

Chapter 15

Transmedia Television Journalism in Brazil: Jornal da Record News as Reference

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ABSTRACT

One of the main features of television is its appeal to transmediation—a production model oriented for the distribution of additional and/or associated content of a specific production in different media and technology platforms. In each field of television production (entertainment, journalism, advertising, etc.), transmediation takes various demonstrations and functions. The interest of the authors here is to show how transmedia strategies are part of the construction of the ethos in TV journalism, based on the analysis of Jornal da Record News, the first Brazilian newscast to be introduced as a transmedia production.

INTRODUCTION: TRANSMEDIATION AND JOURNALISM

Television cannot be limited just to television anymore. Media convergence supported the incorporation of other media and digital platforms, especially the Internet, in its creative and productive chain. Especially after Henry Jenkins' (2006, 2010) works on transmedia storytelling, the adjective “transmedia” widely spread, meaning a vast range of media integration phenomena stimulated by digitalization. However, the terms “transmedia” and “transmediation” acquired such a generalization in communication studies that, in some approaches, they convey the way content circulates within media convergence. In a more specific light, the term transmedia, as in the case of transmedia storytelling, is used to refer to a particular type of narrative, whose actions, situations and secondary characters can be deployed in an interdependent way in other media platforms (Scolari, 2013). In this chapter, the authors use the broader concept of transmediation.

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Due to an excessively broad treatment, on one hand, and a much more restrictive understanding of the phenomenon, on the other hand, the first challenge for those who decide to observe transmediation in journalism is to specify the concept. Transmediation is understood here as a production model oriented by the distribution of content associated with each other in different media and technology platforms. In the same vein, the articulation of the model is docked in interactional strategies. Furthermore, it includes the practices offered by participatory culture, stimulated by digitalization and media convergence.

This approach is based on the assumptions of Fechine (2012, 2013, 2014), Fechine, Gouveia, Almeida, Costa, & Estevão (2013) and Fechine et al. (2015), who state that transmedia strategies are proposed by a communication producer (usually a media corporation) without which it would not be possible to think of transmediation as a production model. These transmedia strategies do not necessarily involve the participation of audiences. Even when producers appeal and allow a freer intervention from the public *over* or *through* the content, these actions do not cease to be, in a way, addressed or guided by a corporate intention, a “corporate authorship,” as proposed by Evans (2011).

According to Jenkins (2006), audiences are creative agents, essential in the formation of transmedia strategies. They establish the relationships between the additional content and the television show to which the content refers to. However, public intervention is not only expected on what is offered (sharing, recommendations, comments, etc.), but their performance can be as content producers (uploading videos, photos, texts, etc.) as well. Even though the public participation is a component of the phenomenon, transmediation is foremost a set of strategic communication actions taken by media corporations to attract, retain, and engage the public on their own platforms (websites, television channels, profiles on social networks, etc.). Among these strategies, there is the articulation and integration of transmedia contents across multiple media platforms.

It is possible to consider that there is one specific medium responsible for leading this articulation. In this medium, a base text, which Jenkins (2006) called mothership, is developed (shows, movies, etc.) and the further articulations are created around it. In this chapter, they are respectively referred as reference medium and reference text. In the case of television journalism, the reference medium is television and the reference text is the newscast, around which transmedia contents are developed. The transmedia strategy is achieved when viewers assume the management of content, i.e. by performing necessary actions to the text construction (accessing and correlating these texts or producing new ones in response to the summons and instructions of the producers).

Despite the centrality that the viewer management has in the transmediation process, transmedia journalism is not the same as citizen journalism. Citizen journalism (Oliveira, 2010; Renó & Ruiz, 2012; Targino, 2009) describes the communication processes that occur in the publication of news *by* the citizen and *for* the citizens on digital platforms, by collaborating with journalists or ensuring that these themes and approaches are in the interest of Internet users, who have public visibility. Renó and Ruiz (2012) consider that transmediation has strengthened citizen journalism; while Scolari (2013, 2014) and Alzamora, Barros and Malta (2015) do not make a distinct differentiation between the types of information the Internet users have in circulation. Alzamora et al. (2015) consider transmedia as actions in journalism, which take place “both vertically, in private actions by media corporations, and horizontally, in collective attitudes of sharing and citizen participation” (p. 212). In this chapter, however, the authors argue that not all types of public collaboration on digital platforms, generically called citizen journalism, can be treated interchangeably as transmedia actions. In the perspective adopted here, transmedia manifestations are considered as the public collaborations proposed *as* part of or *from* production strategies.¹

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