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## The low interaction of viewers of video clips on the internet The case study of YouTube Spain

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**Abstract:** This research study demonstrates that viewers of video clips on the Internet adopt a viewing attitude that is as passive as the one adopted when watching unidirectional and traditional media. Research on the attitude of the viewer of video clips on the Internet is almost non-existent. The authors dispute the widespread myths and the few studies that suggest that most Internet users exercise the interactive potentiality of this medium. The article focuses on Youtube Spain as the main referent of video consumption over the Internet, and demonstrates the initial hypothesis with quantitative data. Their methodology studies the behaviour of Internet users by analysing 278 videos and 650,884,405 visits registered until the end of 2009. These results shed light on many questions, and open other interesting lines of research.

**Keywords:** Internet; television; interactivity; videos; viewer; Youtube; Web 2.0.

**Summary:** 1. Introduction. 1.1. Hypothesis. 2. Methodology. 2.1. The choice of Youtube: Conceptualization of the Web 2.0. 2.2. Quantitative methodology. 2.2.1. The sample. 2.2.2. Universe and total sample. 2.2.3. Videos excluded from the sample. 2.2.4. Handling of data. 3. Results. 3.1. Presentation of results. 3.2. Discussion of results. 4. Conclusions. 5. Bibliography.

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### 1. Introduction

The number of research studies examining internet users' degree of interaction during the consumption of online videos is almost non-existent. In fact, this research tries to break with the conventional idea that viewers interact online simply because they are offered the possibility of doing so. In this line of research there are some studies that affirm that Internet TV was born with a component of social participation and interaction of which it can no longer be detached (The Cocktail Analysis, 2008). Thomas and Dyson (2007) go further when they claim that the new generation of consumers finds difficult to align with the passive model of linear TV consumption.

But this article will deepen into a line of research that was left open and unresolved in Gallardo's 2009 doctoral thesis *La influencia de la televisión generalista en España en el consumo de vídeos por Internet: el fenómeno Youtube* (The influence of Spanish mainstream television on the consumption of Internet videos: The Youtube phenomenon). Researchers like Rafael Díaz (2009) have warned that the video clip is just beginning to develop its own language in the cyberspace, and invites the research community to address the user-video relationship with questions like: "Can video develop a new audiovisual language in the cyberspace at the service of the liberating information?" Is new software needed for this?"

This article agrees and proposes that audiovisual content on the Internet may have the same pacifying effect that television produces on viewers (Ritzer, 1996). A year later, Robinson and Geoffrey (1997) highlighted viewers' need of being entertained passively. In the same direction, Dominique Wolton (2000) warned that the reality is less multimedia than it seems. Owen (2000) stated on "*The Internet challenge to television*" that it is attractive to be passive in the communication process.

These authors (Ritzer, Robison and Geofrey, Wolton, and Owen) predict a passive role of the Internet user as an audiovisual content spectator over the Internet. However, Castells (2000) proposes that the Internet is not an audiovisual space that can compete with film or television. Later, the rapid growth of the network bandwidth and its direct influence on the emergence of videos, made Castells to rectify, seven years later in a public speech, his theory and to state that television broadcasters should ally with the Internet if they wanted to survive (Castells, 2007).

This research examines whether the public has a passive role in the communication process, and opens other possible lines of research about the "vague" attitude of the brain to demand content without the need of participation. Farhad Manjoo (2009), an ICT expert, does not believe that the future of television is interactive. In fact, he states in the online *Slate Magazine* that: "passivity is television's main feature; we love it precisely because it asks so little from us".

But all these affirmations are just the opinions of experts and researches and are not supported by concrete empirical studies on the Internet user's attitude towards the audiovisual content. This does not mean that our conclusions will be absolute and fixed; we simply try to empirically analyse internet users' behaviour.

We start from the basis that traditional television is not interactive, but we are going to develop this idea. When we talk about interactivity (of an active internet user), we refer to the interaction that goes beyond the choice of content, the deferred consumption of content, or what we call the clicking: when user rewinds, stops, or forwards the video, etc. According Alcolea (2003: 257), the viewer of traditional television has only three possibilities of interaction: the zapping, the zipping (when the viewer selects recorded content from recording devices attached to the TV box), and the grazing which consists in passing quickly through the package of channels in the search of interesting content, without any predisposition towards any specific channel. The television viewer zapped 41% more in 2008 in comparison to 1992; a gradual growth that reached up to 20.2 sessions per day in 2008 (Vaca, 2009).

But the fact that television viewers have increased their use of the remote control does not mean that when they have a greater range of options they actually want to use them. In fact, the current potential interaction that traditional television offers is limited to the selection of channels. We will have to wait for the further development of television with Internet access: IPTV (Internet Protocol Television) technology in Spain is offered by companies like Orange TV, Movistar TV, ONO and Jazztel TV.

Pérez de Silva (2000) is convinced that traditional television not only does not offer interactivity, but also that it is dead. In his book *La televisión ha muerto* (Television is dead) he affirms that what is dead is the current way of doing television, the way of watching television, and also the device which until now we known as TV.

In opposition to traditional television, the Internet is presented as the major example of interactivity. Internet offers higher possibilities of interaction than traditional television because of the fact that the spectator can become a sender and have an active role in the communication process. This research tries to demonstrate that the internet users' interaction is low when consuming online videos or audiovisual content. But we will refer to the potential interactivity offered by the Web 2.0, which is understood as a network of free character created by all users. In other words, we will study Internet users' active role. And, as it will be detailed in the methodology section, we chose the leading website in video consumption in Spain: YouTube Spain (Alexa, 2010).

Another factor that makes this research pioneering is the fact that it breaks with the conventionalism that equates the "possibility" of interaction with the "act" of interaction. For example, researcher Lerma Noriega regrets the low exploitation that the Mexican media makes of the potentiality of the Internet in their websites (Lerma, 2009). But, what if Internet users watch online television on the Web with the same passivity with which they used to consume traditional broadcast television on the TV box? In other words, interactivity will not only consist in the potentiality of having it.

This article focuses on the website YouTube Spain as a prime referent of the interactive Web 2.0 and online video consumption in Spain since it was launched in February 2005. According to Pérez and Santos (2009), in these websites users abandon their passive role because they are allowed to establish more fluid forms of dialogue with the media and become generators of content within the communication process. But we are going to quantify the number of Internet users who choose to only watch in comparison to those who actually participate.

To face the problem of analysing and quantifying Internet users' degree of interaction when consuming online audiovisual content we decided to analyse the videos uploaded by users on the website YouTube Spain from June 2007 until the end of 2009. Since Google (the owner of YouTube since 2006) does not provide any information about interactivity, we monitored and collected data to provide a response to a little investigated matter.

Web surfing encourages a sort of multitasking consumption type, which is opposed to the comfortable attitude adopted when watching traditional TV. New terms have been coined in Anglo-Saxon countries to analyse and define the new TV viewing model. Along traditional *leanback* viewers, accustomed to receive content, there emerged the *leanforward* multi-display viewers, habituated to find what they want to consume (Grau, 2010). Enrique Dans (2010: 47) highlights that in unidirectional media like radio and television, "citizens have no access to the sending activity, they are limited to be spectators or part of the audience, with a clearly passive role" and that is reflected in the term used to refer to them in the US: couch potatoes.

### 1.1. Hypothesis

Our research hypothesis proposes that the passive role of adopted by TV viewers is also adopted by users consuming audiovisual content over the Internet.

In other words, we propose that the traditional TV viewer does not take advantage of the potentialities offered by the online videos and, specifically, by the videos on YouTube Spain. So, does the Internet user's role tends to be passive when facing the potential interaction given by the Web?

Our goal is to demonstrate that Internet users adopt a passive role when consuming online videos. To that end, we will use a methodology that allows demonstrating the posed hypothesis.

## 2. Methodology

To prove our hypothesis, we need to quantify the degree of interactivity of users when consuming online videos. First

of all, we must delimit the scope of analysis to the website YouTube as a referent of the Web 2.0 and online video consumption in Spain.

In the next section we will detail the quantitative methodology, although it should be noted that other qualitative tools, based on the observation, were necessary to its approach.

At the beginning of the investigation, we also asked Google Spain for information to widen the field work and obtain data related to our goals. However, this action was not successful. We got in touch with Google's Department of Communication of Spain (the owner of YouTube) on 4 December 2009 through its press officer (Anaïs Pérez Figueras, Google's Communication Department in Spain and Portugal). When asked, via email, about available data on interactivity, the communication department replied that Google does not provide such information. The company only said that YouTube works to improve search personalization and to innovate in advertising. Nonetheless, the company shared important informative facts, like for example that every minute, 21 hours of video are uploaded worldwide, that YouTube Spain has 13.5 million unique users, and that the website receives daily a billion visits worldwide. This information only helps us to emphasize the importance of YouTube and to justify the importance of this study.

It is precisely the inaccessibility to this information that motivates us to design a methodology that answers our hypothesis reliably and empirically.

In fact, in order to design the quantitative methodology it was necessary to apply tools like observation and experience with YouTube's user graphical interface (understood as the visual environment and display that allows communicate between Internet users and YouTube).

### **2.1. The choice of YouTube: Conceptualization of the Web 2.0**

Why did we choose YouTube to analyse Internet users' behaviour when consuming online videos? Because it is the leading provider of videos on the Internet in a large number of countries worldwide, including Spain. According to Alexa.com, a company that quantifies the number of visits to websites since 1996, YouTube is the third website with the most traffic worldwide. Specifically, YouTube is the fourth most visited website in countries like Spain, USA and Japan, among others, in the last quarter of 2009. In Spain, in terms of visits, YouTube is only behind the Spanish edition of the Google search engine (the owner of YouTube), the social network Facebook, and Google in its native edition (Alexa, 2010). Therefore, YouTube is one of the referents of the so-called Web 2.0 of social participation in which users themselves can generate content and upload their videos.

It was O'Reilly who baptized the phenomenon of social networks under the concept of Web 2.0 in 2004. While some authors affirm that it is just a trendy word, a marketing product, and a pointless term, this author accepts it as a new paradigm. If a key part of the web 2.0 is taking advantage of the collective intelligence, O'Reilly (2006) says that Internet becomes a collective and global brain because of these kinds of websites. Applying this definition to YouTube, do users transform this website into a kind of global video store?

However, it is not this participation that we are going to analyse among Internet users, but the one that is performed during the watching of audiovisual content.

The Web 1.0 is stagnated into a static state, i.e. the information which resides on it cannot be changed, is fixed, and is not updated by users.

But the phenomenon of Web 2.0, leaded by YouTube in the field of online videos, is what invited us to select this website as object of study. We believe that the data collected and the conclusions drawn in this research study will be extrapolated to the consumption of videos in other websites or even television channels that offer the possibility of real-time interaction through return channels.

### **2.2. Quantitative methodology**

This article follows one of the lines of research opened by Gallardo's 2009 doctoral thesis *La influencia de la televisión generalista en España en el consumo de vídeos por Internet. El fenómeno Youtube* (The influence of Spanish mainstream television on online video consumption. The YouTube phenomenon). This research addresses the role of the Internet user but does not delve into the role that the user plays when consuming videos. Considering this, we used some data included in the digital appendix of the aforementioned thesis, and complemented such data in order to compare the data evolution and to provide new analysis based on the observation of YouTube's interface.

#### **2.2.1. The sample**

All videos collected and taken into account in this research were taken from YouTube Spain. YouTube's video classification according to ratings was very useful at the time of collecting the samples. YouTube allows video searches according to the following distinctions, among others:

- a. Most viewed: videos uploaded during the selected period of time (today, this week, this month, or always) with a greater number of views in comparison with the rest of videos uploaded during the same period of time.
- b. Most commented: videos uploaded during the selected period of time (today, this week, this month, or always) with a greater number of comments in comparison with the rest of videos uploaded during the same period of

time.

- c. Most responded: videos that have received the largest number of responses during the selected period of time (today, this week, this month, or always) in comparison with the rest of videos uploaded during the same period of time.
- d. Highest rated: videos uploaded during the selected period of time (today, this week, this month, or always) that have obtained the best ratings (with stars) in comparison with the rest of videos uploaded during the same period of time.

### El Koala - Yo Via Jase Un Corra



Figure 1. YouTube media player (screenshot taken during the data collection in January 2008)

After having outlined some of YouTube's most relevant search parameters, we collected five samples to obtain rigorous conclusions:

A) Sample of the 15 most viewed videos from 22 June 2007 to 28 September 2007 (inclusive). The sample included the 15 most viewed videos on Fridays at midnight and the information collected only included the number of views and ratings received. The sample covered 15 weeks and a total of 218 videos and 11,851,877 visits.

B) Sample of the 15 most viewed videos by February 2008. The information collected included the number of comments and ratings left for each video. The sample included 15 videos, which together amount for 103,197,303 visits. Samples A and B both have been taken from the CD-ROM included in the appendix of Gallardo's 2009 Ph.D. thesis.

C) Sample of the 15 most viewed videos from the birth of YouTube Spain (in June 2007) to 10 December 2009. This sample will allow us to observe the evolution of user interactivity. The information collected included the number of comments and ratings left in each video. This sample adds a new innovation in interaction: the number of video responses made by users. The combined views of these 15 videos amount to 290,698,955 views.

D) Sample of the 15 most commented videos from the birth of YouTube Spain to 10 December 2009. This sample aims to analyse the maximum degree of interaction since it includes the 15 videos that have received more comments and accumulate 190.394.320 views.

E) Sample of the 15 videos with more video answers from the birth of YouTube Spain until 10 December 2009. This sample analyses the maximum degree of interaction between the videos that have received more video-responses. These 15 videos sum up 54.741.950 visits.

The 10th December 2009 was randomly selected as the last data collection day for the samples C, D, and E, just in order to assure that the work of collecting the data would be done at the same day.

All the samples were collected through YouTube's search engine. It should be noted that in order to use YouTube's interaction options users need to register for free, and that videos have a maximum duration of 10 minutes (except for

those videos published by promoted channels, which have signed special agreements with YouTube and do not have this limitation: like the TV networks *Cuatro*, *RTVE*, *La Sexta*, and *Antena 3*). In April 2010, during the investigation and after the data collection, YouTube modified its graphic interface and changed its rating system of (one to five) stars with a simplified rating system of two options: "I like" and "I don't like", as shown in the left bottom part of Figure 2 (compare with Figure 1).



Figure 2. New YouTube player (screenshot taken on 9 May 2010)

The existence of all these samples allows the comparison between different periods of time and to observe the evolution of interaction and the more or less active role of the Internet user. Moreover, there are samples that add new variables of interaction for Internet users: video responses.

### 2.2.2. Universe and total sample

Quantitatively, this article investigates the behaviour of users based on the analysis of 278 videos and 650,884,405 visits. We believe that this sample is large enough to obtain results that can help us to respond the hypothesis. Undoubtedly, the data collection is one of the toughest stages of this investigation, in addition to its subsequent analysis.

We believe that the five samples constitute a large enough number of videos and visits to get results with some empirical significance within a universe in constant expansion. Although there are no exact figures about the numbers of videos available in YouTube, Google (2010) says on its website that "hundreds of millions of videos are being watched each day on YouTube. In fact, every minute, 24 hours of video is uploaded".

### 2.2.3. Videos excluded from the sample

We must highlight that eight videos were removed from the sample, which may induce to an error in the results. The reasons for this exclusion have been the following:

A) Three videos offered data that was contradictory or illogic: like showing a lower number of visits than comments. For example, a video was deleted from the sample of the 15 most commented videos from the birth of YouTube Spain until 10 December 2009. In particular, the video occupied the 6th place and was entitled "culturista amateur" (amateur bodybuilder), and had fewer visits than comments.

B) Moreover, 5 more videos were eliminated from the sample because they disabled the potentialities of interaction, which made it impossible analyse users' interaction. For example, the videos uploaded by the Football Club Barcelona on its YouTube channel (user: fcbarcelona) disabled the rating option.

### 2.2.4. Handling of data

All data were collected through YouTube Spain's own search engine and managed in five Excel spread sheets, which facilitated the handling of data (278 videos with hundreds of views) through formulae that produces the average and the percentage of interactivity based on the number of visits.

## 3. Results

### 3.1. Presentation of results

Below are the most remarkable results. The presentation of data follows the same order in which the different samples

were described in the section 2.2.1.

	Number of views	Number of ratings on most viewed videos	% of viewers who rated the videos
Average	54,366	91.5	0.18%

Table 1. Visits, ratings and weight of ratings (sample of the 15 most viewed videos from June 2007 to December 2007)

Table 1 shows the average number of views and ratings of the most viewed videos and average percentage that the number of ratings represents over the number of views. The table does not show all tabulated data because it was 218 videos and 11.851.877 visits. The average allows us to obtain a global view of all the collected results. Thus, table 1 shows that the percentage of people who rates a video is only 0.18% with an average of 91.5 ratings every 54,366 views.

Although we cannot quantify the number of YouTube viewers who choose to register and upload videos due to lack of information from Google, we did try to quantify the degree of interaction of the website's users. Of the 15 most viewed videos (from the birth of YouTube Spain until February 2008) we collected the number of comments and the number of ratings with respect to the number of visits or view count of each video. This way we can determine the degree of interactivity that exists when videos are consumed over the Internet and, specifically, on YouTube. Below, table 2 breaks down the percentage of comments and ratings made by YouTube viewers with respect to the number of visits. Of all these data, the attention should be paid to the averages.

Rank	Nº of views	Nº of comments	% of viewers who wrote comments	Nº of ratings	% of viewers who rated the videos
1	18,224,774	26,869	0.15	<a href="#">12,078</a>	0.07
2	10,298,000	8,118	0.08	<a href="#">4,772</a>	0.05
3	9,621,245	8,100	0.08	<a href="#">2,067</a>	0.02
4	7,291,917	9,246	0.13	<a href="#">4,652</a>	0.06
5	7,185,527	16,830	0.23	<a href="#">13,602</a>	0.19
6	5,992,675	6,098	0.10	<a href="#">4,875</a>	0.08
7	5,776,439	4,832	0.08	<a href="#">1,952</a>	0.03
8	5,138,521	1,325	0.02	230	0.004
9	5,116,976	15,345	0.30	<a href="#">2,059</a>	0.04
10	5,087,256	20,551	0.40	<a href="#">13,109</a>	0.25
11	5,000,675	3,400	0.07	<a href="#">2,196</a>	0.04
12	4,847,105	3,107	0.06	<a href="#">1,024</a>	0.02
13	4,792,841	6,106	0.13	<a href="#">2,059</a>	0.04
14	4,450,777	1,614	0.04	<a href="#">591</a>	0.01
15	4,372,575	17,060	0.40	<a href="#">14,075</a>	0.32
Average	6,879,820	9,906.7	<b>0.15%</b>	5,289	<b>0.08%</b>

Table 2. Comments and ratings achieved by the sample of 15 most viewed videos until February 2008)

Most of these videos that accumulate thousands of visits throughout their life are video clips. For example, the first video with over 18 million views is a music video from Nelly Furtado.

	Percentage of viewers who	Percentage of viewers who
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	commented on the most viewed videos	rate the most viewed videos
Average	0.15%	0.08%

Table 3. Average Percentage of YouTube viewers that comment-on or rate videos (sample of the 15 most viewed videos until February 2008)

Table 3 presents the quantitative data that should be highlighted from table 2, i.e. the averages. It shows that only 0.15% (i.e. 1.5 per every thousand) of people who watched the videos decided to write a comment. The number of people who rates a video with one or five stars is even lower: just 0.08% (i.e. 8 per every 10,000) of people who viewed the video. In other words, the figure is far away, as we see in two cases, from one in every 100 people.

Rank	Nº of visits	Nº of comments	% of viewers who commented	Nº of ratings	% of viewers who rated the video	Nº of answers	% of viewers who left a video-answer
1	44,767,415	4,493	0.01003632	1,571	0.00350925	61	0.00013626
2	31,982,105	25,106	0.07850015	14,978	0.04683244	0	0
3	25,008,360	25,872	0.10345341	14,039	0.05613723	0	0
4	21,289,983	15,708	0.07378118	8,621	0.04049322	1	4.69704E-06
5	20,760,087	45,307	0.2182409	29,847	0.14377107	157	0.000756259
6	19,904,595	6,707	0.03369574	3,754	0.01885997	20	0.000100479
7	19,865,203	38,421	0.19340854	30,599	0.15403316	0	0
8	17,639,688	9,915	0.05620848	4,732	0.02682587	0	0
9	17,077,709	29,686	0.17382894	22,014	0.12890488	192	0.001124273
10	15,737,456	2,125	0.01350282	717	0.00455601	16	0.000101668
11	15,278,847	2,126	0.01391466	894	0.00585123	7	4.5815E-05
12	13,940,534	22,219	0.15938414	37,196	0.26681905	241	0.001728772
13	13,755,311	6,632	0.0482141	4,462	0.03243838	5	3.63496E-05
14	13,691,662	17,621	0.12869877	10,174	0.074308	9	6.57334E-05
15	44,767,415	4,93	0.01003632	1,571	0.00350925	61	0.00013626
Average	20.764.211	17,996	0.09	13,114	0.072	51	0.0003

Table 4. Number and percentage of comments, ratings, and video answers according to visits (sample of 15 most viewed videos until December 2009)

To gain a better understanding of table 4 we should focus on the averaged percentages of viewers who rated, commented, or video-answered based on the number of views.

	% of viewers who commented on the most viewed videos	% of viewers who rated the most viewed videos	% of viewers who left an answered to the most viewed videos
Average	0.09%	0.072%	0.0003%

Table 5. Average percentage of YouTube viewers who make comments, rate videos and video-respond (based on the sample of the 15 most viewed videos until December 2009)

Table 5 shows that the number of comments and ratings made by the users is insignificant with respect to the number of visits. Only 0.09% of people who views a video left a comment, 0.072% rates it, and virtually nobody leaves a video-answer (0.0003%). In fact, in table 4 we see that the most-commented and most-rated videos barely reached 0.2%.

Regarding the interaction through video responses, the results are insignificant. The video that received more video-responses reaches 241 in comparison to the nearly 14 million views.

However, as explained in the methodology, the data collected prior to this research also shows the evolution of the interaction of users from 2006 until the end of 2009. To notice this evolution let's compare the data from table 3 with the data from table 5, in Figure 3.

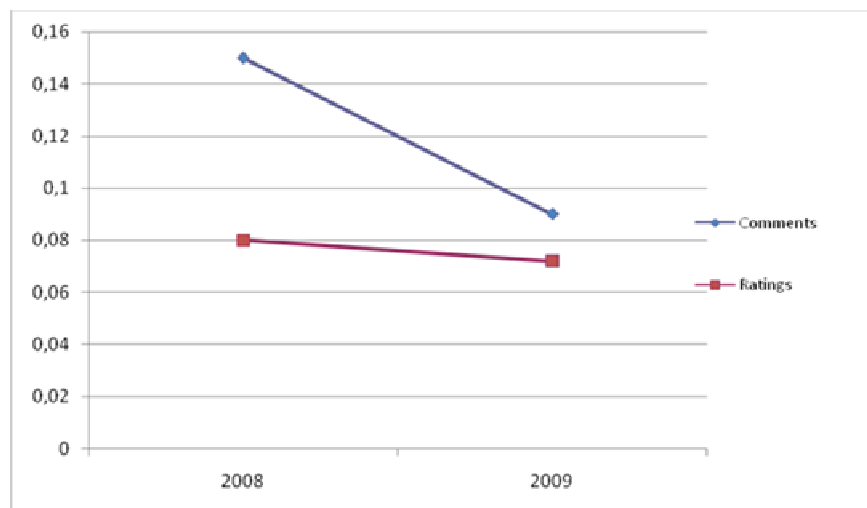


Figure 3. Evolution of the participation of YouTube users from 2008 to 2009

Figure 3 compares data obtained from the sample of the 15 most viewed videos from June 2006 to February 2008 (table 3) with the data of the 15 most viewed videos until December 2009 (table 5). This figure shows how the number of comments and ratings descend in 2009. The most notable decline occurs in participation through comments, although in all cases we are talking about percentages of interaction that do not go over the twenty decimals.

Rank	Nº of visits of the most commented videos	Nº of comments	% of viewers who wrote comments
1	1,131,438	301,381	26.63698762
2	13,940,534	37,196	0.266819047
3	12,164,190	34,082	0.280183062
4	7,833,798	32,195	0.410975621
5	19,865,203	30,598	0.154028126
6	20,760,087	29,847	0.143771074
7	11,365,314	29,591	0.260362362
8	11,615,882	26,562	0.228669678
9	17,077,709	22,010	0.128881456
10	5,860,766	17,514	0.298834657
11	11,853,016	17,078	0.144081473
12	13,266,776	16,669	0.125644693
13	11.677.502	15,825	0.135516997
14	31,982,05	14,978	0.04683244
15	Deleted Video	Deleted Video	Deleted Video
Average	13,599,594	44,680	2.1



Table 6. Participation in the most commented videos (sample of the 15 most commented videos from June 2008 to 10 December 2009)

Table 6 shows the percentage of comments left in the most commented videos, according to YouTube's internal search engine, with respect to the number of visits. This figure should be higher than the figure of the other samples of videos because these are the most commented videos, according to the YouTube's search engine. But that is not the case: the average shows that only 2.1% of the 13 599 594 average visits of the most commented videos wrote comments (as opposed to 0.15% of the sample of the most viewed videos until February 2008 and to the 0.09% of the sample of the most viewed videos until December 2009).

However, it should be taken into account that in the first video of this sample, more than 26% of the 1 131 438 visits left a comment. This situation may be due to the fact that this is a video divided into 5 parts and users tend to leave comments only in the first: in this case it is video called "Eric and the Army of the Phoenix (1/5)". It is supposedly a true story about the tragedy lived by a family due to a prank made by a child about the use of Catalan to a company. The subject of nationalism and languages can produce more controversy and encourage the participation of Internet users. Thus, if we remove this first video from the sample, the average would fall from 2.1% to 0.2%.

As explained in the methodology, there are videos deleted from the samples due to anomalies that are specified in the section 2.2.3.

Rank	Nº of visits of the videos with more answers	Nº of answers	% of viewers who left comments in the videos with more answers
1	1,131,438	8,239	0.72818838
2	15,338	594	3.7273439
3	13,940,779	238	0.00170722
4	587,357	236	0.04017999
5	20,569	232	1.12791093
6	29,381	218	0.74197611
7	70,907	212	0.29898318
8	17,077,709	191	0.00111842
9	590	175	29.6610169
10	19,221	173	0.90005723
11	4,273	160	3.74444184
12	20,760,087	157	0.00075626
13	17,954	152	0.846608
14	47,017	151	0.32116043
15	1,019,330	147	0.01442124
Average	3,649,463	752	2.82008404

Table 7. Participation in videos with more video-answers (sample of 15 videos with more video-responses from June 2008 to December 2009)

Table 7 shows the data reflecting a high potentiality of interaction: an answer to a video through another video upload by the user. The average shows that 2.8% of each 3.649.463 viewers of the 15 most answered videos (according to the Spanish YouTube's internal search) interacts by uploading another video as a way of response. This figure is higher than the one obtained from the 15 most visited videos until December 2009, limited to only 0.0003% of interaction. However, the average of table 7 increases so dramatically because of the number of responses to the video in the 9th rank. If we withdraw this video, the average would descend to 0.9% of users leaving responses. This video presents the music mix of a song by artist David Guetta accompanied by a photo collage. The video has answers from a user repeated on 10 occasions, which might involve some form of manipulation from the user who uploaded the video.

### 3.2. Discussion of results

The exposition of results proves the hypothesis from an empirical and quantitative perspective. All the results and averages of interaction obtained in the five samples indicate that the role of the passive TV spectator has been transferred to the Internet when consuming audiovisual content, in our case, videos on YouTube. The study demonstrated that Internet users share, in a large percentage of cases, a passive consumption behaviour when watching videos online. The study revealed the passive character adopted by YouTube viewers, who are in an environment that offers great possibilities of interaction. Although we do not know the number of users that decide to register and upload videos due to the lack of information from Google, the study did quantify the degree of interaction among Internet users. The data are revealing: of the five samples analysed, the highest percentage of interaction was only 1.5 per thousand (0.15%, in Table 3) and the evolution a year later shows a lower level of interaction (0.09%, in Table 5) as shown in Figure 3.

All data collected shows that the participation of the viewer of online videos is insignificant, considering the possibility to rate and leave comments and video-answers.

The confirmation of the main hypothesis shows that spectators behave passively and not actively, regardless of the medium through which they consume audiovisual content. That is regardless of the users' possibilities to choose videos and being able to consume them at the time they want. Internet users look for a video and select it, but afterwards they do not make use of the potentialities offered.

The confirmation of the hypothesis coincides with the findings of the investigation by Soto, Aymerich and Ribes (2009) which points out that interactivity is not a factor that affects the overall perception of the enjoyment of a fictional content. These authors demonstrate that the enjoyment of the audience when watching a movie is not related to their capacity to interact with the plot. They claim that the possibility of selecting the argument of the audiovisual narrative does not impact the variables of enjoyment of the spectator. In other words, as Owen (2000) affirms, it is necessary and attractive to be passive.

Also Rafael Díaz insists that "the influence of hypermedia language and the larger dimension of the screens have led users to open a growing number of windows. Thus, the image loses the protagonist role and the attention is divided among these simultaneous windows, in a process that hinders the understanding of a linear message" (Díaz, 2009: 70).

This research opens new avenues of research in the area of communication because it denies the conventional idea that everything that surrounds Internet gives the user a more interactive role. For example, there are many journalistic and academic articles that portray YouTube as the paradigm of interactivity. The director of Google agencies maintains in *ElPais.com* that half of YouTube videos have comments or ratings (Mañana, 2010); but this research highlights that this is only half of the reality because the percentage of users who leaves comments or participates among the number of users who watch videos is minimal.

This article clearly shows that the potentiality of interaction does not imply the existence of desire and the execution of that interaction. In this sense, our research makes clear that the video on the Internet seems to be moved without the language that is characteristic of traditional television to other screens (in mobile phones, computers, televisions with Wi-Fi, etc.). In this sense, this study poses a research question which has also been raised by Díaz (2009: 71): "Can video develop a new audiovisual language in the cyberspace at the service of the liberating information?" Is new software needed for this?"

Enrique Dans (2010) is right when he points out that the lack of interactivity of the traditional media comes from the technological constraints and the regulation caused by practical, economic or even political reasons. However, what Dans called the "unidirectional media" do not stop being so with the advent of the Internet, at least in the consumption of videos.

Renó (2007) grants the Internet a liberating character that does not match the confirmation of our hypothesis. This author says, via YouTube, that the social groups will be able to disseminate their ideas, beliefs and customs. And through this cyberspace, people can fight against the homogeneity caused by the neo-liberal interests driven by cultural industries, so criticised by the Frankfurt School. However, if the rates of participation are so low in the audiovisual field, it is difficult to meet this objective proposed by Renó.

#### 4. Conclusions

The main conclusion is that there is a transference of forms of consumption of traditional television at the time in which the spectator watches audiovisual content online and does not interact with it (in the case under investigation, we refer to YouTube videos of less than ten minutes of duration). Therefore, the spectator decides to be so, a mere passive spectator who does not interact in spite of the potentialities offered.

We also agree with Pérez de Silva (2000) when he predicts a "radical" attitudinal change in viewers. And, in this sense, this is the trend that television networks are adopting on their websites, where they provide audiovisual content that is identical to the content broadcasted on TV. In this sense, the video network simply transfers the intellectual laziness of the spectators who only want to watch. In other words, "the video clip is just beginning to develop its own language in the cyberspace" (Díaz, 2009: 70).

But the media groups are aware of this lack of interaction from the viewer of videos clips on the Internet. And in this sense, the media tend to simplify the forms of participation. In fact, YouTube changed the voting system to simplify it

(see figures 1 and 2). Similarly, a mainstream television network in Spain, *Antena 3*, offers since June 2010 a new website that offers the so called “*modo salon*” (Living room mode). Doesn't this name imply a passive character that is appealing to the spectator? The development of new touch-screen devices that facilitate the manipulation of the image (like Apple's Ipad) could change the passive role of the “spectator” of video content over the Internet. Google has just launched its new television device that allows television boxes to have Internet access. But these are lines of research that we leave open.

It is clear that the need to register in order to be able to participate in websites such as YouTube is a scourge for interactivity. Although it only takes five minutes to register to this free service, the spectator can adopt two behaviours: the spectator chooses to register but can feel watched over, or the spectator decides not to register because he or she is not interested in interacting. The psychology of the Internet user could be analysed more deeply in this aspect.

As a final conclusion, the linear consumption of audiovisual content of the classic communication process (sender-receiver) has, in most cases, continuity on the Internet. It is appealing for the spectator to perpetuate its definition as someone who watches carefully an object. And it seems that, so far, the spectator will continue with his or her passive attitude for a long time over the Internet and despite the convergence of the network with the traditional media.

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