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Manipulating an Interactive Era: Public Participation in Television News Broadcasting

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Abstract

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C-level, Media and Communication Studies

Title: Manipulating an Interactive Era: Public Participation in Television News

Broadcasting

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Key Words: convergence, gatekeeping, pre-mediation, television, Twitter

Purpose: To investigate how new technologies and new media possibilities are converging into older forms of mass media and examine the flow of cross platform communication and its implications with gatekeeping. **Questions at Issue:** How is gatekeeping involved in the process of broadcasting the internet discussion? How do television gatekeepers pre-mediate and script the online discussion? Is the convergence process allowing access for the participatory culture, making televised information less hierarchical? **Theory:** Gatekeeping controls the flow of information distributed through media to its audience. Gatekeeping is a selective process, using different mechanisms to filter information. **Method:** A semi-structured interview was conducted with an editor at the Swedish TV4 program Nyheterna. Additionally, through a content analysis proceeding the comments found on the TV4 forum submitted by participants of the convergence process were collected and compared to the comments broadcast in television. **Results:** The material showed that out of 319 comments, in total, 39 were broadcast; only 19 of the 39 comments could be traced back to the forum. The comments had also been manipulated in the convergence process. Despite new technologies traditional gatekeeping mechanisms control the flow of information. **Summary:** Further research needs to be done to fully investigate the impact of new technologies and explore whether their participants have influence during the gatekeeping process.

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1. Introduction

This study explores how new technologies and new media possibilities are converging into older forms of mass media and what that process generates. Specific focus is placed upon how the relatively new internet platform Twitter and the Swedish TV4 news internet platform are used, in order to make people participate in television broadcast. Twitter with its fast message function and user friendly usage, is today a way of expressing oneself and in some ways a highway into the mass mediated television. This type of communication is also found in internet based forums that allow instant access and participation in the mediated debate. This is why this study also examines how internet based services, such as Twitter and the Swedish TV4 chat forum, are increasingly integrated with and used by the production team in broadcast television. This is done to see what new mediums are capable of contributing with, and how these opportunities are used by the production team.

The televised mass mediated debate is today, thanks to new technologies as those mentioned above, generating public participation that allows everybody with an interest to take part. The internet has also made it possible for motivated users to be informed both faster and wider (McQuail; 2008 p 531), leading to a participatory society where people can be a part of news making and news breaking (Goode; 2009 p 1291). This openness of communication possibilities may not be as open as one could think; these possibilities can have room for offending material, which, with a completely open flow, would be broadcast on television. This could be seen as a problem, which makes it obvious that some form of control over the material is occurring, but to what extent is this control completed? Do these communication possibilities lead to a less hierarchical information structure, where selection of broadcast information no longer just belongs to the media industries? To get a glimpse at the answers to these questions is of interest when considering how people can participate in mass media today. This convergence is in some ways setting the bar on how information and public participation in the older mass medium television are used and on how this integration can be seen as an extension of television possibilities. It is possible that new technologies could have forced television to expand over its own borders in order to keep the public interest alive.

Looking at the history of media and communication, this convergence process represents something innovative and new. In this sense it is also rewriting many of the older perspectives that exist inside the academic world of media communication. Specifically, it is reshaping the older existing theories of media and communication. Previous research that

focused on modern mass media television, is mainly discussing the traditional television as a medium by itself. Little research has been found in the area of convergence between internet functions (that allows people to be broadcast on television) and television. This area of research is important in order to follow the technical advancements that are rewriting the way people interact and communicate over standardized boundaries. Because this convergence has somewhat revolutionized the possibility of interaction, it is also inviting to new research. Further investigation of convergence between television and the internet would be interesting from both an academic and a public perspective.

In the academic world, this study could provide a discussion of a possible expansion and a modernization of the older theories. In terms of public interest the relationship between media control and non-professional participants would be somewhat clarified, in order to get a deeper understanding of how this relationship take place.

The convergence of technologies that both generate and distribute information is an interesting addition to the communication society (McQuail; 2008 p 137), giving the users of these technologies boundary free communication and information possibilities. This technology could have a diminishing impact on the hierarchical structure of television information content. Looking at how the usage of these technological ways makes finding and spreading information possible, it is likely to find a good ground for its usage in the mass mediated televised broadcasting.

This essay is based on research on the Swedish TV4 news program that daily invites people to comment and participate on news and relevant topics to society's discourse¹. This specific program is interesting since it has a flow of communication with both Twitter and the TV4 homepage message function.

This integration of new technology and easy access seems to have formed a culture which significantly has become participatory. People using Twitter and other communication platforms are to a great extent not just communicating with each other, but communicating to a potentially limitless audience (Marwick & Boyd; 2010 p 115). This level of communication is becoming more of a mass mediated communication form. Going back in time, one can see that mass communication was almost impossible for the individual person. Today, on the other hand, individuals can become senders of mass self-communication thanks to e.g. Twitter, social networks or message functions (Castells; 2009 p 55-56). Accordingly, bringing this advancement of technology one step further, Twitter and other social networking

¹ <http://www.Nyheterna.se/>

platforms, considered to be potential mass mediums, can be integrated into what is referred to as traditional mass mediums (e.g. television, newspapers online, radio).

The convergence of Twitter and the Swedish TV4 news message function into television inhabits a set of question marks. Internet is a huge communication platform that has different forms of regulation than television, which allows users to write and post for others to read with a minimal interference from any external source. However, when converging into television, the freedom of participation has to be regulated to some degree (Ytreberg; 2006 p 426). A television network or program cannot have a completely open flow to the public viewers. This is understandable since offending statements and other provoking communication acts do not belong in the public media, developing the question of where the line of interference really goes. Already known, there is some form of pre-mediation and scripting in combination with gatekeeping. This is applied in order not to offend the public and use the submitted content to the fullest extent, but how this process works will be described later on. However, this process is controlled with certain values or interests in mind. Ultimately, this indicates that the freedom of using internet based platforms to distribute information and views may not be as free as one might think in the convergence process. This process may actually be based on predetermined values and/or interests from the instance/actor (e.g. TV4) and not only the gatekeeper (e.g. the moderator at Nyheterna).

2. Background

This section provides relevant information in order to generate an understanding of the so-called participatory culture. The actors involved in this study will be presented here together with technical solutions making the process of convergence possible. This may be important since there are many terms and functions involved in making our highly technological society interactive and full of communication possibilities. Both Twitter and the Swedish TV4 news chat function are integrated and simultaneously shown on the TV4 internet homepage whilst the show is on air.

2.1 TV4 Nyheterna

Nyheterna, is a television news program belonging to Swedish TV4. Nyheterna has been on air the last two decades and the program has multiple news broadcasts on a daily basis (TV4). On April 18th 2011, the program refreshed its program design (the first change to the program since 2007). They expanded the broadcast of the ten PM news into a one-hour program. This change also led to that the program incorporating a more interactive approach; Nyheterna started inviting people to be part of the conversation. This was done in order to expand the interest of the news program as well as keeping the viewers tuned in during the commercial breaks (TV4). People can now comment from a computer on the live news broadcast. This can be done from the social website Twitter or it can be done directly on the TV4 news program homepage. All of the comments end up at the same destination, i.e. the TV4 news program homepage. A moderator leads the discussion online and provides topics to discuss. Later on, a selection of nine comments makes it into every ten PM news broadcast of Nyheterna. These comments are put together, a title is added and then they are broadcast in the same live news transmission on television².

It could be claimed that this change is forced upon the program Nyheterna, since our society has entered an opened communication and information era, much thanks to new technologies. These new technologies also offer information and news, which could lead to a diminishing use of the traditional television. In order to keep the public interest in traditional television these new technologies had to be incorporated. In my understanding, Nyheterna does this so that interactive people feel that they can be active participants during the program.

² <http://www.nyheterna.se/>

2.2 Twitter

Twitter is a text based platform of communication that has rapidly gained popularity. Twitter was founded in 2006 and expanded as a communication platform at a rapid pace (the Daily Anchor). Twitter's function is to allow people to communicate with their followers but also to an unknown, limitless audience in an easy and fast way. Twitter is an internet based social networking platform that allows people to communicate via short messages, consisting of not more than 140 characters (Twitter Support). These messages, or *tweets*³, are individual writings that can be seen as a form of microblogging (Wikipedia Twitter). After investigating the Twitter homepage, it was established that Twitter is by no means a closed network, meaning that whatever a person decides to write becomes available for everyone to read. Because the audience is not determined or selected, this openness could be seen as a factor making Twitter a potential mass medium.

The two most essential techniques in using Twitter are the use of the @ (at) sign and the use of the # (hashtag) sign. These signs make it possible for individuals to connect with other Twitter users all over the world and spread information.

By using the at-sign it is possible for people to spread other people's profiles to other members of Twitter (Twitter Support). In this way, someone can start to follow another person if he/she seems interesting. This makes it possible for "interesting people" to gain a very large number of followers. In other words, by pressing for example @mattisandersson in a tweet you would be redirected to this profile. This symbol has a second important function: the *re-tweet* function, which allows a person to answer a tweet on an open-for-all-communication-sphere. This makes it possible for a different Twitter user to contribute with either agreeable or contradicting information (Twitter Support).

By using the hashtag-sign, users of Twitter can make their tweets searchable on the Twitter search engine (Twitter Support). This allows people to see who is talking about which subject and what others say about certain things. The hashtag-sign is also the way that people can connect their tweets to the convergence process i.e. the person using Twitter needs to add the hashtag-sign and the name of the program in order to appear on television. If a person wants to be a part of the Swedish TV4 news convergence process, he/she would need to write #Nyheterna in a tweet during the time that the program is on air. This sends the hashtagged tweet to the TV4 news discussion forum on their homepage.

³ <http://support.twitter.com/groups/31-twitter-basics/topics/104-welcome-to-twitter-support/articles/166337-the-twitter-glossary#>

Twitter's straight forward format and today's information seeking and spreading culture are quite probably two key factors that are driving Twitter's continued expansion. When Twitter recognized its biggest growth the company had more than 500,000 new registrations each day and more than 140 million tweets on a daily basis (Twitter blog).

2.3 TV4 Forum

The second alternative of joining the conversation and also the convergence process in the Swedish TV4 news is to use the program's internet platform. From this platform, one can simply use the available message function in order to participate⁴. This function enables people who do not use Twitter to be part of the discussion and since this function is directly connected to the discussion going on, it invites people to share their opinions (Nyheterna). A moderator provides the forum with topics relevant to the program broadcast in television, making the discussion stay relevant. Later, the moderator chooses three comments three times from the forum to be broadcast in television, during the ten o'clock news program. When these three comments are taken from the forum to be broadcast they are placed next to each other and they are given a title. The comments that have been picked out originate from different points in time and contexts on the forum.

2.4 The Power to Interact

In the last few years there has been a massive technological development which has made it easy to get connected and stay connected to the rest of the world. New smart technologies have enabled us to take part of information in an easy and interactive way (McQuail; 2008 p 39). The flow and the possibility of constant information is what I believe to be the reason for the growth of our participatory culture. From my understanding, to participate is easy; to create opinion, discussions and interests are today achievable through internet based social networking platforms and other smart tools.

As our society keeps on expanding in the technological environment, people are getting increasingly more interested in creating a voice of their own. Observing how the internet is used, it is possible to see that millions of people are online every day and by using the internet and social networking platforms or some kind of discussion platform they can convey their thoughts, political stance and other views of the world; this allows people to shape and construct their own interaction to the rest of the world. This seems to be an

⁴ www.Nyheterna.se

unstoppable force that will grow even stronger as new ideas and new technological solutions come in to play.

This is not only something that concerns the individual person and his/her spare time. Workplaces, coffee shops and other institutions also permit themselves to these advancements. Nowadays numerous corporations have created a profile online or a coffee shop that has set up a Twitter account as a means of trying to get as many followers as possible in order to spread information and gain maximize exposure⁵. This really shows that the internet and most social internet platforms not only belong to the individual person, but also to anyone and anything that wishes to be seen.

2.5 Societal Effects to New Technologies

This section will present a deeper understanding to new technologies and their impact on society's relationships. I believe that the importance of someone's online world has really come to be a social factor in the offline world. Thanks to social networks, social status can become a metric system where someone's "friends" can be counted and used as indicators of status. Specifically for Twitter, Marwick and Boyd suggest that the showing of people's followers becomes a measurement for social status (2010 p 127). This suggests that in using internet based platforms one can actually bring one's "in-real-life"-friends online.

Twitter, however, does not use this friend-concept, but instead they use followers. Even if friends and followers are not synonymous with each other they have the same function. They both make it important for the user to uphold a certain image of one's persona and without them it would not be satisfying to use the medium (Marwick & Boyd; 2010 p 119). If for example, a political leader is a user of Twitter it would be somewhat awkward for him/her to post a message that is contradicting to his/her position in real life. It would also be a waste of time if the politician had no followers and thus he/she would probably not use the medium. In this way, looking at the possibilities that arise from convergence gives a perspective to why people use this interactive potential. This way of communicating gives the users a limitless audience but it also gives the program, Nyheterna, a more loyal user-base resulting in an audience that does not change or turn off the channel during the commercial breaks.

Users of Twitter are, according to Marwick and Boyd, balancing personal and public information and they are avoiding certain topics in order to maintain impressions and

⁵ <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Espresso-House-Kullagatan-Helsingborg/152364341473690>

authenticity (2010 p 124). In conclusion, this free-speaking medium is all of a sudden a very controlled medium where the users constantly think of what they are presenting (there are exceptions). This would indicate that the individual identity maintaining process is less authentic online than in real life; the internet provides people with the necessary tools to embellish their own self. In doing this, I believe that they also become their own gatekeepers. By regulating which information that is shown on the internet and through the convergence process, they act similar to journalists which can be seen as the first gatekeepers of mass media (Goode; 2011 p 1291, Roberts; 2005 p 8-9).

Furthermore, it could be argued that the earlier hierarchical structure of mass media is on its way to be somewhat broken down because of the convergence process; however, it could be a welcomed function for the television network station. In further reflections, if they give the people exactly what they want instead of guessing it they make sure that people stay on their television channel and by that they also generate more revenue from investors and commercial content.

What the internet and its solutions have brought to our contemporary society is a platform where individual users can express themselves. The possibility of finding and spreading information is one factor why this modern culture of ours is taking the shape of a participatory culture (Jenkins; 2006 p 3). I believe that these possibilities of discussing and interacting are beneficial for society. People are no longer constrained and bound by television; they have the possibility to freely contribute as *prosumers* to television where the individual person both can consume and produce content, and be a part of the ongoing process of convergence (van Dijck; 2009 p 43). On the other hand, this freedom can be exploited by people in charge so they can steer people's focus and generate more revenue (Ytreberg; 2011 p 426).

With its information finding and information exposure friendly usage, the technology of internet is also contributing to that the former closed doors can be opened more easily. This allows for power structures in society to be investigated by the public mass and by that also questioned (Kann, Mark E et al; 2007 p 3-4). This development could be seen as a tool in reducing individual power and reinforcing a democratic power distribution. It could be suggested that people today in the convergence process of the internet and television have the possibility of putting pressure on, for example, the television network stations, and in this way influencing what is mediated. This means, that people can contribute to a better journalistic approach because they can scrutinize information and news in a completely new way.

2.6 Research Difficulties

Little research has been done in this area and material concerning internet platforms converging into television is scarce. What can be found on search engines like Sagepub.com and other academic internet based search engines is not specific material that would be appropriate as analysis material. This material is on the other hand beneficial in providing a broad background to my essay. This material could be used when describing how people are, to a greater extent, getting connected with an online society.

2.7 Purpose Description

The purpose of this study is to examine how and why gatekeeping and its potential possibilities are exercised in the convergence process. People might believe that it is an open flow of communication and information that is being broadcast in this convergence process. This is why this study focuses on TV4's news program. This program was amongst the first in Sweden to actively use a flow of internet opinions in the live broadcast. In comparison with what is written and displayed on the TV4 news homepage, to what is actually broadcast in television, this study examines how gatekeeping is involved in the process.

Looking at the available material, my study could contribute to the academic world. In order to get the answers that I am searching for, I am going to conduct an analysis of what is being written both through Twitter and on the internet homepage of the program and then compare this to what is actually shown in the televised broadcast. I am also conducting a semi-structured interview with an editor of the Swedish TV4 news program. This interview could answer some of my questions directly.

I believe that a study like this would provide interesting information about contemporary society. This highly technological and informational society of ours is in a rapid pace evolving and contributing to an interesting future; a future that potentially can, in many ways, lead to a more liberal society when it comes to information and news, depending on how the process works. The evolvement of new technology can perhaps contribute to a de-hierarchical information structure when people now have the opportunity to find and spread information without the need of traditional media. By looking at this, I will examine if broadcast media and specifically television is becoming less hierarchical when the public interest is conveyed in these discussion forums.

In order to see how the usage of internet platforms co-relates with the older mass medium television and the information structure, I need to examine their relationship. By looking at what is written on the program's discussion forum during runtime and comparing

this to what is broadcast in television, I will find a structure of relevance to gatekeeping theory. I am also looking for broadcast messages that have been changed during the process of convergence.

In conclusion, through research this study might find new empirical material that could be put in perspective to gatekeeping, scripting, pre-mediation theories and previous research. By doing so, this study is hopefully bringing new insight to how the material submitted by the participatory community is used in the convergence process.

2.8 Questions at Issue

This study examines the following research questions:

- How is gatekeeping involved in the process of broadcasting the internet discussion?
- How do the television gatekeepers pre-mediate and script the online discussion?
- Is the convergence process allowing access for the participatory culture, making televised information less hierarchical?

These questions were selected as they are particularly relevant in contrast to previous research and theories. This study expects to find good empirical material that can answer or provide insight to these questions. To get an understanding of these questions would prove beneficial for both the academic world, but also for the participants of this communication technology.

2.9 Limitations

This study is limited to focusing on TV4's news an information- and community-oriented program broadcast on Swedish TV. This program was selected as I believe it to be a very good example of convergence between internet technology and traditional television. This study will analyze the text based communication and not communication provided by the host. In doing this, the material at hand could be referred to in a more sustainable way.

The analysis will be based on the found empirical material and discussed through gatekeeping theory, convergence and previous research. Since the study uses one program on the Swedish TV4 network station, it will be restricted to a result concerning that network station or even that program.

3. Theories

This section gives a short introduction to convergence and discusses gatekeeping theory. The study will use gatekeeping theory in order to understand how the convergence between internet and television is affected by different interests. An understanding about the potential control gatekeeping can have over our participatory culture will be reached by looking at gatekeeping theory. In this section, the study is looking at and discussing additional previous research that is of relevance.

3.1 Convergence

Henry Jenkins is in his book *convergence culture*, providing us with his classification of convergence:

By convergence, I mean the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behavior of media audiences who will go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they want (Jenkins; 2006 p 2).

This view of convergence is well incorporated into this essay since its goal also is to: examine the flow of cross platform communication and its implications with gatekeeping. Jenkins understands the contribution of convergence as a process that alters the relationship between existing technologies, markets, industries, genres and audiences. He states that this process is altering the way that the media industries operate and the way that the media consumer processes news and entertainment. This means that convergence involves both a change in the process of media production and a change of media consumption (Jenkins; 2006 p 14-16).

As convergence creates opportunities for the individual user to share and mediate his/her own reflections to others, it is also a beneficial tool for the media industry in expanding and controlling both revenues and participants. "Media companies are learning how to accelerate the flow of media content across delivery channels to expand revenue opportunities, broaden markets, and reinforce viewer commitments" (Jenkins; 2006 p 18). Convergence, according to Jenkins, is a two way happening: the corporations can use this process in order to shape consumer behavior and the consumers can demand the companies to be more responsive to their tastes and interests (2006 p 243). As described earlier, convergence from Jenkins' point of view

makes it is easy to see that a connection between what this study is set out to examine and Jenkins' theory could be made.

It could be emphasized that there are two processes of convergence in this study. Firstly, there is a convergence between the internet platform Twitter and the internet platform of the television station's homepage. Secondly, there is a convergence between the internet forum and the television broadcasting.

3.2 Definition of Gatekeeping

In Denis McQuail's *Mass Communication Theory*, gatekeeping is defined as:

General term for the role of initial selection and later editorial processing of event reports in news organizations. News media have to decide what 'events' to admit through the 'gates' of the media on grounds of their 'newsworthiness' and other criteria (McQuail; 2008 p 556).

I believe that the above definition provides a fundamental base of how to define gatekeeping. The process of gatekeeping allows for organizations or institutions to make a selection of what is interesting, but it also provides them with other tools. The process of gatekeeping is according to McQuail synonymous to the power of giving or withholding access to different voices in society (2008 p 309). This again shows that gatekeeping could be inflicted with many different interests. Just like McQuail, Chris Roberts define gatekeeping as "the process by which the media decide what to emphasize and neglect" (2005 p 13). As an example we can look at a journalist; a journalist is often the first to be faced with a decision involving a selective choice. The journalist has to choose between different news and by doing that he/she is also excluding other news. This initial choice is determining which of the news that will be broadcast or printed. So by opening the gate to specific news content but not to other, for some reason, is what is called gatekeeping.

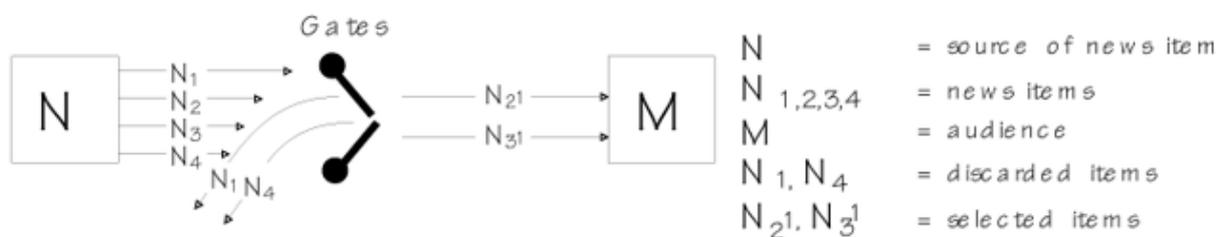


Figure 1: Media gatekeeping process according to David White 1964⁶ (University of Twente)

⁶ White, David Manning. (1964): "The 'Gatekeeper': A Case Study In the Selection of News". *People, Society and Mass Communications*: 160 - 172.

This means that a person trying to join the convergence process could be and is most certainly scrutinized by some form of selection process, in other words by a gatekeeper. The gatekeeper can open the way to mass media if the content is in the right format. The television program involved in this study applies gatekeeping as conducted by a moderator who decides which information may pass through the gate and make its way into television. This means that the moderator needs to include or exclude information and news submitted by the participants.

A third definition comes from Shoemaker et al, who defines gatekeeping accordingly: “It is the process of selecting, writing, editing, positioning, scheduling and otherwise massaging information to become news” (2009 p 73). This as well, is accurate to what is previous noted about gatekeeping theory. Shoemaker et al, also suggest that the gatekeeper can be found in various forms, apart from a person, a gatekeeper can also be professional codes of conduct, company policies and computer algorithms. All of these forms can be involved in making decisions about what information that is to be let through the gates (Shoemaker et al; 2009 p 74). This also means that there can be a number of different decision-makers when selecting certain material.

What also can be found in the Shoemaker et al article, *Journalists as Gatekeepers*, is that journalists, to some extent, use their environment in order to make decisions. This means that journalists are using their competition (i.e. other companies in the same business) to judge their own performances (Shoemaker et al; 2009 p 77). This in turn, lets them see if their gatekeeping process is relevant to society’s discourse.

Gatekeeping consists of different mechanisms that steer how the process of gatekeeping is conducted and determine what should be allowed through the gates. Shoemaker et al claim that these six different categories of gatekeeping mechanisms can be used by gatekeepers:

- *Neutral*: if a gatekeeper uses this mechanism he/she opens the door for information from an objective perspective. This means that the gatekeeper stays objective when selecting material to be broadcast.
- *Participant*: when using this mechanism a gatekeeper is letting information pass through the gates if he/she finds the material agreeable.
- *Disseminator*: with this mechanism the gatekeeper spreads “relevant” information, news and facts through the gates.
- *Adversarial*: by using this mechanism the gatekeeper lets contradicting/opposite material through.

- *Interpretive*: this mechanism lets the gatekeeper interpret the material before letting it pass through the gates (this could lead to changing or revising material before submitting it through the gates).

- *Populist mobilize*: in using this mechanism the gatekeeper can give the source of information a way to express views, develop cultural interests and set the political agenda (2009 p 78).

These are the different mechanisms, or professional norms, which shape the content and steer what is mediated. According to Shoemaker et al, these mechanisms are the fundamental base of the selective process in gatekeeping. What also contribute to shaping news making in gatekeeping are forces (availability or representativeness heuristics). These forces come with an ontological understanding that put pressure on gatekeepers to select or not select information. “These forces limit the autonomy of individual gatekeepers and shape the news in consistent ways.” (Shoemaker et al; 2009 p 80)

Gatekeeping is one theory, among many, that examines how information is selected and mediated to the public. In this way gatekeeping is only a metaphor for this process. Despite this, gatekeeping is in a vivid way providing the tools necessary to examine what this study is out to examine. This study could use gatekeeping theory in order to see how the convergence process is controlled and regulated.

3.2.1 Interests Effecting Gatekeeping

The tremendous power that comes with gatekeeping is well recognized (Goode; 2011, Ytreberg; 2011, Barzilai-Nahon; 2008, McQuail; 2010, Shoemaker et al; 2009). Gatekeepers can steer a whole nation’s news attention towards what they choose to mediate (Barzilai-Nahon; 2008 p 1500) this has made it possible for a variety of different corporations, political interests and power structures to try to take advantage of this power (Barzilai-Nahon; 2008 p 1499). Gatekeeping has created assumptions towards the media industry to follow certain criteria or values: the media industry is considered of selecting the material that is concerning reality reflections, significance and relevance (McQuail: 2010 p 311). These three criteria can be threatened and not followed if some kind of interest is put into play. For this reason, the whole process of gatekeeping is working its way on a fine line. As soon as any form of gatekeeper (journalist, producer, network station etc) is affected by interest, this value system might be in jeopardy.

Gatekeeping becomes interesting when looking at the possibilities of gatekeeping. If interests would exist between the internet and its convergence with television, this could lead to a misconception and mistreatment of the participatory culture.

In a study like this, it would be possible to find minor gatekeeping functions inflicted with interest, perhaps in order to steer the general discussion online or to provoke the online discussion, so more people feel the need to participate.

3.3 Network Gatekeeping

The internet is a platform that allows for a greater diversity and volume of information flow, compared to the traditional media platform. Internet is also changing the traditional way of gatekeeping, making it possible to perform gatekeeping in a variety of different ways (Barzilai-Nahon; 2008 p 4). In her article *Toward a Theory of Network Gatekeeping: A Framework for Exploring Information Control*, Karine Barzilai-Nahon put forward an improved gatekeeping theory considering internet and its possibilities. She debates that in network gatekeeping, the passage point of information has further places or gates where the information is able to make an entry, in contrast to traditional gatekeeping theory, (Barzilai-Nahon; 2008 p 1508). This allows a source of information that has not been allowed entry from one gatekeeper, to find a different gate where to enter. In turn, this increases the chance to somehow making the information pass through the gates.

In this stage, McQuail's three criteria, as mentioned earlier, are being jeopardized. When a gatekeeper (e.g. a television news program), supposedly admitted to these criteria, neglects a source of information, this source can turn to a different gatekeeper with other interests (e.g. an internet newsmagazine) and then make it through.

Thanks to the internet, the process of gatekeeping has come to include a wider perspective, where any process of information control is seen as gatekeeping. This has also made it possible for numerous gatekeeping mechanisms to enter the market. Before the internet, the main purpose of gatekeeping was editorial and it was a manual process, whereas today it can be used in order to serve political power, advertisement revenues or other external interests. As a consequence of the huge amount of information, partially introduced from our participatory culture, the process of network gatekeeping has come to be more automated (Barzilai-Nahon; 2008 p 1508).

3.4 Additional Previous Research

The use of social communication platforms such as Twitter and other interactive platforms is in the academic world, on its own, a very much examined phenomena. When adding convergence to this area of research the material is scarce. Despite this, looking at a broader perspective provides a ground of previous research. This research is used here in order to give an understanding of how the above mentioned theories can be applied.

3.4.1 The Need for Control

A previous study done by Luke Goode concerns whether our participatory community could take on the role of gatekeeper (Goode; 2011). He conducts his study on three online news sites, where it is the users that have all power over the submitted material. He is in his study elevating the concept of the participatory culture not only to include the possibility of making and mediate news. His understanding of this new culture is connected to gatekeeping theory and he believes that participants or users of interactive solutions, actually has come to be a part of the ‘sense-making’-process that ultimately shape news (Goode; 2011 p 1291). Goode also sees a possibility that external interests can come to have more influence over what is brought up to the surface and mediated; that these interests can shape a discourse from the material created in the participatory culture. He says:

In fact, it is necessary to acknowledge the enduring role and relevance of many ‘traditional’ gatekeepers in this radically altered environment. Venture capital, larger scale corporations, advertising revenue and commercialism in general are increasingly important factors shaping the citizen journalism environment (Goode; 2011 p 1295).

In this sense, I agree with Goode. As pointed to earlier in this study, there are to be found a form of gatekeeping involved in the news program at the Swedish TV4, when concerning the convergence process that is involved. I believe there to be some form of advertisement revenues and motivation to stay connected with the audience which shape and, to some extent, edit the submitted material in order to get the desired effect. When looking at the three online news sites, Goode concludes that this new form of gatekeeping, involving the participatory culture, needs to adapt some of the existing gatekeeping tools for its full function. Goode means that there is a risk for some of the participants to be generally recognized of as more dominant gatekeepers, thanks to acquired status, meaning that they have more gatekeeping power (Goode; 2011 p 1299, 1302).

To summarize, this shows that the new form of gatekeeping is good for the participatory community, but it needs to examine and maybe even adopt certain key aspects of traditional gatekeeping in order to make the process even more democratic.

3.4.2 Scripting and Premediate the Material

Espen Ytreberg is in his study, *Premeditations of performance in recent live television : A scripting approach to media production studies* examining the forces of premeditation and scripting in television. He is looking at how performances in television can be scripted to fit the format; he is both looking at interactive and reality television. Most relevant in this article is his discussion on how text messages converge into interactive television can be faked, in order to create or steer the participation (Ytreberg; 2011 p 427). What Ytreberg means with the terminology of premeditation is that material can be prepared before used. In other words, connecting this to the approach of my study, material can be examined before broadcast, i.e. pre-mediated. Ytreberg argues that the technology providing the function to perform this interaction can be used as a scripting tool for the production team in order to direct the performances of non-professional participants (2011 p 427).

Ytreberg's text becomes most relevant since the study investigates if the production team of the Swedish TV4 news is using these tools to serve any interests. Even though his study is based on a text message service that provides the program with revenues, his discussion could be used and applied to the research of this study. Through this study an examination will be performed to try to understand how the interactive flow of communication from the non-professional participants, between both the internet-based forum and television, are used to get as much out of it as possible.

Ytreberg's study focuses on how the production team can use scripting and premeditation to increase the amount of text message traffic and then in the end make more profit. This is interesting since my study also will focus on how the moderator drives forward the online discussion and how he/she makes the selection of material to be broadcast.

This essay will differentiate the three words premeditate, gatekeeping and pre-mediate. Premeditation, as Ytreberg uses it, is through his definition similar to gatekeeping. Despite this, a distinction will be made between the two since gatekeeping will be used as the term for selective choosing of material. Also, this study will use the term pre-mediate, meaning that material is looked at before selected. However, pre-

mediation is not the same thing as gatekeeping; pre-mediation is a part of gatekeeping but it is not involved in the process of selecting material.

As previous research mentioned above demonstrates, coming close to my area of interest but not specifically dealing with it, this study may provide new empirical material between internet based platforms, convergence and broadcasting of participatory content.

4. Method

In this section an explanation of how this study is constructed and performed will be presented. This section will provide the information necessary to understand how this study will bring new empirical material to the field, which in turn will provide results to the questions at issue. From a content perspective the material available from the internet forum will be analyzed. Additionally, an interview has been conducted in order to get supplementary information to the questions. Furthermore, e-mail correspondence with the Swedish TV4 news director Anne Lagercrantz will be presented and discussed later on.

4.1 Content Analysis of Collected Data

This study's focus will be aimed at how the non-professional participants get broadcast in television, if pre-mediation and scripting occurs and on what grounds the gatekeeping process is involved. I will organize broadcast comments into categories (i.e. the above described six gatekeeping mechanisms). I have chosen to examine the text flow of the TV4 news homepage and compare it to the comments that are actually broadcast in live television. The involvement of Twitter is incorporated into this text flow. Thus, Twitter needs to be a part of this study since it has the same potential to get broadcast as the TV4 homepage function has. Since both ways of communication to the program ends up at the same location, I am going to conduct an analysis of the content and compare it to what is broadcast. This systematic method provides the necessary tools to examine patterns and content which could lead to a better understanding about the effects that media brings (Østbye et al; 2003 p 230).

4.1.1 Content Analysis Proceeding of Collected Data

For one week (five days) I examined the ten PM broadcast of *Nyheterna* at TV4, when it was broadcast live. This examination was conducted from Monday to Thursday and then the following Monday, since Fridays did not use the involvement of internet based platforms, and the Friday program was also only 25 minutes long. I followed the programs both on television and on the internet homepage.

In the televised broadcast, I took photographs of those commentaries that were broadcast on television from the TV4 news homepage. This was done three times during the one hour news program. After that the comments had been broadcast on television, I turned to the online discussion platform (i.e. TV4's news homepage). Following every photograph I

turned to the online discussion platform and copied all of the comments that were to be found and then I pasted them into a document.

Every time a set of comments were broadcast in television, it had a title, explaining what subject these specific comments discussed. I later created new documents where I inserted the titles of every set of questions, from every program. Further on, I found the commentaries matching the pictures from the copied online discussion. This was done to each photograph (13 pictures and 39 comments in total). In the following I color-coded the comments depending on their nature. If a comment had been changed (word added/ removed etc) I colored that part green, if I could not find the comment appearing on the photograph I wrote it down and colored it red and so on. I also investigated the comments to see what gatekeeping mechanisms that had been used (neutral, participant, disseminator, adversarial, interpretive, populist mobilize).

4.2 Interview

Since the content analysis does not bring clarity to all of my questions in a desired manner, I have also chosen to do an interview with one of the TV4 news editors, to get even more solid material. I have chosen not to display the name of the interview person since I find this irrelevant to my study and thus it would not bring any beneficial significance. Much can be found in the material gathered from the internet discussion, but in some cases I need complementary answers in order to fully answer my questions. This strategy is used to find information that otherwise would not have been accessible. This interview will provide more exact information on how the TV4 news program uses this convergence process (Østbye et al; 2003 p 101), thus it will also be used in my later discussion. The questions of which I am hoping to obtain even more results from, out of this interview are: whether or not the participants contribute to a de-hierarchical television structure and if interests are working in the convergence process.

It would have been possible to conduct a field observation in order to see how the production team worked under a live broadcast (Østbye et al; 2003 p 114). Despite this, and with regards to the short time period, I chose to conduct a semi-structured interview because I wanted more concrete answers to my questions.

4.2.1 Interview Proceeding

To find an interview subject of relevance, I had to establish a contact. I e-mailed TV4 (since I already knew that they had involved other media platforms to participate in some of

their programs), explaining my intentions and what I wanted to do (appendix 1). This resulted in the interview with the editor of the TV4 news program.

The interview was set at the TV4 network station. Since it was a semi-structured interview I had made an interview guide to follow, but this interview model made the interview very flexible allowing me to follow up answers and questions that rose during the interview (Østbye et al; 2003 p 103). This approach was very beneficial since it was easy to keep the interview in relation to my study. It also let me explore some of my initial thoughts towards my subject and it generated some confirmations to certain questions (Østbye et al; 2003 p 101).

I explained to the interviewee that I was going to record our interview and then transcribe it. This was not a problem. Because I recorded the conversation I could give complete focus to what was said, allowing me to be more interactive and alert so I could put forth follow-up questions. After the interview I transcribed parts of it; I transcribed everything that was of interest for my study, leaving parts behind that were irrelevant such as long sections where non-related topics were discussed.

After the transcription of the interview, I took out parts that concerned certain areas of interest and placed them in categories according to my questions at issue, giving me easy access to: gatekeeping information, information about interest, usage information and so on. This allowed the material to be processed more efficiently.

4.3 Ethical Aspects

There are many ethical aspects involved when working with interview material and I will be careful in order not to omit too much personal information that might have resonated from the interview. As already mentioned, I established the contact with the interviewee through e-mail correspondence before making the interview. At this stage I presented what I wanted to do and that I wanted their perspective of how the convergence process functions in their program (appendix 1). Later I explained that I would record the conversation and transcribe it; this was according to the interviewee fully accepted. I have also chosen not to name the interview person since it is of no importance to this study. In this way complications were also kept to a minimum.

5. Material

When gathering the material for this study I wanted to investigate the commentaries that were broadcast in television. I have gathered 38 pages of comments, resulting in 319 different comments. These comments have been found on the TV4 news homepage during each ten PM Nyheterna program. After organizing the data I ended up with 39 comments that had been taken from the discussion forum on the TV4 news homepage and transmitted into the live news broadcast. These comments are going to be the foundation for my analysis (appendix 2).

I have also photographed the broadcasting of the non-professional participants' comments. This provided 13 photographs (not 14 since one program ignored to show one box of comments) with three comments in each, giving me a total number of 39 broadcast comments (appendix 2). From this data I will find relevant information that allows me to reflect over this process. This material will provide me with the tools necessary to examine how gatekeeping is used by the TV4 news production team and if pre-mediation and scripting occurs.

The second set of material comes from the interview done with one of the TV4 news editors. This interview was conducted at the TV4 network station and was 29 minutes long. The interview was recorded and then later transcribed.

The data drawn from the semi-structured interview is used from a selective point of view, meaning that what I find interesting and of meaning to this study I am going to use. I have divided the interview into sections concerning my questions at issue and by doing this I have used parts of the interview in a non-continual manner. This is done since I used a semi-structured method, allowing noteworthy information to arrive at various points in time and contexts during the interview.

This material will be used in order to strengthen the answers found in the data from the internet discussion. It will also answer questions that could not be found in the previous collected data (Østbye et al; 2003 p 101). In order to strengthen the result from the data in a more comprehensive manner, I am using the e-mail correspondence. Since Anne Lagercrantz is the director of the whole TV4 news section, this material could be considered consistent.

6. Results

In the result section I am going to start by presenting the results drawn from the interview. Here I will present what I found relevant to my area of research. Later I will provide the result generated from the data collection in a more visual way.

6.1 Interview Results

Looking at what was found in the interview through my transcription, it is easy to see that some of my questions have been answered by the interviewee and others have been talked about, providing good material to contrast the data collection.

When considering how gatekeeping might interfere with the online discussion, this interview provided interesting material. The first elements identified were some fundamental elements that are involved in the convergence process. It may not come as a great surprise that this process has a moderator which is active in the online discussion. But what also is interesting is that the program's moderator, who answers to people's comments and constantly tries to spark the online conversation, also has a second role: that is reading and choosing from the online discussion in order to determine which of the commentaries that will be broadcast. This is of importance since it is a major inflection of gatekeeping, because when selecting what will be broadcast this person is also excluding other material. This also states that there is no open flow of communication from the internet platforms to the broadcast television.

In order to understand why this selective process occurs, I investigated this further in the interview. In addition, I wanted to see if there were other regulations that had power over this process, and the result was:

We would be able to let them do that (to let the comments be broadcast without gatekeeping) if we had been irresponsible. But since we have responsibility to what is written... and we are responsible publishers for everything that is produced... we could get sued for aggravated defamation and such things... if such things come up (Interview with TV4 news editor, author's translation).

This also means that one interest involved in this process could be found in the legislation; in order not to get sued or in any way prosecuted they need to conduct gatekeeping since they are responsible for what other people write on their platform. When asking if there are specific content that they choose not to mediate the answer was that they choose to disregard those comments that contain violating judgments and defamations of individuals.

What also was brought up in the interview was if there was a selection of content in the commentaries. The interviewee stated that a selection of content was done since they wanted comments relevant to that day's program and its context.

Second, and since gatekeeping was occurring in this manner I wanted to know more about the pre-mediation process. Here I found that everything the participatory community submits to the TV4 news forum is looked at. What also could be drawn from the interview is that there is much focus on the responsibility of the TV4 news production team in order not to publish any offending material and facing the risk of a juridical proceeding. This makes it clear that pre-mediation is used on the non-professional content.

What I also wanted to gain insight to was whether or not this convergence process of the different platforms had any specific interest involved. Accordingly, I wanted to investigate if the function of letting ordinary people participate in the discussion was somehow navigated with interests concerning the use of the audience. What was brought up from the interview was that the interests that are part of this process have not increased the commercial content or capital spending towards the TV4 channel. Instead, the interviewee believed that the effect of this was to strengthen the viewer's commitment to the program but also the companies' willingness to invest in commercial runtime. She expressed that the possibility of discussing the content with both the moderator and the public, during the commercial breaks, made the viewers less eager to leave. Continuing the interview, she stated that in order to attract younger people to the program they had to use new technologies. What was also brought to light through this interview, was that this openness to the public via the discussion forum in the end helped the program not to lose viewers (nor did they gain viewers) and with that they did not decrease in financial interests. This is not a very remarkable result since the Swedish TV4 network station is dependent on commercial revenues, however, as far as the process of convergence goes this is noteworthy since they are capitalizing on the possibility to allow the participatory community access.

Another question at issue that formed parts of my interview was if the online content and debate provide access to change in the hierarchical structure of news making. I wanted to know if the availability to discuss and comment on what was said brought any impact. "We are aware of what the viewers think and we process that" (author's translation). This is a result since it shows that they are paying attention to the non-professional participants and their comments. "Our purpose was that we wanted to invite the viewers to participate in the program; we wanted open transmissions and more input from the viewer" (author's

translation). This again shows that there may be some form of willingness to let the public participate in the creation of broadcasting.

Later on in the interview, the interviewee talks about how this process of bringing in interactive media into mass mediated television was a form of democracy act when inviting the public to an open conversation. What also could be found in the interview was whether or not internet platforms such as Twitter, had any power. The interviewee provided an example; where in a news segment the production team had broadcast the wrong facts about a public person's sexuality. This had generated tremendous internet traffic where many people wrote to the program and about the program on the internet. This escalation of comments somewhat forced the program to submit an excuse and then the correct facts. This was an influence act from the participatory community and thus a result to this question.

6.2 Data Collection Results

The data collection is a very good complement to the interview since it can give a more visual representation of how the processes of broadcasting comments are performed. Engaging results that will contribute to the analysis of this study were found in this data.

The whole set of data generated 319 comments of various kinds. I divided these comments into four categories showing where they came from. These comments are not all broadcast, but they are all submitted to the TV4 homepage.

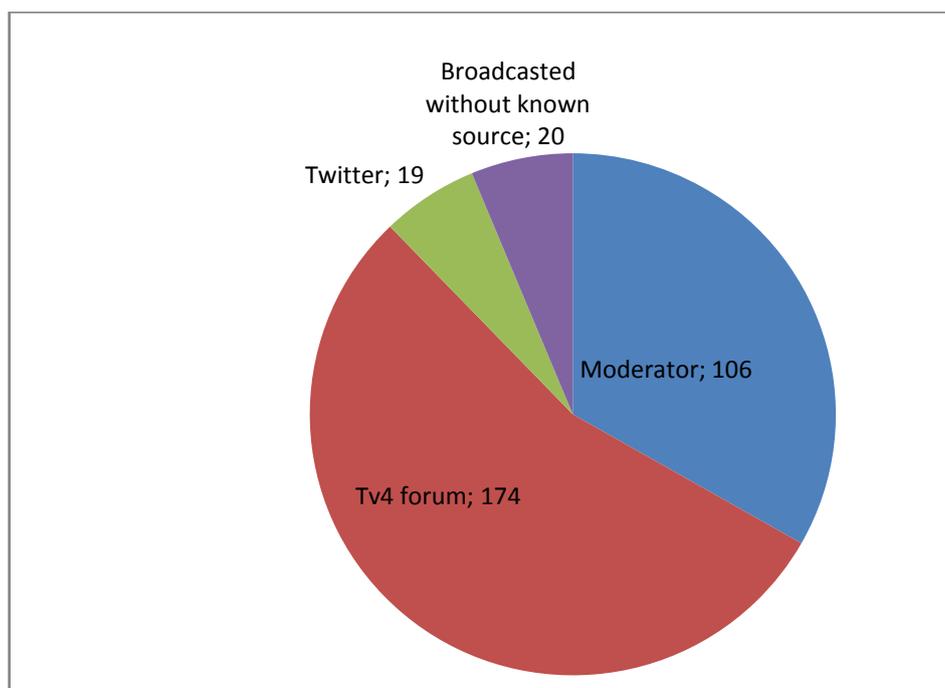


Table 1: Distribution of the 319 submitted comments on the TV4 homepage

This table provides a visual representation for the online discussion found at the TV4 news homepage during the evening news at five different occasions. The results that can be drawn from this representation are first, that the most common platform in order to discuss the evening news is the TV4 forum (i.e. chat function). Second, we can see that the moderator is writing almost a third of all the comments that is found on the forum. Third, there are 20 comments that cannot be found on the forum that has been broadcast and photographed. The last variable is comments that have been submitted through Twitter to the TV4 homepage forum.

The results from the set of data only concerning the broadcast comments in television give a much lower number of comments. As a total, there were 39 comments broadcast which resulted in 13 photographs (appendix 3), out of these comments I could recognize 19 from the online discussion forum. 20 comments that have appeared in the broadcast and in the photographs cannot be found on the internet forum. It is also worth mentioning that submitters from Twitter have not been integrated into the broadcast as far as could be found.

In the e-mail correspondence with the TV4 news director Anne Lagercrantz, it was expressed that these missing comments were submitted to the production team in various ways. During the day people can comment on articles existing on the TV4 news homepage, they can write directly under the article, they can e-mail and they can phone in their comments. She also states that the comments submitted from Twitter to the TV4 forum have the same chance of getting broadcast during *Nyheterna* (appendix 4). This I believe, builds up a sort of archive that is relevant to that day's news publish agenda, providing the moderator to construct the broadcasting of non-professional participant's comments in advance.

Out of the 19 identifiable comments 13 was untouched and look the same way they did on the forum. Looking at chart number two; the removing of text is dominating the changes by 40%. This means that the comment broadcast has had removed text in front or after what was posted on the forum. Looking at the comments that has been changed one can notice that different amounts of words in different comments have been removed. This happening was questioned on the forum by a participant:

Submitter of content: "Michaela! Why do you show only half of my post in the news?" [author's translation]

Michaela the moderator: "It may not place as much text so we had to pick out a part of your post. Thank you for your comment!" [author's translation]

From the identifiable comments found both on the forum and in the photographs I could compare what was broadcast and what was actually written on the forum. This process identified interesting results concerning gatekeeping. What could be seen in this process was that changes were made in the commentaries. These changes were concerning grammatical aspects of the comments. Out of the 19 comments that were found and matched with the photographs there were a total of 15 different changes to the comments. These changes are categorized into five categories, which I have illustrated in table number 2.

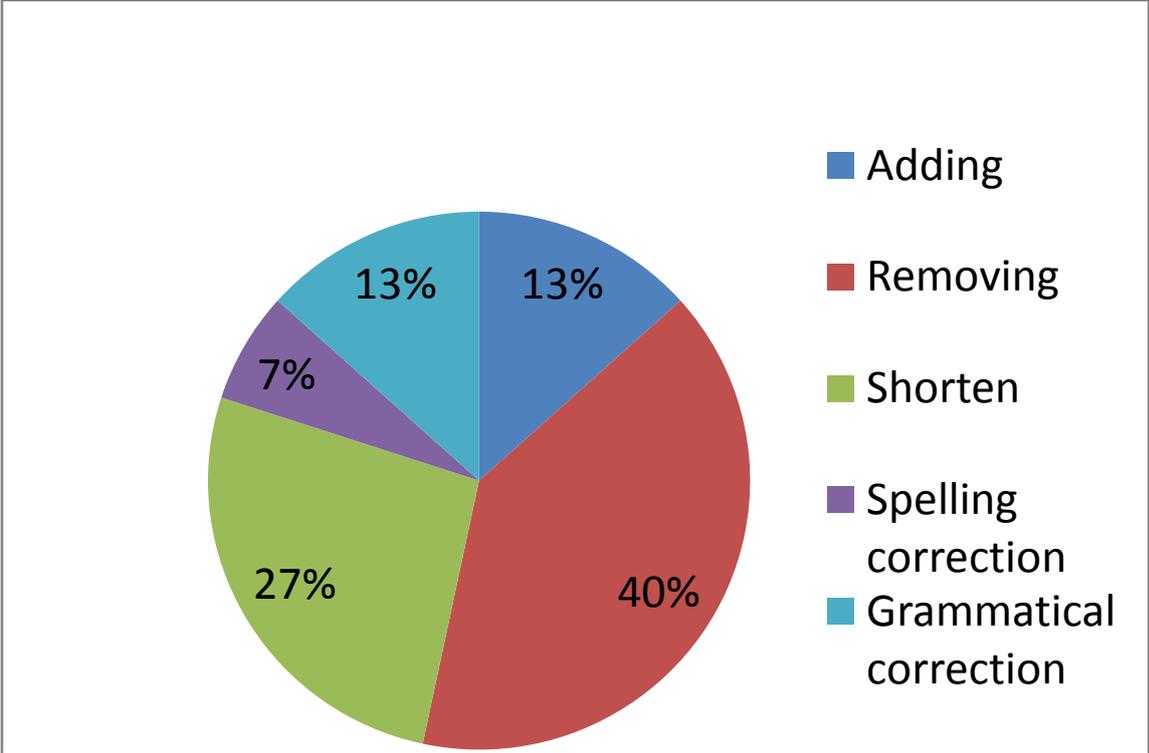


Table 2: Changes made from forum to television broadcast

Looking at the various mechanisms controlling gatekeeping (as noted above in the theory section), Shoemaker et al. put forth six aspects that help to steer the decisions of the gatekeepers. Looking at all the comments that were broadcast in live television gives an understanding of how the gatekeepers make the selection from these different aspects. When de-coding the comments found on the TV4 forum broadcast in television, the mechanisms or norms of gatekeeping were found. When performing this process a selective understanding of the mechanisms was performed. In order to find the mechanisms, interpretations of the comments' meaning had to be made. This process had to be done on each photograph since the title of the comments found in the photograph broadcast in television shaped the meaning of the comments. As an example:

Title: Osama bin Laden's death evokes feelings

Comment 1: Elin

Regardless of all the bad bin Laden has made it feels somewhat absurd how his murder are celebrated in the U.S. ... what will it lead to?

Comment 2: Oskar

Pretty sick view on humanity if you celebrate another person's death.

Comment 3: Andreas Lann

Good that he cannot kill more innocent people. A world without Bin Laden is a safer world.

Figure 2: Example of a set of comments broadcast on TV4 020511

In this set of comments it is possible to see the different mechanisms used by the moderator. All of these comments are expressing a view, dealing with cultural interests and are politically active. This would indicate that the gatekeeping mechanism populist mobilize is used. Looking at comment number 3, one additional mechanism has been used: the adversarial mechanism. This is understood since it is used as a contradicting, or opposite, comment to the other two comments.

By following this decoding scheme and doing this to all of the broadcast comments it was possible to create table number three. Additionally, this means that the result in table number three is based on that comments can have multiple aspects of gatekeeping mechanisms.

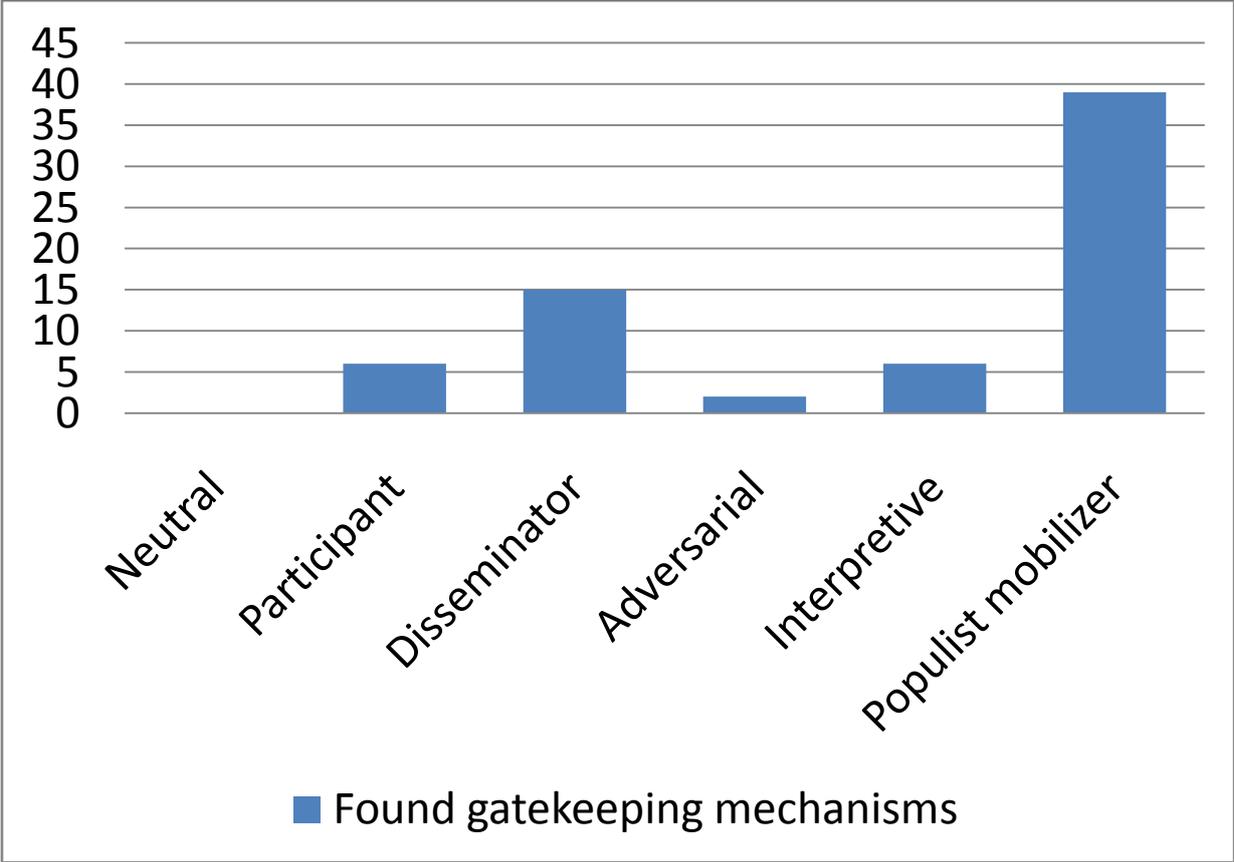


Table 3: Found gatekeeping mechanisms in the 39 broadcast comments

7. Analysis

In this section I will try to answer the theoretical questions concerning this study. I will use the empirical material to gain a deeper understanding of the processes that are involved in the convergence of these technological platforms into television broadcasting.

7.1 How Is Gatekeeping Involved in the Process of Broadcasting the Internet Discussion?

From the result section, it becomes clear that the material submitted from the participatory culture to the discussion forum is met with interference from other directions. The interview results show that all the comments that are sent to the TV4 news program are looked at in order to avoid offending material slipping into the online discussion. What also could be found in the interview is that the selective process performed by the moderator is controlling what kind of comments that will be put on the forum and then also broadcast.

Looking at the gatekeeping mechanisms involved in this process also gives good indications of how the moderator makes his/her selection. When examining the broadcast comments, in search for the definitions of gatekeeping mechanisms by Shoemaker et al (2009 p 78), the result is clear. All of the comments are in one way or another conveying a populist mobilize-feel; they are all expressions from “ordinary people” and the majority of the comments are trying to spark the ongoing debate.

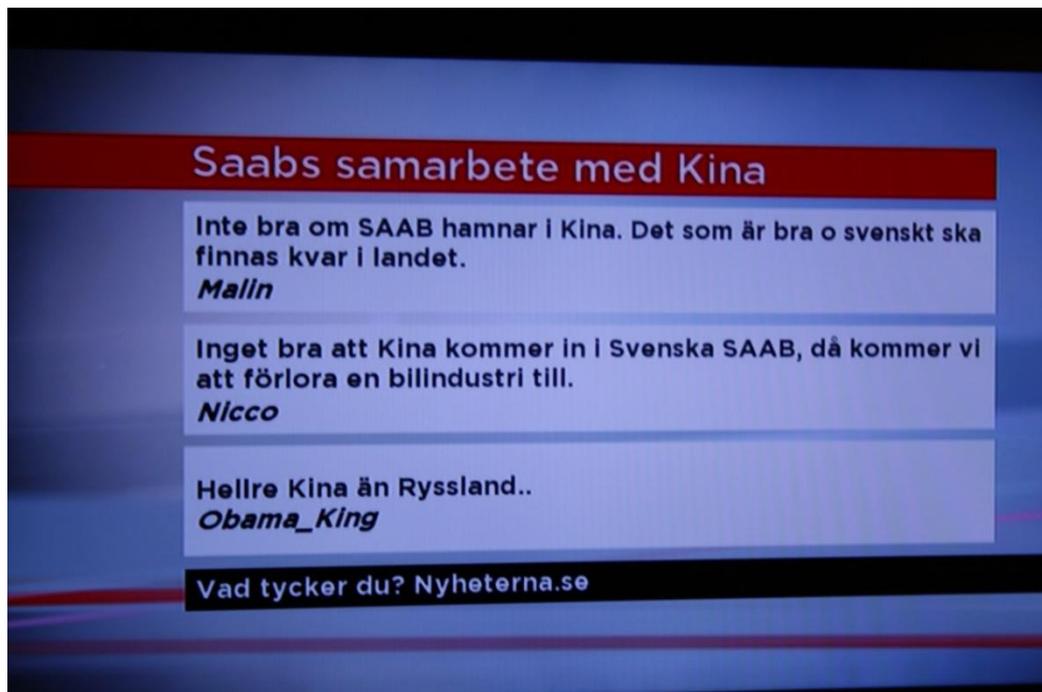


Figure 3: Cooperation between Saab and China. Photograph from a TV4 news broadcast 020511, 22:58

In the above photograph (figure 3) we can see how the convergence process is represented. What also can be found in this photograph is that the comments are formed as the previous noted definition of the gatekeeping mechanism, populist mobilize. This can be found in that the comments are expressions of peoples' views and thus this gatekeeping mechanism has provided the people with a voice. These comments are also relevant to what is happening in society and by that they are of cultural interest. In this way they can also reflect the political agenda that the TV4 news may or may not have.

In this study I can see that the mechanisms of gatekeeping can come in a plurality. In this case, it cannot be determined if these comments are let through the gates purely from a populist mobilize mechanism. They could as well be part of a disseminator mechanism, spreading information on how things would be if China became owner of Saab (figure 3), depending on what the moderator, the program and/or the format wishes to convey.

The TV4 news program is thus inviting people to contribute with their own reflections and information (even if it is subjective information conveying a person's thought). Other mechanisms could also be found in the comments (table 3), but these mechanisms are not as frequently occurring. Despite this, I suggest that all of the comments that have been changed or improved in any way are part of the interpretive gatekeeping mechanism.

Comment when posted on the forum: "Education is crucial for children's future, as long as the quality is guaranteed I do not see why it would not be all right making money out of it, but it requires careful monitoring, both from public and private schools." [030511, author's translation]

Comment when broadcast in television: "As long as the quality is guaranteed I do not see why it would not be all right making money out of it. But it requires careful monitoring." [030511, author's translation]

In this comment we can see how the gatekeeper has made a selection of what to broadcast and what not to broadcast. In other words, the gatekeeper has made an interpretation of this specific comment and its meaning. In doing this, the interpretive mechanism of gatekeeping has been used by the gatekeeper.

This is a clear process of gatekeeping where the moderator's power can control the whole discussion forum. When choosing which comments to broadcast, the moderator is also concerning what type of information that is to be found in the comments. This selection is

aimed at how relevant the comments are to the program or to the content in the program. I believe that in this way, the gatekeeper is trying to follow McQuail's three criteria of value, i.e. reality reflections, significance and relevance (2010 p 311). However, by doing this he/she is making his/her own subjective understanding of these values. This can make the values of the media industries a subjective understanding to the moderator, resulting in that one person's views are mediated.

What also is shown is that the moderator had a tendency to enhance the quality of the broadcast comments. These comments were only changed when broadcast on television; there were no changes made to them at the online forum. When the moderator goes in and changes the comments he/she performs gatekeeping from another aspect. All of the changes were done in order to improve the comments in a grammatical way (spelling included); those comments that on the forum were grammatically correct were untouched. This means that the TV4 news program do not want to broadcast material that is grammatically incorrect. In other words, they are creating a representation of their program providing a feel of a higher standard. Perhaps, this is even contributing to a feel of the program's authenticity concerning the broadcast news. Interestingly enough, this process of correction is not done to the comments on the internet forum, providing a feel that the forum is more informal than the television program.

Further, I believe that the process of the moderator's corrections can be a part of peoples' own control. By making the comments more or less grammatically perfect when appearing on television the standard of the comments is given. This could lead to that people act as their own gatekeepers in order not to do mistakes because no one else is doing mistakes.

Examining the online forum, there are no comments with violating content. This can be because no one is writing offending comments or this can be another example of how the TV4 news program has incorporated gatekeeping to their online discussion forum.

7.2 How Do Television Gatekeepers Pre-mediate and Script the Online Discussion?

From the material it is safe to say that some form of pre-mediation is done. This can partly be a factor responding to the legislation and the fear of being sued, but in my meaning this can also be a factor of increasing the participant's interest. Since there are more ways in which a person can comment on content related to the TV4 news program, the process of broadcasting is also changed. As brought up earlier, the possibility of comment on content found on the TV4 homepage during the day, either under articles, by e-mail or via telephone

is undoubtedly inviting pre-mediation. In this stage the moderator can view, pick out and prepare the most interesting comments, leading to a script of broadcast comments that has the most interesting content. This construction is interesting since the moderator has a whole day to script the evening news via the comments that has been pre-mediated and chosen. Almost the same process can be found in Ytreberg's (2006) study, but instead of direct income the TV4 news strengthen the band with its viewers (and indirectly with its investors) when broadcasting interesting comments.

What can be found in the material is that there is a difference between the levels of pre-mediation to the comments on the forum opposed to the one's broadcast. This is found in that the online forum keeps all its grammatical errors when those broadcast do not. This indicates that the comments fit for television is more scrutinized than the other comments. Further, since no offending comments can be found on the forum, pre-mediation is assumed to take practice at this stage as well.

As mentioned earlier, the moderator is constantly providing the online discussion forum with new topics. This can be seen as scripting since the moderator provides a format for the non-professional participants. When the moderator gives new topics to discuss they are all relevant to the program, both in its content but also time wise. As new topics come to the forum the television broadcast news are talking about the same topic. This gives the forum a format to follow so that the discussions stay relevant to the televised news. This result shows how new technology provides the production team with new scripting opportunities. This scripting tool can direct the performance of non-professional participants to a great extent. This stays accurate to what Ytreberg's (2006) study showed. Further on, what also could be observed was that the host of the news program occasionally told the viewers what was written and discussed in the online discussion and that they as well could join this discussion. This could also indicate that this process is used as a scripting device.

7.3 Is the Convergence Process Allowing Access for the Participatory Culture, Making Televised Information Less Hierarchical?

What was found in the interview was that the program had incorporated this new technology so that people could join and participate. The TV4 news wanted to have a form of openness towards the public, but they also wanted input from the public and thus create a platform for open conversation.

My initial thoughts were that the power of the forum would guide the moderator towards what was supposed to be broadcast in television. Looking at what is written on the

forum; I can see that what people write is not something that the moderator pays to much attention to. What the moderator is doing is to post new things that people can discuss. This happens very frequent and it seems that this is done in order to see what people are most willing to discuss.

In this way, the hierarchy still seems to exist; the production team is choosing what people online should discuss and they are choosing what comments to broadcast. Accordingly, the participants cannot provide new news for the TV4 news program to broadcast. So in this meaning the participatory culture does not bring the opportunity of choosing or determining what should be the news content when converging with traditional mass media (or at least the TV4 news program).

Despite this, the interview provided new insight. As in the example earlier (in the result section; interview results), the interviewee mentioned that excuses had to be made since the online discussion recognized faulty information and started to generate a lot of comments on this subject. This resulted in that the TV4 news had to apologize and convey the right information. This means that the convergence process does allow access for the participatory culture, making televised information less hierarchical. When looking at the material brought from the interview, we can see that convergence of technology creates an easy opportunity for the public to question information and news. In turn, this could mean that the participatory community in numbers can be part of shaping news (Goode; 2011), or even more exactly they can police the news so that faulty information is scrutinized, corrected and re-transmitted.

This could lead to a new journalistic approach, where information is more thoroughly acquired and investigated before transmitted. However, after all, the fact remains that the participatory culture is gatekept by the traditional mass mediums standards.

7.4 Summary of Analysis

Convergence of new technologies into traditional mass media seems to be an effective method in order to keep the expanding participatory cultures interest even if this process is controlled by traditional gatekeeping. This material also shows that the freedom of internet is not simply transmitted in the convergence process.

8. Discussion

As mentioned in the result section, there are 20 missing comments that are not found on the forum but broadcast in television. Not knowing where these comments come from is a potential threat to this study so e-mail correspondence with the TV4 news director Anne Lagercrantz was conducted, in order to find the missing comments. This resulted in the knowledge that comments can be brought in to be broadcast from various ways and times.

After further investigations, conducted of searches on the TV4 homepage as well as overall searches on the internet, these comments are still not to be found. In this way I question the e-mail correspondence since no further evidence can be put forth about these comments' existence. In doing this, parallels can be drawn to Ytreberg's study. In his article he finds that the production team fakes text messages in an attempt to promote further audience participation (2006 p 427). In the same way, I believe it is possible that the TV4 news production team "fakes" certain messages to uphold a better discussion. Considering the short time that the program has incorporated the convergence process it is likely that they have manipulated some of the comments so people would want to use this function. Further on, considering the extra time and work that would be needed to find and use these comments correctly makes it even more unlikely.

When investigating which gatekeeping mechanisms that the TV4 news production team uses, this study focused on the comments that had been broadcast. A more thorough investigation could have been conducted. If this study had focused on the whole spectrum of comments (319 comments), interesting parallels could have been drawn. This would have made it possible to compare the whole forum to the broadcast comments. Additionally, a conclusion could have been made of why those 39 comments were selected and broadcast and not one of the other among the 319 comments. As a suggestion, the six gatekeeping mechanisms could have been examined in all of the comments that were submitted to the forum in order to see how the moderator, i.e. the gatekeeper, use these mechanisms or norms in his/her selection.

The approach taken in this essay is of interest since the mechanisms of gatekeeping could be found in the comments broadcast on television and not, to the same extent, on the forum (since no selection is made on the forum).

In this essay I have not studied the titles given to the three comments broadcast in the TV4 program Nyheterna. These titles are part of the gatekeeping process since the moderator, i.e. gatekeeper, constructs them and collects comments to put underneath. However, this

would have been interesting to investigate, but since time was scarce I concentrated on examining the broadcast comments and not their titles.

Scripting would also have been interesting to investigate further. Examining the possibilities of scripting, that both comes from the insertion of titles and the option of gathering information during the day, would provide interesting and supplementary information to my essay. Unfortunately, this would need complementary interviewing with gatekeepers which could not fit into my timeframe.

8.1 Generalizability, Validity and Reliability

Since this material only concerns the Swedish TV4 news program, it would not be possible to generalize any result drawn from this material to a wider spectrum; this because the Swedish TV4 news program is constructed in a different way than other news programs. This is indicating that further research is needed in order to make a study like this generalizable.

However, what could be generalized is the way that different moderators working at the TV4 news program normally use these comments. Instead of making a generalization possible, I am hoping that this material can bring a deeper understanding of the processes involved; by that I mean the process of gatekeeping over the participatory culture in television concerning broadcasting possibilities. This essay is not claiming to have investigated every aspect of internet-based mediums converging into television broadcasting, but it will provide an understanding of how the process might proceed.

The sources of material used in this study have been chosen in order to provide as solid data as possible. The fact that I have used both an interview and a quantitative method, to investigate the same issue, gives this study a high validity when it measures what I have set out to measure (Østbye et al; 2003 p 120). The data collected from the online discussions is not seemingly refined in any way; there are misspellings, grammatical errors and a whole variety of different ages, genders and thinkers providing a feeling of genuineness, which in some way diminishes the risk of bias. However, since I was not blinded to the result when analyzing it, the risk of bias may have occurred anyway. The interview gives this study even more interesting material and it is also functioning, in some cases, as a method of testing material from the internet discussion material. This means that data that was not possible to get from one scientific approach could be found in the other (Østbye et al; 2003 p 101). This resulted in that I could find the answers to my questions, strengthening the validity to this study.

The reliability of this study is also high when considering the content analysis of the data collection. By comparing the comments on the forum to the ones broadcast it becomes clear that the drawn conclusions of the results are reliable (Østbye et al; 2003 p 120). It is a process where the reliability lays in the evidence that is found in the text on the forum and in the photographs taken from the TV4 news broadcast. This strengthens the reliability of the study from an inter-subjectivity standpoint because it is repeatable (Østbye et al; 2003 p 213).

8.2 Further Research

As I have pointed to earlier, this study is not sufficient enough in order to generalize any results. This study have only focused on one television program using interactive internet platforms in order to open up their broadcasts to the public. Initially, there were a second program in mind but since that program ended for the season and the empirical material was hard to find, I had to limit my research. A much wider and deeper study would prove beneficial when looking at how television control and steer the convergence between these two different platforms.

What this study can be used for is to get an understanding of how this area could be furthered researched. This study would prove beneficial as a pilot study in order to get a glimpse at the different possibilities available. This is a very interesting area which grows bigger each day and I believe that new interactive ways are created in a rapid pace and will come to dominate the way that the information society is constructed. This is why I also think that further research is necessary in this area. I suppose that the public interest would want to know on what conditions they function as a participatory community.

In order to get the best results, I would want to suggest observational studies at various TV-stations and in a variety of genres of programs. This would provide more hands on results when the whole process becomes visible. Interviews with gatekeepers would also offer an understanding of their choices and see if they are following any certain norms. It would also be of interest to conduct qualitative interviews with participants using the platforms available, in order to see how they think that the process works and explore whether the participants have influence during the gatekeeping process. This would create interesting comparable results explaining why the participants participate and how their material is used.

9. Summary

What this study has examined is how new solutions create possibilities for the public to interact with the mass media. What this study set out to answer was how traditional mass media, open for convergence with internet based platforms, controlled this potential internet traffic. In looking at the Swedish TV4 news program and their convergence process with internet based platforms, this allowed for interesting information and data to be collected in order to get a deeper understanding of how the production team of the TV4 news program performed this convergence process.

The scientifically approached collection of material proved to be of high value for this study's focus. What could be found in the material is in large responding to the questions at issue. In a very accurate way, McQuail's definition of gatekeeping proved to be responding to how the TV4 news program used a gatekeeper (i.e. the moderator and in some cases the production team). This definition of gatekeeping is very much living in the convergence process between internet and the TV4 news program. As was found, all of the comments were looked at before mediated; providing a feel that the moderator ultimately chose which comments or news should be displayed from the participatory community.

Envisioning a sense of greater diversity in the process of gatekeeping between television and internet, this study also focused on finding more possibilities for the participatory culture to submit their material. Looking at the results of this study, we can see that traditional gatekeeping is dominating the whole process. Non-professional participants do not have the same opportunities in this convergence, involving traditional television and internet; just as Goode's study (2011) had towards internet based mediums such as online newspaper where the non-professional participants were very much involved in the gatekeeping. By using Karine Barzilai-Nahon's article (2008) on network gatekeeping, this study also wanted to explore if convergence of internet and traditional television improved the characteristics of gatekeeping in this process. What was found was that television still remains the dominant gatekeeper pushing internet's gatekeeping opportunities to the side.

In looking at Ytreberg's study (2006) and what he found when examining how text message traffic could be used as a scripting tool, parallels can be drawn. The comments that are submitted to the TV4 news program provide the program with a possibility of scripting the online comments so that they fit the acquired format.

The production team at the TV4 news program can find comments from the forum that is related to the ten PM news program, from e-mails, previous made comments and telephone

calls in order to script the best script to be displayed in television. This means that the production team can search for the best comments to broadcast on television. This also means that the comments are pre-mediated in a former stage.

The interview provided insight to the question concerning the influence from the participatory culture. Here it was found that users of this convergence process do not hold any direct influence over the information broadcast in television. The production team wants the input and participation of the participatory culture, but it seems that this is done in order to create an appearance of an open broadcast. Despite this, what was found in the material was that these participants have an indirect influence over the broadcast information. The process of convergence has allowed information to be policed and scrutinized by the users, which could provide an even more accurate journalistic approach in the future.

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11. Appendix

11.1 Appendix 1

C-uppsats: förfrågan

Hej!

Jag heter Mattis Andersson och går på Södertörns högskola. Jag läser ett program som heter media, engelska och globalisering och kommer skriva min c-uppsats om hur dagens medier konvergerar samman och släpper in publiken.

Jag undrar således, lite försiktigt, om det kan finnas en möjlighet att antingen genomföra en kortare intervju med de som är ansvariga för sociala medier eller om det finns möjlighet att vara med och ta del av produktionen (bakom kulisserna) i ett program. Självklart skulle båda alternativen vara perfekt!

Det skulle verkligen bidra till min uppsats att ha med era perspektiv!

Med vänliga hälsningar!

Mattis Andersson

mattis01.andersson@student.sh.se

11.2 Appendix 2

Comments found on the forum (i.e. in their original form) matching the photographs:

110502.

Usama bin Ladins död väcker känslor

Elin

Oavsett allt hemskt bin Ladin gjort så känns det smått absurdt hur mordet på honom firas i USA... vad kommer det leda till?

Oskar

Ganska sjuk människosyn man har om man firar en annan människas död.

Andreas Lann

Bra att han inte kan mörda fler oskyldiga människor. En värld utan Bin Laden är en säkrare värld.

Saabs samarbete med Kina

MALIN

Inte bra om SAAB hamnar i Kina. Det som är bra o svenskt ska finnas kvar i landet.

nicco

Inget bra att Kina kommer in i Svenska SAAB, då kommer vi att förlora en bilindustri till.

Obama_King

Hellre Kina än Ryssland..

110503

Posten misstänkt för konkurrensbrott

Erik

Detta är känt sedan länge i branschen att detta sker. Äntligen vågar någon ta tag i detta. Hoppas de får fram tydliga bevis.

Albin

Bra! Kläm åt dom bara! Fuskare och bedragare ska sättas dit rejält!

Maffe

Förfärligt att statligt ägda bolag försöker mygla bort prispressande privata alternativ. Skäms Posten.

Gamla ska övervakas med kamera

Kristina

Den trygghet personalens besök ger och det stöd brukare kan få i ångestfyllda situationer kan aldrig ersättas.

Niklas

Till och med jag som är 33 årig ung man förstår hur kränkande frågeställningen känns för våra äldre. Vart är samhället på väg?

GMS

Jag tror att vi alla måste våga protestera mot alla apparater och maskiner som "tar över" i vårt samhälle.

Skandalskolor stängs ner efter avslöjande

Doris

Det är skamligt att vem som helst får driva friskolor utan någon som helst kontroll!

Martin

De flesta friskolor sköter sig bättre än de kommunala, är väl några få som missbrukar deras pengar.

akhil

Utbildningen är avgörande för barnens framtid, så länge kvaliteten i den garanteras ser jag inte varför man inte skulle få tjäna pengar på den. Men det krävs noggranna kontroller, både av kommunala och privata skolor.

110504

Vad tycker du om tullens arbetsmetoder?

Calle

Utan lite information skulle väl dessa brott kunna verkställas som på löpande band?

Kurt

Det gäller grundläggande rättsliga principer. Ändamålen helgar inte medlen!

Jocke

Hur skulle rättsamhället se ut om vi inte skyddade informatörer?

Funktionshindrade kränks av kommunen

Cissi

Vi föräldrar är helt utmattade. Ingen tar längre ansvar för något och alla skyller på alla

En mamma

Jag vill säga till Er som kämpar att inte ge upp. Överklaga gång på gång. Lycka till.

Britt

Familjen blir helt utmattad och man riskerar att bli illa sedd eftersom man helatiden får bråka med myndigheter.

Vad tycker du om tullens arbetsmetoder?

Fredrik

Vad är problemet, de sätter ju dit brottslingar!

Henric

Blir det rätt att fälla brottslingar med fejkade bevis. Vem ska då avgöra vem som är mest kriminell.

Åsa

Förstår faktiskt inte vad problemet med viss brottprovokation är om vi kan minska antalet brottslingar på gatorna. Är själv utsatt för grov kvinnofridskränkning, hade jag haft kameror eller vittnen i sovrummet hade han suttit inlåst nu. Det gör han inte.

110505

Gör tullen rätt?

F.d tullare

En myndighet skall följa lagen! Självklart skall källor skyddas, men vi måste värna om vår demokrati!

Lasse

Självklart har tullen gjort rätt, ska de kunna slå ut brottsorganisationer måste de använda okonventionella metoder.

David

Konstigt att tullen måste ljuga för att skydda sina källor.

Vad tycker du om Obamas besök?

N

Betr. Osama bin Laden - vilka bevis finns egentligen för att detta är sant? Politiker och militärer som framträder för världen och påstår att detta har hänt. Strategi och taktik är allt som gäller - och större delen av världen suger blint åt sig. Ifrågasätt och tänk kritiskt!

Anna F

Värdigt av Obama att inte hålla skrytigt tal

David

Alldeles perfekt. Barack Obama är guds gåva som bekämpar terrorister.

110509

Ny "skruvkorksmetod" ska hjälpa strokedrabbade

Mikaela på Värmdö

Låt oss nu hoppas på att alla landsting kan skaffa samma sorts behandling – det är rätt vanligt att det är olika fördelat över Sverige.

Bosse Gustafsson

Kul att se nyheten om korkskruven. Tack för en god nyhet!

Gunilla

Man önskar att dom hade uppfunnit den tidigare...

Rätt att stänga av knattelag när föräldrar bråkade?

Petra Lundahl

Helt rätt för vilken väg når det fram bäst? Jo att föräldrarna är tvungna att förklara för sina barn att den så kallade vuxna gjorde fel

Yvonne Strömberg

Helt rätt agerat! Hoppas också att de blir anmälda och får stå till svars i rätten. Domaren var ju också bara ett barn! Skäms ...på er (om ni som gjorde det läser det här)!

Sven

Konstigt beslut - man väljer inte sina föräldrar, så knattarna borde inte straffas. Stäng av dom vuxna istället!!!

Kanada slog Tre kronor med 3-2

Britt via Hockeykanalen

Jag skäms för att jag är svensk. Jag hoppas verkligen Canada eller Finland vinner VM.

Ludwig

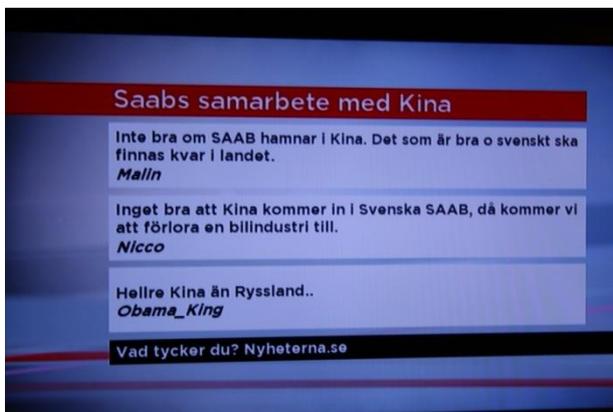
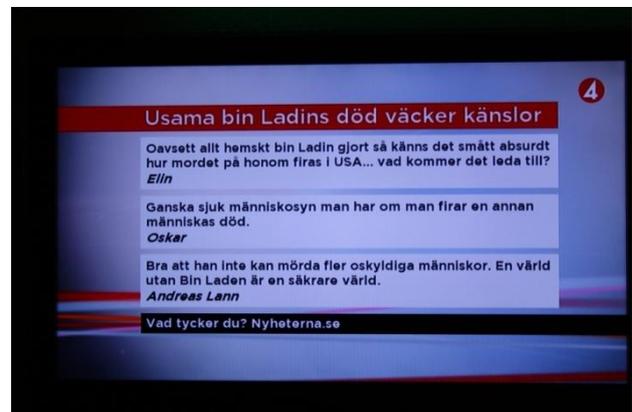
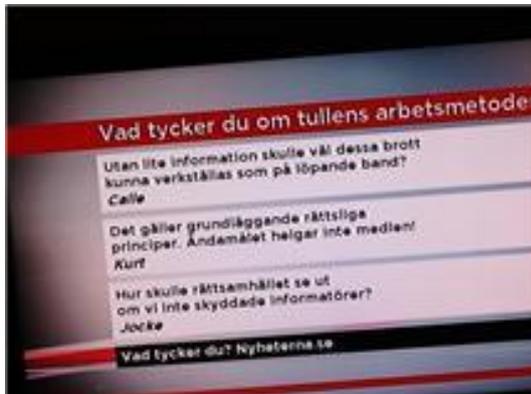
Äntligen inte enbart en "hedersam" förlust för Tre kronor utan även en taktisk förlust.

Harry

Kronorna verkade ju inte bryta benen av sig precis för att kvittera. Bra de´.

11.3 Appendix 3

Photographs of the broadcast comments during the ten-pm-TV4-news-program Nyheterna



Gamla ska övervakas med kamera

Den trygghet personalens besök ger och det stöd brukare kan få i ångestfyllda situationer kan aldrig ersättas.
Kristina

Till och med jag som är en 33 årig ung man förstår hur kränkande frågeställningen känns för våra äldre. Vart är samhället på väg?
Niklas

Jag tror att vi alla måste våga protestera mot alla apparater och maskiner som "tar över" i vårt samhälle.
GMS

Vad tycker du? Nyheterna.se

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Det är skamligt att vem som helst får driva friskolor utan någon som helst kontroll!
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De flesta friskolor sköter sig bättre än de kommunala, är väl några få som missbrukar deras pengar.
Martin

Så länge kvaliteten i utbildningen garanteras ser jag inte varför man inte skulle få tjäna pengar på den. Men det krävs noggranna kontroller.
akhl

Vad tycker du? Nyheterna.se

Gör tullen rätt?

En myndighet skall följa lagen! Självklart skall källor skyddas, men vi måste värna om vår demokrati
F.d tullare

Självklart har tullen gjort rätt, ska de kunna slå ut brottsorganisationer måste de använda okonventionella metoder.
Lasse

Konstigt att tullen måste ljuga för att skydda sina källor.
David

Vad tycker du? Nyheterna.se

Vad tycker du om Obamas besök?

Betr. Osama bin Laden, vilka bevis finns egentligen för att detta är sant?
N

Värdigt av Obama att inte hålla skrytigt tal
Anna F

Alldeles perfekt. Barack Obama är guds gåva som bekämpar terrorister.
David

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Gunilla

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Helt rätt för vilken väg när det fram bäst? Jo att föräldrarna är tvungna att förklara för sina barn att dom så kallade vuxna gjorde fel.
Petra Lundahl

Helt rätt agerat! Hoppas de blir anmälda och får stå till svars i rätten. Domaren var ju också bara ett barn! Skäms...
Yvonne Strömberg

Konstigt beslut - man väljer inte sina föräldrar, så knattarna borde inte straffas. Stäng av dom vuxna istället!!!
Sven

Vad tycker du? Nyheterna.se

Kanada slog Tre kronor med 3-2

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Britt via Hockeykanalen

Äntligen inte enbart en "hedersam" förlust för Tre kronor utan även en taktisk förlust.
Ludwig

Kronorna verkade ju inte bryta benen av sig precis för att kvittera. Bra de'.
Harry

Vad tycker du? Nyheterna.se

11.4 Appendix 4

E-mail correspondence between author and Anne Lagercrantz.

Author:

Hej!

Jag heter Mattis Andersson och gör just nu min c-uppsats på Södertörns högskola. Den handlar om hur medier går in i varandra så som internetkommentarerna fungerar hos er på Nyheterna.

Jag undrar således om du skulle kunna hjälpa mig med en fråga?

Min fråga är: Finns det något annat sätt för tittarna att komma med i det flöde som ni visar på kl 22 Nyheterna? Idag kan man ju använda sig av Twitter men också av er chattfunktion som är på hemsidan, finns det något ytterligare sätt? och slutligen, om det finns andra sätt att komma med, hamnar då de kommentarerna också på hemsidan, precis så som Twitter fungerar?

Tack så mycket på förhand!

Med vänliga hälsningar

Mattis Andersson

Anne Lagercrantz:

Hej Mattis,

Ja, under dagen har vi diskussions-möjligheter på flera artiklar, och ofta fångar vi kommentarer till ”skyltarna” i 22 även här. Ibland får vi kommentarer via mejl och telefon, och de syns generellt inte på hemsidan, och hamnar mer sällan på skyltarna.

Mvh Anne Lagercrantz, chef TV4Nyheterna

Author:

Hej

Tack för snabbt svar!

Ok, jag förstår, men de kommentarer som ni hämtar från dessa diskussions-möjligheter lägger ni med dem sen i flödet som går under sändningstid? brukar det vara många sådan kommentarer som visas i rutan?

Har de som använder Twitter samma möjlighet att hamna i rutan under en sändning? Förlåt att det kom nya frågor hoppas att du kan svara på dem ändå =)

Mvh
Mattis Andersson

Anne Lagercrantz:

Hej, nej enbart de ”live-inlägg” och de tweets vi väljer ut syns i flödet under sändningstid under flödet. Vi visar generellt tre skyltar under timmen, med tre kommentarer per skylt. Ja, de som använder twitter har samma möjlighet att hamna i rutan. Mvh Anne