Audience's behavior and attitudes towards lifestyle video blogs on Youtube

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Abstract

Audiences perform as a key factor driving social media nowadays, and there would not be any point to create video content on Youtube if there was nobody to watch it. It is therefore important to study audiences and their behavior in order to find out viewers' preferences and to understand what makes them follow Youtube channels.

The purpose of this research is to find out what is audience's behavior on Youtube and its attitude towards lifestyle content on the video platform. Additionally, in the theoretical part of my research I will take a look at the phenomena of fandom and the relationship between advertising and audiences. I will apply social cognitive theory and cultivation theory in order to support my findings from reading materials. Using the method of semi-structured interviews, I will explore users' activity and their watching preferences on Youtube. In the analytical part I will combine both theoretical and practical approaches and figure out the answer to my research statement.

To conclude my research, I will discuss my findings together with perspectives for the future studies within selected area.
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1. Introduction

“Audience is a central part of any mediated communication process, as it is 'hard to imagine any form of media studies that is not, on some level, about audiences'”.
(Webster 1998, p. 190 ref. in Vicente-Marino 2014, p.37)

Usually audiences are represented as a group of people having common practices of using certain product or media device (Vicente-Marino 2014, p.37). However, the activity of contemporary online audiences is very different from the way it used to be years ago. Besides content consumption, today audiences also perform many other actions such as communicating, sharing, collaborating and co-producing which makes them very active and productive (Strangelove 2010, p.163).

With the popularity of all kind of social media, audiences interest and attitude towards different communicational tools is constantly changing (Mechant 2014, p.214). Relationship between audiences and media is often undefined since it is difficult to make any assured statements about something that is not really fixed. There are many talks on how social media influences on its users, and often these discussions sound in a negative way. Nevertheless, I am curious what could be the positive effect of media platforms on users. Moreover, I would like to find out whether users can actually affect social media in some ways as well, besides being affected by it. I am especially interested in Youtube as a platform for exploration of the relationship between audiences and media.

Youtube remains one of the most popular video platforms in the world. Being an active Youtube user myself, during the past years I have observed various new trends and phenomena on this platform particularly within the sector of lifestyle video content. Fashion, beauty, diy, travel and daily vlog channels have insensibly created a solid amount of content for those viewers who are interested to see how other people live. Such content creators surely have their own reasons to share information related to these topics. However, what would be the motivation for a viewer to watch it? What forces people to follow unknown person, to join his or her so-called fan club and to become part of youtube fan family? How audiences behaviour influences on bloggers' success? These are some of the questions I would like to discuss in my study.

In order to find answers to these inquiries, I formulated a research statement which I will use as a navigator for my research:

**Audience's behavior and attitudes towards lifestyle video blogs on Youtube.**
To be able to answer this statement, I will start my research process with a literature review divided into several sub-sections. I would like to find theoretical explanation for audiences interest to lifestyle video content and to see how it can affect viewers habits. I am also curious about phenomena of fandom and how it is connected to audiences' behavior and actions in virtual and real world. The last but not least, I would like to take a look at advertising on Youtube and to see whether it has some positive or negative effects on viewers.

The methodology section will describe empirical approach to my research. I will elaborate on my choice of method – semi-structured interview. Furthermore, I will explain how I approached the method, what is the sample and what type of questions I asked in the interviews. After that I will describe the transcription procedure and explain how I moved to the stage of analysis applying the color coding method on gained interview data. I will also mention ethical considerations of studies and limitations that complicated my research process.

Later on, based on my interviews findings, in the results & analysis section I would like to figure out why people watch lifestyle content and how exactly they select it. I am also curious to learn more about viewers' watching behavior and habits, i.e. when and how they use Youtube during the day, what are their usual actions on the platform besides watching (e.g. commenting, liking, sharing etc), what place Youtube takes in their daily life. Additionally, I want to learn more about fandom and viewers' attitude towards it. Finally, I would like to investigate to advertising topic and to see whether audiences have some thoughts about it. I will support my analysis with the theoretical findings from previous chapter.

In the discussion part I will create an end summary of my findings and put them all together. I will discuss recommendations for future research and create an overview of the study process.

I will end my paper with conclusion.
2. Literature review

In the following chapter I will take a look at the relationship between audiences, bloggers, content and advertising on Youtube.

2.1. From television to Youtube. Evolution of audiences analysis

The audiences research process has significantly changed during the past decade. The overview of audiences behavior was quite different 10 year ago, when Youtube just appeared and was not yet something common to everyone. It is seen pretty well in Jason Toynbee's chapter published back in 2006 where he is making strong statements regarding the difficulties of measuring media audiences interest towards certain content or advertised product (p. 102). From Toynbee’s conclusion I could see that without having certain analytical tools it was very complicated to reach some findings about audiences several years ago, especially for more traditional kind of media such as TV and print magazines which were quite difficult to analyze from statistical point of view (Toynbee 2006, p. 102). Youtube is one of those social media that today provides enormous variety of opportunities to examine audiences' behavior and preferences, to study current watching trends and to make certain conclusions based on findings.

To certain extent, the trend of watching Youtube can be considered as a tendency that originates from the habit of watching television. In other words, Youtube might soon be called a new television. According to Michael Strangelove, videos generate a special power that audiences obtain when involving themselves to watching routine (2010, p.173). The power allows viewers to become participants and erase the boundaries between audience and content creator. Comparing to a television consumer, a Youtube subscriber has much more freedom. The TV has been not only often considered as a tool that requires specific context to be used in (usually related to domestic practices) (Morley 1992, p.174), but it is also seen as a source showing false reality and distorting human perception of the world (Strangelove 2010, p.173). Meanwhile, Youtube content has gained reputation of reliable and credible information (Strangelove 2010, p.160) even when it is presented by amateur creators. In result, the modern video platform performs as a creative alternative to TV, where content is mainly user-generated and viewers have a voice and perform as hyperactive audiences (Strangelove 2010, p.113).

Another interesting point captured in Toynbee's work says that there was a vast gap between producers and the audiences in media a decade ago (2006, p. 92). Producers could not get any feedback on shown content from viewers. However, today an open source of statistical information (Youtube analytics) allows producers (bloggers) to track information needed to be able to create relevant content. Thus, a video blogger can not only measure its audiences but
also see their preferences and to find reasons of their actions on Youtube channel. Back in 1992
David Morley was predicting these steps as potentially helpful items for television audience
research (p.175). Now it is perfectly functioning not only for TV but also on one of the most
popular video platforms in the world – Youtube.

In the following chapter I will take a closer look at the variety of content published on Youtube.
However, I would like to primarily focus on lifestyle sector that consists of fashion, beauty,
travel and daily routine videos.

2.2. Exploring the content. Videos of affinity, vlogs and amateur videos

The purpose of media is to communicate, and the way communication occurs is constantly
changing – partially because we are getting more and more channels and mediums to be
engaged in (Bruhn Jensen 2014, pp.227-229). Therefore, audiences cannot complain about the
lack of content. On the contrary, they are facing difficulties in taking decision of which content
to watch.

According to Courtois and Mechant (2014, p.213), today's Internet platforms are playing the
role of user-generated data storage. Audiences consume as much content as they produce,
however, there are still more video content spectators than producers. Both have their own
motives for actions, however, my goal is to analyze viewers motivation to consume lifestyle
video content on Youtube.

To understand audiences and their behaviour, it is also important to take a look at the content
available for audiences to watch on Youtube. Trends within content creation depend a lot on
viewers preferences and actions. However, often a Youtube blogger, or a Youtuber, as a
content producer is playing major role in driving popularity of certain kind of videos and topics
mentioned in the video. Bloggers have created a new niche in modern media environment that
allows to maintain relationship between producers, users and content. Video bloggers are
mostly great experts of Youtube communicative ecology (Burgess and Green, 2009, p.57). The
confidence and a great knowledge of platform allows them to create content which will most
likely be warmly welcomed by audiences. The knowledge of viewers preferences makes
Youtubers very powerful and gives wide opportunities to govern audiences. Nowadays bloggers
turned into opinion makers, role models and advisors for their viewership. By sharing their
personal experiences, they are often considered by audiences as experts in specific fields
(Burgess and Green, 2009, p.56) and thus build viewers' trust towards themselves.

Patricia G. Lange sees the opportunity to spread personal media amongst broad audiences on
Internet using Youtube as a massive change in the process of content distribution and
consumption (2009, p. 74). In her article Lange is discussing audience's perception of amateur
videos and explains the term *video of affinity* (2009, pp.70-85) which describes how and why amateur videos are spread out globally through Internet. Lange is mostly talking about the concept of a video that does not necessarily have a deep meaning but is very focused on creating connection between video maker and viewer. It could be, for example, a family video from a birthday party or a wedding. According to Lange, a person who creates video of affinity does not count his work as a content that aims to attract new audiences, it is more like a bridge between viewers and a video maker who share the same interests, e.g. parents and children who want to watch and share a footage from family event.

At the first glance, videos of affinity look quite similar to something that viewers are used to call *videoblogs*. Burgess and Green (2009) have a description of vlogging and it is interesting to compare differences and similarities of both video formats. All authors simultaneously focus on maintaining connection between creator and audience. The content of both is meant to be spontaneous and filmed naturally, from the first take. The main difference between the formats is, however, that videos of affinity are not intended to be posted regularly while video blogs are meant to be uploaded systematically with a purpose of keeping the viewer informed about blogger's life routine. Moreover, according to Lange, videos of affinity usually are addressed to concrete audience (2009, p. 73) while Burgess and Green don't expect vlogs to be purposed towards specific target group. Diversity of viewership is on the contrary much appreciated for the format of vlog and the goal is to provoke audience's participation – comments, responds, likes and feedback to uploaded video (Burgess and Green, 2009 p. 57).

In general, the form of video blogs comes from television's talk shows and reality shows where people used to reveal confessions, show their daily life and let others to interfere with it (Matthews 2007 ref. in Burgess and Green 2009, p. 53). The genre of vlogs creates environment for diverse communication between creator and audiences and amongst the viewers as well. It's a platform for comments, conversations, disputes, critique, as well as for information consumption and transmission (Strangeloove 2010, p.174, Burgess and Green 2009, p. 54). It's hard to believe that simple entertaining video is carrying so many functions. Amateur videos have got a reputation of dilettante user-created content, however, they are quite underestimated and they should not be treated as meaningless video diaries created in bedrooms (Burgess and Green 2009, p. 53, Strangeloove 2010, p.56) because the content and quality of these videos can vary. In fact, sometimes it is even difficult to differentiate amateur and professional productions because modern technology allows anyone to create a masterpiece using simple tools and having a very basic knowledge of filming and editing (Strangeloove 2010, p.173). The quality of video mostly depends on producer's ability to imitate professional production and to convince viewers that they deal with excellent video product. All in all, Youtube amateur videos are in the process of transformation from superficial content to a genre that is able to create new relationship between audiences, viewers and brands and thus
to change our position as viewers and consumers (Burgess and Green 2009, p. 93, Strangelove 2010, p.158).

Such evolution of content perception is partially caused by the type of information revealed in today's digital spaces. As mentioned above, audiences are switching their watching habits from reality shows on television to visual journal entries on Youtube. Half of the TOP-30 most subscribed channels back in 2009 were vlog channels (Burgess and Green 2009, p. 96) because people wanted to watch something real and natural, not fabricated by television producers. Today, in 2016, vlogs are on the 3rd place of most watched video content on Youtube (Mediakix). Vlogs create access to strangers' private lives and let viewers learn about human behavior in different situations. According to Strangelove (2010, pp.158-162), amateur videos have changed viewers perception of watched content as well as bloggers started feeling more open to share more of personal details. Information that used to be private now turned into a subject of mediation (Peters and Seier 2009, p.189). Videos create awareness about cultural diversity, habits and traditions in different countries which has been warmly welcomed by curious viewership. This content is now flourishing and it is perceived very naturally within Youtube's ecology.

Looking at diverse video formats and differences between them makes it possible to analyze audiences behaviour and preferences within specific video sectors, and to find additional information on Youtube popular culture and current video trends (Burgess and Green, 2009, p. 38). Comparing different videos it's seen what kind of content is more attractive for audiences and which way users prefer to exploit Youtube as a platform. Such observation of statistical information is significant for a video blogger who wants to know what sort of content he or she should investigate in, for a viewer that uses statistics as a determinant showing whether a certain video is worth watching, and also for advertisers who seek for new medium to introduce their products.

In the next chapter I will look into audience's motivation to consume video content and will try to figure out theoretical explanation of why viewers watch Youtube.

2.3. Why people watch Youtube?

While studying phenomena of Youtube blogging and audiences' reaction to it, I was seeking for various explanations of why this social media has actually been developing so speedily and what is the meaning of this tool in the process of mediatization. In accordance to Grusin (2009, p. 61), Youtube plays the role of TV remediator creating new forms of media and building modern media networks. And most importantly, Youtube is not just a neutral link between classic television and amateur video production but actually an active mediator and accelerator of new media development.
Grusin describes the way Youtube lets us to temporarily place ourselves into a different context (2009, p. 61). While watching videos from all over the world, we can listen to the sounds of various geographical locations, observe foreign lifestyle, learn about different cultures. However, what constitutes the uniqueness of Youtube in comparison with television is the ability to make such interaction ubiquitous and the feeling that viewer is seamlessly connected to what's happening on the screen. Today there are still people who are not familiar with Youtube culture and don't define themselves as Youtube audience. They only watch television content, and they do not understand why other viewers might prefer amateur Youtube video content over professionally made TV programs (Nardi 2005 ref. in Lange 2008, p.363). Nevertheless, what is extremely valuable when speaking of Youtube as media platform is the diversity of content and availability of multiple point of views presented on the 'Tube' medium comparing to what television can offer to audiences nowadays (Grusin, 2009, p. 66). This partly clarifies why Youtube, being audiovisual media, attracts and engages its audiences.

Certain viewing behavior on Youtube can be explained by various theories. Thus, social cognitive theory (Bandura 2001, p.265) can expound several phenomena that occur while audiences consume video content. I would like to take a look at the studies of Bandura and Shrum and to figure out what is the connection between the content and viewers' behavior according to the theory of social cognition.

According to Shrum, social cognition is based on two major aspects: stimulus and response, and their interaction between each other (2002, p. 71). Here, stimulus is represented by information gained from media source, and response is a judgment that consumer unconsciously creates based on information he received. In a result, the way people acquire and assimilate information is then projected to their judgement of data, and this is how the attitude to specific information source is being generated. Shrum also argues that it's not the whole amount of information that creates actual opinion on something, rather selected pieces of data that user retrieves and prefers to remember (2002, p. 72). All in all, the judgement is constructed just on the small extract of overall knowledge provided by media source, thus, it cannot be quite objective.

Theoretical explanation of Shrum intersects with Bandura's practical approach towards the theory of social cognition. In Bandura's studies, judgement discussed by Shrum is interpreted as behavior that user is choosing when obtaining specific information. Depending on what sort of content one absorbs, his actions will lead either to positive or negative thinking. At the same time, Bandura mentions that people do not utilize all data that they consume, and eventually they do not use everything they learn (2001, p.274) which is also supported by Shrum's idea. Users perform only those activities that appeal to them, using information that they consider
the most fascinating. In a result, human behavior is determined by the impact of one's surroundings and personal attitude towards specific topic (Bandura, 2001, p.265). These factors define the relationship between information and its consumer.

Now, how can it be applied to the research of Youtube audiences, their preferences and behavior? Social cognitive theory partly explains viewers addiction to specific video content, their attitude towards certain content producers (bloggers), their behavior on video platform and the way their manners in real life are affected by watched content. Surprisingly, it happens quite often that viewers apply new behaviour patterns after following certain person and observing one's actions (Luszchynska and Schwarzer 2005, p.127).

A video blogger performs the role of a model for those viewers who actively follow him. Content producer is using media platform to spread his ideas and personal opinion amongst followers, diffusing specific beliefs and judgements over a wide area of digital space. The more popular a blogger is, the more chances he has to be heard by a large audience and to perform as a model.

Albert Bandura explains why modeling is significant in the process of media consumption and what are the effects and consequences of following a role model. Amongst other functions, Bandura mentions motivation, tutoring, inhibition, value shaping and emotion evoking as the most common grounds for content sharing (for bloggers) and consumption (for viewers) (2001, p.283). It explains that Youtube audiences have many reasons to watch specific content and to react on it. It does not necessarily mean that the reaction must be positive, on the contrary, people may sense reluctance to adopt experiences and opinions from content creators if they see risks in it (2001, p.285). Moreover, if audiences require too many resources, money or skills to be able to adopt knowledge or to replicate someone's behavior or experiences, there is a big chance that viewers won't be interested in imitating blogger's habits even if they are very appealing (2001, p.290). User's reaction and impressions of watched content mostly depend on the message sent in the video and on the personality of a viewer – because people usually consume information differently (McGuire 1986, ref in Shrum, 2002). In any case, video content consumption leads to the change of viewer's beliefs and convictions (Shrum, 2002, p.72).

In the next chapter I will look closer at viewers behavior and what forces audiences to act in certain ways on Youtube.

2.4. Audiences watching behavior

Every Youtube user is constantly taking decisions – what to watch, when and where; to leave comments and likes or not; to share video with friends or to add it to the list of favorites, and so on. We do not think consciously of it while using the platform but, in fact, everything we do on
Youtube is a result of our decision-making process which Morley was describing back in 1992 in relation to television (p.175).

There are plenty of opportunities to express yourself on Youtube, even if you are not a video creator. The most typical activity for viewers besides watching would be commenting, leaving 'likes', sharing videos, creating playlists, participating in polls (it is a new function that Youtube has launched recently), in other other words – leaving traces in digital space (Burgess and Green 2009, p.57). Comparing to television watching which used to be considered as one-dimensional activity (Morley 1992, p. 176), Youtube is on the contrary very vibrant media which creates various values for its consumers, it can used in many different ways and could be treated as a platform of opportunities – for both video makers and viewers.

Today's Youtube watching behavior significantly differs from the way we acted while watching television years ago. TV used to act as a link between family members, it forced people to spend time together while being gathered in the living room and watching a programme. We are now far away from such traditions – simply because Youtube inclines us to different watching manners. According to Strangelove, viewers have entered a post-television world where they are fragmented into narrowed audiences, separated by concrete interests and targeted on watching very specific content (2010, p.171). In other words, if television offered us certain content, we could not resist it because we did not have that many other options. Meanwhile, Youtube supplies viewers with ubiquitous information of any kind, and we have the right to choose whatever we want or need.

However, something that remained since the era of television is a habit to be multitasking and keeping Youtube watching process as one of the tasks performed simultaneously with something else. As stated by Morley, pure television watching is quite a rare case (1992, p.176), and audiences tend to replicate the same attitude towards Youtube (Strangelove 2010, p.164). Nevertheless, it does not mean that watching video content turns into a passive process even if it is performed simultaneously with other actions – simply because in any case it carries out one of the main purposes of media – sharing a message (Friedman 2006 ref. in Lange 2008, p. 377).

Audiences’ reaction on the content can be tracked by Google Analytics – a tool which is only accessible for content's owner; and by public statistics which can be observed via the rating of 'likes', amount of views and comments. The public data reveals viewers participation within Youtube environment and their relationship with selected blogger, and indicates the satisfactory level towards specific video content (Bruhn Jensen 2014, p. 229, Lange 2008, p.363, Strangelove 2010, p.103). Moreover, the most active Youtube audiences are often at the same time video producers themselves, and their energetic behavior in the comments section comes
from aspiration to be noticed and to build relationship with potential subscribers (Lange 2008, p.377, Strangelove 2010, p.158).

Some of the most important features of Youtube that influence on audiences' behavior provide the opportunity to give direct feedback to the media, to share thoughts with like-minded people and to receive responses from other viewers. This is happening because of digitalization that turned watching process into interaction between content and viewers. Bruhn and Jensen call this relationship *communicating audiences* (2014, p.230), and I am going to discuss it in the next chapter.

**2.5. Communities and phenomena of fandom**

Within lifestyle content, Youtube often creates friendly atmosphere where it is quite easy to make new friends if you are an active viewer. For dedicated audiences, Youtube is seen as a community of people with shared vision (Strangelove 2010, p.103). Viewers who follow one certain blogger are often familiar with each other, sometimes they communicate not only within digital platforms but also go offline and transfer their virtual relationships to real friendship (2010, p.103). This also decreases a threat that digital communication will demolish the necessity of humans interaction with each other in real life. On the contrary, virtual friendship expands viewers desire to relocate online connection to a physical world (2010, p.104).

There are many ways Youtube can be used by community of audiences, e.g. for chatting, sharing content, sharing opinions and creating new common experiences while watching and receiving information (Mabillot 2007, p.39). The networking amongst audiences is considered as one of the most important acts in Youtube watching process (Iversen 2009, p.356). According to Jones, virtual communities consist of individuals who are most often grouped by the same interests and follow similar directions (Jones 1997, ref. in Strangelove 2010, p.105). These people often have shared imagination which is being mediated on Internet (Strangelove 2010, p.104). Sometimes shared imagination can encourage viewers to produce videos themselves because they are getting inspired by their favorite vloggers and want to imitate their life by creating similar content (Strangelove 2010, p.104). This is a very typical diffusion process for social network (Bandura 2001, p.291).

In some cases, being part of virtual community can turn viewers' interests into fandom when audiences start cultivating watched content and obtain a special attitude towards video blogger. Here, by cultivation I mean extremely high interest to specific content or person, and a desire to adopt his or her behavior pattern. This phenomena is explained by cultivation theory which is focused on the idea of a strong connection between frequency of video content watching and its effects on audiences beliefs (Shrum 2002, p.72). A developer of cultivation
theory, George Gerbner, was discussing how media is shaping opinions and public knowledge grounding it on the meanings of messages sent by content creators (Potter 2014, p.1016). Shrum argues that cultivation effects appear when audiences do not have judgements, instead they accept given information with pleasure and look forward to learn more about specific subject presented by the person of their interest (Shrum 2002, p.90).

Talking about Youtube, cultivation theory is often reflected in relationship between a blogger and the audiences when a viewer is intensively following certain content producer and tracks his activities and actions. According to Grossberg, the reasons for being a fan can vary. Fandom allows viewers to create new identities and to imagine themselves living a different life (2013, p.459). It does not necessarily mean that a fan is a person who blindly follows someone's actions and imitates them in his own life. Nevertheless, often those actions function as a role model for the viewer's daily routine (2013, p.463).

Phenomena of fandom in human lives is not something ashaming as it used to be previously, today it is rather a vital aspect of modern society (Strangelove 2010, p.114). Groene and Hettinger discourse on changes of phenomena in the past years, mentioning that due to Internet-based interaction and technological innovations the concept of fandom has been modificated (2015, p.2). Authors also compare fandom to consumerism, saying than both phenomenons create emotional attachment for a person. However, fandom is much stronger since it also evokes behavioural and ideological connection with a product – video content.

The nuances of fandom are still being discussed and explored, however, the most important aspect of it is viewer's interest towards idol's life, the intensity of such involvement and the cultivation effect that is being created under these conditions (Shrum 2002, p.78, Strangelove 2010, p.114). In the end of a day, every person is a fan of something, simply because human beings cannot live a life where nothing matters (Grossberg 2013, p.464).

As Grossberg states, the term of fandom has a different meaning for every user (2013, p.459). For someone it is a massive emotional addiction, for others it's a tool for creating their own understanding of the world. Every person puts his own unique values to a certain video, thus each piece of content is interpreted by audiences differently. And most importantly, even though every viewer is attentively watching video content and have a perfect understanding of blogger's life, he cannot actually know how it feels to live this way (2013, pp.459-462).

Even though fandom in relation to a popular blogger is considered as a social phenomena that unites people globally, being a fan does not always mean participation in fan communities or being a member of fanclub (Strangelove 2010, p.114). Fandom can be private too in case if a viewer prefers not to share his emotions and attitude towards a blogger with someone else.
Nevertheless, Youtube fandom is still a great example of expanded participatory culture which is being actively emerged within current digitized lifestyle (Groene and Hettinger 2015, p.1, Strangelove 2010, p.116). Looking at the development of Youtube participatory culture we can analyze fan's identity and explore audiences motivation and behavior (Groene and Hettinger 2015, p.13).

However, the role of fandom in audience’s life can be quite variable. When we follow bloggers, we interpret texts and the message individually, according to our own ideologies. A person is following blogs especially attentively if he/she struggles with changing his/her own life conditions (Grossberg 2013, p. 459-465). It is not a fandom in any negative way, it is more of a chance for followers to get inspiration and motivation to change their lives. Looking at someone’s success often stimulates to take actions and improve own life conditions. And if to keep such positive view, fandom does not seem to be something wrong, it is on the contrary quite useful and helpful.

To sum up, phenomena of fandom is not quite obvious as it might be seen at first glance. Fandom often makes viewers adopt blogger's behavior which can positively influence on audience's personal developments. However, fandom is not only all about the relationship between viewers and bloggers. It can also affect financial aspect of content creation process. In the following chapter I will take a look at the connection between fandom and advertising on Youtube, its influence on the content trends and video monetisation.

2.6. The meaning of advertising in the relationship between bloggers and viewers

Audiences have always had significant influence on television content creation process, especially when it came to advertising of various products on the screen (p. 107, 2006). However, a decade ago it was extremely difficult to verify whether audiences received selling message from the screen in appropriate way and what is their attitude towards products and content being shown. Therefore, there was a problem to convince advertisers that large audiences watching television might be a great target group for their products, simply because advertisers did not have any tools to check statistical information on viewers from broadcasters (Toynbee, p. 101, 2006).

Today Youtube analytics provide blogger with the opportunity to create extremely detailed overview of one's viewership, and some of this information (such as amount of views, comments, likes and rates) is also available for the public. This allows advertisers to be aware whether specific channel might be suitable for their advertising or not (Andrejevic 2013, p. 495-502). Conclusions obtained with such observations also allow companies to select the best
ways of communication with their target group and to see what strategies fit best in making audiences to buy the product. As a result, viewers are quite vulnerable and not really safe in terms of their privacy. The same way as bloggers are exposed to their viewership, audiences are uncovered for researchers and analytics. In result, both audiences and bloggers are being watched. As said by Andrejevic, 'disciplinary surveillance enhances economic productivity' (2013, p. 495).

Today the relationship between advertising and content is a popular topic for discussion on Youtube. If years ago we used to believe that amateur content cannot drive viewers interest and therefore is not able to be monetized and create any value for audiences (Lange 2009, p.70), lately consumer culture has completely changed and it has created new possibilities for advertisers to get noticed on amateur content platforms (Strangelove 2010, p.177). Since people started to actively watch non-professional video creations such as vlogs, the popularity of it has rapidly grown and advertisers are no longer afraid to place their products to such content. Professional videos are not anymore considered as easily monetized, moreover, for advertisers it is now much easier and beneficial to access the audiences through popular amateur vlogs because they know that famous blogger's fans can generate a great sales revenue for the brand (Strangelove 2010, pp.169-176).

All of a sudden, from a platform for participatory culture and casual interaction between content creator and viewers, Youtube turned into a stage for implementation of new marketing models and a platform for building a business (Soukup 2014, p.11). At the same time, popular video content creators are now not only the Youtube stars, but can also be characterized as entrepreneurial vloggers (Burgess and Green 2009, p.94). Because online audiences are constantly changing, advertisers need to create new ways of interacting with Youtube viewers (Wasko and Erickson 2009, p.382). Often companies prefer to let the blogger create and perform advertising campaign on his own because video creators know their audiences better than anyone else. Bloggers are quite professional in making money from Youtube but most importantly they are the experts in building engaged audience and forcing it to actively participate on the platform (Burgess and Green 2009, p.105).

When audiences watch their favorite blogger using specific product, they will unconsciously want to have the same item for themselves, no matter if it is actually advertised or randomly appeared to the video. Such product placement helps to speed up the selling process for the company without doing much of an effort (Andrejevic 2013, p. 496). However, even though audiences easily pay attention to such ads, it does not mean that their attitude towards them is always positive. Nevertheless, viewers still do watch advertised content if it is produced by their favorite blogger (Strangelove 2010, p. 169).
To sum up, relationships between audiences, advertising and content are quite complicated. These factors mutually depend on each other, and in order to get the best result out if their performance, many details should be considered. In my further research I will investigate into each phenomena and take a look at them from audiences perspective. But first, I should select appropriate method for learning more about the subject of my studies.

3. Methodology

3.1. The choice of method

I chose to work with qualitative research because I believe that this method will help me to generate the most relevant knowledge for the topic. According to Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 'qualitative approach produces meaning that does not result from the quantitative surveys' (2010, p.8). It allows to better understand social processes by directly communicating with people and observing their behavior and attitudes (2010, p.4). Qualitative research requires to look for detailed explanations of phenomena, and to ask 'why, how, why is it important?' instead of simply asking 'what is this?' (2010, p.28). This is how qualitative method creates truly unique content for studies and has a very distinctive form of presenting the data (2010, p.5).

The interview method gives access to audiences opinions (Morley 1992, p.180). According to Morley, for a researcher it is always better to immerse yourself into study environment and to talk to the audiences directly, rather than to stay away from them imagining what their opinions might be (1992, p.180). Additionally, interviews allow to access personal thoughts of respondents which are normally hidden from general public (Vicente-Marino 2014, p.47).

Qualitative research creates possibility to understand how audiences interpret social world and what is their role in the process of mediatization (Vicente-Marino 2014, p.48). Moreover, conversational methods show the ability of respondents to formulate their thoughts in terms of linguistics which also gives additional information about the sample (Morley 1992, p.181). Another benefit of semi-structured interview is the open-ended approach that creates natural and relaxed atmosphere during the conversation (Whitehead 2015, p.17). Using interview guide, an interviewer can still modify the path and pace of the talk and thus to evoke the fullest answers from respondents (Qu and Dumay 2011, pp.246-247).
3.2. Research Design

3.2.1. Sample selection

In order to be able to conduct the interviews, it is crucial to find corresponding sample for research. Below I will describe the process of my search of interview participants.

First, I selected several friends of mine who are actively involved into Youtube community. Additionally, I posted a question on my social media asking whether there is someone who is interested in research participation. I used judgmental sampling (Fetterman 1998, p.8) to select the most appropriate respondents for the interview amongst those who responded on my inquiry.

I based my selection on personal ideas and assumptions of who might be suitable for my research, however, I had several requirements to the sample. I was primarily interested in respondents beyond the age of 18, male and female interested in watching lifestyle video content, active and passive users i.e. those who participate in commenting and sharing video content and those who are not. I intentionally selected people living in different countries who might have diverse watching habits. The majority of my selected respondents' mother tongue is Russian, however, all of them live all over the world and I had an assumption that this fact might also create variety in responses. Most of Russian-speaking interviewees watch similar channels. There were 4 women and 2 men amongst them. Additionally, I selected 2 international respondents in order to be able to produce supplementary and variable data for my research. All in all, I have got 8 people answering my questions. Below you can find a short description of each of them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Country of residence</th>
<th>Favorite video topics</th>
<th>Interview in Appendix</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Melitta</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>Fashion, beauty, travel, vlogs</td>
<td>Interview 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niina</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Beauty, lifestyle, sustainability</td>
<td>Interview 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ksenia</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>Learning languages, beauty, travel, calligraphy</td>
<td>Interview 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molly</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>Beauty</td>
<td>Interview 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The interviews were held in Russian and in English via Skype. With a help of web camera I managed to arrange ‘face-to-face’ conversation. Conversations were recorded on a camera in order to remember the body language of participants and to create transcriptions of the interviews using the recordings. Each interview took around 20 minutes and each respondent was informed about the purpose of my research, type of questions and the fact that the conversation is going to be recorded. The respondents were questioned about the confidentiality of gathered data.

3.2.2. Types of interview questions

Kvale (1996, pp.133-135) presented several types of questions which I found useful for my research area. Therefore, I developed my interview guide taking into account his theories. Below are the types of questions I used:

1. Introducing questions. The purpose of these questions is to start a discussion and to let interviewee to speak freely. The interviewer can later point to specific points raised by the respondent and to ask follow-up questions. In my case, the introductory question was: Could you describe, on a typical day, how do you watch youtube?

2. Follow-up questions. This type of question was raised in order to get additional information on mentioned topic. Example: You mentioned that you give dislikes to one specific blogger all the time. Could you expand on that and explain what forces you to do that?

3. Probing questions. I used to ask them when I wanted to get additional information without making it clear which part of the answer I need to know. Example: What could make you suddenly stop watching a certain video?
4. Specifying questions. The goal of this question was to get precise descriptions. *What time of the day do you usually watch Youtube?*

5. Direct questions. These questions focus on the main topic of research and produce the most significant data needed for research. Example: *What is your motivation to watch Youtube? How often do you buy products advertised by a blogger?*

6. Structuring questions. I applied this questions to structure the interview, especially in a situation when a respondent's answer was going to direction that was not related to the topic of my research. It was useful to apply structuring questions to politely break off interviewee's long answer. Example: *I would now like to ask you about your attitude towards your favorite blogger. Could you name yourself as a fan of her?*

7. Interpreting questions. This type of questions allowed me to avoid misunderstanding and to get more clear explanation of interviewee's point of view. *Do you mean that Youtube motivates you to study more?*

The interview guide for my research was developed according to mentioned bullet points. A full version of the guide can be found in Appendix 1.

### 3.2.3. Piloting the method

A very significant part of my research was the interview pilot. After creating the list of questions and discussing it with supervisor, I piloted the interview to test respondent's reaction on questions. During the pilot I realised that about \( \frac{1}{3} \) of listed questions were unnecessary because the interviewee was mentioning the issues naturally during the conversation and there was no need for me to set a separate question. Therefore, I adapted my interview guide after the pilot. Another very important finding I got from the pilot is related to my own behavior as an interviewer. I did not feel confident not knowing all questions by heart and checking my list every time I wanted to ask something, therefore my insecurity caused awkward pauses and my approach looked very amateur.

After the pilot I adjusted interview guide by removing, rephrasing and changing the order of questions. Such reorganization also helped me to narrow down the scope of my research once again because I realised that some information obtained during the interview was not actually related to my studies.
3.2.4. Transcripts

Bryman mentions several factors defining the quality of transcription, i.e. the quality of recording, the equipment used to transcribe, the kind of data, how detailed transcription needs to be (2004, p.10).

All of the interviews were recorded in order to be later transcribed into a written document: Kvale and Brinkmann presented this requirement as obligatory for qualitative studies (2009, p.179). Several interviews were conducted in English and the rest of them in Russian, which was translated to English during the transcription. Kvale and Brinkmann also mentioned that the quality of the audio should allow to clearly understand the whole conversation between a researcher and a respondent (2009, p.179), therefore I organized absolutely silent environment during the interview.

I used the manual method of transcription, meaning that I did not use any technology to help me to arrange the text in a document. Transcribing process was quite long since it required to listen to the dialogue carefully several times and to reproduce every word said. In some cases I also noted emotions of a respondent if I found it useful to be mentioned for my further research. Sometimes interviewees' emotions created extra meaning to mentioned information. In this case, I used brackets to emphasize it, for example: (laughing), or (smiling). I did not leave out any of the information given during the interview, however, it does not mean that I intend to apply all data for my analysis since not all of it is quite valuable for my research statement.

Conducted interview – recorded and textually documented – can be found in Appendices 2-9.

3.2.5. Data collection

In order to fulfill the purpose of interviews and to obtain specific knowledge about the audiences, collected data needs to be processed and responses should be stored in a usable and appropriate form (Gorden 1992, p. 1). Therefore, after transcriptions were done, I should have coded them to be able to move to the next step of my studies. Coding allows to match collected data with the research questions and to find explanation to stated issue.

Before starting coding interview transcripts, I selected 5 themes, or categories, which I wanted to further analyze in my research. My 5 themes are: Motivation to watch Youtube, Watching behaviour, Phenomena of fandom, Communities of audiences, Advertising on Youtube.

According to Gorden, it is better when themes are more abstract than concrete because then they can consist of 'all of the relevant examples regardless of their superficial differences' (1992, p.1) and thus no information will be lost or unwitnessed.
However, the 'Watching Behaviour' theme included three sub-themes which allowed to have a more detailed approach to the large topic. The sub-themes are: Content Selection, Watching Habits and Watching Behaviour.

There was a symbol assigned to each category in order to differentiate themes during the coding process. As a symbol I used colors and created the following color legend inside transcribed document:

Motivation to watch Youtube
Watching behaviour:
- Content selection
- Habits
- Behavior
Phenomena of fandom
Communities of audiences
Advertising on Youtube

The selection of topics is based on the literature review results. Through data analysis I would like to see whether audiences opinion supports or opposes theoretical findings of my research.

3.3. Ethics
Ethical concerns should be necessarily mentioned in the research process description (Courtois and Mechant 2015, p.222). Researchers usually are very attentive towards ethical issues during the preparation to the interview and while conducting it. Qu and Dumay (2011, pp. 252-254) described several ethical issues which should be considered before and during the research process, and I followed their recommendations while working on interviews.

*Impose no harm.* Information provided by interviewees was interpreted by me as a researcher according to my personal understanding and perception, meaning that data interpretation is subjective. Respondents participated in the interview voluntarily and they were informed about the interview process and how the information will be used.

*Disclosure of research intent.* Before the interview, I briefly explained the aim of my research to the respondents. It was needed to be done in order to establish the connection between me and the interviewees and to make sure that they understand the purpose of our conversation. According to Qu and Dumay, there is always a threat that knowing too much information about the research goals interviewees might alter their responses (2011, p. 253). I did not notice any major attempts to avoid specific question or to fake the answer. However, in some cases
respondents felt uncomfortable answering questions, especially when I asked about their favorite bloggers and what channels they prefer to watch. Several interviewees seemed to be ashamed of watching 'naive' content such as daily vlogs by beauty bloggers, and it was not easy for them to admit that they do enjoy content which often has no serious meaning behind it. Answering this question, respondents created additional explanation of why they watch it, and the reasoning usually looked like excuses.

*Relationship-based ethics.* The relationship between interviewee and a researcher usually requires certain obligations (Qu and Dumay 2011, p. 254), e.g. not to use respondent's personal data in interviewer's private needs. It is especially important in my case because several of interviewees are my actual friends. Therefore, information I gained from them should not affect or be reflected on our private relationships.

*Right to privacy and confidentiality.* Interviewees agreed to expose the following private information in my research paper: names, age, location and the data gained from the interview. However, no written agreements or protocol have been created. According to Qu and Dumay, respondents should be given the opportunity to read interview transcripts and the final research paper (2011, p. 254). None of the interviewees showed interest towards reading the transcripts, however, several of them would like to hear about research results when I will finish the studies.

### 3.4. Limitations

Due to a limited timeframe, there was a minimal amount of participants in the research. Even though the physical location of interviewees varied, they mostly belonged to one nationality which possibly did not bring much of variety to the research findings comparing to what could have been done if a research was conducted on international level. On the other hand, I could have also fully focused just one nation, i.e. Russian audiences, and completely exclude other nationalities. This might potentially give me better or just different results.

In a couple of cases I noticed that interviewees felt uncomfortable with being interviewed via Skype with camera and their answers were quite short and not descriptive. Situation might have been different if it would be a real talk face-to-face in a common space, however, there is no guarantee that a person is actually different outside virtual reality. Moreover, I believe that restrained behavior might be connected with the fact that I have never personally met those two respondents before and it was our first talk, therefore they did not feel comfortable sharing information with unknown person. They might have also been shy because they were afraid to give a 'wrong answer' to my questions, even though there were no such thing as right or wrong answer in the interview. Nevertheless, interviewees' timidity limited some of their answers and thus did not allow me to access full data.
4. Research Results & Analysis

In the following chapter I will analyze the interview data and match it with the theoretical findings from my literature review, if it appears to be possible.

4.1. Audiences motivation and reasons to watch Youtube

The question “What is your motivation to watch Youtube” turned out to be a tricky one to answer for many of the interviewees. It was hard for the respondents to formulate the reasons why they actually watch Youtube, what is the meaning of this social media in their lives.

As I found out, not everyone was ready to answer. Kirill took a pause before he could share his thoughts, and then he confessed that he has never thought of it before and the question was quite difficult for him. After all, he said that he just enjoys watching the real life of people:

“... I think that's the concept of Youtube – to be real. I think a person who is real always wins. Of course there are also shows looking like Real Shows but.. Why do I actually watch vlogs? Who is Casey, who is Connor Frunt? It's just some vloggers.. But it's not a show. I just like watching other people, the way they live and describe their lives.”

According to Kirill, Youtube creates opinions and makes people think differently. He also believes that it is especially important for teenagers who are easily influenced by Youtubers' views. Kirill sees only positive things about popular Youtubers spreading out their thoughts:

“... beauty bloggers sometimes talk about super fascinating topics. <...> ... she says something that can completely change your opinion, especially if you are a teenager studying in the 8th grade”.

Kirill thinks that Youtuber's honesty and ability to share personal thoughts is something that drives the audience to watch the content and motivates to subscribe to channels. In theory, this phenomena can be supported by Bandura's explanation of social cognitive theory. Audiences behavior and desire to follow specific content is shaped by influences of bloggers and their channels (2001, p.265).

Respondents selected several other points that motivate them to watch Youtube. One of the most popular reasons was the process of learning: viewers get new information even from the most basic vlogging channels which normally do not provide any specific knowledge. It can be
advice related to fashion & beauty, learning languages, traveling or various life hacks. Xenia said:

“I am curious to watch how other people learn languages, what's their approach. I am myself educated as a teacher so I always wonder how non-educated people deal with learning process, what they recommend.”

The more skills a Youtuber has, the more interesting for a viewer is to follow him. Often audiences' attention is captured by people whose life is extraordinary. For Niina, it is important that a blogger is passionate about something and can share his experiences with the others:

“I like when people are genuinely interested in something, do something that I can't see in my everyday life. So it's interesting to explore life through their lives.”

Another popular motivation to watch Youtube is variety of content. As Molly said:

“there is so much content than on any other platforms.. You can't really watch beauty bloggers on TV”.

Rich content creates possibilities to be entertained, which also leads to audience's interest towards the platform:

“They {bloggers} make me smile. Sometimes I am even laughing loud while watching.” (Zarina)

Several respondents also stated that bloggers play a role of motivators. Looking at someone who has a large viewership and interesting life makes audiences want to achieve something significant in their own lives too. According to Bandura, people are inspired by the success of others and role models motivate audiences to adopt their opinions or behavior (2001, p.274).

Ksenia could not formulate her thoughts on motivation for a while, and I asked her several additional questions. After all, she said:

“When I see someone of the same age like me, and he has got a broad audience, he is travelling around the globe, he is doing something.. It motivates me because you see that it's a real person who achieved something, and it means that I can achieve something as well if I really want it.”

Michael Strangelove was answering the question of why people participate in Youtube (2010, p.122) by saying that modern culture predisposes humans to make their confessions online, to
be open in the digital world and to expose their private moments through video entries about their lives. Apparently, audiences are quite happy to observe such confessional practices and even gain a lot of personal benefits out of it.

4.2. Watching habits
Surprisingly, respondents have common habits within Youtube watching process. Most of the respondents watch Youtube in the morning during breakfast and in the evening before going to bed. All of interviewees said that they watch Youtube while having meal, some added that they can do many other things in parallel with watching: cooking, cleaning, washing the dishes, doing makeup, working. For example, Anton said:

“Sometimes I eat or even study.. But rarely I just simply watch video.”

As I found out previously, back in 1992 Morley stated that television watching process often comes together with domestic duties and rarely occurs as a sole activity (p. 176). Apparently, this phenomena has been transferred to Youtube watching behavior as well. That explains why none of my interviewees rarely watch videos without doing something else on the side.

However, respondents only do several things simultaneously if content does not require extra attention and can be played as a background noise. In case if video consists of valuable information, respondents prefer to focus on it and listen carefully. Xenia explained it:

“If I hear some useful information then I prefer to sit down and watch, or to take notes if there is something really important. When it’s a video with some interesting actions happening then I’ll most likely just watch it without doing anything else at the same time.”

For some interviewees it does not matter which language is spoken on the video, however, for the others it plays crucial role. For example, Melitta (German girl) said that she prefers to watch videos in her mother tongue:

“For me it's just easier to listen to something in German because it is something I just do while I do other things besides.”

Speaking of gadgets used for watching, the majority states that they use laptop to watch Youtube at home. However, smartphones and iPad are also actively used by viewers. Xenia gives exact reason why sometimes she prefers laptop over any other gadget and in which situation smartphone is functioning better for her:
“Sometimes it's my laptop – I use it especially for those videos which have some links included to the description. Then it's more convenient to use laptop to open all those pages. But sometimes I also use mobile phone, especially to watch vlogs.”

Kirill added that he is using iPhone to watch Youtube on the train because it's a good way to kill time.

4.3. Content selection

In the literature review I discussed phenomena of vlogs and affinity videos watching. Such content (with the focus on lifestyle topics) is watched by my interviewees the most. In this section I will discover why audiences choose this type of videos and how exactly they select what to watch in different situations.

The way audiences choose content differs from person to person. One of the most important factors here is blogger’s personality. Respondents claimed that they will most likely not watch someone with irritating voice or unpleasant appearance. Melitta said:

“**I have to like the person to watch videos and not like the content, you know?**”

Melitta also added that it's important when a blogger has something in common with her, at least age. Otherwise she cannot relate herself to a blogger and there is no interest in watching:

“**There are a lot of youtubers who are super young and I never watch them because it's just totally different interests and jokes.**”

Each respondent uses different ways to store unwatched content and to check new uploads from their favorite bloggers. Ksenia regularly receives email notifications with new videos from her Youtube feed. Kirill always goes directly to 'Subscriptions' page and selects something to watch from there. Molly, on the contrary, never uses this function and mostly looks for content randomly through a search bar. Xenia said she opens videos that she likes in separate tabs on Google Chrome and keeps them opened until she watches everything.

Some of the respondents often watch videos recommended by Youtube. Depending on thumbnail and title, audiences choose whether they want to watch something random or not. However, for Kirill it is quite difficult to watch a content he is not familiar with. It takes time to get used to a new blogger. Nevertheless, if recommended video turned out to be nice, there is a chance that the viewer would like to follow this channel. This is how Kirill explained his actions:
“...actually, this is how I started to watch Marie Novosad recently. And I really didn't want to watch her before.. I mean, it's quite difficult for me to get used to new people, it takes a month, or two, or three.. And once I just opened her video, and then they started being recommended to me all the time, and then I thought OK, if she is always around here on Youtube and we have so many friends in common, it's time to start watching her too”.

This is a good example of how relationship between a viewer and a blogger start. If a blogger has a constant content, he will most likely followed by a larger audience (Lange 2008, p.73).

Interestingly, for some respondents is was quite a big deal whether a blogger lives in the same environment (country, or city) as them or not. For example, Melitta claimed that she only watches German bloggers – those who come from the same country as her:

“And also it's appealing because of course they are recommending things that I could do.. But if they lived e.g. in LA.. then I would probably never be able to go to LA, so it's not really appealing. No point for me to watch it.”

Meanwhile, Xenia said that it is more entertaining to watch someone living in the other part of the world. According to her, it's nice to learn about traditions and cultures of different places. As mentioned by Grusin (2009, p.61), Youtube can easily place viewers into a different context and create a feeling of being present in different reality. The ability to 'travel' and to see actual life of real people is very valued by the audiences. Xenia said:

“Actually, it does not matter for me where a person comes from. That's why I appreciate Youtube – you can find a blogger from any part of the world and to see his reality, to learn about his lifestyle. There is also a cool guy Kasyo Gasanov, he is travelling everywhere around the world, and this is a real person, he exists, and that's what I like about Youtube.”

All in all, audiences have different reasons for watching specific content. According to Patricia Lange, people who do not participate on Youtube at all, might not understand why there is such a huge interest towards this video platform and why someone is watching video content no matter if the quality is good or extremely low. Nevertheless, it is an individual choice of every Youtube viewer and everyone has his own motivation to follow certain bloggers. The interest towards the blogger cannot be bought or fabricated, it always arises naturally (2008, p.363). Variety of interview answers proves this statement of Lange.
4.4. Audiences' participation and watching behavior

The way people react on watched content is also quite interesting to observe. Watching behavior is closely connected to phenomena of communities on Youtube. Some people create discussions in the comments, argue or agree on something, make new friends or meet haters. There is a separate world existing in the comments section under each video.

According to Bruhn Jensen, digitalization has influenced on human attitude towards expressing opinions (2014, p.230). Today people can 'write back to the media' (Bruhn Jensen 2014, p.230) and get the ability to communicate not only to a blogger but between each other as well. Different people have various opinions on that, and not all of my respondents are actually representing communicating audiences Bruhn Jensen was talking about. Nevertheless, some of interviewees do use the chance to play active role in communicative processes on Youtube. In this chapter I will take a look at the empirical data of how this is happening.

As I found out, some people do not leave comments because they are afraid to be either ignored or ashamed for their opinion. Anton and Kirill shared their views explaining that according to their beliefs, often popular bloggers don't care about the comments and never reply to them. However, later Anton admitted that he is currently changing his attitude: recently he started leaving some comments and got responses, and it made him motivated to do it again in the future:

“I just suddenly realised how cool it is.. I mean, before I just had thoughts about the video after watching it but never really shared them. And suddenly I thought that it would be nice to write my thoughts <...> I actually started enjoying this kind of communication, and it's also cool to do something nice for that person who spent his time working on this video, creating this content.. And it's nice to get a reply then”.

Kirill adds that he mostly leaves comment to his friends' videos:

“I try to leave it below the video because, well, that's what comments are invented for – to express my opinion. And I am not ashamed if someone else will read it”.

The interviewed girls answered more or less similarly. However, Molly added that for her it's fun to read other comments even though she never participates in discussions herself. She is not really into communicative culture of Youtube:

“I don't know. For me it's not part that appeals to me on Youtube. I know there are big communities and stuff like that and people leave comments and become friends and talk and stuff like that. But for me it's basically just about the video, when the video is done I take
something else.. So.. I do read them though but I never reply because I just want to see what opinions people have”.  

Xenia prefers to avoid comments because she doesn't want to participate in group discussions. She is very sensitive in relation to her private space and she doesn't like when someone is trying to argue with her:  

“I just take everything very personal and if my comment will arise some arguments against then I'll start thinking about it all the time.. “.  

On the other hand, according to Burgess and Green, video blog's main function is actually to evoke this sort of active discussions and debates within the audiences (2009, p.54). However, exploring the data obtained from the interviews, seems like viewers are not yet ready to expose their opinions on the public.

Talking about likes and dislikes, mostly respondents were eager to press 'like' to videos that they really enjoyed watching. No surprising tendencies were observed in this part of my research. However, there was one unexpected moment when Anton admitted that he is playing the role of a hater sometimes. There is a blogger which he really doesn't like, and he often leaves dislikes under her videos just because of his personal enmity. He was quite open about it:  

“I just don't like that person, that blogger.. I really press dislike just on her channel. I mean, I only do it when I absolutely don't like her videos, it's not often.. But I actually do it sometimes”.  

To sum up, no matter what kind of audiences activities are happening on a blogger's channel, whether it is commenting, liking or sharing, all of them leave traces of viewers' presence and indicates the evolution of Youtube communicative culture (Burgess and Green 2009, p.57).

4.5. Communities and fandom  
For each interview participant, being a fan means something different. Not all of them admitted the presence of their personal fandom towards someone, in fact, it was only Kirill who proudly stated that he is a 100% fan and is always ready to support his favorite blogger. Ksenia and Xenia agreed on the fact that they have never idealized anyone in life, and did not even ever have favorite singer or actor, not speaking of bloggers. Xenia added that she simply enjoys watching real people but is not glorifying someone:  

“The reason why I have never been a fan of any actor is because I am attracted by real people, and Youtube blogger is a real person, he exists here, not in Hollywood”.
Ksenia stated that she might be a fan of the content produced by a blogger, though:

“I think I’m a fan of information that I receive from a person, and that person can motivate me. But I don’t idealize bloggers, and I don’t consider youtubers as celebrities”.

According to Grossberg, fans do not necessarily blindly believe in everything said by the person of their interest, however, they digest everything mentioned by their favorite content creators and select specific information they would like to apply in personal lives (2013, p.463). Niina adds that for her watching Youtube vlogs is similar to talking to a friend. Therefore, she does not exaggerate her attitude towards bloggers and does not consider them super stars. That’s how Niina explains why she is following a certain blogger:

“It’s just interesting to hear some opinions. So I’d say it’s maybe a substitution of meeting someone.. But I’m not a fan or something like that”.

Melitta has quite straightforward opinion about phenomena of fandom. According to her, a fan is someone who is stalking bloggers and expresses overwhelming interest towards them. Melitta claims she would never disturb a famous blogger on the street and show her sympathy:

“I think the fans are really the ones who comment on everything and just want to meet bloggers. For example, if I met a blogger it would have been the weirdest thing on Earth. Going to a meeting and saying “Hi, I watch you Youtube channel”.. No, I would not do it. So I could totally say I am not a fan. But it’s just interesting because most of bloggers are my age..”

All respondents said that they follow Youtube bloggers on Instagram as well. This allows to observe their private life and to get news related to blogger’s latest video uploads. However, for Xenia it is important that Instagram is managed by a blogger himself, and not by his or her fanclub. She finds fanpages quite annoying, that’s why she prefers Instagram to stay in touch with bloggers:

“I mostly follow all of them on Instagram. I guess that’s why I don’t really follow all those fanclubs because I know for sure that Instagram is managed by a blogger himself”.

Nobody amongst respondents showed their interest towards participation in fanclub activities. As I have discovered in the literature review, Strangelove explains it by saying that phenomena of fandom does not actually require involvement to public activities and being a fan can be also just a private affair (2010, p.114). Therefore, I was not surprised to find out that interviewees are not involved to any fan clubs. However, some of them said that they would like to attend a
fan meeting with their favorite blogger. Ksenia clarified that she is simply curious to see a Youtuber in real life:

“I think video is a video, it’s telling some information. But in reality a person can be completely different, and it’s interesting to look at him or her”.

Even though Youtube creates many possibilities to make friends within digital environment, viewers prefer not to discuss their passion towards video content with their real friends. Interviewees stated that they don’t even know if their friends watch Youtube too because they have never discussed it. They could not clarify the reason for avoidance of this topic. Melitta feels uncomfortable to talk about Youtube with friends because she believe she is quite old to watch this sort of content.

“sometimes I have the feeling that we are already 25 and watching youtube.. I am not sure but sometimes I have feeling if I tell people they are like “Hmm, you watch youtube videos..?!”. But I am not sure if THEY are doing it but just not telling, you know. <...> It’s weird that you are watching Youtube videos”, at least in my surroundings. Especially in Germany where people are like “no, we don't watch Youtube videos” but then they do and they don't tell”.

Melitta explained that in Germany people consider Youtube as a social media for teenagers, and that is why she feels uncomfortable discussing this with her peers. However, for her Youtube content is similar to tv-series, meaning that it’s just casual entertainment.

Niina adds that she also does not know if her friends are into this topic:

“And actually I don't know if my friends are subscribed to Youtube. It's a topic that we somehow never discuss”.

However, viewers of Youtube communicate with each other quite actively. Audiences feel much more comfortable talking to people like them, to those who have similar interests and especially if they have common favorite bloggers. It is easier to make friends within Youtube rather than explain ‘real’ friends your passion towards video content. Xenia explains why she enjoys making new friends on the platform of Youtube and why she is interested in going to fan meetings with a blogger:

“So if someone else is watching a blogger I watch, then we are most likely have a lot in common. And I can enlarge my own community, talk to new people, meet people. So it won't be actually because of a blogger himself because I realise that when you have 300K subscribers
it's hard to be friends with everyone. But I could most likely find new friends amongst those 300K who watch that blogger”.

Groene and Hettinger discussed that fandom does not just include passive content consumption, and even though sometimes fan interaction is only based online, it can still be quite active and dynamic (2015, p.3). Talking about fandom with my respondents I realised that they also put much bigger meaning behind this phenomena rather than simply blindly admiring someone.

4.6. Advertising

It is a fact that ads became essential part of Youtube culture (Strangelove 2010, p.177). In the literature review I was looking at the relationship between audiences, video content and advertising on Youtube. The interview method allowed me to get viewer's opinion on that. I found out that audience's attitude towards advertising depends on several factors.

First, it is hard to deceive viewers with the product placement ads because audiences can naturally feel whether a blogger is saying honest opinion regarding something or he/she is trying to sell a product. Zarina said that she has a special feeling that allows her to recognize sponsored content:

“I think there are moments when I feel that it's a commercial, and at the same time I feel when a blogger is saying something honestly without being paid. I have this intuition I guess..”

There is of course no guarantee that a blogger would endorse a product without getting paid for it, however, it is not the aspect that I would like to focus on in Zarina's words. She mentions 'intuition' which often depends on amount of time viewers spent watching a blogger. Real fans are truly familiar with their favorite blogger's behavior, therefore it is quite easy for them to see if a product is advertised or simply mentioned without any promotional intentions. Moreover, fans will in any case pay attention towards advertised product because they believe that their favorite blogger could not have selected a wrong thing to sell. The level of fan's trust can be quite high in these terms. Kirill explains that after following someone on Youtube for a long time he has a feeling that he can totally rely on blogger's opinion.

“What do you think.. When I watch 100 videos from one person, and then there is an advertisement in one of them.. Of course I still trust him. <...> I definitely trust those who I watch. And also, I either trust 100%, or don't trust at all, so.. I don't trust to those people who I don't like”.

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This, in turn, is a great example of cultivation theory which I discussed in literature review. According to the theory, audience's beliefs depend on frequency of video content watching (Shrum 2002, p.72).

Moreover, most of the respondents stated that they actually do buy products recommended by bloggers. For Molly, watching Youtube is the only way she finds out about new beauty products which she later invests into. She also explains that Youtube helps her to find appropriate products for her skin, so she uses it as a search engine for a purchase:

“Basically, all my makeup [comes from] over there. Cause I also look up for youtubers based on my skin type. I click on videos that about oily to mixed skin.. And then I check what makeup brands is she [a blogger] using and then I would also go and buy it.

Kirill says that he won't necessarily buy the same item as the blogger has got, however, he will keep in mind specific recommendations related to a certain brand:

“When my favorite blogger says that he bought something from H&M, I just create a better opinion about H&M in my head. And next time I will go shopping to H&M. So I think this kind of ads work on a subconscious level”.

Nevertheless, advertising can still influence on audiences watching behavior. If a follower is genuinely not interested in e.g. beauty topic, he won't watch a video related to this even if it's filmed by his favorite blogger. Zarina said she has been into similar situations before:

“If it's not a whole video dedicated to some commercial, then it's fine. But if it is, for example, a review of Urban Decay beauty product, then I most likely won't watch such video even if it's made by my favorite blogger”.

It is important for viewers when bloggers are being honest about their attitude towards advertised product. Audiences appreciate sincere reviews, and as said by Xenia, anti-advertising is sometimes even better than a positive notice:

“If a person is telling that he did not like specific product, then it's even better, I respect that”.

Moreover, it is the best for audiences when a blogger is publishing disclaimer under the video specifying if video is sponsored. It doesn't only create more trust but also evokes respect in relation to video content creator. Melitta said that she feels being treated better when she knows for sure whether she is watching commercialized content or not.
“I think bloggers usually should write under the video that it's an advertising. They shouldn't make it as a personal opinion if they are paid for it. I think it's not fair”.

All of the interviewees agreed that product placement ads inside the video generally do not bother them. Ksenia claimed:

“There are people who hate it but personally, I am fine with it. I think it's normal”.

Kirill admitted that he doesn't even notice advertisement in video content:

“I don't pay attention to those ads, I never remember what is said there”.

Xenia and Niina believe that actually bloggers deserve to be paid for all the work they have done, and advertisement is a natural aspect of video blogging. According to Andrejevic, viewers anyway perform their work by consuming sponsored video content (2013, p.496), meaning that no matter whether audience's feedback on it is positive or negative, they still have seen mentioned brand and received the message which is the most important for the advertiser. Nevertheless, both Xenia and Niina are very tolerant with commercialized content. Xenia adds:

“Sometimes I scroll through video comments under the clip that has advertising in it. And many people are pissed off because of the product placement. But for me it's totally ok. A blogger spent his time to create this video, to tell about the product.. It doesn't hurt me if there is a little ad inside”.

Interestingly, Molly mentions that she actually likes watching ads. She used to study marketing and for her Youtube is a great research platform that allows to learn more about various types of product placement and advertising models. As mentioned by Michael Strangelove, sponsoring does force bloggers to think innovatively and to create unique video content (2010, p.176), therefore there is always something to learn from it:

“Uum.. I actually like it.. Maybe because it used to be my major in college, and I really like to watch them even on TV.. there are a lot of new brands and products that you discover through that, so I really don't mind”.

Speaking of discovering new products, for Molly it is important to watch content which shows specifically those products that can be bought in her country. She explains that it makes no sense to watch recommendations on something that she cannot purchase:
“Zoella, for example, she posts so many videos. She is from UK. and she post so many things that are only available in the US. so I’m just like. Why would you promote things that are not available in other places.”

To sum up, advertising is perceived by the audiences as a natural part of Youtube content and none of participants have negative opinions about it. Nevertheless, respondents demand respectful attitude to themselves and prefer to be aware of the fact that they watch sponsored content.

5. Discussion

The literature review and analysis presented above were focused on the topic of audiences behavior within Youtube environment. Initial purpose of my research was to find out what is audience's behavior on video platform and its attitudes towards lifestyle video blogs on Youtube. During the research I divided my research statement into several sub-themes in order to create detailed observation of the issue. Theoretical data was supported by empirical approach – semi-structured interviews. The data collected in current research could be used as a basis for further explorations. There are several issues that I discovered during the studies and would be interested to investigate in the future. In this chapter I will summarize my findings and proposal for further research and lead them to a common denominator.

I started exploring my research statement from looking at the development of audiences watching preferences and behavior during the past years. I compared television watching habits with the way people consume Youtube content today and found several similarities and distinctions. For example, I found out that while TV was functioning as a distortion of viewer's perception of the world (Shrum 2002, p.69), Youtube content creators started showing reality the way it is, and this evoked audience's interest towards video-sharing platform. However, despite the fact that the sample of my interview believes in the truthfulness of what's being shown on Youtube, there are many talks about how fake Youtube blogging actually is. Surprisingly, none of the respondents mentioned this issue during my studies. This, however, might be a topic for further investigation of current research area.

The reason why audiences actually watch lifestyle content on Youtube is mainly because they are interested in other people's realities. However, comparing to television reality shows, viewers know that Youtubers are not fictional characters who are getting paid to play the role but real people who have creative approach in sharing their daily routine through the blog. In my research I discussed phenomena of affinity videos and vlogs and realized that audiences easily adopt bloggers' habits, it is proved by social cognitive theory developed by Albert
Bandura. By learning from bloggers, audiences obtain experiences and create their own imagination of reality.

Audiences watching behavior on Youtube depends on several factors. In my research I found out how and why viewers discover specific videos and what forces them to consume lifestyle content. Interviewees revealed their watching habits and described how Youtube fits into their daily routine. For example, one of interesting findings was the fact that respondents never really watch Youtube as a sole activity, and videos often are part of multitasking process.

In addition to that, it would be also interesting to apply ecology mapping method and to discover audiences precise actions within Youtube watching routine. The method could help to examine the complexity of communication between user and Youtube and the way Youtube possibly interacts with other social media in viewer's life. Through the research of communication system complexity I could obtain additional data that would create a full picture of Youtube utilization process. Thus, it would be easier to understand audiences' behavior and find motivation to their actions.

In my research I also studied phenomena of fandom and Youtube communities. Using cultivation theory, I looked into the reasons of high interest towards video channels. Through empirical method I found out that it is not only a popular person who can evoke interest and a feeling of sympathy but also the content that attracts viewers and hooks them on a channel. I also discovered viewers opinion regarding fanclubs and found out that the respondents do not actively participate in fan activities preferring to admire their favorite bloggers individually. However, the results might have been different if I selected another interview sampling and focused on, for example, audience younger than 18 years old. There is a tendency that young people easily become affected by online media sources and social media (Huffington Post). Additionally, in general youngsters tend to show more interest towards fan activities than adults. If I have selected younger target group for my research, findings on fandom could look completely different and, in fact, more diverse.

While investigating my research area, I have got another idea for possible further explorations: it would be interesting to conduct several interviews with the bloggers who create popular content and to find out what are their impressions of interaction with audiences. Bloggers can influence on viewers behavior by creating certain content or communicating in some specific ways. Therefore, I would like to find out what are blogger's methods when it comes to grabbing audiences attention and how Youtuber's actions influence on viewers behavior.

During my studies I observed the fact of a vast gap between advertisers and the audiences in the TV era due to the lack of information about the viewers. However, today, with the modern
technology of Youtube it is possible to analyze viewers in details. It is quite obvious that companies can use video platform as a massive channel to sell their products with the help of popular bloggers. Youtube created the possibility to invent new marketing models for brands and to obtain entrepreneurial skills for content creators. It is very likely that Youtube is on its way to become an empire of new marketing solutions since it has already become an effective tool for earning money.

Audiences, however, play the most important role here since it would not be possible to achieve this progress and to spread out the content so successfully if there were nobody to watch it. As I found out from the interviews, viewers do not mind watching advertised content on Youtube. On the contrary, it is convenient for them to learn about new products through bloggers recommendations. Viewers do understand that bloggers are getting paid for this kind of content, however, this does not push them away from watching.

Talking about my impressions from communication with variety of respondents, I must say that, personally, I consider the method of interview the most convenient and trustworthy way to study audiences' attitude towards trends on Youtube. For me, the best opportunity to learn something about the viewers is to talk to them directly. During the interview I did not only note a lot of new information about the subject but also made some records on my personal reactions and impressions of the study experience (Whitehead 2015, p.7).

However, in case of further research it would be interesting to create more diverse sample for the interview method in order to obtain different findings. At the moment I had only 3 nationalities amongst the respondents, with a majority of Russian-speaking respondents. With a wider selection of people from different countries I could have gotten data about various cultures and compare audiences watching habits, preferences and behavior worldwide.

After discussing the theoretical and practical approach to research statement and based on the findings I have got during the research process, I would like to create a final conclusion for current studies.
6. Conclusion

Audiences are the main factor that drives social media and platforms such as Youtube. Without active viewership there would not be any point to create content and run channels. Therefore, it is important to study audiences and their behavior – to be able to recognize what is more interesting for them, what they are seeking for, what makes them stay on the platform. When a blogger knows what a viewer wants and needs to watch, it is easier to create relevant content which will be warmly welcomed by audiences.

In my research I found out the reasons why video vlogging is so popular, and I got to know that mainly people just want to watch someone living their lives. As simple as that, we, human beings, are often curious about other people. We tend to compare ourselves, to adapt habits from each other, to imitate someone's behavior and to dream of having someone else's life. And as long as we are interested in watching other people, video blogs will exist and they will be popular.

Trends within video content are always changing and, in fact, it is happening due to audiences' activity. The freedom of reflection on the video, commenting, sharing, collaborating and interacting with it, allows viewers to influence on content and its quality. Bloggers are very attentive to the voice of audiences and they take into consideration viewers' opinion. Therefore, content creators can easily adapt their work to the format that would be most viewed and better accepted by the public.

Audience's approving attitude towards advertising also gives bloggers a chance to be flexible and to create content that will be valuable for viewers and at the same time could bring financial benefits to the author.

Nevertheless, because of a constant change and developments within digital media and technologies, none of the conclusions can be actually fixed and taken as the final ones. New tendencies bring fresh opinions, and knowing that audiences easily change their preferences, there is no guarantee that lifestyle content will remain on the same top position and stay popular amongst viewers.
7. Bibliography


8. Appendices

8.1. Appendix 1. Interview Guide

Name of participant:
Age:
Nationality:
Country of residence:
Date of the interview:

Questions:

Introduction
Could you describe, on a typical day, how do you watch Youtube?

Content
What kind of content do you prefer watching the most?
How do you choose a video to watch?
What kind of videos you don't watch at all?
In which case would you watch videos shown as 'recommended' by Youtube?
What are your favorite Youtube channels at the moment?

Watching behavior
What time of the day do you watch Youtube?
Which gadget do you use to watch Youtube?
Are you doing something else while watching? (If yes, what exactly?)
Where do you usually watch Youtube?
How often do you leave comments on Youtube?
In which situation would you press like under the video?
How often do you rewatch videos?
What could make you stop watching certain video?

Fandom
How would you describe your attitude towards your favorite blogger? (Do you consider yourself a fan?)
How often do you attend events created by a fanclub or by a blogger?)
How often do you buy products mentioned by your favorite bloggers?
What is your attitude towards advertising and product placement in the videos?
What other media complements Youtube in your case?
How often do you discuss youtube with your friends?
Would you prefer to watch someone similar to you or a person having completely different lifestyle?

Conclusion
Could you define your motivation to watch youtube?
What are your impressions of the interview?

8.2. Appendix 2. Interviews

Color coding legend:

Motivation to watch Youtube
Watching behaviour:

Content selection
Habits
Behavior
Phenomena of fandom
Communities of audiences
Advertising on Youtube

INTERVIEW 1. MELITTA (25). German, lives in Denmark. 13/4/2016

– Can you describe, on a typical day, how do you watch youtube?
– Yes. I mean, I would not say I watch Youtube daily. I would say, I watch it several times a week. And I have some Youtubers that I follow. Actually, I don't have a Youtube account so I am not subscribed to any Youtubers because I never had a Youtube account, I don't know why. I should do this. But em.. I have several Youtubers who I follow, actually they are German because I am from Germany. And for me it's just easier to listen to something in German because it is something I just do while I do other things besides. So it's not like I am just sitting in front of Youtube and just watch videos but.. I don't know.. doing my Danish homework for example, then I watch some Youtube videos.

– Could you please give more examples of what else you are normally doing while watching the videos?
– Sometimes I am sewing or sometimes I'm cooking or.. brushing my teeth.. So I just put it on my phone and just watching. Because the content is not something I should really focus on.
– Ok, so you said you are not really subscribed to any channel. But do you have any favorite blogger that you always watch?

– Yes. There are two girls from Germany, they are called Consider Cologne and they are having like weekly blog which I really like to watch. And then I have several other bloggers. Em.. Teetharejade, Dariadaria, yeah, some German bloggers. Or MadamTamtam. Yeah... sometimes when I'm on Youtube I just watch their videos. Because some of them don't upload so regularly. Sometimes I just put their names on search when I have nothing to do and then I say. “ah, yeah ok, I could watch this video they uploaded” - I don't know - one week ago. So it's not really regularly that I think “ok, today it's Monday and I will watch this video”. It's more like entertainment..

– Aha, I see. But what kind of content do you normally watch?

– All of them I watch are somehow fashion or beauty blogs but they all have different focus, for example bloggers from Consider Cologne just show more of their daily life and then they are showing also videos like... how to put on makeup on and things like this but I am not really interested in these, so I don't watch this kind of videos. I just watch more like Youtube vlogs, or daily vlogs or interior stuff or travel vlogs that I also like... where they show where they have been. But for me it's more like... I have to like the person to watch videos and not like the content, you know? It's like... they have to be sympathetic, to be really nice people... I see that I would like to have them in real life, you know what I mean? And then I just watch because I think it's nice how they talk, if they are natural and everything. So I couldn't watch something just because of the content. Even if I really would like to see this and this but I really don't like the person, and I think “oh my god, her voice is so annoying”, then I would just switch it off. Because for me it's important that I feel comfortable with the blogger, and it's important that she is natural for me. When it doesn't seem that they want to sell you something but they do it really because it is their passion and they really want to share things.

– And do you also follow those people somewhere else on other social media?

– Yes, usually I follow them on Instagram and sometimes I didn't even know that they have a Youtube channel before, so I just found them on Instagram – one blogger, and another blogger, for example... Or a friend of mine, she is also a blogger but not the big one, and she also has a blog but not a Youtube channel but she knows a lot of other bloggers, so sometimes she introduces me like and saying “Have you seen this and that? And this is interesting as well. “. So... But most of them on Instagram and then I just watch the videos. Because mostly all of them write “oh, I have this new video on Youtube” and then I'm like “Ah, ok!” Because I am not subscribed and I don't know when they upload the videos. So sometimes they say with the picture on Instagram and write a caption like “there is a new video on my Youtube” – and then I go. And of course if I watch one video, and I see another one featured next to it, then I go and watch it as well.

– But do you watch videos that are recommended by Youtube but are not from your favorite blogger?

– Not really. I mean, sometimes I start watching them. And then I don't really like it or I don't feel that it's interesting, so I just drop off the video.
– And do you sometimes also rewatch some videos?
– No, I think I haven't done this. Because actually Youtube now has – and I think it's really nice-- a button that says that you have already watched this. So no, I don't see the sense to watch it again. But sometimes when I for example find out about a new youtuber then of course I watch the old videos as well.

– I see. And do you also leave likes or comments under the video?
– Mmm.. not really.. I mean, I did it maybe just twice but just if I'm interested in a product or something they showed. And most of bloggers just write down in the description what they have used. But sometimes I can't find information and then I just ask but I would never comment saying “Ah, this video is so great!”.. I don't know.. Because I have a feeling that most people who do it they want to promote their own channel, for example they write “Hi, it's me and my blog is blablabla”, But since I don’t have a blog and I don't really use other social media I don't see the point of doing it. But sometimes when I think it's a really good video I thought about writing it but then I think it's really ridiculous to write it.. But I don’t know.. (laughing) .. how to explain.. But I am more a passive 'watcher' I would say.

– Ok, and another question – what gadget do you normally use to watch Youtube?
– Either my phone, or computer. It depends. When I in the bathroom brushing my teeth I usually use my iPhone. But when I'm on my computer and then I see a new video then I will watch it there.

– Aha, and what time of the day do you watch it then?
– Mostly I'd say either in the morning when I have a bit of time eating breakfast and I am alone and I am watching some videos, or in the evening when I can't concentrate anymore. But I think it's too much of a distraction to do it during the day because if I am working on something and then I get into Youtube, then I just watch and stop working, so I try not to do this. So yeah, most of the time it's in the morning or in the night.

– Ok. You mentioned bloggers who are showing products in their videos. Can you say that you really trust your favorite blogger when she recommends something and you buy it?
– It actually just happened once. I mean, most of the bloggers usually show cosmetics and I am not that interested in it. So even if they say it's a good product.. I think I did it just once or twice when I bought it because when I was looking for a concealer and they mention it 1000 times then I think “ok, I could try it”. But not that often. But.. I mean.. That's what I meant. Once I follow, I have a feeling that.. Mm, that sounds really creepy but.. I have a feeling that I know them, after a while. That's weird but it is how it is. That's how if you would have mentioned “Hey Melitta, I found this new emm.. I don't know.. a toothpaste, and it's really good” then I would think “ok, if Ellina says so probably I should try it as well”. So at some point I would say yes but I am not really the one who starts buying everything they show. But it's an inspiration.

– Aha. And.. can you call yourself a fan in some way?
– No, totally not. I think the fans are really the ones who comment on everything and just want to meet bloggers. For example, if I met a blogger it would have been the weirdest thing on Earth. Going to a meeting and saying "Hi, I watch you Youtube channel!".. No, I would not do it. So I could totally say I am not a fan. But it's just interesting because most of bloggers are my age. There are a lot of youtubers who are super young and I never watch them because it's just totally different interests and jokes.. So yeah, they are all around my age and from Germany. Most of them are also from Berlin, where I am from, so I really can relate to them.

– So if your favorite blogger would organize a meeting..
– No, haha

– ..you would never go..?
– No {smiling}

– Do you have any other friends who watch the same bloggers as you and you discuss it?
– Yes, that one who has her own blog, she also works for German cosmetic brand Glossybox.. And she meets them to collaborate on more professional scale. And of course when I talk to her it's interesting to hear all this personal stuff about other bloggers. Because even if you think you know them, of course they are just showing the best of their life. So sometimes my friend Caroline tells me all their “secrets” they would not show on Youtube. But I think she is the only friend I talk to about Youtube. So I don't have so many friends like that.. Or I am not sure if they are talking about it, you know. Because sometimes I have the feeling that we are already 25 and watching youtube.. I am not sure but sometimes I have feeling if I tell people they are like “Hmm, you watch youtube videos..?!”. But I am not sure if THEY are doing it but just not telling, you know. Because for me it's no difference if I watch Youtube or I watch really stupid series on TV, for me it is the same. But I think some people are just thinking “hmm Youtube.. It's just for young people.. It's weird that you are watching Youtube videos”, at least in my surroundings. Especially in Germany where people are like “no, we don't watch Youtube videos” but then they do and they don't tell.

– That's really interesting actually! Good. But when you are watching and you said you can relate yourself to the blogger.. Does it matter for you where the blogger comes from? If she is from your city or any other place abroad..?
– I would say it's important.. It feels much closer for me, first of all because of language. Because I started watching Zoella and I think it just doesn't appeal to me because she is from England and.. And.. I think she's really annoying. So for me it's really important that it's in my language because for me it's something that I can listen to when I am doing something else, for example. If I listen to German bloggers I can distract myself but I still get what they say but if I watch in English for example, then I have to really concentrate and for me it's not the.. hmm.. it wouldn't be the first priority to watch their videos. So that's one reason. And also it's appealing because of course they are recommending things that I could do.. But if they lived e.g. in LA.. then I would probably never be able to go to LA, so it's not really appealing. No point for me. Yeah, I actually just watch German speaking youtubers.
– Alright, thank you very much! That was my last question actually. Thank you for your time.
– Of course, no problem! You are welcome.

INTERVIEW 2. NIINA (31). Russian, lives in Germany. 13/4/2016

– Can you describe, on a typical day, how do you watch youtube?
– I’d say I’m watching YT mostly when I’m having breakfast or before I go to bed. And I have several subscriptions and either I check if they posted something new or sometimes if I’m interested in specific topic I just look on YT for any videos regarding that.

– So when you want to watch something new, do you usually open the 'subscriptions' page or what is the procedure?
– Yes, I'd say I normally open subscription page and see if someone who I'm subscribed to has posted anything new.

– And amongst those videos how do you choose which video you want to watch first?
– Actually, I have several favorites, some friends who I know in person and I want to watch them and some others also who speak about some interesting topics, for example sustainability, there is one girl I'm subscribed to.. And some others.. They are mostly 'makeup girls' or I don't know.. Some girly channels. I am also subscribed to them but I'm watching these videos mostly when I really want to watch something and unload my brain.

– I see. And could you name some of your favorite channels?
– Can I write to you them later? I don't really remember it right now.

– Ok! And could you please tell me more about the content that you prefer? You already named sustainability, right?..
– I’d say I like lifestyle but with some idea behind it. Because there are so many lifestyle blogs and most of them are based on makeup and just boys or girls walking around the city.. But I like when people are genuinely interested in something, do something that I can't see in my everyday life. So it's interesting to explore life through their lives. But I can't say that I have a lot of such channels. Mostly I stumble upon them when I'm researching on something.

– Ok. And how often do you leave comments on Youtube?
– Mmm I don't know. I'd say not that often but there are several people who I know in person and I usually comment on their videos. And sometimes when I'm really touched or interested in the topic I also could write something. But not that often I'd say.

– Ahaa. And what about likes?
– Likes? I almost always put them on videos that I liked and enjoyed watching.
– I see. And how often do you rewatch some videos?
– I’d say rarely, only if it’s some tutorials to cook something, where I really need to follow the process. Or if it’s really inspirational thing, then I can maybe also watch it but that happens not that often.

– And what could make you stop watching a video?
– Mm maybe when a person says something that I really disagree with. Then I’m trying to listen a bit further, give him or her her chance but if it’s something that I really don’t understand what he means then I just think – why would I waste my time.

– Ok, I see! Is there some kind of videos that you would never watch at all?
– I think I really don’t like that genre of videos with “funny” guys or girls who are.. I don’t know how to say.. They are summing up what have happened on the Internet during the past week. So they sort of have their own prospect on what’s happened in a “cool” way to describe it and it’s supposed to be funny. But I really don’t see myself watching it. I don’t know how to describe it.. But do you understand what I mean?

– Yeah, yeah. In which case would you watch the video which is recommended by YT?
– Sometime ago it recommended me a girl from Germany who is filming about sustainability and I really liked the channel.

– So what made you click on her video?
– I think it was an interesting header.

– Mhm. Which gadget do you normally use to watch YT?
– iPad

– And what time of the day do you watch it?
– I guess when I have breakfast and before I go to bed. So either with my morning coffee or in the evening.

– Is there something else that you are doing while watching?
– In the evening when I’m lying in bed I just watch. And in the morning – while I drink coffee or something.

– Ok. And how would you describe your attitude towards certain favorite bloggers? Would you call yourself a fan..?
– No, I would not call myself a fan, I would call it... hmmmhmh.. I am genuinely interested sometimes in seeing what other people tell or do but I can’t say that I am a real fan. It’s just interesting to hear some opinions. So I’d say it’s maybe a substitution of meeting someone.. But I’m not a fan or something like that.

– Then what is your general motivation to watch YT?
– To hear people talking, to see life through someone else's life and to hear some ideas I can't discuss with my friends for example when I learn something about sustainability or other countries.

– And do you discuss YT often with your friends?
– Nnoo.. not really.
– Why not?
– I don't know.. Because we are not really subscribed to the same channels. And actually I don't know if my friends are subscribed to yt. It's a topic that we somehow never discuss.

– Ahaa. And by the way, have you ever joined a fanclub of some youtuber?
– No.

– Is there any other media or social media that you use to follow your favorite bloggers?
– No.

– So you just watch them on Youtube?
– Yes.. I'd say there are maybe 2 who I also follow on Instagram but that's all.

– Ok. And what's your attitude towards advertising and product placement in the video?
– Do you mean advertising before the video?

– No, inside the video, made by a blogger.
– I'm ok with that but I think bloggers usually should write under the video that it's an advertising. They shouldn't make it as a personal opinion if they are paid for it. I think it's not fair.

– Aha. And would you buy a product that is recommended by a blogger?
– Yeah, I think if I'm interested in a product overall, I could google it and wonder what that product is and actually maybe I would pay more attention to it than if it wasn't mentioned by the blogger.

– Mhm. And if your favorite blogger would create some event and invite all viewers, would you join it?
– Yeah, I think so, I could go.

– Ok, thank you! It was actually my last question. But I would like to ask what do you think about this interview, how was it?
– It was nice! I enjoyed it. (laughing)


– Can you describe, on a typical day, how do you watch youtube?
I started watching Youtube around 6 months ago. I use it on a daily basis for example to look for cooking recipes or travel ideas. I watch videos everyday. In the weekend I can spend 1-2h just watching videos about different countries, travelling. On a workday I usually search for cooking ideas or just watch videos to cheer up myself, to take a break from work during the lunch.

What time of the day do you usually watch it?
In the workday it's usually lunch time between 12:00 and 14:00, and in the weekend it's normally during the evening between 18:00 and 22:00.

I see. And where are you watching it – at home or at work?
Only at home. I work at home as well, that's why I can watch it during the lunch.

What gadget do you use to watch it?
Laptop.

What kind of content do you prefer? You already mentioned cooking and travel..
Yeah.. Lately I also started watching videos that help me to learn English. Sometimes I watch beauty videos but not that often. I also love travel vlogs. And I'm watching calligraphy videos.

I see. Could you please name some of your favorite bloggers?
Anastacia Kay, Marie Novosad. But lately Marie started uploading videos every day and they are not that useful anymore, so I don't watch her that often. For me it's quite important to get some information, to learn some life hacks from Youtube, and not just listen to random talks. I want to listen about something than I can use in my life later on.

I see. How do you choose what video to watch?
Hmm.. I start with a message that comes to my email when some of my subscriptions have uploaded a new video. So when email comes, I open it and check the topic of uploaded video. If there is something interesting to me, then I'm watching the video and also checking out related videos that appear on the right side of the page.

Do you mean that you are subscribed to email newsletter which informs you about new uploads by your favorite blogger?
Yes, exactly.

And how often do you receive such emails?
Every time when some of my favorite bloggers uploads something new.

Got it. Do you watch videos from these emails immediately when you receive them?
If it comes in a day time, I usually wait for lunch or evening when I have free time to watch it.

And do you also use the page 'Subscriptions' to watch newly uploaded videos from people you follow?
– Not really, I mostly use email notifications and start from there. I never really use YT homepage. Though sometimes I open homepage if I know that I have already seen a certain video and want to rewatch it again for some reasons, then I go to concrete channel to watch something.

– I see. Do you rewatch videos often?
  – Yes. Probably it depends on what I have watched.

– What kind of video would you rewatch normally?
  – Mmmm.. for example, some videos with tips on learning English. I watched Slava Beauty Tips channel recently and found one there, and then came back to it after some time and watched it again. Once I also saw similar video on Anastacia Kay channel where she recommended certain book for learning English, and later I watched this video again to remember the name of that book.

– What about more relaxing videos about beauty or lifestyle – do you watch them again too?
  – Mmmm... I would say I only watch them once just to cheer up myself when I'm in a bad mood.. But I don't really watch them again after that.

– I see. Do you watch videos recommended by Youtube?
  – Probably I watch around 50% of them. Others don't really attract me.

– What kind of recommended video could attract you then?
  – A video with appealing title. Ah, and also thumbnail!

– Aha. And does it happen that you only watch one specific blogger in a day?
  – Yeah. Since Marie Novosad started uploading daily, I didn't watch her videos often. But then I turned on her channel in the weekend because I knew it will take a lot of time, and I watched them all together at once.

– Do you leave comments often?
  – No. I never leave comment anywhere, not only on Youtube.

– Why not?
  – I don't know.. Sometimes I do leave a comment if I have a question. But I never write something like “great video” or “great channel” but I don't know why..

– And do you press likes?
  – Yes.

– How often?
  – If I really liked the video, I press like. I'd say 70% of watched videos are “liked” by me.

– Ok. And do you normally watch the whole video or can you stop watching in the middle of it for some reason?
– I never really stop watching but I'm scrolling through it. For example, if there is something that doesn't make sense to me, or if a blogger is talking about irrelevant subject, I will definitely scroll through. And if then I see that blogger is back to original topic, I keep watching. Otherwise I turn it off. So anyway I give a chance to blogger and never just close the video immediately if I don't like it.

– I understand. Can you tell if there are some videos or content that you don't watch at all?
– I have seen some channels, for example about sport and trainings, where there is loads of content but it's absolutely ridiculous and exercises are not shown correctly. So basically, those channels share wrong information even though it's filmed really nice. But it doesn't appeal to me because I don't want to watch something artificial and useless. Such channels actually scare me. I also used to read comments under these videos where even real trainers were saying that exercises are done completely wrong. So it's really strange.

– Sounds interesting. Do you do something else while watching YT?
– Yes. I normally check email simultaneously. If it is some informative and educative video then I can drink tea meanwhile. But most often I just eat while watching.

– And in which room do you normally watch it?
– In the kitchen. I mean, I live in a studio apartment, so it is something in the middle of kitchen and living room.

– I see. You named some of your favorite bloggers. But have you ever joined their fanclubs?
– No, not really.

– But if a blogger organised a meeting with subscribers, would you go?
– Yes, definitely. I think video is a video, it's telling some information. But in reality a person can be completely different, and it's interesting to look at him or her.

– And do you follow your favorite youtuber on some other social media?
– Yes, on Instagram.

– And could you actually call yourself a fan of those bloggers?
– Hmm. probably not.. I think I'm a fan of information that I receive from a person, and that person can motivate me. But I don't idealize her, and I don't consider youtubers as celebrities. But maybe it also deals with my personal characteristics since I have never been a fan of any singer or actor, I never hanged a poster of someone to the wall, you know.. It's not my kind of thing to do.

– I see. And could you explain what actually motivates you to watch YT?
– Hmm.. when I started traveling I realised that there are no restrictions and limits, and nothing can actually bound me to do something I like. And that in real life I can do.. mm.. that everything is actually.. mm.. how to say that.. uhh...

– That everything is possible?
– Yes, precisely.
– So you realised that when started watching youtube?
– Yes. So I mean that when I see someone of the same age like me, and he has got a broad audience, he is travelling around the globe, he is doing something. It motivates me because you see that it’s a real person who achieved something, and it means that I can achieve something as well if I really want it.

– I got it. Sounds interesting. And how much do you actually trust to everything blogger says and shows?
– Those who I watch for a long time already – I really trust them. And when I see e.g. Instagram post from some of them recommending something, I will be sure that this product is really good. I do understand that there will always be advertisement on Youtube. There are people who hate it but personally, I am fine with it. I think it’s normal.

– I see. Have you ever bought something a blogger has recommended?
– Yes. Mostly beauty products. From Slava Beauty Tips, for example. Hair products.

– Ok. Great. My last question is how do you feel about this interview, what are your emotions?
– I’d say I am a beginner on Youtube, I started watching it just recently. And when you asked how I am choosing videos to watch, I started thinking and realising. Yeah.. I don’t really know why I choose this or that.. It’s interesting to think about it.

– Yeah, we never really think about it in real life, right?
– Exactly.

– Alright, thank you for your time!
– No problem!

INTERVIEW 4. MOLLY (23, Belgium). Dutch, lives in Belgium.
17/4/2016

– Can you describe, on a typical day, how do you watch youtube?
– Uuum it depends cause usually when I wake up and get ready before going to work, I am using my makeup table and either I put up a music from YT or I put a tutorial which I watch or don’t really watch while I’m doing my makeup. So it depends...

– So what time of the day do you usually watch it?
– Uum I watch it in the morning, and then in the afternoon it can be when I come home from work and relax. Usually it’s in the evening. The time when I calm down. Because I travel 1,5h from work every day and then I want to relax, to cook or something. And then before bed I usually watch YT to fall asleep.
– Aha, I see. So which room do you usually watch videos?
  – Bedroom a lot. and livingroom. But mostly bedroom.

– Ok, and which gadget do you use?
  – I have ipad or iphone.

– So, you mentioned already that you are doing your makeup while watching, and what else you might be doing?
  – I cook sometimes as well while watching it.. Because when you need to stir spaghetti sauce or something like that, I usually watch videos. Or in the shower, I have my music playlist on YT that I put when I shower.

– Ok, but then it's just music right?
  – Yeah

– And what kind of content do you watch besides music?
  – Tutorials, mostly beauty.. I like to look at the recipes a lot. Mmm.. sometimes some vlogs.. Stupid.. I actually like to watch everything actually. For me it's like TV. When I was younger.. Here in Belgium we don't actually watch that much of TV series on TV because they always show them so late on our channels, so I used to watch series on YT when I was younger. But now I have other resources.

– And how do you select which video to watch?
  – Hmmm.. well, before I think I found them like randomly, like you watch one video and then you find a similar video on sidebar. And now sometimes I find some videos on facebook and then I go to check out a youtube channel and if I like it then I subscribe.

– And do you use your subscription bar?
  – Ah, yes yes, sometimes I check if there is something new, and if I'm bored sometimes then I just go there.

– So you don't really use it that often?
  – Uuum.. usually I know what I'm looking for but when I'm bored I usually go to the subscriptions and see if there is something.

– Aha. And amongst those subscriptions, how do you choose a video to watch?
  – Based on a title, if it's something appealing to me... so it really depends on a title.

– And could you name some favorite channels or bloggers?
  – I recently discovered Beauty by Haley, and she does a lot of makeup tutorials and I really like this kind of tutorials. Uuuum... I used to watch the Shepherds a lot, I don't know if you know them.

– No, but you can still tell me.
– The Shepherds is a family who decided to film every single day of their life for 5 years. And they just talk about their daily life, they take camera wherever they go and whatever they do and you know, it’s so normal, every day... And I kinda like it... They have bunch of kids, and they tell them what to do. I don’t really know why it’s so appealing to everybody. Uummm. Who else do I follow.. I like Zoella from the UK, she has a really cute personality. I like the Tany Bear as well. So., quite many beauty channels. I also like Gai Iga, it’s a funny Asian guy who is from Hawaii but lives in LA now. And he is really funny, so I like that.

– Cool! And how often do you leave comments?
– Oh, never. Never.

– Why not?
– I don’t know. For me it’s not part that appeals to me on Youtube. I know there are big communities and stuff like that and people leave comments and become friends and talk and stuff like that. But for me it's basically just about the video, when the video is done I take something else. So.. I do read them though but I never reply because I just want to see what opinions people have.

– Sounds interesting. And do you press likes?
– Sometimes yes. Sometimes it's just not to forget.. Cause sometimes I’m watching some cover songs, and sometimes I press like so I can go back to it later and see “ok, this was the song that I really liked”.

– Ok. And how often do you actually rewatch the videos?
– Basically... it depends.. On the music I rewatch videos a lot, on beauty tutorials sometimes I go back to check what products they used but on the blogs I never really go back to watch it again. So it depends on the content that they have in the video.

– I see. And do you normally watch the entire video or does it happen that you stop watching and just close it?
– Uum. If I'm not interested, if it's boring then I just click on it and turn it off.

– And how often do you watch videos recommended by YT?
– A lot actually. Yeah, they know me pretty well I think (laughing).

– Yeah? What makes you click on a certain video?
– Eeem... Again, the title I think. Usually the title for me is really important. And then the thumbnail they use. But.. it depends, sometimes on the videos there are clickbaits, you know.. I would never click on that, that annoys me so much! Especially on fb they share them so much.. For me it’s not appealing at all.

– Got it. And is there certain type of video that you would never watch?
– Um... I'm not an animal person. And there are a lot of video compilations where they put animals.. And I'm just not an animal person. Then scary things. A lot of people go on youtube to watch ghost
videos and stuff like that, I would never watch it. What else.. And then there are really really bad pranks. For me it's like “arggg, why would you do that??”

– Yeah, I see. And could you call yourself a fan of some bloggers that you really like?
– Emmm.. I think yes, yeah. I could call myself a fan.

– And if a blogger would arrange a meeting, would you go there?
– Eem.. I don't know.. I dont know actually.. Let me think.. Maybe.. There is a slight chance that I could go. But I'm really not a fan of big crowds.

– And do you join some online fan communities of those bloggers?
– No, nono. I usually follow the page that youtubers have on facebook but not like fan pages with a lot of people.. Like “oh, we love this blogger”. I would never watch it.

– And is there some social media that you follow of your favorite blogger?
– aam.. On Tumblr.. There are couple who I follow.. But they usually same the same content on every platform..

– And what about Instagram? Do you follow them on Instagram?
– Yes, I do follow them on Instagram. Actually, I find a lot of youtubers on instagram. And if they do a lot of makeup, then I go on their youtube channel and that's how I find them and start watching videos.

– Aha, and then I'm just curious.. How would you describe your fandom towards a blogger? Why would you call yourself a fan?
– Well, I think it's the same thing as if you're a fan of the musician, you follow them on every single platform, you care about what they use as products, what they do on everyday. They do create content, they use their personality. I am not saying they are celebrities, like musicians or something.. Even though I'm pretty sure that some of them are right now. But they kinda interact with people, they know there are a lot of them watching.. And that's what makes you a fan kind of.. People follow them on twitter, on instagram and stuff like that. That what makes you a fan, basically.

– I see. And how much do you trust a blogger when he recommends you something?
– Eeem.. I actually trust them quite a lot. Cause sometimes.. I know they they get a lot of products from advertisers, because they are getting paid or something like that.. But some of them.. Usually smaller bloggers they normally don't get money from advertisers and they just use products that they really like, so I actually trust them more than big youtubers. Because.. Zoella, for example, she posts so many videos.. She is from UK.. and she post so many things that are only available in the US.. so I'm just like.. Why would you.. I mean, your followers are probably from everywhere. From UK.. so why would you promote things that are not available in other places..

– And have you ever bought something recommended by a blogger?
– Oh, definitely. Basically, all my makeup over there. Cause I also look up for youtubers based on my skin type. I click on videos that about oily to mixed skin.. And then I check what makeup brands is she using and then I would also go and buy it.

– And what is your attitude towards advertising?
– Uum.. I actually like it.. Maybe because it used to be my major in college, and I really like to watch them even on TV.. there are a lot of new brands and products that you discover through that, so I really don't mind.

– Ok, I see. And how often do you actually talk about YT with your friends?
– Uum.. I think not that often.. Maybe when I'm going to buy a new product mentioned by a youtuber and then I can discuss it with a friend.. But we never really discuss just videos.

– And do you prefer to watch those youtubers who have more or less similar life to yours or who live in a completely different environment?
– Um.. I don't know if I pick youtubers based on that. Because a lot of them have similar lifestyles from mine. I wish I had a lifestyle like they have. They travel a lot and stuff like that. But I don't think I'm looking for someone... on purpose...

– Aha. And what is your motivation to watch videos?
– I just like it because it's short videos and you can pause it, and then watch them again...

– But why do you watch it, why do you need to do that?
– Why.. I don't know.. I just like it.. There is so much content than on any other platforms.. You can't really watch beauty bloggers on TV or something..

– Ok, That was my last question actually. I just wanted to ask how was the interview, how does it feel?
– Feels like I was talking to a friend! Hahaha. And I also remembered some channel that I might to rewatch again after I told them about you.. But there is so much content on youtube that you don't remember. And that's the thing. On TV you watch several specific shows and you remember all of them, and when you watch Youtube you are like.. “What should I watch now..”

INTERVIEW 5. ANTON (22). Russian, lives in Russia. 15/4/2016

– Can you describe, on a typical day, how do you watch youtube?
– Hmm, in the morning I usually don't have time for it before going to Uni, normally I watch it when I'm back home after studies at around 4pm. I'm lying on my bed, relaxing and watching videos.

– So what time of the day do you normally watch it?
I’d say between 4pm and 5pm.

And it which room are you watching it?
Either in the kitchen or in my room.

What gadget do you use for watching?
iPhone or Macbook Air.

Are you normally doing something else while watching?
it depends. Sometimes I eat or even study.. But rarely I just simply watch video.

I see. What content do you prefer watching?
I’d think mostly about culinary, food and recipes. And not that much of entertainment. I’d say I prefer informational channels where I can watch something that gives me new knowledge e.g. about self-development.

Do you have any favorite channels?
Casey Neistat, Nastya Rubik, Ulileie..

Ok! And how do you choose which video to watch?
Actually, when I have time I just watch everything randomly. If there are time boundaries then I watch my favorite bloggers first.

Ok, so imagine this situation when you open YT and you want to watch something. What would be your actions?
I’ll open subscriptions and open all videos on different tabs.

And do you watch videos recommended by youtube?
Reeeally rarely. Maybe once in a month when I’m super bored. But almost never.

Ok, but what video could appeal to you amongst recommended?
Mhmm.. I’d first look at the title.. Yeah.. no, wait, probably thumbnail first, yes, a thumbnail is the most important.

Ok. Do you leave comments often?
Yes, lately I started doing it.

Why lately?
I just suddenly realised how cool it is.. I mean, before I just had thoughts about the video after watching it but never really shared them. And suddenly I thought that it would be nice to write my thoughts, to share my experiences similar to something that a blogger says. I actually started enjoying this kind of communication, and it’s also cool to do something nice for that person who spent his time working on this video, creating this content.. And it’s nice to get a reply then.
– And why didn't you leave comments before?
– I thought it's not that important, and that bloggers never really pay attention to them or read them.. I thought they just scroll through comments and that's it. But then I actually noticed that they sometimes replied to me, and I just kept writing after that. It's a nice way of communication, in my opinion.

– I see. And do you press likes on Youtube?
– No, I press dislikes.

– ..?! Really?
– (nodding).. And I only press dislikes to one specific channel.

– Wow
– Yeah..

– Can you explain why are you doing this?
– I just don't like that person, that blogger.. I really press dislike just on her channel. I mean, I only do it when I absolutely don't like her videos, it's not often.. But I actually do it sometimes.

– Ok. And do you rewatch some videos sometimes?
– Only those which tell about food and recipes.

– I see. And do you normally watch full videos?
– No, lately, especially when I began evaluating my time differently, sometimes I can even close the video without finishing watching it. So it I assume that there won't be anything interesting any further, I just stop watching. But I only began doing it lately because before then I used to watch absolutely everything. And now I realise how much time I lost..

– I see. And are there any differences in your watching preferences related to the content? Comparing to last months..
– Actually, there is a huge difference. 2 years ago I used to watch all the top bloggers, those who had million of followers and were insanely popular. I thought they are so awesome. And then half year later I suddenly realised that they are filming complete ********, I was watching them though because it was interesting to see 'the kitchen' of youtube back then. I couldn't understand why everyone is only filming something entertaining, stupid jokes and pranks.. I couldn't understand why there are no 'normal' videos on Russian youtube, with some useful information and meaning behind it, and not just random daily stories, vlogs, shopping hauls and so on.

– Ok, got it. Could you call yourself a fan of your favorite bloggers?
– Nope.

– Have you ever participated in any fanclub of a blogger?
– Nope.

– And if your favorite blogger organised a meeting, would you attend it?
  – Hmm.. Actually, it’s a difficult question. First of all, I think I am over it at the moment. I mean my age. Secondly, depends how popular a blogger is.. If I am not personally familiar with this blogger and have never spoken to him anyhow, I will most likely skip this meeting because it would not be that interesting to me. But if it's a blogger that I really really like and we have spoken before, I would definitely come.

– I see. And do you use an other social media to follow your favorite youtubers?
  – Yeah, Instagram.

– Do you talk about youtube with your friends sometimes?
  – Yes, I do actually. Sometimes. Normally we discuss where the video was filmed, how it was filmed. We never talk critical things, I mostly share my emotions with friends if I really liked the video, the way it was edited, the concept and so on. I always wonder how it's done, and normally I would like to do something similar myself.

– I see. Is it normally more interesting for you to observe bloggers that live a life similar to your, or someone completely different?
  – Hmm, I’d say both. I can't really choose. First of all, I enjoy watching those who live in my city because I want to know where they are going, eating, what they are doing and whether they like it. I am curious to see how people live on other continents as well.

– Aha. And how could you generally describe your motivation towards watching YT?

– Alright, thanks. My last question – how was this interview, what do you feel?
  – It was nice actually. I systematized my thoughts about Youtube somehow, and I guess I will be thinking about it more in the following days. Also, I started thinking that I should probably clean my list of subscriptions now since I don't really watch many of them..

INTERVIEW 6. KIRILL (24). Russian, lives in Russia. 15/4/2016

– Can you describe, on a typical day, how do you watch youtube?
  – Hmmmm actually, I usually watch it while eating breakfast or dinner. Or while I’m on the way somewhere. I started doing it in the public transport just recently because I've got a good internet on my smartphone. So, shortly speaking, I watch my most favorite bloggers while I'm eating at home and
those which are not that important to me I watch in the transport. It takes around 1 hour for me to get to the city centre, so I use it for watching Youtube.

– I see. So what time of the day do you usually watch it? Is it in the morning and in the evening?
– Mmmm yes, I’d say so. I never really watch it during the day.

– Ok, and when you watch it at home which room do you usually use for it?
– Hmm it depends where I’m eating. Sometimes I stay in the kitchen, sometimes I take a plate to my room and eat here.

– I see, and which gadget do you use for watching?
– It can be computer, laptop or smartphone.

– And which of them do you mostly use at home?
– It's normally my computer but when I’m cooking I can use my phone because it's easy to place it in the kitchen.

– Aha. What else are you sometimes doing while watching videos besides cooking?
– So, eating.. And if it's some video-talk then I can be cleaning meanwhile or getting ready to go somewhere.. Soo doing something that is possible to be managed automatically, without being focused on it.

– I see. How do you choose a video to watch?
– Hmm, ok, look. I have 3 favorite youtubers who I prefer to watch in the first place. Casey Neistat and Ben Brown are my favorite. So first of all I watch Casey, then Ben. If I watch Casey, I literally just sit down and watch and it’s truly delightful for me. All the others I watch just randomly.. I mean, I do watch my friends as well. So it's either Casey, or my friends, and noone else.

– Ok, and what kind of content do you prefer the most?
– Mmmmm. Damn, I actually realised that lifestyle is probably my favorite.

– What exactly do you mean by lifestyle? Traveling, for example, or ..?
– I’m not interested in traveling. I am interested in other people and it doesn’t matter where they are, what’s their environment. So it’s either my friends who I’m just curious about or it’s just someone who impresses me, who has a strong personality.

– Aha, and is there some type of video content that you don’t watch at all?
– I don’t watch gaming videos but I can easily watch some beauty blog. I actually think that girls create a better content than guys. At least amongst Russian Youtubers.

– Why?
– Because beauty bloggers sometimes talk about super fascinating topics. Girls are more educated somehow. It’s more interesting to watch them rather than something dull and entertaining.
– Do you mean those beauty videos where girls talk a lot, not necessarily about beauty?
– Well, you know, those.. Well, ok, let me give a very basic example that comes to my mind – Sonya Esman. Though, actually, she is not a beauty blogger.. Nevermind, you can take any other blogger. Even Marie Novosad. And she is walking somewhere with a camera and says “So, I’m walking in this district now.. Oh, and BY THE WAY” – and then she says something that can completely change your opinion on something, especially if you are a teenager studying in the 8th grade.

– Hmm, I never thought of that.
– Yeah, you know, I am the one who was growing up without Youtube, and when I grew up, the Youtube generation has just appeared. So my generation was growing without it at all. And now I’m looking at those kids who watch Youtube daily, who are being raised on it, and I see people of completely different level. They are like my fellows at the moment. They haven’t graduated from high school or university but they are not less smart than I am. And I realise it’s because they watch all those popular Youtubers now. I mean, I am happy that kids are able to watch Marie Novosad, it’s the best that can happen to them.

– Hmm, ok, I see your point. And do you rewatch videos often?
– Hmmhm, no, not often. But there is one video that I watched several times, it’s about the best moments from all Casey Neistat’s videos, and it’s 30 minutes long. I watched it like.. 5 times.

– Aha, so what kind of videos would you watch again?
– Uhh, something informative, philosophical and psychological. So I am not attracted by nice footage, travel, stuff like that.

– Aha, ok. Do you usually watch whole videos or do you sometimes stop and turn them off?
– Because I mostly watch only those who I like or those who are close to me somehow, I usually watch entire video. Sometimes I scroll it through but quite rarely. I'm just.. You know, I’m that kind of person who, when I see that someone texted me, I have to reply. So when a person made a video, I feel like it's filmed for me, and I have to watch it.

– Ok, got it. Do you watch videos recommended by Youtube?
– Yes, I sometimes click on them, actually this is how I started to watch Marie Novosad recently. And I really didn't want to watch her before.. I mean, it's quite difficult for me to get used to new people, it takes a month, or two, or three.. And once I just opened her video, and then they started being recommended to me all the time, and then I thought OK, if you know her, and my friends know her, and she is always around here on Youtube and we have so many friends in common, it's time to watch her too. And yeah, of course since she moved to another city it's now more interesting to watch her. Because.. Of course everyone is interested in that person but when she is in some different environment, it's even more appealing.

– Aha. And how should a recommended video look like in order to catch your attention?
– Uhh.. well, I am like everyone else, I love strong headlines.. But to be honest I never open that page. I always go directly to my subscriptions page because I marked it as favorite in my browser, so I just click on that and always avoid Home page of Youtube.

– I see, that sounds interesting. **How often do you leave comments under the videos?**
  – Mmm.. I.. You know what I noticed recently.. So, I only watch my friends or those bloggers who I really like. And the last ones.. it's quite pointless to leave comments to them. Sometimes I do it but really rarely. But I always try to leave a comment to my friends. I used to do it in direct messages but now I try to leave it below the video because, well, that's what comments are invented for – to express my opinion. And I am not ashamed if someone else will read it.

– And what if it's not your friend but just a random person?
  – Well, if I really liked the person, I will leave a comment. To me, personality is the most important. And if a person says something that matches with my own opinion, I will leave a comment. Or.. if I liked a girl.. I will write a comment. *(laughing)*

– Haha, ok. And do you press likes on the videos?
  – Yes, always, I press likes to everyone's videos.

– **So, every time you watched someone you press like?**
  – Well, look. If it's Casey or some other favorite blogger, I always press like because next time if I don't remember whether I watched this video, I will open it and see that I already 'liked' it. And.. to my friends videos I press likes naturally. Always. I realise that I value their job. So it's not that I use my 'favorites' page to keep all these liked videos and they are my beloved videos. I don't really care about that page.

– Ok. **So, and how often do you watch your favorite blogger?**
  – Every day.

– **Can you call yourself a fan?**
  – Yes, absolutely, I am a true fan. I mean, you probably have heard about that article called “1000 true fans”.

– No, I haven't.
  – So there was a guy who made this concept about 1000 true fans – it's those people who are ready to spend 50-100$ on a favorite blogger once a year. And when you achieve that point of having 1000 true fans, you can survive on that.. Like full time job money. **So, I am that kind of fan that will buy anything if Casey will sell some stuff for 50$**,.

– **Have you joined some fan groups on social media?**
  – No, they piss me off actually, I don't like to be part of that fan-theme.

– But if your favorite blogger organised a meeting, would you attend it?
– Mmm… well… if it would be someone really cool.. I don't know.. I actually went to a couple of meetings like that and I realised that it's not really a valuable format of communication for me. Ok, maybe if just to see a person in real life.. but still.. I think I'm not THAT big fan.. I mean, let's say if my friends would create a nice startup I'd be the first one to pay them some money, to support them. So I am speaking about myself as a fan who is ready to support my favorite blogger as much as I can.

– Ok. What's your opinion about advertising in the video?
– Actually, I think it's ok. If the fact that I watched the ad helps to a blogger somehow, gives him money for living, then it's normal. The ad just should be done really accurately because sometimes bloggers exaggerate with it.. Well, you know. But I think on English-speaking Youtube it's developed much better than on ours. Though I think that we are also moving to that direction, and we create our own culture of advertising. But in general, I am ok with ads.

– Have you ever bought something recommended by a youtuber?
– Hah, by the way, I thought about it today. I was thinking that I never buy anything offered by bloggers. I don't pay attention to those ads, I never remember what is said there. But when my favorite blogger says that he bought something from H&M, I just create a better opinion about H&M in my head. And next time I will go shopping to H&M. So I think this kind of ads work on a subconscious level.

– And how much do you actually trust a bloggers, believe his opinion?
– Well, because I don't watch many bloggers I definitely trust those who I watch. And also, I either trust 100%, or don't trust at all, so.. I don't trust to those people who I don't like. And also, what do you think.. When I watch 100 videos from one person, and then there is an advertisement in one of them.. Of course I still trust him. And of course if someone has irritating pre-roll ad forcing people to buy something, then.. But actually I have some friends video bloggers who do it now, and they place those ads not because they really want money so much but because.. Well.. hmmm.. (thinking. Quiet for a while.)

– Well, ok. I have another question then. What kind of bloggers are more interesting to you – those who have similar or different lifestyle to yours?
– Hmm. The most interesting for me is the point of view that a person has. So it does not really matter where that person lives. It doesn't matter where I am, I am always with myself, you know. I don't travel somewhere to see a new place. I know it sounds weird. For example, if I go to Nizhny Novgorod, I don't travel to visit the city. I go there to meet new people, to make friends because I can have different conversations.

– Ok, I see your point. Can you tell me what is your motivation to watch Youtube?
– Hmhm. Hmmmm. I think it's... hmm. Well... actually, it's such a cool question. Really cool! Hmmmm.. Motivation.. I think I want to develop myself, my personality probably.. But again...
(thinking long time, not answering)

– So, how does Youtube help you to evolve?
– So, as you might have noticed, I am really focused on people skills. Something about human behavior, and how people show themselves in different situations. The more realistic their videos are, the more value I can find for myself. I think that's the concept of Youtube – to be real. I think the person who is real always wins. Of course there are also shows looking like Real Shows but.. Why do I actually watch vlogs? Who is Casey, who is Connor Frunt? It's just some vloggers.. But it's not a show. I just like watching other people, the way they live and describe their lives.

– Do you mean that you are simply curious about human lives?
– No, actually the point is that I love cool people, it doesn't matter if I know them in person or not. I can just get inspiration from them. Some of my friends tell me “Hey, Kirill, I saw your new video, now I know that you are doing fine and everything is ok”. And we don't really need to talk because he just knows that I'm fine. So those people who make daily vlogs, they are just close to me somehow. Yes, they don't know who I am, but so what..? It's their job and it's cool.

– Alright. Thank you! I only have the last question – how was this interview in your opinion?
– I think the questions were quite interesting, many people don't think what is their motivation to watch Youtube. So... it was nice to reflect on it.

INTERVIEW 7. XENIA (32). Russian, lives in Austria. 14/4/2016

Can you describe, on a typical day, how do you watch youtube?
– Hmm.. uuhmm.. Well.. so, I think it's important to say that previously I worked for a company where I had to analyze you tubers and watch a lot of content, so I did it because I had to, not because I wanted to.. Aand... then I started a new job and one day I just wanted to watch something that would be interesting for me. And I started to watch Anastacia Kay, Polina Brz, just because I was interested in self-development and learning languages because my job is also connected to languages. I have always been working with languages, so this topic appeals to me. But I also like to watch travel, beauty and fashion videos, just for myself. And because I work from 9 to 5, I try to distinguish videos I watch, for example, I keep the most interesting videos for evening when I can watch it after work and relax. Some I can watch at work early in the morning when it is time to have some coffee. If there are some channel I have to track regularly because of work, then I watch them regularly. Sometimes when I notice that I haven't been watching YT for a while, for around 2 weeks, then I just open it and check all those videos that I've missed.

-So, in result, what time of the day you end up watching Youtube?
– I'd say morning, because, again, most of the bloggers I watch upload their new videos either in late evening or early morning. Ooor I can watch it in the evening but it also depends.. If I've had a hard day, then maybe not.. So the best for me is to watch in the morning when I can focus on the information and listen carefully.

-Are you doing something else while watching? If so, what?
– Depends on the video. For example, if it's just a video talk where nothing really happens then I am cooking or doing makeup. If I hear some useful information then I prefer to sit down and watch, or to
take notes if there is something really important. When it's a video with some interesting actions happening then I'll most likely just watch it without doing anything else at the same time. If a video is extremely beautiful and visually attracting then I can even rewatch it again later.

—I see, and which room do you usually use for watching Youtube? Is it kitchen or bedroom, for example?
- Normally I'm just sitting behind the table and watching. Rarely I take Youtube with me to the bed.

– Aha, and which gadget do you use for watching?
– Sometimes it's my laptop – I use it especially for those videos which have some links included to the description. Then it's more convenient to use laptop to open all those pages. But sometimes I also use mobile phone, especially to watch vlogs.

—I see. Could you please name some of your most favorite channels?
- Ok, so.. I already mentioned some but I will open my account to check other channel I watch. Wait a second. So, I have different kind of content here: education, learning languages – Anastasia Kay, Polina Brz, Oxfordinesite, Goethe Institut – I'm used to watch it because I need it for work. But also for myself because I enjoy learning languages. I'm subscribed to some travel channels, vlogs.. Also a bit of girlish content. I really like Mimi Ikonn, Dara Muscat, Marie Novosad - I like the way she films. Slava Beauty Tips. Sonya Esman – I watch her for a long time since she created Youtube channel. (she is being shy for a while) I don't remember how I found her but since then I'm following her. I like her visual taste, she creates beautiful videos. And I really enjoy watching cute videos, so I like Sonya.

- What content amongst those which you already mentioned is the most appealing to you?
- I'd say it's languages and knowledge kind of content. I am curious to watch how other people learn languages, what's their approach. I am myself educated as a teacher so I always wonder how non-educated (professionally) people deal with learning process, what they recommend. The second category I could mention is girlish content – I'm not a hairdresser or makeup artist but I am interested in watching people doing makeup even if they are not professionals. For example, I like Valeria Dolgova, her editing, the music she adds to the clip. And also I love watching something about healthy lifestyle and sport. So, these are the 3 of my favorite categories.

–Sounds interesting. Ok, and how do you choose which video to watch when you open Youtube?
– Depends on amount of time that I have. For example, if I have 30 minutes free and I open my subscriptions page then I first of all select my most favorite videos. I select according to the title. If I have a lot of time and can even spend half a day on Youtube, then I will do it. I am very dedicated to watching, if there are some videos that I haven't seen yet then I feel like I have to do it. Previously I used to have a lot of subscriptions and also used to watch videos that are recommended by Youtube.

–But do you normally watch the videos from your list of subscriptions or those which are recommended by Youtube?
— At the moment mostly just subscriptions because I rarely find something interesting amongst recommendations.

— Which kind of video could attract you if it's recommended by Youtube?
  — It should have a beautiful thumbnail, not grey and boring. Then a title should be without any caps lock, not kind of a shouting title, you know.. But to be honest I already have so many videos unwatched that I have to see some time soon that I am not that interested in any recommendations.

— But how do you save those unwatched videos?
  — I simply keep them in open tab.. Oh and I also love watching German girls, called Consider Cologne, looove them because I live next to Cologne and it's always interesting to watch the city there.. I think Anastacia Kay has recommended this channel once.

— I see. Is there any kind of content that you do not watch at all?
  — There is one very popular blogger called Kate Clapp. I don't watch her at all. Her videos are visually not attractive to me. Sometimes I think that I should watch her because she is so popular, so apparently there is something cool on her channel.. But I just can't force myself. I really don't like those crazy colors and ugly fonts she’s using in her videos. But otherwise.. What kind of content I don't watch.. Some stupid videos about cats, it's a waste of time for me.

— And does it happen that you rewatch videos again?
  — Yes but rarely. I don't have that much time unfortunately. But those videos like Polina Brz has — about Italy, or other trips, very short, they last around 5 minutes – I enjoy rewatching them. Or those which definitely consist of some useful information, and I remember that I could watch it again. So mostly I rewatch either something inspiring or informative. But at the same time that information can be about a lipstick or something not really important.

— Ok. Does it happen that you suddenly stop watching video in the middle of it? In which case?
  — Yes, when the video has an interesting topic but the actual content is boring – then I just stop watching. But there are also extremely long videos like Mimi Ikonn has, they last 30-40 minutes. Then I divide it for several days and spend 10 minutes every day to watch it because they are way too informative.
  — But otherwise.. If I hear that a person is not smart enough, or he/she is making mistakes while talking, or just talks about nothing then I just quit the video.

— I totally understand you. And by the way, do you leave comments under the video?
  — Yes but super rarely. Once I left a comment under a video about some interesting facts, I just really liked the format of the video and could not resist commenting. But in general, I have the same rule like on Facebook – no comments. I don't like stalking and so on, when you leave a comment and then get 10 more notifications back.. It is really annoying. So I try to never leave comments.

— But so what could happen if you left a comment on Youtube?
–I just take everything very personal and if my comment will arise some arguments against then I'll start thinking about it all the time. So I try to never leave comments. But if it's a very beautiful video then I can write something. Or if I see that someone is bullying my favorite blogger or just writes something bad to her, then I will definitely reply to it.

–Really? What would you reply then?
–I'd say something 'hey guys, calm down please'. But again, usually I am just an observer, not a commentator.

–I see. And in which situation would you press like?
–I do it very rarely in fact. I think when a blogger says “please press likes under my video” then I definitely won't do it, it's very inattractive. Also, I try to avoid liked videos in my timeline because I don't want to see something trashy, you know what I mean? And I don't want the others to see what I have liked already. By the way, I read interesting thing recently.. About our generation. People like less stuff today, and even if a post has many views it does not necessarily has lots of likes. Comparing to 2-3 years ago, when it was completely different. So probably I'm just that kind of person, I don't use likes that much.

–Got it. Have you ever joined a fanclub of your favorite blogger?
–No, but sometimes I visit those groups of bloggers on VK or FB. Especially when I see that a blogger is moderating this group himself. I can keep the link to this group in my favorites though. Also, some bloggers keep their favorite music in those groups, so I check it time to time in case if something interesting appears.

–How would you describe your attitude towards your favorite blogger? Do you consider yourself a fan?
–Mmmm… well, I don't really have this fandom thingy in my personality, I have never really been a fan of any actor or actress. But last year I could have watched 2-3 videos of my favorite blogger at a time, I was really addicted to it. And sometimes I'm thinking if I should start filming something myself because I learned how to do it, and I have different life experience to share with people. That's why I am watching what others are saying, and I try to find a niche that hasn't been mentioned yet, something that people haven't really talked about yet. And the reason why I was never a fan of any actor is because I am attracted by real people, and Youtube blogger is a real person, he exists here, not in Hollywood.

–I see. And how often does it happen that you watch one particular blogger for a long time?
–It happens when I find a new blogger, and when I enter her channel and I'm surprised by her amusing content. Then I can leave all the other things I have to do and just watch her channel for 1-2h.

–I can understand you. And is there a way that you follow your favorite vloggers on other social media?
–Yes, I mostly follow all of them on Instagram. I guess that's why I don't really follow all those fanclubs because I know for sure that Instagram is managed by a blogger himself.

–Aha. Would you attend events created by a fanclub or by a blogger?
–If it would be in Germany or Austria, then definitely yes.

–Why?
–Uhm.. I think it's sort of religion. Like vegetarian lifestyle. If I know that someone is vegetarian, and I am as well, then I will trust that person. So if someone else is watching a blogger I watch, then we are most likely have a lot in common. And I can enlarge my own community, talk to new people, meet people. So it won't be actually because of a blogger himself because I realise that when you have 300K subscribers it's hard to be friends with everyone. But I could most likely find new friends amongst those 300K who watch that blogger.

–I see. What is your attitude towards advertising and product placement in the videos?
–Depends on advertising.. I don't know.. This topic is very actual at the moment, all bloggers enjoy talking about it. If it's a really cool ad or product placement in a video like 'Get Ready With Me' and a person is using Clinique cream in that video.. Then I'm totally fine with it. I realise that the person is probably using this cream in his/her daily life and he is also getting money for showing this – then why not to do that? If a person is telling that he did not like specific product, then it's even better, I respect that. Sometimes I scroll through video comments under the clip that has advertising in it. And many people are pissed off because of the product placement. But for me it's totally ok. A blogger spent his time to create this video, to tell about the product.. It doesn't hurt me if there is a little ad inside. Probably it won't be my favorite video then but it's not that important. And actually I might think if I should use this product.. Because I am easily affected by this kind of ads.

–By the way, have you ever bought something that was recommended by a blogger?
–Only if many bloggers have recommended it in different time and not because some company has sent it to everyone. If a person is really using the product, and some other bloggers do it too, then maybe I will try it too. Well, not maybe, but most likely I will do it.

–I see. How often do you discuss Youtube with your friends?
–Not often because not that many of my friends actually watch Youtube.

–It is more interesting for you to watch someone similar to you and living in your country, or someone who lives in another part of the world and has completely different lifestyle?
–Well, look, I watch, let's say, Lera who lives in Krasnodar, or Slava who lives in London. I really love to watch bloggers from St.Pete because it's my hometown and I prioritize bloggers from there. But actually it does not matter from me where a person comes from. That's why I appreciate Youtube – you can find a blogger from any part of the world and to see his reality, to learn about his lifestyle. There is also a cool guy Kasyo Gasanov, he is travelling everywhere around the world, and this is a real person, he exists, and that's what I like about Youtube.
– How could you describe your motivation to watch Youtube?
  – Well, information.. Advice and so on.. Then visual part, and how it's filmed and edited. A blogger’s personality.. Because sometimes nice videos are not made by nice people, you know.. And it’s not that interesting to watch. And motivation. When I see a real person doing something, then I apply his experience on me and realise that I can do it too. It motivates me a lot.

– Ok, thank you! My last question: what are your impressions of this interview? Was it interesting to answer questions?
– Yes, it was interesting to answer and to think about my watching habits.

INTERVIEW 8. ZARINA (23, Almaty). Russian, lives in Kazakhstan.
14/4/2016

– Can you describe, on a typical day, how do you watch youtube?
  – Usually I watch it when I wake up and have breakfast, drink coffee.. I check if my favorite bloggers have uploaded something and I watch them. In general, when I don't have anything else to do then I always watch Youtube.

  – So what time of the day do you watch it?
  – In the morning between 10 and 12, or in the evening between 20 and 22 o'clock.

– I see, and in which room do you normally watch it?
– I'm in kitchen in the morning and I use my mobile phone then. And in the evening I watch it using my laptop, in the kitchen again.

– What kind of content do you prefer to watch?
– Beauty and lifestyle videos. I don't really watch fashion.

– Could you name some of your favorite bloggers?
– Anastacia Kay, Estonianna, Lena from Norway..

– Ok, I see. And how to you choose which video to choose?
– In the weekdays I just check what my favorite bloggers have uploaded but I don't really search for some specific videos on Youtube. Sometimes if I find something recommended by Youtube, for example someone's morning routine, then I watch it if I feel like doing it. So if I see a nice thumbnail and the video is also nice, then I keep watching. If it's a boring video, then I leave. But I don't really watch recommended videos so often.

– And when you use your subscriptions bar, how do you select which videos to watch from those which are newly uploaded?
First of all I will scroll through, and then I pick something the most appealing to me, with a nicer headline, for example.

And do you rewatch videos often?
- Not really. But I do rewatch if I want to hear some beauty advice again and if I haven't noted it down before.

I see. How often does it happen that you start watching something and then decide to stop the video?
- Actually, usually I just watch the whole videos if it's made by blogger that I really like. I rarely turn off the video before the end of it.

Aha, ok. And what kind of content you are not interested in watching at all?
- I can't really name anything like that amongst lifestyle content.. I watch everything.

Ok, fine. What are you usually doing in parallel with watching Youtube?
- Normally I play videos as a background meanwhile I'm working.

I see. How would you describe your attitude towards your favorite blogger? Do you consider yourself a fan?
- No, I don't think I can call myself a fan. I'm not a fan, I just like watching my favorite bloggers.

Why do you like to watch them? What emotions do they evoke?
- They make me smile. Sometimes I am even laughing loud while watching.

Have you ever joined a fanclub of your favorite blogger?
- No, not really.

But would you attend events created by a fanclub or by a blogger?
- Yes, definitely. Actually, once I went to such event.. But it was for my work, I had to take an interview of one popular blogger. So I didn't really go because I wanted to, rather because I had to. But there were quite many people.

Aha, and what were your impressions?
- I had really positive impressions. That girl was exactly the same in real life as she looks on Youtube. I really liked her.

I see. What other social media do you use to follow bloggers?
- Instagram, I follow everyone there.

Ok. What is your attitude towards advertising and product placement in the videos?
- It doesn't bother me. If it's not a whole video dedicated to some commercial, then it's fine. But if it is, for example, a review of Urban Decay beauty product, then I most likely won't watch such video
even if it's made by my favorite blogger. But if there is a gentle product placement in the video, then I don't mind watching it.

– How often do you buy products mentioned by your favorite bloggers?
  – Hmm.. not that often.. I watch everything they show and recommend and I use their practical advice on how to use mascara for example, but I don't really buy anything they recommend.

– But how much do you actually trust a blogger when she recommends something?
  – Well, hmmm.. I haven't really thought about it. I think there are moments when I feel that it's a commercial, and at the same time I feel when a blogger is saying something honestly without being paid. I have this intuition I guess..

– It is more interesting for you to watch someone similar to you and living in your country, or someone who lives in another part of the world and has completely different lifestyle?
  – Hmm.. I don't really watch bloggers from Kazakhstan besides that girl who I interviewed. At that moment it was interesting for me to know how local bloggers are developing their channels. But talking about the others, sometimes I watch completely different people, their channels are attractive to me.

– Why are they attractive?
  – I think because of the way they talk on the video and communicate with subscribers.

– I see. How often do you leave comments under the videos?
  – Not often. Only if I reeeeally liked the video and I feel attached to a person somehow..

– But why don't you leave comments then?
  – Well,, maybe.. I don't really know how to explain it.. I just don't want to do it. Feels like I'm not used to leave comments.

– Ok. How often do you press likes?
  – If I liked the video then I'll definitely press like.

– Ok, thank you! My last question: what are your impressions of this interview? Was it interesting to answer questions?
  – Yes, and you made me think about something. For example, why I don't leave comments and why I watch someone who have completely opposite to my own lifestyle.