonic and limiting at the same time. Personal freedom, for example, inheres as a muscular cultural value in automobiles and telephones but stringent restrictions on the use of cars and phones have also evolved as part of their memeplexes.

Despite appearances to the contrary, neither genes nor memes takes initiative or has intentions. Nonetheless, in line with selection principles, they evolve in ways that are advantageous to themselves or they wouldn't exist. Like the healthy diversity that arises within and among biological organisms and communities, some memes become particularly good survivors in the presence of other members of the memeplex, especially when complicated or controversial belief systems are involved. A successful gene pool resides in human hosts and perpetuates itself by means of sexual reproduction. A viable memeplex functions as a matrix of ideas, customs, and traits that inhabits human and nonhuman hosts and transmits influence from generation to generation through human communication. Like biological organisms, the fittest memes –those that attract the most positive attention and maintain their popularity– survive to affect subsequent generations.

How memes and memeplexes spread their influence has often been compared to the way an invasive virus can ruin a body or machine. From this point of view, memes infect our lives. They are contagious. Parasitic. Memes steal into our worlds and control how we live. There is no escape. In «The Meme Machine», Susan Blackmore (1999) argues that the cognitive algorithms of memes render cultural freedom illusory. Consciousness doesn't exist apart from the tyranny of memes because a totalizing homology develops between the agents of memetic reproduction and the human mind. We become the memes that surround us. Humans have no independent mind to protect us from «alien and dangerous memes» (Dennett, 2006: 342-352).

Is this true? Are we such passive casualties of culture? Dominant cultural traditions and practices frame and guide our thinking, often subconsciously, and not always to our benefit. They socialize us to accept basic cultural assumptions and to conform to behaviors and rituals without questioning their history or whose interests they represent. Winners and losers emerge. No doubt, memes can cause real harm to individuals and societies. But it is not a cultural virus that causes the damage. The meme-as-virus metaphor fails to explain how cultural transmission takes place and what the true consequences are. Viruses only bring misery. Cultural life, even under repressive conditions, is not determined the same way viral infections ravage biological bodies or computers.

### 6. The global reach of cultural transmission

Comparing cultural transmission to the spread of a virus recalls standard theories of cultural and media imperialism. The regrettable story is well-known. For centuries, colonizing nations violently imposed their will on the less developed parts of the world, especially Africa, Asia, and the Americas, and later ransacked the colonies for economic and geopolitical gain. Indigenous cultures were plundered. Even decades after most colonial nations won independence, the former colonizers continued to wield economic, political, and cultural influence over their subjects and still do. The whirl of globalization assures that cultural influence continues to spread from the former imperial nations –England, France, Spain, Portugal, Holland, Russia, and Japan especially– but also now from the United States, of course. The new colonial outposts are empires of the mind. Multinational corporations like McDonalds, Disney, Microsoft, Coca-Cola, and Nike work over-time to exploit global markets. The pattern of influence is vertical. Global media and information and communications technology perform as interlocking

instruments of contemporary cultural oppression.

Theories of cultural and media imperialism coincide with another hypothesis born of early twentieth century social science –media effects or direct effects. Media effects theory postulates that mass media overwhelm mass audiences in widespread processes of mass communication. Like accounts of cultural imperialism which drew heavily from Marxism and mass society theory, the relationship between senders and receivers of messages is considered to be exploitative and one-directional. A powerful stimulus elicits the desired response. Structure conquers agency. Mass media and the culture industries corrupt culture, pollute consciousness, manipulate behavior, and undermine the human potential.

This way of thinking has its roots in humanistic philosophy and liberal politics and deserves to be respected. Theories of cultural imperialism and media effects were advanced to critically reveal how the cultural media of the nineteenth century were influencing society. Blaming the media never goes out of style and the argument, simple as it is, will forever bear an element of truth. But the media landscape has changed so much in recent years that arguments based on last century's realities no longer advance the critical debate productively. The sheer amount of information circulating the globe and the explosion of cultural resources and communications technologies available to people almost everywhere have radically changed the nature of cultural experience.

The passive audience for media, if it ever really existed, disappeared long ago. More accurate depictions are the engaged audience, participant, cultural user, or even more accurately, the cultural programmer (Lull, 2007). The greatly expanded symbolic features of modern culture give individuals much more control over their life than before. Any idea that individuals or groups become hopelessly victimized by their cultural experiences and relationships grossly distorts what's happening.

The idea of the meme as a virus and the old fashioned theories of imperialism and direct effects only connote the negative consequences of cultural transmission[4]. This is incomplete, misleading, and even dishonest. Charles Darwin had thoughts about the spread of ideas too, but he focused on the positive and organic nature of the process. In «The Descent of Man», for instance, he wrote of how members of various cultural groups could eventually overcome their differences and begin to «look at [members of other groups] as our fellow creatures» (Darwin, 1871/1981: 127). Communicative interaction would make this possible: «As soon as [concern for the welfare of others] is honored and practiced by some men, it spreads through instruction and example to the young, and eventually becomes incorporated into public opinion» (Darwin, 1871/1981: 127).

> Biological evolution has created an unfathomable array of life forms since the Earth was formed more than six billion years ago. In but a tiny fraction of that time cultural development has ushered in modern science, technology, democracy, civil institutions, even little pills that prevent pregnancy and prolong sexual performance. Nature is pure information; it provides us with endless resources. Culture is applied knowledge; it alters what nature gives us. The trajectories of natural history reveal a crucial distinction. Evolution is about variation in nature; development is about innovation in culture.

Spreading information and opinion throughout a society or culture by means of «instruction and example» where it becomes «incorporated into public opinion» resembles the social imitation principle of memetic transmission proposed by Dawkins. It also fits with a more recent research trend—the science of social contagion or network science (Christakis & Fowler, 2009). This approach builds on the personal influence model of mid-nineteenth century American social psychology. Opinion leaders influence the voting and consumer behavior of others through a two-step or multi-step flow of information and opinion

that goes from experts to followers on topics ranging from beauty tips to political candidates.

The premise is evolutionarily sound: all of humanity is interconnected and our actions invariably affect the actions of others. The explanation of how those actions actually play out, however, is weak: good ideas, bad ideas, moods, and behaviors travel like viruses from person to person, sometimes indirectly, by an unspecified mechanism of influence. The individuals who make up a social network come to share emotional states like happiness, physical traits like being overweight, or personal habits like smoking. Person A might influence Person B directly so that both individuals come to share a trait. But Person A could also influence Person C, who is connected directly to Person B even if Person B is not affected and Persons A and C never meet. The network thus has some kind of mysterious power of its own. People in social networks apparently converge in a way that exceeds the power of any solitary individual to affect another directly. So what's at work here? A virus? A meme? The network?

Alternative explanations of social contagion may be more satisfying than speculative network theory. We gravitate toward people who are already like us. Peer pressure affects our decision making more than the arrival of an unfamiliar idea. Established personal preferences and habits override encroachments from the outside. Interpersonal power differences based on family position, social class, and professional hierarchy often render lifestyle decisions involuntary. And of course information and communications technology interfere with any direct network effect in daily life.

Any idea of cultural transmission as a virus, therefore, should be put to rest. The magic of social contagion resides not in a virus, a meme, or a network. All forms of cultural transmission have one thing in common: it is communication activity operating under selection pressure. Contagion has a selective goal on the part of all its participants, whether they realize it or not. Communication gave rise to the first common gene pools and cultural tribes. Our habits inside these pools and tribes emanate from and reinforce survival strategies. To be out of step with our social groups limits our viability as we see every day in our personal and professional lives.

Today, with the ability to communicate at great distance literally at our fingertips –the keypads of our mobile phones and keyboards of our computers– the drive to connect with others has intensified proportionately. Traditional boundaries of intimacy have fallen by the wayside. Texting, sexting, sending photos, posting the most person details of one's life, and tweeting about every mundane moment are desperate pleas for social acceptance with clear evolutionary motives—survival and reproduction.

## 7. Nature, culture, and communication

Darwin recognized the role of communication in this kind of cultural development when he compared how information flows in different societies. The language of Darwin's day may offend, but the point remains correct: «In semi-civilized countries, with little free communication, the spreading of knowledge will be a slow process» (Darwin, 1859/1979: 97). Now, more than 150 years after Darwin published «The Origin of Species», the United Nations Development Programme uses different phrasing to advocate the same idea. Expanded communications and exposure to a broad range of cultural resources –especially novel ideas arriving from afar– are fundamental to social progress, particularly for developing countries (UNDP 2004).

Any idea that humans haven't evolved much biologically since our ancestors left Africa 50,000-60,000 years ago simply isn't true. The pace of evolution over the past 10,000 years has been particularly fast compared to any other time since hominids split from our common ancestor with chimpanzees millions of years ago (Harpending, 2009). Still, biological evolution remains relatively slow, conservative, and undirected. It has no goals or interest in human welfare (Wade. 2006: 34). The twin motors of biological evolution –natural and sexual selection– respond gradually to random mutations and hang on to solutions that create stability and security.

By contrast, cultural development is fast, innovative, and purposeful. Like a dragster that blazes from 0 to 100 miles per hour, culture can heat up quickly. Biological evolution has created an unfathomable array of life forms since the Earth was formed more than six billion years ago. In but a tiny fraction of that time cultural development has ushered in modern science, technology, democracy, civil institutions, even little pills that prevent pregnancy and prolong sexual performance. Nature is pure information; it provides us with endless resources. Culture is applied knowledge; it alters what nature gives us. The trajectories of natural history reveal a crucial distinction. Evolution is about variation in nature; development is about innovation in culture.

## Notas

[1] Electronic Arts' Spore might help popularize evolutionary thinking among young video game players too.

[2] Genes don't do this alone. Ribonucleic acid (RNA) molecules also influence the complex process of protein production.
[3] Richerson and Boyd. The helpful term «internal cultural patterns» is from Thomas Sowell, «Race and Culture» (New York: Basic Books, 1994)
[4] The exception to this criticism of meme theory is Richard Dawkins, the originator of the concept. Dawkins' initial and subsequent discussions of memes do not appear to be politically motivated.

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# Television: Seen, Heard and Read by Peruvian Adolescents

## La televisión: vista, oída y leída por adolescentes peruanos

ABSTRACT
This paper analyzes the current relationship between Peruvian teenagers and television. The information accessed from various sources concluded that adolescents are consuming television extensively, especially the poorer within the country. Teens appreciate the cable television as a source of learning, and its variety and ability to relate it with the world. The interest in cartoons, movies and series –fiction genre in general– affirms the value of this media in society as well as the possibility to make them more familiar with their environment. Information about what happens beyond their localities is a source of reference in their perception of the country. Beyond the cultural conflict from which is generally assessed from the effects that television may have on the rural world, television has a positive sign for the visual deterritorialization, which dissolves the natural relationship between culture and territory. In rural areas, parents and teenagers evaluate television positively because it offers more than just the school itself. In the midst of academic and professional criticism on television, adolescents do not distinguish between traditional media and new media, they are all integrated into their daily lives.

RESUMEN
El presente trabajo analiza la relación actual de los adolescentes peruanos con la pantalla televisiva. La información consultada en diversas fuentes concluye que los adolescentes siguen consumiendo ampliamente la televisión, especialmente los más pobres de ciudades del interior del Perú. Los adolescentes valoran la televisión por cable como una fuente de aprendizaje, así como por su variedad y por la posibilidad de relacionarlos con el mundo. El interés por los dibujos animados y las series y películas y, en general, por la ficción televisiva, reafirma el sentido que tiene la televisión en familiarizarlos con la sociedad y su entorno. La información de lo que acontece más allá de sus localidades es fuente de referencia en su percepción del país y es compartida en familia. Más allá del conflicto cultural, desde el cual generalmente se ha evaluado los efectos de la televisión en el medio rural, ésta tiene para los adolescentes y sus padres un signo positivo porque favorece la desterritorialización visual al disolver la relación natural entre cultura y territorio geográfico. En el medio rural los padres y los jóvenes valoran a la televisión porque les ofrece más que la propia escuela. En medio de la crítica académica y profesional a la televisión, los adolescentes no distinguen entre medios tradicionales y nuevos medios porque todos ellos están integrados a su vida cotidiana.

KEYWORDS / PALABRAS CLAVE
Education, communication, television, youth, culture, consumption, technology, media.
Educación, comunicación, televisión, jóvenes, cultura, consumo, tecnología, medios audiovisuales.

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The debate about television and the concerns about its relationship to education are not limited to the TV screen. They have expanded to include other related screens, such as that of the computer and the cellular phone. No matter how big or small they may be, or where they are located, or if they go with the user according to his or her needs, they are equally important because of what they show, say and communicate. This paper is interested in looking specifically at what is occurring with the TV screen and the focuses and values that Peruvian teenagers take in from it, as well as its effects on their knowledge and opinions about the country and the environment. The discussion on audiovisual media countered text with screen and reduced TV to mere images and sounds. However, «it is common to counter visual forms with verbal forms, the modern day media suspends the opposition between pages and screens in reciprocal transformation: in addition to being heard and read, words are also seen on the screen. Biblical and ancestral, like in the desert, the voice is seen» (Block de Behar, 2009: 15).

For some analysts, the TV screen has been replaced because children and teenagers prefer other screens that are more interactive due to their flexibility, mobility and ability to be manipulated, as opposed to TV, which is more two-dimensional and uni-directional. In this respect, the consumption of television by families, as an important daily activity, has been affected by the increasing use of Internet at home, especially among young people, who diversify their audiovisual consumption towards a multi-mode, multi-channel and multi-platform universe (Tubella, 2008). Others coincide with this observation, from a business perspective and from a fascination with technology, indicating that children and teenagers are abandoning TV genres and TV media stories, leaving space for other forms of digital entertainment.

In this paper we will discuss a series of studies performed in Peru, in the city of Lima and especially in other provinces, as they show slightly different realities. Studies carried out by the Radio and Television Council (CONCORTV) and the TV-Cultura association, aimed at producing quality and alternative television as well as academic research projects, maintain that television is still the most significantly consumed media type among teenagers, that the dominance of television is holding strong, and that television plays an integrative function amidst the civilization of images. Cable TV, in particular, arouses interest among the youngest consumers and is appreciated for its informative and formative value.

Throughout this paper we will cover and explain the ties between teenagers and television in Peru, considering that the trend towards consumption of national television responds to the way the country is geographically and socially structured, as a product of centralization and extreme inequality. Television is most important in areas that are farther away from main cities and regional capitals, as well as among the poorest economic sectors.

In a study on teenagers and adults performed by the National Radio and Television Council (CONCORTV) it was found that television (98.5%) and radio (91.5%) are the media types with highest presence and distribution. These are followed by the cellular phone (77.8%) and DVDs (77.4%). While Internet comes in at only 25%, cable TV comes in at 60% in Lima, which is reduced to nearly half this percentage in provinces, although access is greater through «pirated» or illegal connections (CONCORTV, 2009).

The study adds that most teenagers and adults watch TV with their family, primarily news and movies. Why these genres? News narrates and makes a part of the country public, especially Lima, and tells about politics, celebrities, crime and accidents. Movies offer fictional tales that are long-standing and culturally significant because they present stories with touching and exciting characters. In both cases, there are media narrations that are attractive and allow teenagers and adults to comment on them and share opinions during their daily lives. What meaning do these genres give to life, and why do they attract such interest? We return to questions posed when TV only competed with the radio and the cinema, but that remain relevant now that television is still being watched, although –as we have been claiming– also heard and read. TV can stay on for many hours and only be heard, as it can also offer text to accompany the images and sounds. For Buonano, fiction performs three functions: the first qualifies as fabulating, because it brings to life the thirst for stories that lies within us, satisfying the deep and universal pleasure to listen, to let oneself get carried away in the story, activating identification and reading abilities for diverse genres. A second is related to familiarization with the social world of shared beliefs, creating a «common meaning» of daily life. And, a third is the upholding of community, allowing heterogeneous audiences to share common topics and issues (Buonano, 1999: 62-66). Rincón (2006) comments that TV is fundamentally a means of expression and storytelling, with formats that very often appeal to emotions, such as magazines, contests, musicals,

docudramas, talk shows, reality shows and, in general, the lighter styles of entertainment and information. It must be added that, despite the academic distinction between new media and traditional media, like TV, this difference does not appear relevant to teenagers. It has more to do with a «media atmosphere», as affirmed by Murdochowicz, in which each type of communication media cannot be analyzed separately, but rather from its insertion in daily life. One type of media does not displace another, but rather it is articulated within the context of its location, the common value associated with it and its use (Morduchowicz, 2008).

Opinion surveys carried out in 2010 on habits and attitudes towards radio and TV identify the high daily consumption of television, especially among the poorest sectors, specifying that more than 85% of the population watches TV on a daily basis in their homes or somewhere else. Even so, has the amount of time spent on watching TV been reduced? Results from other research studies show that this depends on several factors. For example, the CONCORTV report shows that age and gender are two influential aspects. Children and teenagers, who are quite flexible in their consumption, share access to TV with other activities in their daily lives. Tubella indicates that: «Age is revealed as a determining factor in the patterns of incorporation and use of media and technology and communication practices (…), minors under the age of 18 more openly combine specific times for the use and consumption of all types of technology and media, with a tendency towards flexibility, which includes the consumption of TV» (Tubella, 2008: 89). Likewise, men watch less TV than women, due to their greater freedom of access to public spaces.

Some sources show TV to be the most entertaining, informative, and truthful form of media, as well as the one that is closer to people. These results are surprising when compared to the critical debate of academics and analysts who insist on the deficient quality of information and trivial entertainment that TV provides. Nevertheless, TV is more appreciated by those with fewer resources –the poorest– as a privileged source of entertainment and information. Some claim that these results are explained by the poor critical capacity of the less educated social sectors. My explanation is directed towards the possibilities that TV gives them in spite of their shortcomings, and towards the presence and meaning that television holds in their daily lives.

In a study performed on rural Peruvian communities in the city of Huaraz by the anthropologist Rocío Trinidad (2001), it is shown that TV is the preferred media of entertainment for children and teenagers. As opposed to the critical arguments of teachers, for parents, television is fundamental because it keeps them and their children informed of events beyond the local sphere. Trinidad observes the existence of a social obligation to be informed, because external events affect their immediate interests and allow them to experience the feeling of fear and vulnerability before events such as mudslides, car accidents or earthquakes, for example. The frequently debated contradiction between life in rural areas and TV images is not seen as such, since the latter would provide an encounter between their Andean identities and those of the Western world, allowing children and teenagers to move easily between one and the other. This different «other» on TV allows them to compare their own lives with the characters on programs such as soap operas, as well as to identify reprehensible behavior such as abuse and

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cheating, and to value the more independent role of women (Trinidad, 2001).

The researcher adds that parents and their children appreciate «the correct use of Spanish» on TV, because it is learned better than in school; as well as the socially recognized ways of speaking, dressing, fashion, including models of respect and hygiene. TV contributes to the early stimulation of learning, motivating children and teenagers to migrate, an indicator of possible access to progress. Beyond the cultural conflict from which the effects of TV on rural areas have generally been examined, TV holds for them a positive sign of visual deterritorialization, which dissolves the natural relationship between culture and geographical territory. Just as school is associated with the light and the possibility for improvement within the Andean symbolic universe, it appears that TV also offers this: «If education, (…) essentially continues to mean having a head for thinking, eyes for seeing and reading, and a mouth for speaking, expressing and defending oneself, media provides a mouth (to speak better), eyes (to see what is happening beyond the local sphere) and a head (for knowing and, above all, learning how to behave properly)» (Trinidad, 2001).

Two studies carried out in 2008 and 2010 by TVCultura, explored how adolescents between 11 and 13, and 14 and 18, appropriate technology in different cities of Peru. It showed the time spent on watching TV: 43% watch two hours of TV a day and another 45% watch 3 to 4 hours. 35.8% watch TV between 4:00 and 8:00 in the afternoon, and 24.4% watch between 8:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m; the younger group watches at earlier times, and the older group at later times. Although they tend to watch many different types of programs, there is a special preference for cartoons among boys and girls, especially between the ages of 11 and 13. This preference deserves analysis, since it deals with children who are transitioning into adolescence, but for whom fantasy presents the possibility of escaping from conflictive and violent situations, both in family and society, through its images and stories. On the other hand, the gender factor also plays a role: males prefer movies and sports programs, while females prefer series, musicals, and also soap operas, as it is shown in the following chart (TVCultura, 2008).

Teenagers manifest –in the studies carried out by TVCultura– a relative interest for what is going on in the country, their city and the world. It should be specified that it is not related with an interest in politics, but rather an interest in culture, entertainment and sports. The majority (85%) watches TV programs to stay informed about the country, and they do so with their family. With regards to this, Vilches maintains that they continue to prefer local information, and not even CNN, much less Euronews, can substitute it. The same happens with TV fiction because the national programs continue to attract greater audiences (Rincón, 2006). It should be added that a high number of those surveyed use the Internet for up to two hours a day to aid them with their schoolwork, to write messages, although also to chat on MSN messenger, especially girls, in comparison to boys who prefer video games (TVCultura, 2008).

TV shows watched by gender and age (%)

| | Total | Men | Women | 11/13 | 14/16 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cartoons/Animation | 55.8 | 60.3 | 51.5 | 64.4 | 47.0 |
| Movies | 52.6 | 60.2 | 45.2 | 47.6 | 57.8 |
| Series | 46.9 | 43.0 | 50.8 | 45.2 | 48.7 |
| Musicals | 42.2 | 38.6 | 45.7 | 36.2 | 48.3 |
| Sports | 31.6 | 44.0 | 19.5 | 30.4 | 32.8 |
| Comedy | 30.7 | 31.9 | 29.5 | 28.2 | 33.3 |
| News | 30.5 | 32.4 | 28.6 | 28.3 | 32.8 |
| Contests | 30.1 | 26.0 | 34.2 | 34.9 | 25.2 |
| Soap operas | 16.2 | 03.7 | 28.4 | 11.9 | 20.6 |
| Reports/Interviews | 10.9 | 12.4 | 9.50 | 08.5 | 13.5 |
| Magazines | 10.4 | 13.3 | 7.50 | 07.9 | 13.0 |
| Documentaries | 01.0 | 01.6 | 00.4 | 01.5 | 00.4 |

An academic research study performed in three Peruvian cities showed that TV continues to be the most significantly consumed media type, although cable TV is most preferred by school-age children. Younger children watch more TV than the older ones (an average of 95% in the 1st year of secondary education, and nearly 90% in the 5th year), and the latter listen to the radio more than the younger ones (55% vs. 45%). The results are coherent with the greater freedom of the older students to access public areas and individualize their consumption through their more private relationship to music. There is a tendency to replace TV with other activities as the students get older. The older students and students

| Activities performed by students in 1st and 5th year of secondary education by type of school, city and gender | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1st Year Secondary | Public | Private | Cuzco | Iquitos | Chiclayo | Male | Female |
| Watch TV | 95.5 | 94 | 91.4 | 98.0 | 95.9 | 92.9 | 96.9 |
| Listen to the radio | 45.9 | 34.4 | 47.7 | 44.9 | 36.4 | 31.6 | 53.7 |
| Video games | 11.4 | 16.1 | 15.8 | 19.6 | 11.4 | 24.2 | 07.9 |
| Internet | 11.8 | 27.7 | 26.0 | 11.2 | 23.9 | 25.5 | 16.3 |
| Go to the movies | 04.4 | 09.1 | 06.1 | 14.4 | 03.9 | 08.9 | 07.1 |
| Go to the park | 14.5 | 13.8 | 20.6 | 16.7 | 10.1 | 14.3 | 17.6 |
| Play in the neighborhood | 21.8 | 22.8 | 20.2 | 35.1 | 13.8 | 23.7 | 21.9 |
| Go to night clubs | 01.5 | 1.2 | 3.2 | 0.80 | 01.6 | 02.6 | 01.3 |
| Play sports | 54.0 | 50.1 | 61.3 | 56.7 | 46.1 | 64.8 | 46.3 |
| 5th Year Secondary | | | | | | | |
| Watch TV | 87.8 | 88.3 | 85.7 | 91.9 | 89.8 | 87.7 | 90.1 |
| Listen to the radio | 55.7 | 51.6 | 63.9 | 56.9 | 47.8 | 50.1 | 62.5 |
| Video games | 07.6 | 15.0 | 14.3 | 15.9 | 5.4 | 19.8 | 04.6 |
| Internet | 31.4 | 45.5 | 41.2 | 36.1 | 43.7 | 36.3 | 43.8 |
| Go to the movies | 02.8 | 06.7 | 05.0 | 09.6 | 04.8 | 07.5 | 5.6 |
| Go to the park | 07.4 | 09.4 | 12.5 | 08.8 | 05.5 | 09.0 | 09.1 |
| Play in the neighborhood | 12.1 | 10.1 | 16.1 | 16.6 | 07.5 | 15.3 | 12.2 |
| Go to night clubs | 06.4 | 10.3 | 11.8 | 10.8 | 07.7 | 11.8 | 08.9 |
| Play sports | 41.9 | 42.9 | 47.2 | 51.0 | 35.0 | 59.1 | 31.1 |

from private schools can use the Internet more frequently for economic reasons and satisfy their curiosity more freely and at more flexible times. The younger students tend to spend more time in the neighborhood with their friends, while the others go in groups to dance clubs. Children and teenagers devote more time to sports, especially boys and younger children. It should be highlighted that there is an aspect that expresses the reconfiguration of gender relations: in the consumption of TV and interactive technologies, the differences between men and women are fading. Women have become «equal» to men in terms of consumption, and this is a cultural change, which is even more pronounced in provinces (Quiroz, 2008: 132).

The testimonies of these young people are very eloquent when referring to TV and expressing their opinions on the importance of information, their perception of the country and their preference for local and national news over international news: «Thanks to the news, we all know what is going on around us, about the earthquakes, kidnappings, fires (Cuzco, private school, 5th year secondary). But they cover more news about Lima, because Lima is important for politics (Iquitos, public school, 1st year secondary). The news is nice… we hear about accidents, murders… they kidnapped a child in Lima and rescued him for 5,000 sols… we sometimes talk about these things with the tutor (Iquitos, public school, 1st year secondary). We also find out about what is happening in the United States, about the war (Iquitos, public school, 1st year secondary)» (Quiroz, 2008: 136). They also express a critical perspective and their expectations: «When I watch national TV, I see the news and I don't like it because they only show crime and rape of teenagers, whereas on cable I also like watching my channel number 28 Discovery Channel, documentaries, channel 46, and I don't want to watch national TV, because cable has more things (Iquitos, private school, 5th year secondary). I wish I had my black and white TV to watch my DVDs to buy CDs and to see Ronaldo's games» (Chiclayo, public school, male, 1st year secondary).

I watch 2 or 3 hours of TV, but when I have a test I can't watch TV because I don't learn anything (Chiclayo, public school, female, 1st year secondary) (Quiroz, 2008: 137).

They show their preference for cartoons, because they stimulate their imagination and help them forget their problems: «Cartoons make me laugh, they're fun, and I forget about my problems (Chiclayo, public school, male, 5th year secondary). Cartoons make you

| Cable TV, by type of schoool, city and gender | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1st Year Secondary | Public | Private | Cuzco | Iquitos | Chiclayo | Male | Female |
| Watch cable TV | 19.4 | 52.6 | 29.6 | 35.1 | 38.2 | 36.7 | 31.6 |
| Learn from cable TV | 86.5 | 85.8 | 85.4 | 85.3 | 88.1 | 85.4 | 87.1 |
| 5th Year Secondary | | | | | | | |
| Watch cable TV | 25.4 | 57.8 | 33.7 | 41.7 | 39.1 | 41.4 | 34.7 |
| Learn from cable TV | 94.2 | 97.2 | 96.8 | 94.5 | 97.2 | 97.0 | 94.9 |

laugh, they're fun… they take you back to when you were younger, your childhood, you can escape because sometimes you're sad, you escape from that sadness, you forget about your problems, they make you change, they make you different (Chiclayo, public school, male, 5th year secondary). With regards to other types of media: I have fun watching TV and listening to the radio… with DVDs and the TV… creating songs, poetry and cooking… listening to music and watching videos… going out on the weekend (Chiclayo, public school, male, 5th year secondary)» (Quiroz, 2008: 137).

TV not only takes up students' leisure time, but also their affective time. The images privilege responses that are close to their emotions, which come directly from the materiality of signs, music, colors and their dynamism, according to Joan Ferrés. The sensory over-stimulation boosts the feeling of meaning, the senses to the detriment of meaning, the dominance of the visible over the intelligible, in a fast-paced era of primary emotions and the hijacking of rationality (Ferrés, 2008).

The case of cable TV should be highlighted, as it is increasingly more present and preferred by teenagers. They associate it not only with entertainment, but also with information and learning, even more so than the Internet. Cable TV is appreciated for its quality and variety, and recognized as a source of learning. More than 80% of 1st year secondary students and more than 90% of 5th year students declare having learned through cable TV. That is, it has become a highly valued source of knowledge (Quiroz, 2008: 141).

The opinions about cable TV are very positive. The older students prefer it because of the variety on offer and because they can select programs and channels, an argument which is coherent with their age. The model of thematic channels, different from open signal TV, responds to the more defined personal interests during adolescence. The younger students, especially those from public schools, highlight adult programs, curious about their prohibited content. There is no doubt that their opinions about the possibility of learning are associated with the various topics and genres offered on cable. They appreciate the history and cultural channels because they offer knowledge that is even more illustrative than at school. They value information from other countries and in other languages, including the news, as well as references for medicine, science, food, monuments and geography. They feel like part of the world and restore fiction as a source of learning models of behavior and professionalism.

In their testimonies, teenagers talk at length about the variety on offer. The good thing is that there you can choose, and there are all of the channels that you want to watch, when you want to watch (Iquitos, public school, 1st year secondary). «I watch it somewhere else… it has more channels, more programs, it is more advanced, you can see what is happening in the world, it also teaches us about the life of animals… I like movies… on Discovery Channel there have been scientists that have found a dinosaur at the North Pole… on cable there is more information and learning, I like cartoons, songs, sports, fashion shows (Iquitos, public school, 5th year secondary). There are more channels… more variety… it is more up-to-date… there are more and better series (Iquitos, private school, 5th year secondary). The gourmet cooking (female) and cartoons (male)» (Cuzco, private school, 1st year secondary) (Quiroz, 2008: 144).

About learning they mention: There's a Discovery Channel that teaches you the difference between animals (Cuzco, public school, female, 1st year secondary). «They talk about plants, animals, different things about science, values related to what nature is… Animal Planet also (Cuzco, private school, 1st year secondary). That program that researches animals, and you can see an animal, the dinosaurs… there are different things taught on different channels that can help you in your life (Chiclayo, public school, 1st year secondary). They tell stories like the ones about

Egyptians, that and on the other one they talk about things, inventions, all of that (Chiclayo, private school, 1st year secondary). On cable there are programs that are educational, that teach you, they teach you like on the computer too (Chiclayo, private school, 5th year secondary). I like when they talk about operations, so you're watching, it's amazing… there are some that show series, like police shows and while they are narrating the story you learn more about what it's like to be a lawyer, or a doctor… a detective (Chiclayo, private school, 5th year secondary)» (Quiroz: 2008: 144).

The students' testimonies reaffirm the sense of the images as a way to learn and have fun. They distance themselves a little from open signal TV because of its poor quality, and they lean towards cable TV because it allows them to choose and to satisfy with their individual interests. The lack of cable TV in their homes is not an obstacle for them, they know it perfectly well and access it at friends', neighbors' and family members' homes.

This relationship between TV and other types of media allows teenagers to construct their own horizon, even one that breaks with the family and school horizon. They establish an implicit association between «culture» (understood as information and knowledge) and cable TV. They mention channels such as the Discovery Channel, History Channel, National Geographic and Warner in addition to the Disney Channel, MTV, FOX, HBO and Hallmark. At the same time, they talk about cartoons, like those from Japan, and also sports, especially soccer. They feel they are in contact with realities that are broader than their immediate realities –family and local– through informative programs, documentaries, series and movies. In summary, this allows us to maintain that their abilities and knowledge do not come solely from school, but also from the culture outside the classroom.

We can see a certain intellectual distancing from their teachers because they can live and experience other languages, knowledge and writings. Without a doubt, «the information that they obtain is less structured, fragmented and is inserted in the culture of simultaneity, of change, of speed, of dynamics and non-permanence, all of which is related to their attitude towards life» (Murdochowicz, 2008: 37).

I would like to conclude by suggesting that we are experiencing a drastic change in communication practices because of the transience of information, the value of visibility and the new forms of communication, as well as social networks. Although there is a generational gap and a distance between the world inside and outside of the classroom, children and teenagers integrate different types of media in their daily lives. Even if TV continues to hold importance as part of the media atmosphere, the trend is towards coexistence with other types of media and other types of screens, with which we can participate and interact. The traditional socio-economic distances shown by the family income levels, the living spaces and location of the homes, the type of school and the region where they live, are all met with different access to technology. This means that the digital gap has joined economic inequality, although the latter is not reduced by access to technological devices and connectivity, as there is still a relationship to the abilities to use the information as a symbolic and reflexive resource to produce and exchange knowledge.

There is definitely a difference between children and teenagers whose families encourage their interpretation of images, the exercise of opinion and the development of multiple abilities, and those from urban-marginal and rural families, where domestic violence occurs more frequently, intellectual stimulation is weaker and the parents are not well educated. It is not merely a technological issue. For this reason it has been important to offer a look at the values and perceptions of teenagers from marginal and rural sectors, for whom TV holds a different value, given the condition of exclusion from which they express themselves.

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# New Television Narratives: Entertainment, Telling, Citizenship, Experimental

## Nuevas narrativas televisivas: relajar, entretener, contar, ciudadanizar, experimentar

ABSTRACT
Broadcasting and industrial television is a trip back to the past, to a space devoid of meaning, and to the boredom resulting from its moral conservatism, lack of creativity, thought and entertainment. But television's monopoly over public screening is over; now, anyone can be a producer, an audiovisual narrator with his or her own screen. New television and other screens are daring to change the way stories are told: a more subjective, testimonial and image-based journalism; a hyperrealist soap opera that dares to bring melodrama to comedy, documentary and local cultures; a bottom-up media with people in charge of breaking with the thematic and political homogeneity of the media, market and development machines. This essay will argue in favor of television as a space for expression by unstable identities, narrative experiments and unknown possibilities for audiovisual creation…only if «it takes the form» of women, indigenous peoples, African races, the environment, other sexualities…and plays on YouTube and new screens that are community-based and cellular. The most important thing is for television to move away from an obsession with content towards aesthetic and narrative explorations of other identities and into narratives that are more «collaboractive», with the possibility that they become the stories we want them to be.

RESUMEN
La televisión generalista e industrial es un viaje al pasado, al vacío de sentido y al aburrimiento por su conservadurismo moral, su pereza creativa, su ausencia de pensamiento y su pobre modo de entender el entretenimiento. Pero el monopolio televisivo de la pantalla pública se acabó, pues ahora todo ciudadano puede ser un productor, narrador audiovisual y tener pantalla. Así aparecen nuevas televisiones y otras pantallas que se atreven a contar distinto: un periodismo más subjetivo, testimonial y pensado desde las imágenes; una telenovela hiperrealista que se atreve a intervenir el melodrama desde la comedia, el documental y las culturas locales; unos medios de abajo y con la gente que se hacen para romper con la homogeneidad temática y política de las máquinas mediática, del mercado y del desarrollo. En este ensayo se argumenta a favor de la televisión como lugar de expresión de identidades inestables, experimentos narrativos y posibilidades inéditas para la creación audiovisual… solo si «toma la forma» de mujer, de lo indígena, afro, medio ambiental, otras sexualidades… y juega en nuevas pantallas como Youtube, lo comunitario y el celular. Lo más urgente es que la televisión pase de la obsesión por los contenidos a las exploraciones estéticas y narrativas desde las identidades otras y en narrativas más «colaboractivas» porque existe la posibilidad de ser los relatos que queremos ser.

KEYWORDS / PALABRAS CLAVE
Television, narrative, aesthetic, entertainment, identities, citizenships, new media, sensibilities.
Televisión, narrativa, estética, entretenimiento, identidades, ciudadanía, nuevos medios, sensibilidades.

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We are no longer amused by the enjoyment, pleasures, stories, aesthetics, politics and content served up by television. Television bores us. And it was supposedly made for entertainment! We flee; some of us to cable, to the Internet, to Facebook, to YouTube, to Twitter, many to the cell phone, fewer to books, and others go abroad to get to know other cultures. We all flee because the TV stations and their producers abuse their broadcasting power and produce stupid entertainment, information at the service of the power holders, fiction with bad acting, poorly dramatized formats, forgettable information…

And the excuse is that television is a conservative, restrained communication media in order to boost ratings by neither morally, creatively or narratively offending the viewer. Television has profound problems in the way it tells stories, in its contents and politics: it does not entertain or seduce, or make you think. But it does make money. Open-signal television has lost its value as «family entertainment». And it is not a matter of a lack of talent or possibilities of expression, but rather too many executives and businessmen selling us off «as audiences», executives who do not watch television and believe you have to dumb down the screen in order to gain viewers. For them, the world becomes a set of marketing formulas. These executives are a virus that is gradually converting the mass television screen into a void, a desert, a collective frustration. The result: confused executives and disillusioned television viewers. The only thing they achieve is to make us flee further.

The good news is that a multiple audiovisual media are emerging that can better adapt to each one of us: they take the form of what is being told – a narrative and aesthetic revolution.

## 1. The reinvention of television

Television is industrial in its processes, logic and forms of narration; its purpose in society is to relax, entertain and generate conversation. Its rebelliousness was made possible by YouTube and inspired by feminism, indigenous studies, citizen studies, the youth and others; it was revolutionized through the Internet, the cell phone and video because we acquired the capacity to participate in the screens and stories.

The television that was meant for everyone has failed to excite. New television follows the structure of hypertext and flow, where one program is mixed with another, where what happens in a soap opera or reality show becomes daily news and becomes a documentary of our time. We are moving from a primitive television that has been poorly copied from the film model or in the image of old-fashioned journalism, to another that appears more like talk shows, reality shows, docudramas, video clips and landscape TV. Its tone is more exhibitionist, truculent and daring. Morals are no longer determined by the producers but rather by the viewers. Everything flows and is consolidated into one; there are no longer programs, or channels, or television – we inhabit the narrative burst of audiovisuals.

We live in a time of screen multiplicity, the business of formats, the logic of other emotions, the burst of audiovisual narratives, the multiplication of aesthetics, the diversity of awareness/identities – times in which each of us can make whatever we want out of television. What is meaningful is what is close, vital, emotional and unexpected. Truth is somewhere else, in a space that is neither Western nor male, but of other cultures. And the oral nature of the soap opera is mixed with Facebook images, YouTube mini-stories with an infinite number of aphorisms in Twitter, the Blackberry network with Skype and text messaging. We inhabit the multiplication of signals, and there is a channel for every interest, every population and every faith.

And everything becomes apt to be televised, no longer imitating film or artistic video, but rather television. For this reason, we talk about ourselves in terms of «zapping, surfing, scratching, zipping, DVD, linking». «TV zapping», the mindless exercise of changing channels only to return to the same place we started off at. «TV surfing»: changing the channel while following a wave: sports, culture, children's shows, fiction, music, or pressing the fast forward button. «TV scratching»: the practice of introducing images and TV personalities in order to discover other values, bringing them again to light and discovering their multiple cynicisms. «TV-zipping»: going deeper-deeper-deeper into an idea, an image, a character, a tone in order to enjoy brief moments of ecstasy. «TV DVD», or when we decide to watch whatever we feel like watching. «Linking» videos in YouTube and to any other screen.

Audiovisual diversity made up of hysteria, repetitions, fragments, spontaneity. The audiovisual screens cry out once again and turn life into infinite entertainment; the celebration of pleasurable experiences and sentimental cultures. A television narration that documents a hysterical attitude (always overacted; always on camera, excited); aesthetics of repetition (variations of the same, for relaxed pleasure); a fragmented narration (creating the illusion of continuity on the basis of autonomous situations); an

everyday style (as if everything were live and spontaneous, and the viewer was right).

The new televisions are an invitation to nomadism, to unstable identities, to ephemeral senses, to telling through images while we are living, to non-linear transformation, the multiplayer rebirth, the virtuous perception, the visionary memory, the public creativity, the sustainable emotion and «body sense»[1]. All forms of television are possible. Mass television is what we will not watch. Only religion and football will be left to mass, industrial television; for everything else a camera and a story will do. We inhabit the opulence of expressive diversity. Question: Are we ready to tell our stories?

## 2. Telling, narrating, experimenting

And the trend is to narrate. In order to narrate, we must recognize that each device is unique, and we have to learn/know how to narrate while respecting each specificity (film, TV, video, Internet, cell phone) and have something to tell (giving meaning to the life experience). Film will continue to light the path of celebrities but it will have little impact on the social life of ordinary people; everything looks bourgeois and from another time in the movies. Their language, logic, genres, duration, glamour and narrative model have fewer and fewer adherents. Film will continue to exist in its own church and with its own believers. It will continue to be one of the main areas of audio-visual study at universities; directors and authors, instead of gaining the art, will continue moving from festival to festival; their great works (no more than 10 a year) will make us think and imagine better. But either way, film will lose its hegemony and will no longer continue to impose its language and discourse on other audiovisual devices.

Now we have to practice a multiplicity of screens, and begin to search for how each screen narrates, what the criteria of temporality, image, sound, rhythm, duration, genre and format are. The narrative specificities of each audiovisual device and each teller must be found. We must begin to think about each screen and how it contributes a narrative and discourse, which the following chart explains[2].

Each community is an audience. The industrial is an idea that is history, which constructs a format and is brought to the market. The format is an idea, with a way of producing according to set criteria of aesthetics and philosophy, in a specific dramaturgy with a storytelling style and ways of marketing. Each country, culture and society with their audiovisual knowledge will adapt the format to the interests/traditions/sensibility of their citizens.

On open-signal television and cable, the winning format is the series, fictional works concentrated in a few chapters. The best audiovisual product on offer is on cable, and its «avant-garde» is HBO; it is not television or film, but cult series that create global audiences and require a different type of television viewing[3]: watching with concentration, becoming a fan of each series, assuming audiovisual intelligence, paying for moral exploration (all topics), aesthetics (each series is a unique work) and narrative (complexity and choral stories). Additionally, the door is opened for made-for-TV movies that reintroduce film knowledge but with less pretension and more narrative heartiness. Documentary formats reign supreme when they seduce in the form of fiction and convert life into a story (something like a reality show). And with the arrival of digital television comes the emphasis on searching for other genres and narrative tones for children's shows, fantasy, eroticism, cultural, everyday life; these niches that had been abandoned in the name of the «masses» are now back in business to tell, gain and exploit industrially.

## 3. News as storytelling

The big news story in journalism in 2010 was that CNN was losing the ratings war. The informative television model has changed in form, style and

| Criteria | Film | Television | Video | Internet | Cell Phone |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Communication | Expressive | Informative | Artistic | On network | Intimate |
| Ritual | Going to mass | Praying the rosary | Angels | New era | Celebration of «I» |
| Watching | Dreaming | Seeing | Searching | Connection | Flow |
| Actor | Author | Artisan | Experimenter | User | Subject |
| Production | Slow | Fast | Personal | On demand | Live |
| Duration | 90 minutes | 30 or 60 minutes | Diverse | Fragment | Instantaneous |
| Image | Wide angle | Close up | Mobile | Close | Unstable |
| Language | Art | Conversation | Resistance | Contextual | Personal |

agenda, and CNN do not want to admit it (or Telesur, or any world or national news channel in our countries). In these times, no-one wants news «that appears» neutral, they want explicit subjectivity like on FOX News; the USA power agenda is no longer interesting, the empire is already a phenomenon of a past when there was supposedly only one world. Today, viewers want to be kept up-to-date with local news, with territory and perspective; before, there was only CNN, and now there are many news sources (including surprisingly, Aljazeera) and the Internet, Twitter, YouTube and the cell phone, which are more reliable.

The model for informing and doing journalism CNN-style is out-dated: serious poses, faces of appearance-truth, adulation of images in themselves, screens with telephone diagrams, reports from hotels, interviews with experts that talk about themselves, all dressed in the same clothes, hairstyles and smiles. Images without stories, only documentary images freely given by nature or warriors are saved. This CNN-style journalism is no longer valid, and business looks bad.

The news is that you have to experiment with other models of journalistic narration and other analyses of information; that you have to ditch the supposed objectivity (which is always misleading) and gain the diversity of subjectivities and of well-founded points of view; new agendas are required, which interest citizens more and go beyond political power. We do not want informative robots or readers off teleprompters (journalists that know how to read more than the script); we need human beings that tell us their vision/version/point of view, now that individual perspectives and having something to say are in demand. We are searching for histories, and not talking heads; we need more images and testimonies and more context and diversity of comprehending reality. If we do not change the informative television models, people will continue to flee from information, and we will be left with sensationalist news stories of death-accidents, sports-success and celebrities-sex which is the formula for success in television.

The good news is that there are new journalistic narratives. A case in particular is Guillermo Prieto, better known in Columbia as Pirry, who hosts a weekly program that is somewhere between a personal report and a television documentary for the RCN Channel, generating good ratings and better social conversation. His television talent is in discovering the narrative of existence, delving more into daily life and talking about the common man. His Ten Command-ments[4] for producing reality television would be:

• Try a decent narrative on television: beyond the facts, telling with images and transmitting emotion.

• Stories are conceived from research and images.

• Stories are told from a subjective viewpoint and as an expression of opinion.

• You have to try literary journalism on television: novelize without inventing.

• Don't be repetitive; aim for innovation in topics, points of view and subjects.

• You must go to the movies, where you can find ideas and narrative lessons.

• You must read, only then will you learn to tell stories and write better.

• Television is an act of writing for the ear, and it must be spoken like people speak.

• It must be personalized, take a position without desecrating history.

• The only thing that you have to do is to tell stories, hopefully other types of stories.

Along the same lines operates Margarita Martinez, whose «La Sierra» reached the highest rating for a documentary in the history of Colombian television on Caracol TV. One year of filming (2003). One war. Three human stories: a warrior, a prostitute, an unconsciousness. A testimonial tale. An edition that allows silences to be felt, paradoxes to survive and to «wage war». A journalistic work that dares to look at life as it happens, and an observation of patience to wait for the stories to tell themselves.

> We live in a time of screen multiplicity, the business of formats, the logic of other emotions, the burst of audiovisual narratives, the multiplication of aesthetics, the diversity of awareness/identities – times in which each of us can make whatever we want out of television. What is meaningful is what is close, vital, emotional and unexpected.

### 4. The soap opera, our story

The soap opera is much more than love and tears, and this is why it accompanies our way of life in Latin America. It is the national product that industrialized Columbia in the 20th century (Café con aroma de mujer, «Coffee with the Scent of a Woman»), with new Colombian lifestyles in this world, beauty and women (Yo soy Betty la fea, «I Am Ugly Betty») and narcotrafficking «Sin tetas no hay paraíso» (Without Breasts There Is No Paradise) by Gustavo Bolívar (2006), «El Cártel» (The Cartel) by Andrés López (2008), Gustavo Bolivar's «El Capo» (The Boss) from 2009, «Las muñecas de la mafia» (Mafia Dolls) (2009) and «Rosario Tijeras» by Carlos Duplat (2010). Narco-soap operas are testimonial television: stories with a lot of rhythm, hyperrealist word games, exuberant landscapes, extreme architecture, street mafia, silicone queens, natural hit men, an enchanting sense of humor, amazing excesses, immoral acting and familiar music. Their authenticity is aesthetics – aesthetics that document a way of thinking and popular taste.

The soap opera is an anthropophagical format of formats, genres, aesthetics and ideas. For this reason, to understand reality you have to watch soap opera not the news. This would be the new formula:

• Ideas, scripts and formats are sold to be adapted to the cultures and local tones where they are to be presented.

• The Brazilian soap opera shows that fiction is an excellent public space for debate about representations and important national issues.

• The Colombian soap opera seeks tones other than melodrama: it could be comedy, suspense, documentary, tragedy, contests, documentary, talk show, reality.

• The soap opera must tell drama that generates identification with survivors in the target society and must explore the affective moment of society.

• The soap opera must continue exploring among the Mexican style (elevating the virtue of suffering and working on moral essences), contributions from Brazil (the search for who we are as a culture), the intuitions of Colombia (social ascent through the body and crime), searching from Chile (industrial modernity with historical imagination), and irreverence from Argentina (middle-class aesthetics within permissive and sexual morals).

• More soap opera series need to be produced, ideally in a made-for-TV movie format, with their concentrated drama, aesthetic adventure and daring topics that promote audiovisual innovation.

• Soap opera stories are no longer designed for 30-minute or one-hour chapters, but rather with an emphasis on flow, programming should be of varied duration. Each sequence must be meaningful in and of itself.

• People have watched so many soap operas and, therefore, know a lot about them. The soap opera, its stories and actors are «like family», so producers cannot be unfaithful or disrespectful to the audience's television memory.

• The power of the soap opera is in the characters who generate identification and magic; the idea is to humanize without losing the melodramatic point of reference.

• In the future as in the past, soap operas will need good storylines and close connection to reality.

### 5. Forming citizens through production

And leaving behind the media machine of the news and soap operas, we should focus on the most important thing that is happening now in Latin America: grassroots media, of the people, of the citizens. Media to break with the thematic, political homogeneity of the media machine, the market machine, the machine for development, the business machine, the machine that serves the interest of the financers. The findings: communications media, all types, must be reinvented.

If there are stories, then reinvention will be possible. The inspiration is in blending the media machine with other aesthetics, other narratives, other methods of storytelling, other dramaturgies, other voices, other stories… and for this reason these media types must «take the shape» of a woman that is collaborative aesthetics, close-up, vital encounter, testimony-essay-proposal. We must understand those other ways of communicating that are not inscribed in the new collective sensitivities, called indigenous, afro, environmentalist, alternative sexualities, street, city, youth, and children. There is much awareness yet to be told, which is not for telling or to be «talked about», but to be communicated «from» their meaning, aesthetics and tales.

There are six simultaneous movements that we must take advantage of in order to generate new communications for all: 1) the Rights to Communications, in order to think practically about democracy and politics; 2) overcoming the fascination with technology in order to have the chance to produce our own messages; 3) practicing expressive radicalism: we do not consume, we produce; 4) trying out other aesthetics, other formats, other ways of expression; 5)

exercising the right to entertainment that means using free time, inhabiting leisure and experiencing «relaxation» from one's own emotional culture; 6) generating communications that develop the right to Identity, to go to the media to find out who we are and to produce/create ourselves according to our own interests, traditions and desires.

The greatest expectations and possibilities for the future are in local television, community television and YouTube. Community channels are making the best television possible, one that questions politics, looks for useful information, tries out other formats, does not buy the stories from canonical channels, and enjoys its own aesthetics. Wherever you go in Colombia and Latin America, you will find a local channel that talks about what each community is and what each wants. Useful communication is the key to community![5].

If we have so many screens to talk about ourselves, then faithfulness to a brand, a channel, a program declines – unfaithfulness triumphs. We look to where we have the most emotion. We have to emphasize «what we have to say». We have to fill our heads with ideas and life experiences – telling something that needs to be told, that is the rule. History tells us that people chat and enjoy watching the lives of others. First came blogs, then MySpace. YouTube appeared and seduced us, and blogs were left behind with the visual effervescence of Facebook, and now we are all into Twitter, the biggest machine in the world for aphorisms. Each one a format: one's own story. And that story must be possible in any format from YouTube to «local TV» and from the cell phone to Twitter/Facebook/Skype. The idea is to bring together communities – to add, but not require all to be together.

The YouTube narrative searches for situational impact, the story that for once and for all has to be told. More than history, it is the situation that triumphs, and its daring to watch/experience life from the other side. Its tone is almost mocking, of resistance to mass television. Its potential is telling an absolutely personal version. Its realm is direct and live; its logic is the Net; its tone, the instability of the voyeur. YouTube is the channel of all channels, where we can see all programs from now and before, the bad and the good, those of worship and those of hate. On YouTube you can access the best videos made in the other America, the ones that do not appear on official television, those videos that tell stories and do not ask for permission, those that dare to try out other aesthetics, other rhythms, other textures and times. This is the case of the «Escuela Audiovisual Infantil Belén de los Andaquíes» (http://escuelaaudiovisualinfantil.blogspot.com), the «Children's Audiovisual School of Belen de los Andaquies», that says in its style manual that without a story there is no camera; stories are told to generate happiness because war is scary; stories are told as gossip, with a moral at the end; they are told in local aesthetics; it is what is popular that is celebrated.

Communication inserted in culture, such as that of the indigenous communities of Cauca ACIN. This is an experience they call «the communications fabric», where they use a photo or video camera or cell phone camera to «defend» the life out of which they produce their testimony and memory. Their stories come from their own interests, «the word moves because communication is like water that flows and ebbs», they exhibit their audiovisual documents to make their reality public, and they make a documentary video to occupy the minds of the people from within (www.nasaacin.org).

The cell phone is the media of intimacy, of personal life records, of personal defense. It is an audiovisual device for combat, for fighting for the defense of interests, visions and one's own politics. It is a device for telling about oneself, to have a voice and image in the world of stories. It is image-text spoken word. It takes the shape of each one. Its realm is individual. Its logic is existing. Its tone is the celebration of oneself. On cell phones today, we can snap images that reflect us, and in their messages and aesthetics we can construct new subjectivities and new ways of being a community and public sphere – pure communication for personal freedom and autonomy. It is not possible to control these play-like aesthetics and passion-like politics; the cell phone represents the possibility of being a message with conformity – cellular TV, belonging to each of us.

The technological, communicative and political revolution of our time is that anyone can be a journalist, documentarian, message producer and creator of images, stories and information. We no longer depend on official channels, and we have less desire to be represented by journalists that do not know how to talk, who research little and tell nothing. The criteria that define these new televisions are: 1) stories told with the aesthetics of the storyteller; 2) stories and formats that take the form of what they are telling; 3) time is mobile, and lasts as long as each message must last; 3) all style types are accepted from essay to docu-fiction; 5) the atmospheric sound is real; 6) it looks for all screens: YouTube, Skype, local TV, festivals, pirated screens; 7) they pay attention to the audiences, they are the ones who tell the stories; 8) all

technologies are valid: cell phones, photography, video; 9) they produce and narrate from the street, with the people and without stars; 10) they have something to say, and then there is a message.

The most important thing is for the people's media to move from obsession with contents to aesthetic and narrative explorations. The issue is how we will give shape to our experience from our interests, cultural codes and aesthetic references. For that reason, the people's media must produce new formats of subject and collective narration, allowing for many voices, faces, ideas and styles, and existing within citizen communication.

The stage is full of hope and mined with private interests. It is time to risk believing in the citizens, in their competences, in their aesthetics, thematic charms and uncertain stories. And so it is that television is a mirror of the society that produces it; it says a lot about who we are, what we imagine and how we think as a community. Television must be citizenised!

### 6. Narratives of possibility

We are experiencing a burst of narratives, temporalities, languages, formats, audiences. Television is, therefore, more and more interested in finding a fictional direction, the spoken word as a narrative model, more collaborative than just the author.

Watching television should become an entertainment trip, in which each screen will contribute what it has to offer: the cell phone, intimacy; the internet, a quick but multiple connection; the video, personal expression; local TV, storytelling methods; regional TV will be on-site with the people and openly accessible; national TV will only aim for mass entertainment in the form of «joke-telling», soccer and soap operas; global TV will concentrate on small pleasures, great aesthetics and good series.

The television to come will have to have the narrative wisdom of the soap opera, the patience and realism of the documentary, the aesthetic force of fiction, the seductive conversation of talk shows and the adrenaline of reality shows. There will be various forms of television, not just one. The television of the future will have to find another business model that is not aimed at selling mass audiences. It will be interested in joining communities rather than gaining masses. The key will be closeness to the awareness, understanding and desires of the communities.

The narrative compulsion inside us, the burst of audiovisual narratives call us to narrate in a diversity of temporalities, in unique languages, in formats that are mixed and fused, such as fusing the revival of the direct (old television) and spoken world (old tradition) with new screens (the Internet) and oral-digital flow (cell phones). As Jesus Martin-Barbero indicates, we must think with our own heads, have something to say and getting it heard. Thinking with our own heads means laying down the foundations of the world from the humanities, literature, art and cultures; having something to say means researching the world of the people, the pains of society, collective desires, experiencing life; and getting to be heard is knowing how to narrate, knowing how to tell, to excite and connect with people. Listening to the world is the best way to learn how to tell stories.

Watching television should become an entertainment trip, in which each screen will contribute what it has to offer: the cell phone, intimacy; the internet, a quick but multiple connection; the video, personal expression; local TV, storytelling methods; regional TV will be on-site with the people and openly accessible; national TV will only aim for mass entertainment in the form of «joke-telling», soccer and soap operas; global TV will concentrate on small pleasures, great aesthetics and good series.

The future is near, it is here in the aesthetic inventions of other awareness/identities that have not been told or experienced. We will need to: exercise mobility, expressive flow and potential of technology; practice and adapt the entertainment imposed by the commercial media empire; find resistance in ethnic identities (afro, indigenous, oriental); search for social expression in forms of contemporaneous awareness (feminism, sexuality, ecology, urban, young).

They will be narratives that are more «collaboractive» – aesthetic inventions placed on awareness/-

identities. The great audiovisual revolution will arrive the day we are able to tell stories from female, indigenous, afro, environmental, gay or oriental aesthetics/dramaturgy/tempo…when the shape that the audiovisual takes in its diverse devices includes storytelling methods that have not been experienced. New awareness, other identities, they are not just contents, they are above all ways of telling, narrative models, aesthetic proposals. And if we don't tell them, we don't exist!

## Notes

[1] The seven global mega-trends presented by the Future Concept Lab (www.futureconceptlab.com) in a workshop held at Bogotá's Chamber of Commerce.

[2] This is an exercise based on the table presented in Rincon, O. (2002). Televisión, vídeo y subjetividad, Norma, Buenos Aires; 22-26.

[3] The most famous series (there are many) are: The Sopranos, Six Feet Under, Lost, 24, Ally McBeal, South Park, The Big Bang Theory… these are series that would be successful on a national public screen, for this reason they reign in global television and their limit is the morals of each viewer.

[4] Available at www.revistaarcadia.com/ediciones/32/television.-html.

[5] Rodríguez, C. (2008). Lo que le vamos quitando a la guerra [medios ciudadanos en contextos de conflicto armado en Colombia], Bogota: C3 Fundación Friedrich Ebert (www.c3fes.net/docs/quitandoalaguerra.pdf).

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Series referidas: «Los soprano», «Six feet under», «Lost, 24», «Ally Mc Beal», «South Park», «The Big Band Theory».

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# Structure, Concentration and Changes of the Media System in the Southern Cone of Latin America

## Estructura, concentración y transformaciones en los medios del Cono Sur latinoamericano

ABSTRACT
The present text analyzes the changes in the structure of the media system in four South American countries during the first decade of the 21st century: Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay. The general premise is that the current levels of concentration in media markets have accelerated during the first decade of the 21st century as a consequence of the historical processes which have taken place in these countries, although each has different origins and effects in each of these national cases. Increased concentration, the media convergence with telecommunications and the Internet, the growing financial dependence of the sector, the foreign acquisition of a significant amount of their property at the hands of multinational firms and the crisis of the current regulatory frameworks are the main frameworks for understanding the transformation of the media in the Southern Cone of Latin America. The processes of change identified to describe and analyze the evolution of Brazilian, Argentine, Chilean and Uruguayan media in recent years could not have been achieved without the collaboration of different governments and the radical transformations in the management and ownership patterns of these media.

RESUMEN
El presente texto analiza los cambios en la estructura del sistema de medios de comunicación en cuatro países de América del Sur durante la primera década del siglo XXI: Argentina, Brasil, Chile y Uruguay. La premisa general es que los niveles actuales de concentración en los mercados los medios de comunicación se incrementaron durante la última década, como consecuencia de los procesos históricos que han tenido lugar en estos países, aunque cada uno tiene diferentes orígenes y efectos. La profundización del proceso de concentración, la convergencia de los medios con las telecomunicaciones e Internet, la creciente dependencia financiera del sector, la adquisición extranjera de una cantidad importante de sus bienes a manos de las empresas multinacionales y la crisis de los marcos reglamentarios actuales son los principales marcos para la comprensión de la transformación de los medios de comunicación en el Cono Sur de América Latina. Los procesos de cambio identificados en el análisis de la evolución de Argentina, Brasil, Argentina, Chile y Uruguay en los últimos años no se habrían podido lograr sin la colaboración de los diferentes gobiernos y sin radicales transformaciones en la gestión y la propiedad de los medios de comunicación.

KEYWORDS / PALABRAS CLAVE
Media system, telecommunications, concentration, pluralism, convergence.
Sistema de medios, telecomunicaciones, concentración, pluralismo, convergencia.

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## 1. Introduction

Studying the ownership structure of Latin American media is a challenge in various senses. On the one hand, this is because it is not risky to state that the region has one of the highest ownership concentration indexes in the world. On the other hand, because although there are many studies that have tried to analyze the issue of media during the past 40 years (from the classic studies of the 1970s to more recent works published in English, such as Sinclair (1999), Fox and Waisbord (2002) or in Spanish by Mastrini and Becerra (2006), Becerra and Mastrini (2009) and Trejo Delarbre (2010), to name a few), for the most part these have been studies on a national level or a compilation of studies from national capitals, which do not always follow a common research methodology.

In a previous study (Mastrini & Becerra 2001), we tried to analyze the transformation of large communications groups in the region from family businesses (in the 1950s and 1960s) to large conglomerates (from the last few years of the 20th century), whose logic for merging is not so much based on political power as in the past, but on the exercise of dominant positions in the market. In that study, we analyzed the strategies of the four largest media groups in the region: Globo (Brazil), Televisa (Mexico), Clarin (Argentina), and Cisneros (Venezuela). In prior studies, we made progress in the measurement of levels of ownership concentration of media, considering that any theory put forward concerning the consequences of concentration must be based on a study of the real structure of the media system (Mastrini & Becerra 2006; Becerra & Mastrini 2009).

This article aims at analyzing the changing media structure in the countries that comprise the Latin American Southern Cone, with particular interest in verifying trends related to ownership concentration. Special concern will be given to the strategies of telecommunications companies, who in the past few years have maintained a constant shift towards the sector of communications media.

A new situation in Latin America during the 21st century is that the public sector has assumed a stronger regulatory position with regards to historical processes, where there was a marked combination of interests between media owners and political power. On the one hand, this is due to the emergence of center-left governments or populist inprint in many countries of the region (Brazil, Chile, Bolivia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Uruguay and partially Argentina), which have shown interest in establishing new regulatory frameworks. On the other hand, technological developments such as digitalization have stimulated a convergence of sectors, even muddying the traditional barriers that have separated telecommunications from audiovisual media (primarily, radio and television).

In the meanwhile, the large communications groups readjust within their new environment. Internally, these groups are completing a process of transformation that has entailed changing over from family businesses to multimedia conglomerates. Some of these groups have taken advantage of globalization, diversifying their interests in other companies (especially Televisa, Cisneros and Globo). On the other hand, the groups must respond to challenges posed both by the political sectors that are trying to redefine their regulatory framework and corporate strategies of telephone companies that have become real competition as a result of technological convergence and integration of services (such as triple play). In this sense, the large multimedia groups of Latin America face the challenges posed by the emerging global regulatory system, using its high capacity for influencing national governments despite contradictions that arise due to the change in the nature of state intervention that new Latin American governments propose.

## 2. Concentration and diversity

The phenomenon of concentration of media ownership has been discussed in the past few years from different theoretical perspectives that have gone beyond the traditional studies on the political economy of communications from a critical perspective. This latter trend has historically attempted to establish to what degree communications media ownership relations form part of a system that is trying to justify existing social stratification relations (Murdock & Golding, 1974).

Incidentally, and especially after the controversy that was unleashed as a result of an attempt by the U.S. Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to make anti-concentration standards more relaxed in 2003, there has been an increasing number of academic studies that have tried to justify greater levels of concentration than those currently permitted (Thierer, 2005; Compaine, 2005).

The concentration of production of a sector or financial branch can be defined according to the impact of the largest companies of a specific economic activity on the value of production of said activity (Miguel de Bustos, 2003). Concentration is a complex process, multi-faceted and with multiple variables, since it can mean the domination or control of one

company on the market (through takeovers and mergers), the territorial coverage by one or just a few media companies, and political origins. Through processes of media system concentration, the economic forces that operate on these markets tend to generate imperfections and asymmetry. The technical debate on the relationship between these processes and their possible consequences for pluralism, diversity, informative balance and innovation in the production of cultural goods remains open.

Albarran and Dimmick (1996) justify the importance of the study of this concentration, when they observe that «by evaluating the level of concentration within a certain market, you can learn about the market structure, which at the same time has consequences for the types of products offered, the degree of diversity or differentiation of products, the costs for consumers and the entry barriers to new competitors».

In Latin America, dynamic and internationalized market share often leads companies to the crossroads of either growing through the takeover of smaller companies, or being bought out by international groups. In this way, the growing number of mergers and company takeovers in the information-communications sector has implied that the traditional company structure has become a group structure.

### 3. Media in the Southern Cone

In Latin America, radio broadcasting was entrusted at an early time to the private sector which then developed a competitive model based on publicity for financial support and sustainment. Both radio and television have shown a strong trend towards centralizing their contents in large urban centers. In the case of open signal television, for many years it showed high dependence on North American content. However, since 1990 it has shown a greater capacity to generate national content; even in the area of fiction, prime time has been taken over by national productions (with the partial exception of Uruguay in the Southern Cone, where the small size of the market makes it difficult to match up to basic economies of scale). Foreign content continues to predominate on cable television, with numerous Hollywood movie and television series channels.

In an analysis of Latin American television, Sinclair (1999: 77) highlights that its ownership and control is structured around families with strong patriarchal figures. This model has experienced changes in the last few years due to the internationalization of audiovisual markets and the generational turnover that has fallen upon the main communications groups: «The descendents of the patriarchs retake family control over the groups, while applying new forms of administration. The past national champions are being reconverted into important actors in the globalized world» (Mastrini & Becerrra, 2001). There is also media that has transformed its offer. As pointed out by Bustamante and Miguel (2005:13), «originating from and focused on the world of distribution and broadcasting, they have learned to take charge of important national production veins in areas of high local demand (like television fiction), but have abandoned or weakly cultivated markets that are more greatly dominated by large groups such as film or discography, where they have practiced a policy of generating alliances with international groups».

> In this sense, the large multimedia groups of Latin America face the challenges posed by the emerging global regulatory system, using its high capacity for influencing national governments despite contradictions that arise due to the change in the nature of state intervention that new Latin American governments propose.

Fox (1990) characterizes the Latin American model as a «politically docile commercial system». From the 1990s, the predominance of neo-liberal policies even promoted greater deregulation of the communications system. The processes of ownership concentration, favored by more relaxed rules, did not take long to appear. By allowing cross-ownership in markets that were already concentrated, they promoted the formation of large media conglomerates. This situation holds especially true in those countries with larger markets such as Brazil and Argentina.

During the first decade of the 21st century, there has been resurgence in the region of different governments that have revised, at least on a discursive level, the postulates of neo-liberalism. The policies

based on the proposals of the Washington Consensus are being abandoned, and a new agenda is emerging. Within this new agenda, communications media holds an important place. Some governments propose changes in media policies that suggest a greater degree of State intervention in regulation and certain relative controls of levels of ownership concentration. At the same time, civil society groups are encouraged to participate in the discussion of policies such as media ownership.

In response to this, large media owners have denounced that government regulation is trying to limit their critical capacity. This line of argument has been very similar in all countries for decades, highlighting its refusal to accept any modification to the legal system, especially with regards to the possibility of allowing access to new social actors into the media market. The conniving practices among media owners and political power as described by Fox do not apply to the past few years in Latin American countries, where many times television channels, radio stations and news-papers appear as political opposition leaders against democratically elected governments. Below we will present an overview of the media structure in the countries of the Southern Cone.

Concentration is a complex, multiple and diverse process. The media is made up of institutions with double action and mediation of interests: political and economic. Based on the type of products they offer – which have a double value: material and symbolic – they constitute a particular actor and have special consequences for their actions. They participate, affect and constitute (although they do not exclusively determine) the public arena, which is a political arena.

### 3.1. Argentina

The definition of communications policies in Argentina presents an apparent paradox: strong state intervention and the absence of a state policy to promote public interest. It is not difficult to prove that the state has had decisive influence on the radio broadcasting sector (defining licenses, providing subsidies, sanctioning the legal framework, etc.) and that, at the same time, it has failed to sustain public policy over time.

The structure of the media system has been based on private radio broadcasting that dominates the stations of the main cities throughout the country. It is accompanied by radio broadcasting that is state/-government-run, which only covers the city of Buenos Aires and several zones with low demographic density, while the large urban centers have been beyond their reach.

Until the 1980s, the media structure, both the press and the audiovisual sector, showed no cases of cross-ownership. More recently in the 1990s, with the progress of neo-liberal policies executed by the government of Carlos Menem, modifications were made to the legal framework, which allowed for the creation of multimedia groups. From that moment, the process of media ownership concentration has remained constant. The Clarin group is the main communications group in the country, with the best-selling news-paper (and partner of several others in Argentine provinces), one of the most important television channels in Buenos Aires as well as several others in the provinces, a chain of radio stations, the main cable distribution system and several cable channels. It also participates in other areas tied to cultural industries such as press paper manufacturing (where it is a partner to the state), film producers, news agencies and Internet distribution. The great threat to the dominant position of the Clarin group are telephone companies (especially Telefonica from Spain) that share the domination of the landline tele-phone business and are the main operators in the cell phone market and broadband distribution (Internet). In addition to Telefonica and Telecom (tied to Telecom from Italy, and therefore to Telefonica from Spain), there is a growing importance of the Mexican company, Telmex. Both Telefonica and Telmex have shown interest in entering the business of cable television, an issue that is currently prohibited by the current regulatory framework. The annual turnover of

these companies greatly exceeds that of the Clarin group.

Since 2008, there has been a heavy confrontation between the government and the large communications groups, lead by the Clarin group. The primary motivation behind this confrontation has been the sanctioning of a new law on audiovisual communications services in 2009 that proposed new limits for the concentration of media ownership.

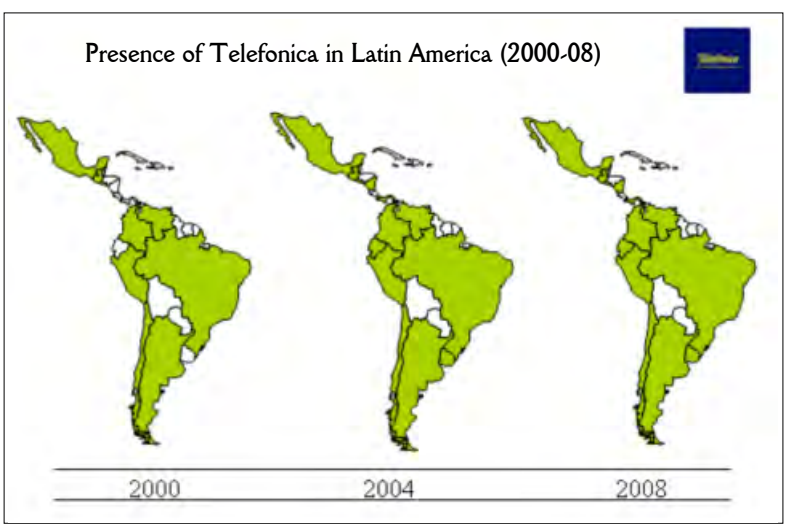
### 3.2. Brazil

Brazil constitutes the largest market in Latin America. Its over 180 million inhabitants give its cultural industries an unmatched potential for development. Although it is calculated that a third of the population live in extremely precarious conditions, the cultural consumption of Brazil in absolute terms noticeably exceeds that of any other country in the region.

More than 500 newspapers are published in Brazil; the majority is regional, given that there is practically no press with national coverage. The focus of media in large urban centers (San Pablo, Rio de Janeiro, Salvador) is also repeated in the case of radio and television, although in this case the situation is made worse by the chaining of contents. Although the ownership structure is divided among the big cities, the contents are very similar throughout the country.

Within the Brazilian media structure, the presence of the Globo group stands out, with its origins in the 1960s, when the Marinho family holding led by the O Globo newspaper began to show presence in the television market. As Fox (1990: 72) points out, TV Globo was born with the dictatorship established in 1964, serving as support for its conservative modernization project. With contributions from the North American investments of the Time Life group, Globo was able to displace its main competitors and begin to expand towards national coverage. Its growth was made possible by taking advantage of numerous State investments to develop telecommunications through the Empresa Brasileña de Telecomunicaciones (Brazilian Telecommunications Company). The group was able to generate a product of original nature: soap operas. With these, it not only took advantage of its horizontal and vertical integration, but soap operas became the raw material with which Globo would face its entry into the international market. During the government of President Lula (2002-2010), the Globo group used all of its lobbying capacity to get the Brazilian state to lean towards the Japanese standard of digital television, instead of the European standard that telecommunications companies promoted. The Globo group holds ownership of the second highest selling newspaper in Brazil, the main television station which has relay stations throughout almost the entire country, and the largest cable television company which it holds in association with Televisa from Mexico. The Globo group has shown concern for the expansion of tele-phone companies (Possebon, 2007: 302).

The government of Lula has been very moderate in the development of media policies – in fact, for a long time the Minister of Communications was journalist Helio Costas, tied to the Globo chain. The main government policy was driven by public radio broadcasting with the creation of the Empresa Brasileña de Comunicación (EBC, Brazilian Communica-tions Company) that, however, was never fully carried out.



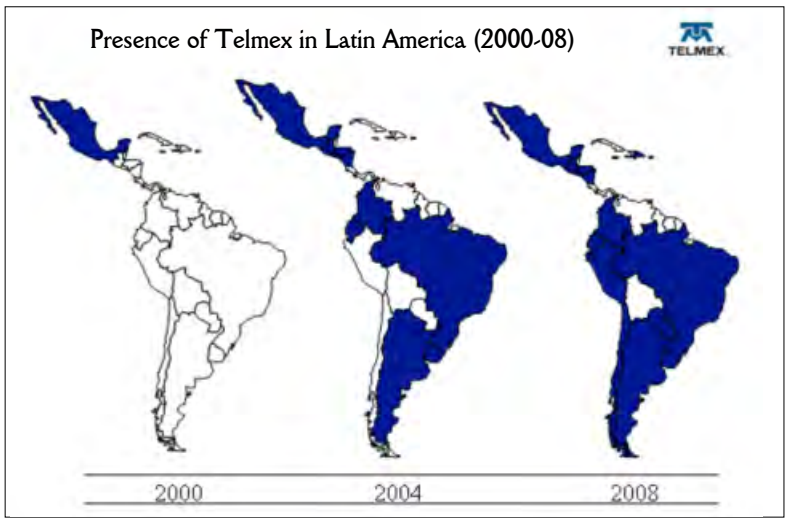

Source: own analysis based on the balance statements of the company.

### 3.3. Chile

This country exhibits the most stable economic environment during the last two decades in the region. Chile exhibits the only «successful» case of neo-liberal policies in the continent, although it may also be maintained that its situation is precisely due to the fact that orthodox policies were not

rigorously applied at least since the recovery of the constitutional regime in 1990 (part of the structural reforms were carried out during the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet, fundamentally in the 1980s). During the most recent years, and until March 2010, the last two presidents belonged to the Chilean Socialist Party.

Regarding cultural industries, Chile has one of the least regulated markets in the region. There are no great legal impediments for the concentration of media ownership or for the participation of foreign investors in the information-communications sector. Until the 1970s, the ownership structure of the communications media, especially the press, was tied to political trends. Likewise, television channels were in the hands of the state and universities. The dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet (1973-1990) entailed ideological control over communications media, censorship and the closure of many of these channels, as well as the formation of a duopoly composed of the Mercurio group (Edwards family) and the COPESA group (La Tercera).




Source: own analysis based on the balance statements of the company.

Coinciding with the return to democracy, since the early years of the 1990s there has been a process of liberalization and privatization of the information-communications sector. From then, the heavy concentration that existed in the Chilean press has begun to expand to other sectors. However, it should be noted that multimedia conglomerates as large as those in Argentina and Brazil have not been formed. There is also an important participation of foreign capital in the radio broadcasting sector.

Communications policies in Chile have been defined by a central market orientation that has not put limits on either the concentration or inflow of foreign capital. The policy of the Coalition of Parties for Democracy (Concertación, the center-left coalition of political parties in Chile) has been explicit towards state-run television, which has managed to exceed private media in ratings.

### 3.4. Uruguay

Uruguay was considered for many years as the Switzerland of South America. In fact, in addition to having a banking system renowned for maintaining banking secrecy, the socio-demographic indexes of Uruguay were close to those of many European countries. The media system has heavy penetration in Uruguayan society, but the small size of its market (the country has less than four million inhabitants) prevents large-scale economic development. It is highly dependent on the content produced in neighboring countries: Argentina and Brazil.

Communications media is highly concentrated in Uruguay, but there are not any observable large groups of communication. Both in the press and in the audiovisual sector, three groups share the market. Even cable television has been developed as a joint business between the three main companies. It is important to note that it is the only country in the region that has a monopoly over basic telephone services, as well as an important role for the state mobile communications company.

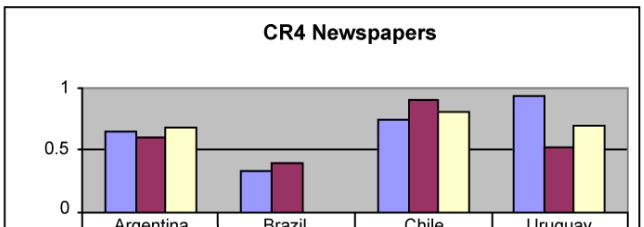
The government of the Broad Front (Frente Amplio), a center-left political party that came to power for the first time in 2005, did not have a communications policy that affected the interests of the commercial sector. However, community radio broadcasting legislation, thought to be one of the most advanced policies in the world, was passed in 2008.

## 4. Concentration in the Southern Cone

Here we will present results from an analysis of the concentration of communications media and telecommunications ownership in the countries of the Southern Cone, based on the application of the concentration index method (CR4) in two senses: one

that weighs the volume of turnover of the four largest companies in relation to the rest (CR4-turnover), and another that measures the percen-tage of domination of the audience (CR4-audience). In this article, data is limited to CR4-turnover, given that the data corresponding to audiences has not yet been processed. Although the research project studies all communications markets (press, radio, paid television, basic and mobile telephone services, Internet, see Becerra and Mastrini (2009)), this article only presents data corresponding to three markets: the daily press, television and mobile telephones. In this way, some examples are provided from the editorial, audiovisual and telecommunications sectors.

Market Concentration of Newspapers



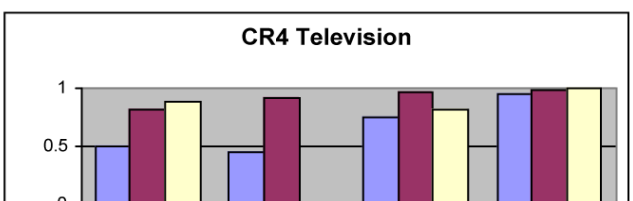

| | Argentina | Brazil | Chile | Uruguay |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2000 | 0.64 | 0.33 | 0.75 | 0.94 |
| 2004 | 0.6 | 0.39 | 0.9 | 0.52 |
| 2008 | 0.69 | | 0.8 | 0.7 |

Data in millions of dollars. Source: own research.

Levels of market concentration in the written press vary according to country. While in Brazil the joint income of the four largest newspapers reached 40% of the total, in Argentina they exceeded 60%, and in Chile and Uruguay they showed even higher indicators. The data presented here tends to confirm previous studies that linked diversity in the editorial market with the size of the market. Only with a high number of readers can a newspaper reach the economies of scale needed to survive financially. It should be remembered that the Brazilian population is three times the combined population of Argentina, Chile and Uruguay.

In the television market there is also a high concentration of turnover. According to the data collected (see Figure 2) this market takes the form of an oligopoly. In all of the countries in the Southern Cone, the four largest television channels of each country control at least 50% of all income in the sector, which confirms that there are high levels of concentration. Also in this case, Brazil has a lower concentration index to those of its neighboring countries. It is important to highlight that although the number of licenses existing in each of the countries varies (more than 300 in Brazil, less than 50 in Argentina) the levels of concentration are high in both cases. This would indicate that those to reach dominating positions at the audience level also manage to capture the greatest market share. As opposed to the written press sector, the data collected allows us to establish that there is a trend towards slight increases in the levels of television market concentration in the Southern Cone.

Market Concentration of Television




| | Argentina | Brazil | Chile | Uruguay |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2000 | 0.51 | 0.46 | 0.76 | 0.96 |
| 2004 | 0.82 | 0.91 | 0.97 | 0.99 |
| 2008 | 0.89 | | 0.83 | 1 |

Data in millions of dollars. Source: own research.

The mobile telephone market is even more concentrated. In all of the countries in the Southern Cone, the CR4 reached the highest possible level. In fact, it is interesting to observe that with the policies of liberalization that entailed dismantling public telecommunications monopolies that existed until the 1990s, in just a few years the market managed to take on the form of a strong oligopoly (in some cases a duopoly), but privately owned. Even the telephone market, which was born within a «competitive» regulation environment, does not allow for more than four operators. This situation is also the case in Brazil, which showed an indicator of low concentration at the beginning of the century, followed by a trend of competitor withdrawal.

The extremely high levels of concentration in the mobile telephone market merit a deeper reading. As indicated by Fox and Waisbord (2002: 9), «the privatization and liberalization of the telecommunications industry also contributed to the formation of conglomerates. It is impossible to analyze the evolution and structure of contemporary media without considering the developments made in the tele-communications market». To this regard, two companies have launched campaigns to

conquer the Latin American market. In fact, since the beginning of the 21st century, Telefonica of Spain and the Mexican company Telmex have carried out a regional dispute for regional leadership of the telecommunications market. The Telefonica group has had a significant presence in the majority of Latin American countries since the sector began to be privatized in the 1990s. The Telmex group, which obtained control of Mexican telecommunications, came into the game much later than its rival (see Figure 6, at the end of the article). However, it has gained ground and, in 2008, exceeded Telefonica in its volume of regional turnover.

The economic importance of these large communications groups stands out when their turnover volume is compared to that of communications media. Figure 4 shows the turnover volume of Telefonica and Telmex, contrasted with the total turnover of the press sectors in the countries studied. This shows that during the year 2008, Telefonica turnover in Latin America was ten times greater than that generated by all of the newspapers in Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay combined, six times higher than that of paid television, and three times higher than that of open signal television.

When added together, Telefonica and Telmex had a regional turnover of 73 billion dollars, a figure that greatly exceeds the 21 billion dollars of turnover from the press, open signal television and paid television combined in the four countries studied.

Although it could be argued that Latin America for telephone companies and the Southern Cone for the communications media sector are two geographically different dimensions, what is being gauged here is the enormous difference in availability of capital for the former. It is important to remember that telephone companies design their business strategy at the regional level, and their policies and development are coordinated at this level.

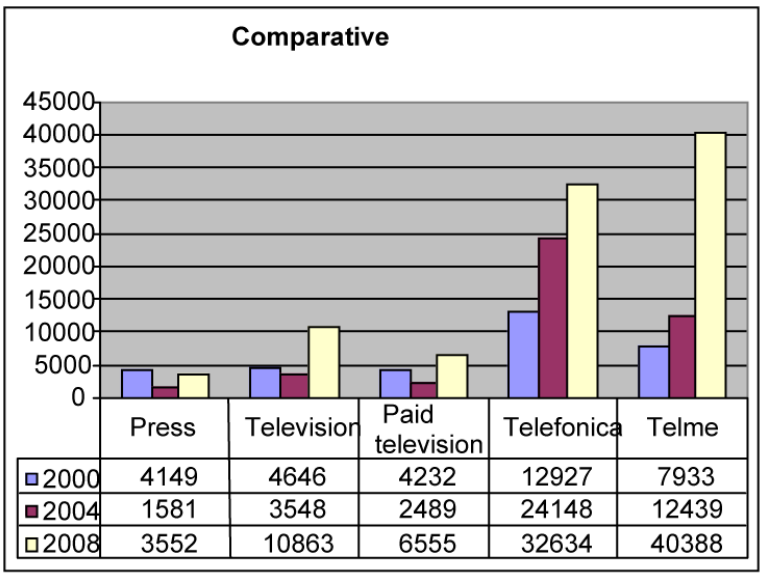
In the last few years, Telmex and Telefonica have begun to expand towards the cable television sector, taking advantage of the benefits of digital convergence. Although this topic is beyond the scope of the present study, the data presented in Figure is highly relevant, especially for the current owners of paid television systems in the Southern Cone, currently in the hands of local companies.

It is important to also consider that telephone companies are actors that follow a globalized market logic and participate from their different scales (McChesney,1998). The protagonists of the process of formation of a global commercial market are public and private, but they go beyond the frameworks traditionally defined by the state.

## 5. Conclusion

Concentration is a complex, multiple and diverse process. The media is made up of institutions with double action and mediation of interests: political and economic. Based on the type of products they offer –which have a double value: material and symbolic– they constitute a particular actor and have special consequences for their actions. They participate, affect and constitute (although they do not exclusively determine) the public arena, which is a political arena. And as economic actors, and according to the type of activity they carry out, they tend towards concentration, due to the composition of costs, in which fixed costs are very high and variables are very low. They organize their activities according to this format, leading to processes of concentration that can

Comparative Turnover: Media Sectors vs. Telephone Companies




| | Press | Television | Paid television | Telefonica | Telme |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2000 | 4149 | 4646 | 4232 | 12927 | 7933 |
| 2004 | 1581 | 3548 | 2489 | 24148 | 12439 |
| 2008 | 3552 | 10863 | 6555 | 32634 | 40388 |

Data in millions of dollars. Source: own data.

generate entrance barriers for other actors. To govern this trend and prevent its impact on the loss of cultural diversity, numerous states have been trying to actively intervene for over a century in the control of anti-competitive practices and in the stimulation of a presence of various stations, channels and newspapers with different editorial perspectives.

With regards to the Latin American situation, Bustamante and Miguel (2005: 13) indicate that, «concentration in Latin American countries, benefited and spawned by political interference, in the absence of public counterweight to these interferences, has created a structure that poses serious questions in terms of public pluralism in their respective countries, with times in which the politicians have shown an unbearable prepotency».

According to Albarran and Dimmick (1996), it is considered that concentration exists and is high when more than 50% of the market is controlled by the top four operators. As seen in this study on countries in the Southern Cone of Latin America, in all cases (with the exception of the written press in Brazil) the indicators of concentration are higher than the percentage considered as high by Albarran and Dimmick.

It was also expressed that the theoretical debate about the relationship between these processes and their possible consequences for pluralism, diversity, informative balance and innovation in the production of cultural goods remains open.

Finally, a third aspect to consider is the progressive integration of dominant logic and actors from the communications sector of the Southern Cone with respect to those that lead the world market, a process that knows no immediate limits. It should be highlighted that, as an inherent trait of this process, the breaking down of borders, both geographical and industrial, poses an objective organization that is global and converging of changes. In the Southern Cone, the great challenge for media, and especially for its societies, is to coordinate with the demands of a globalized world, without the extremely high concentration produced in the information-communications sector boring through its enormous cultural diversity.

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# Communicative Empowerment: Narrative Skills of the Subjects

## Empoderamiento comunicacional: competencias narrativas de los sujetos

ABSTRACT
This paper analyzes the educommunicational consequences of the transformations of mediated communication in the process of digitization. We present qualitative empirical evidence on the use of mass media and digital technologies from the digital convergence of media, the industry and the resulting complementary formats. Television, in particular, has experienced a process of changing its formats and expressive content by delivering interactivity, facilitating the expression of subjects by means of different technological devices. So from the perspective of the subject, it is observed that the new technological devices and their new grammars are utilized provided they contribute with meaning to his daily practice and biographical trajectory. Nevertheless, digital inclusion policies have focused only on maximizing access to equipment and digital literacy associated to technology applications and not to the narrative skills of the subjects. It is therefore necessary to generate new concepts that allow new methodological guidelines, in communication and education academic processes, to promote the use of new emerging digital spaces for communicational empowered citizens, that is, from competent to tell (expressive skills) to more specifically, tell oneself (as an individual) and tell us (collectively). Finally, these will be the expressive spaces of the new television with citizen´s expressions, fostered by converging elements of digital technology.

RESUMEN
El presente trabajo analiza las consecuencias educomunicativas de las transformaciones en la comunicación mediada por el proceso de digitalización. Se presenta una constatación empírica de carácter cualitativo en el uso de los medios masivos y las tecnologías digitales desde la convergencia digital de los soportes, la industria y la consecuente complementariedad de los formatos. En este sentido la televisión ha vivido un proceso de cambios de sus continentes y contenidos expresivos, entre otros aspectos al entregar interactividad, facilita la expresión de los sujetos, desde los distintos dispositivos tecnológicos. Así a nivel de los sujetos se observa que los nuevos dispositivos tecnológicos y sus nuevas gramáticas son usados en la medida que asumen un sentido en sus prácticas cotidianas y trayectorias biográficas. No obstante, las políticas de inclusión digital solo se han centrado en la maximización del acceso a equipamiento y en una alfabetización digital asociada a aplicaciones y no a las competencias narrativas de los sujetos. Por tanto, es necesario generar nuevas conceptualizaciones que permitan nuevas orientaciones metodológicas formativas en comunicación y educación que promuevan el uso de los nuevos espacios digitales emergentes como ciudadanos empoderados comunicacionalmente, es decir, competentes para relatar (habilidades expresivas) más específicamente relatarse (como individuo) y relatarnos (colectivamente). Finalmente, estos serán los espacios expresivos de la nueva televisión con sus expresiones ciudadanas, propiciados por los elementos convergentes de la tecnología digital.

KEYWORDS / PALABRAS CLAVE
Convergence, communicational policies, citizenship, empowerment, narrative competences.
Convergencia, políticas de comunicación, ciudadanía, empoderamiento, competencias narrativa.

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## 1. Introduction

When identifying the strategic factors of the guiding principles of the future progress in the field of communications and education, these can be seen to make up three main axes: the complexity and permanent changes to the information-communi-cations systems; the characterization of the «prosumers» of the same system; and proposing possible strategies to strengthen the narrative competences (through the mass media and infor-mation and communication technologies) of civilians, starting with children and adolescents.

The present study attempts to take into consideration the need for an integral communications policy that deals with, from the state, the different dimensions implied by the development of the information-communications industry and, especially, the narrative competences required by subjects in order to participate in the Society of Information.

The above is founded upon qualitative research that shows, from the subjects themselves, the strategic nature of mass media and ICT in socially excluded sectors.

## 2. From industrial media to information-communications system

Aguaded (1999) indicates that the four strategic elements to be incorporated into education for television are:

- Family, by constituting the natural space for television usage.
- School, because of its central formative function.
- Civil society, because of its ability to «press» for a television for all citizens.
- Communications media, as it is responsible for the contents and programs they show.

These four mediating elements will probably continue to be fundamental as far as the challenges to researching the dynamizing factors of education and television. However, the scenario has changed, becoming even more complex; in just over fifteen years the mass media system was transformed by the digitalization of many processes, a situation which also affected the basic institutions: from politics to the school, from entertainment to economics. Castells (1996) indicates that it has to do with structural changes and not simply cosmetic technological innovations.

In this way, it is now possible to verify that there is a technological convergence of digital platforms that has modified the industry and media consumption. There is also an imminent need to understand, within this new context, the forms of use and appropriation of traditional supports like television and the instances of symbolic participation acquired by the audiences as converted into «prosumers», based on the interactive options offered by even the web versions of these same TV channels. In this sense, it is necessary to consider that the subjects fit into a single consumption diet, the «new and old» communication devices (Tudela, Tabernero & Dwyer, 2008).

On the other hand, children and teenagers have been important in the implementation and understanding of these changes at a cultural level, and not only a communicational one. They form, in many cases, the vanguard of adoption of broader social and communications innovations. Mead (1971) stated that a younger age group was beginning to be formed, that would produce its own cultural-symbolic systems, even without fully considering the proposals of traditional agencies of socialization such as the family and school. Probably, during the first few years of this century, characterized by high-speed changes, it is precisely the teenagers and children who are protagonists of many symbolic proposals. However, to this we should also add marketing and publicity that have broadened their «protagonism».

The growing complexity of the phenomenon leads us to question the categories used up to this moment and that are obviously valid for certain historical periods. It is rational to begin reflecting on new categorizations to understand this phenomenon from a more cultural-communicational perspective rather than based on age (Saintout, 2006).

ICT has assumed an increasingly central position in the daily lives of social subjects of this century, and the differences provoked by the digital gap are still insurmountable in many cases. This is no more than the expression of structural differences with socio-cultural origins, so we should refer to it more as a digital social gap, and therefore the action of almost all states to design and implement school and community programs to help minimize differences of access and use of ICT. The digital gap in its one-dimensional version, limited to access, has changed to a multi-dimensional perspective (Villanueva, 2006) which allows us to approach the issue from the socio-communicational sphere.

Ford (1999) already used the concept of information-communications to describe how ICT and traditional media make up an integrated system of growing importance not only in communications but also as a strategic economic sector. The new communicational devices make up a group of digital resources that inhabit the daily lives of the subjects. Never-

theless, the social differences in which information-communications are inserted are multiple and not merely limited to access to equipment, but they are also related to cultural factors. Ford (1999: 162) indicates that, «at the center of all of this is the abysmal difference between cultural, technological and economic power of mergers and the North Americanization that faces various and multiple cultures».

### 3. From receptors to «prosumers»

Different studies (UNICEF, 2010; Robinson, Ketsnbaum, Neustadtl & Álvarez, 2002) indicate that digital devices tend to have a similar importance as that of TV in children's and teenagers' daily lives. However, if this phenomenon is associated with socioeconomic differences, we can see that children and teenagers from lower-income levels have less access to ICT than those from middle and upper classes. These would appear to continue using TV to a significant degree due to a lack of options for using digital devices (Consejo Nacional de Televisión de Chile, «National Television Council of Chile», 2009). This is especially relevant because the social uses of information-communications probably constitute an important change. Jenkins (2008: 14) proposes that cultural convergence is one of the attributes of emerging communicational practices, understood as «the flow of contents through multiple media platforms and the migratory behavior of media audiences willing to go anywhere in search of the desired type of entertainment experiences».

This places communicational practices on a cultural-symbolic plane, in which subjects use technological devices as a form of what Lull (2000) calls symbolic power, with the central distinction that it no longer has to do with the construction of meaning based on what is seen/read/heard from the industrial communications media. Rather, convergence poses the possibility of generating symbolic proposals that take into account the experience of the subjects themselves, communicational products that in «form and content» express their individual points of view: feelings which make up emotions and ideas to be shared.

What is also relevant is that these expressions can be shared not only on the local/national level, but also in regional/global spaces, or more precisely what Sinclair (2000) calls «geo-linguistic regions».

Subjects have the possibility of receiving and generating proposals for meaning, based on the use of information-communication system devices; they are able to generate «stories» and «micro-stories» that tie them to concerns and issues that involve their own experience and that of others. In other words, it entails talking about oneself from a space that involves «otherness».

These symbolic spaces of conversation are evidently different, from issues proposed by mass media to neighborhood problems, from an environmental perspective to reduced employment opportunities, from criticism of the educational system to their own affective experiences.

However, on all of these planes, it is not only necessary to have «experience» from which to «recount», nor devices and necessary «digital literacy», but also a certain cultural capital is needed (Bourdieu, 1997). Although it is true that available digital technology allows those with access to it the opportunity to participate in communicational experiences beyond their daily terrain (the daily here-and-now) this does not necessarily imply having a «domain» over communication, given the differences in cultural capital and narrative competences. Tudela, Tabernero and Dwyer (2008: 103) mention two categories: on the one hand, the «initial level» of use that implies managing e-mail and Internet navigation and, on the other, an «advanced» level that involves the active participation in the generation, production, edition and distribution of contents.

**There is also an imminent need to understand, within this new context, the forms of use and appropriation of traditional supports like television and the instances of symbolic participation acquired by the audiences as converted into «prosumers», based on the interactive options offered by even the web versions of these same TV channels.**

Nevertheless, having access to computer equipment does not necessarily imply the management of expressive resources to transform them into communicationally active subjects. A study done in Santiago, Chile, PNUD (2006) shows the limitations to access/use and limits imposed by precarious living conditions on the symbolic realm. Although this certainly does not imply determinism, it does take into account a «context» that affects the communicational competences of the subjects. It concludes that «teenagers from low-income families, once they are disconnected from their schools, highly reduce their use of the Internet. When added to high rates of unemployment, it would over time generate a lack of opportunities to apply what they learned in school and a difficulty for reintegrating into the world of New Information and Communications Technology in the future». This shows how the use of ICT is associated with the position and context of the subject, that is, structural living conditions, also opening up other questions, such as, «why use technology?» (PNUD, 2006: 98).

This is backed by another study by Avendaño and Phillippi (2009) on the use and valuation of digital technologies in working-class sectors, using focus groups and ethnographic interviews. It shows that the meaning that subjects give to the Internet and other digital devices generates differences with regards to uses beyond communication (e-mail, chat) and entertainment (games), in other words, at the «initial level».

On the other hand, Phillippi and Peña (2010)[1], in a study on the development of women who use public-access telecentres, showed a trend of more intensive use by those women that found meaning in the Internet, while they show differing levels of domain over navigation.

Therefore, the uses in which the subjects participate require having access, managing basic elements of digital literacy, and it is especially relevant to have constructed a sense of Internet use, that is, the pretext established by the subjects to relate their own biography (socio-culturally situated) to some determined uses. The concept of social uses, in communicational terms, comes from studies by Lull (1999) with families in the United States and research by Martin Barbero (1992) in Colombia based on soap operas. In both cases, the social uses are determined by the subject and his or her micro/macro social context, which allows for the construction of specific meanings.

**Communications policies of this century must incorporate new dimensions in their designs, so as to take on the challenges posed by technological changes and new business models of the industry. It is essential that they incorporate a new perspective, from communications and education, that takes into consideration the formation of a subject to communicationally participate in the new possibilities offered by digital TV and various devices that offer access to it, from traditional home appliances and mobile phones; from the office and the classroom.**

To illustrate the concept of the meaning of Internet usage, we will present four cases, which come from the above-mentioned studies and the authors' experience in training workshops with classroom teachers:

a) Meaning: promise of overcoming and consolidating. In the community of Lo Prado, in northwest Santiago, a marginal community built during the government of Salvador Allende as a result of squatting by homeless people, three families live together: the in-laws who have lived there since the house was built, Evelyn, her husband and 13-year-old daughter and the other son of the homeowners with his wife. To the original house, a series of rooms have been added for children that, for lack of options, gradually came to stay there.

Evelyn's husband works in a company that installs cable TV, and he spends most of the day outside of the house, since he also has to travel outside of Santiago. This couple's main concern is that their daughter receive a good education and avoid spending

so much time with the teens from the neighborhood, since they believe that she will only learn «bad habits», in this case associated with delinquency and drugs that, according to them, are rife throughout the street. Because of this, they have invested in a large TV and at the start of the year they bought a computer for their daughter to do her homework. For Evelyn and her husband, the computer and TV are factors that keep their daughter at home, so that she can concentrate on her studies, without needing to go out on the street. However, Evelyn's daughter has also managed to develop a certain domain over the Internet: she has her own Fotolog, she comments on sites of interest and connects with people from other cultural and geographic areas that are different from her own. The main problem has been to make the monthly payments of the Internet service, and since money is always scarce they have agreed to share the costs of the service with the sister-in-law. This has allowed them to make the monthly payments not too far beyond their due date, although they are not always so successful with this.

b) Meaning: development of new abilities. Rolando lives a few blocks from Evelyn. He is in the sixth grade, he is 13 years old and since two years ago he has a computer that was given to him by an uncle that lives in another neighborhood and who had replaced his PC with a new one. When he gave it to Rolando, he mentioned that it had a few small problems that he did not know how to fix. It was at that moment that Rolando, out of necessity, decided to «repair» computers that had minor imperfections, and he became the neighborhood expert. Although demand for his services is not very high, when he gets repair jobs that take him only 30 or 45 minutes to fix, he invites his friends to have ice cream and sodas. Since he knows that software and applications are constantly being updated, he has become a good friend of the teacher who mans the computer lab at the school where he studies, in order to stay up-to-date and to have a representative. Here a horizon of new potential professional practices has opened up to him, as well as the search for specialized information that may be useful for his «trade».

c) Meaning: window to diversity. Carolina is an elementary school teacher at a private school in a very exclusive neighborhood of Santiago. She has been working in the area of language for the past few years and is in charge of groups of adolescents that, in her opinion, are not really connected to the world beyond their homes and neighborhood. She believes that the true educational process is not limited to developing the curricular contents, but rather it is also for forming citizens who are conscious of the complex reality of the country in which they live. Because of this, she tends to encourage her students to be more open-minded and autonomous, as well as to use media communications tools to access situations beyond their daily lives. Communication media such as television and the Internet make this job easier since the analysis of the television and information agenda that she asks of them, allows them to establish necessary bridges to cross in order to form a more comprehensive idea of the country. She has generated a project involving blogs and online social networks to favor the discussion of public issues.

d) Meaning: tool for communication and belonging. Maria lives in a working-class neighborhood in West Santiago. Her neighborhood was built a few years ago by the state, and it consists of four-story apartment buildings, with a minimum square footage to house a family of four or five people. However, various circumstances have led the inhabitants to receive other family members or children along with their families. During the past few years, Maria has converted to Protestantism (sometimes called Evangelical) after conversations with a neighbor. In addition to going to church on Sundays, she frequently listens to Christian radio programs and, especially, goes to an Internet café that is a few blocks from her house. She uses communications tools that offer Internet in order to stay in touch with her church community. In this sense, Internet allows her to feel part of a group with a high sense of belonging. Although she has also become more open to social issues and current events, which have generated greater commitment and involvement with the situation in her own neighborhood, even taking on a certain informal leadership position.

The converging dimensions in these synthesized examples of the relationship people establish with mediated communications (media communications and ICT) allow us to establish the following:

- In all cases (saturation) the uses of communicational and digital devices help people to develop means of communication with individuals that they have previously known and also with whom they seek to intensify their friendship. In this way, it allows them to overcome the limits of their own everyday experiences, de-territorializing communication.
- There is a reason for the use of the communicational devices. The subjects presented recognize a «before» (Orozco, 1996) from which they construct a media/digital diet based on their own subjectivity.

• Likewise, the development of grammatical and technological competences allows them to participate in an interactive communicative process –prosumers– that entails the development of comprehensive and expressive abilities.

• There is a convergence between «off» and «on» between mediated communication and the interpersonal and group communicative processes. There is no gap separating digital from analog or both these from daily practices. The communicative practices are inserted into their lives.

• There is an interrelationship between biography/context/text. The texts appropriated and generated by the subjects are not only related to the socioeconomic and cultural context but also to the paths of their own life stories.

• Because of this, it can be seen that the dual categories that have been used: digital/analog; on/off; receptor/broadcaster do not make sense in the case of these subjects that, despite their limited economic conditions, are able to use their symbolic power to access different points of view, establish relationships, and definitely use their communicational capacities to project their lives.

Nevertheless, these micro life stories are exceptions within the context of the mentioned studies, in which the «initial level» tends to dominate.

## 4. The fifth element: communications policies

Aguaded (1999) reasonably affirms that, by definition, there are four forms of television mediation: family, school, civil society and the communications media themselves. However, at the beginning of this century and the end of the 20th, we have seen that communications policies have once again been given strategic importance, primarily because of the process of digitalization and the need to regulate the development of the information-communications industry. This fifth element has meant that different governments have generated their own programs of digital inclusion, based on the verification of a social digital gap, especially in the countries of the Southern Hemisphere. These programs go from the subsidy of the demand for computer equipment by telecentres, to digital governance and the incorporation of digital technology in schools. In this way, governments have multiplied their efforts to achieve universal access, which has occurred almost at the same time as the digitalization of TV.

In Chile, from the publication of the «Blue Book» (1999) during the presidency of Eduardo Frei to «Digital Strategy» by the government of Michelle Bachelet (2008), we can see the progression of public policies in this area. However, although progress has been made in the development of programs that maximize universal access and digital literacy, specifically in spaces of citizen participation there is much more to be done to develop communicational and narrative competences. The PNUD report (2006:192) indicates that, «skeptical users have appeared, pointing out the Internet's limits to influencing the public sphere, as well as the Chilean social characteristics that also impede this from happening». This demonstrates the communicational deficit of Internet and, by extension, the communications media, which have a high level of concentration (Sunkel & Geoffroy, 2001).

From the communicational perspective and, especially, from Communications and Education, it is necessary to review the conceptualizations and make proposals to contribute to the formation of critical, conscientious citizens with narrative competences that allow them to participate in information-communicational public spaces, both individually and collectively. The development of terrestrial digital TV may provide the opportunity to question the dimensions of the public sphere and open possibilities for participation that this new technological advance offers. To do so, we need to strengthen the subjects' abilities to offer greater options in the construction of new meanings.

Communications policies of this century must incorporate new dimensions in their designs, so as to take on the challenges posed by technological changes and new business models of the industry. It is essential that they incorporate a new perspective, from communications and education, that takes into consideration the formation of a subject to communicationally participate in the new possibilities offered by digital TV and various devices that offer access to it, from traditional home appliances and mobile phones; from the office and the classroom.

In short, the TV of the future, which in a way is already here, is more and more interactive, pushing aside the old Fordist TV that only allowed symbolic appropriation. Now, it is not only possible to see and obtain meaning from new physical spaces (mobile phones), but also to create and distribute material, in essence construct MY television. These changes at the level of the uses given to them by subjects must be included in Communications Policies, insofar as they are a part of communication law in the 21st century. For this, it is not enough to merely demand plurality at the level of mediated communications, but also to

provide public programs to train citizens in the use of communications.

Now it is commonplace to say that political circumstances are affected by the media and that the democracy of surveys is influenced by the media's agenda, and therefore it is necessary that the subjects not only have access to elections and opinion surveys, but that they also begin to participate in the public sphere through their own stories. This has already begun as indicated by Castells (2009:395), «the public sphere is a space of social and meaningful interaction where ideas and values are formed, transmitted, backed up and fought for, a space that ultimately becomes a training camp for action and reaction».

The challenge is to institutionalize these practices from Communications and Education and, more specifically, from education through communications, obviously including television and ICT.

## 5. Towards communicational empowerment

Bauman (2002: 37) points out that the social processes of this liquid modernity tend to «transform human identity from something given as a task, making the actors responsible for carrying out this task and the consequences (collateral effects) of their work»; it is what Beck (2001) calls institutionalized individualism. In this sense, it is not strange that digital technologies and the transformations of large industrial media such as TV have to accommodate themselves to the new subject and even go to where the individual is. Large audiences that are socio-culturally situated in a specific space and time, correspond to another time, heavy Fordism that has been replaced by nomadism and mobility. This does not mean the disappearance of the social realm, but rather an eclipse of categories to understand it. In this way, we move from identity to identities in social contexts that are increasingly changing and «liquid» (Touraine, 2005).

Likewise, the solid media industries must adapt more quickly to subjects and communities that have greater possibilities, not just for selecting contents but also for interacting in public spaces. For many years, the main job of Communications and Education, especially in the Latin American context, was to «multiply voices», in a public space seized by just a few (Kaplún, 1985). The analytical and methodological proposals tended, on one hand, towards generating a conscientious and critical view of the mass media and, on the other, sought to create communicational spaces and devices for marginal groups to express themselves. Although media concentration continues to be a reality, having critical capacities is still a relevant factor, and today there are information-communicational devices that offer the possibility of expressing the viewpoints of the subjects. Perhaps an individualized expression that overshadows group expression, but it is precisely from there that we see new challenges emerge like those we mentioned earlier; today, citizenship is lived at the level of media communications, a both individual and collective experience.

The proposal made by Communicational Empowerment seeks to take on the new challenges posed by changes in the subjects, social processes and new devices and grammars that include «new and old media». There are three dimensions from which to define and construct this educational-communicational perspective.

The first dimension is generated from citizenship and civil society. Both the market and the state provide the resources, knowledge and technology to make their points of view public and to exercise symbolic pressure. Even the area of strategic communication, which first appeared in companies, has been adopted by the state and politics. There are some relevant cases in which strategic communications have been used in the third sector, but not widespread. What is necessary is for the people to promote and strengthen themselves communicationally.

A second aspect is oriented around the development of the narrative capacities of the subjects, in other words, promoting expressive abilities to construct stories. This is associated with a certain level of cultural capital, since we understand that communication and culture are two inseparable dimensions. For this reason, it is also assumed as a task for educational institutions, due to their role as reproducers of the cultural capital of the subjects. Narrative competences imply critical and reflexive abilities, not only for media communications but also for the social context of the subjects. Additionally, it assumes not only familiarity with technology, but domain over the emerging grammars that allow a subject, for example, to tell their stories in 140 characters. This obviously has to do with cultural matrices such as the use of language, discourse strategies, among other factors.

In third place is the coordination among the subjects themselves to be able to organize themselves with regards to common objectives or social movements. Obviously, it is also possible to participate in dialogues that emerge in the media spaces (such as TV and social networks). The inter-textual dialogues are a frequent practice today, TV journalist use online social networks not only to present their points of

view, but they also use topics that are of interest to the people. It is evident that there is a dialogue between, for example, «tweeters» and certain communicators that, although still weak, is starting to increase. These are the new converging communicative realities: spaces of social coordination. They are not isolated cases, but rather show a more widespread phenomenon of collective experiences in which «on» and «off» are intertwined.

«Communicational empowerment» as a socio-communicative space, in which subjective is mixed with social, critical analysis with expression, also implies a methodological direction that takes from Latin American active-participative traditions that have gained strength during the past 40 years and even earlier with the concepts of Paulo Feire. These continue to work if they are re-appropriated during this new century, within the framework of the new technological scenario and emerging social dynamics, precisely because they focus on work with sectors that have been socially excluded but, as we saw in the four cases presented, are communicatively active when they find a meaning beyond that of entertainment, although this is certainly an integral part of the pleasures of communications.

Communicational Empowerment implies learning to tell about the new social context with the available communicational technologies (new TV and ICT) in order to help subjects talk about themselves and for us to talk collectively about ourselves.

## Notes

[1] Phillippi, A. & Peña, P. (2010). «Mujeres y nuevas tecnologías en Chile: el impacto del acceso público a las TIC, la inclusión digital de género», a paper currently being written under the 2010 Amy Mahan Fellowship Program to Assess the Impact of Public Access to ICTs. The paper is studying working-class sectors of the Metropolitan and O'Higgins Regions with regards to the implementation of a program called «Quiero Mi Barrio» (I Love My Neighborhood, in English). This paper provides an analysis of the results of surveys and the first focus groups held in a neighborhood located in south Santiago.

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# The Intervention of TV in the Chilean Earthquake

## La intervención de la televisión en el terremoto chileno

ABSTRACT
This paper has two purposes: one conceptual and the other practical. On a conceptual level, it outlines a model for understanding how TV operates as a social mediator in the event of natural disasters, and at the practical level, it recommends measures that can be used to optimize the role of TV and its ideal social function in contexts of crisis. This model views TV intervention as both «self-centered», that is, driven by its reproduction as a media consumption company; and «socially-centered», designed to respond swiftly and accurately to the social requirements that emerge in crisis situations. The suggested model is to be contrasted with the results of a research study conducted by the National TV Council of Chile that explored the role of TV broadcasting after the earthquake in February 2010. According to the results of the study, audiences value the amount of information broadcasted by TV networks but perceive that the predominance of its «self-centered» function creates a problem: the logic of the 'spectacle' is prevalent and exacerbates the audience's emotions. The primary purpose of this paper is to develop a strategy to recommend how TV and its associate services can respond to a crisis situation while respecting the tragedy of natural disasters.

RESUMEN
Este trabajo contempla a la vez un propósito conceptual y otro de orden práctico. En lo conceptual se propone un modelo para comprender el funcionamiento de la televisión en escenarios de catástrofe y consecutivamente se sugiere, desde este modelo, un conjunto de derivaciones prácticas destinadas a optimizar la funcionalidad de la televisión en estos escenarios. El modelo propuesto concibe la intervención televisiva con una doble funcionalidad, una de carácter «autocéntrico» focalizada en su reproducción como empresa y otra de carácter «sociocéntrico» orientada a responder a los requerimientos surgidos en el escenario de la crisis. Este modelo será contrastado con los resultados de un estudio del Consejo Nacional de Televisión de Chile que indagó sobre el rol que asumió la televisión en el terremoto acaecido en Chile el año 2010. Según este estudio, si bien se valora el rol informativo y orientador de la televisión, la doble funcionalidad de su intervención fue percibida como problemática, con predominio de la funcionalidad autocéntrica que, desde una lógica de la espectacularidad, buscó construir audiencias, empleando una estrategia basada en la hiperactivación emocional. Finalmente, se concluye con una propuesta para conducir la televisión desde una intervención en la crisis hacia una efectiva intervención en crisis optimizando su funcionalidad sociocéntrica.

KEYWORDS / PALABRAS CLAVE
Intervention, television, earthquake, audience, autocentric, sociocentric.
Intervención, televisión, terremoto, audiencia, autocéntrico, sociocéntrico.

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## 1. Introduction

On February 27, 2010, Chile suffered an 8.8-magnitude earthquake –considered the fifth largest of its kind– and a subsequent tsunami, which together left nearly eight hundred people dead, five hundred thousand homes destroyed or severely damaged, and around two million people homeless.

Free to air TV played an important role, but the way in which it covered this event has been the subject of much public debate. Although it excelled in its role of providing information about what was happening and the decisions made by the authorities at different moments throughout the tragedy and in its support in searching for missing people, it has also been questioned because of its supposed emphasis on the most tragic and violent consequences of the earthquake.

The debate has been tied to three fundamental issues: the role of TV in face of a natural disaster; journalistic ethics regarding the coverage of natural disasters; and the effects of TV broadcasting on the opinion of the audience. In response to these circumstances, the National TV Council of Chile (CNTV) carried out a study aimed at understanding the role assumed by TV during this catastrophe (National TV Council of Chile, 2010).

Within this context –and based on the results of this study– the purpose of this paper is to present the basis of a model that allows us, on the one hand, to understand the intervention of TV in disaster scenarios and, on the other, to see which elements are needed to make this intervention more planned, systematic and pertinent. Based on a dynamic concept of reality (that attempts to overcome the more passive and static focus of perception analysis), in this model we conceive the TV broadcastings as a kind of intervention in different scenarios caused by the earthquake.

This interventional component of TV is widely recognized by organizations such as the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), which have come up with protocols aimed at regulating this intervention and directing it towards minimizing the psychological impact of crisis, respecting the dignity and self-esteem of the people and communities affected, and promoting solidarity and social cohesion, among others (Pan American Health Organization, 2006).

The logic behind TV intervention unfurls a double function. On the one hand, it plays a self-centered function, and on the other, a socially-centered one. Both functions are closely united within the logic of intervention.

Under its self-centered function, TV as a company reproduces itself fundamentally through the construction of audiences. Under its socially-centered function, TV responds to the multiple and urgent requirements posed by the different scenarios caused by the crisis.

From this perspective, TV has the ability to act on its audiences, turning them into relevant actors in the construction of the chaotic social response generated by the earthquake. This interventionist capacity is based on its extensive and intensive power. TV is present in 92.4% of Chilean homes (Census, 2002) with an average of 2.4 TV sets and average consumption of 2.5 hours a day (National TV Council of Chile, 2008), which explains its extensive power: omnipresent in the daily lives of Chileans, it intervenes in the dynamics of coexistence. From its intensive power, TV acts on the identities, emotions, self-esteem, and the symbolic integration of people.

Under its socially-centered function, which is of primary interest to us in this text, TV can intervene in at least two ways. First, by providing people with important elements to construct their own actions in their immediate surroundings in time of crisis, and second, in the configuration of accustomed ways to react to these situations; -this is extremely important for future crisis scenarios that are fairly frequent in Chile-.

From this «dynamic-active» perspective, we pose the following questions: How does TV intervention contribute to the construction of «adaptive» actions of the people and the development of coexistence in each of the situational scenarios generated by the crisis (affected areas, partly affected, and non-affected areas)? How do citizens react to this intervention? What were the positive aspects perceived in the intervention and what were the most questioned? What kind of intervention is expected of TV? The following data and reports help answer these questions, and therefore will gradually construct and validate the proposed model, which will be drawn from the results of the mentioned study carried out by the CNTV, whose design we will describe below.

## 2. Methodology

At first, we will systematize the main results of the study in order to then go deeper in their interpretation, taking from them some basic guidelines for the elaboration of the desired model. The main objective of the study was to understand and describe the role assumed by TV in this catastrophe. To do this, a double triangulation method was used: on the one hand, between quantitative (telephone survey,

STUDY METHODOLOGY

| SOURCES | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Techniques** | **Audiences** | **Channels** | **Key informants** |
| Focus groups | 6 groups of parents with children between 4 and 12 years old, in areas affected, partly affected and not affected by the earthquake. | | |
| Interviews | | | 7 interviews with: on-site journalists, editors that worked from the capital, representatives of the Journalist Association and the Media Ethics Council |
| Telephone survey | Men and Women, over 18 years old, from urban homes, in areas affected, partly affected and not affected by the earthquake 1,000 cases (+/- 3.1% of error). Sample period: between April 30 and May 12, 2010 | | |
| Analysis of contents | | 565 hours of continuous open signal TV broadcasting from channels that provided earthquake coverage: TVN, Megavision, Chile Vision, Canal 13 Sample period: Continuous week from Saturday, February 27th to Friday, March 5th. | |

analysis of screen contents) and qualitative techniques (focus groups and interviews); and on the other hand, between different sources (people in affected areas, partly affected areas and areas not affected by the earthquake; screen contents, and key informants).

## 3. Results

The results will be presented based on two categories: the way in which TV constructed its intervention and the reactions of audiences.

### 3.1. Intervention

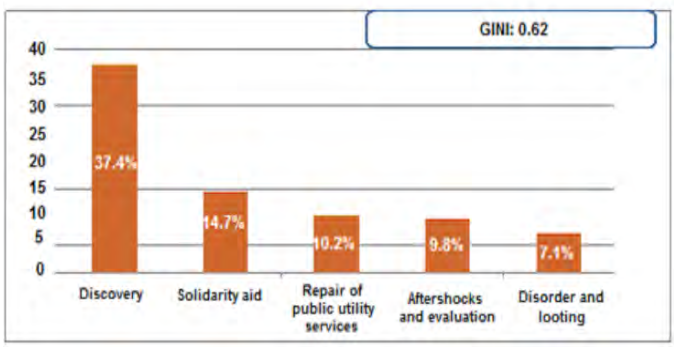
During the week immediately following the earthquake, 98% of all broadcasting was concentrated and continuously dedicated to the catastrophe and its consequences. The remaining time was used for movies and TV series. Based on the screen analysis, in this section, we will be referring to the most used format for coverage, the main issues discussed, the main participants and their evolution of appearance, and finally the TV resources that generated the most emotional impact for the audiences.

The most used format in TV broadcasting from February 27th to March 5th was «developing news» (76.8%), where the story was accompanied by images and active sources (reporting, commentary, interviews, home videos and others), followed at a great distance by the «interview» (7.9%). The majority of broadcasting included on-site reporting, but the highest percentage of images transmitted were pre-recorded (65.9%), which, according to the study, shows that there was time to decide what information would be presented on-screen. The prerecorded news stories were concentrated primarily on March 1st, (recapitulation of broadcast news), and on March 3rd (previews of the aid campaigns). What were the main issues covered?

As is shown in Graph 1, of the five most covered topics during the week of the earthquake (nearly 80% of all issues discussed on screen), the most frequent one was the «discovery and verification of material and human damage». For this dimension, the Gini coefficient is calculated at 0.62, confirming a significant concentration of topics. How did the presence of these topics evolve during the first week?

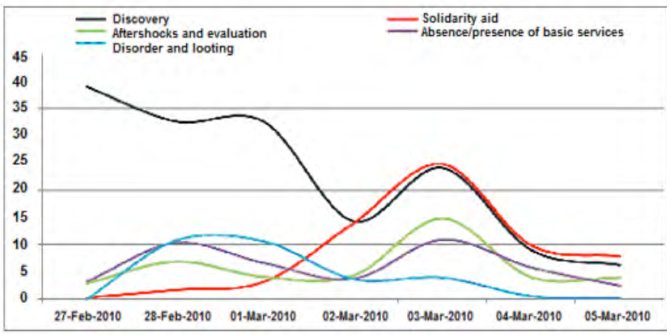
Graph 2 shows a pronounced and sustained decrease in the topic of discovery and verification of material and human damage, and a gradual increase in the topic of solidarity aid. Both topics decreased towards the end of the week.

MAIN TOPICS DISCUSSED ON-SCREEN




The issue of the absence/presence of basic services is seen to have two high points: on February 28th and on March 3rd. The first refers primarily to the absence of services, while the second informs the repair of services such as drinking water, supermarkets and electricity. The topic of disorder and looting obtained its highest point during the first few days, decreasing considerably later on in the week, when the most important topics were the evaluation of

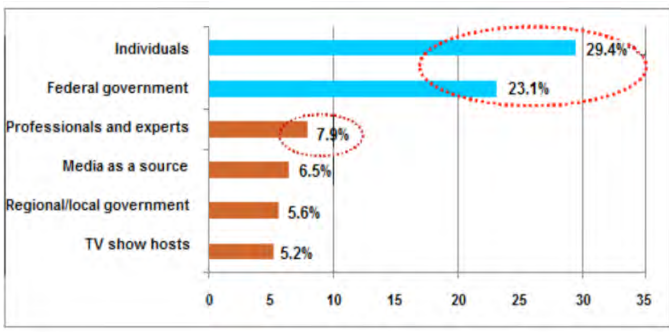
EVOLUTION OF TOPICS DISCUSSED ON-SCREEN




damages and repair of services. Who were the actors that participated in the discussion of these issues and how much time were they present on-screen?

As seen in the graph, individuals and Federal government sources account for more than half of the time dedicated to information sources (52.5%). This concentration (Gini coefficient: 0.65) is proof of how journalistic news is constructed based on testimonies and opinions of people affected, and the emotional sources of the victims, more than expert information of the local authorities. How did the participation of these actors evolve on-screen during the first week of the earthquake?

ACTORS MOST PRESENT IN EARTHQUAKE COVERAGE DURING THE WEEK




The graph shows a sharp change in the presence of institutional actors (central, regional and local government) in relation to the affected people, as a source of information. While the former were the most predominant actors in TV content during the first two days, the affected people increased their presence throughout the week, reaching a high point on March 3rd. On several occasions, the communications media teams arrived on-site even before the authorities and rescue teams from Santiago, becoming the object of urgent demands for aid from the affected people, demands that these teams, on the one hand, were not prepared to meet, and on the other, had not contemplated in their work. An important aspect of the TV intervention is seen in the impact that it had on the emotions of the audiences. According to screen analysis, the resources used by TV that generated the most emotional impact were the following table n. 2.

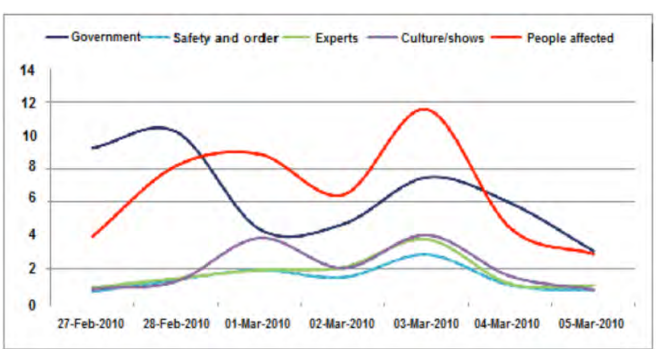
The systematic use of these resources shows an emphasis on the dramatic construction of the news.

### 3.2. How did audiences react to this intervention?

Taking the survey and focus groups as a reference, in this section we will look at both, the most criticized aspects of TV intervention, that is, the emotional impact on children, the coverage of looting, sensationalism[1], the invasion of privacy and lack of explanatory information, and the most valued aspects.

Of those surveyed, 56% watched more TV than usual. Only 18% stated having watched less TV during the days following the earthquake. According to the survey, the images of destruction and general devastation (40%), coastal devastation (39%), suffering of the people affected (8%) and looting (5%) were those that most impacted the audiences. On the other hand, during the qualitative part of the study, it was the TV coverage of looting that most left an impression with those interviewed, independent of their

EVOLUTION OF PRESENCE OF ACTORS ON-SCREEN



socioeconomic status or where they live. What emotional reactions did these images activate?

According to Graph, the emotional reactions activated went from concern (90%) to shame (49%), also including motivation to help (86%), sadness (86%), hope (79%), fear (78%), anger (68%) and pride (58%). It is on this level that TV intervention is most questioned, especially when it has to do with children, 68% of whom, according to the survey, followed the TV coverage of the catastrophe.

According to the qualitative part, the child population experienced recurring reactions of anguish, insecurity, nightmares, fear of being alone, insomnia and fear of visiting places such as the beach in the case of Iquique (a coastal city in an area of the country not affected by the earthquake). It seems that here there was an emotional saturation that caused parents to regulate their children's consumption of TV and led to a strong criticism of the TV channels because of the explicit content broadcast during viewing times dedicated to all audiences and the absence of more relaxing programs that would have benefited children and their families.

The images of looting fundamentally triggered reactions of surprise and shame. The surprise was associated with the unexpected (not only delinquents were involved) and their incomprehensible nature, from a moral standpoint, of these actions. The shame was associated with the country's loss of symbolic capital, a breakdown in self-esteem and a significant loss of community cohesion.

Criticism of sensationalism, where the dramatic construction of the news surpassed its informative component, was a recurrent theme for those interviewed, who believe that there was «exaggeration», «excess» and «manipulation» aimed to obtain higher ratings than the other channels that were covering the catastrophe. The excessive repetition of explicit and highly emotional images was one of the resources of TV construction that was most visible for the audiences (mentioned by 81% of the people consulted). This criticism by the audiences of «sensationalism» has been repeated over and over again with notable regularity (59%) in the tri-annual survey carried out by CNTV (National TV Council of Chile, 2008).

Likewise, TV viewers experienced the uncomfortable feeling that by including people from show-business[2] in the TV coverage of the earthquake entailed downplaying the seriousness of the situation and the tragic meaning of the events, and an attack against the dignity and respect of people who were experiencing the harsh reality of the catastrophe. Once more, this practice was associated with an (unscrupulous) attempt to obtain higher ratings.

Another form of TV intervention that was questioned was the invasion of intimacy with the repeated use of emotional sources motivated by an artificial search for news stories, without respecting the rhythm of the interviewees, their dignity or their right to privacy.

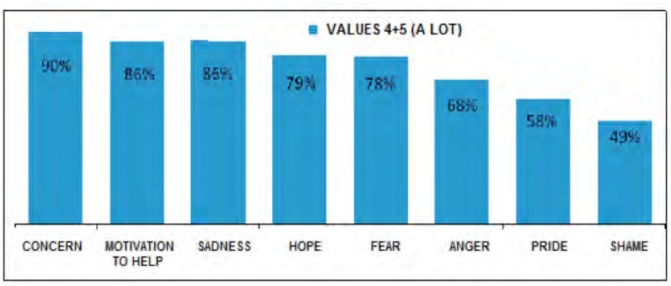
According to journalists consulted, one of the weaknesses shown by TV intervention was the predominance of a primarily descriptive discourse about the events, with detriment to «explanatory information»: journalists must be didactic. From this point of view, this weakness is particularly criticized in a context in which the people tend towards «pure emotions» and require elements to help them face the situation with a certain level of rationality.

What was most valued by TV viewers? The most valued aspect by the audiences was the information provided that allowed them to create a very complete view of what had happened and, depending upon the different scenarios and locations of the informants, to form an idea of concrete ways to take action during

RESOURCES THAT GENERATED THE MOST EMOTIONAL IMPACT

| RESOURCES | |
|---|---|
| Repetition of images | 44.2% |
| Use of close-ups to emphasize the suffering | 39.2% |
| Excessive use of adjectives in the stories | 35.6% |
| Use of soundtrack or background music (for example, Schindler's List). | 31.7% |
| Presence of real audio including expressions of pain and grief (screaming, crying) | 20.2% |
| Aggressive intrusion into the privacy of the sources | 6.3% |
| Disrespectful and rude treatment of socially vulnerable people or groups (victims, family members of the dead or disappeared, persons from most destitute sectors) | 6.1% |

EMOTIONS ACTIVATED BY TV

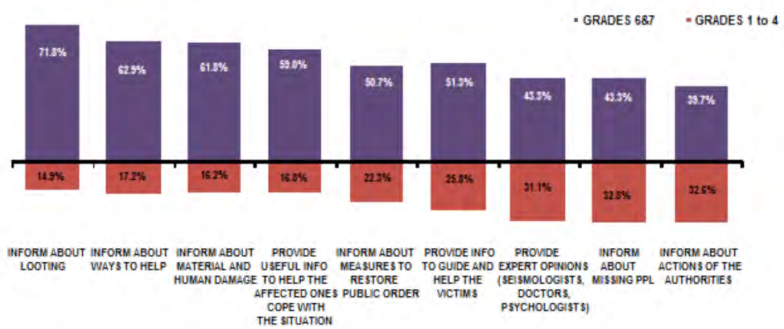


this situation. In general, the people consulted considered that TV did a good job in its informative coverage of aspects related to the catastrophe, providing useful information for the situation.

At the same time, TV was considered more effective when presenting testimonies of the victims (62.7%), giving hope (51.4%) and calming people (43.7%). TV intervention can then be seen as having a calming and supportive effect, often meeting the function of companionship and facilitation of coexistence.

What did audiences expect from TV? For audiences, especially those located in areas of crisis, TV did not adequately respond to the more situational and urgent needs generated at the scene of the catastrophe. In fact, they complained that TV should serve a role of public service: personalized support, instrumental help and practical guidance. Its intervention was perceived as more informative than giving guidance, more universal than local, more distant than close and many times catering to other priorities and interests rather than to those of the people, in contrast to the radio stations that provided practical and effective services, showing itself to be a much more situational media that is close to the local dynamics, of easy access to the immediate demands of the people and communities affected. Finally, TV is assigned a relevant role in the reconstruction (according to 95% of those interviewed) that includes other activities such as «supervising the completion of reconstruction programs» (40%), «organizing, supporting and promoting aid campaigns» (29%), and «showing the accomplishments and progress of reconstruction» (24%).

Evaluation of the informative role of TV




## 4. Discussion

The main thesis of the proposed model conceives the role of TV as an intervention that goes beyond the merely informative to have a real impact on people. TV intervenes, so to speak, «on-site» at the scene of the catastrophe: although it acts individually on people, TV intervenes in what they have in common, in their coexistence, in their framework of action, in their shared emotions, in their support structures, in their symbolic capital, in the collective understanding of the situation, in their feelings of belonging and the psychological meaning of community.

TV intervenes on-site from a double-function, one self-centered and the other socially-centered. Both functions are inseparable components in the same intervention process. However, this double function is perceived as problematic by the actors consulted in the study. Where TV, in a self-centered logic, gives priority to its own interests in the construction of its audience, this intervention generates problems for TV viewers. But where TV is a socially-centered logic and directs its intervention straight towards vital and urgent needs of the people and communities affected, its presence becomes essential for the configuration of adaptive actions and the management of coexistence at the scene of crisis.

From the language of Zubiri (2004: 197-207) we hypothesize that TV proposes for its viewers a perceptive field of the catastrophe organized mainly from the «logic of spectacularity», from one that fixes its horizon, close-ups, background and surroundings. The earthquake generated a spectacular scenario, with buildings that collapsed, the ocean invading the coastal towns, boats transported to the town square, fatalities, people in the state of profound suffering and emotional activation. The spectacular nature of these images, associated with a degree of high uncertainty, became an opportunity that TV could not miss out on: it had before itself a «real reality show», at zero cost, that it really knew how to take advantage of effectively.

Within this context, one of the most «spectacular» events was the looting. What was spectacular here was the loss of community, the falling apart of social cohesion, the abrupt break with the routine course of life that, like all things that go against the norm, intensively moves the emotions (Tetu, 2004: 16). This TV strategy had the effect of spreading community distrust, increasingly confining communities that were

already closed off, giving them aggressive, violent and threatening closure. Paradoxically, TV produced social cohesion in its audiences precisely because of the breakdown in community social cohesion during the earthquake, exploiting here –from a more Hobbesian vision– the ghost of community loss, of man against both man and the supermarkets, of man's secret fear of insecurity and disorder, of man as a werewolf (Homo Homini Lupus) (Esposito, 2007: 55-58).

In the coverage of these «spectacular» events, journalists many times tend to be confused with TV hosts, and audiences cannot manage to differentiate collective solidarity from the promotion of the media brand's image. In this spectacular position of the world (in which the earthquake was confused with a stage production, journalists with TV hosts, and information with entertainment) the TV viewer becomes a mere spectator and information a mere spectacle (Mathien, 1993).

TV viewers clearly identify the strategy of emotional activation used by TV to meet its objective of constructing its audiences. This activation, fundamentally in a negative tone, operates upon a psycho-emotional surface that has already become hyperactive because of the real events of the earthquake, in this way generating a risk of emotional saturation, especially among children.

The live transmission, being both on-site and in real-time –a modality preferred by TV to show catastrophic events– contributed greatly to this over-activation. This type of broadcasting has generally been highly criticized because it offers a minimum distance in relation to the broadcast event. It is precisely this characteristic that makes live broadcasting an opportune area for intense emotional activation, since it gives a lot of room to the unexpected, presenting the reality of an event open to multiple and dramatic outcomes that will be resolved in real time and before the viewers' eyes. According to Tetu, this way of presenting an event hands over to the TV viewer the role and responsibility of interpreting the action taking place before their own eyes (Tetu, 2004). From the perspective of Mathein, «in a logic of media exploitation of real events, the scenario of live broadcasting from the site of the catastrophe is practically no different from the transmission of a spectacle or show» (Mathien, 1993: 67).

But at the same time, the strong impact generated by the images of destruction and desolation, together with the impossibility of the TV viewer to act immediately in the area of the catastrophe and the unbearable emotion of remaining impassive to the suffering of others, activates different types of gestures of solidarity from the viewers, in this way contributing to the implementation of multiple forms of help (Tetu, 2004:13).

**TV must contribute to the emotional containment of the people affected and the development of a sense of security, self-confidence and tranquility to lessen the psychological impact of the crisis, making it possible for people to act from a more stable emotional state. This implies avoiding working from the logic of spectacularity, a shift towards sensationalism, the emotional over-activation and the systematic use of emotional sources of news.**

The study shows a critical and proactive TV viewer, with the ability to recognize the logic of TV intervention, anticipating and recognizing its objectives, and, in their own fields of action and control, to generate practices of self-regulation aimed to protect the mental health of their children, in order to prevent a stage of negatively-charged emotions. This new kind of viewer has shows a relatively autonomous confrontation with TV intervention, which can be highly relevant for a media education policy in this area.

TV intervenes, but its intervention is not planned. The results of this study allow us to see some operative elements for the design of a planned, systematic and pertinent intervention of TV in this type of catastrophe. During catastrophes, TV must maintain a predominant approach directed towards its socially-centered function, in this way giving secondary priority to its self-centered function.

On a more operative level, it must integrate itself into the local and national crisis intervention plan that coordinates and provides instructions for institutions, social organizations and communities under the following general guidelines:

• Respect for the dignity and rights of people affected.

• Constructive help and support for the development of adaptive actions: a central aspect of TV interaction is maintaining the population informed about what has happened (showing the material and human damage produced) and the evolution of events. This makes it possible for people to make the best possible decisions with regards to what actions they will take.

• In association with the above guideline, TV must contribute to the emotional containment of the people affected and the development of a sense of security, self-confidence and tranquility to lessen the psychological impact of the crisis, making it possible for people to act from a more stable emotional state. This implies avoiding working from the logic of spectacularity, a shift towards sensationalism, the emotional over-activation and the systematic use of emotional sources of news.

• TV must contribute at all times to adequate institutional-community (re)coordination at the scene of the crisis, avoiding unnecessary tensions and strengthening the community's trust in the institutions and organizations providing aid.

• The intervention must stimulate and strengthen community support as a source of security, aid, stability and belonging for the people, so as to contribute to the strengthening of the psychological sense of community.

• TV must play a crucial role in the reconstitution of national symbolic capital and the recuperation of social cohesion.

• It must also take on the functions of a public service channel, facilitating aid campaigns and searches for missing people, providing information about the functioning of basic services and specialized information from experts in order to better understand the phenomenon.

• This all implies that we need to include within the formation and preparation of communications professionals contents related to media education, models of crisis intervention and networking with institutional and community organizations.

• The main idea is that TV must break away from its form of crisis intervention that is predominantly self-centered, which can bring with it the risks analyzed in this paper, and take on an effective form of crisis intervention that plays a socially-centered role, placing its constructive potential at the service of the community.

## Notes

[1] Trend of communications media to exacerbate or abuse emotions with the objective of impacting the audience.

[2] Refers to the Spanish term «farándula», which are programs with or about celebrities.

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# Young People's Attitudes towards and Evaluations of Mobile TV

## Actitudes y valoraciones de los jóvenes ante la TV móvil

ABSTRACT

Mobile communication systems are responsible for the significant changes that are taking place in cultural practices. The mobile phone has established itself as a portable, multi-use, interactive device that individuals use to enable them to manage important aspects of their work and leisure time. This article is based on research that aims to understand the phenomenon of mobile TV, the related trends (in terms of experiences, ideas, and models), and the type of user that operates this device. This article also analyses the values and perceptions of users as well as the benefits and drawbacks they encounter when using mobile TV. The study develops a mobile TV content test by using a viewing experience among 100 students from the universities of Malaga and Seville, in Spain. Structured questionnaires with closed questions are used with qualitative techniques that promote virtual discussion in forums that focuses on face-to-face groups. Altogether, the study has enabled the development of a theoretical model of the phenomenon of mobile TV, and has classified user preferences in terms of ergonomic technology, delivery dynamics, the economic value of services, and consumption patterns and scenarios. The main results focus on participants' evaluations of mobile media narrative and the cross-platform experience.

RESUMEN

Una porción significativa de los cambios que en la actualidad experimentan las prácticas culturales puede encontrarse en el ecosistema de las comunicaciones móviles. En este sentido, el teléfono móvil comienza a postularse como el dispositivo multiuso, portable e interactivo que los individuos utilizan en su quehacer cotidiano, ofreciéndoles la posibilidad de gestionar importantes parcelas de su tiempo productivo y de ocio. La investigación en la que descansa este artículo tiene como objetivo comprender el fenómeno de la TV móvil, qué tendencias sigue –experiencias, reflexiones, modelos–, y qué tipo de usuario se sirve de ellas; así como sus percepciones, valoraciones, ventajas e inconvenientes que encuentran. El diseño metodológico ha contemplado el testeo de la experiencia de visionar contenidos de televisión móvil en un grupo de 100 estudiantes de las Universidades de Málaga y Sevilla mediante cuestionarios estructurados de preguntas cerradas y técnicas cualitativas que comprendían foros de discusión virtuales y grupos focales presenciales. En su conjunto, el estudio ha permitido elaborar un modelo teórico sobre la televisión móvil, pero también una tipología de uso relativa a las preferencias del usuario en cuanto a la ergonomía tecnológica, dinámica de distribución, valor económico del servicio, y patrones y escenarios de consumo. Los resultados más relevantes se centran en las valoraciones que los participantes formulan sobre narrativa propia para el medio móvil y la experiencia multiplataforma.

KEYWORDS / PALABRAS CLAVE

Mobile TV, cultural practices, digital contents, youth, imaginative appropriation, streaming, communicative scenarios. TV Móvil, prácticas culturales, contenidos digitales, jóvenes, apropiaciones imaginativas, streaming.

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## 1. Introduction

For more than half a century, «watching TV» has been a widespread common cultural practice that is deeply embedded and supported in certain modes of use, business models and narrative discourses, in a continuous flow of messages available to all citizens. However TV, like the majority of the cultural industries today, has undergone far-reaching transformations, and it is within these changes in the general cultural, economic, technological and social framework that our society exists.

Any explanation of the changes in communication necessarily includes the remarkable progression of competences – the know-how acquired by the population that now not only knows how to use the technology, to receive and interpret content, but also knows how to use it to express itself and produce messages. In this sense, «watching TV» no longer means the synchronous reception of imposed content organized within a media format (the television screen) but, by using media, the user can now receive different content according to preference.

These changes in cultural practices are already recognized and described by the viewers, and this knowledge enables certain industries to address these changes –or at least use that knowledge to plan strategies. In particular, technology companies look to create devices that encompass[1] as many technical functions as possible so that new devices can be used statically or as a mobile part of daily life.

In this context of mobility, permanent connectivity and ubiquitous communication, the outstanding device is the mobile telephone, which has been transformed into a multipurpose tool. It acts as a small computer that helps us to manage our spare time and business activities within any time-space context; it is also a crucial element in many of our social interactions, communications and cultural practices. The mobile phone integrates numerous functions, including providing communication links through sounds and images, and allows almost universal diffusion; indeed, this so-called «fourth screen» (after cinema, television and the computer) is seen as the screen of the future (Cebrián, 2009). Unsurprisingly the number of scientific studies that examine the use of this technology by adolescents (Garcia-Galera & Monferrer, 2009) and its impacts on daily life (Malo, 2006) is on the increase.

These changes in cultural practices, technology, content, production, delivery and usage dynamics are complex in nature and origin, but they all demonstrate a constant process of innovation. The participation of technology companies, cultural industries –including traditional companies that seek to adapt, as well as the most recently developed industries that offer brand new contents, services and business models– and users (indeed, all of us) draws on creative processes of innovation, using technology and symbolic practices in the contexts of our daily lives.

To rigorously examine this communication scenario in which innovation is crucial, the Advanced Media Content Research Group has developed the Innovcom programme to understand specific cultural practices within the population (particularly how and why users are guided by media and content. In doing so, the group aims to propose criteria that can guide both the media content industry as well as public policy makers. One of the Innovcom programme's research interests is media content for mobile devices[2]. To study the mobile phone, we have adopted several approaches and undertaken various research activities. One of our main goals in this investigation was to understand how the user perceives these devices and to assess their main users, namely young people, as the ones most likely to experience that media. Despite a lack of precedent[3] in previous research we have developed several studies, some of the results of which we present in this paper.

## 2. Methodological design

Our main objective was to evaluate the experience of consuming television on a mobile device by a group of young people (i.e., students at two universities in Andalusia, Spain). We designed an experience in which 100 mobile phones were given to a specific group of students; the group was asked what they thought of the experience with respect to their lives and their style of communication. The terminal model used was the Sony Ericsson 910i, which allowed navigation on the Internet through 3G data networks, particularly through Vodafone's multimedia content management and delivery site, Vodafone Live!

We stratified the sample of 100 individuals into four sub-groups.

- 25 students (male and female) from the 3rd year of the Media Studies Bachelor Degree course at the University of Malaga
- 25 students (male and female) from the 3rd year of the Media Studies Bachelor Degree course at the University of Sevilla
- 25 students (male and female) from the 3rd year of the Telecommunications Engineering course at the University of Malaga
- 25 students (male and female) from the 3rd year

of the Telecommunications Engineering course at the University of Seville.

These groups allowed us to maintain a balance in geographic distribution as it affected mobile TV use. The experience lasted a month, with four broadcasts at the rate of one per week.

The design consisted of the following phases.

• Initial questionnaire. The students from the four courses selected were given a «questionnaire on media leisure» (32 questions with closed answers: simple or multiple choice) in order to investigate cultural practices. Using this procedure, 257 surveys were carried out, of which 158 were selected (78 from the Media Studies courses, and 80 from the Telecommunications Engineering courses).

• Contextual analysis: This focused on the sample's cultural practices. The 158 questionnaires were processed by the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences software (SPSS) in order to evaluate trends in media consumption. This allowed us to frame the study on mobile TV experiences within the context of cultural practices.

• Selection and preparation of the participants. From the 158 questionnaires, 100 students were selected (25 from each sub-group) who showed the highest level of integration into digital culture. As an incentive to participate in the experience, they were gifted the device they would use to carry out the experience. Later, they were asked to attend a preparatory session which had the following objectives:

• To instruct the participants on the investigation, to obtain agreement to participate in the experience by watching content for a minimum stipulated period, to assess the participants' content according to the given evaluation criteria, and have them sign a contract that agreed to these obligations.

• Preparing for broadcasting. The research group's associated producer designed the media content of a fictional series, each programme of which was 10 minutes in duration. The clips would be broadcasted through Vodafone Life!'s channel each Thursday. Simultaneously, a promotional campaign in various social networks would be implemented to promote a contest in which people not involved in the experience could participate by producing content and win a cash prize for the week's best proposal. This included the following initiatives:

• Creation of a virtual interaction site (i.e., participation forums). A platform within the virtual campus of the University of Malaga was created, and its discussion forums allowed students to detail their experiences in handling the mobile TV as well as evaluating the material watched.

• Development of the experience. Broadcasts of the content and evaluation of the participants in the forums were mediated by members of the investigating team.

• Thematic analysis of the commentaries would occur in the forums, for instance, through evaluations of the experience of watching the content on the mobile TV.

> Watching TV no longer means the synchronous reception of imposed content organized within a media format (the television screen) but, by using media, the user can now receive different content according to preference.

• Focus groups with some participants were used to evaluate a time experience using the mobile TV. In this phase, four groups of eight students that included one participant from each of the sub-groups took part in a guided discussion for one hour.

## 3. Qualitative research results

### 3.1. Semantic analysis of discussion forums

As part of the methodological strategy, we developed a virtual space which the participants could access daily to input their opinions, to discuss their experiences and answer any questions that were formulated by the research team. The material compiled in these forums was semantically analyzed after identifying the topics most often highlighted by the participants. Next, a synthesis was made of the comments arising in the forums. These conversations enabled us to identify four thematic sections.

#### 3.1.1. Evaluation of technical aspects

The participants stated that image quality was good in general terms. Broadcast streaming quality was better or worse depending on the 3G signal strength.

They indicated that quality is not comparable to other screens, such as a computer screen, for instance. Another participant raised a valid point by noting that «when viewing the final credits of a video, I've noticed that the mobile phone is not totally adapted to play subtitled content, which is something that requires additional technological improvements». A few participants thought the quality was «very poor» but overall, one of the best-rated aspects was the quality of streaming.

Many participants classified the video streaming speed as acceptable and noted minimal loss of signal. One referred to the change in format used to improve quality by noting that «evidently, videos with more quality can be uploaded with 3gp [format], which it is currently using. In mp4 [format], it would be seen better [i.e., the viewing quality would be greater]». Another participant indicated the difficulties arising from the inadequate connection speed, pointing out that the «video's navigation and visualization on this mobile telephone have all the pros and cons that we expected.

> In this context of mobility, permanent connectivity and ubiquitous communication, the outstanding device is the mobile telephone, which has been transformed into a multipurpose tool. It acts as a small computer that helps us to manage our spare time and business activities within any time-space context; it is also a crucial element in many of our social interactions, communications and cultural practices.

The main advantage is the possibility of having Internet connection wherever you are. However, you need the 3G network, or the navigator will go slowly, and many pages will not be loaded».

Regarding sound quality, the participants' opinions were positive; listening was easy in areas with little background noise. When, in a scene from an episode, two or more sounds came together (voice of actor + music), several participants perceived audio distortion, but there was a significant improvement when earphones were used.

### 3.1.2. Evaluation of narrative aspects

The idea of a collaborative series was well received by the majority of participants. One of them indicated at the end of the first video that «the series per se seems to me to be original. In addition, the possibility that Internet users can follow the series seems interesting to me, [particularly] by encouraging the participation of the public. This is perhaps the first 'wiki series' to be produced in Spain through the Internet». Almost all participants rated positively the fact that the video left the door open for the continuation of the series, as well as its humorous tone. One of the participants also stated at the beginning of the series that «I hope that the following episodes keep up this humorous tone because it is nice to watch a short video in your free time on a mobile phone, that makes you smile».

Regarding genre preferences, participants cited the news, sitcoms, sports, mini-series and videos, with the emphasis on short clip content. One commented that «I am happy to use my mobile phone to watch short-length media. I am satisfied that these video clips can keep me [entertained] for a short while. It has to be quality entertainment. Using the telephone to watch TV on the bus does not mean that producers can create content that insults the viewer's intelligence. I know that this is not going to be like that, and mobile TV will be focused on creating clones of conventional television networks».

In general terms, the average duration of the broadcast (two to three minutes) was welcomed by the participants. The majority thought a five-minute broadcast was the limit. One participant said that this short «duration is brilliant, as we are not accustomed to spending a long time with a fixed glance on such a small screen like that of a mobile phone».

### 3.1.3. Evaluation of the experience

The majority of participants engaged in the experience from an individual perspective and reasoned that technical limitations (i.e., the size of screen and volume) made a collective assessment difficult. In this respect, one participant indicated that «I believe that many people could not watch it without

being uncomfortable». Even so, the majority reported having at some point shared mobile TVs with acquaintances (i.e., partners, family, or friends) for the purpose of discussing the videos or to show off their new device; some even shared earphones while viewing. Regarding the time and place of viewing, almost all indicated that they watched videos in their spare time or while waiting. The most common viewing places were the bedroom, in bed before sleeping (i.e., «I watch it when people are asleep»), on public transport or between classes. A frequent comment in the forums referred to the portability of the media and the fact that it allows ubiquitous media consumption that previously required seating in front of a screen. They also indicated that they have begun to see the mobile phone as a multimedia consumption device; for instance, «it seems to me that the experience is very good, considering that in the end what we will have will not be mobile phones, but minicomputers». Others emphasized their use as an alternative screen, saying «recently I was delayed on my journey home and I missed the beginning of a football match; if I had taken the mobile phone with me, I would have seen it from the beginning on my way home».

Many participants found the experience complicated, although they expressed expectations that improvements would probably be available soon. Almost unanimously, participants agreed that watching mobile TV demands a high level of concentration. Even so, some admitted to enjoying the experience while eating, listening to music or chatting on MSN Messenger on another screen. As one participant pointed out, «if it is the Champions League, I simultaneously watch a game on the mobile phone and another on the normal TV».

Another interesting example of complementary activity was exhibited by a participant who stated that she could watch a mobile broadcast «during the advertising breaks of [another] series». Some even argue that the viewer usually excludes other activities because when money has been spent on content, attention concentrates exclusively on that content, unlike that of a free service (television or radio) that can be watched while other tasks are carried out. They also point out that the viewing experience of televised content on a mobile phone is not as good as that of the cinema, television, or computer screens.

#### 3.1.4. Evaluation of payment for mobile TV services

The participants stated that they were reluctant to pay for mobile TV. The majority declared they would not pay for mobile TV content, perhaps because they had other resources; for instance, one participant said: «I know for certain that I would not pay for televised content on a mobile phone. Rather than watch something on a mobile phone and pay a connection fee for the mobile Internet, I would prefer to buy a laptop DVB USB-card that costs about 20€, and I could watch TV in real time. And a series or a film could be downloaded to my PC at home, and I could see it later on the laptop, which has far better [viewing quality]». Another participant referred to Wi-fi connectivity and the distribution of content through the network by saying that «the latest generations of mobile phones have Wi-fi connectivity, and all of the media videos, whether short clips or with other content, can be seen free of charge using the net-work». A third participant explained a different route for obtaining content: «At the moment, almost all of us have a mobile phone with a memory card in which we can store videos or music. Or, the mobile phone can be synced with the PC through Bluetooth or a USB cable, and this allows us to store on the mobile phone all the content we have in our PC or all that we can get through it. Therefore, we could download any video from the Internet through a PC and later sync it to the mobile phone and watch it there. Of course, it is much cheaper to do it this way». The general opinion is summarized in this quote: «The future problem for mobile TV is having to pay for content that we get free and in better quality in our living rooms».

However, they accepted as reasonable a flat rate at a reduced cost (i.e., 5-10 € monthly) that included access to all video content through a mobile phone. In this case, they would require mobile TV technology to develop the capacity to receive the DVB, thus excluding the mobile network operator from the business model.

### 3.2. Qualitative analysis of the experience of mobile TV. (Focus groups)

The qualitative analysis of the study consisted of forming four focus groups, with 8 participants each, from the pre-established groups. A discussion was held a few days after the conclusion of the mobile TV experience, first in Malaga on December 10th, 2009 and then in Sevilla on December 16th, 2009.

#### 3.2.1. A new scenario

For all participants, the experience with the mobile TV created «disengagement» between the daily reality of the use of the mobile device and the «ideal world» which they could immediately access by

means of the experience. They saw this phenomenon as a new experience or a new scenario in which they did not have to worry about the cost nor the time spent watching mobile TV content, implying that this experience was different from ones normally accessed through a mobile device. In essence, these university students were given a «cash vacation» that allowed them to engage in a technological world of content that they had only been able to access before in a very limited way. According to one participant, «it was as if they gave you a free room in the best hotel in the world when you were used to living in your house. Clearly, you knew that it was only for a little while but…». This is important because all the participants identified previous experiences with mobile TV prior to the initiation of this experience. This experience offered participants a place in which to put into play their identities as ideal users of a device with unlimited benefits. They no longer had a telephone but something much more versatile; as one participant noted, «Now, indeed, you understand that we had another thing that was beyond telephone». The reaction to the device and content and their advantages and disadvantages were defined by the way each participant perceived his presence within the experience:

• For some people, it continued as it began, as a fictional scenario into which they rarely entered. They always considered it to be an unreal experience, from which they would wake up at some point to return «to harsh reality». From the beginning, these people developed a certain intolerance of the experience and the device.

• Other participants «entered» more fully in the role defined by the experience, adopting as their own the ideal world that appeared before them. It is not that they were unaware of the fictional nature of the experience; rather they opened up their habits and personality to the experience. As such, this again raises the issue of lapsing consciousness regarding the end of the experiment, which imposed certain types of relationships (attitudes) towards the mobile phones, positive or negative (resistant).

### 3.2.2. Differences in conceptualization: male-female

In our study, there were people for whom the technology was an open but fragmented window to specific points of interest, and for others it was a meeting point or relationship facilitator that allowed exchanges of emotions and ideas with other people. This difference was associated to gender; women understood the new technological device in terms of relationships, whereas men saw it more as an instrument for information, with more episodic and fragmentary connections between users. Indeed, men showed a general tendency to believe that they had an instrument at their disposal to access content and forums where they could successfully obtain or exchange information on specific interests. Additionally, they regarded the terminal as a technological extension of the benefits they could have accessed through other devices, such as a TV, computer or iPod.

By contrast, the women tended to see the device and the experience as an opportunity to maintain real and virtual relationships, either by traditional calls or through communication on online social networks. However, this difference does not mean that the central idea of the demand to be connected disappears for some participants. All participants stipulated that being connected was a necessity, without which (as one of them put it) «I cannot imagine my life». The difference is in the ways that being connected was experienced by users. For men, being connected meant «to be connected in», while for women, it meant «to be connected with». Men access, while women live. Men related in a «receptive» way, and women related in a «projective» way. However, this association with respect to gender is a guideline rather than a steadfast rule. In conclusion, t women entered the multimedia experience without letting go of who they are; they used the device to re-establish their identity. Men, in contrast, interacted with the device more like spectators and did not access the contents they called up; however, they did download them for their use.

### 3.2.3. Different perceptions from the multiplatform

We have also stated that students with a range of audio-visual consumption habits signify a clear preference for a particular support or device. Thus, especially for students who use one type of technology in receptive terms, TV is watched on large screens (i.e., the TV or PC), music is listened to in stereo, Hi-fi sound systems or on iPod, while chat and forum participation occurs through the PC. These people are more reluctant to accept multi-use platforms, insofar as these platforms demand the extra effort of having to make discussion in a forum or chat using the uncomfortable keyboard of a mobile phone. This compartmentalization of the communication experiences relates to the association of each support to a time-space portion of daily life by the participants in the study:

• Widely accessed media content –such as sport

or cinema– are supported by devices such as the TV or computer. They do not take up any personal time, and anything can be chosen or negotiated depending on the company.

• The musical or radio content, mini-games or urgent messages via SMS or MMS usually occupy the «down time» that occurs while commuting from home to university or to a leisure activity.

• Relational activities occupy these moments of leisure and are ubiquitous, although such activities preferably occur in the privacy of one's home, during leisure moments at the university or in meetings. They take place in times of privacy and so-called «oriented leisure time» in which virtual and/or real relations fill personal free time. Despite having focus groups in different cities and with students of different degrees, we found no significant differences that justify a particular usage setting among them. This is something worthy of further attention, considering the «presumption of superiority» in the technological competence of the telecommunications engineering students.

### 3.2.4. Perceptions of TV and Internet connectivity in a mobile phone device

Participants' perceptions of having TV and Internet connectivity in a mobile phone device are central to our study. For that reason, the original design of the experience aimed to channel the main evaluations of the participants towards this function. In addition, this issue was discussed in the focus groups and was debated at length. The answers can also be understood as a «marketing study» with respect to the use (particularly regarding allowances), limitations and possibilities of multi-functions in a mobile phone device.

• The screen. Although the general evaluation of the experience was described by many as «enthusiastic», when they reflected on the specific points of the experience, the answers were more critical. Namely, the vast majority of participants agreed that the type of terminal used was not suitable for the content to be viewed because of the size of the screen.

• The «false-live broadcasting». The participants had access to Digital TV Mobile from Vodafone. There was some criticism regarding the selection menu for its general nature. As one participant said, «it is not really the telly. Some things are deferred, and others are a series of episodes that can be repeated again and again». Another participant said «watching TV is not the main purpose of the mobile phone. Currently you can see certain TV content adapted to the mobile phone».

It seems that there is a difference between expectations (i.e., to watch TV through the device) and reality, which participants describe as repetitive, delayed and insufficient. This criticism is in contrast to the enthusiasm of participating in an experience in mobile TV, which perhaps results in a certain level of disappointment, as the quality of traditional TV is not reproduced on the mobile terminal.

• Internet connectivity. In part because the series was being tested during the experience and did not work as expected, the participants transferred their attention to the issue of being connected. Suddenly, being connected was the essential function of the mobile phone and the benefits of connection to the Internet –with free, although limited access– became the main attraction, indeed «the star of the

> For men, being connected meant «to be connected in», while for women, it meant «to be connected with». Men access, while women live. Men related in a «receptive» way, and women related in a «projective» way. However, this association with respect to gender is a guideline rather than a steadfast rule. In conclusion, t women entered the multimedia experience without letting go of who they are; they used the device to re-establish their identity. Men, in contrast, interacted with the device more like spectators and did not access the contents they called up; however, they did download them for their use.

experience». Some indicated frustration at the technical limitations of the connection; certain web sites had not adapted their content to a mobile format, and some of the visual Java applications were not supported by the terminal. This limited access, for instance, to the forums that were the essential meeting place for participants with a receptive-informative profile.

• The leisure content. The leisure content was the strongest feature of limitless connection. The most popular web pages browsed were those that allowed the exchange of curious ideas, audio-visual references to shows, videos or content, and fast searches. These involved not only reception and exchange but were also necessary for taking advantage of the downloadable audio and video content authorized by the Vodafone Store. Limitless connection was highly rated as far as content was concerned.

## 4. Discussion

The focus of our research on mobile TV functionality rested on a particular methodological idea. Specifically, we elaborated a theoretical model on the phenomenon of designed content based on that theoretical model, and tried to represent a model user of the product under investigation by surveying the experiences and opinions of users regarding the device and content.

This approach, in our opinion, was an effective way of establishing certain narrative patterns and formalizing content characteristics regarding a mobile format. With regard to formal characteristics, we can initially conclude that important differences in the reception of televised messages on a mobile telephone depend on diverse conditions that can be explained in terms of ergonomics (i.e., screen size), time (i.e., content duration compared to the time available to viewers) and context (i.e., 'liquid' scenarios in which users are available when messages are received); these issues require adjustments in content production and screenwriting.

Other important conclusions are the necessity to adjust content according to specific lifestyles that include cultural practices. The need to produce and deliver these contents and resources within the framework of the current cultural industry in a way that reduces economic risk and achieves a certain degree of success is also important. Nevertheless, the application of these resources requires adaptation to the specific demands of the media (for instance, targeted advertising and marketing campaigns).

Regarding this experience of mobile TV, the participants are conscious that mobile TV does not directly correlate to the consumption of content from other screens, such as TV or cinema. This creates a sensation of value deficiency in the user. In addition, participants greatly appreciated the ability to access the Internet. It is important to note that the consumption of mobile TV content is not widespread, whereas participation in social networks and communication through e-mail and chat rooms is.

Participants' greatest concern is the cost that access to this ubiquitous universe requires; they recommend a flat rate at reduced cost as a form of payment for data and voice plans.

## Notes

[1] The convergence of support (mainly personal computers [PC] and mobile phones [MP]), industries and usages before unfolded separately.

[2] The project discussed is in the 'Supports' section.

[3] The three previous experiences most similar to ours were carried out by the VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland. In its report entitled «FinPilot 2 end Report – User Acceptance of Mobile TV Services» (Kaasinen, Kivinen, Kulju, Lindroos, Oksman and Kronlund: 2008), they employed a panel of 27 users from Helsinki who used several mobile TV services via the Nokia N77 product from July 2007 to February 2008. Complementing services that were already available commercially, 10 pilot services were tested in this study. Feedback from users was gathered through surveys and interviews on the Internet.

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# The Transformation of Public TV Companies into Digital Services at the BBC and RTVE

## La transformación de las televisiones públicas en servicios digitales en la BBC y RTVE

ABSTRACT

Some authors question the existence of public television companies in the new environment of digitalization, Internet proliferation, growing competition and audience segmentation. However, others believe they should act as a driving force in the process of convergence and even that the new media present an opportunity to redefine the public broadcasting service (PBS) remit. The current challenge for the public media companies is to deliver their content through the maximum number of devices, not only via television sets but also broadband and mobile devices. Over the years, the BBC has adapted to new market situations and has implemented solutions that have been adopted by other public and private broadcasters around the world. The objective of this article is to show how the BBC has taken up the leadership of transforming public TV companies into online services in order to maintain market share; and how it has influenced Spain's public TV broadcaster, RTVE. The methodology is based on internal and external documents of both corporations, and the findings are complemented by interviews with online service managers at RTVE. We conclude that these public companies have adapted their activities to the new technologies and have developed interactive services to reinforce their public service mission.

RESUMEN

Algunas voces cuestionan la permanencia de las televisiones públicas en el nuevo entorno digital, caracterizado por una mayor presencia de Internet, más competidores y la fragmentación de la audiencia. Sin embargo, hay otros que creen que deberían actuar como una fuerza motriz en el proceso de convergencia e incluso que los nuevos medios representan una posibilidad de redefinir la misión de las televisiones públicas. El reto actual de las corporaciones públicas es proporcionar los contenidos a través del mayor número de soportes posibles, no solo a través de la televisión, sino también a través de Internet y dispositivos móviles. Un rasgo de la BBC es haberse adaptado siempre a los cambios del mercado y muchas de sus soluciones han sido transferidas a otras empresas de comunicación tanto públicas como privadas de todo el mundo. El objetivo de este artículo es mostrar cómo la BBC es uno de los modelos en los que las empresas televisivas se han fijado para transformar sus servicios digitales a fin de mantener su existencia en el mercado, y conocer cuál ha sido su influencia en la televisión pública española RTVE. La metodología empleada radica en el análisis de los documentos internos y externos de las compañías y entrevistas realizadas a los responsables de los servicios digitales de RTVE. Las conclusiones apuntan a destacar que estas compañías han adaptado sus actividades a las nuevas tecnologías y han desarrollado servicios interactivos como refuerzo de su misión de servicio público.

KEYWORDS / PALABRAS CLAVE

Online services, digital services, innovation, transformation, public television.
Servicios online, servicios digitales, innovación, transformación, televisión pública.

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## 1. Introduction

While some authors (Tracey, 1998; Syvertsen, 2003; Medina, 2007) question the survival of public TV broadcasters in the new environment of digitalization, Internet proliferation, de-regulation, growing competition and audience segmentation, others (Blake, 1999; Meier, 2003; Steemers, 2003; Storsul & Syvertsen, 2007: 285; Moe, 2008) think they should act «as a driving force in the process of convergence between the communication sector and other social sectors» (Prado & Fernández, 2006: 5), and that the new media present an opportunity to redefine the PBS remit (Enli, 2008), with public service broadcasting moving into online media (Trappel, 2008). According to Goodwin (1997: 72), «recent UK debate provides a number of powerful and widely accepted arguments for the continued and extensive role of public provision in broadcasting. All these arguments are independent of spectrum scarcity», as has happened historically.

Of all public TV broadcasters, Azurmendi (2007: 322-5) emphasises the key role of the BBC in DTT-related technological development, digitalization and convergence of TV and Internet. BBC has managed to maintain its prestige over the years by adapting to new market situations, and many of the solutions it has implemented have been adopted by other public and private TV corporations across the world (Walzer & Retis 2008; Ojer, 2009).

The current challenge for the BBC, as with all media companies, is to deliver content via the maximum number of devices, not only via TV but also the Web and mobile devices (Wildman, 2008: 100; Jacubowicz, 2007: 41). The momentum of the information society led the BBC to develop a webpage that is now one of the most visited worldwide, and remarkably, UK citizens have had free access to the BBC's audiovisual archives through iPlayer since 2007. In March 2008, it registered 42 million downloads, and the site has an average 1.1 million weekly users (BBC, 2008: 31). As well as being an innovation, this service is a new source of revenue as users outside the UK have to pay for it.

The RTVE model developed more slowly than the BBC's. Its webpage opened in 2000 but not until 2008 did it have an interactive platform. The objective of this article is to show how the BBC has taken a leading role in incorporating online services and how the Internet enables the BBC to carry out its public service mission. The influence of the BBC on RTVE is analyzed and a comparison is made. The methodology comprises analyses of the process, corporate structure and products of the online services of the BBC and RTVE, evaluating the key points according to the methodology used by Küng (2008), Paulussen and Coppens (2004: 491-492), and Hills and Michalis (2000). The findings are complemented by interviews with online service managers at RTVE, and the study of the BBC was made enabled by consulting internal and external documents (Ojer, 2009; García, 2009; Moe, 2008; Monroe & al., 2008; Hills & Michalis, 2000).

First, the design of the BBC's Internet strategy is outlined, and then the RTVE approach is described. A comparison of the two yields conclusions and some ideas for further research. We study their strategy, with the public service mission firmly in mind, with regard to: (a) the product, (b) number of users and public involvement, (c) organizational aspects, and (d) economic and financial data.

## 2. BBC online development

The main objective of the BBC has remained unchanged since its birth: to meet the information and entertainment needs of British citizens. This principle of public service is founded on the production of content for all audiences that reflects the reality of the country. These programs may also contribute to social cohesion by disseminating accurate information that promotes the democratic nature of its society.

In the beginning, the BBC contributed to its public service remit through radio and TV programs. Nowadays, the great challenge for the BBC is to ensure that its audience receives public service content across as many platforms as possible; for example, the Internet and mobile devices.

The BBC has been always aware of the importance of technological developments for its audience. For instance, its research and development department pioneered many initiatives that would later be imitated by other media companies around the world. The BBC introduced the Ceefax system in 1974, a precursor of what was later called teletext, and provided the first subtitles, a vital innovation for the hard of hearing.

Digital TV, which markedly increases the scope for new viewers, is an area in which each public broadcaster must define its position. Once again, the BBC faces a new, exciting challenge for the future, one which it has already begun to address. In a recent document to regulate the British media market, the government's White Paper on Digital Britain sanctions the BBC's move into «the online, on-demand and search word. But its scale and impact on the market

and the ability of others to commercialize services in the digital environment require careful vigilance by the BBC Trust, particularly in relation to proposals for news services, or new devices such as the broadcast-broadband hybrid Project Canvas»[1] (Department for Culture, Media and Sport 2009: 18-19). The BBC's initiative to provide public content on all platforms had already been articulated in the document Building Public Value. Renewing the BBC for a Digital World (BBC, 2004: 5).

The BBC's brief consisted of creating public value: 1) democratic value; 2) cultural and creative value; 3) educational value; 4) social and community value; 5) global value (BBC, 2004: 8). The BBC's intent was to make «its programs and content as widely available and accessible as possible, using news platforms and technologies, and in partnership wherever it can, to tailor that content to the needs of groups, families and individuals». For that reason, they deployed bbc.co.uk and interactive TV to develop new personalized formal and informal learning opportunities for different audience groups (BBC, 2004: 11-3).

The BBC´s Internet activities began in September 1996. It initially envisaged BBC Online as a commercial service funded by advertising, subscription, and e-commerce revenues. However, in June 2006, they decided to limit the advertising to the webpage viewed by overseas users (Milmo, 2006). BBC Online was made up of four major independent public service sites: BBC Online, BBC Education, BBC World Service and BBC News Online.

In 1998, the Secretary of the State backed the BBC's licence fee-funded online service as a core public service. This service was conceived as an essential resource offering unique, wide-ranging content, as a tool to reinforce the relationship with licence fee payers and as a trusted guide to the new media environment (DCMS, 2004).

The BBC website provides information about the company and information on all the corporation's services. It is possible to access digital and terrestrial TV channels. It also offers users radio broadcasts (BBC Radio1, BBC Radio2, Radio3 BBC, BBC Radio 4, BBC Radio Five Live BBC Five Live Sports Extra, 1XtraBBC, BBC 6 Music, BBC7, and BBC Asian Network). The BBC website provides an international news service –BBC World– with the introduction translated into 32 languages, and distance-language courses.

Nowadays, the BBC has one of the most influential and widely visited websites in the world. According to Küng (2003: 2), BBC News Online is «one of the most successful content-only Internet sites in Europe and has a global following». By June 2002, it was one of the most popular content-only websites in the UK and one of the most visited non-portal websites outside the US. Pete Clifton, head of editorial development for multimedia journalism at the BBC, pointed out at the Online Publishers Association Conference 2008 that 47 per cent of the 17 million weekly unique users to the BBC News website are from outside the UK, with around half these users from the US (Oliver, 2008). As the following table shows, the BBC has been remarkably successful on the Internet, especially in 2004.

In 2008, the visits numbered around 16.5 million. Two events in particular succeeded in drawing in users that year: the Beijing Olympics, with 8.5 million weekly unique users, and the US Presidential Election, which broke audience records with 9.2 million individual users (BBC, 2009: 65, 68). Despite this success, BBC executives continue to work to meet user expectations by improving interactivity and enabling users to shape their experience of the BBC (BBC, 2009: 68).

The BBC management team states that it is important to interact with the website viewers, listeners and users. They maintain regular contact with the audience to find out what they like, why and what they expect from the BBC, via the BBC Information website. There are also webpages, such as BBC message boards or Points of View, where the public can post its comments and complaints. In 2007, it handled 1.1 million contacts (BBC, 2008: 55).

| Weekly visits (in millions) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| http://www. bbc.co.uk | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
| United Kingdom | n.a. | 22,8 | 12,3 | 14,8 | n.a. |
| United Kingdom and rest of the world | 33.8 | 48.1 | 24.3 | 28.3 | 33.0 |

BBC Annual Reports and Accounts.

The BBC has also promoted audience participation online. The BBC World Service developed a program and website called Have Your Say, connecting audiences across the globe and stimulating debate. In 2002, it launched the Test the Nation website that quizzes the public on its general knowledge of current affairs, famous personalities, sports and entertainment; it includes tests, results, fact files, questions, and answers.

BBC has also made alliances with different online social communities such as YouTube, Facebook and MySpace, with the latter offering BBC classics like Doctor Who, The Mighty Boosh, Attenborough, Robin Hood, and others.

The website is very much oriented towards not only providing information but also a useful service for its users. For example, the «Get Involved» section of Sports contains information on the nearest tennis courts for users in England, Wales, and Scotland. The BBC's online shop sells DVDs, audio, books, magazines and children's products. The user can also sign up to the charity Children in Need, whose mission is to bring a positive change to the lives of disadvantaged children and young people across the UK.

All these services enable the BBC to keep in contact with the British taxpayers who finance the public corporation and who, thanks to the iPlayer, can also download audiovisual content free while the international audience still has to pay for it. This archive system has had a great impact on other public broadcasting bodies such as RTVE, as it allows access to content of historical value and generates a new source of revenue, to be reinvested in quality public service content.

iPlayer began in December 2007, and in March 2008 it recorded 42 million downloads of BBC programs. From December 2007 to March 2009, it had over 360 million visits with an average of 1.1 million users per week in 2008 (BBC, 2009: 31), winning it the Prix Italia for Best Cross-Media Public Service. As Tapscott and Williams (2008: 192) outline, the BBC expects its web services to develop innovative content and new revenue streams especially with its archive sales to international audiences. iPlayer allows children to access content for youngsters, but also contains a parental control system. The CBeebies iPlayer puts parents in control of their children's viewing by enabling them to choose what they watch and when. It is designed to provide a safe, dedicated area for children where they can view appropriate content and which restricts inadvertent access to non-children's programming. This section for children has numerous entertaining, educational games and quizzes.

The online services team comprises a Technical Director, Editorial Head, Head of Design and Head of Operations, and the project was endorsed by the CEO and the Director of BBC News. Küng (2008) regards the process as semi-structured in the terms defined by Eisenhardt and Brown (1999). According to this author, «semi-structures allow organizations to 'patch' – a corporate-level process that allows incumbents to 'remap dramatically' resources in response to changing market opportunities, by 'adding, splitting, transferring, exiting or combining chunks of businesses'» (Küng, 2008: 142).

The BBC online service's organizational structure was not established through the acquisition of a new organization that developed new tasks, nor through spinning out an independent company, but through the creation of a new division within corporate boundaries, staffed by personnel working together yet individually charged with responsibility for the success of the project (Christensen & Overdorf, 2000). The project team was multidisciplinary with a variety of expertise and backgrounds. In the words of Erik Huggers, the BBC Director of Future Media and Technology, «it's about creating an environment where ideas can flourish, and then taking the best of them and making them work for audiences» (BBC, 2009: 65).

BBC News Online is an experienced operation with over 210 staff. According to Küng (2003: 9), «the venture has enjoyed a level of independence unusual in the BBC, an organization known for its tight management style». The Director of BBC Online enabled the successful development of a culture very different from the mainstream BBC way of doing things. He had a very clear sense of what he wanted the organization to do. «The speed, flexibility and creativity which characterised this new unit's work style might 'infect' the rest of the news division. It would also provide a logical foundation for a major current strategic initiative, the development of interactive TV». The result was that News Online was free to design a service which reflected the strengths of the new medium and responded to the needs of Internet users.

At the same time, this approach involved a degree of risk: an intrinsic tension between the speed of the

**Number of plays of some RTVE videos on YouTube/rtve up to 01/30/2008**

| Videos | Genre | Plays |
|---|---|---|
| Muchachada Nui | Children's series | 3,000,573 |
| Pre-elections | Political campaigning | 23,929 |
| Tengo una pregunta para usted | Citizen participation | 379.315 |
| Fútbol Club | Sports program | 54,853 |

Source: Ramírez & Sanchís (2008).

Internet and BBC's reputation for careful, responsible reporting. This new way of doing things also had a bearing on how other departments operated.

A growing understanding of the importance of the Internet throughout the BBC, the need to manage all online content centrally to avoid duplication and contain costs, plus a desire to ensure that the «organisational learning» this unit had acquired should permeate the rest of the BBC, meant that there was increasing pressure to integrate News Online with the rest of the organisation. The Director of BBC Online was convinced that integration and success depended on News Online's market and all that was special in terms of culture, creativity and work processes.

The BBC spent £83.2m (€91.02m) on content for bbc.co.uk, excluding BBC Jam2, £24m (€26.25m) on infrastructure and £8.8m (€9.6m) on distribution in 2005-2006 (Kiss, 2007). The annual budget for BBC websites in 2009 rose to £145m (€157m) (The Economist, 2009: 75). The next challenge for the BBC is to move several key departments, including Future Media and Technology, to a center in Salford, in Greater Manchester, by 2011, to be equipped with state-of-the-art technology.

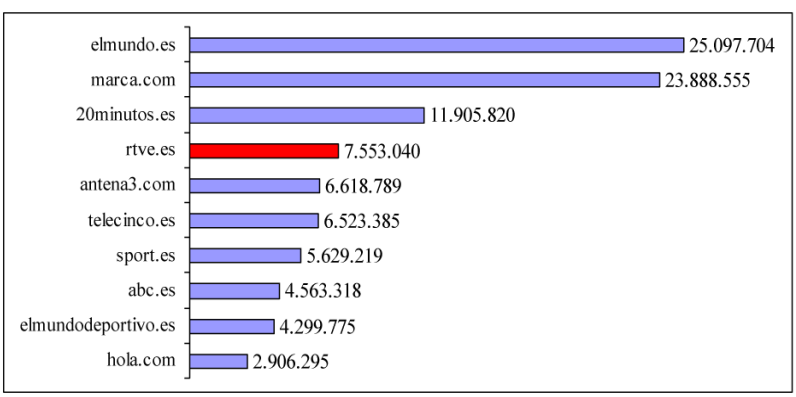
### 3. RTVE online development

Compared to the BBC, RTVE model has differed in relation to political independence and financing over the last 50 years. However, the recent legislative reform of the Spanish broadcaster seems to move the corporation in the direction of the British model and to correct certain past mistakes. Despite the report on public media reform (2005), which emphasised the lack of a clear, efficient strategy on digitalization online and TV (Comité de Sabios, 2005: 28), the new managers are convinced of the importance of new technologies, especially Internet, as an instrument for the institution's survival. Furthermore, Article 3.3 of Law 17/2006 on Public Radio and TV states that «it is part of the mission of public radio and TV to contribute to the development of the Information Society, to participate in this technological progress using various technologies and means of distribution, and developing new related and interactive services to ensure and enrich their supply (...)». Since 2006, the new RTVE board's key strategy has been interactive media. In 2007, General Manager Luis Fernández appointed Internet expert Rosalía Lloret as new director of the division. She had previously worked with Terra.es, the website and online TV division of Telefónica, and had also participated in the launch of the Ya.com website.

Although RTVE opened a website in 2000, it was not until a revamp in May 2008 that the website began including video, audio and photos, TV and radio on demand, blogs, some archive material and news. Through the website, it is possible to watch the programs you want, access the 24 Hours TV channel with live reporting of the Council of Ministers, football matches, the program «Tengo una pregunta para usted» [I have a question for you], and others. TV news programs can be viewed once they have been broadcast on TV, as can a derived news product – «Telediario en 4 minutos»–, a four-minute summary of the main news of the day tailored for its web and mobile phone consumers. Internet users can now watch, but not download, episodes from series such as «Los gozos y las sombras», «Verano azul», «La bola de cristal», «Anillos de oro», «Historias para no dormir», «Turno de oficio». The new website is to allow access to TVE's historical archives once the images are digitized by RTVE.

In March 2006, RTVE created its own channel on YouTube: http//youtube.com/rtve. For the 2008 Spanish General Elections, it created the Elecciones '08 channel on YouTube and invited citizens to submit video questions to candidates for a talk show broadcast live on the TV channel. The RTVE website also offered live and recorded coverage of the Beijing

UNIQUE USERS OF SPANISH MEDIA WEBSITES, MARCH 2010




Source: OJD Interactiva.

Olympics that year, providing a platform for citizen participation called «La Villa», through which fans could contact athletes participating in the Games. By January 2008, it had registered 1,358 videos rising to 13,784 subscribers in October 2009. RTVE uses YouTube to show previews of its most popular series, some formatted for a duration of 90 minutes. Table 2 shows examples of RTVE videos on YouTube and the number of plays.

The website has proven to be a useful means for establishing contact with the audience, especially with live-chats with public figures, and famous actors and actresses. The blogs are a good example of the closeness between RTVE professionals and the corporation's users. In October 2009, there were 17 blogs related to cinema and TV, 22 to music, 15 to radio, 21 to sports, 33 on current affairs, and 22 from the international correspondents. Viewer responses reveal their tastes, although this has yet to be systematized. In 2006, the Ombudsperson's online program was created to attend to users' complaints and suggestions on radio, TV and the website. Once a month, the corporation presents the Ombudsperson's TV program, «RTVE responde», in which Elena Sánchez airs the public's complaints and recommendations. In 2008, the program received 4,954 inputs. RTVE also signed agreements with Facebook and MySpace, although the latter was terminated at the beginning of 2009. With Facebook, RTVE implemented forms of audience participation never before seen in public broadcasting, by creating real inter-activity between web users/TV audience and program hosts. RTVE worked with MySpace for two years in the presentation and pre-selection of candidates for the Eurovision Song Contest. TVE a la Carta enables viewers to watch streamed content available for up to seven days after broadcasting. The programs most viewed on the RTVE website are series such as «Muchachada Nui», pre-recorded and live sports events and coverage of specific topics, as well as the radio sites and blogs. RTVE's website had 6 million visits in May 2008, reaching some 9 million a year later. In May 2008, the mean connection time was about 6:40 minutes, rising a year later to 13:35 minutes; by September 2009 it stood at more than 25 minutes (Pinheiro, 2009). The following table lists the Top 10 Spanish media in terms of visits; RTVE ranks above Antena 3 and Telecinco, its direct TV competitors.

Data provided by Pinheiro, Deputy Director of New Projects, indicate that about 75% of users reside in Spain with the rest spread among the U.S., Latin

Comparison of BBC and RTVE websites

| | BBC | RTVE |
|---|---|---|
| **Beginning** | 1991: bbc.co.uk domain is registered<br>1996 | 2000<br>2008 (new) |
| **Budget** | 162 m. € | n.a. |
| **Number of employees** | 210 (London BBC News Online) | 130 |
| **Number of visits** | 22 million weekly visitors (2008) | Approximately 10 million monthly visitors (September 2009) |
| **Unique users** | 16 million unique users (2007) | 4,5 million monthly unique users (September 2009) |
| **Pages visited** | n.a. | +69 million page views (September 2009) |
| **Live content (examples)** | Beijing Olympics (2008)<br>US Presidential Election (2008)<br>BBC News | Beijing Olympics (2008)<br>Sports, 24h news |
| **Original online content** | News | News, Clan TV |
| **Blogs** | 111 | 130 |
| **Pod/audiocasts** | Yes | Yes |
| **Social networks alliances** | YouTube BBC World Wide, Facebook America, MySpace | YouTube, Facebook, MySpace |
| **TV contents** | Watch and download with iPlayer | Watch, no download. Streaming |
| **Sections** | News, iPlayer, Radio, Learning English, Sport, Business & Money, Weather, Entertainment, Music, Arts & Culture, Religion, Gardening, Food, International | News, TV, Radio, Sports, Children, TVE Catalunya, TVE Internacional, TV series, Culture |
| **Languages** | 32 languages (BBC News) | Spanish. Catalan |
| **Children parental control** | No | In Clan TV (children's site) |
| **Citizen participation** | BBC complaints<br>BBC message boards<br>Points Of View<br>Have Your Say | Ombudsperson's program<br>Live chats with politicians, actors, sportspeople, etc.<br>Participation through Facebook comments on news, sports and entertainment programs |
| **Archives** | Through iPlayer | Work in progress |
| **Search facility (out/in)** | In BBC and news | In RTVE as a whole and by media type (video, audio, news, etc.) as well as by section |
| **Games/clubs** | For children | In the children's site |
| **E-commerce** | BBC Shop | RTVE Shop |
| **External links and comments** | No | No |
| **Mobile services** | News, Sport, Weather, Entertainment, TV, Radio and Music, Featured Sites | News, weather, games, live content: Champions League, 24h TVE channel |

America, other European countries, Asia, and Africa (Pinheiro, 2009).

Following the BBC, RTVE is working on user access to its TV and radio archives dating back to the last 50 years. RTVE's aim is to make its entire audiovisual treasure trove available to users as soon as possible, but there is concern that it may take several years to digitize all the material, evaluate, classify and document it and establish licence ownership. There is also a plan to prioritize the most popular shows as a means of knowing what users want to watch.

The RTVE website has special divisions for sports, children and merchandising. The radio stations offer podcasts from Radio Nacional, Radio Clásica, Radio 3, Radio 4, Radio 5, and Radio Exterior. Another innovation has been Mobile Match Tracker, an application that enables users to download video-clips of goals and match highlights from the UEFA Champions League directly to their mobile phones. It also enables mobile phone access to the latest news, sports results and events as they occur. Furthermore, RTVE uses iPhone to broadcast its 24-hour news channel as well as those Champions League matches whose rights it has acquired. In June 2009, the new children's site, Clan TV, was launched, where children of all ages can watch programs, play games and participate in activities. There is also a section that informs parents on content, and parental control is enabled for those who register and log in. The corporation also provides some live events online.

Diversity characterizes RTVE, with its 15 regional centers, but the site uses only one other language other than Spanish, Catalan. To promote innovation, these centers launched the International Award «INVI» for Online Audiovisual Innovation in June 2009 to search for and encourage new talent on the Web.

The number of employees in RTVE's Interactive section is 130. There are three main divisions: Content and Design, Development, and IT Systems. Budget figures are not available. Like the rest of the corporation's services, it used to be funded by advertising (almost 50%) and public funding (35%) (Lloret, 2008a). However, since 2010, neither advertising nor sponsorship space is sold on its TV channels or sites. The RTVE website never abounded in advertising, although commercials were more evident on the children's site. In the other site sections, they only allowed two-page banners and video ads prior to content reproduction.

According to Pinheiro, the greatest pressure was not money, but time. They needed to develop the new website as soon as possible. In accordance with the General Manager, «the RTVE has now caught up after a ten-year delay» (Fernández, 2008). The objective was clear: to offer all radio and TV content to users wherever and whenever they wanted it; to set the standards for multimedia, which is independent and objective information. The goal was for users to have access to all the news and news headlines 24 hours a day, and for them to be able to select how they want to be informed (Lloret, 2008b). The focus was also clear: to continue with the public service mission (Fernández, 2008). However, so as to fulfil this commitment to public service, the corporation wanted to become an online leader (Lloret, 2008a). Integration with the other departments was relatively easy: in most cases, the different teams update their own sites.

## 4. Comparison of BBC and RTVE websites

The competitive advantage of new media is demonstrated by the investment that both corporations make in their online services and the number of professionals employed in these new areas. A comparison can be made after analysing both sites from the key aspects of corporate culture, interactivity, customization, personalization, contents and services. The table shows the main aspects that differentiate the BBC from RTVE.

BBC Online was created with internal staff and its flexible culture quickly influenced other departments, though most had been operating for more than 50 years with their own particular style. The second launch of RTVE online was created with new managers and staff. But their spirit soon caught on with the rest of the corporation, in part, thanks to the new General Manager.

Most BBC services were later adopted by the RTVE site. However, the commitment of the BBC to the development of this new medium was stronger in terms of the number of employees and budget, and success was more or less immediate, thanks to the prestige and reputation of the Corporation.

BBC Online has been longer on the Web than the RTVE site and its employee numbers are higher. However, the numbers of those involved in online services is almost equivalent, taking into account the overall number of employees at both companies. Although the RTVE website is ranked among the top media company websites and may avail itself of important opportunities to engage Spanish-speaking audiences in Latin America, the success of the BBC's site is incomparable.

Many of the two corporations' services and

alliances forged with other companies are similar: live content, blogs, social networks, TV and radio content, search engines, online shops and contents for mobile telephony. Both are multimedia, especially due to contributions from other media in the group; they provide top-quality content for children, and have developed efficient interactive tools to establish and maintain contact with the public.

However, the BBC has greater experience in relation to audience participation, creation of contents, English language learning, has more archive material available online, and its content comes in many languages. All these services and content are on its webpage.

On the other hand, both corporations, as happens in many media company websites, have to develop different or re-versioned content for the Web, adapted to the new medium.

## 5. Conclusions and further research

Both companies have seen their online divisions advance considerably especially in their home countries; they are leaders in innovative development. However, the BBC has international prestige and has invested heavily in its online services, which RTVE has yet to do. Clearly RTVE has tried to follow the trail blazed by the BBC; RTVE's Director was asked how rtve.es might look like BBC Online and her response was clear.

They (BBC) have several thousand people working in the Internet area. We have fewer for now, but let's not forget that they are the model to follow. They have been on the Internet for 10 years, had considerable success and are the major reference-point for information on the Web (Lloret, 2008b).

According to Klontzas (2006: 610), BBC Online is «centred on a combination of interactivity, branding and content, BBC Online is ambitious to become a global brand». Hills and Michalis (2000: 491) characterized the BBC Online strategy as a defensive means of expanding audience reach and they conclude that this is mainly due to it being a trusted brand.

RTVE online is very well-positioned in relation to Latin America and in comparison to its competitors in Spain. Its site is the most visited, it is better organized and more innovative, and contains less controversial content. The websites of other national TV channels offer fewer services and sections, but have a sexier orientation. The RTVE's children's site was especially significant, being the only free website with parental control in Spain until 2010. That is why so many advertisers were interested in it. The limitations of this study should be acknowledged. A complete comparison between the BBC and RTVE requires a full range of data, such as budgets, income, and audience reach. Some data still lack scientific rigor and others, relating to financing and economics, should be made available to the public. An in-depth account of the quality of content and corporate responsibility could be a subject for further research, with a particular focus on these corporations' public service mission.

Finally, the current study may prompt a renewed and more scholarly evaluation of different types of websites around the world. A systematic analysis of existing websites from public and private companies, as well as comparative studies, may benefit managers, leading to the development of more efficient ways of developing online services.

## Notas

[1] Project Canvas is a proposal to develop a joint venture partnership to help enable the delivery of Internet protocol TV (IPTV). The project would allow viewers to watch on-demand services, such as the BBC iPlayer and other Internet content, via TV sets.

2 An online educational service for children under 16 launched by the BBC in January 2006 but removed in March 2007 due to complaints from e-learning firms about unfair competition.

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# Emotions Elicited by Television Violence

## Las emociones que suscita la violencia en televisión

ABSTRACT
The effects of TV violence have been widely studied from an experimental perspective, which, to a certain extent, neglects the interaction between broadcaster and recipient. This study proposes a complementary approach, which takes into account viewers' interpretation and construction of TV messages. Social dimensions influencing emotional experiences to TV violence will be identified and analyzed, as well as the way these emotions are construed in discourse, how they are linked to attitudes, ethical dimensions and courses of action. Eight focus groups (segmented by age, gender and educational level) were the basis of a discourse analysis that reconstructed the way audiences experience TV violence. Results show the importance of a first immediate emotional mobilisation, with references to complex emotions, and a second emotional articulation of experiences regarding repetition of scenes (type, classification and assessment of broadcasts), legitimacy (or lack thereof) of violent acts, and identification (or lack thereof) with main characters. In conclusion, the double impact (immediate and deferred) of emotions generates complex narratives that lead to a single course of action characterised by responsibility and guilt, which can only be taken into account by assuming the active role of viewer.

RESUMEN
Los efectos de la violencia en la televisión han sido ampliamente estudiados desde una perspectiva experimental, que soslaya en cierto modo la interacción entre emisor y receptor. El presente trabajo plantea una perspectiva complementaria que tiene en cuenta la interpretación y la elaboración que los espectadores hacen de las emisiones. Se propone identificar y analizar las dimensiones sociales que mediatizan las experiencias emocionales ante la violencia vista en televisión y cómo esas dimensiones emocionales, que se construyen en el discurso, están ligadas a actitudes, dimensiones éticas y posiciones de acción. El discurso analizado procede de ocho grupos de discusión –compuestos diferencialmente respecto al género, la edad y el nivel educativo–, que se analizaron a partir de las emociones que experimentan ante la violencia en la televisión. El análisis del discurso muestra, en primer lugar, la importancia de una primera movilización emocional, con referencias a emociones complejas y, en segundo lugar, una articulación de la experiencia emocional respecto de la repetición de escenas (modalidad, clasificación y evaluación), los actos (legitimación o no) y los personajes (identificación o desidentificación). En conclusión, el doble impacto de las emociones (inmediato y diferido) genera narrativas complejas que abocan a un único curso de acción caracterizado por la responsabilidad y la culpa, que solo puede tenerse en cuenta asumiendo el papel activo del espectador.

KEYWORDS / PALABRAS CLAVE
Violence, television, emotions, emotional impact, audience reception, discourse analysis.
Violencia, televisión, emociones, impacto emocional, recepción por la audiencia, análisis de discurso.

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The majority of studies on TV violence concern the so-called «effects model», which understands effects as the production of ideas, emotional reactions or consequences in behaviour. The most important effects are the emotions viewers feel when watching the scenes, and the effects most closely connected to emotions are fear, anger, desensitisation and catharsis. Fear, as both a reaction and a «cultivated» emotion, as an effect of viewing TV content is the emotion most usually highlighted (Cantor & Nathason, 1996; Shanahan, 1999). Research into what causes fear when faced by physical violence has mainly centred on scenes of real-life violence (Smith & Moyer-Guse, 2006) in news programmes (Smith & Wilson, 2002; Wilson, Martins & Marske, 2005), particularly in news on wars (Hoffner & Heafner, 1994) and on the 9/11 terrorist attacks (Saylor, Cowart, et al, 2003). All these studies tend to show the short- or long-term effects in children and adults of exposure to news programmes. Other authors insist on the reactions, behaviour or aggressive feelings aroused that are more typical of the emotion of anger (Anderson, 2004).

Desensitisation to violence as a result of viewing violent TV content has been described as an emotional state of familiarisation with violent images (Zillmann & Weaver, 1999; Cantor, 2002). Desensitisation or saturation are not emotions, rather they are more or less stable states in which the individual experiences a non-reaction, or a less intense reaction, to images which he would have previously reacted more strongly to. In this case, there is a continued psychological process of reducing an emotional state.

These studies have not focused on the interaction between television and viewers, viewers' interpretation of television, its broadcasts, and the aims and social significance of the same scenes of violence. However, the same identification or perception of violence varies depending on viewers' characteristics (Barrios, 2005), which leads us to believe that the construction processes of the meanings of violence are important.

We can identify an «interactionist» orientation, which insists on the social construction of emotions (Harré & Langenhove, 1999), which emphasises the structural and communicative dimensions of emotional discourses. This perspective emphasises language and discourse, viewed as a key element in the social construction of emotion, delimitation of its content, significance and social consequences. It considers emotions as a means of communication. The language of emotions is very varied and flexible. It is a set of metaphors and «situated» expressions, of narratives at the service of agency, understood as the scope of action that subjects have in their cultural contexts (Wertsch, 1999), with legitimation of one's own or others' actions, and with power. Discourses on emotions are the telling of emotions. They are not scientific reports on physiological, internal or visible states (Buttny & Ellis, 2007). Instead, they contain cultural meanings and moral assessments.

Consequently, the objective of this study is to understand the social dimensions of emotions towards violence from a constructivist viewpoint. We aim to understand the social dimensions influencing emotional experiences to TV violence, and the way these emotions are construed in discourse, how they are linked to attitudes, ethical dimensions and courses of social action.

## 1. Material and methods

The discourse analysed comes from eight focus groups, with people of various ages, gender and educational level, who were invited to talk about violence on Spanish television. The composition of the groups was decided on the basis of the most relevant differences we expected to come across, although invariants were looked for in this first analysis, so no differential analyses will be conducted among the various social categories. Finding common discourses in such varied groups backs the assumption that they are widespread in society.

The focus group technique is especially suitable when phenomena need to be examined or interpreted in the terms people use to give them meaning (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), when a collective discourse on an object as «social» as television broadcasts needs to be reconstructed (Callejo, 1995). The groups, consisting of subjects with similar characteristics, although not natural groups, produce a discourse which represents the collective the individuals belong to, and their differential characteristics emerge in the researcher/ observer testimony. The researcher/ observer's task is to ensure the study subject is discussed without influencing symbolic group production. It is the group itself, with the structure created in the context of the research, which controls, emphasises, penalises and hierarchises the interventions and the discourse contents (Fern, 2001; Stewart, Shamdasani & Rook, 2007).

In this text, we construct a spectrum of feelings and emotions as they are named, and we interpret which emotional states they are related to, and what they refer to in the social context in which the viewers live. We present an analysis of interpretive repertoires

(Potter & Wetherell, 1987, 2001; Potter, 2003), understood as consistent language units linked with each other, which refer to the understanding, relevance and enjoyment of violence. Furthermore, the context of the viewers' positions was interpreted and the discourse organised as clearly and as structured as possible, in connection with the content and the social implications that the reception of violence in the various programmes may have.

## 2. Results

### 2.1. Emotional mobilisation: its first significance

The first significance of emotions experienced when watching violence is construed on the basis of the importance of first reactions, the first outlines of significance which structure the viewers' discourse. If we summarise the wide range of words with which they are referred to, the term «impact» clearly stands out. The word impact, jolt, shock in the dictionary, but also effect, mark or impression which the impact or shock leaves, is a manner of verbalising the emotional effects, even strong emotional effects, but it does not qualify the type of emotion felt.

«I still have the image imprinted on my mind of a district here in Madrid, of that girl, Irene, with a leg torn off by an ETA bomb. I'll never forget that. Nor many others. You start to forget them… If you put red dots on the map of Madrid, you would be amazed: twelve policemen in the Plaza de la República… There's always one image that stays with you more than others do. Perhaps because you were younger and she was a child. But, many of images of that type have a huge impact on you» (Adult males, basic education).

Violent images «have an impact», i.e. they cause emotions, they mobilise, they awaken emotions with various levels of intensity, which, in general, are high. That intense emotion has two dimensions or qualities: on the one hand, the content of the emotions is negative, since, fundamentally, it is fear, anger, surprise and sadness, but, on the other, feeling an intense emotion is attractive, and even pleasurable.

Identification of this first aroused emotion extends in a continuum which ranges from allusions to simple reactions or emotions, such as nervousness, anxiety, disgust, repugnance, horror, sadness, anger, violence (ire), unease, to other more complex, but immediate emotions (powerlessness, depression), sometimes accompanied by very clear physiological correlates (your stomach contracts, sobbing, wanting to flee), or immediate actions (changing channel, turning off the TV, getting up from your chair).

However, the discourse contains another dimension of the impact: intense surprise, experimenting with one's own limits, curiosity peppered with anxiety and expectation. It is a need for knowledge, which wonders about the irrational or sinister, and surprising nature of mankind, including oneself. On the one hand, we want to understand, give meaning to the violent acts occurring around us, which may affect us, but which elude understanding with daily parameters. On the other, we want to know how far our own emotions can take us.

> The language of emotions is very varied and flexible. It is a set of metaphors and «situated» expressions, of narratives at the service of agency, understood as the scope of action that subjects have in their cultural contexts (Wertsch), with legitimation of one's own or others' actions, and with power. Discourses on emotions are the telling of emotions.

### 2.2. Structuring elements of emotions towards violence

The dimensions which structure the construction and experience of emotions are: the type of scenes, their classification, legitimation or delegitimation of the acts, identification or lack of it with the characters.

The type of scenes, i.e. whether they are real-life or fictional, can modify the emotion radically, which may transform from unpleasant to pleasant. Fictional violence can be enjoyed, and this enjoyment is recognised and accepted. But it has to fulfil certain conditions, some in connection with meaning, with logic, and others with legitimation. Fictional violence must be connected to a tale. It must mean something to viewers. It must be «well placed» and sequenced, and linked to the plot (i.e. not repetitive or absurd). It must be limited in intensity. Not all violence is enjoyed, for example the most sadistic.

Viewers take control of the emotions by classifying and assessing the scenes. By breaking down the scenes into episodes and the smallest units, viewers classify them into series: «War violence», «news about abuse», «reports on harsh reality», «gender-based violence», «violent films», etc. The classification organises the viewings and intervenes in the formation of emotions, which already depend on the series they are included in. Some scenes are understood as repeated, since, although they are not the same, they are of the same series or the same type. Repetition modifies emotions, because viewers can anticipate what it concerns, and they can select what they want to see and how much of it they will see. To a certain extent, they can decide how they will be impacted.A third dimension is the legitimation or delegitimation of events. Viewers can accept or even enjoy violence, or classify what they have seen as non-violent, when they believe that it is legitimate, that it has served a purpose or has some social function. Violence which solves a problem or something bad is considered acceptable or pleasurable. This is recognised without any problems in fiction, but not when it refers to real-life scenes.

«We always have the fight against evil. If you see the bad character kill, you feel very bad, but if you see the good one defending principles, things, your view is different: such as the triumph of good over evil» (Adult males, basic education).

Finally, identification or lack of it with the characters, which is measured by the viewer's physical or psychological distance from the actors of the violence. We understand physical closeness to be the scenes that occur in places viewers know, frequent, or could frequent. Close geographical contexts (Spain, Madrid), contexts viewers can identify with (i.e. conflicts between groups for young people) generally substantially modify the emotional effects to emphasise the importance of feelings and the strength of the emotion aroused. Viewers are moved by what they associate with (by displacement). The similarity of the problems found in fiction is the source of feelings, effects and emotions. The ability to put oneself in another's shoes, take their place, merge some aspects of yourself with the person watched «commits» them, involves them and they feel with him. In the discourse analysed, this process leads to a targeted, specific sensitisation involving the actors, or situations, with similar experiences, and with whom the viewer can identify (Buckingham, 1996; Schlesinger, Haynes et al, 1998; Kitzinger, 2001; Boyle, 2005). Legitimation and identification are somehow always present in the explanation of viewers' emotional response (Buttny & Ellis, 2007), whether reference is made to real-life or fictional violence.

> The discourse on emotions encompasses «situated» concepts with a complexity of feelings that is only decipherable with viewers' previous experience. The «impact» of violent images is more than emotional activation, or behaviour after viewing includes awakening from a process that leads to reflection, thought, the production of ideas, arguments, and conclusions based on individuals' personal or social experience.

### 2.3. The emotional impact produced by the perception of violence

The content and the type of emotions betray how variable they are when we compare the emotional impact of violence perceived as real with fictional violence. Whilst real-life violence emphasises the emotional impact of negative content, fictional violence keeps the memory of extreme experience alive.

The emotional impact of real-life violence can last for a long time, since it leads to a feeling of powerlessness, fear for the future, a need to flee… The emotional impact of fictional violence is much shorter, centring on almost physical experiences as a result of the level of tension, interest, surprise and fear, although, at times, it can approach or exceed some people's tolerance limits. «Yes, I like to be afraid, to feel violence, to feel bad, that has happened. And then you laugh with your friends, but you end up thinking: Do I like seeing violence and fear?» (Young males, university students). One of the most pronounced differences between the perception of real-life and fictional violence is, therefore, how long the emotional

impact lasts. With fictional violence, the emotion is consumed immediately: it is enjoyed or rejected. If it is repeated, it responds to the repetition patterns of other cultural and leisure acts: if the effect produced is pleasurable, then it is re-experienced, but with the loss of the surprise factor, and, if it is an effect shared with other stimuli, with less intensity than the first time. If the violence is real, the situation is very different. The emotional impact is combined with new impacts and impressions producing singular effects.

As in the extensive literature on desensitisation, the effect of the repetition of images figures widely in the discourse of all the groups. Phrases such as «one image makes me forget the previous one», «so much violence makes us numb», «we like images that are more shocking than the last», etc., demonstrate the importance of considering emotional reactions taking their repetition into account. Nevertheless, the effect of the repetition is neither unique nor uniform. We have detected at least five possible consequences.

1) Accumulated emotional impact. The new impact comes on top of the previous one, and it is added to it, producing an effect that just one scene would not have. Viewers react emotionally when they are impacted on several occasions, with repeated scenes or of the same type. «Well, we are going to feel it, but it all depends on what they show us. If we see it once a week, it's not the same as if it's on a channel all day. I saw what happened at Atocha in the morning and I said «God, what a slaughter». And it didn't have such an impact on me. But I watched it on the TV all day, and in the end I was crying because of so many images one after another, so much pain… And luckily I didn't know anyone there, but I ended up feeling as upset as anyone there» (Young males, university students).

2) Reducing the intensity of emotions. In this case, the previous impact «buffers» the effect of the new one. Instead of accumulating it, it is absorbed. The original impact remains, but repetition only reactivates its presence with less intensity than the first time. «I think they are the same feelings, but less intense, in other words you are always going to feel rage even if you've seen it throughout the year, but it isn't the same because when you see it for the first time, it is something new, something you have never seen, it is shocking» (Young women, basic education).

3) Becoming normal, routine. The buffering in this case is not limited to the intensity of the emotions aroused, but it also affects their cognitive production. Repetition makes you feel that the violence cannot be changed, that nothing can be done about it. Consequently, viewers disassociate themselves from it and accept it. The emotion is controlled and does not form an attitude towards the facts presented by the images. «I feel numbed by it, I am numb, because I see it every day. I only see one news programme a day and I am numb. I know what they're going to say tonight because it's the same as it was yesterday. In the beginning, it has an impact on you, like that Allah business that's happening at the moment [they are referring to the demonstrations and disturbances in the Islamic world after the publication of caricatures of Muhammad in a Danish newspaper], but after they've been saying it for a week… It's like football for women, all the matches seem the same, 22 blokes running about» (Adult males, university students).

4) Fictionalisation of the images. In some cases, the first step towards accepting the perception of images as normal is by starting to consider them as fictional rather than real. It is seen as a self-protection strategy in view of the difficulty of accepting something which is incomprehensible or unacceptable as «normal». The real-life image is viewed as if it was a film, which makes it possible to distance oneself from the characters. «I remember those bombs which looked so small… but then you imagined the dead people… and it's like… God, I'm looking at a corpse… but now they show you them all the time and… One more or less… it becomes a film» (Young males, basic education). Naturally, desensitisation tends to mainly occur when the incidents are far removed, they do not endanger us, or those suffering them are psychologically distant. No instance of fictionalisation or desensitisation occurred with the images of 11-M, for example.

5) Reaffirmation. In some cases, the effect of the more shocking images does not wear off. It is very persistent, inevitable, and the subject believes that it «will always be there». The images arouse the same feelings with the same intensity. The impact reactivates with every new viewing. The example refers to the images of 11-M.

«I saw them four or five times [the images of the terrorist attacks on 11 March 2004 in Madrid], and every time I saw them, they had the same impact on me, I don't know, a feeling of anger and sorrow, powerlessness and wanting to cry. I felt that every time I looked at the images, it didn't change» (Young women, basic education).

### 2.4 From emotions to ethical attitudes

The impact produced by watching real-life violence on television is essentially emotional, but it

has attitudinal and behavioural consequences. The «educational» discourse, the positive function of showing violence to make people aware of conflicts and of the «horrors» of reality, is oft repeated on television. «If she was older, it wouldn't affect you as much. But it is still just as hard. An older prostitute is still the same, but it doesn't affect you as much. And they are images you have to see to become aware and decide to take action. These are images that try to get people involved and out onto the streets and doing something» (Young women, university students).

It can mobilise people by making them aware of what is happening in society outside their immediate context. The images provide awareness and information with a veracity that forces viewers to feel an agent in this situation. «I don't think TV violence is a bad thing. It is necessary to make society aware of what's going on. Because you go out and live in a bubble, but when you see it directly… that's what I think, anyway (…). It's to inform you: they are real-life events which happen, and people need to know about them, to report them to the police or whatever» (Young males, university students).

Arguments on the role of images in the formation of ethical attitudes are not the same across the board. Intuitively reproducing the various effects caused by the repetition of watching real-life violence, the participants' discourses vary, ranging from the effectiveness of the mobilising impact to paralysation due to saturation. On the one hand, as we have seen, the effectiveness and need to show violence to make people aware, denounce, be responsible or propose social changes was defended. The simple dissemination of information, the fact that the information circulates, is explained, demonstrated, and is present in interaction is considered positive. Knowledge and testimony seem to be a necessary step for taking responsibility for something, to start something that transforms the conditions in which violence emerges. On the other hand, scepticism is evident on the effectiveness of the images to transform anything, and they are viewed as an unnecessary emotional appeal to viewers which is too harsh and leads to saturation, desensitisation and «non-productive» guilt, i.e., only punitive without any transfer into social action.

«This crudeness, which, starting with the parents, affects me. That crudeness of seeing so many images, so much reality… Or even what there was before, when someone saw another fight and intervened, helped people. Now people ignore it, they have got used to it, it is so every day that… For me, that crudeness really dehumanises people a lot, because they're showing them all day… again and again» (Adult males, university students).

Ethical attitudes produced by watching serious real-life scenes of violence are responsibility and guilt. Allusions to these attitudes are expressed in words such as responsibility, pricking one's conscience, doing your bit, need to do something, etc. Responsibility is a short-term mobilising attitude. It arises when people perceive that something can be done. Guilt, on the other hand, is linked to helplessness and powerlessness. A more detailed analysis of the social implications of the two attitudes needs to be conducted.

«You see it and say: I cannot do anything. It makes you live with a feeling of guilt. People are dying in the world because they kill each other for political reasons, and I cannot do anything about it» (Young women, university students).

An emotional impact forces viewers to be active, to take on the role as a witness to the violence, or to reject this demand.

## 3. Discussion

Research on the emotions aroused by the perception of audiovisual contents has examined the physiological correlates in more depth (Morris, Klahr & al., 2009) or the identification of short- and medium-term effects (Browne & Hamilton-Giachritsis, 2005). However, the results obtained in the research presented reaffirm a line that complements these results: viewers are not passive, nor are they isolated when producing emotions, especially as a result of the perception of these contents (Pinto da Mota, 2005).

The physiological correlates of emotions cannot be denied, but the language with which they are presented and told in social life is not just a way of naming them. The terms and narratives of emotions reveal a structure, a story, a mode of constructing them and a specific cultural context (Hong, 2004, on the emotions of shame and guilt in Taiwan). In fact, emotions have been considered a communication interface, so they partly depend on the recipient of them (Fernández-Dols, Carrera & Casado, 2001), and they may lead to conflicting interpretations when facial expressions are intentionally modified (Russell, Bachorowski, & Fernández-Dols, 2003). A more complex aspect of communication is verbalising the emotions experienced, since it means constructing something that was not previously delimited either physiologically or verbally, and which depends on those involved in the interaction, the fellow participants

or recipients of the telling. For example, it has been proved that group production of the emotions caused by violence takes place by controlling the discourse of some children towards others, and it is explained by the immediate context in which they are found, i.e.: the classroom (Tisseron, 2003; Lacasa, Reina & Alburquerque, 2000). Emotions are a public phenomenon, which is why it is important to use methodologies which maintain this basic aspect of emotions.

Consequently, cognition is an inseparable dimension of the emotion. People have a prior assessment, probably intuitive, of the context which is going to affect the emotion experienced and expressed. However, at the same time, emotion impacts on the later production of the significance of what has been viewed, and the understanding of the situations seen on TV modifies the emotions experienced (Smith & Moyer-Gusé, 2006). The relation is one-to-one interaction. Unz, Schwab and Winterhoff-Spurk (2008) show how the feelings of fear and anger generated by violent news are complemented by sadness and powerlessness when it is perceived that the violence has been intentional, and the victims are recognised as innocent.

Emotions not only have the capacity to modulate and activate various cognitive dimensions, but also various action tendencies (Muramatsu & Hanoch, 2005). Viewers' agency is revealed in both their active role of perceiving the violent contents and in the consequences of this perception. Viewers, immersed in a (immediate and general) context, establish a differential relation with what is perceived depending on how close it is and the importance (Scherer, 1993) attributed to it. And, furthermore, with the importance they want to attribute to it. Consequently, «avoidance» viewers, those who avoid being exposed to violent news (Unz & al., 2008), do not generate the feelings of compassion, pity or responsibility which those who are exposed repeatedly to information on violent events do, thus further highlighting the complex importance of repetition in the perception of violent contents. The unavoidably contextualised production of what has been perceived leads directly to reflecting on what should be done, what would be the most appropriate thing for a viewer to do in connection with what has been seen (Cosmides & Tooby, 2000). The connection between emotions and social action is influenced by moral criteria on justice and it is connected with the same viewer's relation with social reality and perceived (or desired) possibilities to change it, resulting in true «moral emotions» (Rozin, Lowery & al., 1999).

The discourse on emotions encompasses «situated» concepts with a complexity of feelings that is only decipherable with viewers' previous experience. The «impact» of violent images is more than emotional activation, or behaviour after viewing includes awakening from a process that leads to reflection, thought, the production of ideas, arguments, and conclusions based on individuals' personal or social experience.

When people or groups interpret that they have been harassed, traumatised or humiliated, emotions are a fundamental recourse to construct the injustice of the situation, and assess the past or current situation among the participants. The emotional impact goes beyond reactions: not only does it express physiological sensations, but it also involves the individual and others in the responsible action.

According to Linde (2005), the effects of violent images are unpredictable. Many of them include victims' pain and suffering or death, which are assessed in a specific context of values and social standards. Emotional discourse is a narrative recourse that accompanies emotional activation. When people or groups interpret that they have been harassed, traumatised or humiliated, emotions are a fundamental recourse to construct the injustice of the situation, and assess the past or current situation among the participants. The emotional impact goes beyond reactions: not only does it express physiological sensations, but it also involves the individual and others in the responsible action.

Despite the research already conducted into the perception of TV violence, many of its consequences on viewers are still unknown. This research has highlighted the complexity and importance of repetition,

but its role needs to be studied in more depth, specifically, the relation between the voluntary or involuntary nature of being exposed to the repetition. More attention also needs to be paid to the importance of agency with regard to initiative in the structure of emotions in a group, so that the key factors behind it can be determined, as well as to how permanent the resolve to take social action is, etc. All these unknown entities demonstrate the need to continue with this type of research.


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Comunicar 36

# Kaleidospe

## Research
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# Teaching Skills in Virtual and Blended Learning Environments

## Competencias en los procesos de ense-ñanza-aprendizaje virtual y semipresencial

ABSTRACT
Universities are currently immersed in what is known as the process of European convergence to create the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). The aim is to establish a standardized, compatible and flexible European university system that enables graduates and undergraduates to move easily from one institution to another within Europe. As a result of evaluation mechanisms, the system will be transparent and of high quality, which will make it attractive and competitive internationally in a globalized world. In this paper, we focus on two distance learning modes that will become more important as a result of this change in universities: e-learning and b-learning. These basically involve the virtualization of learning processes through the use of computer equipment. We carried out a qualitative study using the case study method. The results indicate that teaching staff use information and communication technology (ICT) to improve student learning. Similarly, a high percentage (78%) of lecturers use some form of digital platform as a support for teaching. In conclusion, training policies should strengthen university teachers' skills in the use of ICT equipment, tools and resources related to blended and virtual learning.

RESUMEN
Actualmente las universidades están inmersas en lo que se conoce como el proceso de «convergencia europea» y que llevará al Espacio Europeo de Educación Superior (EEES). El objetivo es dotar a Europa de un sistema universitario homogéneo, compatible y flexible que permita a los estudiantes y titulados universitarios europeos una mayor movilidad, así como ofrecer al sistema universitario europeo unos niveles de transparencia y calidad, mediante sistemas de evaluación, que le hagan atractivo y competitivo en el ámbito internacional dentro del actual proceso de globalización. En este artículo, interesa centrar la reflexión en dos de las modalidades de la educación a distancia que asumirán importancia en ese cambio universitario: el e-learning y el b-learning, que consisten básicamente en la virtualización de los procesos de aprendizaje a través del uso de equipos informáticos. Para ello se ha realizado una investigación cualitativa con metodología de estudio de casos. De entre los resultados se destaca el uso de las TIC por parte del profesorado para conseguir un mejor aprendizaje en los estudiantes, de igual forma un porcentaje importante de los profesores 78% utiliza alguna plataforma virtual como apoyo a la docencia. Como conclusión se resalta que las políticas de formación deberían fortalecer las competencias del profesorado universitario en el uso de dispositivos telemáticos, recursos e instrumentos relacionados con el aprendizaje semipresencial y virtual.

KEYWORDS / PALABRAS CLAVE
Skills, teacher training, blended learning, e-learning, European Higher Education Area (EHEA), digital platform.
Competencias, formación de profesorado, enseñanza semipresencial, enseñanza virtual, EEES, plataforma virtual.

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## 1. Introduction

The Bologna Declaration is the result of work undertaken by the educational authorities of 29 European countries in 1999, in order to establish a European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Currently, European universities are immersed in what is known as the process of European convergence (Fernández, Rodeiro & Ruzo, 2006; Díaz, Santollala & González, 2010).

The proposed new university structure involves students carrying out various face-to-face, blended learning and distance learning activities. The distance education modes of e-learning and b-learning are of particular interest, as they basically entail the virtualization of learning processes through the use of ICT equipment. This leads to a new form of teaching, for which university teaching staff need to develop new skills (Cabero & Aguaded, 2003; Outi, 2010).

Virtualization of the learning process through the use of IT equipment is one of the practices that have become most popular as a result of the Internet (Uceda & Senén, 2010). The Internet is an open, flexible and technologically accessible means of dissemination and communication. It is also a powerful tool for breaking the limitations of time and space that exist in traditional forms of teaching-learning (Álvarez, 2005; Cabero, 2006; Tejedor, García & Prada, 2009).

The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) is a key aspect of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). The introduction of these credits is a great challenge for universities (Font, 2003; Cebreiro & Fernández, 2003). Another challenge is that of introducing information and communication technology (ICT) as a means of boosting student learning (Salinas, 2004; Gutiérrez, 2003).

The project «University teachers' skills for promoting significant student learning through e-learning and b-learning in the framework of the European Higher Education Area» involved two main areas of activity. The first consisted of a literature review of papers on distance learning and on the teaching skills required for this mode of education. This activity enabled us to gauge which topics were of interest and, above all, to contextualize them. The second area involved consulting experts at various Spanish universities. The resulting reports provided interesting basic information on the general characteristics of education in b- and e-learning modes. This research helped us to redefine the scope of our initial proposals, the type of information that we aimed to obtain and the topics that were of interest to university teachers. It also helped us to establish which data gathering techniques would be the most suitable.

Therefore, these two activities enabled us to establish the scope of the study and its general outline. The experts' experience helped us to determine the initial considerations and questions that would be addressed, and to define the general characteristics of the study and the term «skill».

It is difficult to take one concept as a reference when we define the term «skill». The existing definitions are so varied and appropriate that referring to just one of them would prevent us from fully tackling the subject in all its complexity. This is therefore a polysemous concept, which could lead to many definitions.

The literature on this topic (Perrenoud, 2004; Le Boterf, 1998; Aubert, 2003; González & Wagenaar, 2003; Cano 2007) considers various meanings of the term «skill». In summary, the following aspects are of interest: the concept includes knowledge, know-how and knowing how to be; it is related to action, which is needed to develop it and keep it up to date; it is linked to a context, to a given situation; it helps to effectively resolve familiar and unfamiliar work situations; and it can be taught. This study is focused on IT skills or «digital competence», which, according to the EC, involves «the confident and critical use of information society technology… It is underpinned by basic skills in ICT and the use of computers to retrieve, assess, store, produce, present and exchange information and to communicate and participate in collaborative networks via the Internet» (Commission of the European Communities, 2005: 18).

E-learning plays an essential role in educational processes. There are various ways to work with the contents: through the Internet, video recordings, satellite broadcasts, interactive television, virtual classrooms and digital collaboration, among others (Bersin, 2004). Some of its characteristics are as follows: it involves working in a network and can be updated instantly; information can be stored, retrieved and distributed and data can be shared; it is delivered to the end user through the use of computers and standard Internet technology; and it approaches learning from a broader perspective that goes beyond traditional models.

Recent studies stress that university teachers must have a command of IT skills and know how to develop them, in order to foster independent, meaningful learning processes. Therefore, lecturers should also know, understand, select, use, assess, perfect, recreate or create teaching strategies that are

effective in a context that is defined by ICT against the backdrop of ECTS (Area, 2006; Ruzo & Rodeiro, 2006).

Taking into account the above and the requirements of the EHEA, our aim was to study which teaching skills are needed to boost meaningful student learning at university level through e-learning and b-learning. The efforts of university teaching staff in this early part of the twenty-first century should be focused on this area.

## 2. Material and methods

The main aim of this research was to describe, analyse and explain teaching skills through a multiple case study. We focused on the following specific objectives:

- To propose a set of teaching skills that promote meaningful student learning through e-learning and b-learning.
- To identify Spanish university teachers' needs for training and refresher courses on the new concept of teaching, the establishment of European credits and the development of significant learning through e-learning and b-learning modes.
- To propose guidelines university teaching staff training in the areas of e-learning and b-learning, in order to boost significant student learning in the framework of the new EHEA.

> As a result, we can see that training policies for university teachers must be closely related to student needs. Technology provides students with a set of tools and resources that make learning more interactive and significant, particularly when it takes place in a more dynamic environment.

- To achieve these aims, we carried out a case study (Stake, 2005). We purposefully selected a group of Spanish universities (which were representative of the entire country) that were working on initiatives or pilot projects involving e-learning and b-learning modes in the framework of the EHEA. We used the procedure that Goetz and Le Compte (1988) called «criteria-based selection» and that McMillan and Schumacher (2007) referred to as «purposive sampling». This procedure consists in determining the characteristics of participants before the study has begun. The participating universities were the Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB), the University of Alcalá de Henares (UAH), the University of Barcelona (UB), the University of Deusto (UD), the European University of Madrid (UEM), the University of Huelva (UHU), the University of the Balearic Islands (UIB), the University of Santiago de Compostela (USC) and the University of Seville (US).

We selected a statistically significant sample of teachers who were participating in the aforementioned learning experiences and met some specific criteria. For example, we wished to find out more about the use of the e-learning and b-learning distance modes, through an analysis of varied experiences. Therefore, we selected a purposive sample with the maximum variation, which was composed of a range of individuals who had wide experience and sufficient knowledge of the topic (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

In addition to the variability, we considered the context as it would help us to increase our understanding of the topic. Hence, to select the sample size, we decided to begin with lecturers from different faculties and areas of knowledge who used virtual platforms and others who did not use them. In addition, for the final sample, we considered different techniques and instruments: questionnaires, interviews and discussion groups.

According to the various instruments we used in the research process, the final sample was made up as follows:

- Each university administered 50 questionnaires to its teaching staff. The main selection criterion was use of the virtual platform: 25 lecturers who used the platform and 25 who did not. In addition, the lecturers were selected from different areas of knowledge, faculties and departments.
- Each university carried out 4 interviews. Two lecturers were selected who used the university's virtual platform, and two were chosen who did not use it. In addition, it was specified that the interviewees should not have completed the questionnaire.

The University of Barcelona (UB) coordinated

two discussion groups with 8 lecturers in each one. The criterion was the same as described above: lecturers who used the virtual platform and those who did not. In addition, it was specified that members of the discussion groups would not have completed the questionnaires or participated in the interviews.

In the selection of data gathering techniques, we considered whether they provided enough information to increase our understanding of the issue, whether they involved different approaches to the topic and whether enough time was devoted to each activity. We used the following procedure to meet our objectives:

We requested an assessment report from each of the participating universities to find out about and analyse some of the teaching initiatives carried out by the university teaching staff through e-learning and b-learning modes.

A questionnaire was administered to 50 lecturers to find out what support (IT platforms, resources, strategies, training, etc.) the universities provided for the teaching staff in relation to the use of ICT to promote learning in e-learning and b-learning modes.

Each university carried out two interviews with lecturers from different faculties who used the virtual campus and two lecturers who did not use it, to discover opinions on the teaching skills required to foster significant learning in the framework of the EHEA.

To identify, validate and triangulate information, two discussion groups were made up of lecturers that used the virtual campus. The aim was to compare the participants' opinions and to find out about their experience of the topics dealt with in the interviews and the questionnaires. This activity was carried out in the last stage of the project, so that we could find out more about topics that had come up several times during the study (Coffey & Atkinson, 2005).

## 3. Results

The results are divided into two sections. The first section deals with the questionnaires that were administered. The second section describes the results obtained in the interviews and discussion groups.

Regarding the first section, we found that a large percentage of the lecturers who completed the questionnaire (almost 78%) used a platform to support their teaching. This indicates that universities are disseminating information to promote the use of their platforms.

The main tools used by lecturers in their work were: email (80%), web pages and multimedia materials. Although teachers knew about various other tools, they did not know how to use them in their teaching, for example only 10% used WebQuests and 10% used wikis.

The lecturers considered that their university's technological support was good. They stressed that, just as the students had IT resources, they usually had computer rooms and WiFi areas in the university where they could access the Internet and the platforms used on their courses. Very few lecturers (close to 15%) had created their own digital material for the students. A comparison of the data showed that this may be due to the training that lecturers had received in the design of resources involving technology tools.

The lecturers stated that they did not promote ICT, such as the use of search engines, email, blogs, wikis and other tools, on their courses. Thirty percent of lecturers considered that they received little advice on the use of ICT in teaching. The results indicated that lecturers had little training on the application of these technologies.

Despite the fact that lecturers received good technological support, we found that it was insufficient when we considered the high number of lecturers who wish to use the virtual campus or virtual environments in their teaching. Many members of the teaching staff could consider that they were self-taught in the use of ICT.

The Moodle platform has helped to advance in the introduction of ICT into teaching and has enabled teaching staff to become the administrators of their environment, so that they can design and shape it according to their interests and needs. Moodle is a flexible tool that fosters collaborative work and could be a good tool in training processes.

A variety of ICT training courses had been taken by teaching staff. Lecturers with advanced knowledge of this area considered that the courses were insufficient. In addition, introductory ICT courses and courses on working in virtual environments (for example, WebCT and BSCW, among others) had been promoted, as well as other programs related to online teaching.

In terms of initiatives to apply ICTs to university teaching, lecturers were aware of these and considered that they were interesting from a methodological perspective. They mentioned, for example, the use of electronic portfolios and lecturers' blogs. It appeared to be necessary to work in small groups (or even in pairs) and to stress transferable skills. In all cases, it was stated that teaching staff needed to be motivated and that coordination between the lecturers

was essential, particularly with respect to joint planning and continuous evaluation, among other factors. The aim was to attain good coordination between different subjects and to ensure that institutions' teaching policies are consistent.

Like the teaching staff, students have sufficient IT resources, including, in most cases, computer rooms and WiFi spaces in the university. Therefore, they can access the Internet and the platforms used for their courses. They recognise that they use ICT to ask their classmates for help, for example for notes and class exercises. This is in agreement with the results of a study carried out on young people and social networks by the Pfizer Foundation (2009).

## 4. Discussion

An analysis of the results revealed that the predominant teaching-learning mode in most cases is blended learning, which combines face-to-face and distance activities. This type of learning has the advantages of both e-learning and face-to-faces classes, and makes the work of the teacher and the student more dynamic.

Lecturers who had experience in the b-learning mode recognized the importance of IT tools for carrying out their activities. In these cases, IT resources play an even more predominant role, as there are no «real» teaching relations (with physical presence). However, this does not mean that there is no communication, either through synchronous or asynchronous interaction.

The use of platforms or virtual campuses basically involves virtualization of the learning process through the application of IT equipment. This is an activity that lecturers already carried out before WebCT or, more recently, Moodle, were introduced. Such platforms facilitate student learning through the use of technological tools, the Internet and other factors. Activities can be carried out with no restrictions of timetables, times or distances. One notable aspect is the need to incorporate transferable skills into university education, mainly due to the importance of innovation and knowledge, the increasing use of virtual spaces, change in the organization and structure of work and, above all, the demand for flexibility in training and learning systems throughout life.

### 4.1. Some conclusions about teaching skills

The many contributions made in the empirical stage of the study, in the interviews, discussion groups and questionnaires, were extremely diverse and referred to very different levels of specification. In some cases, the participants referred to «macro» or broad skill area, whilst in other cases they listed professional activities or tasks that involve a specific skill area.

An analysis of the data enabled us to conclude that, in general, teaching in IT, virtual and e-learning contexts involves the following specific skills: knowledge and use of ICT tools; knowledge and use of planning and design techniques for virtual environments; and knowledge and use of teaching methods for e-learning and b-learning. Such skills are broken down into many different professional tasks or «micro-skills», as shown below.

### 4.2 Guidelines for training programs

The quality of university systems is now one of the main concerns of countries committed to advanced social policies. One of the most obvious aspects of quality, which has been highlighted in all international studies (Castañedo, 2003; Tejedor, García & Prada, 2009; Kearn & Frey, 2010), is that universities can learn from their own experiences and reflect on educational practices in order to improve them.

One aim of this study was to provide some guidelines for the training of university teaching staff, mainly in relation to the development of significant student learning through e-learning and b-learning modes in the framework of the EHEA. Existing collaborative networks between universities have played a crucial role in this process. To consolidate these networks, lecturers are needed who have sufficient training, initiative and ability to promote the analysis, discussion and creation of new alternatives in a context of academic teamwork and collaboration.

Therefore, we can see that a training model is a design for learning that involves various interpretations of the origin of knowledge about teaching practice and of how lecturers acquire and expand this knowledge (Imbernon, 2007). It is therefore a norm or a plan that can be used to guide the design of training programs. Consequently, the process of training university lecturers can take place in different ways, according to educational concepts and the role of the teacher as a facilitator of significant student learning.

The guidelines that we present include a series of items that could help to boost development and strengthen the abilities and skills of university teaching staff. These items include the following:

- Focus on training university teachers in the use and understanding of technologies, according to their level of ability with the tools, resources and contents used in the virtual campus.

• Boost teachers' abilities in designing teaching activities that foster significant student learning.

• Promote the use of technology, instruments and tools in class, team and individual activities.

• Increase teaching staff's ability to know when to use virtual tools and resources in class activities, presentations and tutorials and when not to use them.

Boost abilities so that students have the means to resolve problems, communicate, collaborate, experiment, think critically and express themselves creatively in such a way that they can evaluate their own progress and that of their classmates. As a result, we can see that training policies for university teachers must be closely related to student needs. Technology provides students with a set of tools and resources that make learning more interactive and significant, particularly when it takes place in a more dynamic environment.

A second factor is related to the organization of training and the methods that are used to carry out training processes. These characteristics are combined in different ways in each case, depending on: the participation method (individual or group), the degree to which the activity is planned (whether or not there is a project and a fixed plan, etc.), the roles of those involved and the interaction between them (organizers, experts, advisors and participants, among others), how much involvement is expected from participants and to what extent they operate independently, the dynamics and internal structure of the sessions and the special strategies that are used to carry them out, among other factors. Various training methods were identified in the study. They can be classified as: university studies (for example, postgraduate programs); courses (for specific needs); cooperative work among teaching staff (which has several names: peer training, reciprocal training,

| Professional tasks or aspects of the skill | Skill areas | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Knowledge and use of the required ICT tools | Knowledge and use of planning and design techniques in the virtual environment | Knowledge and use of teaching methods for e-learning and b-learning |
| Understand and use the platform and IT programs needed to teach their subjects | ▪ | ▪ | |
| Understand aspects needed for the design, maintenance and assessment of tools used in the virtual campus (forums, materials, files, etc.) | ▪ | | ▪ |
| Command of the tools for communication with the students (use of forums, chat, email, video conferencing) | ▪ | | ▪ |
| Page management | ▪ | ▪ | |
| Page management in conjunction with the students | ▪ | ▪ | |
| Promote interactive learning, group work and team work | | ▪ | ▪ |
| Foster collaboration between students | | ▪ | ▪ |
| Boost the social construction of knowledge | | ▪ | ▪ |
| Develop critical abilities and learning through other classmates and lecturers | | | ▪ |
| Understand and use databases, multimedia presentations and animations; post videos, activities and assessments | ▪ | ▪ | |
| Understand the elements and resources that are used to promote and carry out continuous assessment and to correct activities | | ▪ | ▪ |
| Know how to use IT programs that support teaching | ▪ | | ▪ |
| Command of word processors | ▪ | | |
| Know which programs make it easier to surf the net (search engines, databases, accessing resources, learning objects) | ▪ | | |
| Understand and use the platform's tools | ▪ | ▪ | |
| Design activities for teaching in e- and b-learning modes | | ▪ | ▪ |
| Adapt programs, materials and activities to the individual and group needs | | ▪ | ▪ |
| Adapt materials and use the most appropriate methods to attain the course objectives | | ▪ | ▪ |
| Understand and use the latest IT programs and tools | ▪ | | ▪ |
| Design activities that are in keeping with the campus | | ▪ | ▪ |
| Draw up activities and contents that are easy for students to understand (technical requirements such as the design of materials, hyperlinks, instructions for use, use and benefits of the learning objects) | | ▪ | ▪ |
| Plan, monitor and assess activities | | ▪ | ▪ |
| Ensure the campus works correctly for the subject | | ▪ | ▪ |
| Manage the campus correctly | ▪ | ▪ | |
| Meet students' needs (tutorials, guidelines) | | ▪ | ▪ |
| Access other IT resources (blogs, groups) | ▪ | ▪ | ▪ |
| Resolve students' doubts | | ▪ | ▪ |
| Improve teaching strategies | | ▪ | ▪ |
| Coordinate the modules and topics dealt with in the (virtual) class. Beginning and conclusions | | ▪ | ▪ |
| Gain a command of the characteristics of virtual and blended learning | | ▪ | ▪ |
| Promote and coordinate debates in the forums, rather than making them into virtual lectures | | ▪ | ▪ |
| Promote communication between students, not just between the lecturer and the students | | ▪ | ▪ |
| Activities to monitor students (statistics on access to the campus) in the case of b-learning | | ▪ | ▪ |
| Share the leading role with students through moderation (of chat, forums, etc.) | | ▪ | ▪ |

Proposed aspects of skills involved in the use of ICT.

etc.); seminars and forums (preferably on current topics); conferences and meetings with high participation (update on teaching topics); workshops for reflection and study circles; and teaching advice in departments and schools.

On the basis of these suggestions, methods of training were described in the study in relation to face-to-face, blended and virtual modes. Some of the participants suggested that activities should be adapted to different levels of ability in the specific area. In addition, they proposed that training activities should be complementary and carried out at different times.

From the contributions of our participants, we have put together some proposals that could be taken into account when training activities are organized:

Participants suggested that seminars should allow reflection and have a predominantly theoretical and practical input, as the main objective is for teaching staff to be able to review topics that provide them with different perspectives or involve aspects that complement the theoretical basis described by those responsible for designing the training proposals.

As shown in the results, the virtual campus has created a space for exchanging information and communicating about training. University teaching staff with less experience can receive virtual support to consolidate the training that they receive face-to-face. This support is provided by those responsible for training or by colleagues.

Training should help to develop skills that enable university lecturers to:

• Work with the elements needed to design activities for the virtual campus.

• Gain a command of the function and purpose of ICT tools and resources (multimedia materials, publishing tools, «software»» for publications and web design tools) and to use them to help students to innovate and consolidate their learning.

• Create online material that contributes to deepening students' understanding of essential concepts and their application to real-life problems.

• Play a coordinating role in supporting innovation in classes and promoting collaborative learning with other colleagues.

• Constantly assess professional practice and reflect on it to make continuous improvements.

• Describe how collaborative learning can contribute to strengthening skills in the area of knowledge management, the analysis of online resources, the incorporation of knowledge into professional practice and quality assessment.

Training should also help to development significant student learning as follows:

• Support students in the use of virtual campus tools and other IT resources, so that they develop the ability to search for, manage, analyse, incorporate and assess information.

• Help students to use ICT to develop skills in the areas of communication and collaboration.

• Promote the development of skills in the areas of reasoning, planning, reflective learning, knowledge creation and communication.

• Use virtual campus resources to participate in work communities and benefit as a group from the practices used in the campus.

• Contribute to the development of learning and the social interaction of students, so that they can understand the concepts, skills and essential processes described in the contents and use them to resolve real-life problems.

• Encourage students to describe, examine, assess and present examples of their own learning.

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# Teenagers and Motherhood in the Cinema: «Juno», «Precious» and «The Greatest»

## Adolescentes y maternidad en el cine: «Juno», «Precious» y «The Greatest»

ABSTRACT
Today in Spain there are many teenagers who suffer unwanted pregnancies. The extension of the abortion law and the approval of the sale of morning-after pill without a prescription have focused attention on girls under 18. The possibilities of motherhood, an unwanted pregnancy and the alternatives are variables that young women face in the real world, and upon which the discourses of films are constructed, some of which coincide with reality and some of which do not. On the big screen we can see movies like Juno, Precious and The Greatest which express different points of view about the topic of teenage pregnancy. These audiovisual texts have a direct impact on the creation and proliferation of models, attitudes and values. Their influence upon young people is evident and they form a reference alongside family and school for adopting certain patterns of behavior and assimilating socially accepted archetypes. This paper analyzes these films from a gender perspective, using the tools of both audiovisual language and textual analysis. Through this analysis, we establish that visions of motherhood and adolescent sex are constructed and identify the strategies used for the production of meaning in these films. The results show how the models and stereotypes survive under the appearance of renewed and alternative audiovisual discourse.

RESUMEN
En la actualidad son muchas las adolescentes en Spain que tienen embarazos no deseados. La ampliación de la Ley del aborto, así como la aprobación de la venta de la píldora del día después sin receta, han focalizado la atención en las jóvenes menores de 18 años. La maternidad, los embarazos no deseados y las alternativas ante estos son variables a las que las adolescentes se enfrentan en el mundo real, y sobre las cuales los filmes construyen sus propios discursos coincidentes o no con la realidad social. En las pantallas de cine películas como «Juno», «Precious» y «The Greatest» tratan bajo diferentes prismas el tema del embarazo adolescente. Estos textos audiovisuales inciden de manera directa en la reproducción y creación de modelos, actitudes y valores. Su influencia en la juventud es constatable y suponen una referencia junto con la familia y la escuela a la hora de adoptar determinados patrones de comportamiento e interiorizar arquetipos socialmente admitidos. Este trabajo examina estos filmes utilizando las herramientas tanto del lenguaje audiovisual como del análisis textual, atendiendo a una perspectiva de género. A través del análisis se constata qué visiones de la maternidad y el sexo en la adolescencia se construyen y cuáles son las estrategias de producción de sentido utilizadas. Los resultados muestran cómo los modelos y estereotipos tradicionales perviven bajo la apariencia de discursos audiovisuales renovados y alternativos.

KEYWORDS / PALABRAS CLAVE
Film, gender, adolescence, motherhood, pregnancy, sex, abortion, archetype.
Cine, género, adolescencia, maternidad, embarazo, sexo, aborto, arquetipo.

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## 1. Introduction

The liberalization of the abortion law in Spain in 2009 provoked controversy and protests. The controversy primarily centered on the possibility that young women under the age of 16 could undergo an abortion without the prior consent of their parents. The law was passed in February 2010 and included a modification that required 16- and 17-year-old girls to inform their parents of their decision to terminate their pregnancies except in cases in which they might be subjected to «family violence, threats, coercion or abuse».

On September 28 2009, the Ministry of Health approved another law permitting women to purchase the morning-after pill (an emergency hormone contraceptive) in pharmacies without prescription. This measure was intended to help reduce the number of unwanted pregnancies, especially among young and adolescent women, as well as lower the number of voluntary abortions.

The most recent report on the voluntary termination of unwanted pregnancies published by the Ministry of Health and Social Policy in 2008 shows a slight decline in abortions (1.27%) by the young female population for 2007-2008, reversing a years-long trend. Nevertheless, it is clear that from the 1990s to 2007, the number of voluntary terminations of pregnancies by girls under 18 rose continually despite numerous AIDS prevention campaigns and educational programs on condom use. In 2007, minors comprised 13.79% of the women who chose to voluntarily terminate a pregnancy. During this period 4,400 births and 6,273 voluntary abortions were registered for adolescents.

In response to these data, the Women's Health Observatory carried out qualitative research to ascertain the causes of this unusual increase. Among the conclusions of the study, an allusion was made to the new, more precocious and open sexual behavior of young people. It reported that in some autonomous communities of Spain the incidence of abortion in immigrant populations has contributed to an increase as high as 50% in the abortion rate. Somewhat curiously, it pointed out that although there is more sexual education information available to young women than ever, it can occasionally be very superficial and ridden with clichés. The shift in the patterns of young women's emotional and sexual ties away from a traditional boyfriend-for-life scenario has also had an impact, and girls enter into relations with the opposite sex much sooner.

Adult discourse, whether it takes place at school, in the family environment or through the media, was deemed of great importance in this context, although sexuality is one of the subjects least spoken about at home. This report also noted a significant reduction in health education in schools and warned that the media transmitted «a model of sexuality that equates pleasure with the sexual act» (2008: 594).

The representation of adolescent maternity has long been taboo in the film industry, which has only dealt with it on an anecdotal level. Spanish cinema broached the subject during the 70s, with Manuel Summer's film Adiós Cigüeña, Adiós (Goodbye, Stork, Goodbye), a comedy about an inexperienced young woman preparing for future motherhood with the help of her teenage buddies behind the back of her blissfully unaware parents.

Today women's social evolution is mainly reflected in television series. Galán (2007: 236) has studied this area of audiovisual communications and has observed that since the 1990s Spanish television series «have begun to weave issues that currently preoccupy society or reflect it, such as delayed motherhood, the importance of physical appearance, the entry of women into traditionally male-dominated professions, gender violence, the difficulty of reconciling family, professional life, etc. into their plots».

Nevertheless, during the past few years it has been American cinema that has surprised us with several more or less independent films which have stood out for having dealt with the issue of teenage pregnancy: Where the Heart is, marketed under the title La fuerza del amor in Spanish, (Williams, 2000) featuring a very young Natalie Portman giving birth in a supermarket; Riding in Cars with Boys, released as Los chicos de mi vida in Spanish, (Marshall, 2001) with Drew Barrymore as a precocious mother; as well as the more recent «Juno» (Reitman, 2007), «Precious» (Daniels, 2009) and «The Greatest», which was distributed in Spanish under the title «El mejor» (Feste, 2009).

It goes without saying that if cinema is no longer the most popular media among young people it still continues to have an important role in the transmission of social models and codes of conduct. As Imbert has observed «In contemporary culture, cinema and audiovisual discourse in general have created an authentic youth culture that embraces a wide range of imagery and has its own vocabulary of signs, fashion objects, speech and dress codes and lifestyles, as well as its own film and television heroes» (2002: 92).

In this article we analyze three films that are a part of this culture: «Juno», «Precious» and «The Greatest»,

scrutinizing the models of maternity that they propose to determine whether they suggest alternatives to maternity and what narrative strategies are employed to develop their storylines. This study of audiovisual resources takes its inspiration from authors such as Aumont (1990) and Carmona (1991) among others.

By employing an interdisciplinary method of cultural analysis and criticism and applying a gender perspective to our analysis of these discourses, we seek to gain an understanding of how social representations are articulated in a given historical and cultural context. Like Barthes (1980: 8), our intention is to expose the ideological abuse that confusion between nature and nurture constantly gives rise to throughout these stories, «hidden behind the decorative facade of the blatantly obvious» .

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### 2. Sexually active

In «Juno», the expression «sexually active» is used on various occasions by adolescents who find it amusing that their parents cannot imagine they could be having sexual relations.

In two of the three films analyzed it is implied, at least by the father of the girl in question, that conception took place the first time she had sexual intercourse. Both Juno (Ellen Page) and Rose (Carey Mulligan) show themselves as being sexually experienced and in both movies the girls take the sexual initiative, breaking away from old clichés such as «it was the first time» and the passive role of the woman in sexual relationships.

The behavior of these adolescents squares with the conclusions of the previously mentioned sociological study in that «One observes a process of reconfiguration of the more traditional gender stereotypes and clichés that assign men a more active role both in worldly and sexual matters (freed of emotions) and women a more passive role in life and a sexual behavior more associated with the world of emotions» (2009: 591). They also concur in pointing out the risk factors that both films illustrate in their narratives: a girl's belief that she has some sort of natural defense against conception the first time she has sexual intercourse and the lingering romantic ideal of fusion with the love-object. This ideal places a higher importance on the emotional bond than the possible health risks or the possibility of an undesired pregnancy.

Although sex is treated as being insignificant in «Juno», toward the end of the film the plot dwells on the deep emotions she feels for the baby's father, the young and timid Paulie Bleeker (Michael Cera). «Juno» describes their romantic encounter as «magnificent».

«The Greatest» repeats this myth of romantic love even more emphatically. In spite their mutual attraction, Rose and Bennett (Aaron Johnson) do not have sexual contact until the last day of class when the Bennett finally breaks down and speaks to her for the first time. What is a first experience for him becomes a magical and unrepeatable moment for both young people; an impression heightened by the way the scene is filmed. The romantic atmosphere is reinforced by the film's soundtrack. There are relentless close-up shots of the couple kissing and their eager gestures express their passion and desire. As if that were not sufficient and the transcendence of this youthful love had not been made patent, at a given point in the film Rose offers «He was the love of my life» as the rationale for her decision to keep her baby.

Of the three films analyzed, «Precious» (Gabourey Sidibe) distances itself the most from both the romantic ideal of teenage love and the typical model of adolescence. «Precious» is an unattractive, overweight and ignorant young African-American woman. She

has never experienced romantic love and her contacts with the opposite sex are limited to her friendship with a male nurse who assists in the delivery of her baby and her relationship with a father who has sexually abused her since early childhood. In spite of these determining factors, there is still a place in Precious' imagination for romantic love. In her daydreams she constantly fantasizes about a handsome young man who finds her attractive.

### 3. Maternity

For centuries, motherhood has been considered synonymous with womanhood. Femininity was directly associated with maternity and the maternal instinct was considered to be nothing more than a manifestation of the force of nature. This premise obviously dismisses the differences between individuals and therefore those of its own underlying social and cultural constructions as well. As Lorena Saletti has said «Culture takes sexual drive and transforms it into a maternal impulse, assigning it a sole determined end and purpose as though it were deeper and more primordial than biology and creating a new type of association and a new myth: the belief that all women are not only potential mothers, but also mothers by desire and necessity» (Saletti, 2008: 173).

During the past few decades, the concept of maternity has been the object of heated debate among feminists. Simone de Beauvoir (1949) rejected the concept of maternal instinct and considered motherhood as an impediment to a women's development while others have advocated the acceptance of a woman's fertility as a source of power, pleasure and knowledge.

Today we would doubtless agree with Silvia Turbert (1996) when she affirms that maternity is neither completely natural nor completely cultural, given that it embraces the physical as much as the psychological, the conscious as well as the unconscious, the orders of the real, imaginary, and symbolic. It is the last of these three that is of interest to us, as it is precisely this order that the cinematographic texts that we are analyzing help to construct. A discourse on maternity is established through them, that although draped in a new mantle, continues to spring from the most traditional sources.

> Today women's social evolution is mainly reflected in television series. Galán has studied this area of audiovisual communications and has observed that since the 1990s Spanish television series «have begun to weave issues that currently preoccupy society or reflect it, such as delayed motherhood, the importance of physical appearance, the entry of women into traditionally male-dominated professions, gender violence, the difficulty of reconciling family, professional life, etc. into their plots».

In the three films studied, the mothers of the protagonists, who are by extension their maternal role models, are either absent, and therefore invisible, or present and a monster. In «Juno», the mother is referred to as a woman who has abandoned her daughter to form another family. Her absence is filled by the cactus she routinely sends her daughter as a gift every Valentine's Day.

Juno's stepmother, who is herself the biological mother of a daughter younger than Juno, assumes this role. Although in general she does not appear to be very comfortable in this role, she comes out firmly in her defense during a scene of the film in which a nurse questions her stepdaughter's ability to raise her unborn child. Her maternal instinct is oddly aroused in the very instant that another person casts doubt upon Juno's future suitability as a mother.

«Juno's» own discourse on motherhood and the nature of maternal sentiment is fundamentally grounded in a personal process of maturation.

In «The Greatest», the mother is conspicuous by her absence. Her psychological problems separate her from her daughter and provide a justification for her complete lack of maternal instinct.

Nevertheless, it is Mary, the mother in «Precious» (played by Mo'Nique), a woman completely devoid of any maternal instinct, who takes on the characteristics of a monster. As the «normal» in our society is to have

a maternal instinct, love one's children, protect them, feed them, in short, cover all their physical and psychological needs, we regard a person lacking this instinct abnormal, inhuman, that is to say monstrous.

Isabel Baeza describes the monster as «a category that has served as a metaphor that embraces everything removed from the concept of human nature, as the embodiment of social exclusion. Monsters are beings which find themselves on the fringe of humanity, beings that throughout history have been considered and continue to be considered inhumane or inhuman. The category of monster covers the subjectivities situated outside of the naturalized norm» (2009: 57).

No one would hesitate to label the mother of Precious, a woman who sees her daughter as a rival and her children and grandchildren as a source of income, a monster. She is a mother who constantly undermines her daughter's self-esteem and manipulates and humiliates her to intolerable limits, a mother who has been witness to the abuses that her husband has subjected her to since the age of three and yet channels her feelings of hate and revulsion towards the victim. In recounting these abuses to a social worker (Mariah Carey), Mary justifies her attitude, invoking the authority of the grandmother, stating «I did what my mother told me I was supposed to do with my child» only pass the blame to «Precious», blurting out, «You've got this bitch looking at me like I was some kind of fuckin' monster». The mother of Precious is the incarnation of the grotesque and monstrous and both the director and the actress who plays the role make every effort to convey this impression without attributing a trace of humanity to her character. This monster-mother has no maternal instinct and the show of maternity that she puts on in the presence of the social worker is living proof that she can only theatrically invent the sentiments that she pours out in the interview because they are not a part of her true nature. She squares perfectly with archetypal descriptions of the bad mother: a woman insensitive to the need of her offspring, narcissist, preoccupied only with herself and unaware of her children's interests. Incapable of empathizing with them, she often uses them for her own gratification. She is unconscious of her own behavior and does harm to her children, setting them up for all kinds of future psychological problems. (Swigart 1991: 7).

Precious and Rose have no maternal role models to refer to and their mothers exist on the margins of society, in the shadows of madness and irrationality.

Of course there is the other maternal role model, the good mother. The good mother in «The Greatest» is Grace Brewer (Susan Sarandon), a woman who is incapable of accepting the death of her son and for whom Rose's future motherhood offers a sense of consolation. Grace falls apart while the father figure, Allen Brewer (Pierce Brosnan) appears to be the pillar of support of the rest of the family. The cliché of the strong and reasonable father faced with a sensitive and irrational woman surfaces once again.

In «Juno», the mother figure par excellence is the adoptive mother Vanessa Loring (Jennifer Garner), a woman whose inability to have children constitutes an empty hole in her life. She is young, attractive, has a good job, and even earns more than her husband. She is the winner who will never be happy unless she fulfills herself through motherhood. She is the very image of stability and good sense, the mother that every daughter longs to have – without doubt what Juno desires for her future child.

The rupture of her marriage will not prevent Vanessa from fulfilling her desire to be a mother. Her husband Mark (Jason Bateman) cannot be a father for the very same reason that Juno cannot be a mother: he isn't mature enough. For Juno, maternity is a combination of instinct and maturity. Someday in the future Juno may be a mother, but not at this moment in her life, and everything in the narrative development of the film points to this outcome.

In «Precious», the discourse on maternity as a natural instinct and even a woman's salvation, is stronger, if that were possible, than in the other films. As previously mentioned, Precious' only point of reference regarding maternity is her grandmother, who is portrayed in the film as having assumed the responsibility for rearing her grandchildren but incapable of exercising any authority over her daughter.

Paging through a photo album, Precious imagines the ideal mother, doting and affectionate, and she mentally grasps at this ideal. Her only maternal experience has been giving birth to a handicapped son at home on the kitchen floor while her mother slapped her about. However, against all logic, Precious is a good mother, as if no other option existed and as though apart from her studies and the basic things she has managed to achieve in life, her true reason for living was taking care of her children.

Rita Morena, an ex-drug addict and also a teenage mother, is one of Precious' fellow marginalized classmates. When asked what she knows how to do best, she replies «I'm a good mother, a good mother». Precious does introduce a few female role models rarely seen in commercial films, for example a lesbian

couple formed by a schoolteacher (Paula Patton) and her partner. These two women show the protagonist the affection and security that her own family has not known how to provide. One of Precious' classmates, Germaine, is also openly lesbian.

Despite its pretentions of offering less-than-traditional role models, the message of the film itself is as traditional as a Christmas story and motherhood is presented as a mentally sound and physically healthy woman's destiny.

### 4. Alternatives to an undesired pregnancy

When Juno was first released in movie theatres it provoked a great deal of debate. For some it pushed a pro-life message and for others it was too liberal in that it broached the subject of alternative solutions and some of its characters spoke openly of abortion.

When Juno tells Paulie that she is pregnant and plans to have an abortion, she uses the euphemism «I thought I might nip it in the bud before it gets worse». From this moment on, the treatment of abortion as an alternative is extremely simplistic and superficial. Juno decides to have an abortion and even goes to a clinic where she encounters one of her classmates waving an anti-abortion sign. This girl tries to talk her out of her plans and the argument that impresses Juno the most is that a fetus has finger and toenails. Once inside, she looks around at the rest of the women in the waiting room while she fills out forms. A rapid succession of close-up and detail shots is juxtaposed with the protagonist's gaze. Rhythmic editing is employed to transmit Juno's emotional state and make the audience identify with her. Although what we are seeing is apparently of minor transcendence (drumming fingers on a sheet of paper, a woman rubbing her hands together, others painting their nails or scratching their arms and necks – one pensive woman chewing her nails and another filing hers), all these shots together, interwoven with the amplified sound created by the gestures, create an nerve-wracking atmosphere. Juno flees the waiting room and we are given to understand that her decision not to have an abortion has sprung from this intense manifestation of uneasiness and anxiety.

In a few brief seconds the director has transmitted an atmosphere of tension and uneasiness in which the most trivial gestures appear to take on immense proportions. No reasons or arguments are offered, only flashes and impressions that chisel away at a solid determination that until this moment appeared to be natural and logical. From this point on, no one utters the word abortion. When Juno breaks the news to her parents, her stepmother asks «Honey, have you considered, you know, the alternative?» and gives a sigh of relief at her negative answer, praising her decision. Juno decides to put her baby up for adoption and chooses the parents by perusing personal advertisements in magazine she finds in a supermarket. The new alternative of adoption surges up spontaneously as a consequence of her decision not to abort.

In «Precious», abortion isn't even mentioned. Precious finds herself expelled from school when it is known that she is pregnant again. Following this, the only viable options appear to be rearing the child herself or offering it for adoption. The messages concerning these options are verbalized through two characters: the teacher and the grandmother. Her teacher advises putting both her children up for adoption, reminding her that she is only 16 years old and must continue her studies in order to build a future for herself. Her grandmother tells her that not even a dog would abandon its young and lets her know how proud she is of her.

Precious' teacher maintains a dialogue with her through her diary, attempting to refute the grandmother's arguments by reminding her that her grandmother did nothing to prevent the abuses she has suffered and trying to convince her to think of herself and her future. As Precious listens to this tirade, we share her dilemma of whether to continue the studies that give her a sense of personal self-satisfaction or raise her children by means in an interior dialogue, a device that is used throughout the film. In the end, her maternal instinct proves to be more powerful than any personal aspiration. «I want to be a good mother» the young woman tells her teacher, who replies that «Being a good mother might mean letting Abdul be raised by someone who is better able than you to meet his needs». Precious' answer to this is: «I is (sic) best able to meet my child's needs» and these words are reinforced by an image of her breastfeeding her baby.

When she learns that she has contracted AIDS through her father, the young woman declares that she isn't concerned about dying, only about raising her children. Precious is an archetypal example of the good mother.

Abortion is not an option in «The Greatest» either. Having just finished high school and with a university career on the horizon, Rose opts for motherhood although she has no without money or family support. Her motives are as neatly put as the logical conclusion of any romantic story of true and only love. During a party, she tells her boyfriend's father «I was in love with him and that's why I am going to have this baby.

I was in love with him for four years. I hardly knew him but everything was exactly as I had imagined it would be in my mind and I'm going to have this baby because I believe that he was the love of my life»[1].

## 5. Conclusions

«Juno», «Precious» and «The Greatest» are all low-budget films, although the third features several well-known actors. They have been and still are box-office successes and have won various awards. All three can be classified as independent films and all three recount intimate family dramas.

«Juno» and «Precious fall» back on the device of using the protagonist's voice as narrator, a method meant to consolidate the public's identification with their heroines.

All three utilize a classic narrative structure that incorporates flashbacks to flesh out the important details of the story. «The Greatest» is the most conventional of the three in terms of the cinematographic language employed. Typical documentary filmmaking conventions such as handheld camera work, tracking shots and unstable images combined with other more sophisticated and contrived techniques are used in «Precious».

The three stories use these devices to weave a concept of maternity, pregnancy, and its alternatives into a fresh new package that conceals the most traditional of myths and models.

The portrayal of sex in the films squares to a large degree with what the experts are reporting: stories of very young girls with sexual experience who take the initiative in their relationships and respond to stereotypes that adolescents can deeply identify with.

We must point out as positive the fact that these films undermine certain myths such as the impossibility of a girl getting pregnant the first time she has sexual intercourse and that some of them offer the twist that the boy, rather than the girl, was the virgin. Nevertheless, they reinforce other conceptions that are very likely to generate adolescent frustration: the ideal of romantic love and the idea that one's first sexual experience is magic. Even in Precious, in which everything is drenched in sordidness, an imaginary white prince appears as some type of sublime goal.

All three films construct a discourse on maternity tailored to all the social and cultural conventions of patriarchal society. Although feminist theorists have spent years discussing this concept and have made great strides in deconstructing it, all three stories analyzed present maternity and the maternal instinct as being a question of nature. Although it may share the same suppositions as the others, «Juno» is the only film that qualifies the maternal instinct as a sentiment that must grow as a woman matures.

Although in the three cases studied the pregnancies are undesired, few options are presented. Only «Juno» raises the possibility of abortion, although it is rejected almost immediately without solid arguments.

Adoption is the most developed alternative in these stories and apart from rearing the child, it is the option given the greatest consideration. The only requisite is having family support, whether it comes from one's own or another family or in the form of some kind of institutional support.

We must keep in mind that the young girls in these films belong to what we could categorize as dysfunctional families. Even in the most extreme situations, a possibility of a girl following her own instinct, in this case to bear a child that was initially unwanted, depends entirely upon the support that such an adolescent can muster. Precious finds this support in her teacher and her friends and Rose through her boyfriend's family.

We cannot obviate cinematography's influence in the creation and consolidation of our social consciousness. In response to the question of whether cinema is essential to the construction of gender equality, Arranz (2010: 23) answers her own question by citing the power of this media to restructure and disseminate symbolic capital in the configuration of social reality. For this author, «the naturalization of the portrayals through which these types of relationships are presented is the key to their enduring success». It has been our intention to demonstrate the naturalization that occurs in the construction of the models of maternity proposed by the films we have analyzed, which obfuscates their social and cultural constructions from the viewer under the guise of the natural.

These socially-shared audiovisual texts, as Pilar Aguilar (1998: 70) well notes, «are transmitters of wisdom, data and knowledge, etc. We speak of the basic frameworks of our personality: of our capacity to symbolize, of the maps of our sentiments and emotions, of our perceptions, of our hierarchy of values…». We share this author's conviction in pointing out the need for the educational system to confront these realities and to equip young people with the necessary tools for interpreting them by means of richer and more complete audiovisual discourses that provide other models and points of view.

## Notes

[1] Dialogue from «The Greatest» that appears in this article is a translation of the Spanish language soundtrack.

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# Audiovisual Riddles to Stimulate Children's Creative Thinking

## Adivinanzas audiovisuales para ejercitar el pensamiento creativo infantil

ABSTRACT
Solving riddles involves association of ideas, analysis of metaphors, and discovery of analogies. Therefore, promoting this type of children's entertainment is a way to develop creative thinking. However, there is a problem: traditional riddles are literary forms that correspond to a pre-digital era. How can we increase its acceptance among the digital natives? One way might be creating audiovisual riddles specially designed for YouTube. In this research we made five prototypes of audiovisual riddles with different creative characteristics and validated them among 8-12 years old students. The validation results helped us to identify the attitudes, reactions, interpretations and ways of thinking of children when they try to solve such riddles. We also identified the resources of language and creative formats that fit best in audio-visual riddles. The outcome of this research emphasizes the need to correctly formulate the audio-visual riddle statements and their «clues» for children; this way we assure an intellectual and emotional satisfaction when solving them. It also concludes that reading or listening to traditional riddles are cognitive and sensory experiences that are very different from interacting with the same riddle in a multimedia language. Finally, we discuss and analyze the mediating role of the teacher and the importance of collaborative learning in educational projects using digital technologies.

RESUMEN
Para resolver una adivinanza hay que asociar ideas, analizar metáforas, descubrir analogías. Por eso, impulsar esta forma de entretenimiento infantil es un modo de ejercitar el pensamiento creativo. Sin embargo, existe un problema: las adivinanzas tradicionales son formas literarias que corresponden a una época pre-digital. ¿Cómo lograr, entonces, que tengan mayor aceptación entre los nativos digitales? Una posible solución sería crear adivinanzas audiovisuales diseñadas especialmente para YouTube. En esta investigación se realizaron cinco prototipos de adivinanzas audio-visuales con características creativas diferentes y se validaron con estudiantes de tercero a sexto grado de educación primaria. Los resultados de la validación permitieron identificar las actitudes, reacciones, interpretaciones y modos de razonamiento de los niños y niñas cuando intentan resolver este tipo de adivinanzas. También se identificaron los recursos de lenguaje y formatos creativos que funcionan mejor en una adivinanza audiovisual. En las conclu-siones se destaca la necesidad de formular correctamente los enunciados de las adivinanzas audiovisuales y sus respectivas «pistas» para que los niños y niñas tengan la satisfacción intelectual y emocional de resolverlas. Se precisa, además, que leer o escuchar una adivinanza tradicional representa una experiencia cognitiva y sensorial muy distinta que interactuar con esa misma adivinanza en un lenguaje multimedia. Finalmente, se discute y analiza el rol mediador del docente y la importancia del aprendizaje colaborativo en los proyectos educativos que emplean tecnologías digitales.

KEYWORDS / PALABRAS CLAVE
Riddles, creativity, education, children, audiovisual, language, media, digital.
Adivinanzas, creatividad, educación, niños, audiovisual, lenguaje, medios, digital.

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Riddles: creativity and rituality

The traditional riddle, whether in verse or prose, includes a variety of resources and creative formats. Within these we find similes: «small as a mouse, guards the house like a lion» (a key); the description: «it has teeth but doesn't eat, it has a beard and is not a man» (a corn cob); the narration: «in a dark house there was a dead and a living person, the dead asks the living: will you last (duras)? And the living answers: no» (a peach, in Spanish: durazno); comparisons: «Why is a bear like a fallen tree?» (A bear lumbers and a tree becomes lumber); the paradox: «What Is the worst thing about being 'Armando Guerra' (which means 'stirring up war')» – Marrying someone called 'Zoila Paz' (which means 'I am peace'); questions with a set formula: «What did the moon say to the sun?» (You are so grown-up and yet are not allowed to go out at night); mind-bogglers: «Which animal looks most like a dog?» (a bitch); curtain raisers: «first scene: a female monkey appears, second scene: a road roller appears, third scene: the female monkey appears flattened, what is the name of the play?»: la monalisa is a play on words, monalisa meaning the famous painting and mona = female monkey + lisa = flattened; the double meaning: «a bicycle can't stand on its own because it is two-tired».

According to Miaja de la Peña (2008), the structure of the riddle usually includes four elements:

- Introduction formula. For example, «Tell me fortune teller», «What will it be?».
- Concluding formula. For example, «Guess if you can», «he who cannot guess is a big fool».
- Orientating elements, which are usually within the text. For example, «in the middle of the sky am I, yet I'm not a star». Answer: The letter «k» in sky.
- Disorientating elements, which are rhetoric or meaning traps. For example, «what gets wetter the more it dries?» (a towel).

For this author, riddles represent a dialogic game between two people. The one who sets out the enigma knows the answer and demands the receptor to exercise his imagination and sense of interpretation, thus establishing an intellectual game between both.

In Peru's Andean culture, riddles (watuchi in Quechua) follow a very specific ritual (Lara, 2008). The people sit in a circle and a dialogue similar to the following takes place: «What will it be, how much will it be?», someone asks. «It will be what I will answer», says another person, accepting the challenge.

The first person sets out the riddle and if, after reflecting a while, the other person cannot answer, he asks for help: «What is it related to?». The first person answers: «It is related to (something)». If the other person still cannot answer, the first person asks him: «How does a stone fall to the ground?" (or "How does a firework explode?»). «Boom!», answers the other person. «Got you!», says the first person and then asks again: «How many teeth do you have? (or anything related to quantity)».The other person states a quantity and receives similar insults (the punishment for not having guessed). Only then does the first person give the answer to the riddle: «You fool! Didn't you know that the answer was (something)?».

Nowadays, this custom is disappearing due to the popularity of radio and television, which have become the favourite hobby of many rural communities.

### 1.2 Creative thinking and digital technology

Some people believe that the right hemisphere of the brain takes charge of creative thinking, while the left is responsible for logical thinking. The truth is that creative thinking requires both hemispheres: the right one imagines and relates, and the left analyses and evaluates. (Parra, 2003). This discussion about the hemispheres has a certain connection with the opposition that occurs between the text (associated to abstract and lineal thinking) and the image (linked to concrete and holistic thinking). The image is efficient in showing and motivating yet its usefulness is limited when making abstractions and specifying. On the other hand, words are very useful for abstract communication and analysis, yet of limited use for the expression of concrete realities. This is why the best alternative would be multimedia education, which takes advantage of the expressive qualities of both forms of language (Ferrés, 2008). In the case of boys and girls, it is said that they are creative by nature. But their creativity is a fruit of their innocence and not of formal learning. Boys and girls are usually original, yet also inflexible up to the point of refusing to propose new ideas. In their case creativity comes from their spontaneous attitude and not from the deliberate search of a new point of view (De Bono, 1995).

According to Tom Wujec (1996), a way of exercising creative thinking is resolving enigmas, which is different to resolving problems because problems are a synonym of difficulties, perturbations and obstacles. However, resolving enigmas reveals the «Sherlock Holmes» we have inside. Associating ideas or concepts also stimulates creative thinking, as well as the search for metaphors and analogies. «Metaphors –and their relatives similes, analogies,

parallelisms, allegories, symbols, allusions– are much more than rhetoric figures. They are the creators of our conceptual system, they build scaffoldings of ideas» (Wujec, 1996: 28). It is evident that this type of creative exercises has much in common with the game of solving riddles. This is why we believe that encouraging their practice among boys and girls would be an efficient didactic strategy to stimulate creative thinking. Moreover, resolving riddles doesn`t only imply imagination, it also requires logic.

However, there is a problem. The traditional riddles are literary forms that correspond to a pre-digital era. According to Piscitelli (2008), a significant part of children's and youth's resistance to scholar education is due to the technological generation gap between the students (many of which are digital native) and the teachers (who are mainly digital immigrants). This is why the challenge for the teachers is double: they must learn new things and teach old concepts in a modern way. Both of these are challenges that are difficult to overcome, «maybe the hardest part is to teach old concepts with new eyes» (Piscitelli, 2008: 11).

Then, can we achieve a higher acceptation of the traditional riddles among the younger generations? A possible solution would be to use an audio-visual approach and to design them especially for YouTube. Here we must consider the predictions made by Roberto Igarza: «YouTube is probably the Google of the next generation [...] The website based on text is being replaced progressively by an audio-visual website, of which YouTube will be king like Google is in the present era» (Igarza, 2009: 214-215). In relation to the new technologies, we must also be aware that there are also trivial applications, enablers and enhancers. «But the truly valuable, the enhancers, are those that permit acquiring knowledge that is impossible and unthinkable to acquire without digital technology» (Piscitelli, 2005: 94). Moreover, we must remember that learning is a process that involves students and teachers. «It is true that children and young men love machines, yet what they really need in order for them to learn is people» (Piscitelli, 2005: 106).

## 2. Materials and method

In this phase of the investigation we decided to create prototypes of audio-visual riddles and validate their acceptance and interpretation qualitatively among boys and girls from third to sixth grade of primary education. We made a series of five audio-visual riddles, uploaded them to YouTube and annexed them to a blog named «Don't be hard-headed» (http://noseascabezadura.blogspot.com). The riddles (see annex) are identified with the titles: «leaves», «cotton», «vowels», «sum» and «girl».

In the business world competition is promoted as one of the main pillars of economic progress. It's what allows the development of innovations and the maintenance of comparative advantages between products and businesses. Furthermore, on a country level, we talk about the competitive advantages of nations. On the other hand, the collaborative spirit is a factor for success in the development of many social and technological projects; it's a way of bringing individual efforts together to accomplish common aims that will benefit everyone.

In order to rescue the dialogic nature of traditional riddles, which we think is important, we created a character in 3D animation similar to a «stone head» (stone sculpture of the pre-Inca culture Chavin). As an introduction, this character sings a text in an Afro-Peruvian rhythm were it states the degree of difficulty of the selected riddle. We established three levels of difficulty to reinforce the recreational-challenging function of the riddles and evaluate comparatively the degree of ease/difficulty that boys and girls experiment in each case.

After the introduction formula the riddles are presented, all of them designed with still images, written texts and background music. We didn't use a video to avoid the excessive weight of the files making it difficult to view. The five riddles use different creative resources. «Leaves» (fig.1) uses images that substitute words and applies the antithesis. «Cotton» (fig. 2) uses two consecutive metaphors. «Vowels»

(fig. 3) uses a comparative description and an incomplete word as help. «Sum» (fig. 4) associates different images and substitutes one object with an allusive one. «Girl» (fig. 5) includes the hidden answer in the names of the images that are presented.

At the end of each riddle, the character reappears with a common concluding formula. It offers the user two «clues» (see end of fig. 1) or help that can be selected in an interactive part of the screen (resource offered by YouTube). But only one of the clues has a relevant relation with the riddle, the other works as a disorientating element, which, all the same, forces the boys and girls to think. We decided to use this concluding formula in order to maintain the dialogic tone of the riddle and establish a procedure or fixed ritual in the same way as watuchi or Quechua riddles that we commented on previously.

In the presentation of the blog we included a text that invites the users to write their answers in the comments of each riddle, specifying that in some cases there could be more than one possible answer. We also included an online survey with the question «what do you think of this riddle?» and four possible answers: «they teach how to think», «they are too hard», «they are entertaining», «they are boring».

We validated the material in three state schools of Lima, with 34 girls and boys who were between 8 and 12 years old. The majority were familiar with

Image 1: Leaves

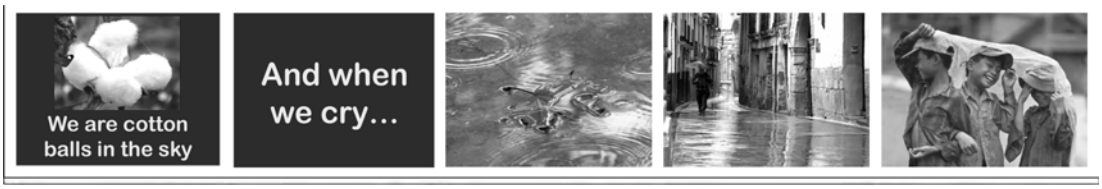


Image 2: Cotton

Image 3: Vowels

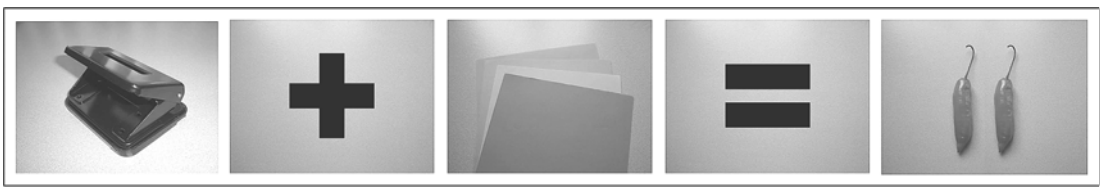

Image 4: Sum

Image 5: Girl.

YouTube, yet very few knew how a blog worked. The procedure consisted of showing them how to access the first riddle and then letting them continue on their own whilst we answered their doubts. We tried to intervene the least possible to be able to observe and analyse their behaviours and spontaneous reactions. Originally we expected each student to work individually on a computer, but the chosen schools didn't have enough terminals with internet access. So we decided to work in small groups of two, three or four students on each computer.

This allowed us to observe the dynamic that takes place when girls and boys try to solve a riddle in groups. Considering that we would only work with a limited number of students, we designed an information sheet for the rest of the students explaining them how to access the blog.

## 3. Results

Next we will present the most relevant results from the validation in relation to each riddle.

### 3.1. Leafs

This riddle turned out to be much more difficult than we expected. We classified it as basic difficulty level, but most of the boys and girls needed to see the clues to be able to solve it. Even though they understood the double meaning of the word «leaves», they got confused with the other words. Their lack of vocabulary didn't help them understand the meaning of the words «index», «back» and «cover» applied to the book. Apparently, including many descriptive terms of the object in question instead of facilitating the riddle, made it more complicated.

There was a girl who gave answers such as: «A donkey!», «Aloe!». In other words, she tried to guess the type of animal or plant that she saw in the images. Another boy had to explain to her: «No, you are saying what the pictures are, that is not what it is» It seemed that the girl didn`t read (or didn't understand) the written text and was just influenced by the images. It is important to mention that in the commentaries, besides «book» they also wrote other acceptable answers: «notebook», «encyclopaedia», «album».

### 3.2. Cotton

In this case there was a correspondence between the level of difficulty assigned by us (basic) and the degree of difficulty perceived by boys and girls, as many could easily solve it without having to see the clues (although it seemed that some of them new a similar riddle). Those who had some difficulty to solve it thought that «rain» was the answer. Having included a second metaphor (« and when we cry... ») confused some children, making them believe that they had to guess the meaning of the images (maybe too many of them) that were after the suspension points. On the other hand, the correct clue had a text, which was a little hard to read and understand.

### 3.3. Vowels

This riddle turned out to be too easy to resolve. We classified it as a level two in difficulty, yet most of the children solved it without looking at the clues. Including the name with the missing vowels facilitated excessively the answer (the first part of the proposal would have been enough). Moreover, one boy commented that the example of an animal whose name included the five vowels was in his school book. Some students knew the answer but didn`t remember the exact name of the animal («it is like a vampire»), which reflected a vocabulary problem. On the other hand, the resource of substituting a word for an image, in this case worked better –without misinterpretations– than in the riddle «leaves». Maybe because in the previous case all the message (text and image) was presented in the same screen, yet here two screens linked by an effect were used. Furthermore, the text is shorter. It should also be mentioned that the false clue (a small wooden truck) was considered funny, even though the image itself is not funny at all. The reason may be that considering that most of them knew the answer (bat) the clue resulted totally absurd and senseless.

### 3.4. Sum

This riddle was the hardest of them all. Some children commented «it is really hard (difficult)», «it is for smarter people». We classified it as very difficult (third level) but we didn`t imagine that almost nobody would solve it even after looking at the correct clue. To help them, we had to improvise additional clues at that moment. Only one out of the 34 children found the answer without help. Some confused the image of the hole puncher (it is a stapler) or didn`t know its name (it is the thing you use to make holes). Others, at the beginning saw the «plus» sign as a «cross» and thought that the coloured sheets were folders. Moreover, after seeing the result of the sum (two chillies) they were even more confused: «it is not the correct sum, chilli is not the answer», said one of the boys. Seeing the correct clue didn`t help them much either, even though it shows a bag of «confetti (pica pica in Spanish)» (pieces of paper), which is the answer to the

riddle. With respect to the questions of the correct clue (what effect does chilli have? And two chillies?), some didn't understand the term «effect» and others answered «two chillies are hotter (pican más)». This is why we had to improvise other orientating questions, even though we didn't always receive the answers we expected. We asked: What comes out when we perforate a coloured sheet of paper? They answered: «holes» What does it feel like when you eat chilli? «Our tongue burns». What is the name of what is in the bag? «It is what they throw at parties». Finally, after a big effort we made them associate the image of the two chillies with the word «hot-hot (pica pica which means confetti)» and everyone exclaimed «That's right!»

We believe that the great difficulty that this riddle generated is understandable because it is more symbolic and abstract than the others. But also because its approach has no equivalent in traditional riddles, in other words, there is no previous knowledge of how to interpret it. It looks more like a graphic hieroglyphic than a riddle. This is why the correct clue should have been more direct. For example, writing the word 'pica' (hot) replacing the letter 'i' with the image of a vertical chilli.

### 3.5. Girl

We classified this riddle with a medium level of difficulty (level two), yet it should have been level three because the majority of boys and girls couldn't find the answer without looking at the clues. When they saw the image of the floor polisher, some didn't remember its name: «It is the thing used for cleaning the floor. What is its name?». Others didn't recognise the artefact (it isn't used very much in some working-class sectors). In the case of the refrigerator, many said fridge, which made it more difficult to discover the answer. They also tried to construct a name with the initials of the artefacts («Refila?, Alina?»). The initial text turned out to be long and confusing for the children who could not read fluently. Seeing the correct clue, most were able to identify the solution, but there were those who did not recognize the character (maybe because it is mostly seen on cable TV, and few have access to it). Only when they read its name on the logo on the screen could they solve the riddle. However, there were some kids who not even seeing the correct clue with the name could answer the riddle because they weren't able to decipher that the word «Dora» was hidden in the names of the electrical appliances. In this case we had to give them additional help: we asked them to repeat out loud the names of the artefacts so that they could find the connection. Translator's Note: In Spanish the appliances are called: «refrigeradora, lustradora, licuadora y lavadora» – and Dora is the name of a girl.

### 3.6. Other notable results

• We didn't find a correlation between the age of the pupils and their capacity to resolve riddles. Younger kids resolved riddles that the older ones couldn't resolve. There was a kid, apparently not too bright, that discovered the answers more quickly than his group members who in the end told him jokingly: «Today you are not as dumb as usual». This makes us wonder if there is a relation between intelligence and the ability to solve riddles (maybe a theme for a complementary investigation).

• Having established three levels of difficulty increased the sense of challenge of the riddles and allowed us to associate them with the dynamic of videogames. One child asked: «How many levels are there? What happens if I complete them all?». This concern reflected his expectation of obtaining some kind of recognition, maybe that his name appeared in a virtual ranking. Other kids had the idea that they were going to be evaluated: «Are you giving us a grade?», they asked.

• Deciphering the riddles in small groups generated an internal competition: «You haven't solved anything, I've resolved three». There also was some collaboration and exchange of ideas, yet not in a formal or premeditated way. It was interesting to observe that in one of the schools the first group, to whom we explained the procedure, wanted to explain it to the next group and this group to the next. When we finished working with one group of students, the new group entering the class usually asked those who were leaving: «Did you guess?». And the other answered «Yes!» with satisfaction.

• Having included two clues, one correct and the other one incorrect, turned out to be disconcerting at the beginning, but after they had understood the mechanism it was stimulating. A couple of kids, for example, left it to rock-paper-scissors to decide who would choose the first clue. Other children believed that the clue the stone head was looking at was the correct one. Some viewed the clues as quick as possible (they opened them as soon as they appeared) and others, on the contrary, «froze» the video to think for a while. In some cases, we suggested to watch the riddle again before seeing the clues. Those who solved the riddles without looking at the clues wanted to see them anyway in order to confirm their answer.

• The possibility of writing their answers in the commentaries of the blog was highly appreciated by boys and girls. But what they enjoyed the most was being able to write their names and see them published. However, within those who entered the blog on their own (guided by the information sheet we gave them) there were some kids who entered anonymously in order to make jokes or make fun of a classmate.

• The survey of the blog only had 14 participants and the answers were: they are entertaining (7), they teach how to think (5), they are very hard (2), and they are boring (0). Apparently, resolving this kind of surveys is not very appealing to a child. One of them expected something to appear on the screen after submitting his answer.

• During the validation we collected opinions about the expression «hard-headed» and the 3D character. The phrase was associated with «someone who doesn't think» and the character was identified correctly as «stone head»; one kid even mentioned «Chavin». With respect to the music, many kids ended humming the song, especially the part where it says: «Don't be hard-headed».

• In general, the interest raised by the material was very positive. One kid asked us: «Can we continue watching it at break time». Here we must mention that in one of the schools the internet connection failed and we had to show the videos without the children being able to neither interact with the clues nor write their answers in the blog. This mishap allowed us to observe that in comparison the enthusiasm was less than in the groups with internet access.

## 4. Discussion

### 4.1. Brilliance of the author or satisfaction of the guesser?

In a traditional riddle, the author is the one who controls communication: he sets the challenge and knows the answer. His expectation is that nobody solves his riddle, this way he can show off revealing the solution. This communication scheme is reinforced more in certain forms of traditional riddles: ironies, questions with a set formula and the double meaning. These formats are very similar to popular jokes. When someone asks: «What's the worst thing about being Armando Guerra?» he expects that nobody knows, otherwise he would fail as a joke teller (or riddle proposer). But in the case of the audio-visual riddles, our expectation is that boys and girls discover the answer. This is why the design of the riddle and especially of the clues is fundamental. The user's intellectual and emotional satisfaction of solving the riddle depends on the correct formulation of the riddle and clues. If we transfer this reflection to the formal education field, we can verify that some teachers frequently want to show off their knowledge more than facilitate the intellectual enjoyment of their students, which should be the objective of all educational communication.

### 4.2. Seems like the same riddle, but it is different

We have already mentioned that the most valuable use of digital technology is when it maximizes knowledge which is impossible to gain without it. Do traditional riddles (oral or written) encourage creativity in the same way and degree as our blog of audio-visual riddles? If it were so, our project would only work for making the traditional riddles look more attractive for the new generations. But we believe there are two additional advantages.

In traditional riddles, as we pointed out before, the transmitter usually reveals the answer. And when people listen to it, they associate the statement of the riddle with the solution and understand the creative clue: «Oh, so that was the answer» In other words, the creative thinking is exercised not so much in the process of discovering the answer but in the subsequent comprehension of the concepts and ideas that have being creatively linked to the riddle. It is like learning how to paint, mainly analyzing paintings and not painting. In our project the emphasis is on the user (who is not a passive receptor) discovering the solution. This directly exercises creative thinking. Moreover, as authors of the blog we chose not to publish the answer. We prefer users to read the comments and deduce the correct answer (which could eventually be more than one).

The other advantage has to do with language. Reading a riddle in a book or listening to it from someone is a cognitive and sensorial experience very different from appreciating the same riddle in a multimedia interactive language. In this case, children usually confront the riddle in a different way: they look at the image, read the text, interpret the message, give ideas, doubt, read the text again, advance the video, pause the video… in other words, «think» and «feel» in a different way.

Here we must remember what Gramigna and Gonzales Faraco (2009:164) point out with respect to videogames: «The thing that really counts in a recreational, cognitive and relational adventure is to know how to capture in each process a movement of the mind and the emotions that encourage it».

### 4.3. The mediator is the one who facilitates individualized clues

Nowadays it is expected that a teacher must act as a mediator in the education process. He must facilitate the access to knowledge for students without giving it to them directly. In other words, work as a «bridge» that links, brings closer, orientates and allows encounters. But how to perform this role now that digital technology can also work as a mediator between users and knowledge? From our experience in the blog validation, we believe that there are two different types of mediator. When technology works as a mediator it tends to homogenize the users assuming all of them have a similar profile and will react within certain established parameters. But what happens when a child «breaks the mould»? Previously we commented the case of a girl who gave absurd answers and another boy of her group helped her understand the real sense of the riddle. It would be difficult that this type of individualized «tutoring» is assumed efficiently by a machine. This is why we believe, now more than ever, that the mediator role of the teacher (and also of older or more capable students) is fundamental to complement the usage in class of new technologies. Maybe it is paradoxical but teachers should thank the digital media for making their role acquire more relevance.

### 4.4. Collaborate or compete?

In the business world competition is promoted as one of the main pillars of economic progress. It's what allows the development of innovations and the maintenance of comparative advantages between products and businesses. Furthermore, on a country level, we talk about the competitive advantages of nations. On the other hand, the collaborative spirit is a factor for success in the development of many social and technological projects; it's a way of bringing individual efforts together to accomplish common aims that will benefit everyone. How do we combine both factors in the educational field? In the case of our project, one way of accomplishing this would be that each group of students works internally in a collaborative way and externally in a competitive way. In this scenario the mediator role of the teacher would consist in organizing the groups, trying to be fair, helping everyone without any favouritism, acting as an impartial referee during the intergroup competition and rewarding the best without diminishing the rest. What if we had to choose between competition and collaboration? In this case, we would choose collaborative learning. Even though there is not much accumulated experience, it seems as a more advanced form of education, closely linked to the collective intelligence nowadays associated with the web 2.0 and social networks.

### 4.5. Create riddles: pending assignment

According to the «Bloom Taxonomy for the digital era» (Churches, 2009), the highest level of ability of superior thinking corresponds to «create» rather than «evaluate», «analyze», «apply», «comprehend», «remember». On the other hand, according to «The social technographics ladder», the upper ladder of technology users correspond to the group of creators, followed by critics, collectors, joiners, spectators, inactives (Forrester, 2008). These two approaches demonstrate the importance in the digital world of the creation of communication products by users. This is why we must accept as –self-criticism– that an important deficiency of our project is not having included a mechanism that facilitates the creation by boys and girls of their own audio-visual riddles. With the purpose of making up for this deficiency we intend to include in our blog an invitation for children to send ideas or dialogues of audio-visual riddles that they have done in class with their teachers. We will produce a video of them to publish it with the name of their authors. The participation of teachers will be, once more, indispensable.

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# Education for Democratic Citizenship in a Digital Culture

## Educación para la ciudadanía democrática en la cultura digital

ABSTRACT
Given the importance of new technologies in the classroom, especially in today's information and communication societies, and following European Union recommendations to promote media literacy, this article reflects the need to educate not only in technical and efficient applications of communication technologies but also in their civic and responsible use, thus promoting participatory and deliberative processes which are the lifeline of a functioning democracy. The Greek dream of «isegoria», everyone's right to speak, can become a reality in a digital culture, yet the highly selective use of communication technology can have the opposite effect: new forms of socialization can contribute to the expansion of «echo chambers» or «digital niches», shrinking communication spaces in which the right to speak dissociates itself from the responsibility to listen critically to what arises from a more open, plural and public sphere. One of the goals of education in a digital culture is precisely to diminish this trend that authors such as Sunstein, Wolton and Cortina have detected in recent years. This article proposes educational guidelines to avoid this bias by using communication technology to promote digital citizenship and the ethical values sustained by democratic societies.

RESUMEN
Asumiendo la importancia de las nuevas tecnologías en las aulas, especialmente en las actuales sociedades de la información y la comunicación, y siguiendo las recomendaciones de la Unión Europea a favor de la alfabetización mediática, el presente trabajo reflexiona acerca de la necesidad de educar no sólo en los usos técnicos y eficientes de las tecnologías comunicativas, sino también en el uso responsable y cívico de las mismas, favoreciendo así los procesos participativos y deliberativos que son el sustento de una democracia viva. El sueño griego de la «isegoría», del igual derecho de todos al uso de la palabra, puede hacerse realidad en la cultura digital, si bien es cierto que un uso hiperselectivo de la tecnología comunicativa puede producir un efecto contrario: las nuevas formas de socialización pueden contribuir a la expansión de «cámaras de eco» o «nichos digitales», es decir, espacios discursivos cada vez más reducidos en donde el derecho a decir se desvincula de la responsabilidad de escuchar críticamente lo que procede de un espacio público más abierto y plural. Una de las metas de la educación en la cultura digital es precisamente frenar esta tendencia, detectada en los últimos años por autores como Sunstein, Wolton o Cortina. En el presente artículo se proponen orientaciones educativas para evitar estos sesgos y para fomentar, mediante la tecnología comunicativa, la ciudadanía digital y los valores éticos propios de sociedades democráticas.

KEYWORDS / PALABRAS CLAVE
Media literacy, citizenship, digital culture, audiovisual education, democracy, values, public sphere, social networks. Alfabetización mediática, ciudadanía, cultura digital, educación audiovisual, democracia, valores, esfera pública, redes sociales.

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## 1. Digital Niches: an obstacle to democratic citizenship in information societies

Given the communication flow that is flooding our technically advanced societies, the need to learn habits or cognitive mechanisms to filter and select messages is increasingly evident. Developing such mechanisms, if based on good criteria, is one of the clearest indications of autonomy in communication, in other words media or audiovisual citizenship (Conill & Gozálvez, 2004).

Internet triggers our active, selective nature the moment we connect to the medium. However, an excessive interest in building up and preserving personal selection devices can be counterproductive especially if the habit is solipsistic. The cognitive revolution attributed to the Internet can foment cognitive regression if our only information sources in the world are those we extract from cyberspace or an audiovisual space after restrictively selecting the type of information we had previously wanted to receive.

From the comfort of our homes, the Internet allows us to receive an audiovisual supply of information (entertainment, services...) that we requested beforehand. The Net opens up a personal world of predesigned communication. A range of people from MIT researcher N. Negroponte to Bill Gates predict the arrival of a «Daily Me», a newspaper that will be sent to us via Internet; a communications package whose components (local news, sports events...) will have already been chosen in advance. The «Daily Me» will be followed by the «TV Me», and within a few years we will walk into our living rooms and say what we want to see, and a screen will pop up to help us choose a video that interests us[1]. The convergence of TV and Internet will make traditional television as we know it redundant; phone companies are already building the appropriate infrastructure that will impose flexibility and individual selectivity on a fully on-demand television.

The audiovisual skills of Internet users will be so customized that, according to Sunstein (2003), our cognitive system will disregard the option of checking and evaluating heterogeneous knowledge and unpredictable information, which will undermine the building of shared, debated social experiences and democratic citizenship. The Internet propitiates individualization and immersion in «digital niches», («ever-smaller niches») or countless media bubbles. These niches are transforming us into cells isolated from a huge web of information that we find quite foreign, strange and distant.

C. Sunstein examines the threats to a deliberative democracy that arise from a selective capability powered by the Net. The possibility of such a negative outcome Is shown in the latest research: the Net is transforming television in such a way that teenagers interviewed by the «Center for the Digital Future» do not even understand the idea of watching TV via scheduled programmes, given that they watch it on their computer screens and, increasingly, on portable devices (Castells, 2009: 100). These devices make viewing more comfortable and entertaining, but the increasing ability of the audiovisual consumer to filter what gets through to him spells danger for the smooth running of any system deemed to be democratic. A plural, democratic society should not only promote freedom when faced by overreaching government (by limiting its ability to censor and ensuring that it respects individual choice to the utmost). Freedom requires public initiatives, education and training measures to limit apparently reasonable individual decisions (to digitally customize and filter the extensive audiovisual flow) that could eventually deteriorate the social web and the freedom of citizens.

Sunstein also says that individual filtering of information may lead to loss of access to public information of general interest, which is cause enough for reflection on our democratic responsibilities.

As Moeller states (2009), technology is changing the way we receive and understand information. The Internet is reinforcing the current trend to know exactly what it is that a person wants to see, read or hear rather than stick to what editors and producers have chosen. However, Moeller continues, «the fascination with the transformational effect of all this allows you to forget that old journalism is expensive yet still essential» (Moeller, 2009: 72). Organizations defending press freedom have seen their authority and influence decline worldwide and their very existence questioned. So-called old journalism might be reports filed by, for example, Anna Politkovskaya or the German journalists who died on the same day in Afghanistan. These journalists who fought to guarantee freedom of expression cannot readily be replaced by «citizen journalists», even though they deploy photographs, videos and blogs, and may post significant news items on the Net (such as blogs that reported the U.S. government's disarray in the wake of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans).

A free democracy works, paradoxically, because citizens come into contact with news and material they had not previously seen (Sunstein, 2003: 20). Unplanned encounters without prior appointment, so to speak, are essential to democracy because they put

the person in contact with significant points of view or issues that may be important for human and civic education, but which had not been selected or filtered «a priori».

A democracy also requires the majority of citizens (or a large number of them) to have common, similar communication experiences. Cultural and informative diversity –postmodern multiplicity– is a significant value but with limitations: it loses value if it leads to social fragmentation and prevents citizens from facing up to ordinary problems in a civic way. The dangers of fragmented communication (digital or audiovisual) are bigger as nations become more global, and are also affecting the construction of a cosmopolitan citizenship[2].

Filtering technologies that allow you to screen information specific to the network society can dangerously undermine the two fundamentals of any political system of freedom: civic participation and deliberation for social and human development. A functioning democratic order will be in serious trouble if the filtering processes of communication are radicalized and spread indiscriminately across the Net. If citizens restrict their digital consumption, they are giving up exposure to different opinions, especially those that deal with common issues (political, socio-moral, cultural...) necessary for public life or for sound public opinion. The new forms of online socialization are often new ways of strengthening existing social ties by direct relationships with friends, family or old acquaintances (Castells, 2003). They are also a constant opportunity to contact like-minded people about hobbies, ideologies, different tastes and cultural preferences. Such forms of socialization (as developed with the help of social networks) boost «network-empowered citizenship» provided the user does not bury himself in a particular social group and succumb to a kind of techno-socializing experiment that will isolate him from the general social problems or challenges that our global world requires us to confront.

The danger of misuse of social networks is made clear when the conditions for democratic citizenship are destroyed, and the communication flow leads to the setting up of «digital islands» in which people only share experiences with those who have similar interests, and ignore other issues that directly or indirectly affect them as members of a global, pluralistic society. Plurality is undoubtedly one of the axiological foundations of mature democracies which can degenerate into a type of «multiple digital inbreeding».

As Bilbeny (1997) said of our digital age that actions aimed at selection and filtration on the Net could lead to a general or partial cognitive regression rather than a cognitive revolution. It is essential to be aware of this danger and fight it on the educational front.

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The Internet provides effective filtering systems to select only the opinions you want to hear, read the articles and comments of politicians in line with your own ideological thinking, and use the type of communication (sports, arts, politics, economics...) that will reaffirm and reinforce your symbolic universe.

In a subsequent work, Sunstein (2007) insists on the precautions to be taken with the expansion of the blogosphere. The study refers to an interesting experiment in the state of Colorado (USA) in 2005 in which they chose some 60 adults from different states to form groups of five or six people. The groups were asked to deliberate on three controversial, political and social issues: Should states allow civil unions between same-sex couples? Should employers initiate positive

action to give preference to members of traditionally disadvantaged groups? Should the U.S. sign an international agreement to combat global warming?

The groups were organized according to the mainstream ideology of their home state, divided into groups of liberals[3] and conservatives. The results went according to plan: the discussions and dialogues acted as a springboard for more extreme views instead of moderating them. In almost all cases, people became entrenched in more uniform positions after talking with like-minded people («like-minded others»). Disagreements lessened or disappeared after a mere 15-minute dialogue. The experiment also highlighted a second effect: aside from intensifying differences, it homogenized similarities. Liberal and conservative groups similarly outlined their different beliefs, after taking them to more extreme positions.

The Internet (rather than traditional media) makes it much easier for citizens to repeat the Colorado experience, says Sunstein. For example, anyone who doubts the credibility of global warming (or the Holocaust...) can find extensive material to justify his doubts on the Internet and confirm (strengthen or radicalize) their beliefs, to the exclusion of opposite or alternative opinions. However, it is also true that the Internet is a home for different viewpoints and news that would otherwise remain invisible, silenced or crushed beneath the general debate, as I will discuss later. One of the main tasks of education in digital and audiovisual culture is, I believe, to fight against «multiple digital inbreeding» created by digital niches or electronic echo chambers[4]. Inbreeding in this context refers to the tendency to cluster in virtual families that are more or less stable through new technologies. These families group together according to partial, sporadic beliefs or ideological preferences, and thus neglect those common issues that form the core of public interest. Educational institutions, by contrast, can harness the vast argumentative potential of communication technologies to promote learning in a plural, autonomous and civic form.

The fascination for new technologies as political utopia, as an agent of social change, can be a false dream since it is not the technology itself but the social, cultural, educational and political projects that guide its uses; only these projects can produce desirable social change. From the point of view of personal relationships, the abuse of the Internet is an interactive incentive for solitude coupled with a certain degree of narcissism rather than for moral and civic autonomy (Twenge & Campbell, 2009).

However, are the new technologies really responsible for the bleak outlook we portray for modern, post-conventional citizenship? Could it be that they open us up to a new form of relationship, a new socialization process, which requires us to treat them with special care in the educational sphere?

> Education that is technologically blended is an opportunity for expansion and enrichment in the experiential field, but it has yet to fully engage the student citizen, the future builders of our social and human reality. In the end, technology has to be seen for what it is, a medium, a tool for pursuing very different aims and purposes, ranging from solipsism or «digital inbreeding» to a network-empowered citizenship that is completely democratic.

## 2. Media literacy and civic values: some educational proposals

It is not our intention to portray an apocalyptic scene tinged with defeatism, among other things because dwelling on the pessimistic gives rise to the bad omens that will only encourage apathy and inactivity.

Moreover, sociologists specializing in the social impact of the Net, such as Castells, argue that new technologies do not lock people up at home but activate their sociability, and are a key element in users' personal, political and professional autonomy (Project Internet Catalonia, 2007)[5].

Yet, it is best to be warned, especially from an educational viewpoint, against the hazards and technologically amplified biases denounced by authors

like Sunstein (2007), A. Cortina (2003), Sartori (2005) and Wolton (2000). It never hurts to develop educational initiatives against threatening and socially harmful prejudices, and civically responsible uses of new communication technologies to foment moral, democratic autonomy in a younger generation.

Castells recognizes that the Net produces a certain autism in «mass self-communication». Castells (2009: 102) quotes a study by the «Pew Internet & American Life Project», whereby 52% of bloggers write primarily for themselves, while 32% do so for their audience. So, «to some extent, an important part of this form of mass self-communication is more like electronic autism rather than real communication».

How can the dangers of autism or antisocial individualism in a network society be diminished? How can one prevent autism and «multiple digital inbreeding»? What are the educational conditions necessary for the network-empowered citizenship to become an audiovisual, digital citizenship?

The proposals for innovations in formal education that our new global and technologically communicated environment demands are the following:

### 2.1. Reinterpretation of the concept of education

Digital culture provides the conditions for a new interpretation or revision of the concept of education, surpassing technical instruction and old- or new-style encyclopedism (De Pablos, 2003), and in line with the classic movements of educational renewal (Aznar & al., 1999; Trilla, 2001, Nuñez & Romero, 2003; Gimeno Sacristán & Carbonell, 2003). Education in the ethical and civic values of democratic societies, and within new information and communication societies, means revitalizing cooperative educational programmes (Torrego, 2006); this education needs to update models that rely on activity (or interactivity) and student experiences, once teachers' academic authority and function are redefined (Colom, 2002). It is vital to raise teachers' capability and involve stakeholders, parents as well as students, in the educational process. It is most to educate learning minds in a constant, imaginative invitation to action so that students feel positively compelled to take part in the adventure of knowledge and personal skills development. This will help them take control of the critical assimilation of knowledge or the reflexive assumption of norms and regulated values of coexistence.

The School 2.0 has to be seen as a renewed commitment to this form of educational thinking (Sancho & Correa, 2010).

### 2.2. Learning 2.0 and integrated digital literacy

Since School 2.0 assumes the revision of the concept of knowledge and access to it (more horizontal, interactive and reciprocal), it can simultaneously act as a platform for a richer understanding of the public sphere, that which concerns us all on a social, global level. School 2.0 can help by educating on the public sphere, connecting students on matters of common interest. To counter the danger of a restrictive or endogamous use of social networks, the school may seek to impart knowledge of a broader social reality, increasing sensitivity and experience from other points of view. Knowledge of others through the Net can be exploited to favour a global, cosmopolitan citizenship, encouraging critical and creative thinking, awakening student activity for cooperation and interaction (Gutierrez, 2003). The European Commission has established resolutions that urge all member states to promote media literacy «one of the prerequisites for full and active citizenship, and to prevent and reduce the risk of exclusion from the community» (Aguaded, 2010). In this regard, the Salzburg Academy on Media and Global Change has developed a media literacy programme in conjunction with universities worldwide, and media organizations and international institutions such as the UN and UNESCO (Moeller, 2009)[6].

### 2.3. Empowering audiovisual citizenship

Educational institutions should evidently be open to new communication technologies, not only as mechanisms for learning and the pursuit of knowledge, but as an opportunity to reflect on the social uses of such technology, with the means to strengthen audiovisual and media citizenship in this field (Conill & Gozálvez, 2004). For examples, school curriculums should allow discussion of blog content, video games or advertisements that diminish the quality of democracy, or which are questionable from the civil rights perspective (gratuitous acts of violence, contradictory content that undermines the dignity of certain social sectors...). Likewise, schools should be a platform for detecting the standard image that the media portray of children and the youth. Schools can evaluate media perceptions of young people as they become more involved with communication technology; they are no longer passive receivers but are actively reconstructing their identities based on relationships with their surroundings (Buckingham 2005; 2008). Schools, in their attempt to spread critical thinking, cannot miss this opportunity to introduce into the classroom good life models, images

of identity and ways of perceiving and valuing the world that are hidden by media discourse, to make these models more explicit and to encourage reflection and dialogue on them.

Since formal education also includes the analysis of social networks to avoid bias and prejudice, it can also warn against the criminal uses of networks that threaten users' dignity and privacy; the school deploy its new technological resources to encourage global contacts of a cognitive and socio-moral interest, with schools that are near or far, as well as with other educational or supportive organizations. In short, the necessary introduction of communication technology in elementary or high schools should not focus on purely technical aspects, as its social scope is equally important and affects vital aspects of society such as interpersonal relations and democratic, civic values.

To empower audiovisual or media citizenship is to educate citizens not only in the autonomous use of media whose applications can bring us closer to freedom, for example through the ability to identify and address new forms of servility, but also to educate citizens in the media (including, of course, the Net as an interactive medium of communication). This involves reinforcing the condition of the individual citizen through the use of media and new technologies, because communication technology is undoubtedly a valuable tool for the healthy democratic condition of nations, promoting civic participation and critical information. In short, appealing to citizens in this context is to talk about citizenship in the media or digital field, but also about how citizenship is achieved or enhanced thanks to the use of communication technology. Although the terms are closely related, it is necessary to distinguish between being an audiovisual citizen and a citizen with (of, through, with the assistance of) communication technology. These two dimensions need to be taken into account in the elementary or high school spheres, and require urgent attention in our media society.

### 2.4. Inclusion of the ethical dimension: human development and global justice

Expanding on the previous point, educational innovation will necessarily encourage «third-level empathy», that is, an assumption and understanding of other broader points of view in accordance with the concept of reversible, universal dignity (beyond empathy with the other direct contact, or the next one in the same social surrounding). 2.0 Learning relates to a model of key cosmopolitan justice linked to the new concept of sustainable human development, for the educational dimension of a human being that is so crucial and unavoidable for an emancipatory transformation to take place. Including the ethical dimension in techno-communicative training breathes life into digital or media citizens, and disseminates the values of civic ethics that are profoundly democratic in audiovisual and digital culture.

In reference to discursive ethics (Cortina, Escámez & Perez-Delgado, 1996), and based on current UN proposals for human development, and hermeneutic and critical methodology, we present some guidelines on the education of an integral, civic use of communication technology. Elementary and high schools are great places to foster human development and an overall global sense of justice, integrating values such as:

• Freedom, a classroom analysis of digital spaces for civic and, of course, peaceful engagement (freedom as participation), considering the consequences for privacy and the freedom of others, reflecting on the dangers to one's own privacy or integrity arising from certain Net practices (freedom and independence), encouraging students' critical thinking, searching for and analyzing news of public interest in an online newspaper (freedom as autonomy), studying how access to information and communication technology increases people's capacity to build on projects and live better lives (freedom as development, as proposed by A. Sen, 2000), understanding the extent to which access to certain socially relevant information is a mechanism for avoiding servility or new forms of servitude (freedom as a non-denomination, according to the concept of freedom coined by Ph. Pettit, 1999).

• Equality, prompting awareness of and closing the digital divide by facilitating access to communication technologies (equal opportunities), as the 2.0 School aims to do by; exposing websites, blogs or YouTube videos that impinge on the people's dignity and propagate the inferiority of cultural or ethnic groups, the disabled, the elderly or women (equality in dignity)...

• Solidarity, involving a school with a local association for cooperation and development via the Internet, starting with e-mail correspondence between students of different backgrounds; discussing ways to use social networks that connect the needs and rights of others, by e-mail campaigns to demand justice in a particular case, or collaborating online with initiatives for sustainable development and preservation of nature.

• Dialogue and respect, reflecting on the benefits

and limits of tolerance in democratic societies, especially concerning digital culture, encouraging active listening, openness to different views or to those not previously selected by the student in their Internet interactions, assessing the consequences of copyright infringement on the Internet, or quoting text without crediting its author, reflecting on the new concept of friendship that arises in different social networks, and the minimum standards of courtesy to those who make it worthwhile to use them.

## 3. Conclusion

Civic education in a digital culture attempts to adapt the flow of technological communication by opening minds to others, in the constant search for new experiential and mental horizons, especially with regard to civic participation, social interest and key cosmopolitan justice. Education that is technologically blended is an opportunity for expansion and enrichment in the experiential field, but it has yet to fully engage the student citizen, the future builders of our social and human reality. In the end, technology has to be seen for what it is, a medium, a tool for pursuing very different aims and purposes, ranging from solipsism or «digital inbreeding» to a network-empowered citizenship that is completely democratic, a kind of citizenship that relies on the intensification of communicative human beings.

## Notes

[1] Statements by Bill Gates gathered by C.R. Sunstein (2003). In 2007, Gates reaffirmed these predictions, as reported by Reuters. He said that this revolution would be possible thanks to the explosion of video content on the Net and the alliance between computers and televisions. In 2010, Spain took its first steps to market the TV model «Sony Internet TV».

[2] See Nussbaum (1999) and Cortina (1997).

[3] Progressive enclaves, according to a related category.

[4] The «echo chamber» metaphor is significant: it is a chamber in which only one person hears what he utters or what those around him utter.

[5] www.ouc.edu/in3/pic/esp

[6] Other interesting resources for digital literacy, the critical understanding of media and education for active use are: www.understandmedia.com/; www.educomunicacion.org/; www.eurosmedialiteracy.eu.

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# Software for Teaching Emotions to Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder

## Software para enseñar emociones al alumnado con trastorno del espectro autista

ABSTRACT
This paper reports the results of a research project in which educational software was used to teach social and emotional skills to primary and secondary school students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). The participants with difficulties in recognizing emotional states were nine male and female students aged between 8 and 18, with a mental age range of between 5 and 7 years. A single group design with pre-test/post-test was used. The students were assessed before teaching in relation to their levels of social and emotional skills. This assessment was intended to set the starting level of the teaching process for each student. The educational intervention consisted of two 45-minute weekly sessions for 20 weeks over two academic years (2006/08). Following the intervention, each student was again assessed. Results indicate that the pupils improved their performance in tasks that evaluate the ability to recognize and understand emotional expressions. These results confirmed that the use of educational software for teaching social and emotional skills helps students with ASD to improve their ability to perform tasks aimed at the understanding of emotional skills. In addition, the participants improved their social skills significantly, a fact that was noticed by both teachers and families.

RESUMEN
En este artículo se presentan los resultados de una investigación en la que se ha utilizado un software educativo para apoyar el proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje de competencias emocionales y sociales en alumnado con trastornos del espectro autista (TEA) escolarizado en educación primaria y secundaria. Los participantes, con dificultades en el reconocimiento de estados emocionales, han sido nueve alumnos de edades comprendidas entre los 8 y 18 años, de ambos sexos y con un rango de índice de edad mental entre 5 y 7 años de edad. Para ello, se utilizó un diseño de grupo único con pretest-postest. Así, antes del proceso de enseñanza, el alumnado fue evaluado con relación a sus niveles de competencia emocional y social, con la finalidad de establecer, también, el nivel de inicio del proceso de enseñanza para cada uno de ellos. El proceso de enseñanza se desarrolló a lo largo de dos sesiones semanales de 45 minutos, cada una, en un intervalo de dos cursos académicos (2006/08). Tras el proceso de intervención educativa, los alumnos fueron nuevamente evaluados. Los resultados obtenidos confirman que la utilización del software educativo en la enseñanza de competencias emocionales y sociales ayuda a los alumnos a mejorar su capacidad para superar tareas encaminadas a la comprensión de competencias emocionales. Además, los participantes mejoraron sus competencias sociales ya que docentes y familiares apreciaron progresos significativos en esta área.

KEYWORDS / PALABRAS CLAVE
Educational software, ICT, inclusive education, education-learning, students, special education needs, emotional education, social interaction.
Software educativo, TIC, educación inclusiva, enseñanza-aprendizaje, alumnado, necesidades educativas especiales, educación emocional, interacción social.

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## 1. Introduction

The presence of information and communication technologies (ICT) in society is an evident reality and an area of special reflection and continuous evolution that has expanded in recent years due to the speed of technological advances and their impact on the educational world (Selwyn & Gouseti, 2009). This is a necessary factor for a profound educational revolution in the use of new language for greater access to information, knowledge building and improving of communication.

Social and educational institutions have been concerned to incorporate these technologies into schools and endow schools with ICT equipment as an indicator of quality and improvement in teaching and learning processes. In fact the presence of ICT equipment in schools has increased exponentially over the years (Aguaded & Díaz, 2010). The need to incorporate ICT and the political will to promote their use in education was reported in 2001 (Eurydice). Subsequently, ICT access has increased as a means to combat technological illiteracy and geographic isolation, as well as to facilitate access to new sources of knowledge and provide new services and resources for citizens. Similar guidelines and initiatives have led most countries to plan the introduction and promotion of ICT use in educational organizations (Ballesta, 2006). In Spain, the Organic Law of Education (LOE) integrates ICT in the educational process at all school stages, because ICT play a mediating role in the experiences of a student and act as a support tool in their learning, including students with special educational needs. The school, therefore, must use technology as a didactic resource to enrich and improve the teaching and learning process (Chacón, 2007), while understanding that the didactic resources are curricular elements whose systems of symbols and strategies favour the development of cognitive skills and values in the subjects within a given context. This facilitates and encourages the reality-mediated intervention, the student's understanding of information and the creation of an environment that enhances learning and skills development and, as stated by Collis and Moonen (2008), the development of virtual and cooperative learning processes. However, recent data are not very encouraging in terms of assessing the integrative dimension of these technologies in schools. Reports from 2007 and 2009 (Sigalés, Mominó & others, 2009) show weak ICT integration, reinforcing the contradiction that teachers and students have above-average skills as Internet users but that two thirds of centers have no specific ICT integration plan. Despite the increasing presence of media technology in schools, teachers' pedagogical practice in the classroom has not changed significantly in terms of the traditional teaching model (Area, 2008). The acquisition of technologies per se does not mean a change in the concepts of the school (Sancho, 2009) so aspects and educational needs must be taken into account (Fernández, 2005). We believe the benefits of technology are not in the introduction of a new support in the compartmentalized school curriculum but in the transformation of the meaning of teaching practice (Ballesta, 2006).

In the case of students with special educational needs, technology is a critical input because the capabilities of these media allow these students to access tasks that would otherwise remain beyond their reach. New technologies configured as a powerful teaching tool could provide the solution to some special educational needs of students, (Alba, 1998; Pensosi, 2010). As Pavia stated (2010), interaction with digital media increases these students' possibilities of interacting with the environment, thus improving their quality of life on the emotional, personal and professional levels, and helping them overcome exclusion by encouraging their inclusion in society (Cabero, Córdoba & Fernández, 2007).

Yet there is a digital divide that affects these students with its roots in accessibility and ICT use that manifests in digital and social exclusion processes (Lozano & Ballesta, 2004, Rodriguez-Fuentes, 2008). The digital divide, the distance between those people and communities who dominate, access and effectively use ICT and those who do not (Ballesta, Bautista & Lozano, 2008; Bautista, 2010; San Martín, 2009), affects various groups, including students with special educational needs.

We believe that access to computers and the Internet by these groups, as well as the ability to make effective, social use of ICT, is important for full participation in political, economic and social development in developed countries (García, 2005; Tirado, 2007). Consequently, schools have been using a variety of technological tools to promote and encourage learning among pupils with special educational needs in general, and students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) in particular.

In terms of teaching students with serious difficulties in social and communication interaction and in the attribution of mental states, that is, in understanding what others feel or think, the new technologies seem to be a good fit for their characteristics and educational needs. In fact, many people

with ASD seem to have a natural affinity with ICT because they provide a controlled environment, individual attention and the possibility of repeating the activity proposed. Learning tasks developed in digital environments using information technology can motivate the desire to learn in ASD students (Cheng & Ye, 2010; Parsons, Leonard & Mitchell, 2006; Pensosi, 2010). Most kids are motivated by information technologies, but children with ASD find them even more attractive due to the cognitive information processing features, especially the visual (Lehman, 1998).

In this sense, ICT use in schools is associated to a pedagogical model that becomes a means, not an end, for student learning. It goes without saying that ICT must be configured to enable access to information and knowledge building. In fact, the LOE preamble seeks to «ensure universal access to information and communication technology», but the eradication of the digital divide in use and accessibility for people with special educational needs to computer media is much more complex than having or not having access to technology (Fernández, 2005). Therefore, we call on teachers to use computers and software as a resource in their teaching programs and educational projects for pupils with ASD, as an integrated element in their education. Technology is configured to help these people to compensate for their functional limitations, and to increase and enhance learning, independence and autonomy, mobility, communication and environmental control.

We must avoid the concept of technology as an end in itself (Levis, 2006); that is to say, the incorporation of technology in the education of pupils with ASD must be accompanied by a methodological reflection and rethink of the objectives to be achieved. The use and benefit of information technologies in the intervention with ASD students will depend on their characteristics and special educational needs. The potential benefit of this use of technology media depends on how this resource is used (Passerino & Santarosa, 2008).

We have set specific targets for intervention, based on the person not the technology, and if properly implemented, we can overcome those myths of the isolated child with ASD attached to an isolated computer because, according to Cheng & Ye (2010), children with ASD can use computers as an individual activity, but also collectively, just like all other children.

This research presents our experience of computer use in the teaching of social and emotional skills to students with ASD. We develop, implement and evaluate educational computer software for a teaching process that enables us to understand the beliefs and emotions of ASD students, which in turn helps us to improve their understanding of social and emotional skills. We specifically used educational software for teaching these emotional competencies that integrates a multimedia presentation of the information. Multimedia systems that employ multiple formats for the presentation of information enable multi-sensory teaching; it is a functional tool that can be adapted both to the characteristics of students with ASD and to the complexity of the explicit teaching of these skills.

We also generate an active, dynamic stage that facilitates the acquisition of knowledge; we foster creativity and the development of the imagination, so important in an educational intervention involving people with autism spectrum disorders; we also provide channels for interaction because the program allows for dialogue and encourages cooperative learning; we offer access to learning content and motivation in the task of teaching, enabling the program to fit users' needs (Alba, 1998).

> The research objectives have focussed on the concerns of social and educational institutions to meet the challenge of accessibility and use of technological media. This project aims to promote digital inclusion in the media to enable the integration of people who have difficulty in accessing technology. In our view, the overcoming of this barrier is conducive to inclusive education and positive educational settings where all students have a place.

## 2. Research objective

This paper presents the results of an investigation that has used educational software to support the teaching and learning of social and emotional skills to students with autistic spectrum disorders. The objective is to show the advantages and benefits of incorporating technological media in an educational program for teaching social and emotional skills to students with autism spectrum disorders, both in primary and secondary education.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Research Design

The research is applied in nature and context for improvement procedures to be implemented as a treatment study in natural classroom situations. The project used a single group design with pre-test/post-test, since the objective is to analyze and assess the improvements in participants' social and emotional skills by using a software-based educational program. Before the teaching process began, the students were evaluated in relation to their levels of social and emotional skills. This initial assessment was intended to mark the starting point for each student in order to develop the teaching and learning process, which consisted of two 45-minute sessions per week for 20 weeks over two academic years (2006/2008). After the intervention process, each student was again assessed with the aim of discovering possible development and improvements in these skills.

### 3.2. Research participants

Nine students with autism spectrum disorders participated in the investigation, aged between 8 and 18, of both sexes and a mental age range of between 5 and 7 years old. Participants were selected according to the following criteria: having a confirmed and updated diagnosis; enrolled in primary or secondary schools in the Autonomous Community of the Region of Murcia, with a mental age of more than four years old.

### 3.3. Data collection instruments

The educational software «Aprende con Zapo. Propuestas didácticas para el aprendizaje de competencias emocionales y sociales» (Lozano & Alcaraz, 2009) was used to teach and assess the social and emotional skills of students with ASD.

This educational software is composed of tasks structured on levels ranging in complexity from basic to advanced both for teaching the recognition of basic and complex emotions, as well as for teaching how to predict people's actions from their true or false beliefs (Table 1). The software was constructed with a tool used for creating quick and easy multimedia applications. It is ideal media for educational work with students with ASD. It provides a controlled environment and individual attention through contact with the main character (the clown Zapo) who the student can accompany while performing the various tasks in the program. The program also keeps a record of each student's progress, or the difficulty experienced, in each task in a personal file; this customizes the teaching-learning process and enables teachers to monitor each student's progress, even when they are not present, and to tailor the program's pace to suit each student's needs.

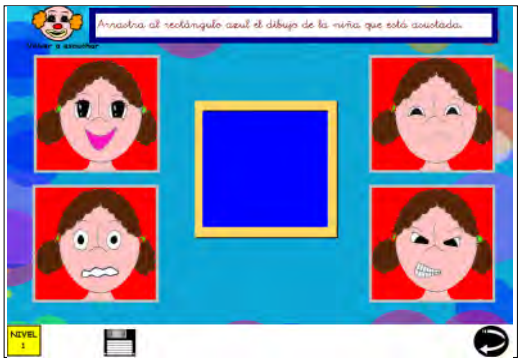
Interviews were used to discover the changes, development and improvements in these skills in the students' everyday contexts (school and home). These provided information on the perception of the student's teacher (interview 1) and family (interview 2), and on progress in participants' social and emotional development after the teaching and learning process. Both interviews were two-dimensional in concept: a) positive changes in emotional and social skills (Examples: Do you think he has improved his ability to spontaneously express emotions? Does the child relate more to others?); and b) educational software to support student learning (Example: What has brought the child to use educational software?).

## 4. Results

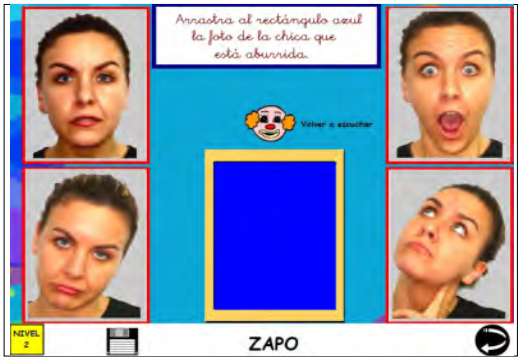
The results confirm that the use of technological media in teaching social and emotional skills is a support for students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). The participants, despite the difficulties they showed before the intervention process, have improved their ability to successfully carry out tasks on emotional skills (Figure 1 and 2). These results are in line with the findings in previous studies (Cheng & Ye, 2010, Parsons, Leonard & Mitchell, 2006), whereby it is possible to improve the social and emotional skills of people with ASD with specific, explicit instructions through digital media.

Although these results must be interpreted with caution and their generalization is limited to the research participants, there are grounds for optimism as the teachers and families identified significant positive effects on the everyday lives of the ASD students. These improvements were noted in various situations (break, play, class) within the school context. To see if the learning acquired by students at school was extrapolated to other contexts in the real world

## TEACHING THE RECOGNITION OF BASIC AND COMPLEX EMOTIONS




Level 1: Global recognition through drawings




Level 2: Global recognition through photographs

Level 3: Emotion judgments based on a specific situation

Level 4: Emotion judgments based on wishes

Level 5: Emotion judgments based on beliefs

## TEACHING TO PREDICT THE ACTIONS OF PEOPLE FROM THEIR TRUE OR FALSE BELIEFS

Level 1: Adopting a simple view

Level 2: Adopting a complex view

Level 3: Beginning to see it to know

Level 4: True belief and action prediction

Level 5: False belief and action prediction

Table 1. Educational software tasks.

such as the family, we asked the students' parents to judge whether the educational intervention process had been effective. One mother's comment was particularly relevant: «I can see significant progress in emotional recognition, in spontaneity and, above all, in the understanding of the emotional causes of his actions. For example, the other day he told me he would do a good job for me to make me feel happy with him. He was not able to express this previously».

The educational software used in this research is a recognized tool for teaching social and emotional skills to students with ASD. While typical children develop this emotional understanding without the need for an educational program, this is not the case with ASD students who require explicit teaching of social and emotional aspects.

We are in favour of educational intervention for students with ASD by means of computer and digital materials to improve their quality of life. Our research has shown the benefits of educational software which are integrated in a patient, continuous and systematic educational program that positively affects the daily lives of students with ASD – computer technology at the service of pedagogy. We believe it is possible, through continuous, systematic and explicit work with the support of visuals, graphics and interactive materials, to teach ASD pupils emotional and social skills.

The educational software used in this research has stimulated the emotional processes of identification, recognition and expression in students through an interactive, graphical environment that has systematized the teaching. Educational software, due to its simplicity and easy interpretation, has become a useful resource for students with ASD because of its user-friendly information processing, compared to other types and forms of representation. Educational software opens the way for sorting visual preference information, which is the predominant factor in these students' cognitive processes. This not only motivates the student but allows the teacher to develop the teaching of complex concepts (emotional and social skills) and positively encourages the student to tackle the learning content.

Another important aspect of the educational intervention with ASD students is to respect the pace at which they normally learn. The students need to learn and control a new skill before acquiring it. For this reason, the software was sequenced across various education levels to enable a consistent pace of learning in relation to the acquisition of those skills. Teachers with experience of students with ASD confirmed the accuracy of the sequencing of content, as the following comment testifies: «I value the materials very positively because they help to consistently systematize teaching concepts that are very important yet difficult to work with».

The educational software in this research not only motivates but also facilitates interaction, cooperative work and peer support. This has empowered ASD students to work in pairs, in which each student respects the learning pace of the other and helps with any difficulties. This is a considerable advance for people with reduced capacity for communication and social interaction, and was one of the main goals we set for the development of the intervention process. We did not wish to restrict the process to the instruction of the tasks proposed by the software, but to make the performance of these learning tasks converge with the development of social interaction processes.

The educational software can also be adapted to different contexts and to ASD students with a wide range of characteristics. The material designed, developed and implemented in this research can be applied to educational intervention with ASD students of various ages, as the material for the teaching-learning process is appropriate for students aged from 8 to 18. It can also be successfully applied to achieve the objectives set out for the teaching of social and

emotional skills to students enrolled in primary and secondary school education. Another advantage of the software is that it enables teachers to work with students with varied degrees of ASD. Its versatility, flexibility and task range adapt to the heterogeneity of characteristics presented by students with ASD. In addition, since students are used to different forms of schooling (standard classes and specialized open classes in mainstream schools), it can adapt to the organization and methodology as developed by teachers in their work with ASD students.

We conclude that the use of educational software for children with ASD responds to their individual characteristics and developmental needs as a means to improving their social and emotional skills.

## 5. Discussion

The approach of this research to the context of teaching people with special educational needs, particularly those with autistic spectrum disorders, enables us to draw a number of conclusions to reflect upon. First, education for diversity requires a wealth of materials in the classroom for teachers to draw on to be able to vary and adapt their students' learning processes (Lozano, 2007, Sanchez-Montoya & Madrid, 2008). This, together with the increased provision of equipment for schools, means that teachers of ASD students should have a wide range of resources at their disposal. Technological tools such as the computer and software are one such resource. However, due to the specific needs of ASD students requiring instruction in social and emotional and skills, and the necessary customization of that teaching, teachers who currently work with pupils with ASD find they have few resources to count on. Our research suggests that educational software is a useful support tool for teachers and those in training to meet those needs.

What are the opportunities and possibilities presented by the use of technology in the teaching of students with specific educational support needs and those with ASD? More research is needed to realize the educational potential of the applicability of technologies to these students, especially those with ASD (Rajendran & Mitchell, 2000). It is necessary to discern how technologies add value to the education of pupils with special educational support needs, to confirm that they are more than just tools, and that they can be incorporated in curriculum areas and help achieve individual goals to solve difficulties in accessing or learning in specific educational cases. This investigation confirms that ICT use in educational contexts enables the development of methodologies that promote the individualization and personalization of education. New technologies, thanks to their varied pace and combination of graphics, sounds and animation, create a dynamic, attractive and motivating environment for pupils with special educational needs, particularly for students with ASD.

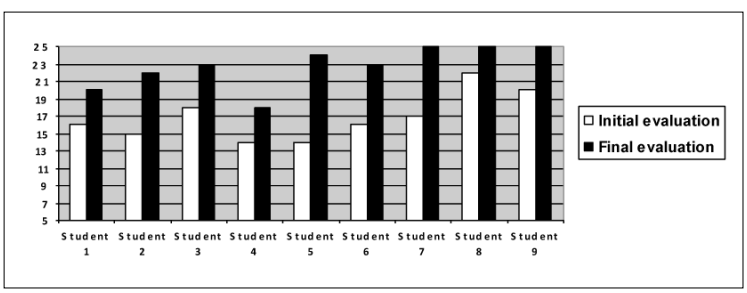



Figure 1. Learning outcomes of the recognition of basic and complex emotions[1].

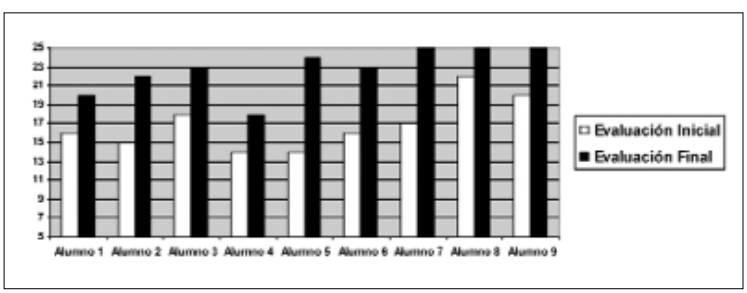



Figure 2. Learning outcomes of teaching to predict the actions of people from their true or false beliefs[1].

Secondly, educational software is intended to assist those teaching social and emotional skills and to be an affordable means for teaching the standard curriculum. Educational software motivates and stimulates the learning of these skills, and can individualize instruction to promote the autonomy of students with ASD, allowing pupils to initiate, develop and complete the tasks at their own pace and enable them to step out of their isolation by interacting with a character (Zapo the Clown) and participating in a learning task that is fun. It also allows them to interact with a peer, thus enhancing the child's relationship with others. The software aims to support teachers as

they impart the content that promotes the development of a teaching-learning process of social situations which tells stories, presents rules and norms, and aims to foment the social inclusion of these students by exploiting their learning potential to help them overcome their possible cognitive limitations; it provides information by processing visual preference with its incorporation of a multisensory communication model. Thus, the instructions given by Zapo are given in auditory and textual form in clear, simple language adapted to the needs and information processing of individuals with ASD.

Thirdly, the results of this investigation lead us to agree with Chacón (2007) on a fundamental requirement of incorporating ICT as a tool for personal development in the teaching of pupils with special educational needs. The significance of technology is not only in access to important curricular content, but the personal and social consequences of such access (Alba, 1998).

In this sense, the media must be appropriate to the teaching methodology and consistent with the abilities and learning styles of students. One of the advantages of educational software is the possibility of using it in different scenarios: regular classes, small group classes, computer classes for all, etc. As the educational software logs the progress of each student who uses it, the teacher can adapt the course to each student.

In conclusion, the research objectives have focussed on the concerns of social and educational institutions to meet the challenge of accessibility and use of technological media. This project aims to promote digital inclusion in the media to enable the integration of people who have difficulty in accessing technology. In our view, the overcoming of this barrier is conducive to inclusive education and positive educational settings where all students have a place. This in turn will help to eradicate the digital divide in access to and use of computers that occurs among different groups, such as people with ASD.

## Notes

[1]The teaching tasks are divided into five levels where the point awarded at each level varies in progressive value to task completion (Value 1: Do not exceed the level. Values 2-4: intermediate values not exceeding the task. Value 5: above the level).

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# From Cultural Industries to Entertainment and Creative Industries. The Boundaries of the Cultural Field

## De industrias culturales a industrias del ocio y creativas: los límites del «campo» cultural

ABSTRACT
This article analyzes the current trend towards dilution of the concept of «cultural industries» and the increasing usage of terms such as «entertainment industries», «leisure industries» or even «creative industries». We review recent specialized literature, identify overlapping between the above terms and conclude that this change is a new turning point in the concept of culture, closely associated with new spaces and times for its enjoyment, with the technological evolution of cultural products, changes in the ownership of their suppliers as well as with the shifting roles of author, actor and spectator. To understand this change, we identify and explain three factors: 1) from the strong, closed materiality and textuality of the classic cultural product to the malleability and convertibility permitted by new technologies; 2) from an essentially contemplative, reverent cultural experience to participant experimentation and play; 3) from a desire for permanence and intensity to constitutive contingency and superficiality. We conclude by suggesting wider implications that go beyond the scope of this work: the melting pot that blurs the boundaries between culture and entertainment, which undermines the autonomy of the disputed cultural «field» situated between work and leisure (more pleasant than the first, more demanding than the second), and which also erases the boundaries between cultural entertainment and work (a merged environment of «otium and negotium», «homo ludens» and «homo laborans»).

RESUMEN
El artículo analiza la tendencia actual a la dilución del concepto de «industrias culturales» en fórmulas como «industrias del ocio», «del entretenimiento» o incluso «industrias creativas». Revisamos la bibliografía reciente especializada, acotamos el alcance y los solapamientos entre los términos mencionados y argumentamos que rubrican la deriva del concepto de «cultura», íntimamente asociada a nuevos espacios y tiempos de su disfrute, a mutaciones tecnológicas de los productos culturales, a cambios en la titularidad de sus proveedores, así como de los roles de autor, actor y espectador. Para entender esta mutación recurrimos a tres factores: 1) de la materialidad y textualidad fuertes, cerradas, exentas, del producto cultural clásico a la maleabilidad y convertibilidad que permiten las nuevas tecnologías, 2) de una experiencia cultural esencialmente contemplativa y reverente a una experimentación participante, en constante circulación, mancomunada y lúdica; 3) de una aspiración a la permanencia y la hondura, a una constitutiva contingencia y superficialidad. Finalmente apuntamos implicaciones más ambiciosas, que desbordan el alcance del trabajo: ese totum revolutum que desdibuja las fronteras entre cultivarse y entretenerse, que socava la autonomía de ese disputado tercero en discordia –llamado «cultura»– entre el trabajo y el ocio (más placentero que el primero y más trascendente y esforzado que el segundo), también alcanza a borrar los límites entre ese ocio cultural y el propio trabajo (el neg-ocio, en definitiva).

KEYWORDS / PALABRAS CLAVE
Cultural industries, leisure industries, entertainment industries, creative industries, postproduction, cultural field.
Industrias culturales, industrias del ocio, industrias del entretenimiento, industrias creativas, postproducción.

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## 1.Culture and leisure in retrospective

Less than half a century ago, there was a clear difference between Mass Culture (or Cultural Industries)[1] and Mass Entertainment or Leisure. Proof of this lies in two anthologies which came out within a year of each other from the same publisher, both containing work by highly prestigious contributors (Rosenberg & White, 1957; Larrabee & Meyersohn, 1958). In «Mass Culture», interests listed were popular literature, comics, cinema, radio and television, popular music and advertising. In «Mass Leisure», interests were attributed to the person at play or recreation, not to the consumer of cultural and media industries, although all these activities might be pursued in one's spare time. Pursuits analysed were sport, hobbies, vacations and activities such as membership of an association or social life away from the home (restaurants, social gatherings, bars, pubs and dance halls). We could say that the editors made an implicit distinction between services or products (books, records, films, TV programs) created by others, which required a mere contemplative attitude (as readers, listeners or spectators), and leisure time... for essentially active pursuits where participation in the spatial sense requires that we actively join in.

The authors of the collected texts in both publications were authorities in their field.. In «Mass Culture», contributors included Ortega, Greenberg, Kracauer, Adorno, MacDonald, Löwenthal, Riesman, McLuhan and Lazarsfeld, among others. «Mass Leisure» compiled texts by Huizinga, Mead, Piaget, Russell, Lafargue, Riesman (again), Lynes and Katz.

By the turn of the century, these limits became less well-defined and cultural industries were attracted to and absorbed by proximity to other industries that began to colonise people's spare time.

The «Entertainment Industry» (Vogel, 2004; Caves, 2006) or the concept of «Leisure Industries» (Roberts, 2004), or even crossovers such as «culture and leisure industries» (García Gracia & al.; 2000, 2001, 2003) are categories that mix stage productions, popular literature, cinema, radio, television and videogames together with participative sports, betting, gambling and casinos, theme parks and tourism, adult toys and games and even shopping, dining out and the consumption of alcoholic drinks. (Vogel[2], 2004: 355-530; Roberts[3], 2004: 61-198). As far as the label «Creative Industries» is concerned, and its apparent desire to prevail (Caves, 2000; Blythe, 2001; Negus, 2006; Deuze, 2009), the limits are less clear: in some instances these are restrictive rather than classic «cultural industries», since they identify more with the Arts (plastic, literary, stage, musical, plus film and television fiction) and exclude mass communication and the news media (Caves, 2000), whereas in other uses their embrace is wider as they include all the classic sectors plus advertising, industrial design, fashion and interactive software (Jeffcutt & Pratt, 2002; Blythe, 2001)[4]. In the drift away from traditional cultural industries, as the subject of studies on economic and political culture (Huet, 1978; Flichy, 1980; Miège, 1986; Zallo, 1988, 1992; Bustamante & Zallo, 1988), to the all-inclusive «leisure» or «entertainment» or «creative» industries, we find a number of interrelated features which are common to the evolution witnessed in other industrial sectors.

## 2. Digital leisure and culture: convergence, hyper-productability and transfiguration

The material nature of cultural «texts» (whether written, visual, audiovisual, musical, etc.), is exactly what allows their conversion into economic «goods», as the sequence of their transmission presents them as what we might call «acquirable objects»: books, records or videos (publications) but also television (flow culture) increasingly marketed in the shape of catalogue products («video on demand» for example), or where the stream itself is on sale (pay per view). We might remind ourselves at this point that one of the most solid features of the concept of the Cultural Industry was not the mere commercialisation of culture, but also its industrialisation, which allowed for reproduction of its media format, using specific equipment (Benjamin, 1973; Lacroix & Tremblay, 1997: 68; Hesmondhalgh, 2007: 55-58; Lash & Lury 2007: 1-15).

Nevertheless, what we are witnessing now is the «hyper-reproducibility» of cultural products transformed into a numerical matrix which, on the one hand stimulates demand –by ensuring availability and enabling that insatiable appetite for new products, which is the defining feature of telematic cultural consumption– and on the other, promotes the free access to the product itself, due to cooperative exchanges (creative commons licences and «copy-lefts», p2p exchange protocols for mp3 and mp4 files and the circulation of free software), as well as through social networking (Facebook, MySpace, Twitter), which stimulate exchange and specialised websites for music (Spotify, Goear, Lastfm, Grooveshark), photography (Flickr), vídeo (YouTube, BlipTV) and film (Peliculasyonkis, Cinetube).

Yet we are lacking in certain aspects. Prior to the revolution in new technologies, many authors spoke of

cultural goods as «immaterial» goods (Hirsch, 1972: 639, 641-2; Lacroix & Tremblay, 1997: 11-19), such that one may be able to identify the fulfilment of this «dematerialising» destiny within the process we describe here. Nonetheless, «immaterial» is misleading since, in reality, its use aimed to contrast what we might call the prosaic, immediate and universal monosemous utility of «material goods» with that other aesthetic misdemeanour of cultural goods, namely the more ethereal, drawn out and subjective. Beware!. Cultural products are of an unquestionably material nature (Miller, 1987, 2005; Storey, 1999; Lévy, 2007: 40-1). This may sometimes take the form of a tangible quality, which they possess and can move from one place to another, and which have texture, colour and shape, to wit, a design (a bound book, with its pages printed using a certain font type with a picture on the front and back covers, its jacket and marker ribbon, or the packaging for a phonographic or video recording, with a special design for the album or movie cover and, of course, the design itself, its graphic image, the usability of the menu which allows one to access audiovisual content, but also the design of the computer –or TV set– itself due to its ergonomic design). Or it may, without the need to take the shape of a physical object, continue to occupy space and time in what may be described in physical terms (a film screening, listening to an audio recording, even from a computer screen, by means of its speakers). We refer to two series of phenomena which needed to be differentiated: it is true that cultural experience does not end in pure materiality, but that it should transcend it, thus signifying the need to read the book, listen to the record or see the film in order to get to their very core, and those experiences are infinite and thus repeatable. Nevertheless, we cannot overlook nor relegate the material dimension, a necessary condition which may go beyond the genuine aesthetic experience but which might determine the same. Our attention does not just penetrate the fonts of a printed book –or the screen of an e-book– we are reading to get the sense and the plot constructed within its pages; nor is listening immune to the balance of treble and bass, the positioning of the speakers or the acoustics of the space where it is being reproduced, that is to say, strictly material conditions. To say that cultural products –even in the digital age– are «immaterial» is to confuse cause with effect. The cause is always material and its effect is always embodied in the interaction between this materiality (visual, audio, audiovisual, in any case, physical) and a mind which, through bodily senses, cognitive patterns and prior experience, interprets and enjoys.

Notwithstanding, what we have been witnessing for a number of years now is not so much the dematerialisation of the cultural good, but perhaps a «transfiguration» or «transubstantiation», so radical as to make it difficult for us to understand the «material» nature of these new figures or substances. It is not so much that the product vanishes into thin air, but rather it becomes voluble, malleable, «liquid», as Bauman might say, assumes it convertibility due to some type of digital «equivalence». One thing seems clear at any rate: our wonder at being able to fit entire libraries, news or sound archives in a computer or even a USB memory stick (shall we say, downloaded, off-line), or even more so, that they are accessible and linked to one another in the vast territory which is Internet (let's say, online, in that common ground called «the cloud»), must be about as exciting as the feelings of the early Twentieth Century music lover when listening to the gramophone or the radio, or those of the first television viewers midway through the same century.

In any case, having made these points, the conversion of what we might term a classic cultural product (the book, record, film or videotape) into a digital file or accessible online document and its assimilation into a setting such as a computer, where

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reading, listening or watching these works converges and merges into other leisure forms (such as videogames, word puzzles and gambling, sports betting and lotteries, chat rooms) encourages the assimilation of culture from a range of entertainment opportunities, as well as offering absolutely indiscriminate, ubiquitous, portable, desecrated enjoyment, independent of moments of time, places, rituals and special or specialised intermediaries.

### 3. From contemplation to participation, from experience to «experimentation» and from informed to «performative»

The conversion of what we might term a classic cultural product the book, record, film on videotape) into a digital file or accessible online document and its assimilation into a setting such as a computer, where reading, listening or watching these works converges and merges into other leisure forms (such as videogames, word puzzles and gambling, sports betting and lotteries, chat rooms) encourages the assimilation of culture from a range of entertainment opportunities.

The textuality and materiality of culture, to a certain extent «cold», «shut», recede and, by contrast, emphasis is placed on their character as «experience», which is liable to result in coproductive participation. And from there, the drift towards phenomena as diverse as games, tourism, theme parks or betting, where the roles of author, actor and spectator become confused, looks to be much easier to digest. That is to say, culture ceases to be perceived as distant, closed work which is treasured, stored away, protected and admired but never touched, and starts to be seen as action, which is fulfilled as soon as the receptor finds something which stimulates and moves him, and that is when its proximity to other leisure time activities becomes immediate. The exclusive ownership of a cultural good, its withdrawal for enjoyment at a later time and the reverence afforded to its author are no longer what sets its value, rather its total availability for access at any time and in any place. On the other hand, these goods are no longer private property occupying an unalterable space and time as set by their author, but constitutively unfinished texts which fluctuate, proliferate and which are always subject to the possibility of participative intervention, criticism, review, ironic transformation and parody, due to the possibility of mere unlimited reproduction and cooperative, globalised distribution (García Canclini, 2007).

That is to say, it is not only a matter of immateriality –the convertibility, or rather, the transubstantiation– of cultural goods which stands above all else, at the precise moment of «experience», of true consummation – but rather encouraging democratic creativity, of experimenting one might say, by creative touching or holding. This refers to an experience which goes beyond mere contemplation –almost mystical, ecstatic and essentially static– and which implies intervention, practice, trial and error, a «game» if you like, which points to know-how and the transmission of knowledge, towards feeling, sharing and awaiting an appropriate answer. Paradoxes, or perhaps not: the greater the intangible nature of the cultural product, fragmented into bits –whatever their nature– which hurtle down fibre optic cables at frightening speed, the greater then is the intervention of a receptor who is required to use his senses, not only to receive information but also to perform operations with it: the operator must step forward (although this may be using an alias) and must reveal his behaviour, the more open, unfinished, random and provisional the product is.

This also applies to interactive narration –whether literary or audiovisual– where we are offered diverse prosecutions of the plot from which we are able to choose (or indeed, test them all or suggest others). There is also a proliferation of web-based initiatives which result in the creation of audiovisual or musical montages («mashups», DJ style mixes, «lipdubs» with their mass choreographed play-back performances of hit songs, false trailers –for movies which do not exist– or trailers where the soundtrack, titles or sequencing

parody the genre of a well-known file, home movies…) (Yúdice, 2007; Díaz Arias, 2009; Lipovetsky & Serroy, 2009). Not overlooking phenomena such as «wiki», «blogs» or social networking, telematic practices that do not feed off a single product as regards productivity, which are always ongoing, which exist precisely due to their own precarious stability at the moment of access, but which can be modified the very next second, by us or by complete strangers. This is not confined to the everyday web user, but also applies to still-institutionalised artistic practices –to wit, those linked to literary, plastic, film and musical creation– whose works reflect this vast (post) production so closely related to the «sampler» (Bourriaud, 2005; Fernández Porta, 2007, 2008)[5].

Moreover, it may be claimed that the digitalization of cultural goods –literature, painting, cinema, music– has greatly modified the way in which we understand the experience / experimentation. Before, cultural experience was a «circumscribed» activity, if you like, meaning that it applied exclusively to an object and was thus «intense» and almost always «intimate». Cultural experience today, however, seems to focus attention not on a single point with any vigour in an effort to get right inside the thing, but rather it follows a path which jumps from one place to another, without stopping for any longer than is necessary to gain the impetus needed to propel it on to the next interconnected node. It is not so much a case of diving for treasure, once located, but surfing skilfully over the crests of waves as they emerge intermittently and upon which we linger at our peril, due to the risk of sinking and thus ending our voyage. Before, a book, a film and musical score could, and had to be, self-sufficient entities which required no outside help to move them on to find fulfilment within, under many layers perhaps, but nevertheless within. In any case, the inner meaning might be traceable to other examples of the same species: books which found their meaning in other books or paintings in other paintings or movies in other movies. Today a book, successful books at least, are popular to a great extent because they connect to other portions of experience which go beyond literature and whose interpretation and greater enjoyment is not found within the scope of literature itself: it is found in film, television, music, advertising, comics, the daily news, in «Popular Science», in History, in the pages of the local paper… and vice versa (Baricco, 2008: 112-118; Fernández Porta, 2007, 2008).

All this, if we look carefully, is exactly the way the Internet works: that hypertextuality which undermines (or contaminates or sews) each text with «links» which take us to other links on any subject, inviting us to skip from one to another, without even finishing the first text before us and which now vanishes from sight (although it can always be recovered) as we move on to the next one that grabs our attention and which invites us to go on to another beyond, for connections which are full of logic, in this case fuzzy logic. That same experience of connection is what sets the hierarchy of Google searches: the results list is not ordered using the number of times the word we seek appears, but above all by the number and relevance of texts which refer to (which link and quote) the text which we are supposedly seeking. And that is supposed to be the most useful, since it is the most connected, where the greatest number of web-based documents converge and, thus, link together portions of knowledge in a series which is extendable virtually to infinity but is also especially dense and attractive at certain points (Battelle, 2006).

To sum up, as opposed to the cultural experience of times gone by, which was circumscribed, intense, intimate, erudite and profound, today's is disperse, superficial and fast. That is to say, if we wish, a diversion (or a distraction. This explains the cohabitation of culture and entertainment: culture itself has become fun because it sparkles, glows, precisely in that «between» the interconnected points, in transit and not in coming to rest at a particularly dense point.

### 4. From transcendence to contingence, from conoisseur to consumer

Finally, the persistence or transcendence of culture, which outlives not only the moment of contact, but also the life granted both to its author and to its receptor and which travels down the centuries, embodied in works which are the object of veneration and study (Arendt, 1961, 1996), withers before the ephemeral, consumable characteristics of cultural input, always threatened by the fragility of the situation, of the opportunity, instant success and instant forgetting, not due so much to exhaustion, but to inundation: the unstoppable tide of other seductive offers, which are just as ephemeral but which replace the current number one story with those upcoming, just as each wave reaches, breaks over and erases the previous one, as it retreats and leaves foam which is not its own, but the echo of all those which have gone before mixed together. It is then that this immediate form of pleasure from cultural experience seems to merge into the immediate pleasure from other forms of leisure, in its irrelevance and in its, shall we say,

«frivolity» (Rodríguez Ferrándiz, 2008). Now, that superficiality –multidimensional or rather, multi-tasking– of current cultural experience, which allows the web surfer to simultaneously read, for example, a fictional story on the Internet or an article on naturo-pathy, whilst listening to chill-out versions of the works of Chopin or Mozart and all the while keeping an eye on the latest TV ghost story or crime series without having to resist the temptation to share what he is reading, listening to or seeing with his Facebook contacts, and digest, judge and perhaps even analyse, cannot be dismissed at a stroke by claiming that it is nothing more than a shortcut to the effort required by a genuine cultural experience. So, summarising, analysing, expressing opinions, linking the story to other texts and even modifying it cannot be discredited. That superficiality cannot be explained merely as the resource of the latter-day Barbarian who destroys the liturgies and rites of that experience at the same time as the very same sacred content which had been revealed. That experience is not merely an easy, convenient way out, but requires a different kind of effort. What precedes undoubtedly obliges us to reset the limits of the cultural «field» (Bourdieu, 2008): its agents (and patients), its autonomy or heteronomy with respect to other fields (far more difficult to distinguish today than was the case years ago), the appropriation of cultural capital and its impact on a far wider creative economy, the production of culture and its successive post-production, the productive routines required in any sector and, especially, the educational routines which serve to train those productive sectors, our responsibility as modest but increasingly empowered producers, prescribers or consumers of culture and leisure.

## 5. Balance and perspectives

All this portrays an ambivalent, paradoxical panorama. On the one hand, there are some who, quite reasonably, lament the fact that attending theatre or opera is to be compared, as regards ways of using one's leisure, with visits to theme parks or casinos (or in its virtual forms: videogames or betting websites), or that a record or book can be considered in the same light as dining out or adventure holidays (let's say, gastronomic or recreational experiences). Others would argue, and rightly so, that culture which requires the reverential pilgrimage to the theatre or opera is tainted by snobbery, as a ritual which expresses differences, and that a book, record or film as material objects become fetishes, to be revered, collected and exhibited without having been read, listened to or watched. By contrast, there is the exaltation of the experience of doing something with culture (streamed music or video, in full flow at the moment of access, for example) and beyond that, creative experiments (enlarging, glossing over, modifying, embellishing, enriching, remixing internet content) and cohabitation (share, cast it back into the fray that is Internet, recommend or criticise it) is to bestow culture with its rightful factual dimension, where culture is not a hidden treasure, but the some-times bumpy journey, even if that pairs it with other experiences which are not cultural in the sense of being «cultivated» or of «excellence». Some may remind us, as Adorno does (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1994: 189; Adorno, 2009), that contact with culture generates pleasure, of course, but it is a serious, austere pleasure, in contrast to mere distraction or entertainment, which are its caricature. And others will argue that the gravity required of culture begs the question: cultural mandarins of all ages have always presided over what the appropriate attitudes are, and have demanded effort, made difficulties and erected barriers for both the creator and the receptor, difficulties or barriers that served to classify and to exclude.

Perhaps the error is not so much in having to choose between one set of responses or another, all of which, while still opposed, represent different forms of malaise with respect to what should be considered culture. The problem, perhaps, lies in the scope of the question. It is not so much a question of accentuating the levelling effect which would seem to degrade culture and exalt –within the action of making comparisons– the mere distraction, or as a way of spending one's time, but to take on board the complete removal of the limits between leisure time and working time.

When leisure is delimited, whether or not culture is included here – it would seem to be necessary to regard it in contrast to business, which would be its very negation («otium» vs. «negotium»). However, it is true that we are witnessing not only the confusion between leisure which lifts and ennobles and that which dissipates and brutalises (to exaggerate the extreme poles), but an overlapping and even coincidence in time and space for leisure and work, the industrialisation, rationalisation and commer-cialisation of leisure and a soft, malleable, informal view of work (Virno, 2003), both ravaged by the same torrential outburst which mixes new technologies, participative cohabitation, experimentation: of «homo ludens» and «homo laborans».

## Notes

[1] This is not the place to discuss the terms «Mass Culture» and «Cultural Industry», which do not fit exactly, nor the transition from «Cultural Industry» in the singular, to the more descriptive, as opposed to qualitative «Cultural Industries» (Rodríguez Ferrándiz, 2009a, 2009b, 2010). There are very interesting discussions on this topic in «Cuadernos de Información y Comunicación», 9 (2004) and in «Revista de Occidente», 290-1 (2005), both dedicated to Mass Culture. There are also sectorial studies on cultural industries, applied to both Spain (Bustamante, 2002), Latin America (Mastrini & Becerra, 2006; Castro, 2008) and the world in general (Bustamante, 2003, 2004, 2007).

[2] Vogel's book was originally titled «Entertainment Industry Economics» (2001), but has since been translated as «La industria de la cultura y el ocio» (2004), a translation which is less confusing to the Spanish speaking reader. The author dedicates each of the two long chapters of his book to «Media and Entertainment» and «Live Entertainment», respectively, which would seem to suggest a distinction between «textual» mediation, which keeps it distance and where the viewer is limited to his or her condition as a contemplator, and live enjoyment, which allows and requires participation but which are both considered as «entertainment». In the first, he analyses film, television, music, radio, the Internet, the publishing industry and games and toys, and in the second, casinos, betting firms, sports, theme and recreational parks and «performing arts and culture». As can be seen, there are unexplained contradictions in both lists.

[3] Roberts organizes his study into three large sections, Providers (commercial leisure, voluntary activities and the public sector), Provisions and Policies. Among the leisure domains, he points out that the three most important, given the proportion of the population involved, the time dedicated to them and the volume of business generated, are tourism, dining out and the «media». Some distance behind come sports, games of chance and the arts. He suggests that many sectors are interrelated and overlap, and enjoy synergies which support them: tourism nearly always implies eating out and often also implies attendance at artistic shows or visits to museums, sports may be watched live or on the television, etc.

[4] The label «Creative Industries» already enjoys institutional recognition in Great Britain where, since 1998, it has been the responsibility of the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (Blythe, 2001: 145-146). This Department claims that «Creative Industries» are «those activities which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property» and include «advertising, architecture, the art and antiques market, crafts, design, designer fashion, film, interactive leisure software, music, the performing arts, publishing, software and television and radio» (Jeffcutt & Pratt, 2002: 227). The label «creative industries» has been gaining ground since the beginning of the 21st Century, in academic literature and, above all, in publications on economic geography, the economics of culture and urban studies, especially in Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian countries. For well-argued criticism of the concept, see Garnham, 2005; Zallo, 2007; Bustamante, 2009.

[5] This mutation, often presented in optimistic, even enthusiastic terms, also has its shady side. The participating consumer («prosumer» was the term coined by Toffler back in 1980, and «mass auto-communication» is the term given to the process by Castells (2009: 87-108) which, on the one hand, stimulates, involves, marks, creates and shares and on the other, may even tend to show off its own triviality, with no clear conscience of what it owes or leaves behind for posterity, encouraged by the immediacy, the cause of such confusion in Internet, at every moment of use, as regards the limits to the recognisable, the intelligible and also the usable, in true Do-It-Yourself style.

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# Report about the Media Literacy Situation in the Basque School Community

## Estado de la alfabetización audiovisual en la comunidad escolar vasca

ABSTRACT
This article gathers together the results of a quantitative and qualitative piece of research conducted between 2007 and 2010 by the HGH «Hedabideak, Gizartea eta Hezkuntza» (Media, Society and Education) research team at the University of the Basque Country. The main aim of the research was to examine the situation of Media Literacy in the Basque Country's school community. One of the newest aspects of this research was the study of the school community as a whole, at a specific moment and in a specific field; in other words, the students, teachers and parents of the same community. The results of the quantitative study have been taken from a survey done among 598 young people between 14 and 18 years old enrolled in Secondary or Further Education, or in Vocational Training courses. The qualitative study took into account the information extracted from ten focus groups and six in-depth interviews. Young people between the ages of 14 and 18, parents between 40 and 55, and eight experts of different ages took part in the discussions. Through the in-depth interviews the research team observed the opinions of eight educators who teach Education in Media. According to the results, the education system should include media education among its priorities.

RESUMEN
El presente artículo recoge los principales resultados de una investigación cuantitativa y cualitativa llevada a cabo durante el período 2007-10 por el equipo de investigación HGH (Medios de Difusión, Sociedad y Educación) de la Universidad del País Vasco. El principal objetivo de la misma ha sido analizar el estado de la alfabetización audiovisual (Media Literacy) en el entorno de la comunidad escolar del País Vasco. Una de las principales novedades del presente trabajo radica en que se ha analizado el conjunto de la comunidad escolar en un momento y entorno concreto; es decir, teniendo en cuenta la opinión tanto de alumnado, como de profesorado y padres. Los resultados de la investigación cuantitativa se han extraído de una encuesta realizada a 598 jóvenes vascos de entre 14 y 18 años escolarizados tanto en institutos de Secundaria y Bachillerato como en centros de Formación Profesional. La investigación cualitativa se ha fundamentado en la información recogida a través de diez grupos de discusión y seis entrevistas en profundidad. En los grupos han participado jóvenes de la misma edad (entre 14 y 18 años) por una parte y padres y madres de entre 40 y 55 años por otro. En las entrevistas en profundidad, se ha testado la opinión de ocho profesores que imparten docencia en materias relacionadas con la educación en comunicación (educomunicación). A tenor de los resultados, el sistema educativo debería introducir la educomunicación entre sus prioridades.

KEYWORDS / PALABRAS CLAVE
Media literacy, school community, media education, ICT.
Alfabetización audiovisual, comunidad escolar, Educación en Comunicación, TIC.

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## 1. Introduction

This piece of work has been produced by the research team known as the HGH (Mass media, Society and Education) set up in 2003. It is a multi-disciplinary team that groups together lecturers belonging to different knowledge areas –media communication, journalism and art education– who work in various faculties of the University of the Basque Country.

The conclusions presented here are the result of the second research project carried out by this group. The work started at the end of 2007 and was completed during the first semester of 2010. The main aim was to research the current degree of media literacy of the Basque school community as a whole – pupils, teachers and parents or guardians– by applying sufficiently proven quantitative and qualitative methods which are dealt with in further detail below.

Over the last 40 years many authors have made valuable contributions to this subject (Media Literacy). In the Anglo-Saxon sphere the ones that stand out in particular owing to their global perspective are those produced by Mastermann (1979, 1980, 1985, 1993), Luckham (1975), Firth (1976), Golay (1973), Gerbner (1983), Jones (1984) and Duncan (1996). More recent are the contributions of Nathanson (2002, 2004), Buckingham (2005), Stein & Prewett (2009), Larson (2009), Livingstone & Brake (2010) and Gainer (2010). Some of the contributions in Spanish worthy of mention are Kaplun (1998), Aparici (1994), García Matilla (1996, 2004), Aguaded (1998, 2000), Orozco (1999) and Ferrés (2007).

Other authors have thrown themselves into applied research taken to the classrooms. This is the case of pieces of work by teachers like Hall & Whannel (1964), Galtung & Ruge (1965), Berger (1972), Cohen & Young (1973), Hall (1977) and Bonney & Wilson (1983). It would be unforgivable to omit from this list the French authority Celestin Freinet, the true father of popular pedagogy and pioneer of the introduction of the newspaper into the school. It would also be an indescribable oversight to ignore the work carried out over the last 25 years by the journal Comunicar in the Latin American sphere. In the last decade alone this journal has published many pieces of research on media literacy from a range of viewpoints. So worth highlighting are the theoretical pieces of work on media competences published by Ferrés (2007) or on digital literacy by Moreno (2008). Also relevant have been the contributions on Educommunication made by Barranquero (2007), Cortes de Cervantes (2006), Tucho (2006), Ambrós (2006) and Percebal & Tejedor (2008). We end this list by citing the research which, like our own, has focussed its analysis on the media literacy of youngsters in the area of Argentina (Fleitas & Zamponi, 2002), Brazil (Esperón 2005) or Spain (Marí, 2006).

The data obtained in all these pieces of work have served to illustrate our working hypothesis better by focussing it specifically on Basque society, a community with its own identity, bilingualism and with a high degree of technological development.

A central hypothesis was an apparently obvious starting point for us but it needed the certification of the data: the failure to address the subject of communication in a mainstream way is leading to serious gaps in the media literacy of the Basque school community as a whole. This hypothesis necessarily entails a series of RQ Research Questions that the current research aims to shed light on. They are as follows:

- RQ1: How do teachers who have worked on this subject at high schools rate their own work?
- RQ2: What is the degree of media literacy of Basque youngsters between 14 and 18? Are they capable of interpreting the keys of media language?
- RQ3: Is it possible to achieve an acceptable level of media literacy without doing specific media studies?
- RQ4: In the family environment is there any kind of filter or criterion imposed by parents or guardians when it comes to consuming mass media?
- RQ5: How have guardians been experiencing the technology revolution in recent years?

## 2. Material and methods.

The results of this piece of research are based on methods for quantitative and qualitative analysis applied to the school community as a whole in its different strata: pupils, teachers and parents or guardians. The combination of the two techniques has been fundamental when correctly evaluating the global nature of the study, and this has allowed us to put the piece of data within the framework of its natural context without straying one inch from the accuracy of the number. Let us start by detailing the qualitative methodology. The group used two widely recognised techniques of qualitative analysis. We are referring to the focus groups or discussion groups (a total of ten were carried out; eight among pupils between 14 and 18 and another two with parents) and in-depth semi-structured interviews.

### 2.1. Variables used.

The composition of the eight focus groups conducted among the youngsters was structured

bearing in mind two independent variables:

• The age and academic levels of the participants. On the one hand, students in the 3rd and 4th years in Statutory Secondary Education (14-16 years) were chosen, and on the other, youngsters in the first and second years of the Sixth form (16-18 years).

• The syllabus. The groups were structured on the basis of the presence or absence of some kind of subject related to educommunication.

The dependent variable used in the three strata researched has been the state of media literacy itself.

### 2.2. Procedure.

• The opinions of the pupils were gathered in eight groups belonging to as many schools[1]. Four of them comprised students doing sixth form studies specialising in arts or having disciplines directly linked to educommunication included in their syllabuses. This variable did not appear in the remaining four. In all the cases the debate was initiated by the viewing of the opening sequence[2] of the film «The Lion King» (Walt Disney, 1994).

• To find out the views of the teachers, five in-depth interviews were carried out and seven educators participated in them[3], (in one of them the people taking part numbered three).

• To find out the opinion of the parents or guardians, two focus groups were held. The first took place in Gasteiz (Vitoria); the second in Bilbao. In the first, the group was made up of a random selection, while the second was formed by the executive committee of the EHIGE, the organisation coordinating Parents in the Basque Country and which brings together 240 associations. In addition, a person in a position of authority in this association with broad experience in the subject gave an in-depth interview.

The quantitative data were extracted from a survey carried out between November 2009 and February 2010 by the company Aztiker. The universe of the survey was made up of 107,467 young school pupils in the Basque Country between the ages of 14 and 18, from high schools and vocational training centres. A representative sample made up of the 598 youngsters was selected from this broad universe[4]. The field work was carried out by means of the «simultaneous group application» method (Wimmer & Dominick, 1996: 136). This means that the information is gathered on the basis of a self-applied questionnaire. Each person surveyed fills in his/her own questionnaire. The team conducting the survey went to the schools, to the pupils' normal classrooms. Groups of 15 to 20 youngsters were formed. Prior to this, a person conducting the survey from the above-mentioned company explained to them in detail the mechanics of the questionnaire, and projected the audiovisual material on which some of the questions were based.

**Both the qualitative and quantitative results gathered here confirm the central hypothesis that gave rise to this research: the failure to address the subject of communication in a mainstream way is leading to serious gaps in the media literacy in the Basque school community as a whole. This community is set to undergo radical changes in a brief period of time. Within a decade teachers that are considerably younger than the present ones will be teaching a generation of students that is more skilled in digital strategies than present one.**

## 3. Results

The main results of our research are summarised as follows.

### 3.1. Qualitative research

We will be starting with the qualitative research. We have structured these reflections on the basis of the three strata analysed: teachers, pupils and parents or guardians.

#### 3.1.1. Experiences of the teachers

The interviews carried out revealed a very broad teacher profile. In all the cases ITCs were determining factors, but their proximity to the educommunication sphere had sprung from various concerns: the world

of the videoclip, cinema, the photograph, the Internet or computing, for example. All the teachers interviewed were self-taught; they had trained themselves after many hours spent accumulating and contrasting multiple experiences.

Among the testimonies gathered some were particularly illustrative, like for example the experience of the Amara Berri public school in Donostia-San Sebastian. This school, founded in 1979, has come up with its own method of educommunication called the «Amara Berri Sistema». It is a benchmark in the Basque Country's school community to the point where it has been adopted by another 18-20 schools in the area. The main players are students in primary education. The pupils do not follow an ordinary text book for studying mathematics, for example; they learn the metric system as people in charge of an imaginary shop, or what a mortgage is when they have to repay a loan to the bank which is run by another classmate. Nor do they have ordinary language classes. Instead, they produce a newspaper every day, edit radio and television programmes, interact through their «txiki-web» website and even offer talks with those who have overcome their fear of speaking in public. The process is very co-operative and is always supervised by the teachers. Since 1990 when the Basque Government recognised the innovative nature of the school, the Amara Berri System has been perfected from year to year.

All the teachers interviewed have coincided when demanding greater commitment from people in charge of Education. In the view of these teachers, educommunication cannot be a mere technological discipline, but an instrument capable of training free, 21st century citizens. This need becomes more acute if one takes into consideration the background with which the students arrive in the classrooms. The teacher MPY reflected on this in the following terms: «This is a generation with a vast accumulation of technical knowledge: they have been glued to the telly, they obtain and swap materials, photos and masses of things over the Internet, they know how to look for new things on it. They have accumulated a vast background even though they don't often realise it. And when they get the chance, they surpass you immediately. The teacher has to be humble; he or she has to give them the bases and then let them flourish».

### 3.1.2. Interpretative competences of the youngsters

The main aim of the focus groups among the youngsters was not only to delve into their interpretative competences, but also to find out if significant differences really exist in the degree of media literacy among those who have or have not done subjects linked to educommunication.

We would start off by saying that differences do exist. The adolescents trained in educommunication display an interpretative maturity greater than that of the ones who have not done these kinds of subjects. That is particularly clear when it comes to differentiating between denotation and connotation, when a determined shot is designated or when they interpret the communicative function of a specific frame. Nevertheless, it is equally true that for other youngsters without training in educommunication, the mere accumulation of cultural text throughout their lives has generated for them the necessary intellectual springboard to develop certain interpretative capacities. Even in the groups in which no one was capable of citing a «grammatical» film norm (frame, lighting), there were youngsters capable of making interesting reflections on another level.

In our research, the method of the focus groups itself turned out to be revealing. As the discussion progressed, many participants modified totally naturally and spontaneously their initial points of view and adopted those of their fellow group members. It is clear that leadership and inertias resulting from dominant opinions come into play during the group discussion. Nevertheless, group communication emerges as a very interesting method for social analysis.

Cultural maturity emerges as a determining factor in interpretative competences. The consideration of the low cognitive development of children is overcome as they get older. The new knowledge acquired with the passing of time can generate autonomous, critical thought. This was the reasoning in one of the interventions of a student of Secondary School with training in educommunication: «I saw the film when I was small and I didn't realise about these things; but now, when you watch it with your little sister, you say… crikey (…) They're trying to get an idea into your head, but then, when you start to think for yourself, you can change that idea, and that is what usually happens, isn't it?».

In the focus groups, Disney emerged as a megacorporation illustrating the symbolic, children's universe. We reproduce below a reflection in a group of Secondary School with educommunication training: «It's a typical Disney film. As it's made for kids, it has to respond to their capacity for understanding (…). That's why they use animals, because it's a film for kids. If people were presented it would be very strange

talking about these things with people; with animals it's easier to get the kids hooked (…) I don't think it's right to fill your heads with these ideas from childhood». The reflection displays a capacity to criticise Disney's communicative strategy. It is probably the result of the greater media training of this group. For the rest of the groups, Disney is something «parents trust».

### 3.1.3. Parents' concerns

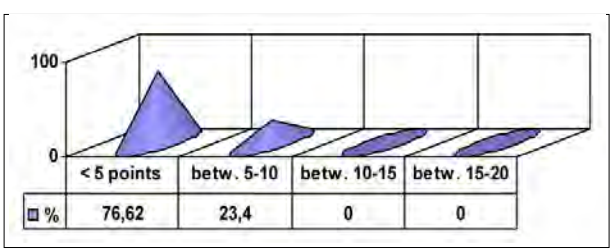
Concern. this is perhaps the sensation that best defines the state that overwhelms parents when faced with these questions. It is a concern linked to a certain confusion caused by the lack of knowledge towards the new technologies that many confess to. The opinions collected through the focus groups were complemented by the information coming out of the in-depth interview given by one representative of the parents (AE) a person with decades of experience in the association and well-versed in the subject being studied.

However, it would be as well when addressing the phenomenon to point out that among the parents or guardians there are appreciable differences. As the aforementioned AE reveals, the digital gap is also present within this group: «Nowadays, there are considerable differences between people. The attitude towards the new technologies of a person of 35 is very different from that of a person of 55. In twenty years things have changed an awful lot, and you notice that when you speak to parents».

In general, parents accept the arrival of the new technologies. They believe that they are a reflection of the society and see in them more positive aspects (new forms of communication, interactivity, etc.) than negative ones. However, they do not conceal a feeling of uncertainty, especially when they find that their own children are way ahead of them.

Nostalgia could be another of the keys. Nostalgia for the co-operative street games that parents enjoyed as children and for certain habits that are being lost, like going to libraries. That nostalgia is also linked to the hope of a better future. AE insists on linking the technological perspective and a critical attitude together: «The current panorama is going to change radically in ten years' time. Schools will be totally different. 40% of the teachers are set to retire. In the family environment more than half the parents will not be aware of hardly anything, but they going to have to adapt to the new times, thanks to the influence of their offspring. They will hang on to their values, their ideas, but it will be adaptation; not change».

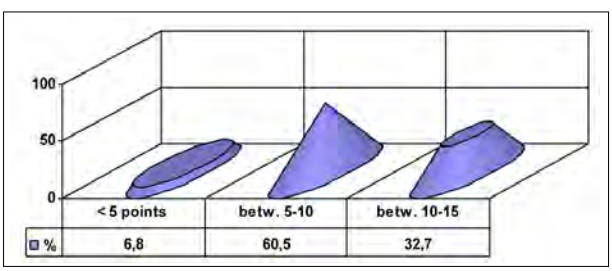
**Graph 1: Degree of knowledge of media language.**
Range: 0-20 points. Source: Aztiker Survey In-house production




### 3.2. Quantitative research

Below we reproduce the main results extracted from the survey conducted among 598 Basque youngsters between 14 and 18. The data are grouped into seven broad sections: media language (maximum 20 points), technological language (max. 15 points), production (12), critical reception (13), values and ideology (25) and aesthetics (15). This produced a grading system from 0 to 100 points which indicated to us the degree of media literacy of each person surveyed. The following graphs summarize the principle findings of our research.

**Graph 2: Degree of knowledge and use of audiovisual equipment.**
Range: 0-20 points. Source: Aztiker Survey




### 3.2.1. Media language

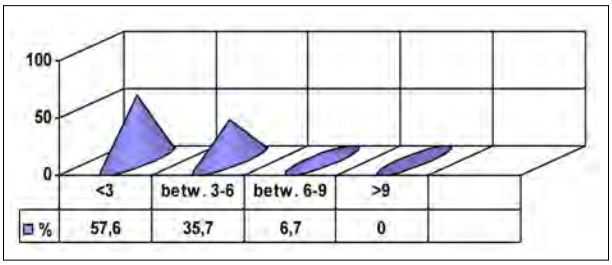
According to the responses gathered, we saw that school adolescents and youngsters were not very well trained in media language. Only a quarter of them were close to passing. The remaining three quarters failed miserably.

### 3.2.2. Technology

This is the section in which our team found the highest number of correct answers. In general, it can be said that Basque youngsters have a good idea about how audiovisual

Graph 3: Degree of knowledge about the process to create an audiovisual product

Range: 0-12 points. Source: Aztiker Survey




equipment works. The data show that nine out of ten are capable of using communicative technologies effectively as far as receivers are concerned. They are autonomous in this respect.

### 3.3.3. Production

This section was designed to verify the degree of knowledge the youngsters had about the creation process of a media product. The questions aimed to find out if those surveyed were capable of: a) describing the jobs of the professionals (for example, of the producers, stage managers, etc.) responsible for the work to produce media materials, and b) to produce a list of the tasks necessary to make a product.

According to the data gathered, it can be said that the level of knowledge about production is very limited among these youngsters.

When it came to describing the world of production, two variables –age and gender– produced considerable statistical differences. As age increases, it is possible to appreciate a greater level of knowledge about the production system. As regards gender, the girls –in this section, too– were more capable than the boys.

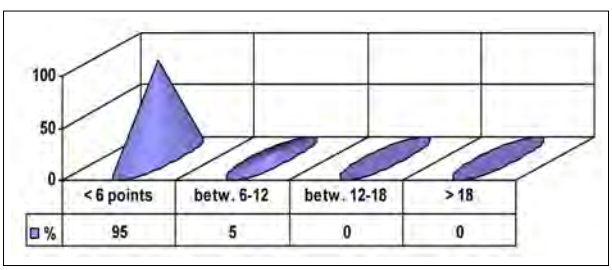
### 3.2.4. Ideology and values

This aspect was developed on the basis of five questions. One of them was on the reflections prompted by one of the advertisements subjected to examination, and another two on whether they found a piece of news more credible if it was accompanied by an image. Those surveyed where not particularly skilful when it came to detecting the underlying ideology and values in the media texts subjected to examination.

In the evaluation of ideological competences we verified that the youngsters used very simple, weak reasoning when it came to grasping and describing the ideological veneer of a media product. Out of a maximum of 25 points allowed by this section no one managed to score even half.

Graph 4: Capacity for interpreting the ideology and values of media products correctly.

Range: 0-25 points. Source: Aztiker Survey




### 3.2.5. Global Assessment

The summation of all the responses offers an alarming assessment. According to thus survey, no Basque schoolboy or girl would today be media literate since none of them scored more than 50 out of the possible total of 100 points. Only three out of ten came slightly closer to passing without managing to do so. These data call for serious reflection.

## 4. Discussion

The results harvested in this piece of research reveal considerable interest on the part of the Basque school community in media literacy. This interest turns into an urgent need in the light of the quantitative results arising from the survey among the youngsters.

The research exposes a Basque education system that is incapable of making the school population media literate. The youngsters are ignorant of the basics of media language. They lack structured discourse to explain in a reasoned way what they have in front of their eyes. They find both the grammar and the rhetoric of media language foreign. Logically, the educational authorities should be taking note of the data compiled here and be including edu-communication among their curricular priorities. Only that way could they take effective steps forwards towards a common goal: the training of citizens who are free, media educated, capable of surviving autonomously in the self-called information society.

Notwithstanding the undoubted interest in the experiences that have been analysed in the area of educommunication in this piece of research, the curricular isolation surrounding them is palpable. The very teachers involved complain about the lack of continuity and absence of global approaches. The technicist perspective takes priority over the critical one. A

fascination for technology reigns, and it can even go as far as blinding and, consequently, hampering the capacity for critical reflection.

The profile of the teachers involved in these experiences is multidisciplinary. The mastery of the new technologies has been a determining factor, but each one has reached the world of educommunication along different roads. They detect gaps in their own experiences and put them down to the lack of mainstream training in these subjects. Although these teachers largely display a really commendable dose of enthusiasm, it is also true that in some of them one can sense a certain intellectual fatigue, which is partly the result of the passing of the years. Teacher motivation is crucial in this subject (as it is in all subjects). It has been extensively shown that if the educator is capable of linking the pedagogical aims with the pupils' social and emotional context, the goals can be achieved more easily. In this respect, the new technologies open up huge possibilities as long as specific content and aims that can be easily identified by the students are added to them.

The youngsters educated in Basque schools where specific experiences in educommunication have been developed display better media literacy. It would be as well to point out that the evolving maturity itself of the youngsters –linked to their age– facilitates greater capacity for interpretation.

The very methodology used in the qualitative research –the focus groups– has emerged as an effective tool in the implementation of the objective to be achieved: media literacy.

The technological revolution occupies and worries parents. They feel overwhelmed and lacking in criteria when faced with a reality which in many cases is beyond them. They even feel incapable of setting limits on the media consumption of their children. Despite this, they see more positive aspects than negative ones in the new technologies. They are demanding a more critical use of these tools.

The results of the survey gathered here should prompt a deep cause for concern among those responsible for education and society in general, particularly if one takes into consideration that the degree of media literacy of the population as a whole will not –presumably– be greater than that demonstrated by the youngsters. The scores achieved are very poor. They point to a youth that is illiterate from the media point of view. They have advanced equipment at their disposal. They are capable in terms of their mechanical skills, but they are ignorant of the basic questions relating to media culture, the production or detection of ethical and aesthetic values underlying the media text.

The profile of the parents will evolve likewise towards more technological parameters. The research team understands that the Basque school community is facing a golden opportunity, an unbeatable opportunity to devote serious attention to a debate that affects the very backbone of the current education system: the media literacy of its citizens.

## Supports

[1] This research was financed by funds of the University of the Basque Country, and thanks to grants from the Departments of the Presidency and Education of the Basque Autonomous Community Government. The field work was made possible thanks to the services of the company Aztiker SL.

[2] Apart from the authors of this article, the following people are members of our research group: Juan Vicente Idoyaga Arrospide, professor of Audiovisual Communication in the Department of the same name in the Faculty of Social and Communication Sciences in the University of the Basque Country and Amaia Andrieu Sanz, lecturer in the Department of the Didactics of Musical, Plastic and Body Expression at the Teacher's University School (UPV).

## Notes

[1] The focus groups among the youngsters took place during the 2008-2009 academic year. Four groups were selected from the schools which had developed some kind of media studies. They were the Manteo Zubiri high school in Donostia-San Sebastian, the public high schools of Eibar and Sopela and the Mendizabala high school in Vitoria-Gasteiz. We were interested in contrasting the degree of media literacy of the pupils at the schools which did not teach these kinds of disciplines. That is why the following schools were approached: the Koldo Mitxelena in Vitoria-Gasteiz, the private Ikastola (Basque-medium school) of San Fermin in Iruñea-Pamplona and the Txurdinaga Behekoa and Gabriel Aresti public high schools in Bilbao.

[2] The sequence referred to is about the public presentation of Simba, the lion cub who had just been born and who becomes the king of his community.

[3] The people interviewed were: MPY, Ph.D. holder in media communication and graduate in English Philology. She taught until the 2008-2009 academic year when she retired. During her long career this interviewee carried out various experiences in media literacy at the public high schools in Sopela and Sestao in Bizkaia. The interview took place on 3 October 2008; IO, teacher at the Zubiri Manteo public high school in Donostia-San Sebastian and responsible for the European programme European Cinema and Young People within the Comenius 3 programme. The meeting took place on 7 November 2008 at the school itself; EL, teacher of Basque and person in charge of the media workshop at the Txurdinaga Beheko high school in Bilbao. The meeting took place on 16 February 2009 at the school itself; TE teacher at the San Nikolas private Ikastola (Basque-medium school) in Getxo and head of the «Globalab» experience run at the school itself. The meeting took place on 12 March, 2009; EMG, AM and AP, director and heads of the media section and the laboratory, respectively, at the Amara Berri public school in Donostia-San Sebastian. They coordinate the «Amara Berri sistema», a pioneering programme in media literacy that works with primary school children. The

interview took place on 3 April, 2009 at the school itself.

[4] The field work was carried out between November 2009 and February 2010. The youngsters responded to the questions in line with the education model used in the classroom (in Basque, French or Spanish). The calculation of the margin of error (attributable to completely random samples) is +/-4.1% for the whole universe with a level of dependability of 95.5%, where p=q%50.0 for the most contrary hypothesis. In total, the questionnaire was filled in at 33 schools in Alaba, Bizkaia, Gipuzkoa, Navarre and Lapurdi (Labourd), of which 15 were private and 18 public. To build the sample, the sex of the pupils, level of studies and their experience with respect to media activities were taken into account.

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# Digital Competence and Literacy: Developing New Narrative Formats. The «Dragon Age: Origins» Videogame

## Competencia digital y literacidad: nuevos formatos narrativos en el videojuego «Dragon Age: Orígenes»

ABSTRACT
The approach of this article is centered on the concepts of digital competence and new narrative formats. We aim to apply these dimensions to the videogame «Dragon Age Origins», winner of the 2009 videogame of the year award. Its features –plot, characters and interactivity– make it ideal reading material in other formats and are highly motivational for young people. The development of digital competence signifies new literacy, and it is necessary to find new stimulating resources that combine the fun and formative dimensions. Equally relevant are multimodal texts (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001), especially new narrative formats that imply social progress, as the ways of reading are different. The texts have acquired new formats with the same quality as books but they sometimes motivate users more. This is the case of «Dragon Age Origins», a dark heroic fantasy role-playing game set in a unique world containing a story to be read and experienced. Our analysis of the videogame discusses whether it should be considered a form of reading or not.

RESUMEN
Este artículo tiene como ejes conceptuales la competencia digital, la literacidad y los nuevos formatos narrativos. El aprendizaje permanente incluye las mismas como claves de la formación de la persona y sobre todo, como elemento que va a contribuir a su inserción en una sociedad dinámica y cambiante. Tras analizar dichas dimensiones, las mismas serán reflejadas en el videojuego denominado «Dragon Age: Orígenes», galardonado con el premio juego de rol del año en el año 2009. El desarrollo de la competencia digital conlleva una nueva alfabetización y en la misma es preciso hallar recursos motivadores para que dicha adquisición sea a la vez una cuestión lúdica y formativa. Otro aspecto relevante que será tratado en el texto tiene que ver con la multimodalidad textual (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001), sobre todo con los nuevos formatos narrativos. Este hecho supone un importante avance social ya que las formas de lectura varían apareciendo formas distintas más motivadoras para el usuario pero no por ello poseen menor calidad. Éste es el caso de «Dragon Age: Orígenes», un juego de rol basado en la fantasía heroica ubicado en un mundo novedoso. Dicho juego se convierte en una excelente historia para ser leída y experimentada.

KEYWORDS / PALABRAS CLAVE
Competencias básicas, comunicación digital, software, videojuegos, ficción, lectura, alfabetización tecnológica.
Basic competences, digital communication, software, videogames, fiction, reading, technological literacy.

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## 1. Lifelong learning: new competences for a dynamic and changing society

In 2005, the Council of Europe listed eight key competences related to lifelong learning. Communication in the mother tongue; communication in a second language; numeracy and competence in Science and Technology; digital competence; learning to learn; interpersonal and civic competence; initiative and cultural expression (European Commission, 2005). Former EC president Jacques Delors (1996) had previously viewed education as a heritage issue that became the basis of this lifelong learning philosophy.

We are now aware of these competences and our aim is to develop and promote them. These competences are defined as a combination of knowledge, abilities and attitudes adapted to this context. People need them for personal development, active citizenship and social inclusion. Escamilla (2009) explains that the genesis of this approach is related to a «know-how» concept to be applied to different contexts in people's lives: domestic, social, academic and work.

This reclaimed autonomy must be highlighted in a society where people are bombarded by materialistic stimuli. The educational community should accept this and try to combine capitalism with the need for a civic education (Bolivar, 2003). The new educative paradigms must be updated, which may mean that we have to develop the aforementioned competences as part of people's education.

Nowadays, digital literacy is in demand in study programs (this refers to levels of education). This aim is honourable although, as Aguaded (2010) explains, civil society has to collaborate in what should be a progressive process of implementation. We cannot ignore the importance of a non-formal educational context. This is the objective of this article, as we try to incorporate elements from the social field to the development of digital competence and literacy. This article aims to contribute suitable alternatives to digital literacy.

## 2. Digital competence

Touriñan (2004) explained that digital education was a challenge for the digital society in schools since it required a technical knowledge and a strategic objective for innovation in the field of Pedagogy. Digital literacy is now a challenge that has been met but the fact remains that we do not know whether technology can be incorporated in education. The concept we refer to as digital competence could be defined as follows: «Digital competence implies a safe and critical use of the Information Society Technologies (IST) for work, entertainment and communication purposes» (European Commission, 2005: 18).

It refers to a skill related to the acquisition, assessment, production, presentation or exchange of information or the possibility of participating in communication networks through the use of the Internet. We firmly believe that this competence should be part of digital education (e-Education) in which the abilities, habits, attitudes and knowledge that help people to exist, move, learn or interact in the digital dimension will be developed. Does this mean that this new configuration will substitute traditional literacy? No. The idea is that we continue benefiting from both.

Digital literacy, or the development of this competence, implies that people will be able to apply their IST knowledge to ordinary life situations. It is our aim to make these resources useful, either as a word processor or as a tool for creativity and innovation. Our text goes further by exploring fictional worlds (videogames). These are useful tools that help us understand young people's interests, to understand diversity or even develop multiple intelligences (Montero & Ruiz Díaz, 2010). We focus on a videogame in which linguistic and literary abilities converge, and the concept of digital literacy deployed is developed in the following section.

## 3. Digital literacy

Understanding literacy as the condition of being able to read and write implies a basic understanding but we must take into account that we are using knowledge and attitudes in addition to reading and writing. Cassany (2000) points out that social values and ways of thinking are added to this knowledge and attitudes. Thus, the term literacy requires an expansion of this basic definition, the reading and writing of not only printed but also digital texts. Traditionally, we consider reading to mean hard copy, but what happens with other formats that contain stories and texts? Is it possible to consider the videogame an electronic text? Of course, it is another kind of reading but the development of this skill is similar, and some specific knowledge is required in order to understand the messages and the whole story.

It is necessary to refer to the concept of digital competence and connect it to electronic literacy. This is a live issue since, when considering learning languages or literature, certain changes and resources taking place in our society must be taken into account. Technology is a reality and it is our duty to find

suitable ways to make the best use of it, and not just as entertainment. Digital literacy is a new challenge for educators and, of course it has several potentially worthwhile characteristics which must be exploited.

Reinking (1992) sites the interaction between readers and texts as one such characteristic. An active user is a motivated user. This is one of the biggest drawbacks of hard copy texts for young people. Another characteristic indicated by Reinking (1992) is that electronic texts may contain different structures. Videogames are ideally structured to develop different skills. If we select games with more content than an arcade perspective, we have material that is strong enough to motivate young people to acquire and maintain the reading habit. Previous experiences in language teaching, that of Shetzer and Warschauer (2000) for instance, allow us to see how this digital literacy can be fostered in ways that will also enhance young people's ability to learn to read printed texts. Indeed, an interesting, new line of research would be to focus on how students approach writing and reading in hypertexts.

**Digital literacy is now a challenge that has been met but the fact remains that we do not know whether technology can be incorporated in education. The concept we refer to as digital competence could be defined as follows: «Digital competence implies a safe and critical use of the Information Society Technologies (IST) for work, entertainment and communication purposes».**

### 4. The videogame: beyond entertainment

When analyzing what a videogame is, we associate it with the field of entertainment. A definition that corroborates this point is: «A digital game with entertainment objectives, which uses computer technology and allows player interaction with the machine in real time, and in which action is fundamentally developed with visual support (on the screen of a portable console, a personal computer, a television or another support)» (Tejeiro & Del Río, 2003: 20).

Is it possible to believe in videogames that contribute to people's education with their various dimensions? From our point of view it is possible. It is true, as Gómez del Castillo (2007) points out, that videogames are based on competition, on being the best, the most extreme in violence, sexism and racism, and triumphing in economic environments. This may well be the most generalized opinion people have about them.

But there are other ways of designing videogames that offer the user challenging stories, because the abilities they have to develop are related to cognitive, reading and decision-making aspects. Montes Pérez (2010: 48) establishes a difference between a graphic adventure and a role-playing game. Both are videogames but the first is limited, while a role-playing game is characterized by the importance of creating the character and the way he acts, as well as the freedom of action the user is given when playing.

Our choice is a role-playing videogame whose main characteristics derive from what is known as interactive fiction. Basically, this is computer-mediated narrative. In hard copy texts, it would resemble the kind of stories that offer the readers the possibility of choosing their own adventure. The user must read a short text and then has to choose the course of action he wants the main character to take. In the case of Dragon Age Origins, the story will vary depending on the instructions given by the user, as will the number of characters involved and even the plot itself. Interactive fiction requires the text-analysis skills of a literary scholar, so the skills are developed by means of a different format. The structure of this game would probably be more sophisticated than the typical fantasy novel.

Another relevant issue with the new formats is that the role-playing game enhances communication among players. As in reading forums, gamers can chat about the game and share problems and experiences so as to move the story forward.

This is a kind of immersion in a fictional world and at the same time an interaction with a virtual reality. Dragon Age Origins could be a hard copy book but has the advantages of a videogame (graphics, music, interaction, etc).

### 5. New narrative formats

The concept of interactive fiction means that its application is different, above all due to morphological diversity. There will be variations depending on the author and the content. However, it is possible to establish a common point: interactivity. This changes the way fiction is perceived since, thanks to interactivity, the reader is the main character on some occasions and the author on others. The experience of reception becomes more complete.

From the aesthetic of reception (Jauss, 1977; Iser, 1987), interactivity offers the opportunity to choose different possibilities for continuing the story, new narrative sequences and new paths of information about the main characters, settings and plots. Interactivity offers the possibility of changing the story as if the user were simultaneously author and reader –entirely possible in videogames–.

Esnaola and Levis (2008) consider this to be a cultural advance. Professionals claim ever more vigorously that it is possible to develop new materials – in particular videogames that are culturally valuable. So these authors aim to create an interdisciplinary work situated between the education field and communication industry.

The new narrative formats are a reality containing stories with intertextuality mixed with others that are autonomous. The challenge people now face is to learn how to read them, although it is not dissimilar to traditional reading. Martos (2007) points out that postmodern society needs a new focus for reading. The format is different but the goal is the same: to read. In rescuing the reading habit the attractiveness of the new formats can be an advantage. In this sense, the educator can combine book content with that of the videogame, thus enabling digital texts and hard copies to share a space. In the following section we describe our videogame as an example of a new narrative format and interactive fiction.

> We have to redefine people's competences. Therefore, the development of digital competence has to be included in people's educational process. In «Dragon Age: Origins», high fantasy is alive and we have to find ways of combining printed and electronic copies in order to promote reading.

### 6. «Dragon Age: Origins», and the story of the Grey Wardens

«Men and women from every race, warriors and magi, barbarians and kings... the Grey Wardens sacrificed everything to stem the tide of darkness...and prevailed» (Duncan, head of the Grey Wardens in Ferelden).

This is the essential message that underlies the story of «Dragon Age: Origins». As a videogame, this is a dark heroic fantasy set in an imaginary world, a deep, complex story filled with varied characters and plots. We cannot compare playing time and reading time but when the user finishes the game, he will have been playing for almost 70 hours. Half that time is dedicated to the arcade dimension and the remainder to reading and interaction. For this reason, it could be considered a fantasy novel. This underlines our argument on the new narrative formats and the way they promote reading.

Regarding interactive fiction, it is very important that the users/readers surround themselves with companions on their journey, each with their own unique story and motivations. Inside the videogame we can find a full, rich world of cultures, wars and politics. There are several imaginary places based on Ferelden (a fictional world similar to the Middle Earth created by Tolkien), the land in which men, women and different races live. As an epic/heroic story we find different types of characters such as Magi, Rogues or Warriors. Combat and magic are combined in this story. The characters, depending on their condition, are able to cast spells or use different weapons in combat. One of the main points of the game/story is that the user can create his own character endowing it with the characteristics they need to play in the world of «Dragon Age: Origins».

The main character's mission is to become a Grey Warden and to avoid the emergence of the Dark Spawn, but to do this he will need help from the different characters who themselves are involved in politics, wars or intrigues. Depending on the decisions

and actions taken, the player's entourage will be large or small. During the game the user must learn how to become a good leader since all the decisions and actions taken will condition his fate. As in other high fantasy stories, alliances or entourages are crucial to defeating the Dark Spawn. They have their own opinions and objectives, and may ask for The Warden's help on quests of their own. The main character can recruit different companions that will be active or not (because the Warden can only use three at a time, but they can be replaced depending on the situation). However, The Warden can make decisions that will result in a companion leaving, or even dying.

Leadership plays an important role in partner interaction. It may change depending on plot decisions or gifts. There are 10 full partners in «Dragon Age: Origins», and seven in «Dragon Age: Origins» – Awakening (the sequel). Some of the characters in «Dragon Age: Origins» are Alistair, a new Grey Warden, Leliana, a Chantry sister, Morrigan, a Witch of the Wilds, Oghren, a dwarven Berserker, Sten, a qunary warrior, Wynne: a senior enchanter from the Circle, Zevran: an Antivan assassin and the dog: a mabari war hound. In the sequel, we find the following characters: Anders: an apostate mage. Justice: a trapped Fade Spirit. Mhairi: a Ferelden warrior. Nathaniel: a human rogue. Oghren: a dwarven Berserker (the same character as in «Dragon Age: Origins»), Sigrun: a dwarf rogue. Velanna: a Dalish magus.

This is a complex videogame that requires the user to read constantly and which creates a parallel universe with several story lines and endings. The videogame plot is available in book form as «Dragon Age: the stolen» and «Dragon Age: the calling» (Gaider 2009a; 2009b). New formats such as comics allow the text to be expanded. This is a good example of a combination of tradition and modernity, because the story of this videogame is based on an epic. Other authors like Garin and Pérez (2009) have developed work on videogames that are closer in form to science fiction. The skills developed through «Dragon Age: Origins» are multiple because the user needs to be computer literate, use his reading experience and the cognitive skills (memory or attention) relevant to it. To all this we would also add the entertainment dimension, which gives the user extra motivation.

## 7. Recurrent topics in «Dragon Age: Origins», intertextuality

Lukens (2003) reminds us that the high fantasy genre is primarily characterized by its focus on the conflict between good and evil, in this case the Grey Wardens and the Dark Spawn, respectively. It is similar to Tolkien's (The Lord of the Rings) battle between Sauron's forces and the human, elf and dwarf races. High fantasy portrays full, complete human and classic characters such as the king without a throne, like the one depicted in this story. Alistair discovers that he is the heir of Ferelden but using the interactive fiction, players/users have the opportunity to put him back on the throne or not. This is a recurrent topic in literature because we find many instances in which the king must recover his throne after it was taken from him.

In this genre, credibility depends on the fantasy world that has been recreated. Ferelden is similar to Middle Earth, an invented world which must be reunified by the heroes. Themes throughout the role-playing videogame encompass a broad concern for Humanity, universalizing the human conflict of good versus evil. For this reason, the politics, wars and quests are orientated towards resolving this conflict.

Race is another recurrent element. Based on the high fantasy classics, elves, dwarves and wizards play their part in this story, each with specific skills, who, depending on the decisions made by the user/reader, may decisively influence the development of the story. Naturally the user needs to read the codex included in the game for a better understanding of the keys to this fantasy world.

Creatures such as ogres, dragons or spiders appear throughout the story. We have talked about politics or the relationship between good and evil, and we find betrayal as a feature of some of the characters. Sometimes the user/reader does not expect certain situations to arise that relate to such questions. This reminds us of Eddison's book, «The Worm Ouroboros», where two parties are battle for territory and supremacy.

It is clear that classic texts, above all, The Lord of the Rings, have influenced the design of this role-playing videogame. But the story is different and the characters are new and contextualized in a different fantasy world. This, added to the attractive design of the game (graphics and music), makes for a good quality product.

## 8. Conclusions: a new way of reading?

After analysing the role-playing videogame «Dragon Age: Origins», we need to answer the questions that posed in our text. We firmly believe new formats are a reality in society and it is time for educators to find new ways to promote reading. For instance, the book and the videogame of the classic

text Treasure Island (Stevenson) both exist. This digital version becomes an alternative to reading. Young people are a very active part of the world of electronic literacy and they probably feel more inclined to play videogames than to read books. This paper combines the entertaining dimension of games with the increasing need to develop reading habits. «Dragon Age: Origins» requires the user to spend a lot of time reading the situations and the codex in order to play the game properly. As a result, it becomes suitable material for helping young people to maintain a close relationship with reading. Recent trends in the teaching of languages (including cultures and literature) relate to the applied approaches and the language in use (González Piñero, Guillén & Vez Jeremías, 2010; Álvarez Angulo, 2010). In this situation, we have to redefine people's competences. Therefore, the development of digital competence has to be included in people's educational process. In «Dragon Age: Origins», high fantasy is alive and we have to find ways of combining printed and electronic copies in order to promote reading.

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# People with Intellectual Disability and ICTs

## Las personas con discapacidad intelectual ante las TIC

ABSTRACT
New technologies have dramatically changed our daily lives and the way we are connected to other people. Television, cellular telephony and the Internet have opened up new opportunities in communication, leisure and training, and yet barriers prevent certain social groups from accessing these new technologies. People with intellectual disability (ID), for instance, are often «invisible» to communication and new technology researchers. An exploratory study was made of 156 adults with ID (workers and users of the Carmen Pardo-Valcarce Foundation sheltered employment programs and workshops in Madrid, Spain) to show their patterns of new technology (cell phones, Internet and television) use. The study confirms that these patterns are similar to those expected of the general public but specific differences were found. Some could be attributed to the direct effects of intellectual disability, but others could result from the hypothetical stigma effect on the attitude of those close to the person with intellectual disability, which might lead to discriminatory behaviors.

RESUMEN
Las nuevas tecnologías han introducido profundos cambios en nuestro entorno y en los modos de relacionarnos con los demás. La televisión, el teléfono móvil e Internet han abierto nuevas posibilidades de comunicación, ocio y formación para muchas personas. Pero el acceso a las nuevas tecnologías para algunos individuos o grupos sociales puede hallarse condicionado por diferentes barreras. Uno de los grupos que habitualmente resultan «invisibles» en las investigaciones sobre comunicación y nuevas tecnologías es el de las personas con discapacidad intelectual (DI). En la presente investigación han participado 156 personas adultas con DI (trabajadores y usuarios de la Fundación Carmen Pardo-Valcarce en Madrid, Spain). Se ha llevado a cabo un estudio exploratorio con el fin de caracterizar en términos generales los patrones de uso de las nuevas tecnologías de comunicación (Internet y teléfonos móviles) de los participantes, así como sus patrones de consumo de televisión. Como conclusión puede señalarse que las pautas de comportamiento de las personas con DI en relación a las nuevas tecnologías de información y comunicación, en términos generales, se aproximan a las de la población general. Sólo en aspectos puntuales podemos encontrar diferencias llamativas. En algunos casos, tales diferencias pueden atribuirse directamente a la DI. Pero también es necesario tener en cuenta un posible efecto estigma actuando en las personas que rodean al individuo con DI, que puede motivar comportamientos discriminatorios.

KEYWORDS / PALABRAS CLAVE
Disability, ICT, cellular telephony, Internet, television, reception, discrimination, psychology.
Discapacidad, TIC, telefonía móvil, Internet, televisión, recepción, discriminación, psicología.

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## 1. Introduction

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) have brought profound changes to our environment and in the ways we relate to each other. Television, cell phones and Internet use have opened up new prospects for communication, leisure activity and education in our increasingly globalized world. Without question, these new technologies have greatly facilitated the exchange of information among individuals and thereby contributed to the eradication of distance and physical barriers. However, as Núñez and Liébana (2004: 40) have recently pointed out, «in this globalized, interconnected world inequalities are still evident, as in the fact that ICTs are not equally accessible to all». Accessibility should not just be understood as a financial issue. Using ICTs normally requires specific knowledge and operating skills that must be learned, and for certain sectors of society that can be complicated. As we all know, the younger generation has a real flair for adapting to technological changes –perhaps because they have been used to using technology since early childhood– while older people have greater difficulties (and are more reluctant) to avail themselves of the opportunities of the digital era. Likewise, for some individuals or groups in society, access to the new technologies may be affected by barriers that are not readily apparent and which have hardly been studied. In this regard, we believe that research must focus more on these groups of individuals who, by virtue of their inherent characteristics, may have an access differential in terms of information and communication technologies. The need for this becomes even more urgent when dealing with individuals who have traditionally been overlooked in research on the use of new technologies.

One group that is all too often «invisible» to investigators of new communications technologies consists of people with intellectual disability. Intellectual disability (ID) is a meta-syndrome characterized by significant limitations in intellectual functioning and learning (Salvador-Carulla & Berteli, 2008) that manifests as dysfunction in practical, social and conceptual skills (Schalock, Borthwick-Duffy & al., 2010). The concept of ID is complex, involving various biological, psychological and social factors. In the past, expressions such as «mental retardation» and «mental deficiency» were used in reporting on this phenomenon. Currently, however, there is a broad consensus for using the term «intellectual disability» as it does not have such a pejorative connotation. Traditionally, the intelligence quotient (IQ) is the main tool for quantifying the degree of ID. The International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10) published by the World Health Organization establishes four levels of ID in terms of its severity: mild (IQ from 50 to 69), moderate (IQ from 35 to 49), severe (IQ from 20 to 34), and profound ID (IQ less than 20) (WHO, 1994). The term «borderline intelligence» has also been introduced to describe those who have intellectual limitations but whose IQ is above 70; so, strictly speaking, they do not have ID.

Research devoted to analyzing use and consumption patterns that could be used to describe the access people with ID have to means of communication and new technologies is scant. Can the cognitive limitations associated to a below-average IQ impose a barrier that makes access difficult? And to what extent? Could the fact that people with ID usually require supervision by a caregiver or guardian limits their free access to means of communication or reduces their autonomy when selecting content? The objective of this study is to stimulate thinking on these issues. For this purpose, a sample of people with ID is analyzed in terms of their behavior in three different situations: using a cell phone, accessing the Internet and watching television.

## 2. Materials and methods

The participants in this study were 156 adults with ID who were workers and clients at the Carmen Pardo-Valcarce Foundation. Headquartered in Madrid, this institution is registered with the Foundations Registry of Spain's Ministry of Education and Science and is recognized as a non-profit educational entity with a public service interest[1]. Its primary objective over the past 20 years has been to offer assistance to people with ID. The participants in this study are workers in the foundation's sheltered employment program as well as clients in its sheltered workshops. In terms of intelligence quotient, they range from limited intelligence to moderate ID.

The primary research objective was to conduct a descriptive study whereby the participants' patterns of using the new communication technologies (Internet and cell phones) and watching television could be characterized in general terms. As a preliminary research phase and to evaluate user habits, the 156 participants were given a questionnaire in which they were asked about 1) cell phone use: whether the participant has his/her own cell phone, the number of calls made and messages sent per day, whether the participant or family member or caregiver recharges the device with money, whether the participant is able to pay for reloading with his/her own income or

whether, on the contrary, this falls to the participant's family members or caregivers; 2) Internet access and use: whether the participant has a connection at home or outside the home, how often the participant connects and whether he/she uses instant messaging programs or «chats»; and 3) watching television: the number of hours watched per day and the type of content the participant watches regularly. The questions presented were closed –that is, they were test-type questions– and each participant had to choose a response from among several options given. The questionnaire was written in easy-reading language using simple terms that the participants understood without difficulty. They also filled out the test with the support of a Special Education teacher who explained each question to them and addressed their concerns.

A second objective was to explore the connection between certain individual characteristics and the patterns of use evaluated in the questionnaire. The following individual characteristics were considered:

1) Gender. Of the 156 study participants, there were 105 men (67.3%) and 51 women (32.7%).

2) Age. The age ranges of the participants in the sample were as follows: up to 30 years old, 73 participants (46.8%); 31-40, 64 participants (41.0%); more than 40 years old, 17 participants (10.9%). Two participants declined to give their ages in the questionnaire.

3) Intelligence quotient (IQ). As a measure of the participants' degree of ID, the most common indicator –the intelligence quotient– was used. We were able to look up this information in the foundation's files for 128 of the participants, whose IQ had previously been determined through application of the Wechsler Scale for adults in the WAIS-III test (Wechsler, 2001). For these 128 participants, the degree of ID, according to the WHO ICD-10 criteria mentioned above, was distributed as follows: moderate disability, 5.5% of cases (7 participants); mild disability, 68.0% (87); borderline intelligence or higher, 26.6% (34). The participants' average IQ was 62.87 (standard deviation: 10.97).

In analyzing television-watching patterns, we thought it appropriate to distinguish between those participants who chose their own television «diet» (i.e., they chose their favorite programs in the scheduling) and those who complied with the decision of other adults (i.e., the parents or caregivers assumed responsibility for choosing the television content they considered most suitable for the participants).

It is important to add to this information the fact that the percentage that watches cartoons is higher in the group where the caregiver chooses the channel. Consequently, the results of this research appear to indicate a certain trend on the part of some parents to «infantilize» their children with ID, at least with respect to their television-watching patterns. In other words, in their television-watching patterns, adults with ID appear to manifest some features that are typical of children to an extent that would not be expected in adults of the same age with no disability.

The statistical software SPSS, version 15, was used to analyze the data obtained. Above and beyond a merely descriptive analysis, comparative analyses of medians (Student's *t*-tests) and non-parametric tests (chi-square) were carried out to determine whether there were statistically significant differences.

## 3. Results

### 3.1. Cell phone use

The vast majority of participants (89.7%) had a cell phone. In terms of frequency of use, 59.3% reported using it sporadically to make calls that were absolutely necessary, with 22.9% making 1-3 calls per day, 6.4% making 3-5 calls, and 11.4% making more than 5 calls.

As far as recharging the phone with money, the participants divided into two groups: those who paid for it with their own money (53.6%) and those whose family paid for it – 40.0%, with 5.7% reporting that

they split the cost with their parents. The group of prepaid cell phone users within the sample was divided into two subgroups: participants who reloaded it themselves (82) and those who usually turned to a family member for reloads (44). Comparison of the average IQ for these two subgroups revealed significant differences ($t=2.145$, $p=0.017$), with the group of individuals who do their own reloads showing a higher IQ.

### 3.2. Internet access and use

Taking Internet access opportunities into consideration, the majority of participants fell into two groups: the first, comprising 50.0% of participants, reported having an Internet connection at their place of residence, while the second, comprising 41.7%, lacked any type of access. Only 6.4% reported using the Internet by going outside the home for a connection –for example, to public facilities, places where one can pay for access, or the home of a friend or relative– and the remaining 1.9% did not answer the question.

When asked about their utilization, 56.4% stated they did not use the Internet regularly; 7.7% reported less than one hour and 6.4% more than one hour of use, only at weekends; 9.6% reported using it daily for less than one hour; and 16.7% reported connecting daily for more than one hour. The participants were divided into two groups according to whether their IQ was above or below the median for the sample ($IQ<=60$ and $IQ>60$). In terms of the percentages for frequency of Internet use, no significant difference was found between the two subgroups ($\chi2=4.466$, $p=0.347$).

Another result pertains to the comparison between availability of Internet access and degree of Internet use on the part of the participants. Participant distribution in relation to these two conditions is shown in Table 1, which shows that the majority of participants who never use the Internet do not have an Internet connection at home, 64 individuals in this instance.

It also demonstrates, however, that 19 participants who have a connection at home do not use it, compared with another 57 who, with variable frequency, do use the Internet connection they have available at home. Stating these results as a percentage, 25.0% of the participants whose families have Internet access never use this service.

Only 22.4% of participants report engaging in «chats» or using instant messaging programs. No significant difference was noted with respect to either gender ($\chi2=0.011$, $p=0.917$) or IQ; the average IQ of the subgroup that uses these programs was compared with that of the subgroup that does not use them, and no significant difference was found ($t=1.682$, $p=0.095$). There was a significant difference, however, in relation to age ($\chi2=7.746$, $p<0.05$), with younger participants using these types of services more frequently.

### 3.3. Watching television

Only 7 of the 156 people surveyed (4.5%) stated that they do not watch television on a daily basis. By contrast, the majority of participants spent more than two hours per day in front of a television set (63 participants, 40.4%). While 23.7% (37 participants) reported watching less than one hour per day, 29.5% indicated that they watch about two hours per day.

| | No use | Only weekends (less than 1 hour) | Only weekends (more than 1 hour) | Daily (less than 1 hour) | Daily (more than 1 hour) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No access | 64 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Access outside the home | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| Access at home | 19 | 10 | 8 | 15 | 24 |

Table 1. Distribution of participants according to use of Internet and connection availability.

In turn, 38.5% of participants reported that they usually watch television alone, compared with 42.9% who usually watch with a family member. With regard to choosing programs, 41.7% of participants maintained that they themselves choose the televised content they watch. Programs are chosen by negotiating with the family for 32.1% of those reporting, and only 14.7% reported watching content that someone else chose for them.

As far as the audience for specific formats, the number of participants who reported watching each type of television programming and its corresponding percentage of the sample total are shown below (in descending order of popularity): movies, 111 (71.20%); series programs, 109 (69.90%); news programs, 78 (50.0%); sports, 66 (42.30%); game shows, 62 (39.70%); talk shows, 55 (35.30%); soap operas, 37 (23.70%); celebrity gossip shows, 33 (21.20%); cartoons, 31 (19.90%); others, 15 (9.60%).

The percentage of men and women who report watching each television format was compared using a chi-square test. No significant difference was found except in three cases: sports, soap operas and series programs. Male participants showed a significantly

| TV format | Percentage of audience in men | Percentage of audience in women | $\chi^2$ | Significance |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| News programs | 56.4% | 41.2% | 3.158 | N.S. |
| Soap operas | 19.0% | 35.3% | 4.847 | P<0.05 |
| Series programs | 63.4% | 88.2% | 10.331 | P<0.001 |
| Sports | 55.4% | 19.6% | 17.716 | P<0.001 |
| Movies | 76.2% | 66.7% | 1.576 | N.S. |
| Talk shows | 33.3% | 43.1% | 1.393 | N.S. |
| Celebrity gossip shows | 19.0% | 28.6% | 1.747 | N.S. |
| Cartoons | 22.2% | 18.8% | 0.234 | N.S. |
| Game shows | 39.4% | 46.9% | 0.766 | N.S. |

Table 2. Comparison of audience percentages according to gender.

stronger preference than female participants for sports programming. This phenomenon is reversed in the case of soap operas and series programs. Table 2 shows the results.

In addition to gender, the connection between participants' IQ and television preferences was also considered. For each of the television formats listed, the sample was divided into two subgroups: the first comprising those participants who report that a given type of program is a regular part of their television diet, and the second comprising those who do not watch this type of program regularly. For each type of program, the average IQ of the participants in the two subgroups was compared using a Student's t-test. There was a significant difference in only one case: news programs ($t=3.932$, $p<0.05$), where the average IQ of the watchers was 64.59 (standard deviation: 11.30) and the average IQ of the non-watchers was 59.87 (standard deviation: 9.00).

Another variable considered was age. Distinction was made between participants up to 30 years old (73 individuals), those between 31 and 40 (64), and those over 40 years old (17). The audience pattern appears to be the same except in four types of television content: news programs, movies, talk shows and celebrity gossip shows. In these cases, there is a significantly higher preference among the older participants. Table 3 shows the results of this comparison.

Another analysis that was carried out consisted of distinguishing between participants who choose for themselves the television content they watch (65 individuals) and those who accept what their parents or family members have chosen (23). There was no significant difference between the two groups except in four cases: talk shows, celebrity gossip shows, cartoons and game shows. Participants tend to watch these programs more when it is other people who choose the television channel. The results of this comparison are shown in Table 4.

## 4. Discussion

With respect to cell phone use, the results obtained appear to indicate that, generally speaking, people with ID –those included in the sample for our study, at least– have no great difficulty using one. Only those individuals with a lower IQ may encounter some limitation when performing operations that are cognitively more complex, such as managing the money spent on the cell phone and getting it reloaded, for which they may need assistance from family members or caregivers. Apart from that, the data obtained appear to be consistent with the data one would expect from a survey of the general public. Therefore, the results from this study point to the conclusion that cell phones can also be widely used among the ID population.

Regarding the Internet, it is noteworthy that the percentage of people with ID in the sample who use the Internet is very close to the norm for the general public in Spain. As an example, we can take the estimate given in the 11th edition of the Internet Users Survey made public by the Media Communications Research Association [Spanish acronym AIMC] in 2009 – the same year the information for our study was gathered (when making comparisons, it is important to use estimates that are not far apart chronologically because it is an established fact that figures related to the use of new technologies can vary considerably within a relatively short period of time, as little as 2-3 years). If the percentage of participants in our study sample who regularly use the Internet is 40.4%, then the figure given in the AIMC survey for the general public over 14 years of age, even though slightly higher, is of the same order: 45%. The data appears to support the hypothesis that there is no reason why borderline intelligence or a mild-to-moderate disability should limit the individual's opportunities to enjoy the advantages of Internet access. This idea is also upheld by the fact that there

| TV format | Percentage of audience (younger than 31 years old) | Percentage of audience (31-40 years old) | Percentage of audience (older than 40 years old) | $\chi^2$ | Significance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| News programs | 41.7% | 56.3% | 75.0% | 6.900 | P<0.05 |
| Soap operas | 26.4% | 23.8% | 18.8% | 0.441 | N.S. |
| Series programs | 72.2% | 75.0% | 56.3% | 2.236 | N.S. |
| Sports | 37.5% | 50.0% | 43.8% | 2.156 | N.S. |
| Movies | 62.5% | 79.7% | 93.8% | 8.980 | P<0.05 |
| Talk shows | 34.7% | 30.6% | 68.8% | 8.177 | P<0.05 |
| Celebrity gossip shows | 19.7% | 17.7% | 50.0% | 8.140 | P<0.05 |
| Cartoons | 26.1% | 17.7% | 12.5% | 2.162 | N.S. |
| Game shows | 42.9% | 35.5% | 62.5% | 3.864 | N.S. |

Table 3. Comparison between audience percentages according to age.

| TV format | Percentage of audience (participants choose) | Percentage of audience (others choose) | $X^2$ | Significance |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| News programs | 43.8% | 60.9% | 1.986 | N.S. |
| Soap operas | 15.9% | 26.1% | 1.161 | N.S. |
| Series programs | 65.6% | 82.6% | 2.329 | N.S. |
| Sports | 45.3% | 52.2% | 0.320 | N.S. |
| Movies | 70.3% | 82.6% | 1.315 | N.S. |
| Talk shows | 23.8% | 52.2% | 6.294 | P<0.05 |
| Celebrity gossip shows | 11.3% | 39.1% | 8.510 | P<0.01 |
| Cartoons | 18.0% | 39.1% | 4.098 | P<0.05 |
| Game shows | 33.9% | 60.9% | 5.049 | P<0.05 |

Table 4. Comparison between audience percentages according to content choice.

is no significant difference in frequency of use between the group with above- average IQ and the group with below-average IQ. The fact that the use of messaging programs is significantly more frequent in the younger participants also appears to reflect a trend in the general public.

In light of the data analyzed, then, could it be assumed that there are no specific barriers to Internet access for people with ID other than those that also exist for the general public? We believe that the conclusions of this study are not so positive. We need look no further than the data in section 3.2 indicating that 25% of the participants who have an Internet connection at home never use it. We have no information on percentages for the general public but, given that the individuals evaluated in our study are over 18 and not children, we believe there is more than enough reason to think that this figure is significantly higher than the one we would obtain if we were to conduct a survey among older individuals who live with their parents or other family members who do not have any type of disability. This percentage leads to the thought that a significant proportion of parents whose children have ID tend to manifest certain prejudices about their ability to use the Internet– apprehension about their child causing some type of breakdown in the equipment, such as deconfiguring a program or downloading a computer virus; fear that their child might be more seriously affected by harmful Internet content than someone without disability; or a belief that their child will not be interested in using the Internet simply because he/she is a person with a disability. Our research does not allow us to draw more precise conclusions as to whether these prejudices exist and how they may operate, but it does point to a general conclusion: that almost a quarter of parents and caregivers believe it is best to restrict or completely block Internet access because the problems a person with ID may encounter in using the Internet would exceed the prospective advantages. This sheds light on the first barrier that might impede a person with ID from benefitting from the opportunities for education, leisure activity and communication offered by the Internet – that barrier could be located in his/her immediate environment. There is no cause for alarm, however, because even though a sizeable percentage of parents in our sample do not encourage their children to use the Internet access they have at home, it is still a minor issue: three-quarters of the parents with Internet connection at home do not hinder their children with ID from using the service.

With regard to watching television, we can report that the results obtained are consistent with those that would be expected in the non-ID population, generally speaking. For example, the division by gender (Table 2) shows that the preference for series programs and soap operas is significantly higher among women, while the preference for sports is significantly higher among men. Although this points to a gender-related difference in patterns of TV watching, it has important implications that may extend to other realms associated with the world of ID. For example, although some studies – research by McDermott, Martin, and Butkus (1999) on workplace integration, for instance– extend gender differences for the general public to people with ID, others suggest that people with ID tend to be treated as «gender-neutral individuals» rather than as individuals who have their own gender-related needs and preferences (Umb-Carlsson & Sonnander, 2006). In this regard, the results of our research would support the idea that the term «intellectual disability» cannot become a mere label that overshadows other individual characteristics such as gender-related differences. Also, the results found in relation to age (Table 3) appear to be consistent with those that would be expected in the general public: news programs, movies, talk shows and celebrity gossip shows are the preferred viewing of older people.

There is no significant difference in terms of IQ –or in the degree of ID, which is the same thing– that distinguishes the group of participants who say they watch a particular program from the group who say they do not watch it. The only exception is in the case of news programs—and that should come as no surprise. Naturally, the lower-IQ participants would have greater difficulty understanding the content presented in news programs. In terms of preventing possible discrimination against people with ID who wish to keep themselves informed, one solution would

be to develop programs that present the news in accessible language.

Another meaningful piece of information pertains to the differences associated with the person who controls the choice of channel. First of all, it is worth noting that there are significant differences within the percentage that watches celebrity gossip shows. A person with ID is much more likely to watch such programs, of course, when he/she is not the one who chooses the program. The fact that it is the parents' television preferences that may impose on their children's preferences when the children are older could be deemed unusual in light of the trend established among the general public, at least if we take into account the research studies –certainly not numerous– that have been published on the subject. For example, echoing the research conducted by Piñón, Huston, and Wright (1989), the authors of the Pigmalión report (Del Río, Álvarez & Del Río, 2004) point out: «When parents watch TV with their children, parents usually choose what to watch, especially the father (according to an opinion shared by mothers and children); when children watch adult contents on TV, they are usually accompanied by their parents. However, when children become adolescents, it is their preferences that determine what the family watches». It is important to add to this information the fact that the percentage that watches cartoons is higher in the group where the caregiver chooses the channel. Consequently, the results of this research appear to indicate a certain trend on the part of some parents to «infantilize» their children with ID, at least with respect to their television-watching patterns. In other words, in their television-watching patterns, adults with ID appear to manifest some features that are typical of children to an extent that would not be expected in adults of the same age with no disability. This «infantilizing» could transfer to the person more likely to watch programs that he/she does not wish to watch because the parents have imposed their own tastes (celebrity gossip shows, for instance) or their own standards of television content appropriate for their children (cartoons, for instance). More precise research is needed to obtain definitive conclusions on the subject.

Among the limitations of this study, it is worth mentioning that the participants have borderline intelligence or mild-to-moderate ID only, so our results cannot be generalized to more severe degrees of disability. Furthermore, the fact that the sample was taken entirely from one setting –clients and workers at the C. Pardo-Valcarce Foundation in Madrid– would necessarily restrict generalization of the data. The Foundation promotes access to the new technologies for its clients through classes and activities, so the results obtained could vary if the study were repeated in an environment with different characteristics. Also, as already mentioned, all the data analyzed was obtained from questionnaires the participants filled out, and the information was not verified by questioning family members or through direct observation methods. In that regard, a certain risk of desirability bias could be involved: it is possible, for example, that some participants deliberately reduced the hours of television watching or the amount of money spent on their cell phone, believing that excessively high values would be «inappropriate».

**Naturally, the lower-IQ participants would have greater difficulty understanding the content presented in news programs. In terms of preventing possible discrimination against people with ID who wish to keep themselves informed, one solution would be to develop programs that present the news in accessible language.**

In short, we may conclude by stating that, with respect to the new information and communication technologies, the behavior patterns of people with ID approximate to those of the general public, on the whole.

We find noticeable differences only in particular aspects. In some cases, these differences can be directly attributed to the disability: for example, we can assume that the complexity of television news program content makes comprehension difficult for people with low IQ. A possible stigma effect on the part of people around the individual with disability must also be taken into account, as this can motivate behaviors that are, to a certain extent, discriminatory.

We might think that a person with ID would not be interested in certain television programming, simply for having this disability – so, in the end, we might take it upon ourselves to choose for him/her. Likewise, we might think that this person is not able to handle the Internet properly – so we might deny him/her the opportunity to use our computer or Internet access. Society as a whole is responsible for eradicating the discrimination that may arise from this stigma effect and for ensuring that people with ID are able to benefit fully from all the advantages afforded by the new information and communication technologies.

## Notes

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# Learning from Television Fiction. The Reception and Socialization Effects from Watching «Loving in Troubled Times»

## Aprendiendo de la ficción televisiva. La recepción y los efectos socializadores de «Amar en tiempos revueltos»

ABSTRACT

Television fiction is often understood as a cultural product whose aim is entertainment and escapism. However, its functions are not merely commercial. In fact, this article aims to improve understanding of the socializing and educational effects of television's fictional messages. It also reflects on the active role of the audience in the process of reception, and on its capacity to define and interpret messages according to the viewer's personal and social characteristics. This work examines the informational usefulness and significance for personal identity of a specific television genre, the telenovela, a fictional product which, despite focusing its narrative on romantic events and personal conflicts, can also provide the viewer with explanations and interpretations of society's past and present. In particular, this analysis of the melodramatic format sets out to establish the meanings and representations in «Amar en tiempos revueltos» («Loving in Troubled Times») for its female viewers. Based on the analysis of in-depth interviews, the article will explore the female audience's reception processes through variables such as age and education. This study concludes that the majority of female viewers use fiction in an explanatory sense, and that the telenovela is a genre in which women identify themselves individually and as a group.

RESUMEN

La ficción televisiva suele ser entendida como producto cultural encaminado a la evasión y el entretenimiento. Sin embargo, sus funciones no son estrictamente comerciales. De hecho, el presente trabajo surge del interés por conocer los efectos socializadores y educativos de los mensajes de ficción. Del mismo modo, reflexiona sobre el papel activo de los espectadores en el proceso de recepción, sobre su capacidad para definir e interpretar los mensajes de acuerdo con sus características personales y sociales. Más concretamente, el trabajo se interesa por las utilidades informativas y significados identitarios de un género televisivo concreto: la telenovela. Si bien focaliza el grueso de sus tramas en los avatares románticos y los conflictos personales, este producto de ficción, puede además proveer al espectador de explicaciones e interpretaciones en relación con el pasado y el presente de una sociedad. Concretando nuestro análisis en un formato melodramático concreto, «Amar en tiempos revueltos», analizaremos los significados y representaciones que ofrece a sus públicos femeninos. A partir de ahí, y mediante el análisis de contenido de los discursos obtenidos a través de la técnica de la entrevista en profundidad, se explorarán los procesos de recepción de las espectadoras, en función de variables como la edad y el nivel educativo. De este modo, se concluirá señalando cómo el grueso de las espectadoras utiliza la ficción en un sentido explicativo, y se reconocen en ella personal y grupalmente.

KEYWORDS / PALABRAS CLAVE

Telenovelas, television, information, entertainment, woman, socialization, interviews, television effects.
Telenovelas, televisión, información, entretenimiento, mujer, socialización, entrevistas, efectos televisivos.

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## 1. TV entertainment fiction / socializing fiction

The usefulness and gratification associated with the consumption of fictional television vary greatly. While entertainment is the most manifest, hegemonic and visible function of television, research has identified other uses and effects related to the socialising role of this medium. Indeed there are significant audience segments that value entertainment products provided they offer plausible and realistic representations (García de Castro, 2007: 149). This highlights the importance of guidance and modelling in fictional television for viewers. Alongside the traditional agents of socialization (family, school, peers, work environment, etc.), fictional television should be understood as a significant influence in shaping personal, group and community identities in the orientation of attitudes and behaviours, and in the acquisition of cognitive and informative elements, especially when it acts on our socialization processes during primary and secondary school (i.e. in childhood and youth, and the early adult stages).

### 1.1. Television fiction as a source of personal, group, community and national identity

Fictional TV stories can act as a mechanism in the construction and reconstruction of viewers' personal identity. Viewers can use fictional TV to reinforce their self-esteem, and as a self-reflective support tool to better recognise themselves. It can also be understood as a link to the experiences of others through which they can explain their own existence. This usefulness can be extrapolated to the group level, because TV fiction can orientate the relations of individuals by promoting their psychological linking to a reference group. If one of these groups occupies a subordinate social position, the fictional text might usefully build a more positive and valuable reflection on their status (Brown, 2009). For those whose identity is in the process of construction, such as adolescents, fiction could provide values, images, rituals, symbols and models that act as reference points for their personal and group perceptions (Montero 2005). Fictional texts might also reflect and transmit feelings of belonging to a wider community. The representation of cultural elements common to viewers (folklore, customs and traditions, gastronomy, dress codes and music) acts as a means to build and strengthen national identities (Rodríguez Cadena, 2004; Castelló, 2009).

### 1.2. Fiction as a source of information

Although fictional texts are not necessarily rigorous, accurate or representative, the viewer can reinterpret their content as if they were. This perception is enhanced by devices that generate verisimilitude, ranging from product placement or Reality TV techniques to references to current affairs or historical events. Paradoxically, fiction can be used to obtain information about present-day reality and provide a framework for its interpretation. From this perspective, consumption of this product type could be taken as a dimension of public life. As viewers get involved on an intuitive and expressive level in a kind of public dialogue, they develop notions of how politics works and how to understand it (orientation role) (Porto, 2005: 355).

## 2. Hypotheses and methodology

This article presents a reception study whose objective is to analyse the socializing impact of a particular television fiction genre: the historical telenovela «Amar en tiempos revueltos» («Loving in Troubled Times»). Produced by Diagonal TV and broadcast daily during TVE 1's afternoon slot, this telenovela narrates the lives and occurrences of a large cast of characters whose relationships represent the evolution of Spanish society from before the Spanish Civil War to the 1950s. With a clear female emphasis, most of the plots focus on universal relational conflicts – love, family and friendship. They also address problems that women face today (combining work and family, the domestic roles of men and women, negligible promotion prospects at work, separation and divorce, single parenting, frustrated maternity, and so on) and suggest solutions for these problems.

The choice of this particular subgenre and format is justified firstly by the importance of this show in the programming of general national and regional TV networks, its high (and profitable) audience ratings and longevity (still showing since 2005), all of which indicates its socializing potential. Secondly, this historical telenovela has come to represent the most genuine adaptation or indigenization of this genre for Spanish viewers (Buonanno, 2009). The semantic richness of its text brings together a wide variety of socializing elements: an emotional and sentimental approach, community and identity proposals that recreate recent Spanish «intra-history», renewed models of femininity and historical references that give the fictional text a documentary character.

The article studies the cultural effects of this text based on several assumptions. Firstly, we maintain that fiction, and in particular the format under study, acts as an instrument of informal education for viewers.

Socialization is understood as a broad, never-ending sociocultural process. We also understand that this telenovela has been produced as part of an educative-entertainment strategy (Tufte, 2007), which aims to promote certain dynamics such as women's empowerment and gender equality. Secondly, we understand that this re-creation of recent Spanish history is used as an informational resource by a large sector of viewers, and that is why we examine the strategies of persuasion and verisimilitude embedded in the narrative. Thirdly, we maintain that this telenovela's connection with the public is based on, among other things, its ability to act as a source of identification: on a personal level (personal identity), group level (gender identity), or community level (national identity). The telenovela's melodramatic format, adapted or «indigenized» to the Spanish public, offers the viewer familiar landmarks that subsequently facilitate this type of learning about identity. Finally, we will reflect on the processes of re-semantization, re-assignation and re-processing, and the negotiation of meanings that viewers can extract from the text (Martín Barbero, 1993).

The story's connections to irrational elements such as memories increase its persuasive force and enable active public participation. The female viewer can use fiction to see a reflection of herself, her gender group or the wider community she belongs to.

The pedagogical and persuasive impact of the fictional text is measured via reception analysis based on in-depth interviews with 25 regular viewers1. Nineteen of the interviewees were women aged 45 or over, intentionally selected according to such variables as age, educational level, occupation, and husband's occupation. The sample is a simplified snapshot of the most visible, representative viewing positions but focused on the variables of education and occupation. The six remaining interviewees were used to form control groups and to measure differences in the perception of the television text through age and gender variables. There were three interviews with young women (aged 21) and three more with men of varying ages.

The interviews followed a thematic plan previously memorized by the interviewer, recorded and then transcribed entirely for subsequent analysis. The interviews polled the type of relationship the viewer had established with the story by registering, from the viewer's viewpoint, variables such as originality, verisimilitude, historical rigour, informative relevance and topicality. The reception analysis also identified the valuation viewers gave of the most prominent characters and the connection they perceived in this telenovela to other TV series of the same subgenre. For the discourse analysis, the 19 interviews were divided in four homogeneous groups in terms of occupation and the educational level of the interviewees and their spouses:

• Group 1: Self-employed women and housewives (wives of self-employed men) with a basic or low educational level, aged from 45 to 75 (4 individuals).

• Group 2: Women working in the service sector and housewives (wives of men who work in the service sector) with a basic or low educational level, from 45 to 80 years of age (5).

• Group 3: Women in occupations that do not necessarily require a university qualification, with a medium level of education attained at high school, or through vocational training) and who might, nevertheless, have a university degree, between 50 and 60 years of age (4).

• Group 4: Women in occupations that require university qualifications, with a university education, aged 45 to 65 (6).

The content analysis revealed that the interviewees in each group provided coherent information until they reached saturation point. The discourses of the first two groups established constant continuities that differed remarkably from those in the last two groups, which were equally assimilable. Similarly, there were big differences in the discourses of the women in Group 5 (three 21-year-old university students) and Group 6 (three men of varied educational and professional ages and backgrounds).

## 3. Results

### 3.1. «Amar en tiempos revueltos»: History and information

«Amar en tiempos revueltos» presents an historical setting within which a series of plots representing

everyday life take place. The realistic component so characteristic of the «folletín» (serialised novel) seems to lend its discourse objectivity. Supported by historical references and informational film devices, it facilitates viewers' immersion in a text which, by sometimes transgressing the rules of fiction, manages to look like a documentary. This informative appearance strengthens its socializing dimension and, in the opinion of many viewers, makes it a pedagogical telenovela. Furthermore, the telenovela evokes old radio series and literary genres such as the historical novel, the Spanish Realist novel of the late 19th century, and the social and critical theatre of the early 20th century, reinforcing the feeling of reality attributed to the story.

Regardless of their socio-demographic characteristics, all members of the sample noted the informational aspect of the telenovela. Indeed, apart from the content, the tale's familiar approach seems to increase the persuasive potential of the text. The most knowledgeable comments in the sample link the story to the «Unamuno» vision of the «intra-history», while the most prosaic interventions highlight the relationship between the plots and everyday life. Others reveal the ideological bias of the ethnographic discourses. All the female interviewees show how the anecdotal and everyday perspective of the TV series foments processes that reveal a significant psychological connection between the audience and plots which, in some cases, are highly personalized.

«If you think about it, it is like real life. And in the scenes, you see a bit of your life, like when you were a child» (a 60-year-old housekeeper from Group 2).

In its process of adaptation to Spanish viewers, the telenovela, which is an eminently Latin American genre, opted for an historical recreation of the social reality of a bygone era in Spain. This historical setting is the most important feature that identifies the product as Spanish in relation to its Latin American referents. Realism, historicism and the documentary nature of the text are the most important and visible aspects of the brand image of the Spanish telenovela. Following the idea of national community and the reinforcing of national values, the Spanish nation is represented as having a common history built on the confluence of conflicts. The telenovela materialises its role as a community text by recreating the conflicts of a society and its ability to overcome such problems for the sake of future progress, that is to say, the viewers' present:

«I think that it is important for Spaniards to know how people lived during that time, to realise that we have not always lived as we are now, in democracy, and that before, we were not allowed to read what we wanted (...) people believe that what we do today is how it always used to be» (a 49-year-old primary school teacher from Group 4).

> The influence of the educational factor has a varied effect depending on its combination with the age group. So, the youngest women, although they are educated, possess limited sources of verification, and place their trust in the veracity of the ambience and content of the TV series.

On the one hand, the «indigenization» of the telenovela in Spain ensures its familiarity and proximity, by offering stories that exalt Spanish idiosyncrasy. On the other hand, «indigenization» enhances the status of the product by associating it to features like verisimilitude, representativeness, reliability, and the realistic feel of the stories which, at least in appearance, disrupts the inherent fictional and extremely romantic conventions of the genre. By contrast, the Latin American telenovela are seen as increasingly more fictional and unreal:

«Amar en tiempos revueltos» seems more serious, more novelistic, and more historical. And the other (the Latin American telenovela) is more romantic (…). And the same happens in series and telenovelas from there, they are just romanticism and nothing more (...) (Amar en tiempos revueltos) (…) is more real». (a 60-year-old housekeeper from Group 2).

«(The Latin American telenovelas) are less informative than the Spanish ones because the former focus more on personal relationships and tend to exaggerate too much» (a 21-year-old female university student from Group 5).

However, the distinctive features associated to the Spanish telenovela go beyond this. The sample of women with a high level of education, and who are also long-time consumers of fiction, point to other elements by which «Amar en tiempos revueltos» readapts the telenovela genre. The use of Spanish TV

stars and «normalised linguistics», and less theatrical dramatic strategies reduce the cultural distance between Spanish viewers and Latin American television stories:

«Spanish actors (have) accents with which I identify more (...) In the South American telenovelas… (the actors) speak in a certain way… I don't know how to explain it… their expressions… their acting is not credible. (…) However in (the Spanish production) they speak your language, the acting is more credible, (...) it seems more familiar (…) I see actors who are well-known, in fact some of them have been actors their whole lives» (a 50-year-old, administrative assistant from Group 3).

### 3.2. Verifying the story, looking for identity

The ethnographic approach that recreates the lifestyle of post-Civil War Madrid allows viewers to establish ties of continuity with personal experiences lodged in their memory, and which measure the accuracy of the story. At the same time, the central role of plots that deal with the family and relationships, so characteristic of the serialised novel, enables the construction of a wide open space for identification, opinion and discussion in which any female viewer can participate, regardless of educational and occupational level.

In this sense, the groups with a lower level of education are the most credulous, although they articulate defence strategies that act as procedures to evaluate the story and its rigor (Callejo, 1995). The resources to measure veracity include the recovery of childhood experiences or plots that are intergenerationally referenced. This process requires the female viewer to recognise a part of her within the fictional text in order to activate the processes of evocation.

What they usually select for this comparison are the most material elements which are more firmly ingrained in the memory: dress style and home decoration. Some female interviewees suggested that the television text softens the post-war reality. The hegemony of black in the clothing of the era, the decorative austerity of households as well as the narrative ellipses that obviate the hardships that still live in their memories explain why the representation might be described as «rich people's post-war» reality (a 53-year-old housewife in Group 2).

This appreciation is, however, compatible with the tendency to seek coherence between the reality experienced and the fiction watched on television. That is why the message is particularly persuasive in those moments when it recreates and personalizes those situations that are part of the viewers' personal oral heritage, producing a resonance:

«For example, my mother told me about the way political prisoners used to hide and all that, and now I am putting a face to that story» (a 47-year-old small business owner from Group 1).

«The telenovela showed the story of a man that was locked up, and well, I have lived that experience because in my town they locked up a kid. It is like my story, because I have lived that» (an 80-year-old housewife in Group 2).

By contrast, when there is a dissonance between the television representation and viewers' historical experiences, the fictional plots operate as cognitive correctors that reorganise viewers' memories. That is why the anachronisms of the TV text, far from being questioned, are frequently received as valuable informational input.

«We are dealing with an interesting subject: divorce. At that time… nobody would believe it!» (a 56-year-old housewife from Group 1).

«What struck me about the series is the case of homosexuality between two women, and seeing that during that time there were things that exist now» (a 47-year-old small business owner in Group 1).

At the formal level, this group is less aware of gender diversity and the various languages that shape the small screen. That is why some resources deployed in the TV series to increase the sense of reality and to give it a documentary feel do not achieve the desired effect of continuity. This is the case of informative archive images, which mostly come from news and documentary footage. These images are inserted at the beginning of some narrative sections and act as transitions between sequences, and give an historical context to the plots to enhance their documentary quality.

«Is it because of the sections that present the history before the telenovela starts? (…) «Amar en tiempos revueltos» wants to show how life was lived before and how it is today. This is why they present short fragments, about Franco going to certain places, and that kind of stuff… And then, bam, the telenovela really begins» (a 60-year-old housekeeper from Group 2).

«A long time ago, at the cinema, people watched the news. And then the telenovela shows pieces from NO-DO (the news and documentary programme). It is useful to show the date, day and year» (a 59-year-old small business owner, Group 1).

The evaluation of the representative meaning of the TV series becomes more complex and sophisti-

cated in the discourse of the more educated women. Using the same material (memories of family experiences), they diversify and expand the indicators while simultaneously analyzing them more exhaustively. They mirror the observations of the lower socio-demographic group, but in more detail, and extend criticism of the excessive use of other objects such as the telephone, and what at the time might have been considered luxury food items:

«You see their trousers and you think these trousers are pleated! And the sofas, everybody has sofas! And this makes you wonder whether, at that time, they all had three-seater sofas? (…) For breakfast, strips of fried dough and muffins, the only thing missing is the fridge!» (a 49-year-old primary school teacher, Group 4).

But the distinctive feature of this group is its reiterated reproach of the representation of the female condition and its performance in the telenovela. Aware of the difficulties faced by women, they highlight the contradiction of certain key characters that embody the values of the contemporary female, such as empowerment, job promotion for women and the balancing of work and family life. This group notes the rigidity of women's progression in the telenovela, and the difficulties in educational, job and social mobility they have inherited. Through their criticism of these non-contextualised fictional stereotypes, these interviewees underline the genuine progress of real women who lived during that time, and with whom they identify and maintain referential and affective ties.

«There are things that are very incongruent, like the fact that a woman in that time could lead a company by herself, even when she was married (...). When my mother got married she immediately had to stop working because that was the tradition. It was the same for my sister's workmates when they got married (...) they stopped working because their goal was to maintain the family» (a 50-year-old administrative assistant, Group 3).

At the same time, the discourse of these women still defends the dramatized merits of the female characters, which often seem to reduce the real merits of their female viewers to the banal. The female characters and the female viewers share conflicts, although the former resolve theirs more successfully than the latter. That is why the modernity, sophistication, exaggeration and lack of credibility, and even the derision awoken by these fictional women, are the most recurring accusations. After watching the story, these female respondents are perhaps made more aware of the almost inherently domestic nature of their role and of the obstacles to overcome to achieve social change in a more egalitarian society:

«For example, the character of Manolita, who has three daughters, is at the bar, and she has been working in big department stores for a while. Women of that time would either take care of their children or work. But she does the two things at the same time, which is very difficult. And the daughters are always very well taken care of, and wonderful, and the mother is always at the bar, and the father at the bar, and the grandfather at the bar. Who takes care of these girls? (…) There are things that do not make sense» (a 52-year-old administrative assistant in Group 3).

However, the ability to judge the accuracy of the story is reduced in those groups that no longer have a direct link to the historical period represented. The generation gap between female viewers and the epoch represented results in the lack of material and indicators to articulate this verification process. In other words, the influence of the educational factor has a varied effect depending on its combination with the age group. So, the youngest women, although they are educated, possess limited sources of verification, and place their trust in the veracity of the ambience and content of the TV series. In fact, they see this fictional text as an educational text. Thus, the story is used less as a reference for the status of women. For this group, «Amar en Tiempos Revueltos» is above all a useful tool for verifying the accuracy of the oral histories of their families, and to compensate for the lack of knowledge of that era which they did not acquire from the formal educational system:

«I have never really understood it… I know what Francoism is… what happened in the transition, what happened before… but I never studied it. I don't know, I never studied that part of our history in high school and I have only learnt about it from this and other telenovelas or series or other programmes, and based on what my grandparents have told me… that it (what the telenovela shows) is actually true» (a 21-year-old university student, Group 5).

### 3.3. Re-signifying the characters

«Amar en tiempos revueltos» presents a branched narrative structure, built from a network of plots sustained by personal conflicts, some of them timeless, others strictly of their time. It thus offers the female viewer models for action and the resolution of ordinary problems. The female characters, on the one hand, articulate a sort of historical panorama of the situation of women under the Francoist regime, and on the other hand, present evaluative, attitudinal and

behavioural patterns with persuasive power based on the psychological commitment of the viewer to the text.

The most consensual and extended alliances revolve around the character of Manolita (Itziar Miranda), who arouses a range of positive meanings in female viewers, regardless of age and education. The female viewers witness Manolita's vicissitudes through «El Asturiano», a small bar she runs with her family. This bar is used as a scenographic resource to present the dual role of the archetype: the family and the professional roles that are mainly to this space. Interview analysis shows that this character exemplifies the value of the family in its classical dimension, and embodies the processes of female re-accommodation and the central responsibility of women in the cohesion and continuity of the family as an institution.

The interviewees with better jobs perceive the character as a symbol of the reconciliation of family and work. It combines tradition and modernity, and shows the high expectations placed on women who wish to pursue this dual role. At the same time, Manolita's simple psychological characterisation includes proactivity, optimism, emotional intelligence and the ability to perform. All these features conform to a model of compulsory features the contemporary female must possess. This already broad portrayal also includes virtues such as charity or social solidarity, which stimulate loyalty in the female viewers who have been sensitized to ethical and even religious attitudes. In addition, the popular halo enveloping «El Asturiano» connects the bar to places and characters that are typical of genres such as the «zarzuela» (traditional Spanish operetta), which give this space a certain humorous character that is much appreciated by the female interviewees.

The character of Ana Rivas (Marina San José) evokes very different meanings. The evaluation of her character divided opinion in the sample. Her presentation as a highly educated and socially successful business woman who owns and manages a big company arouses emotions ranging from admiration and psychological projection from those women not in the public space, to disdain from others who consider her to be an implausible, anachronistic and improbable character. While this character symbolises the processes of women's empowerment, the critical vision that she awakens, especially among the higher educated interviewees, reveals the growing barriers to social and job mobility that they experience.

In fact, the highest educated group of women shows its special appreciation of the characters that embody a femininity that is consistent with the cultural rules of that time. The character of Carmen (Pepa Pedroche) is singled out by several interviewees due to her credibility, the strength of her psychological construction and her coherence with the era of the narrative.

According to this reading, the stereotype of the unwearying and selfless woman comes to symbolise the silent work done by most women of the time.

**The story's connections to irrational elements such as memories increase its persuasive force and enable active public participation. The female viewer can use fiction to see a reflection of herself, her gender group or the wider community she belongs to.**

Embodying the mythical role of the mother, which distinguishes and grants exclusivity to the genre, the character symbolises women's sacrifices and compromises for the sake of family survival and harmony. On the one hand, the dynamics of the sharing of domestic power portray the character as a subordinate figure and yet, paradoxically, her strength and resistance to adversity portray her as an indisputable pillar on which the rest of the family depends physically and psychologically.

## 4. Conclusions

The socialization process is never-ending, indeed during this process several resources are deployed depending on the viewer's current mindset and socio-demographic characteristics. The media, including television, collaborate in these pedagogical dynamics through formats whose explicit function is entertainment.

This is how the «Amar en tiempos revueltos» can help to build identity and perform informative functions for its female viewers, provided the women's evaluation and verification filters are penetrated. On

the other hand, the story's connections to irrational elements such as memories increase its persuasive force and enable active public participation. The female viewer can use fiction to see a reflection of herself, her gender group or the wider community she belongs to. The force of variables like gender and age in the re-signification of the telenovela is unquestionable. The comments of the male interviewees (Group 6) reveal how their view of the telenovela is influenced by their intense involvement in the public space. The informational dimension of the plots and their usefulness as texts of representation of the political situation of post-Civil War Spain is the aspect most highly valued by these viewers, who watch the telenovela with a more informative and less emotional involvement. However, we still need to investigate the individual psychological processes the male viewers go through. The use of indicators such as the evaluation of the male characters, or plots and conflicts in personal relationships could advance the research in this area.

From a macro-perspective, the continued exercising of this socializing role could contribute to the articulation of wider social changes. The message of «Amar en tiempos revueltos», as a means of strengthening worldviews that favour women's empowerment, could be an instrument for greater gender equality, as has happened with other telenovelas and other contexts (La Pastina, 2004: 177).

Its effect might be reinforced by the consumption of other intra-textual products working in the same ideological direction («La Señora», 2008-10); or counteracted by the consumption of more conservative and opposing discourses. Finally, the role of interpersonal communication dynamics in the remaking of fiction is another element to consider in proposals for the analysis of the effects of this message.

## Notes

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