



**From see to click:
new patterns of television
production and consumption**

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Television and New Media. Must-click TV (Gillan, 2011) is a *must-read* book. Based on the North-American television market reality, but a reflection of a global trend, explores the transition of the “must see” to the “must-click” era, due to the development of content generation technologies. If, in the 1980s and 1990s the viewers were encouraged to stay tuned to a fix programming flow—in line with Raymond Williams thoughts (1975)—the new millennium brought to life an “overflow” model of production.

The “Big Four” television networks (ABC, CBS, NBC, FOX/The WB),¹ confronted with “avatar” consumers, peo-

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¹ Until the 1990s, the market was composed by “the big three” commercial channels: ABC (American Broadcasting Company), created in 1943 and owned by The Walt Disney Company; CBS (Columbia Broadcast System), created in 1927 by William Paley, is part of CBS Corporation, a media conglomerate, since 2006; NBC (National Broadcasting Corporation), founded by David Sarnoff in 1926 is owned by NBC Universal, a media group created in 2004 by the merge of NBC and Vivendi (French international media conglomerate). This leadership was challenged by many channels during almost 30 years, but was just with the appearance of FOX in 1986 and its strong success in prime time, that the tag “big three” is, sometimes, changed to “the big four”. FOX (Fox Broadcasting Company) is owned by Rupert Murdoch's Fox Entertainment Group. Nowadays, “the big three” do not control the market due to the existence of other commercial channels, as FOX and TheCW (The CW Television Network is a joint venture of CBS Corporation and Warner Bros), and also because of the expansion of pay channels.

ple familiar with the *click* devices and with fragmented media discourses, and with the loss of audiences, had to revise their strategies of programming, scheduling, advertising, promotion and distribution.

Having television series as unit of analysis, Gillan studies how networks use the new media possibilities. If, in the first place, they were used as platforms to promote other media (e.g. CD of soundtracks), now we see a *transmedia* phenomenon (Jenkins, 2008; Lopes, 2009)—the migration of content from platform to platform, and also the production of networked texts for a multi-platform reality—. The concept, however, is not new. Scolari (2009) summarizes other concepts used throughout history, such *ascross media*, *hybrid media*, *intertextual commodity*, *multimodality*, but all are indicative of mediated relationships and interactivity appropriate to the existing technologies.

The act of storytelling finds its meaning in the relationship with the consumer—or with *viewer* (p. 2)—whose role is expanded and not limited to the last place in the chain. In this era of 360° media (Domingos, 2008), the classic forms of narrative remain in transit (from *feuilleton* to radio, radio to television, books to television, etc.), the screens multiplied (Introna&Ilharco, 2004, 2006) and the line between producer and consumer blurred. Bearing this in mind, we are now confronted with an increased hybridization of formats and contents, leading to the emergence of *flexi-narratives* (Creeber, 2008) and to the assumption of *remix* (Lessig, 2009) as a dominant paradigm of encoding, but also of decoding. *Viewers* are

diversifying, and gaining new skills to pursue their favorite contents, in despite the on-air texts consumption. Through the new formats such as *websites* (web) and *mobisodes* (mobile phones), which are adapted to the fragmented audiences, a pattern of usages anchored on mobility, plasticity and immersion arises (Rose, 2011).

This reality leads to the emergence of *narrowcast-broadcast* series and to the emergence of the idea of TV franchise, which is also useful to sponsors in order to interact with potential consumers (p. 16).

In four chapters, the Associate Professor of Media Studies of Bentley University, describes the Must-Click TV model by the observation of six key concepts: *platforming*, *networking*, *tracking*, *timeshifting*, *placeshifting* and *micro-segmentation* (p. 17). In the first chapter—Fan tracking, targeting, and interaction from the web to the WB (p. 26-75)—Gillan tries to understand how the networks recalibrate the space “dedicated on the web for a television series; the on-air and on-line screen space dedicated to promoting sponsor, network, and media conglomerate products; and the spaces in which storytelling, promotion, or a hybrid of the two occur” (p. 29). The use of case studies of new platform of successful series such as *X-Files*, *Dawson’s Creek*, *Smallville*, *Veronica Mars*, helps the readers understand the (sometimes) tension relations between producers, fans and sponsors and how these are mediated.

Timeshifting, circumvention and flow on FOX is the second chapter (p. 76-134). *24* series is the paradigmatic example to illustrate “an emerging Must-Click TV dynamic in which media

conglomerates are increasingly thinking of ways to blur the boundaries between different mediums so that one media product could maintain a presence on multiple media platforms." (p. 78). In fact, the characteristic of this title of having 24 episodes of one hour each and unfolding in "real-time", promote new approaches to scheduling² and distribution windows.

Jennifer Gillan continues to explore the Must-Click TV model in chapter three: Placeshifting, schedule-shifting, and the long-arc serial on ABC (p. 135-179). Focusing on *Lost*, the author explains how the so called long-arc serial, which are titles with multiple characters and complex narratives based on mystery, linked to the new technologies leads to the construction of different schedules by the production, and to different places of consumption, i. e. computers, mobile phones, videogames or tablets.

In the last chapter —Branding, synergy, and product integration on NBC (p. 180-220)— the author reflects on the (most) commercial face of the Must-Click TV model. Regardless the distribution platform, and in spite of the narratives proper, television market needs to monetize their products. National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) and their formats —gameshow, reality show, series— are used by Gillan to understand different techniques, such as *story integration product placement, synergy* and *brand TV*.

Although many professionals and scholars still dictate the end of television, this era of "post-broadcasting" (Turner&Tay, 2009) is just a new step of the inevitable evolution of societies which function in a symbiotic way: "people will continue 'to watch television', although what means to follow a television program and through what devices content is accessed and how viewers are measured will continue to evolve. One thing is certain. Right now, someone is inventing the new media device, social utility, application that will bring change to the industry and some writer is creating the series that will start a new strain of programming and set the copycatting cycle in motion again" (p. 245).

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² FOX tried new ways of broadcast a series, by debuting on a non traditional month and by presenting consecutive episodes or blocks. In Portugal, for instance, season one, which credits were bought by RTP, public channel, had a rerun in real 24 hours.

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