

NETFLIX AND BINGE?

Exploring New Cultures of Consumption

ABSTRACT

This study sought to identify shifts in audience media use and consumption. The study was further concerned with identifying the various ways in which thinking about audiences has shifted within policy discourses, and specifically in the EU audiovisual policy directives. The rationale behind this study was informed by the hypothesis that there is a potential disconnect between the policy and the practices of audiences. The project used a mixed methodology combining 164 weekly media diaries and 7 focus group discussions with users mostly in the 20-55 age category. YouTube and Netflix emerged as the two preferred media for video consumption, while the patterns and rhythms of this consumption followed the rhythms of everyday life and its requirements and practical limitations. The findings further identified three new or underexplored motivations for media use: instrumental, educational and aesthetic. Finally, media audiences emerge as oriented towards interpersonal, social and public media use. The main insight for policy is that audiences operate socially and not individually and that media have expanded in almost all domains of life, from work to aesthetic appreciation.

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Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of a research study on the new ways in which Irish audiences use and consume the media, with an emphasis on video contents. Audio-visual media policies are seeking to address the challenges posed by a rapidly changing media landscape but to do so efficiently they must take into account the media practices and activities that audiences are engaged in.

The study undertook a review and discussion of the evolution of the European audio-visual policy, from the Television Without Frontiers to the revised Audio-Visual Media Services Directive (AVMSD). The discussion revealed that policy positioned audiences in terms of two continua: a passive to active continuum and a consumer to citizen continuum, but always understood as individuals. The idea of a passive audience that can be led from the top down has given way to an active audience that is looking to exercise choice in the media. While considerations of the public good and attention to vulnerable parts of the audience, especially children, have always been present in the policy, too much emphasis on audience choice and activity may end up shifting the work of assessing the appropriateness of media contents from public authorities to individual consumers. This tension emerges more pronounced in the revised directive, which further places the onus for regulation to the hands of private digital media corporations.

To understand how audiences use and consume media, the study made use of media diaries and focus group discussions, with diarists detailing their daily media consumption for a week and then discussing this in a group discussion setting. This allowed them to reflect on their consumption and for the research to identify not only emerging patterns, but also the meaning and relevance of these for users themselves.

The findings were organised in terms of three questions: What media do people consume (media repertoires); why do they consume them (motivations, uses and gratifications); and how do they consume them (domestication, media socialisation).

Media repertoires showed that most users use many media forms, but two media stand out: YouTube and Netflix, which all users among our sample used. The rhythms of media use followed those of everyday life, with practicalities and expedience determining which media would be used. However, we identified two exceptions to this general rule, whereby media rather than life drive consumption. These are:

- Media events: specific scheduled events such as for example sports events;
- 'Intriguing stories': i.e. stories that intrigued users to the extent that they drove them to consume more on these stories through, for example, binge watching or across media through, for example, searching for more information on this topic.

The motivations underpinning media use and consumption, and the gratifications derived for the most part coincide with those identified in the literature: people use the media for personal and social identity, information and entertainment. However, we identified here three novel or underexplored motivations:

- Instrumental media use for work-related purposes;
- Media use for education: this covered a wide variety of broadly understood education, ranging from TED video talks to cosmetics tutorials;
- Media use for aesthetic gratification; this outlined the aesthetic pleasures that users derive from the media, but this is heightened when combined with other gratifications such as for example information seeking. The genre of documentaries was typically associated with this kind of multiple gratification.

Understanding the conditions under which media are used and consumed, we identified three different patterns, which we termed here media socialities. Media socialities refer to the specific ways in which media intervene between people. These were:

- Interpersonal media sociality, in which people use media in the context of interpersonal relations with specific other people who may be present physically or virtually.
- Social group or community sociality, in which people use media as part of a group, or in order to form an ad hoc group for media consumption. These groups can include friends, family, neighbours, parents' association, or any interest-related group.
- 'Being in the world' sociality, in which people use media in order to be able to function and participate in the broader society and world. This is a public media orientation and is often catered for through legacy media. At the same time it is also oriented towards how unknown others are responding to events reported in the media.

The main implications of this study for policy makers and academics include the need to add nuance to understanding audiences and their practices. While policy typically assumes that audiences are individuals, we found here that, in line with previous relevant research, media use and consumption is a social process, and that audiences are always embedded in interpersonal and social relationships. Furthermore, the three motivations we identified here, instrumental, education and aesthetic motivations for media use, point to the expansion of the scope of media in domains they were previously less involved, alluding to the need to think of media policy beyond media platforms and the civic duty of media service providers.

Introduction

At a time of rapid technological, political and socio-cultural changes, it is critical to be able to take stock of these developments and their potential impact on society. This is especially the case when it comes to the audiovisual sector and its regulation. The European position is that the cultural sector, within which audiovisual contents fall, is unlike other sectors because of its importance and role in the creation and transmission of cultural, social and political values, norms and ideas, as well as having important economic value (Pauwels and Loisen, 2003). The European Union has long held the position that the audiovisual sector is the vector to illustrate the creativity and traditions of the European people, but to do so it must be competitive in the global market. The importance and centrality of the audiovisual sector and its public interest character have determined its regulation, within a context that respects free trade. This dual objective of preserving the specificity and importance of European culture and protecting European citizens from harmful contents in a manner that allows for competition in a free market has been behind relevant policy at the EU and national levels.

However, the context within which this policy has taken place has dramatically changed. Audiences and media are fragmenting, blurring boundaries between traditional media formats. Broadcast in the form of non-linear video and audio programmes that can be viewed on demand or which are streamed online, presents significant challenges for regulation. A missing link here concerns the actual practices and views of audiences and how they might impact the development and future of the audiovisual sector. In support of the key aims of the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI), this project has conducted research into the everyday video consumption habits of Irish audiences.

As new consumption habits and routines are formed around digital media, we know little about the role of both technological changes and social contexts in shaping consumption habits. Survey research, such as The Nielsen Total Audience study or the Reuters Digital News Report, provides insight into broad categories of media users and although these have been very useful they have important limitations. For example, survey studies allow us to link age profiles to heavy or light digital consumption but provide little insight into the routines and context within which media consumption takes place. Survey research also fails to provide insight into the perspectives of audiences – the key public stakeholder.

The current study has sought to go further and delve deeper into audience practices and habits forming around video viewing, contextualised in terms of broader media consumption and use. While typically industry reports focus on television, catch up and on demand services, the present study examined a broader variety of video and audio services offered online, and sought to understand their place within other media consumption. The study identified the formation of specific habits with respect to video consumption and their socio-cultural significance, as sources of information, knowledge, and cultural know-how. Habit formation is a crucial parameter as it has been found that habit strength is a significant predictor and determinant of future media consumption (Diddi and LaRose, 2006). Determining the main motivations for media use and consumption as well as the significance, role and meaning of video and other media contents for audiences, are equally crucial for understanding the scope and role of future regulation.

In accomplishing these goals, the study carried out in depth qualitative research to identify the everyday video consumption habits of Irish media users, through the method of keeping weekly media diaries, complemented by a set of focus group discussions. The

empirical part of the study relied on a total of 164 weekly media diaries and seven in depth group discussions. This report details the findings of this study, beginning with a review of the relevant literature and an analysis of the current policy landscape. It then moves on to discuss the research design and methodological approach to the study. This is followed by a discussion of the empirical findings, while finally the concluding section discusses the implications of the findings of this study for understanding consumption of audio-visual contents, the limitations of the present research and suggestions for future research.

Audiences, Users, Publics

This section reviews three sets of perspectives on audiences and media consumption, beginning with a consideration of policy documents at the European level; industry reports from bodies such as Ofcom, and the Reuters Institute; and current academic work. The objective in this section is to identify how perceptions of the audience change historically and across different sectors, from policy to market and academic research.

Audiences and/in Policy

The emergence of the internet and the rapid evolution of web content present difficulties for regulation. Although, in many ways, there are continuities between forms of web video content and the traditional forms of broadcast content such as radio and television, there are several points of divergence which present significant challenges for regulation. Firstly, the global reach of online platforms means that traditional regulation, conducted at a national level, has largely been absent. Moreover, national legislation within the EU has been directly shaped by EU-level directives. To understand current developments in EU policy it is important to assume a long-term perspective, looking at the co-evolution of policy along with media systems in Europe. Secondly, in assessing policy that affects media consumption, it is important to understand how audiences or users are conceptualised within these policies. This section will examine the audiovisual communications policy of the EU from a historical perspective, looking to identify the implied understanding of audiences in these policy documents, and to trace the shifts in both policy priorities and in definitions of audiences/users and their activities and role.

The inherent tension that underpins policy in this area is evident in the dual nature of (audiovisual) media, which serve socio-cultural and political functions while also constituting valuable economic assets. This central tension has been at the centre of policy, which then is seen as striving to find the right balance between these two functions of the media (Michalis, 2014). Policy looking to safeguard the socio-cultural and political functions of the media lends itself to an interventionist approach while policy that prioritises the economic function of the media as commodities lends itself to a liberal approach (Collins, 1994). Analyses into the evolution of policy in this area show that while early policy prioritised the socio-cultural and political functions of the media, more recent policy focuses on its economic value and dimensions.

Specifically, tracing the history of audiovisual policy at the national and EU level, Maria Michalis (2014) shows that in Europe up to the mid-1980s, broadcasting was regulated in terms of public service ideals and not as a commercial institution. This meant that the normative ideals underpinning this approach included universality of access and reach,

diversity of viewpoints, and meeting the informational and socio-cultural needs of citizens so that they can fully participate in the cultural and political life of their country and by extension of Europe (see also Garnham, 1990; Cushion, 2012). Michalis (2014) notes that when European institutions, notably the Commission and the Parliament, entered the field of audiovisual media policy their approach was shaped by these ideals. While the institutions were also aware of issues relating to competition, their position was that questions of public interest assume priority and may impose limits to competition. A further development worthy of mention during this period was the failed attempt to a pan-European satellite television system with the Eurikon/EuropaTV initiatives in 1982-1985, supported by the European Broadcasting Union, and involving a number of European public service broadcasters¹. This represented an attempt to foster further cultural and political European integration through broadcasting to a common European public. Collins (1993) attributes their lack of success to the assumption of a techno-cultural determinism. The then new technology of satellite television was seen as impacting directly European culture; Collins (1993: 164) quotes a statement from 1986 by the European Commission in which the fear of a US cultural takeover is clear:

“At the end of 1986 the whole European television scene will be transformed by the appearance of Europe's first direct television satellites . . . The choice is clear: Either a strengthening of exchanges within Europe and a deepening of Community cooperation to promote the identity of our continent in all its diversity, or a surrender to powerful competitors and their cultural models, be it the Americans today, or the Japanese tomorrow. (CEC, 1986: 3)

The significance of this quote and the failed experiment of a pan-European television lies in its view of the audience as on the one hand structured by technology and on the other liable to be shaped from the top down. The logical conclusion of this view is that European audiences are passive recipients of information and potentially vulnerable, and hence in need of protection.

Television Without Frontiers

Following Michalis (2014), the second period of European media policy at the EU and national levels was characterised by an emphasis on competition, competitiveness, and internationalisation. Michalis argues that the restructuring of the broadcasting sector through deregulation, opening up the market to new entrants, and in general pursuing policies enhancing competition and competitiveness was driven by national policy but within the context of the launch of the European integration project in 1986, and was the result of a combination of factors. These factors, including the shift towards neoliberalism, the

¹ Eurikon consisted of five national public service broadcasters: Austria (ORF). Italy (RAI), the Netherlands (NOS), West Germany (ARD) and the United Kingdom (IBA). During the five weeks of the experiment, they each broadcasted for a week, while secondary members from Algeria (RTA), Finland (YLE), France (TDF), Greece (ERT), Ireland (RTE), Portugal (RTP), Spain (RTVE), Switzerland (SSR), Tunisia (RTT) and Yugoslavia (JRT) contributed some programming, performed technical tests, and measured audience reactions. Europa was based in Hilversum in the Netherlands, and was supported by NOS, RAI, ARD, RTE, and RTP. Euronews, which has been a success, is the descendent of these first efforts to develop a common European television. For further information, see Collins, 1993.

intensification of global interdependencies and increased migration, loosened the tight knot between culture, national identity and the public sphere, allowing the entry of new players in the media market. At the European level, this shift towards a liberalised media market was supported by the Television Without Frontiers Directive (1989), which put forward a regulatory framework for transnational broadcasting across the EU based on a set of common rules around the issues of advertising, sponsorship, and protection of minors (Michalis, 2014: 133).

This new policy regime led to a multi-channel, liberalized commercial broadcasting system, but heightened the tensions between the cultural and political functions of the media and their economic and market value and significance. For Michalis the TVWF Directive established EU jurisdiction over economic policy considerations and national governments retained control over socio-political and cultural aspects of broadcasting regulation. However, when these two clashed, economic considerations prevailed. A case in point is the *Konsumentombudsmannen (KO) v De Agostini (Svenska)* and *Konsumentombudsmannen v TV-Shop i Sverige AB (C-35/95 and C-36/95)* cases, in which Sweden asked the European Court of Justice to determine whether it is possible to prohibit television advertising designed to attract the attention of children less than 12 years of age and to prohibit television advertising broadcasts from another member state. In both cases the ECJ ruled that member states' national legislation "may not stop retransmission of a broadcast coming from another member state"². While audiences are in this context constructed primarily as consumers, it is mainly the right of companies to trade across borders that assumes priority.

Despite this shift in policy towards a deregulated media market, the Directive further included space for cultural issues, through the provision of quotas for European content required by public service broadcasters, but also the protection of minors, notwithstanding the above ECJ ruling³. In fact, the Directive rests on two principles:

"the free movement of European television programmes within the internal market and the requirement for TV channels to reserve, whenever possible, more than half of their transmission time for European works ("broadcasting quotas"). The TVWF Directive also safeguards certain important public interest objectives, such as cultural diversity, the protection of minors and the right of reply"⁴.

However, as noted by Michalis (2014), the quota provision was a political commitment and not a legally binding requirement. In general, the TVWF Directive focuses on the creation of a transnational broadcasting competitive market across the EU, while also recognizing the cultural significance of the media. Therefore, audiences are viewed primarily as **consumers**, while the reference to public interest objectives points to the parallel understanding of audiences as **citizens**. The acknowledgement of the cultural and political role of the media, and the explicit references to cultural diversity, illustrates the underlying understanding of the media as pivotal in the construction and maintenance of cultural identities. Because of the importance allocated to this aspect of the media, national and European policy in this area

² ECJ Press Release, 1997, full text available at: <https://curia.europa.eu/en/actu/communiqués/cp97/cp9745en.htm>

³ The ruling took into account that provisions for the protection of minors already existed in the TVWF Directive.

⁴ TVWF summary available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=LEGISSUM%3A124101>. The full text of the Directive 89/552/EEC of 3 October 1989 and its subsequent revisions in 1997 and 2003, is found here: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:31989L0552>

sought to preserve public broadcasting in Europe, as shown in the relevant protocol of the Amsterdam Treaty⁵.

The Audio-Visual Services Directive

The same tension between public policy objectives and a competitive transnational media market remained in the revision of the TVWF in subsequent years, as well as in its successor, the Audio-Visual Media Services Directive (2010). The impetus for the revision of the directive stemmed from technological changes which affected the distribution and consumption of audio-visual contents. The most notable technological changes include digital convergence, which allows users to consume audio-visual contents in a variety of platforms, and the 'end of scarcity' in audio-visual contents given the growth in online content (Helberger, 2008; Michalis, 2014). The AVMSD extended the scope of broadcasting regulation to on-demand services and, in general, to any mass media that is "intended for reception by, and which could have a clear impact on, a significant proportion of the general public"⁶. In this manner, the Directive excludes user-generated content and in general any contents "which are not in competition with television broadcasting, such as private websites and services consisting of the provision or distribution of audiovisual content generated by private users for the purposes of sharing and exchange within communities of interest"⁷. The Directive follows in the spirit of older policy instruments, prioritising a functional, competitive and plural media market, while also safeguarding European culture and the protection of minors. It further upholds the country of origin jurisdiction though paradoxically, as noted by Michalis (2014: 138), it also weakens it as it allows member states to restrict broadcasting from another member state if it raises issues of safety of minors, incitement to hatred, public health and security, and the protection of consumers and investors.

While in general the AVMSD upheld and expanded the scope of TVWF, Helberger (2008) refers to a notable shift in its understanding of audiences. Helberger (2008) argues that whether seen as consumers, citizens, or as vulnerable, audiences were for the most part understood as primarily passive recipients of information: 'eyeballs' as she refers to them. Indeed, as Alan Peacock (1989: 53, cited in Helberger, 2008: 3) put it, the passivity of audiences is evident as "while broadcasting is designed to benefit viewers and listeners, they neither know what they want nor where their interests lie." Broadcasters are then regulated in order to provide media services that are considered essential for audiences, with regulators safeguarding their quality and accessibility. The AVMSD, as Helberger (2008) notes, marks the recognition by regulatory authorities that viewers are able to and regularly exercise control over the type of media content they choose to consume. The Directive further acknowledged that audiences can protect themselves and their families, and for the first time referred to media literacy. This was defined as:

"skills, knowledge and understanding that allow consumers to use media effectively and safely. Media-literate people are able to exercise informed choices, understand the nature of content

⁵ Protocol on the system of public broadcasting in the Member State, p. 109, in the Treaty of Amsterdam, 1997, full text: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/topics/treaty/pdf/amst-en.pdf>

⁶ AVMSD, 2010, full text: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32010L0013>

⁷ AVMSD, 2010, recital 21.

and services and take advantage of the full range of opportunities offered by new communications technologies.”⁸

Building upon a recommendation of the European Parliament (2006)⁹, the Directive recognizes on the one hand the dynamic nature of media contents carried by new media platforms and on the other the ability of users to learn how to use these platforms efficiently. In this manner, the passive audience or consumer has given way to audiences as an **active agent, capable of exercising discretion and judgement**. Efficient policy therefore is no longer focusing on regulating the conditions under which broadcasters operate and produce contents, but also taking into account the conditions under which users receive these contents. The inclusion of media literacy has been of great significance, actively contributing to audience empowerment. Importantly, it was through **mobilizing media literacy** and in general the active audience-user frame, that the Directive justified a lighter-touch regulation of the non-linear, on demand, audio-visual services. These services are considered to be subjected to greater user control compared to linear broadcasting, while the Directive further considers them to be different “with regard to the impact they have on society”¹⁰. This ‘lighter touch’ meant that such services only need to adhere to the basic regulations concerning hate speech, protection of minors, and enjoy relaxed advertisement rules and obligations concerning European works (Helberger, 2008). Also exempt from the scope of AVMSD are “electronic versions of newspapers and magazines”¹¹, thus continuing the line of relatively strong broadcasting regulation and self-regulation for the press.

While the AVMSD’s focus on active users and media literacy has been a welcome development, it nevertheless appears to abdicate responsibility for regulation and to pass this to users. Users, in turn, provided they are well informed and media literate, can not only exercise choice but through their informed choice can force audio-visual service providers to develop better quality contents catering to diverse interests. But, as Helberger (2008) notes this view is as naive as the passive audience one: the media literate user is now expected to understand everything, from media law to media economics and the psychology of advertising to child psychology. Equally, the view that consumer choice alone can protect and help enforce public interests appears unrealistic to say the least. Finally, the light touch regulation of on-demand, non-linear services, and the generally unregulated provision of user-generated contents is at odds with developments in digital media production and consumption.

Recent Developments: The Revised AVMSD

Some of these issues led to the revision of the AVMSD, which was completed on the 6th November 2018, following two years of proposals and discussion. In the final step of the legislative process, the Council adopted the revised directive which formally enters into force 20 days after the publication in the Official Journal of the EU. Member states then have 21

⁸ AVMSD, 2010, recital 47.

⁹ Recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council of 20 December 2006 on the protection of minors and human dignity and on the right of reply in relation to the competitiveness of the European audiovisual and on-line information services industry, available at: [OJ L 378, 27.12.2006, p. 72.](#)

¹⁰ AVMSD, 2010, recital 58.

¹¹ AVMSD, 2010, recital 28.

months to adopt it as national legislation. The new AVMSD moves to regulate video-on-demand services and video-sharing platforms but still employs a lighter touch regulation compared to television broadcasters. The main revisions concern **protection of minors**, **extension of the European works quota to on-demand services**, **rules on hate speech and terrorist content**, and **advertising regulations**. The infographic in Figure 1 shows graphically the main changes.

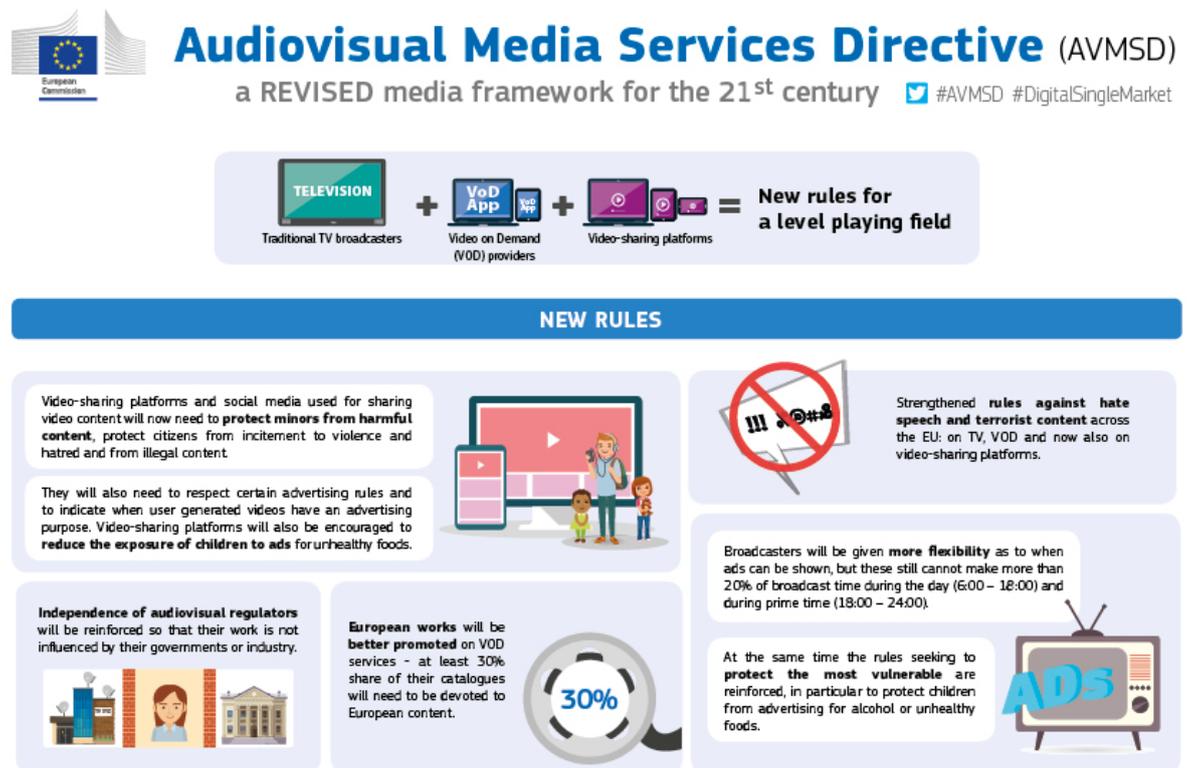


Figure 1: AVMSD infographic, source, EC, 2018¹²

The revisions of the Directive clearly take into account shifts in media consumption within an overall drastically changed media landscape. The move to regulate video-on-demand services such as Netflix, as well as video-sharing platforms such as YouTube, has been seen by many as a necessary step in order to address the lack of parity between traditional broadcasters and new players in the provision of audio-visual contents. The revised AVMSD therefore subjects the audio-visual contents that are hosted by video-service providers (VSPs) and on demand services (VODs) to the same or similar requirements as those of traditional broadcasters. This means that audio-visual content on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram or Twitter and on demand services such as Netflix, has to follow the rules and requirements of this directive.

¹² Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/revision-audiovisual-media-services-directive-avmsd>

The main provisions for VSPs and on-demand services include: (i) protection of minors from harmful contents, including commercial communications concerning unhealthy food and, in general, from “content that may impair their physical, mental or moral development” (Recital 47)¹³; (ii) protection of the general public from incitement to hatred, violence and terrorism; (iii) regulation of commercial communications and advertising, and (iv) quota requirements for European works, which should occupy at least a 30% share of the catalogue of on-demand services. Although the revised directive recognizes that VSPs do not have editorial control over the contents they host, they are still required to ensure that users are protected from illegal or harmful content, through developing flagging and reporting mechanisms, complaints procedures, parental controls and age verification systems (Article 28a and 28b). Additionally, the directive prohibits the collection, processing and selling of data of minors (Article 6a).

While there are still questions that need clarification, for example the issue of the boundaries of the revised AVMSD, what falls within its scope and the definition of the VSPs (Woods, 2018), the revised directive goes some way towards setting down the regulatory and legal groundwork for the protection and fair treatment of users (Kuklis, 2018). Lubos Kuklis, chief executive of the Slovak media authority (CBR) and chair of the European Regulators Group for Audiovisual Media Services, argues that the directive sets up protections for users at the appropriate level - that is, not heavy handed - alongside requirements for transparency and the establishment of procedures for users to submit complaints.

On the other hand, two sets of concerns have been raised. The first is that the directive **delegates regulation to private corporations** (Barata, 2018). The directive establishes a form of two-stage procedure and implementation whereby VSPs are expected to revise their terms of service or community standards on the basis of the requirements set by the directive; the implementation of these will then be overseen by national media regulatory bodies, which will assess the extent to which platforms comply with the requirements. For example, national bodies will determine whether platforms include appropriate flagging and reporting processes, age verification systems, and media literacy tools. But this, argues Barata (2018), cedes too much power to private, for profit, companies. As she put it:

“Private online intermediaries will develop, interpret and enforce (in a word, regulate) content rules affecting the core elements of the right to freedom of expression within the society of each European member State. Video sharing providers will play a fundamental role in determining the boundaries of legitimate political speech or the right to adopt and express unconventional social and cultural points of view.”

In this, the role of national regulators is one of overseeing rather than determining the regulatory contents and processes, while platforms are elevated into regulatory agents.

The second kind of concern refers to **the extent to which the directive is indeed creating a level playing field with respect to advertising**. Platforms and on-demand services are in a far better position to collect data from their users in order to target them in specific ways, something that traditional broadcasters are still not able to do efficiently. Broughton Micova (2018) points to the fact that in this area, the difference between traditional broadcasters and VSPs and VODs is such that it cannot be levelled. Broughton Micova argues that the:

¹³ Full text available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32018L1808&qid=1547229274759&from=en>

“AVMSD cannot deal with the root causes of the uneven playing field for advertising dependent services, and where it does deal with data for legitimate public interest reasons, there are risks that even more imbalances could be introduced if implementation is not done in a careful, evidence based, and forward looking way.”

From the point of view of our current concerns on audiences, the revised directive relies on the same understandings of **audiences as active users** found in the earlier version, but re-introduces concerns regarding **vulnerable audiences**, such as children. It further reflects a growing **concern with harmful contents** not only addressing minors but also the general public who need to be protected both from illegal and harmful contents, but also from inappropriately labelled commercial contents. An important new element in this directive is the reference to **user data**, something that did not exist in the earlier AVMSD. Users are therefore understood as **productive** in the sense that they generate data subsequently used by certain categories of broadcasters, namely VSPs and VODs. However, the Directive does not explore this dimension further as it is considered covered in the GDPR. In general, we can see here both a continuation of previous understandings of audience and the introduction of extra protections for minors, the general public and European media producers. The revised directive seeks to combine public interest concerns with the right of freedom of expression, taking into account the shift in media consumption patterns associated with the rise of the video service providers (VSPs) and video on demand services. But while the popularity of these new services is unquestionable, the actual patterns of consumption and emerging trends require further exploration.

New Audiences in Research

The emergence of new media and the associated changes in how most of us use and consume the media have not gone unnoticed by media researchers. Since the explosion of social media, there have been numerous calls to undertake research into new modes of media consumption, and into media use as consumption. In traditional (mass) media research, the conception of audiences oscillated between passive and active. In early media effects research, audiences were conceived as passive recipients of information and media contents (Klapper, 1960) and most research sought to identify and quantify the effects of media contents on behaviour and attitudes. Subsequent research recognized the active ways in which audiences interpret and use the media, as found for example in the uses and gratifications theory (Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch, 1973) and in the audience reception paradigm (Livingstone, 1991). But when media changed from broadcast to digital interactive media, the activities of audiences become much more complex. Tracing them and understanding them needs not only new methodological approaches but also new theoretical lenses to make sense of them. Sonia Livingstone recognized this as early as 1999 the need to be attentive to media shifts and their impact on audience theory and research. Livingstone (1999; 2004) calls for more empirical research into audience activities, including both behavioural and interpretative activities surrounding media use. While academic research has produced an impressive volume of empirical research into audiences, research tends to be fragmented and focused on specific kinds of audiences. The main contribution of this kind of academic research is to produce new understandings and theoretical revisions of approaches to audiences. In contrast, market research into audiences has produced more empirical data

but has tended to be descriptive rather than develop any new theoretical insights. This section will review these two research approaches to audiences, with a view to producing a synthesis that will move our thinking forward. It will begin with a review of the most recent market research into audience consumption patterns, and then proceed to review and discuss recent academic work on this topic.

Audiences in Industry and Market Research Surveys

Market research reports are produced in order to inform the industry of the most recent and comprehensive developments in the field. Such research tends to be iterative, that is, to be repeated in regular time intervals in order to map the most recent changes and derive consumption trends that may be useful to the industry. As such, the emphasis is on providing a descriptive account of audience practices, but which can often lack in more in-depth insights and explanations. Nevertheless, such reports provide impressive data on audience activities which, combined with more in-depth qualitative studies, can enhance our understanding of how audiences are repositioned in a dynamic and evolving media landscape. While there are many market research surveys on audiences, this section will review three relevant industry reports, undertaken by Nielsen, Ofcom and Comreg in the US, UK and Ireland respectively. The present report does not include a discussion of surveys such as the Reuters Digital News Report and the Pew Research Center State of the News Media because they focus exclusively on the news media and omit the broader media context within which news consumption takes place.

The Nielsen Total Audience survey is US-based research that seeks to provide insights into the current trends in digital media consumption. It further traces year-on-year changes which allows for the identification of relevant changes and developments. The survey covers three broad areas: (i) the time spent on media consumption; (ii) the devices and platforms used; (iii) the demographics of the media consumers, and seeks to relate these to one another, identifying patterns of similarity or difference among different consumers, devices and time frames. In terms of the time spent on media consumption during the second quarter of 2018, the Nielsen survey found that US adults use the media on average for 10 hours and 24 minutes every day. Most of this time is spent on television, both linear and non-linear (on demand), with audiences spending 3 hours and 49 minutes watching linear, scheduled TV and 32 minutes watching non-linear, on demand or time shifted TV. This was followed by 2 hours and 19 minutes spent on apps or the Web on a smartphone and 1 hour and 45 minutes spent listening to the radio. Figure 2 below presents a graphic illustration of the time spent calculated as percentages of the overall media consumption time. The time spent has fluctuated by 41 minutes between 2017 and 2018, but this is accounted for by Live TV and Nielsen explains it in terms of variations in the programmes offered to audiences.

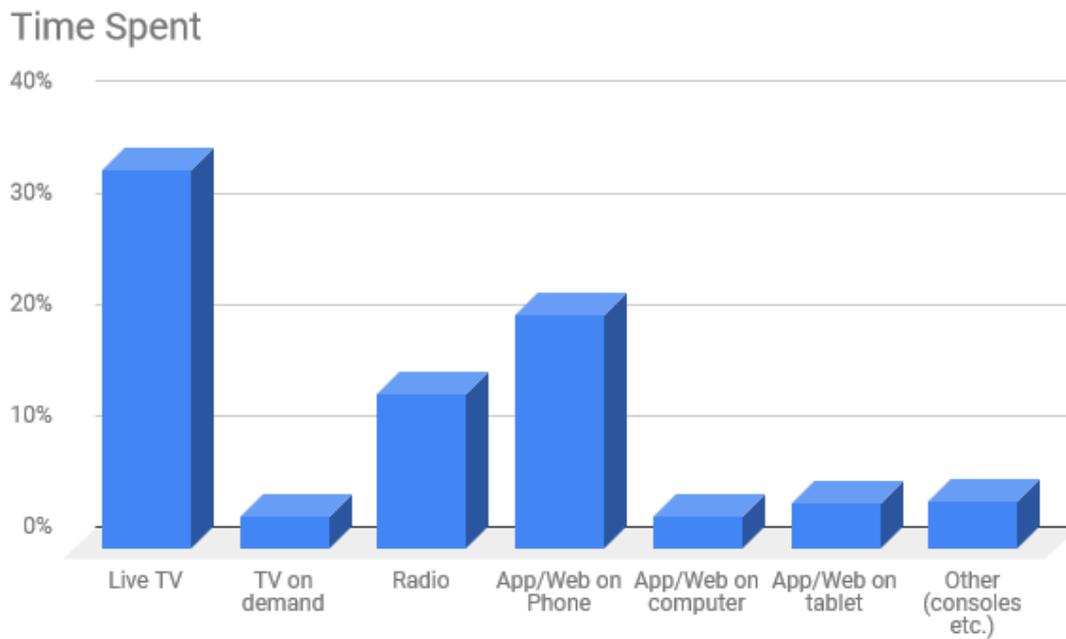


Figure 2: Time spent on media. Based on data from Nielsen, 2018.

In terms of digital media use, one of the key findings of the Nielsen survey shows the continued symbiotic relationship between television and digital devices, with 45% of the survey respondents using digital media always or very often while watching TV. This dual screen usage is primarily for two reasons: to find out more about the content watched (71%) and to message others about the content (41%). In these terms, television viewing does not compete with, but is augmented by, digital media usage. It is also evident in Figure 2 that the two devices that are more popular among users are television and smartphone, with radio coming a close third. The survey further reports the continued growth of on-demand subscriptions, which in June 2018 stood at 66% compared to 59% in June 2017.

However, when filtered by demographic parameters, the survey reveals a slightly different picture. Television consumption is mainly driven by the 50-64 and 65+ age demographic, who consumed live and on-demand TV for 5.38 and 6.55 hours respectively. In contrast, those aged 18-34 spent only 2 hours watching live and on demand TV while those aged 35-49 spent on average 3.41 hours. Figure 3 shows the time spent by age.

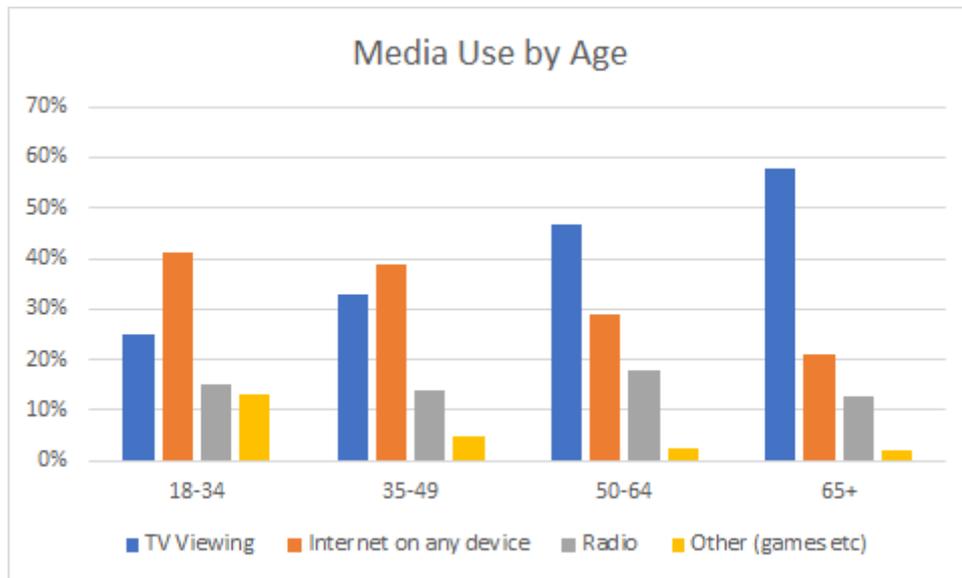


Figure 3: Media Use by Age. Based on data from Nielsen, 2018.

The clear relationship between age and television viewing suggests that this may be a media habit picked up by the older generations, with younger generations picking up new habits. On the other hand, it could be an issue of life stage, with older generations having different needs better served by different media.

In general, the Nielsen Total Audience survey shows that while TV viewing retains its popularity, this has significantly declined among younger audiences, who prefer the Internet. At the same time, there is a steady growth of on-demand services, with a 7% year-on-year increase in subscriptions.

While these findings concern the US audience and its media use across a variety of media, Ofcom in the UK has produced research that provided further insights into media consumption, and into the relationship between linear and on-demand contents. Specifically, evidence comes from two studies by Ofcom. One is a qualitative study of media audiences undertaken by Kantar Media on behalf of Ofcom in 2016. The second is the Media Nations report of 2018 that reviews and summarises key trends in the audiovisual sector. The qualitative study of 2016 (Kantar Media, 2016) sought to identify the motivations behind the use of linear and on-demand services as well as the types of devices used by audiences. Methodologically it relied on focus groups and in-depth interviews, reaching 85 participants with an emphasis on the 18-34 age bracket. The fieldwork took place in 2015. The key findings of this research support the trends identified by Nielsen and add some depth to the reasons behind these choices. The younger informants and family viewers (16-24 and 25-54) showed a clear preference towards on-demand services, citing viewing flexibility and a range of devices available to view as the two main reasons. In contrast, older audiences cited familiarity as their main reason for preferring linear television.

Younger audiences (16-24) appreciated the availability of other devices to consume on demand services, which made it possible for them to watch a different programme to that of their parents or housemates. Additionally, these audiences made a distinction between the active choices offered to them by on demand compared to the more passive viewing of scheduled television. Family participants (25-54) had to fit their viewing with the demands of their lives. For parents, on demand was a way to catch up on viewing missed because television on weekdays tended to be dominated by children's programmes. At the same time, on demand was seen as a valuable resource to keep young children entertained and occupied.

In the case of family audiences, the shift to on demand services was seen as a necessity rather than a choice or preference. In both of these groups, linear television was seen as important in broadcasting 'event TV', that is live events, for example sport events, or during reality shows. News was also a broadcast category that audiences prefer to consume live. Older audiences (54+) found live television easier and familiar to watch, and often expressed a lack of familiarity with the on demand services. Respondents further referred to perceived advantages and disadvantages of linear and on demand viewing; advertising, less personal choice and waiting time for next episode were listed as key disadvantages for linear viewing, compared to subscription fees, questionable quality of some programmes, and addictive, which were listed as key disadvantages of on demand television. Users of on demand services further referred to buffering and the quality of transmission which could be affected by internet speeds, as well as to limited data allowances, which limited their consumption.

The Ofcom Media Nations reports paint a clear picture of the media consumption landscape in the nations that comprise the UK. In the UK as a whole, audiences spent 3 hours and 23 minutes watching contents broadcast on the television in 2017, a decline of 9 minutes compared to 2016. Unpacking this figure, Ofcom reports that in the whole of the UK, 71% of all viewing time is spent on broadcasting, but the figure drops to 46% among those aged 16-34, echoing the Nielsen findings on US audiences. Furthermore, 16-24 year olds spent 59 minutes on YouTube, typically on devices other than the television set. Finally, 39% of all UK households have at least one on-demand subscription. In Northern Ireland, the total viewing time is 3 hours and 19 minutes, 17 minutes less than in 2016 - this is the shortest viewing time of all UK nations. 29% of NI households have a Netflix subscription and digital terrestrial television is the most popular TV platform in Northern Ireland. Ofcom notes that the rise of online video (i.e. on YouTube and similar video service providers) is changing the TV landscape but did not offer any specific details concerning these changes.

In Ireland, information about broadcasting consumption patterns comes from the Comreg 2018 report, relying on a survey of 1,158 respondents conducted by IPSOS Mori. The key findings of this report echo in many ways the above findings in the UK and US: 42% of the respondents were Netflix subscribers, compared to 52% Sky and 33% Saorview subscribers. Moreover, 51% of all respondents reported that while they still view linear television, the amount of time spent on it has decreased. As with the UK and US studies, the findings reflect differences in terms of age: Netflix subscriptions stand at 56% among the 16-24 year olds, compared to only 11% in the 65+ category, and 12% of 16-24 year olds reported that they have altogether stopped watching live television. However, in Ireland a further significant division emerged between urban and rural respondents: while 47% of urban residents had a Netflix subscription this fell to 37% among rural residents possibly reflecting issues with broadband speed.

These studies are informative but tend to be descriptive, with no attempt to understand these findings in broader terms and to contextualise them in terms of social shifts and continuities. Surveys **understand audiences in terms of broad demographic categories** such as age which, although important, tend to gloss over the role of social context and do not allow for the emergence of variations among such groups and the reasons behind such variations. We have seen that the European policy instruments construct audiences in terms of two continua: an active and passive continuum, and secondly a continuum with individual consumers on one side and enlightened citizens on the other, often moving the pendulum too far towards one or another end. On the other hand, surveys and industry reports construct audiences as primarily reflecting their demographic characteristics, discounting the meaning

and significance that media habits and practices acquire for different users. In the survey format, audience activities appear separated and decontextualised from their immediate social context, experiences, and needs of audience members which, owing to lack of qualitative detail, would add meaning to these activities. While the Kantar Media qualitative approach produced important insights into the meaning and significance of media use, it glossed over the embeddedness of audience activities in various and overlapping social groups and communities and the relevant norms that emerge in these contexts. The present study therefore seeks to provide such an in-depth picture of embedded audience activities through qualitative methodologies. But to understand and explain these activities, it is necessary to review the theories of audience use and habit formation and the ways in which audiences 'domesticate' or 'socialise' different media forms.

Audiences in Academic Theory and Research

In a recent article, Kim Schrøder and Ib Gulbrandsen (2018) outlined three key phases of audience research: **the behavioural, reception and participation paradigms**. In the first phase, research focused on identifying the effects of the media on the behaviour of audiences. Audiences were then conceived as passive recipients of information, easy to influence and manipulate, and hence in need of protection. It is clear that this corresponds to the early phase of broadcasting regulation and its assumptions of passive audiences as found for example in the Television Without Frontiers directive. The second phase accepts that audiences are active in processing information and research here focuses on the motives and preferences of audiences. This phase was inaugurated by the important research approach of uses and gratifications (Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch, 1973) but has since evolved to incorporate other approaches, such as the audience reception approach (Livingstone, 1991) that focused on the interpretative activities of audiences and the domestication approach (Silverstone and Hirsch, 1992), that looked at the embeddedness of media in the context of everyday life. To the extent that this phase understands media use as consumption, and audiences as media consumers, making active choice as to the media they enjoy and prefer, this phase can be seen as corresponding to the more recent broadcasting regulation policies, such as the AVMSD. Finally, the participation phase of audience research emerged out of the shift to the digital media and the fusion between producing and consuming media (Livingstone, 2013). Research here focuses both on the new ways in which people use the media as well as in the ways in which digital media have enabled user participation in a variety of spheres of life, from politics to health and from school to conflict, war and terrorism (see Livingstone, 2009). This more expansive approach to audiences, which clearly takes into account the potential pitfalls and problems that arise out of the extended forms of audience participation seems to underpin the revised AVMSD.

These shifts in audience activity, which may be seen as corresponding not only to shifts in research paradigms, but also in shifts in media technologies, are captured in Napoli's (2011; 2012) term **audience evolution**. Napoli stressed the dual aspects of this audience evolution, which presents important challenges to both media institutions and policy makers: the fragmentation of audiences and the autonomy of audiences. With the increase in the availability of different media and different media forms, audiences have fragmented and cannot be thought of in the same way as in the era of mass media. At the same time, audiences have much more autonomy in terms of which media they use and over what they do with the media. This means that no single theory can adequately capture the diversity of audience activities once and for all. In the context of the present research, and given our interest in an

in-depth understanding and positioning of audience activities in the context of their everyday lives and in the context of technological and institutional media changes, we develop a theoretical approach that relies on synthesising the **uses and gratifications approach**, the **domestication approach** and the **audience participation** paradigm as developed by Couldry, Livingstone and Markham (2008; 2018). This section therefore begins with a discussion of the most recent developments to media ‘uses and gratifications’, then it moves on to a discussion of the domestication of media and technology approach, concluding with the development of the current synthetic approach which seeks to integrate these strands in a revised audience participation approach, which draws upon the Couldry et al. study.

Uses and Gratifications in the Digital Era

The importance of the uses and gratifications approach to media audiences is located in its focus on audience activities. This approach has turned the question of ‘what do **media do** to people’ that was prevalent in the media effects era, to ‘what do **people do** with the media’. Media uses and gratifications research “represents an attempt to explain something of the way in which individuals use communications, among other resources in their environment, to satisfy their needs and to achieve their goals” (Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch, 1973: 510). It therefore prioritised audiences and their needs and wants as the starting point of research. It is a functional approach in that it looks at the functions that media serve for people, and identifies which media they use for which purpose. In these terms, it has important implications for policy because it allows for specific policy interventions for specific media-related needs.

The main contribution of the uses and gratifications approach has been to develop a typology of needs which underlie the motivations of people’s engagement with the media. Katz, Haas and Gurevitch (1973) established that the following five parameters are motivating media use and consumption: (1) **cognitive needs**, connected to information-seeking, knowledge and understanding; (2) **affective needs** linked to aesthetic, pleasurable and emotional experiences; (3) **personal integrative needs** that integrate cognitive and affective elements and are seen as strengthening self- esteem; (4) **social integrative needs** that strengthen contact with the social world; (5) **tension-free needs** that are linked to escapism and relaxation. The audiences studied by Katz and his collaborators were using different media to fulfil different needs, connected to the different attributes of the various media forms. For example, Katz et al. argue that enjoyment is better served by television, film and books, and informing oneself is better served by newspapers. Research into new media uses on the whole reproduced the same gratifications: Haridakis and Hansen (2009) report that YouTube is associated with the gratifications of entertainment, information seeking, social and interpersonal connection and interaction. Quan-Haase and Young (2010) compared Facebook to instant messaging and found that Facebook is used for passing time, affection and social information, while instant messaging is connected to relationship development and maintenance. To an extent, this reflects the unchanging elements of human psychological needs: new media cannot create new needs or motivations, but rather address existing needs in slightly different ways.

Uses and gratifications perspectives have usefully highlighted the role of user psychological needs and motives for using media. However, media use is a social occasion,

and media are embedded in different ways in the fabric of everyday life. This is something that is found at the heart of domestication and reception approaches to media use.

Domestication, Reception and Public Connection

These approaches have in common the idea that media use is an essentially dynamic process, changing and evolving as it meets, or fails to meet, certain individual and social requirements. Additionally, these approaches focus on the meaning and significance of different media for people, and the sense-making processes that people are involved in when they choose some media over others. Importantly, these approaches make a useful distinction between media as objects - for example, the TV set, the mobile phone, the laptop - and as texts or contents - for example, the shows watched, the messages received, the podcasts listened to. The importance of these perspectives lies in highlighting the **social role** of media use and especially its function in maintaining what Couldry et al. (2006) have referred to as '**public connection**', connecting audiences not only to one another as members of social groups and communities but to the broader world.

The term domestication was used by Silverstone and Hirsch (1993) to highlight the importance of media in the domestic setting, but also to show that people are actively 'socialising' or adapting the media to their own requirements and in the process they are themselves adapting to the media. The overall process by which this is done is divided into four phases: **appropriation, objectification, incorporation, and conversion** (Silverstone, Hirsch and Morley, 2003). Appropriation occurs as soon as a new technology or medium has been bought, exchanged, downloaded or otherwise brought into the world of the person or the household or any other social unit. Objectification occurs when the media object is positioned or repositioned in a specific space or place within the person's social environment. For physical media objects, this can refer to the position allocated to the media, for example, a laptop is placed on a desk, the phone in one's pocket or purse, the television in the living room and so on. For non-material media, this may refer to positioning within the virtual environment, for example, when an app is displayed very prominently on the desktop. Incorporation refers to the placement of the media within the routines of the person or social unit that has adopted it. In practice, this refers to the time and time-slots allocated to the use of specific media. Within broader discussions of the economy of attention, it is clear that questions of time are crucial, and that incorporation is a central process for users in today's environment. Finally, conversion forms a bridge between the sphere of private use and consumption and the public world. Consumption and use of certain media signifies entry into certain social groups: for example, music and games allow users to form their own communities based on shared tastes. Conversion is therefore the process by which media use is converted into some form of social and cultural value and status.

If domestication points to the 'outwards' social significance of media use, reception focuses 'inwardly', in that it looks at the meaning-making process involved in media use. Schrøder (2018) argues that audiences are actively engaged in making sense of the media they use (both as contents and as objects). This process does not take place in a vacuum, or at the psychological-cognitive level, but it is an inherently social process, drawing on the expectations, social needs, interests, values, identities, and pre-understandings of the various media which have been acquired through the various experiences with the media during people's lives - Schrøder refers to this as the 'mediated lifeworld'. Through their constant navigation of the media, people acquire certain media repertoires - that is, certain preferred

media platforms, genres, forms and certain media habits developed over time. These are not written in stone but are dynamically changed as people and media change over time. Audience reception analyses therefore can be used to identify these repertoires on the one hand, and the meaning, value and significance they have for users on the other.

While the domestication and reception approaches have recognized the social elements of media consumption, the seminal Public Connection study by Couldry, Livingstone and Markham (2008; 2018) have sought to identify the ways in which audiences operate as 'publics', that is in their capacities as citizens rather than private individuals and with a socio-political orientation towards the world. Using a qualitative media-diary approach, complemented by a survey, Couldry et al found that media use for public connection was different for different groups of people: for one group, the media connectors, it was driven by the media themselves, for example through reports on urgent and important political topics. For a second group of people, it was driven by their own orientation as agents in the world; for these people, who were often but not always actively engaged in public actions, for example as school governors. For yet a third group of people, the weak connectors, there was no interest in any public connection and very limited, if any, public connection, preferring the private connection to friends, family and entertainment. Finally, a fourth group of people fell somewhere in the middle, displaying a mixed set of orientations. Crucially, the survey did not reveal any clear demographic patterns among these groups, though younger women tended to be a little more disengaged than other groups. The theoretical importance of this study lies in a recognition of different orientations towards both the media and the public world, but which do not necessarily correspond to specific demographic groups.

Taking all the above into consideration, it emerges that: (i) **people are actively positioning themselves towards the media based on their needs and preferences;** (ii) **audience activities include not only consuming media contents but also appropriating certain media forms in order to position themselves in the social world;** (iii) **meaning-making among audiences is not only a cognitive but also a social process, linked to group memberships, social values, and expectations;** (iv) **audience activity cannot solely be predicted on the basis of demographics, as people orient themselves towards the media differently based on their life experiences.** A theoretical synthesis of all this therefore leads to the proposition that: **audience activities are at once cognitive and social, whereby the social element refers to socialisation and life experiences, alongside group and community memberships beyond demographics.** The recognition of the social element in what audiences do is a crucial factor that helps correct the somewhat one-sided picture that emerges from industry reports that focus on demographics; while it also helps to add nuance to the policy understanding of audiences are either passive or active, where the activity is primarily cognitive referring to media choice at an individual level. With this theoretical approach, the empirical research undertaken here revolves around the following research question: **How do Irish audiences use media in their everyday lives?** The following section offers details of the research design of the study.

Research Design

The development of more fragmented and autonomous audiences raises questions about how to study and measure audiences, their consumption patterns and their media experiences. As noted above, survey research is limited in its ability to provide insights into media consumption from the audience perspective. To address this, this project adopted the following qualitative methodologies which will provide a rich understanding of video consumption among Irish audiences:

Media Diary Methodology: Media diaries are particularly useful for comparing practices among individuals and across groups. Diaries collect data on what media people use, how, when, and why and they additionally provide context about the social and psychological processes involved (Couldry, Livingstone and Markham, 2008). Diarists were asked to note the devices they used, the kinds of contents they accessed, the time of day they accessed these contents, the location and whether they were alone, with family or friends.

Focus Group Research: The focus group research adds depth and provides context and explanations of the media diaries. Specifically, the focus groups went over the media diaries, discussed the main patterns emerging, the main news/media sources, barriers to accessing or enjoying contents, issues that have arisen during the diary period, justification or reasons for choosing specific media over others, reflections on habits, and discussion about the importance and meaning of the various forms of video consumption.

Qualitative Analysis: The analysis collected the materials from the diaries and focus groups and then analyse them in a three-pronged manner, based on the theoretical approach identified above. Specifically, the analysis combines a media repertoire approach to identify the media diets of audiences (Taneja, Webster and Malthouse, 2012; Hasebrink and Domeyer, 2012); a uses and gratifications approach, to identify the underlying motivations and needs that led to these diets (Sundar and Limperos, 2013); and a media domestication approach to identify the ways in which the various patterns of video consumption are embedded in audiences' everyday lives (Silverstone, 2005).

Sample

In the empirical part of the study we collected 164 weekly diaries. In the early part of the study, the research team ran a pilot media diary study, eliciting 39 weekly diaries kept by 39 media users in order to see if the media diary template worked well. Following feedback from this process, the research team refined and simplified the media diary (Appendix 1). Using the final media diary template, we collected **125 weekly diaries** in addition to the **39 weekly diaries collected in the pilot study**. While based on our current theoretical approach we did not look for a demographically representative sample, the majority of the diarists were undergraduate and postgraduate students, within the ages of 20-28. 27 diaries were produced by people in the ages of 30-37, and 5 diaries were kept by users over 40 years old. 85 of the dairies were kept by women and 79 by men. The periods of collection were Oct 2016 for the pilot study, February and October 2017 and April to October 2018 for the remaining diaries. The research team further conducted a total of **seven focus groups** discussing the diaries and their media habits in more detail. The first focus group took place in May 2017 as a pilot, and the remaining ones were conducted in the second part of 2018. The interview schedule for the focus groups is found in Appendix 2. The discussions were recorded and transcribed. The data collection part of the project concluded at the end of October 2018.

Findings and Discussion

This section is organised as follows. First it presents the findings in terms of the media repertoires identified through the media diaries. Then it moves to discuss the motivations and gratifications derived from media use. Finally, it looks at the ways in which users socialise the media -- that is, how they adopt them and adapt them to their own requirements. The three sections correspond to the following three questions respectively: **what media do audiences use; why do they use them; and how do they use them.**

Media Repertoires

We are using the term media repertoires in order to refer to the combinations of media used by the participants in our study. As Taneja, Webster and Malthouse (2012) note, audiences are using media for a finite period of time. They therefore make active choices to consume a subset of all the media that is available to them. Identifying the main media repertoires for users is important because it offers information on the ways in which the various media are combined, and on the 'division of labour' among different media from the point of view of the user. **Table 1** below tabulates the media options that diarists indicated they used.

Platforms	YouTube	Netflix	Social media	Video/audio streaming apps (e.g. podcast apps, TED talks etc)	Media sites-players	Radio	TV
Genres (most typical)	Youtuber channels, vlogs, tutorials, music, news	Drama/ documentaries	Funny videos, 'stories', short news videos	Music, podcasts	Drama/news/documentaries	Live radio	Scheduled drama/news/current affairs etc
Producers	Youtubers, professional content creators, ordinary users	Professional content creators	Random users, friends and family, some professional contents	Professional content creators	Professional content creators	Professional content creators	Professional content creators
Time	Live/stored	Stored	Live, ephemeral	Stored	Stored	Live	Scheduled (ephemeral)
Order/structure	Recommendation algorithm, push notifications, search	Recommendation algorithm, search	Newsfeed algorithms, push notifications	Recommendations, lists, search	List, search	Scheduled	Scheduled
Revenue	Ads	Subscription	Ads	Ads, subscription	Subscription	Ads	Ads, TV license, bundles

Table 1: Media repertoires

Diarists made use of a wide variety of media, which offer different experiences but also different functionalities. For example, while TV was used for scheduled programmes, a video streaming app was used to access stored contents that were already broadcast. The various

media are also structured differently, with YouTube, Netflix and social media all structured via recommendation algorithms, as opposed to streaming apps and iplayers, which are structured through lists and search, and, radio and TV which are structured through scheduled programming. It is also very clear from this table that the majority of media contents consumed are produced by professional content creators rather than by users themselves, with two notable exceptions: YouTube and social media. It is further useful to include in the table the main revenue models of the various media, as they may also shape their consumption. For example, as we shall see later, the free availability of YouTube contents or the low cost of Netflix have been noted by the focus group participants, though they also noted their annoyance at YouTube's frequent content interruptions for adverts.

It was very clear in all the diaries that YouTube featured very prominently in the media repertoires of our diarists. The vast and growing archive of video contents on YouTube, along with the wide range of video genres, from YouTubers to informational and educational videos, from music to films, make **YouTube the preferred media for video consumption** for our diarists. Additionally, the accessibility of YouTube across media makes it equally attractive, as it is available on mobile, TV and any internet enable device, including games consoles and tablets. The **second most preferred media for video was Netflix**, which was the preferred media for entertainment for our diarists. It is noteworthy that the Netflix genre that was referred to by many of our diarists is the documentary and particularly real crime documentaries and drama.

In contrast, **social media were used to consume short videos, often funny user generated videos or animal videos**. Such contents are also shared among friends, typically through tagging others rather than sharing in timelines. It is worth noting here that while Facebook was referred to often by the diarists, Instagram was at least equally if not more popular for videos. Participants further used streaming apps not only for music but also for podcasts. We noted with interest that several participants mentioned that they consumed TED talks systematically, through the bespoke TED app, which plays the videos of the talks. As expected, media players were used in order to catch up with favourite programmes missed but in general they were not especially mentioned in the diaries, mainly because our diarists were not consuming that much scheduled television in general. Radio featured in most diaries, but as noted by most participants, it was mostly in the background, for example when at the hairdressers or while driving. The circumstances and conditions surrounding media use will be explored in the section on domestication and socialisation of the media. The next section offers an insight into the main motivations for media use.

Media Motivations, Uses and Gratifications

If the previous section covered the 'what media are consumed' this section focuses on 'why are these media consumed'. In other words, this section covers the main motivations offered by users to explain their media use. In general, their media use is divided into four main parts: i.) personal ii.) work-related, iii.) entertainment, iv.) information and/or education.

Personal media use includes the use of messengers and other media that allow users to connect with friends and family. The use of notifications was an important factor driving this personal use, but in general this personal use of media was continuous and span across the whole day in parallel with other activities. Consider for example, these excerpts from a media diary:

8 am to 10 pm: When I woke up I checked my notifications on my phone, Snapchat and WhatsApp and FB messenger. Snapchat was just general snaps of friend's activities. WhatsApp was academic notifications from group projects. FB messenger, had message from a group of friends from home.

1 pm to 7 pm: [On the bus] Snow got bad so sent snaps to housemates.

7 pm to sleep: Chatted to sister on snapchat. Snapchat used to have continuous chat with friends from home.

This kind of media use corresponds to both the personal and social integrative function as discussed in the uses and gratifications theoretical model, according to which it covers aspects relevant to the construction of one's personal and social identity. Users here either pro-actively survey their social media environment to find out what their friends have been up to or respond to notifications that alert them to their friends' activities:

8 am to 10 am: Every morning I quickly scroll through my Instagram and Facebook feeds to view stories posted by people that I follow on both.

8 am to 10 am: Scrolled through Instagram stories/posts to see what everyone had done the night before.

8 am to 10 am: Immediately checked notifications on all of the listed social media platforms.

As indicated above, this personal use further serves as a means for **relationship maintenance** especially for those who live far from their family, as seen for example in the excerpts above where the diarist uses Snapchat to talk to her sister and her friends from home. Relationship maintenance can also take the form of sharing contents that users think certain people will like or are likely to be interested in:

2 pm to 4 pm: During my break my friend sent me a post from BuzzFeed on the best Netflix shows. (M)y friends sent various posts from multi social media platforms into our group WhatsApp group including an article on the 'Take back the City' protests taking place in the city centre.

7 pm to sleep: Shared news article with brother on WhatsApp about local robbery from The Irish Times. Shared feature article from Dublin Live Facebook with Uncle on WhatsApp about Krispy Kreme in Dublin.

Secondly, media use was undertaken for **work purposes**. Most of our diarists were students, but the majority also had another job outside their studies. Social media, especially messengers, such as WhatsApp or Facebook Messenger, were used in order to form work groups for projects or to communicate with colleagues. The excerpts below illustrate this:

8 am to 10 am: WhatsApp was academic notifications from group projects and changing meeting days due to weather.

2 pm to 4 pm: WhatsApp and Facebook were used to engage with work, mainly to try get extra shifts.

Although the next section will cover in more detail the ways in which users organise their activities through media, it is worth noting here that users form a variety of media groups, both personal and professional, and adjust their media contents to the requirements and expectations of these groups. It is further important to note that this **instrumental use** of the media is not found in the literature and can be seen as an indicator of the collapse of the boundaries between work and leisure. While in the broadcast media era and in the early social media era, media use was exclusively related to leisure or social time, it is evident now that media use is currently used for work-related purposes.

Thirdly, as expected, media use is oriented towards **entertainment**, including relaxation, fun, escapism, and to cover their **affective needs**. This is one of the most important media functions and the greater availability of various media platforms cater to all entertainment needs, ranging from the niche to the mainstream. For example, one of our focus group participants explained why she really enjoys Dodo, an animal video site:

[I watch videos on] Dodo.com for animal welfare, it is a website where they do so many animal videos. But from all over the world of animals being rescued, adopted, fostered, from kittens to snakes, elephants, lions, it shows videos about poaching. It is to show what bad things happen to animals out there to try and help. I watch a lot of that. But most of them do end up making you feel good. You see the animal getting the home. [...] [It is] so soothing, just watching them finally happy and playing. All of that. It's such a nice feeling. [Our emphasis]

We can further locate **aesthetic appreciation** within this set of needs. This was very closely linked to the video and picture format, but perhaps the clearest manifestation of this was encountered in the preference for documentaries. John Grierson defined documentaries as "the creative treatment of actuality" (quoted in Hardy 1966: 13) and we found here that they are increasingly popular because they fulfil two expectations for users: firstly, an aesthetic expectation and secondly a substantive expectation for contents that are truthful and in-depth treatises of topics. The exchange between focus group participants below shows the role played by aesthetic elements as a gratification associated with the consumption of documentaries:

Participant 4: They're cinematic. Sometimes they can be... kind of one sided, which you have to do your own judgement on that. But they draw you in. They are really were well put together.

Participant 1: Feel like you are getting a whole story...

Participant 3: I feel like they've taken time to consider what they're going to say and not just trying to push out a video or something. You know what I mean. It's not done quickly, it's deliberate thought put in it and it makes me enjoy watching it. I enjoy the skill, the finesse, and technique and time, like the way I would an actual film, you know.

Participant 1: It's also like you're being educated twice because you're listening to, sorry I'm shouting, you're listening to someone talking and forming [NB opinions] about something while watching visually. It just has a really strong impact on you, and when you walk away you would see it in your head.

[Focus Group, October 17, 2018]

It is worth noting in the above extract that documentaries in fact meet several of the uses and gratifications identified here: informational and educational gratifications, explained below, entertainment and relaxation, as well as aesthetic appreciation.

Another noteworthy issue that emerged here concerns the degree of focusing on or paying attention to different media. Watching TV and watching Netflix both cover entertainment and relaxation needs but they do so in very different ways. As the diarist below explains, TV is used as background and distraction while Netflix is watched in a more attentive manner:

7 pm to sleep: Before I go to sleep I watch an episode of 'Jane the Virgin' on my laptop. When I am watching Netflix I tend to pay attention to it as opposed to when I 'watch' the actual TV while scrolling through my phone.

Similarly, for another diarist, TV and radio are consumed when also involved in other activities:

12 to 2 pm: Watched the TV whilst I ate my lunch and listened to the radio in the shower.

1 pm to 7 pm: I watch TV while eating dinner and talking to my family.

The fourth set of uses and gratifications identified in this research are those oriented towards **information and education**. Informational needs are addressed mainly but not exclusively through news consumption, and here our participants revealed a very wide range of news sources, both national and international. Participants also ranged in terms of interest, with some being very interested in news, others checking only sporadically, and yet others pursuing specific stories.

8 am 1 pm: Again, used news apps to catch up on all the news. Checked twitter for trending stuff about news and what's going on in the world.

8 am to 1 pm: Woke up and checked major international news publications: BBC< NYT< Haaretz, L.A Times, Guardian. Also used Newswhip Spike for Viral trends. This is pretty much a morning ritual.

10pm: Watched several videos relating to Kavanaugh confirmation on YouTube

7 pm to sleep: I watched a seven-minute news video on the AJ plus YouTube channel about North Korea.

8 am to 1 pm: I opened snapchat where I opened the Daily Mail snapchat story, this outlet gave me numerous stories and gossip revolving around celebrity life, predominantly American Hollywood.

In terms of **education**, a number of the participants in this study used media for the consumption of educational content, which here we understand as content that offers users detailed knowledge about a topic or practical instructions about how to perform certain tasks. It therefore contains both tutorials about a variety of topics, from make up to video editing, and in-depth insights about more abstract topics and issues.

8 am to 1 pm: Watched a TED talk YouTube video.

1pm to 7 pm: I then got the bus back home on which I watched multiple different YouTube tutorials. (Make-up /hair/etc)

1pm to 7 pm: During this time I was cooking. I used YouTube to look up some cooking videos.

1pm to 7 pm: I also used YouTube on the laptop to watch videos pertaining to some of my coursework

1pm to 7 pm: From 2-3pm I used an app called GuitarTuna to help me tune my guitar. I looked up Dave Brubeck take five on YouTube and I am learning how to play this song on guitar.

1pm to 7 pm: I clicked on a YouTube video by Dr Sabina Brennan about brain health and dementia.

This particular motivation for users has not been discussed in the literature and constitutes a new finding. Although education is a well-known function of the media, famously established by Lord Reith, the BBC's first director, who set for BBC the remit to inform, educate and entertain audiences, it has never been examined as a motivation for users to consume media, although there are references to gaining knowledge. There is scope here for recognizing this as an important use and gratification for audiences, who pro-actively search and consume educational and instructional media contents. It further raises some questions regarding the quality of these contents, as the extract below suggests:

1 pm to 7 pm: [I accessed] a YouTube tutorial on 'skin care routine' I watched the YouTube bloggers skin care routine where she promoted [certain branded] skin products it wasn't until the end of the video that a #SP #AD sign came up and I realised the video was not a genuine review as it seemed but in fact a sponsored video.

To summarise, this part of the analysis addressed the 'why' of media consumption and found two important new uses and gratifications complementing the ones that have already been established in the relevant literature: an **instrumental use** of media for work-related purposes and an **educational use** of the media to receive instruction or in-depth knowledge about a topic. Finally, we also identified the importance of **aesthetic elements** in consuming contents and especially documentaries.

Media Domestication and Socialisation

While the previous two sections provided important information about what users consume and why, this section focuses on providing the context of these, by looking at the circumstances and patterns of media use which show how people appropriate and embed media in their everyday lives. Ultimately, this section examines the social and sociological meaning of media consumption moving away from individual motivations to form broader patterns. The main findings here are as follows: (i) the rhythms of media consumption typically follow but do not dictate the rhythms of everyday life and (ii) media consumption is a social process in the sense that it involves other people in some form or another, even when users are alone. These findings add an important dimension to the ways in which audiences are conceived in policy and in industry reports: rather than active/passive, consumer/citizen or members of demographic groups, users are part of social groups, communities and society in its more general sense. While this social and communal media use is to an extent understood and captured by social media platforms, it has been overlooked in policy and the industry who view audiences either as individuals or in terms of their demographics.

Rhythms, Patterns and Habits

This section looks at the ways in which media consumption and everyday life intersect. We have found that media consumption tends to follow rather than lead everyday life. The key take-away in this section therefore include the finding that everyday life drives media use, with two notable exceptions: **media events**; and what we may call **'intriguing media stories'**.

Media consumption tends to be routine and repetitive, as our diarists found out. Their diaries from day-to-day look very similar, in terms of how their media day is structured. If we were to reconstruct the typical media day for one of our participants it would like this: waking up and checking out notifications in social media received during the night and responding as necessary; actively going through newsfeeds to see if anything happen and 'what others have been up to'; use media when commuting, radio, podcasts or music if driving, cycling or walking, video, social media and music if on the bus/train; much less if at all media consumption during lectures and work; media consumption resumes during breaks and after work; media for entertainment, typically Netflix, YouTube or TV are consumed in the 7 pm to sleep period. In terms of the media devices used the smartphone emerges as the key device used throughout the day – see Figure 5.

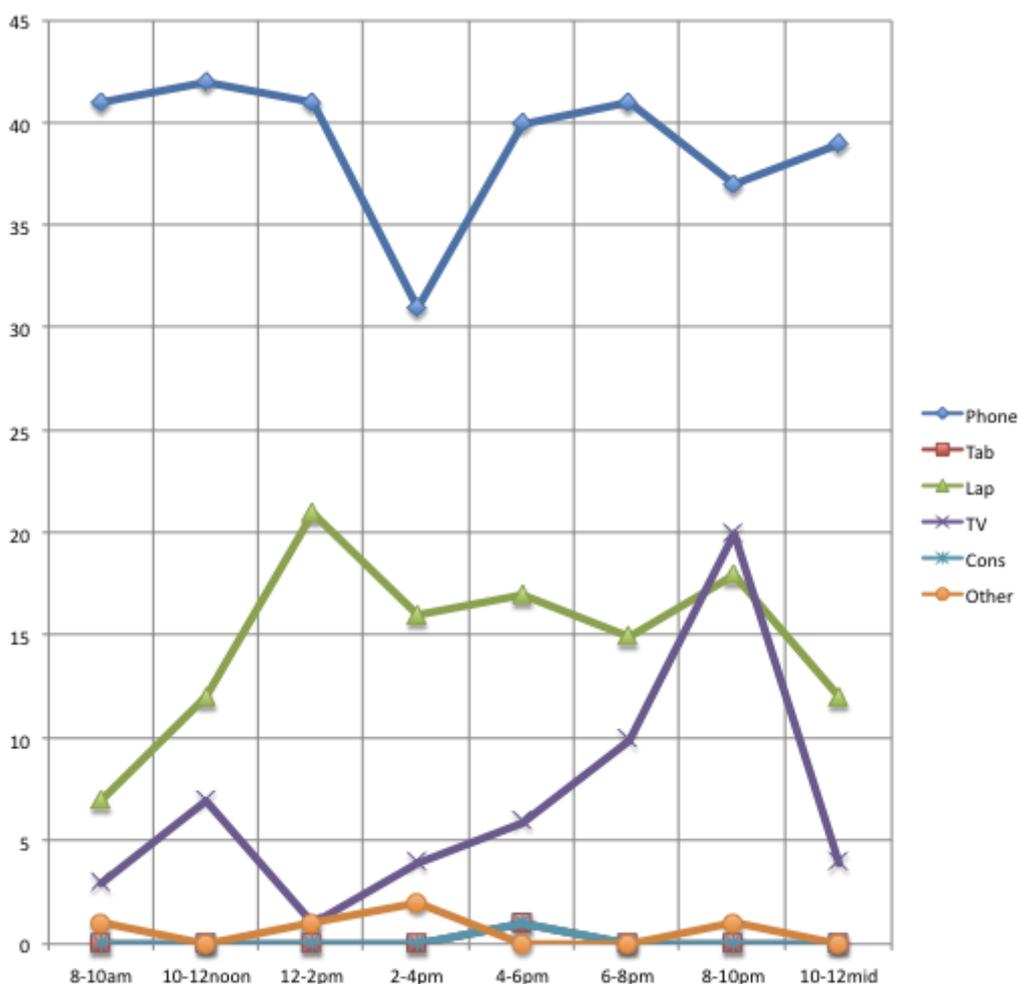


Figure 5 Media devices used across the day

Within these typical rhythms of media use, people develop their own specific routines and rituals around media use. These routines do not form overall patterns; rather the pattern here is that users form their own routines structured around their individual preferences but also structured around the groups and communities they are part of. For example, people tend to do the same thing every morning:

8 am to 1 pm: For the first part of my morning I was alone and checked international major news organizations to see what is happening throughout the world. This is a well-worn routine at this stage. Upon waking I check the following websites: BBC, NYT, Guardian, Irish Times, Independent (UK and Irish) I also check Haaretz.

8 am to 1 pm: I checked Instagram as I woke up first (it's a bit of a habit).

8 am to 1 pm: This is the start of the college week for me so the first thing I do is go on WhatsApp this app is a good way to stay in contact with a large group of people such as group work or society business that needs to be taken care of.

8 am to 1 pm: I generally have the same routine every morning. I deleted my Facebook and Instagram apps in an attempt to use social media less. Despite this I still use the Facebook website every morning.

This is what we can understand as media habits, and it is clear that they are formed in the context of the structures of everyday life and oriented towards fulfilling the various demands and requirements of everyday life. For example, commuting time emerges as an important space for media consumption; how this time is filled depends on the type of commute, and whether the user can read, write or watch, or if they can only listen. At a second level it depends on the preferences and requirements of the user, but also on their needs on the day; for example, one of our participants was recovering from an illness and preferred to listen to calming music. Another had spent an intense few hours working with her colleagues on their computers and preferred to abstain from screens during her commute back home. It is in this sense that the way in which users' everyday lives are structured shapes their media use. The exception to this concerned mediated events that were of specific interest to some users, who would then adapt their routine to these events. A typical example would be a sports event, such as the UFC fight between the boxers Conor McGregor and Khabib Nurmagomedov. One of our participants was traveling abroad but on the occasion of the fight adjusted their plans so as to be able to watch the fight. On the other hand, some media consumption led to more media consumption, not necessarily in the sense of binge watching but in **intriguing or engaging users** to the extent of leading them to search for more information or content on this story in other media:

7 pm to sleep: I watched a Netflix documentary on a murder in New York during the 1990s. Afterwards I used Google to see where the people from the documentary were now. I ended up on BuzzFeed after this looking for more documentaries to watch on Netflix.

7 pm to sleep: Watched two more episodes of Narcos. Same drill as before had one eye on my phone. [...] Following Narcos I stayed up late and read various archived pieces about Colombian history. I read several articles detailing U.S involvement in the Los Pepes death Squad which were detailed in the tv show. I also read the Wikipedia page for the period of times in 1950s in Colombia referred to as La Violencia.

This kind of lateral media use, in which users are intrigued by a story to the extent that it drives them to search for more information across a range of media, is a pattern of use that we have not seen discussed in the literature. It attests to the story telling power of the media that can be used to trigger more engagement with the story even if the actual programme has ended. But it also points to the seamless way in which users navigate the media environment: it is not the platform, the media brand, or the media device, but the **story that intrigues users** and drives this kind of media consumption. Some platforms have sought to capitalise on this tendency and use algorithmic recommendation and autoplay systems to entice users to stay on their platform for more – these are typically seen with scepticism:

1 pm to 7 pm: I then went on Facebook and scrolled through. I watched one video about dogs being funny which led me to three more funny animal related videos.

Autoplay used to annoy me constantly. You stop the autoplay but the next one keeps coming and it used to drive me nuts. So I turned it off. [Focus group May 13, 2017]

Like so I was looking up a video on how to jump start a car on YouTube and it worked, it was a good video. But after that I just had loads of videos on my homepage on how to jump start a van. I was like no, I just needed the one video. I don't need loads of stuff about this. And then you just watch one thing and YouTube has you as an avid fan of jump-starting vans.

[...]

Instagram is really obvious, like you watch one Kardashian video and scroll and it's all Kardashian videos. And you can't get out of it. And on YouTube it is really obvious because it is like you watched this, so you might like that. It literally says recommended for you.

[Focus group Oct 26, 2018]

In general, users became aware of their habits once they began keeping a diary, though a few were already aware of their use and what they perceived as **excessive use** understood as 'waste of time' or 'procrastination'. This was typically connected to social media, but also to some news sites:

8 am to 1 pm: Same routine. (realized at this point I look at the Daily Mail too much and clicked 'see less')

1 pm to 7 pm: Went on phone for social media and wasted far too much time looking at Snapchat.

Although some users described their Netflix use as '**binge watching**' no one described it as excessive or wasteful. None of our participants described Netflix or any other media players as interfering with their everyday or social lives in any way. Rather, it formed an important part of their social lives especially because, as we will discuss later, most of this

consumption had a social character and was consumed with others or in some instances in order to be part of the social conversation around certain Netflix programmes.

7 pm to sleep: Binge watched “Jane the Virgin” on Netflix with housemates.

7 pm to sleep: Watched all new released episodes of The Good Place on Netflix, so I could chat to my friends about them. I then finished written work on Microsoft Word.

A final element to note here concerns the **practicalities of media consumption**. Issues such as loading times for videos, data plans, access to TV or access to a smart TV were all factors that fed into media consumption. For example, a limited data plan means that users will preserve their data when commuting preferring to be offline. No access to television, which was very common among students, would lead them to either use media players or to only watch when at home with parents:

7 pm to sleep: watched Television as I was at home in Mayo and do not have a television in college.

1 pm to 7 pm: Again, to conserve mobile data I read the rest of the Sunday Business Post while on the bus and listened to music on my saved songs on Spotify.

We have seen in this section that media use tends to have a **rhythm that follows everyday life**, and that it is **routinised and habitual**. Users form their own routines and habits, based on practical factors, but also on their preferences, and on what is happening around them. Two stand-out findings here concern the role played by scheduled **media events**, especially sporting events, which break the routine and drive consumption; and the role played by **intriguing stories** that engage users and lead them to search for more. It is noteworthy that **documentary** is the genre that drives this consumption.

Consumption as a Social Process

One of the key findings of this research has been that media consumption is an inherently social process. Although practical issues feed into media use, users have individual preferences and needs, and develop their own media routines, it is crucial to note that most media consumption is socially driven. This social aspect can be thought of as having three dimensions: one immediately social, that is **being with others**; one that derived from **group and community memberships**; and one that operates at the more abstract level of ‘**being in the world**’, to borrow a phrase from Martin Heidegger. This section will explore these three social dimensions of media consumption.

In the first instance, much of **media use occurs in the presence of others at an interpersonal level**, even if this presence is often virtual. We have observed that a typical media day begins with checking social media feeds and notifications. Typically, users will respond to messages, comments, tags, snaps and so on, and they will do so very early in the day. The etiquette that has developed around (social) media use is that messages, tags and direct comments will be responded to, and that social media will be precisely for **social communication**. This is clearly illustrated in the following extract:

8 am to 1 pm: Immediately check updates on Twitter on my phone. Primarily news based: trending/hashtags etc. Looked at comments about Brett Kavanaugh's confirmation. Then used Facebook for more social based interaction: **wished 2 people Happy Birthday**, watched a funny dog video but **used messenger mostly to talk to about 5 people**. Opened two Snapchats from **people I know**, looked through people's public stories. Scrolled through Instagram and **looked and liked some posts from people I know** and two posts concerning sea pollution by a Wildfire photojournalist.

This extract illustrates the multifaceted sociality of media consumption, but for now, we want to focus on the use in order to **be with others** even if they are not physically present. It is significant to note that if pressed for time, this is the only media use that people will allow themselves.

7 pm to sleep: I was then in work so I did not use any media again except to reply to the occasional snapchat from my friends.

Users often described the primacy of face-to-face social interaction, which means that they will not use any media when with others on a social occasion. This points to the importance of the sociality of being with others, preferably physically but also virtually when physical presence is not possible. In this sense, **media extend rather than curtail this sociality**.

7 pm to sleep: After work I went out, so I didn't spend much time on my phone.

1 pm to 7 pm: I did not spend much time on my phone or anything during this portion of the day as I spent time with family and I don't like to be distracted by the media while doing this although I did answer a few messages received on Instagram or snapchat.

7 pm to sleep: I was out with my friends so we took a few snapchat and Instagram pictures but mainly stayed off our phones.

Secondly, **media consumption takes place with others as part of social groups and communities**. These range widely and can include anything from family members to larger communities of shared interests. Users will either share on timelines or tag those among their social groups and communities that they know will be interested in certain contents. They will also watch certain media contents with friends, housemates or family. Here **consumption is not so much driven by interest in the contents but by companionship and social convention**. Occasionally, they will form ad hoc groups for watching certain contents. All these point to the various ways in which being part of a social group connects to media use beyond demographic group membership.

I prefer to watch documentaries or TV series with friends. [...] There are some documentaries I will organise for a few friends to watch together because I think they will be interested. So, for example, my friends who would be computer programmers or something, I organised a night of WikiLeaks, hacking and digital privacy documentaries on Netflix and we all drank tea and chatted about how to solve the digital world's problems.

[Focus group, May 13, 2017).

1pm to 7pm: My roommate had her laptop in our kitchen and she played a movie called "To All The Boys I've Loved Before" while we made and ate our dinner.

8 am to 1 pm: I watched some Facebook videos with my friend during lunch.

1pm to 7pm: Shared feature article on Krispy Kreme from Dublin Live Facebook with Uncle on WhatsApp

1pm to 7pm: On the way home, I listened to The Intercept Podcast which detailed issues relating to the Yemen war. I sent the link to it to a friend and downloaded the next episode.

The relationship between social groups and media is also informed by the architecture of some media. For a number of our participants, the public media such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube were no longer seen as 'safe' to participate in, since they felt that there were too many negative comments, angry sharing, and judgmental people. While they would still look at content on these places, they reserve any comments for **private spaces**, and groups formed on WhatsApp and other messengers:

: I do share stuff on WhatsApp. I've a few groups, like that is a good point because I have a group I share a lot of news, it's with old school friends. We say stuff that we would never, ever, obviously, not say anywhere else, not even in the comment section. Like you feel like you would be judged or profiled as x, y, or z. and you just want to talk and let it out. And see what people think.

Because I lived in Belfast for 18 years. I talk with people in Belfast on WhatsApp about things that are happening in Northern Ireland about the Assembly and stuff that I just would never get involved in online. I talk about things that might be private, like politics in the North of Ireland. Not because of my opinion, but because it is a touchy subject. As much as I would have talked about the second referendum, it would be with people privately or private messages. Stuff I would never discuss on social.

[...]

I really want to talk about gamergate on Twitter and on Facebook. I really wanted to talk about it. But I didn't. Because I just linked to an academic article, gave no opinions and I got trolled. Because people are tracking those phrases. There are things that I want to talk about publicly and I won't because I know that there's some bot ready to send people the call to troll you.

[Focus group, Nov 7, 2018]

This self-censorship is an important element of the sociality of media consumption. On the one hand, it shows the difficulties and challenges of the present form of the digital public sphere. On the other hand, it shows that people still feel the need to process and discuss information that has a public and political relevance, but they want to do so in more intimate social circles, where they feel they will not be judged or attacked. This media space which is more **intimately social** underlies the shift towards **peer-to-peer media**. It is therefore **not a retreat from the social-public world, but a return to more containable forms of socialising** with specific others.

While belongingness in social groups and communities is an important factor in how media are consumed, people are also members of the broader society, existing locally, nationally and internationally. This is what we call here **'being in the world'**, and we found that this also feeds into media consumption. At this level, **media users are oriented towards the broader society** even if, at times, they shift to a more intimate social circle when they are looking to express their own views and opinions, as we saw above. Looking, however, at their practices it is clear that they are interested and attuned to this 'being in the world', and are, for the most part, keen observers of the goings on. In the Public Connection study, Couldry et al questioned if people are connected to the world. In our study we find that they are, but often

in ways that are unobservable. This extract from a focus group below illustrates this kind of social consumption of media:

[I]t wasn't Charlottesville but there was another like, police brutality incident following the shooting of, I think, an 11-year-old boy or something in somewhere on the East Coast of the States and it was videos that made it seem real and I started caring about the issue and then I started reading about it more, and like, getting into it. For me it sparks a lot of interest in a story. And I guess, that means, I'd be like, not like a baby, but I'm like a few years younger than everybody else here, and like I would've been more growing up with that as **I became aware of like 'The World' at large.**

[Focus group, Oct. 17, 2018]

There is a **whole sub-genre of news that is 'social media 'reactions to news'**. You don't see it a lot of things like culture, celebrity, sport, but you see it for things like in the wake of things, or the referendum, presidential election and referendums. Also, what Twitter thought. And if it is something that I am happy about I eat that stuff up with a spoon. When Ireland beat Italy in Euro 2016 and I was like constantly searching for the things of like reaction to other people. Absolutely loving it.

[Focus group, Nov. 7, 2018]

The orientation is on the one hand towards the actual story or event, for example police brutality or a football match, and on the other towards learning how society is reacting to it. But knowing about what is going on through the media is something that is vital for everyday life, because it allows people to be **fully participant**:

[B]ecause I work with the public obviously so therefore I'm talking all the time. So, therefore I find it important for me to know exactly what's going on every day. Like topics that are happening every day. What's going on because I would have conversations with clients about maybe a topic that comes up. You know, I would look more in-depth into it. You need to know what's going on and then I would make it a social thing with a client. Like I don't always just talk about what are you doing at the weekend as hairdressers get a bad reputation for.

[Focus group, Oct 13, 2018]

This kind of sociality requires not only knowledge about the world around in all its dimensions, political, social and cultural, but also a **compass by which to navigate** the world:

Participant 2: [W]hen I say news on RTE, the Six One or whatever, I don't watch it on a consistent basis. I like to tune in maybe on a Sunday evening or if it's been a mad news day, I'll be like, I want to see what the synopsis is, and what their political correspondent or whatever thinks of this or whatever, because I've seen a million things on Twitter and I've probably read five articles about Trump, America, Ireland, the UK, and somewhere in...and then I'll go, right what's the...

Participant 3: The party line [laugh].

Participant 2: What's the two-minute clip that kind of summarizes this in two minutes.

[Focus group, Oct 17, 2018]

While the orientation is towards society as a whole, **the form** that media consumption takes is a question of **preference and expedience**:

Participant 1: You know that video gets turned on the minute that you come to it and news videos have gotten so good now that they can tell you something in one minute. So, you know that in one minute you're going to know everything about at Tsunami that's just happened in Indonesia. Whereas I don't have time to read an article. So, the video will have my attention for one minute and then I'll keep going but I'll now know that news, so yeah, they [NB videos] are significant.

Participant 3: I'm the total opposite. I don't watch the videos at all. I will read the bios about them. It will read the blurbs, because I'm always in a public place or something I can't watch it. And if I don't have my earphones with me. Like I read my news on the go, typically with other people around, it seems ruder to be watching the video than it does, if I just kind of skim this article for a sec, do you know? [...]

[Focus group, Oct 17, 2018]

What is important to note in the above extracts is that the form that the contents take, video, text, or audio, is not the most important factor; rather it follows the orientation that people have towards the world around them. For our participants, the specific media form employed is a **matter of convenience, habit or expedience**. Occasionally, **'being in the world' emerges as an obligation or duty** that comes with being a member of society:

Participant 2: But like what you (P3) were saying about news being boring when your young. It is like 'eating your greens', I now see podcasts as **'streaming my greens'**. The stuff I don't want to read, that it's like homework, I listen to it while I'm like doing housework as podcast. Or bites of podcast. So, don't have to read.

Participant 1: I know what you mean, I feel like there are things and I don't want to hear about this, you know it will be depressing. But I feel **it's my duty** to because it's important to know whether its related to my work or where I feel this is important in the world and I should really know what's going on here.

[Focus Group Nov 7, 2018]

These three forms of sociality are not mutually exclusive but rather nested. Figure 6 represents graphically their relationship:

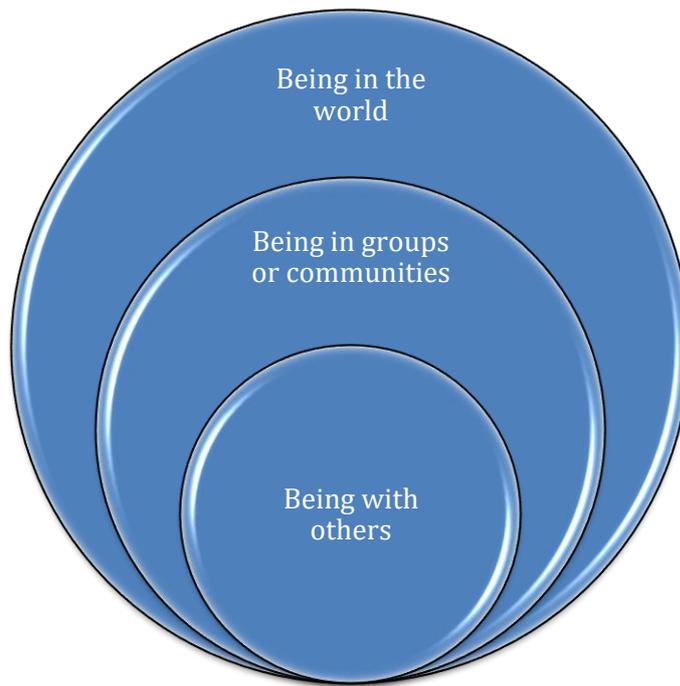


Figure 6: Media Socialities as Concentric Circles

'Being in the world' contains both the group-based and personal sociality. Media use oriented towards the world includes but is not limited to the personal and group sociality. These kinds of media consumption and use co-exist with one another and potentially feed into one another. The importance of this co-existence is that it shows that media consumption is at all times a social process operating at different levels or registers.

To summarise this section, media use and consumption is social in three distinct ways: firstly, in people using media to **communicate and be with others**; secondly, in people using media to **reaffirm social group and community membership**, and occasionally even to **create new groups**; and finally, in people using media to **orient towards the broader society** or world, both in terms of events occurring in the world or stories emerging, but also in terms of how (unknown) others are talking about these events.

Conclusions

This study was undertaken with the main purpose to identify shifts in audience media use and consumption, with a view to inform relevant policy in the audiovisual media sector. The study was also concerned with identifying the various ways in which thinking about audiences has shifted within policy discourses and specifically in the EU audiovisual policy directives. The rationale behind this study was informed by the hypothesis that there is a potential disconnect between the policy and the practices of audiences. This provided the impetus for a three-pronged analysis of the notion of the audience as found: in audiovisual media policy; in industry market research-based reports on audiences; and in academic theory and research. Accordingly, the first part of the present report focused on the constructions of the audience in these three areas. The second part of the report presented the empirical research that was conducted into audience practices in Ireland. This part outlined the research design and methodology and discussed the findings of the empirical study.

The first part began with discussion and analysis of the three main policy instruments at the European level, the Television Without Frontiers Directive (1989); the AudioVisual Media Services Directive (2010); and the revised AudioVisual Media Services Directive (2018). The analysis found that the first directive relied on an understanding of audiences as passive but was also underpinned by the idea of media serving the public interest, hence positioning the audiences as citizens. In contrast, the AVMSD of 2010 was characterised by a clear shift towards active audiences but understood as consumers within a commercial media context. Nevertheless, it still included a notion of media serving the public interest, evidenced in clauses covering the protection of minors and the establishment of media literacy initiatives. Finally, the revised AVMSD of 2018 signalled a partial return to a stronger notion of the public interest, found in extending protections for minors and other vulnerable groups, in establishing limits to advertising and quotas for European works.

If audiences were constructed in terms of the active-passive and citizen-consumer continua, reports undertaken for the industry and the regulators tend to understand audiences mainly through demographic criteria. Findings from the US (Nielsen), the UK (Ofcom) and Ireland (Comreg) show that there are differences attributed to the age of users and associated with the time spent in different platforms and media forms. Furthermore, they all showed a marked increase of subscriptions to video on demand services, and especially Netflix.

The academic approach to audiences is concerned with understanding audience activities outside of specific practices, and to identify the meaning that such activities have for people themselves. Theoretical approaches have focused on the cognitive, social and cultural aspects of media consumption and on the role of media technologies. The three approaches covered in this report offered insights into the motivations of using media (uses and gratifications); the ways in which users socialise and appropriate different media (domestication); and the socio-cultural and political meaning of media use (public connection). The theoretical perspective adopted in this report relies on a synthesis of these approaches, positing that audience activities are at once cognitive and social, whereby the social element refers to socialisation and life experiences, as well as social and community group memberships.

The empirical part of the study addressed the following research question: how do Irish audiences use the media, and especially video contents? Methodologically, the study developed a weekly media diary template and collected 164 diaries. These were complemented by seven focus groups discussing media use and consumption. The findings were discussed in terms of three issues: what kinds of media do users consume (media repertoires); why do they consume them (uses and gratifications); and how do they consume (socialisation and public connection).

The media repertoires of people varied, but the top three media for video consumption were common to all: YouTube, Netflix and Social Media. While TV was ever present, our participants considered this as background or consumed it during media events, for example a sports event. Other media for video consumption included bespoke apps, for example TED-X, and TV media players. The rhythms of media use follow the rhythms of everyday life and they are dictated mostly by practicalities. While for the most part media use follows rather than dictates everyday life, we identified two exceptions: media events and what we referred to as 'intriguing stories'. Media events refer to specific events covered by the media, such as for example a sports event or for some users a reality TV programme of a relatively limited duration. Intriguing stories refer to stories that captured people's imagination and pique their interest: these can range from breaking stories, such as the Brett Kavanaugh story which

occurred during one of our media diary periods, to true crime stories seen on Netflix. These stories are followed by audiences across media.

The **main motivations for consuming media** are the ones identified in previous literature – **personal and social identity, information, and entertainment/escapism**. In addition to these **we found three novel or at least less discussed uses that are worthy of further research: instrumental media use for work purposes; media use for education; and media use for aesthetic appreciation**. Secondly, education, although assumed and included in the literature mostly as a normative requirement for media providers, is encountered here as an important motivation for media use. Thirdly, aesthetic pleasure and appreciation was an implied dimension in entertainment but in the present study we encountered this emerging as an important dimension in news and information related genres, specifically documentaries.

The users in our study socialised or **adopted and adapted the media in terms of three socialities: being with others at the inter-personal level; as members of a social group or a community; and being in the world**. The first kind of sociality refers to media use with specific persons; this media use is primarily oriented towards interpersonal communication, through for example, sending texts and personal messages, checking notifications from friends, tagging others and so on. The second kind of sociality refers to media use within specific groups and communities, which can range from friends and family to ad hoc groups formed around shared interests. Media use at this level is oriented and adapted to the social group involved. The third kind of sociality refers to the media use that is necessary for audiences to function in the world as fully participant members of society. This is oriented towards the news and events that occur in the world at large, and users often turn to mainstream media and television for this. At the same time, gauging the reactions of others to the same events is an important element of this media sociality. This, in turn, is linked to public social media pages and specifically tweets or comments left by other – unknown – users.

We have seen in this study that video sharing platforms such as YouTube, and video on demand services such as Netflix are increasingly popular, audience use the media in ways that reflect their own lifestyle and practical needs dictated by the requirements and rhythms of their everyday lives. Media consumption follows rather than dictates audience activities. From this point of view, audiences are active, but their media activities are variable and adapted to the requirements of their lives, as they navigate personal, professional and social relationships as well as while functioning as publics, oriented towards the broader world. The section below identifies the implications of these findings for thinking about audiences and for developing relevant policy.

Implications

In terms of the novel or at least under-explored motivations for media use, although not directly or exclusively linked to video consumption, instrumental media use testifies to the increasingly blurred boundaries between work and leisure and to the potential requirement or expectation to use video contents for work-related purposes. Secondly, the emergence of education as an important motivation for media use points to the need to develop an approach that assesses the educational value of video contents. Educational videos can vary widely in terms of their quality, and it seems important to find ways to rank them. Thirdly, while aesthetic

appreciation has always been part of media consumption, we must be aware of the potential tendency to over-dramatise and sensationalise contents in order to cater to this gratification.

The main implication of the identification of the three media socialities is to offer a corrective for the tendency to consider audiences as individuals. Indeed, for the most part policy initiatives and industry reports consider audiences either as individuals or as members of specific demographic groups. However, we found here that audiences are always social, at a micro interpersonal level, a meso social group level, and a macro social world level and they adapt their media use accordingly. To address this, policy has to consider the social aspects of media consumption. In practice this means that policy may need to differentiate between media use for interpersonal purposes, within a group, and as a public. While the latter has important political implications, in that it is oriented to the democratic role of the media, consumption in a social group or interpersonally means that people may prioritise social and interpersonal norms, expectations and etiquette about what is acceptable, and group norms, such as conformity, group identification and so on. Identifying these and the potential barriers they set for audiences is equally as important as identifying age barriers to digital media use. Additionally, matters are further complicated because all three types of socialities occur across all kinds of media, presenting important challenges. The tendency to regulate media forms (e.g. video service providers or broadcasters) or to encourage platforms to self-regulate, overlooks the different registers at which these operate for various users.

Limitations

The main limitation of this research concerns its methodology and sample. The diary method constitutes an important means by which to get to the routine, everyday aspects of media use but it also has limitations: it is repetitive, and diarists found it difficult to record all and every media use, often opting to offer broad summaries. As such, the method has to be seen as a summary of the broad aspects of everyday media use rather than an accurate recording of every single media used, video watched, or comment posted. Similarly, the sample of the study was limited to mostly students, those in the 20-50 age category, and those living in or close to Dublin. The findings are suggestive but cannot generalise to the whole of Ireland.

Future Research

Future research into audience activities can explore two possible directions: firstly, the media socialities and the social aspects of media consumption require further exploration to identify the various norms emerging. While the present study identified some tendencies, for example to prioritise physical over virtual contact, to avoid spoilers, to share through tagging, the shift towards peer-to-peer to avoid being judged and to escape polarisation, there is a need of a systematic study possibly through ethnographic methods to delve further into these.

A second research direction can focus on the difference between different media genres and video consumption: specifically, we already noted some differences between news and entertainment contents, and the emergence of the documentary form as a hybrid genre that caters to more than one gratification. The role and evolution of such mixed or hybrid genres could be explored further as it has the potential to reach broader audiences compared to the classic news genre.

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Appendix 1: Media Diary Template

MEDIA DIARY			
Day: Please complete for 7 days			
Time:	Medium: Check all that apply	What: Check all that apply	Details: Write a brief description of your media related activities during time period. Please include details, such as: Where activity occurred, with whom, what kind of media content consumed, uploaded, shared, reacted to, why, etc. If news, what kind, where, and if you were using more than one device at a time etc.
8.00 am -1.00 pm	Phone <input type="checkbox"/> Tablet <input type="checkbox"/> Laptop <input type="checkbox"/> TV <input type="checkbox"/> Console <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) <input type="checkbox"/>	Facebook <input type="checkbox"/> Snapchat <input type="checkbox"/> Twitter <input type="checkbox"/> Youtube <input type="checkbox"/> Instagram <input type="checkbox"/> Whatsapp <input type="checkbox"/> Television <input type="checkbox"/> Radio <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper (print) <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) <input type="checkbox"/>	
1pm- 7.00pm	Phone <input type="checkbox"/> Tablet <input type="checkbox"/> Laptop <input type="checkbox"/> TV <input type="checkbox"/> Console <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) <input type="checkbox"/>	Facebook <input type="checkbox"/> Snapchat <input type="checkbox"/> Twitter <input type="checkbox"/> Youtube <input type="checkbox"/> Instagram <input type="checkbox"/> Whatsapp <input type="checkbox"/> Television <input type="checkbox"/> Radio <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper (print) <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) <input type="checkbox"/>	-
7pm – sleep	Phone <input type="checkbox"/> Tablet <input type="checkbox"/> Laptop <input type="checkbox"/> TV <input type="checkbox"/> Console <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) <input type="checkbox"/>	Facebook <input type="checkbox"/> Snapchat <input type="checkbox"/> Twitter <input type="checkbox"/> Youtube <input type="checkbox"/> Instagram <input type="checkbox"/> Whatsapp <input type="checkbox"/> Television <input type="checkbox"/> Radio <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper (print) <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) <input type="checkbox"/>	

Participant Number:

Are you: male/female (delete as appropriate)

Appendix 2: Focus Group Interview Guide

General Questions – reflecting on diaries

- What was the most striking thing about your media consumption that you discovered in keeping a diary?
- What would you describe as typical and untypical in terms of your practices?

- Which type of media contents would you say you consumed more: audio, video or text?

Types of contents consumed - news and current affairs compared to entertainment:

- When I say news, what comes to mind?
- Would you say you are interested in news on a day to day basis?
- Would you say you are interested in political topics or social or cultural issues? Feminism, racism, water, environment? How does online video help with this?
- To what extent do you consider documentaries a part of news and current affairs?
- What is your favourite programme? Where do you watch it? Who do you watch it with?

Technology:

- In general, do you use headphones with your smartphone or do you read the text on the videos? Is it different depending on where you are?
- What are you doing with your other devices while watching TV? Would you be using them, and if so how?
- When you are at home and there are a range of options, how do you decide which devices/media to use?
- Do you usually prefer to click on the full screen option?
- Does your subscription, the amount you spend or the amount of data you have, ever come into consideration when you go to watch a video?
- Do you use apps for audio or video? Which ones?

Preferences, uses and gratifications:

- Preferred device? Platform? Alone or in company? At home or elsewhere? And why...
- How do you usually come across videos or other contents?
 - [active search versus serendipity/found in feeds versus friends sharing/talking about these versus other]
- When is video and/or audio more useful than text?
- When is watching alone better than a group?
- What do you prefer to watch in the home?
- What do you prefer to watch with friends?
- And what do you prefer when you are killing time?
- What is the best and the worst thing about online videos?
- What is the best and the worst thing about podcasts?
- Which kinds of contents would you be inclined to share with others?
 - When?
 - Why?

Final Questions:

Do you want to add or comment upon anything we discussed so far?