WATCHING WITH THE WORLD

Television Audiences and Online Social Networks

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9 March 2011
Introduction: What is the television audience?

The landscape of television technology today is in constant fluctuation. With the development of Internet-based technology combined with broadcast television – everything from the DVR to IPTV to Over The Top (OTT) options like Netflix and YouTube – the options for television distribution and consumption are numerous and fragmented. The television audience also has experienced fragmentation, across cable networks (Napoli 2003) and now away from traditional broadcast schedules, turning instead to online options like Hulu. So how do we define the television audience in an era of chaos?

The television audience has been conceptualized along various theoretical and practical lines. Both Ang (1991) and Mosco (1996) argue that the television audience is a product of the industry, lacking any social context beyond demographic groupings. Ang (1991) notes that, over twenty years ago, characterized through a representative ratings system, the actual viewers watching television were invisible conceptually and technologically to the television industry. In a much different televisual area, today it is more valuable to look at practices like information sharing to define audiences. While the industry has adopted more detailed studies, such as the use of focus groups to calibrate concepts, examining practices invokes further theoretical issues. Lunt and Livingstone (1996) question whether the audience should be defined as a group of individuals that share common behaviors of watching TV or as a collective that engages with one another. If characterized by group dynamics, Livingstone (1998) also asks if the audience represents a unified group or a diverse set of subgroups. In response, I approach the label of “audience” as a malleable category that encompasses varying behaviors yet unifies diverse participants around media and information while moving beyond statistical extrapolations and outdated abstractions.

The ratings systems used dominantly by the television industry fix the television audience as a group that exhibits one behavior: watching television programming. However, media audiences actually exhibit a range of practices beyond mere viewing, such as evaluating media, discussing topics socially, generating content, sharing information, attending fan events, and even leaving the room during a TV show. While the concept of television audiences as constructed by television ratings remains valuable for certain purposes, it does not account for the diverse range of behaviors in which audiences participate. These other behaviors beyond simply watching television are valuable for understanding how and why viewers connect with and mobilize around media content, providing more productive feedback about audience interest and value.

Media institutions define audiences by exposure, but these metrics only account for estimations of audiences and do not reflect why audiences are drawn to certain content. C3 Researcher Sheila Seles (2010) instead calls for the industry to recognize audience expression over impression because expressive behaviors show why audiences engage in the first place: “[I]nstead of letting the outmoded concept of “exposure” or the Internet misnomer “impression” dictate the value of the audience, we need to understand TV viewing as an expressive process.”
This paper aims to address the expressive and participatory practices of online television audiences. Television audience participation online has been radically shifting to new forms of practice over the past decade as more and more users interact with the Web and other Internet-connected services. Prior to these recent trends, most participation online revolved around television “communities,” where fans primarily interacted with other fans. However, with the rise of social network sites, viewers are constructing a more-social ecosystem that will affect how current and future audiences engage and identify with television content. Rather than a group of likeminded strangers, users on social network sites (SNS) are connected to others they know. Likewise, SNS provide opportunities to perceive trends across large populations and wide ranges of viewers. By mapping out the evolution of television audiences’ participatory spaces and practices, this memo outlines the evolving technical and social ecosystem that mediates audience participation online.

**Background: The Ever-Changing Internet**

To understand current television audiences’ behaviors, we must look at the distinct differences in the trends of user practices between the rise of social network sites (defined below) and the online platforms that preceded them. The largest difference of these older Internet audiences is the participation by these audiences in online communities. The adoption of the Internet in the 1990s – most notably via Bulletin Board Systems, Usenet, newsgroups, and eventually Web forums – allowed for sustained discussion among fans of television programming through textual conversations. Through these online systems, television viewers formed communities dedicated toward the exchange of information around broadcast television, before online video and streaming found their way into technical infrastructure.

Early research concerned with online television communities focused on these communities of users situated within platforms such as forums or newsgroups, particularly those dedicated to the discussion of various television shows. Drawing from Lave and Wenger (1991), C3 Consulting Researcher Nancy Baym describes how users came together in a “community of practice” on the Usenet board rec.arts.tv.soaps with an interest in discussing television-related topics with like-minded individuals (Baym 2000: 21-22). Baym defines communities of practice as “any social grouping” (21), but goes on to describe them functionally in relation to newsgroups as “how participants dynamically appropriate a wide range of resources drawn from the structure of Usenet and the [television show] and combine them with other resources in unpredictable yet patterned ways, ultimately constructing a social space that feels like community” (24). She notes, though, that the community of television fans was drawn to the online space because of interest-driven incentives, and only later did social and personal connections form (119). Baym describes the transition from (shared) interest to the social as how “disconnected individuals took their shared interest in a pop culture text and transformed it into a rich and meaningful interpersonal social world” (21). She identifies the community’s definitive participatory practice as “the joint endeavor of making sense of the media” (24).
Studying a range of fan sites, newsgroups and forums in the late 1990s, scholars Victor Costello and Barbara Moore also frame television audience participation in similar ways to Baym’s analysis of Usenet communities. They examine these online television fans through the lens of active viewership, asking how the “concrete experience of viewing” raises “difficulties in defining ‘audience’” (Costello & Moore 2007: 127). The active fans of their study reveal a range of audience participatory behaviors, from “minimal involvement such as simple information acquisition (spoilers and episode guides) to fully engaged viewers seeking interaction with other fans and, at times, program cast members, writers, and producers” (130). Regardless of type of participation, Costello and Moore assert, like Baym, that these television audience communities online represents groups where “the participants have in common only an interest in a program, a desire to talk about it, and access to the Internet.” By participating in a community interested in media, the users construct social connections.

With regard to newer platforms, Mark Andrejevic (2008: 33) notes that production teams have engaged with users to glean insightful audience feedback and occasionally to solicit ideas. Yet his study of the Television Without Pity forums reveals the same trend with forum-based communities: users congregate initially with interest-driven motives to participate in public television discussion and criticism, out of which social connections form and community norms emerge.

It is important to note how social connections organize this community of television fans. On Usenet, the users construct “a social space that feels like community” (Baym 2000: 24). Inside this online community, distinctive social norms develop over time. All in all, social connections are established after an interest in media draws users to these communities. Baym points to the r.a.t.s. newsgroup as a community because they share social norms. However, connections over social network sites – primarily personal relationships reconstructed in mediated online platforms – challenge our notions of audiences as communities of practice, driving us to reconsider media audiencehood as it is reshaped through the use of online social technology.

When we describe participation on social network sites, we must keep in mind that participation tends to be framed in terms of the platform used: eg., “users on Facebook.” Gee (2004) challenges the notion of an audience situated within a specific space with his concept of “affinity spaces,” where groups of users with multitudinous behaviors span various platforms, types of content, and levels of engagement. Writing about multiplayer online games, Gee notes that participation in a game spans more than the game’s platform: social and information-sharing behaviors extend to other platforms, like forums, websites, and chat services – and all users do not participate in every location. When examining social network sites, we must keep Gee’s suggestions about participation and platforms in mind because these collective behaviors constitute a group audience dynamic which is impossible to define by typical definitions of community (ie., the development of social norms).

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1 A web forum where users specifically discuss television shows: http://www.televisionwithoutpity.com/
In comparison with older online community behaviors, the participatory television audience of the “Web 2.0 era” (see footnote 2 below) exhibits similar behaviors but ones mediated by a much different digital space. This memo does not argue that contemporary online social trends have replaced the form of interest-driven community that dominated the older Internet. Many online communities, such as the Television Without Pity forums, continue to thrive. Even usage of Usenet has increased dramatically over the past decade (Roettgers 2009). However, with the popularity of social network sites, the ecosystem of social spaces and participatory media audiences looks fairly different. Participation is similar, but it occurs in a different social form, affecting how audiences relate to and engage with media.

Just As Social, Just More Personal

Design in social systems on the Web changed dramatically in the first decade of the 21st century. One trend in the social development of the Web has been the creation of social network sites (SNS) (boyd & Ellison 2007) – such as Friendster, MySpace, Facebook, and Twitter – which make visible the relationships between users, usually through profiles (derived from early dating sites). In their historical account, boyd and Ellison note that social network sites marked a distinct change in the nature of online user relationships and the organization of online communities: from interests to people. This shift has changed users’ perception and function of online communities, where the individual is now at the center of their own group. Ito (2010) reiterates the shift in popularity from interest-based to personal networks, particularly for youth, (though the latter has not outright replaced the former) in today’s online social ecosystem.

It is important to emphasize that social network sites grew at such a radical and unprecedented rate compared to these older communities, particularly because users were attracted to the construction of networks of users they knew in real life. And as networks were built on social network sites, more and more general users (ie., not early adopters or technically-sophisticated users) began to participate, continuing and inducing widespread adoption of Internet technology at the beginning of the twenty-first century – but with users who primarily understand participation online as bounded by personal connections.

Due to both the egocentric structure of social network sites as well as the mass adoption of the platforms, different behaviors began to be emphasized in these networks compared to older online communities, and new practices even emerged. For example, social network sites enabled users to share information in new ways on the Web. In previous decades, most information was either shared privately via email or instant messaging platforms, or shared amongst a sheltered collective of users in a communal discussion forum or newsgroup. Conversely, largely-populated SNS – platforms dependent on much more personal relationships, along with the visibility of users’ relationships designed to be viewed by other users – encouraged participants to share information in a way reflective of their personal and social identity and – as a result – reconstruct real-life (or fashion entirely new) trust networks (Dwyer, et. al. 2007).

2 Web 2.0, the term commonly applied to the later developments, highlights the cumulative cultural and participatory evolution in how users use the Web (O’Reilly 2005). Concisely, O’Reilly describes the dominant trend in this Internet era as “network effects from user contributions,” emphasizing the complex social grid in Web services produced by large populations of users on specific mediated sites.
Socially Networked Television Audiences

The social behaviors that emerged from and were enhanced by SNS also have repercussions for the entertainment industry. The visibility of these online connections compared to a decade ago presents a different audience environment, because the social networks of media audiences then were difficult to discern and largely ignored. Although the niche online television communities that have previously been mentioned, like Television Without Pity, have provided the industry with extra points of contact for audience research and production feedback (Andrejevic 2008), these communities tended to cater to highly-engaged members of the television audience gathered (albeit virtually) in one central space.

Social network sites, on the other hand, provide a new perspective for our understanding the television audience. In sharing information with their network, these users are constructing their identities in many different ways, including in relation to the media they consume. As with older online communities, media content has become a method for fostering social relationships. For SNS, however, the social relationship remains the foundation for additional interest-driven connections. In other words, participation on SNS around television content must be understood within the context of how an individual user’s network will perceive that participation, be it simply sharing links or critically analyzing shows. This context is thus different from the practices of older communities, since identity within the community is not necessarily as correlated to real-life identity.

An understanding of media identity on social network sites is central to how the television industry should think about the futures of audiences for two reasons:

1) Understanding how information moves through the networks of SNS helps us conceptualize how individual television viewers relate to television shows and brands, and…

2) It informs the industry about mapping the progression of social engagement around media properties (rather than just counting eyeballs for advertisers).

SNS data allows networks to derive insights from high-population networks – using a number of variables, like audience demographics and sections of timed media content – that apply to both the future production of television content as well as conceptions of potential and actual audiences for advertisers. These data-driven insights have created a new discourse around “audience engagement” and a new attention toward the intended or possible effects of engagement (Napoli 2011). SNS allow networks and advertisers to survey a vast network of audience members, extract real-time, granular responses about patterns of interest (or indifference), and remap those sentiments according to preferred variables. In essence, SNS have fostered “audience information systems” (Napoli 2011: 88) that reflect actual audience behavior at an intensive level far greater than focus groups and exposure metrics can possibly show.
The audience behaviors reflected in SNS-extracted data certainly have not been ignored by the television industry. For example, Neilsen BuzzMetrics analyses brand metrics and monitors conversations across blogs and social media sites to supplement the audience ratings the company provides to the television industry and advertisers. However, BuzzMetrics prioritizes influence over audiences, reporting on how television brands move as “buzz” and targeting pivotal users who aid that movement. The television industry needs to see that social network sites are restructuring how users – especially those who have been less participatory than the hardcore fans that inhabit older communities like rec.arts.tv.soaps or Television Without Pity – identify with media through the acts of consumption and participation.

To some extent, the industry already uses SNS to capture the interest of audiences and extend their attraction from social networks to centrally-controlled platforms, usually to boost immersion within the television show. For example, HBO launched a Twitter aggregate website called “BloodCopy,” which collects messages related to True Blood as well as the accounts controlled by the show’s cast into a central platform, while integrating pathways to other brand mechanisms (like ways to purchase the related graphic novels) and also expanding sharing capabilities to other social networks.

Understanding the connections between the various behaviors that inhabit the television audience ecosystem mediated by SNS will help the industry formulate better experiences – especially ones that bridge media and communities – for viewers of its shows. Recent examples of networks engaging audiences via SNS occur through the strategy of gathering buzz from SNS and transplanting it into a larger, more connected experience. For example, FOX collaborated with Coincident TV to create a unified video-SNS platform called the “Glee Superfan Player,” which allows the user to continue to watch streaming Glee episodes while participating on SNS, like Facebook and Twitter, in the same window. The platform also includes links to buy Glee’s music on iTunes, in addition to other fan-enticing components (like the ability to create “photobooth” pictures with the cast), providing a consolidated fan experience that unifies the multiple portals across the Web around Glee’s franchise. We must note, though, that the Superfan Player only integrates “official” platforms, instead of uniting the entirety of the Glee affinity space, which spans unofficial venues, like fan-produced videos on YouTube and fan-moderated forums (http://gleeforum.com, versus its FOX counterpart, http://glee.community.fox.com). Recognizing the various behaviors that constitute each media-related audience network, this memo emphasizes the importance of information sharing in online, as well as offline, social networks. Sharing has become one of the primary behaviors (beyond real-life encounters) that fosters growth in and across social networks. And as networks grow, the reliability of information sharing depends heavily on the strength of the trust-based connections in those networks.
Summary and Implications

To examine in depth the value of online audiences, this memo has looked at the development of and research about Internet technology and the social structure of communities online. The memo has established that:

1. Early online television communities formed around shared interests in specific online spaces.

2. The development of social network sites (SNS) helped different social behaviors emerge online because of increased visibility and accessibility of users.

3. While SNS do not represent the only online platforms where television audiences reside and interact, they can be excavated to extract significant, previously-unavailable data and trends.

The recent development of Internet-based technologies will influence the future of television audiences, both in how audiences watch television content and how viewers interact with each other. The implications of placing value in social media and SNS are:

1. The industry must recognize that platforms will evolve and change, and while design will subtly reshape behaviors, social participation should remain constant. The industry must therefore be ready to evolve with the Web and be ready to engage consumers with flexible media experiences that cater to, rather than suppress, these social practices.

2. The availability of widespread social networks, especially integrated with media viewing devices, allows the industry greater opportunities to engage with networks of consumers, rather than simply individuals. Recommendations systems are one area where these networks can be exploited to help deliver content, spread awareness, and reinforce brand identity, while providing the industry better systems to measure consumer engagement online.

3. With more users online than ever before, the industry should push to make its content as widely available as possible. As social networks span global markets, so too should companies embrace global distribution, allow television content to spread across those vast networks, and aim to broadcast simultaneous worldwide releases.
Evolution of Platforms

A large increase in Web users has fueled the boom in participation on social network sites and related social media systems. While a number of platforms – such as MySpace, Facebook, and Twitter – have dominated the landscape, it is important that the television industry understand that the landscape will continue to evolve. Due to the high rate of churn (or customer attrition) in online platform adoption and the similar rate of innovation in Web services, new platforms will appear, compete with or even replace the current dominant businesses like Facebook.

In the face of platform change, social practices will remain a point of stability. While new services may change actual behaviors (like how SNS altered community formation online), it is more likely that audiences used the affordances of the technology to change their behaviors, and fans will continue to watch, share, and play around with content, particularly on a massive social level. Audience consumption patterns are evolving to the point where viewers now watch television content on their own schedules via DVR, on time-shifted video aggregation portals like Hulu, or via on-demand services like Netflix. The social participation of the audience, from discussion to sharing, will likely increase as digital tools become integrated with these new practices and make it easier to do so.

The television industry should recognize these social audience behaviors and draw upon them to engage viewers. Iterative and flexible media experiences that are able to cross platforms and cater to various individuals participating on a multitude of services will win out in the end. Gradual and varied efforts can sustain audience discussions beyond the initial airing.

For example, in late 2009, NBC created “Chuck Me Out!,” an SNS-based initiative to encourage Chuck fans to spread word about the upcoming third season of Chuck in January 2010. Upon visiting http://chuckmeout.com/ (a popular portal for Chuck fans) and completing certain tasks via MySpace, Facebook, and Twitter – such as sharing links and getting friends to click through to videos or promotions – players would earn points redeemable for limited-edition merchandise. The initiative placed committed fans in a more active role, attaching more value to the common, daily practices of fans.

Chuck Me Out! emerged from similar point-based engagement initiatives, such as “Backchannel,” an MTV initiative that allowed viewers to write comments in a dedicated space for points while watching The Hills. NBC’s approach to include social network services (which Backchannel lacked) opened the audience to more than the usual dedicated audiences as well as potentially introducing the Chuck series to those who had never seen it. The program was successful enough that in mid-2010 NBC launched “FanIt,” a similar point-based game encouraging SNS users to spread word about all ongoing NBC television properties.

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3 See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Churn_rate
Recommendation Systems

Sharing information with peers has become one of the simplest ways for audiences to participate in the media ecology. The practice has exploded since the introduction of social media services this decade, in large part because individuals are interested in sharing with their friends, but also hearing what their acquaintances have to say in return.

Social networks, especially constructed through SNS, act as a vibrant exchange network for spreading television content. The industry should consider mediating these emergent exchange networks by creating recommendation engines to harness these frequent sharing practices. Television networks are currently poised to develop rich methods for digitally securing their respective audiences both off- and online.

While the social economy is strong on particular online platforms, it is also vast, across many platforms. As SNS become influential platforms for television audiences online, recommendation systems implementing SNS seem the obvious route. Recommendation systems based on SNS design have begun to draw in a fair portion of television audiences interested in sharing. Some of the innovative ideas for media sharing networks are being built by start-ups, such as “Shortform,” “Miso,” and “GetGlue,” although their popularity and use seem limited (Kastelein 2011). Comcast has already foreseen the value of these media-related networks, having invested in “Tunerfish.” These services allow social curation of video content where acquaintances can recommend shows, brands, and networks with easy implementation that spans other social networks (like Facebook). Similarly, the MIT Media Lab has developed a social television system called neXtream that combines multi-device viewing with multi-platform SNS use (Martin, et. al. 2010). It is important to note, though, that these experimental recommendation systems are integrating audiences’ social network site activities at the crucial points where viewers can participate in watching the show by sharing that practice with their friends rather than the various other spaces explored earlier in this memo (eg., forums).

Ideally, the television industry will foster and curate these networked relationships on its own. But at the very least, the industry must recognize the power that these networks will yield in the near future, as they are already being constructed. For example, Google has already implemented social sharing techniques in its new Google TV initiative that borrow from the constructed social graphs of the company’s email, social network, and phone users, although many networks have already blocked the service from accessing their online streaming options. YouTube has similarly attempted to integrate social viewing elements into its in-browser player with YouTube “Leanback,” which can include videos that your friends on YouTube share. Boxee founder Avner Ronen asserts that social recommendations will play a larger role than individual searching (Proulx 2010), and he has overseen the implementation of social features into the software that powers the service (Ronen 2008). But pundits of social viewing technology do not come only from the disruptive side. Hardie Tankersley, VP of Innovation at Fox Broadcasting Company, has stated that recommendations from friends are one of the biggest factors in determining what shows are worth watching (Fehrenbacher 2010).
Global Ecosystem

One of the biggest issues in online television content distribution is how to cater to international fans. While the syndication of content for foreign markets on the part of the American television industry continues to bring in money, the increased importance of global connectedness for audiences will continue to expand with the growth of the Web and SNS. International audiences continue to present a considerable size of the demand for good television content. C3 Consulting Research Gail De Kosnik (2010) argues that the industry should strategize for immediate access to content for global audiences. TorrentFreak, for instance, reports that in 2009 Heroes saw more downloads than its actual US viewership (Ernesto 2009). Availability and accessibility tend to be the issues for those who torrent television content, and TorrentFreak asserts, “Outside the US, fans sometimes have to wait for weeks or even months before the show airs on TV in their own country. Many of them are simply not that patient or willing to torture themselves, and turn to BitTorrent in desperation.” While these download numbers don’t solely account for non-American downloads (certainly there are some U.S.-based torrenters), the gap between linear television broadcast and official international syndication remains too large for international fans to engage with their peers around the discussion of the content, and thus they will turn to the most convenient means to view their favorite shows.

For these viewers, though, it’s not just about watching these shows; there’s the additional draw of participating in a cultural event with the rest of the audience. And as online social networks continue to grow overseas, engaging global networks and creating international media availability will yield positive results. Opening up the media ecosystem will only encourage those who face 404 pages or region blocking in video portals to embrace foreign networks rather than spurn them.

One recent experiment is the BBC opening up its programming lineup to the world through its BBC iPlayer. The in-browser player allows local audiences of the BBC’s television shows to access shows without a television set, but the iPlayer will be making global rounds in 2011 with the introduction of subscription-based access with the iPad to the BBC. While the paywall may deter some viewers, access to the shows is immediate, countering BBC syndication around the world, which can take months for international audiences to be granted access.

Currently, the Web-based iPlayer also integrates social elements that focus on the viewing environment in concert with the sharing environment. The player gathers and makes available friends’ recommendations when the viewer wants to search for a program, rather than expecting users to constantly glean nominated content from social networks (BBC 2010a; BBC 2010b). These social features will help bring viewers to the BBC’s platform, hopefully incorporating it as a portal in audiences’ participatory ecosystem around BBC’s television content. Considering the potential global scale of the iPlayer, this will only add value to the BBC’s platform. And according to BBC.com managing director Luke Bradley-Jones, the iPlayer will boast a hybrid model of paid and free content in the future across multiple platforms at a global scale, expanding the global scale of the audience (Neilan 2010).
Conclusion

This C3 research memo has examined the evolution of online audience participation around television content and the implications social connections have on brand identity. Recognition of the heightened social ecosystem that currently pervades the Web is important for understanding the underlying motivations for sharing information – particularly that associated with television programming – across social networks. The development of new technology, platforms, and services will continue to affect the evolution and propagation of social behaviors on the Internet, and the industry will need to be able to keep up with the various spaces that emerge.

In addition, audiences must also be able to navigate those various spaces and technologies. Robin Sloan, Director of Media Partnerships at Twitter, notes a growing issue between audiences and their participation:

The scale of TV is more of a challenge in terms of content than in terms of code. Even when everything is running perfectly — and increasingly, it is — big televised events become almost a victim of their own success. If you did a search for “VMAs” during the VMAs, the good news for MTV is that there were literally millions of tweets. The bad news for users is that it was way too much to keep up with. I think this is actually a really interesting challenge. (Roettgers 2010)

If the industry is able to craft better solutions for that navigation, streamlined experiences and broad access to content will be honored with greater loyalty to shows and brands, while also rewarding the television industry with greater and more detailed insights into consumer participation and practices.
Bibliography


BBC (2010b). http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/bbcInternet/2010/05/introducing_the_all_new_bbc_ip.html (now defunct)


Ito, Mizuko, et. al. (2010). Hanging Out, Messing Around, and Geeking Out: Kids Living and Learning with New Media.


Appendix I – Websites & Platforms References

Rec.arts.tv.soaps: http://groups.google.com/group/rec.arts.tv.soaps/topics

Television Without Pity: http://www.televisionwithoutpity.com/

BloodCopy: http://www.bloodcopy.com/

Glee Superfan Player: http://www.fox.com/glee/gleesuperfan/

Chuck Me Out!: http://www.chuckmeout.com

MTV Backchannel: http://www.mtv.com/ontv/backchannel/the_hills/how-to-play.jhtml

NBC FanIt: http://my.nbc.com/fan-it/

Shortform: http://shortform.com

Miso: http://gomiso.com

Get Glue: http://getglue.com

Tunerfish: http://tunerfish.com


BBC iPlayer: http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/radio
About C3 Research Memos

Introduced in the spring of 2010, Convergence Culture Consortium (C3) research memos are short (8 to 11 pages) position papers - designed from their inception to provide more tactical, design-driven recommendations to the C3 membership. Ideally, these recommendations would then be introduced into the early phase (i.e. ideation or brainstorming) of the strategic design process for new media products, delivery services and content programming.

The suggestion here is that an evangelist (or “champion”) of these innovative insights and recommendations would then be able to:

a. Assemble a working group within or across organizational divisions, departments, professions or academic disciplines; and

b. Use C3 research memos as a “common language” for these working group sessions - framing product development, strategic marketing, content programming or market research challenges and subsequent discussions within the framework of “C3 Thinking.”

We encourage the creation of such working groups within C3 Sponsor company organizations. By taking this approach, the hope is that new products, services and programming would better reflect the emergent cultural and media engagement patterns unearthed by the current crop of C3 research.

2010 – 2011 C3 Research Memo Series (to date)

• Online Advertising: The New Magic by Ravi Inukonda with Daniel Pereira
• Piracy is the Future of Television by Abigail De Kosnik
• Embracing the Flow by Nancy Baym
• You and Our Space by Shenja van der Graaf
• Aging and the Future of Media Fandom by C. Lee Harrington
• Assumption Hunters: A New Profession for the Corporation in the Throes of Structural Change by Grant McCracken
• Watching with the World: Television Audiences and Online Social Networks by Alex Leavitt

2010- 2011 C3 White Papers

In contrast to our research memo series, C3 white papers are longer, higher level discussions (more strategic in nature - i.e. Spreadable Media (2008) or the upcoming How to Ride a Lion by Geoff Long). 2010-2011 C3 White Papers include:

• Learning to Share: The Relational Logics of Media Franchising by Derek Johnson
• Turn On, Tune In, Cash Out: Maximizing the Value of Television Audiences by Sheila Seles
• How to Ride a Lion: A Call for a Higher Transmedia Criticism by Geoff Long (forthcoming)