



Copro & Networking
International TV Event

CONCLUSIONS · Conecta FICCIÓN THINK TANK 2019

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Discussion groups moderators: Sophie Valais, Concepción Cascajosa, María José Arrojo, Charline De Lépine, Alex Lagomarsino y Sandra Ouais.

In the six discussion groups, a conversation was established with the participants belonging to different professional areas, including creators, producers, executives of networks and platforms, distributors and communication directors, which provided diverse points of view from the European and Latin American contexts.

In general, two words were repeated several times in the discussions, which were:

- Creativity, and
- Independence

Would it be thus a foreseen conclusion that we cannot have one without the other?

As regards the relationship between broadcasters, producers and creators... it was considered that:

- The balance of power is clearly on the OTT side:
 - + A loss of power of TV channels against the OTTs, since the OTT have the money to hire talents and producers.
 - + A loss of power of producers against OTT because OTT keep all intellectual property rights, forever.
- However, there is hope that this imbalance of power may change in the future, with an increasing number of platforms on the market competing for more content and giving new bargaining power to producers.
- There is not the same hope for all the actors in the audiovisual chain: the writers are considered to be in a weak situation, and showrunners are still needed in Europe and Latin America.
- The solution could be found in co-development and collaboration through co-production, which offers the best way to finance high-end quality content.





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As regards international co-productions and what makes them work, it was considered that:

- Going into co-production can be a headache: the complexities due to distance, administrative barriers and language are often still a reality.
- However, everyone agreed that this is the best way to gather financial resources to produce TV formats that have changed over time, that have become higher quality formats and that are more expensive to produce as well.
- Although sometimes complex, co-productions are considered necessary to compete with OTT and allow access to international markets.
- The format of co-productions has also changed, along with television formats:
 - + Collaboration starts earlier from the creative process and the choice of narrative: local stories with international impact (noir, narratives based on historical facts) are particularly popular to go into co-production. In any case, entering an international co-production cannot be a "forced" process and has to come naturally with the needs of the story.
 - + Also, the ways of co-producing are more flexible in terms of the type of collaboration, as co-producers can collaborate at different stages of the process, from the creative side, to the distribution phase. And this was also the experience of the new alliances of public broadcasters who are co-producing high quality television content (e.g. The Alliance between Italian RAI, German ZDF and France Télévisions). Roles between co-producers change depending on the project. And in any case, it is important to have a leading co-producer to make the final decision on the creative side.
- On the one hand it is considered easier to co-produce than before due to the growing demand for content and the demand from broadcasters; On the other hand, there is an evolution towards the internalisation of production by platforms and large groups and it becomes more difficult to find a coproducer.
- One of the challenges for producers is to keep some intellectual property rights and to remain independent, as talents and rights are the only assets of a producer. Co-production can be a way to help keep some rights in the negotiation process.
- Public support was also seen as key to ensuring the independence of producers, as well as laws to protect independent producers from larger groups and platforms.





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As regards if independent producers are in danger, it was considered that:

- The answer was NO, because:
 - + Many producers still choose to remain independent, develop as such and are very dynamic.
 - + To keep their independence, they must focus on high quality content and specialise in what they do best.
 - + And develop further collaborations: local in Latin America, with Spain and with Europe.
- Among the questions raised was the definition of independence.
 - + What does it mean to be independent when a producer is in front of a client, be it a channel, a platform or a larger group? You are always smaller in front of the biggest in the negotiation.
 - + What is needed is legal framework or industry agreements that protect producers' relationships with platforms and independent producers' status. In some countries, the need is greater than in others where commissioning production is usual, and platforms do not bring much change to the practice.
 - + Finally, concentration was considered to have a limited impact on creativity. This is a work of passion and even the biggest groups want to remain open and creative.

As regards consumption in new devices and how this affects the relationship with the audience, it was considered that:

- The fiction industry cannot fight technological change but adapt to it. And, as part of this adaptation process, new formats must be developed that appeal to the interaction of the viewer, such as the combination with social media.
- At present, different types of consumption coexist. Some are based on individuality, through portable devices, but there is still a family consumption based on the television set. These models will be complementary, without one nullifying the other.
- Prime time is not going to disappear, but it is going to be increasingly disaggregated in different types of contents, which also poses challenges for rating measurement systems.
- Linear broadcasting, especially in prime time, will continue to maintain its position as the main banner of the medium, due to the visibility it gives to content.
- News, sport and entertainment are genres for which linear broadcasting continues to be fundamental, while fiction will increasingly be consumed through video on demand systems. This makes marketing strategies increasingly important. Investment in marketing will be key to the future of each fiction project.





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- It must be assumed that there are segments of the audience, especially young people, who will only discover the content when it reaches the video on demand platforms.
- There continues to be a demand for innovation in formats, with shorter and shorter durations that work on mobile devices, such as comedy, but for the time being no monetisation mechanism has been viable beyond branded content.
- Video games are an established form of leisure, but they still are complementary to television fiction, both for their level of demand (due to their immersive nature) and timing (as they tend to occupy side hours). In any case, their penetration into certain age groups must be taken into account, especially for its ability to expand narrative universes.

As regards the future of linear television and how to compete with OTT, it was considered that:

- Linear television has a future, but it must be considered as a pre-eminent platform for fictional content, especially as first window, but no longer the only one.
- There are two views on the kind of relationships that traditional operators should maintain with OTT in relation to productions and co-productions, which shows that this is still an open debate:
 - + Particularly from the point of view of European professionals, it is proposed to strengthen relations between television channels that are not in competition with each other.
 - + Especially on the part of Spanish and Latin American professionals, it is considered that it is necessary to opt for collaboration agreements with the OTT.
- In any case, at this moment the OTT are key to increasing the distribution of contents and thanks to them an audience is reached that otherwise would never have access to the contents.
- It is necessary to work to reach agreements about contents windows, which in any case must be characterized by flexibility and the search for innovative models.
- When developing content, it is necessary to emphasise the local, but also to think about how to make it easier for them to travel to other markets.
- Traditional operators must bet on innovation, such as shorter formats, and also on improving communication to generate events associated with the premiere of content.
- It is essential to have a global measurement system of content consumption.
- Television advertising is undergoing its own transformation process where saturation must be replaced by quality: everything leads to fewer and more expensive ads, but also more effective.

As regards for how to innovate in content creation, it was considered that:

- In the new context of coexistence between the offer of traditional channels and new platforms, it is very difficult to propose something new without repeating recipes.





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- One of the bets is the short format (with episodes of between 5 and 10 minutes), which could be a form of innovation, but so far have not been developed as a viable format and its monetization remains a challenge.
- The last ten years have been very intense, with far-reaching changes, and the time has come for the industry to evaluate these changes and for them to consolidate.
- To remain creative the solution would be to rely on writing, to avoid reproducing the same ideas to infinity and seek to safeguard the own identity.

