

## **Capturing and Retaining Attention: the Case of Creative Industries.**

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## **Abstract**

### **Capturing and Retaining Attention: the Case of Creative Industries.**

In the digitalization era, capturing and retaining the public's attention has become a major strategic issue for creative industries. The ease of reproduction, the dematerialization of the various supports, and the facility of imitation, all transform original creative products into information. Consumption is therefore volatile and characterized by low switching costs. A qualitative study conducted on a sample of experts identifies three emerging strategies for attention retention and for encouraging a loyal public: the creation of rare and exclusive products, differentiated repetition and the creation of links with the public to build a desired or imposed attachment.

**Key words:** capturing attention, retaining attention, creative industries, digital services, strategic choice.

## **Résumé**

### **De la captation de l'attention à l'attachement, le cas des industries créatives.**

A l'ère de la digitalisation, la captation et la conservation de l'attention du public sont devenus des enjeux stratégiques majeurs pour les industries créatives. La facilité de reproduction, la dématérialisation des supports, la facilité d'imitation, transforment l'œuvre originale en information. Les consommations sont alors volatiles et caractérisées par de faibles coûts de changement. A partir d'une étude qualitative menée auprès d'experts, trois stratégies émergent pour retenir l'attention et fidéliser les publics : la création d'œuvres rares et exclusives, la répétition différenciée, la création de liens avec le public afin d'instaurer un attachement voulu ou imposé.

**Mots clés :** captation de l'attention, attachement, industries créatives, numérique, choix stratégique.

# **Capturing and Retaining Attention: the Case of Creative Industries.**

## **Introduction**

The purpose of this article is to propose a synthesis of generic strategic modalities to summarize, as clearly as possible, the actual practices whereby different publics receive and retain information in creative digitalized industries. Based on a qualitative approach, we will endeavor to propose a formulation of the generic strategies implemented by professionals in creative industries and that will, moreover, form the basis for a robust academic reading.

We have decided to limit our scope here by only analyzing the activities that transform a unique, creative product of an author “the creation” in its multiple forms “the industry” (Deforge, 1987). Experts chosen for this research only include representatives of companies developing this type of activity where the creative product holds the original form given by an author and where the industrial product is one of the reproductions or broadcasting of the creative product through codification, an industrial process or media technology. We will restrict our analysis to the following sectors: literature, music, film, audiovisual and video (or digital) games that have, in various degrees, to a great extent for music, natively for games, more modestly for books, dramatically changed at the end of the 20th century from a world of tangible products to a digital and networking world.

The first part of the research depicts the competitive picture of generalized digitalization that has today been adopted by creative industries. The second and third parts summarize the learnings from our research with experts.

## **Distribution and consumption of creative products in a digitalized world**

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, production and broadcasting worlds of creative products are influenced by a number of determining factors of change. These technical, economic or

legal factors indeed appear from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century with a strong switch in the entertainment and cultural universe from a model of representation (in a theatre or a museum) to a broadcasting model (at home), initially radio, then television, and ultimately telephonic or digital (Chantepie and Le Diberdier, 2005). The film industry was thus originally formed on a basis relatively close to the representation model of a live show. It produced and reproduced creative products that were considerably well protected by theatre walls, through a system of rights and controls that were relatively well established and through a “chemical-electro-mechanical” technology that, we can consider, protected the copyright owners quite well, given the associated costs of duplication and projection. It was the same for books and records until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

***Generalized digitalization of the production of creative industries. From creative products to information***

In the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, the irruption, of terrestrial broadcasting, then of the magnetic reproduction of creative products, gave rise to the “mono-sector” models dominated by specialized producers, editors and distributors. Both the financing and marketing of creative products and the structure of the industry were transformed.

Generalized digitalization of content opened up the world of creating new consumer spaces. From a strategic point of view, the habits of traditional fields of literature, the record industry, and cinema, change and contest habitual regulations. Players considerably stronger from the world of telephony and internet take off and gain on accessibility to an end client, captive via a contract (Rifkin, 2005). Networks mastered the broadcasting technology and its control, becoming justices of the peace for higher revenues from increasingly numerous and more frequent points of access compared to the period when access to creative products was accessible via specialized places: bookshops, record shops or theatres. In other words, creative

products become information, and the control of connecting publics and creative products is now in the hands of digital media and those managing access and infrastructures.

The development of new broadcasting supports for creative products, such as television at a cost, via satellite or by cable, the emergence of video on demand, the multiplication of additional derivative or substitutional products, has largely contributed to the diversification of revenue sources for creative industries (Paracuellos and Benghozi, 2011). The development of high-speed internet and the convergence of broadcasting channels: television, internet, mobile telephone has confirmed the trend and their apparent contradictions.

Generalized digitalization technically assimilates creative products to information (Elberse, 2013) and amplifies what was already sprouting at the heart of television: the broadcasters' control and an increased risk for the rights holders, due to the ease of duplication and a loss of control on the consumption. Generalized digitalization also produces specific effects most of which have already been observed by information economists (Shapiro and Varian, 1999): a significant increase in fixed costs for creating infrastructures and content, emergence of "versioning" possibilities for creators-producers and of copying and "customization" for the users. This consequently gives rise to a mutation of the creative industries that become industries that protect and maximize portfolios of copyrights (Bomsel, 2010). The production and reproduction of creative products then their tele-transmission is carried out within a business model where the investment for creating content and infrastructures becomes risky given the considerable variability and extreme fragility of the revenues and even gratuity for viewing or listening, or more generally, communicating or recording.