Who’s Starring, What’s Buzzing and What’s Up Next
Online Film News and its Interplay with Film Viral Marketing

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INTRODUCTION

While doing my daily Facebook Newsfeed check-up routine, I recently stumbled upon a friend’s post, sharing a link of a so-called Monsters University website, stating: “application SUBMITTED. With full Financial Aid.” Just when I excitedly wanted to congratulate my friend, I suddenly thought about why any university would ascribe itself to such a funny name. The website (monstersuniversity.com/edu) appeared to be like any other university website, including information for admissions, academic programs, and campus maps, news and events. However, this university is fully occupied by animated furry monsters, which I instantaneously recognized from the movie Monsters, Inc. released more than a decade ago. I was amazed by the clever transformation of a recognizable element for an average (prospective) college student to a promotional campaign of the upcoming PIXAR sequel, so I soon ended up on Google Search, which provided me with numerous news sources that have reported this surprising phenomenon, ranging from major online newspapers to niche film news websites. Even though the actual film was yet to be released by the time of writing, and no statements could yet be made on neither the actual virality of the campaign nor the film’s actual commercial and critical success, the website does seamlessly integrate the narrative and visual assets of the film medium into the technologies of online media, and creatively utilizes the participatory, interactive and social characteristics of today’s web for commercial purposes. The website could therefore be considered as a representative example of viral film marketing.

The Monsters University online campaign is one of many examples of the on-going convergence between film and digital media. Looking at contemporary big-budget films that are all about eye-popping 3D, exhilarating special effects or mindblowing visuals, today’s film industry seems eager to keep up with the on-going digitalization and technological innovations in our daily lives. The interplay between film and online/digital media is thus an interesting case for academic research. Specifically since the mutual impact is ranging from simple communication and entertainment, to acquiring information, self-expression/-exploration or to even creating a sense of belonging to a particular community. Moreover, with its almost limitless range of reach, its speed, convenience and above all costless possibilities in disseminating and receiving information, the Internet has forced the film industry to seriously rethink its films as well as its exhibition and distribution strategies. In this case, film marketing strategies are a significant aspect since they are the catalysts in gaining revenues for films, as film promotion is supposed to lead to successful exhibition, which is the critical driver of the film’s success (Eliasbergh et al. 2006, p.652). Here, the film industry should question how it can utilize the almost limitless possibilities on the web in order to find new, more effective ways to promote its films. Even though possible threats such as (free) online streaming and illegal downloads has been repeatedly stressed and warned, the Internet has also proven
to be a suitable platform for showcasing independent productions (Marich, 2009, p.255) and word-of-mouth marketing (Kerrigan, 2010, p.117), generating buzzes and creating virals.

The past decennia, many studies have emerged on these topics, discussing new possibilities that the Internet has offered film distribution and marketing (Zhu, 2001), as well as the converging film medium and shifts in its socio-cultural significance (Jenkins, 2003). These studies confirm the presumption that film, as a relatively old medium of entertainment and artistic expression, is indeed very much necessitated to merge with the Internet since online engagement have become such a crucial part of our lives. Many studies on film marketing or online marketing in general have repeatedly been published from an academic background in Marketing and Economics, focusing only on its diffusion and impact as it is previously confirmed by Berger and Milkman (2011, p.2). A recurrent trend is the discussion of the structural changes in the value chain (as lines between the producer, distributor and consumer have become blurred), revenue models (as the amount of content producers may increase due to the lower costs of digitally produced movies) and consumer behavior since advertising is moving from a passive form to interactive forms (Eliashberg, Elberse & Leenders, 2006; Kerrigan, 2010, p.193-194; Zhu, 2001, p.276). Alongside, studies on specific digital impacts within the overall changing structure of the film industry are emerging. For instance, Dellarocas et al. (2005, 2007) have looked into the impact of online reviews and online ratings as a proxy of word-of-mouth communications to the actual revenue of films. Both Liu (2006) and Duan et al. (2008) examined the direct correlation between online word-of-mouth and box-office revenue/movie sales, and Mabry and Porter (2010) have posed the question how social networksite MySpace and official film websties affect the audiences' need to see a particular film. Moreover, significant studies have explored the conditions and characteristics that affect the virality of online content (Berger & Milkman, 2011) and the consumers’ motivations behind passing along messages (Dobele et al. 2007). However, from a media/cultural studies approach, no direct connections with film (viral) marketing are made. Instead, studies to specific developments in film content and film cultures are being looked into such as the transformation of the film trailer’s aesthetics in the digital/online age (Johnston, 2008) and the spectatorship of horrorfilms in the Internet era (Tyron, 2009).

It seems that most studies have overlooked the importance of specialized film news websites as well as how films are covered on online news sources in general, as these are either often visited by film buffs or the first source that get an average Internet user in touch with film. Either way, well-known (film/entertainment) news sources would in theory be qualified to function as a showcase for film promotions and marketing campaigns seen from their amount and diversity (in demographics at least) of visitors. Also, online news sources (online newspapers, online magazines and news websites) have evolved in both content, agendas, features and lay-out (Cooke, 2005; De Waal & Schoenbach, 2008; Barnhurst, 2009), therefore requiring an up-to-date capture of the integration of news within today’s participatory web, specifically aiming at the immense popularity of user-led news websites. Moreover, as Web 2.0 platforms seem to complement the essentials of viral marketing, it is necessary
to look at how various platforms are utilizing visual and functional characteristics to catch readers’/users’ attention and to what extent they actually respond to viral marketing campaigns in terms of e.g. coverage of promotional materials and adaptations of specific topics.

Even though Web 2.0 characteristics probably apply to all of today’s major websites, a division should still be made between user-led news websites (e.g. group-aggregated websites and blogs) and institutional news websites (e.g. online newspapers and online magazines) as their functionalities, content and purposes might differ from each other. By dissecting these websites, both content and presentation will exemplify how specific news sources might cater to film promotion, focusing on how the website and its functionalities can stimulate awareness and word-of-mouth. As Mabry and Porter (201) only have focused on MySpace and official film websites, this research follows their recommendation: “the effects of advertising on the Internet beyond official movie websites and promotions within social networking sites should be explored. Researchers should also choose different methods to analyze this issue, such as experimental design and content analysis.” (Mabry & Porter, 2010, p.14). After all, as Mabry and Porter (2010) argue, film promotion is all about finding the right aesthetics and texts to create a memorable and surprising product so that audiences will anticipate the actual film months before its release. Also, I believe that one could not wish for a better promotion platform than the Internet where communication flows are reflections of consumers’ behavior: users become producers, while gratifying their own needs, and content are dependent on its users’ input, thus easily accustomed to everyone’s preferences.

(Entertainment/film-) News websites – as I will argue in this research – are becoming more ‘social’ by actively engaging audiences through different forms of interactivity and entertainment, therefore creating a reason for virality. To clarify this, I will first look at what kinds of attention are given to films on these sources by finding reoccurring themes/topics, structures, tones in news reports with a combination of quantitative and qualitative content analysis of news sources, emphasizing on the latter one. In the data anlysis, I will elaborate on questions such as: How do these websites and their film news presentation relate to the characteristics and functionalities of Web 2.0? How do these websites and their film news presentation relate to the characteristics and strategies of film (viral) marketing? And what are the significant differences and similarities between the film news presentation on user-led and institutional news websites? These questions will substantiate the main focus in this research:

“How is attention given to recent and upcoming films on user-led and institutional news websites, and how does this attention relate to (viral) marketing strategies of film?”

In order to find answers to these questions, this research is designed to both offer an overall character sketch of ten websites (five institutional- and five user-led websites) as well as an in-depth analysis of these website’s articles by combining a quantitative analysis focusing on the type of news
reports and users’ activity, and an extensive qualitative analysis focusing on an interpretative content analysis of the texts (themes/topics/tone/style) and visual materials as provided in articles and posts on each website.

This research will thus provide a valuable scientific addition to the very limited academic research available on the interplay between (film/entertainment) news websites and film (viral) marketing, as it might provide useful insights to the potential lucrativity of news websites for film (viral) advertising in the near future. Moreover, in line with Caldwell (2005), advocating on the expansion of film studies, I would too like to argue that to fully understand the role of film in multimedia convergence, film should be framed and defined in terms of broader industrial and cultural practices as film functions as a ‘semiotic cluster-bomb’ integrated and mutated in various media formats (Caldwell, 2005, p.95); this research responds to this suggestion by combining marketing perspectives with theories from media and cultural studies, which I believe is a combination that should be further applied and explored, specifically since the Internet’s ever-increasing socio-cultural significance closely relates to marketing strategies since these are considerably subjected to consumers’ behaviors, interests and preferences.

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter consists of two sections: the first focuses on theories and discussions on Web 2.0, and how this correlates with (user-generated/user-led) news platforms on the Internet, and the second section serves to illustrate the interplay between Web 2.0, online film news and online film marketing, emphasizing on the workings of word-of-mouth/viral marketing on today’s web. In the first section, Web 2.0 and its significance for media users and producers are dissected by discussing its various theories on media convergence, participatory culture and user-generated content. As I make a distinction between UGC websites and institutional (journalistic) websites, I will clarify their differences and similarities by referring to previous research as well as to personal observations. Also, this is supported by elaborating on research results of online (entertainment) news sources.

In the second section, an overview of film marketing basics is included. I would like to stress that as this research is not part of economic studies, the emphasis is put on the role of marketing in general within Internet cultures. I am more interested in (re)presentations of recent and upcoming films on the web (its content and its constructions) rather than their effects on the consumers and audiences, and their financial profitablity. Nevertheless, I would like to illustrate the interplay between the Internet and film promotion by comparing Web 2.0 theories to the basics of viral marketing, as specifically this is often argued as a marketing strategy that is optimalized by Web 2.0 platforms. To specify viral marketing and define it within the context of film industries, a few examples of online viral campaigns that have been covered repeatedly by online (news) sources will be given to
exemplify how online viral marketing can be adapted to film promotion. Whereas these examples might very well offer accurate indications of how film studios market their films today, my findings from the data collection will demonstrate how attention is given to films outside the industry, therefore enabling us to find to what extent awareness that is given to films on the Internet show signs of viral marketing strategies.

1.1. WEB 2.0

Web 2.0 platforms have become indispensable in our daily communications, and in our information and entertainment seekings. As a term introduced by Tim O’Reilly in 2005, Web 2.0 referred to new types of websites that could be considered as cost-effective scalable services rather than packaged software. They harnessed unique data sources that would get richer as more people use them. Users became co-developers and enabled the platform to harness collective intelligence as well as to leverage the ‘long tail’ (Anderson, 2004, 2006) through customer self-service (O’Reilly, 2005). Its lightweight user interfaces, development models and business models were considered to be a huge turning point in the development of Internet and led to numerous researches on Web 2.0 such as ‘convergence’, ‘participatory cultures’ (Jenkins, 2004, 2006; Deuze, 2007), ‘produsage’, ‘blogosphere’ and ‘citizen journalism’ (Bruns, 2008), which are concepts that all will be discussed in this chapter. Moreover, adaptations of Web 2.0 theories to various Internet platforms had soon emerged in the following years: YouTube (Burgess, 2008) from a cultural studies point-of-view and social networking sites such as MySpace and Facebook from economics (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

However, whereas O’Reilly seemed to imply that Web 2.0 can be considered as an overarching term to describe Internet developments, activities and applications, I would agree with the assumption that Web 2.0 is rather a conceptual frame, within which we can correlate and make sense of specific events that the Internet has led to (Allen, 2008). Allen offers four aspects that Web 2.0 is referring to. Firstly, it is a term applied to designs and functionalities of websites and services, amongst which usability would serve as the most essential characteristic as I will clarify later in this section. Moreover, Web 2.0 is a term referring to a business model for financial success in using the Internet to put people and data together in meaningful exchanges. As I will argue that viral marketing of films might optimally be adapted to the benefits of Web 2.0 functionalities and services, this aspect will be discussed in the next section. Thirdly, Allen suggests that the term describes services and activities that create a new kind of media consumers, consumers who are more engaged and active, as I will clarify in the next paragraph, and at last, Web 2.0 is a political statement of an era in which societies are more ‘mediated’ and democratic (Allen, 2008), something that, as I would like to suggest, goes hand in hand with the philosophy of creative industries.
1.1.1 Participatory Culture and User-Generated Content

Due to technological developments, and the advent and rising popularity of services like YouTube, Facebook and Twitter, O’Reilly later rephrased his definition of Web 2.0, in which he emphasized one of the characteristics he had given in the original description: “Web 2.0 is all about harnessing collective intelligence” (O’Reilly & Battelle, 2009, p.1). The way we harness such information, however, is no longer all about just using words and keyboards to communicate: WIFI and smartphone technologies have for instance enabled location sensors, therefore increasing the scale of participation and involvement in media. In this sense, another definition of Web 2.0 seems to offer a more concise summary of its characteristics: “Web 2.0 is using the Internet to provide platforms through which network effects can emerge” (Blank & Reisdorf, 2012, p.539). Network effects refer to the idea that some things become more valuable when more people participate: whereas traditional media content was designed and produced by a selected group of people, networked ‘new’ media was generated by ‘us’ as we – by adding little pieces of our own views and ideas – collectively produced and harnessed information as O’Reilly and Battelle (2009) have referred to it. As O’Reilly already predicted that “network effects from user contributions are the key to market dominance in the Web 2.0 era” (O’Reilly, 2005), such effects are now indispensible to the profitability of social networksites and other user-led platforms. In this sense, there can be argued that the role of user participation has a crucial share in defining Web 2.0 platforms.

Earlier studies in the domain of Humanities to the roles of media consumers have repeatedly stressed how signs and discourses can lead to intrinsic engagement of the viewer with the medium (Van Dijck, 2008, p.43). The rise and evolution of the engaging, active consumer started with significant observations made by Stuart Hall (1980) and John Fiske (1995), who both argued that the passive couch-potato no longer exist since audiences are actually able to adapt media texts to new contexts and give them their own meanings. Defining active audience has now, together with the evolution of the Internet, shifted from interpreting media texts (which is ‘active’ since each individual is able to form his own readings and interpretations) to actually producing media texts (which takes the term ‘active’ to a more literal level), therefore changing the concept ‘active audience’ to ‘participatory users’. In Bastard Culture!: How User Participation Transforms Cultural Production, Schäfer (2011, p.14) argues that participatory culture is a complex discourse consisting of several factors:

a. a rhetoric that advocates social progress through technological advancement
b. a cultural critique demanding the reconfiguration of power relations
c. the qualities of related technologies, and
d. how these qualities are used for design and user appropriation
e. the socio-political dynamics related to using the technologies

To understand the correlation between Web 2.0 and the socio-cultural and economic developments within media industries, I would suggest that factors ‘a’ and ‘d’ are directly related to such industries
as their successes very much rely on how consumers (tastes, motivations, interests etc.) are accommodated to technologies as well as how technologies are shaped by both socio-cultural developments and individual preferences. This interdependency between consumers and technology that accounts to media industries is extensively explored by Jenkins (Van Dijck, 2008, p.42). Jenkins argues that, empowered by new technologies, audiences are demanding the right to participate within this new online culture (Jenkins, 2006, p.24) and as a result, converging media has led to a participatory culture, which enables ordinary citizens to wield media technologies, to express themselves and distribute those as they seem fit (Van Dijck, 2008, p.42-43). In *Fans, Bloggers and Gamers: Exploring Participatory Culture*, Jenkins (2006) focuses on how Internet fandom perfectly exemplifies characteristics of his definition of the participatory culture: involving a range of different disciplines, participatory culture refers to the interaction and traffic of content amongst online communities of artists, fans, gamers, bloggers, subcultures etc. that altogether have gotten their hands on media production and distribution (Jenkins, 2006, p.4-5).

In the same time period, along with Jenkins, Bruns (2006) also introduced a term that encompassed the essentials of Web 2.0 platforms: ‘produsage’. Bruns suggested that the traditional industrial value production chain ‘producer → distributor → consumer’ was slowly shifting towards new models of production, where ideas are created in collaborative environments that break down boundaries between producers and consumers, and instead enables all participants to be users as well as producers of information and knowledge (Bruns, 2006, p.276). Through the Internet, production has become a process of continuous building and extending of existing content in pursuit of further improvement. In this sense, produsage should be considered as a descriptive characterization of the functioning of Web 2.0 platforms, whereas participatory culture involves a greater context in which produsage causes fundamental changes in the way people communicate as well as the way business market their products, and in which it enables different online communities (cultures) to emerge. The significance of collaborative engagement and harnessing communities, that the definitions of ‘produsage’ and ‘participatory culture’ both agree upon, is very much applicable when looking at specialized websites on films, as niche-targeted websites mostly rely on its users’ input as well as a solid ‘fan base’ (recurrent visitors).

Aside from participatory culture, it is crucial to look into actual platforms that endorse participatory engagement since the main question of this research has implied that two types of websites will be coded in the data analysis: user-generated/user-led websites and ‘institutional’ websites. In studies to the participatory web, user engagement is mostly defined alongside UGC (user-generated content) or UCC (user-created content), both generally describing non-professional content that is made publicly available over the Internet and which reflects a certain amount of ‘creative’ effort (OECD, 2007, p.4). UGC websites have experienced a major traffic growth over the past eight years and the amount of variations within user-generated online platforms has significantly increased (Lanchester, 2006): text, photos and images, music and audio, and video and film were produced and
shared amongst peers on UGC platforms such as blogs, wikis (text-based collaboration formats) and open-source development platforms, group-based aggregation and social bookmarking websites, podcasting and online streaming platforms, social networking websites and virtual world platforms (Bruns, 2007; OECD, 2007). The ‘creative’ input and transparency that user-generated media endorse, serve very well to disseminate and share creative products, as I will demonstrate with different platforms in the data analysis. News blogs and group-aggregated news websites allow film lovers to share their personal views on movies, and generates its presentation and content based on users ratings and shares. So as public opinions on movies can be easily influenced, formed and distributed, film industries have anticipated features that UGM-users are accustomed to into their marketing strategies such as crowdsourced film projects (Child, 2012; Sweney, 2010) as well as into traditional marketing materials such as the film trailer, which has created a more intimate relationship with its audiences through mobilized screen technologies (Johnston, 2008, p.146). For the analysis, the question here remains whether news reports draw attention to such tactics, particularly on user-led websites as their functionalities and characteristics seem to cater more to such campaign designs.

1.1.2. Participation and Media Convergence

This increasing mobility of media confirmed another significant theory on the ‘new’ media revolution in the start of the 21st Century: media convergence. With the advent of new computing and telecommunication technologies, Jenkins (2004) has coined this term referring to an era where media will be everywhere and all kinds of media will be used in relation to each other (Jenkins, 2004, p.34). This definition is closely linked to collective intelligence as well, since convergence represents a reconfiguration of media power and a reshaping of media aesthetics and economics (Jenkins, 2004, p.35), which are enabled by the large-scale information gathering and activities that can emerge in web communities. As convergence is both a top-down corporate-driven process and a bottom-up consumer-driven process, it offers both opportunities and risks to media conglomerates: if content can be expanded by reaching across other platforms, it means at the same time that media companies should rethink old assumptions about what it means to consume media – assumptions that shape both programming and marketing decisions (Jenkins, 2004, p.37).

Drawing on the convergence culture, Mark Deuze has typified two trends that characterize the media ecology that emerged by that time: “an environment where consuming media increasingly includes some kind of producing media, and where our media behavior always seems to involve some level of participation, co-creation and collaboration, depending on the degree of openness or closedness of the media involved” (Deuze, 2007, p.247). Similar to Jenkins, Deuze seems to see a rather two-sided functionality of the convergence culture: convergence is a mechanism to increase revenue and proceed the industry’s agenda, while at the same time it enables people to enact some kind of agency regarding the dominant messages and commodities brought out by this specific industry. Deuze connects convergence culture to creative industries as he refers to the idea that
creative industries seek to describe the conceptual and practical convergence of the creative arts (individual talent) with cultural industries (mass scale) in the context of new media technologies (Deuze, 2007, p.249). It was therefore no exception that film (as part of creative industries) could easily be adapted to this convergence culture as the process of telling stories, making meaning and sharing experiences became more participatory and collaborative.

The convergence between film and online media is reflected by remarkable platforms that have allowed film production, distribution and exhibition to adapt themselves to the possibilities on the web including crowdsourced and crowdfunded film productions (e.g. Life in a Day, hitRecords, Kickstarter and IndieGoGo), (il)legal downloading and online streaming of films (e.g. PirateBay and Netflix), promoting and expanding franchises by harnessing interactivity with networked (fan) communities, interactivity between the industry and film audiences through online reviews, blogs, social networks and so on. So despite the fact that convergence of audiovisual media has enabled consumers to easily share and distribute media content within seconds, which has caused serious reconsiderations of the market models of these industries (as legal issues and financial loss were at stake), media convergence has definitely cultivated new marketing models that reflect upon the successes of the participatory culture.

However, user engagement within Web 2.0 platforms can be questioned in a sense that aside from active users, passive users are also part of this ‘participatory culture’. Explicit participation (active users) is driven by motivation, either intrinsic or extrinsic, reflected in visible actions, while implicit participation (passive users) is channeled by design (easy-to-use interfaces and the automation of user activity processes) where no conscious activity of cultural production, collaboration or communication is visible (Schäfer, 2011, p.51). Likewise, Blank and Reisdorf (2012) have found that whereas content production and information seeking are both task-oriented activities, the disproportionately high use of the Internet for entertainment has little to do with task achievement, therefore little to do with explicit participation since entertainment contents consists of ready-to-digest pieces of texts, videos, pictures and games without the possibility to change any of its content. Instead, they suggest that Web 2.0 and entertainment uses of the Internet might be associated simply because it is hard to disentangle them empirically (Blank & Reisdorf, 2012, p.549). Nevertheless, even though if convergence between film and the Internet has logically resulted from the easily matchable content (both focused on creativity and visuals), technological (audiovisual) features of entertainment industries and the blurred lines between producing and consuming, it is exactly the earlier mentioned platforms that have demonstrated how the film industry is continuously adapting itself to the on-going

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1 Life in a Day is a collaborative feature film produced by Ridley Scott, aiming at creating a collage of user-submitted videos all around the world that is shot within a day (source: http://movies.nationalgeographic.com/movies/life-in-a-day/). hitRecords is an open-collaborative production company set up by Joseph Gordon Levitt, focusing on harnessing creative input from artists by either letting them to find members to complete a film, music record/video etc. or letting them to create hybrid projects with artists in other disciplines (source: http://www.hitrecord.org/). Kickstarter and IndieGoGo are the most well-known western crowdfunding platforms for creative projects (source: http://www.forbes.com/sites/chancebarnett/2013/05/08/top-10-crowdfunding-sites-for-fundraising/).
Online developments that confirms the assumption that the film industry and film cultures have been redefined by digital and online media (Jenkins, 2003; Tryon, 2009, p.2).

1.1.3. Online News: Design & Usability
As I have illustrated in the paragraphs above, there are many reasons why Web 2.0’s ability to enhance participatory aspects of media production and cultural expression could be celebrated as an evolutionary phenomenon that have enabled a certain social empowerment (Jarrett, 2008). Indeed, a broader participation in decision-making, new modes of citizenship and community, and the reciprocal exchange of information are made possible by the many-to-many communication features of the Web. Also, the interpersonal interaction between individuals, as they were mostly carried out by social networking platforms, was believed to be a ‘revolution’ that has made the web more democratic, as it was assumed that it had the power to disrupt existing social and economic relations (Jarrett, 2008).

This idea is endorsed by definitions of the blogosphere and the so-called ‘citizen journalism’ (also referred to as ‘participatory journalism’), which both refer to forms of self-expression (reporting and commenting) and interaction with peers outside the public agenda that traditional, professional journalistic industries carry out: by harnessing collective intelligence and knowledge, communities collaboratively filter and highlight topics of importance according to each individual (Cammaerts, 2008, p.359; Bruns, 2008, p.5). This gatewatching process might be considered as the main difference with traditional journalism, as Bruns argues that traditional journalism was rather subjected to the process of selecting what events to observe, what stories to cover, and what responses to publish that fully depends on the expertise of a selected staff and the decisions made within professional news organizations, which might limit the amount of diverse views and angles (Bruns, 2008, p.4). However, in contrast to coverage of current affairs and global issues, film as a news subject remains rather niche and is mostly targeted to only those (and most often to be visited by those) who are interested in movies or the film industry in general. In this sense, participatory/interactive functionalities might not determine the quality of websites focused on professional/journalist content such as online newspapers and magazines. Instead, the lay-out, content/topic and tone that affects the attractiveness of a news subject is more significant.

In the earlier days of the Internet, it has been argued that to access news stories online, one has to make many individual choices and come across a wealth of information, links and details along the way, which all may just be too overwhelming and distracting (Eveland & Dunwoody, 2001). Moreover, it was demonstrated that the more users were allowed to select and customize their information diet individually, the less likely people were to remember complex media content (Southwell & Lee, 2004). These claims seem rather outdated as it is repeatedly argued that today’s user-generated media are constantly adapting to consumers behaviors and demands. In line with the social shaping of technology theory that suggests that technology is a social product which is patterned by the conditions of its creation and use (Williams & Edge, 1996, p.866), this assumption refers to the
idea that user-generated media is shaped and reconstructed by adapting its mechanisms and functionalities to our motivational sources for creating UGC as well as visiting such websites. As consumers use different types of websites for different gratifications, it is necessary to offer an overview of the characterizations of the websites that will be analyzed in this research (see Chapter 2).

Drawing on the converging characteristics of online cultures, news media have also taken paths towards a visual convergence: in the 1970s and 1980s, the shift from a textual emphasis to an emphasis on visual design took place in terms of a spacious modular layout, structural and graphic elements, scan-and-go newspaper front page (Cooke, 2005, p.41). In 1990s and 2000s, the widespread public access to the Internet led to a highly-scannable presentation style (easily consumed news bites, menus and categorizations systems) as well as the implementation of videos and interactive slideshows to emerge (Cooke, 2005, p.41; Fass & Main, 2012, p.758). Such formats and functionalities seem perfectly suited for the coverage of visual media such as film. However, as most homepages are hierarchically structured (full text and further details are hidden unless one choose to expand the article which opens in a new screen) and/or presenting the most popular posts (Fass & Main, 2012, p.758), titles and introductory summaries should be formulated as clear and attractive as possible, and I believe it is exactly this matter that leads to the possibility that marketing strategies might be closely related to the presentation and coverage of film (news) on the web. As printed news already embodied an automatic sense of recency and a snapshot in time, news articles on the Internet became a continually corrected, living reflection of a story (Fass & Main, 2012, p.757) since it enables non-journalists to share their opinions or remarks as well. This user-generated aspect has brought online news reports greater attractiveness in a sense that it enhances interactivity, which is often argued to enhance users’ trust and understanding of the website (Mabry & Porter, 2010, p.3).

Aside from interactivity, it has been argued that great usability is the determining factor of the appeal and success of user-generated media (Shao, 2009, p.16). Shao defines usability in UGM as easy to use, which is translated as enabling “users to input very little, but the output for users may come in abundance”, and as controllable by its users, which means that users should be able to interact with each other without criticism, space and time constraints, as well as that users can select their own contents. Even though media convergence was idealized as bringing individuals, industries, communities and societies closer to each other, its actual effectivity in terms of usability and quality has been put into question. For instance, in a survey-research by the British International Federation of Periodical Press (FIPP), it is observed that the main objectives of Internet users visiting online versions of consumer magazines – varying from niche magazines to global brands – are the web’s immediacy, its capacity to store and provide easy access to (previously published) information, its interactive content, its greater scope for entertainment, and the additional editorial content (Consterdine, 2003, p.11-12). Online news, as opposed to the content of traditional newspapers, is typically presented in a nonlinear fashion: a limited screen size which forces users to click and scroll to pursue their personal path and to select information that matches their own interests (De Waal &
Schoenbach, 2008, p.163). Whereas a newspaper presents us with a closed selection of information, the enormous range and diversity of information available on a news website demands for a clever layout on which ‘important’ news requires to be highlighted in a way that it involves the Internet user directly.

More significantly, as I have mentioned earlier, film news (websites) might not be considered as traditional online news sources per se: film news is often categorized as a subject on itself or as part of ‘arts’, ‘media’ or ‘culture’ in different sources (Alexa.com). From this point-of-view, we might assume that film news similarly focuses on entertaining purposes of its contents towards its readers. As part of (dramatic) entertainment studies (Raney et al. 2003, p.42), it has been argued that websites focusing on media content that contain suspenseful or arousing media content with a satisfying resolution, would be perceived as more enjoyable and entertaining than one that does not. Alongside interactivity and usability, words such as ‘fun, exciting, cool, imaginative, entertaining and flashy are often ascribed to determining a website’s entertainment value (Raney et al. 2003, 42). These emotions and effects are rather similar to the principles of a successful viral marketing campaign as I will demonstrate in the next section: to what extent are entertainment news and viral marketing related to each other in terms of strategies and presentation? In the data analysis, I will explore what strategies are implemented to highlight film news, how these are carried out in lay-out as well as formulation and phrasing, and if these indeed respond (in any possible way) to entertainment as well as marketing values.

Aside from many advantages of an interactive and personalized web, a possibility that the focus on consumers and their personal preferences on Web 2.0 platforms is less beneficial for finding alternative point-of-views should not be overlooked. Since search engines and group-aggregated websites base their results and contents on each user’s input, each consumer would only get to see search results and contents that they might be interested in. This ‘filter bubble’ (Pariser, Ted.com, 2011) in which consumers find themselves, creates a major challenge for marketers to expose consumers to new, unexplored products. Even though film news websites and blogs are targeted to a specific group of consumers (most likely ‘film lovers’), the representation of films by both professional journalists and common audiences on the Internet determines the public opinion which in turn will indirectly cause the film’s eventual success. In the following section, I will discuss how the film industry can overcome this problem by not only reaching out to film connoisseurs, but to a biggest audience as possible through online viral marketing.

1.2. WEB 2.0 AND VIRAL MARKETING OF FILMS

The western film industry seems to have adopted the participatory and convergence culture of Web 2.0 to its marketing strategies. As mentioned earlier, encounters between Internet users and online film promotion should most logically be categorized under ‘Internet use for entertainment’ rather than
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‘Internet use for information seeking and production’. This raises the question how film studios and distributors try to gain awareness for upcoming films in order to grasp the attention of Internet users, both passive and active ones. Even though traditional studio-marketing strategies have been executed for decades, it has been argued that film markets are branding themselves by invoking and deploying mystique – a kind of ‘Hollywood myth’, therefore not paying enough attention to actual audience research, which was more often executed with television (Caldwell, 2005, p.95). Therefore, Caldwell (2005) believes that to fully understand the role of film in multimedia convergence, film should be framed and defined in terms other than its own: not only does it merely represent art or entertainment, but it is entangled with marketing and consumption strategies as well.

Whereas movie trailers have always been the standard strategy to introduce new movies to the public, the advent of the Internet has enabled interactivity between the film and its audiences, therefore paving new ways to attract film audiences. Stapleton and Hughes (2005) have claimed that film marketing should no longer be limited to the traditional form of a movie trailer, and indeed, it seems that novel approaches on the web are increasingly emerging today, all able to spark people’s passions long before the movie is going to be released. Film marketing can be defined as “[…]any element that assists a film in reaching its target audience at any time throughout its life. […]Marketing strategy will incorporate elements such as print designs, trailers and showreels, publicity, advertising, promotion and merchandising” (Durie et al., 1993, p.15). Based on this starting point, the authors have posed five key elements that determines a film’s marketing potential: stars, director, genre and story ingredients, awards and box office (performance in other territories). Within marketing literature, the star actor is generally defined as an important point of reference for consumers when choosing particular films (Kerrigan, 2010, p.83). Even though the mere presence of a star is no guarantee of box-office succes, the star does often become the central factor of a publicity and advertising campaign as this is supposed to maximize awareness of the film among the audiences (Durie et al., 1993, p.92-93). The same would account for the director’s name which might affects one’s preconceptions of the film. Mentioning awards and (previous) box office performances self-evidently increases the presumption that the film is qualitatively ‘good’ and/or popular. These strategies are most adapted by movie posters, trailers and teasers, as well as press junkets and news reports. Likewise, exploiting genre and story ingredients are very much adopted into such materials and coverages. Traditional publicity and promotion strategies consisted of press kits (including credits, biographies/ filmographies, production notes etc.) which was made available to different media outlets, star interviews, press screenings, preview screenings and merchandising campaigns (Durie et al. 1993; Kerrigan, 2010). The general aim of these techniques are spreading word-of-mouth messages among the media and audiences, which supposedly increases the awareness of and anticipation on the film.
1.2.1. WOM and Film Viral Campaigns

Defined as the ‘Long Tail’, Anderson (Wired.com, 2004) suggested that Web 2.0 platforms have enabled niche goods to take part in the bigger markets together with major players, as the networked distribution of the Internet created an easy spread of online word-of-mouth, therefore leading new consumers via to content they might be looking for. Viral marketing responds very well to this ‘world of abundance’ Anderson is referring to (Anderson, 2006, p.15;18), since it employs the numerous and far-reaching networks to raise awareness on a product or brand. It allows firms to promote their products and services with very low budgets and still reach the same levels of awareness that usually are only achievable with high-frequency advertising in public, on TV and in theaters (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011, p.254). Practical elements that each viral marketing should contain are for instance the readability to give away products or services, effortless transfer of these products and services to others, exploiting common motivations and behaviors, creating something small that is easily scalable to something very large, utilizing existing communication networks, and taking advantage of others’ resources (Wilson, 2005). The common feature of endorsing, sharing, and passing the message along by addressing consumers’ interests seems perfectly suited to web technologies. Therefore, it is no surprise that the essentials of viral marketing are often related to strategies focusing on the adaptation of social networksites in creating word-of-mouth buzz (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2011). Following this approach, I will also focus mostly on the implementation of online media to define online viral marketing.

Viral marketing as a definition was coined nearly two decades ago, referring to the exponential growth in message diffusion, just like how viruses disseminate themselves. The Internet’s accessibility, almost limitless range of reach, and its (seemingly) transparency have empowered word-of-mouth (WOM) communications, therefore making viral marketing a popular strategy to promote popular/cultural goods online. WOM marketing is defined as the intentional influencing of consumer-to-consumer communication and is sometimes referred to as social media marketing, buzz- or guerilla marketing (Kozinets et al. 2010, p.71). The basic principle of viral/WOM-marketing that each receiver of the message passes it to more than one other person, therefore creating an exponential growth in the amount of people getting the message (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011, p.255), closely connects WOM to social media. The community element embedded in social media makes it convenient to transmit messages to a large group of people, allowing personalized interactions between advertisers and consumers (therefore enhancing persuasiveness of messages to target groups), and content sharing between consumers (Mabry & Porter, 2010, p.4).

According to Kozinets et al. (2010), WOM is affected by four important factors. Firstly, it is influenced by its placement within ‘character narratives’, enduring personal stories or accounts that we may understand as being related to particular expressed character types (Kozinets et al. 2010, p.74). In this sense, WOM elaborates on the emergence and maintenance of communities on Web 2.0 since the strategy is about targeting those who might share the same interests so that they will have a sense of
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belonging while consuming the promoted product. Social media, on which advertisers can easily find target consumers as preferences and interests are being shared, have a significant role in this. Likewise, WOM communication is affected by communal norms that govern the expression, transmission and reception of a message and its meanings. These norms would of course vary by the communities’ characteristics which includes demographics, size of community, educational levels, gender and so on. And at last, WOM is affected by the promotional characteristics of such campaigns and related promotions, which includes for example the type of product, product’s brand equity, product’s objectives, and humorlessness of the campaign.

Alongside the importance of sending the right message in viral (entertainment) marketing that is implied by Kozinets et al. (2010) and Dobele et al. (2005), it is repeatedly argued that emotions and drama are crucial factors in encouraging consumers to pass the message along (Stapleton and Hughes, 2005; Raney et al. 2003; Dobele et al. 2005, 2007). Engaging messages can be created when the imagination by being fun or intriguing is captured, and different (online) media and media technologies are leveraged. The Blair Witch Project has been frequently discussed in studies to viral marketing in film, exactly because its clever adaptation of its story and genre into the campaign. As this film was appraised for its apparent documentary realism and its ability to convey ‘authentic’ horror, its marketing campaign was very much reflecting upon blurring boundaries between film, television and fiction on the one hand, and the implied ‘realness’ and ‘rawness’ of DIY-video and the Internet on the other hand. Crucial narrative aspects within the film is adapted to other media outlets, amongst which the Blair Witch website and a Sci-Fi Channel TV-special The Curse of the Blair Witch, both offering ‘exclusive’ information on the story that has not been told in the film, the ‘aftermath’ and its ‘legacy’ (Tyron, 2009, p.42; Blairwitch.com). The film’s campaign absorbed its audiences into the story by creating a sense as if everything is real and happening; as if the audiences have become part of the exploration themselves. The success and effectivity of this interaction is solidly confirmed as many other horror/thriller films adapted their viral campaigns in the same fashion: Paranormal Activity similarly transformed from a low-budget horror flick into a box-office success as the film’s campaign perfectly utilized social networks in spreading WOM by elaborating on the genre and its supposedly evoked emotions such as fear and horror. Audiences were asked to facebook their ‘paranormal’ experiences as well as “tweet their screams” after pre-release screenings (Butler, 2009). Strategies involving aspects of daily/recognizable cultural aspects are widely adapted by major studios as well if we look at 20th Century Fox’s Prometheus with its TED Talk on the ‘inventors’ of humankind, the Alien-franchise’s company website (weylandindustries.com), and previously mentioned Pixar’s upcoming Monsters University with its university website not only appearing as a real-life university website, but becoming even more ‘real’ when a ‘hackers-invasion’ on the website on April 1st took place (Hernandez, 2013). These campaigns do not only confirm the effectivity of integrating genre and story ingredients into campaigns, as Durie et al. (1993) have ascribed to
traditional film promotion, but they also reflect upon the importance of interactivity and dramatic involvement as I have discussed earlier.

1.2.2. WOM and Online (Film) News Presentation

It is commonly agreed upon that WOM is a critical factor underlying a movie’s staying power, which leads to its ultimate financial success and is generally discussed in correlation to pre-release advertising, critics’ reviews and online activities practiced by consumers in blogs and discussion threads (Elberse & Eliashberg, 2003; Duan et al. 2008, p.234). Eliashberg and Shugan (1997) have looked into the effects of critics’ reviews on the box office success of films and have demonstrated that critics are predictors of success rather than influencers. Whereas most studios and distributors assume that critics are opinion leaders (influencers) of film, therefore ‘leading’ film audiences into the shaping of a certain opinion, film predictors are merely indicators with no significant influences on actual box office revenue, as they only provide predictive information of the outcomes of the film.

However, as film information databases and review/preview websites now enable Internet users and moviegoers to comment and write reviews themselves, the film critic’s actual influence on WOM can be questioned. It is argued for instance that consumers’ evaluations are more likely to be influenced by the reputation of the film’s director (Astous & Touil, 1999, p.689). Also, even though critics’ reviews might generate more discussions on the film, the amount of visitors is still determined by trailers, release timing and advertising (Eliashberg & Shugan, 1997, p.77). In this sense, WOM thus functions as an awareness-raiser to films (regardless positive or negative awareness) rather than a promotional strategy that directly boosts a film’s sales. Elberse and Anand’s (2007) research to the influences of pre-advertising on television to the film’s box office revenue has indicated that the impact of advertising is actually lower for movies of lower quality (Elberse & Anand, 2007, p.22). In contrast, I would argue that WOM communications on the Internet do not conform to this observation: buzzes might attribute films of ‘lower quality’ with a cult-status, possibly leading them to become a significant part of popular cultures. The promotional campaign of The Blair Witch Project is an ideal example of how film promotion might be a crucial factor in determining the success or failure of a movie right after its release (Stapleton & Hughes, 2005, p.1). Not only did the film become one of the most (financially) successful independent movies of all time, but it also set a trend for the ‘found-footage’ horror films, and sparked new inspirations and techniques in film promotion by adopting the Internet. The unexpected success of the movie is seen as almost entirely due to the buzz that was created on the web, something that obviously was rather innovative, since the Internet still was in its new-born stage by that time.

The assumption that WOM campaigns seem to have different variations and purposes that depend on the type of film production, is also shared by Holbrook and Addis (2008), who have argued that critical/popular evaluation (appraisal of the film by critics or consumers) and critical/popular buzz (tendency to recommend the film by critics or consumers to others) are two separated factors that
each determine different paths of success for films (Holbrook & Addis, 2008, p.89). The authors suggest that potential blockbuster movies are more suitable targets for critical and popular buzz as they can publicize big-budget aspects (e.g. slick trailers and print advertising), whereas a favorable critical/popular evaluation is more likely to be reached through emphasizing on the film’s artistic values. Looking at recent campaigns from major productions such as previously mentioned _Prometheus_ and _Monsters University_, it seems that today’s viral campaigns of films strive for both commercial buzz and artistic evaluation to some extent: both campaigns have incorporated different online platforms as well as official websites that seamlessly integrate story elements, main narratives and characters of the film into website design and functionalities. Moreover, Holbrook and Addis’ (2008) findings raise the question if institutional websites are more inclined to report evaluations and if user-led websites might mostly include buzz.

Looking back at previously mentioned techniques, some significant similarities can be found between viral marketing strategies and traditional film marketing strategies. A striking element in both Kerrigan’s (2010) and Durie et al.’s (1993) categorization of film marketing is their focus on the visual presentation and specifically, film trailers, television- and print advertising, and how these should resemble the essence of the promoted film. Kerrigan refers to Berger (1998), who clarifies e.g. processes of resemblance and processes of ‘cause and effect’ that situate the design of film marketing materials as well as the process of sensemaking of these materials by consumers (Kerrigan, 2010, p.133). Similar to Kozinets et al. (2010)’s characterization of viral marketing strategies, Berger (1998; as cited in Kerrigan, 2010) refers to how images should optimally resemble the genre and style of the film and how the design should evoke logical interpretations of the viewer matching the narratives of the film, for instance, heightened emotions and tensions for thrillers and humoresness for comedy. As I have mentioned in the first section of this chapter and clarified in the previous paragraph, the presentation of entertainment news also shows striking similarities with viral marketing strategies in a sense that they both aim at enhancing the entertainment value of users’/consumers’ experience in getting to know the film. This relation between traditional film marketing (including visual advertising), viral marketing and film online journalism should be taken into account in the data analysis, as it will provide me guidelines for focusing on the question ‘what moods are implied by the author (either professional or amateur) at which subjects?’

Although marketing strategies should be covered while discussing convergence between films and other media platforms, the eventual needs that are gratified by movie-going and –watching should not be forgotten: the role of film in convergence cultures is still closely related to art and entertainment as film remains holding a symbolic and cultural value within the western society (Corbett, 2001, p.30). In this sense, I believe cultural participation has a significant role within film marketing and how film news are presented online. While analyzing viral videos on YouTube, Burgess (2008) argues that through reuse, reworking and redistribution, spreadable media content will gain greater resonance in culture, taking on new meanings, finding new audiences, attracting new markets, and generating new
values (Burgess, 2008, p.2). Viral marketing very much evolves around these purposes as well: it does not spread ‘new’ things necessarily, instead, performative and communicative practices are deeply situated in everyday, mundane traditions as we observe in viral videos (Burgess, 2008, p.8). Furthermore, marketing circles tend to assume that the convenience and ease in which viral marketing gets a product onto the market while it is often forgotten that viral techniques should still gratify the customers’ needs and interests: the shared content should empower fans to share the enthusiasm, therefore making viral marketing an extention of the customer loyalty principles (Ferguson, 2008, p.181). Here, film marketing as a cultural practice is once again endorsed.

In this chapter, several questions have emerged in the discussions on the presentation of film news and how viral strategies are reported and represented by news media: 1) What kinds of film news are available on the Internet and how are they presented? 2) What attention is given to recent and upcoming films in film news on Web 2.0 platforms: what elements are emphasized and to what extent is film marketing-related news given attention to? 3) What are the significant differences and similarities between attention given to new films amongst all websites as well as by institutional news websites and user-led news websites? 4) To what extent is marketing/promotion-related attention given by both journalists and audiences/consumers to films on the Internet? In the following chapter, I will illustrate how these subquestions are answered.

2. RESEARCH DESIGN

2.1. Methodology
As mentioned in the introduction, this research consists of a small quantitative analysis and an extensive qualitative analysis, which allows me to find patterns in the comparison inductively. In finding representational answers to this research’s main question and its subquestions, the research design is partly based on Schneider and Foot’s (2005) ‘Web Sphere Analysis: An Approach to Studying Online Action’ and Weare and Lin’s (2000) ‘Content Analysis of the World Wide Web: Opportunities and Challenges’. The web sphere, which is defined as a set of dynamically connected digital resources spanning multiple websites deemed relevant or related to a central event, concept or theme (Schneider & Foot, 2005, p.158), is in this case the collection of different types of websites that elaborates on film news and promotions in various ways. December (1996; as cited in Schneider and Foot, 2005) offers a typology of units of analysis for Internet-related research: 1) media space, 2) media class, 3) media object, 4) media instance, and 5) media experience (Schneider & Foot, 2005, p.158). Despite this rather dated publication, the categorization is still very much applicable to today’s web spheres. Obviously, there should be stressed that through apps and new types of spheres that have emerged ever since, new units of analysis can be created. As I exclusively focus on the content of specific websites, the first three units of analysis mentioned above can be examined: two media spaces
divided in a group of user-led websites and a group of institutional websites, ten media classes defined as each individual website in its entirety, and most importantly, a vast range of media objects within the media classes that the user can observe and perhaps even interact with (articles, videos, pictures etc.).

Web sphere analysis provides a framework for investigating relations between producers and users of web materials as mediated by the structural and feature elements of websites, texts and the links between them (Schneider & Foot, 2005, p.159). The authors argue that multiple methods may approach such analysis, as long as web materials related to a theme of the sphere are identified, captured in context and archived with some periodicity for retrospective analyses. The applicability of the traditional content analysis to the Web was once questioned because of its dynamic complexity, whereas traditional media texts such as television and newspapers were rather fixed entities (Weare & Lin, 2000, p. 273). Now, more than a decade later, content analysis is widely utilized for exploring web content such as user-generated websites (Burgess & Green, 2008), online newspapers (Barnhurst, 2009), and more specifically, film blogs (Verboord, 2010) and online film reviews (Kersten & Bielby, 2012). Although research questions that may be addressed through content analysis are almost limitless, Weare and Lin (2000) have referred to three aspects that are worth to examine: researchers may focus on message content and meaning, they may examine the antecedents of messages, or they could examine message effects. With this in mind, I will focus on message content and meaning based on a selection of websites that reflect upon essential characteristics of Web 2.0 theories. As I am particularly hoping to find how content related to film promotion is represented on different Internet platforms, a qualitative content analysis would offer space to personal observations and interpretations. Also, the interpretative analysis will be leading this research since texts, images and audio-visual materials are very much drawing on emotions and sensations, which are of course experienced differently by each individual. Moreover, the qualitative approach of the analysis should be emphasized, as I am looking for specific details that might lead to certain patterns in content presentation. Nevertheless, a small quantitative analysis including basic information of a website and its user activity (comments, shares, votes, ‘likes’ etc.), before I proceed with the qualitative analysis, will provide an overview of the websites’ characteristics. The characteristics from this overview will be compared with the findings of the qualitative analysis, enabling me to find relations between specific features of the website (quantitative) and its presented content (qualitative). I believe a comparison between quantitative and qualitative results clarifies what (types of) websites report on recent and upcoming films in what ways and which (types of) websites (are more likely to) present viral marketing-related content.
2.2. Time period
The samples are analyzed throughout a period stretching from April to May, in which all websites are coded once quantitatively in April and once qualitatively in April-May. All samples have been collected and saved in two randomly selected days (April 13 and April 18, 2013). The sequences in which websites are coded within a week are randomly selected. As I am mostly interested in finding how recent and upcoming films are given attention to within media objects on websites, and not necessarily in the time, length or repetition in which such content appears, coding every website just once is sufficient enough. Also, the layout and main topics of webpages remains the same since each website supposedly has its own fixed style. And unlike current affairs, film news is reported less often and/or in smaller portions on most of the websites that are not specifically aimed at film-related content.

2.3. Units of analysis
This research includes 10 websites in total. Since I am looking for the presentation of film news on Web 2.0 platforms in general, these websites are selected based on the condition that they could be considered as representatives of the participatory and convergence culture seen from their content and functionalities. Five websites of the selection can arguably be defined as user-led news websites:

- Reddit (fully group-aggregated news website)
- Mashable (staff-created, user-led website)
- Buzzfeed (both staff- and user-generated news website)
- Deadline (personal blog on film news, emphasis on film industry)
- Film Drunk (personal blog on film news, emphasis on pop culture/mainstream films)

And five sources could be defined as institutional news websites:

- The Guardian (online newspaper UK)
- The Los Angeles Times (online newspaper US)
- IndieWire (preview/review website, emphasis on independent productions)
- Variety (online entertainment magazine)
- The Hollywood Reporter (online entertainment magazine)

One of the common approaches employed to create a sampling frame for web analyses is to focus on the most popular sites on the Web (Weare & Lin, 2000, p.279). Accordingly, I have focused on finding as diverse as possible sources that present film news and promotions, however, they should all be successful websites in terms of the global range and visitor amount as reported by the websites ranking platforms Alexa and Technorati (Alexa.com; Technorati.com). Deadline and Film Drunk are the biggest personal film blogs according to the blog-ranking platform Technorati. The Guardian is world’s second best visited online newspaper according to Alexa. As The New York Times requires a paid registration, I have selected The Los Angeles Times as a replacement, which is ranked as the 25th
best-visited newspaper worldwide (Alexa.com). Variety and The Hollywood Reporter are amongst the publishing veterans in Hollywood and entertainment news (both are founded in the start of 20th Century), whereas IndieWire is the most visited film/TV news website specifically dedicated to independent productions. I have decided to add group-aggregated news websites because no detailed analyses on such websites in general have yet been published. More importantly, as Internet memes are increasingly appearing in online communication and social network sites, I am convinced it was necessary to include Reddit (which is the most popular headline links/group-aggregation website according to Alexa) as its content is almost fully depending on users’ input. Along with BuzzFeed, Reddit is also one of the most suitable media platforms to start and track viral content (Zimmerman, 2012). Mashable is selected based on its recognition as the 2013 Webby Award Winner and Webby People’s Voice Winner as the Best Business Blog². Even though both Mashable and BuzzFeed are less depending on user’s input, their presentation, types and availability of content are nevertheless fully depending on users’ reactions (the more likes/shares, the greater visibility of the news item on the webpage).

The coding objects per website are selected based on their position within the webpage. This is preceded by starting at the top of the webpage and scrolling down accordingly to the way in which the webpage presents its news (sequence) until I have collected 15 objects per website. In the coding process, a distinction is made between news on specifically recent and upcoming films as well as news on other film-related topics. ‘Recent films’ refer to some Oscar winners and films released in 2013, whereas ‘upcoming films’ indicate those that are yet to be released either this year or in the near future (see Appendix II for a clarification and overview of recent and upcoming films). As the amount of media objects presented per website is very different, I have analyzed a fixed amount of 15 objects per website (a total of 150 objects) for the quantitative analysis. The qualitative analysis has covered the exact same content, but has specifically focused on the articles reporting recent and upcoming films, therefore consisting of 100 objects in total (Figure 1). For a clarification of these objects, please refer to Appendix V, which offers an overview of all articles coded for either the quantitative analysis or both analyses, including the URL, title and date of publication.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recent films</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upcoming films</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1 – Frequency type of films

² The Webby Awards is the leading international award honoring excellence in categories such as Websites, Interactive Advertising & Media, Online Film & Video, Mobile & App, and the Social Web (source: http://www.webbyawards.com/about/ and http://winners.webbyawards.com/2013/web/general-website/blog-business).
2.4. Measurements

Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative part of the analysis is processed in SPSS using **12 variables** (refer to Appendix I for definition of variables and their numerical indication). Assimilated into tables, the coding results have provided an overview of all results and enabled me to find patterns and conclusions. At each specific film news section, I have looked into the following objects (presented in no particular order):

- **Film Drunk**: 15 posts within the category ‘Movies’ ([http://filmdrunk.uproxx.com/](http://filmdrunk.uproxx.com/))
- **Buzzfeed**: 15 posts on ‘entertainment’ page → only film-related posts will be selected ([http://www.buzzfeed.com/entertainment](http://www.buzzfeed.com/entertainment)) While analyzing *Buzzfeed*’s film news, I have looked into the ‘Entertainment’ section of the website, which consists of a mixture of posts related to television, film, music and other media submitted by staff members and users. As the film section is categorized under ‘Rewind’, which basically refers to nostalgic and retrospective topics, it seemed better to select every film-related post on the ‘Entertainment’ page since this presents actual news and recent web trends.
- **Mashable**: 15 articles within the category ‘Entertainment’ and subcategory ‘Film’ ([http://mashable.com/film/ → ‘what’s hot’ section](http://mashable.com/film/ → ‘what’s hot’ section))

The data include variables such as source, date of publication, title, type of article, whether a recent/upcoming film is covered, article’s size, its additional content i.e. multimedia, and the amount of comments and social media shares (definitions and exact variables are given in Appendix I). Each article’s title serves as the indicator for determining the type of article, for instance, if a title contains ‘Q&A’, the article is most likely an interview; if a title contains ‘Watch:’, the article will probably display a video; if a title contains actor’s/filmmaker’s/awards’/event’s name, it is plausible that the article will focus on (one of) these topics etc. Obviously, not all film news cover recent or upcoming
films. The ‘Film’ variable (Figure 1) is therefore determined by looking at the title and the first paragraph of the text: if it does mention any person or other development/event that is reported together with the film title, this specific article will be considered as a report on recent or upcoming film(s). Here, ‘Not applicable’ accounts to reports and posts on e.g. classic/older films, memorials/retrospectives, studios/production companies, film theaters etc. The articles that have been coded as ‘Not applicable’ at the variable ‘Film’ cover the question how film news are presented in general and therefore they are NOT analyzed with Atlas.ti, since the qualitative analysis exclusively aims at exploring how recent and upcoming films are covered. The size of each article is determined by counting the words of the text (without the title or any links in-between) with Word Count. The quantitative results are presented with basic cross-tabulation tables in the next chapter.

Qualitative Analysis
As mentioned earlier, the qualitative analysis focuses on finding patterns in the actual content of texts and the content of accompanying pictures/videos if applicable with Atlas.ti. Even though this research is executed with an open-coding approach, based on the given theory it has been useful to set basic guidelines that clarify which aspects I should specifically pay attention to. These guidelines include preliminary codes with definitions of possible codes to which pictures, multimedia, videos, words, sentences, paragraphs and titles might be ascribed (see Appendix I). By saving each webpage with MAC OS X application SiteSucker and in a PDF-file, I have been able to capture the moment of coding, therefore preventing any changes that might be made to the article over time. The guidelines in Appendix I are first categorized as several news subjects: reports, opinion/discussions, interviews etc. Since I am looking for specific signs in texts, images and videos that refer to and/or imply promotional/viral marketing-related strategies, these broad categorizations are divided into ‘focus areas’ and ‘tones’. Whereas ‘traditional’ marketing-related signs might be spotted if for instance a news report on a specific upcoming film emphasizes on its biggest star (leading actor) or director in journalistic articles/websites, viral marketing-related signs are expectedly more likely to emerge in user-led websites on which a specific type of (multimedia) content is repeated on different platforms and/or in different forms. The coding results are first presented in a table generated by Atlas.ti presenting which codes are most ascribed to what articles and sources (Appendix III). This frequency overview of codes serves as a clarification of the interpretative analysis, in which I am referring to these overviews while dissecting the articles’ quotes and images. To summarize, as the research question is two-folded, the data collection is divided into a quantitative part and qualitative part, in which the latter one is including a quantitative frequency overview as well as an in-depth analysis based on the coding results.
3. RESULTS & DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter is divided in three sections: 1) Quantitative results, 2) Qualitative results and 3) Conclusions and Theoretical Implications. In the first section, all relevant results of both quantitative and qualitative data collection will be demonstrated with frequency table overviews of all sources, as resulted from the data coding in both SPSS and Atlas.ti. Exceptional or striking elements will be discussed based on theories provided in Chapter 2. The second section will focus on the qualitative findings as resulted from Atlas.ti. Here, I will provide the most relevant and noteworthy results, structuring them according to the Research Design and Appendix I. The final section summarizes the most significant findings and makes preliminary conclusions to the following questions before continuing to the final chapter (Conclusion & Discussion) of this research:

- How is attention given to recent/upcoming films on these platforms; what techniques are used to present and report on films?
- What are the significant differences and similarities between film news presentation on non-traditional and institutional news websites?
- How does film news presentation relate to the characteristics and functionalities of Web 2.0?
- How does film news presentation relate to the characteristics and strategies of film- and viral marketing?

3.1. Quantitative Results

As Table 1 demonstrates, both user-generated film news and traditional news websites have generally dedicated most of their topics to upcoming films. Unexpectedly, traditional news websites focus on reports related to either recent or upcoming films rather than film industry reports or retrospectives. A striking element is the difference between the *The Guardian*, *LA Times* and *IndieWire* on the one hand, and *Variety* on the other: whereas the latter is mostly reporting news unrelated to any recent or upcoming films, *The Guardian*, *LA Times* and *IndieWire* are mainly reporting news on upcoming films. From this perspective, *Variety* is the only source in the data collection that might be considered as a more specialized website targeting to Internet users who are savvy with, or at least interested in, developments within the film industry in its broadest sense. *The Hollywood Reporter* is the only source within the list dedicating most of its content to recent and upcoming films. This observation leads me to assume that the website might function as a lucrative platform for film marketers to release promotional materials.
Table 1 – Frequency of upcoming and recent films per source*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOURCE</th>
<th>Recent</th>
<th>Upcoming</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deadline</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Film Drunk</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reddit</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BuzzFeed</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mashable</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Guardian</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The LA Times</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Hollywood Reporter</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IndieWire</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>26</strong></td>
<td><strong>74</strong></td>
<td><strong>50</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The outcomes are not displayed in percentages since there are just a small amount of frequencies; percentages would suggest more precision, which does not necessarily provide additional value in this case.

Table 2 presents a summarized view of Appendix III (that presents all codes ascribed to text passages, words and (audio-)visual materials), which has categorized every code into so-called ‘families’ that encompass every code that is related to a specific category. For example, the code family genre/story contains codes such as synopsis, description film character, film themes etc. The code family production/industry includes codes such as ‘description film current affairs’, ‘box-office reports’, ‘description events/festivals/awards’ etc. And the code family opinion/discussion would contain codes related to tone (appraisal, criticism) and ‘personal observations/responses/suggestions’.

From Table 2 (as well as from the overview in Appendix III), I can conclude that in terms of articles’ content, categories such as ‘genre/story’, ‘opinion/discussion’ and ‘production/industry’ have been used most frequently within institutional news websites, whereas user-led websites expectedly contain even more ‘opinion/discussion’ and considerably more pictures and multimedia. Also, even though the amount is low for both types of sources, ‘director’-related topics and ‘production/industry’-related topics on institutional news websites far exceed those on user-led news websites. This suggests a possibility that institutional sources might be more focused on qualitative and critical acclaim, as these are more likely to involve director’s appraisals and responses, and evaluations and anticipations of the film within the context of events and awards. In the qualitative analysis, the significant difference between the more subjective user-led websites and the more ‘grounded’ impression of institutional websites will be further clarified. Obviously, basic information that is usually expected to occur in news reports on recent/upcoming films have proven to be most common for both institutional and user-led websites, such as adapted interview responses, author’s own opinion/interpretation, film character (either description or judgment), film release information, genre (either description or judgment), synopsis and production progress (Appendix III).
Table 2 – Frequency percentage of content topics/themes per type of source

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code Families</th>
<th>Institutional News Websites</th>
<th>User-led News Websites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Actor</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial/Critical Performance</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genre/Story</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opinion/Discussion</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
<td>27.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pictures/Multimedia</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production/Industry</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100% (587 codes)</td>
<td>100% (453 codes)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

User-led news websites contain less codes (as shown in Table 2) is caused by the considerably smaller portions of text (sometimes no text is involved at all): Reddit and BuzzFeed hold mostly non-text posts and both do not exceed 200 words per post; Deadline and Mashable’s articles also do not exceed the 200 words. Film Drunk is the only non-traditional news website holding an equal amount of articles alongside The Guardian and The LA Times (10/11 articles using between 200-500 words) and is the only source presenting an article longer than 800 words aside from Variety (which holds two articles with more than 800 words).

As Table 3 demonstrates, all sources utilize multimedia as a complement to their articles, while the majority of sources display more pictures rather than other forms of visual media. A remarkable observation here is that news sources originally published on paper (The Guardian, The Los Angeles Times, Variety and The Hollywood Reporter) hardly use any multimedia (videos, integrated playlists, integrated interactive gadgets) as an accompaniment to their articles. However, it might be rash to conclude that the use of multimedia depends on the type of source. Instead, it is more plausible to consider the application of multimedia as a choice that is made in line with the field or theme each website wants to focus on. Whereas IndieWire, BuzzFeed, Reddit and Film Drunk’s multimedia use are either evenly divided or slightly different, Deadline is clearly not using multimedia accompaniment for entertainment as it implies that it focuses on dissemination of the latest breaking news on the industry: “It has become the authoritative source for breaking news in the entertainment industry and readers check the site multiple times each day” (Deadline.com). In this sense, the lack of multimedia use seems to be subjected to the aim of each source; either informing or entertaining its users.
Moreover, looking at the entire overview of sources presenting multimedia and pictures, pictures are more common rather than other types of text accompaniment, which is remarkable since the shift from trailers to newer promotional strategies that enable interactivity between the film and audiences, is exactly what Stapleton and Hughes (2005) have predicted. However, based on an absolute calculation, I may conclude that the power of film trailers and teasers are still widely recognized: video and audio-centered content are the most common type of news reports as resulted from Table 4.

**Table 4 – Most frequent type of report per source**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of report</th>
<th>Frequency per source*</th>
<th>Total frequency**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deadline</td>
<td>Videos/audio</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Film Drunk</td>
<td>Videos/audio</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reddit</td>
<td>Videos/audio + Other</td>
<td>5 + 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BuzzFeed</td>
<td>Videos/audio + Pictures</td>
<td>3 + 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mashable</td>
<td>Videos/audio</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Guardian</td>
<td>Actor reports</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The LA Times</td>
<td>Videos/audio</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety</td>
<td>Industry reports</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Hollywood Reporter</td>
<td>Review/analysis</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IndieWire</td>
<td>Videos/audio</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The type of report with the highest frequency that accounts for this particular source
** The total amount of occurrence of the type of report amongst all sources

From Table 5, it can be observed that commenting on news articles on institutional news websites is generally rather unusual, specifically for Variety and The Hollywood Reporter. Referring to the possibility that Variety might target those who are savvier to film industry backgrounds as I have mentioned earlier, this observation raises the question why Variety–users do not react to articles, a question that might be clarified by the purpose of Variety’s website and therefore the characteristics of its visitors/users. Amongst all institutional online news sources, The Guardian is the only website of this kind holding three articles that have received 60 or more comments. Articles from The
Guardian are also the most often shared: with nine items receiving between 100 and 500 shares, therefore surprisingly exceeding the six items holding between 100 and 500 shares on BuzzFeed.

Table 5 – User activity per source

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Comments*</th>
<th>Shares*</th>
<th>Likes*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deadline</td>
<td>&lt; 30</td>
<td>&lt; 100</td>
<td>&lt; 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Film Drunk</td>
<td>&lt; 30</td>
<td>&lt; 100</td>
<td>&lt; 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reddit</td>
<td>&gt; 60</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>&lt; 100 - &gt; 1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BuzzFeed</td>
<td>&lt; 30</td>
<td>&lt; 100</td>
<td>100 - &gt; 1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mashable</td>
<td>&lt; 30</td>
<td>&gt; 1000</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Guardian</td>
<td>&lt; 30</td>
<td>100 - 500</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The LA Times</td>
<td>&lt; 1</td>
<td>&lt; 100</td>
<td>&lt; 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety</td>
<td>&lt; 1</td>
<td>&lt; 100</td>
<td>&lt; 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Hollywood Reporter</td>
<td>&lt; 1</td>
<td>&lt; 100</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IndieWire</td>
<td>&lt; 30</td>
<td>&lt; 100</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* <= less than, >= more than; the results are based on the amount of comments/shares/likes that has occurred the most frequent in the 15 articles per source.

Reddit has predictably appeared to be the website presenting the most comment-activity, whereas BuzzFeed as a similar type of news source has again scored below expectations. Reddit also holds the most ‘likes’, as this is the feature that determines if its posts are qualified to appear on the front page of the website. The same system accounts for Mashable, the only source presenting the most articles with more than 1000 shares, as the amount of shares determines the article’s position and layout on the front page. As for sources in which shares and/or likes are applicable, most articles have received less than 100 shares and likes, which implies that theoretically most collected data have not (yet) become ‘viral’ by the time of coding. However, BuzzFeed might be an exception: the website is argued to serve as a platform on which valuable (or rather, potentially viral) content is disseminated (Zimmerman, 2012). Nevertheless, it appears that its staff creates most of its film news on BuzzFeed, therefore raising the question how and why these news items are created and to what extent they are similar to viral topics that are already flowing through the web.

From the quantitative results as presented in this section, I can conclude that ‘citizen journalism’ on user-led websites is indeed endorsed through the design of functionalities that enable users to (seemingly) filter and highlight topics according to their own likings (Cammaerts, 2008; Bruns, 2008) as these websites show more user activity in terms of either shares, likes and/or comments. Also, usability on user-led websites (Shao, 2009) and the textual-to-visual shift of institutional news websites (Cooke, 2005) are both implied in a sense that shorter texts (inputs) are presented in comparison to the striking presence of visual material. The significance of visual attractiveness seems to apply to both types of websites as pictures and multimedia are used in every article.

3.2. Qualitative Results
As previously mentioned, the following paragraphs address the most frequent and remarkable focus areas of articles that have resulted from the qualitative data collection. Within each section, I will illustrate how each specific focus area is presented by referring to striking/reoccurring examples, focusing on the topic, structure and tone, connect these to previously given theories on user-generated content and film (viral) marketing, as well as clarifying the differences and similarities between user-led and institutional news websites.

3.2.1. Emphasizing Director, Actor, Star/Celebrity

Shared amongst both types of sources, the first remarkable element is how the leading actor’s name or director’s name is always the first to be mentioned (either in the title or in the first paragraph) while announcing upcoming films. It seems that a star (-actor or -director) confirming a new role or task is the main and most valuable motive to report about this specific upcoming film; e.g. “Alan Arkin Joins ‘Million Dollar Arm’ (EXCLUSIVE)” (Variety) and “Anne Hathaway Contemplates Interstellar Mission” (The Guardian). In this case, traditional marketing strategies that have been practiced for decades, as Durie et al. (1993) have mentioned before, still seem to have a significant role in film news report: the movie star and the director might affect our preconceptions of a film, therefore often becoming a central factor of publicity campaigns as this is supposed to maximize awareness of the film among the audiences (Durie et al., 1993, p.92-93).

Looking further into the actual text of each article, it seems that institutional websites mostly cover a director’s and/or an actor’s professional career by stating his/her personal opinions, previous works, critical/commercial acclaim of the film itself, and the director’s/actor’s performance through assimilating interview responses into the report. The Guardian and The LA Times have expectedly scored the highest for presenting articles based on interviews. For instance, “How Brian Helgeland came to make Jackie Robinson movie ‘42’” (LA Times) is a typical traditional source’s title for a news report on a recent film that can only be written through interviews:

“One of the most poignant moments in the film comes when Robinson, verbally abused by Phillies manager Ben Chapman, takes a bat to the dug out wall when he thinks no one is watching. The scene is invented — Rachel Robinson and Branca both gave Helgeland blank stares when asked about the moments Jackie lost his cool; in their experience it just didn’t happen. But Helgeland said he felt comfortable inserting it because it was reasonable to assume Robinson did let out his frustration when he thought he was alone.” (Zeitchik, Latimes.com, 04/17/2013).

This quote clarifies how the author’s is responding to the interview by expressing his own analysis and opinions, which gives the interview more depth and ‘flavor’ on the one hand, but leaves a very neutral and ‘factual’ impression on the other. On the contrary, Film Drunk has resulted to be the source with the most integrated author’s interpretations. In “Ericson Core Tabbed To Direct Point Break Remake”,

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one of *Film Drunk’s* authors clarifies his own view on how the film might look like based on his personal opinion of the director:

“Director and possible Sony smart phone Ericson Core (Invincible) has been tabbed by Alcon Entertainment to direct the remake of Kathryn Bigelow’s 1991 part-time bank robbers/full-time surfers action drama *Point Break*. According to Alcon – yes, the very same Alcon that brought us *Joyful Noise* and *The Wicker Man* – *this new take on the classic tale of a former college football star turning to law enforcement to infiltrate and take down a team of surfing skydivers who rob banks to fund their free-wheeling lifestyles is to remain in our radical wheelhouses, you righteous bros. […] So it’s basically *xXx* meets, um, *PointBreak*. Whatever.” (Burns, Filmdrunk.com, 04/11/2013).

Obviously, one of the most likely reasons that blogs might not contain interview responses is that a blog is expected to focus on personal musings rather than sharing concrete facts and figures. Also, it might not have the authority to easily take interviews, as established news sources would have. This leads me to the most important difference between *Deadline* and *Film Drunk*: whereas *Deadline*’s authors do seem to have a lot of access to insiders news on the film industry (sometimes reporting without referencing to any external sources, therefore implying that their news is ‘original’), *Film Drunk* appears to be the source with the most statements explicitly implying the author’s personal opinion, with barely any emphasis on factual information or other news sources. The quotes below demonstrate very well how *Deadline* focuses on the star’s professional career, therefore more similar to what one might expect to see on an institutional source, while *Film Drunk* exclaims the author’s own view on the choice of actor, typically what one would expect to see on a ‘participatory journalistic’ source.

*Deadline* on upcoming film *The Machinist* starring Vin Diesel “MGM Setting Adam Shankman to Helm Vin Diesel-Starrer ‘The Machine’”:

“MGM is in talks with Adam Shankman to direct *The Machine*, the action comedy that will star Vin Diesel and was scripted by the Night At The Museum team of Thomas Lennon and Robert Ben Garant. Diesel and his One Race Films banner is producing with Marc Platt and Adam Siegel. Alfred Gough and Miles Millar did the most recent script draft. Shankman’s Offspring partner Jennifer Gibgot will be an exec producer. It is a reteam for Shankman and Diesel, who previously worked together on *The Pacifier*.” (Fleming Jr, Deadline.com, 04/12/2013).

*Film Drunk* on upcoming film *Filth* starring James McAvoy “James McAvoy Steals Mel Gibson’s Perfect Role in Filth”:
“To be honest, I never expected to see a clean, sweet boy like James McAvoy playing Bruce Robertson, the filthiest filth of filth, who spends half the first-person novel complaining about his various ball rots and venereal diseases – the only piece of literature I’ve ever read that includes a child-like drawing of a penis. But here he is toplining the Welsh adaptation (which probably made getting it financed a lot easier) from director Jon S. Baird.” (Mancini, Filmdrunk.com, 04/11/2013).

Whereas Deadline’s quote emphasizes the director’s name and basic (crew) information on the film, Film Drunk underlines the appearance of the star actor as well as his ‘status’, implying that McAvoy might not be as big of a star as e.g. Mel Gibson would be. Moreover, when looking at the use of pictures, user-led websites do not seem to stick to one kind of representation of stars whereas institutional websites always seem to emphasize the star quality and glamorousness of the leading actor/actress, which are treats that are usually subjected to the actor’s appearance.

For instance, event pictures in which stars present themselves in glamorous dresses and suits are most often used (Figure 2) on institutional websites, alongside film posters and scene impressions in which the leading actor as the film character is centered (Figure 3). Another striking observation that confirms the importance of an actor’s star value, is Hollywood Reporter’s “‘Iron Man 3’: Robert Downey Jr. Sports Lederhosen in Germany”, which reports the leading actor of the (by then) upcoming film Iron Man 3 in a remarkable outfit during a press conference. Again, the actions and statements by an actor seem like a main motive for reporting the highly anticipated film:

“Often a bit mischievous on red carpets, Robert Downey Jr. showed up to an Iron Man 3 press event in Germany clad in custom-made traditional lederhosen and bright green socks. The eccentric ensemble effectively showcased the actor’s sense of humor as well as his calves.” (Galuppo, Hollywoodreporter.com, 04/12/2013).

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At last, *Buzzfeed* is holding the most posts in which the star is emphasized and is presenting the most pictures of celebrities. In “Celebrities Offer Their Suggestions for a ‘Magic Mike’ Sequel”, red carpet interviews of celebrities attending the MTV Movie Awards 2013 are asked by the *Buzzfeed* staff to comment if they will consider joining the sequel. Although their answers do not seem serious at all, the post does remind us of the impact of celebrities’ opinions, therefore raising the question to what extent stars (unrelated to the movie) could impact its buzz in what ways. Another *Buzzfeed* article focusing on the star, “The Only 17 Things To Talk About From The MTV Movie Awards”, is a GIF report on the MTV Movie Awards 2013 that apparently featured bizarre performances and sexual-explicit references. The author implies that these elements were the only ones worth to see in the show, as “you can literally forget every other part” (Yapalater, 2013). The post therefore seems to both mock and celebrate today’s shallow pop- and Hollywood culture, emphasizing celebrity behavior rather than promoting any film content. As it is generally known that celebrities are often leading topics in gossips and entertainment news, it seems no longer that the definition of ‘star’ within today’s film marketing context should only be ascribed to the film’s leading actors and actresses. Instead, the star in this research is better defined as a ‘celebrity’, a definition that in this case should be referring to those who are unrelated to the film, but are possibly influencing the film’s WOM communications in an indirect way.

3.2.2. **Criticizing Industry**

Accordingly to my expectations, institutional news websites seem to have more access to detailed industry news rather than ‘ordinary’ Internet users/bloggers, since the quantitative data has shown that the majority of *Variety* consisted of industry news unrelated to any recent/upcoming films, and sources such as *The Guardian* and *The Hollywood Reporter* has repeatedly referred to industry developments as appears from the qualitative data collection. Also expectedly, *Deadline* appears to be the source presenting the most industry news regarding recent/upcoming films, as it presents itself as a significant authority in industry news reports (Technorati.com; Deadline.com). Surprisingly, aside from practical information such as the release date and the production/distribution company, industry and film production-related news is often illustrated with descriptions of or statements on the film’s marketing strategy and its commercial performance. The quote below is an excerpt from *Deadline*’s “Cannes: Weinstein’s ‘Grace Of Monaco’ To Screen Footage; Whither The Studios?”, a preview on the (by then) upcoming 66th Cannes Film Festival:

“*Cannes is still considered by Hollywood to be a useful marketing tool, but could it be that’s becoming truer outside of the official selection? Witness TWC, which last year rented a plush room in the Majestic Hotel to screen about 20 minutes of footage from three of its fall films – Django Unchained, Silver Linings Playbook and The Master. The move turned out to be a prescient means to*
Online Film News and its Interplay with Film Viral Marketing

whet the appetite for pictures that TWC was confident would be awards contenders later in the year.” (Tartaglione, Deadline.com, 04/13/2013).

Whereas the quote implies a certain professionality by referring to factual happenings, Film Drunk approaches commenting on the film industry from an entirely different perspective. The quote below is another excerpt from “The Point Break Remake has a Director Now”, commenting on the news that Ericson Core has been appointed to direct the remake of Point Break:

“I’m not going to be that guy who freaks out and acts all indignant that yet another “classic” film is being dug up and violated by uncreative Hollywood suits who are just looking to make a quick score at the box office by trampling the name of something we love, while knowing that we’ll bite and fork over our cash because we’re all soulless monkeys, conditioned to stare at the giant flashy screen because, “LOOK AT ALL THE PRETTY COLORS!”” (Burns, Filmdrunk.com, 04/11/2013).

The quote seems to evoke reactions more easily in comparison with the previous quote from Deadline as it is humorously mocking Hollywood’s exploitation of films and how audiences will always fall for it despite their actual intention, which reflects upon Caldwell’s (2005) mention of the mystique around Hollywood products that major studios have imposed on moviegoers. Deadline has also referred to the industry mystique as it is announcing Cannes:

“With day-and-date releases now a matter of course and because the Internet has removed some of the mystique surrounding Cannes, there does appear to be a trend towards less emphasis from Hollywood. Already, last year was a pretty low-key affair.” (Tartaglione, Deadline.com, 04/13/2013).

The author claims that the Internet is responsible for a decreasing mystique and exclusivity of the festival, which is quite remarkable as it exactly draws upon the abilities of both distribution of information and audience engagement through Web 2.0 platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube that are extensively being utilized by journalists and celebrities updating the ‘outsiders’ with behind-the-scene news.

Hollywood marketing strategies are further described within the context of franchises. For instance, in IndieWire’s “The Mortal Instruments: City of Bones Prequel 'Infernal Devices' Now In The Works”, the author tries to find answers on why another adaptation of a best-seller novel is being released while its production company has already released adaptations of best-sellers that no one seemed to care about:

“Whatever the reason, this is just what you do in Hollywood these days: you prepare for the eventuality of a franchise. And just as countless movies have done before (for example, "John Carter") a follow-up is being readied so they can hit the ground running if they’ve got a hit on their hands.” (Jagernauth, Indiewire.com, 04/13/2013).
The fact that this article stems from IndieWire, which is a leading news website for independent film and television productions, leads to the assumption that a certain degrading attitude is implied towards the commercially-driven production and distribution strategy of Hollywood. Another article focusing on Hollywood franchise is made in BuzzFeed’s “42 Breaks The Box Office Curse Of The Baseball Movie (but Scary Movie 5 is just cursed)”:

“You could blame the fact that the first Scary Movie in seven years was missing franchise stars Anna Faris and Regina Hall. You could blame the fact that the film was largely marketed on the off-putting presence of tabloid staples Lindsay Lohan and Charlie Sheen. You could blame the fact that the horror movie genre isn't currently dominated by a single franchise or trend, which makes it harder to find overused horror tropes ripe for spoofing.” (Vary, BuzzFeed, 04/14/2013).

Here, the author speculates the possibilities why Scary Movie 5 could have been such a failure, stressing the influence of the genre and its stars; what was assumed as a potentially-marketable film, it appears that Elberse and Anand’s (2007) observation, stating that the impact of advertising is lower for low-quality films, does indeed account for Scary Movie 5 as it was repeatedly confirmed as a film of utterly low quality.

A final reoccurring topic stressed in industry-related news is the author’s statement on how audiences might respond to the film. These are most common in film reviews, which occurred most frequently on Hollywood Reporter. In “Fists of Legend Film Review”, author’s interpretation of the stylistic and narrative characteristics of the film are argued to support his implication that the film would not fit its target audience, and that it does not show any potential to receive any promising commercial/financial results:

“With a 2½-hour runtime and a dauntingly shaky narrative premise, theatrical response is likely to verge on weak to lukewarm at best. In a first, the film opens in South Korea concurrent with its major market US launch. Kang’s conviction that international audiences will sympathize with the contemporary personal challenges of unrepentant, borderline ludicrous former high school bullies and wannabe gangsters appears wide of the mark, while a lack of stand out stylistic traits that would distinguish the film’s fight scenes from dozens of more accessible real life sporting events seems at odds with audience expectations.” (Lowe, Hollywoodreporter.com, 04/12/2013).

It seems that, once again, the complex relation between critical and commercial appraisal in the ultimate success of the film is confirmed through the author’s implied statement that the film does neither meet artistic appraisal nor the accessibility for commercial appraisal.

IndieWire appears to be the only source that is concerned with audience responses in news
reports on upcoming films instead of actual film reviews. In “The Mortal Instruments: City of Bones Prequel 'Infernal Devices' Now In The Works”, explicit statements are made on how audiences are expected (according to the author) to respond to a book adaptation as well as to an independent film:

“But as always, a fanbase who loves the books doesn't always translate to a fanbase who buys tickets to the movies. And more importantly, it's the mainstream crowd - who don't know a Mortal Instrument from an Infernal Device - who really needs to be sold on the picture and feel it's worth their time.” (Jagernauth, Indiewire.com, 04/13/2013).

However, Indiewire seems like the only institutional source implying the most criticism towards marketing campaigns as well as stressing the critical performances of films. Other institutional sources seem less critical towards the films they are reporting, amongst which Variety, The Guardian and LA Times maintain the most neutral-toned reports (see Appendix III), meaning they do not make explicit statements or value judgments on aspects that are not verifiable. User-led sources on the other hand, specifically BuzzFeed and Film Drunk, contain more skepticism, sarcasm and speculations in tone and topics (see Appendix III).

As clarified from the quote by Burns from Film Drunk, there can be argued that whereas user-led news websites seem to evoke reactions through personal excitement and/or frustrations, institutionalized websites seem to mostly rely on the author’s comment on the success potential of the film based on its possible target audiences and genre. Previously mentioned in Chapter 2, critics’ reviews have been discussed in correlation to the financial success of a film, but a direct link between positive reviews and guaranteed success has never been proven due to the possible influence of many internal factors such as genre and production (independent/mainstream) as well as external factors such as WOM (Elberse & Eliashberg, 2003; Duan et al. 2008). The qualitative results have demonstrated that institutional sources are more likely to predict film success rather than user-led websites, therefore implying that not only critics should be considered as influencers or predictors (Elberse & Eliashberg, 2003), but that they could differ depending on the type of source as well.

3.2.3. Marketing through Multimedia

Similar to the quantitative analysis results, the qualitative coding has also demonstrated that multimedia (all types of (audio-)visual media content aside from text) is adapted in every source and it appears to be the most extensive and various in its presentations. One of the most significant observations derived from an overall look is that multimedia seem to be the most essential, driving element on all user-led websites, catching visitors’ attention, therefore serving as a kind of ‘discussion-opener’ to enhance interaction between the article/author and the users. Also, user-led sources’ application of multimedia are most related to viral marketing as I will discuss in the following paragraphs.
1) Promotional teasers, featurettes and soundtracks

Appendix III clarifies that Mashable’s majority of articles consists of reports on material that is without doubt originally provided as marketing material. The films that are covered by its articles are almost all major Hollywood productions i.e. *Iron Man 3, The Great Gatsby, This is the End, Oblivion* and *Finding Dory*. With this in mind, and looking at the great amount of shares of each article, the website confirms to Holbrook and Addis’ (2008) observation that critical/popular buzz is more likely for potential blockbuster movies as they can publicize big-budget aspects. Moreover, as *Mashable* emphasizes visual presentation, the availability of images, slick trailers and print advertising are likely to imply an exciting, flashy and entertaining impression, which are characteristics that are often ascribed to a website’s entertainment value (Raney et al., 2003).

Amongst the articles representing marketing-related content, the coverage on “’Pineapple Express 2' Trailer Is April Fools' Day Prank - With a Twist” has revealed a remarkable quote:

“While some companies took advantage of April Fools' Day to troll people for laughs, Sony saw it as marketing opportunity for its upcoming film, This is the End. A promo for the apocalyptic comedy, starring Seth Rogen, James Franco, Jay Baruchel and Jonah Hill as on-screen versions of themselves, is disguised as a trailer for Pineapple Express 2 — the supposed sequel to popular 2008 stoner movie, Pineapple Express. […] Judging by the thousands of hits Pineapple Express 2 has received since going online Monday, Sony’s clever marketing ploy — that is, piggybacking on the original film's considerable fan base — is a success.” (Li, Mashable.com, 04/02/2013)

This quotation not only describes the marketing campaign for the upcoming film *This Is The End*, but it also implies that the author agrees with the cleverness and effectiveness of targeting the most potential audience group. As there are more than 20,000 shares spread through different social media platforms, it is plausible to say that this coverage on Sony’s marketing strategy has indeed reached its word-of-mouth effect in terms of a successful social media spreading. However, the news report remains rather neutral and does not seem to be looking for evoking comments and reactions. Instead, the author ends with the question: “What do you think of Sony's April Fools-inspired tactic to promote a film? Tell us in the comments, below” (Li, 2013). Apparently, ‘What do you think’- questions do not attract respondents, at least not within this article. This is not surprising since the question mismatches the question’s content and the audience groups who might be interested in this news report: would a stoner movie-fan even care about commenting on the marketing campaign?

A similar article covering the marketing campaign of another upcoming feature *Finding Dory* “Disney Pixar's 'Nemo' Sequel 'Finding Dory' Arriving in 2015” has a similar topic approach, text

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5 Please note that by the time of data collection (the weeks of April 1 and April 8), *Iron Man 3, Oblivion* and *The Great Gatsby* were still yet to be released, therefore considered as an ‘upcoming film’ throughout this research.
structure and tone, but uses a slightly different ending question: “What do you think the plot of Finding Dory should be? Give your predictions below” (Hernandez, 2013). This has called a lot more reactions, which is comprehensible since this question does refer to a specific element to which respondents can react to and it does take the type of readers’ profiles/interests into account as the question focuses on story, which was believed to be the strongest element in the original film Finding Nemo and supposedly for the sequel also. Quoting Ellen DeGeneres’ statements from her TV talk show for almost the entire report, the article confirms the importance of the leading star as well as it implicitly agrees to the effectiveness of the marketing strategy, an effect that the Pixar marketers have probably aimed at by allowing DeGeneres (who will be voicing Dory) to be the first to officially announce the upcoming sequel. Even though the difference in responses between This is the End’s post and the Finding Dory-post is probably mostly influenced by e.g. timing of publication or just the popularity of the film itself, the phrasing does seem to work similarly as creating WOM: the amount of responses seems affected by how the author plays with its target audiences’ communal norms, norms that obviously differed between the two articles.

The (by then) upcoming film Man of Steel’s bizarre teaser, which temporarily appeared on its promotional website, have caught both Reddit and Buzzfeed, as well as LA Times’ attention. Whereas one of Reddit’s posts only focused on the video, to which the top commenter responds that he/she has spotted the LEXCORP building in the trailer, the other Reddit post contained a link to a high-resolution version of the film trailer, directly encoded from the Warner Bros. website. Both posts draw upon the participatory culture, in which users are allowed to respond in numerous ways, therefore often leading to communicating about something that is trivial. The second post obviously refers to the transparency of the web, on which products are easily acquired, disseminated and customized by consumers. However, the encoded trailer-post was removed just after a few days when it was first submitted. It remains unclear if the Redditor (user) or a Reddit moderator was responsible for this, as various reasons are possible (copyright infringement, video is removed from the original website, malfunction of the video etc.). Based on the enthusiastic comments, the chances of removal on legal or technical grounds do seem more likely rather than a voluntarily removal bij the Redditor. The Man of Steel video was not the only post to be removed: the exact reasons for removal of another post called “One of the most ballsiest, most misguided movies ever made” is even less clear, as the post seems like a normal call for reaction and was already receiving more than 70 comments at the time. In this sense, as far as a so-called ‘democratization’ goes in the participatory web (Jarret, 2008), we should not overlook that user-led websites such as Reddit do regulate its content by setting up detailed rules on how and what (not) to post.

Seen from its frequency in the data collection, Man of Steel obviously seems to be a highly anticipated film, which is not surprising since it fits well into today’s superhero craze with major box-office successes such as The Avengers, The Dark Knight Rises and most recently, Iron Man 3. Buzzfeed and LA Times both referred to the (by then) just released teaser featuring the villain of the
film, leaving a video message in a severely distorted black and white transmission, therefore adding some sort of realness through this raw documenting style to a surreal and fantastical super hero story. This seems to also fit in the trend of combining timeless political-sociological issues to the modern hero (as adapted into the Batman-series). It therefore confirms Kozinets et al.’s (2010) characterization that WOM is partly affected by a correct placement of the product within its ‘character narratives’ so its target audiences (in this case: action/sci-fi/super hero/comic-lovers) will easily recognize what the new product is about. Also, the dramatic impression of the video encourages audiences to talk about it (Stapleton & Hughes, 2005; Raney et al. 2003; Dobele et al. 2005, 2007), since its ‘creepiness’ is quite unusual amongst the promotions of such film genres. As both video and website have been noticed by prominent sources, it is plausible to assume that it was a successful campaign. Alongside Man of Steel, the (by then) upcoming blockbusters Iron Man 3 and (speculatively) Star Wars VII have also occurred on Reddit, including a video of the interaction between leading actor Robert Downey Jr. and leading actress Gwyneth Paltrow, reporting that they have a funny conversation during the Iron Man 3 press conference. As Man of Steel’s official trailer holds the most comments of all, with Iron Man 3 press conference at the second place, there might be suggested that major films that have been marketed on a great scale do get noticed and extensively discussed on Reddit.

The last significant aspect within multimedia attention to recent/upcoming films is the mention of film music. Even though Mashable’s “Great Gatsby’ Trailer Has New Music From Beyoncé, Lana Del Rey” is focusing on a new trailer that has been revealed on the long-anticipated film, the author describes the film’s soundtrack instead of its narratives. The LA Times’ report on The Great Gatsby soundtrack “First impression: The Great Gatsby releases soundtrack teaser on YouTube” seems to be even more outspoken and critical on the soundtrack:

“The ridiculous aspects, judging by the 30-second teasers? Will.i.am’s opener, “Bang Bang,” draws on the most overused riff of the Jazz Age, a shortcut that feels a bit too obvious. Admittedly, in typical Will.i.am fashion, it’s tortuously catchy. The same could be said for the clumsy, thumpy second track, […] which starts with a catchy, repetitive clarinet riff. On first listen, you think, “Oh, this could be interesting.” No such luck. Big, dumb synth washes arrive to render the melody moot, and an LMFAO-inspired steroid beat stomps through unimaginatively.” (Roberts, Latimes.com, 04/17/2013).

Looking back on the theory, no statements were made on the importance of the soundtrack to a film’s marketing. However, as The Great Gatsby is directed by Baz Luhrman, who is famously known for successfully merging music with exuberant visuals in Romeo + Juliet and Moulin Rouge, it is fair to assume that the soundtrack’s significant role to his previous films might be an incentive for both Warner Bros., and LA Times and Mashable’s authors to attract audiences in a similar way for The Great Gatsby. Also, as mentioned earlier, it is no exception that famous music artists and other celebrities in various disciplines are indirectly part of the promotional circuit of major Hollywood film
productions as they are able to spread word on the film to an enormous group of audiences through social media as well as within professional networks. This word-of-mouth approach seems rather traditional as once again, the importance of the star (of any kind) to film marketing is endorsed.

*Mashable’s* “Stream the ‘Oblivion’ Soundtrack” could be considered as a direct call to its users to stream the film’s soundtrack. In this sense, it is the only article enhancing explicit interactivity between the author and user by adapting a music streaming service instead of video or picture slideshow. The author implies that the availability of this streaming service is exclusive: “Here, *Mashable* exclusively offers an advance stream of the film's soundtrack, featuring original music from Joseph Trapanese and Anthony Gonzales” (Olmstead, 2013), therefore enhancing the attractiveness of this article. Even though it is hard to determine what has caused the great amount of social media shares (around 10,800) of this article, the integrated streaming service (and its assumed ‘exclusivity’) is definitely something unique, whereas the rather standard featurette on *Iron Man 3* has relatively collected little amount of shares in comparison to its extensive coverage and attention by both press and audiences on other platforms.

2) Edited pictures and GIFs

The tactic of revealing just a single film trailer (e.g. the film trailer of the upcoming film *Romeo and Juliet* by *Deadline* and *Hollywood Reporter*), a promotional film poster (*Iron Man 3* in Lego by *LA Times*), or a scene impression (upcoming film *Pain and Gain* by *Buzzfeed* and upcoming film *The Bling Ring* by *IndieWire*) without (much) textual description per article has occurred in many sources. Even though promotional material might not be available all at once for a specific news website, if websites consciously try to reveal material of upcoming films in smaller portions over a longer time, it might enhance more anticipation, therefore possibly leading to more buzz. However, “‘Star Trek Into Darkness’ Poster Confirms Ship Death” for instance, has not been shared many times in comparison to other posts on *Buzzfeed*, which might be affected by factors such as the poster design itself, the possibility that posters are not considered as the most interesting material to reveal more information on the movie, the possibility that a lot of audiences are not yet familiar with the film through e.g. a lack of media attention, and many more.

A unique feature on *Film Drunk* is the presence of collage pictures that are visibly edited (in a rather non-photogenic way), giving a funny and DIY feel to its materials (Figure 5). It perfectly reflects upon the easily adjustable content of Web 2.0, but also shows a risk from the marketing point-of-view, as consumers are able to poke fun at, criticize, distort or misunderstand information and products (Figures 4 and 5). Figure 4 is attached to the article “Walking Dead’s Glen Mazzara To

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6 Figure 4 retrieved from: http://filmdrunk.uproxx.com/2013/04/walking-deads-glen-mazzara-to-write-warners-the-shining-prequel. Figure 5 origins from the article “Torture Porn Meets Car Porn” (Mancini, Filmdrunk.uproxx.com, 04/11/13), in which the author announces that James Wan, who is known for directing Saw, is most probably taking the directing job for the new Fast and Furious sequel. Both the title and the picture explicitly refer to the over-masculine violence, action and gore that the combination of the director and the film title imply, something that seems easy for the author to make fun of it through exaggeration (n.d). [Photograph]. Retrieved from: http://filmdrunk.uproxx.com/2013/04/james-wan-universals-choice-for-fast-furious-7).
Write Warner’s ‘The Shining’ Prequel?”, which reports that there are talks about the production of a prequel for the Kubrick classic *The Shining*. The author seems a little skeptical about the actual realization of the production and states: “[…]Either way, I won’t waste my energy by freaking out just yet. Not as long as I can just post this GIF and be happy” (Burns, 2013). Not only does this quote imply a certain excitement of the author towards the possible release of the prequel, but together with the picture, it especially underlines the essence of citizen journalism, that seemingly allows more unlimited self-expression and confirms the citizens’ ability to actively re-adapt films to their own likings, in this case a hilarious parody on the famous hallway sequences in *The Shining*. Also, this creative process of re-edits and re-adapting films to the author’s own likings often results in intertextual references as well, something that might be considered as a form of convergence too as it merges and remixes different types of content from various media into a ‘new’ product. “Video: Scary Movie 5 rips off an Idiocracy joke about putting butt stuff in your mouth” exemplifies how a simple (possibly accidental) flaw is easily spotted by devoted film fans and how intertextual references in media content are being exploited for the sake of implying a certain wittiness:

“I don’t necessarily think the Scary Movie writers […] purposely stole the joke […], but it’s a testament to how lazy they are that they wouldn’t know an Idiocracy reference that most of us would probably get […]. In Idiocracy, it’s a joke about a future medical technology as administered by morons, and it’s a straightforward, believable moment in that context. In Scary Movie 5, it’s part of a shoehorned-in reference to a movie that came out three years ago (Inception parodies were already done a lot better and then exhausted years ago), typical of the modern spoof style where references to pop culture just sort of show up in the story because ‘haha reference’. And then they make their shitty joke even worse by making it the entire point of the bit, as delivered by another random, pointless pop culture reference (Simon Rex) whose reaction shot is like a visual whoopie cushion screaming HAHA, LOOK AT THE JOKE I JUST MADE! Yeah, guys, we got it, it sucked.” (Mancini, Filmdrunk.uproxx.com, 04/12/2013).

Another specific characteristic that exclusively accounts to *Film Drunk*, and *Buzzfeed* in particular, is the application of picture GIFs to many of their articles. In this sense, it seems that both sources consider flashy visual presentations as a significant factor determining its entertainment value,
even though an overload of animated pictures might cause a messy impression. *Buzzfeed* is the only source presenting lists of any kind (instead of conventional articles/posts), often summarizing and making fun of a specific element of a film, actor/character, and/or event. For instance, “14 Biopics That Could Be Coming Soon — Or Not” is a perfect example of how WOM awareness for specific films could be reached throughout the web without any direct marketing strategy implemented by the studios, as it demonstrates how WOM communications might start off in a very early developmental stage or even when a possible film production is still in speculation. The post draws on the unexpected box-office success of recent biopic *42* and gives a list of fourteen biopics that are either officially announced productions or going through negotiations. Whereas this article remains fairly neutral in its tone and structure, therefore implying a rather ‘professional’ impression aimed at informing users, another article presenting a list of “14 Ridiculous GIFs From ‘Pain And Gain’” has an entirely different approach by exclusively displaying GIFs of film scenes, accompanied with an informal tone and use of words which all imply, once again, an ‘amateuristic’ impression. Even though the latter article refers to the actor’s appearance and his performance as the leading character, both posts do not show any direct links with viral marketing strategies in terms of evoking users’ reaction through connecting with them via either story or topic. However, as entertainment seems to be a prominent factor in *Buzzfeed’s* content, emotions and sensations - which encourage consumers to spread words (Stapleton and Hughes, 2005; Raney et al. 2003; Dobele et al. 2005, 2007) - are being emphasized through an excessive use of humor and exaggeration. Moreover, the GIFs emphasize the extremely masculine characters, type of action and humor, which very much reflect upon the genre of the film. If a picture is worth more than a thousand words, an animated picture is not only just implying a story, but allows its viewers to interpret it within an entirely different context (e.g. by describing the action within the context of an entirely different motive), therefore making such GIFs very suitable for evoking reactions.

3.3. Summary of Results & Theoretical Implications

In this chapter, some preliminary conclusions have resulted from the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data collection on how attention is given to recent and upcoming films. The majority of all articles raise attention to upcoming films with mostly announcements of actor (and occasionally director), as well as promotional material such as trailers, teasers, press conferences, posters and scene impressions. Reports on recent films are either interviews with the director and/or actor, film reviews, or reports on their commercial and critical performances. It has appeared that user-led websites emphasize the significance of multimedia for both recent and upcoming films, often reporting articles that extensively elaborate on their visual attachments. Also, the importance of multimedia is endorsed by their frequency of presence, their sizes as well as their customized nature. Institutional websites generally do use visual materials, however, these seem to be utilized as an accompaniment to ‘jazz up’
the textual content rather than being an active part of the story. Institutional sources therefore are more likely to apply the official film trailer, event close-ups of celebrities or scene impressions exclusively. Of course, some exceptional observations have occurred, especially on *Deadline* and *Film Drunk*. With a very basic layout presenting a great amount of texts and merely small images occasionally as text accompaniment, *Deadline* seems to emphasize textual content rather than maintaining visual attractiveness and a convenient interface. *Film Drunk* often presents long articles (often longer than those of institutional websites), therefore being a unique source in terms of text length in comparison to other user-led news sources. Either way, both blogs do confirm Matheson’s (2004, p. 448) observation that weblogs are not a clearly delimited category.

A striking feature that both types of websites share are the many occurrences of specific major Hollywood productions such as *Iron Man 3*, *Man of Steel*, *Star Trek Into Darkness*, *The Great Gatsby* (which were all upcoming films by then), as well as *42* and *Scary Movie 5* (both recent films by then). Surprisingly, often describing the content as well as occasionally analyzing its effectiveness, many articles have extensively discussed the marketing campaigns of these films. In this sense, the status and function to which each website ascribes itself is often lived up to. For instance, as *Buzzfeed* calls itself the leading media company for the social age that detects and collects what is trending on the web (*Buzzfeed.com*), it has indeed spotted the marketing campaigns of e.g. *Star Trek Into Darkness* and *Man of Steel*. User agency on *Buzzfeed* is undermined to a far greater extent than a user-led website is supposed to be: staff members create a significant part of *Buzzfeed*, which makes the source less dependent of users input. However, users do have the possibility to submit their own posts and besides sharing and commenting, they can also react to stories classified in typical Internet language categories like ‘LOL’, ‘Win’, ‘OMG’ or even use their webcam to capture their real-life reaction to a specific post, creating their personal GIF. The more you categorize stories, the more your own personalized feed changes to reflect the kind of stories that you would like. The idea of a convergence culture is therefore still applicable to *Buzzfeed*, as it combines mass media production and an individual level of creativity (Deuze, 2007). There might be argued that *Film Drunk* and *Buzzfeed* are the most entertaining websites as their posts imply the most humor and wittiness through applying specific multimedia forms, and through using specific structures and phrases.

In contrast, *Deadline* and institutional sources (*The Guardian*, *Hollywood Reporter*, *The LA Times* and *Variety*) remain rather neutral in terms of tone. However, these sources do demonstrate explicit criticism towards the film industry, its marketing strategies and film content (either story or director’s/actor’s performance), therefore still creating enough potential space for reactions and discussions. If *Buzzfeed* captures viral developments as it claims to do, it seems that what appears to be viral is either celebrity news or promotional material released by major Hollywood productions. However, as they seem to focus mostly on the categorization of news according to the users’ own likings, the source is rather maintaining individualized entertainment instead of creating a community
in which users interact with each other. *Reddit* seems to reflect upon the latter condition; after all, it is a typical group-based aggregation website (OECD, 2006) since its content is fully based on users’ upvotes and downvotes. As the website endorses its users to submit both links and personal content, *Reddit* contains a lot of personal observations and implied excitement (see Appendix III), which is not surprising because of the high amount of upcoming films that it has covered (anticipation is after all often associated with excitement). However, these observations were linked to each posts’ top comments, whereas the originally submitted posts themselves did not express opinions or emotions in the actual title and description. Also, the subreddit ‘Movies’ has turned out to be rather inactive in comparison to its front page, therefore leading to the conclusion that film content are unlikely to become viral through this source.

Unlike the other user-led websites, *Mashable* does clearly profile itself as a professional news source run by a vast editorial board, and describes itself as a leading source for news, information and resources for the ‘Connected Generation’ that reports on the importance of digital innovation and how it empowers and inspires people around the world (Mashable.com). Nevertheless, I have categorized *Mashable* within the user-generated news group, since its pages are fully dependent, or at least supposed to be, of the user-activity within each post. The more an article is shared through social media, the more prominent layout it will get on the homepage. This system also accounts to the subcategories within the website. In this sense, it does seem that *Mashable* very much emphasizes on the participatory aspect of news convergence (between professional and amateur) as Deuze (2007) has referred to: the share-ranking system enables people to enact some kind of agency regarding the dominant messages and commodities brought out by the industry by letting its users to decide which posts should be getting the most attention. Moreover, similar to *Reddit*, the ranking system is theoretically optimal for creating viral attention to a specific news topic, since the chances for more social media shares are growing exponentially whenever a post is highlighted on the webpage as ‘The Next Big Thing’ or ‘What’s Hot’. From these findings, it can be concluded that even though *Mashable* is profiled to be a professional news website and edited by a selected staff, it very much focuses on users’ agency seen from its share-system and its tactiques to enhance the entertainment value of the website such as the adaptation of different media forms (visual convergence) and visual ‘bonuses’ (slideshows of topic-related pictures). Moreover, the website seems to profile itself as a forerunner/discoverer of potentially viral material through the so-called ‘velocity graph’ displaying how quickly people are sharing a specific article through social media. By leaving just enough space for *Mashable*-users to decide which articles are ‘viral-worthy’, the website might target those passive participatory users who are mostly channeled by design whereas no conscious activity of production, collaboration or communication is necessary (Schäfer, 2011). In this sense, the source is no typical example of a user-generated news website, but it sure utilizes networked communities through converging itself with other social media platforms to spread its news.
An expected outcome is the absence of marketing campaigns by big budget productions on *IndieWire*, which exclusively presents independent productions that are not mentioned in any other source: after all, it is the leading news, information, and networking site for independent-minded filmmakers, the industry and moviegoers alike, serving as a kind of hub for the community and aiming at evangelizing independent filmmaking (*IndieWire.com*). The ‘networking site’ and ‘hub for community’ are remarkable in particular: the website is represented by professional journalists and critics on the one hand, whereas it tries to create a community by its blog section (blog.indiewire.com referred to as ‘The Playlist’) on the other. *LA Times* applies a similar tactic and has divided two areas on its website in which film news are covered: a regular film section within the *LA Times* website presenting the online newspaper’s standard layout, and a WordPress website called *Hero Complex* (herocomplex.latimes.com) subtitled as ‘Pop Culture Unmasked’. *LA Times* is also the only source incorporating a poll, links to quizzes, and a screenshot of the film’s promotional website (*Man of Steel*) in its articles. Also, even though *Variety* mostly focuses on industry (studio/finance) news and has hardly reported anything regarding recent and upcoming films, the website is laid out as a typical blog, chronologically structured as if it implies the author’s ‘logs’ of his latest browsing (Matheson, 2004, p. 448). This leads me to one of the most significant confirmations to previously given theories: media convergence is reflected as the distinction between the appearance and functionalities of user-generated and institutional websites are fading. User engagement are adapted through mixing different types of media content and sharing/commenting/personalizing functionalities, which seems like an obvious development in a world in which everything and everyone are ought to be connected to each other.

Even though all sources and nearly every article do present trailers, which could be considered as viral material, none of all institutional sources have indicated a direct relation to viral marketing in terms of strategy; expectedly, the majority of websites maintains a fixed tone and structure and does not accustom a specific article to those who might be most interested. Aside from *Reddit* and *Buzzfeed*, all sources aim to inform and entertain instead of calling for actual action. One of the most essential characteristics of engaging audiences in viral marketing campaigns – interactivity – has mostly resulted as directly addressing users by asking questions on the reported news and/or material. Nevertheless, a significant amount of news reports have referred to and described marketing campaigns, therefore leading to the conclusion that film news does notice and cover promotional material. Also, multimedia materials seem to be the most shared and commented, from which we might state that major studios should indeed focus on clever digital/visual campaigns that are easily recognizable, spreadable and digestible. *Mashable* specifically, and occasionally *Buzzfeed, Film Drunk* and *Reddit*, show the closest relation to the WOM principle of viral marketing in terms of content: they share potential viral campaigns and encourages its users/viewers to continue sharing through either designing its presentation mechanism as such that it encourages users to share the post, or to
evoke reactions through integrated applications, and through the use of funny/satirical, speculative or slightly provocative content.

Film news websites in general remain an informative medium, in which author-to-reader transmission is still endorsed; even though users are free to share and comment, both user-led and institutional sources maintain a style and agenda in some way. Therefore, the celebrated participatory web does not immediately lead to fundamental shifts in power structures within the online practices of cultural industries (Schäfer, 2011, p. 13). As social networks are already extensively utilized for viral campaigns and news websites have become more social and connected, the dominance of just a few specific news platforms, their unique functionalities and the demographics/interests of their visitors/users might be considered as a new driving force behind film marketing strategists to create news website-specific campaigns in the future.

4. CONCLUSION & DISCUSSION

4.1. Conclusions

The previous chapter has dealt with the main subquestions of this research. Whereas it seems that viral marketing of films have little to do with the purpose of institutional news websites and for blogs, user-led news websites such as Reddit and BuzzFeed do seem to evolve into social networks in which user-activity and interactivity is very much endorsed within the interface and operations/functionalities of the website. Thus in answer to the research question, it can be confirmed that the presentation of film news on (entertainment/film) news websites are sharing similarities in type of reports and the film titles that are being discussed. Yet most film news significantly vary in tone, topics and visual presentation, amongst which user-led websites are more subjective and playful in tone and style, whereas institutional sources expectedly are more neutral. In response to the second part of the main question whether viral marketing strategies are visible through these sources, perhaps the ambiguity of user-led websites would be the most interesting outcome. On the one hand, user-led news sources such as blogs and group-aggregated websites play along with the big players (which are in this case institutional sources such as major online newspapers and magazines) by integrating film marketing material into their reports such as film posters, press junkets and trailers. On the other hand, they actively discuss and dissect these campaign materials, sometimes putting them into new contexts through personal anecdotes and/or customized mash-ups, therefore creating a playful impression.

As mentioned earlier, viral marketing has so far been closely related to social networks because of their great potential in creating and spreading WOM. As I hinted in the final paragraph of the previous chapter, the question rises if some user-led news websites would cater film promotion in
the future, an assumption based on their participatory nature presenting subjectiveness and playfulness that seems quite similar to the emotionally-charged essence behind potential viral content. A self-evident argument against this possibility is that, aside from differences in content and purpose between social networking sites and group-aggregated news websites, these news websites are lacking users’ personal information, such as demographics and detailed topics of interests, that might be necessary for targeting potential audiences for a specific film (Kozinets et al., 2010). Nevertheless, the personalization of group-aggregated website users also provide information in what topics each individual is interested in, which would repudiate this argument. Another reason why social networking sites fit to the essentials of WOM is that it allows film marketing campaigns to specifically focus on user participation, which is believed to enhance entertainment (through interactivity), fun and drama (through drawing on users’ emotions) as was illustrated with e.g. Paranormal Activity’s Facebook and Twitter-campaign. But as resulted from the data analysis, user-led websites are relatively often reporting (potential) viral campaigns as long some sort of (audio-)visual material is involved, therefore leading to the suggestion that these websites do offer a showcase for film promotion and do encourage users to spread along the word. This observation is closely related to the shift from text towards visual emphasis as I have mentioned before, which is a progress that was already observed by Cooke (2005), and Fass and Main (2010) in news media.

Another question that has been revealed is to what extent film marketing campaigns should be designed based on the possibilities of Web 2.0 technologies. If responding to this question in line with the social shaping of technology-theory, which favors the assumption that consumer behaviors and demands influence the way media function, it seems that the Internet is indeed arguably the best measuring criterion that film studios/distributors could acquire to customize their promotional products accordingly to consumers preferences. However, when looking at the consumers’ motivations in sharing content, the film medium’s role on the Internet seems more connected with Jarrett’s (2008) suggestion that participation is not technologically determined. Instead, much of the use of social networking involves the maintenance of pre-existing interpersonal relationships rather than those produced solely by mediated interaction (Jarrett, 2008). Similarly, Berger and Milkman (2011) have pointed out that social transmission may be less about motivation and more about the transmitter’s internal states. This perspective seems to confirm what I have referred to in the theory section, in which is argued that film marketing is rather (or should be) a cultural practice instead of a merely commercially driven business. And this is exactly why the interplay between film and online media provides a fruitful basis for creating ‘culturally-driven’ campaigns, as media convergence enables re-using and redistribution of content, which takes on new meanings and finds new audiences and markets, and generates new values (Burgess, 2008).

4.2. Critical Reflections
As this research is based on a limited amount of articles that are coded within a short period of time, I am aware of the questions that might arise about its representation: merely fifteen articles per website do not necessarily represent the entire content of the website and the news reports are without doubt partly subject to the events, films and other industry developments that take place at specific times. However, each website does have its personal agenda and fixed style or brand image that it wishes to carry out, as it is implied from their personal definitions on the website, in which they often ascribe themselves to a specific news/website category. In this sense, there can be stated that articles do not fluctuate in tone, composition and topic emphases per source. Another issue about coding each website just for once, is the possibility that user-activity can increase in the subsequent days/weeks/months. As pointed out earlier, a significant asset of online news is its immediacy, its ability to be readily digested and updated anytime, therefore providing the most up-to-date reports (Consterdine, 2003). This asset, however, causes articles to easily disappear amongst the vast collection of past articles that are retracable on the website. This asset makes it harder for institutional websites to still invite users to read its previous articles, since their homepage and its content are not laid out according to the popularity of each article. This problem seems sometimes to be solved by adding links to other articles on the website in each new article that has been posted, but it remains questionable how often and under which circumstances the reader is likely to open these links.

Moreover, since qualitative analyses aim to discover in-depth observations at a specific given time, I have emphasized as much as possible on the details of each article by not only coding the obvious expressions, but also referring to those that are more implicit and based on personal interpretations. Nevertheless, one of the biggest complications that has resulted from the data collection is that the results remain to be interpretative, against which might be argued that it does not represent the actual tactics and motives of the website. Weare and Lin (2000) have illustrated this problem and have argued that the sheer size and chaotic structure of the Internet complicate efforts to select representative samples of messages for analysis. Also, the mixture of textual, video, graphic and audio information poses problems when trying to create valid descriptive categories (Weare & Lin, 2000, p.273). Even though today’s websites are no longer chaotically structured but conveniently designed, Weare and Lin’s (2000) argument still seems valid as the huge amount of available information per website makes it hard to narrow down to specific elements: which conditions account for what generalizations and categorizations of information? Moreover, a significant shortcoming of this research might be the lack of detailed information on the users’ activity and users’ reception of each article. Even though I have sketched an overall impression of the amount of shares, comments and likes, the amount does not clarify any motivations nor the exact discussions led in the comment-sections. This of course is due to another restriction of the content analysis, as it only allows me to focus on specific areas in order to provide enough depth in observations and answers.

4.3. Future Research
Looking at the shortcomings as illustrated in the previous paragraph, I would first like to suggest that it is necessary to expand this research by case studies of prominent film news websites with in-depth interviews of some of its editors and/or founders who are allowed to provide us a look into the website’s accessibility to actual film marketing material, its tactics and approaches in writing, topics, style etc. This research has focused on the general functionalities of Web 2.0 platforms by defining them within the context of the participatory culture and convergence theories, but while looking further, this topic is well suited for examination from a design point-of-view also. In her study to visual convergence in news presentation, Cooke (2005) has referred to previous researches to news design in which newspapers, television news and online news are defined and organized according to structure and graphics (Cooke, 2005, p.29) – structure referring to the lay-out of information on the page/screen that together form a visual framework, and graphics referring to the pictorial representation of information. Whereas I have looked into this in a rather one-sided way, visual analyses to websites might offer useful insights on what subjects are most often emphasized on for instance major website’s homepages. Also, through either audience reception/user-activity research or in-depth interviews with web professionals/website editors, scholars could explore what types of highlights, positions and sizes news objects should hold in order to be considered as ‘attractive’. Such findings might provide accurate guidelines for the design of online marketing campaigns as well as for creating strategies for the film industry. Even though the studies I have mentioned in the introduction do show connections with WOM communications in some way, little research has yet been found on the virality of film marketing campaigns in terms of content and design. Therefore, another angle worth to explore is case studies of specific film viral campaigns, as these make up a significant part of the rise and circulation of a (major) film.

In the theory section, I have concluded with the cultural significance of film marketing, not only because film holds an symbolic, social value in our cultures, but specifically because film would always be subjected to its spectator’s personal readings and interpretations. In that sense, film marketing campaigns are also likely to be received subjected to the consumer’s presumptions and interests on this film, including its cast and crew, its genre, its story, its previously amassed reception etc. So regardless how film marketers might present us and/or engage us in catching campaigns, perhaps it is most important to discuss this research by focusing on the paradoxical functions of user-led websites as resulted from the data analysis and as I have referred to earlier in this chapter. The most fascinating relation between the networked, participatory Web 2.0 and film consumption is that participatory culture can be both the overt strength and the covert weakness against the success of a marketing campaign (Shefrin, 2004, p.273). Whereas active, loyal fans (who are most likely film buffs or any other Internet user that is interested in film news within this research) will constantly keep an eye on updated products, therefore increasing chances of WOM to his peers; participatory fandom is argued to be the enemy of media companies on the other hand, as a message is likely to move across
different contexts through WOM-sharing, to get retold in various ways, opening itself up to a vast range of alternative meanings (Jenkins, 2003, p.289). I believe that this continuously changing context and constant renegotiation of the relationship between producers and users attached to a product should not be treated as a complication for film marketers. Instead, I believe it is necessary to explore the possibilities marketers might extract from consumers’ active participation in their products. Therefore, an interesting focus area might be the movie-goers’ reception of and attitude towards viral content: the ambiguity in Web 2.0’s embedded reflexiveness, referring to how Internet users notice (viral) marketing materials and are likely to end up watching the actual film at the end, even though they seem to be skeptical about promotional content by often critically judging its (in-)effectivity. In-depth interviews focusing on how Internet users deal with promotional material that has viral potential (which can be determined based on various studies to what factors create viral content as I have referred to in this research) may provide useful insights of viral campaign designs. From an economics perspective, such studies might inspire new campaign tactics to rise, whereas for media studies it might enlight new definitions of the participatory culture on the Internet also. Moreover, from this approach, it would be interesting to see what and why specific narrative and visual elements are selected, what the balance is between commercial and artistic motivations, and to what extent external socio-cultural aspects such as current affairs and/or popular culture influences these campaigns.

4.4. New Developments

While connecting film marketing essentials as provided by, for example, Durie et al. (1993) and Kerrigan (2010) to today’s developments in digital media, it seems that traditional forms of marketing have also been adjusting themselves to online cultures. For instance, celebrities have acquired new significance with the advent of social media: not only do they merely serve as a living billboard that showcases a new film, they are now challenged to interact with their fans, expected to create a fan base that feels close to the star’s life off-screen (Kemmerle, 2013). Moreover, as resulted from the data analysis, movie soundtracks seem to have become a new arm of the marketing machine: whereas movie scores soon ended up in the record store without many noticing it, studios are now streaming score snippets as a way to tease their upcoming films (Reid, 2013) as I have already exemplified with The Great Gatsby and Oblivion. While these strategies are merely innovative variations of traditional principles of film marketing, many new and more challenging developments can be found regarding to the ongoing technological advancement and innovation in film. Some of them seem to confirm my conviction that this research offers a representational capture of the correlation between film (viral) marketing and Web 2.0. For instance, another reason why Reddit is included in this research is because of its cultural significance gained through the participation of politicians and celebrities on the website, as well as the remarkable outcomes that have resulted from users’ input ranging from charities to online memes (Erickson, 2012; Huffington Post, 2012). Its potential viral impact has now infected Hollywood as a post submitted by a Redditor, amassing nearly 4000 comments (Colbert,
Online Film News and its Interplay with Film Viral Marketing

2013), is now booked by Warner Bros. that invites him to write a screenplay based on his intitial post. Even though the previously (in the theory section) mentioned crowdsourced film projects (Child, 2012; Sweney, 2010), that are seen as part of film marketing campaigns, did not occur in the data analysis in general nor for Reddit in specific, this recent development does illustrate that the platform lends well to the collaborative engagement that Web 2.0 endorses, and that the website does indeed demonstrate potential for film promotion.

At the same time, the advent of new applications and technologies are paving new ways for audience engagement and product marketing. For instance, the increasing popularity of Vine, a free mobile app enabling its users to create six-second videoclips, not only matches the importance of visual and narrative elements in film promotion, but it also fits well into the immediacy and ready-to-digest convenience that today’s consumers are used to in daily communications and entertainment. It is therefore no surprise that Vine will soon be adapted as a film-marketing tool. The potential in creative filmmaking and film distribution is similarly spotted for the recently launched Google Glass, which enables users to shoot actual videos from their own point-of-view (VanAirsdale, 2013).

Regardless if there is a real potential of an adaptation of the Google Glass by the film industry, its features do seem fascinating and promising enough for future research. As film has the ability to carry us into different worlds, for instance making us feel as if we are walking through a cinematic city while listening to music, the augmented reality that Google Glass enables seems likely to cause the rise of innovative campaigns that will engage and surprise consumers on an even higher level. Also, its mobility far exceeds the tablet or the smartphone, therefore enabling new strategies to rise in the distribution and showcasing of films and their promotional materials. Another interesting development within the correlation between the cinematic experience and augmented reality that has been circulating for years would be that of transmedia storytelling. Whereas this concept has so far been utilized mostly in merging film and games in order to create a more immersive and social experience (Summers, 2013), the new phenomenon of second-screen films have enabled mobile devices to real-time synchronize with the narratives of the film during the screening (Bernstein, 2013). Obviously, the emergence of such technologies raise the question to what extent it will actually provide an additional value to the movie-going experience as well as to the film’s content: should the possible distraction that is caused by the application be considered as a positive feature, since distraction could be considered as a ‘feeling’ integrated into the film’s narrative?

Nevertheless, the networked essence of both content and its consumers through media convergence offers a much greater range of distribution and targeting for marketers, and without doubt challenges them to creatively utilize different platforms. As we are finding ourselves in a time in which life is all about prosuming, and sharing views and experiences (Freedman, 2012, p.74), as film exhibition remains to be the most significant generator of the film industry’s revenue, and as long as the symbolic and cultural status of film will sustain (Corbett, 2001), the interplay of the Internet and
film marketing will carry on a prominent and absorbing discussion on how the film industry will keep on challenging itself in a networked digital era.

REFERENCES


### APPENDIX I: Overview Codes & Guidelines

**Codebook quantitative analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable 1: URL [string]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Variable 2: Date [date]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variable 3: Source [numeric]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Deadline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Film Drunk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Reddit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Buzzfeed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Mashable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The Guardian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The LA Times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Variety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. The Hollywood Reporter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. IndieWire</td>
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<tr>
<td>Variable 4: Title [string]</td>
</tr>
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<td>Variable 5: Type [numeric]</td>
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<td>1. Announcement/reflection awards/events</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Actor reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Opinion/discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Review/analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Retrospective/classics/memorial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Videos/audio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Pictures/GIFs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. DVDs/online/TV reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Industry/financial/box-office reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Filmmaker reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Film reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Other</td>
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<td>Variable 6: Film [numeric]</td>
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<td>1. Recent</td>
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<td>2. Upcoming</td>
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<td>3. 200-500 words</td>
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<td>4. 500-800 words</td>
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<td>5. More than 800 words</td>
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<td>Variable 8: Multimedia [numeric]</td>
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<td>2. No</td>
</tr>
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<td>Variable 10: Comments [numeric]</td>
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<td>2. 30-60</td>
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<td>3. More than 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. 1 or None</td>
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<tr>
<td>Variable 11: Shares [numeric]</td>
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1. Not applicable
2. Less than 100
3. 100-500
4. 500-1000
5. More than 1000
6. 1 or None

Variable 12: Likes [numeric]
1. Not applicable
2. Less than 100
3. 100-500
4. 500-1000
5. More than 1000
6. 1 or None

Guidelines qualitative analysis

Below are the preliminary guidelines that have been used for the qualitative coding process. The codes are defined by looking at the use of specific words, sentences and paragraphs, and the main association that goes with it. The eventual codes that have been applied in the coding procedure are attached in Appendix IV.

1. Objective ➔ Topic guidelines for titles/multimedia/texts
   - Review/Preview events
   - Interview director/actor
   - Opinion/discussion
   - Analysis/Retrospective
   - Film review
   - Featurettes/teasers/trailers/scene-impressions/film posters

2. Subjective ➔ Focus guidelines for titles/multimedia/texts
   - Actor performance ➔ any report/expression regarding the actor’s performance in a film
   - Director performance ➔ any report/expression regarding the representation of the director’s skills in a film
   - Industry performance ➔ any report/expression regarding the industry, i.e. festivals, production/distribution companies, studios, theaters, finance/economy etc.
   - Critical/commercial performance ➔ any report/expression regarding the critical (artistic/aesthetical/narrative content) or commercial (box-office) performance
   - Audience reception ➔ any report/expression regarding the (possible) reception of the film by any kind of audience group
   - Film characters
   - Film narratives
   - Film genre
   - …

3. Subjective ➔ Tone/mood guidelines for titles/multimedia/texts
   - Neutral
   - Critical
   - Enthusiastic/Excited/Anticipating
   - Satirical/Mocking
   - Humorous
   - …
APPENDIX II: Overview Recent & Upcoming Films

This list is originated from Movieinsider.com and demonstrates US release dates exclusively, which is suitable for this research since the majority of websites are American. The website might be updated on a daily basis as new films can be announced and release dates can be altered or delayed.

Recent:

http://www.movieinsider.com/movies/january/2013/
http://www.movieinsider.com/movies/february/2013/
http://www.movieinsider.com/movies/march/2013/
http://www.movieinsider.com/movies/april/2013/

As the 85th Academy Awards has recently announced its winners in February 2013 and as it is commonly known that winning the Oscars could offer an enormous boost for the future sales of the film, Oscar winners for Best Picture (Argo), Best Director (Ang Lee), Best Writing; original and adapted screenplay (Django Unchained and Argo) and Best Foreign Language Film (Amour) will still be considered as ‘recent’ films even though they were released in 2012.

Source: http://oscar.go.com/nominees

Upcoming:

http://www.movieinsider.com/movies/may/2013/
http://www.movieinsider.com/movies/june/2013/
http://www.movieinsider.com/movies/july/2013/
http://www.movieinsider.com/movies/august/2013/
http://www.movieinsider.com/movies/september/2013/
http://www.movieinsider.com/movies/october/2013/
http://www.movieinsider.com/movies/november/2013/
http://www.movieinsider.com/movies/december/2013/
http://www.movieinsider.com/movies/-/2014/
http://www.movieinsider.com/movies/-/2015/
http://www.movieinsider.com/movies/-/2016/
# APPENDIX III: Overview frequency of codes per source

Orange-marked codes are either mentioned or analyzed in Chapter ‘Results and Data Analysis’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Buzzfeed</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>FilmDrunk</th>
<th>Guardian</th>
<th>Hollywood</th>
<th>IndyWire</th>
<th>La Times</th>
<th>Mashable</th>
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Online Film News and its Interplay with Film Viral Marketing
## APPENDIX IV: Overview Codes & Descriptions

### (Commercial/critical) performance predictions
Families (1): Commercial/critical performance
Quotations: 5
Comment:
Predictions by the author of the film's performance, either commercial (box-office/revenue wise) or critical (awardwinning potential, other appraisals critics/reviews).

### Actor critical acclaim
Families (1): Actor
Quotations: 6
Comment:
Any expression related to critical performance of the actor, e.g. previous awards he/she won or has been nominated for, or previous films that have won/been nominated in which he/she has played.

### Actor professional career
Families (1): Actor
Quotations: 12
Comment:
Any expression related to the actor's professional career, such as previous films and previous characters he/she portrayed.

### Actor response to character
Families (2): Actor, Genre/Story
Quotations: 4
Comment:
Any expression by the actor (either exact quote or paraphrasing) in response to the character he/she portrays.

### Actor response to film
Families (2): Actor, Genre/Story
Quotations: 3
Comment:
Any expression by the actor's (either quote or paraphrasing) in response to the film in which he/she plays, e.g. comments on story, overall performance, genre and experience in making the film.

### Adapted interview responses
Families (1): Writing styles
Quotations: 30
Comment:
Interviewee's responses adapted into the author's report.

### Adapted social media responses
Families (1): Writing styles
Quotations: 2
Comment:
Communications generated from/quoted on social media adapted into the author's report.

### Address to reader directly
Families (1): Writing styles
Quotations: 3
Comment:
Direct question/comment towards the reader, e.g. starting with a verb or an explicit call out to the imaginary reader.

### Anecdote
Families (1): Writing styles
Quotations: 2
Comment:
Any story not directly related to the actual report.

### Announcement upcoming film production/release
Families (1): Production/Industry
Quotations: 10
Comment:
Any information shared on upcoming film productions and releases.

### Announcement/review events
Families (1): Production/Industry
Quotations: 10
Comment:
Any information shared on recently held or upcoming festivals, awards and other events.

### Author's opinion/interpretation/analysis
Families (2): Opinion/Discussion, Writing styles
Quotations: 28
Comment:
Any expression that is not factual, e.g. statements on the film's content, often accompanied with adjectives.

**Box-office report**
Families (1): Commercial/critical performance
Quotations: 8
Comment:
Any report on the box-office performance of a film, often accompanied with actual numbers.

**Call for action**
Families (1): Writing styles
Quotations: 8
Comment:
Any explicit expression calling for users' action, e.g. watching a video, listen to a song etc.

**Call for response**
Families (1): Writing styles
Quotations: 8
Comment:
Any explicit expression calling for users' response, e.g. direct questions 'what do you think of...'

**Cast summary**
Families (1): Production/Industry
Quotations: 24
Comment:
Summary of the cast of the film, with mention of the director, screenwriter, producer and/or leading actors.

**Catchphrase**
Families (1): Writing styles
Quotations: 2
Comment:
Any expression explicitly trying to grasp the attention of the user.

**Cause/motivation Director**
Families (1): Director
Quotations: 7
Comment:
Any expression referring to director's response (either quote or paraphrasing) to the cause and/or motivation behind making the film in question.

**Colloquial/informal**
Families (1): Writing styles
Quotations: 8
Comment:
Any expression with a colloquial/informal tone and use of words, e.g. slang, curse words, etc.

**Commercial performance film**
Families (1): Commercial/critical performance
Quotations: 12
Comment:
Any expression explicitly referring to the commercial performance of the film, e.g. box-office/revenue numbers.

**Commercial performance film international**
Families (1): Commercial/critical performance
Quotations: 3
Comment:
Any expression explicitly referring to the commercial performance of the film internationally, e.g. box-office/revenue numbers.

**Comparison adapted film character to its original**
Families (1): Genre/Story
Quotations: 2
Comment:
Comparison of the film character to the original character on which the film version is based, e.g. comic book characters.

**Comparison film character to previous works actor**
Families (1): Actor
Quotations: 2
Comment:
Comparison of the film character to previous performances of the actor and previous characters he/she portrayed in other films.

**Comparison film to audience preferences**
Families (1): Commercial/critical performance
Quotations: 9
Comment:
Any expression implying a statement/assumption about the audience preferences and how the film would respond to this.
Comparison film to previous works
director
Families (1): Director
Quotations: 2
Comment:
Explicit comparison of the film's content to the director's previous films' content.

Comparison to similar films
Families (1): Genre/Story
Quotations: 2
Comment:
Comparison of the film to similar films, e.g. same genre, topic, theme etc.

Crew summary
Families (1): Production/Industry
Quotations: 6
Comment:
Summary of (a part of) the crew, e.g. director, screenwriter, cinematographer, composer etc.

Critical
Families (1): Opinion/Discussion
Quotations: 5
Comment:
Any article implying an overall critical/skeptical tone.

Critical performance/reception film
Families (1): Commercial/critical performance
Quotations: 10
Comment:
Any expression referring to the critical performance and reception of the film, e.g. awardwinning potential, appraisals and rates by (other) critics/reviews/databases.

Description event/festival/awards
Families (1): Production/Industry
Quotations: 5

Description film current affairs
Families (1): Production/Industry
Quotations: 2

Description film trailer
Families (1): Genre/Story
Quotations: 3

Description marketing strategy
Families (1): Commercial/critical performance
Quotations: 9
Comment:
Description of how the film is marketed in its broadest sense.

Description original story/film character
Families (1): Genre/Story
Quotations: 2

Description pictures/videos-multimedia
Families (1): Pictures/Multimedia
Quotations: 16
Comment:
Description of what is presented in a picture, video or other multimedia expressions.

Description promotion/advertising campaign
Families (1): Commercial/critical performance
Quotations: 14
Comment:
Description of how the promotional/advertising campaign of the film looks like.

Director commercial acclaim
Families (2): Director, Commercial/critical performance
Quotations: 2
Comment:
Any expression implying appraisal of the director's commercial performance, e.g. box-office success of older/recent films.

Director critical acclaim
Families (2): Director, Commercial/critical performance
Quotations: 8
Comment:
Any expression implying appraisal of the director's critical performance, e.g. critics/awards acclaim of older/recent films.

**Director professional career**
Families (1): Director
Quotations: 16
Comment:
Any expression related to the director's professional career, such as previous films he directed, wrote, produced.

**Director response to film character**
Families (1): Director
Quotations: 3
Comment:
Any expression by the director (either exact quote or paraphrasing) commenting on the characters in his film.

**Director response to film production/distribution**
Families (2): Production/Industry, Director
Quotations: 5
Comment:
Any expression by the director (either exact quote or paraphrasing) in response to the production/distribution process of the film in question.

**Discussion-opener**
Families (2): Opinion/Discussion, Writing styles
Quotations: 8
Comment:
Any expression implicitly calling for discussions, often accompanied with statements, speculations from the author.

**Early developmental stage**
Families (1): Production/Industry
Quotations: 19
Comment:
Any expression implying that the film production is still in an early developmental stage, e.g. speculations and negotiations about the cast/crew, production company.

**Emphasis aesthetics**
Families (1): Genre/Story
Quotations: 3
Comment:
Any expression referring to the aesthetic features (mise-en-scene, cinematography etc.) of the film.

**Emphasis character (appearance)**
Families (1): Genre/Story
Quotations: 7
Comment:
Any expression emphasizing the character's appearance/position within the film.

**Emphasis narratives**
Families (1): Genre/Story
Quotations: 10
Comment:
Any expression emphasizing the film's story (storylines, pacing, construction, continuity etc.).

**Emphasis performance**
Families (2): Genre/Story, Commercial/critical performance
Quotations: 3
Comment:
Any expression emphasizing the performance of the film's actors.

**Emphasis star actor**
Families (1): Actor
Quotations: 12
Comment:
Any expression implying that the film actor is a star.

**Emphasis visual/technological/special-effects**
Families (1): Genre/Story
Quotations: 2
Comment:
Any expression emphasizing visual/technological/special-effects of the film.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>enhancer</th>
<th>families</th>
<th>description</th>
<th>quotes</th>
<th>comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enhancing curiosity</td>
<td>Writing styles</td>
<td>Any expression enhancing the curiosity of the user towards a film by offering extra material.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusivity material</td>
<td>Writing styles</td>
<td>Any expression implying that the shared material/information within the article is exclusive.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusivity news</td>
<td>Writing styles</td>
<td>Any expression implying that the source is reporting an exclusive news item.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusivity/exceptional film</td>
<td>Production/Industry</td>
<td>Any expression implying that the film is exceptional and exclusive in its kind.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explicit interactivity</td>
<td>Writing styles</td>
<td>Any expression explicitly implying interactivity between the author/article and its viewers/users.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fashion</td>
<td>Actor</td>
<td>Any reference to the fashion within a film or on an actor/crewmember etc.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Festival selection/procedures</td>
<td>Production/Industry</td>
<td>Description of festival practical backgrounds such as selection procedures.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Film character</td>
<td>Genre/Story</td>
<td>Any mention of the film character.</td>
<td>45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Film context</td>
<td>Genre/Story</td>
<td>Any expression placing the film in context, e.g. background information of the story, current affairs on which the film is based etc.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Film industry</td>
<td>Production/Industry</td>
<td>Any mention of the film industry in its broadest sense, e.g. status reports, recent developments etc.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Film regulations/copyright/censorship</td>
<td>Production/Industry</td>
<td>Any mention of the film regulations/copyright/censorship.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Film release information</td>
<td>Production/Industry</td>
<td>Any mention of the film release information.</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Film technology</td>
<td>Genre/Story</td>
<td>Any expression emphasizing on the technology behind the making of the film.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Film themes
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Families</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreign vs American</td>
<td>(1): Production/Industry</td>
<td>Any expression implying a comparison/mention of difference or similarity between what's happening in foreign countries and what's happening in the US.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genre</td>
<td>(1): Genre/Story</td>
<td>Any mention regarding film genre in its broadest sense.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implicit interactivity</td>
<td>(1): Writing styles</td>
<td>Any expression implicitly creating interactivity between the author/article and the reader/user.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implied action/disaster/danger</td>
<td>(1): Opinion/Discussion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implied annoyance</td>
<td>(1): Opinion/Discussion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implied anticipation</td>
<td>(1): Opinion/Discussion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implied appraisal (previous) film</td>
<td>(1): Opinion/Discussion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implied appraisal actor</td>
<td>(1): Opinion/Discussion</td>
<td>Any expression implying author's appraisal of the actor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implied appraisal director</td>
<td>(2): Opinion/Discussion, Director</td>
<td>Any expression implying author's appraisal of the director.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implied appraisal marketing strategy</td>
<td>(2): Opinion/Discussion, Commercial/critical performance</td>
<td>Any expression implying author's appraisal of the marketing strategy/campaign.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implied artisticness</td>
<td>(1): Opinion/Discussion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implied astonishment</td>
<td>(1): Opinion/Discussion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implied awkwardness</td>
<td>(1): Opinion/Discussion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implied bizarreness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Implied comical/humoressness
Families (1): Opinion/Discussion
Quotations: 37

### Implied commercialism/materialism
Families (1): Opinion/Discussion
Quotations: 5

### Implied confusion
Families (1): Opinion/Discussion
Quotations: 4

### Implied controversialism
Families (1): Opinion/Discussion
Quotations: 2

### Implied criticism marketing strategy
Families (2): Opinion/Discussion, Commercial/critical performance
Quotations: 6

**Comment:** Any expression implying author's criticism of the marketing strategy/campaign.

### Implied division high-low culture
Families (1): Opinion/Discussion
Quotations: 5

### Implied excitement
Families (1): Opinion/Discussion
Quotations: 20

### Implied fandom
Families (1): Opinion/Discussion
Quotations: 2

### Implied femininity
Families (1): Opinion/Discussion
Quotations: 4

### Implied festivity/happiness
Families (1): Opinion/Discussion
Quotations: 1

### Implied glamourousness
Families (1): Opinion/Discussion
Quotations: 6

### Implied hip/young/youthful
Families (1): Opinion/Discussion
Quotations: 4

### Implied homosexuality
Families (1): Opinion/Discussion
Quotations: 3

### Implied latest/most-updated
Families (1): Opinion/Discussion
Quotations: 11

### Implied madness/extremity
Families (1): Opinion/Discussion
Quotations: 7

### Implied masculinity
Families (1): Opinion/Discussion
Quotations: 11

### Implied negativity
Families (1): Opinion/Discussion
Quotations: 10

### Implied positivity
Families (1): Opinion/Discussion
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Quotations:</strong></th>
<th>15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Implied sarcasm</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families (1): Opinion/Discussion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quotations:</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Implied sexual references</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families (1): Opinion/Discussion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quotations:</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Implied stereotype</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families (1): Opinion/Discussion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quotations:</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Implied suspense/mystique</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families (1): Opinion/Discussion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quotations:</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Integrated streaming service</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families (1): Pictures/Multimedia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quotations:</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interaction author with film character</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families (2): Writing styles, Genre/Story</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quotations:</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment: Any expression implying a direct addressing of the author towards the film character, e.g. calling the film character by name followed-up by a question/statement.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intertextuality</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families (2): Writing styles, Genre/Story</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quotations:</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment: Any intertextual references either related or unrelated to the film in question.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Link to scene impressions</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families (1): Writing styles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quotations:</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Link to topic-related quiz</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families (1): Writing styles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quotations:</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Link to topic-related theme/article page</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families (1): Writing styles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quotations:</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>List</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families (1): Writing styles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quotations:</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment: Overview/sequential top 'x' list of expressions in any form.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Major studios</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families (1): Production/Industry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quotations:</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neutral</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families (2): Opinion/Discussion, Writing styles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quotations:</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment: Any article implying an overall neutral tone, e.g. little to none explicit personal statements, mostly summary of facts.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Original story</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families (1): Genre/Story</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quotations:</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment: Reference to the original story on which the film is based.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parody</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families (2): Writing styles, Genre/Story</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quotations:</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment: Any mention of a parody/satire addressed to the film.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Personal observation/response/suggestion**
Families (1): Writing styles
Quotations: 5
Comment: Shared by respondents towards the author, only applicable to Reddit.

**Picture actor as film character**
Families (3): Genre/Story, Actor, Pictures/Multimedia
Quotations: 5
Comment: Picture on which the actor is explicitly represented as the film character he is portraying.

**Picture actor awards/events**
Families (2): Actor, Pictures/Multimedia
Quotations: 13
Comment:
Picture (close-up) of the actor at an event, e.g. award ceremonies, festivals, press interviews, premieres, charity etc.

**Picture actor photoshoot**
Families (2): Actor, Pictures/Multimedia
Quotations: 2
Comment:
Picture of the actor portrayed as him/herself in a professional photoshoot.

**Picture advertising posters/title**
Families (3): Genre/Story, Commercial/critical performance, Pictures/Multimedia
Quotations: 14
Comment:
Pictures displaying the advertising poster (or the title excerpt from it) of the film.

**Picture behind-the-scenes**
Families (1): Pictures/Multimedia
Quotations: 1

**Picture customized**
Families (1): Pictures/Multimedia
Quotations: 5
Comment:
Any picture that is digitally/manually adjusted by the author/source, e.g. collages.

**Picture director awards/events**
Families (2): Director, Pictures/Multimedia
Quotations: 3
Comment:
Picture (close-up) of the director at an event, e.g. award ceremonies, festivals, press interviews, premieres, charity etc.

**Picture GIF**
Families (1): Pictures/Multimedia
Quotations: 30
Comment:
Pictures containing motion.

**Picture promotional site**
Families (2): Commercial/critical performance, Pictures/Multimedia
Quotations: 1
Comment:
Screen capture of the promotional website of the film in question.

**Picture scene impression**
Families (2): Genre/Story, Pictures/Multimedia
Quotations: 45
Comment:
Pictures displaying a moment from the scene, concept drawings, scene backgrounds etc.

**Picture slideshow**
Families (1): Pictures/Multimedia
Quotations: 4

**Poll**
Families (1): Pictures/Multimedia
Quotations: 1

**Production progress**
Families (1): Production/Industry
Online Film News and its Interplay with Film Viral Marketing

Quotations: 29
Comment: Any reference to the production process, e.g. time span, progress of (pre)production, estimated costs, negotiations in cast and crew etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional relationship Director/Actor</th>
<th>Families (2): Actor, Director</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quotations: 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference (possible) audience response</th>
<th>Families (1): Commercial/critical performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comment:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any expression referring to how the audience might react or have reacted to the author, the article, the film etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference economics</th>
<th>Families (1): Production/Industry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quotations: 1</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference other (news) sources</th>
<th>Families (1): Writing styles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quotations: 17</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference political/current affairs</th>
<th>Families (1): Production/Industry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quotations: 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference previous version/series/prequel</th>
<th>Families (1): Commercial/critical performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quotations: 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment:</td>
<td>References to previous films that are related to the film in question, e.g. previous remakes, series, pre-quels etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference quotes from multimedia</th>
<th>Families (1): Writing styles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quotations: 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference word-of-mouth</th>
<th>Families (1): Commercial/critical performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comment:</td>
<td>Explicit reference to word-of-mouth communications on the film.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quotations: 1</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Review</th>
<th>Families (1): Writing styles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quotations: 8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment:</td>
<td>Personal observation/response/suggestion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rumour/speculation</th>
<th>Families (1): Opinion/Discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quotations: 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment:</td>
<td>Any expression implying it's a rumour/speculation rather than a fact, e.g. 'could be', 'possibly' etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Screenwriter professional career</th>
<th>Families (1): Commercial/critical performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quotations: 4</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Synopsis</th>
<th>Families (1): Genre/Story</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quotations: 41</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trivia</th>
<th>Families (2): Writing styles, Genre/Story</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quotations: 3</td>
<td>Any trivial information related to the film in question.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Value adjectives
Families (1): Opinion/Discussion
Quotations: 26
Comment:
   - Outstanding value adjectives used by authors.

### Video behind-the-scenes
Families (2): Production/Industry, Pictures/Multimedia
Quotations: 1

### Video cast (press) interviews
Families (2): Commercial/critical performance, Pictures/Multimedia
Quotations: 5

### Video film scene
Families (2): Genre/Story, Pictures/Multimedia
Quotations: 1

### Video film soundtrack
Families (2): Genre/Story, Pictures/Multimedia
Quotations: 2

### Video film trailer/teaser
Families (2): Genre/Story, Pictures/Multimedia
Quotations: 23

### Video promotional campaign
Families (2): Commercial/critical performance, Pictures/Multimedia
Quotations: 1

### Writing style matching film
Families (1): Writing styles
Quotations: 2
Comment:
   - Author's writing style tries to match with the film's tone/theme/subject.