

Transmedia formats for the public television. The case of the shutdown of RTVV (Spain)

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Abstract

In this paper we analyse the case of a public regional TV in Spain closed in 2013 by the regional Government. Radio Televisió Valenciana (RTVV) was a public broadcaster (1989-2013) in the region of Comunitat Valenciana (located in the Eastern part of Spain with a population of 5.1 million people). After the shutdown of RTVV, Valencian society has acknowledged the key role of public media to reinforce the sense of community and promote the common language of the region. In this paper we present the results of a report that we have been preparing during the last year and we highlight the importance to implement a transmedia strategy for the new public service.

Objectives

Transmedia is a tool to implement old and new media (cinema, comic, video games etc.) in order to consolidate a new storytelling ecosystem to integrate the possibilities of media communication and interpersonal communication. The new public media should be a transmedia corporation and deal with proximity contents. At the same time, there is still the need to preserve an internally coherent television for more traditional viewers. The five main requirements that we have spotted are:

- Identification of the transmedia contents that should be present among different media
- Definition of the strategic actions to develop in different platforms
- Television and Radio are still important but it is necessary to produce content for the rest of platforms where the audience is present
- Implementation of a gamification strategy to improve the engagement of potential users.
- Creation of a Research Department to explore the possibilities that technology offers

The author of this paper has been participated in the elaboration of the document "Towards a new audiovisual space 2.0" (MESAV, 2015) and in this paper we are going to focus on the main proposals of the transmedia strategy for the new public platform.

Development

The professional audiovisual sector is facing the worst situation in its history in the Comunitat Valenciana region. In response to this situation, MESAV, the Mesa Sectorial de l'Audiovisual Valencià (Valencian Audiovisual Sector Committee) has been established with the aim of laying the foundations for the recovery of an important part of the culture of the Valencian society. Audiovisual is considered to be a strategic

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sector, important for job creation and essential for the development of democracy, culture, art and identity at both global and local levels. It provides more than 1 million jobs in the European Union (more than 5,000 in the Valencian Community), and constitutes the primary source of news and entertainment for Europeans (and, therefore, for Valencians).

In this paper we highlight some of the proposals of the new public broadcasting service. The new radio and television should adopt a clear focus on transmedia, in tune with the digital convergence that is shaping the evolution of the world's audiovisual industry today.

Public radio and television networks today are also multimedia platforms. The new audiovisual technologies make it possible to fill radio and television programming with differentiated content without added cost. In view of this transmedia environment, a department needs to be created to implement the design of new formats sensitive to innovation and on the lookout for new forms of communication. Any modern public broadcaster that aims to promote the knowledge economy must have an R&D&I department and, therefore, must be in close contact with universities and research centres, especially those in the Valencian region (MESAV, 2015). In this way, it is very important to define the new Valencian public broadcaster as a local transmedia group adapted to the current context and to present, future and upcoming formats. The transmedia strategy involves five basic points that are essential to articulate the new media corporation. In this way the re-foundation of the audiovisual public service could be an opportunity to adapt the new media for the society needs:

1. Defining transmedia content associated with topics that cross-connect the different media types of the group. Formats will be grouped into transmedia content and will have a coordination shared by the different media types: news, sports, kids, festivals, weather, etc. Although the content strategy will be shared, each media type will build the story using its own language. Thus, in this new scenario the specific format of each media type remains but must be adapted and subordinated to the transmedia content with which it is associated.
2. Defining strategic actions with common objectives for all transmedia content. The network could implement actions related to current social, language, economic or cultural topics that motivate the audience and contribute to their participation through different broadcasting platforms.
3. Using the same media types accessed by users to inform and entertain, i.e., radio and television, but also the new devices. Television and radio are still the essential devices, but they now coexist with new screens that also need multimedia content. Work flows need to change to make it possible to share part of the process that used to be concealed via these new channels. For example, the takes from an interview that is not broadcast may be attractive for social media, and images used to locate a broadcast could also be used on a blog. It now becomes a question of managing the products of internal communication so that it can be shared on the different broadcasting platforms.
4. The transmedia scenario involves a change of model whereby viewers become users and decide at each moment whether they want to be active. It is therefore necessary to create a department to work on designing strategies to make the presentation of the content on the different platforms more attractive, in order to manage and improve the quality of the interactivity of the user. The concept of user instead the passive receiver is key in the new scenario. Both concepts are compatible and are suitable to describe different situations that appears depending the the kind of the content or the reception context.
5. There is a clear need for the creation of an R&D&I department or service to develop new television

and radio formats which, always with a clear commitment to public service, could have social, educational and commercial benefits. This department would work with the network of Valencian public and private universities.

Conclusions and prospective

It is now that RTVV has been taken off the air that the Valencian society have become fully aware of the void that the public broadcaster has left, and it is this void that the new broadcaster will have to fill. The Valencians, miss their television network when things happen that affect their towns and cities, their sports or their own culture. And there is no media network covering these things. Twenty-five years ago it was enough to provide the information in the Valencian language to justify the value of any topic. But today, with the wide range of television and media content currently available, it would be more appropriate to focus our attention (in Valencian, of course) on content that has a direct repercussion on our people. In this aim, the new media corporation will be the best, providing the service that Valencian society needs and that they now so sorely miss.

Questions and/or considerations for discussion

In this new context, transmedia (Jenkins, 2006) seems the solution in order to offer to the audience what they are expecting. Nowadays people consume the same content in different devices and formats, and transmedia offers the solution to satisfy the new demands of the user. The new public broadcaster should especially promote the production of fiction films and television series (historical, sitcoms, dramas, series, etc.), supporting the creation of a local star system. At the same time, it should also work to promote the theatre industry and other auxiliary enterprises such as set design, make-up and hair, costumes, equipment rental companies, the restaurant and hotel industries, etc.

It is clear that the new public media should be a transmedia corporation and deal with proximity content. At the same time, there is still the need to preserve an internally coherent television for more traditional viewers. The discussion is how to manage the necessary compatibility between transmedia scenario and traditional television. In this paper we have been proposed the five main requirements for managing that issue that we would like to discuss with our colleagues:

1. Identification of the transmedia contents that should be present among different media
2. Definition of the strategic actions to develop in different platforms
3. Television and Radio are still important but it is necessary to produce content for the rest of platforms where the audience is present
4. Implementation of a gamification strategy to improve the engagement of potential users
5. Creation of a Research Department to explore the possibilities that technology offers