

Serialized Participatory Culture: The Digital Transformation of Youth Audiences

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Abstract

Digital technologies are transforming audiences and media practices. In a context of serialization this paper wants to make the case for television series as much of the attention from the industry and the academy is drawn by music and cinema neglecting the effects on television viewing. Lawrence Lessig has proposed "remix" as one of the main outcomes of social and cultural practices enabled by new technologies that allow for easy production and sharing. Henry Jenkins talks of a "convergence culture" and many other authors refer a participatory turn. But this surge of creativity and participation poses new challenges to the industry and to the study of audiences. With the surge of transmediality and new platforms such as mobile phones and tablets, as well as enabling tools for massified DIY, the experience of television series consumption has been completely changed. This is particularly notable in youth audiences where television is still pervasive but networked media practices are gaining ground, namely a serialized participation culture characterized by immediacy, anticipation, control, emotional affordance and freedom. Based in a mixed methodology, composed of a quantitative online survey and a qualitative focus group approach, this paper will offer a case study of Portuguese College students' serialized participatory culture regarding television series.

Keywords: Audiences, Participation, Serialization, Youth Culture, television series

Introduction

Digital technologies are transforming audiences and media practices. With the arise of Web 2.0 and its social platforms the way internet users communicate, search for information and express themselves is changing. The new media practices resulting from the possibilities offered by the technological development are characterized by participation, creativity and sharing. Lawrence Lessig has proposed "remix" as one of the main outcomes of social and cultural practices enabled by new technologies that allow for easy production and sharing. Remix is the creative mixing of cultural elements, a collage, a blending, a hybridization of genres, and a process of creative destruction. Henry Jenkins talks of a "convergence culture" and many other authors refer a participatory turn. But this surge of creativity and participation poses new challenges to the industry and to the study of audiences.

The opportunity of having an active participatory role is being taken mainly by younger internet users, who due to their technological skills are labeled as digital natives, the net generation, or the millenials. Young

people are part of a participatory culture where they develop their identities as media creators through the interaction with peers and audience that may be anywhere in the world (Jenkins 1992; Jenkins, 2006; Jenkins *et al.*, 2006; Lange and Ito, 2009). These new media practices emerge in a context of a “serialized consciousness” (Goggin, 2012) that induce subjects to prefer cultural products recur serially – television series and literary, videogames and movies sequels. In a recent research regarding the piracy culture of television series of Portuguese College Students, concluded that “the consumption of television series is pervasive amongst undergraduate students” and that the main triggers to perform unauthorized downloads of television series is to help friends and to promote the series they most enjoy through sharing with colleagues. Through the combination of two important leisure activities for young people in Portugal – television series watching and internet using, we may be witnessing the emergence of a new type of participatory culture, a serialized one.

Based in a mixed methodology, composed of the analysis of data collected through quantitative online survey and a qualitative focus group approach, this paper will then offer a case study of Portuguese College students’ serialized participatory culture regarding television series.

1. Young Digital Natives and New Media Practices

In the beginning of the new millennium and with the emergence of Web 2.0 the difference between internet use by the younger and older members of population became evident. Facing this difference expressions as digital natives and digital immigrants (Prensky, 2001; Helsper & Eynon, 2010) gained meaning and became common to set the difference. In order to understand what defines a digital native and a digital immigrant we must be conscious that there are two approaches to this categorization – the original proposed by Marc Prensky (2001), and the expansion of this understanding presented by Ellen Johanna Helsper and Rebecca Eynon (2010). While in the original proposal the categories are set having as main factor age, in the second one the distinctive characteristics of digital natives is not their age but they are all “who comes from a media-rich household, who uses the Internet as a first port of call for information, multi-tasks using ICTs and uses the Internet to carry out a range of activities particularly those with a focus on learning.” (Helsper & Eynon, 2010: 515). Prensky’s original definition considered that digital natives were born after 1980, nevertheless in recent literature this category changed and researchers refer the existence of two generations of digital natives: those born between the beginning of 1980’s and 1990, and those born after 1990. These two generations have different internet uses; the later is the generation that is growing up with Web 2.0 and social media platforms. In order to set a distinction

between both categories, we will use the term young digital natives in order to make clear that our proposal is focused in the uses and practices of second generation digital natives.

Among the main characteristics of a digital native are multitasking, access to a large number of digital technologies, trust in their own technological skills, the preference in using internet whenever they want to search information, and educational and leisure use of internet (Taborda *et al.*, 2010a). Digital natives are then:

...used to receiving information really fast. They like to parallel process and multi-task. They prefer their graphics before their text rather than the opposite. They prefer random access (like hypertext). They function best when networked. They thrive on instant gratification and frequent rewards. They prefer games to 'serious' work. (Prensky, 2001: 1)

Social media platforms offer users a space where it is possible and easy to view, create and share content. Young people are taking this opportunity seriously and besides new media practices they are also developing a new media ecology: "The growing availability of digital media-production tools, combined with sites where young people can post and discuss media works, has created a new media ecology that supports everyday media creation and sharing for kids engaged in creative production" (Lange & Ito, 2009: 244). This new media ecology is changing the role youngsters have, they are not just consumers anymore, they are becoming more and more media producers integrated in a participatory culture. These participation practices are contributing to a change regarding the way young people communicate, socialize and express themselves leading to a 'hypersocial social exchange' among youth:

This "hypersocial" social exchange is more generally a process through which people use specific media as tokens of identity, taste, and style to understand and display who they are in relation to their peers. While hanging out with their friends, youth develop and discuss their taste in music, their knowledge of television and movies, and their expertise in gaming, practices that become part and parcel of sociability in youth culture. (Horst *et al.*, 2009: 40)

This 'hypersocial social exchange' among young people leads them to develop cultures of networking with their peers (Cardoso, forthcoming). These new types of belonging networks are not exclusively organized around youth audiences, but as youngsters are among the most innovative and creative users of digital technologies we consider important to understand how these digital cultures are being developed within this population segment, once: "From Lime Wire to BitTorrent, the adoption of file-sharing platforms not only alters how the young and the digital consume media content; it also reflects a greater interest on their part to manage, share, and engage content" (Watkins, 2009: 159).

Cultures of networking result from the convergence and participatory culture possible through the new forms of mediation and content production of Web 2.0. These cultures of networking are cultures of

openness, piracy, clouds and belonging (Cardoso, forthcoming), and all of them contribute to a new perspective regarding media production and consumption. Openness is related with the fact that with the massification of 24/7 media and the ubiquity regarding how we access information and entertainment contents: "News are expected to be always available, reachable from every device we would be using, updated whenever we use it, free of cost and reflecting opens of speech" (Cardoso, forthcoming). Piracy cultures, on the other hand, are those established outside the institutionalized set of rules defined by traditional media companies that delineate how, when and in which circumstances we can access media contents. Piracy cultures are related with the way we distribute and consume media and cultural contents. The third type of cultures of networking is cloud cultures; this is related with the way we store and access data: "we started from storing our data possessions in local computer disks [...] but we have increasingly changed to having personal data in data clouds far away from our physical locations" (Cardoso, forthcoming). We no longer need to be close to our digital possessions but to be able to reach them anywhere and from almost every device. The sense of belonging is intrinsic to our daily lives as members of communities; in a highly mediated context as the one emerging this need to be part of a group is evolving and communities are no longer set only within physical proximity, but also in mediated contexts made available through social media platforms:

The cultures of belonging are expressed in many of the different social appropriation of mediation that occur in our daily life, ranging from the participation in social networks sites, in online communities, political or civic participation, User Generated Content and its sharing among other participants in content producing networks, the way in which audiences that share a same approach to Fandom interact, File-sharing communities and networks. (Cardoso, forthcoming)

It is through the intersection of all these new cultures and new practices that young people organize themselves as digital natives. These new possibilities are changing the relationship established not only with information and entertainment contents, but also with friends and peers. Having this new digital context as background, how can we relate these new practices with more traditional ones as serialization of cultural products? Is it possible to talk about a serialized participation culture among the Youth? In the next section we will present a proposal to understand the relationship established between these new media practices and the traditional culture of serialization, aiming to provide a theoretical framework to the case study of Portuguese college students and their serialized participatory culture: "Young people were drawn to online platforms that facilitate opportunities to develop extremely strong, persistent, and real-time ties to their peers while also interacting with a wide range of cultural content such as pictures, music, and video" (Watkins, 2009: 6).

The average TV enthusiast is looking for content that is relevant and important to them, and wants to be

able to do that on their own schedule. The era of the broadcast network's , of "must see TV" is nearing its end, as BitTorrent is transforming the Internet into the world's largest TiVo (Boudreau, Cox, & Hanwell, 2006: 13).

Sharing has become part of the daily routines of young people around the world. In the context of a "network society" (Castells, 2002), we witness the rise of "networked publics" (Varnelis, 2008):

The term *networked publics* references a linked set of social, cultural, and technological developments that have accompanied the growing engagement with digitally networked media. The Internet has not completely changed the media's role in society: mass media, or one-to-many communications, continue to cater to a wide arena of cultural life. What has changed are the ways in which people are networked and mobilized with and through media. The term *networked publics* is an alternative to terms such as *audience* or *consumer*. Rather than assume that everyday media engagement is passive or consumptive, the term *publics* foregrounds a more engaged stance. Networked publics takes this further; now publics are communicating more and more through complex networks that are bottom-up, top-down, as well as side-to-side. Publics can be reactors, (re)makers and (re)distributors, engaging in shared culture and knowledge through discourse and social exchange as well as through acts of media reception. With the growth of multimedia on the Internet, publics can traffic in both professional and personal media, in new forms of many-to-many communication that are often routed around commercial media distribution. Personal media and communications technologies such as telephony, e-mail, text messaging, and everyday photography and journaling are colliding with commercial and mass media such as television, film, and commercial music (Varnelis, 2008: 3).

This reality is accompanied by complex market dynamics based on the increase in supply and on a more and more demanding public. Technologies become indispensable tools in establishing a "plastic" consumption style based, above all, on multitasking. In searching for information and entertainment, individuals access the content that most draws their attention, covering all platforms. The television series are no exception, and we witness an increased supply and a migration of content from platform to platform. This can be defined as *transmediality*, an emerging reality boosted by new demands from the public, leading even to a broader range of genres and formats and to new ideas, themes, stories and characters (Jenkins, 2008; Lopes, 2009). The concept is not new but has gained momentum with the advent of digital technologies. Scolari (2009) summarizes other concepts that have been proposed, for example, *cross media*, *multiple platforms*, *hybrid media*, *intertextual commodity*, *multimodality*, *overflow*, as indicative of mediated relationships and interactivity (Lopes, 2009).

Arising from digital technologies and the globalization of markets, the same narratives are presented in more than one platform, allowing an increase in speed and quantity of content flow, as well as expansion and diversification of “viewers” (Gillan, 2011). This reality has its basis in economic issues, given that media markets are constantly expanding, and its elements are large groups. This mainstreaming of devices allows them to operate, both for large audiences and niches, and also enables an easier monetization of content.

The act of storytelling, which implies a link between action and discourse, finds its meaning in the relationship with the consumer, whose role is expanded and not limited to the last place in the chain. In this era of 360° media (Domingos, 2008), which prevail within the powers of *melting* (Bauman, 2001: 13), the classic forms of narrative are embellished, the content such as fiction, remain in transit (of *feuilleton* to radio, radio to television, books to television, etc.) and the screens are multiplied (Introna & Ilharco, 2004, 2006; Lopes, 2009). In addition, the receivers are diversifying, and gain new skills, to pursue their favorite content, even on platforms that do not normally arouse much attention to them.

2. Serialized Participation Culture

Serialization is not a new phenomenon but we are witnessing a growth of popular culture serialized forms. The serialized format of cultural contents is welcome by audiences and despite the rise of alternative new media formats, serialization is being applied also to them. From the traditional TV series, to sequels of fiction books, movies and videogames, youth is growing in a more and more serialized cultural context. Due to the accessibility of different media platforms serialization is also being characterized by its transmediality – we have access of contents regarding the same characters and fictional stories in multiple formats, for instance, Harry Potter is not only a literary phenomenon, but also a cinematic and videogame one. Besides the traditional sequels, serialization is more and more cross-media.

Serialization has its roots in ‘taylorisation of leisure’ (Goggin, 2010) and from the birth of popular culture. The taylorisation of leisure was subsequent to the taylorisation of industry and work; workers had defined leisure time and cultural products were created to match those time slots and were sold in units to be affordable. The first serialized cultural products were magazines and fiction literary works (Goggin, 2010; Hoggart, 2009): “Through serialisation readers are groomed to expect a cliff hanger and eagerly buy the next instalment” (Goggin, 2010). Taylorisation of leisure led to Pop Culture and the development of different serialized products. With the massification of television, first in United States and later in Europe, TV contents follow the serialized model in order to keep audiences focused. According to Goggin (2012) the main mechanisms of serialization are four and they are becoming transversal to different media contents.

These mechanisms are characterized by multiple-episode narrative arcs, seasonal episodes, large cast of characters that audiences enjoy following, and continual cliff-hangers to keep viewers engaged (Goggin, 2012). Therefore, theoretically, the "series" is defined by presenting a single story with a sequence or a core of characters and autonomous stories.

The most common media practices of youngsters are concerned with leisure and entertainment activities and despite being broadcasted by a 'traditional medium' TV series play a very important role among young population. Despite its thematic series are organized around identifiable narratives, which together with the mechanisms of serialization keep audiences alert and connected with action and characters. However in an era where media content is always available through different channels, audiences are no longer satisfied by waiting a week for the next episode, as it used to happen before. Audiences are much more active and demanding; as happens with other types of contents, they want to participate, control and share, because "we have evolved from a culture of instant gratification to one of constant gratification. Fast entertainment encourages an insatiable desire to be entertained no matter where we are or what we are doing" (Watkins, 2009: 160).

The 'traditional' culture of serialization is being remixed into a serialized participation culture. The central element of this remix process is web 2.0 social media tools; and the main actors the younger members of population. Creative and innovative uses of new technologies are mostly performed by the youth (Zickuhr, 2010; Tabora *et al.*, 2010a; Tabora *et al.*, 2010b), who is the main actor of this process. Lawrence Lessig conceptualized remix as "the mix [that] provides new creative work" (Lessig, 2009: 69), and young digital natives are not only members of the convergence, participatory and networked cultures, but members of a serialized participation culture, expanding the mechanisms of serialization they are subject to in their TV media practices to all their media activities. Internet and its 'ready to use' communication and socialization tools allow users to have a closer relationship with the fictional contents they prefer:

Visiting sites and participating in blogs and forums are common activities in parallel with the viewing of the series. In this sense, it appears that the consumption of content is not close in itself; there is willingness to learn/know more about new seasons, and about the actors and actresses lives.

Due to the different platforms they can establish cultures of openness, piracy, clouds and belonging with peers but focusing on their favorite TV series. Social networking sites, blogs, forums and peer-to-peer tools gain a new meaning in the context of a serialized participatory culture: "New here, is how the internet speeds, proliferates and assists communication among fans and between fans and the show's producers, thereby intensifying and deepening the mechanisms of serialization through which spectators become sutured." (Goggin, 2012).

In order to understand how this serialized participatory culture is being developed, we will present a case study of Portuguese college students and the relationship they establish both with television series and new media practices.

3. Television Fiction and Consumption Patterns in Portugal

The Portuguese television sector is composed by four free to air channels. Two of them belong to the public service broadcaster RTP (*Rádio e Televisão de Portugal*): RTP1, that appeared in 1957 and has a generalist programming and RTP2 that began the emissions in 1968 and is dedicated to niche targeted audiences. SIC (*Sociedade Independente de Comunicação*) and TVI (*Televisão Independente*) are private and started to broadcast in 1992 and 1993. Their appearance permitted an evolution from monopoly to market and established a system of competition based on programming strategies, mainly around fiction contents.

The television fiction has always presented itself as a touchstone in the Portuguese television channel's grids. If, in the 50s and 60s, theatrical plays were further explored, from the 70s onward, the "telenovela" takes its first steps and consolidate as the format in more balanced supply/demand ratio. Since 1977, with the Brazilian *Gabriela*, is installed a new television ecology, responsible, firstly, by developing new and different routines of consumption, and, secondly, is responsible for fostering the production of national histories.

Thus, and unlike other national realities, primetime television has always been disputed by the presence of Portuguese (Portugal/Brazil) and was never dominated by English. Although free to air channels grids integrate North-American series and movies, these always occupied a limited and observable area – during the week on late night (00:00 to 07:00 am) and on weekends during afternoon (13:00 to 20:00 pm).

According to the study *Television in the Network Society* (Obercom, 2011)¹, the consumption of national television fiction ('telenovelas') is higher among the elder ones (more than 65 years). In relation to imported series, the individuals between 15 to 24 years old are the principle consumers, with a higher proportion among women (29.3% and 52.3%). This reality reinforce our survey and our conclusions: Portuguese youngsters, following international trends, prefer to consume North-American series.

Bearing this in mind, the Portuguese television stations acquired the new series on international markets. But, although the number of titles was increased, the transmission slots did not increase. It is also interesting to notice that the channels, more than offer North-American series, tried to conquer audiences by raising the domestic production of the same format.

¹ 1255 interviews with individuals with more than 15 years.

Table 1: Free to air offer of North-American series (2008, 2009 and 2010)

Source: Markttest-Audimetria/MediaMonitor

	2008	2009	2010	Total
RTP1	7	17	15	39
RTP2	15	18	22	55
SIC	11	14	12	37
TVI	7	16	13	36
Total	40	65	62	167

Table 2. Free to air offer of Portuguese series (2008, 2009, 2010)

Source: Markttest-Audimetria/MediaMonitor

	2008	2009	2010	Total
RTP1	2	3	7	14
RTP2	-	-	-	-
SIC	-	1	2	3
TVI	6	3	4	13
Total	8	8	12	30

In the sum of three years (Table 1), the public service station offers the largest number of foreign titles through its two antennas, RTP1 (39), RTP 2 (55), followed by commercial channels, SIC (37) and TVI (36). Although we can observe a rising between 2008 and 2009, 2010 reveal a disinvestment in this kind of formats and genres.

In Table 2 it is possible to distinguish a rising in national fiction series. This diversification of formats was also followed by the adaptation of North-American theme trends, such as vampires and policy/thriller.

In our opinion, these figures are consistent with the strategies outlined above because:

- a) RTP2, niche channel, doesn't broadcast national fiction contents and appears as the main medium in the presentation of North Americans and Europeans cult series and films;
- b) RTP1 in order to meet public service ideals, does not produce the *telenovela* format, but only a few series spoken in Portuguese, which allows a slight superiority in the presentation of foreign series;
- c) Once that both channels belong to the same group, the titles are transmitted and retransmitted by the two antennas;

d) The two commercial channels have the objective to struggle for the conquest of Portuguese fiction market, especially in *telenovela* segment.

As written above North-American series is not a priority for Portuguese free to air channels. In this sense, pay TV and internet sites became the main resources for the audiences. This reality entails on the recent developments of cable networks and technology platforms. Fruit of the existence of specialized channels in the "series" segment with a plasticity transmission in terms of time and frequency, the range of viewers interested and able to do so, molds itself to the new way of watching TV. Simultaneously, the access and sharing technology allows consumers not to be subject to emission standards and pre-set and increases anxiety to a continued exposure.

The cable networks market has evolved over the years, since 1998/1999, the years of its implementation in Portugal. Data from *Marktest* (August 2004) shows that, between 1999 and 2004, the penetration rate for cable TV in Portugal has risen from 19% to 43%, amounting to 1,504,126 households. In 2010, *ANACOM* (*National Communications Authority*) revealed statistical information about the subscription television service in the fourth quarter of 2010, showing an increase of 0.5% of the sum of cabled households in the previous quarter and more than 1.7% over the same period a year earlier, totaling 4,000,006 homes. Through appreciation of share of March 26, 2011 (*Marktest Audimetria/MediaMonitor*), RTP1 obtained 25.2%, RTP2 5.1%, SIC 21.2%, TVI 24.3% and 24.2% for subscription television, standing at third place in the rankings.

The structure of the audience of pay channels is similar to the aerial channels, although with some specifics. Also according to *Marktest-Audimetria/MediaMonitor*, while the peak of prime time audience of general channels is reached between 20:00 and 22:30, on cable television is later, between 22:30 and 23:00. In addition, although the information channels – RTP N, SIC Notícias and TVI24, all belonging to the open channels – record the highest number of contacts, are the television series and movies channels that gets the more expressive ratings, followed by information and children's programming.

Currently in Portugal are offered nine specialized channels in series and films (AXN, MOV, Sony TV, FOX, FOX Life, FOX Crime, FOX Next, FX and Hollywood) and three channels of movies via an additional subscription (TV Cine1, TV Cine2 TV Cine3). Continuously (24 hours), these channels emit the most famous international titles subtitled in Portuguese, in stereo and high definition (HD). All channels have a website which provides video, chats, programming and information on special transmissions. Its target is comprehensive, although it realizes that there is a connection with a younger audience. AXN, in its official site, assume that it is "a channel with personality" and that is for a "young adult audience, addicted to cinema, action and adventure with the greatest variety and quality in their programming: cinema, current

daily series of national and international success and innovative programs that make the AXN channel is positioned as number one in satellite, cable or ADSL².

Based on these findings, it seemed pertinent to better understand the behaviors of university students in relation to the international television series, including consumption patterns, types of access and sharing and piracy practices.

4. Case Study of Portuguese Undergraduate Students

The students that are now attending University have already been named “download generation” (Cameron, 2005; Gomes, 2008; Lattanzio & Marcello, 2010) because they are driven by speed, diversity, free and ease of share:

New perspectives triggered by the web 2.0 have allowed the birth and growth of a download generation: members of this generation are used to look for information in the whole web, accepting many kinds of contents created in different languages that must be immediately downloadable (Lattanzio & Marcello, 2010: 82)

The new digital tools such as peer-to-peer sites and YouTube allow them not having to wait for a movie or a television series to be made available in Portugal, they also enable a “hypersocial viewing” (Ito *et al.*, 2009):

We see this hypersocial mode of video viewing in a more immediate and socially interactive way when youth view videos together offline. Video downloads and sites such as YouTube mean that youth can view media at times and in locations that are convenient and social, provided they have access to high-speed Internet (Ito *et al.*, 2009: 67).

According to the latest report (Cardoso, Espanha, & Taborda, 2010) on the state of the Internet in Portugal only one fifth of Internet users does not use sharing content sites such as YouTube. And amongst the ones that do use them television series rank in the seventh place with music leading the preferences. As for the download of contents the majority of Portuguese Internet users stated not performing unauthorized downloads (58.9%). In the ranking for unauthorized downloads, television series rank fourth place (8.9%), after music (33.6%), movies (22.4%), and software (13.8%). But in these statistics age plays a huge role with young people between the age of 15 and 24 being the ones that most perform unauthorized downloads in all types of contents, except for books and magazines. According to the same survey the reasons for the unauthorized downloads are mainly economic either because they can access it for free (70.9%) or because they consider the legal option to be too expensive (25.7%). They also claim that they do it because they do not take commercial benefit out of it (19.1%), to have immediate access to the

² <http://www.axn.pt/quem-somos>, 27th March 2011.

content (17.4%), to be able to try it before buying it (14.3%) or because the content is not yet available in Portugal (11.3%).

Against this background we set out to explore the specific ecology of undergraduate students, a sub-set of youth culture. We share the understanding that media practices “are embedded in a broader social and cultural ecology” (Ito *et al.*, 2009: 4) and thus we have to understand media practices against that social and cultural background.

4.1. Method

The case study used a mixed methodology, combining an online survey and qualitative analysis through focus-groups. We began by conducting an online survey of undergraduate students from the Human Sciences and Law Schools of the Catholic University of Portugal. Each student received an e-mail with a link to the online questionnaire that could be accessed through an unique authentication code. Once the questionnaire was completed the system does not allow for a second Access thus avoiding duplicating participants. The survey is totally anonymous because no identification of the students is kept on record. The survey was conducted between the 4th and the 11th of March 2011. Participation was voluntary.

The universe of the students is composed of 1.224 undergraduate students enrolled in the Human Sciences³ and Law Schools⁴ at the Lisbon campus of the Catholic University of Portugal. We were able to obtain 215 valid questionnaires which amounts to a response rate of 18%.

The survey was structured around three sections. The first was centered on consumption (which type of series, frequency, and access); the second section was aimed at recording habits and the third focused on piracy practices and intrinsic motivations.

As for the characterization of this sample, 74% are female students and 68.5% are between the ages of 18 and 23, with the youngest being 17 and the oldest 55. These results are consistent with the fact that these Schools are strongly feminized and with the average age of undergraduate students in Portugal. The students were also questioned about their monthly income and 64.6% stated that the average monthly income was above €1.750 which places these students above the average monthly income of the Portuguese population which according to the National Statistical Institute was of €1.845 in 2009. As for the distribution amongst Schools, 60.5% of the students are enrolled at the Human Sciences Faculty and 39.5% at the Law School.

The qualitative data was drawn from a focus group that aimed at exploring the range of ideas that Portuguese college students had about television series consumption and piracy practices. The purpose was to uncover factors that might influence their behavior or motivations. The focus group was conducted with

³http://www.fch.lisboa.ucp.pt/site/custom/template/ucptpl_fachome.asp?sspageID=879&lang=1.

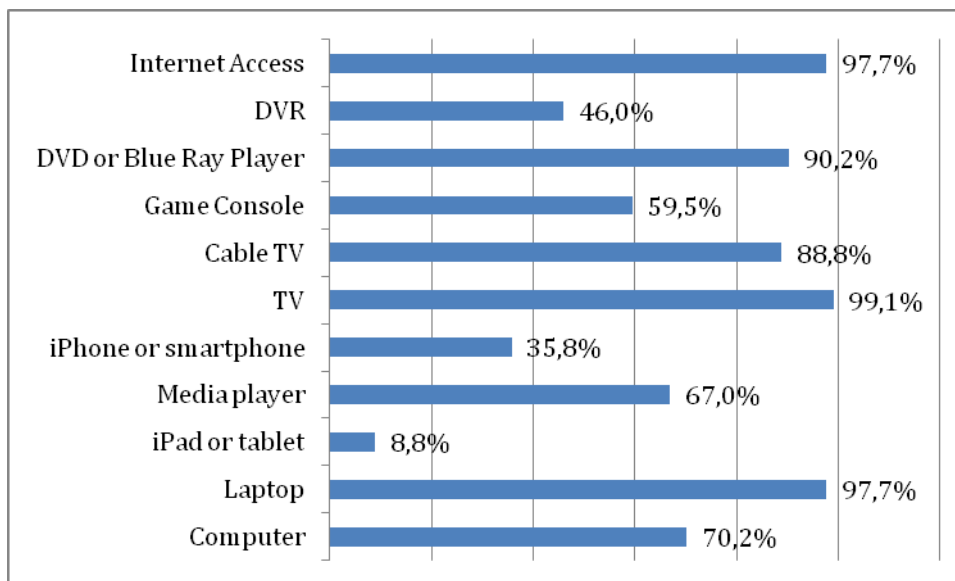
⁴<http://www.fd.lisboa.ucp.pt/site/custom/template/ucptplfachome.asp?SSPAGEID=3141&lang=2>.

six female participants and two male participants from the Catholic University of Lisbon, ranging in age from 18 to 23 years old.

4.2. The Ecology of Portuguese Undergraduate Students

When asked about the ownership of technological devices we can easily perceive that their world is strongly populated by media devices (Figure 1). Television was the medium most frequently mentioned (99.1%), followed by the laptop (97.7%)⁵. The iPad and other tablets had a more residual value (8.8%), probably due to their recent introduction in the market. Also noteworthy is the ownership of DVD/Blue Ray (90.2%), media players (67.7%) and of DVD recorder/box with hard drive (46.0%), which emphasizes the availability of devices that allow for the consumption of recorded content. The penetration of cable television among respondents is 88.8%, and the rate of Internet access even exceeds these values with 97.7%.

Figure 1. Ownership or Access to Technological Devices



Piracy practices become convenient when people have access to high speed Internet, otherwise the downloading or online viewing becomes cumbersome. In our sample 66.7% of those who knew their

⁵ According to the EUKids online recent report, Portugal leads the European rank in personal laptop ownership with 65% of kids owning one (<http://www2.fcsh.unl.pt/eukidsonline/>).

Internet speed had access at more than 8Mbps that allows for fast sharing and downloading⁶. This constitutes a favorable factor in the ecology for piracy practices.

The consumption of television series is pervasive amongst undergraduate students with 86% stating that they are regular viewers of television series. This consumption is an expression of an individual taste and thus 98.4% state that they watch series at home and 85.4% do it by themselves and not as part of a family ritual or activity, not even with friends. In this sequence, students were asked to name their three favorite titles. Of the 99 referrals (a mixture of formats and titles), there are five national contents (with a nominal frequency response) and the remaining 94 are almost entirely of U.S. origin.

Grey's Anatomy, *How I Met Your Mother*, *Gossip Girl*, *Desperate Housewives*, *Criminal Minds*, *Glee*, *House*, *90210*, *CSI* and *Brothers & Sisters* occupy the TOP 10 of preferences (Table 3), while 58.1% are named in the original language and 26.5% in Portuguese. This may be related to the incidence rate of Internet access, where content is made available in the original version. In this youth sub-set, consisting of university students, language is not a barrier as they are used to the spoken English. This also functions as incentive to piracy as the need for subtitles does not constitute a barrier to access content.

Table 3. Top Ten of Student's Preferences

Title	Preference
Grey's anatomy	31.4%
How I met your mother	23.8%
Gossip girl	20.0%
Desperate housewives	15.1%
Criminal minds	11.4%
Glee	11.4%
House	11.4%
90210	10.3%
CSI	10.3%
Brothers & sisters	5.9%
Modern family	5.9%

The genres that students most favor are love stories and crime drama. We think that this preference can be, probably, connected to the feminized sample and to the stereotype of the relation between women and

⁶ According to UMIC, the Portuguese Knowledge Society Agency, the penetration of Internet in Portugal reached 54% at the end of 2009. The penetration of wide band and mobile wide band grew dramatically since 2005. Portugal is the fourth country in the European rank for wide band over 10Mbps reaching 8% in 2009, three times more than the European average of 3% (http://www.umic.pt/images/stories/publicacoes2/A_SI_em_PT_doc_trabalho_Maio_2010.pdf).

fictional contents, which pay attention to the ability of this type of programs to create an emotional bond with female audiences (Balogh, 2002; Barker, 2000).

Furthermore, these titles are on air actually and have distinctive characteristics that can be related to younger viewers: a) casts composed mainly by younger people (*How I met your mother*, *Gossip girl*, *Glee*, *90210*); b) plots about love and family relations (*Grey's Anatomy*, *How I met your mother*, *Gossip girl*, *Glee*, *90210*, *House*, *Desperate Housewives*, *Brothers & Sisters*, *Modern Family*); c) stories related to crimes, thriller and police investigations were the first ones to be transmitted on free to air channels and captured the attention of viewers on a transversal way. In parallel, *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* and all the spinoff series, for instance, is the most successful television series in the world. On its 11th season, this series became a franchise and, nowadays, is broadcasted in more than 200 markets worldwide. In 2010, this content was honored, for the third time, with the Monte Carlo TV Festival's International Television Audience Award for drama series. This prize is attributed to the most-watched television series in the world. Data from a survey conducted by Nielsen-USA (in partnership with local audience measurement companies of 68 countries, including Portugal), *CSI* was seen by 73.8 million viewers worldwide.

In the present study, the youngsters consume the series primarily on Pay TV (39.3%), followed by personal computer (21.1%) and digital format (12.5%). Only 9.3% of the sample watches North-American series on free to air channels.

From the ten nominated titles, eight are broadcasted by Portuguese free to air channels (*Grey's Anatomy* and *Brothers and Sisters* by RTP2; *Desperate Housewives*, *Criminal Minds*, *CSI* and *Gossip Girl* by SIC and *House* and *Glee* by TVI). Two are presented by public service and six by the two commercial channels. Their slots of transmission are congruent with the pattern described above: late night on week days and in the afternoon weekends. Regarding to audiences, it is possible to observe a ranking between 1.9% and 6.9% rating (Markttest/Audimetria-MediaMonitor), which are marginal figures compared with Portuguese fiction contents produced and aired on prime time slot (Ferin *et al.*, 2011).

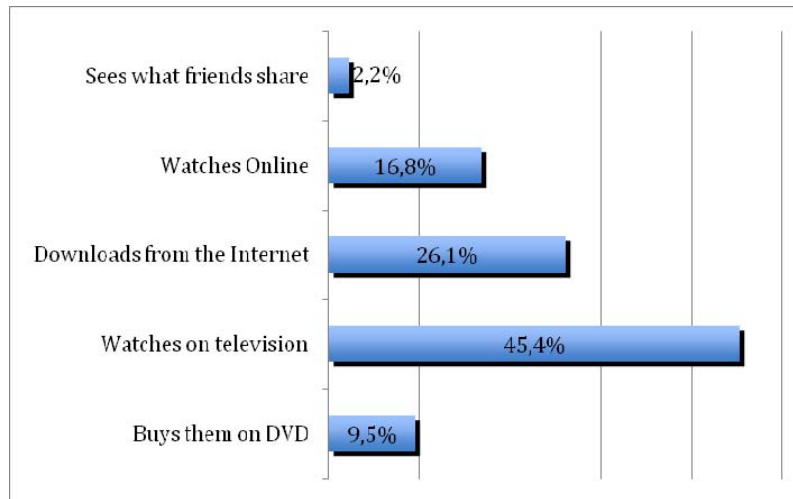
This reality doesn't lead us to conclude if the preferences of our sample are similar to the general consume (especially because we don't have access to pay TV audience measurement data to make a comparison), but we can state that free to air channels, due to programming of the North-American series, do not collect audience preferences (youngsters included) as a chosen mean to consume this kind of products.

4.3. Levels of engagement with piracy

Students show very different levels of engagement with piracy practices. When asked about their viewing practices, television is definitely losing its dominance (Figure 2). A high percentage of students still watch their favorite television series in television (45.4%) but this no longer constitutes the majority. The digital

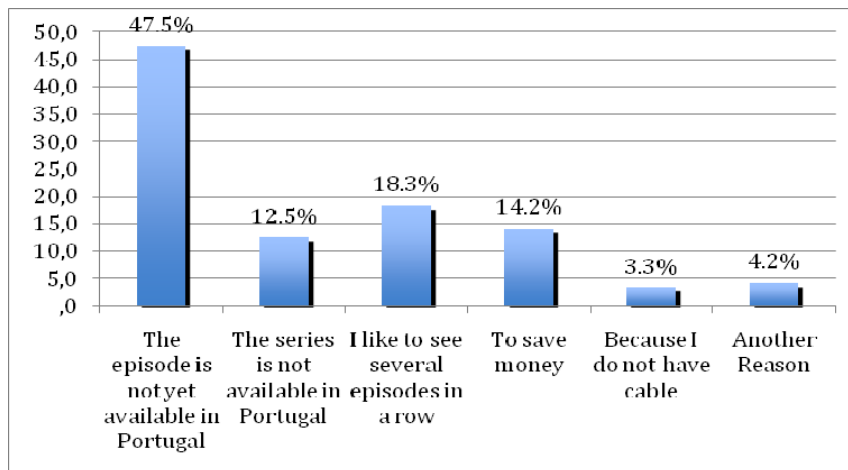
has conquered a foothold in their viewing practices with 26.1% stating that they download their favorite television series from the Internet and 16.8% watching them online.

Figure 2. Student's access to television series



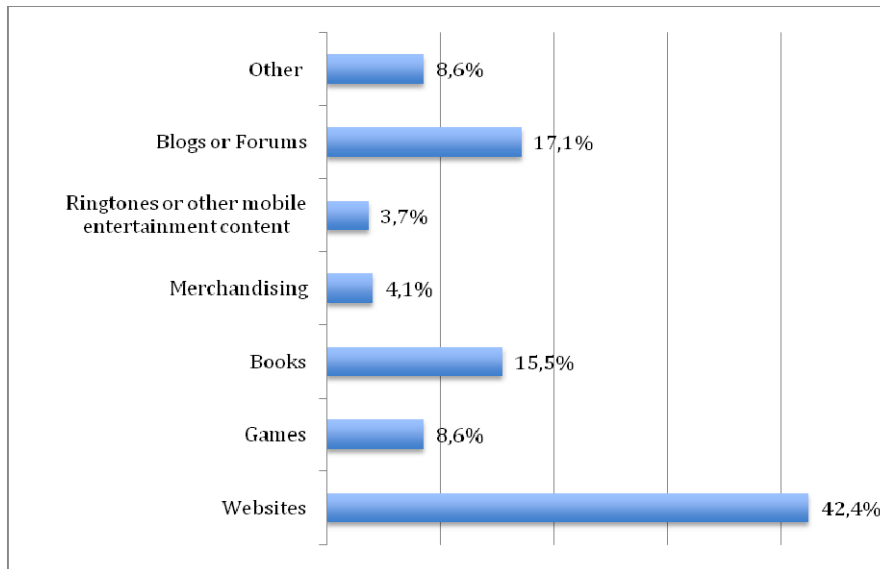
Not having access to an up-to-date episode of their favorite television series in is the main reason for students to engage in piracy practices (47.5%). This motivation is followed by wanting to watch several episodes in a row, saving money and finally not having access to the series in Portugal (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Motivation for engaging in piracy practices



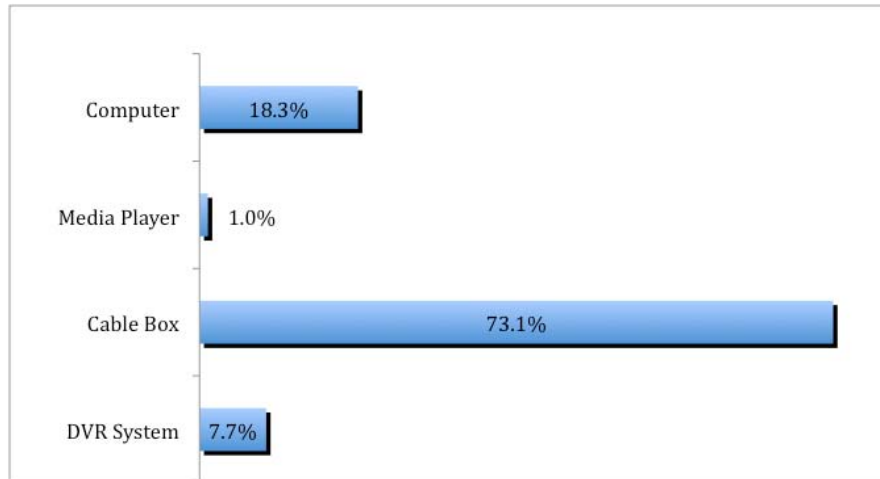
These students have access to online contents of the series such as sites (42.4%), and blogs or forums (17.1%) and thus want to keep close track of what is going on as it is released (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Transmediality practices



Students were also questioned about their recording habits and 46.5% stated that they usually record their favorite television series mainly through their cable service DVR system - 73.1%, of those that recorded, use this method (Figure 5). These recording practices do not indicate engagement with piracy. They are simply recording television series that are running on the cable service and thus the affordance of the DVR system pinpoints towards more of the search for flexibility. As stated before television series are an individual consumption amongst youth and thus are not part of family screen time. Recording enables them to watch the series on their own time. Convenience in the sense of being able to watch the show on their own time is in fact the main reason for recording (88.4%). The remaining said that they recorded it to review it later on.

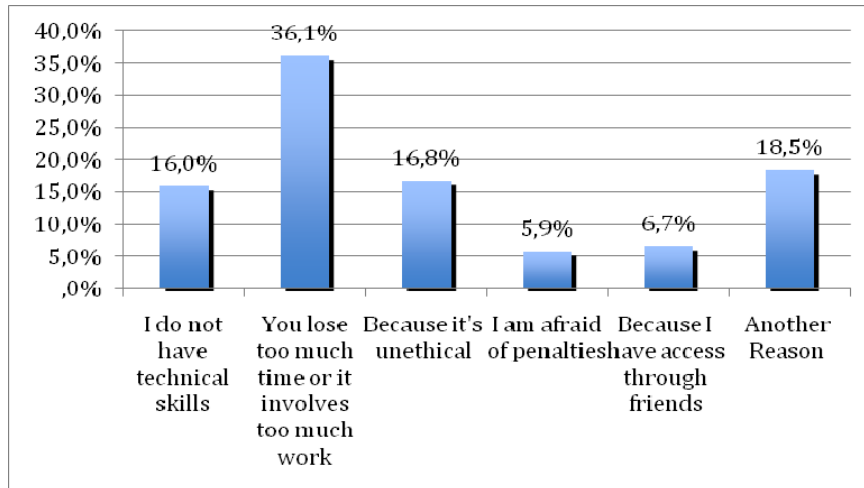
Figure 5. Recording devices used by Portuguese undergraduate students



As for downloading, 51.4% said they downloaded their favorite television series from the Internet. But of those that did not download series the main reason for not engaging in this practice was losing too much time or involving too much work. That was stated by 36.1% while being unethical came for second with 16.8%. Despite all the anti-piracy campaigns, fear of possible penalties comes last with 5.9% (Figure 6). Trying to fight piracy practices through the prosecution of users or the threat of it is counter nature to networked publics:

Audiences are technically savvy these days; they can and will find a way to get any television programming they desire. They don't want to pay for it, they don't want it artificially crippled with any digital rights management technologies – they just want to watch it Now. This is the way that half a century of television and a decade of the Web has conditioned them to behave. We can't really complain that audiences are simply doing as they've been told. It is pointless to try to get them to change their behavior, because, in essence, you're fighting against the nature of television programming itself, the behavioral narrative which grew out of our relationship to the technology. We all understand that this piracy is technically illegal, technically a violation of copyright; but we're in a hell of a bind if we're telling the audience to "sit down, shut up and do as you're told" when it comes to television viewing. The audience won't do as they're told: they'll do as they've been taught, and that is another story entirely (Pesce, 2005).

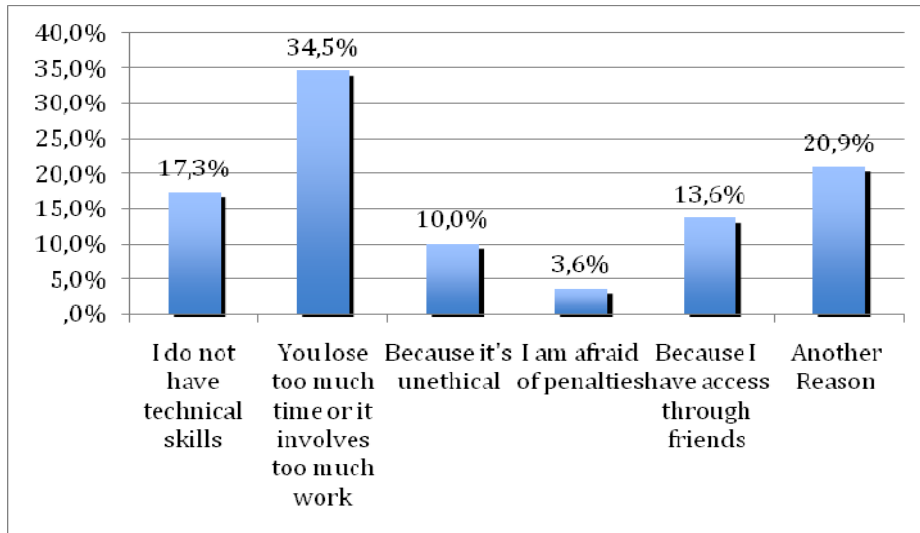
Figure 6. Reasons why students don't download television series from the Internet



A slighter lesser percentage of students usually watch their favorite television series online (45.4%). The reasons why they don't do it are similar to downloading (Figure 7), with a slight increase in the percentage of those that do not have technical skills (17.3%) and a decrease of those that consider it unethical (10%). The fear of penalties is also lower (3.6%).

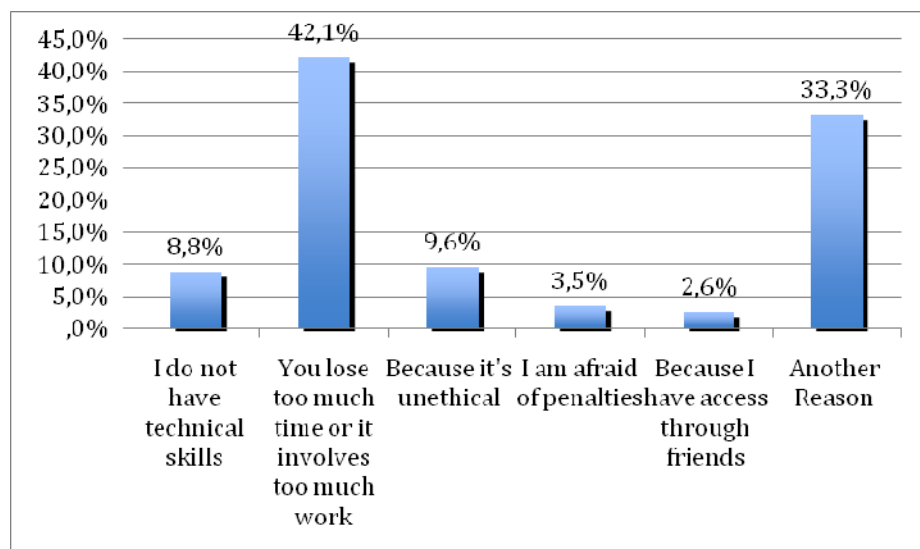
The differences between streaming and download were further explored in the focus group and those that favored streaming did it because it took less time, it was easier, it was not necessary to have storage space and it had lesser risk of viruses. Those that favored the downloaded said that they did it because the content had higher quality, it gave them the opportunity to set up a digital library and review the content later in time, it had no advertising and it was not necessary to have Internet access to view the content later on.

Figure 7. Reasons why students don't watch television series online



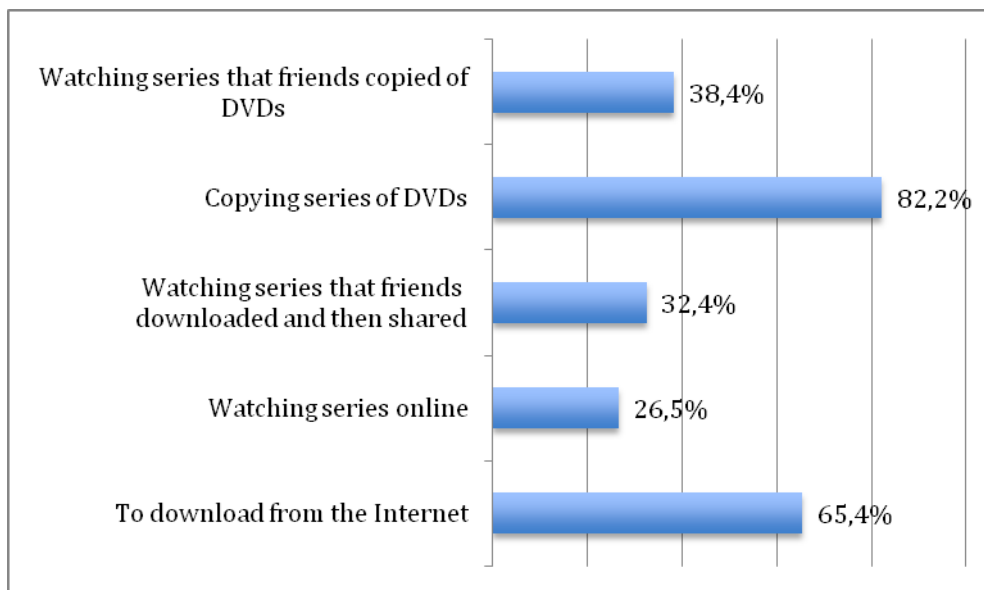
As for watching television series that have been downloaded and shared by friends 43.2% gave a positive answer. This was the activity that they most considered taking too much time or too much work (Figure 8) and it is also the practice that they consider less unethical (9.6%).

Figure 8. Reasons why students don't watch series that have been downloaded by friends or colleagues



Finally when asked about DVDs the vast majority of students stated that they did not copied series from DVDs (94.6%) or even watched series that had been copied and then shared by friends (74.6%). In both cases the ethical considerations played a major deterrence with 23% stating that they did not considered copying a series from a DVD to be ethical and 20.7% saying the same for copies that have been shared by friends. This is an interesting finding in the sense that materiality seems to play a role in the perception of what constitutes piracy. In fact when explicitly asked what they considered to be piracy practices (Figure 9) the one practice that had a more significant percentage was to “copy series of DVD” (82.2%) followed by “download from the internet” (65.4%). Also, “Watch Series on sharing sites”, “to see series downloaded and shared with friends” and “Watch DVD copies shared by friends” had a frequency less expressive. The fact that these are less expressive points in the direction that when piracy is done by proxy, through friends, and not made by them, it’s no longer considered piracy.

Figure 9. Practices students consider being piracy



Despite these ideas on the practice of piracy, when confronted with the direct question about their download routines – consumption and sharing – the numbers are approximate. Thus, 43.3% do not usually do downloads and of the 42.8% who do, only 18.6% share them. Financial benefits are the most common reason for sharing but they also offered more detailed justifications: “Because we all love the series and someone has to download it... it is also not available on television” and “Because sometimes friends that do

not have the same easiness to obtain the series ask me to". So amongst the motivation seems to be helping friends and acting as promoters of the series they love. By analyzing these statements, we can also conclude that the act of sharing with peers mitigates the idea of piracy and is assumed to be a regular and necessary action to satisfy the desire/need for keeping up to date. This constant need to interact with the content is also shown in other transmediality practices. In this sense, it appears that the consumption of content is not close in itself; there is willingness to learn/know more about new seasons, and about the actors and actresses lives. Also 43.7% state watching their favorite series more than once a week and 57.7% like to watch two or three episodes in a row. This corroborates the fact that consumption is more expressive through the pay channels dedicated to films and TV segments, due to a rotating schedule, allowing access 24 hours a day at doses ranging from a single to three episodes; and the fact that access to Internet downloads allows for immediate consumption.

In the focus group students recognized piracy practices but they draw a difference between downloading it for their own use and sharing it. There are strong nuances in their discourse about their interaction with television series contents. Besides immediacy, control plays also a major role in piracy practices of television series. In the focus groups the participants stated that the ability to manage time and place of viewing is a major attraction factor in piracy practices. They felt that they were not stuck to a place or a time to watch the episode. Even when there was a recording feature available that demands planning and storage capability and consequently less freedom. Also watching a series online enables them to move around and watch it in any kind of device. Piracy also frees them from advertising which is also one of the reasons why half of the participants favored the download over streaming which is usually supported by advertising.

Conclusion

With the surge of transmediality and new platforms such as mobile phones and tablets, as well as enabling tools for massified DIY, the experience of television series consumption has been completely changed. This is particularly notable in youth audiences where television is still pervasive but networked media practices are gaining ground, namely a serialized participation culture characterizes by immediacy, anticipation, control, emotional affordance and freedom.

The findings pose huge challenges to the players in the industry, namely how to monetize digital distribution channels and divert their major target audience from piracy to legitimate digital distribution channels. New platforms such as Apple's iPad that have been very successful in Portugal give the industry some hope but the challenge is far from won.

We also wanted to make the case for television series and the digital transformation of youth audiences as much of the attention regarding piracy, remix and participatory culture is drawn by music and movies, neglecting that television series are being affected and transformed. This is especially the case for non-use viewers that, due to the, many times, lengthy delay between a show airing in the US and in markets abroad, have been driven to illegal practices. If on one hand online content drives audiences to a serialized practice, non-US viewers are then deprived of the opportunity to accommodate their induced viewing habits. Lawrence Lessig (2004) argues that large media companies use the potential of the Internet to enclose culture and control creativity. In a world where mixtures and hybridizations dominate, in a world where the mix gets the status remix (Lessig, 2008) supply and demand for content provide an accelerated dynamics, in order to follow the requirements of the public:

If “piracy” means using the creative property of others without their permission – if “if value, then right” is true – then the history of the content industry is a history of piracy. Every important sector of “big media” today – film, records, radio, and cable TV – was born of a kind of piracy so defined. The consistent story is how last generation’s pirates join this generation’s country club – until now (Lessig, 2004: 56).

University students, born and raised in a technological environment per excellence, are the most significant segment of this way of life. The access to pay television and Internet in association with the high level of ownership of laptops and smartphones leads to an easy access to all sorts of information quickly and updated and transforms them into a privileged target for content producers.

This “bite-size entertainment” introduces a “snack culture” characterized by a fast and on the go production and consumer (Watkins, 2009: 158). If music was the first content to be available for fast entertainment consume, industries started to explore alternative offers in line with television market successes, such as fiction contents. “Minisodes” are the presentation units chosen by big companies, such as Sony Corporation. With a three-to-five minutes’ length, these episodes are versions of primetime programs and offer a consistent narrative structure. Despite the on-air text versions, “viewers” can enjoy multi platforms contents offer that are, more and more, produced directly for fans and, nowadays for all receivers.

Thus, from the culture of “instant gratification” we can observe a change for the culture of “constant gratification” (*idem*, 160). Allowed by TV franchises and transmediality possibilities, the TV-off-TV viewing has been a reality and the challenge will be how the consumer patterns and audiences measurement will evolve (Gillan, 2011).

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