The Management of the TV Programmes: from TV Offer to Self-programming, from Public Education to Total Entertainment

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Abstract: *This paper aims to present the development of the TV programming, considering that, within 60 years, television has come a long way, increasingly accelerated in the last 20 years, after the emergence of the Internet. The transformations in the management of TV production and broadcasting over the years are in direct connection with the changes in the structure of the audience and also with the new digital technologies that have a strong impact on our society.*

Keywords: *Programming, Broadcasting, Television, Social media, Internet*

1. A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE EVOLUTION OF THE PROGRAMMING TECHNIQUES

In the first five years of television in Europe, after Second World War, television networks of that period, especially public televisions, broadcast programmes as offer: these are the shows, you, the viewers, choose what programmes you want to watch. This approach was possible because there were very few television networks, as the audience was captive, one way or another. Soon, managers in television realised that there is a need to optimize the relation between the broadcaster and the receiver, the viewer. Since the 1950's, a survey has been organized in France for RTF (Radiodiffusion-Télévision Française, the name of the public television and radio in France between 1949 and 1964), which represented the first attempt to establish a community between the TV channel and its audience. Studies in Great Britain appeared in the same period.[1]

If we look closely at the development of television in France and Great Britain, we will observe a synchronicity in the decisions, but also different approaches in the making of broadcast programming.

Since the launch of BBC, the British, concerned about the idea of competition even in this new field that was strongly developing after WWII, generated competition between BBC Television Service and the ITV network, consisting of smaller regional companies. Both channels have been competing since the launch, in 1955.[2]

In 1964, in France and Great Britain, the second channel of the public television, Antenne 2 and BBC 2, appeared. Moreover, from the 1st of July 1967, BBC 2 was the first European TV channel which broadcast regularly in colours.[3]

The approach of programming the shows of the public televisions in France and Great Britain was different. In France, the management of the television avoided the competition between the first channel and the second channel of the public television, favouring complementarity of the programmes

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[1] Monique Dagnaud, „Profession:programmateur", *Médiaspouvoirs*, vol. 20, 1990, pp. 15-24.

[2] https://www.sixtiescity.net/Television/BritishTV.htm, accessed on 08.03.2020.

[3] *Idem.*

broadcast at the same time. In Great Britain, competition has been favoured ever since the launch of the first BBC channel.

A new programming strategy was applied in France after 1972, after the launch of the third channel of the French public television, France 3. The programmes were considered goods, the public was considered marketplace.[4] Surveys were taken into consideration for the evaluation of the shows.

After 1980, both in France and in Great Britain, the programming was organized as a daily and weekly meeting agenda between the audience and its favourite shows. At the same time, in order have loyalty among viewers, through fixed meeting hours with their favourite programmes, the decision was made concerning the standardization of the duration of the TV shows, 26, 52, 90 minutes.[5]

While in Great Britain, the emergence of the private TV channels was simultaneous with the development of the public channels, the public channels appeared in France in 1986 (La Cinq) and in 1987 (M6).

The mission of the public television at the European Union level remains unchanged, from the first director of BBC, who also had the longest term, of 11 years: to inform, to entertain, to educate. The public television remains an essential source of education, a support for education in crisis situations. The best example is the situation from March 2020, caused by the coronavirus crisis. In these moments, the public television becomes a channel for producing and broadcasting lessons for children who need to stay at home. The broadcast is on air and on the Internet. In this period of crisis, the public television is also a source of programmes for the management of extracurricular education.[6]

The big jump in the field of programming happened after 2000, when the Internet started to retrieve a big part of the TV shows and to broadcast them online, either as live broadcasts, or as files stored in an offer list.

2. SELF-PROGRAMMING

The gradual move of television to the Internet caused the change in the structure which coordinated the programming of the TV shows. A transfer of importance is produced from the programmes' directorate to the marketing directorate, because the fixed times when we used to watch our favourite programmes have passed. The members of the audience have the possibility to watch their favourite show when they have time, when they want. The audience creates its own programming, from the offers that are available online. In this case, we talk about a new concept, of self-programming. Online programming is compared metaphorically with the method of ordering à la carte from a restaurant, where everyone orders what they want.[7] At the same time, TV programmes are available also on other screens than TV: computer monitor and mobile phone. In the case of this new relation with the consumer, the marketing department is more important for television, as it needs to bombard the consumer with information about the programmes it has on the Internet.

The programmes that are available on the Internet can be divided in two categories:

- Programmes broadcast via the antenna and, then, uploaded on the Internet;

- Programmes especially created to be distributed on the Internet.

The third category of programmes that are available on the Internet are the interactive games.[8] The following classification of the online games is used by programmers and users:

- Role-playing (RP), it refers to exercising or playing a certain role, in accordance with the rules of the game;

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[4] Elisabeth Cazenave, Caroline Ulmann-Mauriat, *Presse, radio et télévision en France de 1631 à nos jours*, Paris, Hachette (Collection Carré Histoire), 1994, p. 253.
[5] Monique Dagnaud, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-24.
[6] Vladimir Enăchescu, *Management of educational potential through extracurricular activities,* http://rmci.ase.ro/no20vol3/09.pdf, 10.03.2020
[7] Susan TylerEastman, Douglas Ferguson, *Media Programming: Strategies and Practices*, Wadsworth, Cengage Learning, 2013.
[8] Susan TylerEastman, Douglas Ferguson, *op. cit*., p. 140.

- First-person shooter (FPS), the first person who shoots;

- Real-time strategy (RTS), in which the viewer needs to react in real time;

- Turn-based strategy (TBS), a strategy game (usually a wargame, especially a wargame at strategic level), in which players transform themselves when they play. It is different from the real-time strategy, in which all the players play simultaneously;

- Simulation (SIMs), games which simulate a situation for the player, such as: poker games, racing games, alternative world games, like the Second Life game.[9]

Another major change for online programming is the broadcast advertising. Online advertising is much more diverse and the consumers sometimes have the possibility to avoid the ads they don't want to see, something which wasn't possible in the case of the traditional television. In this case, the viewers have the remote control at their disposal in order to change the channel. But the coordinated strategy of the advertising companies and the television networks, by broadcasting commercials at the same time, on all the TV networks, sometimes in the same order, doesn't allow total avoidance of advertising.

The distribution of the programmes is infinitely expanded in the case of distribution on the Internet. Netlifx is such an example. It has millions of viewers from all over the world. The shows broadcast via the antenna are limited at national level, and in Romania, for broadcasting, the television needs a license from the National Audiovisual Council. For the broadcast on the Internet, there is no restriction, at least not for now.

3. CHANGING THE BUSINESS MODEL AND THE CONSUMER PRACTICES OF THE AUDIENCE

The broadcast of the TV shows on the Internet implies the change of the television business model. The classic model works, in a few words, as follows: the television station broadcasts via the antenna and through the cable companies, the viewers receive the signal at home via the antenna or the cable, based on subscription. The money returns to the television networks from the cable companies. Another source of income for televisions is advertising.

The broadcast of TV shows on the Internet brings new payment methods for viewers. Aside from the classic subscription, we find VOD (video-on-demand), peer-per-view.

After years of stability with respect to its consumption practices, television is now experiencing hybridization with the Internet, which is rewriting its own identity as a medium. We can say that this is rise of new consumption practices among younger generations, possibly related to the emergence of a new way of understanding TV[10]. In recent years, the evolution of TV has been marked by very radical changes with respect to the well-balanced relationship between offer and demand, and between broadcasters and audiences, which historically characterized the medium. These transformations, in one way, deal with the technological evolution of the medium and its hybridization with other devices, and, in another, with the rise of new consumption habits and practices on the part of the audience, who increasingly wants to be entertained and engaged. Consumption practices, enabled by both the diffusion of new technologies and improvement in audience competencies, are now giving shape to new social uses able to domesticate new devices and invent unheard of and unpredictable hybrid styles, as we will discuss later. We could refer to this new condition as a form of "anytime" and "anywhere" television: an experience, in other words, that has little or nothing to do with the show schedule, as it was programmed by broadcasting companies and super-imposed by the flow, which can be seen as the very socio-technical pattern of traditional TV. The system has recently moved from being ruled by a producer-generated flow to becoming a cross-platform environment and this transformation seems to affect different levels of the system: the material distribution of devices in the domestic space (main screen, second screen, etc.), the temporal organization of consumption and the social practices related to TV viewing.[11]

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[9]*Ibidem*, pg. 143.

[10] Romana Andò, „What does TV actually mean? New consumer experience and generations", *Participations. Journal of Audience and Reception Studies*, Vol. 11, Issue 2, November 2014, p. 156.

[11]*Ibidem*, pp. 161-162.

The new idea of TV consumption, as experienced by young viewers, is quite different from the traditional one, "recommended" by TV networks. It's a new experience with new symbolic value, the result of the gradual clearing out of the original one. The TV, as it has been built up over fifty years, remains central to the adults' experience: for them it continues to be the main source of home entertainment, the heart of the house, despite the proliferation of mobile devices also inside the home.[12].

4. SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media represents an extraordinary broadcaster of video programmes. In 2011, the motion pictures and entertainment company Warner Bros. addressed to the consumers on Facebook in order to download movies, for a symbolic price ($3.00).[13] In Romania, the Facebook network is used for the live broadcasting of some events. Television stations sometimes broadcast certain shows simultaneously, via the antenna and on Facebook.

Another social network, MySpace.com, encourages its users to upload productions in order to be watched by as many viewers as possible. In the USA, the network is the vloggers' favourite.

The online environment is in continuous transformation. Televisions are permanently adapting to the new media technologies and we can say that now all the big television networks in Romania are already present online.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Research showed that, for adults, watching television is still a ritual, which is consumed at certain times of the day, as established by the schedule. It's an opportunity for collective vision, with family members and friends, to talk and exchange comments, to sit together in front of the TV.

As for the online TV, it is a new, different chapter in the history of television, one that is being written in the Digital Era, which generates challenges in many areas. But television is capable to survive and to accept total transformation, if necessary, and the proof is that, at present, we see TV programmes simultaneously on the TV set, Smart TV, laptop, smartphone, tablet, etc., as these programmes are available anywhere, anytime. The consumer is the one who chooses how to access them and how to live the television experience.

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[12]*Ibidem*, p. 176.
[13]Susan TylerEastman, Douglas Ferguson, *op. cit.*, p. 128.