

Users or Audience?

It's sure. No doubt about it: this is the user's era.

This is what we daily learn when we try to understand how We're trying to build our future. This is true when we talk about soft-industries, such as software industry or audiovisual industries (just think at the House of Cards' case history), but it's also true when we look at object-centered industries. This number of Tafter Journal presents two specific declination of the complex relationship between user and provider in two different sectors.

On one side this number presents the research proposed by Sağlar, Garip & Garip that shows the results of a wider research project about Flexible User Centered Design Model for Social Housing Units, illustrating the development methodology through which the interior design could create customized housing units. This model could represent a valid solution to a wide social need, inasmuch, as affirmed by authors, "although there is a great variety in social pattern in big cities [...] the response of architecture is extremely standard".

On the other side the article written by Gobbi and D'Ambrosi analyzes the Web communication strategies used by corporate museums, proposing a 5-scale evaluation for seven of the most important design corporate museums in Italy, such as Alessi, Bitossi, Kartell, Molteni, Mumac (Cimbali), Poltrona Frau and Rancilio. The results of the analysis are not so positive: authors show how design corporate museums are not as active as they should be, or at least, as active as we should expect they are.

Going beyond the single researches, the proposed results underline an important issue for Cultural and Creative Industries: in fact, this two articles allow us to glimpse the differences in the value chains when the beneficiary of the production process is represented by a user or, on the contrary, is represented by the so-called "audience".

Even though the two articles analyze the same manufacturing sector (interior design), in one case we have users of the objects that this sector produces, while in the other we have an audience that experience a cultural product.

The difference is not as thin as it could appear and the results of these two researches seem to confirm it.

This should lead CCIs' practitioners and theorists to a more in depth reflection about the way they conceive the beneficiary of their work and, more in detail, how they conceive the "generic beneficiary" of cultural and creative industries above all for intangible deliverables.

In recent years, we have assisted to the multiplication of "audience-related" theories (audience engagement, development, etc.). We have also assisted to substantial investments in this sector. Now it's time to understand whether, how, how much and in which way, these investments has produced factual effects on the audiences.

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