Bloggingis**the**new**black**:

An analysis of user created content related to fashion and its impact in the fashion media industry

Master thesis Media and Journalism,

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ABSTRACT

Research on user-created content is increasing in order to understand the context of the information that is being produced. Most existing research of the topic rely on the analysis of user-created content characteristics. This thesis is a content analysis of a specific type of user-created content: fashion blogs ($N= 243$). This study aimed to explore a different area of user-created content studies. In this thesis, there is a focus on researching what are the motivations for fashion bloggers to produce and publish elaborated content material. The results of this research indicate that self-expression is the primary motivation for fashion bloggers to create and publish content. Moreover, fashion bloggers appear to be driven also for social relations and creativity motivations. Additionally, this thesis explored the characteristics of fashion bloggers, the reaction of fashion blogs' immediate audience and the relation fashion blogs and bloggers have with the fashion media industry.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In 2010, the city of Milan hosted the Dolce & Gabanna spring/summer show. At the first road of the runway show the audience could see familiar faces of the fashion industry sitting in the hot spots. Guest included head fashion reporter and editor for the *Herald Tribune*, Sukie Menkes; the fashion and style director of *Vanity Fair*, Michael Roberts; the fashion news director of *US Vogue*, Sally Singer; trend setter, recognized *US Vogue* editor and probably the most influential person inside the industry, Anna Wintour and the European editor at large of *Vogue*, Hamish Bowles. But, sitting in between all of them there was a young man with a flamboyant style looking directly to the cameras while he was working on his personal computer. This young man is known in the fashion industry as Bryan Boy. He is from Manila, however, he is not a fashion designer neither an editor of *Vogue* or *Vanity Fair*. Bryan like many other Internet users has a blog in which he reports the out comings of fashion and new trends in his own way (Copping, 2009). The blog, that started as a simple journal for Bryan, managed to catch the eye of the public and of the fashion industry and now, it has taken the blogger to a jet set life in which he attends to the most prestigious fashion events to report about them. The presence of BryanBoy at the first road in the Dolce & Gabanna show is an example of a shift that is happening now in the fashion media industry.

During the past years, media has evolved into a complex, very dynamic field in which several channels and contents have merged in order to fulfill the needs of a society that is more and more immersed in a fast-way lifestyle. Ritzer (1993) mentions that consumers try to get from one point to another in the most optimum and fast way using efficient models, tools or channels in order to get what they want as fast as they can. Media allows audiences to get the content they want by providing consumers with a constant, easy and accessible flow of information that becomes even more accessible, available and faster with new technologies.

While some traditional media such as magazines and newspapers are struggling to survive economical crisis[1], staff cuts and an increased segmentation of the audiences; there is a raise of other channels. These new channels involve interaction, that allows to capitalize new segmented audiences with new contents aiming to cover the needs of information and consumption of very specific niches of consumers. In the online world, this new contents are mainly offered by user-created[2] initiatives. New online tools give the audiences a voice that in earlier times they did not have, thus changing the dynamics on how media field works.

User-created content (UCC) is not a new phenomenon inside the media; however, as of the evolution of new tools such as Web 2.0 it has gained a potential to reach massive audiences. O'Reilly (2006) briefly defines Web 2.0 as:

'The business revolution in the computer industry caused by the move to the Internet as platform, and an attempt to understand the rules for success on that new platform. Chief among those rules is this: build applications that harness network effects to get better the more people use them'.

By 2013 user-created content will be consumed by about 155 million US Internet users (Verna, 2009). This means that now consumers are in charge of some of their media experiences. They are no longer passive consumers but become active generators of information.

UCC, in this case blogging, has changed the way the user approaches to the content and the channels. Users are now producers. The importance and popularity of blogs, however, can be seen from another angle. They not only involve producers and consumers but also, many industries have found themselves involved as major topics of the content users produce. Therefore, these industries have had to rethink how to identify and approach to a new audience that is consuming information about them in a way these industries cannot control. In this sense, fashion has become one of the

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[1] Western print media faces a double crisis. It is dealing with falling of advertising revenue and the challenge of getting profits with online content (*Financial Times*, 2009). Retrieved from (http://www.ft.com).

[2] User-created content can also be referred in other publications as user-generated content (OECD Publishing, 2007). For matters of convenience I will employ the term user-generated content (UCC) in this thesis.

industries that face the challenge of addressing the technological developments in content publication. Fashion UCC has induced major changes in the fashion media industry. It has enabled the consumers to become producers of content that before was rigorously exclusive for printed media, fashion magazines, official spokesmen, and designers. Consequentially, a new wave of new writers and producers of content related to fashion have found the spotlight. With different characteristics between each other and many different ways to expose their ideas, fashion bloggers such as BryanBoy, have become a new elite group that catches the eye of readers eager to catch up with new, fresh and original content related fashion.

With the advent of new characters such as UCC producers in the media and fashion equation, things have changed. This means a transformation on how fashion media industry is now seen, as the fashion blogger Scott Schuman also known as *The Sartorialist* explains: 'In the beginning people [in luxury] were afraid of the internet and the idea of bloggers' comments', he says. 'Now they are going after blogs full steam. The whole thing with Dolce & Gabanna and [bloggers] in the front row, it's like they realized that if you can't control it, you might just have to learn to deal with it' (Copping, 2009).

2. RESEARCH QUESTION AND SUB QUESTIONS

In the frame of traditional media, audiences usually play a passive role by being receivers of information (Anderson, 2008; Jenkins, 2006a). With the advent of new technologies such as the Internet, audiences not only are given the opportunity of being content consumers but also content producers. This content can be produced and distributed in many ways for example in blogs. People that create content in blogs require time and a creativity effort to do so (Li, 2005). Therefore, the active role of the Internet users to create and distribute content suggests that the content producers have reasons or motivations to do so. Then, which are the reasons people have to create and upload content? Why do people have a blog?

Previous UCC researches (Nardi, Schiano, Gumbrecht & Swartz, 2004b; Papacharissi, 2007; Trammell & Keshelashvili, 2005; Trammell, Tarkowski, Hofmokl & Sapp, 2006) have already aimed to explain bloggers motivations. These works are based on the uses and gratifications theory and several content analyses in order to understand this phenomenon. However, researches analyzing UCC, specifically blogs, and the implication of their content is still under development. Prior work relies mostly in analyzing blogs published in English language without assessing any specific thematic (Trammell, et al., 2006). Most notably, the implications of blogs have been said to raise people from anonymity and serve to give people a space to communicate and share ideas (Trammell et al., 2006). In between the people who decided to create content through blogs, some bloggers have managed to gather an audience size that is comparable in number to the one some media outlets have making the bloggers 'new influencers' (Trammell et al., 2006, p. 703). Nevertheless, these star bloggers are not representative of all the existing blog producers.

Nardi, et al. (2004b) examined blogs as 'a form of personal communication and expression, with a specific interest in uncovering the range of motivations driving individuals to create and maintain blogs' (p. 41). Other works explored specific types of

blogs. For example, Trammell et al. (2006) researched about Polish blogs, concluding, 'self-expression is the primary motivation for blog posts' (p. 702). In addition, Papacharissi (2007) did a content analysis about audiences as media producers. In this case, Papacharissi (2007, p. 35) concluded that on average blogs 'feature personalized accounts of information that resemble the diary format more than the independent journalism ideal'.

This thesis in particular focuses on the analysis of one specific type of blogs, fashion blogs, in order to extend the knowledge about UCC practices. Fashion blogs as other types of blogs have received audience and media attention. In this case it is worth to address this type of blogs because fashion is consider as one of the fastest growing and most important industries (Kawamura, 2005). Fashion has increased its demand as an indication of different types of consumers that seeks to differentiate from the others by appropriating specific signs and values (Titan, Voineagu & Todose, 2008). For that reason, the relation of fashion and traditional media has always been close in order to enable consumers to be aware of the properties of fashion. But with the arrival of new technologies, what happens with this relation?

This analysis examines the space of fashion blogs using the theoretical perspectives of fashion, Bourdieu's social and cultural capital, UCC theory and the uses and gratifications theory applied through a systematic content analysis that aims to analyze the content of fashion blogs in relation with the motivations fashion bloggers might have.   Based on existing UCC research the following leading question is proposed:

What are the motivations for fashion bloggers to produce and publish elaborated content material?

In addition, other exposed assessments such as the blogs layout, shared and different characteristics blogs may have in their content and their features (Trammell & Keshelashvili, 2005; Trammell et al., 2006; Nardi et al., 2004b; Papacharissi, 2007) are considered in this analysis. Finally, the reactions and impact in the fashion media industry are also covered. Thus, this thesis has a set of sub questions that will help to accomplish a full understanding of the issues mentioned above. The sub questions that support the leading question are:

   i.   Who are the fashion bloggers?

Taking into account that there is a massive production of blogs, only some of them will be taken into consideration for this research. After the selection, a description of their biographies and characteristics of the fashion bloggers will be given.

   ii.   What is the content fashion bloggers create and share?

This sub question will focus on the content of the selected fashion blogs. A detailed description of what is visible in the blogs sample will be given. I will mention and describe what the general layout of the blog looks like, which are the general topics bloggers talk about and what kind of extra material such as pictures and videos they use.

   iii.   How does the immediate audience of the blogs respond?

This sub question will focus on the response and reactions of the selected fashion blogs online audiences. To answer this sub question, comments will be taken into consideration and attitudes towards the bloggers will be analyzed. For example comments on how bloggers inspired the readers, or what are the thoughts towards the blog in general will be assessed. In this part, I will also measure the popularity of the selected pages by measuring the participation of readers with an account of comments.

   iv.   What relation do fashion blogs have with the fashion media industry?

The fifth sub question asks if there is any response from the media industry regarding the phenomenon of the fashion bloggers and how the fashion media industry is reacting to the technological advances such as the out coming of Internet media and UCC products like blogs. To answer this sub question outcomes from designers and fashion brands will be taken into consideration. These outcomes include the mention of fashion publications, brands and designers names in the blog posts and publicity that is visible in the layout of the blogs. Further, sponsors in the blogs if any will also be taken into account. Finally, some blogs have a 'press' section in which they feature some mentions the given blog has in important publications that it will also be taken into consideration.

At sum, this thesis examines fashion blogs as UCC in detail including the motivations its producers, the fashion bloggers, have to create and upload content, a description of

the fashion blogs elements, the content the fashion blogs provide and the reaction of the classical fashion media industry such as magazines about fashion bloggers and blogs.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

User created content has been subject of study since blogs and other examples started to gain popularity among Internet users. Later, motivations bloggers have to create content were and are still assessed. Yet, the literature covering this topic and further, related with a specific thematic, like in this case fashion, is rather scarce. In order to address this phenomenon, it is important to analyze some aspects of the user-created content, uses and gratifications and fashion theories. Therefore, this chapter will examine the existing theory of UCC. It will also assess the uses and gratifications approach to media and its applicability to online media, especially to blogs. In addition and for a full understanding of this thesis topic, the definition of fashion in the western society and how the fashion media industry is constituted will be explained in order to see how this industry works. As a complement, Bourdieu's cultural capital will also be included in this chapter in order to explain why some people can be considered as fashionable or trendsetters and how fashion influencers develop and are constituted within the fashion media industry.

3.1 FASHION

3.1.1 'Fashions Fade, Style is Eternal' (Yves Saint Laurent) - Fashion in western society

'Fashion is hard to define, but immediately recognizable' Hauge (1997, p. 13) states. As a cultural product it can mean different things to different people depending on their backgrounds. The concept of fashion can be studied from many angles for example from anthropology, sociology, art, history, psychology and media perspectives. Fashion is rooted into people's lifestyle and accordingly it means different to everyone. In general, scholars are disposed to identify fashion exclusively as a costume or adornment because clothes have the role to dress people and it is seeing just as shallow product, but this vision does not give a complete idea of its operation and system (Blumer, 1969). While scholars have been looking at the industry raising a point, others in contrast see

fashion as part of the popular culture. The terms fashion and clothing tend to be used as synonyms. While fashion conveys social meanings, clothing refers to the raw materials of clothes people wear (Kawamura, 2005 p. 3). Another definition says that fashion can be related to any object that changes over time and it is based on individuals' collective preferences (Barnad, 1996 in Hauge, 2007). One essential feature is that it is 'ephemeral and elusive, a target that keeps moving' (Crewe, 2001 in Hauge, 2007, p. 13). Fashion relates to changes and trends. But it is not only about that, from a collective and sociological perspective, Kawamura (2005, p. 51) says fashion is 'a social regulating system in its own right and differs from other regulating systems (such as those of habit, custom, convention, morality and the law) only in degree, not in essence' This means it is controlled and spread by legitimized institutions and authorities that are social in the sense that they are formed by actors that share similar standards and norms. Its principal actors and consumers can use fashion in creative ways that incorporate cultural habits, values and point of views. It also gives them a way of expression for their uniqueness.

On the other hand, the fashion industry is a system that tries to balance and integrate, in a profitable way, a complicated group of different ideas and creativity (Hauge, 2007). Style is readily seen to operate in different areas of human life and it is easily observable in our environment. Further, fashion styles can be used to situate a person in a place and time. It also may influence everything (Blumer, 1969). Hence, the fashion industry can be seen as an institutionalized system that has a network of beliefs, customs and procedures (Entwistle, 2002 in Hauge, 2007). As a business, the fashion industry is considered as fast-forward. Quick changes can be expected, for example when copies of trendy exclusive designs hit the stores, fashion-forward consumers recognize it is time to shift to the next new trend. That is why fashion-forward consumers can be compared with what Lievrouw (2006, p. 250) identifies as 'innovators' that can be defined as people adopting new ideas or practices which are introduced in a social system as special focus on communications and information flows and therefore promoting the adoption of such ideas or practices. Fashion media provides the consumers a way to relief their eagerness to find out what is the newest trend. This is seen as an adoption of new practices that affects and also depends on the social status and influence of fashion innovators (Lievrouw, 2006). The domain of fashion is extensive. To limit the definition of it to just notions of garments, industry or media is to diminish the idea of its occurrence (Blumer, 1969). Fashion goes further and not only

reflects language, social conventions, preferences, history and even states of humor, but it is also part of popular culture.

3.1.2 'I don't do Fashion, I am fashion' (Coco Chanel) - The field of fashion media industry

Fashion media can use several media channels for content distribution such as books and TV, however, fashion journalism in specialized fashion magazines and newspapers have an outstanding role. The fashion system has two main types of diffusion agents: one is the designer and the second are the fashion journalists, editors, advertisers and publicists that form the fashion media industry (Kawamura, 2005). In fashion, media plays a key role supporting the industry. Three aspects dominate how fashion appears within different media channels (McRobbie, 1998): first, the fashion media are not only a way to communicate happenings inside the fashion world but second they also represent the industry. In doing so they add a frame to the meaning of fashion trends. Third, the tasks performed by fashion journalists, photographers and editors are driven by and based on logics of creativity, editorial reputation and advertising revenues.

Fashion journalism has specific professional codes that dictate how fashion is represented. Therefore, fashion media is perceived as a separate and autonomous entity from the world of designers. At the same time it is based on the work of other members of the industry such as the designers (McRobbie, 1998). This relationship can be seen as a network in which the membership in the fashion media group provides each of its members with support and recognition from each other[3].

Over all, fashion media has a strong presence in women's magazines where there is a particular dynamic between the publications, advertisers and readers. As a strong characteristic of fashion magazines, advertising occupies a high amount of pages keeping the advertisers in accordance with the given space while magazines still provides articles and content the readers enjoy (Kawamura, 2005; McRobbie, 1998), which is a strong characteristic in fashion magazines.

Writers and reporters in fashion magazines can be divided in two groups: journalist and editors. Both play a large role in making a style in fashion because they can interpret the designers' ideas to a public that is not comprised of fashion professionals (Kawamura, 2005). Journalists write everyday pieces that mainly report

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[3] The relation between the members of the fashion media industry can be seen as what Bourdieu (1986) defines as social capital. This concept is explained in a more detail in the 2.1.3 section of this thesis.

but do not criticize. On the other hand, fashion editors of magazines are seen as powerful and influential images inside the fashion media industry (Kawamura, 2005; McRobbie, 1998) like *US Vogue* editor-in-chief Anna Wintour who is considered one of the most influential figures in the fashion industry (Fashionista, 2011). Editors take mainly all decisions in the fashion industry, which are the trends to follow and even patronage emerging talents they think will succeed. The image of the powerful fashion magazines editor still remains in fashion journalism today (Entwistle & Rocamora, 2006), since hierarchy and status prove to be important as a form of legitimating the practice in fashion journalism (McRobbie, 1998).

3.1.3 'Fashion is a Social Agreement' (Stella Blum) - Cultural and Social Capital in Fashion

The classical sociological discourse of fashion is mostly based on wealth and imitation creating a cycle of consumption and symbolic communication (Kawamura, 2005). In this sense, fashion can be seen as a form of capital in which it is important to understand its origins that forms the basics of the fashion notions. However, nowadays considering fashion as a type of societal differentiation might be outdated since affordable clothes is now available for a wide range of people and the notion of style now is not only possessed by people with high economical resources.

Classical studies such as the ones of Bourdieu (1986) state that capital in its objectified form is accumulated over time by social classes. It represents a potential capacity of getting profits and reproduces itself either in an identical or on an expanded way. For Bourdieu (1986) capital can be presented in three fundamental ways: as economical capital described as the economic situation of a person, as social capital which refers to the social obligations and connections a person has and as cultural capital which is described as the educational qualifications someone possess.

Fashion is more related to cultural and social capital. Bourdieu (1986) says cultural capital exists in three forms: in the embodied state, in the objectified state and in the institutionalized state; it is based on the possession of competences and provides the owner with an instrument for maintaining its social dominance over those who do not have it. For Bourdieu (1986, p. 48) cultural capital 'can be acquired, to a varying extent, depending on the period, the society and the social class, in the absence of any deliberate inculcation' and therefore its acquisition might be done unconsciously. It is

marked by its 'earliest conditions of acquisition' (p. 49) and through different and more or less visible marks determines its distinctive value.

Being more specific, fashion belongs to the objectified state of cultural capital. Fashion relates to garments that according to Bourdieu (1986) can be transmissible in its materiality by being objects. Thus, garments can be transmitted as economical capital as well. Besides being acquired in a material way, cultural goods, in this case garments are also acquired in a symbolic way that represents 'the possession of the means of consuming' (p. 50). Cultural goods also increase the capital of the owner. For example, one can buy a very expensive coat, which demonstrates the cultural capital objectified in a material, and if this owner wears it at the right season in the right event with the right complements at the right time the possessor demonstrates a right of consuming of it.

Also as previously mentioned, the relationship between fashion journalism, fashion photographers, models, designers, and fashion managers can be seen as a network. In this network, the membership in the fashion media group provides each of its members with support and recognition from each other where the existence of cohesion and a community sense in the frame of social capital can be argued to exist. Stated as the quantity of connections an individual can form, Bourdieu (1986, p. 51) describes social capital as

> 'The aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network (…) which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity-owned capital, a 'credential' which entitles them to credit in the various senses of the word'.

This concept may be simply defined as: the most connections someone has (social capital) the more reliable and recognizable that person is in the eyes of the other members of the given community. Further, according to Bourdieu (1986) every network has its forms of delegation given by single agents or a small group of agents better known as spokesmen or spokesperson to represent the group. These spokesmen are entitled to speak on behalf of the group in official circumstances implying that in networks a certain hierarchy is given among the members.

3.1.4 'Elegance Does not consists in Putting on a New Dress' (Coco Chanel) - Fashion and Distinction

Fashion can be seen as a form of class differentiation where the elite seeks to differentiate from the others using distinctive forms such as dressing up. This process is known as the fashion mechanism. Blumer (1986) refers to it using the analysis of fashion made by Simmel (1957 in Blumer, 1986). In this analysis Simmel (1957 in Blumer, 1986) proposed a thesis explaining how it works. For him, 'fashion arises as a form of class differentiation in a relatively open class society' (Simmel, 1957 in Blumer, 1986 p. 279). In that society the elite class look to differentiate by observable insignias, in this case clothes. Members of the immediate lower class adopt these insignias in order to satisfy their desires to identify with a superior status and they are copied as well by the classes beneath them.

Bourdieu (1984) explains this differentiation with the term distinction. In his studies, Bourdieu (1984) states that between classes indicators of different types of lifestyle exist that fall into specific patterns that at the same time correspond to different structures of spaces of life[4]. These indicators which are most marked by cultural capital and everyday choices such as the food type selected for eating, music to listen, art consumption, and type of clothing to use are determined by the social origin of a person. The acquisition of this type of cultural capital gives a certain social status to its bearer. Belonging to it teaches specific aesthetics preferences. In this case the members of a so-called highbrow group do not only make a distinction but also lower classes adopt their own insignias.

However, as it was mentioned at the beginning of this section, these notions belong to the classical sociological discourse of fashion making them outdated. Nowadays with the extended availability of cultural goods, the class differences explained above are not relevant any longer. Yet, it is important to understand the fashion system. The mixture of styles in between social groups (eg. Boho chic trend or ragged jeans) reverse the classic process of cultural distinction among groups in a postmodern society. Nevertheless, taste and style are still relevant in fashion in terms of

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[4] By space of life, Bourdieu (1984) refers to spaces that are defined by the distribution of economic and cultural capital among its members by each space being characterized by certain characteristics and configurations in the distribution of such capitals where the ones with more capital belong to a space of life of highbrows groups and the one with less to lowbrow groups.

cultural capital and distinction because inside the fashion media industry, fashion it is about what you wear but most important it is about how it is worn.

3.2 USER CREATED CONTENT
3.2.1 Power to the Masses - Definition of User-Created Content.
The media industries are undergoing a paradigm shift that involves new technologies. The rhetoric about the digital revolution often contains the assumption that new media will make old media disappear and that the Internet will displace broadcasting, as we know it. Then, audiences would be able to access easily to new content that is meaningful to them (Jenkins, 2006a).

Negroponte (2005, p. 54) draw a contrast between 'passive old media' and 'interactive new media'. This contrast predicts the collapse of broadcast networks in favor of narrowcasting and niche media on demand. At the time of the rise of new media, it was common to imagine a new scenario in which old media will be fully absorbed by emerging technologies. However, nowadays it is more common to think that old and new media interact in a more complex way and not as the absorption of one by the other. We are in an age of media transition, which is marked by 'tactical decisions and unintended consequences, mixed signals and competing interests and most of all, unclear directions and unpredictable outcomes' (Pool, 1984 in Jenkins, 2006a p. 11).

With technologies such as the Internet, the borders between online consumption and production are blurring. For example, the use of Internet is mainly characterized by the increasing participation and interaction of users that express themselves and communicate with others. Nowadays, Internet cannot be conceived without its participative nature, which expands the creativity and communication of and between users.

New media has enabled content to flow through different channels. It may assume many forms at the point of its reception (Jenkins, 2006a). Lévy (1997) suggests with the concept of collective intelligence, that the distinction between authors, readers, producers and spectators, creators and interpreters blends to form a circuit of expression in which the work of everyone will sustain the before mentioned circuit. A collective intelligence Lévy (1997) says is defined as a consequence of media that is now available and is being used in different ways by consumers. It refers to a collective process, which represents an alternative source of media power. Thus, users learn how

to use media everyday for interacting with each other as parts of a convergence culture. According to Lévy (1997) a collective intelligence assumes that each person has something to say and contribute to the others. Audiences work together in order to create information that didn't exist before. They 'create a community of contributors where new information is accessed and processed' (Jenkins, 2006b p. 53). In this case, the collectiveness is not based on hierarchical models but on horizontal models where the knowledge comes from experiences and the learning processes these real-life experiences involve (Jenkins, 2006b).

In order to further understand the phenomenon of collectiveness and the flow of content across multiple media platforms and between different industries it is important to refer to the term of convergence. Jenkins (2006a p. 2) says convergence is 'the collision of old and new media where the common people and the corporate media intersect'. In convergence, the power of the media producer and of the consumer interacts in different ways. Jenkins (2006a p. 2) mentions that convergence can be defined as:

'The flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behavior of media audiences who will go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they want'.

Thus, convergence represents a technological shift, as consumers are encouraged to seek new information and make connections among dispersed media content. If the content is not available, then consumers will create it with the help of new tools. As a consequence, the circulation of media content depends heavily on consumers' active participatory culture.

As Anderson (2008) states there are two main reasons why most users were not creating content in the past as they do now: first is because users did not have the necessary tools to create it and second because users did not have the talent to do it. With the evolution of new technologies, Anderson (2008 p. 63) claims 'there is now only one excuse –not having the talent' and that reason is being less valid because technology can even improve the abilities of the creator. Currently, because of the democratization of new tools for production and publication, millions of people now have the capacity to create and publish information (Anderson, 2008). This has as an

immediate consequence an 'universe of content (…) growing faster than ever' (Anderson, 2008, p. 54). The information users create and publish is known as user-created content (UCC).

The rise of UCC is one of the main features of the participatory web (Anderson, 2008; OECD Publishing, 2007). The participatory web is based on intelligent web services and new Internet applications. These applications allow users to collaborate in the creation of content and to contribute in the development, extension, rating, analysis and distribution of digital content and customization (OECD Publishing, 2007). Participation is open-ended and is less under the control of media producers and more under the control of the audience.

One characteristic of UCC is that audiences produce it because they want to, without any payment or retribution. Content is being produced just for the love of it[5] (Anderson, 2008). UCC possesses another three characteristics that enable a better understanding of it (OECD Publishing, 2007):

- Publication requirement: The work needs to be published in some context; this characteristic excludes emails, instant messaging and similar.
- Creative effort: Users must add their own value and point of view to UCC. A creative effort will increase originality in the material exposed however, the amount of effort impose to something can differ across products.
- Creation outside professional practices: UCC is normally produced outside the professional environment. It is mainly done in an amateur way. It often does not have any commercial market context and profit is not expected. Motivations to produce it may include: acceptance in a social environment, connecting with people that share similar interests, fame and the opportunity to express oneself.

Activities such as production of blogs and active participation in social-network sites are common practices between UCC users (Buckingham, 2006; Martens, 2011).

Even though UCC is defined as a non-profit activity new practices have proved this last point to have now a different dynamic. UCC may have started as a movement not

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[5] Anderson (2008, p. 63) relates the love to create content with the word "amateur" which is normally used to describe users that create content in a non-professional way. Thus, the author explains that "amateur" derives from the Latin word "amator" that means "lover", which comes from "amare, that means "to love".

focused on monetary reward but the monetization of UCC has become a growing trend (OECD Publishing, 2007). Professional established media and other businesses have acquired UCC initiatives for commercial purposes and some professional have involved UCC practices in their specialized work making its creation more extensive. By these means, now some users are being remunerated for the content they produce and some even have become professionals after an initial phase of a non-remunerated activity. (OECD Publishing, 2007).

The rise of new legal means for UCC has also contributed in large extent to the availability and diffusion of UCC (OECD Publishing, 2007). Institutional and legal measurements drive schemes that provide more flexible access to creative works and the right to create them, like the flexible copyright schemes such as Creative Commons. Creative Commons is a nonprofit organization that allows artists, authors, publishers and musicians the option of creating and defining a flexible copyright for their creative works. Licenses such as Creative Commons cover art, music, and writing. A Creative Commons license allows creators to place conditions on their copyrights. Traditionally, copyrights restrict the rights of others from modifying or distributing copy written works. Creative Commons licenses offer flexibility by allowing the creator -copyright holder- the ability to choose what limitations they want in place with respect to specific copy written works (http://www.creativecommons.com).   End-user licensing agreements grants copyrights[6] to users for what they produce.

Even though the Internet and the new technological tools have advantages as new ways to seek and distribute information and communicate with others there are several concerns about some issues. An aspect to considerate but that it is not completely decisive in the creation of content by users is that while a lot of people can access to new technologies, some evidence indicates that there is still a digital divide. This digital divide represents a barrier for people to adopt these new channels of communications. Demographic aspects represent reasons that affect the equitable access

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[6] On the contrary of other industries such as the film and music ones, it is important to notice that the American Copyright Law does not have any copyright protections for the fashion industry. This means that original designs can be copied from other designers and commercialized and they can also be used by publications without any restrictions. However, the absence of copyright hasn't affected the flow of innovation or profits in the fashion industry. Styles rise and fall in cycles of trends. As copies of trendy exclusive designs hit the stores, fashion-forward consumers recognize it is time to shift to the next new trend. This generates more demand for new designs since the old are not longer exclusive, thus, not affecting the innovation or the profit factor inside the fashion industry (New York Times, 2010).

to new technologies (Rice & Haythornthwaite, 2002). However, as the availability of technological tools increases, the digital divide is decreasing more and more making available for consumers new technologies of consumption and creation. The uses of new media technologies represent a rapid shift in the opportunities audiences now have regarding the creation, distribution and consumption of information without the demographics are an impediment to this.

3.2.2 Behind the Curtains - Characteristics of UCC Producers

For Jenkins (2006a, p. 20) media consumers are 'active, emotionally engaged with media products and socially networked' in order to share the content that is interesting for them. According to Jenkins (2006a) over the past several years emerging technologies have granted audiences with more control over the media flows allowing them not only to consume content but also to produce it. As Anderson (2008) mentions in recent years audiences watched people just like them producing works of creativity. This tendency proved to be inspiring for some. Thus people started to produce they own content as well. This shift to passive consumers to active producers can be understood as Anderson (2008 p. 64) states, as a matter of once consumers know 'what is behind the curtain' they realize that, the person that is producing all this content can be themselves. These new waves of producers create and express themselves in search of more interactivity than on traditional media (Livingstone, 2004). However, Van Dijck (2009) and Nielsen (2006) mention that not all people that are able to create content do it. Nielsen (2006) explains that there is a participation inequality in the creation of content on the Internet and that most users simply 'lurk' in the background. Further, Nielsen (2006) mentions that often the users participation more or less follows the 90-9-1 rule in which 90% of the users are lurkers, 9% contribute from time to time and only 1% of users participate significantly and account for most of the contributions.

Through several years, UCC producers have been pioneers in the adoption of new technologies and tools. This is not only as of the tools' availability but also because of the opportunity to create and publish different contents as an option from mainstream media and in order to express themselves as an extension of their inner circles or interests. Producers of UCC look for broad audience participation in order to create a community that shares thoughts or ideas (Jenkins, 2006b). UCC producers have gained greater visibility as they have deployed the web not only to produce content of their

interest but also to create a community, to have an intellectual exchange, cultural distribution or to portray media activism. For Anderson and Wolff (2010) users, consumers and producers are in lull between the commercialization in digital media. UCC producers are leading the venture with their on-demand customized provision of content that potentially increase cultural diversity and lower barriers to cultural participation giving the audiences the specific content they are looking for.

3.2.3 All Eyes on You – Bloggers and Blogs

Since this thesis is focused on a specific type of UCC content, blogs, it is worth to define and describe this type of user-created content with more detail. Blogs production is a common practice between UCC producers. It is a popular way to create online content (Nardi, 2004b). Blogs can be defined as electronic journals in which amateur producers known as bloggers create, update and share content (Dearstyne, 2005; Trammell and Keshelashvili, 2005; Nardi, 20004b). As Trammell et al. (2006) mention blogs are most of the times focused on one specific subject. Blogs are more dynamic than old-style webpages. They have posts that are more permanent than the ones created in online discussion forums. Blogs are more private and personal than traditional journalism but more public than personal diaries. They represent a hybrid channel in which the blogger can share practically every type of content. A blog combines the immediacy of recently updated posts and at the same time shows part of the producer's personality (Nardi, 2004b). One essential feature blogs have as Kent (2008) mentions is that they are public documents and because of that reason they are written in a self-conscious way in order to be informative, entertaining or both. Most blogs portray colorful names, as illustrated in the blogs analyzed in this thesis: *The Sartorialist* and *BryanBoy*. Blog producers are known as bloggers. A blogger, according to Jenkins (2006b) is an important grassroots intermediary. Bloggers range broadly, share and flag interesting stories from other online publications and exchange advice and comments to several problems.

With the development of new technologies, there is a new format for blogging known as microblogging. The term microblog refers to a broadcast medium that can be seen as a variation of a blog. Microblogs can be considered as a part of the social media family, which can be defined as 'group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content' (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 61). Microblogging allows users to

'create and exchange small elements of content such as short sentences, quotes, individual images, video, photo links and so on' (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011, p. 106). Among the most popular microblogging sites are Twitter[7] and Tumblr[8]. This is relevant to mention since this research also analyzes one example of microblogging, a Tumblr named *What I Wore*.

3.2.4 From the Basement to Chanel – Definition of Fashion Blogs

Fashion blogs are only an example of a wide range of existent blogs. Even though user created content practices such as fashion blogs have grown considerably in the past few years, research in this field is still rather scarce. However, some previous studies about fashion blogs (Berry, 2010; Marwick, 2011; Rosser, 2010) have contributed to expand the knowledge about this topic. Fashion blogs, as Marwick (2011) mentions, are part of a blogging practice spread all over the world. Fashion blogging embraces amateur writers who in this specific case may post content about themselves, pictures of their wardrobe, share fashion tips and review fashion collections and fashion events. Further, as Marwick (2011) states fashion bloggers produce a type of fashion media that is read worldwide in which the fashion bloggers show their personal style. Thus, 'fashion bloggers are both, producers and consumers of fashion content' (Marwick, 2011, p. 2).

As Rosser (2010) mentions fashion blogs represent an example of the shifting mode between the alternative and the classical fashion press made by fashion magazines. One of the reasons fashion blogs have gained space inside the fashion media field is because journalism about high fashion like the one in the fashion magazines is being highly contrasted with other emergent styles and tendencies such as the street-style (Berry, 2010). Fashion consumers who now not only wear street-style clothes but also write and photograph about it in an amateur way over the Internet have increased the offer for fashion media consumption with new proposals.

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[7] Twitter is a real-time information network that allows users to send and receive short messages known as tweets. It also shows public streams with compelling conversations that can be followed by users. The platform only allows messages up to 140 characters at a time.

[8] Tumblr is a microblogging platform that allows users to post text, images, videos, links, quotes and audio to their tumblelog, a short-form blog. Users can follow other users, or choose to make their tumblelog log private. Tumblr allows their users to program their entrances because of its queue feature. Inside the platform reblogging, or sharing third-part content, is possible by just clicking a button making contents viral in a short period of time.

Many fashion bloggers (Berry, 2010; Marwick, 2011) are not trained as journalists or fashion experts but they started their pages as personal projects that not only document fashion but also encourage dialogues reinforcing fashion trends. Fashion documentation and discussion give the opportunity to the fashion bloggers to be at the forefront of fashion making instead of limiting the creation of content as a practice exclusively done by fashion editors, models, celebrities and designers (Berry, 2010). Therefore, fashion blogs represent to some degree an exercise of democratization in the fashion industry, as Berry (2010) states.

As a consequence, the fashion media industry noticed the importance of fashion blogs within the Internet audience and consumers. Therefore, some magazines, designers and brands have decided to collaborate with fashion bloggers. Hence, fashion blogs have become influential in the fashion media industry. Fashion bloggers now have important spaces inside magazine publications and are recognized by the industry. For example, the blog of *The Sartorialist* made by Scott Schuman is ranked in Time magazine as one of the most influential figures within the design world and the Danzinger gallery hosted in 2007 a show of portraits from the blog that were valued for $1,200 a piece (The Guardian, 2007). In 2009 for the first time, bloggers were seated in the front row of fashion shows. More, designer Marc Jacobs named a bag *the BB* after blogger Bryanboy from the *BryanBoy* blog (http://www.bryanboy.com). And, blogger Tavi Gevinson responsible of the blog of *The Style Rookie* inspired a collection made by the designers of Rodarte for the brand Target (http://www.thestylerookie.com). More recently the platform Tumblr decided to focus a bit more in the fashion industry and the company behind it decided to send 20 of its featured fashion bloggers to cover the New York Fashion Week 2011 in the city of New York, USA (Sherman, 2011).

3.3 MOTIVATIONS FOR BLOGGING
3.3.1 Why blogging? - Uses and Gratifications Theoretical Perspective
Before research on new media appeared, Li (2005) mentions that the uses and gratifications theory has been used in order to analyze and understand motivations for media use. Previous researches (Ruggeiro, 2000) have explored how audiences can engage in several forms with media in order to satisfy some social and psychological needs. These previous analysis assume as Shao (2009) states that the audiences choose in a conscious way the medium they think can fill their needs. As Trammell et al. (2006, p. 705) mention, the uses and gratifications theory:

'Is built on the assumption that individuals pursue media-related behaviors based on specific predispositions or motives and social-psychological characteristics. Therefore, it is fundamental to understand the media user's motivations and resulting gratifications'.

Therefore, this approach has been used to research users motivations through several methods such as content analysis (Papacharissi 2002; Papacharissi, 2007; Trammell et al., 2006). Thus, according to Trammell et al. (2006) the uses and gratifications theoretical perspective can be a starting point to understand bloggers motivations and needs.

As some researches argue (Papacharissi, 2002; Papacharissi, 2007; Shao, 2009; Trammell et al., 2006) new technologies such as the Internet are considered a medium and as a result they also fulfill users needs. In this case, informational, entertainment, passing time and social needs can be gratified with the use of the Internet (Trammel et. al, 2006). In addition, some previous uses and gratifications studies have shown that this new technologies have more utilities for users, for example the manifestation of creativity (Perse & Dunn, 1998, in Trammell et al., 2006). Therefore, it can be argued that user-created content provides a mixture of uses and gratifications for its users who at the same time are its producers. In this case, the mixture of uses and gratifications is provided by the way the users employ these new technologies. Activities such as content creation and the motivations to generate and upload content may be included here.

Motivations for creating user-created content specifically personal home pages has been researched by some academics like Papacharissi (2002) who found that producers of personal pages created them in order to share information, create a community, for entertainment purposes and self-expression. Other cases such as the content analysis made by Trammell et al. (2006) found that Polish bloggers created online content for self-expression purposes, to have social interaction, for entertainment, for passing time, to be informed and to have professional advancement. According to Trammel et al., (2006) the motivations can be manifested in the content of the blogs or personal pages. For example a comments section may signify a user-created content producer is interested in a creating a community. Hence, "audience and purpose are

clearly important to online diarists, since these writers obviously and intentionally are creating public documents" (Sorapure, 2003, p. 9 in Trammell et al., 2006, p. 706) arguing then that bloggers have their motivations to create content, which can be different depending on the blogger and the topic they address.

This thesis, which focuses on fashion blogs and the motivations fashion bloggers have to create and publish online content, is based on previous works that examined motivations for Polish bloggers (Trammell et al., 2006) and English-language blogs (Nardi et al. (2004b), Trammell & Keshelashvili (2005), and Papacharissi (2007)). All of these studies not only pioneered on the research on bloggers motivations but also found that motivations for blogging are diverse depending on the topic the bloggers are addressing, their writing style, the blog features, the blog style, the resources that are used in the blogs and the frequency of posting. Based on early users motivations studies (Ruggeiro, 2000), more recent motivations researches (Shao, 2009) and researches that examine different bloggers motivations (Nardi et al. (2004b), Trammell & Keshelashvili (2005), Trammell et al., (2006) and Papacharissi (2007)) this thesis used some categories that were previously mentioned and adapted new ones to examine fashion bloggers motivations.

4. METHODOLOGY

This analysis aims to find out what motivates fashion bloggers to create and share online content as well as to find out who they are and what kind of content they share. It also includes how their immediate online audience reacts and what relation fashion blogging has, in particular within the fashion media industry. In doing so, this thesis employed a quantitative systematic content analysis of fashion blogs using a coding scheme based on previous analysis of the motivations of bloggers (Nardi et al. (2004b), Trammell & Keshelashvili (2005), Trammell et al., (2006) and Papacharissi (2007)).

Content analysis 'views data as representations not of physical events but of text, images, and expressions that are created to be seen, read, interpreted and acted on for their meanings' (Krippendorff, 2004, p. xiii). As a method, content analysis can be defined as 'a research technique for the systematic, objective, and quantitative description of the manifest content in communication' (Berelson, 1952 in Trammell and Keshelshvili, 2005, p. 972). Krippendorff (2004) defines it as a 'research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from text (or other meaningful matter) to the context of their use' (p. 18). In content analysis not only text but also images can be addressed, because they may be included as data and therefore they can be considered as text that can be analyzed (Krippendorff, 2004). As Krippendorff (2004) argues the distinctions between qualitative and quantitative are questionable because the reading of a text can already be considered as a qualitative practice since the text is being explored and interpreted. By these means, the content analysis in this project aims to describe in detail the content of each fashion blog in detail.

Previous analysis of bloggers motivations such as the ones of Trammell and Keshelshvili (2005), Trammell et al., (2006) and Papacharissi (2007) have tested and used the content analysis method for their research.

4.1 UNITS OF ANALYSIS DESCRIPTION: A STYLE ROOKIE, A FLAMBOYANT BOY, A SARTORIALIST AND THE GIRL NEXT DOOR AS SELECTED FASHION BLOGGERS

This analysis will be focusing only on fashion blogs and tumbrls. As units of analysis I selected three fashion blogs and one tumbrl that are considered[9] as some of the most influential not only for the audiences but also for the fashion media.

The selected blogs were picked based on popularity issues, meaning they have enough content and reactions from the audience. This allowed doing a meaningful research regarding the collection of data because other blogs with less interaction might not have such an impact on the audience response or even in the fashion industry. The three blogs I am going to use for this research are:

1. *The Sartorialist*: Fashion blog by Scott Schuman. *The Sartorialist* is mostly based on photographs taken by Schuman of people on the streets all around the world. Many in the fashion field have recognized *The Sartorialist* as one of the most influential fashion publications. For example, *Times Magazine* included it on its list of Top 100 designers' influencers. *The Sartorialist* became a book in 2009.

2. *Bryanboy.com*: Bryanboy is the nickname of Bryan Grey-Yambao, a guy from the Philippines. The page contains text, pictures, critics and videos. It caught the attention of the media industry quickly. Well-renowned designers such as Marc Jacobs have adopted Bryanboy as one of their protégés[10]. The New York Post named Bryan as one of the '9 Hottest Celebs on the Web in 2009'.

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[9] I used some indicators to select the blogs for this research. I made a selection based on mentions on search engines by typing "fashion blogs", specialized fashion websites such as New York Times style section and the Financial Times style column. Mentions in fashion magazines websites such as US Vogue, US Elle and Marie Claire were also taken into consideration. But mainly, I relied on numbers and statistics shown by Alexa (http://www.alexa.com) in which, *The Sartorialist* appears as the number one blog in the style fashion category, Bryanboy.com ranks on the 80, 237 place of the global ranking of webpages in general and The Style Rookie on the 85,897 place of the global ranking of the global ranking of webpages in general.

[10] The Oxford dictionary defines protégé as a person who is supported by a more experienced or influential person. In 2008, designer Marc Jacobs noticed a tribute video Bryan did in his honor. After that, Jacobs upload a picture of himself holding a message in which it can be read: " I love BryanBoy, wish you were here, I did write it. Love, Marc". Thus, Bryan made a series of posts about the situation. At that time Bryan blog was already popular in the fashion blogosphere. Later, the relation between Jacobs and Bryan became closer and better; the designer named a bag the BB in Bryan's honor. Nowadays, Bryan frequents Jacobs shows and have a good friends relation among them. (Retrieved from http://www.bryanboy.com).

3. *The Style Rookie*: Fashion blog by Tavi Gevinson. The blog contains text, pictures, tips to make own signature designers' clothes and several pop culture references. She started her blog in 2008.

And the tumblr I am going to use for this research is:

1. *What I Wore*: Fashion tumblr by Jessica Quirk (formerly known as Jessica Schroeder), a twenty-some girl from the USA. The tumblr is a collection of pictures that portrays what Jessica wears every single day of her life. She started documenting in 2008. Jessica expects to release a book of *What I Wore* in 2011.

4.2 THE SAMPLING OF FASHION BLOGS

The blogs used for this thesis were selected between all of the fashion blogs in the Web because they provide content that can be considered as meaningful for the following reasons:

1. They are updated constantly
2. They have existed for at least 2 years
3. They have a meaningful number of comments in most of the posts.

In order to gain the best data possible, several blog entries published by the bloggers themselves were collected. Blogs are defined as online journals where the entries are arranged in chronological order and all posts are available in an online archive within each blog (Trammell et al., 2006). Therefore, I divided each blog in three sections for the data collection. The three divided sections represent different stages of the existence of each blog: the beginning (earliest posts), the maturation (meaning halfway of the time since the blog started until today) and nowadays (lasts posts).

Additionally to the sections that concern the different stages of existence of the blogs, another aspect was taken into consideration: the fashion season. The fashion season works in the following way: it is divided into two periods, spring/summer and fall/winter, each division of time presents new garment collections. In order to present the newest trends, the fashion system organizes catwalks in some places around the world. The most important runway shows are, in that order, in New York, London, Milan and Paris. Each city hosts a show twice a year. Generally, The shows are between January through April and between September through November. Since the shows preview trends and garments for the following season, important people inside the media industry such as designers, magazine editors, celebrities and press are present.

Given that recently, an increased number of fashion bloggers also have made appearances at the runway shows the fashion seasons were contemplated in the selection of the sample. This in order to avoid a bias in the analysis of the blog posts because the information contained during those dates may include high amount of advertising or even paid blog posts.

At sum, the selection criteria resulted in these three final periods:

1) Initial period that takes into consideration the second month of existence of each blog[11]

2) Maturation period that takes into consideration 2 weeks between the 16th and 29th of March 2009 just after fashion weeks that year representing the maturation stage of the blogs and,

3) Contemporary period that takes into consideration 2 weeks between the 14th and 27th of March 2011 again just after fashion week representing the nowadays stage.

4.3 DATA COLLECTIONS AND CATEGORIES

Collection of data was as follow: both, the blog posts and comments were taken from the archives that each blog has. In this case, it is expected that each blog could have a different number of posts and comments.

For coding the information, a codesheet (see Appendix A) was created. It is based on previous research on motivations bloggers have to create and publish content in blogs made by Trammell & Keshelashvili (2005), Trammell et al. (2006) and Papacharissi (2007). Some categories in the codesheet like the topics of the posts (record of the day, news, hobbies, and personal) were drawn from previous work and applied to this particular topic. Additionally, it was necessary to create and modify the other categories to fit with this analysis. To create the codes, more information was collected through an empirical search made by typing 'reasons for blogging' and 'reasons for fashion blogging' in web search engines. The chosen codes aim to explain the motivations fashion bloggers projected in the posts they published, to get to know the characteristics of each blog, their practices, add-ons and the bloggers self-

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[11] Instead of taking into consideration the first month of publication of each blog I decided to analyze the first two month of posts because the reading of the selected blogs showed that the material in the first month is rather scarce and it has to be complemented with more material in order to be meaningful.

presentation inside the fashion blogosphere by using theory of fashion, UCC and uses and gratifications.

The six categories for assessing motivation were established in earlier research (Trammell & Keshelashvili (2005), Trammell et al. (2006) and Papacharissi (2007)). The codes I used in this project are: (1) entertainment, (2) creativity, (3) self-expression, (4) social relations, (5) passing time and (6) professional advancement.

The motivations expressed in the blogs are assessed by using the following criteria (Trammell et al., 2006):

1)   Entertainment includes cues where the blogger states he or she is blogging for pure enjoyment or because it is fun.

2)   Creativity includes cues where the blogger creates original material in a way they will not have limitations to do so, it might entitle experimentation in the use of text.

3)   Self-expression refers to informing others about oneself by providing personal information, feelings, personal ideas, beliefs and thoughts.

4)   Social relations assesses cues in which a community argument is stated, the blogger might propose questions or debates to the immediate audience.

5)   Passing time includes cues in which the author states that he or she is blogging to occupy free time.

6)   Professional advancement refers to promotion that enhances professional skills or shares a career status.

For this analysis, all of the collected posts were read and examined to find these motivations categories by looking for cues or representations like quotes and statements. Even thought the analysis focuses on text, pictures are also taken into account[12].

The topics presented on the blog posts were also analyzed. They were measured by their presence (1) or absence (0). They are as follows (Trammell & Keshelashvili (2005), Trammell et al. (2006) and Papacharissi (2007)):

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[12] As Krippendorff (2004) mentions content analysis also entails images, thus in this analysis pictures will be taken into consideration, for further explanation please refer to the codesheet in the Appendix A.

1. Activities or record of the day: It entitles a description of what the blogger did recently in a day in his/her life.

2. News announcement: Refers to posts that mention an event that just happened.

3. Hobbies/interest: This topic is about the bloggers telling what they like/enjoy to do.

4. Community: Refers to social activities with family, friends and other bloggers/readers.

5. Personal: This category refers to the description of feelings and thoughts.

6. Work: In this topic the blogger refers to his professional duties and advancement.

7. Daily wardrobe: Here, the blogger posts about what he/she wore that day.

8. Fashion events: Refers to catwalks, special events and gatherings inside the fashion industry.

Then, the absent or present of the fashion brands, designers and magazines presence was also coded within each analyzed post. These included a simple (1) for present and (0) for absent.

The analysis also includes the section of comments beneath each post because I relied on them to answer the sub question related to how the immediate audience of the blogs responds to the given information. In order to analyze how does the audience's reacts, comments were analyzed using the following categories: (1) inspiration, (2) social relations, and (3) bloggers response (Trammell & Keshelashvili (2005), Trammell et al. (2006) and Papacharissi (2007)).

Regarding the comments, inspiration includes cues where readers specifically tell the bloggers how they have inspired them to do a certain activity. The social relations category assesses the blogs readers' conversations or promotion of debates or a discussions and the bloggers responses includes cues where it is specifically mentioned that the blogger is the one making a comment. Additionally, in the comments area, the category of self-promotion comments is included in the analysis. This category entitles cues where mainly the readers let know which are their own blog addresses or websites.

4.4 SECONDARY ANALYSIS

In order to get a more profound understanding of the data collected I planned to interview the bloggers that are in charge of each blog however due time and schedule

restrictions from their part this turned out to be impossible. Hence, I choose a second best alternative that is analyzing a series of published interviews. The already existent information about bloggers in other publications may represent and effective way to replace the information I wanted to obtain before. Thus, the data and insights fashion bloggers gave by answering different questions to different publications represents a good complement in order to understand and compare with the content analysis. With this secondary analysis some of the results might be supported or argue to enrich the analysis. Here, I rely on material already published by online fashion magazines and fashion websites retrieved from these webpages: *BaseNow, Big Think, The Sound of Young America*, a promotional interview for the brand Intel, *Slamxhype, The NY Times* photography blog, *Globe and Mail, Style Statement, Interview Magazine, The Interview Show, Generation X Forum, Eye Weekly, Metromix Indianapolis, I Adore Style, Maggie Rose, We The Urban, Style Coalition, Trespass Magazine, Marie Claire online, Tongue in Chic, Comme Des Leroi*, and *Watch Mojo*. I also took into consideration the own material fashion bloggers published in their blogs in the sections 'about me' and 'F.A.Q'.

5. RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of a content analysis of the posts (*n=243*) of a sample of 3 fashion blogs and one tumblr. The main research question of this thesis aimed to answer what are the motivations fashion bloggers have to create and publish elaborated content material. Besides, complementary sub questions aimed to answer who are the fashion bloggers, what is the content they share, how does the immediate audience of the blogs responds and what is the relation fashion blogs have with the fashion media industry. In addition the results of the content analysis presented in this chapter are explained and illustrated with examples taken directly from the three blogs and the tumblr as well as with examples drawn from the secondary analysis of interviews with the bloggers.

5.1 WHO ARE THE FASHION BLOGGERS?

The first sub question asks who are the fashion bloggers. Therefore, in this result section I expand on the information already presented about the fashion bloggers. This is to have a first impression about the people whose blogs are being analyzed.

1) *The Sartorialist*: *The Sartorialist* is the name of the fashion blog created by Scott Schuman. The blog publishes daily outfits of people in the form of pictures with comments about what it is presented. According to his blog's biography (http://www.thesartorialist.com/bio.html), Schuman was born in Indiana, USA. Then, for his studies he went to Indiana College majoring in Apparel Merchandising with a minor of Costume Construction. Before creating *The Sartorialist,* Schuman worked in the fashion industry for about 15 years in sales and marketing for high-end women's designers' collections. After some time he opened his own showroom specialized on sales and public relations for some collections of emergent designers but after sometime he closed his business to focus on photography. Schuman states he 'always felt that there was a disconnect between what I was selling in the showroom and what I was seeing real people (really cool people) wearing in real life'. Therefore, he started to take photos of people on the streets to get and give inspiration and with those pictures he started the blog of *The Sartorialist*, as Schuman says: 'I started *The Sartorialist* simply to share photos of people that I saw on the streets of New

York that I thought looked great'. According to the information provided by Schuman in the same biography, he says that the blog grew in only a year from its launch and after his success he formed an association with the magazine GQ where he had a monthly page and with the fashion website Style.com where he collaborated as a guest in the blog section and video section *The Intersection*. In 2009 he released his own *The Sartorialist* book, which is a compilation of the best pictures Schuman has taken for his blog. His influence has grown so much that *Times Magazine* included him and his blog on its list of Top 100 designers' influencers in 2007 (http://www.time.com/time/specials/2007/style_design) and the website *AskMen.com* included Schuman in its 2007 rank Top 49 Men placing the blogger in the 35th position (http://uk.askmen.com/specials/2007_top_49/scott-schuman-35.html). Currently Schuman still writes in his blog. He covers fashion week events for his own blog and some other fashion publications and now he has a partnership with the also fashion blogger and current girlfriend Garance Doré.

2) *BryanBoy*: Bryan Grey-Yambao also known as BryanBoy is the creator of the fashion blog named after him. He is from the Philippines and he is about 25 years old. He started his blog in 2004 not as a fashion blog but as a travel journal in which he shared his experiences abroad with family and friends. However since the beginning of the blog he showed to portray a flamboyant clothes style and showed interest for fashion brands and designers (http://bryanboy.com). There is no record in his blog or over the Internet of his previous education neither his pasts jobs however from his blog posts it can be seen that before his blogger experience he did not have any earlier relations with the fashion media industry. The BryanBoy's blog, as *The Sartorialist*, gained popularity very soon mainly because of the open support of the fashion designer Marc Jacobs who discovered a fan video made by BryanBoy where he expressed his admiration towards the designer. Jacobs liked the video so much he decided to get in contact with Bryan and all the experience was registered in the fashion blog. Soon after the contact, Jacobs named an ostrich bag 'The BB' in the blogger's honor (http://bryanboy.com). Because of its influence the blog of BryanBoy has been recognized by the 2007 Philippine Blogs Awards as the best fashion & life style blog. Also *The New York Post* named Bryan as one of the 9 hottest

celebrities on the web in 2007 and the magazine American *Vogue* recognized him as one of the most influential front-row bloggers in its March 2010 edition. Currently Bryan still runs his blog and now he is part of a bloggers project called Now Manifest which is an aggregate site that features blog posts of Bryan and other 3 bloggers merged into one lay out. Bryan is now also a jet setter[13] that reports fashion events all over the world for his own blog or other collaborations.

3) *The Style Rookie: The Style Rookie* is a blog created by the now teenager Tavi Gevinson. As stated in his biography page at her blog (http://www.thestylerookie.com/) she is from Chicago, USA. She was born in April 1996 and she is currently 15 years old. In her blog Tavi describes herself as 'wears batman capes and oversized hats. Scatters black petals on Rei Kawakubo's doorsteps and serenades her in rap. I wish I was Daria but I get too excited about things like candy to be deadpan all the time'. She started her blog in 2008 when she was only 12 years old as a journal of her everyday life, everyday clothes choices and as a recollection of things she likes. As it is stated on Tavi's blog she is mainly busy as a normal student. *The Style Rookie* also gained quick attention from the media when Tavi's blog was featured in the *New York Time* history made by Elizabeth Spiridakis in 2008 called 'Post adolescents: Tween bloggers'. Then the same year Tavi was featured in another story titled 'Young fashion bloggers are worrisome trend to parents' by Amanda Kwan for *Associated Press*. Because of her influence, Tavi was asked by Kate and Laura Mulleavy, better known as the Rodarte Sisters to design a t-shirt and also to present their Target's collection (http://www.thestylerookie.com). In 2009 Tavi appeared on the cover of *Pop magazine* and later on in 2010 she was featured at the *Teen Vogue Magazine*. Tavi, as well as BryanBoy and *The Sartorialist*, has attended to some shows at several Fashion Weeks all over the world. Currently Tavi is a high school freshman student and still keeps writing in her blog.

4) *What I Wore: What I Wore* is a fashion tumblr by Jessica Quirk formely known as Jessica Schroeder. She used to live in New York, USA but in 2010 she moved

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[13] The Oxford dictionary (http://oxforddictionaries.com) defines jet set as "wealthy and fashionable people who travel widely and frequently for pleasure"

to Indiana, USA. According to the biography at her tumblr (http://www.whatiwore.tumblr.com) she studied Apparel Merchandising at the Indiana University with a minor in Marketing and also has an Associate's Degree in Costume Construction Technology. In her life story she also mentions that she previously worked in the fashion media industry as an assistant designer and head designer for four years between 2005 and 2009. She started the tumblr of *What I Wore* in March 2008 as a space where she showed as the name of the tumblr suggests what she was wearing on a specific day with a portrait of the outfit and a description of why and how she was using it. Jessica's tumblr gained more and more attention over the time by making some partnerships with some brands and adding more and better content to the page however there is no record of visible support from any designer or fashion brand that helped the tumblr to skyrocket as the other 3 blogs previously described. Jessica has been featured at the *Time Out New York* website in 2010, several times at *Stylelist.com* and she recently was a guest speaker for the video web based initiative *TEDXBloomington*. In 2011 Jessica expects to release her book named after his Tumblr, *What I Wore: A cookbook for your closet.*

After this introductory information about the selected fashion bloggers, now this thesis will focus on the analysis of the content provided by the fashion blogs.

5.2 FREQUENCY OF POSTING

Descriptive analysis of the data shows a substantial difference in the number of blog posts each blogger creates and uploads (see Table 1). The results show that *The Sartorialist* is the most productive one (*n*=102) followed by BryanBoy (*n*=57), then *What I Wore* (*n*=54) and finally followed by *The Style Rookie* (*n*=30).

Table 1. Frequency of posting

Blogs title	All items (*n*=243)
The Sartorialist	41.97%
BryanBoy	23.45%
What I Wore	22.22%
The Style Rookie	12.34%

Since blogs are defined as online journals an analysis of the blog posts through the history of the blogs was also made. Concerning the period in which the bloggers were more active, meaning the period in which they created and uploaded more content, a descriptive analysis demonstrates that bloggers were over all more active in the first season or the second month after their blogs started with the 36.6% of the blog posts belonging to it (n=89) followed by the second season that has a 32.1% of the blog posts (n=78) and finally and without not much difference by the third season with a 31.3% (n=76). The results do not show a substantial difference among them pointing out that the fashion bloggers, over all, are consistent with the content maintenance of their blogs (see Table 2). These results suggest that most bloggers are aware of the importance of consistency in the fashion blogs if the aim of the blogger is to increase traffic and have more readers as Scott Schuman, *The Sartorialist,* mentions in an interview for the *Big Think* (2009) website when he was asked for some tips for a successful blog. In this case, Schuman answered:

'Consistency, you know you have to be able to create a consistent voice because if you're blogging in a real way I think you have to do it very regularly. If it's not five days a week or six days a week, in a way that people start to know when they can come see your blog, when there is going to be new images up'

In another interview for the *Base Now* (2008) website Schuman reaffirmed this idea: 'When I first started the blog, it was important to me that I would post regularly. I think I understood that readers who go back to the blog everyday are the most important for the site'.

Table 2. Frequency of posting according to each season

Posts season	All items (n=243)
First season	36.62%
Second season	32.09%
Third season	31.27%

5.3 FASHION BLOGGERS' MOTIVATIONS

The main research question for this analysis asked what are the motivations for fashion bloggers to produce and publish elaborated content material. Taking into consideration all the blog posts the data analysis demonstrates that 'self-expression' has the strongest presence among the 3 fashion blogs and the tumblr with 88.9% (n=216) followed by the presence of 'creativity' with 67.9% (n=165) and then by 'social relations' with 25.9% (n=63) followed by the presence of 'professional advance' with 19.3% (n=47) after, comes 'entertainment' with 3.3% (n=8) and finally the 'passing time' motivation is only present with 1.6% (n=4). The sum of all results is more than 100% because these results suggest that fashion bloggers may have more than a single motivation to produce and publish content in their blogs and that more than one motivation can be present within the posts.

Table 3. Bloggers motivations among fashion blogs

Motivations	All items (n=243)
Self-expression	88.9%
Creativity	67.9%
Social relations	25.9%
Professional advance	19.3%
Entertainment	3.3%
Passing time	1.6%

However, the analysis made blog by blog shows that these results do not prevail since in the blog of *The Style Rookie* the presence of the self-expression motivation is given in a 100% making it an atypical result compared with others. For example, *BryanBoy* has the presence of social relations motivations ranked in second (56.14%) and the creativity motivation moved into 4th place (19.29%). For the other two blogs, *The Sartorialist* and *What I Wore* the results remain similar to the results showed in Table 3 in which for *The Sartorialist* 'self expression' remains at the top of motivations (96.07%) as well as in *What I Wore* (87.03%). This can be illustrated with the text that Jessica Quirk included in the section 'Pro Tips' in her *What I Wore* tumblr that states: 'your first motivation for blogging should be self publishing your perspective'. This statement is supported by another one made by Scott Schuman of *The Sartorialist* for the website *Big Think* (2009) in which he mentioned that the most important things in a

fashion blog are 'passion and a point of view'. Also for bloggers, the social relations motivation turns out to be quite important for them as Tavi from *The Style Rookie* says in the F.A.Q. of her blog: 'the great thing about the online conversation is that people can be obsessive fans together'.

A further descriptive analysis on motivations for fashion bloggers shows the relation between the season in which the blog posts were created and published and the motivation that is shown in the content. This analysis was made in order to know if there is a change in the motivations for fashion blogging as time passes by. The results demonstrated that most motivations such as entertainment, social relations and passing time remained the same over time in the sample of fashion blogs however, there was a change in the quantity of blog posts related to the creativity motivation, the self expression motivation and the professional advance motivation as the Table 4 shows:

Table 4. Motivations related to the analyzed blogs seasons

Season	Entertainment (n=243)	Creativity (n=243)	Self-expression (n=243)	Social relations (n=243)	Passing time (n=243)	Professional advance (n=243)
First	0.82%	24.69%	36.21%	9.87%	1.23%	1.64%
Second	2.05%	21.39%	27.57%	7.81%	0.41%	6.17%
Third	0.41%	21.81%	25.10%	8.23%	0%	11.52%
Total	3.29%	67.90%	88.88%	25.92%	1.64%	19.34%

In this case, the change in the number of posts related to the professional advance motivation may suggest that some fashion bloggers get job opportunities because of their blogs as Jessica Quirk mentions in her section 'Pro Tips' of her tumblr: 'If you're doing it (blogging) just to get sponsored or get attention, it will probably come across that way. The numbers will come if you have something interesting to talk about'. Scott Schuman from *The Sartorialist* supports this idea as he mentioned in an interview made for the website *Base Now* (2008) where he stated:

'The blog has helped me to gain jobs in magazines and to become a professional photographer and, I guess, a fashion editor. When I first started going to fashion shows, I had a camera, but I didn't look like a photographer. I looked like an editor, which was interesting to many of the people attending the shows. Many

were interested in who I was, and came and talked to me. That was one good way of getting the word out. I think one of my strengths is that I am able to write and take pictures. I think I have been able to develop a strong voice of my own'.

As a next step in the analysis, I investigated the relations between bloggers motivations (see Table 5). The correlations found show that there is a significant positive correlation between fashion bloggers motivations between 'social relations' and 'professional advance' motivation (r=.328, p=.000), indicating that the more social relations are present in the content of the blog posts is more likely that the professional advance motivation is present within the same blog posts and vice versa as BryanBoy mentions in an interview for the website *Watch Mojo* (2011). In that interview Bryan states:

'As bloggers it all started probably about like 2 or 3 years ago when a lot of the designers where inviting bloggers. It's not easy, you know, for a blogger. For me my first fashion week was last year, February last year. Some designers started, you know, giving me front row seats and then Dolce & Gabanna in July put me in the front row you know right beside Anna Wintour and Sukie Menkes and all these hight profile people and after that practically everybody, practically everyone invited me to their shows and gave me you know great seats'.

Table 5. Relations between bloggers motivations

	Entertainment	Creativity	Self-expression	Social relations	Passing time	Professional advance
Entertainment	1.000					
Creativity	-,170	1.000				
Self-expres.	-,082	,290	1.000			
Social relations	,101	-,378	-,239	1.000		
Passing time	-,024	-,188	,046	,077	1.000	
Professional advance	,026	-,221	-,556	,328	,063	1.000

Another significant positive correlation was found between 'self-expression' and 'social relations' (r=.239, p=.000). The correlation analysis reveals that the strongest negative correlation between bloggers motivations is the one between the

presence of self-expression motivation and the presence of professional motivation ($r=$ -.556, $p=.000$). Another moderate negative correlation is the one between creativity motivation and the professional advance motivation ($r=-.221$, $p=.001$). The decrease of the creativity motivation and the self expression motivation through the seasons might be a consequence of the increase of the posts leaded by the professional advance motivation since now more space of this type of content is needed in the blog to fulfill the new necessities of the bloggers. Other relevant negative correlation is the one between presence of self-expression motivation and presence of creativity motivation ($r=-.378$, $p=.000$). This correlation may appear contradictory however, there are a variety of posts in blogs and tumblr analyzed that can be taken as an example of the negative correlation, such as the one published by BryanBoy on March 26, 2011 with the title 'The Power of Flowers'. In this post he only tells that he received flowers and the feelings he had while this happened. His post does not show any creative way of recounting the day or a writing style, it is just a description of emotions and actions. Another example is founded in the tumblr of *What I Wore* published on March 28, 2011 called 'Spring Dresses' where Jessica only states that she feels that spring season will be beautiful and that she took her spring dresses out from the storage. These examples show that 'self-expression' and 'creativity' do not have to be present in the same post in fashion blogs posts. Some of the posts are only a recount of actions that sometimes only make sense for the bloggers or are only short descriptions of a certain situations that are just mentioned as facts.

5.4 THE CONTENT FASHION BLOGGERS SHARE
5.4.1 Visual Resources in the Fashion Blogs
The second sub question of this analysis asks what is the content fashion bloggers share. Therefore, it is important to take the quantity of visual resources that are contained in the fashion blogs posts into consideration, even though the four fashion blogs that were analyzed are in its majority text-oriented. Nevertheless, the analysis of data demonstrates that the analyzed fashion blogs contain a lot of visual elements, specifically pictures. The results show that there is presence of pictures in 91.4% of the blog posts while videos are only present in 3.7% of the total of posts. Further results show that the quantity of pictures used in each bloggers' blog remains high and the presence of videos remains low (see Table 6).

Table 6. Presence of visual resources by blog

Blog	Pictures	Videos
BryanBoy (*n=57*)	75.43%	15.78%
The Sartorialist (*n=102*)	96.07%	0%
The Style Rookie (*n=30*)	93.33%	0%
What I Wore (*n=54*)	98.14%	0%

Also, the results show that most of the visual resources in this sample of fashion blogs, 72%, were made by the bloggers; while 19.3% of the pictures come from an unknown source and the remaining 8.6% represents posts that do not contain any pictures at all. The mean of the quantity of pictures used in the blog posts is 1.91 (*SD=2.165*). Individually, *BryanBoy's* blog has a mean of 1.93 pictures (SD=1.718), *The Sartorialist* has a mean of 1.23 pictures (*SD=.730*), *The Style Rookie* has a mean of 4.50 pictures (*SD=4.066*) and *What I Wore* has a mean of 2.04 (*SD=1.853*). Concerning videos, 2.5% of them come from the bloggers while 1.2% comes from an unknown source. The other 96.3% represent posts that do not contain any videos at all. The importance of visuals, especially of pictures is acknowledged by the bloggers as Jessica Quirk mentions in her tumblr that bloggers should use good photos and preferably their own. According to Jessica the pictures can make a good impression of a blog and the best ones on the batch are the ones that should be selected. This statement is supported by BryanBoy who said in an interview with the website *Commes Des Leroi* (2011) 'Please DON'T take pictures from Style.com and do reviews. Please have your own content. Original content is really important'. Schuman, *The Sartorialist* supports the idea of the importance of pictures in the interview he made for *Big Think* (2009) where he mentioned: 'one of the things that I knew about doing a photo driven blog was that you didn't have to read English to be able to enjoy the photographs. You know there were elements of people that are looking at it for the fashion content'.

5.4.2 Topics Presented in the Selected Fashion Blogs
The topics presented in the four fashion blogs are helpful to answer the second sub question of this analysis that is about what is the content fashion bloggers share. Taking into account all blog posts, the results demonstrate that the most common topic presented in the posts is 'daily wardrobe' (63.4%), followed by the discussion of

'personal feelings and thoughts' (43.6%) and the 'community' related issues (37%). Topics such as 'daily activities' (27.2%), 'work activity' (16.5%), 'fashion events and occurrences' (12.8%), recent 'news' from the bloggers' part (9.1%), and 'bloggers' hobbies' (3.7%) were less present. The sum of all results is more than 100% because these results suggest that fashion bloggers may create and publish content about more than a single topic in the blog posts.

Table 7. Topics of fashion blogs

Topics	All Items ($n=243$)
Daily wardrobe	63.4%
Personal feelings and thoughts	43.6%
Community	37.0%
Daily activities	27.2%
Work activity	16.5%
Fashion events and ocurrences	12.8%
Recent news	9.1%
Blogger's hobbies	3.7%

The results also show that topics presented in the selected fashion blog posts ($n=243$) changed over season. For example, the daily activities as a topic went from being present in a total of 36 posts in the first analyzed season to be present in only 12 posts in the second season and in 18 posts in the third season. The community topic was present in 35 posts in the first season, then in 26 posts in the second season and later in 29 in the third season. Furthermore, the personal feelings and thoughts category was present in 52 posts in the first season, then in 31 posts during the second analyzed season and finally in only 23 posts in the third season. Also the presence of the work activity topic suffered some alterations because in the first season it was only present in 3 posts, then in the second in 12 and finally in the third season it increased to be present in 25 posts. Finally the presence of fashion events topic suffered a similar alteration in its presence like the work topic by being present in 6 posts in the first season, then in 9 in the second season and finally in 16 posts in the third analyzed season. The other categories remained constant in its quantity and presence. These changes of the blog topics can be explain as follow: some topics are being featured less in the blog posts in order to give more space to other ones that need more space according to the bloggers'

necessities and preferences. These results are supported by the immediate reactions of the blogs' readers as one comment in *The Sartorialist* blog with the title 'On the Street… Grace, NYC' stated: 'Anonymous said: you know, I enjoy all these fashionista photos of late, but I'm missing some of the grittier nyc street fashion photography you use to feature. 4:07 PM'. Other comments such as the one made in the same blog in the blog posts entitled 'On the Street… After Louis Vuitton, Paris' mentioned something similar: 'Vanessa said: As much as I love all your shots, I have to say really miss the more regular images of regular, non-industry folks'. In the same posts, another reader said called 'Miss Kelly', said:

> 'Although her shoes are lovely and she is beaming... I must say this has to be the most 'posed' photo that you have captured. And yes I know (via the online mini-doc) that you ask your subjects to 'Stop! Stand right there, just like that!' But I feel as though some of the spontaneity and charm that have been captured in older entries has been over-shadowed by poses. I understand blogs evolve, as do people, but I sure do miss some of the "grit" in your photography'.

Analyzing blog by blog, the results demonstrate that in the blog of *BryanBoy* (*n=57*) the most presented topic is 'personal feelings and thoughts' (59.64%) followed by 'community' (54.38%), then by 'daily activities' (43.85%), then by 'fashion events' (31.57), then by 'work activity' (28.07%), then by 'news' (17.54%), then by 'daily wardrobe' (15.78%) and finally by the blogger's hobbies topic (1.75%).

In the case of *The Sartorialist* (*n=102*) the most presented topic is 'daily wardrobe' (86.27%), followed by 'community' (26.47%), then by the 'personal feelings and thoughts' (18.62%), then followed by both 'news' and 'work activity' (7.84%) then by 'fashion events' (4.90%), then by 'hobbies' topic (1.96%) and finally by 'daily activities' (.98%).

For the blog of *The Style Rookie* (*n=30*) the most presented topic is 'personal feelings and thoughts' (80%) followed by 'community' (63.33%), then by 'daily wardrobe' (53.33%), then by 'daily activities' (30%), then by 'work activity' (23.33%), then 'fashion events' (20%) and finally followed by both 'blogger's hobbies' and 'news' topic (6.66%).

And in the blog of *What I Wore* (n=54), the most presented topic is 'daily wardrobe' (75.92%), followed by 'daily activities' (57.40%), then by 'personal feelings and thoughts' (53.70%), followed by 'community' (24.07%), then by 'work activity' (16.66%), then by 'blogger's hobbies' (7.40%) and finally by both 'news' and 'fashion events' (3.70%).

With the data collected, some correlations regarding the presence of topics in the blogposts were computed. This relation was made in order to see if the presence of any given topic makes more likely the appearance of other one of them in the blog posts. The results show that there is only a moderate positive correlation between the presences of the 'news' topic and 'fashion events' ($r=.352$, $p=.000$) because the posts that feature for example catwalks or information about fashion weeks or other fashion events most of the time include news about this kind of events. Another moderate positive correlation is given between the 'fashion' topic and 'work activity' ($r=.362$, $p=.000$) since for some of the bloggers such as Schuman from *The Sartorialist* and Jessica from *What I Wore* fashion blogging for whom blogging has become their full time job as Jessica states in her blog: 'I worked as a fashion designer for four years between 2005 and 2009. I found myself spending more time thinking about and working on *What I Wore* and decided to passionately pursue it. I made a plan to monetize my site and got all businessy with it.' Other moderate positive correlations are between 'work activity' and 'community' ($r=.372$, $p=.000$).

Furthermore, there are also some moderate negative correlations regarding the presence of topics in the fashion blog posts. In this case, the results show that there are negative correlations all between 'daily wardrobe' and: 'news' ($r=-.326$, $p=.000$), 'community' ($r=-.372$, $p=.000$), 'personal feelings and thoughts' ($r=-.244$, $p=.000$), 'work activity' ($r=-.192$, $p=.003$) and finally with 'fashion events' ($r=-.298$, $p=.000$). These relations may be given because in this case, the blog posts are only centered on outfits without discussing any other of the last mentioned topics. Most of these types of posts mainly feature a picture with the daily outfit and a short description about it.

A more detailed analysis was undertaken to determine whether there were correlations between the bloggers' motivations and the topics presented in the fashion blogs posts. The results show that the highest positive correlation is in between the professional advance motivation and the posts that have presence of the work topic ($r=.794$, $p=.000$) followed by the creativity motivation and the daily wardrobe topic

($r=.758$, $p=.000$). On the other hand, the analysis also shows that there are other strong negative correlations between the motivations and the topics present in the blog posts. One moderate negative correlation is the one between the social relations motivation and the daily wardrobe topic ($r=-.486$, $p=.000$). Other moderate negative correlations are between the self-expression motivation and work activity topic ($r=-.450$, $p=.000$).

5.5 AUDIENCE'S IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

The third sub question of this thesis asks how does the immediate audience of the blogs respond. In order to answer this sub question, comments made by the audience in the three blogs and the tumblr sample were taken into consideration. A summary report shows that the total number of comments in all blog posts of the analyzed fashion blogs is 10462. Individually, the blog of *The Sartorialist* has 76.75% ($n=8030$) of comments out of the total number; *BryanBoy* has 3.44% ($n=360$) of comments; *The Style Rookie* has 10.94% ($n=1\ 145$) of comments and *What I Wore* has 8.86% ($n=927$) of comments. The mean of the total of the comments is 43.05 however this number might not be very representative because there are some blog posts that do not contain any comments and others that have a lot of them ($SD=57.597$). Results show as well that there is a strong positive correlation ($r=.525$, $p=.000$) between the season of the creation of the blog posts and the quantity of the comments, meaning that the posts that belong to the second season have more comments than the ones of the first season and the posts of the third season have more comments than the ones of the second season and therefore more than the ones of the first season. The types of comments were divided in four categories which were present in the total of comments ($n=10462$) as follow: 95.68% ($n=10\ 011$) of the comments are related to the 'social relations' category while 1.80% ($n=189$) of the comments are related to the 'inspiration' category, then 1.26% ($n=132$) are 'bloggers' answers' within the comments section in order to keep the discussion going and 0.30% ($n=32$) represent the comments that were marked as 'deleted' for unknown reasons. In the analysis of the comments there was another sub category called 'self-promotion' which consider the comments that show links of the blogs of the readers. This category was included due the high amount of comments that either only have links in their content or that were signed by the authors with the link to follow their blogs. These types of comments were present in a 16.35% ($n=1711$) of the total number of comments.

Analyzing blog by blog, the tendency noted above about the types of comments remains. In the blog of *The Sartorialist* 97.70% (*n=7795*) of the comments are related to 'social relations', 1.56% (*n=126*) to 'inspiration', 0.11% (*n=9*) to 'blogger's answers' and .07% (*n=6*) represent the 'deleted' comments, also 16.06% (*n=1270*) of the comments show some bloggers' 'self promotion' links. In the blog of *BryanBoy* 97.77% (*n=352*) of the comments are related to 'social relations' while only .55% (*n=2*) represent 'inspiration', and 1.35% (*n=5*) are 'blogger's answers', also 10.27% (*n=37*) show 'self promotion' links. In Tavi's blog, *The Style Rookie*, the numbers are as follow: 94.84% (*n=1086*) of the comments are related to 'social relations', 2.09% (*n=24*) are related to 'inspiration', 0.52% (*n=6*) are 'blogger's answers' and 2.27% (*n=26*) are 'deleted' comments while 21.48% (*n=246*) of the post show 'self promotion' links. Finally, in the tumblr of *What I Wore* 83.92% (*n=778*) of the comments are related to 'social relations', 3.99% (*n=37*) are related to 'inspiration', 12.08% (*n=112*) are 'blogger's responses', 14.88% (*n=138*) of the comments have 'self promotion' links from the blog's readers and there are not deleted comments.

A more detailed analysis was made to see if there were meaningful correlations between the comments and the blogger's motivations. The correlation analysis between the type of comments and the bloggers' motivations showed two positive correlations. One of them is between the number of comments related to 'social relations' and the 'creativity' motivation (*r=.392, p=000*) and the second one is between the number of comments related to 'inspiration' and again the 'creativity' motivation (*r=.169, p=.008*). Examples of this tendency is showed in the blogs posts that feature and explain daily outfits, which have a strong relation with creativity and also have the highest number of comments. This because the bloggers not only ask for the audience's opinion in these cases about a certain garment but also because the readers comment and discuss their own points of view about the outfits. Clear examples of this are given in two posts. One is from *The Sartorialist* published on March 17, 2011 called 'On the Street… Everywhere Flare, NYC, Paris & Milan' and another one is from *What I Wore* published on March 22, 2011 with the title 'What I Wore: Spring Forth!' In both blog posts the fashion bloggers featured outfits with flare pants. This fashion tendency proved to be disliked by many readers while other ones just loved the outfits. In each case, the posts gathered many comments. In the case of *The Sartorialist* there were 181 comments and for *What I Wore* 142 comments. The same analysis also showed a

negative correlation between the comments related to 'social relations' and the presence of the 'social relations' motivations ($r=-.165$, $p=010$). Even though this last negative correlation may appear contradictory it is explained by the fact that in posts where the bloggers present a social motivation related to them and the members of the fashion media industry. The comments decrease because the readers might think the bloggers are getting too close to the industry which may not be one of the main bloggers' motivations to write at the beginning of their blogging experience. An example of this is given in the blog of *BryanBoy* who in the post with the title 'Confidence Booster From Anna' posted on March 24, 2011. Here, he describes an encounter he had with the renowned *US Vogue* fashion editor Anna Wintour. In this case, the comments received were only nine in comparison with the next blog posts which is entitled 'The Power of Flowers' in which Bryan shares personal feelings he had when receiving flowers from his boyfriend. This entry got the double of comments as the one of Anna Wintour.

Further, another correlation analysis was undertaken to investigate the relations between the comments and the blog posts topics. This time, the analysis showed that there are positive correlations between the presence of 'daily wardrobe' as a topic and the number of comments related to 'inspiration' ($r=.181$, $p=.005$), between the presence of 'daily activities' and 'bloggers' responses' ($r=.167$, $p=.009$) and the presence of the bloggers' 'hobbies' as a topic and again 'bloggers' responses' ($r=.242$, $p=.000$). In this analysis there are also some negative correlations which, are all between the number of comments about 'social relations' and the presence of the topic of 'daily activities' and ($r=-.297$, $p=000$), the presence of 'news' as topic ($r=-.178$, $p=.005$), the presence of 'community' as a topic ($r=-.166$, $p=.010$) and the presence of 'work activity' as a topic ($r=-.297$, $p=.000$). The lack of comments in these cases might be because the audience might not have a lot of knowledge about those topics thus, they cannot join a comments conversation or it might be because they just don't feel the necessity to comment about some given topics as well.

5.6 THE RELATION BETWEEN THE FASHION BLOGS AND THE FASHION MEDIA INDUSTRY

The fourth sub question of this thesis asks what relation do fashion blogs have with the fashion media industry. In order to answer this sub question, a description o each blog front page first is presented in order to see if there is any presence of fashion brands, fashion designers, fashion magazines and fashion advertisements. Second, the analysis

of the presence of fashion brands, designers and fashion magazines within the blog posts is also taken into consideration.

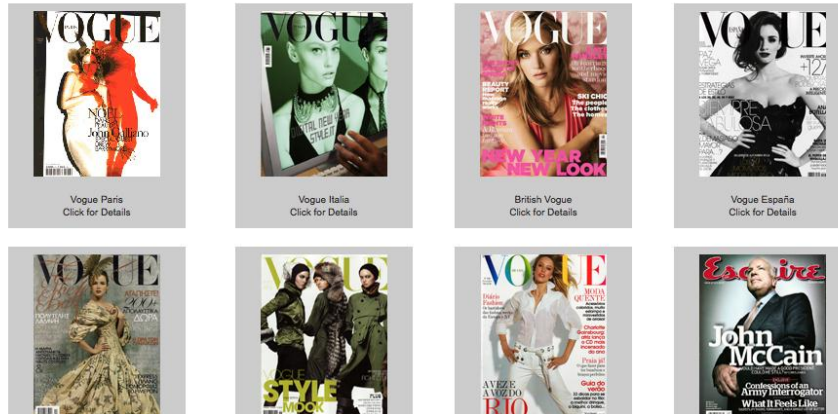### 5.6.1 Description of the Fashion Blogs Layout

The blog of *The Sartorialist* is presented in a very clean simple way. The layout is plain white with letters in black and orange. As Figure 1 shows, the presence of fashion advertisements of any kind is minimal in the layout. At the right top corner there is a sentence that states that *The Sartorialist* was 'selected as one of the Time Magazine's Top 100 design influences'. Then, at the left side there are some links that guide the reader through other sections where the blogger shows his work in other fashion and style publications and finally only one advertisement of the online fashion store *Net-A-Porter* is showed.

Figure 1. Front page of The Sartorialist, screenshot taken on June 12th *2011*

By clicking the link that says 'Press' the reader is linked to a second page where there is an archive of all the publications where *The Sartorialist* has been featured or has collaborated (see Figure 2). Clicking through the link that says 'Video' (see Figure 3) the reader is redirected to a very similar page as the one of 'Press' where there is an archive of the videos made by Schuman for other fashion publications. In the same part, there is also a link called 'SartoriaList'; clicking through it the reader is redirected to a page where some insiders of the fashion media industry, meaning designers, companies' CEOs and editors of fashion magazines are featured with some fashion tips (see Figure 4).

Figure 2. Press section in The Sartorialist. Screenshot taken on June 12th, 2011

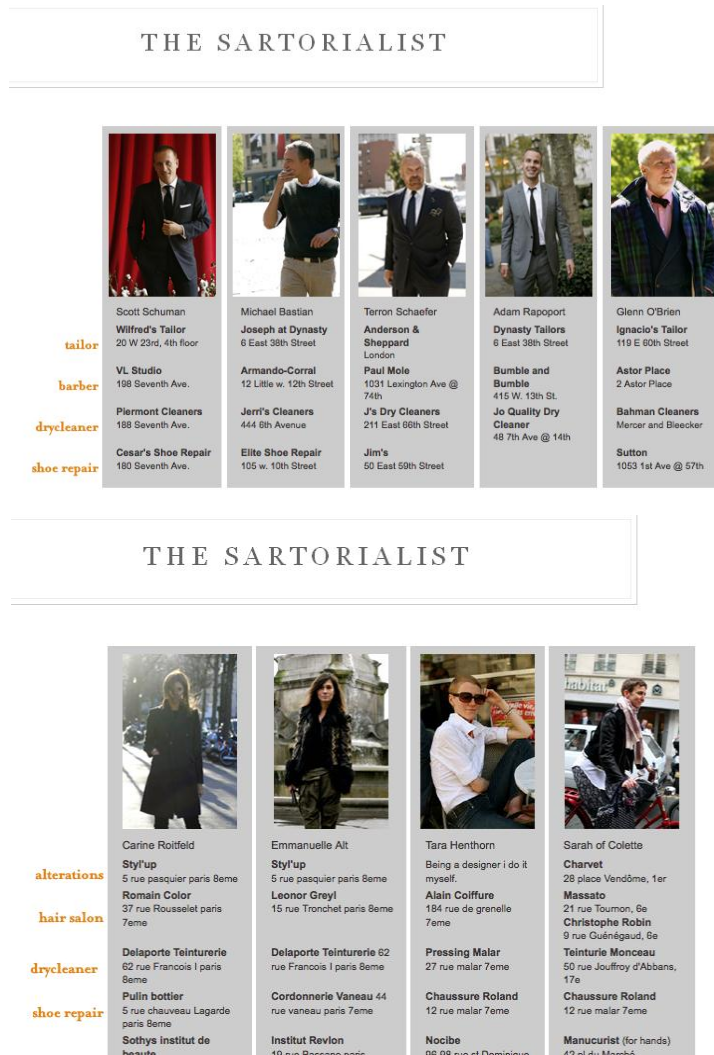*Figure 3. Video section in The Sartorialist. Screenshot taken on June 12th, 2011*

Figure 4. The Sartorialist section. Screenshot taken on June 12th, 2011

The blog of BryanBoy is different from *The Sartorialist*. This blog meets the standard layout of the Now Manifest project it belongs to. At first glance (see Figure 5), the blog has a plain white color in its background layout and it is accompanied with bold black letters. In the top part, the blog has links that redirect the readers to the other blogs of the Now Manifest project and also to other sections in which 'Press' stands among the others. In the 'Press' section some articles in fashion magazines are showed where Bryan is featured (see Figure 6).

Figure 5. BryanBoy front page. Screenshot taken on June 12th, 2011
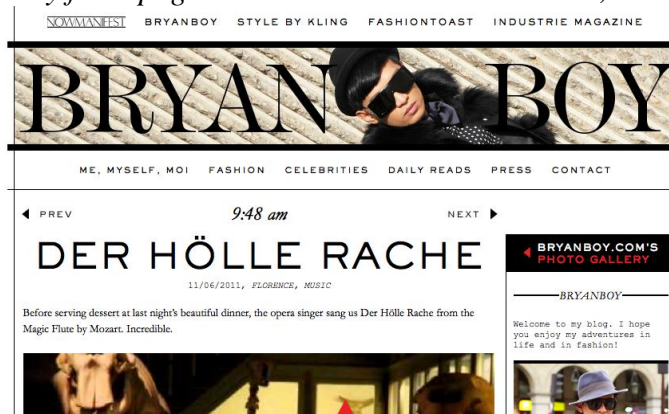
Figure 6. Press section in the blog of BryanBoy. Screenshot taken on June 12th, 2011
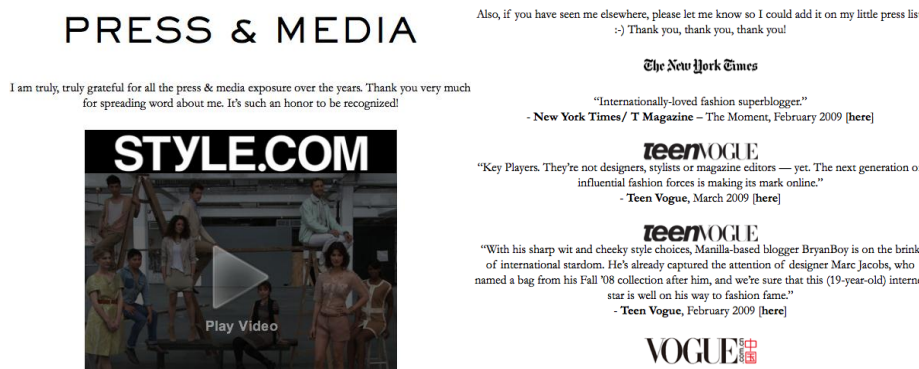
In the right part of the layout of the blog of BryanBoy there is a column that shows extra information that features fashion brands and publications as Figure 7 shows. One is called 'Item of Desire' where Bryan shows which fashion item he currently likes. Another section is 'Video Highlights' where Bryan shows some videos of catwalks and fashion events backstages where he was present. This is followed by the section called 'Obsession' where Bryan shows which fashion item he is currently obsessed with and below it can be seen the sections 'As seen in' where Bryan features all the fashion magazines footages he has been in and 'Reviews' where positive quotes about Bryan from some fashion magazines are shown. Finally there is a section called 'My sponsors' where Bryan features advertisements of his sponsors.

Figure 7. Items of the right column in the blog of BryanBoy. Screenshot taken on June 12th, 2011

In *The Style Rookie* blog the layout is very simple (see Figure 8). The background is completely white accompanied with black and pink letters.

Figure 8. Front page of The Style Rookie. Screenshot taken on June 12th, 2011

The Style Rookie only has one link that features the presence of any fashion brand, designer or magazine (see Figure 9). Here, Tavi presents a link to buy the T-shirt she made in collaboration with the Rodarte sisters.

Figure 9. The Rodarte sisters' t-shirt link in the blog of The Style Rookie. Screenshot taken on June 12ᵗʰ, 2011

Finally, in the tumblr of *What I Wore* it can be seen that the layout is also quite simple with white background accompanied with gray and black letters (see Figure 10). In the top part there is an advertisement of American Express. In the right side of the front page of the blog it can be seen a banner with publicity advertisement. This image changes every time the front page is refreshed (see Figure 11). There is also a section called 'Sponsors' where Jessica features the sponsors of *What I Wore*.

Figure 10. Front page of the tumblr What I Wore. Screenshot taken on June 12ᵗʰ, 2011
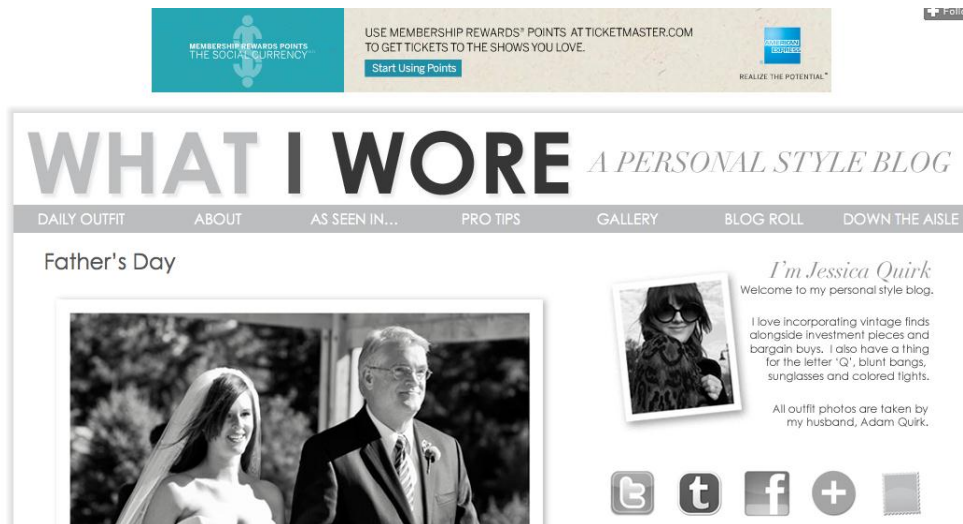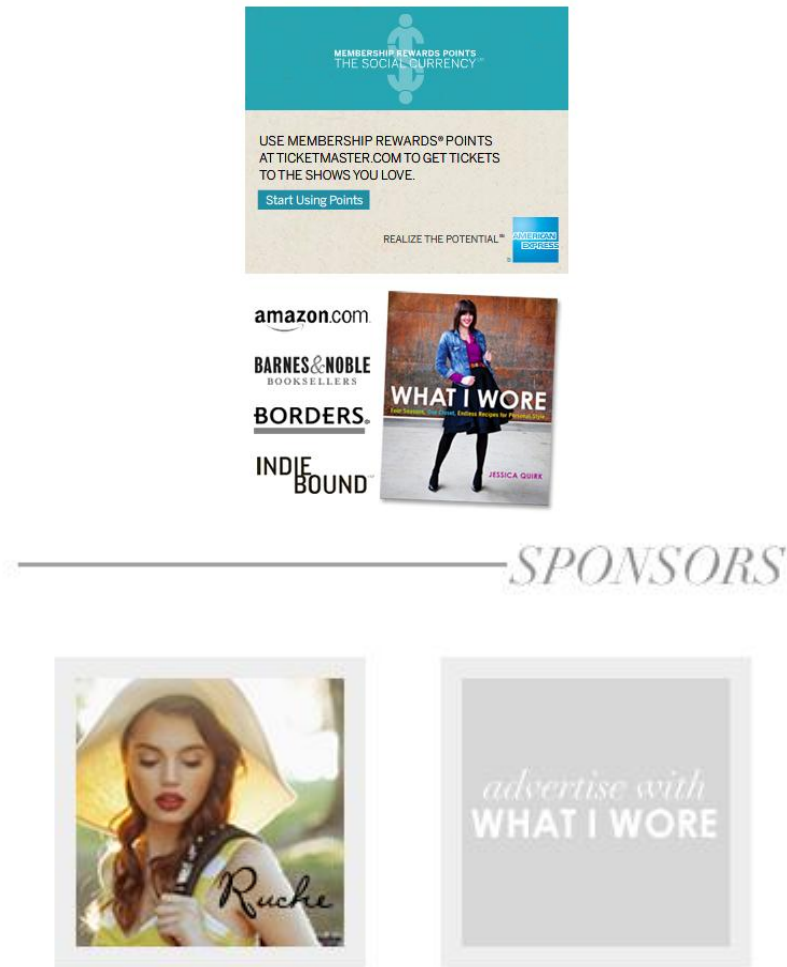
Figure 11. Items of right side of the front page of What I Wore. Screenshot taken on June 12th, 2011

The tumblr also has a section called 'As seen in' where Jessica shows all the articles in fashion magazines and web pages where she has been featured (see Figure 12).

Figure 12. As seen in section in What I Wore. Screenshot taken on June 12th, 2011

5.6.2 Presence of Fashion Brands, Designers and Fashion Magazines in the Blog Posts

In this thesis, an analysis of the posts that have the presence of fashion brands, designers, fashion magazines and fashion magazines editors' names was also made.

Taking into consideration all blog posts ($n=243$) a descriptive analysis showed that 39.9% of them include the presence of fashion brands in the posts, 22.2% of the blog posts have the presence of a designer's name and only 14% presents the name of a fashion magazine or editor. A descriptive blog by blog analysis showed that in *The Sartorialist* ($n=102$), 10.78% ($n=11$) of the blog posts have the presence of a fashion brand, 9.80% ($n=10$) of the blog posts have the presence of a designer's name and 14.70% ($n=15$) of the blog posts have the presence of the name of fashion magazines or fashion editors. In the case of the blog of *BryanBoy* ($n=57$), 47.36% ($n=27$) of the blog posts have the presence of fashion brand names, 42.10% ($n=24$) of the blog posts have the presence of fashion designers' names and only 15.78% ($n=9$) of the blog posts have presence of fashion magazines and editors' names. For *The Style Rookie* ($n=30$) the percentages are as follow: 46.66% ($n=14$) of the posts have the presence of fashion brands, 53.33% ($n=16$) of the posts have the presence of a designers' name and 20% ($n=6$) of the posts have the presence of names of fashion magazines or editors of fashion magazines. Finally, in the tumblr of *What I Wore* ($n=54$), 83.33% ($n=45$) of the posts have the presence of fashion brands, 7.40% ($n=4$) of the posts have the presence of fashion designers' names and again 7.40% ($n=4$) of the posts have the presence of names of fashion magazines or editors of fashion magazines.

For the analysis of the blog posts also correlations were computed between the presence of fashion brands, designers and magazines in the posts of all blogs and the motivations of bloggers. Also some correlations were computed between the topics and the presence of fashion brands, designers and magazines. Both analyses were made in order to see which kind of posts are the ones who contain information about designers, fashion brands and magazines. The analysis between fashion presence and motivations showed the following positive correlation: between the presence of a designer's name and the professional advance motivation ($r=.515$, $p=.000$) between the presence of a fashion brand and the professional advance motivation ($r=.260$, $p=-000$), between the presence of a designer's name and the social relations motivation ($r=.226$, $p=.000$) and between the presence of fashion magazines and editors and the professional advance motivation ($r=.223$, $p=.000$). The same analysis also showed some negative

correlations, this time between the presence of a designer's name and the self expression motivations ($r=-.187$, $p=.004$) as well as between the presence of fashion magazines' names and fashion editors and the creativity motivation ($r=-.180$, $p=.005$).

Regarding the correlation analysis between the fashion media industry presence and the topics, the analysis showed some positive correlations such as the one between the presence of fashion events as topic and the presence of a designer's name ($r=.537$, $p=.000$), between the comments related to social relations and the daily wardrobe topic ($r=.432$. $p=.000$), the presence of the work activity topic and the designers' names presence ($r=.430$, $p=.000$) and the presence of a fashion brand and the daily activities topic ($r=.315$, $p=.000$). The analysis showed only negative correlations in this case between the presence of daily wardrobe as topic and the presence of a designer's name.

6. CONCLUSION & DISCUSSION

The objective of this thesis was to discover the motivations of fashion bloggers to produce and publish elaborated content material. In doing so, this analysis used four sub question that asked: 1) who are the fashion bloggers? 2) What is the content fashion bloggers create and share? 3) How does the immediate audience of the blogs respond? and 4) what relation do fashion blogs have with the fashion media industry?

The given results of this thesis provide some descriptions that can help to understand not only of fashion blogging but also of user-created content practices. It contributes to understand some of the reasons to generate content by amateur producers and gives an insight on how the reasons and motivations to create original content may change over time. In addition, it also explores the relation between the fashion industry and the fashion bloggers. This contributes to the understanding about how some industries are reacting about these content creation practices that before where exclusive of mass media, journalist, specialized writers and spokespersons.

This section of the thesis proposes a conclusion to the results found and some further points to take into consideration. It also suggests a discussion regarding user-created content practices. In addition it exposes some strengths and limitations of this analysis.

6.1 CONCLUSION – IS BLOGGING THE NEW BLACK?

The results of this thesis show valuable data about user-created content practices. When comparing the results with previous research on user-created content and blogs (Anderson, 2008; Nardi et al. (2004b), OECD Publishing, 2007; Papacharissi (2007); Trammell & Keshelashvili (2005), Trammell et al., (2006)) it can be argued that the motivations fashion bloggers have are similar to other bloggers motivations in some cases. The analysis shows that fashion bloggers have 'self-expression' as first motivation to create content followed by 'creativity' and 'social relations'. An example of this is BryanBoy. He mentioned in an interview for the website *Tongue in Chic* (Wong, 2010) that his blog is really about himself and that he started it not as a fashion blog but as a travel journal which made it more oriented to social relations since the beginning. The blog of *Bryanboy*, as he says, was originally conceived to be a blog that allowed him to be in contact with his friends and family.

This analysis shows that the uses and gratifications theory gives support to the assumption that self-expression, information, entertainment, and social needs can be

gratified with the use of the Internet (Trammel et. al, 2006). In this case, fashion bloggers may find gratifications in creating and uploading original content. Posts including personal issues and focus on emotions are often featured supporting the assumption that people create content on the Internet to express. Another example of 'self-expression' as first motivation for fashion bloggers can be seen in the post entitled 'I feel like the photo to accompany this post should be a lot more intense and introspective-seeming but hey! Mirrors are pretty introspective!' published on March 23, 2011 by Tavi in *The Style Rookie*. Here, she gave her personal insights about how she perceived the 2011 Fashion Week and how she felt about it. This excerpt is important to mention because it is a representation of how fashion bloggers express themselves in their blogs. An excerpt of that posts says:

'This is the outfit I wore when I found myself sitting front row next to Anna Wintour at the Band of Outsiders show. Yep, found, as though the moment 'this is the end' rang out in the room set to Jim Morrison's voice I'd snapped out of myself for fifteen minutes till I stumbled upon a hollow body vaguely resembling someone familiar and decided to run away with it. I couldn't tell you what the clothes presented looked like. I couldn't tell you what anyone was wearing or what I had written in spontaneous texts to spontaneous people while waiting for the show to start (something about math class? What they had for lunch that day, maybe?) And I couldn't really even tell you what I was feeling. At that point in the day, in the week, in the Fashion Week and all those that came before, I think that if I were to respond truthfully to the many obligatory questions of how was I, it would've been "N/A"'.

The analysis of the content of fashion blogs gives additional insights to the motivations fashion bloggers have to create content. The inclusion of topics such as 'personal feelings and thoughts' and 'community' is frequent within fashion blogs posts. Therefore, it can be suggested that these topics are used as a way to express the before mentioned motivations fashion bloggers have to create content. In the case of fashion blogs it is worth to notice that details are important. The information given in most of the posts contain descriptions of the images and actions made by the authors. They give not only explanations of their outer looks, but also of their sense of style and originality. The topic of 'daily wardrobe' is a great example of that. These types of

posts are highly featured among them, suggesting that fashion bloggers show what they or others are wearing not only as a 'self-expression' way of communicate but also as a form of 'creativity'. The details in fashion blogs mean a lot. Almost all posts in the analyzed blogs use not only one but several pictures to illustrate better what they want to express. Therefore, it can be said that fashion blogs are highly visual and rely on graphic representations of what they also explain with words. In addition, it is worth to mention that the majority of these pictures come from an original source. This means that fashion bloggers confirm the theory on UCC characteristics that states users must add their own value and point of view to UCC. Therefore a creative effort is exposed (OECD Publishing, 2007).

However, it can also be concluded by the results that the topics addressed in fashion blogs change in a moderate way over time. In this case, the topics 'work activity' and 'fashion events' appeared more within the fashion blogs in the last period of analyzed posts. Therefore, it can be suggested that even though UCC is defined as an amateur activity (Anderson, 2008) new practices, such as fashion blogging, prove this last statement to have a different dynamic. UCC may focus on the creation of content without any monetary reward but making profit with UCC now can be consider as a growing trend nowadays (OECD Publishing, 2007). Therefore, now some users such as the fashion bloggers are being remunerated for the content they produce. Some of them even have become professionals in their field after an initial phase where they were not considered as such (OECD Publishing, 2007). In this case, bloggers Schuman, Quirk and BryanBoy transformed the creation of content of their blogs into a full time job as they state. The blog of *BryanBoy* provides examples about it. While their firsts posts of his blog were about his traveling anecdotes and adventures, there are posts that belong to the third period of analysis that present material about the 2011 New York Fashion Week and the presence of Bryan in the events and the catwalks. One example is the post entitled 'Michael Kors Fall Winter 2011 Flipcam Diary' posted on March 26, 2011:

> 'Here are two videos I took from my front-row seat at the Michael Kors Fall/Winter 2011 fashion show. What an excellent showmanship of timeless, CHIC and most importantly, luxurious, clothing. It's Michael's 30th Anniversary this year'

Afterwards, on March 27, 2011, Bryan posted more professional oriented material. Now with the title 'Thierry Mugler Shoes Fall Winter 2011', Bryan presented pictures of the shoes that belong to the collection of that designer. These examples may be considered as a demonstration of the evolution of the topics addressed in the blogs but also of the motivations of fashion bloggers.

Community and collective intelligence factors are also related to the fashion blogs as the results illustrate. In the case of the analyzed fashion blogs and the tumblr, the content provided by the blogs' audiences, in this case represented by the comments section, is an important part of the posts. As it can be seen, comments in fashion blogs are in its majority a way to communicate and debate about certain topics. Mostly, fashion blogs readers' reactions are about how an outfit looks, if they like it, if they do not like it, why they like it or why they do not like it. They also show their approval or disapproval over certain fashion trends and basically allow readers and bloggers communicate among each other in order to discuss what is going on in the blog and in the fashion world. The results of this thesis show that this type of comments that are related to 'social relations' support previous research (Jenkins, 2006a; Lévy, 1997; Anderson, 2008) that suggests interactivity is one of the most important characteristics of UCC practices. A sense of community within blogs allows the readers to participate actively instead of remaining as passive consumers. Therefore, it can be assumed that fashion bloggers and the readers of the fashion blogs create a collective intelligence (Lévy, 1997) interested in fashion issues.

The community within fashion blogs is based over contribution. In this case, bloggers and readers work together in order to create information about fashion that did not exist before, like the analysis of certain outfits or fashion trends. Fashion bloggers and the readers represent a 'community of contributors' (Jenkins, 2006b p. 53). In addition, fashion blogs can be considered an example of horizontal models within UCC practices because the knowledge and information that the blogs contain comes from experiences and the learning processes of real-life experiences of the fashion bloggers (Jenkins, 2006b).

Previous studies on UCC practices and collectiveness (Anderson, 2008) found that audiences are watching how all kind of people that are just like them create original content. According to Anderson (2008) this may be a reason for passive consumers to become active producers. The results of this thesis show for the case of fashion blogs

that the comments related to 'inspiration' may be taken as indicators of how a passive consumer becomes an active producer. The blog of *The Style Rookie* provides in the post 'I like 'movie site' myself' published on March 15, 2011 an example. Here, blogger Tavi recounts how the URL of her blog suffered an unexpected change showing a 'college girl' image instead of the normal content. Then, it came back to normality. In the comments section of this post, the reader identified as 'natt rodriguez' stated:

'I was one of the many people that went onto "College Girl's" page. I was so freaked out and obviously sooooo upset. Your blog post is the only thing that gets me through each day. I immediately googled your blog and I found you!!! It made my day! You are such an inspiration to me and after of many months of silently stalking you (in a non creepy way) I decided to start my own blog. Seeing as I am being truthful I might as well tell you that its not the best but from my posts so far think that I am definitely getting better'

Inspiration has driven many readers to create their own blogs, as the example provided above mentions. Audiences of fashion blogs are aware of which blogs are read by a significant amount of people and therefore, the fashion blog's readers use this spaces to promote their own blogs as the results of this analysis show. In the case of this blogs sample, a significant amount of comments from the audience are posted not to debate or to state inspiration but as a way of self-promotion. This type of comments may suggest that fashion bloggers can be seen as spokespersons in their fields by the audience.

Thus, fashion bloggers may be considered as part of the fashion industry network that before was formed by fashion journalist, fashion photographers, models, designers, and fashion managers only (Kawamura, 2005; McRobbie, 1998). Even though some fashion bloggers do not possess formal education in journalism or fashion as the results describe, fashion bloggers have acquired experience or 'cultural capital' about it (Bourdieu, 1986). The acquisition of cultural capital by the fashion bloggers allows them to be part of the fashion network. This membership gives support and recognition to them. Therefore, social capital (Bourdieu, 1986) can be argued to exist within fashion blogs because now bloggers may have several connections with other people being they the readers or insiders of the fashion industry. This can be seen as a contradiction to the classic notion of fashion and distinction that states fashion can be

seen as a form of class differentiation (Blumer, 1986) because in the case of the fashion bloggers, fashion cannot be considered anymore a class indicator. Fashion bloggers may be considered as examples of how the classical sociological discourse of fashion can be considered outdated because they represent, as the results of this thesis show, a mixture between styles and social groups. The results of this analysis suggest that the personal style and taste of fashion bloggers is what makes them stand out inside the fashion blogging community.

The entrance of fashion bloggers to the fashion industry network it is not only given by their popularity or the amount of readers they have. It is also because after some time of existence, fashion magazines, designers and brands support fashion blogs and bloggers as the results show. The layouts of the fashion blogs and some posts not only mention fashion brands and designers names but also some have advertisements, collaborations and features with fashion brands and fashion magazines. Therefore, besides the readers, the fashion media industry also collaborates to make fashion bloggers and blogs influential inside the fashion network. Fashion blogger Scott Schuman also known as *The Sartorialist* explains it well, as it was stated in the chapter one of this thesis. It is worth to repeat his quote:

'In the beginning people [in luxury] were afraid of the Internet and the idea of bloggers' comments', he says. 'Now they are going after blogs full steam. The whole thing with Dolce & Gabanna and [bloggers] in the front row, it's like they realized that if you can't control it, you might just have to learn to deal with it' (Copping, 2009).

At sum, fashion bloggers can be described as amateur writers with different backgrounds that are interested in a certain topic. They are motivated to write in order to express themselves, explore their creativity and be part of a community. In doing so, they rely on posting information on fashion trends and garments as a way to expose their own style, ideas and thoughts to the public. They prove to be constant writers that lack of journalism and sometimes fashion training. However, their constancy in creating and publishing new and original content material help them getting a solid audience base. The blogs' audiences and the fashion bloggers form a community that shares information and debates. The audiences of the fashion blogs validate the fashion bloggers as spokespersons in the fashion field. Expertise and further validation can be

achieved by fashion bloggers when members of the fashion industry are attracted to the content of fashion blogs. In consequence, alliances between fashion bloggers and members of the fashion industry can be made. Therefore, fashion bloggers can be considered as part of the fashion network. This may lead to a moderate change of motivations for creating content for the fashion bloggers and in the topics assessed. It can be the case that some bloggers may include information that is more related to their professional advancement and as a consequence they can adopt fashion blogging as their full-time job. However, as the results of this analysis show, 'self-expression', 'creativity' and 'social relations' prove to be still important motivations for fashion bloggers as the blogs evolve. Fashion bloggers can be perceived as what Lievrouw (2006, p. 250) call 'innovators'[14] only that in this specific case it might be more accurate to say, 'fashion content innovators'.

6.2 DISCUSSION

This thesis focused on UCC practices. Even though this analysis aims to discover the motivations for fashion bloggers to create UCC this thesis counts with several strengths and limitations that are worth to mention as part of the firsts analysis focused on UCC and fashion. It assessed the topic in a way that the content of the blogs was taken into consideration instead of only taking into account some blogs characteristics as previous studies did (Trammell et al., 2006). It also incorporated insights of some reactions from the fashion industry. However, it also had certain limitations. One is related to the sample used for the analysis. This study used a small sample of the most important fashion blogs to explore the motivations for fashion bloggers. Due constrains of time, the selected units of analysis are not big in number comparing with previous studies on bloggers motivations such as the ones of Trammell et al. (2006) or Papacharissi (2007) in which the data was collected extensively during long periods of time with several months of intervals in between. The criteria in the case of this thesis relied on choosing blogs that are widely recognizable in the fashion blogosphere and from which a good quantity of material to be analyzed was expected. In addition, while content analysis has proved to be a good method for researching bloggers motivations (Papacharissi, 2002; Papacharissi, 2007; Trammell et al., 2006) the use of this method also brings some limitations to the analysis. In this case, the researcher instead of the bloggers themselves

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[14] See Chapter 3, section 3.1.1

provided the categories of the motivations. The intention of the analysis was to include interviews with the bloggers however, due to constrain of work schedules and time, it was impossible to have contact with them. Therefore, the content analysis and the inclusion of a second analysis[15] were used in this thesis.

An important point to considerate regarding this analysis is that fashion blogs have their own dynamics. They have a lot of detailed information and instead of being rejected by the fashion industry, brands and designers adopt fashion bloggers and blogs as allies. It would be interesting to explore this relation further and now address the same phenomenon just relying in how the members of the fashion community adapt to UCC content practices in fashion. Based on this thesis addressing already this topic briefly it would be interesting to look how brands adopt the fashion blogs content.

Finally, it would be really interesting to do a comparison in between types of fashion blogs. As the samples used in this thesis show, some differences exist between each other. It might be worth to categorize and divide fashion blogs into categories and then analyze the similarities and differences among them and then compare the results with this study.

6.3 FINAL COMMENTS

The final results of this thesis provided a general description of how a specific group of users create and manage their online content. The data recollected and the analysis made provide a foundation for further research of several types of blogs with more specific criteria. It would be interesting to see how other categories of entertainment blogs work and if the same dynamics and motivations can be also applied to them. By these means, this research can serve as an example and guide to research other type of specialized UCC blogs.

During this research, I could also notice how fashion bloggers are exceptional types of UCC producers. They invest not only a great amount of time in content creation but it might be the case that they also spend a certain amount of monetary resources to live a certain lifestyle where fashion has a strong presence. It might be argued that after some times, fashion bloggers might become a brand of themselves while at the same time they deliver original content to the public. This brings out the

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[15] See Chapter 4, section 4.4

fact that fashion bloggers have their own distinguishing elements among other types of content producers and so on.

It is really interesting to see how fashion bloggers construct their own community and how blogs can become online forums and points of communications among its members as well as how a groups can create content that creates awareness through creating a feeling of belonging.

And lastly, it is interesting to see how certain types of communities can reach the democratization of information and how some industries, as fashion, are willing to open to new practices that enrich the field providing alternatives of content consumption and creation.

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Appendix A

Codesheet for fashion blogs content analysis

Mitzi Dominguez created this codesheet in April 2011 for use in her master thesis project of motivations of fashion bloggers. Only one coder took part in the analysis.

Instructions: Coding should be done for the collected posts on the 3 fashion blogs: *The Style Rookie*, BryanBoy, The Style Rookie and the tumblr *What I Wore*. The selected blog posts of each blog are single items to be coded. Each unit of analysis has to be read, marked, analyzed and coded. The aspects that were taken into consideration to categorize were:

1. Name of blog: Name of the blog itself
2. Name of blogger: If available, name of the blogger.
3. Season of analysis: (1) beginning, (2) middle, (3) end
4. Number of post per season of analysis: Count the number of posts that appear on the considerate stages

Motivations

To perform the content analysis, I used indicators to identify each of the following codes of motivations in the blog posts: (1) entertainment, (2) creativity, (3) self-expression, (4) social relations, (5) passing time and (6) professional advancement. In this case only text was taken into consideration. Each code was analyzed by its presence (1) or absence (0).

Codes can be identified as the following description and example shows (Trammell et al., 2006):

5. Entertainment: This category includes the fact that fashion bloggers are creating and uploading content for enjoyment or fun, for example a blogger can indicate in the posts that he/she is doing this because she/he thinks is fun or she/he enjoys to upload information.

6. Creativity: This category include material where the blogger creates original content in a way they will not have limitations to do so, it might entitle

experimentation in the use of text. For example a blogger may share a certain cloths combination he or she constructed or a DIY project.

7. Self-expression: In this category, bloggers share their thoughts, feelings, ideas, beliefs and information specifically about the oneself. For example a blogger may share that he or she feels sad due some event that happened earlier that day.

8. Social relations: Refers to keep a community argument stated. For example a blogger may propose a topic for debate in a post in order the readers gave their opinion and all of them interact in a constructive discussion about a certain topic.

9. Passing time: This category reflects blogging because the blogger didn't have anything better to do at that time and he is creating information in order to spend a couple of hours doing something, for example a blogger can express in a post he or she is writing because he is boring or because he has nothing else to do.

10. Professional advancement: Here the blogger promotes him/herself to augment their career or to promote their skills. For example, fashion bloggers may post professional pictures related to fashion, they can report and critic about a certain fashion event or they can even share tailoring tips or D.I.Y projects.

Visuals:

Analyze if there are pictures and videos within the posts. This is in order to identify if visuals are important as complements for fashion blogs and how are they used by the bloggers in their blogposts.

11. Pictures: Determine if they are (1) present or (0) absent.

12. Source of the picture: Determine its source, (1) means self-created and (0) means source not clear.

13. Videos: Determine if they are (1) present or (0) absent.

14. Source of the video: Determine its source, (1) means self-created and (0) means source not clear.

Fashion content:

Analyze if there is any mentions of fashion brands, designers and magazines within the posts. This is in order to identify the influence and penetration of the fashion industry in the amateur work of the bloggers.

15. Fashion brands: Determine if they are (1) present or (0) absent.

16. Fashion designers: Determine if their mention is (1) present or (0) absent.

17. Fashion magazine: Determine if their mention is (1) present or (0) absent.

Topic of the blog:

Determine if the following topics were (1) presented or discussed or (0) absent in any of the analyzed blogposts:

18. Activities or record of the day: It entitles a description of what the blogger did in a day in his/her life.

19. News announcement: Refers to posts that mention an event just happened.

20. Hobbies/interest: This topic is about the bloggers telling what they like/enjoy to do.

21. Community: Refers to social activities with family, friends and other bloggers/readers.

22. Personal: This category refers to the description of feelings and thoughts.

23. Work: In this topic the blogger refers to his professional duties and advancement.

24. Daily wardrobe: Here, the blogger posts about what he/she wore that day.

25. Fashion events: Refers to catwalks, special events and gatherings inside the fashion industry.

Comments:

An analysis of the response of the immediate audience of the blogs was also taken into consideration in order to see the readers' perceptions towards the blogs. To perform the analysis of the comments I used the following codes: (1) Inspiration, (2) social relations, and (3) blogger's answer. Codes can be identified as follow:

26. Inspiration: This category includes cues when the reader of the blog specifically tells the blogger and the other readers how much this blog has inspired them to start or remain in a certain activity.

27. Social relations: As with the category concerned with the blog posts, this category refers to keeping in touch with the author of the blog and the other readers. For example the readers can ask the blogger for certain advice or might ask a general question to the others in order to form a debate or discussion about certain topic.

28. Blogger's answer: This category includes all the cues where the fashion bloggers respond inside the comments area to inquiries or other comments from the immediate audience.

Additionally, the comments analysis contains the code of self-promotion, which reflects self-publicity of the readers of the blog in the section of comments. A very common practice that serves as an example of this category is when the readers leave the link of their own blog or personal webpage in order others notice and gain some clicks.

Each correspondent number in form of superscripts will identify each motivation, thus I present an illustration to show the indicators and the method to perform the content analysis in the blog posts:

Name of blog	The Style Rookie
Name of blogger	Tavi Gevinson
Season of analysis	1
Number of posts per season of analysis	15
Number of comments in the specific post	2

<u>1960's business was dirty and fashionable</u>

Tech week....blah. That means not getting homework done (the reason I am home from school now-but you don't see me working, do you?) and coming home late every night with ten pounds of lipstick on, sweaty head to toe from those stage lights, blinding mascara clumps, and so much hairspray you don't even feel your head touching the pillow. Luckily, tech week also means junk food and goofing off in the dressing room with friends. So I guess there's a plus side to everything.

The play I'm in is called *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying.* It's kind of a satire on how easy it was in the 1960's to get ahead in business, and the sexism in the office.

Once everyone was dressed I'm kind of thinking, 'Wow. I would actually wear that.' So I'm getting a lot of ideas about different projects and outfits to put together. Pictures up later!

Yours truly,
Tavi

Analysis of the post (not contained in the actual thesis text. This is only for reference):

Motivation 1: 0
Motivation 2: 1
Motivation 3: 1
Motivation 4: 0
Motivation 5: 0
Motivation 6: 0

Pictures: 0
Source of Pictures: -
Videos: 0
Source of Videos: -
Fashion Brands: 0
Fashion Designers: 0
Fashion magazines: 0

Topics:
Daily activities: 1
News announcements: 0
Hobbies: 0
Community: 0
Personal: 0
Work: 0
Daily wardrobe: 0
Fashion events: 0

Comments:

2 comments:

Emily said...

> Ahaha, I saw the play and i would totally wear like everything in it
> April 12, 2008 10:10 PM

(2) Social relations

StyleVictim said...

> Ah! I was in that show and yeah, I had so much damn hairspray in my hair at the end of the day. It took me like and hour in the shower to get it all out! (that's what she said) But I had so much fun and I LOVED the clothes. I never wanted to take my costume off!
> October 01, 2009 10:22 PM

(2) Social relations

Fashion bloggers, such as Tavi blogger Tavi often describe a day in their life. In this example, she basically shared information about how was her day in tech week at her school. She shares the simple facts like how she hasn't done her homework and how was tech week for her, how she dressed, how she got home (here another reference to other post of other fashion blogger can be expected to support the argument). Creativity is also another motive to share this post. Here she mentions what kind of ideas she got from the event, as other fashion bloggers usually do. In this case, there were any visuals to accompany the text. Neither any presence of fashion brands, designer names or fashion magazines but still she mentioned something about clothes and garments. The only topic present in the post was daily activities, which is also a common practice between bloggers (here another reference to other post of other fashion blogger can be expected to support the argument).

In the comments, both readers *Emily* and *Style Victim* share their insights making it a conversation among them. This refers to the code of social relation. They also discuss fashion issues stating how much they love the clothes presented.