



Cross-Media Production in Spain's Public Broadcaster RTVE: Innovation, Promotion, and Audience Loyalty Strategies

ROSA FRANQUET

Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain

MARIA ISABEL VILLA MONTOYA

Pontificia Bolivariana University, Colombia

Multiplatform content broadcasts are one way of securing the position of public-service broadcasting in a competitive and changing market. This research focuses on the cross-media fiction series *Águila Roja* (Red Eagle) and *Isabel*, produced by Globomedia and Diagonal TV for Radio Televisión Española (RTVE), the Spanish radio and television corporation. RTVE is a public-service broadcaster that has recently undergone a significant reconversion as a consequence of the recession and a new funding system based exclusively on financial contributions from the state, with a ban on paid advertising, which had been permitted in the past. We examine the way this organization creates productions for multiple platforms and the innovation strategies that support these processes. Using a comparative case study approach based on the actor-network theory, we found a strong 360-degree cross-media production logic in RTVE's fiction series. However, a detailed analysis reveals difficulties and contradictions regarding the efficacious use of each of the technological platforms available as well as limitations on the actions undertaken in the social media.

Keywords: transmedia television, production analysis, public-service media

Introduction

Radio Televisión Española (RTVE) has focused on producing television shows based on historical events and adventures for Channel 1 of the public broadcasting service. According to Morales Morante (2011), fiction production in Spain is undergoing a deep-seated structural transformation stemming from convergence. This diversification of content and means of participation brings users added value, increases their attention and interest, and thus creates processes of empathy and loyalty. In other words, this set of platforms is the gateway to cross-media television, and the success or failure of the most

Rosa Franquet: rosa.franquet@uab.cat

Maria Isabel Villa Montoya: mariaisabel.villa@upb.edu.co

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innovative projects by audiovisual companies and the provision of new services depends heavily on them. This has been a slow transformation because the evolution of the leading Spanish public broadcasting service took place several years after its U.S. counterparts such as HBO and ABC entered into what Lotz (2007) calls the "post-network era." The decisive step came in 2008, when RTVE made an about-face and turned the Internet and mobile platforms into its main allies when broadcasting audiovisual content and launching new products. The content and applications were designed specifically to stimulate audience participation and increase the audience share, which in recent years had shown a worrisome downward trend.

The shows *Águila Roja* and *Isabel*, made for RTVE by two production companies, Globomedia and Diagonal TV, are at the center of a strategy designed to deal with the recession and win audience loyalty. Both shows have large budgets, are broadcast in prime time, have developed content for different platforms, and have attracted many fans. We examine the content from these two historical fiction series on different technological platforms and the business strategies used by RTVE to overcome the television broadcast flow and to create processes of audience empathy as a way of gaining loyalty. Specifically, we are interested in ascertaining to what extent RTVE has managed with these shows to break the conventional logic of audiovisual production designed for the analogical environment. We argue that cross-media production emerged in this case as a business option for overcoming the recession, while the budgetary restrictions of public broadcasting served as a brake on this process. Likewise, the multiplatform expansion is based on a cross-promotion logic, but it has emerged in a haphazard, fragmented way with content and products designed outside the television production channel and without the necessary coordination and cooperation. The case studies reveal the extent to which the cross-media production strategies and adaptation and promotion processes entail a substantial change in the business practices of the public broadcasting service.

Theoretical Framework

Broadcasting services and content in different media is a way of ensuring the public broadcasting service's position in a difficult, competitive market. In addition to boosting the quality of the signal and increasing the number of channels, now there is the ability to increase value-added services to antenna broadcasts, develop new business areas, and strengthen the creative value of the content. This is a common strategy in the new media scenario and one that has been the target of keen scholarly interest in recent years (Bechmann Petersen, 2007; Debrett, 2009; Doyle, 2010; Dupagne & Garrison, 2009; Enli, 2008; Erdal, 2007, 2009, 2011; Syvertsen, 2006).

Cross-media broadcasts have expanded the possibilities of audience access to the virtual repository of content and have managed to meet the demands and preferences of the majority groups without forgetting the minorities. The new platforms offer the audience the chance to select content and services. As a result, "The audience has become more elusive and less predictable" (Jennes, 2013, p. 78). Worried by this transformation, researchers are interested in not only television production in a multiplatform environment but the characteristics of consumption and the changing role of the audience, who are becoming users or consumers in a new value chain. Audience participation in public television has been an area of significant study since the 1990s (García Avilés, 2011), when other phenomena appeared,

which changed the TV media radically, such as time-shifted viewing and interactive applications. In a cross-media environment, the users are active producers and can even be considered as partakers in the production process. As Bolin (2010) warns, this change in role is not only a practical problem but affects integral concepts like program, producer, and audiovisual text.

Recent scholarly literature has reported on the challenges and opportunities facing public broadcasters as they adapt to digitalization and convergence in different contexts. See, for example, the studies on public broadcasters in Australia (Flew, 2011), in Norway (Moe, 2008), in the United States and France (Palmeri & Rowland, 2011), and in Spain (Moragas & Prado, 2000). One of the core challenges facing public broadcasters is creating business strategies that allow them to remain central actors within technological scenarios that are radically different from those in which they began their activity (European Broadcasting Union, 2000). They can do this by developing new genres and formats adapted to the new forms of media consumption (Bardoel, 2007; Lowe & Bardoel, 2007) and expanding the tools that make audience participation possible, along with integrating the contents stemming from this participation (Franquet, Villa, & Bergillos, 2013).

Public broadcasters' forays into the digital era have inspired a wide variety of scholarly studies. One approach that stands out is *transmedia storytelling*, a controversial and complex term (Scolari, 2009) that denotes the combination of multiple texts in a single narration. This approach has been the focus of renewed interest by academics who are worried about how this content shows the possibilities of the new digital platforms through a sequence where lineal consumption is broken (Jenkins, 2003). These "distributed narratives" (Walker, 2004) are analyzed from a range of theoretical perspectives, especially from the study of semiotics, as *remediation*, *reconfiguration*, and *multimedia* (Bolter & Grusin, 2002), and *intertextuality*, *intermediality*, and *transtextuality* (Jensen, 1999). The key question here is how "the intrinsic properties of the medium shape the form of narrative and affect the narrative experience" (Ryan, 2004, p. 35).

The notion of cross-media production is used to explain how organizations articulate the production of multiple platforms and the innovation strategies that uphold these processes (Bechmann Petersen, 2007; Erdal, 2009; Kjus, 2008; Krumsvik, 2009; Moe & Syvertsen, 2007). However, few studies focus on both the supply of content and the way content is produced, and even fewer specifically examine the production of cross-media fiction for television. Among the studies on television cross-media production in the area of fiction or entertainment, it is worthwhile highlighting a line of studies particularly interested in reality game shows, mainly concerned with audience participation in event-bound formats. To analyze these changes, programs such as *Big Brother* (Jones, 2004), *Doctor Who* (Perryman, 2008), and *Idols* (Kjus, 2008) have been used as case studies. These studies represent a wide area of research that aims to understand how audience participation can be made into a source of revenue through the different digital platforms together with the audience as coproducer.

The theoretical discourse on cross-media production has largely inherited the rationalist school's interest in finding a single production model that ensures substantial advantages over other models. In contrast to this view of the problem, this study does not seek definitive solutions that resolve the tensions that might arise in a cross-media setting or to resolve the complexity of the dynamics and their processes.

Rather, our focus is on how each television program designs and redesigns its production practices to adapt and respond to changes in the environment as well as the similarities, differences, advantages, and disadvantages among the programs. This approach is particularly appropriate at this time in the development of cross-media production—an initial stage in which understanding the work in practice can provide us with more knowledge than theorizing about an ideal organization that is still far from attainable.

Actor-Network Theory Applied to a Public Broadcasting Service's Cross-Media Production

In this study, cross-media production is viewed as a network from the perspective of the actor-network theory (ANT), a consolidated theory in the field of science and technology studies that is useful for exploring the processes of association and understanding the connections among different human teams undergoing a process of technological mediation. This theoretical approach helps us to study people and technology as part of productive cross-media processes determined by interconnections of many kinds. ANT has been used to understand how subjects interact with objects within action networks. Its propositions have been validated in several studies of productive processes in the media (see, e.g., Hemmingway, 2004; Plesner, 2009; Schmitz Weiss & Domingo, 2010), because they examine the social practices in companies and their technical underpinnings in detail. This work is based on studies that began in the mid-1990s that demonstrated the effectiveness of ANT when analyzing the media. Of these, Silverstone (1994), Turner (2005), and Couldry (2008) are particularly noteworthy.

This theoretical approach leaves an important imprint on this analysis, because from this angle we can view cross-media production as a network that is undergoing constant change or creation, and this characteristic is one of the main challenges of analyzing cross-media production. The relationships among the actors in networks are bound by action, but actions do not only happen; they also modify the processes. That is, every time a new actor takes part, it generates transformations. Our job, then, is to understand what has been transformed. Even though this point of departure might seem open-ended and somewhat vague at first glance, we believe that the idea of a network is particularly useful for identifying the roles of the human and nonhuman actors that participate in the cross-media production process and for ascertaining how they interact, because cross-media production practices are uncertain, have no solidly established work routines, and evade generalizations.

To analyze the network, we use three concepts fundamental which are to ANT: (1) *actor*, which, in this study, encompasses all the individuals who participate in the cross-media production and the wide range of technical systems that facilitate the technical adaptation of the multimedia content; (2) *association*, which denotes the workplace structures defined through the organizational charts and the division of labor established by the actors; and (3) *translation*, which describes the processes of displacement, invention, mediation, and creation through which a tie is created between what did not exist before and what is somehow modified by the actors through movement.

Method

This study employed a twofold methodology: First, we analyzed the multiplatform offerings for the series *Águila Roja* and *Isabel*, and, second, we examined the practices associated with the production of these series as content in websites and social networks. The analysis covers the first season of *Águila Roja*, which started in February 2009 until September 2013, when the second season of *Isabel* began. We visited the interactive media department of RTVE twice in 2011, 2012, and 2013 and conducted impromptu interviews with those in charge of the digital project. Afterward, interviews were also arranged with the head of fiction and the head of programs of Globomedia, who were involved in the development of several of the first *Águila Roja* interactive products.

The description of the programs on offer was essential to ascertain the degree of diversification of both shows on digital platforms comparing the different transmedia narrative techniques. In addition, using the ethnographic methodology to study the production processes enabled us to understand the workplace conditions and practices used to produce these shows. In its broadest sense, this study reflects the characteristics of exploratory, descriptive research.

This study is supported by the well-known case study methodology as a way of circumscribing the problem to a given reality. Cross-media television production meets the conditions cited by Yin (2003) to apply this methodology because it encompasses a wide range of concepts and fields of study, it groups together different kinds of variables because each platform demands its own conditions of analysis, and it involves different sources of data.

After an exploration of the current channels and programs available on Spanish television, we chose Corporación de Radio Televisión Española as our case study, as a company that is representative of media organizations' process of transformation toward a cross-media production model in Spain and Europe, and we chose the series *Águila Roja* and *Isabel* as significant cases of television convergence and cross-media narration in Spain (Barrientos Bueno, 2011; Costa & Piñeiro, 2012, Scolari, Jiménez, & Guerrero, 2012).

Águila Roja is an adventure series set in the 17th century. RTVE (n.d.) describes the star of the show on the official website as an "anonymous seeker of justice from the 17th century—known by the nickname of *Águila Roja* (Red Eagle)—who helps the weak and is determined to reveal the conspiracy concealed behind the murder of his young wife" (p. 1). The hero is described as a "Spanish ninja Robin Hood from the 17th century." The production is now in its fifth season and has secured high audience shares and several prizes. *Isabel* is a historical series about the life of Queen Isabel the Catholic, Queen of Castilla, and her husband, Fernando, King of Aragon. Her reign, from 1474 to 1504, is especially remembered because she unified the kingdoms of Castilla and Aragon, reconquered Granada, expelled the Muslims from Spain, and supported Christopher Columbus' expedition to America. The plotline of the first season focuses on the figure of the future queen and how she had to overcome various trials and tribulations in a man's world to become queen and prove her worth and determination. The production is in its second season, and RTVE has announced September 2014 as the beginning of the third and last season.

The first season of *Águila Roja* began in February 2009, and broadcasts of its fifth season began on May 6, 2013. TVE broadcast *Isabel* for the first time on September 7, 2012, and its second season began on September 9, 2013. Both shows are broadcast on TVE 1 during prime time.

Historical shows are suitable productions for cross-media strategies, because they have large budgets and complex production processes that supply a great volume of content that can be used on and adapted to other platforms. However, these are outside productions that have to fit within the public broadcaster's organizational and production structure. External acquisition of production of fiction is nothing new in television, and the people in charge of such programs have been commissioning large audiovisual projects from outside companies for some time now. The new development and challenge lies in exploiting the potential of these productions in a more complex, unstable environment derived from the cross-media strategy. In this environment, the entrenched traditional production logic designed for content meant solely for the television screen must be adjusted to take advantage of the potential of the new channels and human resources of the public broadcasting service.

Results

Cross-Promotion Strategies and Their Relationship With Audience Loyalty and Share

Cross-media productions are an attractive business for media companies. "The business model sees multiple-platform publishing as a way to increase productivity among staff and—equally importantly—as a way to grab as large a share of the advertising pie as possible" (Quinn, 2005, p. 32). Even though "the costs of creating, storing and transferring content from one format to another have been significantly reduced" (Murray, 2005, p. 421), the cost of these productions can halt or delay their production and broadcasting, as happened in the case studies.

The show *Águila Roja* has beaten audience records since it was first broadcast in 2009. "We have to look back to 2005 to find a Spanish series that has higher audience figures than this story, which has been the leader in 100% of its broadcasts, a total of 51," claims Formulativ (2013, p. 7). During its fourth season, in 2012, the audience share remained steady or rose. More than 6 million viewers followed the last episode, capturing 37% of the audience share, while the first episode of the fifth season, broadcast on May 5, 2013, attained a 26.9% share. These significant figures reveal the show's acceptance and the degree of loyalty it attained as it captured a huge number of young viewers.

Isabel has also captured large audiences, although it has not reached the same figures as *Águila Roja*. Its audience fluctuates from more than 3 million viewers of episode 4, or 16% of the audience share, to more than 4.6 million viewers in the last episode, the 13th, with an audience share of 22.6%. Both series are now among the most viewed on RTVE. In the second season, the *Isabel* audience share ranged between 19.5% in episode 18 and 14.6% in episode 21. The positive audience figures have led RTVE to announce the filming of the sixth season of *Águila Roja*. The series' number of fans is significant if we bear in mind audience fragmentation and the increase in the number of shows. What is more, *Isabel*

has reached agreements to be aired in the United Kingdom, France, Ireland, Russia, Serbia, Croatia, and several Latin American countries.

Despite the achievements of *Águila Roja* and *Isabel*, the production deadlines and broadcasts of the shows are feeling the economic crisis that RTVE is experiencing. According to the newspaper *El País* ("Isabel desmonta los bártulos," 2012), the episodes of *Isabel* will remain shelved at RTVE, along with future seasons of *Cuéntame cómo Pasó*, *Gran Reserva*, and *Águila Roja*. Which means an eight-month delay. Parallel to these postponements, the productions have also had to tighten their budgets. Despite all this, RTVE does not want to lose this kind of production. *El País* reported: "the Administrative Board of RTVE has approved it, including the contract with the production company Diagonal, in a clause which states that the possible sequel of the story will remain in the hands of the public broadcaster" ("The Board of RTVE," 2013, p. 1).

Apparently the clearest reasons for promoting cross-media production stem from the need to expand access to the content and thus boost audience consumption and loyalty. Previous studies prove that cross-media strategies extend the life of the show and increase viewers' loyalty. As Marchi (2002), notes, "By giving them access to an extensive range of exclusive services on the cross-media website, users become even more loyal to the show" (p. 3). Cross-media dissemination builds viewer loyalty, increases retention, and attracts new customers (Griffin, 1996; Wang, 2011). However, in the case studies, the delays in broadcasts coupled with budgetary difficulties hinder the relationship with the audience and have consequences on the processes of loyalty and empathy. More than anything else, the lack of information creates disgruntlement among the fans that is expressed via social networks. Complaints from fans of *Águila Roja* are common on Facebook and other social media, and this makes it more difficult for the departments involved to carry out the cross-media strategy.

Consumption and Broadcasting on Online Platforms

When analyzing the broadcasting of multiplatform content, we find that the content has been designed to be consumed as dependent and independent products of the televised series on the Internet. To understand the ties between the online actors, we have applied the second source of uncertainty from ANT, which states that actions are not transparent and are not made under fully conscious control; rather, they are regarded as a knot, a node, and a conglomerate of many surprising sets of agencies that have to be slowly disentangled (Latour, 2008). Association, as understood via ANT, is characterized by the way new forms assemble and are generated. In our case, the production forces encourage associations among platforms and textual content and lead the actors to unfold. Each platform acts as a node, and its content redirects users from one node to another, from one platform to another, so that there is movement around the sole, particular network.

In our analysis of the Internet broadcast strategies, we first see that the RTVE channel on YouTube, which has more than 96,000 followers, is mainly used to post promotional videos of the series and to redirect traffic to the official website on the RTVE front page, RTVE.es. "Discover all the details from the show at <http://www.rtve.es/Isabel>. On Monday the 10th you have a date with history, the history of *Isabel* the Catholic, played by Michelle Jenner," announces RTVE (2012, p. 1). The same tactic is

used with *Águila Roja*. “The most popular show on television in recent years is coming back to TVE’s Channel 1. Next Monday, *Águila Roja* once again brings justice and experiences endless adventures. Its team has unveiled the new season in which action and surprises are guaranteed,” says RTVE (2013, p. 1).

In parallel, RTVE uses the same logic on Facebook and Twitter, where it redirects fans to its YouTube channel, its website, or its catch-up services (*Alacarta*). The pages are designed to stimulate audience participation and provide feedback on the different platforms. The shows occupy a privileged place in these services, because it is believed that a fixed segment of the audience already uses these services predominantly. This phenomenon prompts reflection on the changing nature of both the public media and the public sphere from the point of view of diverse cultural consumption.

Secondly, the analysis of the official websites’ structure, in its latest versions from April 2013 of both shows, provides information on the production synergies and the way associations are established. Within this association, the audience, which takes on the role of the actor, plays the role conferred upon it by the multiplatform network itself. This role is assigned via agency—in this case, defined as the audience’s ability to affect the state of affairs. Both *Águila Roja* and *Isabel* have their own Web space in the RTVE.es domain, as stipulated in their contract. *Águila Roja* has been running for five seasons, so its website has evolved over time and has considerably more videographic material. The home page is presented and organized in the same way for both shows, a clear indication that the previous phase—when each series organized its Internet space autonomously—has been superseded.

The websites have the same sections: the show, complete chapters, videos, photographs, characters, live action, and more shows. *Águila Roja* also has three exclusive sections: participation, music, and a forum. The participation section is a compilation of video encounters from the different seasons and includes the Facebook page, which has more than 270,000 fans, and the Twitter page, which has more than 39,000 fans, according to figures from November 2013. On Facebook, questions are solicited for the video encounters that are scheduled on the RTVE website, and on Twitter, fans are sent the trailer for the fifth season of the series on the RTVE YouTube channel and the catch-up *Alacarta*. The forums in *Águila Roja* do not have a moderator of the channel and reflect an action developed in previous seasons when activity in social media was not as common as it is today.

In this way, participation becomes a core agent in the cross-media production network. Here, in line with Ytreberg’s findings (2009), “audience participation has become a key means of securing audience loyalty” (p. 468). *Isabel* has a maps section that shows a map for each chapter with the locations of the events in each episode. The live section on both websites has become the ideal way to track live broadcasts and to comment on the show in real time on social media. In the case of *Isabel*, this strategy is complemented with the launch of the series’ official website, a specific page something like a second screen for a computer or tablet. The page www.rtve.es/masIsabel contains additional information on the historical events and characters that appear in the television broadcast, such as details of the characters’ pasts (which is not revealed in the TV broadcast), historical facts of the sociopolitical context of the story, and followers’ comments.

The page is linked to the RTVE.es HD app, and while the show is being broadcast it allows viewers to watch a presentation of the chapter and share comments by entering Facebook or using the Twitter hashtag #IsabelTVE. *Isabel* had more than 37,000 Facebook fans and more than 18,000 Twitter followers in November 2013. During the broadcasts, the interactive communication department of RTVE posts strategies on the social networks such as:

Next Monday is Isabel's wedding. We ask you to post a hashtag to promote television so that people get used to this hashtag. . . . The social networks are places of conversation, where there are millions of people chatting and what we want, ultimately, is for radio and television to become part of this conversation. (I. Gómez, assistant manager of technology, Interactive Department, RTVE, personal communication, October 31, 2012)

Twitter is an effective tool for forging bonds and new movements, not only among platforms but among shows. The heads of interactive media at RTVE posted visits to the program *Master Chef* by the actors from *Isabel* on Twitter, who were filming the second season of the series. The tweet, "Do you want a sneak peak of what we're going to see tonight on #MasterChef3?" started the campaign by inviting the audience to watch the series. The *Master Chef* contestants have to prepare a meal for the actors and technical crew. The joint activity between the actors of both programs reinforces recollection of the show while encouraging the fans of *Isabel* to become hooked on the *Master Chef* competition.

In light of the importance of websites to television, the enhanced television features seem to have an impact on television brand loyalty and interest in television commerce. The fans faithfully follow the characters and plots and become emotionally involved, eager for new sensations and experiences. Exploiting these relationships with cross-media productions is a tactic that yields returns if audience empathy is achieved. With this intention, elaborate content is developed for the different platforms. As several studies have demonstrated, the cross-media effect of mobile and Internet advertising is evident in consumers' perceived media engagement, message strength, and brand attitudes. However, the limitations of a public corporation such as RTVE, which is fully immersed in a restructuring process and has no advertising, have hindered the possible cross-media dynamics. The impossibility of economically exploiting the content and the lack of a more aggressive promotional strategy on the television screen and the official website, which would generate new content and actions with the audiences, have diminished the chances of success.



Figure 1. Image of Master Chef competition on Twitter.
Retrieved from https://twitter.com/MasterChef_es

Transmedia Narration

The narrative structure of *Águila Roja* reveals a mixture of genres that belong to the “post-network era” (Lotz, 2007) (see Figure 2). Every product contains nodes that connect it to the others—but each one is sufficiently autonomous to be able to guarantee its survival, even after the TV seasons are over. Owing to this distinctive characteristic, the transmedia narrative can be built as a network in which it is not necessary to state either the consumption or the time set of the narrative. In this way, the film and the comic of *Águila Roja* are released simultaneously but do not coincide with the beginning of the series or the video game. The video game online can be played by fans who have never seen the TV series; however, knowing the plot would undoubtedly help the players’ performance. The *Águila Roja* books can be read by someone who has never seen the series, but they could be especially interesting for the series’ followers because they explain the characters’ pasts, which are not explained in the television script.



Figure 2. Águila Roja comic.

Retrieved from <http://www.rtve.es/television/20110511/dibuja-aguila-roja-descargate-comic-para-ipad/431896.shtml>

Isabel, however, is much less autonomous on each platform in a narrative sense. The televised narrative operates as not only a springboard but a storyline thread of the other products which complement it under a strategy of transmedia expansion that we could call *the iceberg*—the television shows the tip of the island and the Internet the rest. As Kjus finds (2008), in this case the new media strengthen the communicative and basic aesthetic qualities of television. It is unlikely that someone who has never seen the *Isabel* series would be interested in the content offered on the Web, such as the characters' family tree, guide maps, or the making of the series. The interactive application *Más Isabel* invites TV spectators to widen their viewing experience and so not miss the action, as in the case of *Águila*

Roja and the temporary nature of the broadcast. In fact, the application has been made with the idea of synchronized consumption in mind, even though the interactive content is one week ahead of the TV broadcast.

The social networks are also integrated with the broadcasting of the series so that followers can share their comments and impressions while they watch. For this reason, we can say that the transmedia content is closely linked to the televised plot and does not have a life of its own. It is within an experience that we can situate closer to what has been classified as "enhanced television" or "second screen" and is understood as an expansion of the television toward new digital platforms, which, when connected to the Internet, allow more interactive possibilities and access to a greater availability of content and audiovisual services. One of these experiences could be considered in the line of what Kjus studies under the concept of "liveness" (Marriott, 2007), which refers to simultaneous communication and to its "aliveness." In this dialogue model, "several media are applied in connecting the same audiences to an event, and their return paths supplement television and enrich the overall social experience" (Kjus, 2008, p. 74).

Disaggregated Production Routines

We found a production scenario characterized by the "disaggregation of media processes" (Küng-Shankleman, 2000, p. 41) in which the value chain, essentially made up of the stages of content acquisition; content packaging, programming, and integration; and distribution or broadcast, integrates the networks and user interfaces within its phases. The workflow among platforms happens in a random fashion. Not once did we find practices that indicate a connection or overall interaction of the production routines of all the multiplatform products in *Águila Roja* and *Isabel* in a sequential or synchronized way. This is because the production for each platform is governed by time and the specific conditions under which each medium is developed and broadcast. Multiplatform products are created under complex systems that we view as networks in the ANT perspective.

The analysis and the interviews allowed us to identify the fact that those in charge of *Isabel* on RTVE pay more attention to cross-media strategies. This closer relationship between departments was confirmed by the hashtags during the broadcasting of the episodes and the wedding invitation created with the content provided by the fans. The adjustment of the departments or teams entails leaving behind previous tasks and taking on new roles. This process is rarely easy and harmonious, and possible dysfunctions arise in media organization. As with the production routines analyzed by Nilsson and Hertzum (2005), in the shows we have analyzed, it is difficult to synchronize the workplace rhythms.

For this reason, the radio-television corporations have required the assistance of specialized professionals and companies to provide some of the audiovisual production and services linked to interactivity. *Águila Roja* and *Isabel* have followed this model. The producers have taken charge of all the audiovisual content of the shows, and RTVE has focused on exploiting this content on the Internet and mobile devices. The film version of *Águila Roja* also followed this logic and was envisioned as an independent product with a different plot from the TV show.

The producer has seized the opportunity of having a team of actors (characters) and a technical crew who are heavily involved in the project to make the film. The cinematographic experience, the creation of an app, and the comic and the online game have been generated outside of RTVE, but we cannot claim that they are outside the cross-media production network because they end up being connected by the content that inspired all of them.

These developments are joined by the commercialization of DVDs containing the show's past seasons and by the ability to listen to more than 1,000 music cuts extracted from the soundtrack and made available online. These kinds of products, regarded by Ytreberg (2009) as "peripheral platforms" (p. 472), are important, as the author recognizes, mainly because they generate added revenue for the format. "They are peripheral in the specific sense that less effort seems to be made to trigger moves between peripheral platforms" (ibid.). According to the interviews, the professionals from RTVE's interactive department in charge of the development and multiplatform actions did not have a hand in these productions. The content of *Águila Roja* and *Isabel* enables the shows to be reconfigured and hybridized in their transition to the different platforms.

Observation of the productive process in practice shows that multiplatform integration is difficult due to the predominant production logics still commonly found in radio-television corporations. According to the professionals who are involved in television production in RTVE, prime-time television content is at the core of the other activities meant for the Internet, tablets, and mobile devices, and, following this logic, the department of interaction is looking for more collaboration with those in charge of the interactive fiction to develop additional services and interactive content—even though television still dominates the multiplatform environment.

The mission of the interactive media department at RTVE is to create experiences around television consumption that bring added value. Therefore, promoting the actors in the show, stimulating fans, and developing the audience relationship compete with one another. This job means feeding the social networks and using the Internet as a venue of experimentation, with the ability to develop new interactions with the audiences.

"The trials and tribulations of the characters from these series have taken root as the target of discussion and controversy in numerous, blogs, forums, social networks and a variety of other media" (Simelio & Ruíz, 2013, p. 68). Sometimes this empathy leads to a process of audiovisual creation, turning passive viewers into *prosumers* (Toffler, 1980) who post their own production or remix online.

Fans use YouTube as a platform for creative remixes and post their own videos related to the content of both shows. These activities have been dubbed "fandom" and stretch beyond the dynamics of the media themselves. "Fan fiction communities can be seen as a perfect example of the media convergence, social software, and cultural 'remix' associated with the Web 2.0 phenomenon" (Albrechtslund, 2010, p. 113).

Fans use the television content in a process of reappropriation and suggest new ways of interacting with the content, sharing their consumption with other Internet users. Integrating audience

contributions is essential, and these contributions should have status and consideration within the editorial design of a cross-media audiovisual creation. Yet this integration is still difficult and exceptional today because of the predominant production logistics common in radio-television corporations. In *Isabel*, actions are planned coinciding with the episodes' contents. The Facebook strategy was to generate a community surrounding *Isabel*. Those in charge of the interactive department asked the fans to make Isabel and Fernando's wedding invitation, coinciding with the broadcast of the wedding episode.

During several weeks we have generated a community in which there are many historians and so suddenly, comments are being made from a historic point of view. One of the followers sent us a text in Old Spanish. This is the type of collaborative dynamics we seek to obtain but do not always achieve. (E. García, entertainment manager, Interactive Department RTVE, personal communication, October 30, 2012)

The new production practices aimed at audience relations are difficult to formalize and are generated in the interactive department almost on the sidelines of the rest of the television organization. The techniques available to take advantage of the interactions with the audience are very recent and rudimentary. Television series enable a cross-media strategy to be developed from the beginning of production and to more efficiently and simply take advantage of the phenomenon of fans thanks to the Internet and social media. Technical innovations are capable of encouraging change in the media institutions, but this cannot start from the idea that technical broadcasting systems or tools that facilitate online production are able, in and of themselves, to impose patterns that will later lead to innovations in labor practices (Cottle & Ashton, 1999).

Conclusions

Observing the production process within the multiplatform distribution logic provides us with several clues to understanding the transformation that public broadcasters are undergoing. Specifically, we gain insight into how the dynamics of externally acquired content production of the fiction shows coming from the production companies fits with the internal logics of RTVE. The analysis performed on the cross-media strategies of two television series attests to the fact that the television content is at the core of all the strategies. This centrality, which is logical, does not, however, allow other creative propositions to be developed on similar platforms that are envisioned apart from the multiplatform logic. This is the case with *Águila Roja*, in which the relations between Globomedia and RTVE make it difficult to deal with large-scale projects such as the video game and film. The dysfunctions noted are the outcome of RTVE's complex economic situation, its organizational restructuring, and changes in its management. However, taking these variables into account, we must still focus our research on understanding the creative logistics that should match the production, distribution, and consumption needs of cross-media content. It is crucial to involve the entire organization in this process, not just the interactive media department.

The main function of the interactive media is, generally speaking, promotion to boost the television audience and traffic on the website and on mobile devices. At the same time, interactive services strive to consolidate the brand and gain audience loyalty. However, certain dysfunctions were

found in the conventional production structures and the way ties are forged among the different platforms.

In line with Dailey, Demo, and Spillman (2005), at RTVE we detected a state of incipient convergence, which reflects the cross-production level, with little integration or cooperation among the individuals who take part in the production. However, the results of the study confirm that introducing new distribution platforms has generated several major changes in the production practices. These transformations can be seen in the multiplication of audiovisual content and services, in the use of new means on the Internet such as YouTube and social media such as Facebook and Twitter, and in the quest for organizational structures that foster stronger ties among the different functional areas and human groups who take part in the cross-media production.

The economic criteria and the cost-benefit ratio pose obstacles that are difficult for public broadcasters to overcome. We found dysfunctions stemming from the difficult economic situation of RTVE; from its organizational restructuring; and from changes in the management's organizational chart, which still depends on government appointments. As researchers such as Palmeri and Rowland (2011) have confirmed, the public broadcasting service in Europe needs an appropriate, secure funding frame (European Broadcasting Union, 2000). The experimentation that took place during the early stage of *Águila Roja*, with the launching of products that took on a life of their own, was largely truncated in *Isabel* because of economic constraints. The financial aspect is a major part of the problem, but another problem is related to the appropriateness of the organizational and production structure in light of the need for a cross-media strategy. The production logistics must be profoundly overhauled to ensure the entire organization—not just the interactive media department—is involved in cross-media production. As other studies have noted, "in the current development phase, it is important to have flexible, innovative organisational structures that are capable of handling the changes taking place in the context in which the companies work" (Franquet, Ribes, & Zopedu, 2012, p. 35).

The shows *Águila Roja* and *Isabel* are an example of RTVE's focus on 360-degree cross-media production, defined by Parker (2007) as a combination of strategies created to improve the cooperation and understanding between different media so that users can find, see, and share the content on any platform. However, this goal, developed in more economically flourishing times, has been downgraded to focus primarily on access to the content of the show or the relationship with the audience, at the expense of producing new content for other platforms. The detailed analysis enables us to see the difficulties facing the media when striving to implement innovative or risky strategies. These actions tend to experiment with audiovisual content to generate enriched, satisfactory experiences for the audience that earns their favor and involvement. The dynamics related to developing and distributing quality content should be adjusted to conceptual propositions that use more creative stories and interactions to create empathy with the defined target audience.

The production of *Águila Roja* and *Isabel* does not reflect a multiplatform diversification plan that had previously been defined by RTVE management as both shows were being created. We notice a transmedia growth of a "tactic mode" Scolari (2009) characterized by a disorganized and unstructured expansion right from the beginning. This organization results in a segregated production system with

different organizational cultures and divided physical space but with certain common points within the goal of shared convergence.

Even though we did not detect an overall, large-scale organizational transformation of RTVE, during the interviews and observations we did find hints of a change that is beginning in the distribution of roles inside the interactive media department of RTVE and in the increasingly important role of external producers in the production of cross-media fiction. The separation of the production into platforms, common to the analogical era, seems not to have come to a close yet. However, so far this division has not stood in the way of the multiplatform expansion of RTVE, although the structure may prove insufficient in the mid- and long- term because it does not match the corporation's cross-media production needs.

Applying the actor-network theory to the cross-media production practices of *Águila Roja* and *Isabel* provides an analytical perspective suitable to the complexity of this working system and a useful metalanguage to expand our knowledge of this subject. Future studies on cross-media production practices can further explore both avenues: first, the ties between the content units that are disaggregated under the same brand in terms of their creation in time and space and, second, how the audience expands the horizons of the initial audiovisual product.

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