Transmedia teens: the creative transmedia skills of Italian students

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# Abstract

Abstract: The objective of this article is to analyse the extent of creativity and autonomy of Italian teenagers’ digital media practices and to link it to the new transmedia skills developed within their favourite digital environments. The data studied emerged from the Transmedia Literacy project (European Commission-Horizon 2020) which involved eight countries from three continents. Through the analysis of information gathered with multiple methodologies (survey, in-depth interviews, workshops and media diaries), the article explores both the consuming and producing media practices of Italian teenagers and the ways in which they are connected with emerging transmedia skills (Guerrero-Pico, Masanet, Scolari, 2019; Scolari 2018). The data shows that Italian teenagers may still be considered quite traditional media users: their creative participation is limited and often they merely imitate, or remix others’ works, acting as ‘functional prosumers’ rather than ‘critical prosumers’ (Chen, Wu, Wang, 2011). The outcome of the research reveals teenagers’ meta-reflexive approach to media, an approach that seems to regulate and restrict their attitude towards creating and, above all, exposing their own creativity online. At the same time, teens demonstrate the acquisition of new and creative skills related, in particular, to the mechanisms of media industry and self- management.

# Outcome

The data shows that Italian teenagers may still be considered quite traditional media users: their creative participation is limited and often they merely imitate, or remix others’ works, acting as ‘functional prosumers’ rather than ‘critical prosumers’ (Chen, Wu, Wang, 2011). The outcome of the research reveals teenagers’ meta-reflexive approach to media, an approach that seems to regulate and restrict their attitude towards creating and, above all, exposing their own creativity online. At the same time, teens demonstrate the acquisition of new and creative skills related, in particular, to the mechanisms of media industry and self- management.. We can conclude that Italian teenagers contain their participation as creators and often
limit themselves to just imitating or remixing, acting as ‘functional prosumers’, by com- plying with what is already offered and pre-packaged by the market through simple adap- tation: they find a space to expose themselves that is not excessively demanding on an aesthetic level and therefore socially acceptable, while, contemporarily, finding successful models they can identify with and through which they can communicate