A Richness of Perspectives on a Complex Field

Indrek Ibrus and Carlos A. Scolari (editors)

Title: *Crossmedia Innovations. Texts, Markets, Institutions*

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This book introduces the reader into studies of the complex world of innovations in between media or crisscrossing within different media. If media innovation is a twisting concept, try crossmedia or intermedia or transmedia or similar diversions. You will find it challenging. This book has tried it, and as a reader I achieved a better understanding and overview in a field that can look like a jungle.

The book is an anthology. The editors are Indrek Ibrus, Research Fellow at Tallinn University, and Carlos A. Scolari, Associate Professor at Universitat Pompeu Fabra at Barcelona. Another 24 authors have contributed as well, and this team has together written 17 chapters. According to the introduction, the book is a result of research and cooperation within the framework of the First Motion initiative. That is a consortium of national and regional film funds, clusters, incubators and educational institutions from all around the Baltic Sea (more information at firstmotion.eu). This project is financed in part by the European Regional Development Fund.

Three perspectives are applied to elaborate crossmedia phenomena. These serve to organize the book in three sections on textual, economic and institutional matters, respectively. In that way, the book succeeds in presenting crossmedia's multifaceted nature, as promised. The Schumpeterian perspective is dominant in much of recent literature on innovation, as it is in innovation politics, research, teaching, debates and so on as well. That socioeconomic, entrepreneurial and business minded perspective is not wrong, but it is not sufficient to explain media or crossmedia innovations.

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As it is pointed out in one of the chapters concerning textual perspectives, a lot of innovations took place before any commercial agenda had a role. Even in the *Bible* and the *Bhagavad Gita* the nature of transmedia can be traced, according to Maarja Saldre and Peeter Torop at page 25. Following this line, there are a lot of motives for innovations in art, culture, languages, storytelling and so on which are not connected to the logic of commerce or commodities. At the same time, even if crossmedia innovations are rooted in old phenomena, it is the growth of culture industry and media business, digitalization and globalization that has rocketed the growth of the field. Therefore, it is natural that such a perspective is dominant. However, other perspectives, for instance the textual, are good entrances to see the multifaceted nature. Six chapters constitute this first section. Through the chapters theories are discussed and case studies are used to go in-depth to explore or explain different questions or phenomena.

The economic perspective is the second section. Due to the context in this book, the economically oriented analyzes appear as good contributions to the field. For instance, the debate on copyright protection is crucial for the media industry. Exactly the crossmedia innovation perspective illustrates how this can be problematized. The media industry facilitates for user generated content, and so, the readers or users are empowered to produce content in the product. A chapter on the *Star Wars* universe, by Joan Ramon Rodríguez-Amat and Katharine Sarikakis, serves as an insightful case study to discuss these issues.

The third perspective, on institutions, also serves as a separate entrance to the field, one different from texts and economics. In this section especially case studies from public broadcasters as institutions are important for analyzes. It can be discussed how far separate or independent this institutional perspective is in this book. However, it is argued for how this is different from the textual perspective and how the economic logic is different in these institutions.

One of the book's strengths is also a weakness. Crossmedia phenomena are discussed with a richness in perspectives and contributions from many different fields. Further, the book argues well for the constitution of crossmedia as an emerging field, and characteristics of crossmedia innovations. However, alongside these strengths, there is still work to do to define and exactly explain what this field is.

A further quality is that the authors and the case studies are from so many different countries in Europe. Many books on media phenomena are narrow due to the authors' position. The authors collected in this book, by contrast, represent a rich array of perspectives.. In sum, they give more nuanced discussions as compared with many other books.

Crossmedia activities and innovations will continue to grow. Further digitalization, creativity, users in new roles, the media industry's multiplatform strategies, globalization, and changes in the cultures are forces that will stimulate even a more complex media world than we see today. Therefore, the field is important to explore and understand this development. This book is absolutely a contribution to strengthen the field's identity and a step in further understanding of this phenomena.

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