A new perspective for the movie industry: the use of web 2.0 and user-generated content

Descrizione

In 2011, the Dutch company, FCCE, has launched the Entertainment Experience project in order to create the first fully user-generated movie conceived by the audience and another one directed by Paul Verhoeven (Basic Instinct) on the same basis of audience's contributions, entitled *Tricked*. Telling the story of a real estate tycoon involved in extra marital affairs and dangerous business projects, both movies were developed in parallel according to a totally new creative process.

First, the idea came from the producers, FCCE, who wanted to create a user-generated movie based on the involvement of the public. The well-known director, Paul Verhoeven, was asked to write the opening scene and to direct one of the movies. Then, the screenplay was posted online and the public was supposed to write the next part of the script. Paul Verhoeven and others professional screenwriters selected and supervised the contributions received and reordered them to get a coherent script. Once the part ended, another call out was made and the process continued until there was enough material for an hour-long movie. Each part was filmed both by Paul Verhoeven and a team composed by public contributors. So at the end, the public could have participated for casting auditions, scripts, and soundtracks.

This project got a huge success: 400.000 unique visitors to the website, 26 000 registered participants producing their movie, over 9 000 screenplays, scores, auditions and videos have been sent in. Finally, *Tricked* was selected by the Rome Film Festival 2012 in the category "Medium length films"; giving it an institutional recognition.

This example shows a new way of mixing cinema and social media based on the public participation and deals with several opportunities for the movie industry. So far the

cinema was based on professionally written scripts, the “user-generated content” approach is an innovative way to conceive movies and enables a greater interaction with the audience. We can see this new style as a mean to renew an established industry, to provoke further interests from the audience, to attract a different kind of public, in other words to broader and deepen the audience.

Indeed, regarding the impact of the illegal downloading on the movie industry over the last decade, the consumers’ willingness-to-pay has declined, consequently movies are less and less economically sustainable. The direct result is a reduction of the diversity of the movies produced. The perception of a higher involvement from the public could be a solution for a more sustainable industry. Indeed, the incentive to produce movies can be boosted by the audience’s awareness and interest for a project they have been participated in since its inception. Producers still originate the initiative and, then rely on the creativeness of the targeted audience. The success can be anticipated.

Furthermore, the Web 2.0 and the digital networks enable deeper relationships between individuals, both producers and consumers. There is no more a one flow but a bi-flow way of communication. Although the cinema tends to be a passive activity, this example shows that it could be different with the use of the web 2.0 and user-generated content. In fact, the producers launched the idea and asked directly the public, and then a community of users expressed its creativity through different means and started to modify the existing-product and made a new one. To some extents, this new process is a way to mobilise resources both inside and outside the industry. The consumers are the creators as the screenwriters of the movie (Paul Verhoeven and FCCE). The public is making the movie that it is willing to see and pay for in theatres. While, in the same time, the producers are provided with many insights about the way people want to get involved in the creative process. Thanks to the new technologies, the creativity is no more limited to the specialized professionals (here the screenwriters or directors) but is open to the masses. As we saw nowadays, people are really into the self made videos. Youtube or Cinemagram are social medias allowing the realization and the diffusion of this kind of videos. People are not anymore passive; they are the actors of what they want to see. The movie industry should adjust its model in order to get this new evolution.

To conclude, FCCE has used the new technologies in order to release the first user-generated movie in a time crisis for the movie industry. This proactive policy could be seen as a new perspective for the cinema in order to make the public more involved and perpetuated the tradition of a collaborative art.

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