“I felt like I was really talking to you!”: intimacy and trust among teen vloggers and followers in Portugal and Brazil

# Keywords

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* intimacy
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* influencer
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# Details

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## Sample

The corpus was composed of the most popular video blog of each month in 2017 on each of the two channels, and comments on them. The channels are SofiaBBeauty, by 17-year-old (in 2017) Sofia Barbosa (from Portugal) and Manoela Antelo, a channel by a Brazilian 12-year-old girl.

# Abstract

This paper analyzes how female teen YouTubers manage intimacy and trust in the narration of their personal lives and the ways in which this is perceived by followers. The analysis of two case studies of popular teen YouTubers from Portugal and Brazil – SofiaBBeauty and Manoela Antelo, respectively – revealed that their presentation is anchored in discourses about whom they are with and where they are, what they are doing, and their personal tastes and styles. Through their comments on the videos, followers express trust connections with the vloggers, based on a sense of proximity, a desire for exclusivity in their relationship, relatability with banal aspects, and recognition as cultural intermediaries. These case studies have demonstrated strong similarities in the vloggers’ practices of constructing intimacy and consequent trust with peer audiences, bearing great resemblance with older YouTubers from central cultures. Although Sofia and Manoela put forward different class performances, the trust they inspire in their followers is a fundamental form of capital for both.

# Outcome

"The analysis of these case studies has demonstrated more similarities than differences in the practices of constructing intimacy and consequent trust with the young audiences, despite the two channels being produced by teenage girls of different ages and in different contexts. The more the vloggers narrate their own life and the less staging there is (of environments or appearances), the more authentic they are perceived to be. The sincerity and spontaneity of this performed authenticity is greatly valued by the audience and rarely seen as a strategically planned production, although the vloggers carefully manage the limits of their privacy. In this sense, these two cases originating from the semi-periphery of the centers of cultural production reveal great resemblances with precisely the older producers from those central cultures.
While Manoela Antelo and SofiaBBeauty are Portuguese-speaking members in their own right of YouTube’s international community of practice (Lange, 2014), they put forward different class performances. Sofia’s references are mostly American and British and she positions herself as cosmopolitan through her way of speaking and traveling and through references to international brands, as an upper-middle-class young girl. Manoela’s content and identity are strongly rooted in Brazilian culture, particularly with cultural products that are linked with the lower class and even socially stigmatized, such as funk. This works to position them as cultural intermediaries among peers in their local contexts, in which intimacy and trust are fundamental forms of capital" (Marôpo, L.; Jorge, A. Tomaz, R., 2020: 34).