6-30-2010

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B.A., Communication, University of Missouri – Columbia, 2007

A Thesis Submitted to The Graduate School at the University of Missouri –
St. Louis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
Master of Communication

August 2010

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to identify the motivations that lead someone to watching Hulu as well as whether or not Hulu users are heavy viewers of traditional television. Social networking's importance in the context of Hulu was also examined. Students (N=88) completed a motivations scale adapted from Weaver (2001) including motivations for watching online video. Students also answered questions regarding television and online video viewing habits and whether or not they used social networking to seek out information about television shows. The findings revealed four basic motivations: entertainment, purposive, companionship/diversion and informational. Further, the data show that Hulu users do not watch more traditional television than non-Hulu users or the average 18-24 year old. In addition, social networking sites tend to not be a place where television is heavily discussed. Some of the implications of these findings are discussed.

A Uses and Gratifications Approach to Hulu

When looking at any medium, it is important to understand why people are drawn to that particular medium. Uses and gratifications research attempts to answer the question of what draws people to particular mediums and what uses they get out of it. Essentially, this approach attempts to explain what people do with media, instead of what the media can do with its consumers. Before the digital age, there wasn't much mix between media. But the exciting thing about new technology and uses and gratifications research is that instead of research focusing solely on television and solely on the Internet, research in the uses and gratifications field can delve into the merging area of the two. This particular type of research has not been done yet, and that is why it is an exciting new area of investigation.

The current study looks at an important new means of communicating traditional content: streaming television shows and movies online. Online video websites have become more popular in the past few years (Madden, 2010). As the technology is so new, little research has been done on the topic. Some research has looked at specific video websites like YouTube (Hanson & Haridakis, 2008), which has more user-generated content than professionally produced content. This study, in contrast, focuses on motives that drive people to the online video website Hulu. Hulu is a joint venture of NBC Universal, News Corp and Disney. It hosts television shows and older movies from the networks owned by these companies, as well as from other content providers. Therefore, it is a unique video site that attempts to be another outlet for users to view television shows without being tied to a schedule or trying to record a show.

The Uses and Gratifications Approach

Uses and gratifications research asks the question, "What do people do with the media?" The theory focuses on what audiences get out of the mass media and examines why they chose to view or consume particular types of mass media. Uses and gratifications was first proposed in an article by Elihu Katz (1959), who advocated examining how the audience looks at and affects media. Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1974) wrote a paper summarizing much of the previous audience effects studies. At that time, they proposed the "uses and gratifications" model that is in use to this day. The model consists of three assumptions: "1. The audience is conceived of as active. 2. Initiative in linking needs gratification and media choice lies with the audience member. 3. The media compete with other sources of need satisfaction" (Katz et al., 1974, p. 511). Of course, there is more to the uses and gratifications theory than those assumptions. In order for researchers to develop the model, they needed to suggest various categories of audience behavior. According to McQuail, Blumler, and Brown (1972), there are four categories of motives for using media. They are: diversion, personal relationship, personal identity, and surveillance. Diversion deals with being an emotional escape from everyday life, something that relaxes the audience. The second is personal relationship. This includes forming relationships with program characters or media personas as well as using the media to form a relationship with others. For example, some people may watch *House* because they feel connected to Hugh Laurie's Dr. House character. Others may have watched *Lost* because they knew people who watched it and formed a relationship with those people talking about the show. The program gives them something in common to discuss. The third category, personal identity, is a value reinforcement or reassurance. Finally, surveillance pertains to information about things that might affect

one or will help one do or accomplish something. The researchers suggest that most media-use motives should fall into one of these categories (McQuail et al., 1972).

Although Katz and his colleagues helped lay the groundwork for the theory, it is hard to consider uses and gratifications theory without addressing the work of Alan Rubin. Rubin looked at Blumler and Katz's work, specifically their assumptions, and developed it further by adding additional assumptions to the model. He added that communication behavior, including media selection and use, is goal-directed, purposive, and motivated. These assumptions point to a more active audience. Also, he believed people are typically more influential than the media in their relationship with the media, but not always (Rubin, 1994). This means that as consumers, we can select media based on our needs and do not blindly watch whatever the media tells us to watch.

Uses and Gratifications and New Technologies

Ruggiero (2000) stated the case for the importance of uses and gratifications theory as new technologies get introduced. He argued that uses and gratifications research has always been on the cutting edge of technology and new communication. Whenever a new medium is introduced, uses and gratifications theory is applied to it to figure out what draws people to these new media.

Although the uses and gratifications approach has been applied to television viewing, radio listening (Staples, 1998), and video games (Sherry & Lucas, 2003), perhaps the most important new application should be to the Internet. The Internet possesses different qualities that make it and its audience unique. These qualities include both interactive/social and informational/task-oriented dimensions (Paparacharissi & Rubin, 2000, p. 179). For example, people can use the Internet to interact with others via

chat or message forums, and they can also use the Internet to gather information or read the news at the same time.

There has been some previous research on motives for using the Internet as a medium, as well as motives for using specific applications. For example, Paparacharissi and Rubin (2000) set out to identify motives for using the Internet and to examine the antecedents of these motives. They also sought to examine outcomes of Internet use. They found that information seeking and entertainment motives were the most common uses for the Internet in general. They also found that "those who were more mobile, economically secure, satisfied with life, comfortable with approaching others in an interpersonal context, and who felt valued in their face-to-face communication used the Internet as a functional alternative to interpersonal communication" (p. 192).

That study was carried out a decade ago, long before high-speed Internet access became widespread. This might be why another factor, convenience, was not a more salient motive for using the Internet. In the days of dial-up Internet the amount of time it took to get online and find out what you wanted to know was much longer than it would be today, where people have broadband data plans and smartphones that are always connected to the Internet. This suggests that convenience might be a more important factor in people's use of the Internet as a means of information gathering today, largely because of the high-speed broadband access most of the country enjoys. Over 60% of households in the United States currently have a broadband or high speed connection (Digital Nation, 2010) and the number of broadband users continues to increase. As of June 2009, there were more than 69 million broadband subscribers in the United States and over 600,000 new subscribers in the second quarter alone (Leichtman Research

Group, 2009). The growth of broadband is relevant to online video because it is a very

intensive Internet application and needs high speed in order to function properly. In fact,

streaming video might not even exist if broadband were not available. So not only would

convenience become much more likely, but the whole platform is based on the fact that

broadband connections are more abundant.

There has also been some previous work that suggests convenience is a more

important factor today than in the past in specific applications. Kaye and Johnson (2004)

applied uses and gratifications theory to use of the Internet during the 2000 presidential

election. They found that convenience played a big role in motivating people to go to the

Internet for updated news regarding the election campaign. News items appeared faster

online than in print, on television or on the radio, which was a motivation for people to

go online for the campaign news rather than wait until another outlet reported.   It is

probably true that as time goes on and society as a whole is more connected to the

Internet, convenience plays a bigger role in Internet use. But data from Kaye and

Johnson would also suggest that specific applications of the Internet are what are most

convenient. That is, convenience motives for using the Internet as a whole were not high

in previous studies, but when specific uses of the Internet are examined, like news or web

video in this study, convenience is a motivation. Whereas previous studies dealt with

radio, television and the Internet as a medium, current studies and this one are diving into

the realm of web video.

Web Video

There are many different types of online media video sources. There are

professionally produced news online video sites (CNN, MSNBC, Fox News). These sites

generally show clips from previously aired television footage. Live streaming is done via

sites like ESPN360 or MLB.TV. These are mostly sports programming that offer live

coverage of sporting events. There are also user-generated online video sites such as

YouTube or Vimeo. These are different other online video sites because they allow for

everybody to upload video they have created for others to see, whether professional or

unprofessional.

Most of the research regarding uses and gratifications and online video has

addressed one specific site, YouTube. Hanson and Haridakis (2008) looked at news

video content on YouTube. They argued that YouTube is more than a substitute of

traditional TV news delivery. The web aspect of YouTube gives a rich 'post-viewing'

experience with the ability to comment, rate or even share the media. This is one of the

advantages of online media and is especially great for video online. They argue that

social networking is much easier and a more effective means of post-viewing activity

than simply water cooler discussion the next morning, because there is virtually an

infinite amount of water coolers. People are able to talk to many people without the

consideration of time and space about content they have seen. In a survey of college

students, Hanson and Haridakis found that 91% of their respondents reported having

watched at least one video on YouTube. When someone sat down to watch YouTube,

they generally spent 15 minutes doing so and the median number of clips viewed during a

session was just between 1 and 2 (Hanson & Haridakis, 2008). Although viewing videos

on the site was common, only 7% uploaded an original video clip to the site. This is

interesting because it shows that although many people watch content on YouTube, they

do not spend a tremendous amount of time on the site. This data could suggest that the

vast majority of YouTube's audience is simply consuming media and not creating it.

YouTube's focus on user-generated content contrasts with the approach of other

online video providers. For example, Apple's iTunes is a pay-model for online video

consumption that is professionally produced by big media companies. iTunes houses

mostly television shows and instead of directing your web browser to a site to look at

video, you go through the iTunes application and can browse video content there.

However, you cannot view the video for free, you have to download and pay a small fee

per video. Furthermore, there are the various network websites that allow for web video

consumption. All the broadcast networks and many cable networks have full-episode

video online for anybody to watch for free. Users simply go to the website and watch

their favorite shows. But it can be cumbersome to go to each individual website and find

the show you would like to watch. To solve this problem, the networks created Hulu.

Hulu is a joint-venture owned by NBC Universal, News Corp and Disney that was

created to give television shows one online destination. The videos on the site are not

limited to brief clips or webisodes (short clips design for online viewing), rather, the

videos on Hulu are actual episodes from popular television programs. Shows like *Glee*,

The Office and *Desperate Housewives* can all be found on Hulu in their entirety, as can

topical shows like *Saturday Night Live* or *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*. Hulu

currently is free for users via an ad-supported model that interjects short, 30-second

commercials between breaks of an episode. However, Hulu recently introduced a

subscription-based model called Hulu Plus. This model expands Hulu's reach to mobile

devices such as the iPod or iPhone, as well as gaming consoles like the Playstation 3 and

Xbox 360. Hulu Plus will cost $9.99 a month and still will be ad-supported as well. It

will offer entire seasons of shows, although the most recent five episodes will remain

free. Thus, watching via a web browser is not the only way to watch Hulu. The

company has produced a stand-alone PC application aptly called Hulu Desktop that

allows users to watch all Hulu has to offer without opening a web browser.

  Hulu can be seen as a harbinger of a new type of television model. Instead of

watching television on a traditional TV set, the future might be watching that content

online from a centralized source, without catering to a specific programming schedule.

As previously stated, since more people are connecting to the Internet at higher speeds,

video sites like Hulu should see a bump in overall usage. Pew Internet Research

specialist Mary Madden (2010) found that 78% of young adults aged 18-29 consume

online video. Sixty-one percent of young adult Internet users watch television shows

online in the 2010 data, compared to 30% of young adults who did the same in 2007. As

more time passes, I expect the consumption of online video to continue to rise and as it

does, Hulu use should certainly increase as well. Hulu streamed over 1 billion videos in

December 2009 alone (*The Economist*, 2010). The future of television could very well be

changing, as would the business model. And if the business model of cable subscriptions

change in favor of online viewing, networks would be better off knowing what motivates

people to watch video online opposed to on a traditional television set.

  This study extends previous research on motives and uses from online video

(Hanson & Haridakis 2008;) and applies uses and gratifications to Hulu and online video,

leading to the first research question.

  RQ1: What motivations prompt someone to watch Hulu?

Drawing from the four main motivations from previous uses and gratification research (diversion, personal relationship, personal identity, and surveillance) what will be the specific motivations that draw someone towards Hulu? In addition, given the nature of the Internet as a medium and work with focus group data, the possibility of other factors like convenience come into play.   For instance, Hulu differs from television in many different ways, as there is a wider range of content available on Hulu. Many television shows have introduced webisodes on Hulu solely created for online viewing. Other longer-form content is also available. For example, in connection with *Jimmy Kimmel's Aloha to Lost* special that aired on ABC, in which the host welcomed stars from the series *Lost* after the series finale aired, Kimmel held a Q&A session that could only be seen on Hulu. Hulu also is more interactive. One can share links and rate episodes that they watch. And instead of watching what ABC or NBC thinks its audience should be watching at the moment on traditional television, on Hulu one can select any show they want to watch at any time they want to watch. There is no set schedule.

The wider variety of content available and the greater flexibility Hulu allows raised the question of how Hulu use relates to viewership of traditional TV. Do Hulu users tend to watch more traditional television than their non-Hulu viewing counterparts? And do they watch more traditional television than the average person? Two possibilities exist. The first is that Hulu users are watching Hulu in addition to watching traditional television because they love the medium so much. They might be watching Hulu as a supplement for a show they normally watch on traditional television anyway. That is, if people are re-watching shows on Hulu that they have already seen on television, then might they be more dedicated television viewers than the non-Hulu user? And if they are

more dedicated to a particular show, might they watch more television in general?

Television networks would love this option, because they would get advertising income

for both traditional views and Hulu views. The second option is that people watch Hulu

instead of or in place of traditional television because they lack time or funds to watch

cable or broadcast TV.   The May 1st edition of *The Economist* described people who had

given up their traditional cable subscriptions in favor for free Hulu viewing pleasure (*The*

Economist, 2010). This leads to the second research question:

> RQ2: Are viewers of Hulu heavier viewers of traditional broadcast or cable
>
> television than non-Hulu viewers?

Another differentiating factor between Hulu and television is that Hulu allows for

online social discussion. Previous research by Park, Koh, and Kim (2004) looked at the

relationship between types of motives and types of peripheral activities such as chatting

or commenting or looking up more information on Internet movie sites. They did not

find a link between watching movies on the web and the peripheral activities. Theater

goers were just as likely to visit a movie website after seeing a movie as Internet movie

watchers. This doesn't necessarily rule out a link between online social habits and online

video viewing today. The level of involvement in social networking sites like Facebook

at the time does not match the number of people on Facebook and Twitter today.

Furthermore, sites like Hulu and YouTube make it very easy to 'share' or comment on

videos. This feature did not exist in 2004, when this previous study took place. Although

a television with a DVR would be able to provide past movies and allow for no time

constraint, it would not be able to give users the online-only aspect or less cost. It would

seem that from this study we know that watching movies online are more convenient for

people than watching movies traditionally on a television or in a theater. As such, Hanson and Haridakis (2008) looked at the audience's propensity to share the video clip they viewed with others. As mentioned previously, they looked at YouTube news and comedy videos. In addition to their previous findings, they also found that viewers are indeed part of the new distribution chain of video. Many viewers shared content they viewed with others.

Thus, this study also looks at possible links between watching video on Hulu and participating in online interactions such as posting a comment or reading an article using social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter or discussion boards.

RQ3: Is watching a television show on Hulu correlated with seeking out

information surrounding the shows with others via online social avenues such as

television show website, discussion boards, Twitter, Facebook, etc?

In summary, this study attempts to investigate the motives that prompt someone to visit Hulu, whether or not viewers of Hulu are heavy television viewers and if watching a show on Hulu is linked to sharing content about shows on the Internet.

Method

Pilot Study

Twenty students from undergraduate courses at the University of Missouri-St. Louis were recruited to participate in a pilot study relating to online habits and social networking. They were asked open-ended questions that gauged interest in Hulu, looked for motives for using the site, as well as inquired into the types of online activities they engaged in. Among the respondents, 35% of users reported watching content on Hulu. There were two main goals for the pilot study. One was to investigate basic motives and

make sure there was not another motive category that should be investigated, but which had not been brought up in previous research. Convenience was a motive large enough that led to consideration of using it as a factor in the main study. Thirty-eight percent of those who watched Hulu said they did so because of convenience, which was the number two reason why people watch Hulu behind entertainment (85%). The same percentage said entertainment was a main factor and the remaining respondents said they watch content on Hulu for informational purposes. Nobody filled out 'other'.

The second goal of the pilot study was to find out what type of online activities people engage in. Research Question 3 deals with the relationship between the use of online video and online information sharing. Asking these questions on the pilot survey helped me to make sure that the final questionnaire measured use of the most important applications that the respondents might use for information sharing. The online activities the respondents reported mostly dealt with using social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter, but only 25% of the total respondents used those sites for television show related purposes such as posting about a show or reading about a show. Respondents were also involved in commenting on stories about TV and posting about TV on message boards. Some reported that they did it for conversation starters with others, whereas others just like television and that is why they comment or post messages about it. This led to a dedicated question about message board use relating to television.

Participants and Procedure

Eighty-seven participants were recruited from undergraduate classes at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. The survey was anonymous and the participants were offered a modest amount of extra credit for this participation, and given a link to the web

survey. The average age of participants was 25 (*SD* = 7.90). Sixty percent were female

and 40% were male. All but two had a television at home. The average time spent

watching TV per day was 3.42 hours (*SD* = 1.80). All but one had a computer and high-

speed Internet at home. Forty-two percent of the respondents responded yes to watching

Hulu, higher than the anticipated average. Of Hulu viewers, 73% watched the same show

on Hulu as on television and about half (44.4%) re-watch episodes they've already seen

on Hulu. Ninety-four percent watch episodes of television shows they've missed on

Hulu. It was found that Hulu viewers watch a little over an hour per each viewing sitting

as well. Of the non-Hulu users, 78% indicated that they watched YouTube, and 40% said

that they watch other network sites such as ABC.com, NBC.com or TV.com. Eighty-

nine percent had a Facebook account, while only 30% of participants had a Twitter

account.

Respondents were asked basic demographic questions and the asked if they

watched video on Hulu. If they did not watch Hulu they were asked why not and if they

watch online video on other websites such as YouTube or network websites.

Respondents were asked questions about the type of content they tended to watch on

Hulu, how many hours on the average weekday and weekend they watch Hulu, if they

watch episodes they missed on Hulu, and what they watch on Hulu. Answers included

from *The Office, It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia, Glee, NCIS* and *Desperate*

Housewives, but none of the shows users said they watched were past shows no longer on

television. Non-Hulu viewers were filtered from the analyses of these questions.

Everyone was asked how much traditional television they watch on the average weekday

and weekend. Following those questions, motivations questions were asked based on

Hulu or if they did not watch Hulu, based on the online video they do watch (YouTube, ABC.com, etc.). Finally, yes and no questions were asked about whether or not participants had a Facebook or Twitter account, whether they seek out information of television shows using those accounts, and whether they visit discussion boards about their favorite TV shows.

Measures

      Viewing motivations. The respondents were asked to answer 33 items dealing with their motivations for using Hulu on a 5-point Likert-type scale. Most of the items were adapted from previous work on television viewing motives (Weaver, 2001). Since the pilot study answers implied that convenience might be an important factor, I drafted various items measuring convenience and added them to the scale to test for it. If respondents did not watch Hulu, they were asked to apply the statements towards any online video watching habits. The order of the items was randomized for each participant.

      Viewership of traditional television and online video sites. All of the respondents were asked yes or no questions if they watched television shows and how many hours of traditional television they watch on the average weekday and weekend. Weekday television viewing was multiplied by five and the weekend television viewing was multiplied by two. Then the total was divided by seven to get the amount of television viewed daily. The same thing was done in regards to hours watching Hulu. These were open-ended questions in which respondents needed to answer with a specific number of hours or minutes the duration spent watching TV and Hulu. The time spent

watching traditional television was compared between Hulu users, non-Hulu users, and average television viewing based on Nielsen average data.

Sharing information about television. The remaining questions dealt with use of social networking sites and seeing out or sharing information about television online. The audience was asked to answer yes or no questions on whether or not they seeked out information of television shows using Facebook or Twitter as well as whether they visit discussion boards or forums of their favorite show. These were asked in order to find out if people use these social networking accounts for television purposes or not. It was found that 15% of Facebook users used that account to seek out more information of television shows and 20% of Twitter users used their account to seek out more information for television shows. Eighteen percent of respondents reported that they went to discussion forums to talk about television shows.

Analysis

An exploratory factor analysis was performed to determine the loadings of the most conceptually coherent motive statements. Afterwards independent samples t-tests were used to compare of the salience of these motives for Hulu users and non-Hulu users who answered the questions in relation to other online streaming sites. Another independent samples t-test was run to compare whether or not Hulu users watched more traditional television than non-Hulu users. Lacking a majority of Hulu users, it was determined that Hulu users and viewers of websites like ABC.com or NBC.com would be grouped to give more power to the information in the instance of the social network research question.

<div align="center">**Results**</div>

Viewing motivations. Research question one asked for people's motivations for using Hulu. An exploratory factor analysis was run that produced seven eigenvalues over one. A scree plot determined that a smaller number of factors explained most of the variance. It was L-shaped with a bend around four. A series of trials was run in which three, four, five and seven factors were rotated (See Table 1). However, rotating more factors resulted in few items loading highly on those factors, which is why using four factors seemed to produce the most reliable and the most conceptually coherent loadings. Additional analyses were carried out on scales built from these factors. Items were included on a factor if their primary loading was at least .55, and there was no secondary loading greater than .35. The first group of motives seemed to deal with using the video sites to gain or exchange information (alpha = .93). Items loading in this group included, 'So I can learn about what could happen to me', 'So I can learn how to do things I haven't done before', 'Because it shows how other people deal with the same problems I have', The second group of motives was characterized as companionship and diversion (alpha = .89). Motives in this grouping included reasons for watching online video 'So I won't be alone', 'Because it makes me feel less lonely', 'When there is no one to talk to', 'Because it helps pick me up when I'm feeling down', 'So I can forget about my worries and responsibilities', and 'So I can get away from what I'm doing'. The third group of motives was characterized as entertainment motives (alpha = .81). The three items here were, 'Because I just like to watch', 'Because I just enjoy watching' and 'Because it's a pleasant rest'. Finally, the fourth group of motives were categorized as a sort of purposive use (alpha = .84). Two items loading here were 'To catch up on shows I missed', and 'Because I can watch past television shows'. The previous items were

combined into single scales by taking the means of items. Higher means indicate greater

levels of agreement. In order to use more data, Hulu viewers and viewers of network

video websites such as NBC.com, ABC.com or TV.com were combined in all

circumstances because much of the content is the same. YouTube and other viewers of

web video were not.

Looking at the means of scales among Hulu viewers and network website

viewers, purposive use (*M* = 4.5, *SD* = .51) and entertainment (*M* = 4.05, *SD* = .75) were

most strongly endorsed. Meaning most people that watched Hulu did so for practical

reasons like catching up on episodes of shows they missed or watching past television

episodes. They also watched for entertainment purposes. An independent samples *t*-test

was conducted to find the relative salience of viewing motives between Hulu and non-

Hulu users. For the companionship and diversion factor, there was a significant

difference in the scores between Hulu users (*M* = 2.50, *SD* = 1.07) and non-Hulu users

(*M* = 2.03, *SD* = .97); t(81) = 2.05, p = .043. For the entertainment factor, there was a

significant different in the scores between Hulu users (*M* = 4.05, *SD* = .76 and non-Hulu

users (*M* = 3.15, *SD* = 1.01); t(81) = 4.45, p = .001. For the purposive use, there was a

significant difference in the scores between Hulu users (*M* = 4.50, *SD* = .51) and non-

Hulu users (*M* = 3.17, *SD* = 1.25); t(81) = 5.98, p = .001). However, for the informational

factor, there was no significant difference in the scores between Hulu users (*M* = 2.28, *SD*

= .99) and non-Hulu users (*M* = 2.31, *SD* = .99); t(82) = -1.30, p = .90). (See: Table 2).

It was determined that companionship, entertainment and purposive uses were the more

salient uses among Hulu users versus non-Hulu users.

Viewers of traditional television. Hulu users watched on average 1.5 hours, or

90 minutes of Hulu content a day. They watched nearly 3 hours of traditional television

each day on average as well. Non-Hulu viewers watched an average of 3 hours and 45

minutes of traditional television on average each day. An independent samples t-test was

conducted to find out if the difference between traditional television viewing among Hulu

viewers and non-Hulu viewers was significant. There was a significant difference in the

amount of traditional television viewing for Hulu viewers ($M = 2.92$, $SD = 1.55$) and non-

Hulu viewers ($M = 3.79$, $SD = 1.88$); t(82)= -2.269, p=.026. Hulu users watched less

traditional television than non-Hulu users.

Sharing information about television. Chi-Square tests were conducted with

the three social networking variables comparing Hulu users and non-Hulu users.   It could

not be determined whether or not Hulu users were more likely to seek out or share

information about television shows on Facebook than non-Hulu users, $X^2(1, N = 85) =$

2.34, p = .12. Also, it could not be determined whether or not Hulu users were more

likely to seek out or share information about television shows on Twitter than non-Hulu

users, X^2 (1, $N = 84$) = 2.995, p =.084. Finally, it could not be determined whether or not

Hulu users were more likely to seek out or share information on television shows on

discussion boards or forums than non-Hulu users, $X^2(1, N = 85)$ = 3.28, p = .07. Both

chi-square tests were insignificant, but approached the .05 significance level.

Previously, the argument was made that viewers of Hulu and viewers of network

websites such as ABC.com, NBC.com, etc. were similar because the content on both

websites are professionally produced pieces, instead of amateur content so far available

on YouTube. However, even when viewers of Hulu and the other network websites were

combined into one category and compared to viewers of other sites, there was still no significant differences. Viewers of professional television content online and non-viewers were equally likely to take-part in these online information sharing activities.

Discussion

Viewing motivations

The present study applied uses and gratifications theory towards Hulu and online video use. The three scales with the highest means were the entertainment ($M = 4.5$, $SD = .51$), purposive use ($M = 4.05$, $SD = .76$), and companionship/diversion ($M = 2.50$, $SD = 1.07$). The purposive use would seem to say that people watch Hulu to catch up on programming they have missed. This was the most important use of Hulu to users and serves as a basis for what draws people to Hulu. In the study, 95% of the people who watch Hulu said that they watched episodes of shows they have missed on Hulu. In contrast, YouTube viewers are not able to watch many TV shows on the site and thus do not have as much a purposive use as Hulu viewers. The second most salient category was the entertainment category. It could be stated that people watch Hulu because they generally like watching the content. It is also important to note that people watch more Hulu for companionship ($M = 2.50$, $SD = 1.07$) than other online video sites such as YouTube. This may be related to the fact that characters in television shows are ones the audience know and care about, whereas YouTube content and other online video lacks the focus or structure of a television show and thus do not have the same relational capacity.

Items that were intended to measure convenience did not load together consistently. That is, items intended to measure convenience like 'Because it is easy' or

'Because I can watch a show with less cost' did not group themselves together via factor analysis. So instead, the practical reasons such as 'To catch up on shows I missed' could fall under convenience. With shows being available to access on-demand, Hulu would have to be a convenient way to catch up on episodes one has missed. So even though the convenience items did not load consistently, practical reasons for watching Hulu could relate to watching Hulu because of its ease of use and availability. Virtually everyone in this survey had access to a broadband Internet connection at home and network speed is not a barrier it once was when it comes to online video like Hulu. It is still easier and faster than ever before to watch video on Hulu.

Viewers of traditional television

The second purpose of this study was to find out if Hulu viewers watch more or less traditional television than non-Hulu viewers. It was found that non-Hulu viewers watch more traditional broadcast and cable television than Hulu viewers. It is likely that Hulu users' participation in Hulu takes away from time spent watching traditional television. Since roughly half of Hulu viewers re-watch episodes they've already seen, one might think Hulu users would watch more TV, but that was simply not the case. It is also true that Hulu users watch less traditional television than the national average for 18-24 year olds. According to Nielsen data, 18-24 year olds watch an average of four hours of television daily (Nielsen, 2009). What does that mean for the future of television and television networks? People watching Hulu are watching less traditional television. It is possible that people are dropping cable subscriptions altogether in favor of Hulu, as previously suggested. Those would almost certainly watch less traditional television. A likely factor could be found from the motives scale results. Since the purposive category

was found to be the most salient one, possibly the ability to watch broadcast and cable

television shows online alleviates the need to watch them at a set time in the evening.

One can watch shows at any time, any place, just like watching with a DVR,. The results

could also suggest that people are either trying to save money by watching less traditional

television (by saving money on cable subscriptions) or just reiterate the fact that people

are leading ever busy lives, fast-paced and on-the-go, with rarely enough free time to

watch television at a set time. Although online video seems to be booming, ad rates for

commercials are still dwarfed by their traditional television counterparts (Schechner

2010; Learmonth, 2008). So people watching traditional television are more valuable to

networks than those watching on Hulu.

Sharing information about television

Twenty-seven percent of Hulu users visited discussion board websites about their

favorite show. But so few people used social networking utilities or message boards to

find out more or share information about television shows that it is virtually impossible to

draw any concrete conclusions about whether or non-Hulu users participate more or less

than non-Hulu users. Maybe the better conclusion that could be drawn from this portion

of the study is that people generally do not use social networking utilities to talk about

television shows. They might use social networking for other reasons, but it appears

those reasons do not have to do with television. Perhaps those who do utilize social

networking to talk about television are more involved in the show and thus more likely to

be influenced by marketers' attempts to capitalize on profits from these shows. For

instance, the television show *Lost*, which ended its six-year run May 2010, did not have a

fan base as big as other shows such as *CSI, Survivor, or Grey's Anatomy* (TV by the

Numbers, 2010), but fans of *Lost* were possibly more dedicated to their show via discussion boards than fans of the other shows. But again, since so few people in this study participated in social networking in this manner, it is hard to draw any conclusions.

Limitations

There were a few limitations in this study. The sample size is relatively low. This is important because fewer people in a survey make it harder to interpret data and generalize among the entire population. It means that even though a difference was found in parts of the data in the study and those differences were significant, it is not as powerful as if hundreds or thousands of people would have participated. Also, the participants were college students, likely to be in the bottom of the population in income and therefore might be more willing to forego a cable subscription in favor of solely an Internet provider. This would mean they might be more likely to watch video content online than the general population. All these could skew results. Younger people also tend to adopt new technology more than older people. So technological barriers that exist among some might not exist among college students, making watching online video an easier choice for them.

Future research

Because Hulu users watch less traditional television than non-Hulu users, the next logical step would be to figure out why. It could be the lack of time or the cost of cable subscriptions or something else entirely. Future research should be asked what sort of general activities people engage in. Maybe people's lives are busier and they only have time to watch television on the weekends, so they watch their shows on Hulu. Another interesting spin would be to see whether or not people watch Hulu or other web video on

their computer or if they are starting to use devices or computers that hook up to their television to watch Hulu. Maybe some people do not watch Hulu because they can only watch it on their tiny computer screen.

As online video continues to be more prevalent, Hulu offers users an enticing alternative to traditional television. These findings are important to both researchers and Hulu. If Hulu knows why people visit the site, they would be able to cater the page for those particular motives by making it easier to find the most recent shows on the home page. It is important for researchers because the medium would seem to suggest that Hulu is used for practical and entertainment purposes and companionship rather than for informational purposes. Previous studies stated earlier that informational reasons were important. However, as time passes and it gets easier and faster to access the Internet, watching Hulu online more for its convenience and practicality makes it more of a destination for would-be television viewers.

Finally, it would seem reasonable to conclude that this study examined Hulu motivations for the first time and that those motivations were reasonably consistent with previous uses and gratifications research. People watch online video for entertainment purposes, for companionship and for diversion. Perhaps a new category of motivations should be included, one for practical reasons. It is also important to inquire that the video watching habits of today might be shifting from traditional television to online video. However, even though the landscape might be changing, certain aspects of the web like social networking is not being used fully when it comes to online video or television. Furthermore, exploration of the possible shift in the television model would prove important in future research.

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Table 1

Primary factor loading of motivations and Uses for online video

	Information	Companionship/ Diversion	Enjoyment	Purposive
Because it gives me something to do	-.006	.327	.533	.181
Because it passes the time away	.032	.401	.469	.367
When I have nothing better to do	.166	.253	.505	.142
Because I just like to watch	.166	-.045	.874	.115
Because I just enjoy watching	.094	.028	.746	.404
To catch up on shows I missed	-.058	.045	.274	.713
So I won't be alone	.323	.825	.062	.057
Because I don't have time to watch shows on television	.042	.339	.144	.545
Because it makes me feel less lonely	.173	.867	.036	.022
When there's no one to talk to or be with	.167	.695	.227	.189
Because it helps pick me up when Im feeling down	.290	.756	.255	.059
Because it relaxes me	.180	.515	.656	.194
So I can forget about my worries and responsibilities	.191	.771	.224	.156
Because its easy	.180	.166	.410	.543
Because it calms me down when I'm upset	.476	.714	.205	.127
Because it's a pleasant rest	.089	.381	.709	.044
Because there are less advertisements	.146	.238	.287	.310
So I can get away from what I'm doing	.194	.589	.319	.225
So I can learn about what could happen to me	.769	.356	.051	.008

So I can learn how to do things I haven't done before	.800	.179	.153	-.101
So I can learn about things happening in the world	.865	.009	.172	-.081
Because I have little free time	.193	.160	.538	.397
Because it shows how other people deal with the same problems I have	.799	.225	.031	.037
Because it excites me	.798	.060	.314	.187
Because its thrilling	.721	.299	.134	.300
Because I can watch past television shows	-.036	.073	.236	.745
Because I want to use technology other than traditional media to watch shows	.702	.212	.063	.288
Because I can find shows I cannot find on television	.350	.082	.016	.589
Because I can repeat or review specific scenes whenever I want to	.460	.072	.159	.442
Because I can watch a show with less cost	.533	.251	-.135	.459
Because It is easy to access without considering time and space	.376	-.044	.357	.561
Because my friends often motivate me to watch	.771	.254	.082	.224
Because I want something to talk about with others	.622	.421	.131	.143
Cronbach's alpha	.93	.89	.81	.83

Table 2

Viewing Motivations between Hulu and non-Hulu viewers

	Watch Hulu	Do not watch Hulu	t	df
Informational	2.28 (.99)	2.31 (.99)	-1.30	82
Companionship/Diversion	2.50 (1.07)	2.03 (.97)	2.05 *	81
Enjoyment	4.05 (.76)	3.15 (1.01)	4.45 **	81
Purposive	4.50 (.51)	3.17 (1.25)	5.98 **	81

Note. * = p ≤ .05, ** = p ≤ .001

Copy of Survey

1. Age

2. Gender
Male
Female

3. Major

4. Do you have a television at home?
Y
N

5. Do you have a computer at home?
Y
N

6. Do you have high-speed Internet access at home?
Yes
No

Hulu viewers as heavy television viewers
1. Do you watch video on Hulu?
Yes
No

No Hulu
Why don't you watch Hulu?
Too busy
Don't know what it is
Other (please specify)

2. Do you watch online video on other sites such as YouTube?
Yes, YouTube
Yes, TV network website (ABC.com, NBC.com, TV.com, etc)
Yes, Other
No

Hulu Viewing Habits
Answer these questions based on your Hulu viewing habits.

1. On an average weekday, how many hours of Hulu do you watch?

2. On an average weekend, how many hours of Hulu do you watch?

3. How long do you watch at a given time?

4. What shows do you watch on Hulu?

5. Do you watch the same shows on Hulu as on television?
Yes
No

6. Do you re-watch episodes you've already seen on Hulu?
Yes
No

7. Do you watch episodes you've missed on Hulu?
Yes
No

General TV Viewing
1. Do you watch television shows?
Yes
No

2. On an average weekday, how many hours of television do you watch?

3. On an average weekend, how many hours of television do you watch?

4. What are your current favorite shows?

Hulu viewing motives
1. Answer the following question as if finishing the statement "I watch Hulu..." (If you don't watch Hulu but watch other online video, answer these statements in relation to your online video watching habits)
Strongly Disagree = 1, Strongly Agree = 5

Because it's easy
So I can learn how to do things I haven't done before
Because I just like to watch
Because it makes me feel less lonely
Because I don't have time to watch shows on television
When there's no one to talk to or be with
So I can forget about my worries and responsibilities
When I have nothing better to do
Because there are less advertisements
So I won't be alone
Because it helps pick me up when I'm feeling down
So I can get away from what I'm doing
To catch up on shows I missed

Because it's a pleasant rest
Because it relaxes me
Because it calms me down when I'm upset
Because I just enjoy watching
So I can learn about what could happen to me
Because it gives me something to do
Because it passes the time away
Because I can find shows I cannot find on television
Because I can repeat or review specific scenes whenever I want to
Because I want something to talk about with others
So I can learn about things happening in the world
Because it's thrilling
Because I want to use technology other than traditional media to watch
Because I can watch past television shows
Because I can watch a show with less cost
Because I have little free time
Because my friends often motivate me to watch
Because It is easy to access without considering time and space
Because it excites me
Because it shows how other people deal with the same problems I have

Social Networking predictors
The following questions look at social networking and activity.
1. Do you have a Facebook account?
Yes
No

2. Do you seek out information of television shows using this account?
Yes
No

3. Do you have a Twitter account?
Yes
No

4. Do you seek out information of television shows using this account?
Yes
No

5. Do you visit discussion boards or forums of your favorite show?
Yes
No