

Vidding and its Media Territories: A Practice-centred Approach to User-generated Content Production

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Abstract

“Vidding” is the practice of synchronizing a song with excerpts of one or more visual texts (usually a TV series or a cult movie), so to confer new meanings to the video materials. This form of user-generated content usually explores some peculiar aspects of the original materials (the evolution of character or of a relationship), or to confer them new meanings.

Originated within the media fandom ecosystem, the vidding phenomenon has been so far mainly analysed from the points of view of audience reception within fan cultures and of gender and feminist studies. The present preliminary study focuses on the Italian context and aims to explore vidding as a media related production practice. Such perspective brings to the forefront questions concerning the role of digital technologies in the production process, in the distribution of user-generated content, in the emergence of shared aesthetic and stylistic quality criteria, as well as in the circulation of the specific competences required by the practice.

Keywords User-generated Content, Vidding, Practice Theory, Making, Media Territories

1. Introduction

Media scholars have since long observed how we live in a participatory culture (Jenkins, 1992; Jenkins, 2006; Dery, 1993; Lessig, 2008; Miller, 2011; Delwiche and Henderson, 2013 eds.), with digital media allowing people to express themselves, contributing to their beloved storyworlds (media fandom) or criticizing contemporary mainstream cultures (culture jamming). Together with fan fiction, fan movies and machinimas, vids are an example of these forms of user-generated contents.

Vidding is “a form of grassroots filmmaking in which clips from television shows and movies are set to music. The result is called a vid or a songvid” (Coppa, 2008: 1.1). In this specific kind of user-generated content originated in media fandoms, music is used to interpret and give new meanings to the visual source edited by the vidder (Coppa, 2011).

As we will show in section 2, vidding has been so far mainly analysed from the points of view of audience reception within fan cultures and of gender and feminist studies. The present preliminary study aims to address it as a production practice, focusing in particular on the understudied Italian context. Addressing it as a media related practice (Couldry, 2012) allow us to shed light on how vidding is performed, reproduced and stabilized thanks to shared competences and symbolic meanings, as well as to the support of specific assemblages of different media platforms and other technological tools.

Under a methodological point of view, we draw on the practice-centred approach advanced by Elizabeth Shove, Mika Pantzar and Matt Watson (2012). As the section 3.1 will show, practices are conceived as stabilized performances whose constituents are heterogeneous elements such as *materials*, *competences* and *meanings*: our focus on vidding will be similarly threefold. Moreover, our specific research interests as media scholars drives us to introduce the methodological concept of “*media territories*” as the assemblages of media devices, platforms and services adopted in the practice.

The preliminary results of our inquiry, which we present in section 3.2, also aim to deepen the understanding of a specific aspect of practice theory. According to Shove, Pantzar and Watson (2012), in fact, practices may forego relevant transformations when they become connected together to form a *complex*, an “*integrated arrangement* [...] [of practices] *including co-dependent forms of sequence and synchronization*” (Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2012: 17). The case of vidding allows us to shed light on the changes occurring in a practice when it moves from one *complex* to another one: in this specific case, from the complex of practices of fan cultures to the complex of practices of video making.

The final section will be dedicated to some final remarks on the case study and to some previews of the future developments of our research.

2. Vids as gendered cultural artefacts

“In 2005, the year that YouTube was founded, media fans celebrated the 30th anniversary of vidding at Vividcon, an on-going convention dedicated to vids” (Coppa, 2008: 1.4). Vidding is in fact a form of DIY remix that precedes the digital era, dating back to the mid Seventies. At that time, Kandy Fong (ibid.) and other *Star Trek* fans – mostly women – started to create slideshows of their favourite series, where still images were accompanied by songs played by tape recorders. In the Eighties, still images were replaced by VHS footages produced by VCRs’ tape editing.

The phase of digitalization of vidding – the one we will focus on – gained momentum only with the new century and the diffusion in the consumer market of non-linear editing software tools: Movie Maker was distributed for the first time with Windows Millennium in 2000; Apple released Final Cut Pro in 1999 and distributed iMovies with Mac computers starting from 2003; Sony Vegas 2.0, the first version with video editing features, was released in 2002.

In the last decade, media scholars have started to devote an increasing attention to the phenomenon, addressing it mainly from two perspectives.

A first strand of research explores vids as cultural artefacts, addressing in particular the sophisticated textual and symbolic competences required for their reception. As Francesca Coppa clarifies (2010):

Many people still don’t “get” fan vids, seeing them either as incomprehensible mashups or mere celebratory slideshows. In fact, vidding, like most forms of remix, is about critical selection and the editing eye: deciding what to put in and what to leave out. Vids can make very sophisticated arguments about the source text’s plot and characters, and even its ideology. While some vids are edited to broadly emphasize certain themes, images, or characters, and are thus easily understandable to the uninvested spectator, other vids are made specifically for fellow fans who are assumed to be familiar not only with the source text but also with the conventions and established aesthetics of vidding.

On the same line, Jenkins remarks that “[i]f commercial videos encourage spectators to take pleasure in the decision to ‘stop making sense’, as some critics have claimed, fan videos demand the active participation of the viewer as a precondition for making meaning of their quick yet logical progression of images” (Jenkins, 1992: 237). For example, viewers are supposed to be able to relate the song’s mood and lyrics to the fictional character(s) and to their inner feelings and desires (ibid.: 235). In this sense, vids don’t reflect only the producer’s personal creativity and competence but, by encouraging the co-construction of meaning between vidders and vidwatchers (Turk and Johnson, 2012; Turk, 2010; Hills, 2002), they reflect also the common culture of the fan community (Jenkins, 1992: 223).

For the competent user, a vid is “*a visual essay that stages an argument*” (Coppa, 2008: 1.1). Such an argument can scrutinize peculiar aspects of the original text, like a character’s motivations and evolution, or a relationship – actually shown in the show or just hypothetically imagined by fans. Yet, it may also articulate a broader critical discourse on the values ideologically implied in the source materials or, more generally, in the contemporary media culture (Svegaard, 2015). Moreover, these arguments are normally able to activate discussions between the creator(s) and the community, and within the fandom community itself (Turk and Johnson, 2012; Turk, 2010), fostering and strengthening the elaboration of a common culture.

The second main strand of research is, in turn, concerned with the gender issues implied by the phenomenon. From its very beginning, in fact, vidding is an almost exclusively feminine form of user-generated content production (Coppa, 2008; Cupitt, 2008; Freund, 2011; Tralli, 2014). This has led scholars to focus on the role of women as cultural creators (Byerly and Ross, 2006; Butler, 2002; Bacon-Smith, 1991) and on the related possibility – both for producers and viewers – of criticizing and deconstructing gender stereotypes. On one hand, vidding – where women act as the main consumers and producers – would be in fact a “*minor audio-visual practice*” (Tralli, 2014: 408). On the other hand, however, it would open for women a space of appropriation of a hegemonic language (Johnston, 2000; Butler, 2002) – the audio-visual language – to question mainstream media texts. Such a possibility would make vidding a precious form of cultural expression also for the LGBT community (Kreisinger, 2012), where it would be used to criticize the dominant heteronormativity.

Concomitantly with these two main strands of research, scholars have interrogated vidding in relation to topics of key relevance for contemporary participatory cultures, like issues of copyright and fair use (Lothian, 2009; Tushnet, 2013; Freund, 2016), media literacy and education (Stein, 2014; Winters 2014), and digital cultural artefacts preservation (Framow, 2014).

However, while the literature on vidding as a gendered cultural artefact is quickly becoming more and more vast, the specificities of vidding as a practice have been so far left mostly unexplored. This leaves unanswered questions concerning, among the other topics, the specific forms and the evolving dynamics of the production process of vidding; the role played in it by digital technologies; the shifting forms of assemblage of online platforms and services used by video makers to support the practice, to circulate their products, to stay in contact with other practitioners and with their audiences; the emergence and transformation of shared aesthetic and stylistic quality criteria; the definition and circulation of the competencies required by the practice.

3. Vidding as practice

In this section we present the preliminary results of the on-going research we are conducting on vidding as a production practice in the Italian context. The first subsection, dedicated to methodology and methods, clarifies the main tenets of the specific brand of practice approach we are adopting and the specific research methods we are employing for our research. In the second subsection, we compare the practice of vidding as intertwined in the complex of practices of fan communities to vidding as intertwined in the complex of practices of video making.

3.1. *Methods and methodology*

To address the aforementioned gaps in the current understanding of vidding as an activity of content production, we adopt a practice-based perspective. Looking at vidding as a “*media related practice*” (Couldry, 2012) means first of all to conceive it as a stabilized arrangement of joined bodily activities, “*a temporally unfolding and spatially dispersed nexus of doings and sayings [...] linked in certain ways*” (Schatzki, 1996: 89). For complex “integrative practices” as vidding, these ways encompass “*understandings*”, “*explicit rules, principles, precepts and instructions*”, as well as “*‘teleoaffective’ structures embracing ends, projects, tasks, purposes, beliefs, emotions and moods*” (ibid.: 89), that altogether form the “organization” of the practice. This perspective leads the researcher to focus at the same time on the articulations of actions – media related or not – performed in vidding and on the socialization and learning processes that enable practitioners to acquire the skills required to perform the practice itself.

As media scholars, we are especially interested in the forms of technological mediation involved in the activities in which vidding is articulated. Moreover, as vidding is a spatially dispersed practice, mostly undertaken by solo (but interconnected) practitioners, we are interested in all the forms of mediated learning and socialization that sustain and reproduce it. The specific brand of practice approach elaborated by Elizabeth Shove, Mika Pantzar and Matt Watson (2012) seems particularly apt to address these aspects. The authors propose a threefold approach which draws on Andreas Reckwitz’s understanding of practices as interdependent correlation between “*forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, ‘things’ and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know how, states of emotions and motivational knowledge*” (Reckwitz, 2002: 249). Together with a focus on *competences* – including both “*knowing in the sense of being able to evaluate a performance*” and “*knowing in the sense of having the skills required to perform*” (ibid.: 23) – and *meanings* as “*the social and symbolic significance of*

participation at any one moment” (ibid.), they propose a specific attention to *materials*, “*encompassing objects, infrastructures, tools, hardware and the body itself*” (ibid.) as integral constituent of a practice.

Some of these tools are media devices, platforms and services. Drawing on previous works (Tosoni and Tarantino, 2013; Tosoni and Ridell, 2016), we refer to these ensembles of specific material elements (in which we include software applications) as “*media territories*”, carved out by practitioners from the general mediascape to be employed in a stable way within a particular practice (in our case vidding). In this respect, media territories are more specific than the broader concept of “*media diet*” (see for example Pozzali and Ferri, 2012), that refers to all the media devices, platforms and services commonly employed by a subject, or a category of subjects, in their daily lives. Using the spatial metaphor of “*territories*” we intend to underline how these media assemblages represent also the mediated sites in which practices unfold, contributing to define their overall spatial arrangement.

Audience studies, and in particular the tradition stemmed from Silverstone’s domestication theory (Silverstone, 1994), could contribute to practice theories by addressing the way in which these media devices, platforms and services are appropriated within the media territory of a specific practice, along with the meanings they acquire, the uses they forgo and the specific competences they require (for an example of a similar perspective applied to digital music consumption, see Magauidda, 2012).

Finally, the approach to practices proposed by Shove, Pantzar and Watson has been specifically tuned up to tackle the dynamic evolution of practices, which involves both stabilization and transformation, resulting therefore particularly apt to approach vidding as a research object. As we will see, in fact, throughout its recent history, vidding production has foregone a major transformation, moving from the complex of practices of fan cultures to the complex of practices of video making. Under this point of view, our contribution to practice theory will be the attempt to clarify what happens to a practice when it moves from a complex of practices to another one.

Based on this methodological and theoretical framework, the on-going research employs a plurality of integrated methods, each of them aiming to shade light on the aspects we have discussed:

1. In-depth qualitative interviews to Italian vidders (n=5 of the 10 subjects we expect to interview), aiming to retrace the main and general constituent elements (competences, meanings and materials) of vidding as making, as well as the career of the practice and of the subject as a “*practice carrier*” (Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2012). We have chosen our interviewees among the Italian vidders with more views on YouTube: all of them were female, ranging from 20 to 26 years old, living in central and northern Italy.
2. Vidding media territories have been further scrutinized through virtual

ethnography of all the online spaces involved in the practice (YouTube channels, Vimeo, Facebook pages, ask.com, forums), at the beginning identified through a search engine research and then integrated with all the media devices, platforms and services emerged as relevant in the qualitative interviews.

3. To better focus on competences and materials, and on the practice as a nexus of doings and sayings, we have asked subjects to give us a basic training on vidding, producing together a short segment of a video as a part of the qualitative interview. This has been so far possible – for reasons of distance – only with 2 of the 5 interviewees.
4. In order to better complete our analysis of meanings and competences, we have performed a stylistic and content analysis of some (n=25) of the video artefacts produced by the interviewees, or quoted by them as example of very good – or very bad – artefacts.
5. Finally, we have asked subjects to produce technical video commentaries about one of their video artefacts, to be able to address in depth their stylistic and technical features, and the technical challenges of their making.

3.2. Preliminary results: vidding from the realm of fandom to the realm of video making

As anticipated, with the new millennium the practice of vidding foregoes a deep transformation, concerning first and foremost its *material elements*: digital editing of video files replaces VHS and VCRs. In hindsight, interviewees acknowledge the rudimentary nature of the vids in this first phase of digitalization, usually produced with the quite unsophisticated tools released with their operating system: generally, Movie Maker (PC users) and iMovie (iOS users). No particular hardware update is reported, with the exception of the upgrade of the RAM (up to 4 or 8 GB), intensively used by video editing tools, and therefore needed to speed-up the editing process.

Media territories get partially reorganized to support this shift that predated the release of YouTube (2005). After a phase of video capture from VHS and DVD, peer-to-peer (P2P) platforms quickly become the main repository for source materials. Our interviewees mention for example the relevance of iDC++, an open source P2P file-sharing client. Yet, the very centre of the practice's media territories remains firmly occupied by the online space hosting the specific fan community of reference: a forum or a website. Vidders, in fact, are stable members of these communities, usually dedicated to a single, specific TV product, and they actively participate to their complex of practices (Fiske, 1989; Jenkins, 1992; Jenkins, 2006). For one of our interviewees, for example, it's the case of Xandrella.

com, the most popular Italian fan community dedicated to *Xena: Warrior Princess* (2003-still active): “*There were about 4 or 5 video makers in Xandrella.com. I was the most prolific of them. In 3 or 4 years, I produced around 100 vids. I produced a video in a fortnight*” (CS, F, 26).

These online spaces are the main circuits of distribution for the video artefacts (P2P platforms are a secondary circuit), and their members are the vidders’ main audiences. As the same interviewee illustrates:

More than being a real vidder, at the beginning you were more a member of a specific fan community, and its website or forum was the place you belonged to. [...] These websites had a section for videos, usually inside a broader section called something like ‘fan creations’ [...]. Therefore, it was inside that community that you received attention and appreciation. If you did not receive appreciation, it was because you were not good enough [...]. There was no other place where to be visible: that was your only circuit (CS, F, 26)

Under a symbolic and affective point of view (the *meanings* of the practice, for Shove, Pantzar and Watson), this means that producing a vid represents a way to participate to the community and to the collective process of meaning-making. This participation allows the vidder to gain “*subcultural capital, [that] confers status on its owner in the eyes of the relevant beholder*” (Thornton, 1995: 27). Moreover, this also means that the practice of vidding becomes tightly intertwined with all the other practices carried on within the fan community. For example, vids can foster – or trigger – the discussion among fans about specific aspects of the narrative world or the ultimate meanings of the show. In the same way, the video artefacts reflect tastes and interests that are heating the community at any specific moment, and sometimes they are produced under explicit request of a community member – for example, when a fan asks to scrutinize a relationship between characters. Finally, vids can also be integrated in more complex transmedia products with other fan-generated contents distributed within the community, like when a vid resumes, or introduces in form of a trailer, a fan fiction.

Consequently, in this phase the main *competences* required by the practice are not only the in-depth knowledge of everything related to the TV show (already discussed by fan scholars like Williams, 2015; Jenkins, 1992; Bacon-Smith, 1991), but also an equally informed understanding of the shifting moods, interests and curiosity of the specific community of reference. Coming to a technical point of view, Jenkins underlines how, already in the previous “analogue” phase, “*the techniques [of vidding] are taught, informally, with new fan artists learning tricks working alongside more established video makers. This process is particularly facilitated by the tendency of fans to work in video collectives which periodically initiate new members*” (Jenkins, 1992: 247-248). Actually, our interviewees describe this phase

as characterized by a naïve process of self-learning by trial and error, undertaken without any direct support by other video makers. Similarly, they do not mention that form of “mediated” support represented by those video tutorials that will play a key role for the stabilization of the technical competences of the practice (and thus, of the practice itself) in the subsequent phase, when vidding will enter the complex of practices of video making.

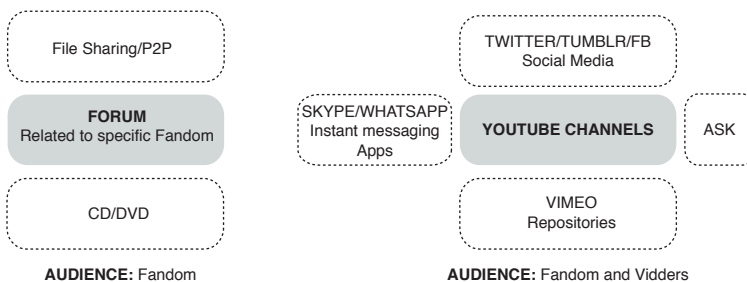
This new phase dates back to the second half of the first decade of the millennium, and is related to the launch of YouTube as a video repository (2005). The platform, in fact, quickly gains popularity among video makers, becoming a key online space to distribute their products. Yet, even if our interviewees acknowledge a continuity in vidding before and after this turning point, the adoption of YouTube is only a part of broader modification that concerns all the constitutive elements of the practice: although remaining related to the fandom realm, vidding gets disentangled from the complex of fandom practices to enter the complex of practices of video making. In this process, it foregoes a vigorous re-articulation.

With the new phase, in fact, specific fandom communities are not anymore the vidders’ only audiences, and not even the most relevant: now recognition and subcultural capital are sought also – and mainly – in the network of video makers: therefore, the *meanings* of the practice radically change. The appreciation from the communities of fans of the source materials – measured by views and “likes” on YouTube – remains relevant, but mostly as a way to raise the attention of the video makers’ network on the vid. As a video maker’s craft, technical bravura and shared aesthetic values gain an unprecedented relevance. Reputation becomes now mainly related to the “quality” of the vidder’s products, acknowledged by other vidders and video makers. For this reason, vidders show a high sense of creative ownership of their artefacts, and they resort to specific sets of sub-practices to discourage unfair appropriation by other vidders. In the most conflictual cases, they can even mobilise and coordinate their network of video makers and fans to induce the “stealer”, or the host platform, to remove the controversial content.

Vidding’s media territories are reconfigured in a way that reflects, and support, the new meanings of the practice. As anticipated, YouTube is now the main channel of vids distribution, and it is equally relevant as a platform of socialization between vidders. Concerning distribution, the repository is often associated to secondary spaces. In fact, vidders deem YouTube’s “fair use” policy too strict and incoherent, leading too often the company to remove vids for copyright infringement. The same vids are therefore published on Vimeo, a platform that is regarded as more flexible in terms of copyright enforcement. While granting less exposure in terms of views, Vimeo is also appreciated as an “elite” platform for video makers and as a valuable way to attract their attention. Other channels are used to maximize personal visibility or to grant online permanence to the video produced: in particular, vidders open and

regularly update personal blogs and pages on Twitter, Tumblr and Facebook. What it is most notable here is that from our online explorations has emerged how vidders are not specialized on a single or on a restricted set of TV shows, like it happened in the previous phase. Their products generally encompass a plurality of sources, targeting a plurality of fandoms. Not surprisingly, our interviewee points also out how “multi-fandom vids” (including source materials from different TV sources) are valued as a way to intercept a plurality of fandoms, incrementing the vids’ potential exposure. Concerning socialization, vidders do not consider the direct participation to a fan community as relevant as in the previous phase. Indeed, the relationships between the vidder and her fan audience are now often mediated by the analytics services provided by YouTube and other distribution platforms. Monitoring and measuring the performances of each vid becomes a new and crucial sub-practice of vidding. Quantitative data are interrogated to get an understanding of the geographical distribution, tastes and interests of the vid’s audience. This is also done thanks to a constant attention to audience’s direct feedback, usually received through personal messages or online public comments. Messages and comments are also a valuable way to become acquainted with other vidders and video makers, and YouTube is quoted as the most relevant online platform for this purpose. These personal contacts are then carried on through other channels, in particular chats and instant messaging services as Skype (used as a chat), Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp. Moreover, specific sub-practices create important occasions to strengthen the network of the vidder’s relationships: it’s the case of the organization and participation to international contests, where video makers and vidders are challenged to elaborate their products around a theme (like, for example, “the human body” as in the last year’s “Test Your Skills” contest). Finally, relevant for socializations are also online services like Ask.com, principally dedicated (as we will see) to the exchange of competences and information between vidders (and video makers) (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Vidding media territories



Concerning other *material elements*, the new relevance of technical and aesthetic skills prescribes to vidders a specific digital tool: the Windows-only software

package for non-linear editing Sony Vegas. Initially conceived as an audio editor, this tool grants users an advanced control on audio/video synchronization: our interviewees unanimously mention how Sony Vegas allows users “to see the sound wave while editing”, enabling refined forms of rhythmic editing. It is noteworthy that the same description of the tool is also given by iOS users: while unable to run Sony Vegas on their computers, they seem anyhow familiar with the Graphic User Interface of the package, mostly seen in video tutorials. The use of alternative iOS-compatible editing tools, like Adobe Premiere, After Effects or Final Cut (regarded as top of the line for other forms of video making), is described as a not completely satisfactory compromise imposed by the hardware equipment owned by the vidder. Regarding hardware, 8 or 16 GB of RAM are now considered mandatory, together with a good GPU (Graphics Processing Unit) for audio/video data processing. Some of the interviewees mention the purchase of external mass storage units for vids and source materials, but they are not regarded as fundamental. Finally, our (Italian) interviewee expresses some concern for the inadequacy of the internet infrastructure of the country to support the 4K (Ultra HD) video standard, supported by YouTube since 2010 and becoming increasingly popular.

Regarding *competences*, three aspects seem to us most prominent. First of all, as we have already mentioned, aesthetic and technical skills acquire an unprecedented relevance: however brilliant the discourse they elaborate on source materials, sloppily edited vids are now mostly ignored within the network of video makers. These competences circulate within the network of relationships of video makers, thanks to personal (mediated) communications and occasional consultations. Moreover, as we have already mentioned, specific portions of media territories are dedicated to the socialization of competences “between strangers”. Being active on Ask.com, a platform dedicated to questions and answers, is for example a good way to learn specific technicalities of the use of editing packages, to connect to other vidders and to get visibility within the video makers’ network. In second place, a relevant part of the competences required by the practice gets embedded and “materialized” into digital artefacts, becoming a point of reference for the network of vidders. In this way, they contribute to the stabilization and standardization of the competences required by the practices, and therefore of the practice itself: it’s the case, in particular, of video tutorials (distributed in dedicated channels on YouTube) and of “presets”, files that automatically set up the software editor (mainly, but not limited to, Sony Vegas) to reproduce a particular effect or palette of colours. Our interviewees clarify that their use of presets aims more to learn how to set up the editing package than to emulate a specific vid. Producing and distributing tutorials and presets represent a key sub-practice both for vidding and (more in general) video making. Finally, it is important to notice how aesthetic and stylistic features do not depend only on the personal choices of the vidder but, in large part, they are also codified (and pre-

scribed) as shared competences. For example, the use of a plurality of flashy video effects (scene transitions, modification of colours, use of masks and logos, and so on and so forth) has been replaced in time by sobriety and simplicity. What once was appreciated as innovative and glamorous is now dismissed as out dated. A skilled vidder is able to set a date for the production of a vid from its stylistic features.

As we have tried to show, our preliminary findings show how vidding, while being acknowledged by practitioners as the same practice, foregoes a vast restructuring of all its constitutive elements when moving from a complex of practices to another.

4. Final remarks and future research directions

In the present chapter, we have tried to shed light on vidding as a practice, focusing on its “career” from the phase of its digitalization. As we have shown, a main turning point of this career is represented by re-contextualization of vidding into the complex of video makers’ practices. In this case, all the elements constituting the practice forwent vast transformations. Regarding media territories, for example, fan forums lose their centrality in favour of a plurality of communication platforms used by practitioners to stay in contact, to distribute their products, to share information and competences and to promote their work. Most notably, analytics tools are included in the practice to mediate the contact with the fan communities where the practices – and the practitioners – originally came from (see Table 1).

Table 1: The transformation of Vidding practice

| | Fandom Complex | Videomaking Complex |
|--------------------|--|--|
| Meaning | Vidding as a way to express belonging to a fan community | Technical and aesthetic skills express competency within the videomakers’ community |
| Materials | Media Territories: Vidders are stable members of specific fandom communities | Media Territories: YouTube is the main channel of vids distribution, and a socialization platform |
| Competences | In-depth knowledge and understanding of the specific community of reference | General understanding of multiple fandoms and specific technical, aesthetic and linguistic competences |

About transformations of this sort, concerning all the constitutive elements of a practice (meanings, materials and competences) Shove, Pantzar and Watson (2012) warn that it is always at least in part an arbitrary decision of the analyst to

acknowledge the emergence of a new practice or to interpret the changes in terms of the evolution of a same practice. In our case, we have followed the principle “*to take practices as anything that practitioners themselves take to be such*” (ibid.: 121) and, with our interviewees, we interpreted this passage as a key turning point in the career of the same practice.

The results we have presented are partial and require further investigations. In particular, our initial interest in vidding in Italy doesn't seem to be fully justified by our preliminary empirical results: the network of relationship that connects Italian vidders to other practitioners, allowing the circulation of competences and the emergence of shared meanings, seems to be fully transnational. Moreover, Italian practitioners do not acknowledge any Italian specificity in the practice – apart from a certain level of dilettantism when compared to the competences of foreign vidders. For this reason, the next step of our research will consist in enlarging the research focus from Italian vidders to the most active international practitioners.

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