

# Engagement: fiction series and social networks. The case of *Pulseras Rojas's* official Facebook page (Antena 3, Spain)

Transmedialidad: series de ficción y redes sociales.  
El caso de *Pulseras Rojas* en el grupo oficial de Facebook (Antena 3. España)

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## ABSTRACT

We analyzed the Facebook group page of a television series broadcasted in Spain, *Pulseras Rojas*. The social network is a transmedia platform and a resource of opportunities to stimulate viewer engagement. Our focus is traffic on Facebook derived from the second season, broadcasted by Antena 3 Spanish network between July and August 2013. Following the proposal of Askwith (2007), we consider seven touchpoints: Expanded access, repackaged content, ancillary content, branded products, related activities, social interaction and interactivity. We studied Facebook entries in order to classify the user's type of involvement, calibrate the corporate response to user demands and evaluate opportunities of both business and participatory culture stimulated by the social network. Facebook is revealed as a powerful tool to engage the viewer, although the network communication strategy has an incipient and undeveloped management that fails to take full advantage of the interactive, two-way nature of the social network.

**Keywords:** TV series, *Pulseras Rojas*, Facebook, engagement, Askwith, touchpoints, transmedia storytelling, crossmedia.

## RESUMEN

Analizamos el Facebook de la teleserie *Pulseras Rojas* emitida en España por Antena 3, en tanto recurso transmedia y fuente de oportunidades para estimular el engagement del espectador. Estudiamos el tráfico generado durante la emisión de la segunda temporada, entre julio y agosto de 2013. Siguiendo la propuesta de Askwith (2007), se pueden identificar siete modalidades de touchpoints, es decir, puntos de contacto con la narración, adicionales a la propia emisión televisiva: acceso expandido, contenido adaptado, contenido expandido, productos de marca, actividades relacionadas, interacción social e interactividad. El estudio exploratorio se basa en el análisis del contenido del grupo de la serie en Facebook e identifica las modalidades de touchpoints y sus resultados. Facebook se revela como un potente instrumento para involucrar al espectador, aunque la estrategia comunicativa de la cadena de televisión presenta una gestión incipiente, poco evolucionada, que desaprovecha el carácter interactivo y bidireccional de la red social.

**Palabras clave:** Televisión; series de ficción, *Pulseras Rojas*, Facebook, engagement (compromiso), Askwith, transmedia storytelling (narración transmediática), crossmedia.

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## INTRODUCTION

Technology and the development of the Internet determine the communicative style adopted by the audiovisual contents. Producers and broadcasters promote engagement to avoid audience fragmentation, create communities and stimulate fans. An audiovisual product's follow-up has become a sophisticated experience. Changes in its design, production and dissemination are demanding communication professionals who are familiar with new narrative forms, and are capable of understanding, managing and exploiting the potential of the communicative spaces enabled by technology in the digital environment. The new communicative spaces offer connection and involvement opportunities for viewers who are hungry for interaction, conversation, and proposals. Fiction series are an attractive genre to these phenomena, since the serial structure allows the design of transmedia strategies to disseminate contents through other media, before or after the broadcast of the episode.

The overall aim of this study<sup>1</sup> is to investigate the use made by the Spanish network Antena 3 of the social network Facebook as part of the communication strategy of the fiction series *Pulseras Rojas*. This is an exploratory study that seeks to identify the types of official contents presented in the official group page, managed by the national network Antena 3, which broadcast the Spanish-dubbed version of the original series. First, we analyze the communication strategy and the adaptation of the official contents of the series to Facebook's characteristics, trying to identify the existence of exclusive content, possible official responses to audience comments and the strategic nature of the planning of new posts. In addition, we decided to categorize the types of contents that motivated the posts based on Askwith's (2007) touchpoint categories (which are potential generators of engagement), and to examine the answers provoked in the audience.

Before we continue, it is necessary to define some key concepts for the study we propose.

### TRANSMEDIA AND CROSSMEDIA NARRATIVE

The term transmedia has evolved from such terms as hypertextuality (Landow, 1995), multimedia and hypermedia (Moreno, 2002), post-hypertextuality (Scolari, 2008), cross-media, user generated content, cross-platform and media hybrids. Transmediality seems to be succeeding in imposing itself, by pro-

viding guides for the transmedia creator (Giovagnoli, 2011; Bernardo, 2011; Phillips, 2012) and even by getting the approval of the industry in 2010, when the Producers Guild of America added the transmedia producer category to the credits list of Hollywood films.

The concept of transmedia storytelling is attributed to Henry Jenkins (2003), although it was Marsha Kinder (1991) who introduced the term in communication studies, as recognized by Jenkins (2011). Indeed, in 1991, Kinder employed the term transmedia intertextuality to refer to relations between television, film, video games and toys, as "compatible members of the same ever-expanding supersystem of mass entertainment" (p. 40). Since then, Kinder already emphasized the commercial aspect of the strategy and warned about the dangers of assuming it in purely textual (or intertextual) terms, disregarding the promotional cross-media dimension between these texts.

But an intertextual network, although necessary condition, is not enough to speak of transmedia storytelling: Jenkins insisted that, ideally, every medium makes a *unique*, *distinctive* and *valuable* contribution to the construction of the story; i.e., is neither a quotation or allusion, nor an adaptation, transposition or inter-semiotic translation, but something more complex (Jenkins, 2007, 2008; Scolari, 2008). Each medium conveys a text that offers something new, narratively speaking; the narrative is enriched and problematized by this contribution and the intertextual universe it helps to build becomes denser and complex:

In the ideal form of transmedia, each medium does what it does best — so that a story might be introduced in a film, expanded through television, novels, and comics, and its world might be explored and experienced through game play. Each franchise entry needs to be self-contained enough to enable autonomous consumption. That is, you don't need to have seen the film to enjoy the game and vice-versa (Jenkins, 2003, p.3).

Transmedia expansion depends, in the era of media convergence, on corporate impulse, participatory culture and fans activity, on which Jenkins had reflected so much (1992, 2006b). In other words, transmedia narratives are creations inside and outside the canon, in the fandom or, as Jenkins (2010)

says, every story aspires to become a re-elaboration “shaped top down by decisions made in corporate boardrooms and bottom up by decisions made in teenagers’ bedrooms” (p. 948).

The transmedia story is thus built by the sum of stories appearing in different media spaces, either simultaneously or successively, breaking the usual linearity. But it does not only have an expansive character, as it seems to be deduced from Jenkins’ proposal. It can also be a compressed narrative, as stated by Scolari, Jiménez and Guerrero (2012), and become a trailer, compilation or synthesis, with a more or less explicit promotional purpose. It can also be an *auteur* narrative, not limited to corporate decisions, but open to fans<sup>2</sup>. The resulting construction tends to be fragmented, but all the fragments have a relationship that gives them meaning.

Ideally, each product in each medium or platform must provide a full story arc, be autonomous and satisfying in itself, but at the same time the experience must be enriched by the relation between the different media and platforms; it must offer a wide range of often endless layers for the user (reader, viewer, player...), who will seek collaboration to fill the gaps and will in turn provide his/her knowledge to fill others’ gaps. The “official vs. amateur” and “narrative product vs. promotional paratext” binary oppositions become blurred, mingled in the Web and feed each other back. This way, the official production can reuse the fandom’s narrative findings, and the promotional strategy can undergo narrative demands, making promotion a part of the story, and of each narrative content a cross-promotion of all the others (Rodríguez, 2012, 2014).

#### THE ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY. ASKWITH’S PROPOSAL

According to Buckner and Rutledge (2011), achieving a more persuasive effect, connecting better with the audience, expanding the effective audience and obtaining greater profitability are the fundamental reasons why any media product should resort to transmedia storytelling.

Digital media offer users action and interaction possibilities that are a new challenge for the communicative management of audiovisual content. In addition, they also allow the extension, reprocessing and new production of audiovisual contents and

other contents of spontaneous generation. “Convergence represents a cultural shift as consumers are encouraged to seek out new information and make connections among dispersed media content” (Jenkins, 2006a, p. 12).

For the communication manager, this panorama is a double challenge, as they have to obtain in-depth knowledge about the possibilities of each medium and create or adapt the communication strategies to these possibilities:

At the same time, the change in the way of producing contents implies: developing them in different narrative languages according to the available formats (text, audio, video, virtual animation...), adapting them to different devices and screens (mobile, PDAs, iPod, television, computer, paper...), equipping them with interactive added value (personalization, possibility to complete or modify them with selections, reviews or opinions through surveys, forums, chat, etc.) and documenting or complementing them with contributions made by blogs and audiences (results of polls, votes, comments...) (Cabrera, 2010, p. 175).

The ultimate goal is to generate engagement, as defined by Askwith:

A viewer’s engagement with a given medium, content or advertising brand (“object”) can be defined as the overall measure of the depth and nature of an individual’s specific investment with an object. Yet, since engagement can take different forms, and simultaneously reflect and serve a number of different needs and desires, there is no simple formula or scale to calculate this measure, nor a single “type” of engagement that describes the range of possible investments (financial, emotional, psychological, social, intellectual, etc.) that a viewer can develop with a media object (Askwith, 2007, p. 49).

All the aforementioned forms of investment represent a temporary commitment, characterized by empathy, with content. In this regard, four commitment modalities are suggested: consumption of all kinds of products related to the media content; participation in activities related to the content and interaction with it; identification with content; and motivations and desires that drive consumption, participation and identification (Askwith, 2007, p. 49). From this perspective, engagement is the combination of commitment, active involvement, adhesion, attraction, interest and the activities that an audiovisual

product provokes in viewers. Current communication allows for conversation, interaction, co-creation, and relies on technological developments that allow interaction and sharing.

Social networks meet with immediacy and effectiveness the new needs. Their study is necessary to understand the overall engagement strategy developed by such media products like *Pulseras Rojas*.

In the opinion of Askwith (2007), all media contents have a number of narrative touchpoints, which are understood as “a sort of a catch-all terms, describing any content, activity, or strategic offering that allows the media consumer to engage with a television ‘brand’ in any manner other than watching the core program content through real-time or time-shifted (DVR) viewing” (p. 53).

Askwith’s classification proposal (table 1) seems quite comprehensive and successful. It ranks and orders prolific contents in very innovative and emerging formats, with a profusion of terminology. Hence its usefulness. It can be applied in the development of our study which aims to identify the most common touchpoints, the ones that get more responses from consumers, the degree of commitment they generate, and the ways they are managed by the broadcast channel.

Table 1. Touchpoint types

1	<b>Formal program qualities</b>
2	<b>Expanded access:</b> DVD Internet (free or pay-per-download platforms) Mobile devices
3	<b>Repackaged content</b>
4	<b>Ancillary content:</b> Textual extensions (narrative or diegetic) Relevant information Extratextual information
5	<b>Branded products</b>
6	<b>Related activities</b>
7	<b>Social interaction</b>
8	<b>Interactivity</b>

Source: Askwith (2007), p. 98.

#### Formal program qualities:

Any program would have intrinsic attractive features (Askwith, 2007, p. 55) that explain their connection with the audience, contribute to the effectiveness of the promotion and are enhanced by a transmedia strategy.

#### Expanded access:

Access or acquisition opportunities of the media content based on different forms of distribution, devices or business models. There is no reprocessing or alteration of the original televised content. Cabrera (2010) considers that the expanded access is a necessity of the new communicative context (pp. 174-175).

Expanded access touchpoints enable new relationships between television programs and viewers, and frame engagement with content as an ongoing process that occurs across multiple platforms and channels. Letting consumers access content whenever, wherever, and however they want positions television content as a reliable part of their lives, and, at the same time, enables viewers to share their favorite content with others, helping position media content as the basis for social interactions (Askwith, 2007, p. 57).

#### Repackaged content<sup>3</sup>:

It is very common and involves all the variations that result from the original televised episode: manipulation, re-organization, repetition, extraction, reuse or adaptation. It is new content, based on variations of the pre-existing content, offering added value for its usefulness or attractiveness: episode guides, character biographies, plot summaries. They constitute a claim or request and help intermittent viewers who miss an episode to “catch up” with it (Askwith, 2007, pp. 57-59).

#### Ancillary content:

Content other than the original episode that extends and expands the initial information the viewer receives. Askwith (2007, pp. 66-73) differentiates three types of ancillary content: textual extensions, relevant information and extra-textual information:

a) **Textual extensions** are developments of the own narrative storylines, with various forms:

- **Narrative extensions:** these are additional stories that are not present in the main plot; previous stories that explain or give meaning to the main plot; and stories that reveal the consequences or address marginal aspects of the original plot. In this case, the series would be a

mother ship and the ancillary contents would refer to it. As these expansions are unpublished and gain narrative autonomy, they can eventually gain their own narrative weight, becoming stories in themselves. The user of comics or games inspired by a TV series, for example, can consume those products without having seen the series, but these transmedia extensions, which give audiences alternative access to the narrative universe other than the usual TV series, undoubtedly generate interest in the TV series (just like the interest in the series can lead to curiosity for non-frequently used media, such as comic books or video games, precisely). Examples of these narratives are novels, comic book, webisodes, webseries and video games.

- **Diegetic extensions:** these are artifacts extracted from the fictional world of the core narrative, and are inserted as objects in the real world, joining the world of our experience and our everyday practices. For instance, books (tourist guides, newspapers) that have been inspired by something that has been mentioned or has appeared in the main story in a secondary way; photographs, phone messages and documents (legal, certified documents, etc.) or virtual environments that are extensions of the fictional world; access to the contents of computers that appear in the series; materials written by or belonging to characters from the series. All these extensions enhance the impact of the series.
- b) **Relevant information** complements the narrative with details that expand the knowledge of the plot arcs. For example: extended information about diseases that appear in the plot or the judicial proceedings, etc.
- c) **Extra-textual information** surrounding the story and comes from the casting, the production team, the search for locations, technical aspects of filming, audience data, related celebrities and/or other instances of the same nature.

#### Branded products:

Articles that viewers can possess and bear the brand of the TV show. They may be paid-for products (clothing, key chains, posters, etc.) or free-to-download products, such as wallpapers, icons, screen savers, ringtones, etc. They encourage collectability, feed the fan phenomenon and give content to the brand (Askwith, 2007, pp. 73-75).

#### Related activities:

It includes *themed activities* (hobbies or games related to the program that tend to attract commercial sponsorship and involve direct interaction with the audience); *experiential activities* (thematic program-related experiences that allow the viewer to imagine being part of the stories related to the main plot, such as computer games, board games, role-playing games and online activities); *productive activities* (which locate the viewer as co-creator of related contents in wikis, give them access to official digital materials with an invitation to explore, make new creations, produce new meanings or interpretations, participate in online communities where participants generate new texts where they express their opinions, desires or preferences); and *challenge activities* (hobbies that give viewers the opportunity to demonstrate to what extent they are experts in the program, or their skills and competences) (Askwith, 2007, pp.76-82).

#### Social interaction:

These are the official social forums that allow interaction between fans (blogs, moderate chat rooms, social networking websites...) (Askwith, 2007, pp. 76-93). Russell, Norman and Heckler (2003, p. 278) identify three different types of relationships: *vertical connections* (that describe the relationship between a viewer and a program); *horizontal connections* (the social relationship among viewers) and *vertizontal connections* (which combine aspects of the previous two connection types and describe the imaginary relationship between viewers and fictional characters).

#### Interactivity:

It is defined as any process that involves the reciprocal (bi-directional) exchange of actions and reactions between two or more entities. There are three types of interactivity: *mechanical interaction*, which refers to the physical and material interactions between viewers and the television set; *content activation*, which refers to the opportunities for interaction between viewers and a program (or related content) wherein the viewer chooses from a set of possible pre-determined actions (for example, a computer game); and *content interaction* (a process of true interaction with impact between a viewer and a program (audience's voting is without a doubt the most significant example), in which Askwith distinguishes two possible modes: acknowledged contributions and influ-

ential interactions. The first mode occurs in narrative moments that anticipate and provide a planned occasion to enable users to make a contribution and be recognized, but their intervention does not alter or affect the plot. Influential interactions can determine changes, like interactive endings of some fictional products (which means the creators write and film those endings, knowing that not all of them will be broadcast), or the winners of docugames such as American Idol (Askwith, 2007, pp. 94-97).

#### FICTION SERIES. THE CASE OF *PULSERAS ROJAS*

Spanish fiction series, with increasing technical quality and culturally close plots, begin to win followers against their American counterparts, although there is still a remarkable difference between the number and proportion of Spanish and American series in the Spanish television. The *Panorama Audiovisual 2012* report (Fernández Olivares, 2012, pp.117-235) shows that the number of Spanish fiction productions (13.9%) is much lower than their American counterparts (46.9%). However, in terms of audience, the Spanish productions dominate the Spanish annual ranking of fiction series broadcasts. In 2011, the top 12 of the 25 most-watched broadcasts were episodes of the TV series *Águila Roja* (La 1), *Cuéntame cómo pasó* (La 1) and *El barco* (Antena 3).

The audience prefers non-episodic, complex, ongoing stories told through a combination of genres (Mittell, 2006, p. 32). New productions prefer seriality and repetition because those characteristics promote loyalty in audiences (Johnson, 2005, p. 105). Today's programs—in comparison to older productions—activate the audience cognitively and pose a challenge to their emotional intelligence, by presenting complex labyrinths of human relations and by decreasing the narrative clues that help the audience to understand them. Today the audience must pay more attention to details and background information if they want to follow what they are seeing (Johnson, 2005, p. 77).

*Pulseras Rojas* (*Polseres vermelles*, in its original Catalan title) tells the story of a group of children living together as patients in a hospital's pediatric ward. It is a story of friendship, desire for self-improvement and courage, humor and tenderness. It has won numerous awards, including *Fotogramas de Plata 2013*, Best TV Actor for Àlex Monner (Lleó), Zapping Awards 2012 and Best TV series.

The series has been created and written by Albert Espinosa, directed by Pau Freixas, and co-produced by both. The original script is based on the autobiographical novel *El mundo Amarillo* (2008), written by Albert Espinosa, and is intended to last four seasons. It is also broadcast in Argentina (by Telefe). It has been adapted in Canada, Italy, Chile and Mexico. In the latter country, it reached 10 million viewers. Steven Spielberg and ABC acquired the rights to produce an American version of the series, but it was the FOX network which finally made the adaptation, under the name Red Band Society.

TV3, the regional public television of Catalonia, broadcast the first season of the series (13 45-minute episodes) between January and May 2011, and the second season (15 episodes) between January and April, 2013. The Antena 3 group<sup>4</sup> bought the broadcasting rights at the national level, dubbed it in Spanish, and broadcast the first season between July 9 and September 17, 2012. The second season, the subject of our study, premiered on April 8, 2013 in TNT, and became available in Spain through several payment platforms (Canal+, ONO, Orange TV, Movistar TV, Euskaltel, R and Telecable). TNT is a TV channel owned by Turner Broadcasting System International, a division of Turner Broadcasting System Inc. (TBS), a Time Warner company. In broadcast TV, the second season of *Pulseras Rojas* was broadcast by Antena 3 between July 8 and August 12, 2013. The promotion of the second season began on Facebook one month after the end of the first season, during the nine-month break, until the beginning of the second season in July 2013.

The first season reached an average of 2,384,000 viewers and a 15.5% share in A3. Season two kept an average of 1,385,133 viewers and a 10.8% share.

#### THE *PULSERAS ROJAS* FACEBOOK GROUP (A3)

This article examines the management made by Antena 3 of the social network Facebook as part of the institutional communication of the fiction series *Pulseras Rojas*. The television networks are beginning to discover the added value provided by the activation of their content in media other than television, where they can promote their products through alternative and complementary formulas and enable spaces in which the audience can express themselves: "This new way of watching TV is based on web pages as an informational framework and virtual communities as a framework for discussion" (Cascajosa, 2005, p. 711). Therefore, we

consider that any engagement strategy designed by the network will be reflected in the posts on the official Facebook group. Good management involves adapting the texts to each channel, talking frequently and naturally with users who comment about the contents, providing unique or exclusive contents: “The design of interactive resources must take into account their effects on audiences” (Cabrera-González, 2010, p. 174). Facebook provides valuable information for an analysis of these effects. This study will try to investigate the exploitation and management made by Antena 3 of the audience information.

The case under study is a group page that represents an organization, in this case Antena 3, and a media product, the TV series *Pulseras Rojas*, after which it is named. Its followers are Facebook users who have clicked the “Like” button. Updates are usually public and visible to anyone on Facebook, whether they are followers of the page or not, and are signed with the page’s name and not by the series’ creator or page’s manager. The page is a powerful advertising tool that allows simultaneously sharing public information with a large number of Facebook users and obtaining relevant information about its followers.

In the context of television fiction series, consumers and fans of these products actively contribute through blogs, forums, chat rooms and social networks like Facebook, MySpace and Twitter, both in the official pages and the non-official pages that the fans have created themselves. Occasionally, viewers become producers of fiction by making videos and uploading them to YouTube or DailyMotion and writing their own scripts and stories (fanfiction) inspired by the characters and plots of these series. (Simelio, 2010, p. 2)

A comparative study on the management of transmediality in two fiction series –*Skins* (UK) and *El Barco* (Spain)– by Grandío and Bonaut (2012) suggests that their producers rely on social networks to generate excitement in the audience and test their response to the first episodes: “The series’ producers used Internet and its different media (mainly forums) to ‘anticipate’ information about the contents and generate expectation in the audience by ‘leaking’ the initial episodes of the season or ‘pilot’ programs of the new series (p. 560).

The existence of a visits counter is an indication of the concern of networks to measure the number of users who are interested in the services offered by the series’

website. Although, of course, there are also other techniques to find out about the audience’s level of interactivity (...) such as the comments made on the contents, the sharing of contents with friends by email, the contacts established with the editorial team and participation in surveys, forums, chats, social or information networks, blogs, contests, and online games. (Hernández, Ruiz & Simelio, 2013, p. 463)

As Lacalle (2011) points out, “from 2009, social networks emerged as the single solid meeting point of the shaky ground of relations between television and the Internet” (p. 103). The connections between both worlds have not yet reached the peak of their development. In fact, a research study on the visibility of television series in the web concluded that the quantity and quality of the information provided by the sites are insufficient and inaccurate (De la Cuadra, 2010, p. 661).

In the transmedia universe, it seems clear that the use of social networks related to fiction series is part of what Askwith calls social interaction (touchpoint 7) and conversational interactivity (touchpoint 8). Grandío and Bonaut (2012) contemplate the study of the use of social networks related to fiction series within the dimension of accessibility and participation of the audience, while Hernández-García, Ruiz-Muñoz and Simelio-Solá (2013) also consider it as an interactivity mechanism.

To consider social networks only as a space that enables interaction is too simplistic. If we manage to see the media as more than isolated spaces, we will see that social networks also support other touchpoints. This is the approach adopted in this study.

## METHOD

The overall objective of this study is to investigate the use made by Antena 3 of Facebook to promote the fiction series *Pulseras Rojas*. We offer an exploratory study of the types of official contents published in the official Facebook fan page of *Pulseras Rojas*, managed by Antena 3, which broadcast the Spanish-dubbed version of the original series. The research objectives and questions are the following:

**Objective 1:** To analyze the communication strategy and adaptation of the series’ official content to Facebook’s characteristics:

Q1: Is exclusive content from the series posted on the official Facebook group?

Q2: Does the Facebook group manager answer the comments of the audience seeking to establish a two-way conversation?

Q3: Is it possible to identify a strategic planning of the entries (posts) made by the manager of the official Facebook page?

**Objective 2:** To identify the types of contents posted by the manager of the official Facebook group of *Pulseras Rojas* (A3) and the user's types of response.

Q4: Which touchpoints can be recognized? How often do they appear?

Q5: What types of responses (“Likes”, “Comments” or “Shares”) are most common?

In generic terms, following Askwith's proposal (2007), the official page of a television series on a social network such as Facebook can be considered within the social interaction category (touchpoint 7), because it enables social conversation. However, it is also possible to analyze the type of contributions that circulate in this social network: adapted contents, ancillary contents, access to branded products, activities, etc. Therefore, we assume that Facebook is a touchpoint which in turn becomes a potential vehicle for many others.

On October 27, 2010, the day of the consultation, there were 31 Facebook groups. The official *Pulseras Rojas* Facebook group had 67,586 followers and was only surpassed by the Facebook page of Albert Espinosa, the creator of the series, which had 80,847 followers on the same day.

Microsoft Excel was used to collect and analyze the quantitative data of the study, the entries, the types of content and the user-generated reviews. A row was created for each official entry and a column for each of the variables examined in the study: the referred-to episode of the series, date, title of the entry, identifiable elements (text, photo, video), suggested links (URL), quantity of “Likes”, “Comments” and “Share” generated, entry function (exclusivity; preview; summary/recap; promotion; second screen, and parallelism with the blog of the series' creator) and the touchpoint categories proposed by Askwith. In each entry we added a section to register startling aspects about the followers' comments, for further consideration.

## RESULTS

We identified 46 entries related to season two in the Facebook group *Pulseras Rojas* Antena 3.

### Q1: Is exclusive content from the series posted on the official Facebook group?

All entries are abbreviated replicas of the contents of the *Pulseras Rojas* official blog of the A3 website. None of the posts are exclusive for Facebook. They all include a link to the blog where the information is expanded and illustrated. The most common function of the entries is to redirect users to the blog. We found only one entry that refers to the general Facebook page of Antena 3, another to its “second screen” platform, *Antena 3 Conecta*, and two to the series #PulserasRojas Twitter hashtag.

### Q2: Does the Facebook group page's manager answer the comments of the audience seeking to establish a two-way conversation?

We did not find any response from the network to any user entry.

Requests for basic information that would help to establish a true two-way conversation, as well as giving meaning to the social network, are disregarded (see figures 1 and 2).

In figure 1, we can see how a Facebook fan asks which day and time is the series broadcast, and another user answers the question, given the lack of response from the network.

In figure 2, a Facebook user expresses her wish to watch more episodes, and the lack of official answer.

Business opportunities are also missed. (Figure 3).

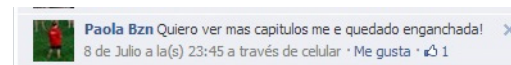
Figure 3 shows how a user asks whether the series' seasons one and two are already available and on sale on DVD and, once again, there is no official reply, but only a reply from another user.

Figure 1. Information request



Source: *Pulseras Rojas* official Facebook page.

Figure 2. New consumption desires



Source: *Pulseras Rojas* official Facebook page..



Figure 3. Business expansion opportunities.



Source: Pulseras Rojas official Facebook page.

Figure 4. Viewers' valuations.



Source: Pulseras Rojas official Facebook.

Most comments contain evaluations of the series, the characters or some particular event of the plot (figure 4).

Figure 4 shows positive valuations of the series, including a comment from someone in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The broadcast in that country, a month after the premiere in Spain, on Telefé, reactivated the Facebook page of the Spanish network.

**Q3: Is it possible to identify the strategic planning of entries (posts) by the manager of the official Facebook page?**

The first entry related to the second season was posted eight months before its broadcast (July 8, 2013 -August 12, 2013) and consisted of some statements made by the protagonist, Lleó, at the Neox

Figure 5. Example of a preview type entry: "Tonight"



Source: *Pulseras Rojas* official Facebook page.

Fan Awards, where he was nominated for Best Actor.

Up until the beginning of the second season of the series, on July 8, 2013, there are eight additional entries that aimed to generate expectation<sup>5</sup>.

On July 8, 2013, two consecutive episodes were broadcast during the first three weeks. The progressive decrease in the audience levels led to the broadcasting of three consecutive episodes, reducing the total broadcast period to six weeks.

Twenty per cent of the entries appeared in the months prior to the start of the broadcast, and 80% were made during the broadcasting period. Official entries stopped on the same day the series ended.

The Facebook entries are planned to fulfill different functions: the majority, 63%, are promotional previews and adopt the formulas "Tonight", "The next episode", "Photo preview", "Video preview" or "Promo". They often contain links to the series' official blog on the A3 website, where the text is extended and accompanied by photos or videos. The previews are posted the same day the episode is broadcast, except in the case of episodes 10, 11 and 12 (8/5/2013), which do not generate new entries.

Only 13% of the entries have a summary function and is intended to recap already-broadcast contents.

#### Q4: Which touchpoints can be recognized? How often do they appear?

Taking the broadcast TV series as touchpoint 1, i.e., the mothership of the transmedia universe, we will analyze its transmedia relationship with the series' Facebook page. A Facebook page dedicated to the series and managed by the network can be categorized as social interaction (touchpoint 7) as well as interactivity (touchpoint 8). It is possible to detect traces of other touchpoints on the Facebook's page, where other media, platforms, and strategies that build the transmedia universe of *Pulseras Rojas* converge or are reflected in a certain way. We have already shown comments of viewers regarding expanded access (touchpoint 2; in particular, questions about the availability on the market of the DVD of the series; see figure 3), and also regarding branded products (touchpoint 5). In their comments, viewers inform other viewers about the seasons' availability on DVD or where to find the series' music or where to buy the characters' bands, among others, but in no case there is a corporate response.

Figure 6. Example of a summary type entry: "Revive"



Source: *Pulseras Rojas* official Facebook page.

Of the entries, 72% contained adapted contents (touchpoint 3), being previews more frequent than summaries (figures 5 and 6).

Figure 5 shows a preview of a new episode: "Tonight, triple episode of *Pulseras Rojas*..."

Figure 6 shows a summary/recap of a broadcast episode: "Revive the best of the return of the most awaited series..."

Regarding ancillary content (touchpoint 4), there are examples of the three categories: textual extensions (4.1), in particular narratives, with access to exclusive content; relevant information (4.2) with data on hospital life, diseases and therapies; and extra-textual information (4.3), with photos of the actors behind the scenes or watching their own performance, or attending awards ceremonies. Point 4.3 also includes videos, photos, and video clips of the life of Albert Espinosa, the author of the autobiographic novel that inspired the series, as well as the series' screenwriter, but not a character of the series.

Three entries were about themed related activities (touchpoint 6), promoting the Atresmedia Conecta interactive application, which gives access to the afore-

mentioned exclusive and ancillary content. Other contents, such as quizzes and sponsored contests, have a unique presence in the Atresmedia Conecta application, but not on Facebook.

The character of the social network of the studied medium implies that all analyzed entries invite users to engage in social interaction (touchpoint 7). In this case, the frustration of the expectations that could have been generated is complete: the direction of these interactions is only horizontal (among viewers). There is a waste of the interaction possibilities: (vertical) interactions among the cast, crew and audience are not encouraged, nor are (vertical) interactions between characters (who have their own fictional profiles on Facebook) and the audience.

Interactivity (touchpoint 8) is inherent to the medium under study: all official entries are an invitation to engage in social interactivity. However, once again we can perceive a limited one-way use that does not encourage or prolongs possible conversations: there is no content interaction, nor what Askwith terms "acknowledged contributions" and "influential interactions".

### Q5: What type of response (“Likes”, “Comments” or “Shares”) is most common?

Each entry generates an average of 619 ‘likes’, which is the most frequent response. The average number of users that share the entry with their contacts in the network is 40, while only 30, on average, leave comments in each entry. We do not know the reasons for these differences, although it might be due to the ease of the action and the degree of enthusiasm, but this has not been verified in this study.

The entry that generated more “likes” (1,597) corresponds to the promotional preview photos of the last three broadcast episodes. The one that generated less ‘likes’ (189) was: “Albert Espinosa at the beginning and end of each episode in Atresmedia Conecta”. This information could be uninteresting for those who do not have the application. The same entries also received the highest and lowest number of comments, respectively. The most shared entry was also the preview of the last three episodes while the least shared was the preview of episodes 7, 8 and 9. Among other reasons, the premiere of *Un príncipe para Corina*—a reality show from the Spanish TV channel *Cuatro*—on the same day and hour could have influenced the decline in audience and Facebook followers.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

### ABOUT THE METHOD

The proposal made by Askwith<sup>6</sup>—disciple of Jenkins—is an accurate classification of the formal varieties that the textual extensions of a TV series can adopt, and are applicable to transmedia universes generated around motherships of another nature (films, comic books, video games, etc.). Askwith’s great merit is to classify the modalities of transmedia expansion combining the two most relevant criteria in transmedia storytelling in Jenkins’ formulation. On the one hand, the narrative novelty of the touchpoint in relation to the mothership (from null, in the case of expanded access, up to very relevant in the case of ancillary content, in particular the narrative type). And on the other hand, Askwith, following Jenkins, subtly measures the audience level of involvement in each of the last three touchpoints (related activities, social interaction and interactivity).

It is important to note that Askwith takes as a reference the broadcast audiovisual product, but does not consider the time variable that orients and explains the function of each touchpoint as a personal narrative construction made by the user. For example, the

category “ancillary content”, as defined by Askwith, omits the time in which such re-elaboration is made (before, during or after the broadcast). Re-elaborations often have a narrative intention linked to the time in which they occur. It would be useful for the category to somehow allow that differentiation. The function of a content recreated in a preview format is to anticipate the content of the plot and to generate excitement. However, a summary of the best moments is also rewritten content, with another function: recapitulate, remind, highlight the important, and facilitate the “updating” and/or reviving. However, the breaks between seasons of a series—lasting several months or even years (as in the case under study)—, allow the inclusion of other kinds of content to keep the interest of fans: contents that are neither previews or advances (i.e., adapted content), but rather stories that can fill the narrative ellipses between one season to another, if any, or may give prominence to secondary characters (i.e., ancillary content, textual narrative extensions). The different types of involvement proposal express a concrete type of operation with the contents and also satisfy a specific need in the consumer.

Another possible improvement that can be made to Askwith’s proposal would be to identify the hybridizations between touchpoints, which he identified but did not develop. For example: the case that concerns us (a series’ Facebook page) is a social interaction platform, but invigorated, eventually, by adapted or exclusive contents, or invitations to participate in related activities (underused opportunities, in our view). We detected possible cases that deviate from the televised content’s core text, displacing the prominence towards re-elaborated contents that are object of new transmedia strategies.

### ABOUT THE RESULTS

In the area of engagement, the type of transmedia operations has the same importance as the level of need that it satisfies in the viewer. The analysis of responses in social networks would allow us to obtain useful information to optimize strategic content management. For example, by knowing the time when viewers interact the most, Facebook page managers could better decide when is the best time to update entries, even according to the content.

The links to other sites offer information about the communication strategy’s orientation: a corporate-media orientation (to other programs), towards the other productions of the series’ creator and towards the network’s official spaces in social networks. They reveal the priority objectives of the dissemination of

the program. In the studied Facebook group, most of the posted links are related to the network's products (the blog, the website, and the Atresmedia Conecta application). The posted links never redirect users to viewers' spontaneous initiatives, where the audience could be extended with the freshness of unexpected content. There is certain separation between institutional transmedia content and user-generated content, which corroborates previous data on the activity of Spanish broadcasters on social networks<sup>7</sup>. The establishment of areas of convergence for viewer-program-producer-network synergies is still a pending issue. The ownership of exploitation and image rights seems to be an obstacle that prevents the dispersion of initiatives related to transmediality.

All entries in the official *Pulseras Rojas* Facebook group have been previously posted on the network's official blog. The viewer can speak out by clicking the "like" button on Antena 3's official website or the Facebook posts. Although it was not the object of our study, it was detected that the support generated by the blog is always lower than the one generated by the Facebook page. It is paradoxical that the blog is the place where updates and detailed contents are posted, while the Facebook page generates greater interaction. The use of social networks to communicate the updates posted beforehand on the series' official blog shows certain waste of Facebook's conversation possibilities and expansive virtues.

Strategic planning seems to follow the following guidelines: first, the post appears on the *Pulseras Rojas* blog, on the A3's official website; then, the same post is shared on Facebook. There are hardly any new content created on or for the social network. Thus, content production is not really multiplying when using multiple digital channels. Facebook is used to tell audiences about the content updates made in the *Pulseras Rojas* blog, located in the network's official website. Both the blog and the Facebook page give users the possibility to "like", "comment" and "share" content, but these three actions are more frequently used on Facebook. Although this aspect was not part of the objectives of this exploratory study –but could be an extension in future research– we confirmed in five randomly-selected posts that the "Like", "Comment" and "Share" options were more significantly used on Facebook than on the blog. To do these actions on the blog, the user must be registered and the system facilitates the connection to the Facebook profile. While access to both Facebook and the blog requires prior user registration, the records of audience interaction in the blog are very low (e.g., the post titled "What you haven't

been told about episode 3" obtained 18 likes, 0 comments and 5 shares on the blog, and 474 likes, 12 comments and 21 shares on the Facebook page).

We have yet to study the possible relationship between the three types of feedback actions enabled on Facebook ("Like", "Comment", "Share") and the user's degree of involvement or engagement. The study shows that the like option is the most commonly used. Sharing is more commonly used than leaving comments. It would be interesting to examine the possible relations between the user's profile, degree of involvement with the series and the type of feedback given.

Entries tend to refer to the official blog of the series, with which there is a strong dependence, and there is certain adaptation to medium's codes: selection of a sufficiently descriptive text that does not exceed three lines, active link and, occasionally, illustrations. There is no response to users' comments, which disables conversation and perpetuates the traditional one-way communication model. In the official group of *Pulseras Rojas*, the strategic use of Facebook does not exploit all of its possibilities; rather, it is conventionally managed and presents a small repertoire of touchpoints, in the sense given by Askwith.

On the fringes of the study we detected some noteworthy actions, particularly user-generated content, such as the creation of a Facebook group<sup>8</sup> (with the third largest number of followers: 32,386) dedicated to the international sale of red bands. There is another Facebook group<sup>9</sup> with 491 followers. This Catalan-language group offers episodes inspired by the values of the series' episodes; makes small polls where viewers can suggest when and how often those spontaneous episodes should appear; asks fans to suggest fictitious plots that will inspire those online episodes; posts poems and discusses the lyrics of the songs. Another group, titled *Parla'm Toca'm Estima'm, la pàgina de Novel·les sobre en Mikel Iglesias i l'Àlex Monner*<sup>10</sup>, has 1,775 followers and includes real life stories of the two protagonists of the series. The personal page *Novel·la: M'ha canviat el món; Alex Monner* presents new episodes co-written by several group participants about the series' protagonist in situations that justify the promotion of brands (e.g., a scene in which a character chooses a bikini or another piece of clothing to go to the beach, accompanied by a web link to an online fashion outlet). All these initiatives constitute a small minority and represent the spontaneous activity of the audience, which is currently a wasted opportunity.

The gamification of contents undoubtedly enhances engagement but is barely used in our case study. How-

ever, Atresmedia Conecta does offer contests and quiz related to the series. Given that the series' theme has a strong component of awareness about a taboo disease suffered by children, it seems obvious that the network is losing the chance, for example, of making social responsibility initiatives associated with childhood cancer<sup>11</sup>.

The study detected an incipient strategic management of Facebook, characterized by the overlooking of the possibilities offered by the social network to favor engagement; the neglecting of the spontaneous reactions and productions of the audience, and the lack of spaces for the convergence between institutional transmedia content and user-generated contents. The results confirmed the traditional, one-way communicative management of a two-way communication medium.

If transmedia storytelling, in Jenkins' formulation (2003), implies that each medium or platform that participates in the construction of the narrative universe ideally has to make a valuable and unique contribution to the universe, we have to conclude that the official Facebook page of the series contributes little in the case under study: there is no exclusive content, but only duplicated content from the network's website. This situation does not favor the nomadism between media and the active construction of a richer meaning, which is the hook to attract transmedia viewers. Moreover, there is no corporate response (either diegetic or extra diegetic) to the concerns expressed by the audience. Facebook is a mere space for horizontal interactions (among fans) and promotional communication (from the network and the series towards fans, with the limitations of conventional advertising).

## FOOTNOTES

1. This study is part of the wider research project FEM2012-33411, financed by the Subprogram for Basic Research Projects, of the Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness (Spain). The study is directed by Rosario Lacalle Zalduendo.
2. The collaborative activity of fans has been studied and classified by various authors and according to different criteria. Robert Kozinets (1999) classified fans depending on their growing commitment to the narration and proactivity into tourists, minglers, insiders and devotees. Jenkins, on the other hand, has differentiated texts into "cultural attractors" (a term coined by Pierre Lévy), i.e., those that stimulate the formation of communities by shared interests in the network (such as the reality show *Survivor*), and "cultural enablers", which also function as catalysts, initiating processes of shared meaning production that favor the generation of content by users themselves (as the series *Lost*) (Jenkins, 2008, p. 101). Sharon Marie Ross (2008) classified the different strategies designed to stimulate the participation of viewers into: *overt strategies*, which are of public knowledge and involve a direct appeal for intervention (for example, viewers are urged to vote by phone); *organic strategies*, which are more subtle and involve, for instance, leaving an open line of short messages services (SMS) for viewers' comments; and *obscure strategies*, which are characteristic of mystery, fantasy or science fiction and involve the spreading of clues to force the most committed fans to devote time and effort to resolve the mystery (with a bigger emotional reward).
3. Askwith refers to repackaged content as the repackaging that modifies the packaged content, changing the order, synthesizing it, telling it otherwise or dosing it to generate interest. This does not prevent, however, contamination between the touchpoint categories. For instance, a DVD series often includes not only the episodes of the series (expanded access), but also additional material that may fall in the category of "repackaged content" (episode guide, character biographies) and even "ancillary content" in the form of narrative expansion (unpublished narrative material not seen on TV).
4. Antena 3 was the first private station to break the public television monopoly in Spain, with regular broadcasts since 1990. It is part of the Atresmedia group, which also owns other broadcast networks, as well as radio stations, advertising companies and audiovisual production companies. Antena 3 is the leading broadcaster in audience ratings in Spain according to the *Estudio General de Medios* (General media study) (February-November, 2013), with a 17.2% share (compared to the 17.0 share of private network Telecinco, and the 13.2% share of La1, the most-watched public broadcaster).
5. 11/09/2012      Good news. A3 will broadcast the second season.  
    01/09/2013      Meet the new characters of season two.  
    02/04/2013      PR: an example of how to transmit positive messages to cancer patients.  
    06/17/2013      Season two promo.

- 06/19/2013 Will they be together again?  
 06/24/2013 PR are not at their best moment. New promo for S02.  
 07/06/2013 Progress in photos.  
 07/07/2013 Rym cuts her hair.

6. Henry Jenkins co-directed the thesis Ivan Askwith defended in 2007 Jenkins to obtain the MSc degree in Comparative Media Studies at MIT (USA). The thesis was titled "Television 2.0: Reconceptualizing TV as an Engagement Medium".
7. Studies carried out in 2011 detected zero interest from the three national Spanish TV networks (TVE, A3, T5) in responding to their Facebook and Twitter followers, despite they amount to hundreds of thousands. In 2011, the Facebook page of Antena 3 had 221,658 followers and an average of 84 posts per week. However, this Facebook page only posted one response from the Corporation (to a question posted by a user). Data from the other two leading networks, T5 and TVE, are very similar, and the same thing happens in their respective official Twitter accounts (García Mirón, 2012, pp. 70-74).
8. <https://www.facebook.com/CompraTuPulseraRoja?fref=ts>
9. <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Novela-Polseres-Vermelles/264304796928156>
10. <https://www.facebook.com/polseresvermelles.Gb>
11. In this sense, a very successful American series (although of quite different theme and tone, except for the protagonist's disease) has used an empathic strategy: Breaking Bad (AMC, 2008-2013). The producers created a website identical to the one used by the protagonist's son to raise money for his sick father. When fans visit the website and click to make a donation, the website sends them to the National Cancer Coalition, an action promoted by the producers of the AMC series. The website is currently disabled (Cf: <http://www.savewalterwhite.com/>). This action was not without controversy, for other reasons, but managed to raise 125,000 USD from the series' fans. (Cf: <http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/breaking-bad-amc-drops-worst-612717>).

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