

GENERATION 20 PLUS

AN EXPLORATION INTO 21ST CENTURY MEDIA PRACTICES

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Training in the media sector never reaches a perfect state. Just as the professions it aims at, it is subject to constant change. In doing so, this training must keep its focus on two essential lines: on the one hand it must freely and playfully deal with formats and contents, on the other hand it must convey the sense of responsibility, the knowledge and the skills relevant for this specific professional environment.

This is why close contact to decision makers – producers, editors, sponsors – has been an integral part of the Filmakademie's training concept for many years. But given the recent changes in media consumption, also these decision makers often try to reach out to their target groups through new formats via diverse channels.

The public television network aims at stepping up to these new developments, but does still not dispose over the respective structures in the cross-media field. This is currently reflected in an openness, which offers a variety of opportunities to a new generation of media professionals. At the same time, the implementation of promising projects is jeopardized by diverging expectations of students and editorial departments and by lacking experience with effective process of all parties involved.



The Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg intends to change this and is creating a place where students and professionals can explore such processes together in order to develop better concepts with regard to the audience behaviour. For this, creative freedom is just as important as the systematic consideration of the so-called users, their needs and habits.

With Generation 20+, the Filmakademie is the first German educational institution, which utilizes this concept to incorporate new insights that have been gathered from a direct and also structured dialogue with users. This multi-layered process, which includes a symposium, a research lab and the transition to project development, is documented in this publication. We would like to thank SWR director Peter Boudgoust for his support of this project.

Equally, we are hoping to extend the initiated development and to establish a place where students and decision makers of public broadcasters will jointly realize cross-media projects.

Prof. Thomas Schadt
Director Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg

Preface

GENERATION 20+ WAS A RESEARCH PROCESS AT FILMAKADEMIE BADEN-WÜRTTEMBERG INVESTIGATING RELEVANT MEDIA FORMATS, MEDIA USE AND USER PROFILES FOR GERMANS AGED 21 TO 34 YEARS. IT INCLUDED A CONFERENCE, WORKSHOPS AND A RESEARCH LAB. THE PROCESS WAS DESIGNED BY FACULTY AND STAFF, IMPLEMENTED BY STUDENTS AND CO-FINANCED BY THE SWR, SOUTH-WEST GERMAN PUBLIC BROADCASTER.

THE CONFERENCE FOCUSED ON EMERGING MEDIA FORMATS IN A CONVERGING MEDIA LANDSCAPE. IT WAS CURATED BY GUIDO LUKOSCHEK, INGA VON STADEN AND THORSTEN SCHÜTTE. THE WORKSHOPS KICKED OFF AND SUMMED UP QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DONE BY STUDENTS ON USERS AND THEIR MEDIA HABITS. THEY WERE DESIGNED BY RAIMO LANG, HEAD OF CONTENT DEVELOPMENT AT YLE, FINNISH PUBLIC BROADCASTER. STEFANIE LARSSON CONDUCTED ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH WITH STAFF AND STUDENTS. ELE JANSEN DOCUMENTED AND INTERPRETED THE WHOLE PROCESS.

[HTTP://INTERAKTIVE-MEDIEN.ANIMATIONSINSTITUT.DE/EN](http://interaktive-medien.animationsinstitut.de/en)

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Executive Summary

„IT'S HARD TO UNDERSTAND REALITIES BEYOND OUR OWN SCOPE. THIS METHOD CAN HELP FACILITATE THAT. STATISTICS CAN'T GIVE YOU EMPATHY, BUT THAT'S WHAT YOU NEED TO UNDERSTAND A USER'S NEEDS." INGA VON STADEN

Conceptually, Generation 20+ is an experiment on how to approach an increasingly fragmented and media adept audience.

As a first step, we asked international speakers to showcase emerging formats, discuss the implications of a progressively engaged audience and ask the students – who themselves are Generation 20+ – about their life and habits.

As a second step, to switch from producer to audience perspective, Raimo Lang, Head of Development at Finnish public broadcaster YLE, led 10 students through a research process based on human-centred design principles, which helps producers to dig deep into the needs, emotions and interests of a particular audience. Focusing on 20- to 34-year-olds in Germany, the students did an intensive ethnography. This means, they probed into the diversification of their own age group and filtered how this is reflected in their thoughts and actions. Their findings do away with stereotypes and illustrate how hobbies, interests and media usage are mixed in highly individual ways. The students' reports also show their own experience of going through the process, how they overcame their preconceptions and how this has affected their production practice.

The aim of this pilot is to design a process in which the examination of the specific needs, desires and habits of a user group inspires the creation of meaningful content, innovative formats and audience engagement. It's imperative to make the process fun for all parties involved - for content creators who want to use it, and for media consumers, who participate as informants.

General conclusions* in terms of audience were:

- + there are audience pockets not using smartphones and/or tablets:
 - a. why are they not interested in those platforms?
 - b. do they access media specific to those platforms?
- + each informant cultivated some form of fetish or other:
 - a. how are these time and emotion consuming interests compatible with work and family life?
 - b. how do media play into this phenomenon?
- + a paradox became apparent between the individual (and often solitary) life style of all informants and the high value they attribute to family:
 - a. how is this apparent need fulfilled?
 - b. what role does media have in this?

* These conclusions are snapshots into pockets of society. They do not necessarily reflect comparable results from quantitative market research.

In order to place "Generation 20+" into a meaningful perspective, the latest trends in media production are contextualized with relevant data from youth studies. This is juxtaposed with different user preferences and degrees of audience engagement in order to give the reader a better understanding for the user-centric design approach for the development of media content.

General conclusions in terms of research design are:

- 1 the effort has led to valuable qualitative data for the students and also indicates niches that could be explored through more qualitative and quantitative analysis.
- 2 students improved their sensitivity for audience needs
- 3 the presentation of results was well received by film and television producers as well as commissioning editors from the two German public broadcasters
- 4 to continue the effort in the form of a formal research process at the school and to expand it by
 - a. involving other departments of the school
 - b. setting up workshops (Content Labs) based on the insights of the research with students, film- and television producers as well as commissioning editors from the two German public broadcasters to develop meaningful content and new formats

Concept Summary

Phase I – SHOW CASES

In February 2012 the Filmakademie invited 7 internationally renowned television, transmedia and games practitioners as well as market researchers to present new media and content formats developed by and for a generation often termed “digital natives”.

Objectives

- + learn about the height of interactive entertainment and its place within today’s youth culture
- + collect data on the media habits of the 80 participating Filmakademie students

Program

- + Alex Binder, Chef-Planner, Jung von Matt: Germany’s most common adolescent
- + Lucia Haslauer, Editor, ZDF: Reaching Generation 20+ as a public broadcaster
- + Tom Liljeholm, CEO, Tea4Two Entertainment: Alternate Reality media mash-up
- + Jonathan Marshall, CTO, Social Television, SlipStream: The User... as an inspiration
- + Andre Peschke, Chefredakteur, Krawall Gaming Network: Piraten, Schund und Kunstwelten
- + Lance Weiler, Story Architect, Reboot Stories: Pandemic 1.0: infiltrating reality
- + Femke Wolting, Head and Co-Founder, Submarine: Melting Silos, new formats

Phase II – AUDIENCE RESEARCH

During the RESEARCH LAB 20+ (5.-6. July 2012) 10 Filmakademie students took a closer look at a representative of a target audience aged 20- to 35 by stepping into a direct and creative dialogue with them.

Objective

- + gain a better understanding of the audience as dialogue partner,
- + overcome preconceptions on unfamiliar audience groups
- + gather inspiring material from unfamiliar audience groups
- + interpret data in its meaningfulness for oneself and other content creators.
- + make this an inspiring and fun process!

Program

Students identified which target groups were unfamiliar to them and created social and cultural probes to step into a dialogue with participants (informants) of the sectors identified. Based on this they built an entertaining and interesting workbook for the 10-day research phase. Ensuing, from July until October, each student studied her/his own informant diary and traveled to visit his/her informant at their home to do an ethnographic interview (1,5-2,5 hours). The collected data was evaluated, mapped and correlated into meaningful summaries.

Phase III – APPLIED RESEARCH

The results of the research were brought into the CONTENT LAB “Non-Fiction 20+” (24.-27. November 2012) to test methods of content development for the identified target groups.

Objective

- + Engage with depth of character to address peculiarities of target audiences within a complex theme.
- + Fit release and distribution strategy to the media habits of their audience.
- + Learn from depth of character to detect and harness a more detailed persona in their content production.

Program

A new group of students got familiar with the data their fellow students had collected. Within their 4-day production workshop (interdisciplinary development, aka content lab), they dedicated one day to pick certain characteristics of the audience research and address them with their content. The results of this process are then carried into the ensuing content labs.

Intro: A Fragmented Audience

FEBRUARY 1, 2012: 90 FILMAKADÉMIE STUDENTS, 10 STAFF, AND I ARE GATHERED IN LUDWIGSBURG'S CAMPUS CINEMA. WE ARE ABOUT TO EMBARK ON A TWO-DAY JOURNEY OF RESEARCH, LECTURES AND DISCUSSIONS WITH 7 INTERNATIONAL TRANSMEDIA, GAME AND AUDIENCE EXPERTS. THE GOAL: TO LEARN ABOUT THE LATEST INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT PRACTICE AND ITS PLACE WITHIN TODAY'S YOUTH CULTURE. ALONGSIDE THE EVENT, THE STUDENTS TAKE PART IN DATA COLLECTION ON THEIR OWN MEDIA HABITS.

MY MISSION IS TO DOCUMENT THE PROCESS AND TO PUT IT INTO CONTEXT. SO I SIT IN THE MOVIE THEATRE AND LISTEN TO THE TALKS, TYPING NOTES WITH MY LAPTOP ON MY KNEES – VERY GENERATION 20+. THROUGHOUT THE PRESENTATIONS, I KEEP AN EYE ON THE LARGE MONITOR, WHERE I CAN SEE THE STUDENTS' TWEETS AND THEIR OPINIONS BEING LIVE BROADCASTED FROM TWITTER. I HEAR THE PRESENTER SAYING 'THOSE FORMERLY KNOWN AS THE AUDIENCE' AND STOP TYPING. I'M STRUCK. THAT'S A BOLD CLAIM CONSIDERING THAT CURRENTLY ONLY 5 TO 25 PERCENT OF THE AUDIENCE CONTRIBUTE TO ENTERTAINMENT CONTENT. I LOOK TO THE MONITOR AND CHECK THE STUDENTS' IMMEDIATE REACTIONS. NOTHING. LATER I FOUND OUT THAT ONLY 5 OUT OF 90 STUDENTS USED TWITTER AT ALL, AND THAT IN GERMANY TWITTER HAS ONLY 7 MILLION USERS COMPARED TO 142 MILLION IN THE USA, 32 MILLION IN THE UK, 34 MILLION IN JAPAN AND 41 MILLION IN BRAZIL (2012 SEMIOCAST STUDY). CONSIDERING GERMANY'S ADVANCED STATE IN OTHER TECHNOLOGIES, THIS PHENOMENON ALONE WOULD BE REASON ENOUGH TO BE CURIOUS HOW THE GERMAN AGE GROUP 20+ USES MEDIA.

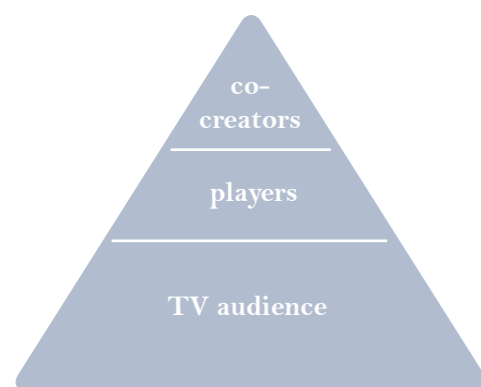


Fig.: Audience Pyramid showing 5-25% players and co-creators among a large lean-back audience.

For the reader less familiar with transmedia, the following introduction locates contemporary media practices and introduces emerging formats to contextualize the challenges producers face in a rapidly shifting media landscape. One of the main drivers of today's 'maker'-turn is the read-write web and easily accessible tools that allow people to become producers of their own media content. The audience as we know it seems to fundamentally change. Since the last decade of the 20th century, social media and affordable digital technology lead to a steady growth of maker culture: youths today start practically from birth, mashing music, designing Facebook or MySpace pages, doing videos and podcasts. This democratization of production and publishing through the many-to-many nature of the web affects how stories are told and perceived, most notably through a culture of sharing, remixing and commenting. Colloquially this new group is often referred to as prosumers (producer-consumer), produsers (producer-user) or viewersers (viewer-user).

In this context, multichannel narratives – which are (not only but often) characterized by locally dispersed contributors who share, create, and circulate content across diverse media platforms – have become popular among the industry and audience alike. Films like *AI Artificial Intelligence* (2001) and the *Matrix* (1999-2012) as well as TV shows, such as *Heroes* (2006-2010) and *Lost* (2004-2010), convey complex stories and games that operate on a multitude of levels, employ plots within another plot and extend across other media. Such transmedia storyworlds include websites, mobile apps, locative media, or pervasive games.

Engagement occurs to different degrees. Some projects allow interaction with computer interfaces, others allow interaction with fictional characters or between users, some allow to move in certain parameters, others give freedom to remix and change the course of the entire project.

Taking stories outside, Alternate Reality Games (ARG) are often but not necessarily part of a transmedia property. Their hyperlocal and global character (= connecting on the ground experiences with an online audience) gave rise to digital urban gaming or digital scavenger hunts, such as *Conspiracy for Good* (2010) and *Pandemic 1.0* (2009).

Transmedia campaigns also double as social media marketing and cross-promotion. Examples of which are *Homeland* (2011) and the *Harry Potter* online extension, in which readers could meet and engage with story and characters (2010).

In its purpose transmedia can be manifold and goes beyond fiction or pure entertainment. It is used as tool for transmedia activism to help communities and raise awareness with wider audiences. *Dharavi Diary* (2012), for example, is a documentary that is produced while the producer team itself builds a recycling design school in Dharavi Slum. A social media campaign extends across platforms, such as Cowbird, Facebook and Twitter. An online map game lets users explore the informal settlement and support its real-life characters.

Mixing print and digital media has the benefit that a theme can address various consumer and prosumer types. For example, a comic book might be the entry point for a fan of haptic consumption, an app interests those who travel a lot or like trying new technology, a game keeps those who seek more engagement than pure cognition. These new specifications require us to understand niche interests of the audience.

With the web as self-service supermarket, individual choice trumps programmed content as we know it from TV and radio. This behaviour leads to a massively diversified social landscape, which is different from a 20th century mass media audience. Generation 20+ assumes that digital natives expect to:

- 1 access all media content everywhere and any time,
- 2 interact with content,
- 3 become engaged in content creation and
- 4 jump from one media platform and format to another.

Whether it's a thrill or a worry, it's obvious that producers have to change the way they think about audience. To address the recipients' diversified needs better, producers seek answers to central questions:

- a. How do we create **for** and **with** a fragmented audience?
- b. What kinds of **structures** work well?
- c. What kind of **content** do we create?

Our 7 experts had some answers to these questions. Jonathan Marshall shared his advice on whether new habits mean we should aim for responsive design.

How might we fund new endeavours and win an audience for experimental content? Femke Wolting and Lucia Haslauer tell how paving new pathways means to take both audience and institutions on a long journey.

How might game mechanics work best with story? Tom Liljeholm and Andre Peschke give insight into the marriage of both from a gamer's perspective.

How can we design across many platforms? What about copyright and return on investment? Lance Weiler pulls back the curtain on how story architecture, audience engagement and creative sustainability can be handled.

And lastly, what do digital natives value in their lives? Alex Binder gives insight into the lives of teenagers in Germany. Here, our research adds perspectives on media consumption and co-creative potential of those who are a bit older, Generation 20+.

I – Show Cases: How Do Creatives Approach Their Audience?

1.1 Transmedia Takeaways

JONATHAN MARSHALL, CTO SOCIAL TELEVISION, SLIPSTREAM TV

Being one of the key technical strategists in the interactive TV field, Jonathan looks back on 18 years experience of both software and hardware innovation. From his experience as a producer at the BBC as well as Social TV at SlipStream, Jonathan shared eight key principles for successful user experience design.

1. it's all about the user (what's the need? user-centred design)
2. keep it simple (what's the jewel?)
3. provide consistency (in design but don't overplay it)
4. know your audience (context: when, where with whom)
5. provide visual hierarchy (use people's spatial memory)
6. be honest (don't trick your audience)
7. incorporate user feedback (respond to user by giving feedback)
8. meet Brief requirements (in case you're commissioned)

He contends that today's young generation proves to be more focused on content than on which device they use. That's why Jonathan puts emphasis on delivering stories fluidly. He stresses the difference between addressing the individual user and the audience in general and contends that it's crucial to know the user's "needs" as well as the audience's context, which means where, when and in which social environment they consume. For instance, mobile devices are frequented at rush hour, so content can be pushed to more gesture driven

LUCIA HASLAUER, EDITOR, ZDF

Broadcast TV in Germany approaches new audience fragments in a similar fashion as Jonathan described. After facing apocalyptic worries about the demise of the medium, recent media developments prove the opposite. Lucia Haslauer gave examples of German public broadcaster ZDF's endeavours to reach a younger audience. She supervises the innovation lab 'Das kleine Fernsehspiel' and stressed the benefit of TV's episodic character, which provides great potential for transmedia storytelling. With this in mind, she experiments with content,

devices throughout commuting times. What's more, mobile devices will most likely be a personal experience whereas a large screen will be a shared experience.

This has consequences for designing experiences for a larger audience. In the UK, according to BBC data, transmedia offers pull up to 8 Mio. interactive users when 20 Mio. watch a sports event on TV. These numbers confirm the assumption that using a second screen (companion device) for interactive narrative becomes the norm while watching TV. However, there are debates as to how second screens are used by the audience. Do people for example really want to dig deeper into a story or do they multitask, check emails, catch up with friends on social networks or scroll through their news feeds? Regardless, second screens are additional outlets to provide interactive narrative (personal) alongside linear narrative (shared).

Jonathan warns, though, to think one size would fit all. He is sceptical about responsive design, which means using the same content for different devices. A film that's shot for TV, he point out, simply doesn't fit for smartphone, but needs to be re-done.

technology and formats both on TV and the station's own 'Mediathek.' This web platform is widely popular among Generation 20+, particularly content such as ZDF NEO, which is programmed for an audience aged 18 to 45 to counter the ZDF's primarily older-skewing main channels. We saw this perception mirrored in our students, who dig ZDF online while they dub ZDF's TV rather old-fashioned. ZDF also delivers HBBTV (hybrid broadcast broadband TV), which is slowly picking up, according to Lucia's information.

Making narrative formats hybrid and innovative includes experimentation with augmented reality (AR) and alternate reality games (ARG). As an example of the latter, Dina Foxx was broadcast in 2010. This crime show ended on TV before the culprit was found, so the search continued online. Although the show was a great PR success and widely published as a case study, only 2 of ca. 70 students in the room had watched it.

Other ZDF formats have been released online first, such as 'mashups.' This remix game was a success on the web before they were programmed into a TV slot. Another favourite, but not anywhere near BBC's Dr Who, is ZDF's Ijon Tichy. Based on Stanislaw Lem's work, this comedy show is whimsical with a

FEMKE WOLTING, HEAD AND CO-FOUNDER, SUBMARINE

To overcome silos in TV stations and media agencies, Femke Wolting and Bruno Felix founded the independent production studio Submarine to combine filmmaking, games and multiplatform formats. That was in the year 2000 when broadcasters were only beginning to experiment with interactive crossmedia content. Having no satisfying media outlet for their productions, the two Dutch producers created their own online channel, which attracted six million viewers until now, most of which come from the US and the UK, followed by Germany; 10 percent are from the Netherlands. The audience grew steadily over the last eight years, showing a significantly larger growth in the past three years. This is mirrored in TV stations asking for more collaboration despite the fact that some national Dutch regulations restrict public broadcasters to not have more than 100 websites, which makes it difficult for transmedia projects to be sold and commissioned. Regardless, Submarine's core process is to produce non-linear multichannel properties and make an offspring for TV. This way they address a large TV audience as well as early adopters of interactive technologies.

As Submarine does not believe in charging the audience directly, their dual strategy has the advantage that content can be sold globally to harness as many revenue streams as possible. Another revenue source can be generated through spin-offs, such as books or DVDs that accompany an interactive property. These more traditional media have a clear market and respond well to crossmedia extensions. As a rule of thumb, Femke recommends to "show first that it's popular on the web, then you can sell it to broadcasters and publishers." Experience showed that since their audience is geographically fragmented, and ad agencies only cover small national or

lay-producer did-it-myself look. 200.000 young people (14-49) of a total audience of 0,4 mio. (5% quota) watched Ijon Tichy, many of which interact and give positive feedback in Tichy's facebook group. Students at Filmakademie had a different stance. 2/3 of them didn't like Ijon Tichy.

Assumptions that a comparably late (after midnight) program slot accounts for fewer viewers were contested when 2/3 of students said they watch TV content after midnight (while 1/3 said they'd still be interactive at that time). Two other student opinions were the fact that they don't care about stations or brands, but choose according to program and content. Many students nodded, as did Lucia herself, agreeing that they watch selectively, no matter which channel.

continental segments. So, they skipped advertising as a major revenue stream. Instead they cooperate with sponsors and recently started experimenting with crowdfunding options. It remains to be seen if established production companies will be as successful in raising funds on kickstarter or IndieGogo as independent producers. And although VOD is seen as a promising way to self-distribute and get revenue-share, Femke observed that this share is normally too low to be considered. What functions best at this point in time is working with broadcasters and public funding (governments).

However, once commissioned, one of the greatest challenges is scheduling how to estimate production time. Reasons for this are mainly the fact that stations, funding bodies and transmedia producers have different levels of understanding of what is possible. What's more, scheduling filming and interactive content production still proves to be challenging due to practical constraints of all parties involved (ie film production, transmedia production, coding, funding timelines and broadcaster operations).

Submarine mainly works with content that educates about critical issues, throwing light in deceptive marketing terminology in Unspeak or raising awareness regarding alternative energy resources in Collapsus. The latter project attracted 200.000 visitors in 2011 and combined three genres: fictional narrative, a documentary with archived information and interviews as well as a game that teaches about environmental issues. Collapsus was kicked off by a TV documentary that was commissioned by the Dutch national broadcaster VPRO.

Femke believes that the majority of the audience responds better to annotated storytelling than interactive narrative. She contends that it is crucial to help users find orientation when releasing a complex and innovative project. That's why she recommends explaining projects upon publication by extended press information and video walkthroughs that explain the project's basic concept.

1.2 Learning From Gaming

ANDRÉ PESCHKE, CHIEF EDITOR, KRAWALL GAMING NETWORK

Moving from transmedia production to gaming, André Peschke gave details on industry, formats and gaming behaviour. With close to 15 years experience in the field, the journalist-consultant-producer saw the game scene gradually emancipating from its overshadowing entertainment sibling: the film industry. Whereas films used to be converted to games, now game IPs are often redone as films. That said, at this time films are not outnumbered or outsold by games, although not all digital distribution channels are accounted for, which makes an honest comparison difficult.

Another large development is that PC games give way to video games, which was confirmed by Filmakademie students, more of which said to have a console than a TV set (68% without TV). 1/3 of students are gaming. Half of them find their games virally, 1/4 via mags, 1/4 via ads or in a shop. One student commented that summer is for being outside and in fall, when most new games are released, begins the winter console gaming madness. These statements in combination with students spending more time on ZDF's Mediathek than ZDF's broadcast are indicative of a drift towards media consumption on different platforms (89% of students said they favour using many device over one convergent device) and with access to the www-noosphere.

MIP blog published in early 2012 that 284 million people, or nearly 50% of US viewers, don't watch TV on the television, but on the internet, via timeshifting, or on their mobile phones. The infographic's other insights include:

- + 60% of people who multitask whilst watching TV do so on social media
 - + 41% of consumers own an HD and/or 3D TV, and 46% intend to purchase one
 - + \$800m was spent on social games like Farmville in 2012.
- (Source: Nielsen & Emarketer)

Today's attention economy contests Riepl's law¹ to some extent as films and games are competing for audience in terms of time, funds and – you name it – attention. Without correlating the film industry's current struggle and the game industry's continuous growth, it's evident that game producers do something very well in handling their audience. One of the core lessons learned how to build large audiences can be taken from the game industry. André explained how game producers reacted to software piracy much more effectively than the music or film industry. Instead of fighting a legal war, they came up with different market strategies, one of which is cloudgaming (or browsergames), which deliver games as streams not as virtual property that is stored on a personal hard drive. Making games available at the click of a button means that game producers understood to react to the 'on-demand' zeitgeist of self-curation instead of following a TV program. Nonetheless, free-to-play games are often praised as great success when they deliver mass audience numbers to start with. However, with game progression and more paid options or ads showing, gamers leave the game and move on to different alternatives.

1 Wolfgang Riepl stated in his 1913 dissertation that further developed types of media never replace old forms. Instead he argues that they converge and lead to new usage patterns. Today, Riepl's law is still discussed with respect to atten-

tion sparsity. Riepl, Wolfgang (1913). „Das Nachrichtenwesen des Altertums mit besonderer Rücksicht auf die Römer“, Leipzig: Teubner.

Another characteristic of game producers handling their audience is an agile reaction to the fluidity of the market. By creating a forum on product websites, users can instantly enter the conversation with other fans, at the same time, explaining features and access as well as widening their circle. Direct communication between producer and audience as well as among players is central to games. This is, according to André, quite different from the film industry. Whereas game developers build their own community and take their audience with them from one IP to the other, film producers miss out on using this proximity to their fans effectively. The ramifications of this insight are quite sweeping. With increasing on-demand and curation behaviour (instead of masses following the same TV-program), target groups are diversifying endlessly. Producers need to do both, address their (niche) target group and open up community spaces for their fans. Communication is a strong social component in most successful games. Players are chatting for hours without actually playing, and they even watch other people playing. And we're speaking about

TOM LILJEHOLM, GAMER/DEVELOPER/CEO, TEA4TWO ENTERTAINMENT

Tom is the archetype of gamer turned producer. Starting playing ARGs in 2001, he learned producing by experiencing storyworlds as a player. Knowing what motivates players made him a valuable contributor and ARG-producers embraced his advice and ideas. Even today, he says, "it's still like doing fan fiction just that he's getting paid by the people he's producing with." After five years of producing professionally, he says, new properties still spring from passion projects among people, who like working together, are like-minded and have an idea they're equally excited about. In the case of Karada, Tom ideated around a theme with Heroes Writer James Martin and transmedia producer Carrie Cutforth-Young. It started off as a small webseries without participative elements. They all invested some money to produce it, and after a while they had so much content and had received so much attention from the press that they upscaled the project to a full TV property, which is currently in negotiations with some of the world's largest agencies and broadcasters (2012). Tom's example of hobbies turning into commercial products becomes more common with ubiquitous availability of tools and knowledge to create and distribute content.

Speaking from his experience, he contends that ARG players are keen to get carried away by a story, a character or a mystery. There's both excitement and anxiety that resides within people's willingness to suspend their disbelief. It's seen as

watching games they paid for. André estimates that core gamers prefer to pay a package price of 30-40 EUR for a rounded game experience. Most successful are console games, which cost around 60 EUR for the game plus additional features that are purchased as downloadable content.

Without overstressing gamification and storification, it can be said that both industries borrow elements and mechanics from one another. Game mechanics such as badges, praise and tiered achievements systems are often utilized to increase participation in interactive transmedia properties. Vice versa, games make use of environmental storytelling to frame individual but interactive movements of players within a unifying storied world. Both industries are experimenting with strategies to marry these two with respect to immersion, engagement and dramaturgy. Tom Liljeholm and Lance Weiler provided examples of this from an independent producer's perspective.

a key driver for immersion, however, as The Truth About Marika has shown, the extent to which people can be 'fooled' shouldn't be underestimated.

"People's suspension of disbelief will always surprise you. Even if you make the story obviously unbelievable, there will be people that go down the most unrealistic rabbit hole and later blame you for misleading them."

Because of this and its innovative concept, The Truth About Marika became a leading case study for transmedia producers to learn about the pitfalls and possibilities of a multi-channelled and multi-threaded participation project. In brief, the story is woven around a woman who goes missing on the day of her wedding, and her friend who starts searching for her. To blur reality and fiction, the friend appeared in media and claimed that the – actually true – story had been stolen by SVT (national Swedish broadcaster) and perverted into an entertainment drama on TV (which was the actual show that was broadcast weekly). In an attempt to redeem themselves, SVT promised to hold a 15 minute special after every episode looking closer into the actual case. Those weekly episodes involved the audience to step in and help finding Marika. The case was unusual in as much as the TV series was designed to promote the game, and not the other way around.

After getting burnt with public complaints about rabbit holes, and consequently figuring that even a playful deceit is a no-go, what are other ways to create immersion? Tom believes in three core strategies to create deep connection with a story. Using episodic media is the first. That’s one reason why TV and the web are better suited for current storytelling developments than cinematic narratives. It’s more agile. Cliffhangers and episodic telling allow to reflect upon fans’ reactions and to include their contributions. The second strategy rests in the power of relationships to fictional characters. The principle is: if you don’t use fake mysteries to tap people’s suspense of disbelief, make them accomplices of your story’s hero. The player should feel as if their hero knows him/her by name, as if there was a personal bond.

Tom creates this by including viewers’ profiles onscreen, or by using their ideas, saying their name, or by showing the characters talking to the players on their computers or phones, making them see themselves in a TV series they love. This way, the producer helps building relationships with characters and story, which leads to the third strategy: building a collaborative community. Blurring reality and fiction to promote immersion is strengthened by fostering relationships among players as well as between players and producers. As a producer, it is crucial to be a part of the community, to listen and respond.

“FAST REACTION TO YOUR PLAYERS’ PROBLEMS AND QUESTIONS IS KEY TO DEEPEN THE CONNECTION. CO-CREATING STORYWORLDS IS ABOUT COMMUNICATING WITH PLAYERS.”

This discourse carries collaboration, says Tom, which works by making a world that is agile. The paradox is that because of the volatile and scattered nature of the storyworld people will create even stronger bonds by helping each other understanding and fitting the puzzle collaboratively. That means community and a feeling of being part of something as well and sharing experiences are crucial elements to co-create immersive experiences.

Now consider this:

“YOU WANT PLAYERS PLAYING AS A UNITY, TAPPING COLLECTIVE INTELLIGENCE. WHEN YOU LET THEM COLLABORATE PEOPLE NORMALLY DON’T GO OFF TRACK ALONE, AND IF SO YOU TRY TO GET THEM BACK TO THE GROUP. IF IT HAPPENS IT’S JUST BAD DESIGN.”

Tom’s quote illustrates that ARGs are rule-bound worlds. He says in this environment “people mostly don’t create but follow.” So, while providing an open social sandbox, game mechanics will offer a structured path that requires some effort to outsmart it. Hence, Tom contends that integrating the audience’s directions is at the heart of storytelling. To facilitate that, he prefers employing media that are known. Instead of pioneering new technology and concepts, he tries to reinvent how people use technology that they are already familiar with.

An important takeaway from a growing popularity of ARGs is that – being part of the same attention economy – broadcasters became aware of the competition and embraced ARGs as an element to enrich programmed content. The inherent mutual benefit is often stressed: ARGs gain reach through reaching mass TV audiences, TV stations extend their services to interactive platforms to also serve the needs of a (niche) audience that is expected to grow in numbers in the near future.

According to Tom’s experience, hardcore ARG players are between 22-28, and the male/female ratio is 50:50. The people who were playing ten years ago are those who are considered professionals today. As the line between playing and producing blurs, Tom concedes that players range between 22-50 years of age. Believing in a rise of this group of interactive consumers, Tom predicts that “ARGs are going to be reinvented as technology offers new options to engage.” It’s no coincidence that current debates and the rise of transmedia have sprung from the ARG world. It offers a range of immersive game mechanics that will be picked up by more and more professionals in traditional entertainment industries. ARGs can be played out commercially as a stand-alone or as part of a transmedia property, reaching larger audiences that just the co-creating 5% (cf. audience pyramid).

LANCE WEILER, STORY ARCHITECT/CO-FOUNDER REBOOT STORIES

Known as a pioneer in pervasive storytelling, Lance Weiler focuses on co-creating with the 5%, determined to engage more and more people to get their hands dirty and ‘do.’ He presented his recent works with a view to story build, use of technology, audience engagement and business models. Integrating the roles of a story architect, technophile and creative entrepreneur, his approach to storytelling in the 21st century is about experimenting and pushing the boundaries. He stresses that our day and age gives unprecedented opportunities to develop new ways of telling stories connecting hyperlocal and global while including “those formerly known as the audience.”

Being practice driven, Lance is part of a growing cohort of independent producers that sees value in rapid prototyping, experimenting, and failing quickly to apply the lessons learned for future iterations of the project. Asked how he tests projects, Lance explained how paper testing, story-centred workshops (which he calls “think-and-do labs”), playing with collaboration and user experience, mapping and prepping ways through the story, being open to external input and facilitating feedback loops have proven valuable for his process. Following this logic, it suggests itself to release storyworlds as a beta version to be tested by users and improved for further instalments. The main value of this is to be able to slow down the development process to ideate and enrich stories in order to make them more meaningful. Before going into detail of his case study of Pandemic, it’s worth taking a look at basic design principles for shared storyworlds.

As the telling of stories changes with new technologies (augmented reality, near field communication (NFC)), it’s even more important to hone a good story as it gives weight to the tactics applied. Hence, the theme in general is more compelling than focussing on character. This is particularly true for participatory narratives since the audience can step in and create characters or be their own characters in the story. Lance sees the audience as being ahead of where he is as a storyteller. “People take your story and remix it whether you want it or not.” As a storyteller he wants to give the right tools and rules to facilitate engagement, make it fun and valuable. To do so, he wants to find things that make people comfortable and invite them into the storyworld. So, it’s not about relinquishing control, but about letting people mine the themes and to

activate the hive mind.

Lance suggests different ways to facilitate participation. When offering multiple entry points, the first advice is to communicate simply at every step to help people understand the complexity quickly. Lance agrees with Femke that a walkthrough video helps players to engage with experimental projects. The same counts for storytelling. The more complex the story’s architecture, the more important it is to stick to simple or traditional rules to make it easy for collaborators to find orientation. Additionally, consistency of participatory elements helps fans understand the rules quicker and lower the threshold to contribute.

“USE DESIGN THINKING, OBJECTS AND TECHNOLOGY TO LINK THE HYPERLOCAL AND GLOBAL.”

For Lance, tangible artifacts range among the most successful storytelling elements as they connect people, which adds a different quality to the story. To observe what works and what doesn’t, Lance collects data to improve experiences and technology, to balance story and game, and to advance people’s engagement. That’s why story architecture, content and analysis are deeply intertwined and handled with same priority. Considering all these aspects means to be creatively entrepreneurial because all these elements feed off each other.

As a creative entrepreneur, learning to diversify revenue streams was one of the most important lessons for Lance. It’s a bit like in the music industry where musicians rely on multiple revenue streams. A transmedia producer can generate income through developing technology and licensing it to other areas and industries, building a library of traditionally marketable content, by using her/his experience to get listed as a speaker, consulting or offering creative services for brands or agencies. In Lance’s case, cooperating with brands and private supporters helped funding the USD 25,000 cash and between USD 300,000 and 500,000 in kind needed for technology that Pandemic 1.0 required. The USD 23,000 for a recent project – Robot Heart Stories – were entirely bootstrapped, added with a small amount that was crowdfunded by an IndieGogo campaign. Irrespective of monetary support, Lance sees his Work-Book Project² as a way to pay forward, meaning that members of the community that he had built over years are eager to be a

part of projects and collaborate with him. This brings valuable knowledge and helps reducing costs. For his company Reboot Stories, working with this community of creatives is a business model that is based on both monetary compensation as well as other currencies, such as learning, access or fun. In a changing entertainment landscape, Lance tries to find ways to license collaborators' artworks, so fans can be distribution points and sell it. There are many ideas that are tested right now and one aim is that it can be mutually beneficial in order to sustain what everybody contributes.

Regardless, treating the audience as collaborators brings to the table a discussion on authorship, copyright and creative control. These were concerns raised by faculty in the room. Lance's response on the necessity to change copyright seemed to be much in congruence with most of the students. One tweet said: "Copyright is so 90s." Arguments were that new technologies create a networked reality and share culture that demand international copyright regulations to be changed. It was feared that the lack of understanding among policy-makers about the meaning of new technology for the future of business and global development could not only slow down but break positive developments (cf. protest against SOPA, PIPA and ACTA). Solutions that work at the moment are creative commons licenses and terms of service agreement with users. In Lance's opinion, it's vital to make it known that participatory projects can't be owned by anyone alone. In his view, it's less about ownership and more about harnessing new ways of creating value.

Comparing the current phase of pervasive storytelling to early film days, Lance suggests that production will become easier once the infrastructure is in place to serve as a contextual storytelling engine. Current efforts from creative entrepreneurs, who experiment, research and find ways around what exists, will push this development in both enhancing participation and financial sustainability.

Alongside these discussions, Lance used Pandemic 1.0 as a case to exemplify the making of a dispersed participatory story. Pandemic was very complex and Lance points out that the game could have been done with half of what they did. A central element was a short film that set the scene for the outbreak of a sleep virus that only affected adults. The film was shown at Sundance theatres and as VOD on Fearnert reaching

² A platform and community to foster knowledge and skills around creating, funding, distributing, and sustaining creativity in the 21st century.

20 mio. households, as well as on Youtube (200.000 views) and as a mobile app. The game used the theme of the film in five stages: 1st day, everything is fine, 2nd day, people start feeling sick, 3rd day, the community loses control over the virus, 4th day, all adults are gone, 5th day, is this the end of world?

When designing shared storyworlds, he recommends considering the local environment and what people expect when they come in. They will find it easier to step into your world when you make the path clear and work within the psychology of the given surrounding; in the case of Pandemic 1.0 it was the Sundance film festival. Pandemic had to fit to frequented locations, time allocations and on-location ticketing culture. Smart staffing was crucial to have all elements gear into each other seamlessly as estimating the number of participants was tricky. Lance knew that 40.000 people would attend Sundance, but how many would help fighting the pandemic, especially as the ARG ran for five days was utterly unclear.

To reach out to players, Lance's team used physical objects, online remix tools, mobile applications, secret shows and locations, as well as online/mobile and urban game elements. The most successful game mechanic was a combination of 50 circulating smart phones and a web-based remix tool that would unlock the geo-location of golden objects that were hidden throughout Park City (Sundance location). Online players would unlock the location, receive a phone number and call a player at Sundance to bring the object to mission control. This would slow the spread of the virus.

Mission control was at the heart of the pervasive game. It was a space that monitored all data and let people change the outcome of the pandemic. Imagine an installation with screens covering all four walls, on which the game played out in real time. All the data that was collected through mobile apps and online activities were accumulated and combined what happened between players in Park City and online. Next to mission control people could enter a dark room that had to be illuminated with flashlights. In it were portraits of sleeping people, whose eyes would open if a phone with information on collected items was held in front of them. As a 'prize' players got the story of that person and how it is connected to the object you unlocked for them.

Other elements that carried tasks and aspects of the story were an abandoned car where people left messages for each

other; a connected toy bear with slide viewer, mp3 player, camera and USB port; and water bottles with artistic labels that were the most valuable objects to reduce the risk of the pandemic for everyone. Within the fragmented narrative, 20 actors performed throughout Park City and were filmed in different locations, so characters and scenes could be connected. These characters were scripted through 20 tweets and each actor had 100 tweets to create their narrative. Some actors would die, some would live throughout the story. Additionally, Pandemic tweets ran across the official Sundance twitter channel, causing a little havoc with announcements about shut down airports shut down and late shuttles. All these stories lead the intrepid gamer to a secret Kid Koala show at the end of the 5th day.

Pandemic 1.0 had 250.000 unique visitors on the website and counted over 15.000 tweets. Phones were passed 5000 times, all water bottles and half of the golden objects were found. For the future, the proof of concept shown at Pandemic 1.0 attracts external funding, media and a larger audience for future iterations of the projects. To scale Pandemic in different territories, some of the elements will be dropped and some other mechanics will be installed to improve engagement and flow.

II – Audience Research: Who Do Creatives Encounter?

2.1 Framing The Average

ALEX BINDER, CHEF-PLANNER, JUNG VON MATT

As head of strategy at one of Germany’s largest ad agency, Jung von Matt, Alex Binder presented their 2011 research into the average teen consumer. The study exemplifies the value system and practices of an 18-year-old German male. Data has been collected from surveying 50 current youth studies and publications as well as 20 in-depth interviews with German teens. Most dominant attributes in terms of media consumption are the use of eight different devices on a regular basis. These are game console, mobile phone, TV, PC or Mac, radio and CD player.

Preferred products are playstation or wii, and an LCD flat-screen TV. Smartphones are only used by 30% of youths, which is explained by the comparably still high costs for handhelds. When using media, youths spend most time is spent on the web (138 minutes per day), then TV (128 minutes per day), followed by using mobile phones, listening to music and lastly playing games. This is confirmed by a Nuke InterNetwork survey that states that 52% of regular web-users watch less TV in order to spend more time online. 12% even ditch their friends to spend more time online.

2.2 Capturing the 5%. A Fleeting Image Of AKA-Students

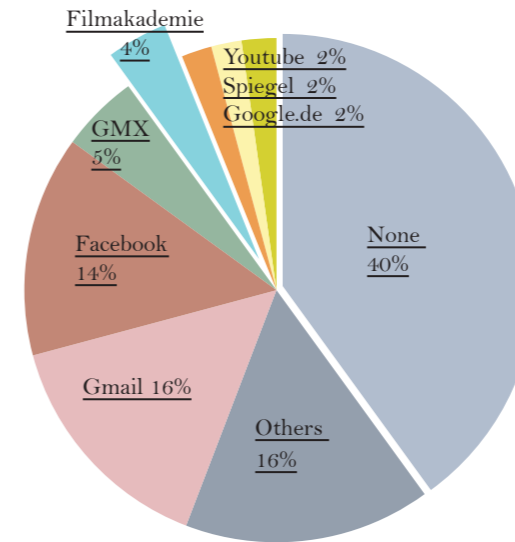
During our kick-off conference we asked 80 Filmakademie students about their daily routines and media preferences. Enquiring about all aspects of a personal lifestyle helps painting a more complete picture of individual consumption on general. These following charts offer room for interpretation, however, they show that even among media savvy students 40% don’t go online right after they get up. A large majority (89%) prefers lean-back content after midnight. The same percentage say they are a multi-device person, which might allude to the fact that all-in-one is not necessarily a preferred option. Although more hours per day are spent analogous, culture and knowledge is consumed largely online, whereas life-managing activities, such as getting groceries, are rather done offline than online. Juxtaposing the quite high amount

It’s worth pointing out that console games are less prioritized than other media. Although Jung von Matt didn’t specify, we can assume that activities on the web and on mobile phones might include games, however, this assumption should be substantiated by Generation 20+ research. Facebook, youtube and Wikipedia are the average young male’s most popular websites and when watching TV he prefers comedy series, such as 2 ½ men.

It should be noted that this study dichotomizes data in a way that extrapolates from even a small majority, ie the average teen is a boy because 51% of German teens are male. This system pervades the study, which is why it can be used as a rough indicator that needs to be substantiated by further qualitative research. Assuming that fragmentation of media leads to an increasingly fragmented society, we can take Jan Mueller as a starting point to ask about differences.

(Research Design and graphic evaluation by Stefanie Larsson)

WHAT IS THE FIRST WEBSITE YOU OPEN AFTER YOU WAKE UP ?



Other sites:

- watchseries.eu
- Piratebay
- Zeit.de
- vimeo.com
- transfermarkt.de
- linkedin
- edk-bw.de
- Skiurlaub
- tagesschau.de
- telepolis.de
- bdfa.de
- Ltur.com
- Yahoo.com

each only accessed once



HOW DO YOU USE YOUR DIGITAL DEVICES AFTER MIDNIGHT ?



+ www
+ Games

11%



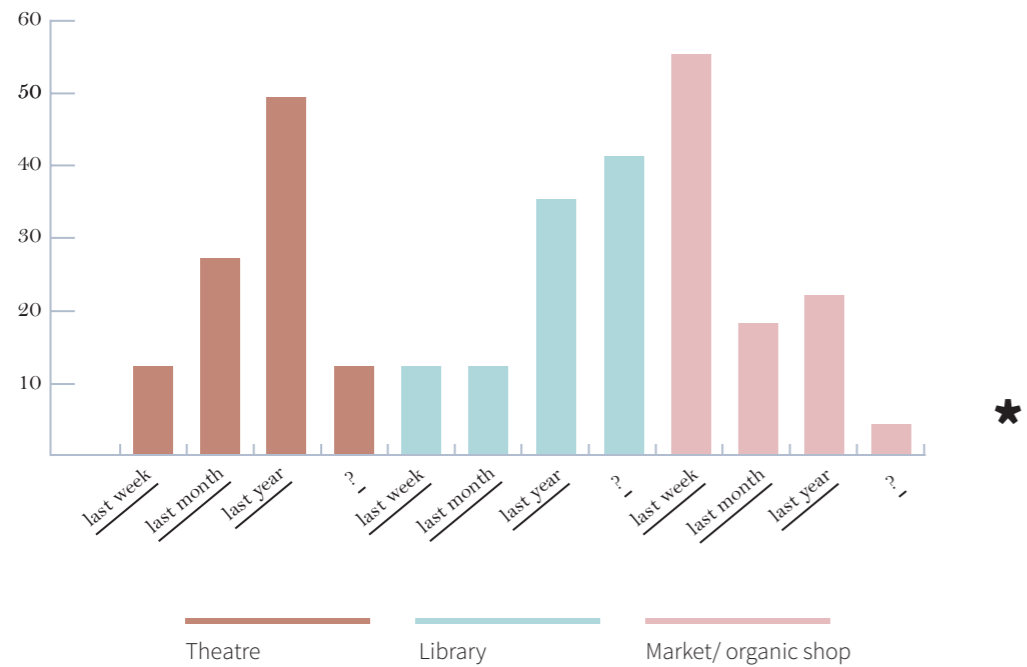
+ Film
+ Internet TV

89%

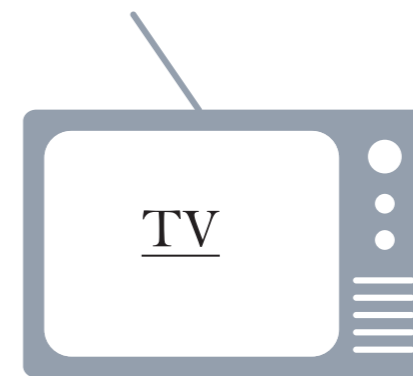


* We asked 80 Filmakademie-students who participated in the first part of Generation 20+

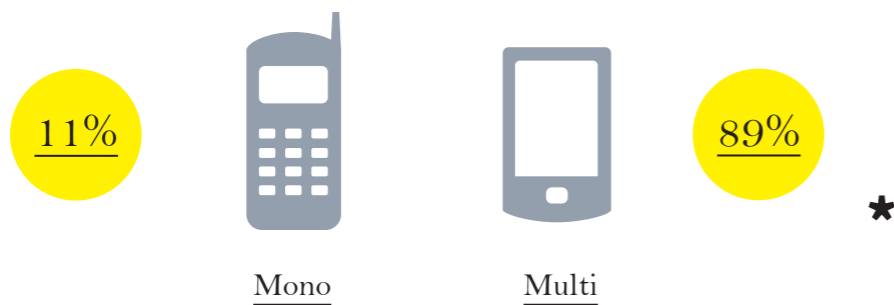
LAST TIME YOU WENT TO THE THEATRE, LIBRARY, MARKET/ORGANIC SHOP ?



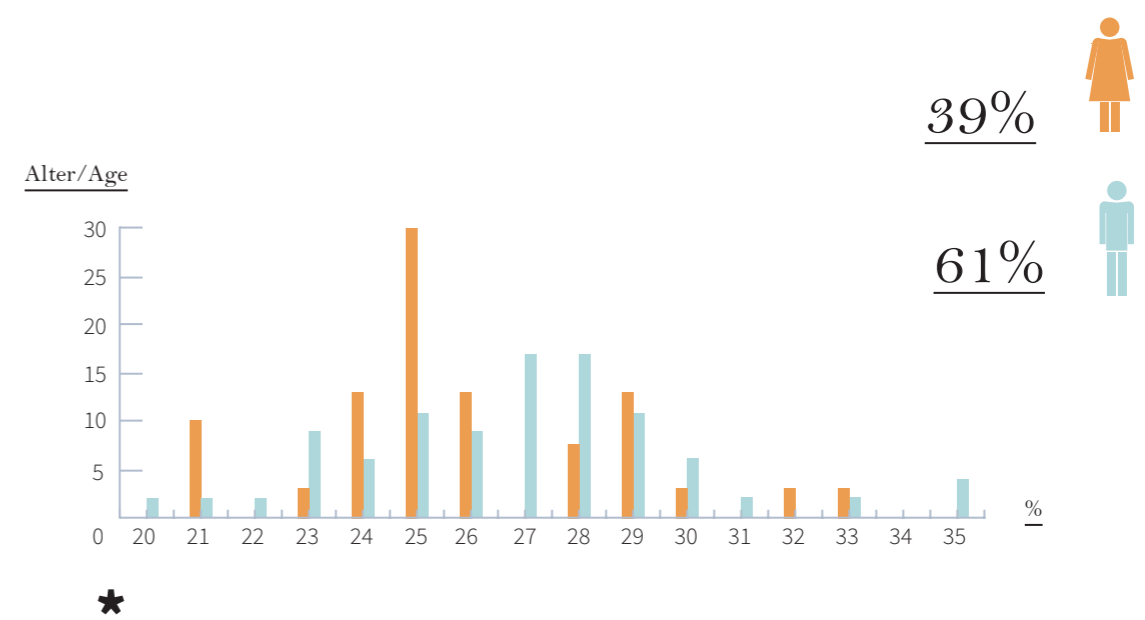
DO YOU OWN A TV ?



ARE YOU A MONO-DEVICE PERSON, OR A MULTI-DEVICE TYPE ?



PERCENTILE OF STUDENTS IN TERMS OF AGE AND GENDER

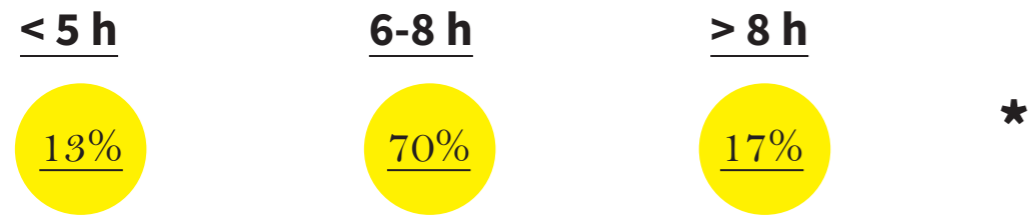


HOW MANY HOURS PER DAY ARE YOU ANALOG OR DIGITAL ?

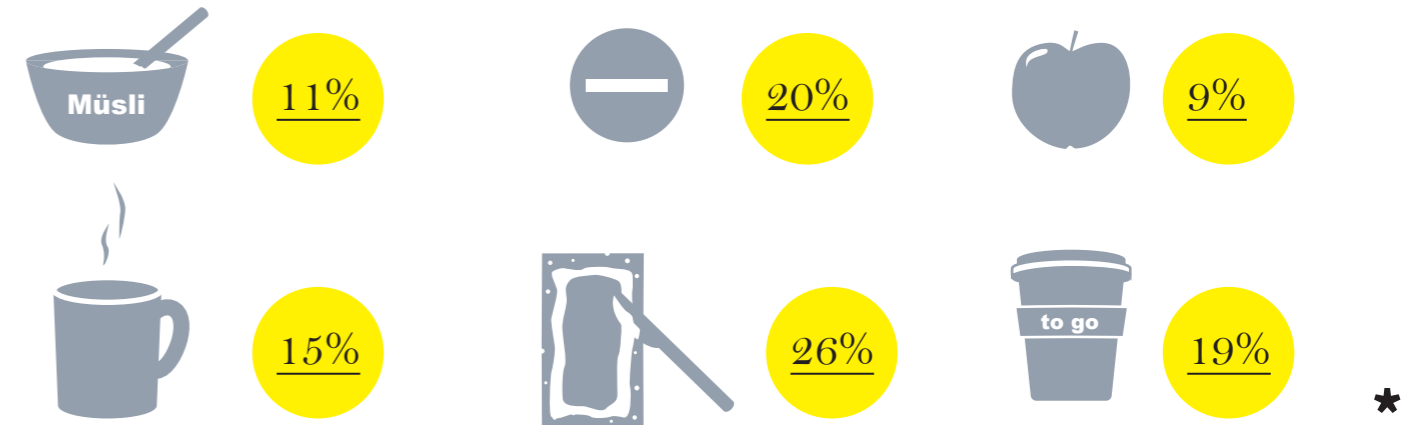


* We asked 80 Filmakademie-students who participated in the first part of Generation 20+

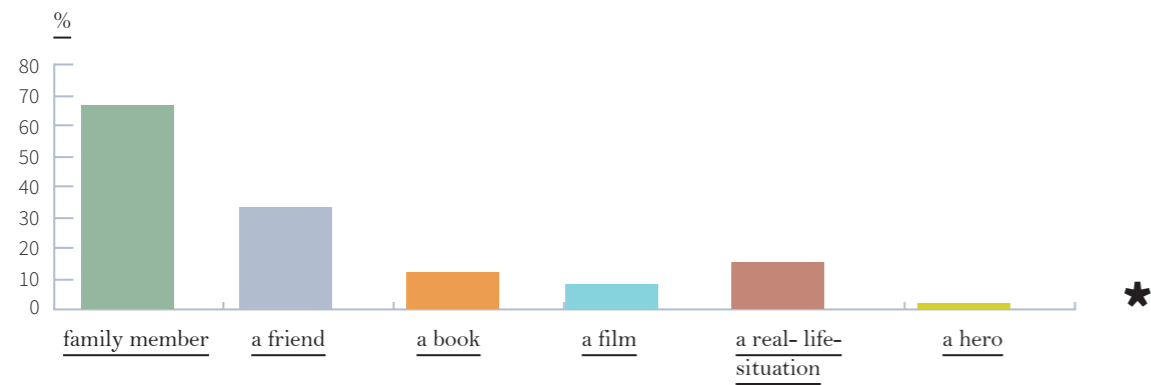
HOW MUCH SLEEP DID YOU GET LAST NIGHT ?



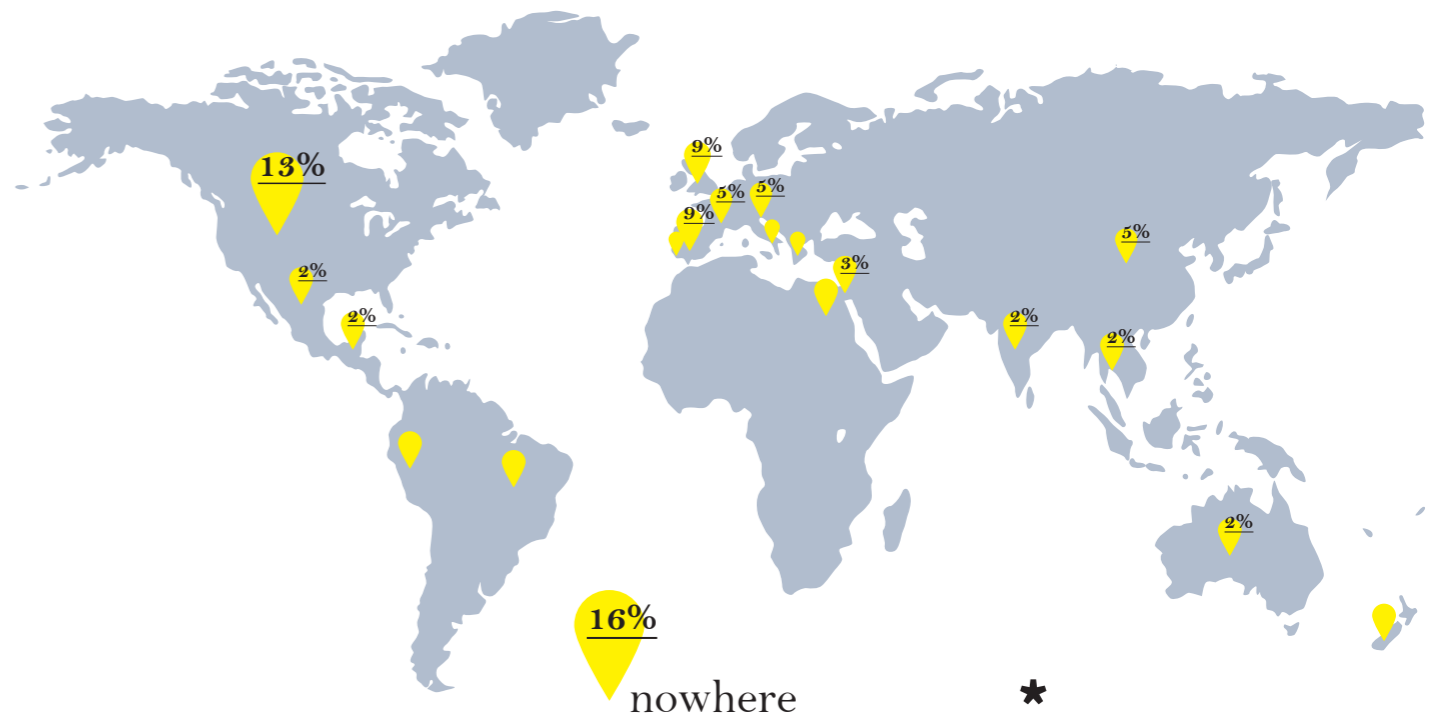
WHAT DO YOU USUALLY EAT FOR BREAKFAST ?



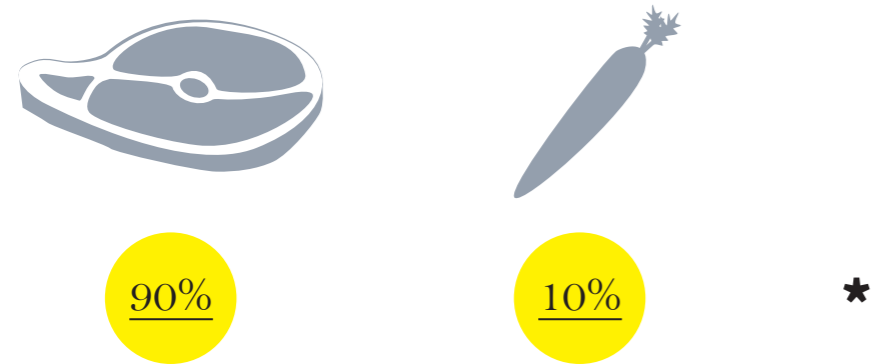
WHO OR WHAT HAD THE GREATEST INFLUENCE IN YOUR LIFE SO FAR ?



HAVE YOU BEEN OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY FOR LONGER THAN A MONTH ?
IF SO, WHERE WERE YOU ?



ARE YOU A VEGETARIAN OR CARNIVORE ?



Students have been outside of Germany for more than a month

* We asked 80 Filmakademie-students who participated in the first part of Generation 20+

2.3 User-Centric Content Design

RAIMO LÄNG, HEAD OF PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT, YLE

Raimo Lång is a program developer, teacher and photographer. His background includes film making, new media design, photography and psychology. He has done research, professional concept development and training on interactive media, particularly about interactive broadcasting and social narration since 1995. His projects include fact and fiction for interactive television and cross-media platforms and design contribution ranges from thematic participatory programs, tool development and interaction design to patented narrative database systems.

Raimo Lång has written and directed several fiction and documentary films for audiences in Finland and abroad. Human non-verbal communication and exploration of narrative structures are emphasized in his documentaries and dramas. Early 2009 he completed a photo project for a travelling exhibition "KI PUN KAU – [non-spaces]", in which he explores 'stretched spaces' in the city that are often outside of usual landscape experience or act of conscious viewing.

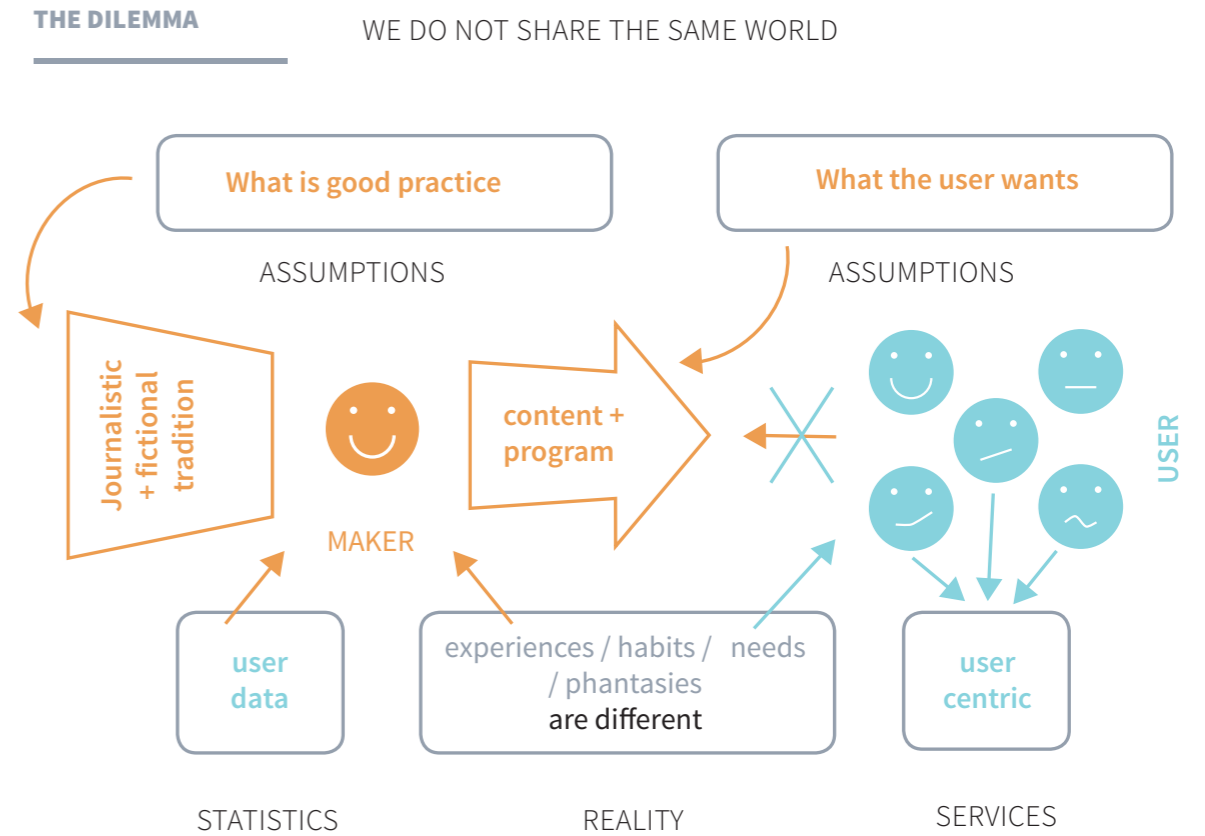
Currently Raimo Lång is the Head of program development and 'zeitgeist' exploration projects at Finnish National Broadcasting Company (YLE), where he also teaches product development for journalists and audiovisual professionals.

The reasons for choosing to implement the user-centric design process created by the Finnish public broadcast YLE in the research phase of the project were:

- 1 "It enables media makers to understand users different to themselves thus address target audiences outside of their familiar context." (Raimo Lang, YLE)
- 2 "Contrary to expensive, quantitative research this is a feasible and affordable, most of all customizable approach for small and mid-sized production studios." (Inga von Staden, projectscope and Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg).

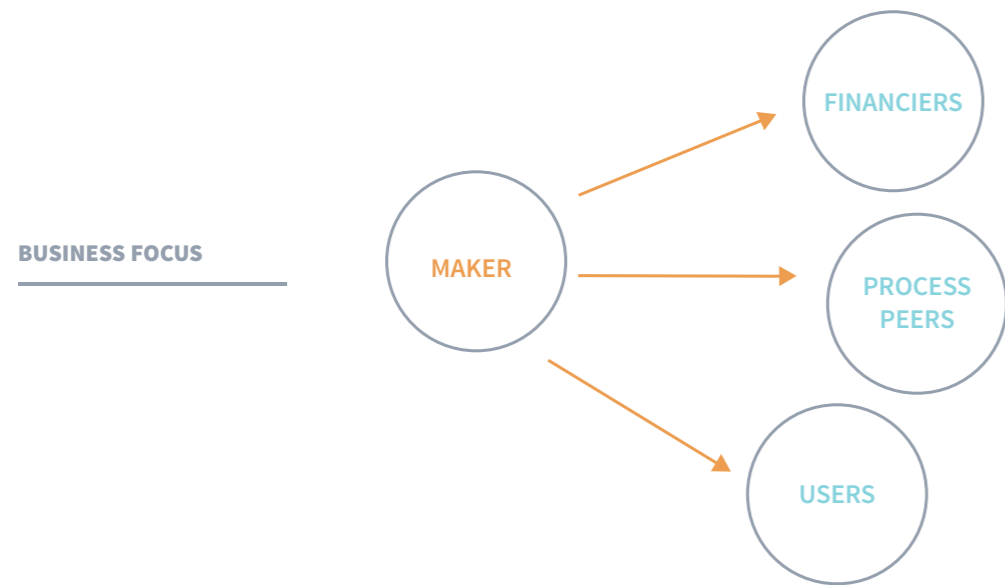
The Dilemma

Media professionals face the dilemma of losing sight of their users. Already in school they learn to serve investors and funders in order to finance their projects. And they learn to cater to their peers for the evaluation of their media products in order to get press coverage and win awards.



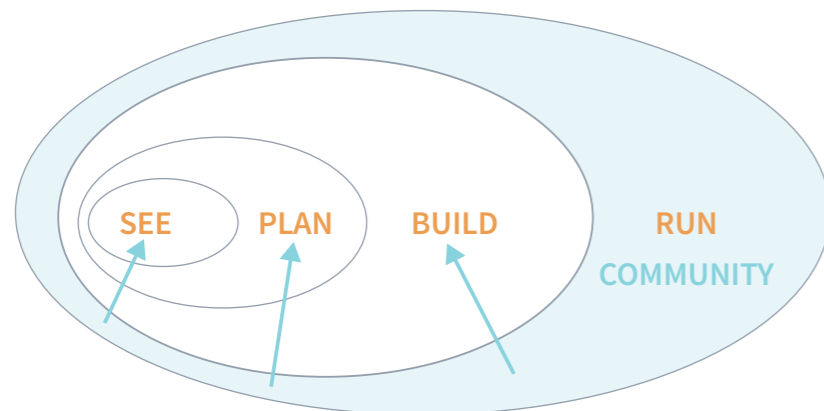
The audience is a far removed parameter most likely viewed through the cold lens of statistics. Assumptions as to the user's interests and needs are based on the personal observations of the media maker that will most often differ from the reality experienced by the user.

With media access shifting from broadcast to the Internet, the audience moves into the foreground. Users (gap-)finance projects via "Kickstarter", engage in a production process through respective communities and support the distribution of a media product by rating and sharing it.



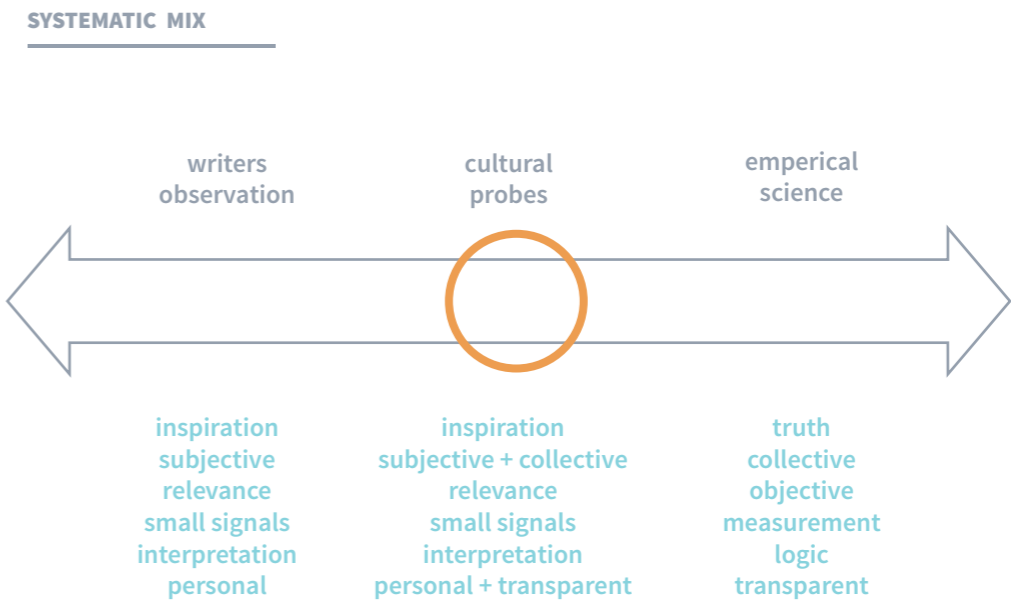
Today creating content means stepping into a direct dialogue with a target group. Thus it becomes (economically) essential to ensure the user can relate to that content. In web lingo this is called “building a community” – building an audience as you create your product.

PRODUCTION PROCESS



The Probe

The question is: “How do you get to know your audience in order to address it?” The methodology developed within YLE is a systematic mix between the personal observations of a creative and the empirically measurable approach of a scientist.

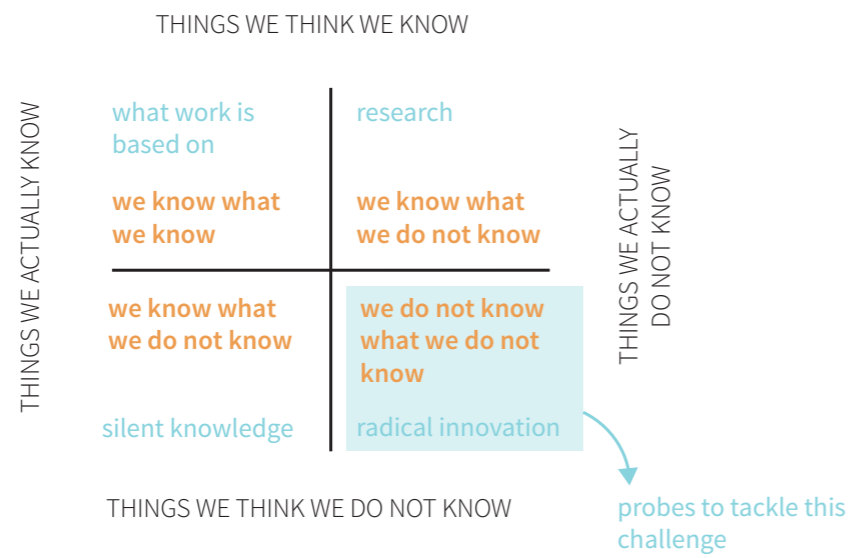


Most quantitative market research investigates human behaviour we are aware of but do not know much about. The aim of a qualitative research is to push beyond our assumptions and probe into social (sub-)groups we were not aware of existed.

This is done with the help of probes. Probes are items that allow for the aggregation of unfiltered personal information, ie a diary, a collector's box or other. They are designed to gain surprising insight about social groups, their interests and their needs. In other words the indirect implications of an answer to a question or task posed via a probe may be of more importance than the answer itself (reading between the lines).

PROBES

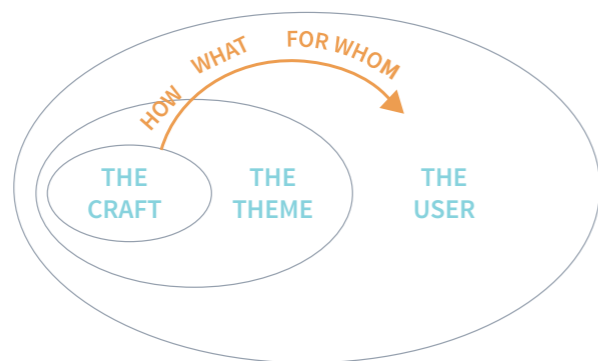
PROMOTING NEW UNDERSTANDING



Inspiration

These insights serve as inspiration. They are by no means a dictation to be taken at face value as to what is to be created and how. They are seeds for creative play within a professionalized media development process as any good conversation among experts will be or the thorough investigation into a chosen theme.

INSPIRATION



Experiential Learning @ Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg

The process Raimo Lang, Head of Development at Finnish public broadcaster YLE, has designed and leads at YLE and as implemented at the Filmakademie is based on a hybrid model that draws on experiential learning and applied practice. Its core elements are a mix of user-centric design, ethnography and production modelling. Finland is known as a forerunner of design thinking and YLE has used this approach to develop 70-80 user profiles since 2005. Considering the rapidly changing media landscape, these profiles are relatively short lived (2-4 years depending on age group), however, the accuracy and depth give striking evidence of thorough qualitative research that can deliver interesting starting points for content development as well as larger scale quantitative studies.

Other institutions researching and developing user-centric design are:

www.ds.school.stanford.edu

www.ulab.org.au

www.learnshare.net

The altogether, the three workshops at the Filmakademie stretched over 6 months, with an initial research lab in July, an evaluation workshop in October and a production lab in November 2012. The first two workshops were attended by the same 10 students (departments “Interactive Media” and “Motion Design”). They each created an individual case to focus on. The third workshop asked other students to implement the collected data into their content development process. This three-partite pilot was an experiment and proved its concept on various levels.

a)

The students expressed and showed a significant transformation in both their personal judgement and production practice, because they gained insights they would normally not get. For example, most students said that the character they investigated is not a person they would hang out with, yet they spent intensive time with them and learned very personal facets of their personality. The process helped foster an emphatic relationship.

It was equally important for the students to learn about the method as well as understanding that each user is much more than the perceived typecast. Engaging intensively with the depth, complexity and diversity of a single human being is of growing importance as media channels and formats diversify, too. Essentially, with an ever more diversified social landscape, content will have to be tailored for large YET specified audiences at the same time.

b)

The data sets show personality traits and habits that – due to the nature of the method – cannot be delivered by quantitative research in the same depth and complexity. For example, we encountered that family is valued over money, yet demographics show that more Germans than ever live as full-time working singles. Such insights are food for thought and inspire the investigation into related themes.

Designing the audience

The July session gave students a method to approach their audience. Over the course of three days, the group of 10 went through 2x2 steps:

- 1 the students collected and categorized questions;
- 2 which they refined and used to design questionnaires (booklets);

- 1 they developed imaginary characters they were interested in;
- 2 and searched for this type of person in real life.

The purpose of this exercise was for the students to categorize and engage exactly those character types that they find hard to understand, but who are a significant audience for their content. They created knowledge based on work group curiosity: what would I like to know, see or ask from this person that I have no relation to? They listed all his or her personal associations, curiosity and questions; and defined 10-12 demographical, life style and mental criteria to describe an interesting set of alpha-characters.

(alpha-character = early adopter or person that incorporates several potential life situational qualities that applies to many people).

The process has three significant principles

- a. it's subjective, systematic and transparent;
- b. each step is cross-evaluated to ensure that all interests are included;
- c. knowledge interest and exercise are balanced by verbalizing one's curiosity. This is done by transcending questions into practice.

The process is not always straight forward, which is part of its strength. At times, students felt lost, which sparks lateral thinking because there was no clear path to follow, but a wide array of possibilities to experiment with.

“THE BEAUTY OF RAIMO’S STRATEGY IS THE AHA-MOMENT AFTERWARDS, WHEN YOU SEE THAT INNER CONFLICT, PROBLEMS, SUCCESSES AND PSYCHOLOGY WERE ALL INTERWOVEN IN A COMPLEX WAY. WE GOT THERE BY REPEATING STEPS AGAIN AND AGAIN BUT WITH DIFFERENT ANGLES AND THEMES.” *STUDENT*

July Day 1

“What would you ask someone you don’t relate to at all? That was our starting point. First we collected 100s of questions we would ask people aged 20-30. Next we clustered our questions and filtered patterns. Using our cosmos of questions we teamed up in groups of two to develop fictional characters. In order to make characters complex we gave them one or two twists, asking ourselves: what are unique characteristics that make this person’s day pleasant? What’s this person’s passion?” *Student*

July Day 2

“On day 2, we returned to our profiles and shuffled them in larger groups, so that everyone engaged with a different fictional person. We made each other’s characters even more complex by adding more layers and peculiarities. Often we had to remind ourselves not to get too absurd, so that we could actually find these people in real life.” *Student*

“Most of us drew from people we knew; people we find strange or had heard of, but couldn’t make any sense of.” *Student*

July Day 3

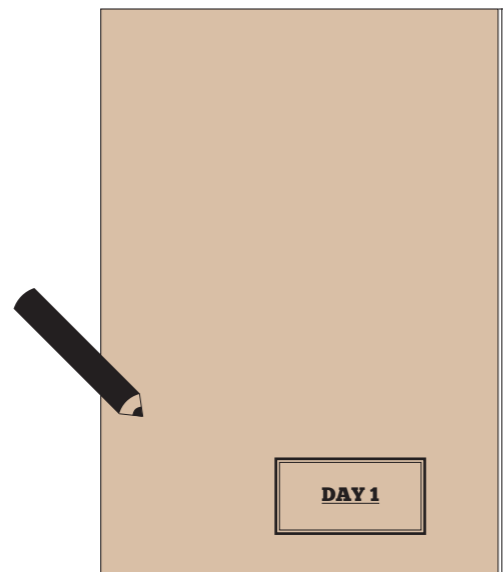
“Lastly we designed the booklets that would be given to our ‘fictional characters.’ For the 10-day trial we designed 1 booklet for each day with 6-7 questions each. We returned to our questions from day 1 for inspiration and included inquiries around media habits, but also around personal likes, dislikes, idiosyncrasies, self-perception, interests, images as well as skills and knowledge. Each page was designed differently, so the participants could answer using multiple media including collages, drawings, photos, diagrams and tables.” *Student*

After each student had chosen one character they would try to find a person that matched their imagination by and large. The students were successful at it and found 10 individuals of all walks of life, who were willing to participate in the 10-day trial.

“THE PERSON I FOUND MATCHED MY FICTIONAL CHARACTER SURPRISINGLY WELL. THE ONLY DIFFERENCE WAS THAT I HAD THOUGHT OF A FREELANCE DJ INSTEAD OF A FREELANCE DESIGNER. BUT THAT WAS FINE AS BOTH ARE CREATIVE ENTREPRENEURIAL TYPES.” *STUDENT*

The Booklets

Data was collected using probes in the form of A5 booklets with daily exercises and questions to dig deeper into the participants' media habits and personalities. The booklets were designed in a collective effort between the students, both during the July workshop and the following fortnight. They turned interests into informant exercises, including writing, drawing, collaging, photographing (exercises should be projective, narrative, systemic or include design elements). After creating app. 70 exercises, they prioritized and organized them into a timeline of 10 days to ensure a fun but deepening self reflection for informant experience about her/him self.



Outline of the booklets

Day 1 – 2:
Warming up, telling basic things about oneself, getting inspired

Day 3 – 5:
Really starting to jump into the world of the exercise book, self-reflection in participant has started

Day 6 – 8:
Intense work period, deep issues, more reflection, intense large exercises

Day 9 – 10:
Resolution, participants create a conclusion about themselves, large issues

Exercise formats

- Writing
- Photography
- Drawing
- Mindmapping
- Collaging
- Graphic representations
- Filling in graphic exercises

Exercise types

- Definitions
- Planning
- Reactions
- Routine charts
- Telling key tools, routines, sources
- Process charts
- Reporting facts
- Telling desires
- Life management details
- Recommendations
- Moments (greater than life, disgust, fear)
- Prioritization
- Situation (what would you do?)
- Elements of good life
- Observation through senses
- Valuation collages
- Descriptive representation
- Cannot live without...
- Tree of life ... fill it
- Cultural weapon ... use it
- Cultural resource ... use it
- Get a programmer, what's your dream software
- Daily content: learning, entertainment

Testing the booklets showed that it took 10-15 minutes each day to complete the tasks and questions in the booklet. Two students improved the first draft by changing the order, wording and templates because they encountered some fuzziness around flow and contents.

The 10-day research period

Once designed, tested, layouted and printed, the booklets were then handed (via snail mail or personal delivery) to the participants. Communication between researchers and participants was sparse but happened occasionally to clarify questions or because the test person sent photos electronically instead of printing and inserting them into the booklet. Some books were sent back with a delay, however, all in all 90% of the materials were returned and completed by the participants. An incentive was the personal contact between researcher and participant as well as a 50 Euro reward for the effort. After the books returned, each student reviewed the

data and made a preliminary analysis. Only after completing this initial report did the students visit their participant (in one exception the conversation had to take place via skype).

The interviews

Based on information in the booklet, students lead semi-structured interviews, which took from 1-3 hours.

1. Read the exercise book 2-3 times.

make notes:

- + what interests you? raises your curiosity? would you like to know more on certain material or non-material things about that person?
- + is something making you admire character or surprised about her/his actions? why?
- + is something making you irritated or embarrassed? why? what assumption do you make?
- + what details you would like to uncover more?
- + what remains unclear, you do not get enough information from the book and you would like to get?
- + do you get the feeling how this person operates or thoughts? what would need more to create that feeling?
- + why and what media she/he uses? for different purposes like learning, having fun and relaxing?
- + how is the character active in web? why?
- + to what (different) social spheres is the person participating? in what role? anything unclear?
- + last but not least: what turns her/him mentally on? passions, obsessions?

A short field memo after a meeting was the reality check: are my attitudes based on the interpretation about the person real? If I got curious about some details in the person, what and why is that?

“MY PARTICIPANT WAS CERTAINLY NOT THE TYPE I’D NORMALLY SPEND AN EVENING WITH, BUT AFTER I WENT THROUGH THE PROCESS I UNDERSTOOD THEIR INTERNAL LOGIC AND MOTIVATIONS MUCH BETTER THAN WITH SOME OF MY FRIENDS.” *STUDENT*

Students found their participants to be very open and honest. In addition to content taken straight from the answers, students were required to read between the lines and make a connection between seemingly unrelated aspects of their participant’s lives.

An example Raimo told from his research at YLE was about a baker, who owned his own bakery. Everyone respected him, because they assumed that he had built his empire from scratch. During the interviews it turned out that he had inherited a great deal of money. The whole image about the man changed and was perceived as much more hedonistic now, and not like a working hero. Knowing this, affected how his attitudes were assessed after the interview. It’s details like these that statistics often miss, but which are crucial to understanding social dynamics and behaviour. In agreement, students reported that their interviews refined the psychological depth and complexity of the profiles significantly.

III – Applied Research

3.1 Evaluation

For the second part of the research workshop, the same group of students came back together in early October 2012. Beforehand, they prepared a personal evaluation of their character probes and interviews. To get a grasp of the overall results, the booklets were dispersed among five groups of two researchers each. This way each student looked at someone else’s material. To create visual psychographs the students retrieved and sorted responses according to the very patterns they had delineated at the outset when they designed the books. Answers to those categories were scattered across the booklets in order to cross-proof responses.

Categories were:

- + family, love and relationships
- + daily routines and media usage
- + consumption habits
- + approaching stories and content
- + general likes and dislikes
- + education

In particular students looked for:

- + weaknesses
- + strengths
- + key life values
- + sense of time and daily life management
- + routines and specials
- + fears and hopes
- + plans and projects
- + media habits
 - relation to content, information
 - relation to stories, characters etc.
 - relation to aesthetics
 - relation to design, user tools and interfaces
 - social web roles, activities
 - relation to media usage/creation tools

First, large overview posters were created, followed by even larger (A0) charts that included parts of the drawings, collages, diagrams and photos the participants had contributed.

Results

Generally, none of these results can be seen as representative. For example, only 8 of the 9 informants indicated to own a tablet or smart device. In contrast, the 2012 JIM study on media habits of 12-19 year-old suggests that every second tween accesses the Internet also via a smart phone. This is 20% more than in 2011 and corresponds with the general proliferation of smart devices in Germany. Observations made with social probes are snapshots into certain pockets of society. This explains why some of them don’t match the results of larger quantitative studies. Yet such

gaps raise awareness. The findings that only 8 of 9 informants had a smart device made the students reconsider whether they should creating content for smart phones and tablets. Who exactly were they creating for? As creators they are driven by the fact, that it is comparatively easy to produce media for IOS devices and the App-Store allows you to distribute directly without going through a publisher. The students began taking a closer look at who it exactly is that is using an IOS device, how and why.

“AFTER THIS EXPERIENCE, I’LL GO OUT AND INTERVIEW PEOPLE WHO FULFIL CONDITIONS FOR MY CURRENT PROJECT (SMARTPHONE OWNER, GAME-AFFINITY...) IN THE SAME WAY WE DID WITH THE G20+ PROJECT.”

STUDENT

Other general conclusions in were:

- + each informant cultivated some form of fetish or other:
 - c. how are these time and emotion consuming interests compatible with work and family life?
 - d. how do media play into this phenomenon?
- + a paradox became apparent between the individualist (and often solitary) life style of all informants and the high value they attribute to family
 - c. how is this apparent need fulfilled?
 - d. what role does media have in this?

Without disclosing too much personal detail, these were some traits and characteristics that were found as a generalized outcome.

Demographics:

- 2 female, 6 male
- ¼ have a migration background
- ¼ are born in Germany but live abroad
- ¼ are born in the former GDR

Personality:

- ½ are extrovert
- ⅓ are clearly egocentric
- ⅔ are self-confident
- ⅔ are lonely
- Most of which are lonely are also egocentric with one being self-confident. However, only one egocentric character is also identified as self-confident.

- ¾ says family is important
- how do we interpret with a view to media consumption that many said, family is more important than their career?

- ½ without both parents (divorced or passed away)
- both, those who feel lonely and those who don’t, equally said that family matters to them. Our data shows no correlation between parental situation and loneliness or family values.

- ¼ freelancers, one of which is out of work.
- ½ out of work at the moment
- ¾ has academic education, with no correlation to work/no work.

Looking into preferred media designs and formats, participants showed the following combinations:

FORMAT

- + hero story, fancy costumes
- + comedy, soft entertainment, infotainment
- + dating, social game, intellectual dating
- + brain vs. body, porn vs. taxi driver
- + hero story, fancy costumes, infotainment, crime, nice pictures
- + fantasy, documentaries
- + fantasy, crime, strong emotions, whole universes, no tv
- + comedy, infotainment

DESIGN

- + high key design
- + LG-brand design, intuitive, green-design
- + he likes to control things, black heavy metal
- + intuitive, „analogue“
- + smart TV, ready to click, more for more
- + romantic mechanics, interest before intuitive, good menus
- + interest before intuitive, good menus, second screen
- + everything in one device, tablet with mouse, intuitive, „times new roman“, second screen

Students reported that spending time with their data, putting various aspects into the context of that person’s life sparked ideas and made them think differently about what kind of content that person would be interested in. It’s “thinking out of one’s own skin” – empathy – that ethnography can provide. A catalogue of such juxtapositions would eventually lead to a deeper understanding of the diversity within the individual user, and thus the diversity within a culture.

Pastime:

- ½ use facebook a lot
- ½ play games
- ½ have a specific interest in photography
- ¼ have a specific interest in design
- ¾ use VOD, but only
- ¼ mention youtube while
- ½ watch TV
- All informants use VOD (video on demand). They watchTV and movie formats selectively on various channels, be it TV, DVD, cinema or the web.
- ⅓ read books
- Many mention to have a fetish, which raises the question which role their fetish has for their general consumption habits.

Other hobbies mentioned are:

- + Gay scene
- + Sport and poetry, volunteer work, animals, vegetarian
- + Magic, music, swinger club
- + Writing, movies, porn
- + Cosplay, astronomy, mechanics
- + Sport, reading, poetry, violine, kickboxing, engagement
- + Cosmetics

3.2 Implementing Data Into Project Development (Content Lab)

In November 2012 students from the departments “Documentary Film”, “Television Journalism”, “Interactive Media” and “Motion Design” came together for a third workshop (Content Lab) also facilitated by Raimo Lang. He was joined by documentary filmmaker and Oscar nominee Dror Moreh (“The Gatekeepers”) as well as participatory video propagator Nick Lunch, CEO of Insight Share.

The goal of the 4-day process was to ideate and shape rough concepts for non-fiction transmedia formats, and to include the character profiles that were developed throughout the research workshop. After an introduction to documentary and transmedia production, the students broke into groups to find their themes, subjects and characters. After a first rough draft the students were presented with the results of the Generation 20+ research workshop. As media producers they had a double benefit by engaging with these cultural probes:

A) they could use hooks and details they found in the probes to enrich their themes and subjects, which helped to address wider or more specific audiences

B) they were inspired to enrich their content. The premise was that one theme should contain more than one story and feature two or three unique aspects to help unfold its complexity. The students were advised to engage with the probes. Raimo suggested that 2x2 hours should suffice to get a good grasp of the probes and how to implement them. The premise was not to think of complete probes but to take aspects that could spice up a theme.

“WE USE THE STUDY AS A STARTING POINT TO FOCUS OUR TARGET GROUP. THE RESULTS WERE A BASIS FOR DISCUSSION AND ANCHOR FOR CONVERSATIONS WITH THE KIND OF PEOPLE WE WANTED TO ADDRESS. IN ANOTHER PROJECT I MORPHED THE RESEARCH PROCESS INTO AN ANALYSIS THAT COMBINES TARGET GROUP AND MARKET IN FORM OF A QUESTIONNAIRE AND PARTICIPATORY OBSERVATION. WE WON GREAT INSIGHTS, WHICH WE IMPLEMENTED INTO THE CLIENT’S PROJECT DESIGN.” *STUDENT*

The students paired up and created a “life field map” (mixture of mind-map, thematic information chart and mood-board) of every informant. They reflected on “what are their strengths and weaknesses, what they want, what they avoid, what they should learn or do.” Furthermore they identified media habits: “what content they use, and in which manner, through which device; how the media habits are linked to a daily routine;

what kind of needs there are for rational/emotional, pragmatic/mythical experiences; what the mixture are of individual and shared media modes.” Finally the students reflected on what inspired them about the informant and what they as content designers could offer this person.

“I WAS UTTERLY FASCINATED TO SEE WHICH SEEMINGLY MINUTE ASPECTS IN AN INDIVIDUAL CAN ENRICH MY CONTENT SIGNIFICANTLY.” *STUDENT*

Ideally media makers should use such probes at the outset of a content development process. If they integrate the study of probes later into the process, they are recommended to find aspects in the profiles that can be used to lure a viewer into a topic that the person may not be interested in per se. The creative team should ask itself what the points of interest are - whether it be style, perspective, context or other - through which the informant could be addressed.

“THE DATA SETS WERE REALLY HELPFUL FOR MY DIPLOMA PROJECT. I WONDERED HOW I COULD GENERATE INTEREST FOR POLITICAL TOPICS. THE PROFILES SHOWED LITTLE INTEREST FOR POLITICAL ISSUES, SO WE LOOKED FOR HOOKS IN THOSE PROFILES THAT WE CAN COMBINE WITH OUR CONTENT, EITHER IN TERMS OF STRUCTURE OR DELIVERY. SPECIFICALLY WE CHANGED OUR CONCEPT SO THAT WE NOW RESPOND TO THE FACT THAT MOST PARTICIPANTS EXPRESSED ENJOYING VISUAL CUES TO DIGEST COMPLEX INFORMATION. THIS WAY WE CREATED A SECOND LAYER OF ATTRACTION ON TOP OF CONTENT.” *STUDENT*

At a later stage, students expanded their documentary formats. They transmedialized and widened their concepts to tailor their production to a multi-faceted audience.

“THE PROJECT MADE ME THINK WIDER ABOUT TARGET GROUPS, OR RATHER THE INDIVIDUALS IT CONSISTS OF. AT THE SAME TIME I LOOK AT MY PROJECTS NOW AND TIE IN ODD INTERESTS I FIND IN PEOPLE THAT BELONG TO A GROUP I ADDRESS.” *STUDENT*

In order to add interactive components they now had to go even deeper into their understanding of the informants in order to engage them beyond mere cognition: “Add something to get your audience active!”

“BASED ON WHAT WE LEARNED ABOUT OUR SUBJECT, WE DEVELOPED CONTENT THAT TAKES INTO ACCOUNT A PERSONAL NEED THAT WE WOULDN’T HAVE KNOWN OTHERWISE.” *STUDENT*

Every 2-3 hours the class would come back together to evaluate each other’s work and listen to short lectures. Nick Lunch introduced the practice of Participatory Video. He stated that engaging an audience requires great insight and empathy into every individual and showed how this was done with Participatory Video. Dror Moreh balanced the input by reminding the students of how important passion is for a media-maker. Without a passion for the project, the two years that it takes to create a documentary can turn into hell.

As a last step, the students got to present their concepts. They were encouraged to take the methodologies learned and the ideas they came up with in the Content Lab into further development and production.

“I SPECIFICALLY LIKE THE CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT. IT INSPIRED ME TO USE IT FOR MY DIPLOMA. I ASK MYSELF WHO’S INTERESTED AND HOW CAN I FIT MY CONTENT TO THEIR NEEDS. THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS WE LEARNED BY DOING THIS STUDY WAS PHENOMENAL. IT’S ONLY DOWNSIDE IS THAT I DOUBT I’LL BE ABLE TO DO IT AS EFFECTIVELY ANYWHERE ELSE OUTSIDE THE FILMAKADEMIE, IN A PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENT.” *STUDENT*

A Wrap: Where To From Here?

In January 2013 the results of the process “Generation 20+” were presented to a professional audience of film- and television directors and producers and commissioning editors from the two German public broadcasting stations ARD (represented by WDR and SWR) and ZDF. After an introduction as to why the process was implemented at the school (Inga von Staden) and a description of the process as to how it used in YLE (Raimo Lang), students presented results of the research and some of the ideas and formats developed in the final workshop.

The response was enthusiastic. The attendees understood it to be a feasible and affordable process to facilitate a better understanding of their increasingly fragmented audiences. Several of the participants asked to become actively involved if the process were to be repeated. Others were interested in content development workshops (Content Labs) based on the research results. Furthermore there was great interest in a documentation of the process.

“WE ALL WOULD BENEFIT IMMENSELY FROM A DOCUMENTATION THAT COMPILES GUIDELINES, PAPERS AND MATERIALS WE USED AND DESIGNED. THAT WAY I COULD GO BACK AND USE IT SYSTEMATICALLY.”
STUDENT

Conclusion

General conclusions in terms of research design are:

- + the effort has led to valuable qualitative data for the students and also indicates niches that could be explored through more qualitative and quantitative analysis.
- + students improved their sensitivity for audience needs
- + the presentation of results was well received by film- and television producers as well as commissioning editors from the two German public broadcasters
- + to continue the effort in the form of a formal research process at the school and to expand it by
 - involving other departments of the school
 - setting up workshops (Content Labs) based on the insights of the research with students, film- and television producers as well as commissioning editors from the two German public broadcasters to develop meaningful content and new formats

Lessons Learned

The lessons learned by all stakeholders involved in the process were:

- + Unless gently pushed to probe beyond our scope, we remain locked into our preconceptions.
- + In order to inspire media makers to step into a dialogue with representatives of their potential target groups they need to experience that process as something fun. Statistical data on target groups is not considered fun or inspiring.
- + Once the social probes (booklets) had been developed, the students started having fun with the research.
- + More transparency of the process and a better introduction into quantitative and qualitative research methods would have helped the students contextualize their research work.
- + The students should be involved in such research projects earlier in their studies program in order to make full use of gained insights for their diploma projects.
- + Sharing the insights from the research with other students and/or professional partners (film- and television production studios, public broadcasters) should be given enough time before going into content development.
- + More time is needed to integrate the results of the research into content development.

Outlook

Due to the positive feedback the Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg got from students and professionals attending in the final presentation, the school plans to repeat the process. In order to do so, regional administration and public broadcasters will be approached to discuss a formal cooperation. The goal is to:

- 1 implement a user-centric approach in the curriculum to prepare students better for a media landscape with increasingly fragmented audiences.
- 2 share the insights gained with public broadcasters to enable co-production of meaningful content.
- 3 professionalize media-makers by introducing them to affordable research methodologies.

In order to expand and continue the effort,

- + more departments – most importantly “TV Journalism” and “TV Series” – should become more engaged.
- + the experiences of the last process should be communicated to the next group of students to the new group of students to build a tradition and optimize the design and flow of the process.
- + different participants of the same target group could be addressed with refined questions based on the findings of the last process (ie family values, fetish or smart phone aversion)
- + the informants and their respective communities could be engaged via participatory video techniques, as introduced by Nick Lunch during the Content Lab. This provides insight into the groups the informants represent.
- + the informants and their respective communities could be engaged in evaluating the content developed based on the research.
- + other target groups could be addressed, ie since “family values” were a prevalent issue for all participants in the study, “families” could a relevant field to explore.
- + the findings of the last process could be followed up on with a quantitative study done in partnership with a larger institution or company.

Confidentiality

All material generated in dialogue with representatives of the Target Group (Informants) is strictly confidential and will be safeguarded.

The material will be used by participating students to create their audiovisual interpretation of the results. Exemplary material may be showcased in the ensuing labs together with the presentation of the interpretations to inspire other students in their creative process. The material will then be taken back to be safeguarded by Filmakademie staff.

