The long tailed construction of the self: revisiting self construction in a mediated world

Rommert Zijlstra

student no. 3724166 | New Media and Digital Culture - Pre-master | Bachelor Thesis
January 10, 2012 | Mentor: Imar de Vries | Self construction - TV as 'New' Medium

Abstract

We are living in an increasingly mediated world filled with media texts signifying a certain relevance to our everyday life. The study of the construction of the self is nothing new in itself: authors like John Thompson, Valerie Frissen, Jos de Mul, and John Fiske have written extensively about the aspects of self and subject construction and its relationship with media and technology, primarily focussing on the way media affect the project of the self. Although providing adequate theories constituting the construction of the self, these theories do not take the virtually limitless amount of choice in media texts due to YouTube and similar video-on-demand services into account. Moreover, in a networked society where there is an abundance of choice in mediated materials, how does choice influence the construction of the self in regards to this extensive amount of choice? This thesis will formulate a theory of a mediated construction of the self by employing Chris Anderson's economic concept *The Long Tail* as a defining factor in a mediated construction of the self. By employing Thompson's reflexive construction of the self, Frissen & De Mul's hypermedial self and Thomas de Zengotita's *Mediated*, this thesis will construct a theory regarding a long tailed construction of the self in a mediated society, where limitless choice seems to be the common denominator.

keywords: identity construction, youtube, mediated society, construction of the self, subject

22-01-12

Table of contents

Introduction

In our post-modern society we are constantly surrounded by, confronted with, and immersed in media. Since the invention of the letterpress, the radio, television, and, most recently, the Internet, we have become an increasingly mediated society, constantly influenced and affected by representations of reality in the newspapers, on the radio or TV, and even on big, highly dynamic displays in public locations like Times Square, New York. Screens are everywhere. Though first limited to the living room TV in nuclear families of the sixties, now these screens are penetrating every room of the household, ranging from a television screen in the kids room to the family computer in the living room. Aside from an increasing number of screens, there has been a substantial rise in media texts offered by these screens as well; instead of having just a few channels available with limited broadcast time, we can now choose between hundreds—or thousands depending on your subscription—of channels (Lotz 6, Anderson 2-3). We can even venture further away from being constrained to the choice of TV channels by resorting to the vast media database that is the Internet. With the rise of Youtube and similar video sharing websites, we now have a virtually unlimited amount of screen-based media texts we can consume (Anderson 49, 180).

This rise in 'media-pervasiveness' has altered our views on politics, society, economics, reality, and, last but not least, ourselves (MacDonald 11-19, Fiske 24). During the rise of television we were constrained to a limited amount of channels and limited amount of programs, practically presenting "reality" on a silver platter (Lotz 77, MacDonald 12-16, de Zengotia 18-22). Now we have channels and programs in abundance and as a result, we can choose which program, or more specifically by taking Youtube and similar services into account, which screen-based media text we want to consume (Anderson 192-193, Lotz 2). The age of channel surfing, hoping to come across an at least moderately interesting program, is getting behind us (Anderson 191). Instead we access content relevant to our interests by selecting a previously recorded show on TiVo, rent a movie on NetFlix, or browse YouTube for videos. All of this comes down to an increasing amount of choice in media texts.

The concept regarding the increasing amount of access to, and choice provided by, media channels like YouTube, NetFlix, and similar video-on-demand services has been defined by Chris Anderson as 'The Long Tail'. The Long Tail describes a exponential distribution of commodities starting with a high and short 'head', decreasing in height drastically, consisting of popular commodities; and a nearly infinite long 'tail' consisting of all niche commodities. Whereas iTunes and Spotify are long tailed distributers of music, YouTube is the "ultimate Long Tail marketplace of the moving image." (Anderson 192).

Many authors have argued that the consumption of media texts is a substantial part of a mediated construction of the self (Frissen & De Mul 23-24, 29; Thompson 209-219). All of these authors take one or more forms of technology into account when writing about mediated self construction. Frissen & De Mul take media, and specifically the World Wide Web into

account, and Thompson is primarily concerned with television. Although Thompson and Frissen & De Mul give us reasonable interpretations of how the mediated construction of the self relates to media practices regarding the Internet, these concepts are more or less outdated and do not take into account the tremendous amount of media texts we now encounter in our daily lives. A lot has changed in the last decade or so, which inevitably, influences the way we construct the self. Although, the basic concepts proposed by Thompson and Frissen & De Mul still hold true, this thesis will relate the construction of the self to the availability of limitless media texts following the concepts in Chris Anderson's *The Long Tail*.

The increasing amount of Long Tails in mediated society raises the question of how the Long Tail contributes to subject construction in mediated society. Since we are offered a tremendous amount of choice in media texts, how does the increasing amount of choices and options relate to the subjective construction of a mediated self? As mentioned above, many authors have written about the notion of the self and subject construction in a mediated society, keeping into account the way which media present reality—with television being one of the defining forms of media (Fiske, Thompson). YouTube offers different ways to make choice easy by having a powerful search engine, related videos, and the possibility of sharing videos through various social media. How does the mediated construction of the self apply to online video? Should YouTube be treated differently than traditional TV in the case of 'the project of the self' because of the abundance of choice, or do the same concepts regarding the construction of the self, in relation to media texts, apply? And lastly, how does the use of advanced mechanisms, like YouTube's search functionality for example, support choices in media texts offered by these media?

The goal of this thesis is to form a more specific interpretation of how having virtually limitless choice in media texts constitutes the mediated construction of the self, following the works of John Fiske, John Thompson, Valerie Frissen & Jos De Mul, and Thomas de Zengotita. All of the aforementioned authors have formulated their own theories regarding the construction of the self in a mediated society and the aspects of media that help define the self. By analyzing the workings of the Long Tail in video-on-demand services—specifically YouTube—in the light of the different concepts of identity construction, I will formulate the concept of a long tailed construction of the self consisting of two elements: choice and filters.

I will argue that there are two distinctive elements constituting a Long Tailed construction of the subject, namely: 1) the virtually limitless availability of choice, and 2) the access to more complex and relevant filters for choice. In the following sections, I will elaborate on these concepts by analyzing the works on television and YouTube mentioned above, and relating the different notions of identity/subject construction to the appropriation of YouTube. In the first paragraph, "Limitless Choice", I argue that YouTube, and similar Long Tail services, constitute the choice aspect of subject construction. In "Filters of Choice", I will continue the concept of choice by arguing how the growing amount of 'filters' helps the subject in choosing a media text fit for consumption. In the last section, I will conclude my findings and raise some

implications and further questions regarding a long tailed construction of the self in a mediated society.

Limitless Choice

In the past few decades, media availability has risen substantially. Like stated in the previous section, the TV channels available to the public have seen an increase in numbers, as well as diversity. If you are done watching a prime-time show, or bored watching a specific movie, the choice is yours to search for the next interesting channel. Aside from the obvious choice between all the commercial and public channels, we can choose to watch a documentary on the African elephant on Animal Planet or a documentary on ancient Rome on the History Channel, let alone see what kind of cooking shows, cartoons, or comedy shows are running on their respective networks. Now, with the rise of YouTube in 2005, we have virtually unlimited choices in regards to media consumption due to "the unlimited shelf space of the Web" (Anderson 49, 192-193). Anecdotally, while I am writing this, Barry Schwartz is talking about the paradox of choice in a YouTube video playing in the background—which I will get to in the next section.

Television is fusing together with the Internet. Aside from YouTube, more and more producers of screen-based texts make their content available online (Lotz 130-137, Uricchio 26-28). Although, in the case of YouTube, the share of amateur content versus professional content—professional content being content provided by big-media content producers, e.g., MTV, NBC, FOX—is not known, there are some interesting numbers to note. As of february 2010, in a report by Sysomos, music videos account for a total of 30.7% of all YouTube videos, followed by entertainment (14.59%) and People and Blogs (10.77%). With a more than 30% of the videos on YouTube being music videos, YouTube is effectively replacing the need for (the traditional) MTV. YouTube aggregates interesting clips and videos of broadcast media, but also provides a platform for expression (Jenkins 110-114, Lotz 252). All these different forms of content, either produced by amateurs or big-media content producers, are freely available on YouTube. The central concept surrounding YouTube, and by extension surrounding any form of commodities provided by Long Tail services, is choice.

Choice can be seen as one of the most important aspects of subject construction in a mediated world. Thomas de Zengotita mentions the availability of options in regards to being mediated: "The key fact is this: *you* can pick and choose among the options [...] because *all* the options are out there." (31); Frissen & De Mul evoke the concept of "multiphrenia" by Kenneth Gergen: "the splitting of the individual into a multiplicity of self-investments" (Gergen in Frissen & De Mul 23) and, additionally, regarding the construction of an individual homepage, argue that the homepage is a "textbook example of *bricolage*" (31)—bricolage in this sense relating to the mediated construction of the self. Furthermore, Thompson notes "By opening up the self to new forms of non-local knowledge and other kinds of mediated symbolic material,

the development of media both enriches and accentuates the reflexive organization of the self." (212).

The thing to keep in mind, though, is the multi-layered aspect of choice. For example, while watching a show, a subject chooses what and at which points she identifies herself with a character on the screen by ways of "playing with the text" (Fiske 174, 232-236). Additionally, on a more superficial level, the subject has the choice of which media text to consume due to the tremendous amount of media texts available (Anderson 26, 200; Frissen & De Mul 24; De Zengotita 22-32). As I write this (december 18, 2011), TED.com offers 1097 videos on a great variety of topics; a search for "guitar lessons" on YouTube returns 683,000 results; and all episodes of the popular cartoon show *South Park* are freely available on the *South Park* website. All three cases offering a substantial amount of choice and all three being a choice in itself. In conceptualizing the long tailed construction of the self, employing YouTube as a case in point, we are concerned with the latter level of choice.

The tremendous availability of choice is what constitutes a long tailed construction of the self: "It is the aggregate sales, use, or other participation of all those people in the newly available niches that turns the massive expansion of choice into an economic and cultural *force*. [emphasis added]". (Anderson 52). Relating this to subject construction, and following John Fiske's argument that we are "subject *to* forces of social power" (49), we can argue that the expansion of choice as a force, constitutes for a large part in the construction of the self: the growing amount of options—in this regard, YouTube videos—produced and provided by amateurs and professional content producers, give us more choice in media texts. By having more choice, we are awarded the possibility to find more relevant media texts. Conversely, the 'most popular' section on YouTube will get us only so far in satisfying our appetite. For example, if you are interested in acoustic guitar covers of popular songs, the chance of content related to this this niche-interest being in the 'most popular' section is negligible, let alone hoping to come across an acoustic performance on the modern day MTV.

The long tailed construction of the self is an aggregate of all the choices offered by the increasing amount of media texts. Due to the multimedial, interactive, virtual, and networked aspects of the Internet, we can access these choices (Anderson 16, 180-182; Frissen & De Mul 29-35). Moreover, the Internet, including long tail services, has emphasized the global aspect of a mediated, reflexive self. With traditional television, we were already used to forms of 'non-local knowledge' (Anderson 55-57, Thompson 212). Now, with YouTube and other long tail video services, this non-local knowledge has the potential of expanding even further.

To further support the argument regarding options and choice as one of the elements of a long tailed construction of the self, we need to resort to Foucault's concept of the subject. We can relate Anderson's notion of the expansion of choice as a force to Foucault's concept of the subject in "Subject and Power". An individual is made a subject by being subjected to forces of power, where power should not be seen as a negative. According to Foucault "power produces" and it is "power that makes individuals subjects" (Foucault in Gordon 411, Foucault

781). The abundance of options and choice as a force can be seen as yet another form of power which constitutes us as subjects.

In viewing choice as a force we can define choice as a substantial element of the long tailed construction of the self. According to De Zengotita, the mediated self is all about choice, or in his words, "options" (14-18). The subject constructs itself based on options and choices. Amongst these options and choices are the options and choices we make in regards to media consumption (Thompson 211-212). We choose to view videos of cats and laser pointers during our lunch break, we choose to record and watch a show on our digital TV recorders. Continuing with relating choice as a power to the long tailed construction of the self, choice gives us more power over our project of the self: "the tremendous expansion of mediated symbolic materials has opened up new possibilities for self-formation and placed new demands on the self in a way and on a scale that did not exist before." (Thompson 212). In this case, having more options, regarding the consumption of media texts, gives the subject the possibility of forming a more 'niched' self: a self constructed by the discourses and representations offered by the media texts the subject wishes to consume.

Filters of Choice

Now that we have defined options and power of choice as fundamental aspects of a long tailed construction of the self, we should look at the possible implications of having virtually limitless choice. Though the rhetoric in the previous section sketches a more or less utopian view of self construction, this is obviously not entirely the case. It can not be denied that the globalizing aspects of media pose some specific problems regarding the construction of the self, one of the most prominent problems being: out of a library of unlimited media texts, how do we access and choose texts relevant to our interests? In order to get an answer to this question, we first need to define the possible pitfalls of self construction, secondly we need to to argue which of these pitfalls apply to a long tailed construction of the self, followed by possible solutions offered by long tail services.

Dilemmas regarding the mediated construction of the self

The construction of the self in a mediated society has several implications, ranging from individuals being influenced by discourses and representations in media texts to individuals being dependent on these media texts in order to practice the construction of the self. John Thompson defines four distinctive negative consequences for the construction of the self in a mediated society. Additionally, Frissen & De Mul, referencing Thompson and Anthony Giddens, also mention four possible (some overlapping with Thompson's) dilemmas regarding the construction of the self in a mediated society. Here we need to differentiate between dilemmas regarding the construction of the self in general, and dilemmas directly related to a long tailed construction of the self in regards to limitless choice.

In a mediated society we are influenced by the discourses and representations in the media. Thompson calls this "the mediated intrusion of ideological messages" (213-214). With the abundance of media texts provided by YouTube, the amount of possible discourses we are subjected to is increased as well. Although these discourses are not always supported by big media companies (think conspiracy theory videos, for example), it can not be denied we still have the possibility of being influenced by these discourses. In regards to a long tailed construction of the self this is not necessarily a bad thing, it is just the way media work. If anything, a growing variety of discourse allows us to construct a more coherent version of the self (Frissen & De Mul 24-28, Thompson 214). However, the opposite might also be the case—in the next section I will briefly revisit this dilemma in regards to filters.

The expansion of available media texts, or in Thompson's words 'mediated symbolic materials', creates a codependence between media and self construction. This "double-bind of mediated dependency" (Thompson 214-215), gives individuals more options in constructing the self, however, at the same time, individuals become dependent on media to construct the self. This codependency holds true for YouTube and video-on-demand services as well. We get used to watching reruns of *24* on our digital recorders and browsing for clips of typical '90s cartoons like *Pinky and the Brain,* because these texts are practically always up for grabs. If the possibility of video-on-demand would disappear from our lives, we would have to fall back to the traditional forms of video consumption.

The problem of codependency correlates with the third dilemma proposed by Thompson: "the absorption of self in mediated quasi-interaction" where "mediated symbolic materials are not merely a resource for the self but its central preoccupation" (218-219). In this case the self is absorbed in symbols. The self does not exist without these symbols. Typical examples are fashionistas or extreme forms of fandom. This third dilemma, again, is a general issue regarding the construction of the self. YouTube and other video-on-demand services might give us access to mediated symbolic materials, however, this access will not add to this issue directly in itself. YouTube and its relatives, aside from being brands, are primarily considered to be media.

Wether the possible consequences of these dilemmas reside within the ethical and moral boundaries of our society is another question entirely, worthy of its own research.

Choice and filters

Now that we have briefly discussed the more general dilemmas of self construction, we can return to the initial question of how we access and choose texts relevant to our interests. As I argued in the previous section, choice is the defining element in a long tailed construction of the self. However, with the limitless amount of choice in media texts it is increasingly difficult to choose and/or to find media texts relevant to our interests. The fragmentation of media and media texts can cause a disorienting effect (Anderson 189-190, Frissen & De Mul 24,

Thompson 216-217). Psychologist Barry Schwartz defined this effect as 'the paradox of choice', which I will discuss in the next paragraph. To battle the problem of extreme fragmentation and the effects it has on choice, long tail services resort to filters, which, I will argue, are essential to the long tailed construction of the subject.

The paradox of choice describes the notion that "too much choice is not just confusing but is downright oppressive." (Anderson 170). It is a paradox because the general discourse surrounding choice is: more choice equals more freedom (Schwartz). However, according to Schwartz, this is obviously not the case. To summarize the notion of the paradox of choice: people are more satisfied with their eventual choice when they have a limited amount of options to choose from, in contrast to having a large amount of options (Schwartz). If this paradox holds true in the case of long tail services like YouTube, by having an unlimited amount of choice in media texts, we should literally be paralyzed by the amount of choice provided by these services (Anderson 171, Schwartz). Additionally, if we are able to make a choice in which media text to consume, we should be relatively less satisfied with the media text we chose versus other possible media texts we could have chosen. As a consequence for a long tailed construction of the self, the paradox of choice would significantly hinder or paralyze the construction of the self in regards to the consumption of media texts. Yet, somehow, YouTube kindly ignores, or is at least not significantly affected by, the paradox of choice. In June 2009, 1.2 billion videos were streamed to users daily and this number continues to grow (Arrington). About a year later, the amount of streams per day reached 2 billion (Kincaid). This phenomenon raises the question: how do people manage the choices offered by long tail services like YouTube?

People filter their choices based on their interests and based on things that move them (Anderson 189, Thompson 216, De Zengotita 24). According to Thompson, in a mediated world people tend to develop an innate sense of what is relevant to their interests. We become selective and more or less the experts of our *self*. With an abundance of mediated materials, we tend to ignore things irrelevant to us and tend to focus on the things that we think are important. In regards to the Internet and websites, one of the effects supporting this phenomenon is the so called 'banner blindness' people experience when browsing websites (Benway & Lane). Banner blindness is a cognitive phenomenon explaining why website users generally miss banners on websites partly due to the advertising-esque qualities of banners. Aside from this finding, the report mentions: "There is evidence that most web users search for specific information." (Benway & Lane). This finding correlates to Thompson's notion of expertise over the self. Users tend to ignore anything that is not tangibly relevant to their objective, being overtly selective in what they do deem relevant.

Selectivity and the expertise of the self are both elements of how we deal with the growing number of choices in media texts. Although this is the theoretical basis regarding the element of filters in a long tailed construction of the self, it does not provide a complete answer to the question of how we filter choice. In order to fully answer this question we need to resort to an

analysis of certain design aspects of YouTube supporting the need for the selectivity of the self. Furthermore, we need to take into account other internet services, specifically Social Networking Sites (SNS), to construct a more complete account of the possible ways we deal with this selectivity and expertise when using internet services like YouTube.

On the YouTube website itself, YouTube offers a range of filters supporting the selectivity of the self. One of the most prominent filters is its search functionality. As soon as the website has finished loading, the first thing on the page, next to the YouTube logo, is the search bar, already highlighted and selected for your convenience. Thanks to the powerful search algorithm the chance of finding a video relevant to your query on the first page of search results is relatively high. Although the search functionality being the most prominent aspect, there are far more elaborate filter mechanisms at work supporting the user in his or her selectivity. To list a few of these filters, YouTube supports: trending videos, popular videos, videos by type (music, entertainment, sports, etcetera), tags, featured videos (videos being sponsored), recommended videos based on the video currently being viewed, and video responses to the current video being viewed. This is only a small selection of the possible filters on YouTube. YouTube users with an account get even more possible filters, a prominent one being the ability to subscribe to YouTube channels of other YouTube users (Schröter 340). And again, the amount of possible filters empowering us to select content relevant to our interests do not stop here. The basic principle at work in the aforementioned filters on YouTube is the clever visualization of semantic relations in the YouTube database connecting these videos to each other (Kessler & Schäfer). YouTube and other long tail services employ semantic relationships to present users with content (possibly) related to their interests.

Aside from the filters offered by YouTube, there is another powerful form of filter active in our day-to-day internet use which in effect, remediates word-of-mouth. This is important because one of the "coping mechanisms" of having an unlimited amount of choice are recommendations by "significant others" (Thompson 216). If anything, the Internet allows us to share texts with the world. The decentralized structure of the Internet makes it possible to effectively link texts to other texts regardless of location, the only prerequisite is the text being accessible via an URL in your internet browser. Facebook and similar social networking sites, allow us to share almost any form of content with our family, close friends, and acquaintances. Following the concept of remediation by David Bolter and Richard Grusin, stating that new forms of media effectively employ other forms of media (55), we can argue that Facebook and other SNS allow for a remediation of word of mouth—maybe even enriching word of mouth by reaching an audience instead of a select amount of people and allowing us direct access to the text provided. Facebook, for example, allows the embedding of YouTube videos (Kessler & Schäfer 278). These forms of recommendations are defined by Chris Anderson as "Post-Filters": "post-filters find the best of what's already out there in their area of interest, elevating the good (i.e., what is relevant, interesting, original, etc.) and downplaying, even ignoring, the

bad" (Anderson 122). Following Thompson's argument of the self having expertise over the self, Post-Filters are an important force regarding the selective self (Anderson 122-124).

The examples of filters mentioned in this section solve the paradox of choice by the basic premise of reducing choice (Postrel in Anderson 174, Postrel). Following this notion it is no surprise that YouTube limits the number of results following a search query to, at the time of writing, 24 per page. Similarly, all the other forms of filters on YouTube limit the amount of choice as well. Following Schwartz's concept of the paradox of choice, less choice provides us with more satisfaction regarding the eventual choice we make. This is again evident on filters separate from YouTube. The word-of-mouth aspect of Facebook, which allows us to see what our peers feel important to share, acts as another reduction in choice by supporting Thompson's argument of individuals being experts of the self and individuals relying on significant others for part of their selectivity.

Although filters solve the paradox of choice, another problem arises. With all these filters, recommendations, and algorithms, we again encounter Thompson's risk of the mediated intrusion of ideological messages. In a TED talk by internet activist Eil Pariser called *Beware online "Filter Bubbles"*, Pariser mentions the dangers of being influenced by filters, algorithms, and recommendations on websites—additionally Pariser also released a book called *The Filter Bubble,* further describing this phenomenon. Filter bubbles effectively obscure irrelevant information. Though, the initial response to this phenomenon might be that this is a good thing, it more or less forces us to be influenced by discourses we approve of. In filter bubbles "you don't decide what gets in, and more importantly, you don't actually see what gets edited out." (Pariser).

Filters act as the second element of the long tailed construction of the self by empowering us to choose content relevant to our interests from an, effectively, small amount of options. The various filters, being constituted by the decentralized structure of the Internet, connecting services with other services and services with users, allow us to make the choice in selecting content relevant to our interests. Although filters raise the problem of filter bubbles, the implications of filter bubbles lie beyond a long tailed construction of the self.

Conclusion

This thesis is concerned with formulating a more specific interpretation of how the self is constructed in a mediated society being influenced by limitless choice offered on the Internet. Following the concepts of the construction of the self by Frissen & De Mul, Thompson, and De Zengotita, along with Foucault, I have argued for an interpretation of a mediated construction of the self as a long tailed construction of the self. By employing Chris Anderson's *The Long Tail*, limitless choice and the variety filters provided by services like YouTube are the two elements of a long tailed construction of the self, with limitless choice being the defining aspect and filters being the mechanism allowing us to cope with this limitless choice.

In this thesis, I have formulated the long tailed construction of the self by employing YouTube and similar video-on-demand services as a case study example. However, a long tailed construction of the self is not limited to these services. The long tailed construction of the self can be applied to similar long tail services offering limitless choice, like Amazon, iTunes or Spotify. The interpretation of a long tailed construction of the self might solve some of the issues regarding a mediated construction of the self, Schwartz's paradox of choice and Thompson's disorienting effect of symbolic overload, for example. There are, however, still other dilemmas regarding the construction of the self which a long tailed construction of the self can not solve—if there ever will be a possibility of having all the solutions for dilemmas regarding the construction of the self in an increasingly mediated society. Specifically Pariser's notion of the filter bubble is a phenomenon that requires more research. Although filters might offer us content more relevant to our interests, we are at risk being saturated by certain discourses and ideologies.

Although Anderson's concept of the long tail is explicitly applied to internet-based services like Amazon, Spotify, and iTunes, there might be a possibility in arguing that we have always been subjected to choices and filters relating to construction of the self, again, we can resort to Thompson's expertise over the self. On the other hand, a long tailed construction of the self might be characteristic of our postmodern mediated society, where the boundaries of locality are fading away, where our experiences are ever increasingly mediated, and where choice and optionality of commodities and media texts become the defining aspects of the self.

Works cited

Anderson, Chris. *The Long Tail: Why the Future of Business Is Selling Less of More*. New York: Hyperion, 2008. Print.

Ang, Ien. "The Nature of the Audience." *Questioning the Media: a Critical Introduction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1995. 207-20. Print.

Arrington, Michael. "YouTube Video Streams Top 1.2 Billion/Day." *TechCrunch*. TechCrunch, 9 June 2009. Web. 10 Jan. 2012. <http://techcrunch.com/2009/06/09/youtube-video-streams-top-1-billionday/>.

Benway, Jan Panero, and David M. Lane. "Banner Blindness: Web Searchers Often Miss "Obvious" Links" *ITG Home*. ITG Newsletter, Dec. 1998. Web. 10 Jan. 2012. <http://www.internettg.org/newsletter/dec98/banner_blindness.html>.

Bolter, J. David, and Richard A. Grusin. *Remediation: Understanding New Media*. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1999. Print.

Fiske, John. *Television Culture*. New York: Routledge, 2001. Print.

Foucault, Michel. "The Subject and Power." *Critical Inquiry* 8.4 (1982): 777-95. Print.

Fox, Nick J. "Foucault, Foucauldians and Sociology." *The British Journal of Sociology* 39.3 (1998): 415-33. Print.

Frissen, Valerie, and Jos de Mul. *Under Construction: Persoonlijke En Culturele Identiteit in Het Multimediatijdperk*. Amsterdam: Infodrome, 2000. Print.

Gordon, Neve. "Foucault's Subject: An Ontological Reading." *Polity* 31.3 (1999): 395-414. Print.

Jenkins, Henry. "What Happened Before Youtube." *YouTube: Online Video and Participatory Culture*. By Jean Burgess, Joshua Green, and John Hartley. Cambridge, England: Polity, 2009. 109-25. Print.

Kessler, Frank, and Mirko Tobias Schäfer. "Navigating YouTube: Constituting a Hybrid Information Management System." Ed. Pelle Snickars and Patrick Vonderau. *The YouTube Reader*. Stockholm: National Library of Sweden, 2009. 275-91. Print.

Kincaid, Jason. "Five Years In, YouTube Is Now Streaming Two Billion Views Per Day." *TechCrunch*. TechCrunch, 16 May 2010. Web. 10 Jan. 2012. <http://techcrunch.com/2010/05/16/five-years-in-youtube-is-now-streaming-two-billion-videos-per-day/>.

Lotz, Amanda D. *The Television Will Be Revolutionized*. New York: New York UP, 2007. Print.

Macdonald, Myra. "Discourse and Representation." *Exploring Media Discourse*. [London]: Arnold, 2003. 9-26. Print.

Pariser, Eli. *Beware Online "filter Bubbles"*. Perf. Eli Pariser. *TED: Ideas worth Spreading*. May 2011. Web. 10 Jan. 2012. <http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/en/ eli_pariser_beware_online_filter_bubbles.html>.

Postrel, Virginia. "Consumer Vertigo." Reason Magazine. Reason Magazine, 1 June 2005. Web. 10 Jan. 2012. <http://reason.com/archives/2005/06/01/consumer-vertigo/singlepage>.

Schröter, Jens. "On the Logic of the Digital Archive." Ed. Pelle Snickars and Patrick Vonderau. *The YouTube Reader*. Stockholm: National Library of Sweden, 2009. 330-46. Print.

Sysomos Inc. "Top YouTube Videos and Other Statistics." *Social Media Monitoring Tools for Business by Sysomos*. Feb. 2010. Web. 18 Dec. 2011. <http://www.sysomos.com/reports/ youtube/>.

Schwartz, Barry. *Barry Schwartz on The Paradox of Choice*. Perf. Barry Schwartz. *TED: Ideas worth Spreading*. TED, Sept. 2006. Web. 10 Jan. 2012. <http://www.ted.com/talks/ barry_schwartz_on_the_paradox_of_choice.html>.

Thompson, John B. *The Media and Modernity: a Social Theory of the Media*. Cambridge, UK: Polity in Association with Blackwell, 1995. Print.

De Zengotita, Thomas. *Mediated: How the Media Shapes Your World and the Way You Live in It*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2005. Print.