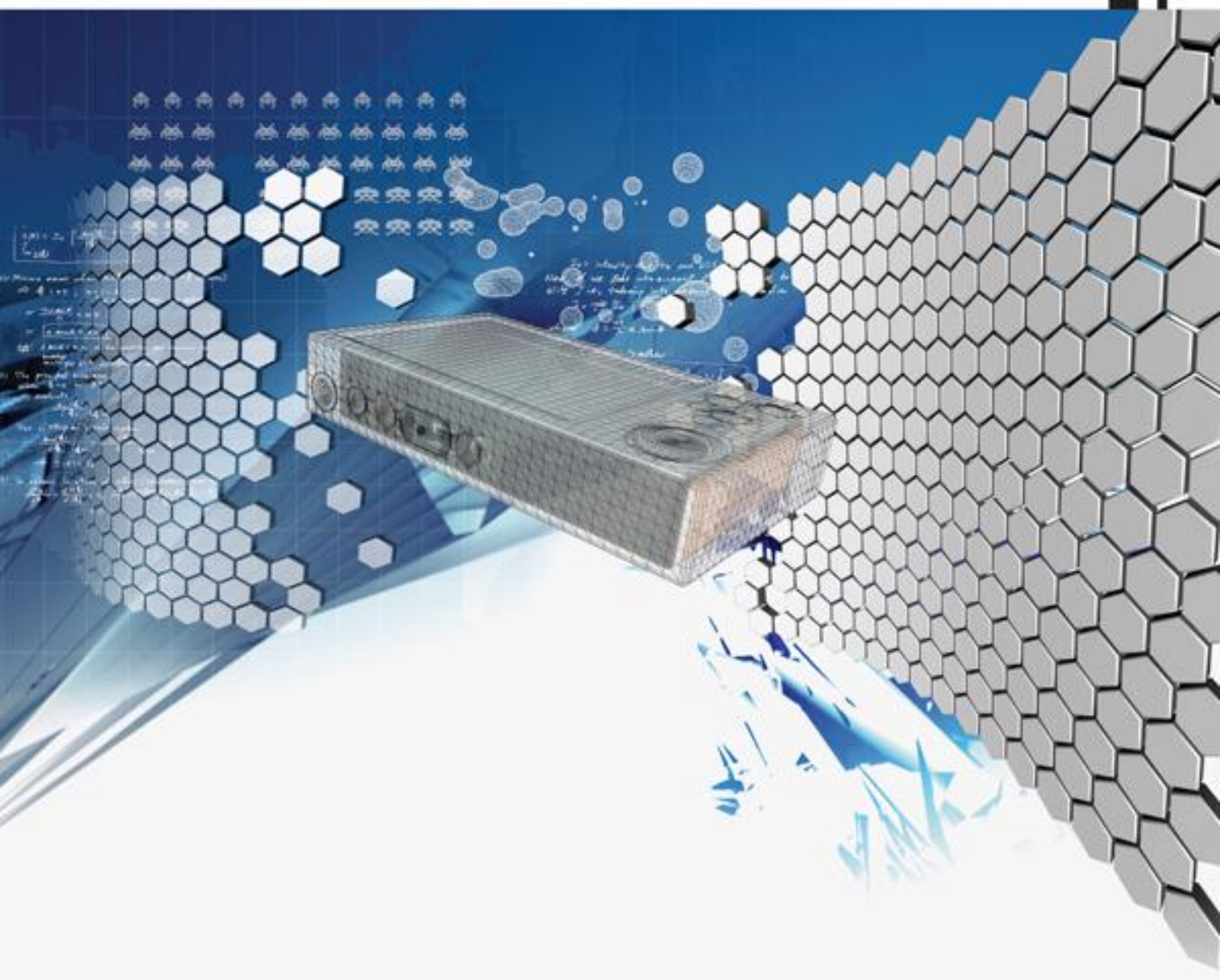# SOCIAL MEDIA

usage and impact

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Chapter Three

The Trivial Pursuits of Mass Audiences Using Social Media: A Content Analysis of Facebook Wall Posts by Fans of Top-Trending Television Programs

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Consumers of mass media have always used their experience and interpretations as topics to engage other fans and friends. This function of media consumption is called conversation currency (Deragon, 2009). The better informed viewers are of a particular element of the mass media, the more they have to spend and the more credibility they obtain. Fans of television programs thus use their knowledge of shows to back up their interpretive claims. For example, followers of *Star Trek* reruns assert their opinions in the context of their own immersion in often-trivial facts about individual episodes. To a lesser degree, fans of any television program express their opinions and interpretations.

Interpretations take many different forms. The simplest claims fall along the lines of approval/disapproval. Casual conversations are filled with assertions that a show or a particular episode is the best to the worst. Entire shows are cast as brilliant or awful, based on interpretations of actors, scripts, production quality, or plot outcomes. An example of such claims might be enacted with extreme conversational assertions (e.g., "that show stinks" or "it's clearly the best show ever").

The forum for discussions of the mass media was initially centered on face-to-face interactions, sometimes referred to as water-cooler conversation, but more accurately as *interpretive communities* (Ang, 1985; Fish, 1980). Popular television shows most often air in prime time, between 8:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m. (EST). For decades, these shows competed in a three-network circus and audiences went to work the next day and found others willing to discuss their previous evening's tele-viewing. With the arrival of cable television, these conversations diminished somewhat as the competitive options grew. Still, a safe mass media topic (one that steered clear of sex, politics and

religion) was television, including televised sports. Researchers have studied such interpersonal conversations, sometimes to understand the parasocial functions of the media (Schiappa, Gregg, & Hewes, 2005).

With the advent of online communication, however, discussion of mass media in general and television programming in particular expanded to fan web pages or discussion groups devoted to conversation about a program or genre of programs (Baym, 2000; Jenkins, 1992, 2006). Working in the same building or waiting until the next family gathering was no longer necessary to make interpretive claims about popular culture (Isaacs, 1995). Qualitative research of such sites includes Beatty (2006), Clark (2008), Godlewski and Perse (2007), and Kozlowski (2005).

Blogging is another mechanism for online discussions (Gregg, 2006). Not only does an individual audience member have a voice, but those who visit and comment on messages posted on blogs are active discussants of the mass media. The successor to formal blogs is microblogging such as Twitter, where communities follow one another. Facebook changed its wall (where acquaintances share public messages), in 2009, to imitate Twitter. Aside from the friend-versus-stranger difference, the functional difference between Facebook and Twitter is small, although game-playing (e.g., Farmville) contributes to its time-passing gratification and total use.

Social networking has greatly expanded the opportunity of people to connect with family, friends, and acquaintances. The general nature of sites like Facebook and Twitter makes conversations about television programs more likely without joining a particular discussion group. Social networking is thus more like the water cooler than an online discussion board (Hsia, 2010).

The influence of social media on old media like television became a hot topic in 2010. Most of the discussion has centered on the use of Twitter by television viewers (Parr, 2010; Tsotsis, 2010), but Facebook is the dominant social medium and considered more influential among participants. Twitter specializes in strangers whom one can follow, but Facebook focuses on acquaintances, broadly called "friends." Interpersonal networks are presumably more salient to participants because comments are more often judged for their validity. Social networking seems to be reversing a trend toward asynchronous viewing. Fans of live programs connect with one another, using social media, thus re-making television a must-see event (Becker, 2010). Only a few years ago, digital video recorders (DVRs) like TiVo persuaded viewers to take control of their viewing choices. One of the guiding questions for this study was how people have begun to share their viewing, particularly as it unfolds in a live setting. Thus, this study chose to examine Facebook, although re-tweeted Twitter posts sometimes appear on Facebook walls, as-

suming any given user wants to share all of his or her streamed thoughts. The primary goal of this study was to describe how people use social media to discuss dominant mass media, but additional efforts were made to explain/understand online behaviors in the realm of social media. Because of the exploratory nature of social media research, a qualitative textual analysis was used to analyze a purposive sample of Facebook posts related to top-trending television shows and their main characters and/or themes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A limited number of studies have examined television-viewing behavior in relation to social media behavior (e.g., Stefanone, Lackaff, and Rosen, 2010). Even before social media, Reeves and Nass (1996) anticipated the link between new media and old media. Boyd and Ellison (2007) initially staked out the domain of inquiry for social networking sites (SNSs).

Social media research has often focused on motivations for using these systems. For example, studies about Facebook have found that maintaining contact with friends is one of the primary reasons for using the system (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007; Sheldon, 2008). Similar findings were noted by Urista, Dong and Day (2009) in research about MySpace and Facebook usage. Among other findings, they noted that users viewed the social networks as a convenient and efficient way to reinforce relationships and to share information quickly to many individuals.

Radio and television stations have experimented with social media as a way of connecting with audiences. Ferguson and Greer (2011) found that only a weak correlation between radio stations' audience size and the number of followers of stations' Twitter sites. Greer and Ferguson (2011) examined television stations' use of Twitter in a separate study that revealed stations that offered news items seldom also promoted their regular newscasts, with overall Twitter use not being used to drive viewers to the station's on-air programming. Both of these studies, however, focused on the media reaching out to listeners and viewers, without much regard to feedback from the audience.

No previous scholarly studies have tracked messages posted by broadcast audience members, but research in related fields has been undertaken. Metzgar and Maruggi (2009) used Radian6, a social media tracking tool, to identify the major topics of conversation on social media sites during the 2008 presidential campaign. Their findings compared how much each candidate appeared on traditional media and social media, but no qualitative study of messages was undertaken.

Another area of previous research involves the amount of self-disclosure as a predictor of social media use. Ledbetter, Mazer, DeGroot, Meyer, Mao, and Swafford (2011) found an interaction effect between self-disclosure and social connection directly predicting Facebook communication and indirectly predicting relational closeness. Friends on social media make evaluations of one another based on messages posted on Facebook (Walther, Van Der Heide, Kim, Westerman, & Tong, 2008). Research on social media and SNSs is evolving to keep up with developing trends, but work thus far is more exploratory than definitive, especially with regard to gratifications of television viewers.

METHOD

Participants

Participants were limited to those members of Facebook whose privacy settings permitted search engines to view their *walls*, where *status updates* are publicly revealed. The resulting sample was self-selected simply by virtue of each person choosing to participate in a semi-private forum. After accounting for multiple messages from the same people, the number of participants was 1,198. The participants did not directly consent to the study. They willingly posted messages to their walls, perhaps unaware that their privacy settings were set sufficiently low enough to permit Openbook (a web engine) to retrieve their often-mundane thoughts. Their names were recorded along with the messages they shared, but all materials were kept confidential. One could argue that they made their thoughts public, but it seemed ethical to protect their identities anyway, in case they were unaware. In all likelihood, they did not care who saw their messages or photos. Social media are predicated on a threshold for self-disclosure that seems very loosely connected to privacy.

Starting in 2009, the contents of Facebook users' wall postings have become searchable through web engines such as Openbook, located on the Internet at http://youropenbook.org (Heussner, 2010; Smith, 2009). Not everyone who uses Facebook is aware, apparently, that their words are seen by people outside their circle of acquaintances (which is the *raison d'etre* for Openbook). Facebook wall postings (status updates) served as the unit of analysis in this study, but the textual data that comprise the sampled messages does not exist separately from the search that produces the data. This study used Openbook to explore the viewpoints of the participants, based on their generic reactions to all programs on the Fall 2010 network prime-time lineup and to five specific programs.

Programs

This study examined the wall postings of several Facebook pages that mentioned new and/or popular prime-time shows in October 2010. Show titles were chosen to reflect debut, mainstream, and established programs across a variety of broadcast networks: *Hellcats* (CW), *Hawaii Five-0* (CBS), *Dancing with the Stars* (ABC), *Outsourced* (NBC), *and Glee* (FOX). Some of these shows are scripted and include one situation comedy (*Outsourced*), two performance-based dramas (*Hellcats* and *Glee)*, and one performance reality format (*Dancing with the Stars*). Choosing popular or brand-new shows was the purpose in this study; dealing with performance themes was happenstance. Collecting data is not as difficult as analyzing it, but some raise the issue of bias (Winslow, 2010). *None of the television programs studied here were favorites of the researcher engaged in interpretation.*

Titles with ambiguous meanings were included despite their double-meaning. Thus, the NBC debut program *Outsourced* was sufficiently generic that comments using that word sometimes referred to something else and had to be discarded. On the other hand, Fox's popular program *Glee* easily uncovered comments specific to the show, suggesting the word itself (much like the word *gay*) has come to mean something unintended fifty years ago. Initials were useful for locating shorthand comments (e.g., DWTS for *Dancing with the Stars*).

As indicated earlier, general comments about *new fall shows* were searched and interpreted. This strategy permitted generic wall posts that might apply to programs not included among the chosen five or to programming in general. For decades, television viewers have been conditioned to expect fresh programming each fall, which is one justification for the time frame in the present study.

The process of sorting the comments by participant's Facebook "user name" produced an indicator of how large the sample of posts was: *Dancing with the Stars* (190), *Glee* (225), *Hawaii Five-0* (193), *Hellcats* (211), *Outsourced* (231), and "new fall shows" (194), for a total of 1,207 messages from 1,198 different people. Some messages were originally Twitter messages repurposed onto the participant's Facebook wall. Thus, over 1,200 wall posts were read, sorted, and interpreted. The apparent limit for each search of the six performed was roughly 200 messages, perhaps a function of how the search is programmed by someone at Openbook.

Nearly all messages were in English. A dozen or so wall posts in another language, usually Spanish or Japanese, were discarded. Although gender and age were not coded, the stream of messages came from a wide variety of people, national origin, and demographic category. Young people were sometimes displayed with drinks in their hands or posed provocatively.

Some people used a logo instead of a photograph, or showed their dog or cat, or a cartoon image. Even so, the Openbook website captured the gender, if made public on a Facebook profile, using a male or female symbol (♂ or ♀). The most disturbing image was a young man pointing an automatic weapon at the lens.

Procedure

Openbook (youropenbook.org) was thus employed to collect publicly searchable messages from private accounts. Most self-reported demographic data are typically anonymous among privacy-conscious Facebook users, although photos (forwarded by Openbook) can be interpreted for age, gender, and sometimes social group. As indicated earlier, Openbook is intended to raise consciousness regarding privacy, but it makes a useful research tool for social media research in the meantime.

Entering the search terms one at a time into Openbook generated the six textualized lists of comments (available from the author). Analyzing and interpreting participant's *status updates* was done qualitatively to identify emergent themes within messages on the walls of Facebook users. For example, posted messages occasionally included YouTube links to clips within programs, sometimes far in excess of making simple evaluative comments. In addition to qualitative textual analysis, this study considered the relationship between themes and photo-identifiable demographics.

The constant comparative method (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002) was used to sort the themes and sub-themes described below. After capturing each stream of comments in September and October 2010, the file was printed out and then cut into strips of paper (including the color Facebook photo for most messages) that were manually sorted into piles on a large workspace. Each item was interpreted by finding similarities and differences between items, which is an iterative process that continues until *saturation* is reached (i.e., to the greatest possible understanding of the identified themes and to the researcher's conviction that adding more participants or messages would not add any new understanding). Sometimes deeper piles of comments started as several related piles. Other times, smaller piles were combined into larger piles to help identify dominant themes.

The method itself allows greater analytic flexibility than other techniques, in part because the tradition has diverged over the years. The earliest description of the *constant comparative method* appeared in the work of Glaser and Strauss (1967), who used it to describe *grounded theory*. Grounded theory is an inductive approach where the researcher systematically and repeatedly gathers and analyzes field data. The repetition of comparison lies at the heart

of the term *constant comparative*, with the end result being an explanation grounded in the data.

Glaser and Strauss later disagreed on the method and published different works on how it should be done (Strauss, 1987; Glaser, 1992). A subsequent textbook by Strauss and Corbin (1990) became a training manual for a newer generation of researchers trained in qualitative methods that were often unaccepted in communication journals even a decade before. Other scholars molded the method to their own purposes, but the underlying structure involved *open coding* (the process whereby most of the comparisons take place) as the first step. The sorting technique described above, using strips of paper, was widely taught in universities in the 1980s, until the appearance of software programs that reduced the manual labor. Given the relatively small population of postings, the manual method was employed in this study.

RESULTS

For the most part, ordinary people shared their feelings or opinions as private individuals. Notable exceptions were those who participated in campaign-driven comments linking to tvguide.com, tv.com, ustream.tv, ABC.com, local newscast anchors, or their own Internet-only blog. Most of these comments include video clips from various programs. It was impossible to discern whether comments were encouraged by the sites that warehouse the clips. Most commercial websites have links directly to Facebook. Presumably someone who views clips is more likely to share comments in such situations, because of the encouragement.

Nearly all comments could be framed as positive such as "cant wait for *Glee* <33" or negative as "If you like *Glee*, you are wrong." Even emotionally neutral comments (for example "*Glee* is new tonight") seemed somewhat positive. Some people simply said that they were "watching [show title]" or asking "has anyone seen [show title]?" Negative comments were numerous but definitely in the minority, often reflecting disappointment or taking a cynical view of the television industry as "Whoever greenlit *Outsourced* is really, really dumb."

New Fall Shows

Several themes emerged from a close textual analysis of the wall postings. First, a sense of excitement captured the positive messages on Facebook. A good example is "Ready for new shows this week!! This week new fall series

begins!!! Here comes fall!!!" Thus, enthusiasm about watching new shows in the fall emerged as the dominant theme. Mostly the enthusiasm was in the form of a declaration, about half of which mentioned one or more specific shows that were enjoyed, but sometimes the comment was framed as a question to elicit responses. For example, someone wrote "The fall t.v. season is underway. What new shows have you checked out and which ones do you like and returning shows are you excited about?" Asking questions, however, was not nearly as common as sharing a statement. When specific shows were mentioned, enthusiasm was absent about a third of the time.

A second theme was mentioning the use of a DVR (or TiVo) to assist in the viewing of new shows. One person wrote "WOW Aren't lots of the new shows this fall just fabulous? Hard to decide what to watch ~ I just DVR them and watch them when I can." That quite a few people included their viewing technique was a contrast to the playful nature of their enjoyment, although these comments were nearly universally positive.

A third theme was the context of television in people's unmediated lives. Many of the people making Facebook comments framed their TV viewing as part of their other activities that they listed. A few suggested that the opportunity to see new programming lifted their spirits or sense of well-being, even in the face of illness or stress. One posting read ". . . call me a loser, call me old, or call me pathetic. WHATEVER!! The new fall shows make me happy!!!"

A contrasting theme was a sense of disappointment and anger with new viewing options. These messages made negative claims, with frequent criticisms of shows. Disdain for a program was usually stated in a clever manner, indicating that the person making the negative comment was more entertaining than the program being attacked. For example, a twenty-something male posted: "The order in which I will listen to a song. Original artist, acoustic version, tone deaf car singer, *Glee*."

Specific Programs

Regardless the particular show, some postings fell under the "watching [*show name*]" variety, sharing an activity under Facebook's original "what are you doing right now?" theme that replaced the "what's on your mind" theme (likely in response to the growing popularity of Twitter). As such, knowing that someone is watching a show could just as easily be eating a sandwich or playing with the dog. The addition of an exclamation mark denoted some excitement and occasionally people would overdo the punctuation.

Hawaii Five-O. The dominant theme of these wall postings was enjoyment. Some just posted the name of the show without further comment, but that it-

self could be interpreted as enthusiasm, with the enjoyment understood. Far fewer negative comments were encountered. Even fewer postings attempted to engage the reader in a response by asking a question. One subtheme was missing Hawaii and wishing to return to Hawaii, which were feelings likely generated by the show's images. An example was a young woman: "Watching Hawaii Five-0 makes me really want to go back to Hawaii :)." A second theme was the program's emblematic music intro recorded in the 1960s by The Ventures. At least a dozen people posted YouTube links to the video and audio. Other clips from the earlier version of *Hawaii Five-0* were linked to YouTube by fans of the show. A third theme was locale and localism. Judging from the names and photos, Hawaiians themselves were excited with the program. Some linked to clips of themselves or relatives in small roles. A few people used local jargon (e.g., "cheeehuuu," which means excitement). Another young man posted: "HAWAII FIVE-0 filming across my work place . . . Cool . . . Haha." Also, a Honolulu newspaper (staradvertiser.com) cross-promoted the program and episodes on its Facebook wall, often tied to a variety of news stories about the show. At least a half-dozen video websites linked clips of episodes: tvsquad.com, imdb.com, tv.com, cbs.com, among others. At the time of the study, CBS was promoting a marching band competition ("Marching Band Mania") featuring schools that showcased the show's theme song.

Outsourced. The dominant theme was enjoyment, greatly outnumbering negative comments. A handful of Facebook users wondered if the show was racist (usually deciding it was funny anyway), but the substantial fan base with Indian-sounding names would not suggest the show is offensive to people in India. A second trend was identically worded messages. First, a dozen or so people linked to www.facebook.com/funHETU, which is a humor page for Indians, using the same wording "Outsourced [HQ]" after the link. Second, a handful featured a word-for-word blurb linking to www.nbc.com: "Talk to the Outsourced virtual call center. Operators are standing by. Outsourced, premiering September 23rd at 9:30/8:30c only on NBC." Each posting came from a different person but likely generated by a "tell your friends" Facebook link on an NBC website. A final but smaller theme was posting a particular punch line from the show, worded slightly differently. The "moustache ride" joke apparently resonated with many viewers who chose to make it their Facebook post, minus an accompanying link or video clip (just the show title).

Dancing With the Stars (DWTS). DWTS was not a new show in October 2010, but was included to contrast with scripted programs. This reality competition draws huge audiences each week and breaks the template for themes in this study. First, an extraordinary number of Twitter links are

cross-posted to Facebook for *Dancing with the Stars*. Second, comments are driven by the competition itself, with posters rooting for and against the season's contestants. Very little was posted about frontrunner contestant Jennifer Grey and nothing at all about Brandy or other finalists (except Bristol Palin, daughter of the 2008 Republican vice-presidential candidate Sarah Palin, who frequently appeared in the audience.) Palin drew many comments but so, too, did Michael Bolton, Margaret Cho, and Michael "The Situation" Sorrentino (including one post from himself). Michael Bolton was the butt of a re-tweeted Twitter (and Facebook) line from Conan O'Brien: "The Chilean Miners could be released this weekend...just in time to see Michael Bolton sing on DWTS. Guys, what's an extra day?" The dominant theme after the numerous contestant associations was the large number of video clips, including some from previous seasons. Competitive dance is such a visual element that these clips were commonly shared. Thus, the enthusiasm so common to the other shows in this study was focused instead on those who competed. A secondary theme was a recurring question: "Who got voted off?" Surely those wondering could have Googled the answer, but they chose to ask their friends on Facebook. This choice reflects an effort to connect with other fans, much more than it serves to answer their question. One young girl wrote: "I'm so mad! Accidentally deleted the results of DWTS off the DVR :(Somebody tell me who got eliminated Tuesday night?" All of these questions, in fact, were posed by women, even though the gender split of those who posted a *Dancing with the Stars* comment seemed fairly even.

Hellcats. This show from the CW network is full of youth appeal, mostly comments originating on Facebook but some cross-posted from Twitter. The most striking finding is that more people claiming to be "watching" than enjoying, although no one seems to dislike the show. Those people who claim to be addicted to *Hellcats*, judging from their Facebook photos, are quite young (not too surprising given the cheerleader theme. One poster described the show as *Bring It On* meets *Mean Girls*. Overall, the enthusiasm is reflected in the number of smiley-faces and sideways hearts <3 and text-style words like "ur" and "u" instead of "your" and "you." A simple example from a teen-aged Latina was "I've become addicted to Hellcats :) lol." This show elicited a substantial number of links to video clips, many of which have the same preview wording, which suggests they come from the same YouTube or cwtv.com link to Facebook. Beyond the youthfulness of the fan base, however, the wall postings for *Hellcats* were similar to other shows in this study.

Glee. One of Fox network's biggest hits, this show already attracted some research attention for its reliance on Internet viewers (Perren, 2010). *Glee* elicited a large number of positive comments. Text comments were the expected prominence, but comments tied to video links were extremely high.

Subcategories of videos included links to a recent skit on NBC's *Saturday Night Live*, mentions of Charice (a popular character on *Glee*), and specific video "covers" of popular songs. The number of people updating their Facebook status as "watching" the show was less than the norm for programs in this study. Very few people had anything neutral or negative to say about the show. One unanticipated theme was listening to songs from *Glee* on the radio or portable audio players. This reflects the show's focus on music. A few Facebook users commented on the program becoming "more popular than the Beatles" with more hits in the Top 100 songs list (Kreps, 2010), complaining that the hit songs were not original versions as had been the case with songs from the Beatles. Still, the popularity of a television show crossed over to other media. Random miscellaneous comments included a bar (Oxwood Inn) touting its *Glee* drink specials, a student working on her dissertation while listening to *Glee* songs in a cold library, and a young black man who commented "Im a big ass softie underneath it all. Glee finally broke me down. Cryd like a baby lol" [his spelling]. Another recurring theme was a campaign to follow "Winston van der Woodsen" on Facebook to obtain additional videos. These messages were identical but not Twitter re-tweets. It is likely that visitors to Winton's videos were offered a link to share a canned message with friends. The opportunity of *Glee* fanatics (called *gleeks*) to connect with others seems unlimited.

CONCLUSION

This study revealed some similarities and differences among the various programs. As mentioned above, nearly all users, regardless of the actual program, self-identified as fans of the television show (rarely making random derogatory remarks). In all cases, there were those who saw their own viewing as framed by a time period (e.g., prime time), an activity among other mundane interests, or a solitary obsession. Few people offered deeper criticism; apparently the form works against the content (Postman, 1985).

One can wonder what Neil Postman would have written about the cybersphere, where no discussion is too trivial. As a media theorist and cultural critic, Postman is best remembered for his 1985 book about television, *Amusing Ourselves to Death*. Probably he would view social media as a logical extension of mass media and its connection to popular culture: less discourse and more "amusing ourselves to death." Postman died in 2003, however.

Surely, enjoyment itself was a recurring motif on these Facebook walls. It is striking how many people can communicate a range of interpretations simply by invoking the name of a show: "Glee!" or "DWTS!" Posting a word

is akin to wearing a sweatshirt with a team logo. The communicator is making a statement. The excitement and enthusiasm for watching television was clearly the dominant theme. A relative lack of critical comments was surprising. One possible explanation is that these shows are regularly scheduled. A study of special events might elicit more negative comments.

Media observers have taken note of the audience's willingness to make rude comments about live events, such as the Super Bowl and the Academy Awards (Stelter, 2011). The key difference among the comments posted for different shows was the use of video clips. Sharing an experience is inherently unlike sharing a declared message or posing an engaging question. Future research should explore the reasons why people want others to see or experience what they saw or experienced. Previous research on self-disclosure (e.g., Ledbetter et al., 2010) seems a productive theoretical thread to explore.

Another difference was the level of detail offered in messages. Established programs were more specific about a given episode or character appearance. Newer shows focused on the excitement of their being new. It would be interesting to see if established shows also had one-word wall postings when they were new.

Meaning

People on Facebook are expected to be upbeat, though more than a few of them go for the negative or snarky comment. Saying something about what one is doing or thinking is inherently a positioning of self, communicating who one is or what one believes or how one views the world. Sometimes the message is manifest and occasionally it is latent. Over time, discussion of television shows may migrate to Facebook Fan pages, where viewers may experience more freedom to participate in discussions of television culture (Jenkins, 1992, 2006).

Judging from the collective comments in this study, people are positive or they choose to say nothing at all. One differentiating dimension is whether someone is stating or asking a viewpoint. Posing questions is an attempt to engage others, although merely making a statement will attract comments, supporting or not. Future studies should examine the stream of responding comments generated by each message. At the beginning of data collection, visiting the page of a particular contributor was not feasible. Toward the end of the study, Openbook began focusing on walls that were public without the need of "friending" the originator.

If there is one overarching lesson from studying how people watch television and share with others using social media, it would be that we live in

an era of "more choice, more voice" with regard to all media. Forty years ago we had limited choice and limited voice. Viewers could choose among three broadcast networks and engage in face-to-face interpersonal contact. The feedback loop for television was limited to letter-writing and the water cooler. Twenty years ago we had more choice, thanks to the growth of cable and satellite distribution of more channels, but still limited voice. Today we have both choice and voice, in abundance, and the impact of newer media on older media is potentially and increasingly significant. Even the bloggers and microbloggers themselves (e.g., Hamilton, 2011) are intrigued at the way Twitter is altering the way television is consumed.

Future research should include cable networks, not just broadcast networks. Now that the exploratory work has been done, qualitative researchers can use more in-depth data collection, engaging people in individual interviews and/or focus groups. Future research might examine whether the general tone of comments elsewhere on those same contributor's walls had a similar negative viewpoint. Certainly, another welcome step is to gauge the uses and gratifications of social media messages as they pertain to traditional media content, perhaps using quantitative surveys. The qualitative approach has shown its potential to supply preliminary findings on this important topic.

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