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## **Transmedia New Literacies and collective participatory skills. Strategies for creative production and leisure management of *Star Wars* fans**

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### **Abstract**

**Introduction.** In the current transmedia communication environment, active participation in the creation of content, information and messages is redefining the educational experience. This article analyzes the production of new transmedia literacies based on the collective participatory skills of a community of fans. **Methodology.** From an ethnographic perspective that combines online and offline participant observation, and in-depth interviews with founding members, the participatory practices of a Star Wars fan community are analyzed. **Results.** From the analysis carried out, two concepts emerge: creative production and leisure management. The first concept refers to a type of production made by the fans that crosses the mediatic, virtual and face-to-face spheres of their practices, and the second refers to the fans’ strategies developed for the use of time and shared emotional culture. **Discussions.** this section discusses the proposal of six dimensions of new transmedia literacies in the light of the collective dimension of participation. **Conclusions.** Finally, we reflect on how collective participatory skills transform educational possibilities through transmediality.

### **Keywords**

Transmedia literacy; Participation; Fans; Creative production; Leisure.

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## 1. Introduction

The media have been an essential part of the gradual and constant changes in the ways in which information is circulated and knowledge is built (Martín-Barbero, 2002). In this sense, it is essential to address the link between education and communication from the cultural dimension based on the evolution of the media, their properties and the processes they trigger in terms of the ability to participate in and through them. This is crucial because it allows us to address a dimension of the educommunicative that transcends the mediatic level, and that is not limited to the structural aspects of the school, but aspires to know the cultural particularity of the practices that involve educational aspects centered on self-management and collective learning. This approach starts from the premise that assumes education always linked to communication processes, where nobody educates anyone, but education occurs as an effect of social communion, for which communication processes are essential (Freire, 1968).

In this article, developed in the framework of a broader research on the construction of learning strategies of communities of practice, the production of transmedia literacies is analyzed from the participatory skills that collectively develop a community of Star Wars fans. The analysis carried out focuses, specifically, on the strategies of creative production and leisure management that the members of this community have developed over the years they have lived as a group, the temporal dimension is important because it allows us to notice the adaptability of their practices from the available technologies (communication and production). The fandom, or the culture of the fans (Jenkins, 2009), is the object of analysis, but always linked to the educational and learning processes that act as a result of their daily life that occurs constantly in virtual environments as in the physical materiality of its presence.

The study proposes a methodology that, from an ethnographic point of view, uses online and offline participant observation to track the participatory practices that fans develop in their spaces and times of interaction. For this purpose, it is necessary to go back to Giddens (1994), who assumes ethnography as the study of people and groups over a period of time, through observation and conducting interviews. And from there, make it clear that conducting in-depth interviews (Flick, 2014), sought to know the hypothetical explanations that the subjects offered about their actions and discourses, based on the selection of specific topics related to: narrative and aesthetic appropriation, creative production of objects, messages and educational experiences, the effects of leisure in the shared emotional culture and in the administration of time.

In this sense, the work analyzes the data that was produced during the field work, which are classified according to their access and construction. The virtual observation analyzes: a) publications on Facebook and website of the community (texts and images), a total of 143 records recovered and

analyzed, b) produced videos available on YouTube, a total of 8. In-person observation analyzes: a) monthly meetings (17 sessions), celebrations (3), altruistic events (2) and premiers (2). Regarding the in-depth interviews, a total of 7 were made, of which 4 were made to founding members of the group, and 3 to other members that have been added over the years.

### **1.1. The educommunicative relationship between the fans and their practices**

With the establishment of information and knowledge societies, the generation and processing of information have modified the production systems of goods in current societies (Echeverría, 2001). Within the framework of an information and knowledge society, other forms of social organization appear for the transmission of cultural heritage and collective experiences (Sennett, 2008). Social exchange and learning have been redefined based on information flows and alternatives for the production, circulation and consumption of current societies (Winocur, 2009; Reig & Vilchez, 2013). This would imply a gradual transformation of the traditional educational paradigms that flourished in modernity and that have been questioned with the arrival of much more horizontal, collaborative, informal and delocalised models and processes (Martín-Barbero, 2003, Orozco, 2003, Dussel, 2009 Aparici, 2010).

Education focused on schooling and literacy involves the challenge of making visible alternative learnings that are already happening, and how culture is transforming teaching practices, the model based on the ability to read or write and training for work (Dussel, 2012). Moving from literacy and formal schooling to other learning modalities involves developing a critical perspective that questions both the intentionality of literacy and the procedure to achieve it (traditional schooling). In this sense, there is a greater need to reflect on the centrality of learning in education, as a way to move the focus from institutions to subjects, since, in the end, learning is present and is updated in people and not (necessarily) in institutions.

Talking about the relation education-communication implies setting the focus on the learning processes and their modalities (formal and informal), but this supposes the development of a critical look based on inside/outside school, where what happens inside the school it is valid and legitimate, and what happens outside is inert and not valuable, which implies a risk because conceptual richness is limited insofar as it is constrained to spaces rather than to practices and experiences. As Martín-Barbero (2003: 4) rightly suggested, "education crosses everything and we learn in all places and at all times", so that learning does not occur *inside* or *outside*, but in a space-time continuum. That is the reason why the bet on educommunicative cannot be limited to literacy (characterized by schooling), but to the learning that arises as a result of practices well inserted in the daily life of the culture.

In this scenario is located the study of the fans as a socially relevant group, given that their practices and forms of participation are especially known in relation to the effects on their learning and skills. Collective doing is a key factor since it implies a self-managing aspect where there is no external position of authority that exercises the power to regulate or lead them.

The investigation of fan communities affiliated with fictional narratives has been widely developed (Jenkins, 1993; Hills, 2002; Booth, 2010; Valdellós, 2012; Bertetti, 2017), almost always revitalizing the discussion about their discursive capacity, agency and effects in the canon stories. Discussion that

gained strength with the growing presence of prosumers (Toffler, 1980) able to give meaning to the notion of fan, from a perspective that accepts consumption linked to productive possibilities. In this sense, the central issue lies in knowing the participation practices of this community and the link these practices have with the educational dimension, especially regarding to collective practices for creative production and leisure management.

## **1.2. Moving from media literacy to transmedia new literacies**

The concept of media literacy is one of the most used to address the relationship between education and communication. From this notion has emerged the importance of making visible the knowledge and skills involved specially to use and create messages through the media (Gee, 2013). This has implied a growing interest (for several decades now) to increase media literacy, as well as to assume the challenges that can be solved in this matter through educational training.

The most important purpose of media literacy is focused on developing a critical attitude capable of reflecting and analyzing the messages and contents that reach the people from the media (Área, et al., 2012). Literacy as a general notion is usually incapable of giving clear answers because it operates under the protection of school educational intentionality, so that it does not break with the established roles of teacher and student, which is problematic precisely because, given the communicative context, societies are increasingly defined by their access to information and the production of knowledge.

There have been proposals and approaches that try to go further in the relationship education-communication, by including not only the media component but, especially, the cultural dimension that places the subjects in constant relationship with everything communicative not only through media and technologies, but other mediations. Assuming that the landscape of communication is changing in relation to the forms of consumption and production of information, it should be recognized that literacy cannot and should not be focused only on reading and writing practices, or under a teaching-learning model; but on moving from media literacies to media new literacies, recognizing that these have other ways of perceiving that are being diversified, from the available media, platforms and interfaces, but also in terms of the multiple interactive possibilities that exist and are developed.

One of the main problems of using the concept of media literacy is that it is a multifaceted phenomenon that crosses different dimensions of action, which makes it very difficult to quantify about it, especially when it is associated with the standardized, planned and evaluable practice known in institutionalized education. Authors such as Lankshear and Knobel (2011), Buckingham, Kehily and Bragg (2014), and Gee, (2015), have proposed moving from literacy to new literacies because it is through these that it is possible to recognize the complexity of cultural practices that promote learnings beyond whether they are planned or verifiable. In this sense, new literacy must be understood as a social practice that does not depend on formal or projected conditioning, but on the daily action of subjects moved by their own interests, desires and possibilities.

We agree with Dussel (2013), when she suggests that it is preferable to use new literacies, rather than literacy, because the concept of literacy implies a direct connotation to reading and writing practices, which hinders a multidimensional systemic approach of contexts and practices. As has been seen so far, with the creation of a wide variety of concepts that try to address the new literacies, the metaphor

of reading and writing expands to other contexts without managing to address the complexity of the social and cultural practices that occur beyond the will to teach or learn (Pérez, 2014).

Buckingham and Martínez (2013) talk about the need for a different definition that manages to overcome literacy, given that it usually focuses in certain technologies or media, and does not observe in its entirety the practices that occur in the complex network of culture and communication. Orozco (2010) proposes to take the reflection beyond literacy to integrate social reality regardless of whether it corresponds or not with what is being done to educate people from formal institutions.

Moving from literacy to new literacies is a form of explicit recognition that aims to overcome a position centered on the mere criticism and media appropriation for the reproduction of school tasks based on the traditional schemes of education (as traditional media literacy has done), and go towards a model capable of incorporating the learning that occurs as a result of the participations and collaborations, which are detonated through narratives, environments and transmedia experiences. In this sense, we seek to approach to the question about the education-communication relation not from what is taught with media literacy but through what is learned from the new literacies that already occur through the multiple practices of participation.

The proposal developed in this article, about new transmedia literacies, recognizes the importance of understanding and appropriating media content and messages, especially to participate through them with society and cultural environments. That is to say, any media literacy project cannot consist only of the use of resources and languages. That is the most substantial difference of the proposal, to recognize the difference between participating in the media and through the media. Because participating through the media makes it possible to notice the need to recognize the importance of the media, but always in relation to what can happen on a local social scale where the actions of people have very specific and direct effects

To achieve a wider understanding of new media literacies, it is necessary to recover Scolari's proposal (2018: 17), because it suggests understanding these literacies in terms of a "series of skills, practices, priorities, sensitivities, learning strategies, and ways to share". This proposal focusses on the experiences that arise in virtual environments and interactive media both in terms of production and collaboration. This helps to understand the education-communication relation in terms of convergent environments and their concrete possibilities, and also offers the possibility to refine (or redefine): the questions, the research instruments and the ways of interpreting what It happens on a daily basis with people's practices.

### **1.3. Participation practices: a culture on the rise**

Participation, as a key concept, is addressed in this work from interactive, digital and networked communication environments, as a key element for the generation of meaningful learning in mediated subjects that define their agency based on individual and collective interests, of transmedia narratives, specifically the narrative universe of Star Wars.

The centrality of the study of participation has been established in many spaces of academic and scientific reflection in the social sciences and in other disciplines that wonder about dynamics,

dimensions, intensities, skills, competences, abilities and possibilities that participation as an essential aspect of action has brought to contemporary mediated societies (Hjarvard, 2008). The research and reflection that from the educommunicative field has been done on the participation is increasingly big and deep, which has brought as a consequence a diversity of approaches that do nothing but expand its meaning and propose new uses and effects. To a certain extent, the study of the media and its contents has moved to the research on what audiences and consumers are capable or willing to do with those contents. Participation as a central aspect to be investigated allows knowing what people have to say, reconfiguring with this the traditional role of enunciator and receiver, so usual in traditional media.

The contribution of Jenkins (2008) about the idea of a culture of participation was crucial in defining a specific perspective to understand the processes and areas of opportunity in which people can exercise their capacity for action and agency both individually and collectively. In this sense, participation, understood from a cultural perspective, allows to make visible that its complexity lies precisely in the factors and possibilities that culture emanates, reason why, the role of media productions has socially relevant effects because they allow knowing the competences, affects and abilities that are put into play to participate in their consumption-appropriation, but especially in their production and creation.

In the context of an accumulation of cultural, technological and communicative convergences, it has become indispensable to investigate the agency (Giddens, 1984) from the forms of participation and collaboration that occur *in and through* communication systems, and at the same time, favoring the characterization of an educommunicative scenario that poses updated challenges and opens up new possibilities for its use and application.

Participation practices are a key factor, not only to understand the nature of social changes, but also as an opportunity to recognize the value of leisure, entertainment and affective dimensions, often disregarded because they refer to scenarios far from objectivity and from supposed objective or related to work values.

Taking into account the recent and constant technological and communicative transformations, some authors (Burke, 2002, Jenkins, 2008, Bauman, 2007, Shirky, 2008) have notice and described the existence of a process of convergences from which social actors they have a renewed capacity to create alternative practices of consumption, access to information, socialization and entertainment. These convergences (which are not only mediatic and technological) have allowed subjects to participate *in, through* and *from* the media in an increasingly interactive way that fosters more intense and committed linkages.

Unlike concepts such as social audience, which refers mainly to the conversations and interactions that take place in social networks about media content (Lacalle and Castro, 2018), the participation practices studied in this article are understood as the agency capacity that is put into action to do or say messages and contents beyond the environment in which they may happen. This is because participating involves much more than communicating, as practices may not be directly associated with the enunciative or productive capacity of messages and content, but, for example, organizational strategies or time management of a community.

We start from the hypothesis that communities of practice, in the case of Star Wars fans, through their participation practices, produce transmedia new literacies by the implementation of learning strategies based on individual, collective and mediated experience. Which are not limited to the online media interactions, but also have effects on the offline dynamics that occur as a result of their collaboration and daily exchange.

## 2. Methodology

The research was conducted as a result of an articulation of three complementary moments: access, construction and data analysis. First the online or virtual participant observation, and later the offline or face-to-face participation, then the in-depth interviews, and finally the coding of the data for the construction of analytical categories. Although presented sequentially, the realization of this work happened in different rhythms and chainings, in the manner of a helicoid, where the research goes through a swing that results in a complex process but full of decisions and positioning (Aibar, Cortés, Martínez and Zaremborg, 2013). In this sense, the time line of the research begins in August 2016 and ends in May 2017. This is important because the methodological work was extended both in its online and offline dimension. The organization of the accesses and the construction of the data followed a continuity: virtual –on-site– virtual –on-site.

The Atlas.ti qualitative data analysis software was used for the analysis process, which allowed the codification of data through the systematization of items obtained as images, videos, texts, and speeches. This decision was epistemologically taken from the approaches of grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin, 2002) and the need to link the empirical material with the production of reflexive conceptualizations. This issue is specifically addressed below.

The data access and construction process began with the design of an online observation strategy, through *screenshot*, ie images taken from the interactions available in open access of the Facebook group of the researched community. This strategy had the purpose of following the virtual interactions of the members, for the identification of: themes, participants, meeting places, dates of participation and incorporation processes and also as a strategy to achieve the necessary rapport to continue with the phase of the interviews. This kind of strategies finds precedents in research works (Miller and Sinana, 2017; Tur-Viñes, and Rodríguez, 2014; Ricaurte and Ortega, 2010) that use Facebook as a space for research and data recovery, and others where customized methodologies strategies are designed for the identification of relevant communities (Hernandez-García, Ruiz-Muñoz, and Simelio-Solà, 2013; Mora-Fernández, 2012) where it is possible to access communicative practices and to a vast diversity of forms of social agency.

This *screenshot* strategy served in a triple way: as a vehicle to obtain data on the interactions and ways of participation, as a pre-analysis process, and especially as a selection criterion based on entries or posts, which had images, texts, reactions (like it, wow, love it, etc.) and that it would have generate comments from other fans. These criteria allowed the recovery of an average of 23 digital pieces of analysis during each month of the investigation. The selection of those analyzed was based on a conversational criterion, in which the pieces that generated more interactions, reactions or comments in the virtual space of the community were chosen.

Thanks to online observation were identified the most active members, the most relevant topics, the importance of participation and its relation with education, the number of members and their styles of participation, the types of members according to their level of involvement and the variety of types of face-to-face activities that they organize.

All this was crucial to continue with the phase two of the strategy, the offline or face-to-face observation, characterized by being present during the meetings held by the community, to record its dynamics, activities, forms of exchange and communication, mutual recognition, strategies of appropriation and creation of contents, collective leisure management and planning of activities to come. During this phase the following meetings were observed: 17 monthly meetings, 3 celebrations, 3 altruistic events and 2 premiers. Each one of these modalities of *being together* allowed access to significant processes for the meaning of the collectivity and for shared meanings about its linkage with narrative and education.

The monthly meetings were events organized and planned to be in presence and discuss topics related to the narrative (such as updates, releases, news, rumors, etc.), both in its fandom and canon dimension, during this kind of events It was possible to observe the teaching of workshops and expository talks, the visualization and planning of future activities and the definition of projects for the community.

This on-site observation was recorded in field journals, organized under the following criteria: the present participants, the places, the dates, the duration of the meetings, the context of the meetings, the intensity and tone of the interactions, the themes addressed, conflict resolution, planning and definition of future actions. In this sense, this phase of the investigation allowed knowing the relations between the members of the community and it was the ideal situation to have access to the members and their particularities

The selection of the informants to do the interviews resulted from the observation phases previously carried out, which determined the selection criteria that would be taken into account. The interviewed fan members fulfilled the following 5 characteristics: 1) to be part of the community explicitly (both in virtual spaces of social media and in face-to-face meetings), 2) to show interest and availability to participate openly in conversations about community practices, 3) to be active in the creation of content, messages and products that are meaningful to the community, 4) currently have an active role, and 5) be recognized by other members as peers and equals.

The total population of potential respondents who met the 5 previous characteristics was 23 members (out of a total of 4520 [1] members of the community in its virtual dimension, and 57 in the face-to-face dimension). This means that during the period in which this research was carried out, during the face-to-face activities, a total of 57 members attending the meetings and face-to-face events were clearly identified. Of which only 23 members fulfilled all the listed features to consider them as ideal fans to interview. The fundamental decision of conducting the interviews was conditioned by three primary variables: a) the seniority criterion, which refers to the election of interviewees who formed part of the community since its foundation, (which reduced the number of 23 to 11), b) the spatio-temporal coincidence between the researcher and the interviewees, and c) the saturation of relevant



information that emerged from the conduct of interviews, which was achieved after the seventh interview.

Interviewing SW fans was a very interesting exercise, rich in cultural references that allude to individual and collective personal experiences about the role of fiction in their lives, the role of the community for each participant and the significant experiences that have been crucial to join, belong and remain over the years. The interviews sought to build, during the conversation, aspects and elements that could be useful for a better *understanding and interpretation*. Through the closeness gained over time within the community, we sought to reconstruct enough aspects and contextual elements for the understanding and interpretation of observations and virtual records, this from an open and sustained conversation that give room for digressions to establish new paths and issues that had not been considered initially. In this sense, the depth helped to explore the nuances difficult to see *with the naked eye* or with the processes of observation.

7 members of the community were interviewed, with different professional profiles, which are listed below: a graphic designer, a supermarket manager, a market analyst, a lawyer, a systems engineer, a criminologist, and a software engineer. Of all of them, only one woman, which is also a proportion that is generalized to the total of the community, where of every 10 members, 7 are men and only 3 are women.

### **2.1. Star wars and its fans: communities of practice**

The concept of *communities of practice* is understood as a group of people who share interests, problems, passions or objectives through which they deepen their knowledge about that area of common interest. These kind of social groups are almost always informal or non-formal, and are responsible for circulating information among its members to standardize their knowledge, and with this to make communities last (Wenger, McDermott and Snyder, 2002). In this sense, sharing experiences works as a form of thematic specialization that implies a constant distribution of the knowledge and experiences necessary to integrate (Aubert, Garcia, & Racionero, 2009). From this perspective, social organizations are not interpreted according to their structures but their relationships, which means that it is the shared motivations and interests that make their members come together and keep in touch to pursue common goals (Wenger, 2001).

Understanding communities from this perspective implies examining which are the recognizable relational elements that give them conceptual meaning. According to Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002), there are three fundamental aspects that can help identify a community of practice. 1) Domain: it is the set of topics and objects of interest shared by the members of the same community, is configured according to the field of knowledge and involves a shared accumulation of values and common positions on what constitutes them. 2) Community: it is about the human resources that, through their interactions, make up a dynamic social network in the production of knowledge. It worries about knowing the role and importance that each member has within the community. 3) Practice: refers to socially defined ways and procedures to do things, is the performance on which the community is based to exercise their collective action. This includes patterns of interaction, models of action, implicit and explicit rules of collaboration, as well as identification of the types of knowledge, issues or aspects that enter the domain of the community.

The previous characteristics that describe communities of practice, are useful to conceptualize relationships, but especially for the identification of the participatory possibilities that a group of people have when operating collectively based on an interest. From the educational dimension, communities of practice are understood from the possibility of learning collectively through the daily interactions that, mediated or not, start from obtaining a benefit or concrete value, from the generation of personal connections, and from the promotion of some specific skill or knowledge.

Star Wars, as a story or narrative production, may not be a masterpiece, in any case its great virtue does not lie in its quality, but in the enormous call and followers that it has achieved throughout the world, and also, to be a narrative considered paradigmatic in the use of transmedia strategies (Scolari, 2013). During its years of life, this popular story has produced and launched media content in practically all possible platforms and textualities. The above makes it ideal to ask questions about the degrees of participation that, in theory, motivates fans. When asking about participation in the transmedia context and its implications for education, it is necessary to recognize that there have been communities that organize precisely around fictional narratives that have managed to expand their stories through different media and platforms.

The effects that the fan communities have had have been widely studied from different paradigms and points of view, the works of Booth (2015), Borda (2011), Hills (2002), Jenkins (1993) and Roig (2013) are evidence of these perspectives and of the multiple theoretical, methodological and epistemological possibilities to approach the fans.

The choice of the fan community was based on: a) its wide and constant media presence, b) the growing number of members, c) the diversity and frequency of its activities, d) the variety of its members profiles and e) their interest in promoting what they call "the SW culture". This community consists of 4520 members, and it is the group that has more face-to-face activities in the metropolitan area of Guadalajara. It was founded in 1999 by a group of friends (five in total) who wanted to share their interest in the narrative.

To investigate fans implies a provocative alternative to access cultural practices and to understand biographically and socially the meanings that are constructed by the receivers and the interactions with media content. In this sense, we propose to look at the fans as active subjects that overcome the distances between the stories and their experiences, and manage to transcend the fictional proposal of the authors, to appropriate the stories and narratives in their own terms.

To investigate fans involves observing their cultural practices from the media, but also beyond the media. Researchers such as Booth (2010), Jenkins (2014), Lewis (1992), Lozano and Hermida (2007), appeal to the use of the *fandom* concept to designate the social structures and cultural practices that result from the fan agency. The fandom must be understood from specific forms of creation such as fanarts or fanvids, in terms of being considered as textualities that originate from a particular narrative.

*Star Wars* as subject of study is not new; its study has been developed from several perspectives for several years. The real significance of this work is the configuration of the methodological proposal and the analyzed practices of the chosen group of fans. The main argument that justifies this election

is its condition of community of practice, besides: the influence that (this group of fans) has had in the city and in other similar groups being an obligatory point of reference that is related not only to the fictional narrative, but with other multiple discourses such as child altruism, involvement in social causes and the seek for dialogue spaces where there is plurality and respect.

## 2.2. Data produced and analysis of practices

For the analysis, it is fundamental to note that the practices are understood based on the *doing and saying* built by a set of relations between actions and discourses located in space-time by social subjects. In this sense, the practices would be characterized by the network of events disseminated in space-time, through multiple forms of representation. Therefore, a practice is understood as a web of relations, located temporally and spatially, linked to the circulation of actions, people and discourses (Estalella, 2011).

The method (ethnographic) and the chosen methodological tools (observation and interviews) for the construction of empirical data produced texts that were read, so that the analysis went through several levels of depth and complexity. This meant a process of constant systematization and identification of markers, themes, concepts and relevant practices, to address the question about the collective participation of fans.

The analysis was carried out as an open process in which a general reading of the data obtained allowed us to outline general topics and possible dimensions of analysis. Later, we proceeded to codify and systematize the data in a detailed microanalysis through the use of Atlas ti [2] qualitative analysis software. The decision to use this software was justified according to the proposal of the Grounded Theory (Strauss & Corbin, 2002), where the idea that the empirical data are the grounding from which theories and concepts emerge is highlighted. An analysis model based on grounded theory would be understood as a process that allows theory to be constructed from data and empirical material. In this method of analysis, the relationship between the researcher and the data is privileged, insofar as the generation of discoverer categories and schemes is expected, which allows to create enough distance on the findings to better understand them (Coffey & Atkinson, 2003).

The coding work carried out allowed organizing and linking a variety of topics recorded in the virtual and in-person observations. This analytical coding process involved the selection, grouping and categorization of the available data, where the code, as the basic unit of analysis, was identified based on its characteristics and relations with the concepts established in the general exploration of information (Strauss & Corbin, 2002).

This type of initial analysis on the data is known as open coding, and is characterized by the identification of concepts and the characterization of the data, their properties and dimensions (Angrosino, 2012).

After the coding process, categories were created, that is, the establishment of relations and the grouping of codes with similar characteristics or shared patterns and features. The creation of analytical categories was done through the grouping of codes into families of codes by association of content and meaning. This method of analysis allowed us to find significant recurrences in the practices associated

with participation, according to the intensities and types of interaction / agency of the subjects. In addition to that it made it possible to overcome the textual barriers of the types of records of participant observation based on an encoding that focused on the construction of analytical categories to make visible the practices of daily life.

### **3. Results**

#### **3.1. The creative production of objects, messages and experiences**

The strategic use of technological tools has also brought the appropriation of their properties and characteristics, in this sense, one of the main forms of production has to do with the virtual communicative dimension of meetings, places and conversations. This is especially noted from the communicative strategies that the community has developed to call face-to-face meetings, for which they use social networks and design work to adapt images of the narrative. In this sense, a transmedia dimension of production comes into play as the narrative that groups them allows and motivates the use of different mediations to issue their own messages.

The community of fans, produces by its own means and skills, podcasts of talk radio and audio-visual reports. These two modalities of the communicative and media dimension were carried out during a limited period of time, mainly due to the enormous effort involved in the planning, realization, postproduction and eventual publication.

The reason why we stopped doing it was because there was a time when the most committed to the cause didn't have the time no more [...] we did well, a lot of people listened to us and it was very fun to get together to talk about SW, [...] Actually, now that I think about it, we did a lot of research and preparation to get it right (Felipe, interview, member of the community).

In the case of talk radio podcasts, it was an exercise that lasted 125 programs (45 to 60 minutes), which was broadcast once a week. This program was carried out collaboratively between four base members and three others who fluctuated in different tasks and assignments. In these productions several topics related to SW were addressed, and included interviews, informative notes and conversations about current topics of the narrative. In terms of production, the realization of radio content made by people without formal knowledge about radio or sound production, involved a deep and constant research and experimentation that allowed them to solve technical, operational and diffusion problems.

The production of these programs allowed the fans to develop skills and abilities on how to assimilate the materials and information available on the Internet, and to take advantage of the convergent context of communication and culture. The realization of this kind of products did not imply for the creators the use of aerial frequencies, but they used the digital technology of Internet to record themselves and to broadcast the episodes by diverse services of sonorous storage and YouTube.

A key factor for the realization of this kind of projects was the commitment to give continuity to the productions, especially because the initial impetus to produce contents are very frequent, but not long lasting. This was the case with the production of audiovisual reports produced by the fans, which aimed

to narrate the history of the community and relate their activities to the evolution of the narrative itself, and to the events organized by the collective.

In this sense, it is possible to notice the importance of the community of practice and affinity in terms of how the commitment to the domination of a topic is an important source of motivation and determination to develop commitment in the forms of participation. The communicative dimension of the practices implied the constant increase of abilities for the interpretation, the appropriation and re-signification of the symbols and the technology.

In the case of audiovisual reports, they were made on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the club and were promoted by some of the founding members, who saw it necessary for new generations of fans to know the origin of the club (as they call themselves) and what were the initial motivations and challenges. The production involved interviews with the most participative fans and took up the areas of specialty or interest of each member on the SW narrative. The name *Holonet TV* was used, in reference to the media represented in the fiction responsible for issuing the official messages of the empire.

Some of the most relevant productions made within this community are collective creations, as in the previous examples, but there are also creations (which are the majority) made thanks to the individual work of members interested in some specialty or sub-topic. Therefore, there are members interested in producing and sharing: comics, illustrations, cosplays, music, videos, reviews and objects / crafts. These productions have an artistic connotation in the sense that they start from a re-constructed aesthetic stance, based on the personal perspective and the cultural experience of the authors (Le Breton, 1998), which gives them a multimodal sense of creation, through which they make individual creative decisions based on the culture of the group.

One form of creative production directly connected to education is the creation of teaching and learning materials and activities that members of the community design and use. In the researched community, the production of documents and educational experiences seeks to build meaningful learning collectively from the information interpreted or produced by the members, all based on the specific interests of the community.

Through educational experiences they seek to build and transmit information to the newest members of the community, this through interactive collective processes. The realization of workshops, lectures and conferences are the main types of educational experiences that are promoted, which are always group activities where they try to rehearse or review some kind of processes or new information about the narrative. This kind of experience is very common in the monthly meetings and also seeks to communicate specific experiences that members have recently lived. This kind of community activities alludes directly to the previous educational experiences of the members, although there is a constant intention to redefine the roles of the one who teaches and the one who learns.

The productive activities of the fans also address the development of tangible products and goods, which makes the sense of the motivations of collaboration and collective creation more complex. This is the case with the production of cosplay, insofar as it is a form of individual production, but which makes sense only as part of a representation in a social and cultural scenario. Fans who are involved

in this kind of creations openly express their intention to represent characters of their liking in order to explore other possibilities of their personal identity.

Making costumes is very fun because it allows you to play to be your favorite characters [...] being another is always attractive because you can live things you normally can't or shouldn't, [...] it is also very entertaining to learn to do things on your own without needing to buy (Martín, interview, member of the community).

The manufacture of costumes or articles related to the narrative is a fundamental part of the realization of appropriation and creation practices, and also allows the exit of the motivations centered in the manufacture, which takes the passion of the fans to a level that it overcomes the media and communicative dimension of its most well-known and recurring actions.

The production of cosplay brings the possibility to represent the fiction in material objects, for which they use skills learned in other contexts such as school or professional life. In this sense, the playful component is fundamental because it allows the use of passion through the application of practical knowledge that is relevant to the culture of the group and the conformation of a shared identity.

The production of narrative-based products has formative and professional implications through the application of knowledge that fans build only through the culture of the community. In addition, as time goes by, and from the combination of interests and professional experiences, is evident the need to produce objects (based on adaptation and remix) that can be sold, and build from this a way of life. This can be read in the following story.

I started making costumes for myself and as others liked them they asked me to sold them what I did, so I started the business [...] I quit my underpaid job as a graphic designer and now I only make SW outfits for fans of many places in Mexico (Martín, interview, member of the community).

The professionalization of creations happens when participants can market or monetize their creations, both for close members of the same community as people from other groups and latitudes. This happens recurrently in the community and makes viable a way of life based on the development of trades and professions that openly recognize the influence of stories, fiction and collective experiences for the definition of vocations and work.

### **3.2. Leisure management: emotional culture and temporal dimensions**

Leisure as an integrating element of daily life allows giving meaning to the practices of participation through communication and processes to share meanings and generate collective experiences. The daily practices related to leisure acquire their relevance when they are given meaning from the common narrative, cognitive and cultural collections of the members. Thus, leisure is directly linked to daily life through communicative dynamics that seek to ensure the full functioning of social relations, and keep the structures and logics of the community operative.

Thanks to the approach carried out, two dimensions that group the modalities, variations and effects of leisure could be identified. These dimensions are: time-spaces of leisure, and shared emotional culture, which concentrate typologies and collective ways of managing the benefits and scope of leisure.

The notion of time-space is learned in each community as a result of the function it fulfills to delimit the experiences and the field of individual and collective action. In this way, time (based on access to culture in a given space) becomes a variable that defines personal and social development, and the availability to use it, manipulate it and adapt it according to needs or desires. The symbolic construction of time and space developed by the members of the community implies a questioning about the role of leisure, as it can be only a moment-place with recreational purposes or it can be a mechanism to access alternative ways of understanding their place in the world beyond its relation to work.

While it is true that the appropriation of the narratives circulating in the media is a way of distancing from the daily productivity of their professional lives, it is also true that this appropriation aspires to be more than a mere moment of estrangement and distraction. In this sense, leisure cannot be understood as an opposition to work or as a dead or empty space-time, because productive practices happen in it, in the sense that they foster communicative and material productions of meaning.

One relevant modality of the time-space-leisure relationship is the notion of evocative enjoyment, which refers to a constant aspirational will to evoke past events (or perspectives of the future), which is understood as a mechanism to read and give sense to the present from a reconstruction of memory and the identification of future expectations.

This conceptualization integrates diverse practices that the communities constantly carry out as part of their speeches and actions, concretized in an aspiration that transcends the memory and expectations. In daily interactions and in media production, fans repeatedly express to each other their first memories of SW, which allows them to share experiences about the first contact they had with the narrative and the role that the story has played since then in their lives.

Members of affinity communities have developed, through their practices, degrees of emotional closeness that unleash a kind of mutual support that does not depend on the theme or domain of the practice that brings them together or on friendly ties, but on a process of recognition and acceptance of the other as a valuable individual and with the same needs and rights as oneself.

This emotional proximity allows collaboration and the exercise of collective intelligence because it encourages much more democratic horizons for participation. For which the community understands the importance of existing interactions as constitutive elements of social capital that operates inside and outside of themselves. The ability to feel together makes possible a shared sense of mutuality and interdependence where each member has its own value, through which participations and leisure are managed as a motor of learning experiences and knowledge creation.

As a result of a shared emotional identification, the members of the community are able to design their own strategic leisure. This is based on the disagreement between work and entertainment, for which it is assumed that creation (and creativity) is not the result of an isolated or especially talented subject,

but arises as an effect of daily interactions based on freedom of commitment and in the ability to choose the motivations of the subjects' passions.

#### 4. Discussion

New literacies are understood as an alternative conceptualization to identify the diverse forms, anchored in the culture and in the daily interactions, in which the learning manifests itself. The transmedia dimension of these literacies refers to the properties of transit, transformation and evolution in which the processes of information production, experiences and knowledge occur.

**Table 1. Six dimensions of the Transmedia New Literacies**

Access and Filtering	It refers to the strategies that allow personalizing the interaction with technology and information, in a way that fosters a critical and responsible sense in the management of the contents via a creative appropriation-production.
Reflection and Understanding	It involves an active participation and is capable of using tools to analyze their context and create bridges that connect their personal experience with a sense of community based on mutual understanding.
Digital-analog creation and production	It implies the emergence of learning to program (in the broadest sense of the concept) and to propose new meanings, where the combination of technical, cultural and emotional knowledge allows resizing the modes of communication, collaboration and creation, and where digital and analogue cohabits.
To share and Collaborate	It refers to the ways in which we learn today, from the collective participation, with and through people interested in similar topics (practices and problems). The transmedia aspect of discourses is crucial to motivate collaboration.
Multimodality of languages and media	Dimension that refers to an acknowledgment of the diversity of messages and communication processes, where communicative-informational technology plays a decisive role in mediating learning experiences.
Innovation and creativity	It aspires to a dimension that demonstrates that participation as a central issue of learning is materialized in a set of (mediated) values that seek for innovation, understood as transformation, change and novelty.

Source: prepared by the author

The proposal for transmedia new literacies is to make visible the need to transform education through constant recognition of other forms of organization, new pedagogies, disciplinary diversification,



production of network experiences, and the generation of more diverse curricula, to achieve a dialogue and more fluid, open, honest and meaningful interactions among the members of society.

The 6 previous dimensions make evident a fundamental discussion about the collective possibilities of participation and the effects, in such important aspects as education and new literacies. A decade ago, Shirky (2008: 32) suggested that the consolidation of the internet in societies would open the possibility that a "gigantic effort of solidarity and collaboration could converge in social causes and large-scale social movements". The premise was not wrong, as has been seen in recent years, the generation of movements and collaborative communities that aspire to transform their reality has been growing significantly.

Thanks to this, there has been a growing interest in analyzing movements and social uprising with democratic aspirations, through the use of technologies, which have emerged in many countries of the world. These forms of protest, visibility and activism can be interpreted even in terms of cyberutopias (Meneses, 2015), which condense the strategic use of interactive digital technology and the organized collective action of society

But the idea of organizational capacity of people, beyond formal organizations, is not new or exclusive of the transmedia environment, emerged from economic theory by proposing that organizations have a maximum point of utility that is reached when the integration of a new member causes more cost than benefit for the community as a whole. This particularity of the organizations has been transformed with the arrival of the internet, where the cost of organizations is close to zero due to the voluntary participation of thousands of people who wish to collaborate on a topic or practice (Benkler, 2006).

These relations between participation, new literacies, transmedia environments, collaboration and fandom, is a proposal that ultimately seeks to: a) promote the research of participation cultures from creative and creator communities, and b) make it clear that it is necessary to conduct research that bet on practices that already occur, and not just those that should ideally occur. In this sense, it is more important to first give an account of what is already happening and then imagine and build what will come in the future.

## **5. Conclusions**

The existence of a dimension of participation that refers to the management of leisure and a shared emotional culture, makes evident the need to investigate the practices of participation (of communities organized from transmedia narratives), as a space to recognize the cultural level of the educommunicative process that detonates as a result of multiple interactions with stories and between people.

Participatory skills are manifested as a result of daily virtual and face-to-face interactions, as they allude to a spectrum of education that can be decisive among the members of the communities to foster a more autonomous and critical sense of their environment, of what they consume and appropriate and more specifically of what they produce individually and collectively.

Both creative production and narrative appropriation are fundamental aspects that make up the idea of transmedia new literacies, as they concretize learning experiences that are experienced by members of the communities of practice, that, like the fans, use the transmedia communicative context to consume as to produce

In this sense, transmedia new literacies should be understood as a conceptual alternative to media literacy, which seeks to make clear that significant educational experiences already take place without the participants being aware of them.

The special thing about this proposal of transmedia new literacies is that it recognizes in the extracurricular cultural dimension a fundamental duality to make visible the emotional aspect of the shared experiences, the leisure management as a strategy to resignify time, and above all, an area of opportunity to recognize that the forms of creative production of the fans are important not only for the media environment but especially for them, both individually and collectively.

In this sense, the collective participatory skills are a fundamental component of transmedia new literacies, because they allow identifying the following elements: the necessary skills for accessing and filtering information, the attitudinal disposition for reflection and understanding, the implementation of strategies for digital and analogue creation and production, the will to open up through sharing and collaboration, and a sense of creativity and innovation based on the emotional culture and the playful sense of the experiences.

The participatory skills identified as a result of this research work are: a) communication and media production, b) self organization, c) the development of a shared emotional culture, d) the ethics of collaboration, and e) the implementation specialized of knowledge.

About communication skills, they are evident in the production of messages and media content that expand both the fictional story and their organizational and discursive abilities. The skills related to self-organization refer to the fact that this type of community dedicates time and effort to organize themselves, because they are flexible organizations that operate in a very organic way based on the recognition of implicit codes which become accessible only after a while as a member.

The ethics of collaboration refers to a constant desire and willingness to help and work with others. This happens especially when the more experienced members are willing to share relevant information with the new ones, or even with people who are not part of the community. This was observed in the altruistic meetings that this community carries out, especially with the donation of toys to vulnerable children and the visit to public hospitals to help sick children. Regarding the implementation of specialized knowledge, the communities of practice, as the fans do, share their previously acquired knowledge for the benefit of the community and the site where it is located.

Finally, access to the participatory practices of the investigated community of fans allows access to their operating strategies and skills and the link they have to the educational dimension. In this sense, both creative production and leisure management are two categories that allow us to specify new literacies in one dimension, which mediates the members' experience, between their hobby and their extracurricular knowledge.

The frontier that divides recreational participatory practices centered on leisure and shared emotional culture, and those oriented towards the generation of educational experiences, is actually very porous and even invisible, especially because their daily actions seek to have a specific effect that overcomes the enjoyment and revalues fiction and stories as elements that trigger other equally valuable experiences.

The production of messages, objects and experiences is constant and collective, which fosters an everyday sense of appropriation and creativity that applies both to the narrative, in this case to Star Wars, and to other topics that are equally valuable for them. In this sense, the proposal is that transmedia new literacies do not depend on the use of technology, although they benefit from it, but rather on the constant resignification of the stories to local and specific concerns and interests.

## 6. Notes

[1] Number of members consulted on December 31, 2017 on the community Facebook page. Retrieved from: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/SWFCGDL>

[2] This is a software specialized in supporting qualitative research for data analysis. It bases its operation on the coding process, which allows to process the systematization of large amounts of information and the establishment of relationships between the codes generated. qualitative research for data analysis

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