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Gerard Goggin & Larissa Hjorth:
The Routledge Companion to Mobile Media.
New York: Routledge, 2014

Jennifer Holt & Kevin Sanson:
*Connected Viewing: Selling, Streaming
and Sharing Media in the Digital Era.*
New York: Routledge, 2014

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The Routledge Companion to Mobile Media is edited by Gerard Goggin and Larissa Hjorth. Between them they have produced several earlier handbooks and reference works in the field: *New Technologies and the Media* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), *Global Mobile Media* (Routledge, 2011), *Cell Phone Culture* (Routledge, 2006), *Mobile Media in the Asia-Pacific* (Routledge, 2009), and *Online@AsiaPacific: Mobile, Social and Locative in the Asia-Pacific region* (with Michael Arnold, Routledge, 2013).

The handbook has a relatively high number of chapters, 47 in all, and a median of 11 pages per article. The introduction reviews the state of the art of the mobile media research field, and the editors keep in mind that while the impact of mobile media is indeed global, it is still local at the everyday level. The handbook is a broad summary of the field divided into seven sections: 1. Fields of Mobile Media, 2. Infrastructures, Economies, and Policies, 3. New and Old Media and Entertainment, 4. Arts of Mobile Media, 5. New Social Categories, Identities, and Practices, 6. Cultures and Politics, 7. Geographies of Mobile and Social Media. The handbook is global both in scope and in its line-up of contributing scholars.

The editors see the handbook as a guide to research, ideas, structures, and practices in the emerging area of mobile media. The concept of media is emphasised rather than communication or technology (p.3). However, the interrelation of categories is acknowledged,

and various sections of the handbook include a focus on communicative or technological aspects of the mobile.

The handbook is interdisciplinary in its scope, but its exact and systematic focus on mobile media is its merit in comparison to similar but more specialized reference works such as the *Handbook of Mobile Communication Studies* (2008), *The Handbook of Mobile Learning* (2013), and the *Oxford Handbook of Mobile Music Studies* (2014). Additionally, this new handbook covers many different kinds of mobile media in moving from the familiar universe of cellular telephony to more recent mediascapes.

I would like to mention just a few of the many chapters that I find stimulating and insightful. For instance, Claudio Feijóo's chapter deals with next generation mobile networks and technologies and their impact on mobile media. Feijóo focuses on the technological requirements for mobile services to live up to user demand. In doing so, he maps interlinking implications for all mobile services from now on. Feijóo's contribution enables a discussion of whether video, the obvious driver for growth, should dictate the technical requirements from which diverse services such as mobile health will be able to benefit.

I was hard-pressed to find an area not covered by the Handbook. Seeing that the mobile is very much close to and increasingly one of our private parts the subject of mobile location-based flirt and sex-related app-use should perhaps have been addressed. However, Amparo Lasén does usefully interrogate the sentimental education, shared agency and mobile intimacy of Spanish heterosexual middle-class couples. There is a thin line between connection and monitoring "... which is revealed when attachment as a form of dependency finds a difficult balance with autonomy and recognition regarding how to manage mobile accessibility." (p.402).

The two editors seem to have perfected the art of compilation, and this perfectly refined companion reflects their scholarly experience. They strengthen their guidance by offering examples, and, importantly, they refer the reader to works that cover specific areas of the field. This is useful as the Companion favours breadth over depth. It is a well-founded broad summary for newcomers to the field and an equally well-founded status update for seasoned media scholars looking into the increasingly diverse field of mobile media studies. I welcome the inclusion of the underlying and sometimes rather technical aspects of infrastructures, economies and policies. In short, the Companion addresses everything that goes on behind and beyond the gleaming interfaces of the modern mobile media.

In *Connected Viewing: Selling, Streaming, & Sharing Media in the Digital Era*, Holt and Sanson have compiled 12 original essays that set out to critically engage and examine the connected viewing (CV) phenomenon across television, film, video games, and social media. Their work is intended for scholars and students alike. With a median of 20 pages per essay, there is ample room to develop argumentation in this well written exposé of what tend to be rather technical subject matters. The editors are careful to position CV as examining a wider realm of activities related to the circulation of digital media, in contradistinction to

the concept of spreadable media (Jenkins, Ford, & Green, 2013), which, the editors suggest, mostly focuses on sharing (p. 3).

CV has its origin in a media industries project at the Carsey-Wolf Center at the University of California. The editors acutely describe the role of the media companies in shaping the initiative and underscore that it is not sponsored research (p.2). The project is a nexus for dialogue between academics and the media industry. Part of the dialogue is available online as *27 critical conversations*.¹ The material is mostly at macro-level, including critical reflections on business practices, on the present status of media industries, and on their future. What the media industry might term *dispersion*, *dislocation*, and *disconnection* are covered by more neutral terms such as *platform diversity*, *the fragmentation of audiences*, and *separated entertainment experiences*.

Part One, on industry structure and strategies, deals with subjects such as regulation, second-screen theory, and the personal media collection. Part Two covers technologies and platforms, while Part Three investigates content and engagement, including gameplay across screens, limitations of the living room, and on-demand viewing.

CV scholarship regards the text and user engagements as the endpoint but includes the underlying business models, policies, technologies and infrastructures. The concept specifically addresses multiplatform entertainment experiences and relates to institutional tendencies across media industries, which include the integration of digital technologies and social network communication with traditional practices around screen media. The concept is intended to cover aesthetic and social experiences of second-screen media as well as the distributors of content and the gatekeepers that regulate the users' access to the internet.

In particular, Chapter Four on the personal media collection in an era of CV draws an illustrative connection between user practices and industry policies. George Steirer analyzes practices of collecting, organizing, and (re-)selling media products. He describes the way in which some copyright holders in America convene to have their digital products legally defined as software and thus become exempt from the user's right to the resale of their property. Steirer concludes that CV services increasingly seem to rule out or disable traditional forms of media collecting.

In Chapter Six, Joshua Braun proposes a name for the unknown players of the digital distribution business. He explains how *transparent intermediaries* are building the infrastructures of CV. He uses the STS concept of heterogeneous engineering to study the socio-technological systems that constitute infrastructures. He does this to analyze the companies behind white-label solutions whose transparent software the users 'look through'. Intricate features for frontend and backend use help classify the transparent intermediaries. Braun pries at the balance of structure and agency in the technical architecture of online distribution. By scrutinising the transparent intermediaries of the CV phenomenon, Braun can shed light on what might be incipient future path dependencies that can still be negotiated if what is initially transparent can be rendered visible.

Book review: The Routledge Companion to Mobile Media &

Connected Viewing: Selling, Streaming and Sharing Media in the Digital Era

An urgent objection might be that there is a modality bias in the concept of CV. Viewing is intrinsically trending towards the audiovisual films and visual arts industries. Of course, focusing on connectedness in applying the concept is a way to move beyond this issue. Additionally, audio-only streaming media are moving towards the increased inclusion of audiovisual content. For example, Spotify and Apple Music are evolving from music-only streaming towards the inclusion of video, podcasts and fitness.² This leaves us with the choice of specifying which modalities are catered to by the streaming practices that support the connectedness in question.

Forgive me for emphasising matters behind and beyond the screen, but my thirst for media form and formats rather than content is satisfied by these two anthologies. With the *Routledge Companion to Mobile Media* and the *Connected Viewing* anthology in hand, scholars, new as well as seasoned, will be well equipped to address the field of mobile media operating in an increasingly streamed and connected digital landscape.

References

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- Jenkins, H., Ford, S., & Green, J. (2013). *Spreadable media : creating value and meaning in a networked culture*. New York ; London: New York University Press.

Notes

- 1 Mostly longer excerpts, while full transcripts of 17 interviews are available in book form: *Distribution Revolution: Conversations about the Digital Future of Film and Television* (Curtin, Holt, & Sanson, 2014). The interviews include studios, upstarts, and creatives.
- 2 <https://news.spotify.com/dk/2015/05/20/say-hello-to-the-most-entertaining-spotify-ever/> (Last retrieved 26.10.15)
<http://www.apple.com/music/> (last retrieved 26.10.15)

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