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## New Paradigms of Audiovisual Industry

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The *New World Information and Communication Order*, a concept coined in the 1980s in the UNESCO International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems, has evolved since then. It capitulated in 1990 to give way to the concept of the *Information Society*, as a result of the growth and expansion of information and communication technologies.

Some of the recommendations made in the 1980s are still in force: strengthen the independence and avoid informational imbalances, democratize information and ensure cultural diversity, facilitate access to information, protect journalists, reduce the commercialization of content and expand financial resources, strengthen cultural identity and foster international cooperation.

However, since the 1990s, the world has certainly become more globalized. Against the political powers, citizens have gained greater prominence; therefore, the new international order brings new elements to the industrial ecosystem of media [NIE 08].

The importance of cultural industries as bearers of values and identity led the members of the United Nations to sign the *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions* in 2005. The new digital context highlighted the increasingly protagonist role of citizens as content generators, a context where the “creative commons” of the economy of participation and sharing relegated the protectionist approaches of the past concerning intellectual property of works. In the 20th Century, the owners of

media left the States in control of the media; in the 21st Century, citizens access content more easily and are even content generators.

In this chapter, we will study how the new order of communication has evolved around the three major issues of concern: the defense of pluralism, the social role of media content and the free circulation of global content.

In short, in this chapter, we will establish the general lines on which the media industry is based; from its global and historical evolution to its triple political, economic and cultural dimension.

### 1.1. Toward political freedom

Media play a social function that has to do with informing citizens truthfully, showing exemplary models of behavior and providing a useful and effective service to society. These fundamental principles must be secured and safeguarded, because the media shape public opinion and influence the recipients.

When asked who should control the media, political systems offer two extreme positions: interventionism and liberalism. State interventionism believes that the media are state-owned and therefore the public power should control its content and management. The opposite extreme position is liberalism, in which the market itself regulates and directs the activity of the media, and therefore the public sector should not have any external control.

Historically, in most countries, media were directed and controlled by the State, and hence public media were a monopoly. This is the case, for example, of the press in Spain at the time of General Franco or televisions and radios in almost all European countries when they started [CAL 02].

In some countries, totalitarian systems developed systems of censorship, so that only what the government is interested in is published. Although it was a common practice in the past in countries where democracy had not been established, it still exists in some countries. For example, in 2007, the Venezuelan television channel RCTV, which had more than 30 years of experience on the air and was an audience leader, was closed because the government of Hugo Chavez thought it destabilized public order with its content; in China, more than 4,000 officials control the information posted on the Internet or accessed from the Chinese territory every day. When

regimes are in a process of being liberalized but freedoms are not fully guaranteed, the censorship system leads to the practice of self-censorship by professionals and media managers. This way, sanctions or other more severe measures against what is published are avoided.

In the 1980s, freedom of trade and expression bloomed in the fields of the media market, in both television and print media. The shadows caused by monopolistic approaches, whose main protagonist was the State, and its dominion over information emerged. In the 21st Century, there are still remnants of statist approaches and lack of freedom in some Arab countries, North Korea, Cuba and China. In other countries, terrorist or destabilizing groups condition freedom of press, as is the case in Colombia, Guatemala or Mexico, where journalists are often killed by drug traffickers [FRE 15].

Liberalization of the media entails the reduction of direct State control, that is, privatizing some public media (as TV channels Rai 2 in Italy in 1975 and TF1 in France in 1987) and the incorporation of private initiatives in the control of the media. When the media were left in the hands of private capital, governments realized the need to regulate the market and establish standards to protect fundamental principles and human rights. For the legal system to organize and allow the full development of the institutions that operate in the free market economy, it is necessary that the law is consistent with the rules of the free market, that it respects free trade, that there is an effective control system and that punitive measures are effective in achieving compliance to the law.

One of the principles that every free state must recognize is that of pluralism. The principle of pluralism recognizes the legitimacy of all cultural options, behaviors, lifestyles, ideologies, policies and human values. The defense of pluralism is justified in considering the public's right to be informed and access the media, and the freedom of expression of journalists. It is essential to guarantee this right and these freedoms in a democratic society.

One way to ensure pluralism is for public institutions to encourage the creation of media companies, so that the different voices of society are represented in the media and have access to them. Thus, pluralism in this sense is identified with a range of media and content wide enough to cover all the information and entertainment needs of citizens.

The liberalization process of radio and terrestrial television in Europe ended in the 1990s. Privatizing the capital and management of media introduced advertising as a revenue source, sometimes the only or main one. Although, historically, the origins of television in North America and Europe are different, we are currently in a stage of coincidence: both in the use of technologies and in the influence that States have in it. Homogeneity is seen in some areas of programming, although the legislation of the Member States of the European Union seeks to maintain a level of European programming. There is another common note between the United States and 'Europe: the States' role gradually ceases to have such prominence and, perhaps above the general interest and public service, commercial forces operating in the market gain strength and influence.

Investment in the launch and implementation of new TV channels, together with limited advertising revenue, required new private partners. In some cases, they came from outside the electronic media industry, for example, from sectors such as banking, computer and electrical. For many of these companies, television was one of the most profitable businesses of their activity. Press managers invested in television, partly to diversify risk and partly in an effort to achieve higher profitability. Most multinational groups participated in television activities: Maxwell, Fininvest, Bertelsmann, Springer Verlag, Hachette, Havas, Time, Warner, Bond and Murdoch. One consequence of the increased presence of televisions in the information market was the stagnation or decrease of the reading of daily newspapers and magazines.

One of the dangers of the free market is corporate concentration, that, ultimately, the media are owned by a few entrepreneurs and, therefore, the information and cultural pluralism is imperiled. To prevent abuse of power, Western legislation established a series of conditions on media ownership, for example, not allowing a single shareholder to control more than a certain proportion of capital – the quantities stipulated often prevent owning more than 25% or 49% of the capital; not allowing one shareholder to own more than one media outlet in the same geographic market, in different markets or any complementary stage of industrialization, for example, that a television channel owns a production company, and preventing one company from overcoming a determined market share – could be applied to both advertising revenue and audience shares. By the beginning of the 21st Century, most Western countries liberalized all these limits to media ownership.

The greater role that civil society has acquired thanks in part to digital technologies has manifested itself in the development of complementary regulatory instruments such as self-regulation. This system leads economic players, social partners, citizens, non-governmental organizations and professional associations to adopt common guidelines and codes of conduct. For this system to be effective, it is necessary that there are professional authorities, independent to political power, to ensure the proper functioning of the market and to resolve disputes out of court.

The existence of councils to help regulate, sanction and encourage free competition and public service is the most appropriate way to achieve pluralism and good practice [LLO 13]. These councils exist in most Western countries. For example: the FCC in United States, Ofcom in the United Kingdom, “*Conseil Supérieur de l’Audiovisuel*” in France and the “*Autorità per le Garanzie nelle Comunicazioni*” in Italy. In Spain, the General Audiovisual Communication Law 7/2010 foresaw the existence of a State Audiovisual Council (CEMA), but before it came to exist, the Law 3/2013 of Creation of the National Commission for Markets and Competition decided that the audiovisual sector was to be monitored and controlled by the National Commission for Markets and Competition (CNMC).

Although in the field of media in Spain, codes of conduct on content have not worked, the same cannot be said about the advertising industry, where the Association for Self-regulation of Commercial Communication, “Autocontrol” (<http://www.autocontrol.es>) is a guarantee of legal compliance and good work [MUÑ 13]. It is a model for many countries in Latin America.

## 1.2. Media economics challenges

The economic dimension of media activities has been gaining prominence since the 1980s. Thus, media economics has been consolidated as an academic discipline that studies how the media respond to the wishes and needs of information and entertainment of the audience, advertisers and society in general, taking into account the available resources. It has three fundamental elements: (1) the media, which, as a subject of economic activity, is referred to as a company; (2) the product, which is the result of the activity of the company or media and (3) the consumers of the product [HER 09]. These three elements meet in the market, which is known as a

physical location or social area where the supply and demand of media products is promoted and met.

The development of the media market in recent years allows us to see how the economic and commercial dimension of communication does not necessarily endanger the cultural, creative and social dimensions of communication. However, we should also be aware of, and reflect on, some concepts that shape the new economic order of the media in the 20th Century.

First, the concept of media product needs to be understood in its double condition, material and immaterial, integrating the concepts of product and service [MED 16]. The media goods concept is associated with a material dimension, the hardware part, while service is associated with the purpose provided. Although the hardware is essential for the information product to be considered an autonomous reality, the value is determined by the content of what is transmitted, the message. The value of the message reflects the kind of needs that media products aim to satisfy. Most goods existing in the market provide consumers with the means to satisfy material needs and desires. News and entertainment products of symbolic and intangible nature can be classified as cultural products. Cultural products deal with the meanings of life, and the needs and desires that they seek to satisfy are directed to the intelligence and will of the individual. Therefore, its value remains and is not destroyed or finished by a first act of consumption.

As we have seen, the guiding role of the State in the launch of radio and television channels in Europe determined the first funding system of audiovisual services, especially television: public funding. The monopoly situation of the first TV channels derived from the concept of public service television and the scarcity of the radio spectrum, owned and managed by the State. Commercial TV channels born from the deregulatory process that took place in Europe in the 1980s and 1990s brought a new way of funding, and consequently, a marketing process. Advertising revenues seemed sufficient to sustain the activity of the few channels that started out in different countries. The first peculiarity derived from this financing system is the presence of a new agent, the advertiser, who pays for the media. The television activity was financed by income received directly from advertisers, but not as consideration for television products. Advertisers do not buy programs, but airtime to insert their ads. Not just any time either, but

one that corresponds to programs that bring together the right audience to their interests.

The audience become a commodity when advertisers buy media airtime [NAP 10]. In the case of television, where direct payment has not existed for many years (until the arrival of pay-TV and other systems of video on demand), commercialization of the audience is especially clear. Advertising commercializes audiences, while enabling media to reach out to citizens free of cost. In Spain, the annual advertising investment in media exceeded €10 billion in 2014.

Direct payment for television products introduced price discrimination in an industry hitherto considered free and of universal access. Unlike in daily newspapers and magazines, where direct consideration was customary, direct payment by users of radio and television (and later on, the Internet) took some time to reach Europe. It was not until the birth of HBO (Home Box Office) in 1972 that nationwide industry of pay television was established in the United States. The delay in the development of the pay-television industry was caused mainly by technological difficulties and legal conflicts. In Europe, the first pay-TV channel, Canal Plus France, was born in 1984, modeled on HBO.

Increased competition and a battle for audiences to achieve advertising revenue started a crisis in the public radio and television sector in Europe several years ago. On the one hand, it could be said that the commercialization of media and the increase in media supply made the presence of the State as a guarantor of media service unnecessary. On the other hand, the fact that public media has a fixed income limits its growth potential. In an era of fierce competition in the audiovisual sector, public media, especially in the online world, have been launched into an arena of business operations and partnerships unlike ever before, in order to increase revenue and market presence. This strategy has led to endless debate that criticizes the public service's allocation of money from the citizens into businesses from which they will not benefit. To avoid this controversy, the BBC, according to data from fiscal year 2013/2014, allocated only 5% of the income received from the fee paid by citizens to online activity, while 66% was dedicated to its TV channels, broadcasted in Britain. However, its international activity through *BBC World Service* was funded by advertising and other commercial revenues, which was justified

by the need to legitimize their existence and build a global brand, thanks to the accumulation of international audiences.

In short, the dimension of media related to trade and the media economy has gained an especially important role in recent decades. Consideration of audiences as an object of transaction has also influenced the legitimacy of public service activity, which will require high ratings to survive. However, the cultural dimension can also be assessed if one takes the externalities generated by media content into account and the influence they might have on the necessity of public media.

High fixed costs and virtually zero marginal cost (the cost of reaching one more user) are behind the media industry's tendency to operate with economies of scale: especially in audiovisual media and the Internet, there are serious advantages in the size or number of units produced. There are three types of economies of scale:

1) those due to efficient production which therefore can reduce the average costs of production (the higher the number of units produced, the lower the cost per unit);

2) those that take place in the economies of scope, which allow the same product to be reprocessed and used in different ways and

3) those that occur when a product is extensively distributed in the market.

Precisely because the marginal cost is zero and fixed costs are very high, the cost per unit will be reduced not by the number of units produced (as with automobile production, for example), but for the number of people the product reaches. Thus, the first type of economies of scale is not applicable to the audiovisual industry or to the Internet, due to the immateriality of the product.

The second type requires recourse to the definition of economies of scope, which allows the production of two products by the same company to be less expensive for the economy in general than if they were to be produced by two different companies. Economies of scope allow a product to be reprocessed and used in different ways. For example, the same content is distributed in newspaper, radio, television or the Internet and gives rise to differentiated products; or a multimedia group can make effective use of the same content in different media of its ownership. Economies of scope made the fast development of the first digital newspapers a reality (which were originally a copy of the content from papers).



The peculiarities of audiovisual and Internet products give the third type of economy of scale a major role. Because of the high fixed costs, the cost per person decreases with the size of the audience. It is suitable therefore to increase production costs on the broadest possible audience. It can be done, first, with a geographical distribution of the same products in different countries, as Netflix did in October 2015 when it began offering its services in Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Italy, Portugal and Spain.

However, there is also a way of building audiences according to time, something specific to the audiovisual industry and that the Internet has taken further. Content producers intend to distribute their products to the widest possible audience in order to reduce the cost per viewer. Through windowing, for example, they seek to achieve the maximum economic performance of a single product. This strategy involves the transmission of the same program on different channels and at different times. For example, one film is first screened in cinemas; later passed to the home video market; third, it is available on pay-TV channels (also via the Internet) and finally any citizen can enjoy it for free in public or commercial open channels.

This shows that a considerable size is essential if you want to reach mass audiences. In Spain, the large media groups Prisa, Unedisa and Vocento, and later the publishing group Planeta, with its acquisition of a controlling share in Antena 3, were created in the late 20th Century. Consequently, the communications industry has high barriers to entry and a high degree of concentration, in which a few powerful operators set the rules of the game, making it difficult for new competitors to enter. It adopts an oligopoly market structure in which only a few sellers offer similar or identical products.

A logical consequence of the size of the companies is their growth strategy, aimed at controlling all phases of production: content production, packaging and distribution. Vertical integration allows producers, packagers and distributors to become a single agent. The advantages are numerous: access to raw materials, control of the costs of main resources, protection of the marketing channels and differentiation of these channels for better use of the product. This has further developed the Hollywood film industry with giants like Disney-ABC Television Group, which owns the production associated with Disney Studios, and ABC television channels.

Moreover, the growing importance of technology in media has favored the convergence of the telecommunications industries with the media industry. On the one hand, telecommunication companies have seen an opportunity in offering content and, on the other hand, media companies increasingly need telcos to reach their audiences. In Spain, for example, the leading pay-TV in 2016 was “Telefónica”, with the acquisition of Canal Plus, which led to additional subscribers of satellite television (with the brand Movistar Plus) and broadband TV.

Part of the growth strategies of companies is the resulting increase in capital needed for investment. Over the years, the industry has gone from being regulated and limiting in property matters to prevent dominant shareholders in the interests of pluralism, to a jump to the stock market in search of financial resources. This evolution implies the presence of shareholders, who want dividends and value the equity returns in the stock market. The audience was seen as an object of trade with advertisers, shareholders and media companies taken into the logic of the stock market: a logic run by the pursuit of profitability and short-term risk. This explains why issues such as the quality of content, which is achieved in the long term, are not among the priorities of the companies. The stock market is usually quite unpredictable, as many factors influence its movements. A sector may be booming, but if an influential factor arises unexpectedly, the value of the stock can completely fall. In Spain, in 2016, only one media company, Mediaset, was among the 35 listed companies with the highest liquidity on the Spanish stock market (IBEX 35).

However, with the creation of large conglomerates and their presence in the stock market, we have witnessed in recent years the development of content and communication platforms that exceed the constraints of oligopolistic structures. As a means of distribution, the Internet is a network of networks with great flexibility and consequent impact on the cost structure. Furthermore, the development of any project is not related to a specific geographical territory, and the structure of *the network of networks* makes it universal and accessible from practically anywhere.

The geographic and legal barriers (spectrum designation, concessions, etc.) are non-existent; only language impedes the content from traveling anywhere on the globe. This has made it possible for citizens to create their own content and disseminate it. Furthermore, this circulation of media content greatly depends on the active participation of citizens. In this sense,

the convergence brought by the Internet does not refer only to a technological process, but to a cultural change. We are thus faced with a market where oligopolistic structures and the consolidation of large conglomerates are compatible with the potential of end users creating and distributing their content without limits.

The high dependence on advertisers for revenue collection gave the media a great financial instability, as the ratings, the sale of copies, visits on the Web, etc. conditioned the amount of income. The collapse of advertising revenue caused partly by the loss of readers and audience segmentation, exacerbated by the financial crisis that hit Europe and the United States since 2007, caused a willingness to produce cheap content that could reach large audiences. Quality content was replaced by profitable *commodity* content, designed to entertain more than to inform with rigor.

Indisputable success formulas like reality shows, contests, tabloids and sensationalistic headlines stopped investigative journalism, high-quality productions and the creation of relevant stories [MED 13]. In addition, the speed of the digital environment permitted professionals to disseminate news without confirming their sources or to publish content without prior review.

The risks of the media market from the 1980s evidently did not dissipate over the years, but grew with some of the new offers and modes of communication.

Nevertheless, entertainment content and content compelling to large audiences are not an obstacle *per se* to the pursuit of quality that the public demands, and for which it is willing to pay, if necessary. The popular programming for the masses has legitimated the activity of TV channels such as the BBC, where a brand value associated with high-quality standards has matured; or some drama series like *24* or *Lost*, seen by audiences worldwide, or shows like *Pop Idol* or *MasterChef* of great success among national audiences.

### 1.3. International trade of ideas

Because of its cultural character, information products have the ability to promote knowledge, experience and imagination of individuals. In economic terms, it seems that information products have externalities, understood as the influence of a person's actions on the welfare of another. If the influence

is negative, it is called a negative externality; if positive, positive externality. Therefore, information products can be classified as desirable goods (merit goods), just as health, education and national defense, because of the positive externalities that they are likely to produce. The opposite of a merit good, one with negative externalities, is discouraged by society in general. However, the cultural character of information products makes them undesirable in some cases and, as discussed in the previous section, the State or other mechanisms of self-censorship from the profession itself may intervene. Noteworthy is the concern of parents and authorities over the impact of content or video games on children and young audiences.

As noted above, in the early stages of television and especially since the 1950s, shows too have become objects of sale and begun to circulate around the world. It is not enough to consider the exchange of shows as if they were material goods; it seems necessary to pay attention to the dissemination of ideas to other countries. For some, the problem lies not only in the dissemination of foreign ideas but also in the destruction of local cultural values. In academia, the critical school that stems from Marxist philosophy coins the term “cultural imperialism”. It emphasizes the danger that the invasion of US programs represents to the world. The first author who applied this expression was Schiller in 1976, followed by Said, Mattelart, Dorfman, Varis, among others. Research by Varis [VAR 84] shows the power of the Hollywood industry as a threat, as the only center of production and export to the rest of the world.

However, for others, of the liberal school, telecasting of American TV shows in other countries is a consequence of the free market economy, and it is as an opportunity for the domestic industry to grow. In particular, Faus [FAU 95] points out that as a result of their extensive experience in the production of television programs, a standard narrative and visual levels of understanding has been achieved, hardly attainable by the average production of any other nation. Moreover, as Bertrand [BER 86] points out, the imperialist vision doubts that the consumer decides how to make use of the material supplied. According to his opinion, one who does not want to be dominated will not be dominated.

Moreover, it is sometimes ignored that there has been a strong flow of shows exchanged between America and Europe, sometimes with help from national governments who established agreements with other countries to channel the buying and selling of televisual products, and also between Latin

America and Spain, or even the great export of Japanese cartoons. At present, there are large producers of content for the international market. For example, Brazil, Venezuela, Argentina, Mexico and Colombia produce soap operas that are watched all around the world, and India and its Bollywood film industry or the fledgling film production in Nigeria.

Nonetheless, we must recognize that this international exchange of programs has led to the homogenization of the content. The new countries that were incorporating television to their media market had the pioneering countries as models for the production of programs, especially the United States and Britain. We could say, therefore, that a few countries provided to many, and that in each country the sector was in few hands. This situation suggests that the new international order of the 1990s revolved around the Western world and in particular English-speaking countries, and that in the new digital scenario this is happening again, since the vast majority of Internet domains comes from the United States and the United Kingdom. However, this does not prevent each country from having developed an audiovisual industry around its local television.

The European Union wanted to protect their culture from the threat of the United States and established quotas of European programming and independent production, which has become a commercial protection more than a guard of cultural identities.

European audiovisual policy intended to achieve a closer union among the European peoples through cultural unity. The policies considered television an essential instrument to promote these cultural purposes. These cultural reminiscences regarded television as an essential public service, more related to earlier times than to the reality of the 21st Century.

In particular, this policy was orchestrated in the *Television without Frontiers* (TVWF), which was amended several times. The latest version is the European Directive 2007/65, *Audiovisual Media Services Without Frontiers* (AVMSD). European Directives propose minimum measures to be taken in each member country. In order to boost European production, Article 4, updated by the AVMSD, states that broadcasters should allocate a majority proportion of the transmission time (excluding the time appointed to certain formats such as news, sports events or advertising) to European works. This proportion should be accomplished progressively, and must in

any case not be lower than the average of 1988 or 1990 in the case of Greece and Portugal.

The most important improvement of the revisions was to include the definition of “European work”: a work made essentially with authors and workers residing in one or more Member States of the European Union. Furthermore, it has to meet one of the following three conditions: that the works are carried out, supervised and effectively controlled by producers established in those States and that the contribution from the co-producers of those States in the total cost is a majority.

Accordingly, Article 5 defines that broadcasters must reserve at least 10% of their transmission time (also excluding the time appointed to certain categories as in Article 4) or at least 10% of their programming budget for European works created by producers who are independent of broadcasters, half of which must have been produced in the last 5 years. In Spain, the General Law on Audiovisual Communication (LGCA) 7/2010 substantially clarifies the legal definition of the *independent* producer. Given that the producer is the natural or legal person who takes the initiative, coordination and economic risk of the production of audiovisual content, the independent producer is the natural or legal person producing such content on its own initiative or on request and, in return for consideration, allows a provider of audiovisual services that is not linked stably with it in a common business strategy to air it.

The development of content distribution systems has made it possible for information and entertainment products to be enjoyed by the user beyond the control of content creators and/or owners of rights.

The contents scheduled on the programming grids in the corresponding commercial time strips are available on different websites, freed from the constraints of time, and therefore outside the conventional commercial possibilities. In some cases, this is part of a bigger strategy of multiplatform content development, as content is distributed through official sites including commercial messages. In other cases, they are available on unofficial sites for fans. This reality raises questions of authorship and intellectual property. However, in recent years, it is also developing the reverse process, and from the extension of content to the Internet, we are seeing the creation of content by end users.

The evolution of Web 2.0 lets us formulate a demanding concept of what we mean by user-generated content (UGC). As a concept, the content generated by the user can be defined by three fundamental elements:

- first, UGC is content that is posted without barriers or restrictions but is not produced by the user for interpersonal communication, like an e-mail;
- second, it requires some creative effort, either for the development of new content or adapting existing content;
- finally, the creation of this content remains outside professional practices and routines.

Regarding the types of UGC, we can distinguish mainly between blogs, wikis, podcasts and social networks. Applications for mobile phones and tablets could also be included in this classification.

The UGC also receive the name of consumer-generated media (CGM). This definition extends the generic relation of content to media, more inclusive in its role of agents of the media market.

Among the characteristics of user-generated content, we would emphasize first the great sense of ownership of the media that gives rise to this content. UGC helps to cultivate relations between common cultural interests, and along with it, facilitates social integration. As a result of these relationships, recognition arises for some amateur artists who are discovered by agencies, websites and media companies.

Along with these realities, UGC blurs the difference between editor and user, with the problems of authorship and attribution that entails, especially in the information field. A result is that piracy seems easier as the perception of illegality and crime is minimized. Moreover, it is common that the content is of low quality, although some may be considered as a seed of creative talent. Some creations have made the leap from the Internet to the conventional grid of national broadcaster, like the series “Qué vida más triste”, born for the Internet and then aired by the television channel “La Sexta”. The network considered it a product that fits very well with young audiences and their line of unconventional programming. It began its broadcast in October 2008 and reached 1 million viewers.

Regarding the advertising possibilities of this content and throughout the digital context in general, we are still at an early stage. Traditionally, advertisers have bought advertising time or space in conventional media, in a

controlled context: they knew where the ad would appear, how it would be and in what environment it would be seen. Considerable success for a prolonged time is required for user-generated content to attract advertisers.

Its accessibility, together with the reduced production costs and zero marginal cost, boost the Internet as the ideal platform for distributing content created by users. The very nature of this network gives creativity very few barriers. Until the advent of the Internet, for content to reach large audiences, or even start production, it had to go through a very long and competitive process, in which commercial criteria often prevented its successful development. Many of these processes are a synonym for quality control: checking the veracity of the sources, the scripts, the creation of characters, etc.

Precisely because of the absence of hindrances to creativity, much of the fictional UGC places special emphasis on transgression, irreverent and erotic content, which would have difficulties being shown in traditional media and somehow responds to desires of protest, social integration, etc. Therefore, quite often, the lack of artistic and technical quality is one of the most negative notes of user-generated content. For this reason, the productions that could qualify as hotbeds of creative talent are rare. It is undeniable that the possibilities for true artistic talent to be developed through the Internet are unlimited.

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