EXPLORING MOTIVATION AND ENGAGEMENT OF ONLINE TELEVISION FAN

AUDIENCES

by

JOEL DANIEL MCLEAN

(Under the Direction of C. Ann Hollifield)

ABSTRACT

Recent declines in television viewership due to an increasingly fragmented mediascape have resulted in many television networks venturing online to establish websites devoted to programming as a means of developing relationships with select audience segments. Employing a uses and gratifications framework, this project explored differences in media-use motivations and connectedness to a favorite television show among visitors to corporate-controlled, official fansites and independent, social networking fansites to construct a profile of visitors to each type of site. The results of this study suggest that official fansites fail to attract the most motivated and engaged audience members; moreover, these findings imply that media managers should consider adapting both audience strategy and philosophy to keep pace with the rapidly changing new media environment.

INDEX WORDS: Television Fans, Fansites, Media Uses and Gratifications, Audience
Activity, Engagement, Connectedness, Social Networking

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B.A., The University of Georgia, 2006

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2008

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DEDICATION

To my wonderful family, for always keeping me grounded while encouraging me to soar.

I love you all.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

In 1986, broadcast television networks captured 75% of the total primetime audience, but by the summer of 2005 that figure had shrunk to just 40%, due in large part to the expansion of cable and satellite distribution technologies (Romano, 2005). According to Nielsen Media Research, 88% of all homes now subscribe to cable or satellite services; likewise, the average home now receives 104 channels, up a staggering 70% from the year 2000 (Lieberman, 2007). The recent evolution of the multichannel media environment has given industry professionals cause for concern and is forcing a reevaluation of traditional media business models. This dramatic channel growth means that competition among television networks for significant audience shares has become fierce, requiring more strategic behavior on the part of networks in their quest for viewers (Lieberman, 2007; Romano, 2005).

Adding to the complexity and competitiveness of the multichannel mediascape are the opportunities afforded by new media in this environment. Scholars have shown that television networks are under increased pressure to develop a strong web presence in order to capitalize on the cross-platform, synergistic marketing opportunities of television and the Internet, which includes cross-promoting television and web offerings and developing online content (Chan-Olmsted, 2000; Ha, 2002; Ha & Chan-Olmsted, 2004; Siapera, 2004).

Against the backdrop of declining audience shares and expanding Internet opportunities, the television industry's recent interest in media fandom—particularly online fandom—becomes especially salient. In theory, fans are heavy viewers of favorite programs and are much more

invested in programs than the average viewer (Fiske, 1998); in turn, this heightened level of involvement with programs transforms the television fan into a valuable commodity for networks to sell to advertisers (Kerschbaumer, 2000). More specifically, recent evidence from industry trade publications suggests that industry insiders are warming up to television fans because this audience segment embodies a metric that advertisers find increasingly attractive—engagement (Albiniak, 2007). According to Alan Wurtzel, president of research at NBC Universal:

> Going forward, the emphasis on mere tonnage [i.e., number of viewers] is going to decrease and be replaced. The Holy Grail is, 'Did I reach as many people who are primary targets of my message as I could? And of those people, how many of them were highly engaged and interested?' When engagement is higher, the impact of advertising is higher (Albiniak, 2007; p. 16).

As a result, advertisers view engagement as a way to enhance return on investment when purchasing ad space (Albiniak, 2007). Not surprisingly, television executives are turning to the Internet as a means of tapping into a show's most engaged viewers. According to Albiniak (2007), networks are channeling resources into developing websites that allow fans to become even more absorbed in the show, with features that include chatting with other fans, streaming episodes, and downloading extras.

Online fan cultures centered around various media objects—television shows, movies, comic books, etc.—are hardly a new phenomenon; independent online fan upstarts are well-documented in the fields of sociology and media studies (e.g., Jenkins, 2006b; Pullen, 2004). However, media companies' encroachment into the world of online fandom via official, corporate-sanctioned fansites devoted to television programming is a fairly recent development. According to Siapera (2004), the special significance of this new, mediated fandom is that fans

"are drawn together by the TV channel itself…in so doing, the TV channel retains control of its own program and coordinates the activities of the fans, thereby occupying a central position in the fan culture" (p.162). In other words, the expansion of television networks to the web and the development of complementary web content has enabled media companies to infiltrate the world of media fandom in ways previously not possible. Faced with increasingly fragmented audiences, a media company's effort to permeate online fandom can been viewed as a strategic move designed to tap into the economic value of this highly engaged audience segment (Jenkins, 2006a; Kerschbaumer, 2000; Siapera, 2004).

However, while industry leaders agree that engagement describes some qualitative, emotional connection to programming, the problem is that, as of yet, no one is sure exactly how engagement among online fan audiences—or any audience segment—should be measured (Albiniak, 2007). According to Jack Wakschlag, chief research officer of Turner Broadcasting Company:

> We do need metrics to help us figure out our value to advertisers. That's really the vexing challenge: How do we combine television with broadband? Until it's all measured, we're just testing it. Once it's enough of an industry to support serious measurement, then the multiplatform business will fall into place (Albiniak, 2007; p. 16).

The growing popularity of establishing official fansites for programming begs the question of this strategy's effectiveness in attracting valuable, engaged television fans. In turn, the goal of this study is twofold: First, it attempts to situate television fandom and audiencemaking in the context of uses and gratifications research that focuses on how motives for media use combine with audience-activity variables to influence media effects. Second, this study compares motives and activity variables among visitors to corporate controlled fansites

versus those of visitors to independent fansites in an effort to assess and describe the differential audience value of visitors to each type of site. While previous research by Ha & Chan-Olmstead (2004) has examined the relationship between the use of enhanced television features on cable network websites and the subsequent impact on viewer loyalty, subscriber loyalty, and new subscriber attraction, this study is somewhat unique to mass communication scholarship in its comparison of fan audiences on corporate-sponsored sites with fan audiences on independent sites that appear to be more removed from capital interests.

Aside from contributing to existing research on strategy and competition among television networks, examining the relationship between fan websites and audience attitudes and behaviors is particularly relevant to an industry struggling to make sense of audience economics in the new media environment. Ultimately, this study seeks to contribute to research in the areas of media management, audience studies, and new media by adopting an institutional view of television fandom and investigating the ways in which online fan audiences may function as a valuable component in the relationship between audiences, programmers, and advertisers.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The New Mediascape: Fragmentation & Audiencemaking

Several scholars have suggested that the structure of the new media environment plays an important role in both organizational and audience behavior (Turow, 2005; Webster & Phalen, 1997). More specifically, the proliferation of cable and satellite networks in recent years has resulted in increasing patterns of audience fragmentation (Webster, 1986; Webster, 2005; Webster & Phalen, 1997). Fragmentation describes the process by which audiences are spread among an increasing number of viewing options, resulting in smaller audience shares for each network (Webster, 1986). This dilution of the mass audience into smaller fragments has forced many television networks to actively define and create distinct, valuable audience segments in an organizational practice that Ettema and Whitney (1994) have termed "audiencemaking." These scholars have emphasized that audiencemaking is inherently an institutional concept because "it focuses neither on how audiences receive messages nor even on how communicators make messages. Rather, it focuses on how communicators make audiences" (Ettema & Whitney, 1994; p.4). More specifically, audiencemaking is a process in which "actual receivers are constituted not merely as audiences but as *institutionally effective audiences* that have social meaning and/or economic value within the system…They include *specialized or segmented audiences* whose particular interests are anticipated—or created—and then met by content producers" (Ettema & Whitney, 1994; p.5). In essence, the concept of audiencemaking highlights the importance of structural and organizational processes in shaping audiences. Moreover, the notion of

audiencemaking supports conceptualizing television fans as comprising an *institutionally effective* audience that may hold real value for television networks.

Television Fandom Online: Independent & Corporate-Controlled Sites

One obvious outcome of audiencemaking activity related to television fandom is the rise of corporate controlled Internet fansites designed to attract fan audiences. While television networks' utilization of the Internet to connect with fan audiences is a recent development, the Internet has played a substantial role in more independent fan activity for some time (Jenkins, 2006a). Early work in the cultural studies tradition emphasized the ways in which the Internet contributed to the proliferation of various forms of fandom. Themes of empowerment, resistance, and audience privilege are common in much of the cultural studies literature related to media fandom, and scholars have suggested that the Internet is the ideal communication medium for this form of audience-privileged fandom because it helps connect fans with shared interests; in turn, this new degree of connectivity facilitates the dissemination of ideas among members of various fan cultures outside of traditional media channels—i.e., independently (e.g., Jenkins, 2006b). Beyond traditional fan-created webpages, Jenkins (2006b) has noted that discussion lists, mailing groups, web rings, and chat rooms are all examples of online sites where fan activity may occur.

More recently, the value that cultural studies places on online fandom as an independent, creative/interpretative activity has been criticized by scholars adopting a more industrial/organizational/institutional approach to media fandom; as Murry (2004) has articulated, "Cultural studies work on fandom is notable for its reluctance to investigate rigorously the commercial utility of fan communities to corporate marketing and policy structures, and especially for is disinclination to investigate how recent Internet developments

may be shifting the parameters of this relationship" (p.21). Recognizing this changing relationship, scholars have voiced concern that forms of independent, online fandom are being challenged by media organizations seeking to develop online fan destinations as a means of pursuing corporate interests (Ha, 2002; Ha & Chan-Olmsted, 2004; Siapera, 2004). As Siapera (2004) has explained:

> In providing a fan site, broadcasters have usurped the more or less spontaneous gathering and organization of fans, and by centralizing the exchange of opinions and ideas they retain considerable control over the shows they produce…Further, in claiming official status for their fan sites, they formalize their relationship to fans, while delegitimizing and undermining alternative fan cultures (pp.162-163).

In addition, Siapera (2004) has suggested that these sites allow media organizations to directly address audience-as-fans; in turn, these sites aid in the construction of a community of viewers and help ensure a degree of audience loyalty. Furthermore, Ha (2002) has emphasized corporate-controlled fansites "…aim at building better relationships with fans of a show by providing opportunities to learn more about and/or connect with the show and its stars" (p.235). These last points allude to the potential of corporate-controlled fansites in helping television networks realize the economic value of a solid fan base for its programming. The connection between corporate fansites and audiencemaking activity will be revisited; first, it is worth considering what—or who—is meant by the term "fan."

Media Fandom: Who Constitutes a Fan?

The definition of a media "fan" is extremely variable and highly contested in much of the academic literature on the topic. Early scholars of media fandom assigned fans decidedly negative labels such as "obsessed individuals" and "hysterical crowds;" in addition, these

scholars described fans as the "passive and pathological victims of the mass media" (Storey, 1996; p.124). According to this early view, fan attachment to media objects was seen as "a consequence of mass culture needing to compensate for a lack of intimacy, community, and identity" (Sandvoss, 2005; p.2). This conceptualization of fandom as a form of cultural pathology began to draw cultural studies scholars to the study of fans in the 1980s. The cultural studies approach to fandom painted fans in a somewhat more positive light and argued for "a more complex relationship between fans as agents and the structural confines of popular culture in which they operate" (Sandvoss, 2005; p.3). Briefly, this sentiment is captured by the cultural studies scholar Henry Jenkins (1992) in his description of fandom as a participatory culture; he describes fans as:

> readers who appropriate popular texts and reread them in a fashion that serves different interests, as spectators who transform the experience of watching television into a rich and complex participatory culture…Fans construct their cultural and social identity through borrowing and inflecting mass culture images, articulating concerns which often go unvoiced in the dominant media (Jenkins, 1992; p. 23).

In other words, this conceptualization of fandom privileges the position of fans over that of media organizations by asserting that fans can attribute their own meanings to media texts and recognizing that this interpretative activity often contrasts or even resists the intended meaning of cultural producers/media organizations.

This binary view of media fans—passive, pathological victims on the one hand and empowered, resistant activists on the other—has been challenged for its exclusivity in identifying who is/is not a fan (e.g., Abercrombie & Longhurst, 1998; Sandvoss, 2005). For example, Sandvoss (2005) has suggested that these previous definitions of "fan" are both

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alarmingly normative—ascribing very specific characteristics to fans—and somewhat antiquated; as he has explained:

> With the proliferation of multi-channel television and the arrival of new information technologies such as the Internet, fandom seems to have become a common and ordinary aspect of everyday life in the industrialized world…it has become next to impossible to find realms of public life which are unaffected by fandom—from the intermingling of show business, sports, and politics to the everyday life talk about one's favorite music, television show, or film (Sandvoss, 2005; p.3).

In an effort to develop a definition of "fan" that is more inclusive and takes into account fandom's "everydayness" in the current media environment, Sandvoss (2005) has argued that "the clearest indicator of a particular emotional investment in a given popular text lies in its regular, repeated consumption, regardless of who its reader is and regardless of the possible implications of this affection" (p.7). In short, for Sandvoss (2005) the common thread in all media fandom is the act of consumption; as a result, he has proposed a more inclusive definition of fandom as "the regular, emotionally involved consumption of a given popular narrative or text" (Sandvoss, 2005; p.8). The significance of this conceptualization of fandom to the current study lies in its institutional focus; defining fans as "regular, emotionally involved <u>consumers</u>" translates fandom into the paradigm of corporate media institutions in which audiences (here, fans) are viewed as consumers of both content and advertising. More importantly, the affective component of this definition (i.e., fans as *emotionally involved* consumers) connects fan behavior to the aforementioned engagement metric that advertisers so highly value, thereby lending credence to the notion of television fans as an institutionally effective audience possessing real economic value within the media system (Ettema & Whitney, 1994).

This recent attention to affective measures of viewer engagement is due in large part to the changing media environment; as Ernst et al. (2003) have explained: "The complex relationship between media environments, programming, and audience behavior calls for new tools that will more adequately describe, model, and ultimately simulate the complex connections that exist between audiences, media channels, programming, and advertising messages" (pp. 2-3). In his most recent work, Henry Jenkins (2006a) has made several connections between many of the ideas presented here: the new media environment characterized by fragmented audiences, definitions of media fandom and fan behavior, the ability of the Internet to connect fans with one another and with media corporations, and media corporations' imperative to capitalize on this lucrative audience segment.

Jenkins (2006a) has used the word "convergence" to describe a series of changes that has resulted in today's new media environment: the conglomeration of media companies, the increasing flow of media content across different platforms, and the increasing movement of audiences across these platforms in search of content. However, the author has stressed that convergence is not simply about changes in technology; instead, convergence describes a cultural and social shift in the way people make use of technology to suit their needs and wants, as well as the way that technologies are developed around such uses (Jenkins, 2006a). More significant to the context of the current study, Jenkins (2006a) has asserted that the new culture of convergence is a networked culture that connects producers and consumers in complex ways and allows audiences to interact directly with media products and with each other. This direct connectivity has encouraged the development of online fan communities and allowed activities that were once restricted to marginal fan communities—such as sharing plot points, distributing fan stories and videos, or lobbying producers—to become more mainstream (Jenkins, 2006a).

Notably, Jenkins (2006a) has argued that media companies must acknowledge these new characteristics of convergence culture or risk alienating fan audiences. Audience alienation is especially dangerous in an increasingly fragmented media environment; rather, media companies should attempt to retain audiences by encouraging extended, long-term, loyal relationships between consumers and content (Jenkins, 2006a). However, Jenkins (2006a) has suggested that fostering audience loyalty requires a shift in emphasis from *quantity* measured in terms of ratings to *quality* measured in terms of the value of media content to consumers; the author has called this the practice of "affective economics," or understanding how consumers' emotions drive their media viewing and buying choices.

In short, Jenkins' (2006a) views underscore the critical need for media organizations to consider how the context of the new media environment influences relationships with media audiences. In this environment, audience interactivity and participation seem to have become organic to the very act of media consumption, and this is especially evident in the rise of fan activity associated with the Internet.

Theorizing (Fan) Media Consumption: Uses and Gratifications Research

Given Jenkins' (2006a) concern with how fans use media technology to suit their needs in the new convergence culture and Sandvoss' (2005) definition of fandom as "the regular, emotionally involved consumption of a given popular narrative or text" (p.8), it is useful to consider fandom in light of a mass communication theory that describes how and why individuals use—or consume—various media. It should be emphasized that a study of online television fandom requires investigating two separate, yet related, acts of media consumption: the viewing of a television program and the browsing of Internet content related to the program.

The uses and gratifications perspective argues that media consumption is the result of specific internal needs that motivate the audience to seek out content to gratify those needs (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974). While research into audience-centered uses of media dates back to the 1930s and 1940s, the seminal theoretical work is largely considered to be Blumler and Katz's 1974 volume, *The Uses of Mass Communication* (Swanson, 1992). In this work, the authors describe the core tenets of the theory as 1) a conception of the audience as active, choosing media based on the benefits/needs fulfillment the media offer; 2) the belief that needs and gratifications sought are subjective and can differ significantly from audience member to audience member; and 3) the belief that the media compete with other sources of need fulfillment (Katz et al., 1974). The authors offer this succinct summary of the theory: The uses and gratifications theory is concerned with "the social and the psychological origins of needs which generate expectations of the mass media or other sources which lead to differential exposure (or engaging in other activities), resulting in need gratification" (Katz et al., 1974, p.20). In short, the objectives of the uses and gratifications theory are to explain how people use media to gratify their needs, to understand motives for media use behavior, and to identify the functions or consequences that stem from needs, motives, and behavior (Katz et al., 1974).

Perhaps the popularity of uses and gratifications theory in communication research lies in its applicability and adaptability to many contexts. According to Lin (1996), "the strength of this theory is its ability to allow researchers to study mediated communication situations via a single or multiple sets of psychological needs, psychological motives, communication channels, communication content, and psychological gratifications within a particular or cross-cultural context" (p.574). Much of the early work using this theory focused on developing categories of motivations or uses of various media (Ruggiero, 2000). With respect to television, Greenberg

(1974) found that school children view television based on eight motivations: pass time, diversion, learning about things, learning about self, arousal, relaxation, companionship, and habit. In an adaptation of Greenberg's (1974) method, Rubin (1977, 1983) developed the Television Viewing Motives Scale to measure the motives of relaxation, companionship, habit, pass time, entertainment, social interaction, information, arousal, and escape. Greenberg's (1974) scale and Rubin's (1977, 1983) adaptation are the most commonly used measures of television viewing motivations (Perse, 1994).

Significantly, Rubin (1983, 1984) has also identified patterns within the range of television viewing gratifications that suggest two types of television viewers: 1) Ritual viewers who watch without regard to program content or program preference and score higher on pass time/habit and escape motives and 2) instrumental viewers who are more selective and purposive in their viewing (i.e., concerned about content) and score higher on information/entertainment-seeking and non-escapist motives. In a series of studies on television viewing patterns, Rubin (1981; 1982; 1983) found evidence for these two television viewer types and later suggested, "These three studies generally support Windhal's (1981) conclusion that media-use may be instrumental or ritualized and further suggest that individuals tend toward one of the two types of viewing, [which] correspond to the general media use orientations often found in uses and gratifications research" (Rubin, 1984; p. 69). Rubin (1984) subsequently identified viewing motivations that correspond to each viewer type; his analysis of 14 viewing motives (which included an additional five motives not included on the Television Viewing Motives Scale: convenience, economics, communication topic, behavioral guidance, and product advertising) revealed that instrumental television viewing was represented by the information, entertainment, and arousal motives, while ritualistic viewing was represented by the pass time, companionship,

habit, escape, and relaxation motives. Furthermore, Rubin (1984) found evidence for a social utility factor that includes the social interaction motivation and operates independently of instrumental and ritualistic viewing. Later research by Finn & Gorr (1988) that utilized Rubin's (1983) Television Viewing Motives Scale also found two main groupings of motives: A cluster the researchers labeled "social compensation motives" represented by the companionship, pass time, habit, and escape motives (traditionally indicative on ritualistic viewing), as well as a cluster labeled "mood management motives" consisting of the relaxation, entertainment, arousal, and information motives, which are typically related to instrumental viewing (Finn & Gorr, 1988). However, Rubin (1984) has acknowledged that ritual and instrumental viewing are not mutually exclusive, but rather interrelated, suggesting that viewing type varies by situation.

The uses and gratifications approach has recently been applied to study motivations for using the Internet. Indeed, a historical review of this theory suggests that it is typically applied to the study of new communication technologies (Ruggiero, 2000). Furthermore, the very nature of the Internet and the requirement for audience activity (a key theoretical component of uses and gratifications) in searching for and browsing content makes the theory especially suited to this medium (Ruggiero, 2000; Song, LaRose, Eastin, & Lin, 2004).

There is considerable debate in the academic literature about how the uses and gratifications theory should be applied to the study of the Internet. One approach has been to apply uses and gratifications constructs from other media to the Internet (Ferguson & Perse, 2000; Lin, 1999; Ruggiero, 2000). The logic of this approach stems from the argument that functionally similar media may gratify similar needs (e.g., Ferguson & Perse, 2000; Kaye & Johnson, 2003; Lin, 2001); after all, a basic proposition of uses and gratifications theory is that various sources compete in need fulfillment (Katz et al., 1974). For example, Lin (1999) found

that the conventional media motivations of surveillance, escape, companionship, identity, and entertainment predicted 47% of the variance in the likelihood of adopting online services. Likewise, in their investigation of the degree to which the Internet served as a functional alternative to television, Ferguson & Perse (2000) found three major and two minor television-related motives for surfing the Internet: entertainment, pass time, relaxation, social interaction, and information.

On the other hand, many more scholars have argued that the unique characteristics of the Internet undermine the validity of applying traditional uses and gratifications typologies to the medium (Chan-Olmsted & Park, 2000; LaRose, Mastro, Eastin, 2001; Ruggiero, 2000; Stafford, Stafford, & Schkade, 2004). Specifically, Chan-Olmsted & Park (2000) have suggested that higher levels of interactivity and personalization make the Internet "inherently very different from the traditional broadcast media" (p.321). Above all, the opportunities for social and interpersonal interaction are those most often cited as differentiating the Internet from traditional media (Song et al., 2004; Stafford et al., 2004). With respect to television, others have argued that Internet functions such as emailing and chatting and activities such as downloading files and certain purchasing behaviors have no functional equivalents in television (Johnson & Kaye, 2003). One result of this line of argument has been the identification of several motivations and gratifications unique to web use; examples of these include: transactional security and privacy, economic motivations, and interactive control (Korgaonkar & Wolin, 1999); sights and sounds, career information, and coolness (Charney & Greenberg, 2001); and personal involvement and personal relevance (Eighmey & McCord, 1998).

Despite these two seemingly divergent approaches to studying uses and gratifications of the Internet compared with those of traditional media, previous research points to some common

ground. It's important to keep in mind that a study of online television fandom is concerned with the interrelated use of two media: television and the Internet. Significantly, Flanagin & Metzger (2001) have noted that uses and gratifications studies comparing gratifications across various media are rare. Seeming to echo the concerns of Henry Jenkins (2006a) outlined earlier, these scholars have argued that such cross-media comparisons are particularly important in a media environment characterized by convergence—an environment in which they hypothesize that rapid technological advances may result in overlapping functional images and the perception of similar need fulfillment among various media options for audiences (Flanagin & Metzger, 2001). Accordingly, in a comparison of the ways in which face-to-face communication, telephones, books and magazines, newspapers, television, email, and the information-retrieval, information-giving, and conversational properties of the Internet related to various need clusters, the authors found that "even fairly new technologies are employed in much the same way as more traditional channels in the fulfillment of a relatively enduring set of needs" (Flanagin & Metzger, 2001, p.175).

Flanagin & Metzger's (2001) conclusion that needs are fairly stable across media discounts the notion of completely discarding previous motivational/gratification inventories when studying motivations for using the Internet in today's new media environment. In addition, the initial application of traditional motivational inventories is arguably more justifiable in the context of online television fandom in which both forms of media use—watching television and browsing the Internet—center on related content (i.e., a particular television show of interest). In line with this reasoning, one approach that aims for a balance between relying exclusively on traditional gratification models and starting fresh with new models for the Internet involves combining traditional mediated motives with interpersonal communication motives that account

for the social and interpersonal opportunities afforded by the Internet (Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000). Consequently, this is the approach adopted in the current study.

Aside from building on established gratification inventories, another similarity between traditional and new media uses and gratifications research involves distinguishing between gratifications obtained from the experience of media consumption itself (process gratifications) and gratifications obtained from the use of specific messages (content gratifications) (Cutler & Danowski, 1980; Swanson, 1992). According to Song et al. (2004), "Process-oriented use of the Internet might be exemplified by those who pass time by browsing for something to catch their interest. A more content-oriented approach might be represented by those who access the Internet looking for a specific bit of information" (p. 385). In this sense, content gratifications of using the Internet are analogous to Rubin's (1983, 1984) concept of instrumental television viewing, whereas process gratifications associated with the Internet are similar to Rubin's (1983, 1984) concept of ritualistic television viewing (Song et al., 2004).

Moving Beyond Descriptives: Television, Audience Activity, & Media Effects

After the establishment of an accepted gratification typology, television uses and gratifications research expanded to investigate the ways in which viewing motives and gratifications and actual media use relate to phenomena such as audience activity and media effects (Swanson, 1992). In other words, uses and gratifications research moved beyond simple description and classification of motives to examine the explanatory value of motives in the overall television viewing experience. The relationship between television viewing motives and audience/viewer activity (one of the core assumptions of the uses and gratifications perspective) is somewhat complex. Overall, research has suggested that audience activity is highly variable, with individuals displaying different types and amounts of activity in different communication

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settings and at different times in the communication process—namely before, during, and after

exposure to content (Levy & Windahl, 1984; Ruggiero, 2000). For example, Levy & Windahl

(1984) found that instrumental television viewing is related to higher levels of activity during

exposure. The variability of the activity concept led Perse & Rubin (1988) to suggest a

multidimensional view of audience activity that includes a pre-exposure measure of viewing

intention, during exposure measures of attention and parasocial interaction, and post-viewing

measures of cognition and discussion in their study of soap opera viewers. Despite these

differing approaches to operationalization, audience activity has been conceptualized as an

intervening variable between media-use motivations and media effects (Perse & Rubin, 1988).

The connection that uses and gratifications research has made between initial viewing

motives, intervening audience-activity variables, and resulting media effects is significant;

according to Swanson (1992), the logic is that "the effects of exposure to media content reflect

not only gratifications sought in the content but also other [active audience] influences such as

attitudes toward the medium and message, dependency on the medium for gratifications, and the

quantity and quality of attention paid to the content" (p.315). This combination of

motives/gratifications and audience activity dimensions has been described as a viewer's media

orientation (McLeod & McDonald, 1985; Swanson, 1992). Although there is some discrepancy

among researchers regarding the audience activity factors that, together with use motives, should

be included in an assessment of one's media orientation, the concept has been heralded as a more

holistic way of applying the uses and gratifications perspective to understand media effects

(Swanson, 1992). Applying the media orientation approach to television research, Rubin & Perse

(1987) found that television news viewers seeking instrumental gratifications from the broadcast

had higher rates of exposure and involvement during the program, which in turn may increase

the effect of news influence on these viewers compared to less involved viewers. Similarly, Perse & Rubin (1988) found that soap opera viewers with instrumental viewing motives and high levels of audience activity (measured as attention to content and parasocial interaction) were more likely to report satisfaction with the program.

The Key Activity of Sandvoss' Fan: Emotional Involvement

At this point, it is worth returning to Sandvoss' (2005) definition of fandom as "the regular, emotionally involved consumption of a given popular narrative or text" (p.8). This quality of emotional involvement is key to conceptualizing fans as an institutionally effective audience (Ettema & Whitney, 1994) because it is exactly what advertisers and television executives hope the currently underdeveloped concept of engagement will eventually measure (Albiniak, 2007). As mentioned earlier, advertisers value engagement because it theoretically translates into advertising impact (Albiniak, 2007; Ernst, Koerner, Jenkins, Shresthova, Theisen, & Chisholm, 2003; Kerschbaumer, 2000). These concepts should map onto the previous discussion of media uses and gratifications based on the following logic: Fan motivations for consuming a particular show combine with the intervening audience-activity variable of engagement to influence the media effect of advertising impact. However, one barrier to empirically investigating this relationship is the absence of a clear operationalization of the audience-activity variable of engagement.

Toward the Concept of Engagement

A concept in the field of consumer research may provide an effective means of measuring engagement. Russell, Norman, & Heckler (2004) have proposed the concept of "connectedness" to describe the qualitative, emotional aspect of television consumption. The authors defined connectedness as "the level of intensity of the relationship(s) that a viewer develops with the

characters and contextual settings of a program in the para-social television environment"
(Russell et al., 2004, p. 152). In a para-social relationship, users of mass media interact and
identify with mass media representations of humans (celebrities, characters, etc) in a manner
similar to typical social relationships (Horton & Wohl, 1956). Significantly, the authors indicated
that "connectedness extends beyond the mere viewing experience by capturing the extent to
which a TV program contributes to a viewer's self and social identity" (Russell et al., 2004, p.
152). Connectedness can range from simply liking and attending to a program to obsessing over
a show and its characters (Russell et al., 2004). Notably, in early exploratory research on
connectedness, Russell and Puto (1999) suggested that extreme connectedness is characteristic of
media fandom.

In their conceptual work on television program connectedness, Russell et al. (2004)
provided support for the notion that connectedness is separate from the related concepts of
attitude toward the program, program involvement, and overall television viewing; they found
that unlike these concepts, connectedness accounts for the strong identification and para-social
relationships that viewers develop with shows and/or characters. Specifically, they found:

> Highly connected viewers are likely to consider the program content part of their world
> and to mold characteristics of their own life after the lives of the characters in the show.
> Because of the relationships they have with the characters, they are interested in the types
> of consumption displayed on the show and, as a result, they pay more attention to these
> consumption portrayals and become more familiar with the premise and the characters
> (Russell et al., 2004, p. 156).

The researchers' finding that connectedness is distinct from frequency of television
viewing is especially important in the context of the current study, which measures fan viewing

frequency as well as connectedness. The authors suggest that frequent exposure to television content does not characterize the emotional relationships that viewers selectively form with shows; in other words, a heavy viewer of a program may not be particularly connected to the program in the qualitative sense of developing intense, parasocial relationships with the program and its characters (Russell et al., 2004).

In an attempt to further validate the concept of connectedness, the authors designed several studies to compare the predictive ability of connectedness with that of attitude, involvement, and overall television viewing on several psychological and social variables.

The psychological variables examined relate connectedness to the cognitive processing of programming information; according to Russell et al. (2004):

The construct of connectedness suggests that the processing and storage of program-specific information will differ between individuals at high and low levels of the construct. Because of the strong relationships they enjoy with the program, highly connected viewers find the information in it more essential to their lives than less connected viewers (p.156)

Research has shown that these processing effects of connectedness extend to the advertising messages placed within shows (Lu & Lo, 2007; Russell, 1998; Russell et al., 2004). This research linking connectedness with advertising impact hints at the concept's applicability to a study of fan behavior focused on how emotionally-involved television consumption could result in audience value. According to Russell et al. (2004), "…TV programs remain a major context for advertising messages and, as such, can generate certain emotional responses or feeling states or certain liking responses that affect the impact of the messages placed within them" (p. 151). Specifically, scholars have shown that as connectedness increases, memory for product

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placements improves, even when controlling for attitude toward the show, involvement, and overall TV viewing (Russell, 1998; Russell et al., 2004). More recent research has demonstrated that a viewer's level of connectedness positively predicts program satisfaction, which in turn positively predicts the likelihood of watching program advertisements (instead of changing channels during commercial breaks) so as not to miss upcoming content (Lu & Lo, 2007).

Beyond these psychological consequences of connectedness, the scholars suggested that connectedness to television programs also has important social implications; as Russell et al. (2004) explained: "As an individual becomes more deeply bonded with a program, that individual will not only have a greater opportunity for social interaction but will also be more likely to seek out interactions with other viewers of the same program" (p.156). The authors found support for the proposition that as connectedness increases, so will a) the frequency of show-related social interaction with others, b) the relationships within the community of co-viewers, and c) the size of the viewer's social network of co-consumers, even when controlling for attitude toward the show, viewer involvement, and overall TV viewing (Russell et al., 2004). This finding is especially interesting in the context of online television fandom where a significant amount of fan activity consists of socializing with other fans of the show in chat rooms or on message boards.

Based on research suggesting that connectedness is distinct from the concepts of attitude toward the program, involvement, and overall television viewing, as well as research demonstrating that connectedness is positively related to advertising impact, the current study proposes measuring the concept of engagement in light of the connectedness construct. In this sense, connectedness represents the missing link in the relationship between uses and gratifications, audience-activity variables, and media effects described earlier: Fan motivations

for consuming a particular show [uses and gratifications] combine with the engagement metric of "connectedness" [the intervening audience-activity variable]; the interaction of these two forms one's media orientation, which in turn influences advertising impact [the media effect].

Demonstrating the end effect of advertising impact is beyond the scope of this study. However, the goal of the current study is to apply the first part of the model—the relationship between media-use motivations and the audience-activity variable of engagement/connectedness—to a study of online television fandom as a means of exploring how fan media use orientations are related to choice of fansite. This conceptual model is depicted in Figure 1. At this point, it is worth noting that while the model in Figure 1 defines a fan's media orientation as the independent variable and site choice as the dependent variable, the design of this study necessitates reversing this relationship when testing hypotheses. Fans participants are recruited based on their current use of corporate-controlled or independent fansites, and differences in media-use motives and connectedness are assessed between the two groups; therefore, in a practical sense, the type of fansite serves as the independent variable while media-use motives and connectedness serve as dependent variables in this study.

In turn, the goal of this study is to explore the interaction of media-use motives and the audience activity construct of connectedness to develop profiles of the types of fans likely to be attracted to corporate-controlled and independent fansites; these profiles will serve as a means of assessing the differential "value" of fan visitors to each type of site. Relying on previous research in the areas of media uses and gratifications, consumer research, media management, and fan studies, the following research questions and hypotheses are proposed to test the relationships between the variables specified in Figure 1.
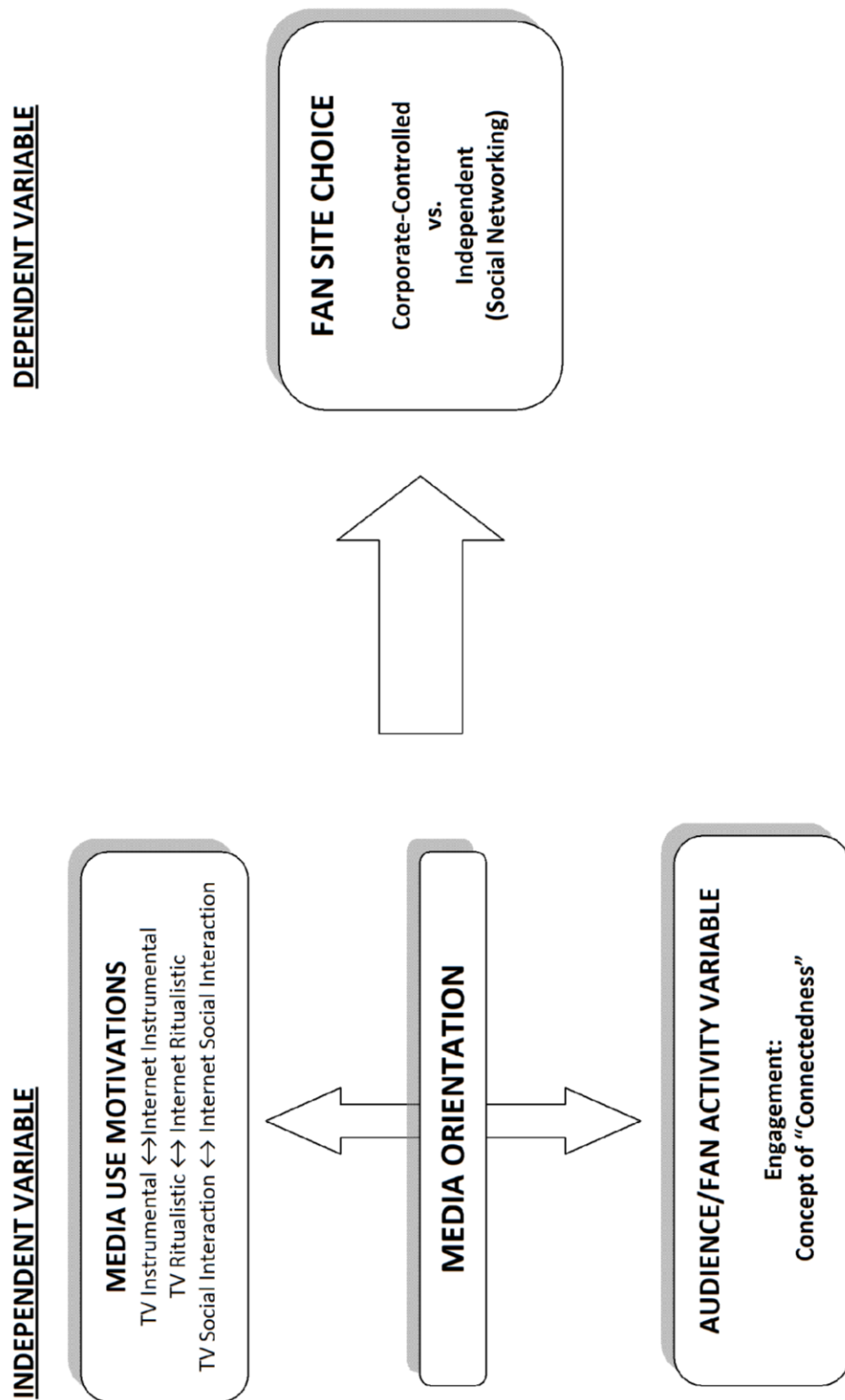
Figure 1. Proposed Uses & Gratifications Model of Television Fan Site Choice

RQ1: How are motives for watching a favorite television show related to the type of site visited—i.e., corporate-controlled versus independent?

H1a: Visitors to corporate-controlled fansites will score significantly higher on instrumental motives for watching a favorite television show than will visitors to independent fansites.

H1b: Visitors to independent fansites will score significantly higher on ritualistic motives for watching a favorite television show than will visitors to corporate-controlled fansites.

H1c: Visitors to independent fansites will score significantly higher on social-interaction motives for watching a favorite television show than will visitors to corporate-controlled fansites.

RQ1 examines the relationship between type of fansite visited (independent variable) and

the reported motives for watching a favorite television program (dependent variable). Building

on previous research, H1a and H1b distinguish between instrumental (more active) and ritualistic

(more passive) motives to test the assumption that instrumental (goal-directed, purposeful,

content specific) viewing motivations drive fans to corporate-controlled fansites due to their

status as "official," corporate-sanctioned sources of information and content, whereas ritualistic

(escapist, general) viewing motivations are more likely to steer fans to more independent, social

networking sites that may offer more medium-centric gratifications, since social networking sites

encourage the use of the medium of the Intenet for social activity. Effectively testing these

hypotheses requires identifying which motives distinguish instrumental from ritualistic media

use. In practice, the results of the factor analysis techniques may reveal that items load

differently than expected based on the eight initial dimensions, but Rubin's (1984) early work

and subsequent research on viewer types provides a starting point for differentiating between

instrumental and ritualistic viewer types. His work revealed that instrumental television viewing

was represented by the information, entertainment, and arousal motives, while ritualistic viewing

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was represented by the pass time, companionship, habit, escape, and relaxation motives (Rubin, 1984).

A key point about H1c is worth noting: This hypothesis is somewhat more exploratory than the others in that it attempts to isolate the six-item Social Interaction dimension from the instrumental/ritualistic dichotomy in order to observe differences in this singular dimension among the group. The intent is to explore how this arguably Internet-centric gratification (Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000) manifests itself in the context of television viewing among visitors to the two types of sites. Previous research lends support to the notion of isolating the Social Interaction dimension; Rubin (1984) noted the independence of a social utility factor separate from the instrumental and ritualistic viewing patterns he identified; Finn & Gorr (1988) also argued that the Social Interaction dimension should be analyzed discretely from the other eight dimensions on the Television Viewing Motives Scale; according to these researchers:

> We do not believe there is a theoretical justification for placing the social-interaction motivation into either the social-compensation [read: ritualistic] or the mood-management [read: instrumental] cluster. Our opinion is bolstered by Blumler (1985, p.50) who specifically cites Rubin's social-interaction motivation as historically distinct from the other eight. Blumler categorizes it as a 'social utility function' that in a limited way approaches his notion of 'communication-for-social-identity' (p.154).

RQ2: How are motives for browsing Internet fansites associated with a favorite television show related to the type of site visited—i.e., corporate-controlled versus independent?

H2a: Visitors to corporate-controlled fansites will score significantly higher on instrumental motives for web activity associated with a favorite show than will visitors to independent fansites.

H2b: Visitors to independent fansites will score significantly higher on ritualistic motives for web activity associated with a favorite show than will visitors to corporate-controlled fansites.

H2c: Visitors to independent fansites will score significantly higher on social-interaction motives for web activity associated with a favorite show than will visitors to corporate-controlled fansites.

RQ2 and its hypotheses test the same assumptions of RQ1, but simply shift the context of media-use motives (the dependent variable) from watching a favorite television show to browsing Internet content related to the show. H2c of RQ2 also maintains the exploratory link between type of site and social interaction motives; one would expect the hypothesized relationship to be even stronger in the context of web-based motives, especially since independent, social networking fansites are inherently predicated on social interaction (Faust & Wasserman, 1994).

RQ3: How is a fan's level of connectedness related to the type of site visited—i.e., corporate-controlled versus independent?

H3a: Visitors to corporate-controlled fansites will score significantly higher on measures of connectedness to a favorite show than will visitors to independent fansites.

RQ3 investigates the link between connectedness and site type, with H3a predicting that connectedness will be greater for visitors to official fansites. This prediction is based on previous research indicating that corporate controlled fansites are designed to foster and reinforce an engaged audience; as Ha (2002) has noted, these sites typically "…aim at building better relationships with the fans of a show by providing opportunities to learn more about and/or connect with the show and its stars" (p.235).

RQ4: How are the motives for watching a favorite television show related to the motives for browsing Internet fansites associated with the show? How is this relationship affected by type of fansite visited?

H4a: Instrumental motives for watching a favorite television show will correlate most strongly with instrumental motives for browsing Internet fansites associated with the show (compared with ritualistic and social interaction browsing motives).

H4b: The effect in H4a will be greater for visitors to corporate controlled sites than for visitors to social networking sites.

H4c: Ritualistic motives for watching a favorite television show will correlate most strongly with ritualistic motives for browsing Internet fansites associated with the show (compared with instrumental and social interaction browsing motives).

H4d: The effect in H4c will be greater for visitors to independent sites than for visitors to corporate controlled sites.

H4e: Social interaction motives for watching a favorite television show will correlate most strongly with social interaction motives for browsing Internet fansites associated with the show (compared with instrumental and social interaction browsing motives).

H4f: The effect in H4e will be greater for visitors to independent sites than for visitors to corporate controlled sites.

RQ4 shifts the focus to exploring the ways in which types of media-use motives correlate

between watching a favorite television show and motives for browsing related Internet content,

testing the assumption that similar motives will positively correlate between both types of media

use. Moreover, H4b, H4d, and H4f predict degrees of difference in observed correlations based

on type of site visited.

RQ5: How is a fan's level of connectedness related to motives for watching a favorite television show? How is this relationship affected by type of fansite visited?

H5a: Scores on the connectedness scale will correlate most strongly with instrumental motives for watching a favorite television show (compared with ritualistic and social interaction viewing motives).

H5b: The effect in H4a will be greater for visitors to corporate controlled sites than for visitors to independent sites.

RQ5 examines the relationship between motives for watching a favorite television

program (independent variable) and scores on the proposed engagement construct of

connectedness (dependent variable). H5a predicts that instrumental viewing motives (i.e., more

active, goal-directed, content specific motives) will more strongly correlate with scores on the

connectedness scale than ritualistic viewing motives. This prediction is based on previous

research that has shown that audience activity measures (like the construct of "connectedness" in

the current study) are often more closely associated with instrumental media-use motives (Levy

& Windahl, 1984; Perse & Rubin, 1988; Rubin & Perse, 1987). H5b again predicts a degree of

difference in this relationship based on the type of fansite the viewer visits, proposing a greater

effect among visitors to corporate sites, which is based on the hypothesis that instrumental

viewers are more likely to visit corporate-controlled fansites. Again, the relationship between

television viewing motives and connectedness is significant because connectedness is linked to

advertising effects (Lu & Lo, 2007; Russell, 1998; Russell et al., 2004), the desirable end-game

of advertiser and television network preoccupation with pinpointing engagement.

RQ6: How is a fan's level of connectedness related to motives for browsing Internet fansites associated with a favorite television show? How is this relationship affected by type of fansite visited?

H6a: Scores on the connectedness scale will correlate most strongly with instrumental motives for browsing Internet fansites associated with a favorite television show (compared with ritualistic and social interaction browsing motives).

H6b: The effect in H4a will be greater for visitors to corporate-controlled sites than for visitors to independent sites.

RQ6 and its associated hypotheses are similar to RQ5, but explore the relationship

between the connectedness construct and Internet browsing motives while preserving the

predicted relationships of a stronger effect for visitors to official, corporate-controlled fansites.

Figure 2 provides a graphical representation of the predicted relationships between

media-use motives, connectedness, and fan site choice outlined above. In this figure, the size of

the motive and connectedness boxes indicate relative magnitude between the two groups, the

weight of the arrows indicate relative strength of correlation, and red arrows indicate a

significantly higher positive correlation between the two groups.
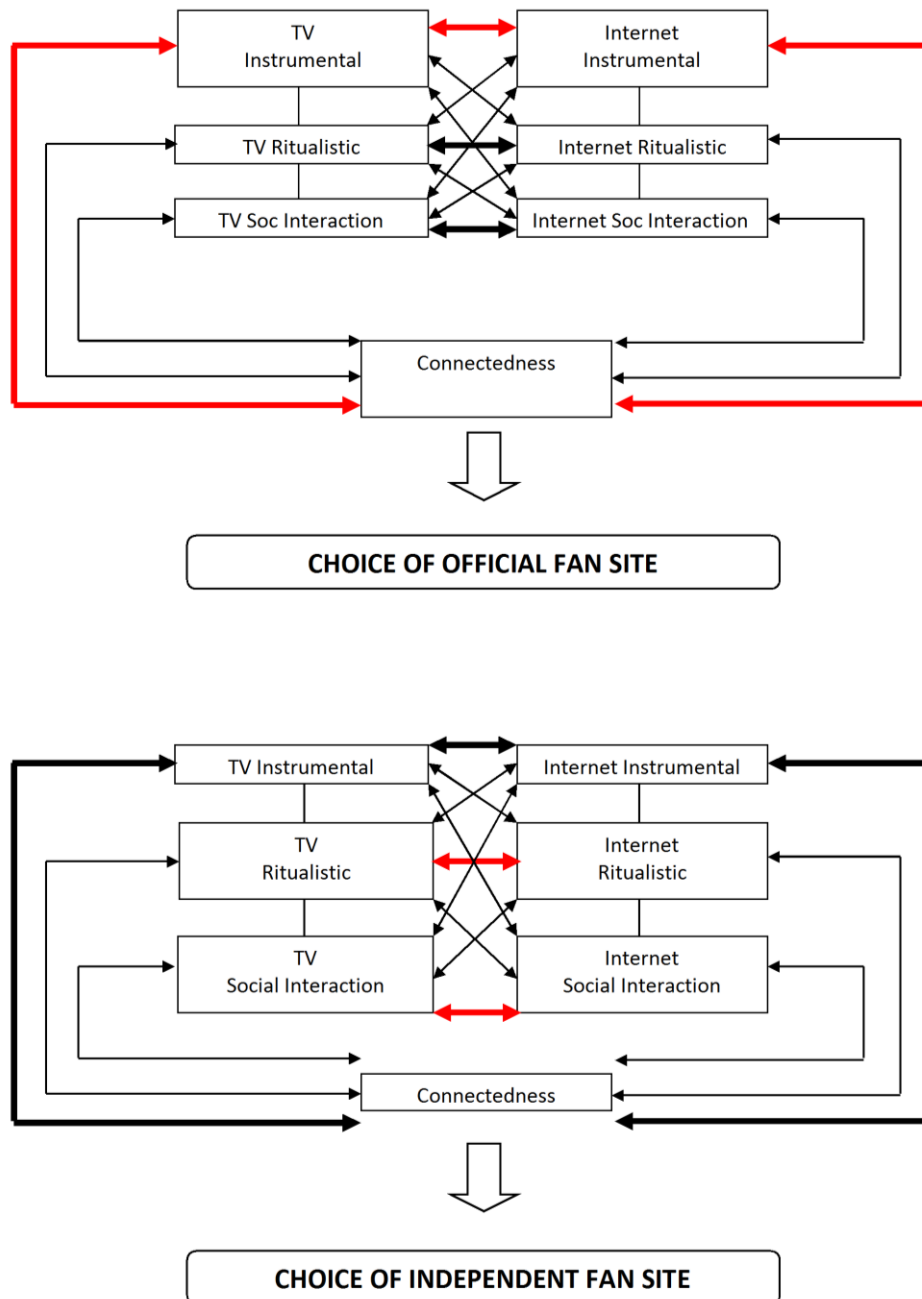
Figure 2. Predicted Relationships Between Media-use motives and Connectedness Among Visitors to Official and Independent Fansites

Note. The size of the motive and connectedness boxes indicates relative magnitude between the two groups. The weight of the arrows indicates relative strength of correlation. Red arrows indicate the prediction of a significantly higher positive correlation between the two groups.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

General Research Design

This study uses a survey research design. The focus of this study is on differences in fan

viewing orientations among visitors to corporate-controlled versus independent television

fansites. As such, the individual viewer represents the unit of analysis, and the population for this

study is characterized as all adult (age 18+) visitors to corporate-controlled and independent

television fan websites.

In this study, corporate-controlled fansites are defined as those sites devoted to a specific

television program that are owned and maintained by a television network, such that there is a

direct hyperlink to the site from the television network's homepage. In contrast, independent

fansites are defined as sites devoted to a specific television program but which appear to be free

from corporate control or interest, instead created and maintained by an individual viewer or

collection of viewers. As previously mentioned, Henry Jenkins (2006b) has noted that traditional

webpages, discussion lists, mailing groups, web rings, and chat rooms are all examples of

independent, online fan activity. However, this study restricts its analysis of independent fansites

to one of the newest incarnations of this kind—the social network group. Online social

networking websites have exploded onto the Internet scene in the past few years. These sites

offer a combination of web-based features such as instant messaging, blogging, interest groups,

public commenting, music, photo and video sharing, and email. Users create personal profile

pages and invite others to do the same, thus creating a complex virtual social network. Broadly

defined, a social network is made up of users and the relations, or collection of connections, between these users (Faust & Wasserman, 1994).

Two of the most popular social networking sites are Facebook.com and MySpace.com. Facebook.com was developed in 2004, and as of January 2008 the site had more than 60 million registered users (TechRadar, 2008). MySpace.com has more than 110 million users (TechRadar, 2008), and the site was established in 2003 with the goal of creating a website that would offer multiple features and allow users to mobilize around similar interests (Correa, 2004). It is precisely this shared interest element that makes these sites especially ripe for the study of fandom. Specifically, the sites allow users to create and maintain virtual groups around almost any subject, including television programs.

An online survey was administered to a convenience, self-selected sample of visitors to both types of sites associated with network-based comedy, drama, and reality television television programs, as these are the types of programs most typically associated with the emotional aspect of fan behavior described by Sandvoss (2005). Here, it's important to note that this study was conducted in the aftermath of the 2008 Writers Guild of America Strike, which lasted from November 2007 to February 2008 and had a significant impact on the network's programming schedules (CNN.com, 2008). Comedy, drama, and reality-based programs on the networks' post-strike, prime-time programming schedules that met the following criteria were initially considered for analysis: First, the show had to have a corporate-controlled website that featured a message/bulletin board, as this was the method selected for recruiting fan participants; this resulted in an initial pool of 68 prime time network programs across the five major broadcast networks. Second, the combined group membership of the social networking groups devoted to the show had to equal at least 5,000, as this was the sampling cutoff selected with the goal of

exposing an adequate number of potential respondents from social networking groups to the recruitment message as compared with the volume of visitors to corporate sites. This second requirement reduced the initial pool of 68 programs to a final pool of 24 programs—five from ABC, five from CBS, five from NBC, four from FOX, and five from the CW.

The survey method was employed in this study because it is a useful means of measuring attitudes and orientations in large populations that are difficult to observe directly (Babbie, 2001). The very nature of online television fandom—a sizeable number of viewers spread over a vast array of websites—suggests that a survey is the most effective and efficient method of data collection for this population. In particular, because the population of interest is inherently Internet-based, this study required the use of *online* survey research. Van Selm & Jankowski (2006) have suggested that two reasons researchers may choose to utilize online surveys are to study a population with Internet experience and to research populations with special interests that may coalesce in the virtual space provided by the Internet; both of these characteristics describe the population of online television fans. Other researchers have acknowledged that there are substantial advantages and disadvantages to online survey research that scholars should consider. Some of the most widely cited advantages of this method include the ability to gain access to groups that are difficult to reach or non-existent outside the virtual world (Garton, Haythornthwaite, & Wellman, 1999), the time-saving capacity of communicating electronically with numerous potential respondents and receiving data in an electronic, ready-to-use format (Sills & Song, 2002; Wright, 2005), and the cost effectiveness of using electronic communication and dissemination methods as compared to the high reproduction costs associated with traditional paper survey mailings (Llieva, Baron, & Healy, 2002; Mann & Stewart, 2000). Within the realm of online survey research techniques, Pitkow & Recker (1995)

have suggested that web-based questionnaires offer a number of advantages over questionnaires sent by email, including the possibility of point-and-click responses, the provision of structured responses, electronic data collation, and the ability to program adaptive questions and control skip patterns of measurements.

Aside from these potential benefits, there are several downsides to online survey research, most of which involve sampling issues and sample bias (Van Selm & Jankowski, 2006; Wright, 2005). Van Selm & Jankowski (2006) have suggested that "Achieving a random sample of Internet users is problematic, if not impossible" (p. 439). On the macro scale, the authors have asserted that this problem stems from the fact that there is no single registry of Internet users from which to construct a complete sampling frame (Van Selm & Jankowski, 2006). Wright (2005) has argued that this problem persists even in more seemingly bounded online groups or communities, since many of these groups do not require users to register and those with a registration requirement rarely provide comprehensive membership lists featuring email addresses because of privacy concerns. According to Wright (2005):

> Some researchers attempt to establish a sampling frame by counting the number of
> participants in an online community, or the published number of members, over a given
> period of time. In either case, the ebb and flow of communication in online communities
> can make it difficult to establish an accurate sampling frame…Some people are
> 'regulars,' who may make daily contributions to discussions, while others only
> participate intermittently. Furthermore, 'lurkers,' or individuals who read posts but do not
> send messages, may complete an online survey even though they are not visible to the
> rest of the community…Because lurkers do not make their presence known to the group,
> this makes it difficult to obtain an accurate sampling frame or an accurate estimate of the

population characteristics. (Generating a Sample from an Online Community section, para. 1)

This inability to estimate population characteristics in the online research environment leads to other complexities, including uncertainty regarding sample representativeness and a lack of confidence in estimating sampling error; furthermore, even if a researcher submits to non-probabilistic research, inaccurate knowledge of sample and population characteristics even makes it difficult to report an accurate response rate (Van Selm & Jankowski, 2006). Another problem particularly related to sample representativeness in online survey research is self-selection bias (Stanton, 1998; Wright, 2005). Wright (2005) has suggested that some individuals in an online community will be more likely to respond to a survey invitation than others, thus creating a systematic bias. This self-selection bias is further compounded when—due to the absence of sampling frames and reliable contact information—open invitations to surveys are posted in online communities. The author explained that all of these factors effectively inhibit a researcher's ability to make generalizations about online survey research findings:

> This, in turn, limits [a researcher's] ability to estimate population parameters, which
> presents the greatest threat to conducting probability research. For researchers interested
> only in conducting nonprobability research, these issues are somewhat less of a concern.
> Researchers who use nonprobability samples assume that they will not be able to estimate
> population parameters. (Other Sampling Concerns section, para. 3)

Each of the web-based research issues outlined above hinders the generalizability of this study's findings. The structure and communicative capabilities available on both corporate-controlled and social networking websites necessitated the recruitment of participants via open invitations on site message boards, thus introducing the possibility of systematic, self-selection

bias (i.e., non-randomness) described earlier. In addition, the fact that both types of sites are public and do not require visitors to register before viewing message board posts (i.e, a strong potential for invisible "lurkers") makes it impossible to report accurate response rates. These limitations highlight the exploratory nature of this study's focus on online television fandom and are acknowledged at this point so that the findings presented hereafter can be judged within the context and confines of the web-based research setting.

The online survey instrument was created using the web-based survey tool SurveyGizmo.com. The recommendations of several researchers were taken into account when designing the online survey. For example, Sheehan & McMillan (1999) have proposed that length is an especially important factor in online survey design, as a traditional print page can consume the space of multiple computer screens; the authors suggested that respondents' perceptions of excessive length may negatively influence response rates. Accordingly, every effort was made to include only the minimum number of survey items needed to address the proposed research questions. Similarly, Dillman, Tortora, Conradt, & Bowker (1998) found that plain questionnaires—as opposed to those featuring fancy graphics—provided better results in terms of response rate and survey completeness. Finally, Couper, Traugott, & Lamias (2001) found that using multiple-item screens and incorporating radio buttons reduced the amount of missing data and resulted in faster completion times. These style elements also were incorporated into the design of the online survey created for this study, which was strictly text-based and featured several screens with varying question types presented on a neutral background. Aside from its versatile design tools, the SurveyGizmo service also included the benefits of automatic SPSS data file creation, the use of secure-socket technology to encrypt information and help

ensure privacy, and protection against multiple survey submissions using cookies and IP address verification.

Development of Survey Measures

Survey measures consisted of media-use motivation scales for television and the Internet, a scale of television show connectedness, several exploratory measures of frequency and patterns of media use, and standard demographic measures of gender, education, ethnicity, and income. The Television-Internet Fan Survey developed for this study is featured in Appendix A. Rubin's (1983) Television Viewing Motives Scale served as the basis for developing the joint television and Internet motives scale used in this study. The survey included items designed to measure the nine original dimensions of the study—relaxation, companionship, habit, pass time, entertainment, social interaction, information, arousal, and escape. The review of literature mentioned that this study would create a single gratification inventory to measure gratifications obtained from both watching a favorite television program and browsing Internet content associated with the show as a means of assessing how patterns of motivations vary among respondents between these two media. To this end, several modifications were made to Rubin's (1983) original Television Viewing Motives Scale in an effort to extend its applicability to the Internet. Specifically, two of the original Information items—"So I can learn how to do things which I haven't done before" and "So I could learn what could happen to me"—were replaced by three Information items later suggested in Ko, Cho & Roberts' (2005) study of Internet use that were deemed more appropriate to measure content-specific television and Internet use. These items included "To learn about unknown things," "It's a good way to get information," and "To learn about useful things."

In addition, Rubin's (1983) original Social Interaction items were similarly modified for the purpose of contextual fit, especially since scholars have previously noted that Social Interaction is a particularly relevant Internet-use motive (Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000; Ko, Cho, & Roberts, 2005; Stafford, Stafford, & Schkade, 2004). Specifically, two of Rubin's (1983) original items—"Because it's something to do when friends come over" and "So I can talk with other people about what's on" [Note: "what's on" in the previous statement was replaced with "the show" for specificity]—were retained and supplemented with four additional items from Social Interaction dimensions outlined in previous research on Internet-use motivations that were judged to also translate to television viewing. These items included three from Papacharissi & Rubin (2000)—"To belong to a group," "To get more points of view," and "To meet new people"—and one from Ko, Cho, & Roberts (2005): "To meet people with my interests."

Aside from slight modifications to the Information and Social Interaction dimensions, the additional 27 items comprising Rubin's (1983) seven other original dimensions were reproduced exactly, resulting in a total of 31 items representing nine dimensions that were repeated on both the television and Internet-use motives scales. The survey presented respondents with a randomized list of the 31 proposed items and asked them to indicate their level of agreement with the statements similar to "I watch television because (INSERT GRATIFICATION ITEM)" based on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." In a survey of previous research that has incorporated Rubin's (1983) original scale construction, Perse (1994) has reported that Cronbach alphas tend to support the reliability of motive dimensions; alphas for each dimension are typically in the range of .62 to .87 (Perse, 1994). In addition, Perse (1994) noted that earlier research in which Rubin (1981) recruited a large sample of viewers and solicited open-ended statements describing reasons for watching television led to

scale refinement and thus supports the scale's content validity. Finally, Perse (1994) also

suggested that Rubin (1983) achieved construct validity of the scale by "finding a .93 Kendall's

Coefficient of Concordance comparing rankings of open-ended viewing motivation responses to

responses to the 30 Likert motive items in his sample of 626 persons" (p. 373).

The connectedness scale was developed by Russell et al. (2004) and includes fifteen

items designed to measure the six dimensions of Escape, Fashion, Imitation, Modeling,

Aspiration, and Paraphernalia. The authors report interfactor correlations ranging from .146 to

.619 and present the results of statistical tests that differentiate connectedness from related

measures such as attitude toward the show, involvement, and overall television viewing as

evidence of the scale's discriminant validity (Russell et al., 2004). Together, the media-use

motives scales and the connectedness scale from the basis for testing the relationships specified

in Figure 2.

Beyond the measures that directly relate to the relationships specified in the model, the

survey included several exploratory measures to gauge frequency and patterns of fan-related

media use. Respondents were asked to specify the number of the show's last five regular airings

they watched, and they were also asked to contextualize their last five viewings of the show

among the following: live broadcast viewing, DVR/VCR timeshifted viewing, online streaming

video viewing, downloaded viewing, or other viewing. Respondents were also asked to report

the name of the show from whose affiliated site or group they accessed the survey link; in

addition, respondents from social networking groups were asked to indicate the service—

Facebook or MySpace—hosting the group. Frequency of site visits was gauged based on the

following choices: several times a day, almost every day, a couple times a week, once a week,

every couple weeks, once a month, and almost never. Significantly, cross-site use (visitors to

official fansites also visiting social networking sites and vice versa) was investigated by asking respondents whether or not they had ever visited a site of the opposing type, and those who answered "yes" were asked to indicate the frequency of cross-site type use according to the same frequency scale just described. Since subjects were recruited from site message boards, active use of this site feature was assessed by asking respondents whether or not they had ever posted a comment to the site's message board; those who answered "yes" were asked to indicate the approximate number of posts they made to the site's message board in the last three months. Overall use of site features was measured by asking respondents to rate the frequency with which they use various site features based on a five-point Likert scale anchored by "Always" and "Never;" these features included news feeds/announcements, video archive, photo archive, blogs, downloads (e.g. desktop wallpapers, screen savers, icons), cast biographies, episode guide, chat rooms, message boards/forums, games/quizzes/trivia, contest/sweepstakes, polls, podcasts, user-created content (e.g. fan art, fan fiction, fan videos), and shopping/merchandise. Due to inconsistencies in fansite/group designs, respondents were also provided with a "Not Available" option for each feature. Finally, respondents were asked to indicate which one of the previous features was most important in their decision to visit the site. In addition to these exploratory measures, the survey collected standard demographic information about respondents, including gender, age, education, ethnicity, and income.

At this point, it is worth emphasizing the distinction between the measures of motivation, connectedness, and frequency of use included in the survey. Frequency of use is a quantitative measure of how often a respondent is exposed to media—i.e., four of the last five airings, or several times a week. On the other hand, the measures of motivation and connectedness represent attempts to quantify (based on a scale) a respondent's qualitative relationship to media.

Therefore, as alluded to by Russell et al. (2004), it is possible to view a program frequently but not be very connected to it in the qualitative, emotional sense of the construct. The same holds for motivation; a respondent can be "more motivated" in the sense that *when they do use the media*, they are more likely to do so for information, entertainment, relaxation, etc. but still actually use the media less frequently.

Recruitment Procedures

As previously described, participants were recruited by posting invitations (consisting of a brief explanation of the project and a link to the survey; see Appendix B) on bulletin boards and/or forums associated with each site or group included in the study. The invitation was posted under a new thread entitled "Attention (INSERT SHOW NAME) fans!" on each site or group's forum page.

While there was only a single corporate-controlled fansite and corresponding forum for each show, multiple social networking fangroups for each program were selected to receive survey invitations based on the following method: A search was conducted on each show's title under the Groups menu of both the Facebook and MySpace sites. Both services allow a user to refine search results based on group categories, and several categories likely to contain fangroups devoted to television shows were identified for each service—on Facebook these categories included Arts & Entertainment-Television and Just For Fun-Fan Clubs, while on MySpace these categories were Film & Television, Entertainment, & Fan Clubs. For each show, separate Facebook and MySpace group lists under these categories were constructed; a group was listed if a) it was public, since this was a necessary condition for posting survey invitations and b) it consisted of at least 50 members, as groups of fewer than 50 were deemed inefficient for sampling purposes because many of these smaller groups are "inactive."

Each list was sorted in ascending order (numerically by ten-digit group ID number for Facebook groups and alphabetically by group name for MySpace groups). For each show, a random number generator was used to alternately select a group from its Facebook and MySpace lists until the sampling quota of 5,000 registered group members was reached. In the event that a particular social networking service featured fewer groups than necessary to reach the 5,000 member quota using the alternating selection pattern (which typically occurred when MySpace featured smaller number of groups relative to Facebook), the remaining groups were randomly selected from the other service's group list.

In order to comply with research requirements of the University of Georgia's Institutional Review Board, only adult site visitors (ages 18 and older) were allowed to complete the survey. Participants were required to accept an online consent form that specified age requirements and informed them of the anonymous nature of data collection before being allowed to complete the survey.

Initial survey invitations were posted to the 24 corporate-controlled fansite message boards on April 26, 2008, and invitations were posted to the 222 randomly sampled social networking groups on April 26-27, 2008. In addition, a follow-up "reminder" post was made to all sites on May 15-16, 2008, approximately two weeks into the data collection phase (see Appendix C for the text of the follow-up post). The survey was terminated on May 30, 2008 with a total of 936 completions—598 from corporate-controlled, official fansites and 338 from social networking groups. Table 1 lists the number and percent of total surveys received from each show by site type, as well as the number of sampled groups and the number of registered members for the social networking groups by show.

Data Analysis

Data from the online fan survey were analyzed using several statistical techniques. At this point, it is worth revisiting the fact that since an opt-in survey invitation was the only feasible means of recruiting online television fans, responses to the survey were obtained in a non-random, non-probabilistic manner. Strictly speaking, the use of inferential statistics is predicated on random sampling, since resulting significance tests are meaningful only if all members of a population have a known chance of being selected in a sample (Garson, 2008). However, in deference to the widespread social science practice of using inferential statistics and reporting significance levels for nonprobability samples as a convenient—if arbitrary— assessment criterion (Oakes, 1986), significance levels have been reported in the discussion of findings related to this study.

Non-random sampling also introduces the possibility of violating one or more of the core assumptions of parametric data, on which many statistical procedures are based. Field (2005) noted that parametric statistical tests assume data are normally distributed, data feature homogeneity of variance, variables are measured at the interval level, and observations are independent of one another. In the event that data violate one or more of these assumptions, non-parametric procedures—which in particular relax the assumption of normally distributed data— may be used (Field, 2005). The key data in this study consist of responses to Likert scale questions regarding media-use motives and connectedness. Strictly speaking, Likert scales represent a form of ordinal measurement (Field, 2005), however, according to Garson (2008), Likert scales with at least five categories are commonly used with statistical procedures requiring interval data. In a recent review of the literature on this topic, Jaccard and Wan (1996) summarize, "for many statistical tests, rather severe departures (from intervalness) do not seem

to affect Type I and Type II errors dramatically" (p. 4). Even though variables measured based on Likert scales are often treated as interval, an initial data screen revealed that several of these key variables may exhibit overall departures from normality, since skewness and kurtosis were often beyond the recommended range of ± 1 that typically indicates a normal distribution (Field, 2005). Accordingly, non-parametric statistical tests were used to explore the relationships outlined in the hypotheses; specifically, the Wilcoxon rank-sum test was used to test for differences in means between visitors to both types of sites, while Spearman's rho was used to assess correlations (Field, 2005).

This study relies heavily on scales designed to measure underlying, latent constructs such as media-use motives and dimensions of connectedness. A statistical procedure known as factor analysis can be used to determine how relationships among a set of measured variables correspond to these latent constructs, or factors (Field, 2005). There are two types of factor analysis: Confirmatory factor analysis is a deductive method in which a researcher hypothesizes a relationship between factors and underlying variables and uses a variation of structural equation modeling to determine the "fit" of the proposed model to the data (Meyers, Gamst, & Guarino, 2006). In contrast, exploratory factor analysis in a more inductive approach to uncovering latent constructs because factors materialize as a function of the statistical correlations between variables, with no structure imposed by the researcher a priori (Meyers et al., 2006).

Exploratory factor analysis is commonly used in the context of media uses and gratifications research (e.g., Rubin, 1983; 1984; Rubin & Perse, 1987; Finn & Gorr, 1988; Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000). This technique is especially applicable to the current study's goal of comparing differences in motivations across media within a specific audience (television

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fans); furthermore, exploratory methods will also be useful for judging the extent to which traditional television-use motivations translate to the medium of the Internet, as well as for identifying how the modifications to Rubin's (1983) original statements affect the factor loadings. In short, while past research will guide the overall assessment of factors that emerge from the analysis—especially regarding the categorization of instrumental and ritualistic viewing motives—the exploratory method seems best-suited for this research.

Researchers using exploratory factor analysis have several options available for uncovering the factor structure of a set of variables (for a comprehensive overview of each option, see Field (2005) and Meyers et al. (2006)). This study uses the method of principal components analysis with oblique (promax) rotation, which is concerned with revealing the linear components that exist in a data set and determining how variables contribute to these components (Field, 2005). In factor analysis, rotation is used to maximize the loadings of a variable onto a single factor, thereby improving the interpretability of the resulting factor structure (Field, 2005). According to Field (2005), oblique rotation is chosen when there is a theoretical basis to suppose factors may be correlated (the counterpart to oblique rotation is orthogonal rotation, which keeps factors independent and uncorrelated). The choice of an oblique rotation strategy is supported by previous uses and gratifications research emphasizing that media-use motivations are likely correlated (Rubin, 1984). The number of factors to extract was determined based on Kaiser's (1960) recommendation of retaining all factors with eigenvalues greater than 1, such that the sample size is at least 250 and the average communality is greater than .6 (Field, 2005). In factor analysis, eigenvalues represent the relative amount of variance explained by a factor, and communalities represent the proportion of common variance—or variance shared with other variables—a particular variable possesses (Field, 2005).

After factor structures are determined, Field (2005) suggests conducting a reliability analysis to determine the degree to which the variables loading onto each factor (i.e, the various subscales) consistently reflect the construct they are intended to measure. Cronbach's alpha, α, is a common measure of scale reliability that accounts for the number of items included in a scale, the variance within each item, and the covariance between a particular item and other items on the scale; values of .7-.8 indicate acceptable reliability (Field, 2005). In the case where a larger construct is defined by several smaller constructs—as is often the case with factor analysis— Cronbach (1951) recommended computing α separately for each sub-set of items loading onto a factor.

Once an appropriate factor structure was interpreted, factor scores for each case in the dataset were computed using the regression method. The regression method for computing factor scores multiplies a subject's score on each of the variables that make up a factor by an adjusted factor loading (known as a factor score coefficient) that accounts for initial correlations between variables; these newly weighted variable scores are then summed to arrive at an overall score for each factor (Field, 2005). Field (2005) suggested that the resulting factor scores for individual subjects can be used in subsequent analyses, such as comparing differences in factors scores among various groups. In this study, factor scores will be especially useful in testing hypotheses of degrees of difference and correlations between media-use motivations and connectedness among visitors to corporate-controlled and independent fansites; specifically, two non-parametric statistical tests—the Wilcoxon rank-sum test and Spearman's correlation coefficient—will be used to investigate the relationships among the variables in this study.

The Wilcoxon rank-sum test is the non-parametric equivalent of an independent samples *t*-test (Field, 2005). The test explores differences in group means using a method of pooled

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ranking, in which data from both groups are combined and each subject's score is assigned a value (starting with one) based on its position in the rank order; rankings for subjects within each group are then summed, and a mean rank for each group is computed by dividing the sum of the group's rankings by the group's sample size (Field, 2005). The test statistic for the Wilcoxon rank-sum test, W_s, is simply the lower of the two groups' summed rankings; the significance of this test statistic is determined by standardizing W_s based its mean and standard error to arrive at a z-score, where z-scores with absolute values greater than 1.65 (one-tailed test) are considered significant at the *p*<.05 (see Field, 2005).

Spearman's correlation coefficient, r_s, is the non-parametric equivalent of Pearson's correlation coefficient (Field, 2005). Like the Wilcoxon rank-sum test, Spearman's test first ranks data and then applies Pearson's equation to the ranks, resulting in a correlation coefficient between -1 and 1 (Field, 2005). Determining the extent to which a difference in correlation coefficients between two independent groups is statistically significant can be achieved by applying Fisher's z transformation, a procedure that transforms correlation coefficients to be normally distributed and results in a standard z-score; for a one-tailed test that makes a prediction of relative strength in favor of one group over another, an absolute value of z>1.65 means that differences in correlation coefficients between the two groups are significant at p<.05, whereas an absolute value of z>2.33 means that group differences are significant at p<.01 (Wuensch, 2007).

Table 1. Sampling and Survey Return Data by Television Show and Fansite Type

Show Title	# of Official Returns	% of Official Returns	# of Social Networking Groups Sampled			# of Social Networking Members in Groups			# of Social Networking Returns			% of Social Networking Returns		
			Facebook	MySpace	TOTAL	Facebook	MySpace	TOTAL	Facebook	MySpace	TOTAL	Facebook	MySpace	TOTAL
AN Top Model	9	1.51%	6	6	12	2,556	2,921	5,477	13	21	34	6.81%	14.29%	10.06%
American Dad	5	0.84%	3	3	6	1,047	6,504	7,551	0	0	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Big Brother	72	12.04%	5	1	6	11,980	3,248	15,228	17	0	17	8.90%	0.00%	5.03%
Bones	18	3.01%	4	1	5	5,127	165	5,292	21	5	26	10.99%	3.40%	7.69%
Boston Legal	29	4.85%	5	1	6	6,471	1,329	7,800	11	9	20	5.76%	6.12%	5.92%
CSI	44	7.36%	2	3	5	243	4,793	5,036	8	4	12	4.19%	2.72%	3.55%
CSI: Miami	46	7.69%	6	2	8	2,506	2,780	5,286	5	6	11	2.62%	4.08%	3.25%
Desp Housewives	36	6.02%	3	3	6	442	15,027	15,469	6	11	17	3.14%	7.48%	5.03%
ER	2	0.33%	5	4	9	1,795	3,238	5,033	10	6	16	5.24%	4.08%	4.73%
Gossip Girl	14	2.34%	3	3	6	1,323	8,916	10,239	5	9	14	2.62%	6.12%	4.14%
Grey's Anatomy	46	7.69%	4	3	7	2,276	2,865	5,141	21	12	33	10.99%	8.16%	9.76%
House	6	1.00%	4	3	7	2,088	4,572	6,660	1	4	5	0.52%	2.72%	1.48%
Law & Order	3	0.50%	10	3	13	2,954	2,053	5,007	0	9	9	0.00%	6.12%	2.66%
Law & Order: SVU	9	1.51%	5	5	10	677	7,271	7,948	13	9	22	6.81%	6.12%	6.51%
Lost	7	1.17%	6	5	11	2,223	2,992	5,215	0	1	1	0.00%	0.68%	0.30%
NCIS	150	25.08%	6	3	9	5,315	1,398	6,713	2	15	17	1.05%	10.20%	5.03%
One Tree Hill	1	0.17%	7	6	13	728	7,576	8,304	0	4	4	0.00%	2.72%	1.18%
Scrubs	4	0.67%	17	4	21	3,756	1,382	5,138	9	3	12	4.71%	2.04%	3.55%
Smallville	16	2.68%	10	10	20	1,831	8,778	10,609	8	1	9	4.19%	0.68%	2.66%
Supernatural	28	4.68%	4	4	8	2,956	2,716	5,672	7	0	7	3.66%	0.00%	2.07%
Survivor	15	2.51%	1	2	3	4,554	520	5,074	5	0	5	2.62%	0.00%	1.48%
The Office	18	3.01%	8	2	10	5,556	1,210	6,766	23	12	35	12.04%	8.16%	10.36%
The Simpsons	0	0.00%	6	6	12	1,409	4,434	5,843	3	2	5	1.57%	1.36%	1.48%
Ugly Betty	20	3.34%	8	1	9	5,898	222	6,120	3	4	7	1.57%	2.72%	2.07%
TOTALS	598	100.00%	138	84	222	75,711	96,910	172,621	191	147	338	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Sample Overview & Descriptives

The online survey resulted in a total of 936 returns—598 from visitors to official sites and 338 from visitors to independent, social networking groups. Despite disproportionate potential exposure of registered MySpace members to the survey invitation, 56.5% of the social networking returns were from Facebook users (compared with 43.5% from MySpace users). One of the most surprising demographic characteristics of the sample was the fact that it was overwhelmingly female—84.2% for visitors to official sites and 78.2% for visitors to social networking sites. Across the total sample, the median age was 27, but visitors to official sites were disproportionately older (median age 33) than visitors to social networking groups (median age 22). In addition to being younger, visitors to social networking groups were also slightly more ethnically diverse (78.5% reported their ethnicity as White/Caucasian, compared with 84.4% of official site visitors). Furthermore, social networking respondents were also more regionally diverse (only 63.9% reported currently living in the United States, compared with 80.0% of official site respondents). There were also differences between the two groups with respect to education and income, although this may be a function of the discrepancy in the average age of the two groups. Visitors to official sites were more educated: 34.3% said they had attended/were attending/had graduated high school, 34.6% said they had attended/were attending college, and 40.7% said they had a Bachelor's or advanced degree, compared respectively with 36.6%, 43.5%, and 29.4% of visitors to social networking sites. Visitors to official sites also had

higher incomes, with 49.4% reporting an annual household income of less than $45,000 and

50.6% reporting an income of $45,000 or more; the majority of visitors to social networking sites

(58.2%) reported annual household incomes of less than $30,000, and only 40.6% of these

visitors said they had annual household incomes that exceeded $45,000.

Beyond basic demographic differences between the visitors of the two types of sites,

there were also substantial differences in viewing frequency and site browsing frequency

associated with favorite television shows. Visitors to official sites appeared to be more frequent

viewers of their favorite television programs; 90.5% of visitors to official sites said they watched

three or more of the last five regular airings of their favorite show (9.5% watched two or fewer),

and 83.6% indicated they had watched all of the last five regular airings. On the other hand, only

88.8% of visitors to social networking sites had watched three or more of the last five regular

airings of their favorite shows (11.2% watched two or fewer), while only 78.7% reported

watching all of the last five regular airings.

Visitors to official sites also visit these sites more frequently than do visitors to social

networking sites—67.7% visit the official site at least a couple times a week, while 23.1% visit

the site several times a day! Comparatively, only 60.1% of visitors to social networking groups

visit the site a couple times a week or more, and only 15.7% visit the site several times a day.

Interestingly, visitors to official sites also appear to be more isolated in their Internet browsing

experiences associated with their favorite shows—only 27.9% report ever visiting social

networking groups associated with their favorite show. Conversely, 88.1% of visitors to social

networking sites said they also visit the official site of their favorite show. In addition, those

visitors to official sites who do engage in this type of "cross-site" use appear to do so less

frequently than those from social networking sites. Only 20.3% of visitors to official sites who

said they also visit social networking sites reported doing so a few times or week or more, compared with 59.9% of visitors to social networking sites who engage in cross-site use reporting that they do so a few times a week or more.

Visitors to both types of sites said that the message board was the most important feature influencing their decision to visit the site, although this feature was cited as the most significant slightly more often by visitors to social networking sites (55.1%, compared with 48.7% for visitors to official sites). In addition, visitors to social networking sites were more likely to have posted a comment to the site's message board (66.5%, compared with 56.0% of visitors to official sites), but visitors to official sites who said they posted comments on the message board indicated that they did so with greater frequency in the last three months than visitors to social networking sites (median number of posts was 15, compared with 5 for visitors to social networking sites).

At this point, it is also worth mentioning a few key footnotes about how the frequency of responses to the survey varied by show, genre, and network. Response frequency/percent by show and site type is displayed in Table 1; response percent by genre, network, and site type is displayed in Table 2). A disproportionate number of responses from official site visitors came from those visiting the *NCIS* (n=150) and *Big Brother* (n=72) sites, as these were very active fan communities. Such high numbers also skewed the distribution of responses by network (both of these shows air on CBS) and genre for official sites when compared to the sampled proportions in each category (see Table 2). The percent of official returns from NBC shows (6.0%) is also skewed because official message board moderators at four of the five NBC show sites refused to allow survey invitations to be posted to their respective boards, promptly pulling the invitation within one hour after it was initially posted (the only NBC message board on which the

invitation remained was the board for *The Office*). Compared with official sites, the percent of

returns for visitors to social networking sites by genre and network are more closely aligned with

the sampling percentages.

Table 2. Comparison of Returns by Genre, Network, and Site Type to Percent Sampled

	Sampled	**Official Site Returns**	**Social Networking Site Returns**
Genre			
Comedy	20.8%	7.9%	17.8%
Drama	70.8%	76.0%	65.6%
Reality	8.4%	16.1%	16.6%
	100.0%	**100.0%**	**100.0%**
Network			
ABC	20.8%	23.1%	22.8%
CBS	20.8%	54.7%	18.6%
NBC	20.8%	6.0%	28.2%
FOX	16.8%	4.8%	11.2%
CW	20.8%	11.4%	19.2%
	100.0%	**100.0%**	**100.0%**

Exploratory Factor Analysis of Television Viewing Motives

Twenty-five television-use motives were subjected to a principal components analysis

using oblique, promax rotation. Since the intent was to uncover patterns of instrumental and

ritualistic use, Finn & Gorr's (1988) strategy of excluding the six social interaction motives

(cited by Rubin (1985) and Blumler (1985) as comprising a separate construct) was adopted. In

addition, since the sample size was greater than 250 and the average communality equaled .612,

Kaiser's rule for extracting all factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 was applied. This strategy

resulted in a total of five interpretable factors that explained 61.2% of the variance in the initial

25 television-use motives. Table 3 displays the pattern of factor loadings of the variables on each

of the five factors.

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Table 3. Fan Television Viewing Motives and Factor Loadings

Television Viewing Motives Items	Television Viewing Factors				
	1	2	3	4	5
FACTOR 1: PASS TIME/HABIT					
TVHA1 Just because it's there	**0.796**	0.020	0.016	0.058	0.122
TVPT1 When I have nothing better to do	**0.715**	0.182	0.042	0.078	0.036
TVHA3 Because it's a habit, just something I do	**0.707**	0.168	0.064	0.037	0.149
TVPT2 Because it passes the time away when I'm bored	**0.643**	0.090	0.039	0.150	0.166
TVPT3 Because it gives me something to do to occupy my time	**0.639**	0.011	0.042	0.098	0.162
TVHA2 Because I just like to watch	**0.505**	0.269	0.289	0.188	0.146
FACTOR 2: ENTERTAINMENT/AROUSAL					
TVEN2 Because it's enjoyable	0.022	**0.844**	0.068	0.074	0.046
TVAR2 Because it's exciting	0.147	**0.831**	0.006	0.201	0.071
TVEN1 Because it entertains me	0.148	**0.803**	0.135	0.150	0.079
TVAR1 Because it's thrilling	0.101	**0.775**	0.126	0.203	0.117
TVEN3 Because it amuses me	0.207	**0.483**	0.114	0.233	0.307
TVAR3 Because it peps me up	0.162	**0.363**	0.122	0.269	0.304
FACTOR 3: INFORMATION					
TVIN2 Because it's a good way to get information	0.043	0.065	**0.865**	0.023	0.040
TVIN3 To learn about useful things	0.006	0.014	**0.854**	0.020	0.066
TVIN1 To learn about unknown things	0.005	0.028	**0.823**	0.026	0.112
TVIN4 To help me learn about myself and others	0.013	0.066	**0.639**	0.248	0.045
FACTOR 4: COMPANIONSHIP/ESCAPE					
TVCO3 Because it makes me feel less lonely	0.043	0.047	0.024	**0.876**	0.071
TVCO1 So I won't have to be alone	0.124	0.028	0.124	**0.785**	0.179
TVCO2 When there's no one else to talk to or be with	0.339	0.018	0.026	**0.610**	0.083
TVES2 So I can get away from the rest of the family or others	0.101	0.031	0.057	**0.558**	0.165
TVES3 So I can get away from what I'm doing	0.165	0.012	0.177	**0.450**	0.401
FACTOR 5: RELAXATION					
TVRE2 Because it allow me to unwind	0.071	0.035	0.012	0.047	**0.846**
TVRE3 Because it's a pleasant rest	0.054	0.021	0.192	0.162	**0.745**
TVRE1 Because it relaxes me	0.037	0.055	0.184	0.114	**0.731**
TVES1 So I can forget about school, work, or other things	0.064	0.034	0.113	0.344	**0.635**

The first factor, **Pass Time/Habit**, contained all six of the pass time and habit items from Rubin's (1983) original dimensions (Cronbach's α=.780). Likewise, the **Entertainment/Arousal** factor contained all six items from the original entertainment and arousal dimensions (Cronbach's α=.786). The **Information** factor consisted of the four items on the modified information dimension specified in the previous chapter (Cronbach's α=.855). The **Companionship/Escape** factor contained all three of the original companionship items and two of the original escape items (Cronbach's α=.812). Finally, the **Relaxation** factor consisted of all three of the original relaxation items and one escape item (Cronbach's α=.765).

Tests of hypotheses involving television viewing motives rely on these motives being categorized as instrumental or ritualistic. Previous research supports categorizing the Pass Time/Habit and Companionship/Escape factors as ritualistic viewing motives and categorizing the Entertainment/Arousal and Information factors as instrumental motives (e.g., Rubin, 1984; Finn & Gorr, 1988). However, prior research is less clear regarding the categorization of relaxation-related motives; Rubin (1984) found items on the relaxation dimension clustered with other ritualistic motives, while Finn & Gorr (1988) found that relaxation items were most closely related to other instrumental motives. An examination of the component score covariance matrix—an indication of the relationship between factor scores (Field, 2005)—for the current factor analysis suggests that scores on the Relaxation factor are most closely related to scores on the Entertainment/Arousal and Information factors, which suggests that in this case, similar to the findings of Finn & Gorr (1988), the Relaxation factor should be categorized as an instrumental viewing motive. This categorization is further supported by the fact that when SPSS is forced to interpret a two-factor solution for the television viewing motives (ignoring Kaiser's criteria), a clear instrumental/ritualistic dichotomy emerges in which all the pass time, habit,

escape, and companionship items group together (ritualistic) and all the entertainment, information, arousal, and relaxation items group together (instrumental).

In turn, following Field's (2005) method of summing factor scores to represent larger constructs, this study operationalizes "Instrumental Television Viewing Motives" as the sum of the factor scores for the Entertainment/Arousal, Information, and Relaxation factors; similarly, "Ritualistic Television Viewing Motives" is operationalized as the sum of the factor scores for the Pass Time/Habit and Companionship/Escape factors.

A second factor analysis of the six social interaction items was conducted to examine how well these items related to a single construct. Indeed, a single factor, **Social Interaction**, was interpreted that accounted for 50.9% of the variance among the six items (Cronbach's α=.804). Therefore, "Social Interaction Viewing Motives" is operationalized at the factor score for the Social Interaction factor.

Exploratory Factor Analysis of Internet Browsing Motives

The same factor analysis procedure for the television viewing motives was repeated for the Internet browsing motives (principal components analysis with oblique, promax rotation). Again, the six social interaction items were excluded for individual analysis. The sample size was greater than 250 and the average communality was .655, so Kaiser's (1960) factor extraction rule was again applied. Four factors accounting for 65.5% of the variance in the twenty-five Internet browsing items were retained. Table 4 displays the pattern of factor loadings of the variables on each of the four factors.

Table 4. Fan Internet Browsing Motives and Factor Loadings

Internet Browsing Motives Items	Internet Browsing Factors			
	1	2	3	4
FACTOR 1: ENTERTAINMENT/RELAXATION/AROUSAL				
INEN1 Because it entertains me	**0.917**	0.085	0.264	0.027
INEN2 Because it's enjoyable	**0.887**	0.000	0.235	0.101
INEN3 Because it amuses me	**0.860**	0.142	0.248	0.073
INRE1 Because it relaxes me	**0.800**	0.074	0.216	0.149
INRE2 Because it allows me to unwind	**0.717**	0.033	0.201	0.088
INAR2 Because it's exciting	**0.715**	0.204	0.094	0.173
INRE3 Because it's a pleasant rest	**0.712**	0.037	0.245	0.105
INAR1 Because it's thrilling	**0.682**	0.278	0.234	0.110
INHA2 Because I just like to visit the site	**0.676**	0.264	0.277	0.100
INAR3 Because it peps me up	**0.647**	0.081	0.202	0.097
FACTOR 2: PASS TIME/HABIT				
INPT1 When I have nothing better to do	0.143	**0.896**	0.009	0.040
INPT2 Because it passes the time away when I'm bored	0.047	**0.829**	0.001	0.024
INPT3 Because it gives me something to do to occupy my time	0.115	**0.744**	0.083	0.036
INHA1 Just because it's there	0.085	**0.737**	0.062	0.007
INES3 So I can get away from what I'm doing	0.187	**0.466**	0.306	0.013
INHA3 Because it's a habit, just something I do	0.119	**0.444**	0.233	0.111
FACTOR 3: COMPANIONSHIP/ESCAPE				
INCO1 So I won't have to be alone	0.187	0.032	**0.929**	0.023
INCO3 Because it makes me feel less lonely	0.101	0.022	**0.904**	0.037
INES2 So I can get away from the rest of the family or others	0.064	0.091	**0.734**	0.080
INCO2 When there's no one else to talk to or be with	0.092	0.350	**0.632**	0.016
ININ4 To help me learn about myself and others	0.005	0.122	**0.599**	0.389
INES1 So I can forget about school, work, or other things	0.301	0.238	**0.445**	0.091
FACTOR 4: INFORMATION				
ININ2 Because it's a good way to get information	0.019	0.110	0.194	**0.861**
ININ1 To learn about unknown things	0.004	0.066	0.014	**0.844**
ININ3 To learn about useful things	0.002	0.042	0.165	**0.784**

The first factor, **Entertainment/Relaxation/Arousal,** contained Rubin's (1983) nine original entertainment, relaxation, and arousal items and one habit item (Cronbach's α=.925). The **Pass Time/Habit** factor consisted of the three original pass time items, two habit items, and one escape item (Cronbach's α=.866). The **Companionship/Escape** factor contained the three

original companionship items, two escape items, and one information item (Cronbach's α=.865). Finally, the **Information** factor contained the remaining three information items (Cronbach's α=.815).

While the loadings for the Internet browsing factors were not as straightforward as those for television viewing (three of the four contained one item outside of the original dimension named in the factor label), the fact that the relaxation items clustered with the entertainment and arousal items meant that a clear instrumental/ritualistic categorization scheme emerged for the factors. As such, this study operationalizes "Instrumental Internet Browsing Motives" as the sum of the factor scores for the Entertainment/Relaxation/Arousal and Information factors, while operationalizing "Ritualistic Internet Browsing Motives" as the sum of the factor scores for the Pass Time/Habit and Companionship/Escape factors.

A separate factor analysis of the six social interaction items again revealed that these items converge onto a single factor—**Social Interaction**—that explains 53.6% of the variance among the items (Cronbach's α=.826). In turn, "Social Interaction Internet Browsing Motives" is operationalized as the factor score for the Social Interaction factor.

Exploratory Factor Analysis of the Connectedness Construct

The factor analysis procedure was also applied to the 15 items Russell et al. (2004) proposed for the connectedness construct. With a sample size greater than 250 and an average communality of .635, Kaiser's (1960) rule for factor retention was applied. This resulted in three factors that explained 65.1% of the variance among the original 15 items. Table 5 displays the pattern of factor loadings of the variables on each of the three factors.

Table 5. Fan Connectedness Items and Factor Loadings

Connectedness Items	Connectedness Factors		
	1	2	3
FACTOR 1: REAL WORLD APPLICATION			
CONMO2 I get ideas from this show about how to interact in my own life	**0.890**	0.095	0.027
CONIM3 I try to speak like characters/contestants on the show	**0.880**	0.052	0.014
CONIM1 I imitate the gestures and facial expressions of the characters/contestants	**0.830**	0.039	0.073
CONMO1 I learn how to handle real life situations by watching this show	**0.799**	0.040	0.049
CONIM2 I find myself saying phrases from this show when I interact with others	**0.741**	0.043	0.033
CONMO3 I relate what happens in this show to my own life	**0.727**	0.036	0.105
CONFA3 I often buy clothing styles that I've seen on this show	**0.546**	0.248	0.049
CONPA1 I have objects that relate to this show	**0.501**	0.345	0.099
FACTOR 2: SHOW AFFINITY			
CONFA1 I like the clothes they wear on this show	0.089	**0.888**	0.021
CONFA2 I like the hairstyles on this show	0.112	**0.879**	0.045
CONAS2 I would love to meet the characters or contestants of this show	0.039	**0.705**	0.024
CONAS1 I would love to be an actor or contestant on this show	0.190	**0.580**	0.067
CONPA2 I read books or magazine if they are related to this show	0.319	**0.437**	0.054
FACTOR 3: ESCAPE			
CONES1 Watching this show is an escape for me	0.044	0.020	**0.921**
CONES2 This show helps me forget about the day's problems	0.090	0.014	**0.849**

The first factor, **Real World Application**, was labeled accordingly because it contained all six of the modeling and imitation items, as well as the fashion items that pertain to actually *buying* (rather than simply *liking*) clothes featured in the show and the paraphernalia item that indicates owning objects related to the show (Cronbach's α=.906). The **Show Affinity** factor consisted of statements related to liking various aspects of the show; specifically, two fashion items, both aspiration items, and the other paraphernalia item contributed to this factor (Cronbach's α=.811). Finally, the **Escape** factor consisted of both of the original escape items (Cronbach's α=.784). In turn, for the purpose of further analyses the construct of "Connectedness" is operationalized as the sum of the factor scores for the Real World Application, Show Affinity, and Escape factors.

Tests of Proposed Hypotheses

The factor structures identified and the constructs operationalized in the previous section were then used to test the hypotheses related to Figure 2. The tests of these hypotheses rely on the non-parametric Wilcoxon rank-sum test (for assessing differences in group means) and Spearman's correlation coefficient described in the Method chapter. The results of Hypotheses 1-3 are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6. Mean Rank Tests for Hypotheses 1-3

| | Mean Rank | | Wilcoxon W Test Statistic | Significance |
	Official Sites	Soc Net Sites		
H1A - TV Instrumental	406.21	440.69	218539.5	.048
H1B - TV Ritualistic	401.16	449.81	215822.5	.005
H1C - TV Social Interaction	444.31	457.21	253701.0	.473
H2A - Internet Instrumental	431.32	400.97	125504.5	.079
H2B - Internet Ritualistic	402.01	450.23	211457.5	.005
H2C - Internet Social Interaction	414.24	493.78	234045.5	.000
H3A - Connectedness	428.53	479.92	245117.0	.004

RQ1 and its related hypotheses concern differences in television viewing motives among visitors to both types of sites. H1a states that visitors to official fansites will score significantly higher on instrumental motives for watching a favorite show than will visitors to social networking sites. The concept of "instrumental television-use motives"—a composite measure—is operationalized as the sum of a respondent's television-use factor scores for the entertainment/arousal, information, and relaxation factors. H1a was not supported; in fact, the opposite relationship was significant, as visitors to social networking fansites scored significantly higher on instrumental television viewing motives (mean=-.140, median=.0709, mean rank=440.69) than visitors to official sites (mean=.252, median=.227, mean rank=406.21), W_s=218539.5, p<.05. However, H1b was supported, since visitors to social networking sites

scored significantly higher on ritualistic viewing motives (mean=.210, median=.123, mean rank=449.81) than visitors to official sites (mean=-.116, median=-.255, mean rank=401.16), W_s=215822.5, p<.01. Here, "ritualistic television-use motives" is operationalized as the sum of a respondent's television-use factor scores for the pass/time habit and compansionship/escape factors. H1c was not supported, since there was not a statistically significant difference in the scores on social interaction television viewing motives between visitors to social networking sites (mean=.048, median=0, mean rank=457.21) and visitors to official sites (mean=-.027, median=-.013, mean rank=444.31), W_s=253701.0, *ns*. "Social interaction television-use motive" is operationalized as a respondent's television-use factor score for the six social interaction motive items.

Together, the results of H1a to H1c suggest that visitors to social networking sites were more motivated to use television in the qualitative sense that they more strongly agreed that they used television for entertainment, arousal, relaxation, and information (instrumental use), as well as to pass time, out of habit, for companionship, and escape (ritualistic use); however, visitors to both types of sites were equally motivated to used television to achieve social interaction goals.

Similar to RQ1, RQ2 and its related hypotheses suggest differences in Internet browsing motives among visitors to both types of sites. H2a states that visitors to official fansites will score significantly higher on instrumental motives for web activity associated with a favorite show than will visitors to social networking sites. In this case, "instrumental Internet browsing motives" is operationalized as the sum of a respondent's Internet-use factor scores for the entertainment/relaxation/arousal and information factors. H2a was not supported, as there was not a significant difference between instrumental Internet browsing motives between the two groups (official site visitors: mean=.067, median=.152, mean rank=431; social networking

visitors: mean=-.113, median=-.062, mean rank=457), W_s=125504.5, ns. However, H2b was supported, since visitors to social networking sites scored significantly higher on ritualistic Internet browsing motives (mean=.211, median=.498, mean rank=450.23) than visitors to official sites (mean=-.126, median=.0803, mean rank=402.01), W_s=211457.5, p<.01. Here, "ritualistic Internet-use motives" is operationalized as the sum of a respondent's Internet-use factor scores for the pass time/habit and companionship/escape factors. In addition, H2c was supported, as visitors to social networking sites also scored significantly higher on social interaction Internet browsing motives (mean=.192, median=.286, mean rank=493.78) than visitors to official sites (mean=-.109, median=.042, mean rank=414.24), W_s=234045.5, p<.001. "Social interaction Internet-use motive" is operationalized as a respondent's Internet-use factor score for the six social interaction motive items.

The results of H2a-H2c suggest that visitors to social networking sites were more motivated to use the Internet in the sense that they more strongly agreed that they used the Internet to pass time, out of habit, for companionship, and escape (ritualistic use), as well as for social interaction. Conversely, visitors to both types of sites were equally likely to agree that they used the Internet for entertainment, arousal, relaxation, and information (instrumental use).

RQ3 investigates differences in the level of connectedness among visitors to both types of sites, with H3 proposing that visitors to official sites will score significantly higher on the connectedness construct than visitors to social networking sites. H3 was not supported; in this case, the rank-sum test offered support for the opposite relationship since visitors to social networking sites had significantly higher connectedness scores (mean=.310, median=.437, mean rank=479.92) than visitors to official sites (mean=-.174, median=-.214, mean rank=428.53), W_s=245117.0, p<.01.

The result of H3 suggests that visitors to social networking sites are more emotionally connected to their favorite programs, as they more strongly agreed that they apply aspects of the show to their own lives, have a greater affinity for the show and its characters, and watch the show to escape, all of which are aspects that describe a viewer's affective relationship to a show and form the connectedness construct.

RQ4 examines the degree to which television viewing motives are correlated with Internet browsing motives and how these correlations differ in strength and significance among visitors to both types of sites. The operational definitions for instrumental, ritualistic, and social interaction television and Internet-use motives described in the previous research questions hold. H4a was supported; overall, instrumental motives for watching a favorite television show correlated most strongly with instrumental motives for browsing Internet content related to the show ($r_s=.587$, $p<.01$), compared with ritualistic ($r_s=.337$, $p<.01$) and social interaction ($r_s=.436$, $p<.01$) Internet browsing motives. In addition, the positive correlation between instrumental television viewing motives and instrumental Internet browsing motives was stronger for visitors to official sites ($r_s=.635$, $p<.01$) than for visitors to social networking sites ($r_s=.507$, $p<.01$); Fisher's Z transformation revealed that this difference in correlations between the groups was significant ($Z=2.521$, $p<.01$), thus providing support for H4b. H4c was also supported; ritualistic motives for watching a favorite television show correlated most strongly with ritualistic motives for browsing Internet fansites associated with the show ($r_s=.690$, $p<.01$), compared with instrumental ($r_s=.260$, $p<.01$) and social interaction ($r_s=.277$, $p<.01$) Internet browsing motives. However, H4d was not supported because the positive correlation between ritualistic television-use motives and ritualistic Internet-use motives was stronger for visitors to official sites ($r_s=.715$, $p<.01$), rather than for visitors social networking sites ($r_s=.644$, $p<.01$), as predicted. In addition,

Fisher's Z transformation indicated that the differences in correlations between the two groups was significant (Z=1.746, p<.05), strengthening the evidence to the contrary of H4d. H4e was supported because social interaction motives for watching a favorite television show correlated most strongly with social interaction motives for browsing Internet fansites associated with the show (r_s=.609, p<.01), compared with instrumental (r_s=.541, p<.01) and ritualistic (rs=.497, p<.01) Internet browsing motives. However, just as in the case of H4d, H4f was not supported because the positive correlation between social interaction television-use motives and social interaction Internet-use motives was stronger for visitors to official sites (r_s=.671, p<.01), rather than for visitors social networking sites (r_s=.508, p<.01), as predicted. Again, the results of Fisher's Z transformation suggested that the difference in correlations between the two groups was significant (Z=3.528, p<.01), further refuting the prediction of H4f.

The results of H4a-H4f suggest that, overall, visitors to both types of site use television and the Internet for similar reasons and to accomplish similar goals: instrumental television users are more likely to be instrumental Internet users, and the same is true for ritualistic and social interaction media users. Moreover, this effect is significantly greater for visitors to official fansites.

RQ5 explores the relationship between a fan's level of connectedness, television viewing motives, and type of site visited. Again, the previous operational definitions for media-use motives are applicable, and the concept of connectedness is operationalized as the sum of a respondent's factor scores for the real world application, show affinity, and escape factors. H5a was supported since overall scores on the connectedness dimension correlated most strongly with instrumental motives for watching a favorite television show (r_s=.641, p<.01) compared with ritualistic (r_s=.359, p<.01) and social interaction (rs=.506, p<.01) viewing motives. On the other

hand, H5b was not supported because, while the raw correlation between connectedness and instrumental television viewing motives appeared greater for visitors to official sites (r_s=.654, p<.01) than for visitors to social networking sites (r_s=.606, p<.01), Fisher's Z transformation revealed that the differences in these group correlations were not significant (Z=1.078).

The results of H5a-H5b suggest that, overall, a viewer's level of emotional attachment to a favorite show is most closely related to watching a favorite television show for entertainment, arousal, relaxation, and information (instrumental use). However, the relationship between these viewing motives and level of emotional connection to a show is not significantly different for visitors to the two types of sites.

Similar to the previous question, RQ6 examines the relationship between a fan's level of connectedness, Internet browsing motives, and type of site visited. H6a was supported since overall scores on the connectedness dimension correlated most strongly with instrumental motives for browsing Internet fansites associated with a favorite television show (r_s=.557, p<.01) compared with ritualistic (r_s=.504, p<.01) and social interaction (r_s=.543, p<.01) viewing motives. However, just as in the prior case, H6b was not supported because Fisher's Z transformation discounted the notion of significant differences between the two groups' correlations for connectedness and instrumental Internet browsing motives (official sites: r_s=.581, p<.01; social networking sites: r_s=.538, p<.01; Z=0.860).

Just as with RQ5, RQ6 suggest that, overall, a viewer's level of emotional attachment to a favorite show is most closely related to browsing the Internet for entertainment, arousal, relaxation, and information (instrumental use). Again, the relationship between these Internet-use motives and level of emotional connection to a show is not significantly different for visitors to the two types of sites.

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The results of the correlational analyses for Hypotheses 4-6 are summarized in Table 7.

Table 7. Correlational Analyses for Hypotheses 4-6

|	Instrumental	Ritualistic	Soc Interact
H4A - TV Instrumental vs. Internet Motives OVERALL (n=757)	.587	.337	.436
H4B - TV Instrumental vs. Internet Motives BY SITE			
Official Site Visitors (n=480)	.635	.363	.458
Social Networking Site Visitors (n=277)	.507	.282	.367
Comparative (Fisher's) Z for Predicted Relationship	2.521		
H4C - TV Ritualistic vs. Internet Motives OVERALL (n=757)	.260	.690	.277
H4D - TV Ritualistic vs. Internet Motives BY SITE			
Official Site Visitors (n=480)	.251	.715	.291
Social Networking Site Visitors (n=277)	.296	.644	.228
Comparative (Fisher's) Z for Predicted Relationship		1.746	
H4E - TV Social Interaction vs. Internet Motives OVERALL (n=851)	.541	.497	.609
H4F - TV Social Interaction vs. Internet Motives BY SITE			
Official Site Visitors (n=542)	.570	.496	.671
Social Networking Site Visitors (n=309)	.497	.509	.508
Comparative (Fisher's) Z for Predicted Relationship			3.528
H5A - Connectedness vs. Television Motives OVERALL (n=806)	.641	.359	.506
H5B - Connectedness vs. Television Motives BY SITE			
Official Site Visitors (n=520)	.654	.338	.515
Social Networking Site Visitors (n=286)	.606	.379	.486
Comparative (Fisher's) Z for Predicted Relationship	1.078		
H6A - Connectedness vs. Internet Motives OVERALL (n=812)	.557	.504	.543
H6B - Connectedness vs. Internet Motives BY SITE			
Official Site Visitors (n=509)	.581	.502	.545
Social Networking Site Visitors (n=303)	.538	.493	.505
Comparative (Fisher's) Z for Predicted Relationship	0.860		
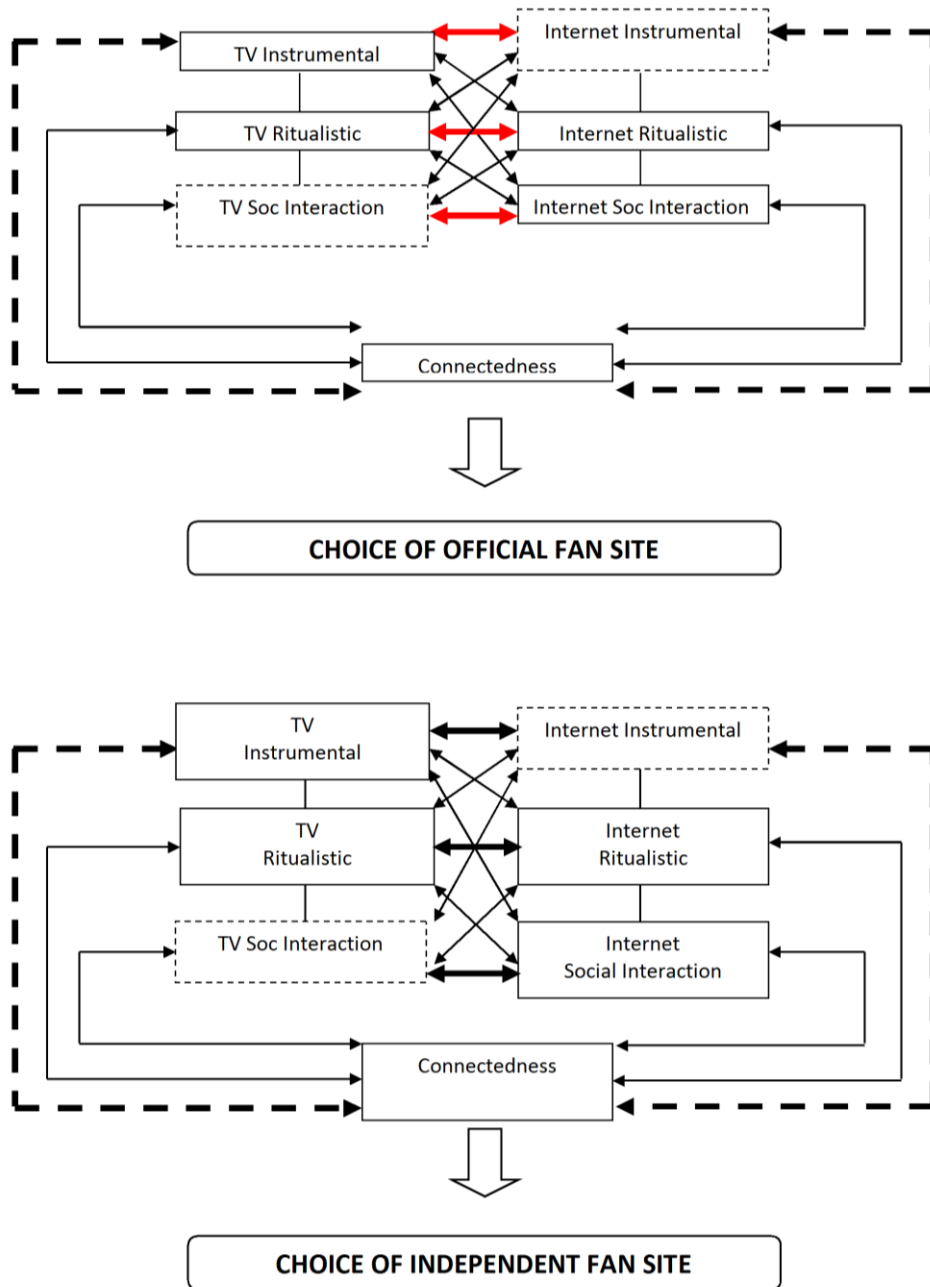
Figure 3. Observed Relationships Between Media-use motives and Connectedness Among Visitors to Official and Independent Fansites

Note. The size of the motive and connectedness boxes indicates relative magnitude between the two groups. The weight of the arrows indicates relative strength of correlation. Red arrows indicate a significantly higher positive correlation between the two groups. Dashed boxes or arrows represent statistically insignificant differences between the groups on a particular measure.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to explore the notion that different types of websites devoted to television programming attract audiences that differ with respect to media-use motives and level of audience activity; ultimately, the goal was to construct a profile of visitors to two types of sites: official, corporate-controlled fansites and independent, social-networking fangroups.

The results of the Television-Internet Fan Survey reveal a complex relationship between fans' media-use motives, level of audience activity, and choice of online fansite. Overall, visitors to official, corporate-controlled fansites were less motivated to use both television and the Internet to access program-related content, and they were also less connected to their favorite shows; however, these fans reported watching their favorite show more often and browsing their choice site more frequently and more exclusively than did visitors to independent, social networking sites.

Visitors to official sites also exhibited stronger correlations between instrumental, ritualistic, and social interaction use motives across media, which suggests that—despite lower overall levels for these motives—motivational categories across media were more closely aligned to one another (or more strongly correlated) for official site visitors. In other words, visitors to official sites had stronger correlations between instrumental television-use motives and instrumental Internet-use motives—and likewise for ritualistic and social interaction media-use motives—than did visitors to social networking sites. On the other hand, visitors to

independent, social networking fangroups were significantly more motivated to use both television and the Internet to access content related to a favorite television show, and these visitors reported significantly higher levels of connectedness to their favorite shows.

In this sense, it's important to emphasize the distinction between the constructs of motivation, connectedness, and frequency of use as operationalized in this study. Motivation and connectedness both represent qualitative assessments of an audience member's relationship to media. Motivation describes an audience member's *reasons* for using a particular medium, and this study identified several broad motivational categories—instrumental, ritualistic, and social interaction—that are common in mass communication scholarship. Connectedness—another qualitative measure—represents an audience member's emotional, affective attachment to media content. Unlike the constructs of motivation and connectedness, frequency of use is a quantitative assessment of mere exposure to media that lacks any sort of richer descriptive properties. Therefore, to say that visitors to social networking fansites are "more connected" or "more motivated" is really an attempt to quantify a qualitative relationship based on composite measures that consist of the sum of the factor scores related to each construct.

While the sampling procedures used in the context of Internet research prevent the generalization of this study's findings to the larger online television fan population, these results—combined with previous research that has shown connectedness to be an indicator of advertising effectiveness and impact (Lu & Lo, 2007; Russell, 1998; Russell et al., 2004)—suggest that television networks are failing to attract a lucrative audience segment to their websites—those fans who are the more "emotionally involved" consumers of television (Sandvoss, 2005).

Relationship of Findings to Previous Research

The results of the factor analyses of media-use motives revealed that motive items clustered in a pattern fairly consistent with previous research. There was an identifiable dichotomy of instrumental and ritualistic motives for both television and Internet use, and this finding lends support to the notion of two main types of media users: a purposive, goal-directed user who scores high on motives such as information and entertainment, and a more passive, less selective user who scores high on motives such as pass time, habit, and escapist motives (Rubin 1983, 1984). Moreover, the exclusion of the six social interaction items (cited by Rubin (1984) and Blumler (1985) as separate from the instrumental/ritualistic dichotomy) from the initial factor analysis for each medium meant that motives clustered in a pattern very similar to that discovered by Finn & Gorr (1988): For both television and Internet use, the companionship, pass time, habit and escape items were characteristic of ritualistic use, while the information, entertainment, relaxation, and arousal items indicated instrumental use.

Among the television fans surveyed, the factor structure that emerged for the connectedness construct was somewhat less comparable to the one originally proposed by Russell et al., 2004; the current analysis of "connectedness" only produced three factors, whereas Russell et al. (2004) found six dimensions. Regardless, the themes underlying the three factors were interpretable, and the smaller number of factors in the current study emphasizes that survey respondents fit the original connectedness items into fewer dimensions; for example, imitation and modeling were two separate factors in the original study, but all the imitation and modeling items were subsumed under the "Real World Application" factor in the current study. The factor structure for the connectedness construct is less important than those for media-use motives because this study is concerned with an overall measurement of the construct, not with parsing

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out the underlying factor structure into more general categories (as is the case with the media-use motives).

Despite the successful identification of instrumental, ritualistic, and social interaction media-use motives among the television fans surveyed, these motives were not clearly associated with fansite choice in the manner predicted. Specifically, visitors to official fansites failed to exhibit more instrumental television and Internet-use motives. The link between instrumental media-use motives and choice of corporate-controlled fansites was posited because these sites position themselves as "official" sources of program-related information, and they are also often content-rich properties aimed at centralizing information and entertainment products associated with a show (Ha, 2002; Siapera, 2004). Instead, the results of the current study revealed that visitors to social networking sites have higher degrees of instrumental television viewing motives, while visitors to the two types of sites did not differ in the level of instrumental Internet-use motives.

However, visitors to independent, social networking fansites did score significantly higher on both ritualistic television and ritualistic Internet-use motives than visitors to official fansites. This relationship was expected because social networking sites lack the advantage of claiming "official" status for content and information and are arguably *designed* to fulfill the process-oriented, medium-centric gratifications that have typically been associated with patterns of ritualistic media consumption (compared with the content-centric, instrumental gratifications official fansites were hypothesized to fulfill).

The "social" aspect of social networking sites also led to the prediction that these sites would attract visitors who would score higher on social interaction media-use motives. The survey results indicated that there was no significant difference in social interaction motives for

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television show viewing between visitors to both types of sites, but visitors to social networking fangroups did report significantly higher levels of social interaction motives for website use associated with their favorite shows. This finding is fairly intuitive since the most of the activity on social networking sites is predicated on social interaction (Faust & Wasserman, 1994).

Taken together, these findings suggest that visitors to social networking sites are more intensely motivated to use television and Internet content related to a favorite show. Overall, they more strongly agree that when they do watch their favorite shows, they do so for entertainment, arousal, relaxation, information, to pass time, out of habit, for companionship, and escape, Likewise, they more strongly agree that when they browse Internet content related to a favorite show, they do so to pass time, out of habit, for companionship, escape, and for social interaction. Again, these are qualitative motivational measures and are irrespective of how often they use a particular medium to access show-related content.

While previous research has emphasized the potential of corporate-controlled television websites to cultivate an engaged audience (e.g., Ha, 2002; Ha & Chan-Olmsted, 2004; Siapera, 2004), the results of this study—which has framed engagement in terms of the construct of connectedness—indicate that visitors to independent, social networking fangroups are significantly more connected to their favorite television shows than visitors to official sites. Stated another way, visitors to social networking sites are more likely to agree that they incorporate aspects of the show into their own lives, have a greater affinity for the show and its characters, and consider watching the show an escape. Interestingly, this finding of greater connectedness among visitors to social networking sites may be related to this group's significantly higher levels of social interaction web use motives. According to Russell et al. (2004), "as an individual becomes more deeply bonded with a program, that individual will not

only have a greater opportunity for social interaction but will also be more likely to seek out interactions with other viewers of the same program" (p.156). Again, it's important to point out that the construct of connectedness represents a viewer's quality of emotional attachment to a show, and functions independently of how frequently he or she uses a particular medium.

After exploring differences in the relative strength of media-use motives and the connectedness construct among visitors to both types of fansites, this study turned to an investigation of the relationships between these variables in an effort to gain a more complete understanding of how these variables might interact and be associated with fansite choice. First, categories of media-use motives (instrumental, ritualistic, and social interaction) were compared across media. As previously mentioned, the original motive dimensions clustered in a similar way for both television viewing and Internet browsing. In addition, for visitors to both types of fansites, each motivational category for television viewing correlated most strongly with its counterpart for Internet browsing (i.e., instrumental television viewing was most strongly correlated with instrumental Internet browsing, etc). However, it was predicted that significantly stronger cross media-use motive correlations (i.e., the correlation between instrumental television-use motives and instrumental Internet-use motives, or between ritualistic television-use motives and ritualistic Internet-use motives, etc) would emerge for those motives hypothesized to be more characteristic of visitors to each type of fansite (i.e., correlations between instrumental television and Internet-use motives would be higher for visitors to official sites, while correlations between ritualistic and social interaction television and Internet-use motives would be higher for visitors to social networking sites). Instead, cross-media-use motive correlations were significantly stronger for visitors to official sites for all three motive categories.

Together, these findings suggest that the television fans surveyed are motivated to use television and Internet content related to a favorite show for similar reasons, or—put another way—visitors to both types of sites are less likely to use these different media for different purposes. However, this effect is even more apparent for visitors to official fansites.

The relatively strong correlations between instrumental, ritualistic, and social interaction media-use motives across media—irrespective of the type of fansite visited—also seem to support Flanagin & Metzger's (2001) claim that need fulfillment is fairly similar across media. Furthermore, the fact that cross-media-use motives are most closely aligned for visitors to official sites is especially interesting. Many network executives view official websites as an extension of the television brand and use the site to stream shows or offer "enhanced" television-related content (Ha, 2002; Siapera, 2004). Flanagin & Metzger (2001) have described such use of an online property by television networks as a form of new media content convergence, in which "people see Internet-based technologies as not distinct from more traditional ones simply because they deliver content in common" (p. 172). As a result, audiences may develop overlapping functional images of media (Flanagin & Metzger, 2001), and this phenomenon may explain why cross-media-use motives are so highly correlated for visitors to official fansites: Is it possible—due to corporate interest in leveraging similar content across media properties—that visitors to official sites interpret the experience of watching a favorite show on television and browsing show-related content through official portals online as functionally similar?

Beyond assessing how use motives correlated across media, this study also examined the ways in which television and Internet-use motives correlated with the audience-activity variable of engagement for visitors to each type of site. Previous mass communication research involving uses and gratifications has emphasized the importance of investigating both media-use motives

(i.e., uses & gratifications) and audience-activity variables to arrive at a more holistic understanding of media effects (Perse & Rubin, 1987; Swanson, 1992). The media effect that television executives are most concerned about is advertising impact, and several of these executives have cited links between engagement and advertising impact (Albiniak, 2007; Ernst et al., 2003; Kerschbaumer, 2000). The concept of engagement is also relevant to a study of online television fandom because official fansites are often strategically designed to connect with and foster an engaged audience (Ha, 2002; Ha & Chan-Olmsted, 2004; Siapera, 2004). However, because a working conceptualization of audience engagement is all but absent in the academic literature, this study proposed assessing engagement in light of "connectedness"—a concept that emerged in the field of consumer research to describe emotionally involved consumption and has been translated to television consumption/viewing by Russell et al. (2004).

Previous research on television audience behavior that has incorporated uses and gratifications and audience-activity variables has found that audience-activity variables tend to be more strongly associated with instrumental media-use motives than with other types of motives (Perse & Rubin, 1988; Rubin & Perse, 1987). In keeping with this finding, stronger correlations were found between connectedness and instrumental television viewing motives and instrumental Internet browsing motives than for the other types of media-use motives; furthermore, this relationship was apparent for visitors to both official and social networking sites. In addition, since corporate-controlled television websites are often strategically designed to connect with and foster an engaged audience (Ha, 2002; Ha & Chan-Olmsted, 2004; Siapera, 2004), this study predicted that the relationship between instrumental media-use motives and connectedness would be significantly greater for visitors to official sites. However, the results of the online fan survey indicated no significant differences in the correlations between

instrumental television or Internet-use motives and connectedness for visitors to the two types of sites.

This finding suggests that for visitors to both types of sites, emotional connection to a favorite show is most closely related to using television and the Internet to access show-related content for the purposes of entertainment, arousal, relaxation, and information. However, this relationship between connectedness and instrumental television and Internet use is not significantly stronger for visitors to either official or social networking fansites.

Implications for Mass Communication Theory

This study has attempted to apply the theory of uses and gratifications to a new media context: online television fandom. As mentioned earlier, online television fandom inherently involves two acts of media consumption: the viewing of a favorite television program and the browsing of Internet content related to the program. Flanigan & Metzger (2001) have asserted that studies comparing gratifications across media are rare, so this study is somewhat unique in its comparison of media-use motives across television and the Internet. Despite media-use motive items being constructed a priori, the fact that the items clustered in a similar way for television and Internet use—together with the finding that motivational categories correlated highly across media—seems to offer some support for the claim that various media may function to gratify a set of similar, stable needs (e.g., Ferguson & Perse, 2000; Flanagin & Metzger, 2001; Lin, 2001). In addition, the motive clusters and factor structures that emerged from the television and Internet-use motive items lend support to Rubin's (1983, 1984) concepts of instrumental and ritualistic media use.

Perhaps more importantly, this study has incorporated the concept of connectedness as an audience-activity variable in the uses and gratifications framework that posits a link between

media-use motives, audience activity, and media effects. In future studies, connectedness could function as a richer, more descriptive indicator of audience activity than more traditional activity variables such as viewing frequency and attitude toward the show.

Implications for Mass Communication Industry

Several findings of this exploratory study of online television fandom are especially significant for media industry professionals. The profiles of fan audiences for visitors to corporate-controlled, official fansites and independent, social networking fansites that resulted from the survey reveal that official fansites are not attracting the more motivated and connected audience members. However, visitors to official sites are more frequent viewers of their favorite television shows, and they visit the site more frequently and more exclusively than visitors to social networking groups. The difference in these site visitor profiles raises an interesting question: Which type of audience member holds more value for television networks and their advertisers—the one that is more motivated and engaged/connected, or the one that is more loyal in terms of frequency and exclusivity of media use? Russell et al. (2004) stress that connectedness is qualitatively distinct from viewing frequency, and these scholars found that connectedness more effectively predicted memory for product placements than mere viewing exposure. While this preliminary research suggests that connectedness is a more effective predictor of advertising impact than viewing frequency, these concepts should be subjected to further empirical investigation that directly compares advertising effectiveness outcomes before definitive claims of differential audience value can be justified.

The relationships between media-use motives and connectedness may also translate to considerations in website design. Specifically, the fact that instrumental media-use motives were found to be most strongly correlated with connectedness suggests that media managers should

consider designing sites that are more effective at appealing to the media-use motives of information, entertainment, relaxation, and arousal.

Aside from any direct advertising value that official sites may be losing by not attracting the most motivated and engaged audience members, another reason that media managers should be concerned that more engaged/connected audiences are found on social networking sites involves another of the television networks' strategic goals for establishing an official site—to "centralize the exchange of opinions and ideas [and] retain considerable control over the shows they produce" (Siapera, 2004, p. 162). According to Jenkins (2006a), the Internet allows groups of highly engaged consumers to operate as a collective: "Online, consumers evaluate quality together. They negotiate consumption standards…Individuals place great weight on the judgment of their fellow community of consumption members…Collective responses temper individual reception of marketing communications" (p.80). In other words, the highly engaged television consumers that form a collective on independent, social networking sites have the potential—collectively—to circumvent television networks' attempts to "manage the message" associated with their programming. The key, therefore, is finding a way to lure this engaged collective to the official sites.

The finding that reasons for using television and Internet content related to a favorite show are similar also has an important implication for media managers—it suggests that media managers can "type" users for both media and then strategize ways to address these similar needs of a particular type of user—instrumental, ritualistic, or social interaction—through both the company's television and online properties, thus allowing media companies to more effectively capitalize on cross-media synergies to develop a relationship with particular types of viewers by more effectively serving their media use goals.

Finally, the finding that more motivated and engaged television consumers are attracted to social networking sites may contribute to the growing sentiment among industry professionals that the current fragmented mediascape necessitates a shift in emphasis from audience quantity to audience quality in order to realize gains in audience value; this wholesale change in audience valuation and measurement is what Jenkins (2006a) has termed affective economics. Jenkins (2006a) has acknowledged that media organizations are warming to more descriptive means of characterizing audience, but he has also underscored their reluctance to break completely from traditional audience research methods that focus on "measuring" aspects of the audience to assess return on investment; as Jenkins (2006a) laments, "It is still a world where what can be counted is what counts most" (p.62).

Limitations

The most significant limitation of this study involves the sampling procedures dictated by the research sites selected. The structure and communicative capabilities available on both corporate-controlled and social networking websites necessitated the recruitment of participants via open invitations on site message boards, thus introducing the possibility of systematic, self-selection bias (i.e., non-randomness). In turn, this web-based research context hinders the generalizability of findings beyond the study's sample

Other limitations include qualifications imposed by the researcher to narrow the broad phenomenon of online television fandom to a manageable research frame. This includes limiting the investigation to only shows affiliated with the five major broadcast networks that appeared on programming schedules during a specified timeframe, as well as restricting the evaluation of independent fansites to fangroups included on the social networking services Facebook and MySpace.

Directions for Future Research

This study has raised many questions regarding online television fandom that are worthy of continued research. Future research might consider including types of independent fansites other than social networking groups or expanding beyond this study's focus on profiling fansite visitors based on media-use motives and connectedness to investigating the effect of connectedness on advertising impact or other outcome variables for visitors to various types of fansites. In addition, scholars should consider whether additional audience-activity variables or different media-use motives contribute to a more complete understanding of fansite choice. Yet another line of inquiry might involve a more qualitative approach to exploring online television fandom by interviewing visitors to various types of fansites regarding their media use experiences; this method may reveal a new, broader range of media-use motives or audience activities associated with online television fandom.

Summary

Audience fragmentation is one of the most pervasive problems in today's new media environment characterized by ever-increasing content choices available on a variety of platforms. In an attempt to hold onto their audience shares and remain competitive in this new media landscape, traditional media companies such as television networks are attempting to follow critical audience segments—namely highly engaged television fans—to the Internet. Jenkins (2006a) has aptly described this recent competitive strategy:

> The television industry is increasingly focusing on understanding consumers who have a prolonged relationship and active engagement with media content, who show a willingness to track down that content across the cable spectrum and across a range of other media platforms. Such consumers, they believe, represent their best hope for the

future. This next-generation audience research focuses attention on what consumers do

with media once it has passed across their eyeballs, seeing each subsequent interaction as

valuable because it reinforces their relationship to the series and, potentially, its sponsors

(p. 67).

While television networks attempt to attract these engaged fan-consumers to "official" websites

devoted to television programming, other online avenues—such as social networking sites—

have allowed television fans to organize independently around shared interests in television

programs.

The purpose of this study was to compare media-use motives and levels of engagement

among visitors to official fansites versus those of visitors to independent, social networking

fansites to understand differences in the composition of audiences who visit each type of site. In

other words, has the television networks' web strategy been effective in attracting the most

motivated and engaged television fans?

The results of an online survey of television fans revealed that fairly traditional uses and

gratifications items were applicable for understanding fan television and Internet use related to a

favorite show. The relationships between these media-use motives and an audience-activity

variable known as "connectedness," which accounted for a viewer's emotional engagement with

a show, provided insight into the types of viewers most likely to be attracted to official and social

networking fansites. Ultimately, the survey results suggested that visitors to official fansites were

more frequent viewers of their favorite television programs and more frequent visitors to their

choice fansites. Conversely, visitors to independent, social networking fangroups—while less

frequent users of media related to their favorite television shows—were significantly more

motivated (in a qualitative sense) to use both television and the Internet to access content related

to a favorite television show, and these visitors reported significantly higher levels of connectedness to their favorite shows. More specifically, visitors to social networking sites were "more motivated" in the sense that they were more likely to agree they watch their favorite show for entertainment, arousal, relaxation, and information (instrumental use) as well as to pass time, out of habit, for companionship, and escape (ritualistic use); they were also more likely to agree that they browse Internet content related to their favorite shows to pass time, out of habit, for companionship, and escape (ritualistic use) and for social interaction. Likewise, these visitors to social networking sites were more likely to agree that they applied aspects of their favorite show to their own lives, had greater affinity for the show and its characters, and considered watching the show an escape (all of which contribute to the construct of connectedness). This last finding in particular, coupled with previous research that has shown connectedness to be an indicator of advertising effectiveness and impact (Lu & Lo, 2007; Russell, 1998; Russell et al., 2004), suggests that official fansites are failing to realize the potential of a valuable audience segment. A more focused effort by television networks to develop websites that can draw these highly engaged audiences away from competitors for audience time and attention—such as social networking sites—may be an inroad toward combating the pervasive fragmentation that characterizes today's new media landscape.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. TELEVISION-INTERNET FAN SURVEY

Thank you for taking the Television-Internet Fan Survey. Following each question is a series of response items. To make a selection, simply click on the item that corresponds to your answer choice. Please do your best to answer all of the questions in the survey.

1. You were directed to this survey because you visited an online fan site or social networking group for a specific television show. Please indicate the name of the television show whose web page or group linked you to this survey: _____

Now, thinking about **SHOW** specifically, please answer the following questions:

2. Of the last five times **SHOW** aired in its regularly scheduled slot, how many times did you watch the show?   5___   4___   3___   2___   1___   0___

3. Now, thinking about the last five times you actually watched **SHOW**, how many of these times did you…
…watch the show "live," on its scheduled air-date and time?   ___
…record the show using a digital video recorder (DVR) or VCR and watch it at a later date and/or time from its original airing?   ___
…watch the show online via the television network's website?   ___
…watch the show online via a download service such as iTunes or Amazon.com?   ___
…watch the show via some other method?   ___

4. Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements, with 5 being "Strongly Agree" and 1 being "Strongly Disagree".

Television Viewing Motivations (Randomized and Based on 5-Point Likert Scale)

I watch **SHOW**…

INFORMATION
To learn about unknown things
Because it's a good way to get information
To learn about useful things
To help me learn things about myself and others

ENTERTAINMENT
Because it entertains me
Because it's enjoyable
Because it amuses me

AROUSAL
Because it's thrilling
Because it's exciting
Because it peps me up

SOCIAL INTERACTION
Because it's something to do when friends come over
So I can talk with other people about the show
To belong to a group
Because I wonder what other people said
To meet people with my interests
To get more points of view

HABIT
Just because it's there
Because I just like to watch/visit the site
Because it's a habit, just something I do

PASS TIME
When I have nothing better to do
Because it passes the time away, particularly when I'm bored
Because it gives me something to do to occupy my time

ESCAPE
So I can forget about school, work, or other things
So I can get away from the rest of the family or others
So I can get away from what I'm doing

COMPANIONSHIP
So I won't have to be alone
When there's no one else to talk to or be with
Because it makes me feel less lonely

RELAXATION
Because it relaxes me
Because it allows me to unwind
Because it's a pleasant rest

5. Again, thinking specifically about **SHOW,** please indicate how much you agree with the following statements, with 5 being "Strongly Agree" and 1 being "Strongly Disagree"…

Measures of Connectedness (Randomized and Based on 5-Point Likert Scale)

ESCAPE
Watching this show is an escape for me
This show helps me forget about the day's problems

FASHION

I like the clothes they wear on this show
I like the hairstyles on this show
I often buy clothing styles that I've seen in this show

IMITATION

I imitate the gestures and facial expressions from the characters or contestants in this show
I find myself saying phrases from this show when I interact with other people
I try to speak like the characters or contestants in the show

MODELING

I learn how to handle real life situations by watching this show
I get ideas from this show about how to interact in my own life
I relate what happens in this show to my own life

ASPIRATION

I would love to be an actor or contestant on this show
I would love to meet the characters or contestants of this show

PARAPHERNALIA

I have objects that relate to this show (for example, a badge, book, picture, etc)
I read books or magazines if they are related to this show

The next set of questions concerns your use of the television network website or social networking group that directed you to this survey. Thinking about that specific website or group, please answer the following questions:

6. *(**For respondents directed to the survey via a social networking fangroup**)*You were directed to this survey because of your membership in a social networking group dedicated to **SHOW**. To which social networking service does this group belong?
___Facebook.com
___MySpace.com

7. On average, how often do you visit this Internet website or group?
___Several times a day
___Almost every day
___A couple times a week
___Once a week
___Every couple weeks
___Once a month
___Almost never

8A. Have you ever posted a comment to this site's message board/forum?
___Yes
___No

8B. If yes, please indicate the approximate total number of posts you have made to this site's message board in the **last three months**:

_____

___Don't know

9. Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements, with 5 being "Strongly Agree" and 1 being "Strongly Disagree".

Internet Browsing Motivations (Randomized and Based on 5-Point Likert Scale)

I visit this television network website (or social networking group)…

INFORMATION
To learn about unknown things
Because it's a good way to get information
To learn about useful things
To help me learn things about myself and others

ENTERTAINMENT
Because it entertains me
Because it's enjoyable
Because it amuses me

AROUSAL
Because it's thrilling
Because it's exciting
Because it peps me up

SOCIAL INTERACTION
Because it's something to do when friends come over
So I can talk with other people about the show
To belong to a group
Because I wonder what other people said
To meet people with my interests
To get more points of view

HABIT
Just because it's there
Because I just like to watch/visit the site
Because it's a habit, just something I do

PASS TIME
When I have nothing better to do
Because it passes the time away, particularly when I'm bored
Because it gives me something to do to occupy my time

ESCAPE
So I can forget about school, work, or other things
So I can get away from the rest of the family or others
So I can get away from what I'm do

COMPANIONSHIP
So I won't have to be alone
When there's no one else to talk to or be with
Because it makes me feel less lonely

RELAXATION
Because it relaxes me
Because it allows me to unwind
Because it's a pleasant rest

10A. *(For respondents directed to the survey via an official fansite)* Are you a member of any social networking group(s) (i.e., Facebook or MySpace groups) dedicated to **SHOW**?
___Yes
___No

10B. *(For respondents directed to the survey via a social networking fangroup)* Do you ever visit the "official" fansite for **SHOW**?
___Yes
___No

10C. If yes, on average how often do you visit the "official" fansite/social networking group(s)?
___Several times a day
___Almost every day
___A couple times a week
___Once a week
___Every couple weeks
___Once a month
___Almost never

11. Next, please indicate how often you use the following features of this website, with 5 being "Always" and 1 being "Never". If a feature listed below is not available on the website, please select "Not Available":

News feeds/announcements
Video archive
Photo archive
Blogs
Downloads (e.g., desktop wallpaper, screen savers, icons)
Cast biographies

Character biographies
Episode guide
Chat rooms
Message boards/forums
Games/quizzes/trivia
Contest/sweepstakes
Polls
Podcasts
User-created content (fan art, fan fiction, fan videos, etc)
Shopping/merchandise

12. Of the following features, which is the most important in your decision to visit the site? (Please select ONE)

News feeds/announcements
Video archive
Photo archive
Blogs
Downloads (e.g., desktop wallpaper, screen savers, icons)
Cast biographies
Character biographies
Episode guide
Chat rooms
Message boards/forums
Games/quizzes/trivia
Contest/sweepstakes
Polls
Podcasts
User-created content (fan art, fan fiction, fan videos, etc)
Shopping/merchandise

Almost done! The last few questions help us understand a bit more about you. The information you choose to provide will remain confidential and is solely for the purpose of academic research.

Demographic Measures

13. What is your age?
_____

14. What is your gender?
___Male
___Female

15. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
___Ph.D
___Master's Degree
___Bachelor's Degree
___Attended/attending college
___Graduated high school
___Attended high school
___Eighth grade or less
___Other, please specify: _____

16. What race/ethnicity do you consider yourself to be?
___ White/Caucasian
___Black/African American
___Asian
___Hispanic/Latino/Chicano
___Mixed race
___Other

17. What is your annual household income?
___Under $15,000
___$15,000—$29,999
___$30,000—$44,999
___$45,000—$59,999
___$60,000—$99,999
___Above $100,000

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Please click "Submit" now to send your responses to us, or click "Discard" if you wish to not participate in the survey.

APPENDIX B. SURVEY INVITATION POSTED TO FANSITE MESSAGE BOARDS

Hey everyone!

I'm a graduate student at the University of Georgia completing my Master's thesis research on television fans' viewing habits and their use of various websites and webgroups devoted to their favorite shows. I'm particularly interested in hearing from fans of (INSERT TELEVISION SHOW NAME), so this means you! I would really appreciate it if you would be willing to take about 10 minutes to complete a voluntary online survey that would help me in my research. For more information about my project and to access the television fan survey, please click the following link:

(INSERT SURVEY WEBLINK)

Thank you so much for your help!

-Joel

APPENDIX C. FOLLOW-UP TO INITIAL SURVEY INVITATION

Thanks so much to all the (INSERT TELEVISION SHOW NAME) fans who have completed my Master's thesis survey so far! The project is shaping up to be a success! If you haven't had a chance to take the survey yet but are interested, there's still time…here's the link again:

(INSERT SURVEY WEBLINK)

Thanks!

-Joel