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UPF	Universitat Pompeu Fabra	Spain
UOC	Fundació per a la Universitat Oberta de Catalunya	Spain
UOXF	The Chancellor, Masters and Scholars of the University of Oxford	UK
JYU	Jyväskylän Yliopisto	Finland
UMINHO	Universidade do Minho	Portugal
UdelaR	Universidad de la República	Uruguay
PUJ	Pontificia Universidad Javeriana	Colombia
UNITO	Università degli Studi di Torino	Italy
ARS MEDIA	Ars Media SRL	Italy

RMIT University (Australia) participates in the research but is not a beneficiary of the TRANSLITERACY Project.

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Introduction: Transmedia teens: digital practices of Italian students

The objective of this paper is to give an overall picture of the cultural consumption and transmedia practices of the Italian teenagers participating in the "Transliteracy" research project. It also aims to analyse a specific aspect of teenagers' consumption patterns, one that is linked to the amount of creativity and autonomy they use and develop through their social media usage practices, and to how they experiment with transmedia usage. In fact, one of the distinctive features of participatory culture is that it permits users to create complex consumption processes that encompass different formats of the same content and different devices or platforms, and which are characterised by high levels of autonomy and engagement (Jenkins, 2006; Scolari, 2013).

Sociological research on the relationship between adolescents and media has often been conditioned and guided by prejudices linked to the theory of technological determinism: the myth of Digital Natives and the so-called Millennials (Prensky, 2001,2009; Pedrò, OECD-CERI 2006; Palfrey and Gasser, 2008; Tapscott, 2009) has often contributed to reinforcing the idea that adolescents, exactly because they are young, are active and critical users of media content. However, the reference literature has highlighted much criticism of the concept of digital natives and its initial formulation (Kennedy et al., 2008; Helsper and Eynon, 2009; Thinyane, 2010; Margaryan et al., 2011), and some authors have questioned just how much "activism" and creativity is encouraged by new digital technologies and then practiced by teenagers (Jenkins, 2007).

Gardner and Davis explore this argument in their book "The App Generation" (2014), quoting computer scientist and cultural critic Jaron Lanier, who in his book "You Are Not a Gadget" (2010) questions the effects of remixing on individual creativity: "Pop culture has entered into a nostalgic malaise. Online culture is dominated by trivial mashups of the culture that existed before the onset of mashups, and by fandom responding to the dwindling outposts of centralised mass media. It is a culture of reaction without action" (Lanier, 2010, p. 20). Therefore, according to the author, digital media can actually hinder rather than help creativity. In this regard, he uses the expression "lock-in" to emphasise how software restricts users, in respect to the actions and decisions it makes possible. This restriction is particularly evident, according to the authors, in how the Apps that teenagers use every day are designed to be used and how they refer to databases with predefined content that they can use: it is highly likely that in this way they create "artefacts" and content that conform to these repertoires and therefore to analogous and repetitive characteristics. Gardner

and Davis cite numerous other examples of the way in which digital media hinders creativity (which they call "imagination"). At the same time, the authors highlight the benefits of Apps, which they say can help promote a strong sense of identity, allow deep relationships, and stimulate creativity. Ito (2008) proposed another point of view that challenges the classical cultural distinctions between active and passive media. According to the reconstructions carried out by scholars, media broadcasts or commercial media often tend to stimulate imitation processes (especially in children), but not originality and creativity. These opinions can certainly be examined, starting with Ito's considerations but also in light of the results of our research. In fact, the collected data demonstrate how traditional media materials can be used as the basis for the creation of new content, such as parodies, mashups, compositions and various kinds of mixes.

Today, this is also the preferred method for the characteristics of YouTube, which is a large dispenser of traditional, remediated (Bolter and Grusin, 1999) media content that is accessible at any time. There is then a second aspect that is linked to degrees of autonomy, activism and creativity. In our opinion, this aspect is related to the diversification of media consumption, i.e. to an individual's ability to broaden their consumption basket, practicing both traditional and digital consumption. This is also a skill that can undoubtedly be conditioned by several factors, such as socio-economic conditions and sociocultural level, and therefore the possibility of accessing a wide range of offers and opportunities, as we have also learnt from research on digital inequalities. We will see that some students have successfully broadened their consumption basket, while others have done so to a lesser extent.



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