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Interactivity and the 'Cyber-Fan': An Exploration of Audience Involvement Within the Electronic Fan Culture of the Internet

Victor Costello
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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Victor Costello entitled "Interactivity and the 'Cyber-Fan': An Exploration of Audience Involvement Within the Electronic Fan Culture of the Internet." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Communication.

Benjamin Bates, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

Herbert Howard, Barbara Moore, Thomas Ladd

Accepted for the Council:
Dixie L. Thompson

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

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Accepted for the Council:

Dr. C.W. Minkel

Associate Vice Chancellor and
Dean of The Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file in the Graduate Admissions and Records Office.)

INTERACTIVITY AND THE 'CYBER-FAN':

AN EXPLORATION OF AUDIENCE INVOLVEMENT WITHIN THE ELECTRONIC FAN CULTURE OF THE INTERNET

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Victor J. Costello
August, 1999

DEDICATION

To the memory of my grandmother Antonietta Lemucchi, 1903-1996. Born in Trento, Italy, she was simply Nonna to those who knew her. Nonna left behind a rich legacy of love to many people who were fortunate enough to be touched by her kindness, wisdom, and zest for life.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the relatively new uses of the Internet by television fans for keeping up with their favorite television programs and for interacting with other fans through on-line channels of interpersonal communication. A distinction is made between traditional television fans and a newly emerging segment of the fan population that routinely uses the Internet to supplement the viewing of their favorite television program. The name cyber-fan is used to describe this savvy and innovative member of television fandom.

The study was designed within a uses and gratifications framework in an effort to specifically observe the behavior of cyber-fans within the electronic fan culture of the Internet. A web-based survey was designed and administered via the Internet during the three and a half-week period from October 13 to November 3, 1998. A total of 3,041 respondents participated in the study. The large majority of the respondents were female (64.5%).

Several hypotheses were tested in an effort to explore potential relationships between television viewing involvement and interpersonal communication activity via the Internet. The three television involvement variables were favorite program affinity, parasocial interaction and post-viewing cognition. The three interpersonal communication variables were Internet affinity, interactivity, and interpersonal communication satisfaction. Statistically significant and positive associations were identified between interactivity and parasocial interaction ($r = .339$, $p < .01$), interactivity and interpersonal

communication satisfaction ($r = .750$, $p < .01$), post-viewing cognition and interactivity ($r = .331$, $p < .01$), post-viewing cognition and interpersonal communication satisfaction ($r = .312$, $p < .01$), parasocial interaction and interpersonal communication satisfaction ($r = .357$, $p < .01$), and parasocial interaction and post-viewing cognition ($r = .692$, $p < .01$).

In addition, mild to moderate associations were found between several instrument television viewing motives and one or more of the three television viewing involvement measures. The study also found that the authors of television fan pages were more interactive in their on-line interpersonal communication with others then subjects who had not created their own personal fan site. Several significant differences were also observed between the male and female segments of the sample population. Females were found to be more interactive in their on-line interpersonal communication activity than males. They also demonstrated a higher degree of involvement with their favorite television programs then did their male counter-parts. The study also produced a great deal of preliminary exploratory data on television and Internet uses by cyber-fans for extending their involvement with their favorite television programs.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Growth of the Internet

The Internet has become a popular target medium for a plethora of academic and commercial research activities. Its rapid evolution from a faddish technological oddity to a full fledged global medium of human communication and interaction has created a new frontier of empirical opportunities for social scientists. During a four-year time span from 1994 to1998, the number of Internet users in the United States grew from 3.5 million to more than 57 million people (Clemente, 1998; Anonymous, 1998, May 9).

Clemente (1998) notes that "since the introduction of the Web in 1992, the Internet has nearly doubled in size every year, far exceeding the growth rates of all previous communications technologies including the cellular telephone, VCR, television, radio, and conventional telephone" (p. 5).

Recent data show a growing dependence on the Internet for a host of informational and communication-related purposes. The 1997 American Internet User's survey found that 75% of adult Internet users now consider themselves dependent on the Internet in their daily lives (FIND/SVP, 1997). Other findings reveal that "web users are relying more and more on the Internet in their

everyday lives for commerce, entertainment, and as a vital source of information" (Anonymous, 1998, paragraph 3).

The two components of the Internet that have gained the most popularity with users are electronic mail and the World Wide Web. Recent research found that the majority of Internet users consider electronic mail (84%) and the World Wide Web (82%) indispensable technologies in their everyday lives (Georgia Tech Research Center, 1997). As Clemente (1998) predicts,

> The Internet is destined to become a pervasive yet unobtrusive force in our lives. It will become the medium by which we will keep in constant contact with our families and friends, watch movies, check the weather, read the newspaper, prepare a speech for work, make a phone call, pay monthly bills and buy Christmas gifts. It is destined to become so ubiquitous that the novelty of its usage will simply fade into the background. The Internet is a by-product of this, the information age, and will ultimately become as common as the air we breathe. (p. 4)

Recent studies and findings "document the transition of the Internet from an overly-hyped curiosity to a communications and information utility on which millions of Americans now rely" (FIND/SVP, 1997, paragraph 1).

The Electronic Fan Culture of the Internet

It has been suggested that the real significance of a new communication technology has to do with "how it is used and whether it is used by people to, in

some fashion, extend what they already do via other forms of communication" (Ball-Rokeach & Reardon, 1988, p. 135).

One way in which this extension of media use is currently being manifested is in the expression of television fandom through the Internet. A growing number of television fans are utilizing the Internet for keeping up with their favorite television programs and for connecting and interacting with other fans. And while such activities can be rather simple and pragmatic, the Internet appears to be more than just another hi-tech toy for checking out the local TV listings. According to Turkle (1998),

> In an interactive, text-based computer game designed to represent a world inspired by the television series "Star Trek: The Next Generation," thousands of players spend up to eighty hours a week participating in intergalactic exploration and wars. Through typed descriptions and typed commands, they create characters who have casual and romantic sexual encounters, hold jobs and collect paychecks, attend rituals and celebrations, fall in love and get married. To the participants, such goings-on can be gripping; "This is more than my real life," says a character who turns out to be a man playing a woman who is pretending to be a man. In this game the self is constructed and the rules of social interaction are built, not received. (p. 6)

This type of extended role-playing and on-line fantasizing was humorously exaggerated by Peter Steiner's ubiquitous cartoon depicting two dogs in front of

Figure 1 "On the Internet, nobody knows you're a dog"[1]

a computer workstation (see Figure 1). As Holeton (1998) notes,

> *'on the Internet, nobody knows you're a dog'* has become one of the best known one-liners of the electronic age…. The cartoon makes fun of the anonymity of network communications by showing a dog online, presumably fooling some credulous humans about its true identity. (p. 111).

Steiner's cartoon makes a valid point by highlighting one of the many unique attributes of the Internet that has fostered its growth and spawned a number of new applications for human communication and exchange. These uses are

taking place within a virtual electronic sub-culture, controlled in large part by its participants who choose to communicate within cyber-space. The extension of the television viewing experience into this new and developing on-line sub-culture is particularly alluring to researchers for its empirical opportunities. To date, very little empirical data exists on the electronic fan culture of the Internet, and more specifically, on the potential for television audience behavior to be mediated by on-line communication activity.

Cyber-Fans

The current study attempts to explore the world of on-line television fandom by investigating the phenomenon of individuals who routinely utilize the Internet's vast array of dedicated television web sites and discussion groups to supplement the viewing of their favorite TV programs. For lack of a better term, this hybrid netizen is referred to in this paper as a cyber-fan. The term is suggested in order to distinguish on-line fans from other television fans that have not yet taken the plunge into the electronic fan culture of the Internet. As more and more users gain access to the Internet, it appears likely that this on-line segment of the fan population will continue to grow as well.

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[1] *Drawing by P. Steiner. (1993). The New Yorker Magazine. Available [Online] http://www.unc.edu/courses/jomc050/idog.html.*

Case Study: The Sentinel Fandom Page

It may be helpful at this point to elaborate on some of the activities currently taking place within the electronic fan culture of the Internet. One way to accomplish this is by illustrating some of the specific opportunities available to the cyber-fan for extending their involvement with their favorite television programs. A single television program web site is presented in this section as an example of cyber-fan activity on the Internet. While this approach is somewhat informal and anecdotal in nature, it is presented primarily for its heuristic value in developing the underlying rationale for the current study. The site that was chosen for this illustration is entitled *"The Sentinel Fandom: A Webpage for New Sentinel Fans."*

This particular web page is referred to as a *fan site* because it was produced by a member of the television audience who happens to be a fan of the television program *"The Sentinel."* The author of this site provides a disclaimer which legally distances himself from the owners and producers of the television series (United Paramount Network). Visitors to this site are greeted with the following message:

> Welcome to one of the coolest and fastest-growing TV fandoms on the Internet! The fans of UPN's The Sentinel are some of the nicest around, and our Internet presence is growing by leaps and bounds everyday. This page is meant to welcome new viewers and fans of The Sentinel and to

function as an informal "How to" introduction to getting involved in The Sentinel's on-line fandom.[2]

The Sentinel Fandom is divided into six sections. A table of contents is provided on the welcome page in order to direct cyber-fans to potential resources of interest.

Section one contains hyper-text links to the welcome page, a page with information about the background story of the series and its lead characters, two pages entitled *SOS* and *TPTB*, and information on where to write to get autographs. The background page contains pictures of all of the lead characters with biographical data on both the actor and the character that the actor portrays. *SOS* stands for *'Save Our Sentinel'* and contains information about an on-line campaign to save the program from cancellation by network executives. The site credits on-line Sentinel fans for saving the show and influencing UPN to order the production of eight new episodes after removing it from the Fall 1998 schedule. *TPTB* is an acronym that stands for *'The Powers That Be.'* This page contains information about the program's producers and distributors.

Section two of *The Sentinel Fandom* contains pages with information about mailing lists, newsgroups, and Internet Relay Chat (IRC). This section focuses on opportunities for connecting fans with other fans via several different Internet channels. The first page contains information about several mailing lists

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[2] *http://www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Academy/8097/newfan1.html*

dedicated to the discussion of the series. By subscribing to a mailing list, the cyber-fan can send and receive individually posted messages from other fans on the list through an Internet e-mail account. Information and instructions are provided on how to subscribe to several mailing lists dealing with the television program *The Sentinel*. Introductory assistance (helpful hints and pointers) is provided to people who may not be familiar with the unique language and terminology associated with communicating via the Internet. Another part of this section contains information about newsgroups. Newsgroups are similar to mailing lists in that they provide fans with the opportunity to individually exchange messages with other fans in the group. The only difference is that the messages are not sent via electronic mail. The cyber-fan must retrieve the messages from the Internet with software specifically designed to interface with newsgroup computer servers. A final page in this section contains information about chat rooms where fans can interact in real-time with other fans using text-based communication only.

The third section of *The Sentinel Fandom* contains a wealth of links to fan-related resources on the Internet. Some general informational sites are provided in the first part of this section. Next, five links are provided to on-line episode guides containing descriptions about each of the specific episodes in the television series. The author also provides a link to a site where the program's soundtrack can be downloaded from the Internet. Other links are available for sites dealing with fan fiction, web rings, and fan clubs. Fan-fics (short for fan-

fiction) are stories written by fans that are based on the original characters and story elements of the series. Fan fiction sites provide an electronic venue for exchanging and discussing these stories. Web rings are sets of web sites that have been linked together around a specific topic. A cyber-fan can locate a web ring for a specific television program and use it to connect with other related sites rather then having to search for them individually. The last page in this section contains information about how to obtain old episodes on videotape.

The last three sections of *The Sentinel Fandom* contain information about supporting characters, acronyms and phrases related to the series, tips for 'sentinel-izing your own web page,' and a page of graphical banners and clip art associated with the program.

The Sentinel Fandom is one of literally thousands of web sites that are dedicated to the fandom of specific television shows, both current and past. The opportunities for information acquisition and social interaction appear to be endless as cyber-fans delve into the relatively new and developing fan culture of the Internet.

Very little attention has been focused on this aspect of television audience behavior by communication researchers and others in related academic disciplines. It would appear that much could be gained by investigating the interplay between traditional television viewing and the supplemental activities that are being embraced so enthusiastically by cyber-fans. Questions need to be

addressed about the nature of traditional television viewing within the new age of electronic communication and the Internet.

Television in the Age of the Internet

As the population of Internet users continues to grow, traditional media usage is likely to be effected. In fact, the displacement of television, print and radio is beginning to show signs of increasing, as more and more people shift away from conventional media activities to make more time available for Internet-based communication activities (FIND/SVP, 1997). Recent data show that as many as 35% of all Internet users indicate that they watch less television as a result of the Internet (Outing, 1998).

However, few people are suggesting that the Internet will result in the permanent demise of conventional mass media channels. It seems more likely that existing media, like television, will simply evolve and adapt to the presence of the Internet in the everyday lives of people.

> With recent developments in set-top box design and the ability to compress Internet protocols into broadcast formats, those willing to foot the bill soon will have something on their TV that doesn't look anything like broadcasts of old…. consumers with the latest and greatest electronic toys will be watching television while simultaneously pulling related information off the Internet. (Vittore, 1998, paragraph 1)

The Internet is a technological resource that has the potential of radically transforming the television viewing experience. As the case study illustrated, the Internet is being used as a supplemental source of information and of human contact and interaction. This activity appears to be driven by the audiences' existing association and involvement with their favorite television programs. As Newhagen (1996) suggests, there has never

> been much empirical support for displacement theories. Whereas older systems may not go into instant extinction because of the Internet, they will be radically transformed by it. Moments of transition allow students of media the opportunity to reconsider their most basic assumptions, gaining fresh insight into the old technology and setting the stage for understanding the new one. (as quoted in Newhagen & Rafaeli, 1996, p. 13)

Coffey and Stipp (1997) found that "instead of replacement, the data show interactions between the media in which television often impacts PC activity and Internet use" (p. 61). The authors further pointed out that

> predictions of a complete replacement of one medium by another, as made by Gilder (1994), were not supported by past experience: radio did not replace newspapers, TV did not replace the movies or radio, satellites and cable did not replace broadcast TV. In each case, the 'old' medium continued to flourish because of unique attributes and content which serve different audience needs. (p. 61)

This conclusion echoed earlier research by Becker, Dunwoody, and Rafaeli (1983) on the effects of cable television on the uses of other media including traditional television viewing. The authors suggested that future research "keep open the possibility that audience members both replace prior media habits by use of cable services as well as use these new services to supplement existing habits" (p. 139). This appears to be the case within the electronic fan culture of the Internet. Rather than competing directly against television, the Internet is being used conjointly to meet audience needs that cannot be satisfied by television viewing alone. The Internet complements the viewing experience and contributes to a greater involvement of cyber-fans with their favorite television programs.

Ball-Rokeach and Reardon (1988) have suggested that “just as established types of communication have accommodated to each ‘new’ type, whether it be newspapers adapting to the development of radio or movies adapting to the development of television, it is likely that contemporary mass communication systems will accommodate to… [computer-mediated] communication” (p. 158). Critical theorist Dr. Neil Postman[3] succinctly argued that,

> there’s a tendency of people to think that new technology is additive, and I think new technologies are ecological… If you put the printing press into

> Europe in the mid-15th century, you don't have 50 years later Europe plus the printing press. You have a new Europe because everything gets changed, the political system, the religious system and so on. If you put television into America in 1946, by 1960 you don't have America 'plus television,' but a new kind of America, so that our social relations are altered and our attitudes toward childhood are altered and our political system is altered and we get new meanings of old words and so on. (National Cable Satellite Corporation, 1992, paragraph 17)

Such an argument suggests that the Internet should not be studied as an isolated communication phenomenon, but rather, it should be investigated within a larger context that takes into account the transforming effects of its influence. Under this logic, it may be assumed that the experiences of television viewing will change in the presence of the Internet and other evolving technologies. The implications for researchers of Postman's ecological view of new technology is that traditional patterns of media usage and consumption in the new cyber-dominate era of communication may be radically different from the past. The electronic fan culture of the Internet represents one way in which the old and the new have been seamlessly merged together by technology, allowing people numerous new choices in personalizing the ways in which they choose to interact with media content.

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[3] *See also, Postman, N. (1993). Technopoly: The surrender of culture to technology. New York: Vintage Books.*

Empirical Mandate and Rationale

Inherent in all of these observations is an underlying mandate for communication researchers to investigate the Internet and the many adaptive uses that are being explored within virtual communities of human interaction. The mandate also carries a charge to investigate how the Internet may be effecting existing patterns of media usage. This challenge is taken up in the current study, which specifically seeks to investigate the role of the Internet in extending the cyber-fan's involvement with their favorite television programs.

A study such as this one is important for several reasons. First, it provides an opportunity to conduct a preliminary exploration of some unique manifestations of television audience behavior for which very little empirical data exists. Second, it necessitates the implementation of an integrative research design to study communication activity across several different channels and within multiple contextual settings. And third, it has the potential of advancing a new theoretical and methodological framework for the study of Internet-related communication activity. These three reasons are provided as the primary rationale for the current study and are briefly elaborated on in the following paragraphs.

Exploratory Analysis

Because it's there. Most people recognize this phrase as a classic response to the age-old question, Why did you climb the Mountain? People are

by nature curious. Likewise, social scientists who are engaged in the activity of communication research are curious. The mere arrival of cyber-fans within the electronic fan culture of the Internet is, by itself, a sufficient rationale for investigating their unique communication activities.

The current study provides an opportunity to understand more about television fan behavior within the new and emerging communication channels of the Internet. Very little empirical data exists on this subset of the television viewing audience. An exploratory analysis of this rapidly growing segment of cyberspace is warranted by virtue of its novelty. A preliminary investigation at this point can serve to break new ground and lead the way for future investigations of the electronic fan culture of the Internet.

Integration of Research and Theory

The second rationale for the current study is to advance the integration of mass communication research with other streams of inquiry that have traditionally been studied in isolation. Specialized divisions of labor have long characterized communication research. The field has been compartmentalized into various streams dealing with mass media, interpersonal and group communication, and computer-mediated communication… just to name a few.

For some time now, communication researchers have been trying to find ways of consolidating these individualized areas of inquiry. A great deal of this attention has focused on designing new empirical models and theoretical

frameworks that more fully encompass multiple modes of human communication and interaction (Cathcart & Gumpert, 1983; Ball-Rokeach & Reardon, 1988; Bryant & Street, 1988). The cyber-fan has effectively bridged at least two uniquely different media channels for the purpose of deriving greater communication satisfaction and utilization. These unique members of the television audience are savvy users of communication technology and represent a new and evolving breed of pioneer in the electronic frontier of cyberspace. The electronic fan culture of the Internet represents a new and fertile venue for studying audience behavior within a truly *multi-media* environment. The cyber-fan represents a logical point of departure for this type of integrative analysis in which television audience behavior can be observed conjointly within the electronic fan culture of the Internet.

Theoretical and Methodological Advancements

The third rationale for the current study is that it provides considerable opportunity for advancing a new theoretical and methodological framework for studying communication behavior within the various channels of the Internet. The Internet has quickly grown in popularity as a new venue for conducting survey research because of the relative ease in which subjects can be sampled and accessed. However, on-line survey methodologies are still evolving and much has yet to be learned about utilizing the Internet for the purposes of empirical research. Selecting cyber-fans as the primary unit of analysis in the

current study necessitates the use of the Internet in identifying and reaching the targeted sample of respondents. As a result, this study can help to advance and refine current ideas associated with on-line survey methodologies.

In addition, a great deal of attention and thought must be given to the conceptual and theoretical issues associated with observing communication behavior across various channels and within potentially different contexts. The current study will result in the design and implementation of an innovative theoretical model that can be used to describe and explain the complex terrain of communication activity across cyberspace and within the parameters of traditional television viewing. Such a model would have the potential to further advance the unification of communication research and theory. Not only will this study provide an opportunity to better understand television fandom, but it may also lead to a greater understanding of communication in general.

A Uses and Gratifications Approach

The uses and gratifications approach has proven to be an effective empirical tool for understanding why people use media and the benefits derived from such use. The approach is particularly helpful as an exploratory paradigm for new media technology, particularly in situations where very little empirical data exists. Very little is known about how television use and Internet use are interrelated within the electronic fan culture of cyberspace. The electronic fan culture offers a unique research venue because it allows for opportunities to

observe various modes of human communication within virtual communities that exist primarily because of traditional mass media.

Television fandom appears to be a powerful force for bringing people together in cyberspace. Rubin and Rubin (1985) suggested that

> it is inadvisable to consider the influence of any mass medium apart from its social environment. The uses and gratifications paradigm emphasizes this point. Interpersonal communication is typically part of the mass communication process… Examining the interrelationships of a variety of communication channels is important for a clearer understanding of the process and consequences of communication. (p. 49)

In response to this directive, the current study attempts to observe the relationship between television viewing and the cyber-fan's involvement within the electronic fan culture of the Internet.

The Research Design

Uses and gratifications research has typically used survey techniques to measure the psychological traits and behavioral activities of respondent's. The current study follows in this tradition by administering a web-based survey that can be accessed by cyber-fans from virtually any computer that is connected to the Internet.

The goal of the survey is to acquire data about the communication activity of cyber-fans as it directly relates to their involvement with their favorite television

programs and their supplemental communication activity within the electronic fan culture of the Internet. This will involve two major types of data acquisition. The first part of the survey will focus primarily on exploratory analysis and contain items associated with the respondent's demographic characteristics and their personal preferences for television and Internet-based communication activities. The second part of the survey will measure several cognitive and psychological variables that are associated with audience involvement with television viewing and interpersonal communication via the Internet. These items are included in order to test several hypothesized relationships about the communication behavior of the cyber-fan.

Cyber-fans typically cluster in virtual groups and around web sites that are dedicated to specific television programs. While there are a number of general purpose television sites on the Internet (e.g. - UltimateTV.com and TVGen.com), the vast majority of fan-related activity is centered around sites that are dedicated to individual programs or program celebrities. *The Sentinel Fandom* that was discussed earlier is a very typical example of this. The current study involved the design and implementation of a strategy for successfully targeting specific television program web sites and newsgroups. Once these sites were identified, various strategies were employed to solicit the participation of cyber-fans in the study. Invitations to participate in the study were sent via e-mail to a sample of web page authors who have designed a personal television fan page. Invitations were also posted to a select group of television program newsgroups.

Additional effort was focused on placing links to the survey instrument on as many television program web sites as possible. Other researchers have successfully utilized this multi-pronged approach in attempting to reach various sample populations of Internet users.

Summary

As the literature review will show, uses and gratifications research has a long tradition in providing answers to why people use television and other forms of communication technology. While predominately a mass communication paradigm, uses and gratifications has a great deal of potential for bridging traditionally separate areas of research and theory such as those related to interpersonal, computer-mediated, and mass communication. Cyber-fans utilize multiple and diverse channels of communication, therefore making them a valuable target for empirical observation. A study such as this can potentially bridge some gaps between historically segregated areas of research and help to recast uses and gratifications as a contemporary theoretical model for future investigations of emerging communication technologies like the Internet.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The current study is an empirical investigation into the relatively uncharted waters of television fandom in cyberspace. While the study of fan culture is not entirely new to communication researchers, the Internet provides a fresh venue for observing expressions of fan-related communication behavior. In short, the Internet is a multifaceted channel of communication that permits enhanced opportunities for fans to acquire information about their favorite programs and to socially interact with other fans. The goal of this study is to gain an understanding of how cyber-fans are using the vast resources of the Internet as a supplement to the viewing of their favorite television programs.

This chapter reviews several related areas of theory and research that are pertinent to the study of television fandom and the Internet. The first step in this process is to review the history of the uses and gratifications approach to understanding communication motives and behavior. As the analysis will show, uses and gratifications has heuristic value as a theoretical paradigm for understanding how and why people use the media that are available to them. Uses and gratifications theory rests on five critical assumptions that will be explored in-depth and related to the current study. Upon laying the conceptual

foundation of uses and gratifications theory, the review will address some conceptual issues related to the Internet as a hybrid medium of communication with seemingly limitless opportunities for human interaction and information exchange. The review also examines how the field of communication research is beginning to move beyond a narrow focus on specialized channels of communication toward more integrative approaches that are inclusive of multiple channels of communication and their interrelated uses. A uses and dependency model is suggested as a framework for the current investigation into the electronic fan culture of the Internet. The model serves as a theoretical extension to uses and gratifications by providing a context for examining the social and cultural effects of television viewing as they relate to communication via the Internet. The chapter concludes with an articulation of three research questions and eight hypotheses that will guide this empirical investigation.

Uses and Gratifications

A large body of research exists on the uses and gratifications of television viewing that may prove helpful in examining how people are applying the technology of the Internet to keep up with their favorite television programs and to connect with other fans. Uses and gratifications has a long history within the field of communication research and has proven to be a useful model for investigating how and why people use various communication media. This section of the literature review will examine the history of the uses and

gratifications paradigm and the underlying theoretical assumptions that have guided its application within the field of communication research.

A Brief History

A by-product of the Limited Effects Era, uses and gratifications is rooted in functionalism, evolving out of the early work of researchers like Merton (1949), Lasswell (1948), and Wright (1960). According to Lin (1996), the "functionalist approach provides the 'means-ends' orientation for the uses and gratifications perspective; it thus opens up a world of opportunities for studying mediated communication as a functional process that is purposive and leads to specific psychological or social consequences" (p. 575).

The seminal work of Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1974b) helped to reconceptualize the basic tenets of functionalism. Uses and gratifications emerged as an audience-centered theoretical paradigm that looks at

> (1) the social and psychological origins of (2) needs, which generate (3) expectations of (4) the mass media or other sources, which lead to (5) differential patterns of media exposure (or engagement in other activities), resulting in (6) need gratifications and (7) other consequences, perhaps mostly unintended ones. (p. 20)[4]

[4] *See also Palmgreen, Wenner, and Rayburn, 1985.*

As Rubin and Rubin (1985) note, uses and gratifications is “based on the notion that the media cannot influence an individual unless that person has some use for a medium or its messages” (p. 36). Through a clarification of its foundational objectives and assumptions, which de-emphasized the role of the media as a power entity for behavioral change, uses and gratifications emerged as a workable alternative to the effects-centered approaches that dominated early studies of mass media. Such approaches assumed that the media were able to "directly influence the minds of average people" and that people were limited in their ability to counter such influences (Baran & Davis, 1995, p. 44).

This notion was challenged during the end of the 1950's at the conclusion of "the first major study of the effects of television on North American children" entitled *Television in the Lives of Our Children*[5] (Lowery & DeFleur, 1988, p. 247). The authors of this classic study reported that,

> Children were not… passive entities being acted upon by television. To the contrary, children were active agents who selected material from television that best fit their interests and needs. It was children who used television, not television that used children. (Lowery & DeFleur, 1988, p. 248)

The shift away from a powerful all-consuming mass media initiated the era of limited-effects, which focused more on the receiver of messages and their use of

those messages for personal gratification and need fulfillment. This shift in emphasis spawned a new era in communication research that rested on an entirely new set of theoretical objectives and assumptions (Morley, 1993).

> In contrast to theories of media use in which consumers are depicted as the passive, easily manipulated targets of media influences, another tradition exists, the uses and gratifications approach (Rubin, 1993a), which recognizes that (1) people differ in numerous ways that lead them to make different choices about which media to consume, and (2) even people consuming the same media product will respond to it in a variety of ways, depending on their individual characteristics. (Arnett, Larson, & Offer, 1995, p. 513)

Rubin (1986) added that "a primary difference between the two traditions is that whereas a media effects researcher 'most often looks at the mass communication process from the communicator's end,' a uses and gratifications researcher takes the… 'audience member as a point of departure'" (p. 292). This shift in focus from source to receiver has played an important role in defining and shaping the uses and gratifications orientation to the study of mass communication and audience behavior.

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[5] *Schramm, W., Lyle, J., & Parker, E. (1961). Television in the lives of our children. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.*

The Objectives of Uses and Gratifications Research

The theoretical objectives of uses and gratifications are "[1] to explain how the mass media are used by individuals to gratify their needs; [2] to understand the motives for media behavior; and [3] to identify the functions or consequences that follow from needs, motives, and communication behavior" (Rubin, 1986, p. 285). Rubin (1986) links these objectives to functional analysis by prescribing that,

> 1) The units of analysis are individuals
>
> 2) The structures are the relationships between the individual, the media, and the social system
>
> 3) The activities are media and other communication behavior, and
>
> 4) The functions are the consequences of this pattern of behavior.
>
> (p. 286)

These prescriptions for research provide a useful framework for the current study in which the primary unit of analysis is the cyber-fan. The structure is the relationship between cyber-fans and the viewing of their favorite television program(s) as well as their extended contact with other fans via the Internet. The activities of interest include traditional mass media use as well as those related to computer-mediated interpersonal communication within the fan culture of the Internet. And finally, such a study should address the consequences of these various behaviors for the cyber-fan.

Theoretical Assumptions

Five basic assumptions have guided uses and gratifications research and spawned considerable discourse over the validity of the approach and its associated methodologies (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1973, pp. 510-511). Much of the attention has centered on the application of these assumptions to the study of traditional mass media use, particularly that of television. As the framework of uses and gratifications is applied within the computer-mediated environment of the Internet, these assumptions must be revisited. This is particularly important as more and more communication research focuses on new technologies involving both interpersonal and mediated models of the communication process (Rubin & Rubin, 1985).

The five underlying assumptions of uses and gratifications theory will be addressed in this section of the review. This section will begin by addressing the foundational assumption of the uses and gratifications approach which views the receiver of mediated messages as a part of an active audience that is goal-directed, selective, and purposeful in their use of communication media. The second assumption of uses and gratifications is that media use is the motivational outcome of the social and psychological needs of the audience. These underlying needs serve as causal mechanisms that contribute to specific patterns of media consumption. The third assumption says "the media compete with other sources of need satisfaction" (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974a, p. 22). This assumption acknowledges the existence of functional alternatives that

compete for the attention of the audience, and provide additional sources of need gratification. The fourth assumption to be examined broaches a methodological concern by suggesting that audience members are capable of supplying accurate and valid accounts of their media use. This assumption addresses issues surrounding the common reliance on self-report data in uses and gratifications research. The fifth and final assumption to be discussed in this section posits uses and gratifications as a value-neutral paradigm that suspends judgment of the positive or negative consequences of media use.

Assumption #1: The Active Audience

The first assumption of uses and gratification theory is that the audience is active and goal-directed in its use of media. This assumption views the audience member as a somewhat sophisticated and savvy media consumer whose "patterns of media use are shaped by more or less definite expectations of what certain kinds of content have to offer the audience" (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974a, p. 21). Media use is thus seen as a means to an end rather than simply an end in itself. The audience derives unique benefits (gratifications) by using specific media content and channels for various purposes in a multitude of personal and situational contexts. Levy and Windahl (1984) suggest that the active audience assumption

> emphasizes the voluntaristic and selective nature of the interaction between audience and mass media. More specifically, this receiver-

> oriented concept postulates that, conditioned by social and psychological structures and within the constraints of available communications, individuals choose what communications setting they will enter. (pp. 51 - 52)

This assumption recognizes the fact that individuals are confronted with a multitude of communication opportunities on a daily basis and that their migration through this ever growing jungle of content and stimuli is less dependent on chance then deterministic judgments about the perceived benefits of media use. The second assumption of uses and gratifications builds upon this idea and goes even deeper in an effort to identify the causal origins of active audience behavior.

Assumption #2: Media Use is Self-Motivated

The second assumption of uses and gratifications theory suggests that media content preferences and choices originate with the viewer, whose needs are directly linked to the potential gratifications of specific media use. This assumption is related to the first assumption in its support of an active audience. However, it attempts to more specifically identify the causal mechanisms that determine personal choice and involvement with media content. According to Rubin (1986) "the individual initiates media selection…. This initiative mediates patterns and consequences of media use" (p. 286). The effects of media messages on the attitudes and behavior of the audience member are therefore

seen as the indirect outcome of a selective and personalized engagement with media channels and content. The logic of this assumption dictates that the individual's predisposition (psychological and social orientation) to the media and its content plays a more significant role in mediating effects then does the actual message content or the medium through which it was delivered. As Rubin (1986) argues,

> a variety of psychological and sociological factors has been suggested to intervene between the sender and receiver…. Mass communication is not a necessary or sufficient cause of audience effects; mass communication is only one source of influence in the social and psychological environment; and the media perform certain activities for individuals, groups, and society and, by so doing, have various consequences (i.e., functions or dysfunctions). (p. 283)

Such a view tends to support the idea that the effects of the media are indirect and unique to the individual based on their orientation to the media that they are engaged with.

This assumption has received some opposition from critics who argue that "media exposure is not so much a deliberate process stemming from inner drives as rather haphazard, an outcome of chance and external circumstances" (McGuire, 1974, p. 168). Other critics have argued "that in the case of television at least, most viewers are not selective about their exposure and that, since watching TV is a comparatively trivial endeavor, viewers 'flow' passively from

program to program" (Levy & Windahl, 1984, p. 52). McGuire (1974) partially conceded to these criticisms when he noted the following: "that external circumstances are an important determinant of mass media exposure does not rule out the possibility that personal needs are also a factor" (p. 168). Rather than looking at audience selectivity as an either/or phenomenon, supporters of the uses and gratifications approach have adopted the view that individuals vary in their degree of selective control of media content. Such a position acknowledges the role of individual choice while conceding that extrinsic determinants are likely to play a role as well. As Rubin (1984) suggests, "this array of meanings also might indicate that the audience is more active on some occasions or in relation to some motivations for media use rather than others" (p. 68).

The notion that media use is only a haphazard activity often motivated by chance availability of media content seems to be a conceptually weak leg to stand on. As McGuire (1974) asserts, “individual choices tend to distribute themselves over equally available mass communication alternatives in a pattern too far from random to be attributable to chance” (p. 169). Such choices far exceed those that were available to the media consumer when uses and gratifications strategies were first employed. In the current era of hundred-channel cable systems, video rental stores, direct broadcast satellites, and so forth, consumers today have a much more diverse array of media content and

channels from which to choose. And with the Internet, the choices of available content far exceed anything offered by traditional media outlets.

The Internet is commonly used to connect users with other people on a vast network and requires selective and purposeful navigation in order for meaningful communication exchange to occur. The very nature of the Internet requires a high degree of self-motivation in choosing specific media content or in choosing to interact with other people. The World Wide Web alone contains sites numbering into the hundreds of millions and is still climbing. The premise that media content preferences and choices originate with the media user is conceptually appealing when applied to a study of cyber-fans who have extensive television program choices as well as a plethora of communication opportunities available to them via the Internet.

Psychological and Social Origins of Media Use

Uses and gratifications research generally places human needs and motives as conceptual antecedents to media behavior and consequences. According to Rubin (1986),

> the perspective presumes that: (a) we need first to understand audience needs and motives for media behavior before we can explain the effects of the media; and (b) an understanding of audience consumption patterns enhances an explanation of media effects. (p. 281)

Under this rubric, psychological and sociological variables play an important role in guiding media usage and consumption, while the media assume a more indirect and less powerful role in the behavioral effects process (Rubin & Rubin, 1985, p. 36).

The social and psychological needs of the individual serves as the motivational force driving the selection and use of media, while gratifications are the product or outcome of such use. When gratifications are obtained, media use and audience expectations about future use are reinforced. When gratifications fall short of what is expected, expectations about future use are modified--- effecting future patterns of media selection and consumption.

Needs, motives and gratifications have often been used interchangeably within the uses and gratifications literature. For example, the term "instrumental" can refer to both the underlying needs and motives that drive media use as well as to the types of gratifications that are received from such use. This interchangeability of meaning has sometimes resulted in ambiguous conceptualizations of key constructs associated with the underlying psychological mechanisms behind media use. This was particularly true during the early years of uses and gratifications research. Researchers sometimes criticized what they perceived as a "lack of precision in major concepts" in the early pioneering applications of uses and gratifications (Swanson, 1977; Windahl, 1981). As the methodology and theory matured over the years, greater care was given to more carefully explicate the meaning of these key terms

(Swanson, 1979). Classification schemes and typologies proved to be useful conceptual tools for many researchers within the uses and gratifications tradition.

Motivational Typologies

Through the years, researchers have suggested several different typologies for the classification of psychological needs and motives. Maslow (1970) contributed the classic five-tiered hierarchy of human needs consisting of physiological needs (the basic biological necessities of life); safety needs (freedom from fear and the need for personal security and structure); love needs (the need to belong, feel accepted); esteem needs (the need for self-respect and dignity); and self-actualization needs (self-fulfillment and creative expression) (Rubin & Rubin, 1985; Rosengren, 1974).

An even more elaborate model of human psychological motives is provided by McGuire (1974), who notes that “there seems to be virtually innumerable ways of slicing up conceptually the reality space of human motives" (p. 171). His research suggests a 16 cell motivational matrix based on four psychological dimensions with bipolar opposites. These dimensions are identified as Initiation (Active vs. Passive), Orientation (Internal vs. External), Mode (Cognitive vs. Affective), and Stability (Preservation vs. Growth). The motives are grouped under the major dividing lines of cognitive and affective motives.

According to McGuire (1974), “the cognitive motives stress the person’s information processing and attainment of ideational states, while the affective motives stress the person’s feelings and attainment of certain emotional states” (p. 173). McGuire offered several suggestions for utilizing the motivational matrix within a uses and gratification study. However, there have been only a limited number of attempts made to match these motives with actual media gratifications in empirical investigations (Lin, 1996; Conway & Rubin, 1991).

With so many different classifications of motives and needs abounding in the literature, it has been difficult for researchers to come up with a consistent and unified conceptualization of the motivational landscape of the media user. There is considerable overlap and redundancy in the terminology used to describe various motives and needs. And while similarities exist among the most heavily cited typologies, the waters are muddied by the subtle differences between the various articulations. In an earlier review of the uses and gratifications literature, Blumler (1979) made an attempt to distill several of the most prevalent typologies into a set of three motivational orientations that he labeled cognitive, diversionary, and personal identity.

> **Cognitive Motives -** whereby the audience member looks primarily for information about some feature of society and the wider world around him---as in 'surveillance' sought from the news, information about party policies and other issues of the day from election broadcasts, or perhaps

'reality exploration' as a use of many fictional series and serials scheduled on television and radio.

Diversionary Motives - the relief from boredom and constraints of daily routines derived from chat shows, music, comedy, and other forms of light entertainment, as well as the excitement generated by adventure serials, quizzes, sports and competitive games, and even the horse-race appeal of following an election campaign.

Personal Identity Motives - ways of using media materials to give added salience to something important in the audience member's own life or situation. (p. 17)

While this typology helped to organize the motivational terrain of media users, it did not adequately address the social implications of media use, such as using the media as a source of content for interpersonal communication with others. McQuail (1987) addressed this missing element by suggesting that people have four basic motivations for their use of media: (1) information, (2) entertainment, (2) personal identity, and (4) integration and social interaction.

Informational needs are basically an extension of Blumler's cognitive orientation in which the individual surveys the media for relevant information. A general interest in and curiosity about life and society drive this motivation. Consumers use the media to gain knowledge and understanding about things

they are interested in. Informational motives for media use have been consistently identified in previous uses and gratifications research.[6] Entertainment motives incorporate the reality exploration component of Blumler's cognitive orientation as well as the diversionary aspects of escape, passing time, relaxation, and voyeurism. This motivational dimension of media use also has been represented consistently in studies of media uses and gratifications.[7] Personal identity motives have not been explored as extensively as the other three motivational dimensions by uses and gratifications researchers. However, the available data tends to support the inclusion of motives relating to personal reinforcement of values and behavior.[8] The inclusion of integration and social interaction motives adds an important dimension to the classification structure by addressing the use of media for enhancing interpersonal communication with

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[6] ***Information*** *- Abela (1997); Abelman (1987, 1989);Abelman, Atkin & Rand (1997);Babrow (1989);Babrow & Swanson (1988);Bantz (1982);Becker (1976);Canary & Spitzberg (1993);Conway & Rubin (1991);Gantz (1978);Garramone, Harris, & Anderson (1986);Kippax & Murray (1980);Lee & Browne (1981);Levy (1978);Lichtenstein & Rosenfeld (1984);Lin (1993, 1993b);Lometti, Reeves, & Bybee (1977);Payne, Severn, & Dozier (1988);Perse & Rubin (1988);Rubin (1979, 1981, 1981b, 1983, 1984);Rubin & Perse (1987);Stanford (1984);Towers (1985, 1986);Vincent & Basil (1997);Walker & Bellamy, Jr. (1991);Wenner (1982);and Yoo (1996).*

[7] ***Entertainment -*** *Abela (1997);Abelman (1987, 1989);Abelman, Atkin, & Rand (1997);Babrow & Swanson (1988);Bantz (1982);Compesi (1980);Conway & Rubin (1991);Downs & Javidi (1990);Gantz (1978);Garramone, Harris, & Anderson (1986);Johnston (1995);Kim & Rubin (1997);Kippax & Murray (1980);Lee & Browne (1981);Lichtenstein & Rosenfeld (1984);Lin (1993, 1993b); Lometti, Reeves, & Bybee (1977);O'Keefe & Sulanowski (1995);Perse (1990);Perse & Rubin (1988);Rubin (1979, 1981, 1981b, 1983, 1984);Rubin & Perse (1987);Vincent & Basil (1997);Wenner (1982, 1983);and Yoo (1996).* ***Escape -*** *Abela (1997);Abelman (1987);Abelman, Atkin, & Rand (1997);Canary & Spitzberg (1993);Compesi (1980);Conway & Rubin (1991);Kim & Rubin (1997);Kippax & Murray (1980);Lee & Browne (1981);Levy (1978);Lichtenstein & Rosenfeld (1984);Perse & Rubin (1988);Rubin (1979, 1981, 1983, 1984);Rubin & Perse (1987);Vincent & Basil (1997)* ***Pass Time -*** *Abelman (1987, 1989);Abelman, Atkin & Rand (1997);Compesi (1980);Conway & Rubin (1991);Downs & Javidi (1990);Kim & Rubin (1997);Lee & Browne (1981);Lichtenstein & Rosenfeld(1984);Lin (1993, 1993b);Payne, Severn, & Dozier (1988);Perse & Rubin (1988);Rubin (1979, 1981, 1981b, 1983, 1984);Rubin & Perse (1987);Stanford (1984);Towers (1985, 1986);Vincent & Basil (1997);* ***Relaxation -*** *Becker (1976);Compesi (1980);Conway & Rubin (1991);Lee & Browne (1981);Lichtenstein & Rosenfeld (1984);Rubin (1979, 1981, 1983, 1984)* ***Voyeurism -*** *Bantz (1982);Kim & Rubin (1997);Perse & Rubin (1988);and Rubin & Perse (1987).*

[8] ***Personal Identity -*** *Kippax & Murray (1980); and Levy (1978).*

others. Media messages provide common ground for interacting and talking with others (Chandler, 1994).[9]

The motivational typologies offered by Blumler and McQuail have helped to synthesize much of what uses and gratifications research has yielded in terms of a cumulative knowledge of individual motives for media use and more specifically for that of television viewing. Such classifications help to organize the very complex arena of human motives into a form that is useful for empirical research and exploration. And while such schemes are useful, other researchers have found it even more helpful to look at needs and motives from the vantage point of the gratifications that are obtained through communication-related activities. Using this orientation to audience motivations, some authors have suggested classifying needs and motives according to the sources of media and content that gratifies those needs.

The Gratification of Needs

According to Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1973), "audience gratifications originate from at least three distinct sources: media content, exposure to the media per se, and the social context that typifies the situation of exposure to different media" (p. 514). It is important to realize here that various gratifications

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[9] ***Social Interaction -*** *Abela (1997);Babrow (1989);Bantz (1982);Compesi (1980);Dimmick, Sikand, & Patterson (1994);Garramone, Harris, & Anderson (1986);Kim & Rubin (1997);Levy (1978);Lichtenstein & Rosenfeld (1984);Lin (1993, 1993b);O'Keefe & Sulanowski (1995);Payne, Severn, & Dozier (1988);Perse (1990);Perse & Rubin (1988);Rubin (1981, 1983);Towers (1985, 1986);Wenner (1982, 1983); and Yoo (1996).*

are derived from a complex set of factors associated with the attributes of the message, the medium, and the social environment of the receiver. While the message is a primary component of the communication process, it only contributes in part to the overall gratifications that are received by the audience.

The cyber-fan is an interesting unit of analysis on this point. It can be assumed that the cyber-fan derives certain gratifications from the viewing of a favorite television program. Acquiring program-related information on the Internet and interacting with other fans and their messages derives additional gratifications. Gratifications may also result from the social contexts of television viewing and computer-mediated communication. And still other gratifications may be attributable to the experience of watching television or using the computer. The gratifications obtained in each of these examples may be similar or different depending on the contextual factors associated with media use and the social and psychological needs of the individual (Elliott & Quattlebaum, 1979). The next two sections look specifically at each of the three sources of need gratifications that have been articulated in the literature.

Content vs. Media Gratifications

Cutler and Danowski (1980) helped to clarify the distinction between media content gratifications and those derived through general exposure to a specific medium. Gratifications derived purely from message exposure are referred to as content gratifications. Gratifications derived from exposure to a

particular medium of communication, regardless of the content of the message, are called process gratifications. More specifically, they defined content gratifications as those that are

> derived from the use of mediated messages for their direct, substantive, intrinsic value for the receiver. For example, mediated messages may be used to gain knowledge or understanding, to increase or reduce specific uncertainty in personal and social situations; or the content might be perceived as useful for the defense of predispositions. Process gratification, on the other hand, is derived from the use of mediated messages for extrinsic values that do not bear a direct link to particular substantive characteristics of the message; the individual receives gratification only or mainly from being involved in the process of communication behavior, rather than from message content. (pp. 269-270)

Variations of this basic typology are articulated throughout the uses and gratifications literature. One of the most popular of these is the dichotomization of the instrumental and ritualistic television viewer.

According to Rubin (1984), "instrumental television viewing appears to be purposeful, selective, and goal-directed, without being frequent or indicating a high regard for the importance of the medium" (p. 75). These types of viewers are more interested in content gratifications then those derived simply through

the process of watching television. Instrumental viewing motives include information-seeking, social utility, and parasocial interaction (Lin, 1993a).

Information-seeking involves activities related to the surveillance of media for the purposes of information acquisition. Instrumental viewers function as their own gatekeepers by selectively seeking out information from various media channels in an effort to fulfill needs associated with learning and cognitive growth.

Instrumental viewers are also motivated by the potential of media to foster interactivity with other people. Talking with others about media content and interacting with others within the shared environment of television viewing derives social utility gratifications.

Parasocial interaction refers to the psychological involvement of viewers with characters on television. According to Auter (1992), this construct

> has been defined as an apparent face-to-face interaction between media characters and audience members. It is similar to an interpersonal social interaction or relationship, but consists of a much weaker bond. This relationship develops over time with repeated viewing of a television personality. (p. 173)

Instrumental viewers tend to be more highly motivated in their maintenance of parasocial relationships through a more potent involvement with their favorite television programs. Viewing for pleasure and relaxation has also been associated with a more instrumental orientation to television.

Ritualized television use on the other hand, "appears to be habitual, frequent, and indicates a high regard for television as a medium" (Rubin, 1984, p. 75). This type of television viewer is more likely to benefit directly from the process of watching television without being too concerned about the specific nature of the content. The ritualistic orientation has been characterized by television viewing for entertainment, diversion, passing the time, and habit (Lin, 1993a). However, these gratifications may be derived from other media channels besides television. As Becker (1979) discovered, "gratifications do not seem to be media specific. The evidence suggests that people seeking a specific gratification from one medium seek that gratification from another as well" (p. 72).[10] For example, reading a mystery novel and watching a favorite television show may both serve as sources for entertainment and/or diversionary gratifications.

Social Gratifications

A third source of media gratifications stems from the social environment or setting in which exposure occurs and from social interaction with other people both during and after exposure. It is here that a distinction is made between the personal and interpersonal gratifications of media use. While media can be used for the purely intrinsic gratifications of the audience (such as rest and

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[10] *See also Lichtenstein and Rosenfeld, 1983.*

relaxation), it is clear from the literature that extrinsic gratifications are also available as the viewer interacts with others. Lull (1980) attempted to categorize what he defined as the social uses of television viewing. According to the author, the social uses of television are either structural or relational in nature. The structural uses of television are described as either environmental or regulative. As the author notes,

> Television is employed as an environmental resource in order to create a flow of constant background noise which moves to the foreground when individuals or groups desire. It is a companion for accomplishing chores and routines. [And] it contributes to the overall social environment by rendering a constant and predictable assortment of sounds and pictures which instantly creates an apparently busy atmosphere. (p. 202)

As a behavioral regulator, "television punctuates time and family activity such as mealtime, bedtime, choretime, homework periods, and a host of other related activities and duties" (p. 202). Thus, television influences the social agenda of the individual and groups of individuals who adjust their lifestyles around their patterns of television viewing.

While television plays a definitive role in shaping the social environment of the audience, it is also important to note how individuals use television as a relational resource for interacting with other people. Lull (1980) divides the relational uses of television into four different types.

Communication Facilitation - Television's characters, stories, and themes are employed by viewers as abundant illustrators which facilitate conversations…. (experience illustration; common ground, conversational entrance; anxiety reduction; agenda for talk; value clarification).

Affiliation/Avoidance - a resource for the construction of desired opportunities for interpersonal contact or avoidance…. (physical, verbal contact/neglect; family solidarity; family relaxant; conflict reduction; relationship maintenance).

Social Learning - the social uses made of the many opportunities for learning from television…. (decision-making; behavior modeling; problem solving; value transmission; legitimization; information dissemination; substitute schooling).

Competence/Dominance - opportunities for the demonstration of competence by means of family role fulfillment…. (role enactment; role reinforcement; substitute role portrayal; intellectual validation; authority exercise; gatekeeping; argument facilitation). (pp. 202-205)

Lull's typology of the relational uses of television identifies a multitude of relational gratification opportunities for the television viewer. These gratifications can occur during media exposure with other viewers sharing the same social setting or they can occur as a part of other social interaction that takes place at a later time and in a different context. Such gratifications may help to explain the appeal of the Internet as an interactive environment for cyber-fans. While the

cyber-fan may be limited in deriving such gratifications through the television experience alone, the Internet opens up an expanded array of opportunities for relational gratification.

The Gratifications of Internet Use

A few studies have begun to address the motivational terrain of the Internet user. Abela (1997) identified eight gratifications of Internet use: (1) escape, (2) information seeking, (3) social interaction, (4) entertainment, (5) browsing, (6) conducting business, (7) downloading software and publishing web pages, and (8) play and fantasy. The author also observed that females use the Internet more for escape and social interaction, while males were more likely to use the Internet for entertainment, conducting business, downloading software, publishing web pages, and play and fantasy.

Yoo (1996) relied on Rubin's dichotomous dimensions of the ritualistic and instrumental viewer. In doing so, Yoo identified the ritualistic gratifications of Internet use as entertainment and sociability. The sociability dimension included both establishing new relationships and the maintenance of existing ones. The instrumental gratifications were described as information (knowledge gain and learning related activities) and transaction (shopping, ordering, making reservations).

Early research into the uses and gratifications of the Internet has been encouraging to the extent that existing classifications of needs, motives and

gratifications appear to be applicable within the emerging culture of cyberspace. While the Internet may produce opportunities for specific information gain and social interaction that other communication channels cannot provide, it appears that the underlying needs and motives driving the use of the Internet line up with those that have been articulated through the years in the uses and gratifications literature.

Summary

While much of the research into audience needs, motives and gratifications has centered on the use of traditional mass media, the goal has been to develop classifications and typologies that are sufficiently abstract and general to apply to other types of communication channels such as the Internet. An analysis of cyber-fan behavior involves both the traditional aspects of television viewing as well as adaptive uses of new technologies for extending television fandom. While the study of needs, motives and gratifications in this communication environment is relatively new, this should not necessarily result in a reconceptualization of traditional motivational structures which have guided uses and gratifications research for the past twenty-five years. A more prudent course of action is to find ways for extending this rich legacy of human motivational research forward into new areas of uses and gratifications research.

Assumption #3: Functional Alternatives

The third assumption of uses and gratifications theory says that the media are not the only sources available to the consumer for need gratification. Functional alternatives exist for the gratification of needs that may or may not be met, in part or in whole, by the media. In addition, this assumption suggests that individuals will select specific communication channels based on their availability and the perceived value of receiving potential gratifications. As Rubin and Windahl (1986) write,

> Mediated and non-mediated channels may be functional alternatives to a specific communication medium…. An individual who is socially active and interacts often with other people may have limited desires to use television for companionship. To the contrary, a person with fewer social and interpersonal ties, or who is physically infirm or less mobile, may rely on television or talk radio to substitute for the lack of social companionship (Rosengren & Windahl, 1972; Rubin & Rubin, 1982). (p. 193)

As this suggests, functional alternatives can involve both mediated and interpersonal forms of communication. In the case of the current study, this assumption would tend to suggest that the cyber-fan's use of the Internet for extending his involvement with his favorite program(s) is a functional alternative to the activity of watching a favorite program on television. However, this would only be true to the extent that both the television and the Internet experience are

fulfilling the same basic needs. This may or may not always be the case as the following examples illustrate.

Cyber-fans can use the Internet as a functional alternative to social interaction simply because it may be easier and more convenient to locate fans of particular programs within cyberspace than within the real-world social environment where they live. In such a case, cyber-fans are complementing face-to-face social interaction with the functional alternative of computer-mediated interpersonal interaction. In a similar vein, if a cyber-fan misses an episode of her favorite program, she can go to the Internet to locate a synopsis of the missing episode or check in with other fans to find out what took place. This type of activity may also serve to meet needs that could not be met by the actual viewing of the television program.

Furthermore, the Internet is likely to provide the cyber-fan with extended opportunities for additional gratifications that were not previously possible. These might include locating behind-the-scenes information about a favorite television program, dialoging with the program's producers and writers in on-line discussion groups, and meeting new people and developing friendships with others who share an affinity for the same television program (Parks & Floyd, 1996). In such cases, the Internet serves as a supplement to the television viewing experience, but not necessarily as a functional alternative. However, it seems likely that these types of supplemental activities also would have some

effect on the gratifications derived from the viewing of a favorite television program.

Despite the extensive history of uses and gratifications research, very little attention has been given to the interplay of traditional mass media with other forms of human communication. Rubin and Rubin (1985) assert that

> because of the complexity of factors involved in the mass communication process, empirical uses and gratifications investigations generally have restricted their focus to the uses and gratifications derived from media channels and content that are studied apart from the social and interpersonal environment. When interpersonal channels have been included in uses and gratification models and research, they typically are regarded as functional alternatives to mass media channels for the gratification of individual needs and motives. (p. 38)

This narrow focus may have diverted researchers away from some of the more interesting questions related to how people use multiple channels of communication conjointly for extending existing gratifications and for deriving new gratifications that cannot be achieved through any one channel alone. A study of cyber-fan behavior within the dual communication channels of television and the Internet can begin to examine these questions and lead to a greater understanding of media uses and gratifications. Such a study may also help to further delineate between the uses of media as a functional alternative and the

supplemental utilization of media channels by some of todays more savvy and sophisticated users.

Assumption #4: The Validity of Self-Reporting

The fourth assumption of uses and gratifications theory represents the methodological concern of self-reporting. Uses and gratifications research assumes that individual audience members are "sufficiently self-aware to be able to report their interests and motives in particular cases" (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1973, p. 511). This assumption is critical to the methodology since most gratification studies rely on self-reported assessments of motivational factors and needs.

McQuail and Gurevitch (1974) argue that the acceptance of this assumption

> is not merely a matter of adopting a general scientific open-mindedness in advance of specific evidence, but rather one of rejecting explanatory frames of reference that are not those of the actor and that therefore might be alien to him. The primary source of evidence is the actor's own view of what he is doing. (p. 295)

If one is to understand the human needs, motives and gratifications of media use, there is little choice but to accept the practice of using individual self-reports. Many areas of social science research have had to contend with this empirical necessity. Nunnally (1978) notes that

> at present, most measures of attitudes are based on self-report, and from what evidence there is concerning the validity of different approaches to the measurement of attitudes, it is an easy conclusion that self-report offers the most valid approach currently available. (p. 591)

Uses and gratifications research often involves the measurement of largely unobservable attitudinal variables. Self-reports offer the most meaningful way of empirical observation and measurement of these intrinsic attributes.

Assumption #5: Value Neutrality

The fifth and final assumption of uses and gratifications theory says that value judgements about the cultural significance of mass communication should be suspended while audience orientations are explored on their own terms. This assumption rests on functionalism's belief in value neutrality. Functionalists argue "that empirical research should investigate both the functions and dysfunctions of media" (Baran & Davis, 1995, p. 165). This conceptualization of media distances itself from the remnants of mass society theory which were more heavily value-laden in their determination of the overall "goodness" or "evil" of media and its content.

Summary of the Assumptions of Uses and Gratifications

A considerable amount of space in this literature review has been dedicated to the discussion of the underlying theoretical assumptions of uses and gratifications. In so doing, the argument has been made that uses and

gratifications is a conceptually valid and logically sound model for empirically observing the audience behavior and activity of the cyber-fan. The foundational assumption of an active audience whose selection and use of media content is driven by underlying social and psychological needs will invariably play an important part in shaping the design of this study. For this reason, more attention will be given in the next section for elaborating on a conceptualization of audience activity, and the implications that this will have on the current methodology.

Conceptualizing the Active Audience

Some of the more serious concerns about uses and gratifications research have centered on issues related to the conceptualization of *audience activity*. As Blumler (1979) noted, the assumption of *audience activity* must be converted from "an article of faith… into an empirical question" (p. 13). Blumler went on to identify three conceptual problems associated with the audience activity assumption that characterized early uses and gratifications research.

A Broad Range of Meanings - such meanings have ranged from *utility* (mass communication has uses for people), *intentionality* (media consumption is directed by prior motivation), *selectivity* (media behavior reflects prior interests and preferences), and *imperviousness to influence*

(the idea that the audience is obstinate and resistant to the effects of media).[11]

An Either/or Concept - the active audience has been treated as an either/or matter; either, in the company of uses and gratifications scholars, you regarded the audience as active, or, with other scholars, you relegated it to a more passive or reactive role. Consequently, the possibility of treating 'audience activeness' as a variable was overlooked.

Media Attributes - it was not appreciated that some media might invite more, or less, audience activity than others. (p. 13)

In other words, the author suggested that *audience activity* was a multi-dimensional and variable construct that was mediated by both the needs and motives of the user as well as by the characteristics of the communication channel being used. This analysis on the part of Blumler did not fall on deaf ears. Uses and gratifications research through the 1980's on up to the present time has been greatly influenced by his ideas about the variable nature of audience activity. As Levy (1983) would later observe, "rather than past research which has uncritically postulated the existence of a totally 'active' audience, a theoretically and empirically more realistic approach would assume only that different members of the audience will display differing types and

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[11] *See also Rubin, 1993b.*

amounts of activity in different communication settings and at different times in the communication sequence" (p. 114).

This conceptualization was further refined when Levy and Windahl (1984) published their two dimensional model of audience activity (see Table 1) which linked audience *selectivity*, *involvement*, and *utility* (the qualitative dimension) to those activities occurring during the three phases of the communication sequence (the temporal dimension). Numerous researchers utilizing the uses and gratifications approach have adopted this model (Lin, 1993b; Levy, 1987; Levy & Windahl, 1984; Perse & Rubin, 1988). The body of evidence largely supports the notion that "different kinds of communication technologies and/or media contents may be associated with differing levels of audience activity" (Levy, 1987, p. 271).

For the television audience, the temporal dimension includes the periods of pre-viewing, viewing, and post-viewing. Pre-viewing and post-viewing occur before and after exposure to television programs. Viewing-related activity occurs during the period of actual program exposure. While the Levy/Windahl model is specifically designed with the television viewing audience in mind, the real value of the model lies in its broad applicability to almost any communication situation.

The temporal dimension helps to delineate between the psychological processes that are engaged prior to a communication experience and those that occur during and after the experience. For example, a person making a

Table 1: Levy and Windahl Model of Audience Activity

	Communication Sequence		
Audience Orientation	**Pre-Viewing Exposure** Choice-making Behavior	**Viewing Exposure** Mental/Psychological process of providing messages with meaning	**Post-Viewing Exposure** Social/sychological utility of information gained during viewing
Selectivity	Selecting based on expectations of what could be gained from that exposure	Selective perception during exposure	Retention of specific aspects of exposure
Involvement	Anticipation of projected media use	Information processing, meaning creation, identification, interpretation, evaluation of content	Meaning making or evaluation after exposure, identification
Utility	Upcoming media programs provide subject matter for socially integrating conversation	Finding utility during media interaction	Using information gained during exposure

the importance of acquiring specific information (Selectivity); or perhaps on whether the call is for pleasure or business (Involvement); or on whether or not the call will provide subject matter that can be passed on to others (Utility). In the same way, the individual's orientation to the communication event might be affected during the call depending on whether the call is an unwanted distraction or an event the caller would like to participate in (Selectivity); whether the person on the other end of the line is a friend or a stranger (Involvement); or whether the call is from a telemarkerter or a personal investment broker with good news

about your stock portfolio (Utility). And finally, the caller's orientation might vary after the call is over depending on how memorable the experience was (Selectivity); or on whether the call prompted further thought and contemplation (Involvement); or whether the call provided the user with useful and practical information (Utility).

For the cyber-fan, the viewing of one's favorite television program is limited to finite periods of time when the program is accessible. Viewing of programming content is also limited to a specific length of time (such as 30 or 60 minutes). While the VCR and other recording technologies offer opportunities for time-shifting and repeat exposure, the viewing period is still confined to specific units of time.

The pre-viewing and post-viewing periods constitute much longer units of time than that of actual media exposure. The television fan may have to wait an entire week or perhaps an entire summer to find out what will happen next. These long periods of withdrawal from the next “fix” of original programming content may serve to temporarily impede or even frustrate the gratifications of television viewing. However, cyber-fans have many alternative ways for staying connected with a program during these in-between times of non-viewing. Fans routinely acquire valuable program information and insights from television web sites and through interactions with other fans between episodes. Such activity allows the cyber-fan to stay cognitively engaged with the program even when it is not on. From the model, it is plausible to assume that such activity might have

an impact on future viewing experiences since the cyber-fan continues to grow in his or her knowledge of the program between episodes of exposure. This type of activity may also strengthen the cyber-fan's affinity for the program as her own personal orientation to a favorite television show is reinforced by contact with other fans.

Audience Orientation

The Levy and Windahl model suggests three different audience orientations to television content that vary across time. These are referred to in the model as selectivity, involvement and utility.

The authors define selectivity as "a process involving the nonrandom selection of one or more behavioral, perceptual, or cognitive media-related alternatives" (Levy & Windahl, 1985, p. 112). This activity is broken down into three sub-processes commonly referred to as selective exposure, selective perception, and selective recall. Baran and Davis (1995) note that

> some psychologists consider these [selective processes] to be defense mechanisms that we routinely use to protect ourselves (and our egos) from information that would threaten us. Others argue that they are merely routinized procedures for coping with the enormous quantity of sensory information constantly bombarding us. Either way, the selective processes function as complex and highly sophisticated filtering

mechanisms that screen out useless data while quickly identifying and highlighting the most useful patterns in this data. (p. 140)

Selective exposure is a pre-viewing self-directed behavioral process of choosing which media to attend to. This is the exposure-seeking phase of the communication process that occurs prior to the actual viewing of media content. Selective perception is the psychological process of recasting the message to fit the preconceived attitudes, beliefs, values and opinions of the viewer. Messages are selectively filtered and shaped by the audience during television viewing. Selective recall is a post-viewing cognitive process having to do with the degree to which program content is retained for future use.

Involvement is defined as "first, the degree to which an audience member perceives a connection between him or herself and mass media content; and second, the degree to which the individual interacts psychologically with a medium or its messages" (Levy & Windahl, 1985, p. 112). Involvement has been largely conceptualized as a set of cognitive and psychological processes that contribute to the viewer's level of engagement with television programs and their characters. Prior to media exposure, involvement includes the degree of pre-viewing anticipation and excitement associated with the event. Involvement during actual media exposure has to do more with the level in which a person becomes engrossed with the substance of the program (plot, story elements, etc.) and its characters. Post-viewing involvement is more of a cognitive process

in which viewers stay connected with a program after watching it. This would include 'long-term identification' and fantasizing.

Utility is described as the "manifold social and psychological purposes" for which "individuals use or anticipate using mass communication" (Levy & Windahl, 1985, p. 112). Utility is expressed more in terms of the tangible behavioral outcomes of the viewing experience.

Audience Involvement

Of the three dimensions of audience activity, viewer involvement may offer the most help in explaining the exaggerated affiliation of cyber-fans with their favorite programs. As Kim and Rubin (1997) note, "emotionally involved viewers get 'caught up in the action of the drama'… identify and parasocially interact with media characters… [and] are more knowledgeable about media characters and plots" (p. 110).[12] This level of extended involvement with program content may help to explain the behavior of cyber-fans and the great deal of activity surrounding television fandom on the Internet.

Perse (1990) suggests that involvement can be conceptualized on both the cognitive and emotional level. Cognitive involvement focuses on activities associated with information processing while emotional involvement reflects the more affective responses to media messages. As the author writes, "when

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[12] *See also Rubin, 1993b.*

people are involved, they pay attention to the message, process the information, and respond emotionally. Involvement is revealed in thoughts and feelings" (Perse, 1990, paragraph 8).

Cognitive and emotional involvement variables may prove helpful in discriminating among cyber-fans according to their level of television fandom and their dependency on the Internet for extending viewer involvement. In the case of the current study, television fandom can be expressed as a function of the cyber-fan's dependency on particular television programs. Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur (1976) define media dependency "as a relationship in which the satisfaction of needs or the attainment of goals by one party is contingent upon the resources of another party" (p. 6). The author goes on to note that "the greater the need and consequently the stronger the dependency in such matters, the greater the likelihood that the information supplied will alter various forms of audience cognitions, feelings, and behavior" (p. 6). The practical application of this idea suggests that the cognitive and emotional (affective) involvement of cyber-fans with their favorite television programs may be empirically related to their dependency on such programs. Thus, variables associated with the cognitive and emotional involvement of the cyber-fan are particularly salient for a study of the underlying associations between the television and Internet uses of the cyber-fan.

The Levy and Windahl model of audience activity provides a theoretical foundation for this type of analysis. However, since this model was designed

with a single communication activity in mind, the interesting twist in a study of this nature will be in identifying how involvement with television viewing is related to the cyber-fan's involvement with Internet-based channels of communication. In order to do this, some attention must be paid to laying a conceptual foundation for a study of the Internet and activities related to computer-mediated communication. The next several sections of the review deal specifically with the Internet and its place within a uses and gratifications context.

The Internet

There are many sources of information about the origins and history of the Internet available both on-line and through the conventional literature. In short the Internet can be thought of as

> a system of linked computer networks, international in scope, that facilitates data communication services such as remote login, file transfer, electronic mail, and newsgroups. The Internet is a way of connecting existing computer networks that greatly extends the reach of each participating system. (Kudoku Internet Services, Inc., 1997)

Although it is a helpful starting point, this common technical definition fails to capture the utility of the Internet as a global medium of human communication and interaction. As Krol and Hoffman (1993) note, “the Internet can be thought about in relation to its common protocols, as a physical collection of routers and circuits, as a set of shared resources, or even as an attitude about

interconnecting and intercommunication" (p. 1). Therefore, it comes as no surprise to find communication researchers grappling with a host of different conceptualizations for the Internet.

The simplest course of action is to merely consider the Internet as a new form of mass communication. However, as Morris and Ogan (1996) caution,

> when the Internet is conceptualized as a mass medium, what becomes clear is that neither mass nor medium can be precisely defined for all situations, but instead must be continually rearticulated depending on the situation. The Internet is a multifaceted mass medium, that is, it contains many different configurations of communication. Its varied forms show the connection between interpersonal and mass communication that has been an object of study since the two-step flow associated the two. (p. 42)

While certain aspects of the Internet resemble the characteristics of a mass communication channel (such as the broad dissemination of web-based content to a potentially large and geographically dispersed audience), the Internet is not limited as a one-way channel of communication. In fact, the Internet shares many similar characteristics with other, more traditional types of interpersonal communication. Through the Internet, it is possible to engage in small group communication, interpersonal communication (both private and public), teleconferencing and much more. The diversity of communication options has

led some researchers to conceptualize the Internet in terms of its functions rather than as a single communication medium.

This perspective received support from December (1996) who argued that researchers should look at the Internet as a "range of media" offering a diverse array of opportunities for communication involvement and exchange (p. 34). The author observed that people use the Internet primarily for the purposes of communication, interaction and information. These purposes can be accomplished individually or in combination with one another depending on the attributes of the Internet channel that is being utilized.

Morris and Ogan (1996) provided a two-dimensional conceptual typology that breaks down the various types of Internet communication into four distinct groups. The authors refer to these as (1) one-to-one asynchronous (e-mail), (2) many-to-many asynchronous (Electronic Bulletin Boards, Mailing Lists, and Newsgroups), (3) one-to-one, one-to-few, or one-to-many synchronous (Chat Rooms and MUDS), and (4) many-to-one, or one-to-one asynchronous (FTP Sites, Gopher Sites, Web sites). The first dimension identifies asynchronous and synchronous communication as temporal delineators that specify whether the communication is time-delayed (asynchronous) or in real-time (synchronous). The second dimension identifies the nature of the interaction in terms of the number of participants. This covers private and group communication and several of the possible variations that lie in between.

Rafaeli offers a more qualitative typology of the Internet based on five defining attributes of the medium (Newhagen and Rafaeli, 1996). First, the Internet is a *Multimedia* environment composed of text, graphics, animation, sound, photographs, streaming video and audio, and more. The high levels of sensory appeal rival much of what was previously available through conventional media. Since television is also composed of images, sounds, graphics, pictures, etc., this characteristic of the Internet may have something to do with the unique appeal of the medium for cyber-fans.

Second, its *Hypertextuality* characterizes the Internet. This means that the Internet is not bound to the linear constraints of conventional media. One navigates through cyberspace at will by following links that connect the user to individuals and information across a vast network. This characteristic seems to complement the constrained linearity of the television medium, which does not offer the same degree of flexibility to its users.

Rafaeli dubs the third characteristic *Packet Switching*. He compares this to mass media's gatekeeping function and to the interpersonal correlate of "taking turns." Packet switching is an engineering term used to describe the manner in which messages and commands are transmitted across the network. The Internet is a medium that requires a high level of user initiation in choosing and selecting content and opportunities for interaction. One cannot simply connect a computer to the Internet and expect to be entertained. A computer requires instructions in order to know what information to retrieve and in order to

handle the exchange of messages between one or more parties. The uses and gratifications assumption that media content preferences and choices originate with the audience is strengthened by this fundamental characteristic of the Internet.

The fourth characteristic is *Synchronicity*. This refers to the temporal nature of communication as mentioned earlier. Communication with others can be done in real time (synchronous) or time-delayed (asynchronous) depending on the characteristics of the Internet channel being used.

The final characteristic of the Internet is referred to as *Interactivity*. This quality may best distinguish the Internet from conventional forms of mass media. Where mass media limit opportunities for feedback and interaction, the Internet excels in this regard. As Tapscott (1998) notes, this is what

> makes the Internet fundamentally different from previous communications innovations, such as the development of the printing press or the introduction of radio and television broadcasting. These latter technologies are unidirectional… by contrast, the new media is interactive, malleable, and distributed in control. As such it cherishes a much greater neutrality. The media will do what we command of them. (pp. 26-27)

Tapscott goes on to describe the Internet as the antithesis of television, while describing the current generation of Internet users as the antithesis of the television generation. Yet, with the cyber-fan, there appears to be a middle ground… a user who has found a way to utilize the strength of each medium in

such a way as to complement the other. As it was previously suggested, the unique attributes of both media may be instrumental in providing unique gratifications to the cyber-fan. What cyber-fans are unable to obtain through television, they may be able to receive through the Internet and vice versa.

While the Internet can be generically referred to as a singular communications technology, it is really an amalgamation of several diverse communication channels that provide different services to the user. Some of the more popular channels include electronic mail, the World Wide Web, newsgroups, and chat rooms. These channels serve two primary functions, to provide users with information and to connect people with one another. As Sproull and Faraj (1997) put it, "people on the net are not only solitary information processors but also social beings. They are not only looking for information; they are also looking for affiliation, support, and affirmation" (p. 38).

Information

As an information source, the Internet is second to none. For the cyber-fan, it is a content rich environment containing program information and a variety of fan-related resources. Entertainment and movie web sites rank fourth in popularity behind news, hobbies, and travel as the top content preferences of Internet users (FIND/SVP, 1997). The avid television fan can easily locate web sites dedicated to currently running television programs as well as to programs that have long been out of production. These sites often contain a wealth of

information, such as episode guides, pictures, fan fiction, frequently asked questions, and spoilers (leaked information about upcoming program episodes).

Television program web pages usually fall into one of two categories, official and unofficial sites. Official web sites are those created and supported by the program producer or distributor. However, the majority of web sites are unofficial--- those created and maintained by the fans themselves. Fan sites number in the thousands and very often rival the official sites in terms of content and appearance.

The idea of the cyber-fan as both an Internet user and a content provider raises interesting questions for research. Do discernable differences exist between the givers and the takers in cyber-space? Are the authors of television fan pages more highly involved with television program content and characters than those who do not function in the role of content provider? Can distinctions be made between more casual uses of the Internet by fans seeking only to acquire information without reciprocating in an exchange, and fans that more actively express their television fandom by establishing themselves as information resources for other fans?

Cursory observation of the Internet reveals that it is an environment that encourages multiple levels of participation and involvement. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that cyber-fans will vary in their use of the Internet and their personal preferences for information acquisition and human exchange. Eighmey

and McCord (1998) explored some of the underlying reasons associated with the personal use of the World Wide Web and discovered that

> Information becomes a relationship on the WWW. This medium offers the potential for members of the audience to become visitors and communicators in the complete sense of both terms. That is, they can come calling at various times and can engage in the exchange of information. In this context, the potential for human qualities and continuing relationships can lead to the advancement of our understanding of the theoretical concept known as parasocial interaction. (p. 193)

The authors of this study found some preliminary evidence of "new uses and gratifications" that are associated with the interactive nature of the World Wide Web (p. 193). These gratifications stem from the individual's personal involvement with others within on-line communities and the information that flows between them. With this in mind, it seems reasonable to expect that Cyber-fans use the Internet for more than just information acquisition and exchange. The Internet also functions as a conduit for social interaction.

Social Interaction

Cyber-fans have innumerable opportunities for locating other fans that share their affinity for a particular television program. In referring to the electronic fan culture of the Internet, Baym (1997) notes that "computer-

mediated groups share the topics around which they organize, the system that links them, and the communication that passes between them" (p. 103). She goes on to comment about the role of virtual communities on the net and how technology may actually be more effective at bringing people together than previously thought.

> The dramatic proliferation and growth of electronic communities has broad implications for how one thinks about the effects of technology on culture. Often one views television and computers as leading to a society increasingly involved with machines and decreasingly involved in community. However, these groups show that for an ever growing number of people, the need for community has transformed working alone at a desk with only a computer as a companion into an excuse to spend time chatting away in vibrant communities of cyberspace neighbors. (p. 119)

These types of community are encouraged by the Internet, allowing television fans to come together and interact in ways that were previously not possible. However, the interaction that takes place within these communities is computer-mediated and differs from face-to-face social interaction. Kiesler, Siegel, and McGuire (1984) observed early on that electronic communication is depersonalized and fosters an atmosphere of social anonymity. In this type of mediated environment, "communicators must imagine their audience, for at the terminal it almost seems as though the computer itself is the audience.

Messages are depersonalized, inviting stronger or more inhibited text and more assertiveness in return" (p. 1125).

Cyber-fans focus much of their discussion and interaction on their common affinity for their favorite television programs. Thus, the mass media serve as a catalyst for much of the communication that occurs within the electronic fan culture of the Internet. As Chaffee and Mutz (1988) observe,

> 'the more people talk with one another about information from the mass media, the greater is the total impact of the media on social action.' Mass media often provide grist for the conversation mill and stimulate informal discussions that might not otherwise take place. (p. 21)

As mentioned before, the Internet is an environment that accommodates multiple levels of active participation. This is true of on-line social interaction as well. An individual does not have to contribute to on-line conversations in order to benefit from their content. In fact, the term “lurker” has been coined specifically for people who enjoy reading the thoughts and exchanges of others without ever venturing into the fray of on-line discussions. This gives further credibility to the assumption that cyber-fans vary in their use of interpersonal communication channels on the Internet.

These potential differences warrant investigation and raise additional questions about the use of the Internet by cyber-fans. For example, what specific benefits do cyber-fans receive as a result of their interactions with other fans via online discussions? And is it possible to observe distinctions between

cyber-fans who are more socially interactive with other fans and those who are less involved in interpersonal communication via the Internet? The role of interactivity in on-line communication via the Internet has become a subject of interest in recent discussions by communication researchers.

Interactivity

Rafaeli (1988) defines interactivity as “an expression of the extent that in a given series of communication exchanges, any third (or later) transmission (or message) is related to the degree to which previous exchanges referred to even earlier transmission” (p. 111). While a bit narrow in scope, Rafaeli's definition of interactivity shares some similar attributes with the previously discussed concepts of audience activity. While uses and gratifications research has consistently found evidence of varying levels of activity among television viewers, preliminary research based on Rafaeli's concept of interactivity has likewise shown that substantive variations exist within people's interpersonal communication across the Internet. Interactivity in this context can serve as a variable that is capable of providing fine-line distinctions between the communication activity of cyber-fans within the computer-mediated environment of the Internet.

Like audience activity in the uses and gratifications tradition, Rafaeli conceptualizes interactivity as a multi-dimensional, variable construct. More specifically, the author notes that interactivity is a three-dimensional continuous

variable. At one end of the continuum is declarative or non-interactive communication. Traditional mass media like television and radio, and more recently web pages on the Internet, primarily serve as one-way communication channels with limited functional opportunities for feedback and interactivity. While it is true that web pages offer enhanced opportunities for interaction and feedback, they primarily exist as a vehicle for distributing information to end-users. Interactivity is not required by the user in order to benefit from the resources available through Internet web sites.

At the other end of the continuum is fully interactive communication "in which simultaneous and continuous exchange occur, and these exchanges carry a social, binding force" (Rafaeli & Sudweeks, 1998, p. 175). Recent research has indicated that the character of on-line communication might be influenced by individual perceptions of the potential for interactivity with others (Newhagen, Cordes, & Levy, 1995). For some individuals, a greater potential for interactivity can lead to a deepening of their involvement within Internet based channels of communication. Fully interactive communication builds upon all previous messages exchanged between the parties. The Internet (specifically e-mail, newsgroups, chat rooms and the like) is a prime venue for this level of communication interactivity. This may be particularly true since previous message content is routinely attached to messages sent over the Internet. The ability to archive message content for future use enhances the opportunity for interactivity in this electronic environment.

In the middle of the continuum is what Rafaeli calls reactive communication. This type of communication involves one side responding to another side in a reactive way based on the previous message that was communicated. For example, this level of interactivity may be characterized by the occasional message poster who is not particularly interested in participating in long, drawn out discussion topics or threads, but will occasionally pose a question or respond to a comment of interest. More fully interactive participants are more likely to be regular contributors to discussion groups who more carefully follow discussion threads, are more opinionated, more open to self-disclosure, and are more apt to participate in arguments and debates (Rafaeli & Sudweeks, 1998).

In order to understand the role of the Internet in the life of the cyber-fan, researchers must be able to identify the underlying associations between the cyber-fan's involvement with their favorite television program and their subsequent involvement within the electronic fan culture of the Internet. Interactivity can potentially be an effective barometer of the cyber-fan's interpersonal involvement within this environment. Williams, Phillips and Lum (1985) suggested over a decade ago that social Interactivity should play an important role within frameworks for studying new technologies. Interactivity as conceptualized by Rafaeli has heuristic appeal as an involvement measure of communication activity within this on-line culture. The next section of the review elaborates on how the uses and gratification model of audience behavior can be

used as a bridge between communication activity within the apparently divergent channels of television and the Internet.

The Merging of Mass and Computer Mediated Communication

It has been argued that uses and gratifications is a suitable empirical model for observing mediated interpersonal communication within cyberspace because of its ability to map out the landscape of this relatively new communication environment (Newhagen & Rafaeli, 1996). Rafaeli (1996) argues that such studies would invariably focus

> on the motivations (biological, psychological, sociological) that drive people to take part in receiving or exchanging messages. What are the uses and gratifications of Net use (e.g., Rafaeli, 1986)? What do we get from such use? What are the relative weights of prurience, curiosity, profit seeking, and sociability? (as quoted in Newhagen & Rafaeli, 1996, p. 10)

Uses and gratifications is potentially useful as an exploratory paradigm for explaining how people are using the Internet for communication exchange and in conjunction with other forms of communication behavior. Rafaeli (1996) further suggests that,

> some of the more important contributions of communication research are in a better understanding of what goes on, even without these 'goings on' necessarily getting anyone anywhere. Intended effects or salient dangers

> play an important part, but there is much more to studying communication than just documenting what it actually does to people. (as quoted in Newhagen & Rafaeli, 1996, p. 9)

Research is beginning to examine some of the interesting *uses* that are now being explored by some rather innovative members of the Internet community. Lin (1996) suggests that the Internet "creates an instant enigma for researchers in terms of how to decode the uses and gratifications of such communication experiences" (p. 577). To this end, a great deal of interest is now being expressed in the functional orientations to understanding media use, particularly in regard to the Internet, where so much of the use is initiated and controlled by the audience.

> More so than ever before, we will be asking about the uses and gratifications of providing information and of participating in an exchange. Why do people expend so much effort presenting themselves on the Web, creating and maintaining and updating home pages?… The Net and its use are likely to be the venue for a rejuvenation of the uses-and-gratifications type of study. (Newhagen & Rafaeli, 1996, p. 10)

Uses and gratifications research has produced a substantial legacy of empirical data about audience behavior and the utility of communication in many different settings and applications. Thus, it is believed that uses and gratifications theory can provide a solid foundation upon which to launch an exploratory analysis of

cyber-fan behavior, where very little is known about the expression of television fandom through the Internet.

In designing such a study, an effort must be made to effectively merge the research traditions of mass and with interpersonal mediated communication. Cathcart and Gumpert (1983) defined interpersonal mediated communication as "any person-to-person interaction where a medium has been interposed to transcend the limitations of time and space" (p. 271). The researchers argued for a greater integration of mass communication research with various forms of interpersonal mediated communication. The authors suggested that "the traditional division of communication study into interpersonal, group and public, and mass communication is inadequate because it ignores the pervasiveness of media" (p. 277). The technologies associated with the Internet are providing new opportunities for this type of integration as mediated channels of interaction facilitate more and more human communication.

According to Ferris (1997), computer-mediated communication can be defined as

> both task-related and interpersonal communication conducted by computer. This includes communication both to and through a personal or a mainframe computer, and is generally understood to include asynchronous communication via e-mail or through use of electronic bulletin board; synchronous communication such as "chatting" or through

> the use of group software; and information manipulation, retrieval and storage through computers and electronic databases. (paragraph 2)

Computer-mediated communication represents one possible meeting place where researchers in the field of mass communication and those in the field of interpersonal communication have common ground for exploring and researching the Internet.

This merging of mass and interpersonal communication, though not entirely new in coming, has been fueled by an explosive interest in new media technology. According to Ball-Rokeach and Reardon (1988),

> we can no longer fragment our areas of expertise into the study of interpersonal communication or mass communication…. Greater breadth in our theory and research would, in our view, be a positive change away from myopic specialization toward theories of human communication…. New communication technologies share with interpersonal and mass communication more than the surface features of interactivity and electronics, respectively. They share, to a greater or lesser degree, a host of characteristics that make them communication forms. To understand the potential of any communication form, we must understand what the fundamental characteristics of human communication are. (p. 136, 159)

Bryant and Street (1988) further suggested that "although conceptual and epistemological differences separate mass and interpersonal communication perspectives, there would appear to be valuable opportunities for integration that

could benefit research and theory construction within each domain and across domains" (p. 178).

Continuing research into the relationship between mass and interpersonal channels of communication is necessary and may even flourish as a result of the Internet, which tends to encapsulate so many types of communication behavior within a single medium. The Internet also allows researchers to unobtrusively observe computer-mediated interpersonal communication in ways that were previously not possible.

A Uses and Dependency Model of Cyber-Fan Activity

Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur (1976) developed an integrative approach to mass media research that attempted to more fully "take into account the interrelationships between audiences, media, and society" (p. 5). The authors conceptualized a "dependency" model in support of their belief that many of the cognitive and psychological effects of mass communication on people and society are mediated by the relationships between the audience and media content and between audiences and other people with whom they are socially interactive. The "dependency" model assumed that audiences vary in their degree of dependency on media content and information.

In a further explication of the "dependency" model, Rubin and Windahl (1986) noted that "dependency is really a continuous concept since an individual may become dependent on communication channels or messages to varying

degrees" (p. 187). Recent studies continue to support the idea that a dependency relationship with media content can mediate audience behavior and activity within and across various communication channels (Rosenstein & Grant, 1997).

Rubin and Windahl (1986) argued that a uses and dependency model "furnishes fresh ideas about the origin and structure of audience needs and motives, as well as a framework for discussing the role of functional alternatives and the consequences of media use" (p. 186). Such a model fits within the goals of this study, which attempts to explore the cyber-fan's extension of television viewing involvement within the electronic fan culture of cyberspace. The cyber-fan's use of the Internet can be viewed as both a functional alternative to mass media use or simply as a supplement to the viewing of one's favorite television program. Rubin and Rubin (1985) argued that "it is unproductive to regard either the media or interpersonal channels as always being functional alternatives to the other. They are potentially coequal alternatives that vary in terms of their primary or alternative nature depending on individual and environmental conditions" (p. 39).

Figure 2 presents a model of cyber-fan activity within the integrative environments of mass and computer-mediated communication. This model was adapted from the uses and dependency model created by Rubin and Windahl (1986, p. 188). The authors proposed the model in response to criticisms that the uses and gratifications approach was "too individualistic in conception and

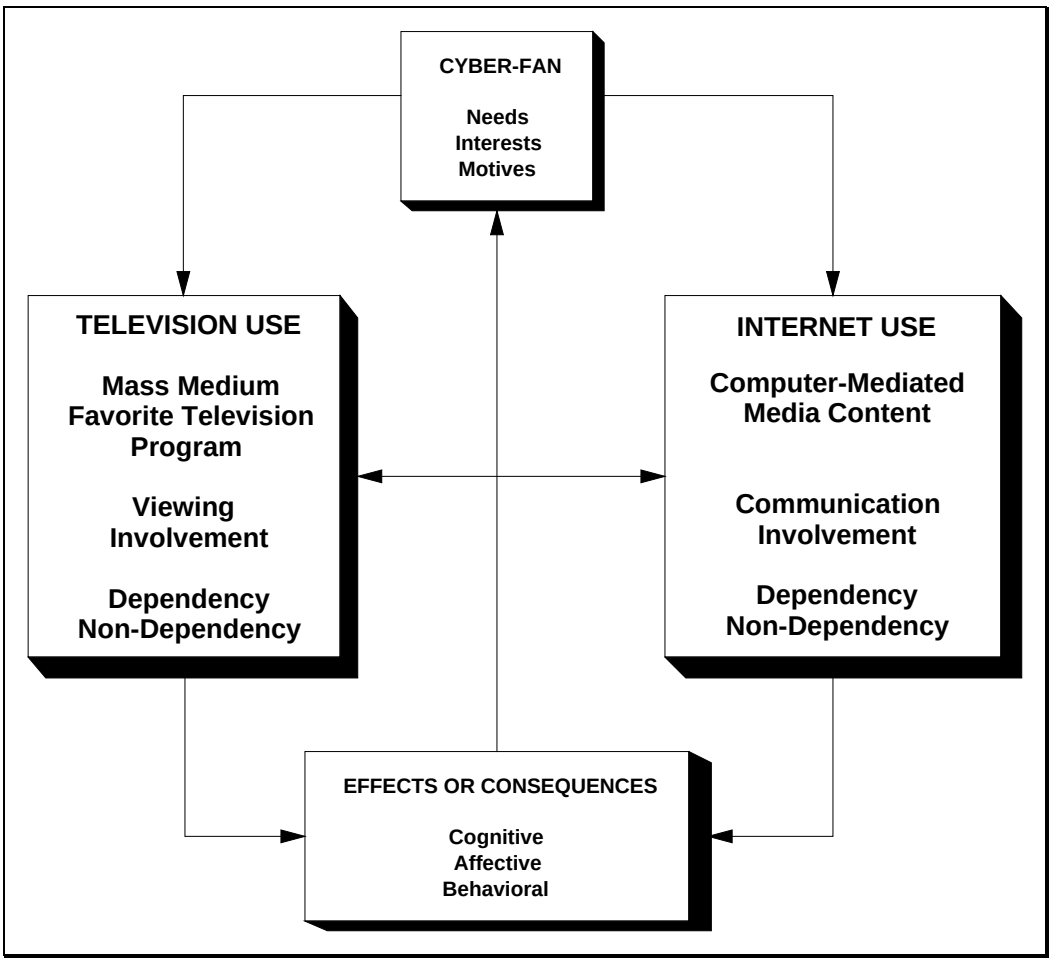

Figure 2: Uses and Dependency Model of Cyber-fan Activity

method, making it difficult to link personal media use to larger societal structures" (p. 184). This criticism was based in part on the fact that a great deal of uses and gratifications research had basically ignored the social and cultural contexts in which mass communication activity occurs. Their model helped to readdress the role of functional alternatives in contributing to the need fulfillment of the television audience (Palmgreen, 1984).

Consistent with the uses and gratifications perspective, the model shows media use as initiating from the social and psychological needs and motives of the audience. The model suggests that the more involved a person is with the viewing of their favorite television program the more likely they will seek out related communication opportunities via the Internet. The model also suggests that the cyber-fan's dependency on their favorite television programs is related to their dependency on the communication opportunities within the electronic fan culture of the Internet and vice versa.

The uses and dependency model is suggested for its heuristic value in an attempt to better understand the communication activity of the cyber-fan within two distinctly unique media channels. The model is also a helpful tool for shaping the research questions that will guide the empirical investigation into the audience behavior of the cyber-fan. Three specific research questions will be presented and discussed individually in the next section.

Research Questions

R1. How is personal involvement with the viewing of a favorite television program related to the on-line communication activity of the cyber-fan within the electronic fan culture of the Internet?

The uses and dependency model suggests that television viewing and interpersonal communication activities via the Internet are interrelated. If this is indeed the case, a study of this nature should be able to identify an empirical link between variables associated with audience activity within the two distinct media

channels. This question originated from Rubin and Rubin (1985) in their discussion of research based on the "view of interpersonal communication as a coequal channel to the media in meeting human needs" (p. 41). The authors specifically suggested that

> it is important to examine the functions of interpersonal communication in relation to media use. How do these potential providers of needs-gratification co-exist? Is a television program used, for instance, as a vehicle for information seeking so that an individual will be able to win an argument and validate his or her self-concept? (p. 48)

The uses and dependency model would suggest that the cyber-fan's on-line interpersonal communication with other fans is an outgrowth of and a complement to the viewing of her favorite television program. However, as the model also suggests, once the functional or complementing alternatives of the Internet are utilized, reciprocating influences occur as the cycle of use within both channels continues to repeat itself. Looking at it in this way, the television and Internet experiences of the cyber-fan are mutually complementary of one another. This study specifically seeks to explore how television viewing involvement and interpersonal communication activity via the Internet are interrelated within the culture of the cyber-fan.

R2. How are the needs and motives of cyber-fans related to their use of the Internet as a supplement to the viewing of their favorite television programs?

Much attention has been given in this review to the discussion of audience needs and motives as deterministic antecedents to media use. As the uses and dependency model suggests,

> individuals have different socially and psychologically produced and constrained needs, interests, and motives to communicate. Needs, motives, or desires lead to personal and mediated behavior, which may lead to dependency on a mass medium, its content, or functional alternatives. This communication activity affects the cognitions, attitudes, and behaviors of individuals…. These effects also influence subsequent communication choices and behavior. (Rubin & Windahl, 1986, p. 187)

Previous uses and gratifications research has been directed at understanding how needs and motives are related to the audience's use of television. Less is known about how these needs and motives mediate the audience's involvement with supplemental media and communication activities. As Rubin and Rubin (1985) suggested, part of this line of inquiry might lead the researcher to ask "Which needs are best met by which channels? [and] How are interpersonal and media channels used conjointly to meet needs?" (p. 48). Swanson (1987) added that "the most straightforward uses and gratifications approach to message content would focus on connections between audience motivations, attributes of message content, and the interpretation of content by audience members" (p. 246). Through an observation of the cyber-fan's activity within the electronic fan culture of the Internet, a study of this nature can help to shed light on this area.

R3. How are the specific resources of the Internet being utilized by cyber-fans within the electronic fan culture of the Internet?

As the review has shown, the Internet is not a single medium of communication, but rather an amalgamation of a multitude of communication channels (e.g. – chat rooms, newsgroups, web sites, etc.) that can be used for different types of activities. Research question #3 is suggested for its exploratory value in identifying some of the specific uses of these various on-line resources, and their importance to the cyber-fan for extending his involvement with the viewing of a favorite television program.

This exploration will include a look at the difference between the utilization of social channels of communication and informational channels. As this chapter has attempted to show, the Internet is being used by cyber-fans to obtain information about their favorite television programs as well as to connect with other fans. While a great deal of information-seeking activity may occur within a social context, such as fans exchanging ideas and information with one another, information is available without being predicated by contact or interaction with other fans. While some people may be content to merely use the Internet as an impersonal source for information acquisition, others appear to be much more highly motivated by the many opportunities for social interaction. This study attempts to explore some of the underlying reasons associated with differences in the cyber-fan's use of the Internet for fan-related gratification.

An Integrative Model of Cyber-Fan Involvement

The three research questions that have been articulated have empirical implications for the design of a study into the audience behavior of the cyber-fan. At the heart of this investigation is a desire to understand more about how the cyber-fan's involvement with television viewing is related to her interpersonal interaction with other fans within the electronic fan culture of the Internet.

Figure 3 presents a model of what this relationship might look like and suggests several variables relating to both mass and interpersonal communication activities that can be explored within a study of cyber-fan behavior. The purpose in suggesting such a model is to give greater conceptual clarity to the ideas and relationships that have been discussed so far and to provide a workable framework for the empirical investigation. Following a discussion of the model and its implications on the study of cyber-fan behavior, eight specific hypotheses will be suggested for testing within the current investigation.

The integrative model of cyber-fan activity identifies and predicts several relationships between television involvement and interpersonal communication via the Internet. Expectations about the nature of these relationships are based on previous uses and gratifications research. The upper half of the model illustrates how television-viewing motives contribute to involvement with program content. Involvement is conceptualized as a multidimensional construct

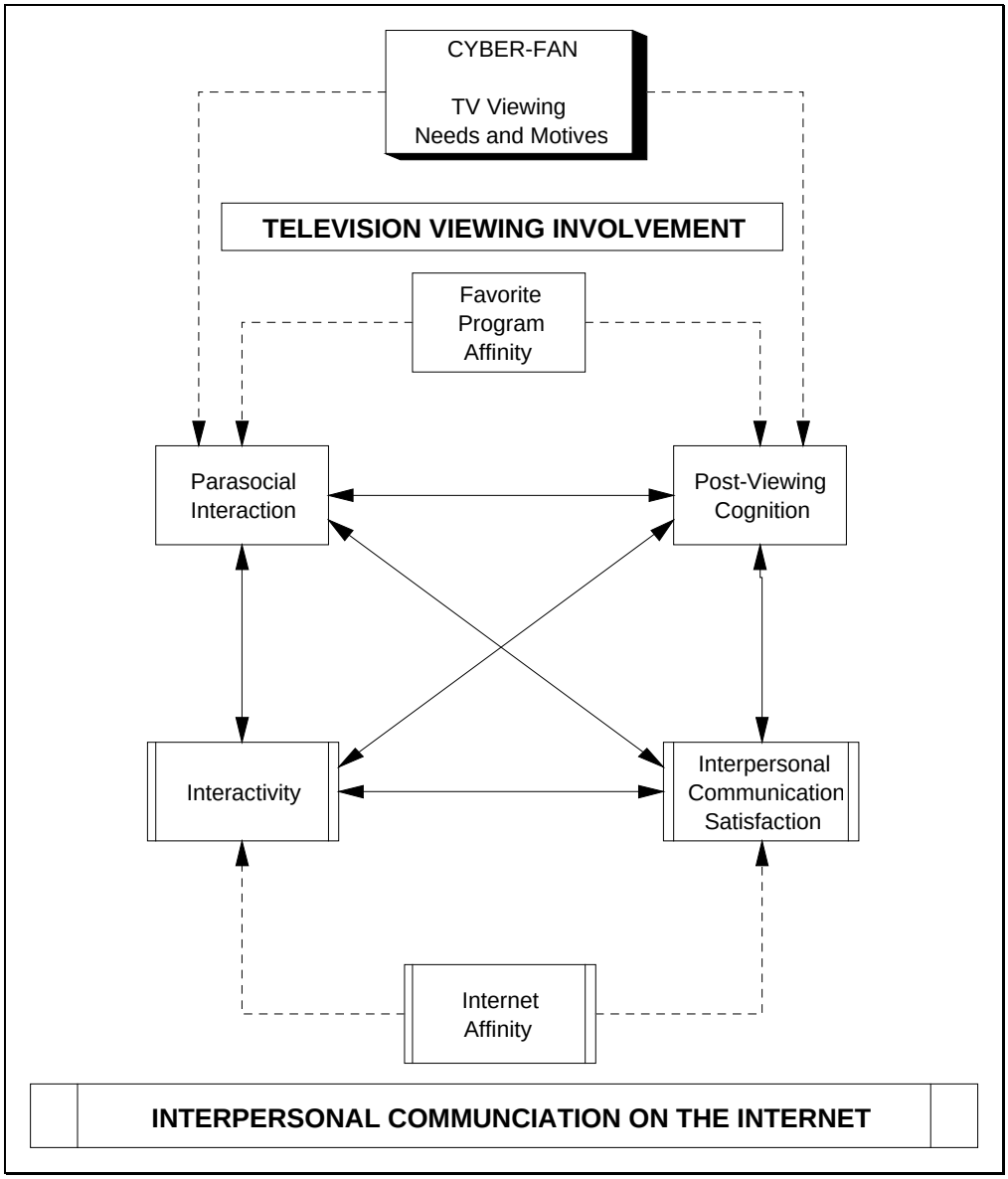

Figure 3: An Integrative Model of Cyber-Fan Involvement

composed of favorite program affinity, parasocial interaction and post-viewing cognition.

Favorite program affinity is a pre-viewing affective attitude toward particular programs. Television fandom grows as affinity for certain shows increases over time--- contributing to a greater degree of viewing and post-viewing involvement.

Parasocial Interaction is an emotional involvement activity that develops during actual program exposure. Rubin and McHugh (1987) define parasocial interaction as “a one-sided interpersonal relationship that television viewers establish with media characters” (p. 280). This relationship develops as individuals become more familiar with and loyal to the characters and the program.

Post-viewing cognition is the third involvement activity and represents a post-viewing condition in which the viewer stays connected with the program by continuing to think about the show and various program elements.

The lower half of the model illustrates the degree to which the cyber-fan is interpersonally active via the Internet. Internet affinity is conceptualized as a measure of the individual's dependency on the Internet. It represents a global affective attitude towards the Internet as a single medium of communication and the degree to which the Internet has become an indispensable technology for the user. Interactivity is conceptualized as a qualitative dimension of the interpersonal communication that takes place between two or more individuals

on the Internet. Interpersonal Communication Satisfaction is conceptualized as the degree to which Internet users find their on-line communication with other people to be a rewarding and satisfying experience.

The real potential of this integrative involvement model lies in the conceptual associations that are inferred between traditional television involvement and interpersonal communication via the various channels of the Internet.

Hypotheses

Viewing Involvement and Interpersonal Communication Activity

One of the more consistently identified gratifications obtained from television viewing is social interaction (Rubin, 1981a, 1983; Towers, 1985, 1986; Wenner, 1982, 1983). People use television content as a catalyst for social interaction during exposure to television programming and after exposure in a variety of social settings. In this context, social interaction includes, but is not necessarily limited to, face-to-face communication, as well as mediated communication via electronic technologies like the telephone (Dimmick, Sikand, & Patterson, 1994; Noble, 1989; O'Keefe & Sulanowski, 1995) and the Internet (Abela, 1997; Yoo, 1996).

Cyberspace has become the newest meeting ground where people with shared interests can easily locate each other and interact in a way that was not previously possible. The Internet fills the gap between episodes of television

exposure and offers the cyber-fan a greater opportunity to stay cognitively engaged with their favorite program content and characters. It is expected that this type of mediated social interaction among cyber-fans is associated with television viewing involvement at both the psychological and cognitive levels.

Rafaeli (1988) argues that the construct of interactivity “should allow for treatment of channels and media as surrogate or real ‘participants’ in the communication process” (p. 116). The author outlined distinctions between parasocial interaction and what he referred to as ortho-social interactions… "the increasingly popular behaviors of calling talk shows, writing letters to the editor, and otherwise using traditional, unidirectional mass media in a new, reactive, or interactive manner" (p. 124). According to this definition, fan-related interpersonal communication activity via the Internet is a form of ortho-social interaction. As Rafaeli notes,

> both para-social and ortho-social interaction were found to be positively associated with media use…. Para-social interaction was also shown, however, to contribute to a reciprocal substitution between media use and sociability, while ortho-social interaction contributed to a supplemental process. Ortho-social interactants with media (those who don't just imagine interaction) use the media to bolster their favorable disposition toward interacting with others. (p. 124)

Thus, media involvement at the psychological level (parasocial interaction) is related to the 'real world' social interactions with other people (ortho-social

interaction). Following this rationale, the interactivity of cyber-fans within the electronic fan culture of the Internet serves as a supplement to the television-viewing experience and as a way of extending parasocial relationships into the "real-world." Rubin and Perse (1987) found that greater amounts of parasocial interactivity among soap opera viewers was associated with a greater likelihood for discussing the show with others when it was over. Thus, the first hypothesis specifically predicts that,

H1. Interactivity will be positively associated with Parasocial Interaction.

Rafaeli and Sudweeks (1998) found that interactivity tends to be "associated with a sense of involvement and belonging" (p. 187). The more interactive the communication exchange is between participants in discussion groups, the more likely the person is to feel that they are a significant part of the group. Thus, group cohesion within on-line discussion groups is viewed in part as a function of the degree to which participants in the group communicate in more fully interactive and meaningful ways. This supports Rafaeli's (1988) earlier conclusion that "acceptance and satisfaction are the most obvious set of effects of increased interactivity sought after and documented in the literature" (p. 122). It seems reasonable to expect that the cyber-fan would derive greater satisfaction from on-line communication experiences that are more fully interactive. This leads to a second hypothesis that specifically predicts that

H2. Interactivity will be positively associated with Interpersonal Communication Satisfaction of on-line discussions.

The argument has been established that parasocial interaction and ortho-social interaction are empirically related constructs within the electronic fan culture of cyber-space. It seems reasonable to suggest that on-line interpersonal communication satisfaction would be greater for cyber-fan's who manifest a greater level of parasocial involvement with their favorite television characters. Thus, the next hypothesis is suggested in order to relate interpersonal communication satisfaction to the psychological dimension of interactivity by predicting that

H3. Parasocial Interaction will be positively associated with Interpersonal Communication Satisfaction of on-line discussions.

In a study of teenage television viewers, Lin (1993a) found that "intentional audience activity variables were positive predictors" of interpersonal communication. Specifically, she observed that "teen viewers who are more cognitively and behaviorally involved with content during and after viewing--- from a wider variety of programs--- received more interpersonal communication gratification by utilizing the program for talking with others" (p. 45). It is likely that cyber-fans, because of their intense involvement with their favorite programs, are more highly motivated to seek out contact with other fans via the Internet and that these interactions, more often than not, lead to satisfying communication. In other words, the more involved a viewer is with his favorite television program, the more likely he will be to interpersonally interact with other fans and derive satisfaction from the exchanges that occur during on-line discussions. This

study expects to find that cyber-fans will vary in their level of interactivity and interpersonal communication satisfaction depending on their level of post-viewing cognition. These predictions are specifically articulated in hypotheses four and five.

H4. Post-Viewing cognition will be positively associated with Interactivity.

H5. Post-Viewing cognition will be positively associated with Interpersonal Communication Satisfaction of on-line discussions.

Rubin and Perse (1987) concluded that "parasocial interaction, thinking about content [post-viewing cognition] and discussing content represent related, yet different, dimensions of media involvement" (p. 262). Their research identified a strong and significant empirical relationship between parasocial interaction and post-viewing cognition for fans of soap opera content. Thus, the degree to which a cyber-fan stays cognitively involved with a favorite television program should be related to her level of parasocial involvement with her favorite television character(s). The next hypothesis specifically predicts that

H6. Parasocial Interaction will be positively associated with Post-Viewing Cognition.

Television Viewing Motives

In an analysis of daytime television soap opera fans, Rubin and Perse (1987) found that parasocial interaction and post-viewing cognition were both associated with instrumental viewing motives, stronger attitudes, and greater

activity. In a later study, the authors were able to link parasocial interaction to overall satisfaction with a favorite soap opera program (Perse & Rubin, 1988). The authors found that program satisfaction "grew out of a more instrumental orientation toward soap opera content" (p. 373). Kim and Rubin (1997) concluded that instrumental viewing motives were positively associated with program satisfaction. They also found that parasocial interaction with soap opera characters "emanates from being motivated to watch the programs to seek information about the sexual attraction and appeals of the characters, to be aroused, and to be with or to interact with others about the content" (p. 127). Television viewing motives have generally been consistent predictors of audience involvement. Therefore, it is expected that in the current study of cyber-fans, that

H7. Instrumental viewing motives will be positively associated with the cyber-fan's affinity for his or her favorite television programs, parasocial interaction, and post-viewing cognition.

Opinion Leaders in Cyberspace

Moving beyond the model, this study will also explore the unique contributions of web page authors serving as opinion leaders within the on-line fan culture of the Internet. The Internet is a unique communication medium in that it allows an individual user, with minimal training and resources, to produce and package message content for access by a potentially global audience. The economic barriers associated with traditional mass media have previously limited

this kind of access to an elite segment of the population. As Morris and Ogan (1996) point out, this raises new research questions about “interchangeability of producers and receivers of content. One of the Internet's most widely touted advantages is that an audience member may also be a message producer” (p. 44). Traditional uses and gratifications research has focused on the gratifications obtained from the audience primarily as a non-interactive receiver in the communication process. To date, little attention has been given to the potential gratifications derived trough the activity of web page authorship.

Buten (1996) found that “self-expression, learning HTML and distributing information to friends are the most popular reasons authors site for writing their personal web page.” His research also found that “authors of pages on commercial servers are likely to receive e-mail related to their page on a regular basis, at least once a week (58%).” Thus, one possible gratification of web page authorship could be derived from the opportunities for social interaction with other people. The notion that “if you build it, they will come” seems appropriate to this type of active solicitation in which web content serves as an invitation for other types of communication facilitated through contact with web pages.

Content providers on the Internet function as virtual ‘opinion leaders’ in a cyber version of the ‘two-step flow’ of communication. According to Severin and Tankard (1992), the essential concept of the two-step flow is “that messages from the media first reach opinion leaders, who then pass on what they read or hear to associates or followers who look to them as influentials” (p. 193).

Opinion leadership has been greatly facilitated through the many new avenues for communication on the Internet.

Rafaeli and Sudweeks (1998) examined interactivity in a content analysis of Bitnet, Usenet, and CompuServe discussion groups. They found interactive messages to be more opinionated, more humorous, and more likely to contain self disclosure. The authors also noted that "interactivity is associated with a sense of involvement and belonging" (p. 187). In addition, frequent contributors to on-line discussion groups write significantly more reactive messages, and "are just as likely as all others to write interactive messages" (p. 188). Stability of on-line groups is related to the degree of interactivity which is characteristic of the groups. Less interactive groups are characterized by less stable membership over time.

These results indicate that interactivity varies in degree across participants in cyberspace. It is likely that the more active participants on the Internet are also those who are more interactive in their communication with other people. The final hypothesis addresses this by specifically predicting that

H8. Web page authors of television fan pages will demonstrate a greater desire for interactivity than cyber-fans who have not created a web site for their favorite television program(s).

Hypothesis Testing

Each of the eight research hypotheses represents relatively straightforward comparisons of variables that are associated with the television

and on-line communication activity of the cyber-fan. These variables will be quantitatively assessed using traditional uses and gratifications survey techniques. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients will be computed for each of the predicted associations and analyzed for their statistical power and significance. In some cases, it may be necessary to test for the significance of differences between group means, such as in the case of the last hypothesis which predicts that web page authors will be more interactive than cyber-fans who have not created a television fan page. Again, these types of statistical comparisons are rather straightforward and will be performed using simple t-tests or one-way analysis of variance statistical procedures as deemed necessary by the characteristics of the data that are obtained. The next chapter will address the specific design issues related to this study and how the survey methodology will be utilized to measure the activity of cyber-fans within the electronic fan culture of the Internet.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter discusses the specific methodological strategies that were employed in an empirical observation of cyber-fan behavior within a uses and gratifications context. The chapter begins by describing the specific target population for the study and the conceptual rationale for using cyber-fans as the primary unit of analysis. Following this discussion, the chapter addresses the sampling strategy that was utilized for selecting respondents to participate in the study. The *Television Fan Survey* was the name given to the on-line survey instrument that was used to specifically measure variables associated with the audience behavior of cyber-fans. This chapter gives a detailed account of how the *Television Fan Survey* was constructed; which items and scales were included in the survey; and the issues related to the administration of the final survey instrument. The chapter concludes with a discussion of measurement and scaling issues, the pre-testing of the survey instrument, and the strategies that were initiated for the tracking of the survey's respondents.

Cyber-Fans: The Target Population

The current study focuses on individuals who routinely utilize the Internet's vast array of dedicated television program web sites and discussion groups to supplement the viewing of their favorite television programs. A conceptual distinction is made between cyber-fans and other television fans simply on the grounds that the former group has access to the Internet and has tapped into the emerging fan culture of cyberspace. As the Internet grows in popularity and accessibility, it is likely that more television fans will migrate to the net (thus becoming cyber-fans) to avail themselves of increased opportunities for involvement with their favorite television programs by acquiring information and connecting with other fans. Cyber-fans are the pioneers in this new and growing frontier of television fandom.

Targeting cyber-fans as the primary unit of analysis is an advantageous research strategy for a study of this nature. In explicating strategies for understanding audience behavior within a uses and gratifications perspective, McQuail and Gurevitch (1974) encourage the observation of "fans",

> ---either of a particular and established type of content or of an item typical of a genre, or possibly fans of a given medium in general. Established genres are most likely to give rise to clear expectations in prospective audience members, and fans are more likely to have, and to be aware of, motives for exposure than are casual members of the audience who simply 'drop in.' (pp. 295-296)

The authors go on to identify "fans as spokesmen for the less committed or articulate consumers of the same media content, who are then perceived as paler and less distinct versions of the former" (McQuail & Gurevitch, 1974, p. 296). This conceptualization of fans can be traced to the *action/motivational perspective* for exploring the audience behavior of television viewers. McQuail and Gurevitch (1974) go on to say that this perspective "allots a dominant role to the receiver" (p. 297). Under this model, the audience is viewed as highly conscious of their personal media behavior. "Media use is regarded as an act of free choice by an actor who seeks to gain some immediate or delayed future benefits, to be or do what he wishes" (p. 295). This assumption is the trademark of uses and gratifications research, which has traditionally focused attention on the more active segments of the media audience.

Lin (1993a) found that *viewing orientation* is a significant variable for predicting gratifications from television viewing. The author measured viewing orientation by asking respondents a series of questions about the importance of television in their daily lives. The composite measure was conceptualized as a global dependency index of the "psychological importance of TV viewing" (p. 233). She offered three general conclusions drawn from her research.

> First, more 'captivated viewers' (i.e., those with stronger viewing orientation) who have access to more abundant program options are prone to be heavy viewers. Second, viewers with greater gratification expectations tend to be more captivated viewers, who are more inclined to

> actively engage in the viewing process, through certain cognitive processing and reflection, affective response, and behavioral reaction. Third, these more motivated, captivated, and engaged viewers would also derive more gratification from their viewing experience. (p. 240)

Cyber-fans fit well into Lin's classification of a stronger viewing orientation despite the fact that their level of engagement is more related to specific television programs than with the medium of television in general. Cursory observation reveals that cyber-fans are heavily captivated by and involved with their favorite programs. This is further revealed in their use of the Internet for extending opportunities for cognitive processing and reflection of program content. The Internet provides a mechanism for staying engaged with television programming during those in-between times of television viewing.

Viewers with extreme orientations to television viewing provide unique opportunities for advancing knowledge about audience behavior. This may be one of the reasons why soap opera viewers have been routinely targeted by uses and gratification researchers. In a study of college student soap opera fans, Rubin & Perse (1987) found that “the appeal of a particular program that makes it an avid audience member’s favorite is associated with more instrumental or goal-directed involvement” (p. 264). This study suggests that fans are more likely then casual viewers to be selective and purposeful in viewing specific television programs. It also suggests that fans are less likely then more casual viewers to watch television in a ritualistic fashion. In a later

study of soap opera fans, the same authors suggested that the more satisfied one is with a particular television program, the more "planned and intentional" is their viewing behavior (Perse & Rubin, 1988, p. 374). The authors of this study concluded that "motivated and active media use provides a truer picture of media effects" (p. 374).

These studies support the conclusions of previous research by Levy and Windahl (1984) which suggested that more active television viewers tend to experience higher levels of gratification and are more likely to be affected by television than their less active counterparts. Such an extreme orientation on the part of fans increases the likelihood of detecting and empirically measuring intrinsic attributes associated with audience behavior.

Sampling Methodology

While the observation of fans represents a conceptual ideal in uses and gratifications research, the difficulty in accessing and sampling specific fan populations has limited its application. One of the reasons for this is that the more highly committed and involved television fans are only a small percentage of the overall television audience. There are approximately 99.4 million television households in the United States alone.[13] The cost and methodological

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[13] *Nielsen Media Research Data reported by UltimateTV.com at http://www.UltimateTV.com/news/nielsen/networks/981228network.html on January 6, 1999.*

difficulty of sampling such a large population base have made it necessary for communication researchers to consider alternative methods of sample selection.

The social sciences have long been obsessed with the empirical ideals associated with the practice of random selection of subjects. Such methods stipulate that samples must be drawn from the targeted population in such a way that allows every member of the population an equal chance of being selected (Kerlinger, 1986). The goal of random selection is to insure that the sample is representative of the target population being studied. Obtaining a representative sample allows the researcher to maximize the degree to which the results and conclusions of a study can be generalized back to the target population. However, the actual practice of social research reveals an undercurrent of tolerance and acceptance for convenience sampling methods and other approaches that have not been based on the principles of random selection. As a professor of political studies was recently quoted, "if studies based on unrepresentative samples were excluded from social science research, whole sections of library shelves would begin to look like supermarkets in the former Soviet Union" (Smith, 1997, paragraph 36). Such a generalization could easily be made about research in the field of uses and gratifications which also has a long history of utilizing methods based on self-selection of subjects and other types of convenience sampling methodologies.

It is worth noting that one of the most prevalent trends in mass media over the past two decades has been the demassification of the audience into smaller

niche groups that attend to media and media channels that cater to specific individual needs and desires. Thus, even the general television audience that once characterized broadcast media has become fragmented as more and more specialized channels of distribution have emerged through cable, direct broadcast satellite, etc. This trend towards greater specialization and availability of media content has also become the trademark of new communication technologies like the Internet. As it has been suggested, one of the Internet's chief attractions is that it encourages people to congregate within groups around shared topics of interest. While random selection of subjects permits the generalization of research from smaller samples to larger populations, this is not an empirical necessity for conducting meaningful research within the specialized communication environment of the Internet.

The Internet offers researchers an efficient and practical venue for identifying niche audience segments for observation in empirical studies. For example, television fans can easily be located on the Internet by visiting newsgroups and chat rooms dedicated to the discussion of particular television programs. Television fans have also created thousands of web pages to disseminate program information to other fans of the same program. In short, the Internet provides multiple avenues of access to highly concentrated populations of cyber-fans who would be much harder to locate by random sampling the general television viewing audience or the total population of Internet users.

In order to reach the sub-population of cyber-fans and to solicit participation in the current study, the method of distributed, electronic surveying was implemented. This method of sample identification and survey administration was pioneered by researchers at the Graphics, Visualization, and Usability (GVU) Center at the Georgia Institute of Technology. The GVU Internet user surveys are the longest running on-line survey instruments of their kind. GVU administers their surveys twice a year in an effort to identify various trends associated with users of the Internet.

As an alternative to traditional methods of random selection, GVU developed an innovative approach whereby a survey is heavily promoted through various media channels inviting respondents to participate. The following techniques are used to secure participants in these on-line surveys (Kehoe & Pitkow, 1996):

- Links to the survey are posted on high-exposure, general-interest Web sites, such as NCSA's "What's New", Yahoo, Lycos, CNN, etc.
- Announcements are posted on WWW and Internet related Usenet newsgroups.
- Coverage is provided to national and local newspapers and trade magazines.
- Announcements are posted on the www-surveying mailing list that GVU maintains for users who want to be notified about upcoming survey activities.

By using multiple methods to promote the survey, GVU has been able to attract a more diverse and representative sample of Internet users.

While this method of self-selection sampling opens a door of criticism to issues of validity and generalizability, the methodology can produce a much larger pool of respondents then might otherwise be possible using more conventional sampling techniques. The GVU survey administrators attempt to compensate for the lack of random selection by oversampling the population and attracting many more participants than would normally be required for a valid random sample. A sample pool of over 55,000 subjects has responded to five different GVU surveys using the methods outlined above (Kehoe & Pitkow, 1996).

The current study took a similar approach by identifying television program newsgroups and fan pages as the primary points of origin for promoting an on-line survey instrument to cyber-fans. The following strategies were employed in this effort to disseminate word of the survey within the electronic fan culture of the Internet.

- Invitations to participate in the on-line survey were posted to select newsgroups dealing with the discussion of specific television programs.
- Invitations to participate in the on-line survey were also sent (via e-mail) to a select number of individuals who have created a personal television fan page.

- A select group of television fan page authors were asked to post a link to the on-line survey instrument on their web site.
- An effort was made to solicit the participation of a select number of commercial television fan sites by asking site administrators to place a link to the on-line survey instrument on their web page.

In order to employ these strategies, criteria had to be established for the selection of television fan pages and newsgroups that would serve as the bases for launching a campaign to promote the on-line survey instrument. These criteria and the rationale behind them are articulated in the following section.

Criteria for Program Selection

Previous studies have focused on the fans of particular program genres such as news and soap operas. Narrowing down the sample by targeting a specific program type is a convenient way of controlling for individual differences that may be associated with genre preferences. For example, one might expect sports fans and soap opera fans to be similar in terms of a shared affinity for the television medium, but dissimilar in attributes associated with specific programming content. A goal of this study was to be as inclusive of as many cyber-fans as possible without unnecessarily restricting the sample to the fans of a single program or genre. This was done in an effort to maximize the external validity of the study. At the same time, it became obvious that some narrowing down of the cyber-fan population was necessary simply because of the broad

and extensive nature of television fandom on the Internet. Cursory examination of the electronic fan culture revealed newsgroups and web sites that were associated with thousands of different television programs and a multitude of program genres.

Criteria had to be established that would systematically pare down the scope of investigation and be logically consistent with the foundational objectives of the study. The decision was made to target the on-line television fans of first-run, episodic, network or syndicated programming on U.S. television. The emphasis on first-run programming constrained the sample to shows that were still in production. This criterion eliminated all television programs for which no new episodes were being produced. It also eliminated all television program re-runs--- shows that had gone out of production but were still being aired. Given that some of the more significant research questions centered on the cyber-fans interpersonal communication about their favorite programs, it was felt that first-run programming would be more likely to foster an environment of fresh exchange and interactivity among cyber-fans. The fan page database at UltimateTV.com maintains a list of the top ten most frequently searched program titles. First-run television programs invariably dominate the list.

To be included in the selection process, a program had to also be episodic in nature. Episodic programs are those that are either dramatic or comedic in nature and feature regularly (daily or weekly) produced episodes based on the continuous theme and characters in the program. This criterion

excludes news and magazine programs, game shows, talk shows, sports programs, and other non-episodic program genres while including daytime television soap operas. It was felt that episodic programs would tend to foster a greater amount of involvement and interactivity among cyber-fans. If a person misses a particular segment of an episodic television program, they may miss important story elements that will play into future episodes or perhaps be pertinent to events that took place in previous episodes. Individual episodes are intrinsically tied to the on-going television series that never really ends until the program goes out of production. Non-episodic program segments stand much more completely on their own without having to necessarily be connected to previous or future episodes. Non-episodic programs do not appear to have a great deal substantive appeal to the cyber-fan for connecting and interacting with other fans.

The next criterion for selection specified that the programs must be network or syndicated programming on U.S. television. Network programs were those being aired on one of the six major commercial television networks: ABC, CBS, NBC, Fox, WB (Warner-Brothers Television Network), and UPN (United Paramount Network). The decision was also made to include some of the more popular cult programs that are currently being aired on a select number of cable networks (USA Network, HBO, and Comedy Central). Due to the fact that there are a number of popular television programs currently being produced that are

not a part of the broadcast or cable network schedules, first-run syndicated programming was also included if it met all of the necessary criteria for selection.

Participation in the study was limited to the adult population in order to comply with the human subject's review guidelines at the University of Tennessee. For this reason, children's programs were excluded from selection. And finally, programs that have been on the air for less than one full season were not specifically targeted for inclusion. This criterion was necessary due to the fact that television fandom develops over time. In addition, it takes time for television fandom to gain a corresponding representation on the Internet in terms of fan pages and discussion groups.

The program selection criteria for the current study are much broader than most of the previous studies done in the area of uses and gratifications research. By identifying the sample as fans of current, episodic television programs, the methodology attempts to target a representative cross-section of television fans with a diverse set of program preferences and interests.

Identification of Programs

Eighty-six television shows (see Appendix A) were identified using the program selection criteria mentioned in the previous section. A search of the Internet was conducted and a database of newsgroups and television fan pages associated with each of the shows selected for inclusion in the study was

created. Sixty Usenet newsgroups (see Appendix B) and 806 television fan pages were also identified through the search.

The following criteria had to be met in order for a fan page to be included in the database. First, the fan page had to focus on a single television program. Second, the fan page could not be commercially associated with the creators or producers of a television program or a television network. Third, the fan page had to clearly identify the creator of the web page as an individual (as opposed to a corporation or business). Fourth, the fan page had to include the personal e-mail address of the creator of the web page. In addition, fan pages that focused primarily on actors and characters from the program (Celebrity pages) were not included.

Various methods were utilized to identify the collection of television fan pages. The majority of sites were found by searching television program lists available at UltimateTV.com and Yahoo.com. Both of these commercial services have created their own database of television program sites and posted them to the Internet. Webring.com was used to locate additional sites. Webring is an Internet-based service that ties together related web sites by various categories including individual television program names. Finally, conventional searches were conducted as necessary using the Metacrawler Internet keyword search engine. Metacrawler was chosen because of its ability to query seven of the more popular Internet search engines at a time.

Every effort was made to fairly represent each of the shows in the master program list. Some programs, such as *The X-Files,* have many more fan sites (literally hundreds) than other, less popular programs. The search, therefore, was not an exhaustive attempt to locate every fan page for every program on the master list. When at least fifty sites were located for a single program, the search for sites related to that program was terminated. While the number fifty was arbitrarily selected as a cutoff point, it was felt that this number would serve to encompass a sufficient amount of the variability associated with the fans of any one particular program. This also provided a helpful way of preventing the oversampling of any one particular type of program.

An invitation to participate in the survey was posted individually to each of the 806 e-mail addresses obtained through the television fan page search and to each of the 60 Usenet newsgroups. A follow-up posting to each of the newsgroups was made four days before the end of the data collection in an attempt to solicit participation from fans that may have missed the initial invitation. In addition to completing the survey, the authors of television fan pages were asked to post a link to the survey instrument on their personal television fan page. A custom graphic promoting the *Television Fan Survey* was included as an attachment to the e-mail message. Web page authors were encouraged to use the graphic on their pages as a link to the survey. Copies of the e-mail and newsgroup invitations are located in Appendices C and D.

The on-line survey instrument was posted to the Internet from October 13 to November 7, 1998. The timing of the survey administration was strategically set to take place shortly after the start of the fall television season. On-line activity by television fans was expected to be high at this time because of the introduction of new episodes, season premieres, and the heightened efforts of television networks to market their programming.

Measurement

An on-line survey instrument was produced which contained several single item measures as well as a number of composite scales for measuring several psychological activity variables associated with media use. The on-line instrument was promoted to cyber-fans as the *Television Fan Survey*. The survey contained two sections. The first section contained several exploratory items related to the cyber-fans use of television and the Internet, six psychological involvement scales, a television viewing motives scale, and demographic questions. This section contained a total of 99 individual items. The second section of the *Television Fan Survey* asked respondents questions about their affinity for each of the television shows in the master program list. This section contained a list of eighty-six program titles with response options to indicate the degree to which the show was a personal favorite. The section also contained two write-in sections where respondents could indicate additional program titles not found in the list. Respondents were given the option to end

the survey after completing the first section or to move onto the second section if they had time to do so. This was done in an effort to minimize survey fatigue given the rather long length of the survey instrument. The complete *TV Fan Survey* as it appeared in its on-line form is included in Appendix E.

Demographic Variables

Age, gender, income, marital status, and education are typical demographic variables associated with uses and gratifications research. These were assessed using the same question format and response categories found on the GVU Internet users survey. This was done in an effort to compare the demographic composition of the cyber-fan sample with that of the general population of Internet users.

Exploratory Variables

Several single-item measures associated with general television and Internet preferences and patterns of use were included in the survey. For the most part, these items were not tied to the underlying research hypotheses of the study, but included primarily for their potential value in exploring the world of cyber-fan behavior within the electronic fan culture of the Internet.

Information vs. Social Utility of the Internet

First, subjects were asked to indicate how often they used the Internet to get information about their favorite television program, and how often they used the Internet to discuss their favorite television program with other people. These

two questions were included in an effort to compare the degree to which cyber-fans use the Internet for information-seeking activity as opposed to using it for the purposes of interacting with other fans. These two items were measured using a 5-point scale anchored by *Never* and *A Lot*.

Importance of Specific Internet Resources

Next, respondents were presented with a list of eleven Internet resources and asked to indicate the degree to which each one was important for keeping up with their favorite television program. The eleven resources included unofficial television program web sites (fan pages), official program web sites, chat rooms, episode guides, fan fiction, mailing lists, message boards or forums, newsgroups, photo galleries, video clips, and sound files. This list of resources was not a comprehensive attempt to include all of the possible things related to television fandom on the Internet. However, as fan sites were explored during the preliminary research process, these resources seemed to be some of the most common ones associated with cyber-fan activity on the Internet. These eleven items were measured using a 5-point scale anchored by *Not Important at All* and *Very Important*.

Web Page Authorship

Respondents were asked to indicate whether they had created a personal web site for their favorite television program. This question was included in order to segment the sample into two groups for testing the eighth hypothesis. This

hypothesis predicted that the authors of television fan pages would be more interactive then cyber-fans who had not created a personal fan page. The response categories for this question were *yes* and *no*.

Media Usage

Two items asked respondents to estimate how many hours per day they usually watched television and used the Internet. Previous uses and gratifications research has typically included a global measure of television viewing or exposure. Amount of television viewing has also been used as a control variable in previous studies of audience involvement with programming content (Rubin & Perse, 1987). As a control variable, television exposure has been found to sometimes mediate the audience's involvement with television viewing. The seven response categories for each usage item included *less than 1 hour; 1-2 hours; 2-3 hours; 3-4 hours; 4-5 hours; 5-6 hours; and more than 6 hours*.

Additional Exploratory Items

Respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which they use the Internet for keeping up with currently running television programs and the degree to which they use the Internet for keeping up with programs that have gone out of production. The current study made a point of assuming that cyber-fan activity would be more likely centered around first-run television programming because of the appeal of fresh topics and information for discussion. These

items were included as a way of exploring this idea about cyber-fan behavior a bit more fully. These two items were measured using a 5-point scale anchored by *Never* and *A Lot*.

The last exploratory item asked respondents to indicate how often they have on-line discussions with other fans while watching the program they are talking about. During the survey pre-test, one respondent indicated that this type of concurrent media activity was common among cyber-fans. The item was included to explore the extent to which this was true. This item was measured using a 5-point scale anchored by *Never* and *A Lot*.

Favorite Television Programs

In an effort to explore the cyber-fan's affinity for particular television programs, respondents were presented with the master list of 86 television programs used in the sample selection process. The subjects were asked to indicate (1) which shows in the list were among their personal favorites, (2) which in the list shows they regularly use the Internet to keep up with, or (3) both. Space was provided for subjects to write in additional shows not included in the master list. This section was presented last as an optional set of items that subjects could either complete or skip at will.

Psychological Scales

Six composite scales were included in the *Television Fan Survey* to measure television-viewing involvement and the on-line communication activity

of the cyber-fan. Favorite program affinity, parasocial interaction, and post-viewing cognition were the three variables selected for measuring television-viewing involvement. Internet affinity, interactivity, and interpersonal communication satisfaction were the three variables selected for measuring the on-line communication activity of the cyber-fan. Each of the items in these scales used a standard 5-point Likert-style response option anchored by *Strongly Disagree* and *Strongly Agree*.

Viewing Involvement Measures

Television viewing involvement variables were measured with three scales that have long been associated with the uses and gratifications approach to understanding audience behavior. The wording for each of the items in these scales was modified from the original versions of the scale in order to reflect the needs of the current study. The phase *"favorite television program"* or *"favorite television character"* was added in an effort to focus respondents on their involvement with their favorite television show rather than upon television viewing in a more general sense.

Favorite Program Affinity

Affinity was conceptualized as a dependency variable that reflects the degree of importance that people assign to their favorite television programs. The scale was adapted from a previous one used in other uses and gratification studies (Abelman, 1989; Rubin, 1981a, 1983) to measure the audience's affinity

with the television medium in general. The five scale items (see Figure 4) were modified to reflect affinity with favorite television programs. This was done in order to be consistent with the belief that the cyber-fan's involvement with television is more closely linked to specific programming content then with the medium as a whole. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each of the scale items. Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients for this measure have ranged from .79 to .93 in previous studies (Perse, 1994a).

1. Watching my favorite television program is one of the more important things I do.
2. If the television set wasn't working, I would really miss my favorite television program.
3. Watching my favorite television program is very important in my life.
4. I could easily do without watching my favorite television program for several weeks.
5. I would feel lost without my favorite television program to watch.

Figure 4: Favorite Program Affinity Scale Items

Parasocial Interaction

Rubin (1994) noted that Parasocial Interaction (PSI) "is a relationship of friendship or intimacy by a media consumer with remote media 'persona' (Horton & Wohl, 1956). It is based on affective ties of audience members with media personalities (Levy, 1979)" (p. 273). PSI was measured in the current study by using a 10-item version of the original PSI scale (Perse & Rubin, 1989; Perse, 1990; Conway & Rubin, 1991). The scale was adapted to reflect PSI with the respondent's "favorite television character." The 10-item version of the PSI scale

is a shortened adaptation of the original 20-item measure. The short version was chosen in order to reduce the overall length of the survey instrument. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each of the 10 items in the parasocial interaction scale (see Figure 5).

1. I feel sorry for my favorite television character when he or she makes a mistake.
2. My favorite television character makes me feel comfortable, as if I am with friends.
3. I see my favorite television character as a natural, down-to-earth person.
4. I look forward to watching my favorite television character on this week's episode.
5. If my favorite television character appeared on another TV program, I would watch that program.
6. I miss seeing my favorite television character when they are not on TV.
7. My favorite television character seems to understand the kinds of things I want to know.
8. I would like to meet my favorite television character in person.
9. I find my favorite television character to be attractive.
10. If there were a story about my favorite television character in a newspaper or magazine, I would read it.

Figure 5: Parasocial Interaction Scale Items

Respondents were encouraged to think about a single (favorite) television character before responding to the individual parasocial interaction items. Administrations of the short version of the parasocial interaction scale have produced reliability coefficients ranging from .85 to .91 (Rubin, 1994). The PSI scale has a long history within the uses and gratifications tradition and has consistently demonstrated a high degree of reliability and construct validity in empirical investigations (Auter, 1992; Rubin, Perse, & Powell, 1985).

Post-Viewing Cognition

Post-Viewing Cognition was conceptualized as the degree to which an individual continues to think about a program and various program elements after viewing is complete. Post-viewing cognition was measured by adapting a four-item scale (see Figure 6) developed by Rubin and Perse (1987). Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each of the items in the post-viewing cognition scale. This measure has a reported reliability index of .86.

1. After viewing my favorite television program, I spend a lot of time thinking about what happened in the story.
2. After viewing my favorite television program, I spend a lot of time thinking about what I saw or heard.
3. After viewing my favorite television program, I spend a lot of time thinking about what will happen in the next episode.
4. After viewing my favorite television program, I spend a lot of time thinking about the characters.

Figure 6: Post-Viewing Cognition Scale Items

Internet Activity Measures

The cyber-fans interpersonal communication activity via the Internet was measured using three scales. These scales attempted to measure the respondent's affinity for the Internet, the level of interactivity during on-line interpersonal communication with others, and the degree to which such communication is a satisfying experience.

Internet Affinity

Internet affinity was conceptualized as a global dependency measure of the individual's reliance on the Internet. Items were borrowed from the favorite program affinity scale and modified to reflect the felt importance of the Internet. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each of the five items in the affinity scale (see Figure 7). Reliability measures were not available for the Internet affinity scale since the current application of the scale had not been previously tested.

1. Using the Internet is one of the more important things I do each day.
2. If my Internet connection wasn't working, I would really miss it.
3. The Internet is very important in my life.
4. I could easily do without logging onto the Internet for several weeks.
5. I would feel lost without my Internet access.

Figure 7: Internet Affinity Scale Items

Interactivity

Since an existing scale for interactivity could not be located, a 20-item scale was constructed and pre-tested prior to the final administration of the survey. The scale's design was based on Rafaeli's tri-part conceptualization of interactivity----from one-way non-interactive to fully interactive communication and exchange (Rafaeli, 1988). Factor analysis was used to analyze and reduce the scale from 20-items to 12-items. The twelve items loaded onto a single

factor that seemed to adequately encompass the conceptual breadth of Interactivity. The 12-item interactivity scale (see Figure 8) had a pre-test reliability of .91. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each of the items in the interactivity scale.

1. I like to share my personal opinions with other people during on-line discussions.
2. I have very little interest in sharing my ideas with others on the internet.
3. I use the Internet primarily as a vehicle for interacting with other people.
4. I like seeing what other people in the discussion group think about my ideas.
5. Other people's comments during an on-line discussion often triggers in me an urge to respond.
6. Communicating with other people on-line is important to me.
7. I like to avoid on-line discussions of any kind.
8. I like interacting with other people on the Internet.
9. I like to contribute messages to discussion groups.
10. I may contribute multiple times to a message thread that interests me.
11. I do not like to participate in on-going discussion topics or threads on the Internet.
12. I love to talk with others on-line.

Figure 8: Interactivity Scale Items

Interpersonal Communication Satisfaction

Interpersonal Communication Satisfaction (ICS) has been conceptualized "as the positive reinforcement provided by a communication event that fulfills positive expectations" (Graham, 1994, p. 217). ICS is usually viewed within this context as an outcome of communication activity. The current study attempted to measure cyber-fan's satisfaction with their on-line communication activity via

the Internet. ICS was measured using a 10-item version of Hecht's (1978) 19-item ICS scale. The scale was shortened in an effort to minimize the overall length of the survey instrument. The items in the scale were adapted to reflect on-line interpersonal communication activity. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each of the 10 items in the ICS scale (see Figure 9). Rubin (1993a) reported a Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of .86 using an adapted version of this same scale. Other reported reliabilities have ranged from .72 to .93 (Graham, 1994).

1. I am very satisfied with conversations I have with other people on the Internet.
2. Other people on the Internet express a lot of interest in what I have to say.
3. I feel like I can talk about anything with other people on the Internet.
4. Each person gets to say what they want on the Internet.
5. Other people frequently say things during Internet discussions which add little to the conversation.
6. People often talk about things I am not interested in during Internet discussions.
7. Other people let me know when I am communicating effectively on-line.
8. Nothing is accomplished talking to other people on-line.
9. Other people genuinely want to get to know me on-line.
10. Other people show me that they understand what I said on the Internet.

Figure 9: Interpersonal Communication Satisfaction Scale Items

Television Viewing Motives

The 27-item Television Viewing Motives Scale has been used extensively in previous uses and gratifications studies. The original scale measures nine

motivational dimensions of television viewing: relaxation, companionship, habit, passing time, entertainment, social interaction, information, arousal, and escape (Perse, 1994a). In their attempt to specifically address instrumental television viewing motives, Kim and Rubin (1997) revised the Television Viewing Motives Scale and produced a six-factor index for measuring the following dimensions: exciting entertainment, information-voyeurism, escapist relaxation, passing time, social utility, and companionship. This scale was chosen for the current study because of the underlying expectation that cyber-fans are more likely to be instrumental then ritualistic in their viewing of television programs. Respondents were asked to indicate how much each of the 27 reasons for watching television is like their own reason for watching television. Each of the motivational sub-scales has a documented reliability ranging from .68 to .87. The 27 items in the *Television Viewing Motives Scale* are shown in Figure 10.

Scaling Issues

A summated rating scale was used to measure each of the exploratory, behavioral and psychological variables in the fan survey. The Likert-type scale is similar in design to those previously used in uses and gratifications research.

1. I watch television because it's something to do to occupy my time.
2. I watch television because it entertains me.
3. I watch television because it relaxes me.
4. I watch television because it makes me feel less lonely.
5. I watch television because it's thrilling.
6. I watch television because I find it sexually arousing.
7. I watch television so I won't have to be alone.
8. I watch television because it passes the time away, especially when I'm bored.
9. I watch television because it amuses me.
10. I watch television because it's something to do when friends come over.
11. I watch television just because of the sex appeal of the program.
12. I watch television because it's like a habit, something I do each day.
13. I watch television so I can talk with other people about what's on.
14. I watch television to learn how to do things I haven't done before.
15. I watch television because it's exciting.
16. I watch television so I can be with other members of the family or friends who are watching.
17. I watch television because the characters are sexually attractive.
18. I watch television because it allows me to unwind.
19. I watch television to learn things about myself and others.
20. I watch television because I just like to watch.
21. I watch television so I can forget about school, work or other things.
22. I watch television when I have nothing better to do.
23. I watch television because it's a pleasant rest.
24. I watch television when there's no one else to talk to or be with.
25. I watch television just because it's on.
26. I watch television because it's enjoyable.
27. I watch television to get away from the rest of the family or others.

Figure 10: Television Viewing Motives Scale Items

A standard design format was incorporated for each of the items in the survey in order to simplify respondent participation and to create a common metric for computing composite scores. Each response option contains five steps anchored at each end with bi-polar adjectives. Depending on the question, one of three sets of adjectives was used: (1) Never/A Lot, (2) Not Important at All/Very Important, and (3) Strongly Disagree/Strongly Agree.

The use of summated rating scales has been criticized because of an underlying assumption that each of the response options is equal in distance from one another. Critics argue that the distance between response steps is not conceptually equal and suggest that this type of scale produces ordinal rather than interval level data. Such a view should tend to restrict data analysis to less powerful non-parametric statistical tools. But in the actual practice of social research, the tendency has been to treat summative scale data as interval rather than ordinal in level. Nunnally (1978) advocates this position by saying

> that it is permissible to treat most of the measurement methods in psychology and other behavioral sciences as leading to interval scales (and in some instances, ratio scales). Whereas the logic of determining measurement scales in any area of science is a highly controversial matter and logically very involved, it will be argued that usually no harm is done in most studies in the behavioral sciences by employing methods of mathematical and statistical analysis which take intervals seriously. (p. 17)

This position has been widely adopted within communication research circles where Likert scales have been quite commonly used in association with higher level parametric methods of statistical analysis (Rubin, Palmgreen, & Sypher, 1994).

In a comparison of various attitudinal scale models, Kerlinger (1986) concluded that,

> the summated rating scale seems to be the most useful in behavioral research. It is easier to develop… and yields about the same results as the more laboriously constructed equal-appearing interval scale. Used with care and knowledge of its weakness, summated scales can be adapted to many needs of behavioral researchers. (p. 455)

Nunnally (1978) added that summative models like the Likert scale are advantageous for several reasons. He specifically says that "they (1) follow from an appealing model, (2) are rather easy to construct, (3) usually are highly reliable, (4) can be adapted to the measurement of many different kinds of attitudes, and (5) have produced meaningful results in many studies to date" (p. 604).

Summing Scores

Another common practice in social research is to sum or average the individual item values in a summative scale to produce a composite index or score on a particular attitude or psychological trait. The purpose of this is to

"place an individual somewhere on an agreement continuum of the attitude in question" (Kerlinger, 1986, p. 454). Multiple-item measures are common in the assessment of attitudinal and psychological variables. As Nunnally (1978) writes, "the tendency of items to relate to factors other than the attribute being investigated usually averages out when items are combined. By combining items, one can make relatively fine distinctions among people" (p. 67). In addition, the practice of using composite measures produces greater variance and tends to increase reliability of measurement.

Tracking Respondents

A CGI script was created to handle the tracking of respondents who visited the survey invitation page and the actual survey page. This was done in order to assess where the survey respondents were coming from and to evaluate whether the methodology was successful in reaching a representative sample of the cyber-fan population. The software kept track of the hits to each of the survey pages; time and date of each hit; referring page URL for those respondents linking to the survey from a television fan page; and e-mail provider information for those responding to the survey from the initial e-mail invitation. A separate survey invitation page was created for people linking to the survey from one of the Usenet newsgroups. Another invitation page was set up to track people linking to the survey from either an e-mail message or a link from a television fan page.

Pre-Test

The on-line version of the *Television Fan Survey* was designed using a commercially available software package and basic HTML programming. The survey pages were posted on a Red Hat Linux server running Apache software. An invitation page (see Appendix F) was created to explain the background of the study and to provide contact information for anyone wanting additional information about the research project. In compliance with the University of Tennessee's research guidelines, respondents were asked to only complete the survey if they were eighteen years of age or older. A link to the survey page was provided for those who indicated they were old enough to take the survey and wanted to continue. This was done in an effort to obtain the "informed consent" of the participants in the study.

Because of the specific content of the survey, it was necessary to locate on-line TV fans for participation in the pre-test. A database of 300 e-mail addresses was created from messages posted to ten Usenet newsgroups dealing with television programs that had gone out of production. Invitations to participate in the survey were e-mailed to the list of 300 subjects. 70 completed surveys were collected during the pre-test. The data were analyzed and several refinements were made to the scales and the overall layout and design of the survey. The pre-test provided a preliminary and successful trial of the on-line survey instrument, web-server, and data retrieval process.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter is organized into four main sections in an effort to clearly communicate the results of the data analysis. These four sections are Data Collection, Demographics, Hypothesis Testing and Exploratory Analysis. The first part of the chapter looks at areas related to actual data collection. This section specifically focuses on the response rate of the participants and a review of the tracking data that was used to show how respondents linked to the survey instrument. The Demographics section presents data on the five demographic characteristics that were measured in the *Television Fan Survey*. These variables include gender, age, education, income, and marital status. The demographics of the cyber-fan sample were compared to existing data about the general Internet population. The third part of the data analysis covers the formal testing of the eight research hypotheses. The chapter concludes with an exploratory analysis of some additional data that was collected on the attitudes and behavior of the cyber-fan.

Data Collection

A total of 3,242 surveys were received during the 26 days that the *Television Fan Survey* was posted to the Internet. 53% (*N* = 1705) of these were submitted within the first six days. Figure 11 displays a breakdown of the number of surveys received each day during the survey administration.

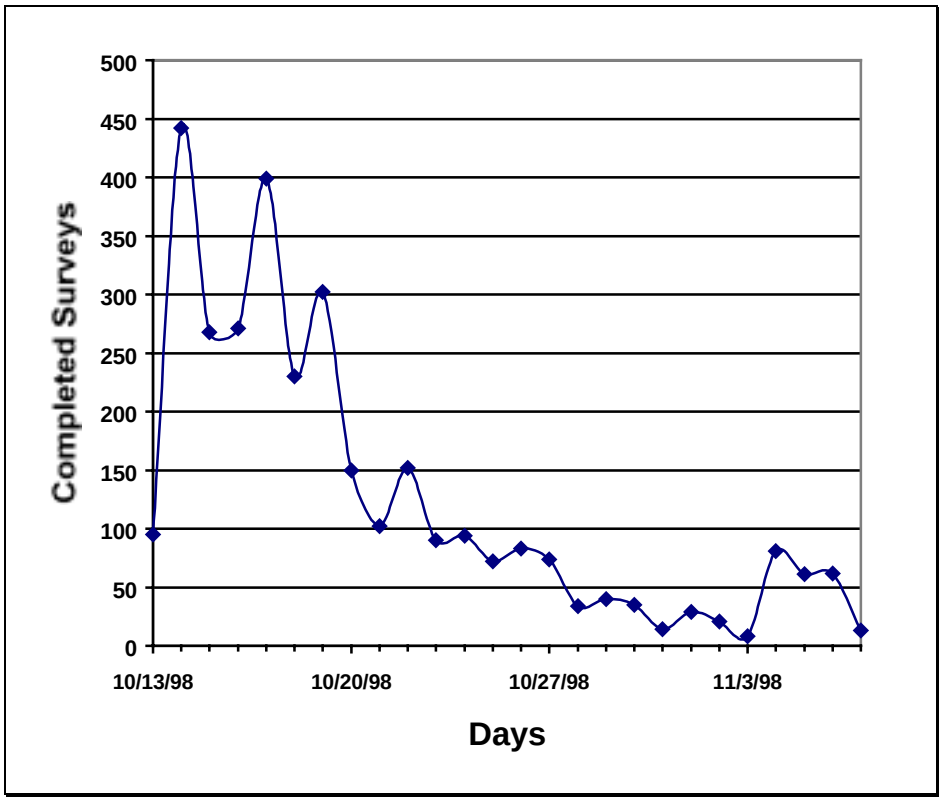

Figure 11: Completed Surveys by Date

Approximately 85% of the respondents who visited the survey invitation page proceeded on to visit the survey page. After linking to the survey instrument, 50% then went on to complete and submit the *Television Fan Survey*.

The completed surveys were examined and 201 cases were discarded leaving a total of 3,041 usable surveys. The discarded surveys were either blank submissions or duplicates resulting from respondents who submitted their survey more than once. The respondent's IP address along with the date and time that the survey submission occurred were used to identify duplicate entries. In each case, the duplicate entries were individually verified and discarded leaving only one completed survey per respondent.

Fan Page Links

Of the 806 e-mail invitations that were sent out to the creators of television fan pages, 43 were returned as undelivered because of an invalid e-mail address. Of the remaining 763, forty-seven agreed to place a link to the survey on their personal fan page. Samples of these pages are included in Appendix G. In addition, UltimateTV.com posted a link to the survey for a period of one week. The link was positioned on their Daily Television News page, one of the most heavily visited pages on their site.

Several web page authors responded by cross-posting the invitation to other message boards and forums dealing with their favorite television programs. A CGI tracking script was created in an effort to record the number of visits or "hits" to the invitation page and the actual survey instrument. The CGI tracking script was also able to register the URL (Uniform Resource Locator) of the referring page that was used to link to the survey invitation page. Television Fan

Page links produced a total of 2,407 hits to the survey invitation page. The UltimateTV.com link produced 765 hits to the survey invitation page. In addition, 2,230 hits to the survey invitation page were received from people who linked to it from the message sent out to the sixty Usenet newsgroups.

Respondents were asked to indicate how they linked to the survey (see Figure 12). 51.5% indicated linking to the survey via a newsgroup posting; 25.6% said they linked to the survey from a television web page; 14.5% linked to the survey from a personal e-mail message; and 8.9% selected the "other" option. It is not clear what "other" methods people may have used to link to the survey, however, it is clear that word of the survey spread through other channels not necessarily associated with the original sampling methodology.

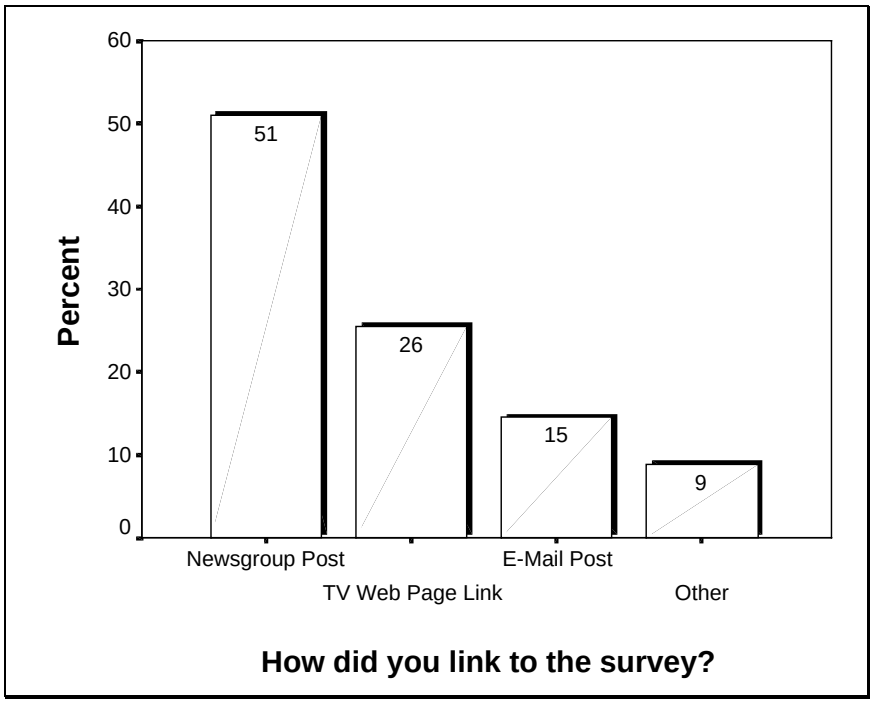

Figure 12: Respondents Method of Linking to the Survey

Demographics

The demographics of the cyber-fan sample were compared to those of the general Internet population as reported in the ninth GVU (Georgia Tech Research Center, 1998) World Wide Web User Survey. These apples to apple comparisons provided a visual contrast of the demographic characteristics of the two sample populations. Graphical overlays are provided for each demographic trait in order to observe the comparisons. The current sample of cyber-fans appears to be largely representative of the general Internet population in three out of the five categories that were measured.

Gender

Table 2 displays the summary frequency data on gender for all of the respondents completing the *Television Fan Survey*. As the data show, a large majority of the respondents in the study were female (64.5%, $N = 1922$). This compares to only 35.5% ($N = 1057$) of the subjects who were male.

This rather large representation of female respondents stands in stark contrast to previous GVU studies that have consistently found males to be the dominant gender in cyberspace. As Figure 13 illustrates, the general Internet sample from the most recent GVU survey is virtually a mirror image of the cyber-fan sample from the current study. GVU reported that 61.3 percent of their sample population was male, while only 38.7% were female.

Table 2: The Gender of Cyber-Fans

Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	1922	63.2	64.5	64.5
	Male	1057	34.8	35.5	100.0
	Total	2979	98.0	100.0	
Missing	System	62	2.0		
	Total	3041	100.0		

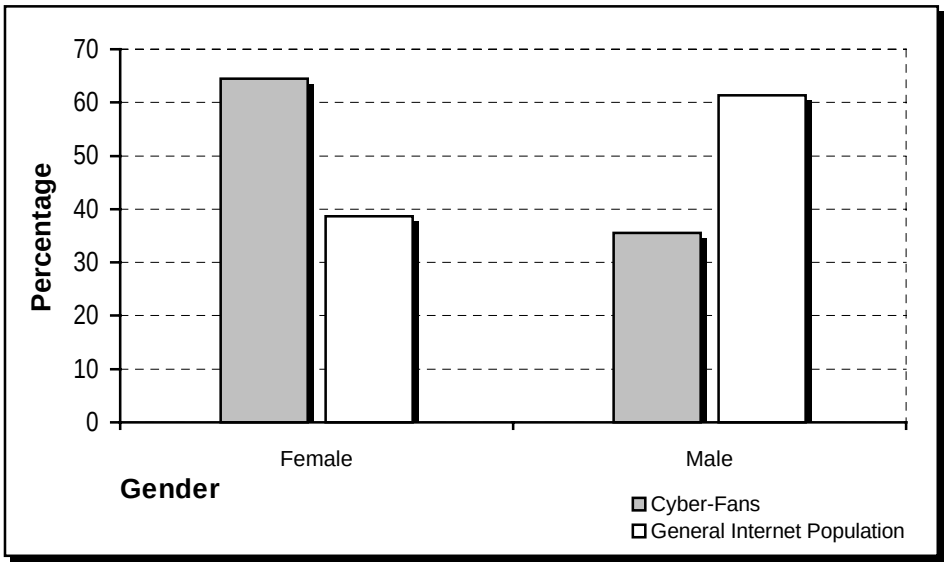

Figure 13: Cyber-Fans vs. General Internet Population (Gender)[14]

[14] *Data for the General Internet Population obtained from Georgia Tech Research Center. (1998). GVU's 9th WWW user survey, [Online]. Available: http://www.gvu.gatech.edu/user_surveys/survey-1998-04/ [1998, November 10].*

Age

Table 3 displays the summary frequency data on age for all of the respondents completing the *Television Fan Survey*. Since age was measured categorically using thirteen different response options, it was not possible to compute a true average for the cyber-fan sample. Instead, a weighted average was computed using the median value for each of the age categories. The last category was averaged in using 85 as the age value since no median value was possible. Using this method, the average age of the cyber-fan is slightly younger ($M = 31.6$) than respondents from the general Internet population

Table 3: The Age of Cyber-Fans

Age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-20	525	17.3	18.1	18.1
	21-25	488	16.0	16.9	35.0
	26-30	501	16.5	17.3	52.3
	31-35	426	14.0	14.7	67.0
	36-40	325	10.7	11.2	78.2
	41-45	293	9.6	10.1	88.3
	46-50	202	6.6	7.0	95.3
	51-55	90	3.0	3.1	98.4
	56-60	25	.8	.9	99.3
	61-65	14	.5	.5	99.8
	66-70	5	.2	.2	99.9
	71-75	1	.0	.0	100.0
	Over 85	1	.0	.0	100.0
	Total	2896	95.2	100.0	
Missing	System	145	4.8		
	Total	3041	100.0		

(*M* = 35.1). However, both studies show a definitive skew towards youth in general (see Figure 14). 72.8% of the cyber-fans are under forty years of age. Only 4.7% of the subjects are older than 50. And the largest single age category is 18-20 year olds who comprised 18.1% of the sample population.

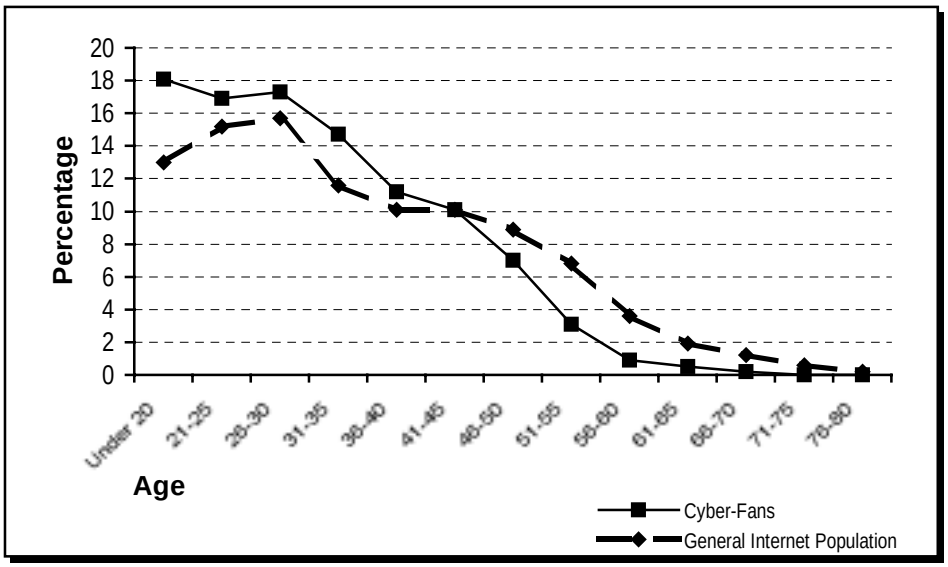

Figure 14: Cyber-Fans vs. General Internet Population (Age)[15]

Education

Table 4 displays the summary frequency data on the education of cyber-fans who completed the *Television Fan Survey*. These data indicate that the majority of cyber-fans have experienced at least some level of college education.

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[15] *Data for the General Internet Population obtained from Georgia Tech Research Center. (1998). GVU's 9th WWW user survey, [Online]. Available: http://www.gvu.gatech.edu/user_surveys/survey-1998-04/ [1998, November 10].*

As Figure 15 suggests, these findings are in line with previous surveys of the general Internet population. The top two categories of education in both samples are college graduates and those indicating at least some degree of college instruction. 64.7% of cyber-fans are in one of these two categories. This compares to 61.1% of the respondents in the general Internet population. 83.9% of cyber-fans report some degree of post-secondary education as compared to 84.9% in the general Internet population.

Table 4: The Education of Cyber-Fan

Education

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Grammar School	19	.6	.6	.6
	High School	393	12.9	13.2	13.8
	Vocational/Technical School (2 year)	101	3.3	3.4	17.2
	Some College	868	28.5	29.1	46.3
	College Graduate	1062	34.9	35.6	81.9
	Master's Degree (MS)	320	10.5	10.7	92.6
	Doctoral Degree (PhD)	57	1.9	1.9	94.5
	Professional Degree (MD, JD, etc.)	96	3.2	3.2	97.7
	Other	68	2.2	2.3	100.0
	Total	2984	98.1	100.0	
Missing	System	57	1.9		
	Total	3041	100.0		

Income

The frequency data on the annual household income of cyber-fans is provided in Table 5. A large number of the respondents (30.7%) refused to

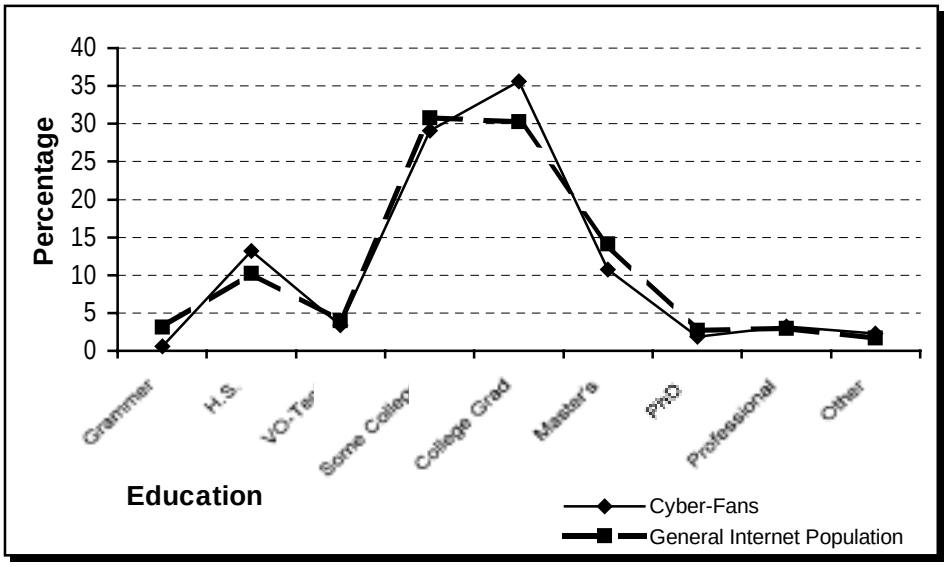

Figure 15: Cyber-Fans vs. General Internet Population (Education)[16]

Table 5: The Income of Cyber-Fans

Income

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Rather not say!	909	29.9	30.7	30.7
	Under $10,000	143	4.7	4.8	35.5
	$10,000 - $19,999	163	5.4	5.5	41.0
	$20,000 - $29,999	299	9.8	10.1	51.1
	$30,000 - $39,999	347	11.4	11.7	62.9
	$40,000 - $49,999	298	9.8	10.1	72.9
	$50,000 - $74,999	436	14.3	14.7	87.7
	$75,000 - $99,999	178	5.9	6.0	93.7
	Over $100,000	187	6.1	6.3	100.0
	Total	2960	97.3	100.0	
Missing	System	81	2.7		
	Total	3041	100.0		

[16] *Data for the General Internet Population obtained from Georgia Tech Research Center. (1998). GVU's 9th WWW user survey, [Online]. Available: http://www.gvu.gatech.edu/user_surveys/survey-1998-04/ [1998, November 10].*

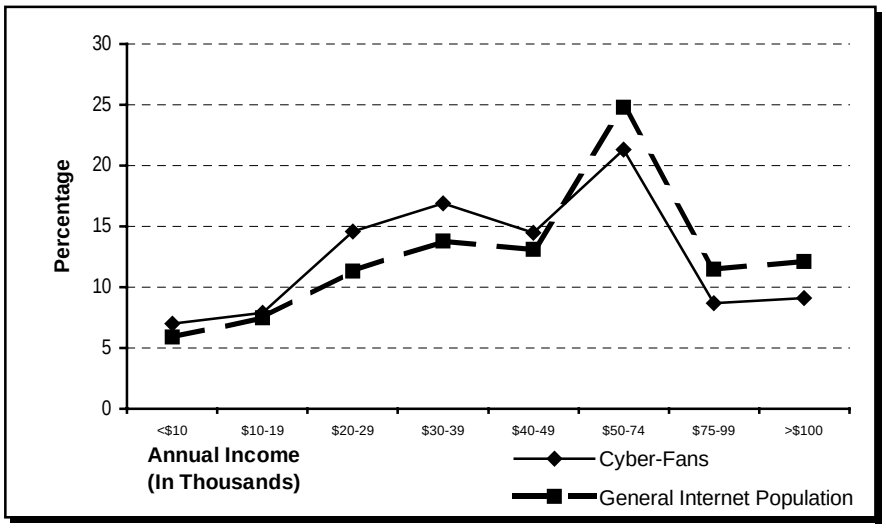

Figure 16: Cyber-Fans vs. General Internet Population (Annual Income)[17]

indicate their income level by selecting the *'rather not say!'* option. In terms of reported annual household income, cyber-fans appear to be slightly better off than the general population (see Figure 16). 70.5% of cyber-fans report an annual household income of $30,000 or higher. This compares to 62.4% in the general Internet population. However, Figure 16 shows a fairly consistent parallel in the income distribution across all income levels for both groups.

Marital Status

The last demographic variable to be examined is marital status. Single and married people form the two largest segments of both sample populations.

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[17] *Data for the General Internet Population obtained from Georgia Tech Research Center. (1998). GVU's 9th WWW user survey, [Online]. Available: http://www.gvu.gatech.edu/user_surveys/survey-1998-04/ [1998, November 10].*

However, while single people comprise the largest segment of the cyber-fan sample (54.2%), they only represent 38.7% of the general Internet population (see Table 6 and Figure 17). Likewise, married people are most highly represented in the general Internet population (41.1%) while the percentage of cyber-fans who say they are married is only 28.1%.

Comments on Demographic Data

One has to be careful of over generalizing the traits of both samples to their respective populations since the results in both studies may be subject to self-selection sampling bias. However, the comparisons are encouraging to the degree that similar methodological approaches were utilized in two independent studies producing very similar results for three out of the five demographic variables (age, education, and income). However, the demographic composition of the cyber-fan is substantively different from that of the general Internet population when looking at the gender and marital-status of the two samples.

A large majority of cyber-fans are single and female. This conflicts with the findings that have been reported by GVU in their bi-annual Internet user surveys.

Table 6: The Marital Status of Cyber-Fans

Marital Status

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Rather not say!	157	5.2	5.3	5.3
	Divorced	132	4.3	4.4	9.7
	Living with another	180	5.9	6.0	15.7
	Married	852	28.0	28.6	44.3
	Separated	29	1.0	1.0	45.3
	Single	1617	53.2	54.2	99.5
	Widowed	15	.5	.5	100.0
	Total	2982	98.1	100.0	
Missing	System	59	1.9		
	Total	3041	100.0		

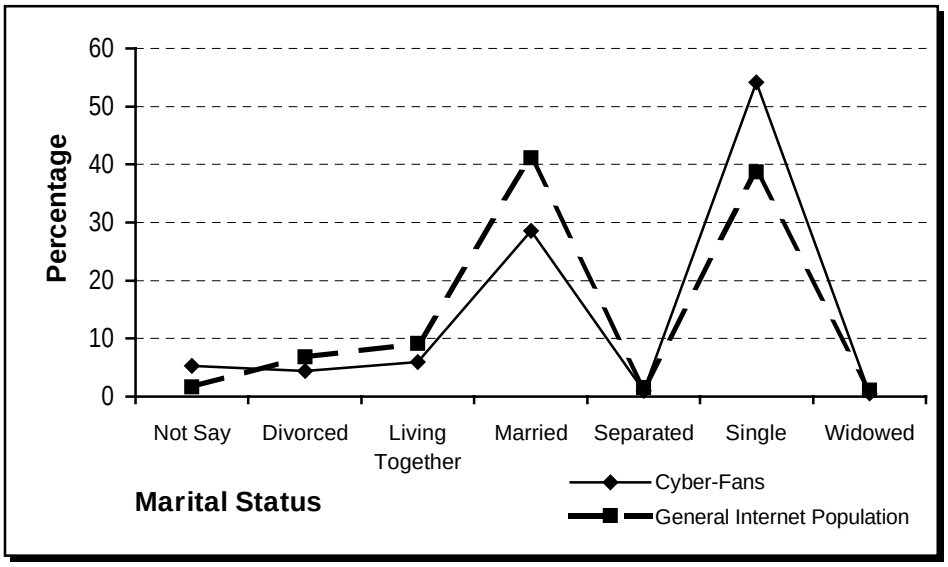

Figure 17: Cyber-Fans vs. General Internet Population (Marital Status)[18]

[18] *Data for the General Internet Population obtained from Georgia Tech Research Center. (1998). GVU's 9th WWW user survey, [Online]. Available: http://www.gvu.gatech.edu/user_surveys/survey-1998-04/ [1998, November 10].*

Hypothesis Testing

This section of the data analysis focuses on the testing of the eight research hypotheses. The first part of this analysis looks at the relationship between the cyber-fan's involvement with television viewing and their on-line interpersonal communication activity. A set of six hypotheses predicted specific associations between each of the three television-viewing involvement variables and each of the three Internet communication variables. The second part of the analysis discusses the role of television viewing motives. Hypothesis seven predicted an association between the instrumental viewing motives of the cyber-fan and each of the television-viewing involvement measures. The final part of this analysis looks at the relationship between web page authorship and interactivity as predicted in the eighth hypothesis.

Summary of Activity Variables

Composite scores were computed for each of the six activity variables: Favorite Program Affinity, Parasocial Interaction, Post-Viewing Cognition, Internet Affinity, Interactivity, and Interpersonal Communication Satisfaction. The scores were calculated by summing the individual item values and then dividing the total by the number of items in the scale. Each of the scales shared a common metric using five response options. Reverse ordered items were re-coded for the analysis as necessary. The composite scores ranged from 1 to 5,

with 1 being the lowest value and 5 being highest value for each of the activity variables.

The distribution of scores for each of the activity variables was examined for departures from normality. The analysis revealed mild to moderate patterns of skewness (usually in a negative direction) for each of the composite indexes. However, this was expected given the rather extreme television fandom of the sample population. Because of the large number of cases (3,041), the skewness of the distributions was not considered a threat to the statistical power of the study nor the generalizability of the results.

A summary of the data for each of the activity variables in the *Television Fan Survey* is provided in Table 7. In addition, Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficients were computed for each of the scales as follows: *Favorite Program Affinity* (α=.88); *Internet Affinity* (α=.87); *Interpersonal Communication*

Table 7: Descriptive Summary of Activity Variables

Descriptive Statistics

	N	*Min*	*Max*	*M*		*SD*	*Skewness*		*Kurtosis*	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	*SE*	Statistic	Statistic	*SE*	Statistic	*SE*
IA	2975	1.00	5.00	3.803	.018	.966	-.673	.045	-.314	.090
PSI	2870	1.00	5.00	3.684	.015	.819	-.411	.046	-.412	.091
PVC	2934	1.00	5.00	3.558	.020	1.105	-.483	.045	-.698	.090
FPA	2929	1.00	5.00	3.441	.020	1.058	-.291	.045	-.791	.090
Interactivity	2802	1.00	5.00	3.292	.019	1.021	-.417	.046	-.666	.092
ICS	2842	1.00	5.00	3.158	.013	.703	-.163	.046	-.232	.092
Valid N (listwise)	2547									

Satisfaction (α=.81); *Interactivity* (α=.94); *Parasocial Interaction* (α=.88); and *Post-Viewing Cognition* (α=.93).

The Involvement of the Cyber-Fan

The first six hypotheses essentially predicted that the cyber-fan's involvement with the viewing of their favorite television programs is related to their interpersonal communication activities via the Internet. Figure 18 displays the correlation coefficients for each of the television viewing and interpersonal communication variables in the Integrative Model of Cyber-Fan Involvement. The model shows both the zero-order, Pearson Product-Moment correlation coefficients as well as the forth-order partials controlling for age, gender, amount of television use, and Internet use (Rubin & Perse, 1987). The complete zero-order correlation matrix of all of the variables in the current study is located in Appendix H.

The first hypothesis predicted that interactivity would be positively associated with parasocial interaction. As Figure 18 reveals, the analysis found a significant and moderately strong association between these two variables ($r = .339$, $p < .01$) thus providing some level of support for the hypothesis.

Hypothesis number two predicted a positive association between interactivity and interpersonal communication satisfaction ($r = .750$, $p < .01$). The exceptionally strong association between these two variables provides ample evidence in support of the second hypothesis.

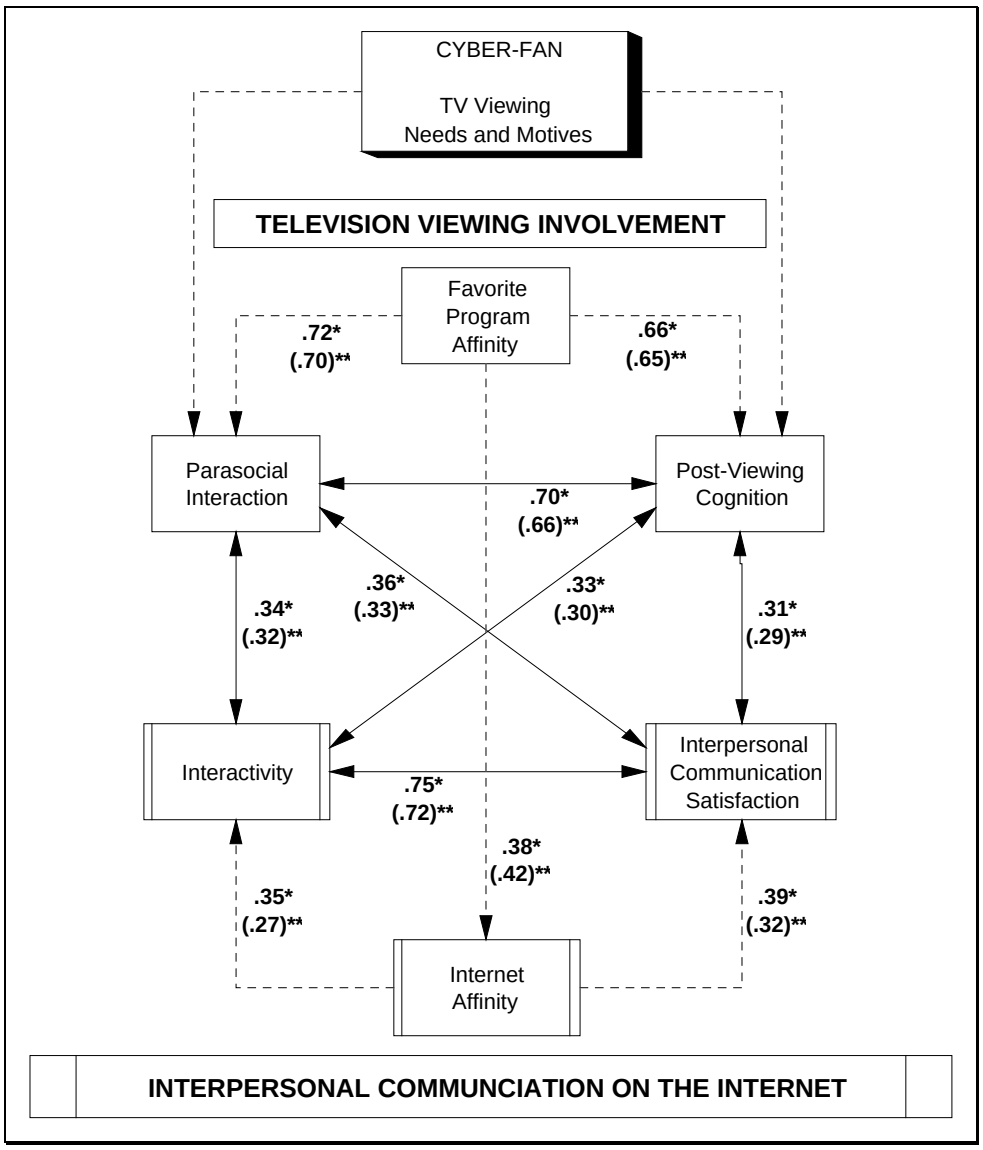

Figure 18: Correlation Coefficients for Cyber-Fan Activity Variables[19]

[19] ** Zero-order Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficients.*
*** Forth-order partial coefficients controlling for age, gender, amount of television use, and amount of Internet use.*

Hypothesis 3 was also supported by the data analysis which revealed a moderately strong and positive association between post-viewing cognition and interactivity ($r = .331$, $p < .01$). In order to test the fourth hypothesis, post-viewing cognition was also compared to interpersonal communication satisfaction ($r = .312$, $p < .01$). As the data show, hypothesis four was successful in predicting a positive association between the two variables.

The fifth hypothesis was successful in predicting a positive association between parasocial interaction and interpersonal communication satisfaction ($r = .357$, $p < .01$). And finally, a strong and positive association was identified between parasocial interaction and post-viewing cognition ($r = .692$, $p < .01$) in support of the sixth hypothesis.

Each of the associations that were predicted in the model is statistically significant and moderate to strong in size. These data provide a great deal of support for the use of an integrative model for understanding the relationships between television viewing involvement and interpersonal communication activity within the electronic fan culture of the Internet.

While not specifically predicted, it was also encouraging to see evidence of a relationship between each of the affinity measures and corresponding variables associated with both television viewing and Internet activity. A strong, positive association exists between favorite program affinity and parasocial interaction ($r = .718$, $p < .01$) and post-viewing cognition($r = .658$, $p < .01$). While less pronounced, significant associations were also observed between Internet

affinity and interactivity ($r = .351$, $p < .01$) and interpersonal communication satisfaction ($r = .393$, $p < .01$).

The analysis also revealed a statistically significant relationship between favorite program affinity and Internet affinity ($r = .375$, $p < .01$). While this was not expected, it seems plausible that within the television fan culture of the Internet, such a relationship would exist. The cyber-fan's affinity for the Internet not only serves to extend viewing involvement, but it may also contribute to a greater dependency on and affinity for favorite television programs.

Television Viewing Motives

Hypothesis seven predicted that the instrumental motives of television viewing would be positively associated with each of the three viewing involvement variables. In order to test this hypothesis, the 27-item Television Viewing Motives scale was subjected to factor analyses using the principal components method with iterations and varimax rotation.

Uses and gratifications researchers have consistently relied upon factor analysis to conceptually organize the motivational constructs of media use. As Dobos and Dimmick (1988) note,

> In the search for these basic organizing constructs, the family of techniques collectively known as factor analysis has assumed a prominent role. Because measurement of any abstract unobservable construct requires a coherent set of measures (Marradi, 1981), the usual practice

> has been to derive a number of multiple indicators of each gratification construct, and then to assess the factor pattern and strength of loadings among these sets of variables. (p. 336)

The goal of factor analysis in the current study was to reduce the 27-item Television-Viewing Motives scale into a set of motivational sub-scales. Each of the sub-scales was then transformed into a composite measure of a single motivational trait that was then compared to other variables in the study.

The initial analysis produced a six-factor solution accounting for 60.7% of the total variance. This analysis used eigenvalues greater than one as the cutoff point for determining the number of factors (see Table 8). However, the six-factor solution was conceptually weak and varied from what had previously been reported in the literature (Kim & Rubin, 1997). Two additional analyses were performed in order to examine alternative solutions with five and seven factors. While the eigenvalue for the seventh factor was below 1 (eigenvalue =.983), the seven- factor solution was retained because it contained the most conceptually pleasing factor structure. Table 9 displays the seven-factor solution along with the individual factor loading scores for each item. Kim and Rubin (1997) administered an identical television viewing motives scale to a sample of television soap opera fans. The authors produced a six-factor solution

Table 8: Factor Analysis of the 27 Television Viewing Motives

Total Variance Explained

	Initial Eigenvalues			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	7.495	27.761	27.761	3.893	14.418	14.418
2	2.918	10.806	38.567	3.130	11.592	26.010
3	2.018	7.474	46.041	2.533	9.380	35.390
4	1.458	5.399	51.440	2.323	8.604	43.994
5	1.333	4.937	56.377	2.159	7.995	51.989
6	1.186	4.394	60.770	1.817	6.728	58.717
7	.983	3.642	64.412	1.538	5.696	64.412
8	.842	3.117	67.530			
9	.769	2.847	70.377			
10	.713	2.642	73.020			
11	.679	2.513	75.533			
12	.611	2.261	77.794			
13	.592	2.194	79.988			
14	.551	2.040	82.028			
15	.518	1.920	83.949			
16	.488	1.808	85.757			
17	.460	1.705	87.463			
18	.445	1.648	89.111			
19	.425	1.574	90.685			
20	.404	1.495	92.180			
21	.360	1.332	93.512			
22	.336	1.246	94.757			
23	.327	1.209	95.967			
24	.309	1.144	97.110			
25	.301	1.113	98.223			
26	.245	.906	99.130			
27	.235	.870	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 9: Factor Loadings for Television Viewing Motives

I watch television...	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Pass Time/Habit							
because it passes the time away, especially when I'm bored	.759	.017	.136	.009	.221	.131	.016
when I have nothing better to do	.747	.006	.144	.038	.113	.148	-.060
just because it's on	.742	.054	.048	.099	.101	.150	.031
because it's something to do to occupy my time	.732	.021	.106	-.031	.131	.043	-.005
because it's like a habit, something I do each day	.717	.125	.093	.133	.095	.073	.106
when there's no one else to talk to or be with	.598	.033	.144	.046	.462	.132	.054
because I just like to watch	.473	.439	.228	.029	-.065	.069	-.037
Pleasure/Excitement							
because it's enjoyable	.094	.774	.215	.069	.035	.024	.062
because it entertains me	.080	.728	.221	.051	-.038	-.027	-.025
because it's exciting	-.090	.709	.087	.184	.238	.273	.152
because it amuses me	.165	.706	.194	.059	-.032	.053	.084
because it's thrilling	-.105	.643	.049	.206	.298	.272	.080
Relaxation							
because it allows me to unwind	.152	.206	.815	.099	.074	.063	.132
because it relaxes me	.093	.285	.758	.056	.099	.049	.068
because it's a pleasant rest	.267	.286	.714	.061	.080	.071	.065
so I can forget about school, work or other things	.214	.122	.604	.080	.290	.266	-.043
Voyeurism							
just because of the sex appeal of the program	.105	.087	.052	.873	.050	.097	.055
because the characters are sexually attractive	.071	.121	.139	.829	.051	.126	.022
because I find it sexually arousing	.032	.149	.032	.792	.187	.030	.094
Companionship							
because it makes me feel less lonely	.275	.096	.172	.102	.801	-.015	.099
so I won't have to be alone	.305	.034	.108	.151	.786	-.007	.130
to get away from the rest of the family or others	.244	.115	.127	.113	-.464	.352	-.060
Social Utility							
because it's something to do when friends come over	.242	.154	.063	.071	.100	.735	-.028
to be with family or friends who are watching	.126	.008	.178	.043	-.085	.705	.214
so I can talk with other people about what's on	.190	.208	.028	.191	.127	.518	.241
To Learn							
to learn how to do things I haven't done before	.087	.071	.026	.051	-.016	.108	.858
to learn things about myself and others	-.058	.122	.155	.103	.198	.153	.752

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

composed of Exciting Entertainment, Information-Voyeurism, Escapist-Relaxation, Passing Time, Social Utility and Companionship. These results were achieved by using the same method of factor analysis that was used in the current study. However, upon close examination of their results, it was not felt that items relating to their Information-Voyeurism factor were conceptually related. By extracting the seventh factor, this analysis was able to conceptually distinguish between information (learning) and voyeurism as two separate dimensions of motivational behavior. This resulted in a more conceptually elegant and logical motivational structure.

The strongest factor was viewing to *Pass Time or for Habit* ($M = 2.90$, $SD = .96$, $\alpha = .85$). This factor accounted for 27.8% of the total variance. This television-viewing motive is comprised of items associated with ritualistic patterns of viewing that are largely unintentional in nature.

Factor 2 is viewing for *Pleasure and Excitement* ($M = 3.77$, $SD = .76$, $\alpha = .81$) which accounts for 10.8% of the total variance. Kim and Rubin (1997) called this the exciting/entertainment dimension. However, their factor structure varied from the current study on this dimension in that it contained two ritualistic items, *"viewing because I just like to watch"*, and viewing because *"its like a habit."* Conceptually, these two items appear to fit more appropriately with passing the time or habitual television viewing.

The third factor is viewing for *Relaxation* ($M = 3.57$, $SD = .92$, $\alpha = .82$). This factor accounted for 7.5% of the total variance. This dimension of television viewing is made up of three strong items associated with rest and relaxation. A fourth item, viewing *"so I can forget about school, work or other things"* loads strongly on this factor, indicating that part of relaxation might also included elements of escape and withdrawal from the normal responsibilities of life.

The remaining factors include *Voyeurism* ($M = 1.99$, $SD = .99$, $\alpha = .82$), accounting for 5.4% of the total variance; *Companionship* ($M = 2.03$, $SD = .1.13$, $\alpha = .84$), accounting for 4.9% of the total variance; *Social Utility* ($M = 2.32$, $SD = .93$, $\alpha = .62$), accounting for 4.4% of the total variance; and *Learning* ($M = 2.80$, $SD = 1.10$, $\alpha = .63$), accounting for 3.6 % of the total variance.

For the most part, each of the items in the seven-factor solution loaded cleanly onto its corresponding factor. The few cross-loadings that occurred were relatively mild and did not appear to detract from the conceptual integrity of the factor structure that was produced in the analysis. The only negative consequences of the seven-factor solution appears to be with the marginal scale reliabilities of the social utility ($\alpha = .62$) and learning ($\alpha = .63$) factors.

Composite scores were calculated for each of the seven television-viewing motive sub-scales. These scores were calculated by summing the individual item values and then dividing the total by the number of items in the

sub-scale. The summary descriptive data for the seven motivational variables are displayed in Table 10.

Table 10: Descriptive Summary of TV Viewing Motives

Descriptive Statistics

	N	*Min*	*Max*	*M*		*SD*	*Skewness*		*Kurtosis*	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	SE	Statistic	Statistic	SE	Statistic	SE
Companionship	2955	1.00	5.00	2.030	.021	1.129	.998	.045	.029	.090
To Learn	2938	1.00	5.00	2.811	.020	1.103	.085	.045	-.783	.090
Pass Time/Habit	2892	1.00	5.00	2.900	.018	.958	.072	.046	-.653	.091
Pleasure	2897	1.00	5.00	3.760	.014	.758	-.327	.045	-.163	.091
Relaxation	2922	1.00	5.00	3.567	.017	.924	-.408	.045	-.265	.091
Social Utility	2936	1.00	5.00	2.325	.017	.934	.482	.045	-.305	.090
Voyeurism	2942	1.00	5.00	1.992	.018	.994	.912	.045	.062	.090
Valid N (listwise)	2748									

Figure 19 shows the correlation coefficients for each of the seven television viewing motives and the three viewing involvement variables. The diagram shows both the zero order Pearson Product-Moment correlation coefficients as well as the third-order partial coefficients controlling for age, gender, and amount of television viewing.

Hypothesis number seven receives some support in that several of the instrumental viewing motives are mildly to moderately associated with one or more of the television-viewing involvement variables. For the cyber-fan, viewing for *Pleasure and Excitement* has the highest level of association with the viewing involvement of cyber-fans. Strong and significant associations were found to exist between the *Pleasure/Entertainment* motive and favorite program affinity

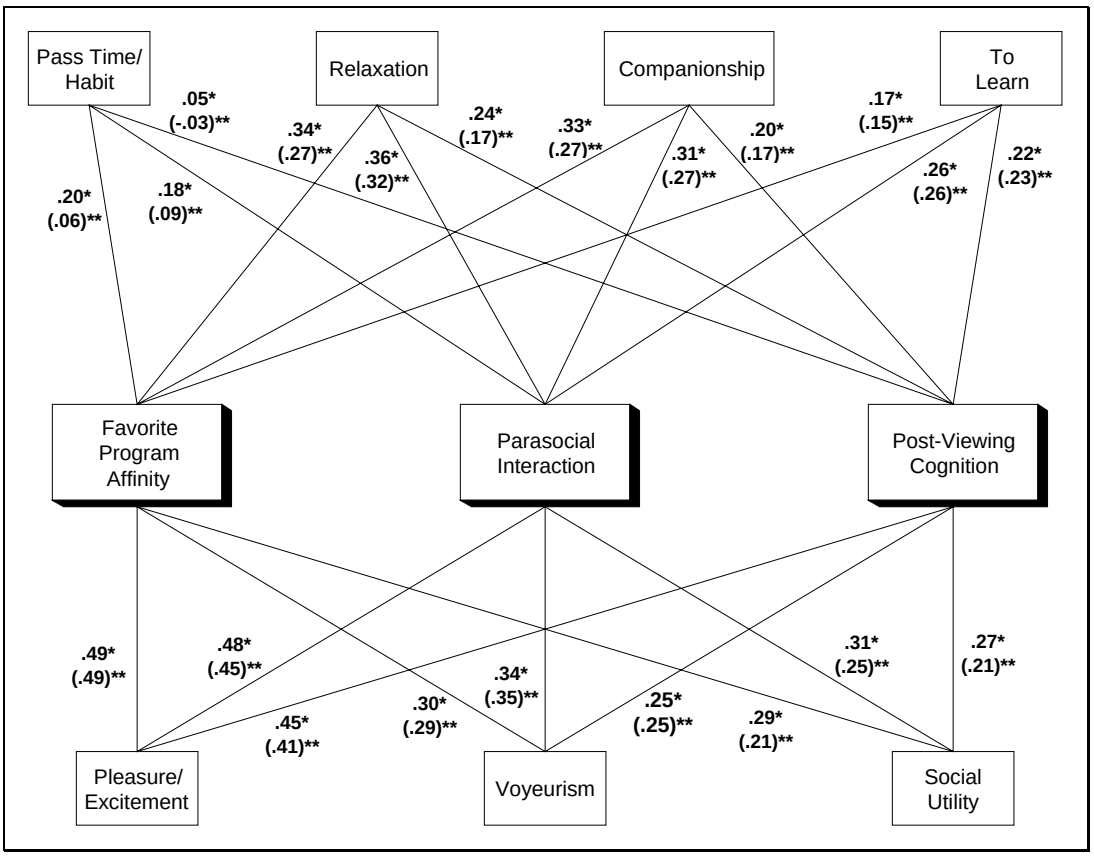

Figure 19: Correlation Coefficients for TV Viewing Motives and Involvement Variables[20]

($r = .489$, $p < .01$), parasocial interaction ($r = .480$, $p < .01$), and post-viewing cognition ($r = .447$, $p < .01$).

The weakest associations were found between the three involvement variables and the viewing to *Pass Time or for Habit* motive. Viewing to *Pass Time or for Habit* represents a ritualistic orientation to television viewing. The weak ties between this motive and the three involvement variables are consistent

[20] ** Zero-order Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficients.*
*** Third-order partial coefficients controlling for age, gender, and amount of television use.*

with the claim that cyber-fans are much more instrumental in their television viewing activities.

Figure 20 shows the rank order of the mean scores for each of the seven television viewing motives. Viewing for *Personal Pleasure* and *Relaxation* are the highest ranked motivations of cyber-fans. This is consistent with Kim and Rubin's (1997) analysis of soap opera fan motivation. Their results showed that *Exciting Entertainment* and *Escapist/Relaxation* were the strongest television viewing motives of their sample. *Passing Time*, *Social Utility*, *Information-Voyeurism*, and *Companionship* followed in order of importance.

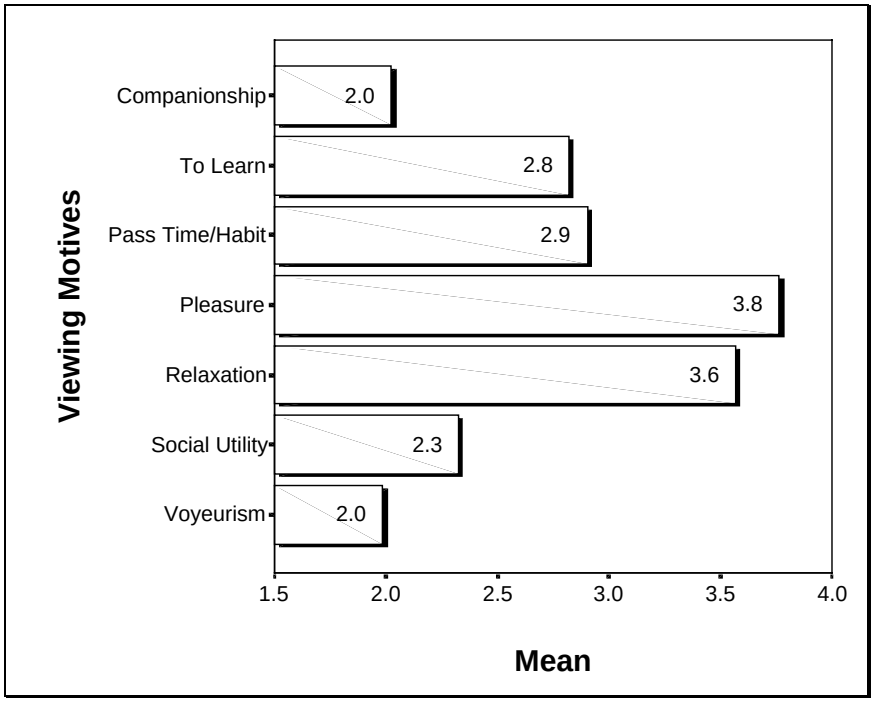

Figure 20: Rank Order of Means for Television Viewing Motives

Likewise, the current study found viewing for *Companionship* and sexual *Voyeurism* ranked the lowest as motivates for watching television.

Cyber-fans are not highly motivated to watch television because of the *Social Utility* opportunities that it provides. The fact that *Social Utility* is ranked so low as a motivational antecedent to television viewing is consistent with the idea that television-viewing motives are independent of people's motives for interacting with one another. This study has asserted that interpersonal communication with others (at least in an on-line context) is motivated by the cyber-fan's involvement with their favorite television program. Thus, the cyber-fan's motives for watching television in the first place do not necessarily provide a mechanism for triggering social interaction with others.

The rank order of the means for each of the television viewing motives was compared across gender. The results of this analysis are displayed as a bar chart in Figure 21. In addition, Analysis of Variance was used to test for differences in mean scores for each the seven television-viewing motives by gender. Only the mean scores for relaxation and voyeurism were found to be significantly different ($p < .05$) across gender (see Table 11). Female cyber-fans are more likely to view television for the purposes of relaxation ($M = 3.59$) than their male counterparts ($M = 3.52$). Males, on the other hand, are more likely to view television for the purposes of sexual voyeurism ($M = 2.08$) than female respondents ($M = 1.95$).

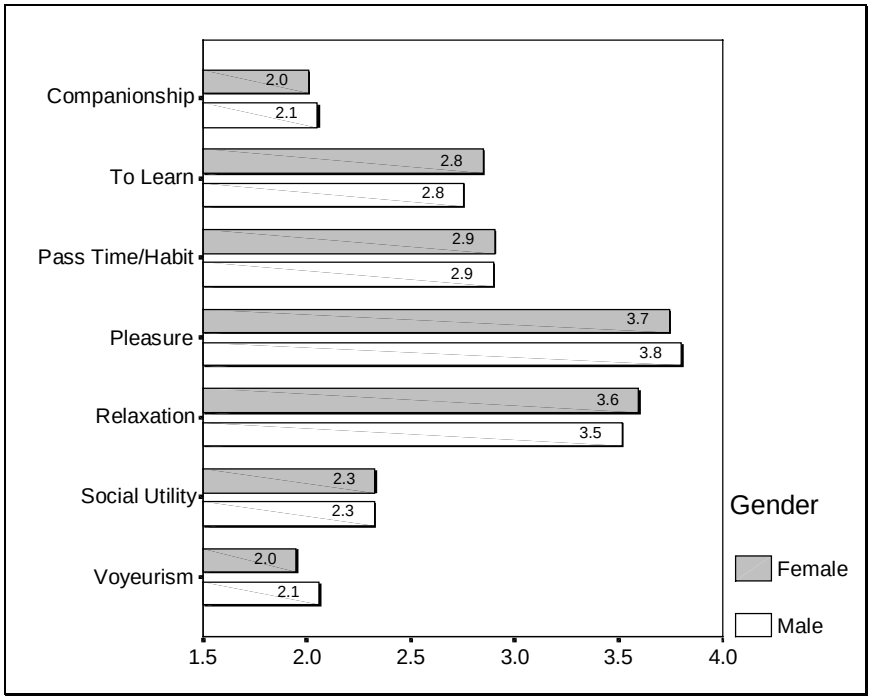

Figure 21: Television Viewing Motives by Gender

Table 11: ANOVA - Television Viewing Motives by Gender

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	*df*	*Mean Square*	*F*	*Sig.*
Companionship	Between Groups	2.289	1	2.289	1.795	.180
	Within Groups	3746.869	2939	1.275		
	Total	3749.158	2940			
Learning	Between Groups	4.257	1	4.257	3.505	.061
	Within Groups	3548.376	2922	1.214		
	Total	3552.632	2923			
Pass Time/Habit	Between Groups	.129	1	.129	.141	.708
	Within Groups	2644.906	2878	.919		
	Total	2645.035	2879			
Pleasure	Between Groups	1.798	1	1.798	3.141	.076
	Within Groups	1649.908	2882	.572		
	Total	1651.706	2883			
Relaxation	Between Groups	3.394	1	3.394	3.978	.046
	Within Groups	2480.063	2907	.853		
	Total	2483.457	2908			
Social Utility	Between Groups	1.494E-04	1	1.494E-04	.000	.990
	Within Groups	2550.654	2920	.874		
	Total	2550.654	2921			
Voyeurism	Between Groups	11.162	1	11.162	11.329	.001
	Within Groups	2883.937	2927	.985		
	Total	2895.099	2928			

The final hypothesis predicted that interactivity would vary among cyber-fans according to their involvement as content providers on the Internet. In order to test this hypothesis, a statistical comparison was made to see whether the mean scores for interactivity were significantly different between web page authors and cyber-fans who had not created their own personal fan page. The Independent Samples t-test and the One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) procedures are both acceptable statistical tools for testing the difference between two group means. The ANOVA procedure was chosen for this analysis because it is typically considered to be a more robust statistical tool, especially in handling data that come from non-normal distributions.

As expected, interactivity for Web Page Authors was considerably higher ($M = 3.80$) then the level of Interactivity for cyber-fans who have not created a personal television fan page ($M = 3.16$). The ANOVA test results in Table 12 reveal that the difference between the two group means is statistically significant ($F = 198.747$, $p < .01$).

A relatively mild effect size ($\eta^2 = .066$) indicated that only a small proportion of the variance of interactivity was related directly to fan page authorship. However, when an expanded model was tested using each of the

Table 12: Interactivity of Web Page Authors

Descriptives

Interactivity

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Web Author	589	3.800	.809	.033	3.735	3.866
Other	2205	3.155	1.029	.022	3.112	3.198
Total	2794	3.291	1.021	.019	3.253	3.329

ANOVA & Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Interactivity

		Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Eta Squared
Source	Corrected Model	193.457[a]	1	193.457	198.747	p<.01	.066
	Intercept	22487.065	1	22487.065	23101.977	p<.01	.892
	WEBAUT	193.457	1	193.457	198.747	p<.01	.066
	Error	2717.685	2792	.973			
	Total	33173.903	2794				
	Corrected Total	2911.141	2793				

a. R Squared = .066 (Adjusted R Squared = .066)

ANCOVA - Expanded Model

Dependent Variable: Interactivity

		Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Eta Squared
Source	Corrected Model	1501.127[a]	6	250.188	587.407	p<.01	.582
	Intercept	3.660	1	3.660	8.594	p<.01	.003
	FPA	4.156	1	4.156	9.757	p<.01	.004
	IA	4.462	1	4.462	10.475	p<.01	.004
	ICS	898.912	1	898.912	2110.524	p<.01	.454
	PSI	2.200	1	2.200	5.166	p<.05	.002
	PVC	10.950	1	10.950	25.709	p<.01	.010
	WEBAUT	13.510	1	13.510	31.719	p<.01	.012
	Error	1079.278	2534	.426			
	Total	30509.562	2541				
	Corrected Total	2580.405	2540				

a. R Squared = .582 (Adjusted R Squared = .581)

six television-viewing and on-line interpersonal communication involvement variables as co-variates (ANCOVA), a much larger proportion of the variance of the dependent variable was accounted for (η^2=.582). A large proportion of the overall variance was explained by Interpersonal Communication Satisfaction (η^2=.454) which appears to be the most significant mediator of interactivity in the model.

An Exploratory Analysis of the Cyber-Fan Data

This study produced a large amount of data dealing with the activity of the cyber-fan within the fan culture of the Internet. With the formal hypotheses testing complete, the remainder of this chapter reports on an exploratory analysis of this data.

Media Use Variables

Two media use items asked respondents to indicate the number of hours they usually watch television and use the Internet on any given day. The results for both of these items are summarized in Figures 22 and 23. Comparisons were made to see if either media use item varied across gender. No significant differences across gender were observed for either of the media use variables.

The amount of time that cyber-fans spend watching television and/or using the Internet does not appear to be related to their level of involvement with

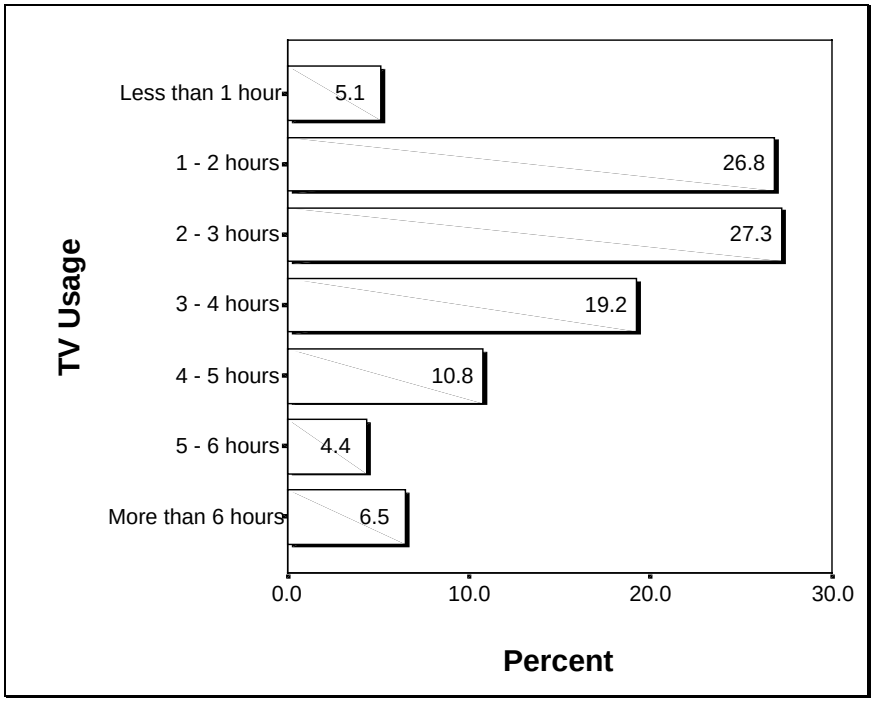

Figure 22: Daily Television Usage by Cyber-fans

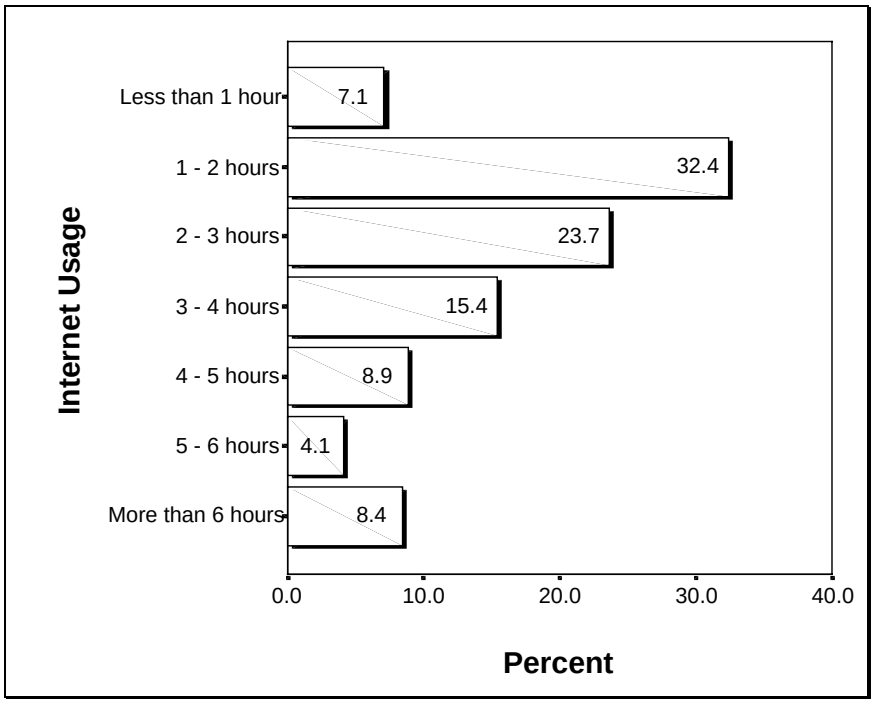

Figure 23: Daily Internet Usage by Cyber-Fans

program content or activity in cyberspace. Only two variables were found to be strongly associated with either of the usage items. A strong, positive association was identified between Internet usage and Internet affinity ($r = .400$, $p < .01$) which comes as no surprise. The second significant association was observed between television usage and viewing to pass time ($r = .404$, $p < .01$). Of the seven television viewing motives that were assessed, viewing to pass time or out of habit is the only one to reflect a ritualistic orientation to television viewing. Such a significantly high correlation tends to support Rubin's (1984) conclusion that habitual viewing leads to more frequent television viewing. Instrumental viewing on the other hand is less frequent and more intentional and purposeful in nature.

Importance of Internet Resources

The *Television Fan Survey* queried respondents about the importance of 11 Internet resources for keeping up with their favorite television program(s). Figure 24 displays the rank order of the mean scores for each of these resources. Television fan pages, episode guides and official television fan pages rank as the three most important resources to the cyber-fan. Fan fiction and chat rooms were ranked as the least important resources.

Importance of Internet resources varies somewhat by gender as Figure 25 shows. Episode guides, fan pages and newsgroups are the three most important resources for male respondents while fan pages, episode guides and

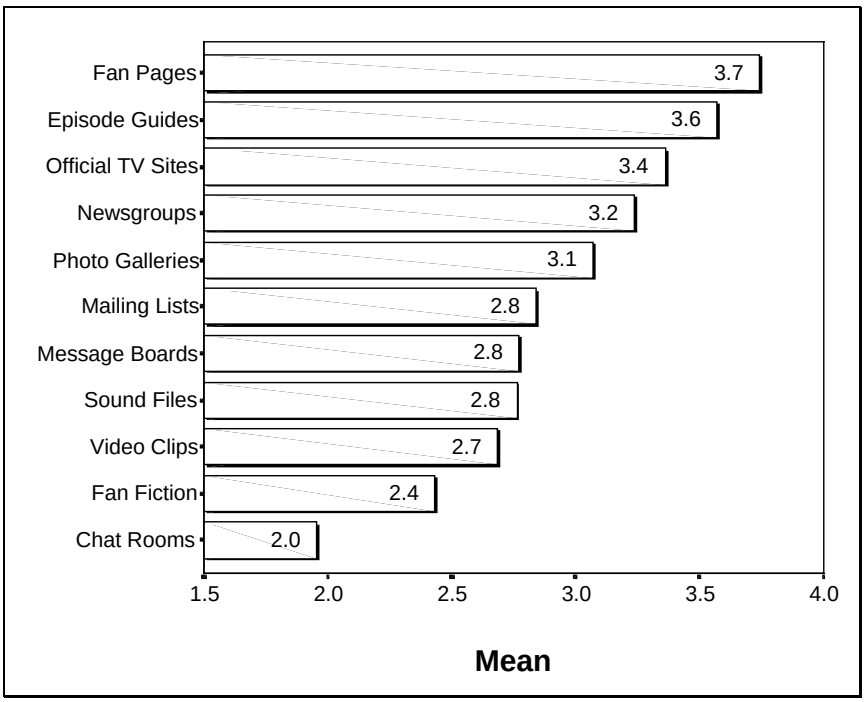

Figure 24: Rank Order of Mean Scores for Eleven Internet Resources

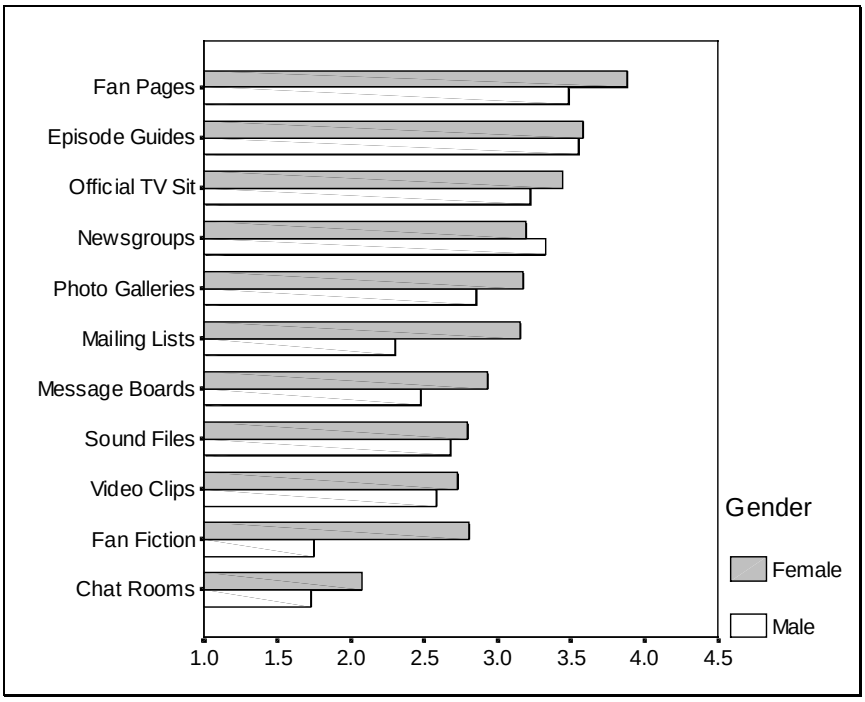

Figure 25: Importance of Internet Resources (by Gender)

official television sites are the three most important resources for female cyber fans.

The one-way ANOVA procedure was used to test for differences between the group mean scores for each of the eleven Internet resources across gender. Table 13 through Table 15 show the results of this analysis. While several of the group means are significantly different from one another, those associated with the use of fan fiction, mailing lists, and message boards are the most pronounced. Female respondents are more inclined then males to rely on these specific Internet resources for keeping up with their favorite television program.

Interactivity and Gender

The exploratory analysis also looked at the mediating effect of gender on the activity of the cyber-fan. Comparisons were run for each of the six activity variables to test for differences between the group means according to the gender of the respondents. The analysis revealed that female subjects are consistently more active than males in each of the six involvement categories. Each of these differences was found to be statistically significant. The strongest differences exist for parasocial interaction, interactivity and interpersonal communication satisfaction. These three variables are strongly associated with the social involvement of cyber-fans. These findings suggest that females may be more active social participants than males within the electronic fan culture of the Internet.

Table 13: Internet Resources by Gender - Summary Descriptive Data

Descriptives

						95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
		N	*M*	*SD*	*SE*	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Fan Pages	Female	1917	3.876	1.277	.029	3.819	3.934
	Male	1056	3.493	1.325	.041	3.413	3.876
	Total	2973	3.740	1.307	.024	3.693	3.493
Episode Guides	Female	1917	3.580	1.245	.028	3.524	3.740
	Male	1054	3.543	1.314	.040	3.463	3.580
	Total	2971	3.567	1.270	.023	3.521	3.543
Official TV Sites	Female	1919	3.442	1.248	.028	3.386	3.567
	Male	1057	3.215	1.226	.038	3.141	3.442
	Total	2976	3.361	1.245	.023	3.316	3.215
Newsgroups	Female	1911	3.200	1.514	.035	3.132	3.361
	Male	1056	3.310	1.505	.046	3.219	3.200
	Total	2967	3.239	1.511	.028	3.185	3.310
Photo Galleries	Female	1910	3.173	1.474	.034	3.107	3.239
	Male	1053	2.852	1.394	.043	2.768	3.173
	Total	2963	3.059	1.454	.027	3.006	2.852
Mailing Lists	Female	1918	3.149	1.615	.037	3.077	3.059
	Male	1053	2.287	1.428	.044	2.200	2.373
	Total	2971	2.843	1.605	.029	2.786	2.901
Message Boards	Female	1914	2.929	1.502	.034	2.862	2.996
	Male	1055	2.475	1.402	.043	2.390	2.560
	Total	2969	2.768	1.483	.027	2.714	2.821
Sound Files	Female	1914	2.788	1.506	.034	2.720	2.855
	Male	1049	2.662	1.409	.044	2.576	2.747
	Total	2963	2.743	1.473	.027	2.690	2.796
Video Clips	Female	1914	2.723	1.497	.034	2.655	2.790
	Male	1052	2.567	1.406	.043	2.482	2.653
	Total	2966	2.668	1.467	.027	2.615	2.720
Fan Fiction	Female	1911	2.805	1.654	.038	2.731	2.880
	Male	1056	1.738	1.148	.035	1.668	1.807
	Total	2967	2.425	1.579	.029	2.369	2.482
Chat Rooms	Female	1911	2.074	1.294	.030	2.016	2.132
	Male	1057	1.721	1.121	.034	1.653	1.789
	Total	2968	1.948	1.246	.023	1.903	1.993

Table 14: Internet Resources by Gender - ANOVA Results

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Fan Pages	Between Groups	99.881	1	99.881	59.616	.000
	Within Groups	4977.653	2971	1.675		
	Total	5077.534	2972			
Episode Guides	Between Groups	.950	1	.950	.589	.443
	Within Groups	4786.538	2969	1.612		
	Total	4787.488	2970			
Official TV Sites	Between Groups	35.164	1	35.164	22.866	.000
	Within Groups	4573.521	2974	1.538		
	Total	4608.685	2975			
Newsgroups	Between Groups	8.117	1	8.117	3.556	.059
	Within Groups	6767.981	2965	2.283		
	Total	6776.098	2966			
Photo Galleries	Between Groups	69.909	1	69.909	33.453	.000
	Within Groups	6187.873	2961	2.090		
	Total	6257.782	2962			
Mailing Lists	Between Groups	505.481	1	505.481	210.053	.000
	Within Groups	7144.740	2969	2.406		
	Total	7650.221	2970			
Message Boards	Between Groups	140.222	1	140.222	65.155	.000
	Within Groups	6385.421	2967	2.152		
	Total	6525.643	2968			
Sound Files	Between Groups	10.809	1	10.809	4.988	.026
	Within Groups	6416.741	2961	2.167		
	Total	6427.549	2962			
Video Clips	Between Groups	16.327	1	16.327	7.607	.006
	Within Groups	6361.893	2964	2.146		
	Total	6378.220	2965			
Fan Fiction	Between Groups	775.289	1	775.289	347.349	.000
	Within Groups	6617.926	2965	2.232		
	Total	7393.214	2966			
Chat Rooms	Between Groups	84.745	1	84.745	55.544	.000
	Within Groups	4525.264	2966	1.526		
	Total	4610.009	2967			

Table 15: Activity of Cyber-fans (by Gender)

Descriptives

						95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
		N	*M*	*SD*	*SE*	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
FPA	Female	1879	3.515	1.052	.024	3.467	3.562
	Male	1035	3.304	1.056	.033	3.240	3.369
	Total	2914	3.440	1.058	.020	3.402	3.478
IA	Female	1890	3.849	.960	.022	3.805	3.892
	Male	1042	3.722	.964	.030	3.664	3.781
	Total	2932	3.804	.963	.018	3.769	3.839
ICS	Female	1808	3.251	.709	.017	3.218	3.284
	Male	993	2.992	.666	.021	2.950	3.033
	Total	2801	3.159	.705	.013	3.133	3.185
Interactivity	Female	1795	3.387	1.023	.024	3.340	3.435
	Male	984	3.117	.995	.032	3.055	3.180
	Total	2779	3.292	1.021	.019	3.254	3.330
PSI	Female	1844	3.812	.799	.019	3.775	3.848
	Male	1013	3.450	.807	.025	3.400	3.500
	Total	2857	3.683	.820	.015	3.653	3.714
PVC	Female	1881	3.649	1.094	.025	3.599	3.698
	Male	1037	3.392	1.106	.034	3.325	3.460
	Total	2918	3.558	1.105	.020	3.517	3.598

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
FPA	Between Groups	29.512	1	29.512	26.609	.000
	Within Groups	3229.758	2912	1.109		
	Total	3259.270	2913			
IAS	Between Groups	10.719	1	10.719	11.597	.001
	Within Groups	2708.237	2930	.924		
	Total	2718.956	2931			
ICS	Between Groups	43.093	1	43.093	89.544	.000
	Within Groups	1347.008	2799	.481		
	Total	1390.100	2800			
Interactivity	Between Groups	46.393	1	46.393	45.187	.000
	Within Groups	2851.085	2777	1.027		
	Total	2897.477	2778			
PSI	Between Groups	85.738	1	85.738	133.307	.000
	Within Groups	1836.222	2855	.643		
	Total	1921.960	2856			
PVC	Between Groups	43.848	1	43.848	36.339	.000
	Within Groups	3518.480	2916	1.207		
	Total	3562.328	2917			

In addition, women were found to have a greater propensity for post-viewing cognition then their male counterparts. They also manifested a greater affinity for the Internet and their favorite television programs.

Web Page Authorship

One important area of exploration concerns some of the ways in which the authors of television fan pages differ from cyber-fans who have not authored a television fan page. Significant differences between the two groups of subjects were found for each of the six activity variables in the study (see Table 16). In general, web page authors showed greater levels of television viewing involvement and on-line communication activity then cyber-fans who have not authored a personal television fan page.

Information-Seeking vs. Social Interaction

The respondents in this study were asked how often they use the Internet to get information about their favorite television program and how often they use the Internet to discuss their favorite program with other people. As Figure 26 shows, acquiring program information ranks higher in overall importance then discussions with other people.

In addition, there is a statistically significant difference in the mean scores across gender for the people-seeking item. Females are much more likely to be

Table 16: Web Authors vs. Non Web Authors (Activity Variables)

Descriptives

						95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
		N	*M*	*SD*	*SE*	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
FPA	Web Author	609	3.759	.958	.039	3.683	3.836
	Other	2308	3.357	1.069	.022	3.314	3.401
	Total	2917	3.441	1.059	.020	3.403	3.480
IAS	Web Author	614	4.081	.867	.035	4.013	4.150
	Other	2349	3.731	.978	.020	3.691	3.770
	Total	2963	3.803	.967	.018	3.769	3.838
ICS	Web Author	601	3.476	.590	.024	3.429	3.524
	Other	2230	3.073	.706	.015	3.044	3.103
	Total	2831	3.159	.703	.013	3.133	3.185
Interactivity	Web Author	589	3.800	.809	.033	3.735	3.866
	Other	2205	3.155	1.029	.022	3.112	3.198
	Total	2794	3.291	1.021	.019	3.253	3.329
PSI	Web Author	600	3.958	.767	.031	3.896	4.019
	Other	2260	3.612	.818	.017	3.578	3.646
	Total	2860	3.685	.820	.015	3.655	3.715
PVC	Web Author	614	3.956	.968	.039	3.879	4.032
	Other	2307	3.454	1.115	.023	3.408	3.499
	Total	2921	3.559	1.105	.020	3.519	3.599

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
FPA	Between Groups	77.802	1	77.802	71.049	.000
	Within Groups	3192.052	2915	1.095		
	Total	3269.854	2916			
IAS	Between Groups	59.852	1	59.852	65.450	.000
	Within Groups	2707.753	2961	.914		
	Total	2767.605	2962			
ICS	Between Groups	76.873	1	76.873	164.765	.000
	Within Groups	1319.898	2829	.467		
	Total	1396.771	2830			
Interactivity	Between Groups	193.457	1	193.457	198.747	.000
	Within Groups	2717.685	2792	.973		
	Total	2911.141	2793			
PSI	Between Groups	56.625	1	56.625	86.749	.000
	Within Groups	1865.545	2858	.653		
	Total	1922.170	2859			
PVC	Between Groups	122.206	1	122.206	103.621	.000
	Within Groups	3442.515	2919	1.179		
	Total	3564.721	2920			

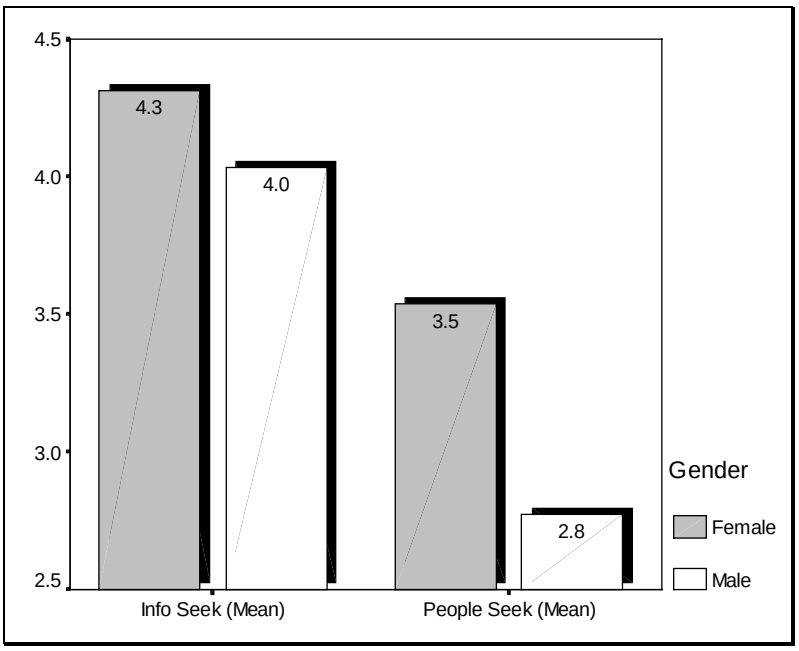

Figure 26: Seeking Information vs. People Contact

interested in discussing program information with other people than male cyber-fans. And cyber-fans who have created a personal television fan page are more interested in using the Internet for information-seeking and social utility than cyber-fans who do not have a personal web presence. Tables 17 and 18 show the results of the Analysis of Variance data for these two comparisons.

Current vs. Older Programs

Respondents were also asked to indicate the degree to which they use the Internet to keep up with currently running television programs and older programs that have gone out of production. The mean score rankings for each of these three variables (by gender) are reported Figure 27. The bar chart

Table 17: Discussing Program With Others (by Gender)

Descriptives

						95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
		N	*M*	*SD*	*SE*	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
People Seek	Female	1914	3.541	1.488	.034	3.474	3.607
	Male	1050	2.776	1.415	.044	2.691	2.862
	Total	2964	3.270	1.508	.028	3.216	3.324
Info Seek	Female	1910	4.312	.984	.023	4.268	4.356
	Male	1051	4.036	1.076	.033	3.971	4.101
	Total	2961	4.214	1.026	.019	4.177	4.251

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
People Seek	Between Groups	396.349	1	396.349	185.238	.000
	Within Groups	6337.726	2962	2.140		
	Total	6734.076	2963			
Info Seek	Between Groups	51.601	1	51.601	49.854	.000
	Within Groups	3062.649	2959	1.035		
	Total	3114.250	2960			

Table 18: Discussing Program With Others (by Web Authorship)

Descriptives

						95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
		N	*M*	*SD*	*SE*	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
People Seek	Web Author	622	4.135	1.175	.047	4.043	4.228
	Other	2389	3.047	1.501	.031	2.987	3.107
	Total	3011	3.272	1.505	.027	3.218	3.325
Info Seek	Web Author	622	4.582	.777	.031	4.521	4.643
	Other	2387	4.117	1.066	.022	4.074	4.160
	Total	3009	4.213	1.031	.019	4.176	4.250

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
People Seek	Between Groups	584.368	1	584.368	281.906	.000
	Within Groups	6237.405	3009	2.073		
	Total	6821.773	3010			
Info Seek	Between Groups	106.741	1	106.741	103.951	.000
	Within Groups	3087.708	3007	1.027		
	Total	3194.449	3008			

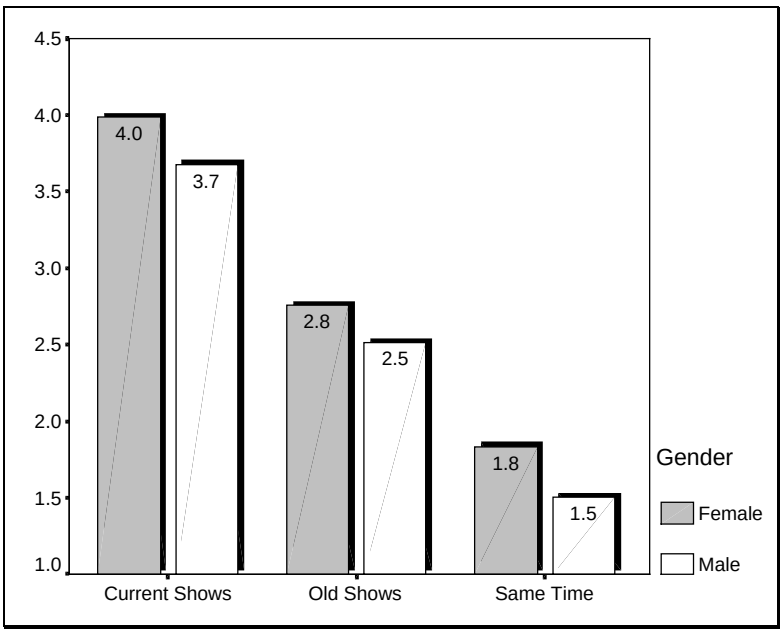

Figure 27: Various Internet Usage Preferences by Gender

indicates a general preference for using the Internet for keeping up with currently running television programs as compared to programs that have gone out of production. And, while it is clear that some cyber-fans watch television while concurrently connected to the Internet, it does not appear that this is a regular pattern of use for most majority cyber-fans.

Favorite Television Programs

The *Television Fan Survey* included an optional section that gave respondents a chance to indicate their favorite television programs. A list of the 86 programs used to target the sample was presented to respondents who chose to complete the optional section of the survey. For each program, the subject was asked to indicate whether (1) the show was among their personal

favorites, (2) the subject regularly used the Internet to keep up with the program, or (3) both. Sections were provided at the end of the list for subjects to write in additional program names that were personal favorites and/or shows that they regularly used the Internet to keep up with.

The two write-in options generated a great deal of response. 498 different television program titles were named as personal favorites by at least one respondent in the survey. In addition, cyber-fans listed 136 program titles among shows that they found the Internet to be a useful resource. The vote tallies for each program were summed by category and rank-ordered. The results are presented in Tables 19 through 21.

While it is difficult to draw specific conclusions about cyber-fans from their responses to the favorite program survey, a few interesting observations should be pointed out. First, cyber-fans apparently can distinguish between favorite programs in general and those for which the Internet serves a use for extending television fandom. Significant differences exist in the program rankings between the general popularity of a program and its association with on-line activity by cyber-fans. For example, *The X-Files* is ranked fifth in overall popularity as a favorite television program, but ranked first as a favorite program for Internet use. Similarly, the program *Babylon 5* is ranked 42nd among favorite television programs, but 2nd in terms of Internet appeal.

Table 19: Ranking of Favorite Television Programs by Cyber-Fans

Favorite Television Program			Favorite for Internet Use	
Rank	**Title**	**Votes**	**Rank**	**Votes**
1	ER	792	10	231
2	Frasier	705	33	75
3	Friends	673	12	196
4	The Simpsons	597	14	186
5	The X-Files	571	1	644
6	Ally McBeal	528	20	157
7	Dharma & Greg	442	46	54
8	Law & Order	420	21	154
9	Drew Carey	363	54	41
10	Star Trek: Deep Space Nine	363	5	352
11	3rd Rock From the Sun	362	48	52
12	South Park	348	8	271
13	Just Shoot Me	338	58	29
14	King of the Hill	337	50	48
15	Star Trek: Voyager	327	4	358
16	The Practice	327	27	93
17	The Pretender	296	9	231
18	Buffy, the Vampire Slayer	291	3	493
19	Mad About You	290	44	55
20	Spin City	273	68	16
21	NYPD Blue	259	29	89
22	NewsRadio	257	37	66
23	Home Improvement	255	55	35
24	Xena	237	7	281
25	Party of Five	232	26	119
26	JAG	228	25	122
27	Sabrina the Teenage Witch	227	47	52
28	Chicago Hope	225	45	54
29	Highlander	220	6	312

Table 19 Continued: Ranking of Favorite Television Programs by Cyber-Fans

Favorite Television Program			Favorite for Internet Use	
Rank	**Title**	**Votes**	**Rank**	**Votes**
30	Caroline in the City	213	39	63
31	Early Edition	211	43	62
32	Profiler	210	24	124
33	Dawson's Creek	202	13	194
34	Hercules: The Legendary Journeys	200	11	203
35	Millennium	200	19	165
36	Touched by and Angel	198	53	44
37	Homicide: Life on the Streets	187	16	178
38	7th Heaven	180	41	62
39	Suddenly Susan	177	70	13
40	Everybody Loves Raymond	173	62	19
41	Veronica's Closet	172	71	12
42	Babylon 5	169	2	559
43	Earth: Final Conflict	158	17	177
44	Boy Meets World	158	61	24
45	Nash Bridges	157	59	28
46	Beverly Hills 90210	152	28	91
47	The Nanny	151	38	65
48	Two Guys, A Girl and a Pizza Place	138	67	17
49	La Femme Nikita	120	18	175
50	Diagnosis Murder	113	35	69
51	Walker, Texas Ranger	102	15	184
52	Melrose Place	93	32	77
53	Days of Our Lives	81	23	127
54	PSI Factor: Chronicles of the Paranormal	80	65	18
55	Silk Stalkings	79	40	62
56	Promised Land	76	64	18
57	General Hospital	74	22	130
58	Cosby	65	77	6
59	Working	63	72	12
60	All My Children	62	30	84
61	Clueless	56	76	6
62	The Young and the Restless	54	49	50

Table 19 Continued: Ranking of Favorite Television Programs by Cyber-Fans

Favorite Television Program			Favorite for Internet Use	
Rank	**Title**	**Votes**	**Rank**	**Votes**
63	Pacific Blue	49	63	18
64	Mr. Show with Bob and David	47	66	18
65	Pensacola (Wings of Gold)	46	69	14
66	Unhappily Ever After	44	74	7
67	Baywatch	43	56	33
68	Sister, Sister	37	80	5
69	S.O.F. Special Ops Force	35	57	30
70	Sunset Beach	35	36	67
71	One Life to Live	32	31	82
72	Another World	31	42	62
73	The Bold and the Beautiful	28	60	26
74	Guiding Light	26	51	45
75	As the World Turns	25	52	44
76	For Your Love	23	83	3
77	Love Boat: The Next Wave	23	78	6
78	The Wayans Brothers	22	82	4
79	Nightman	21	73	11
80	Port Charles	21	34	73
81	Getting Personal	19	81	4
82	Moesha	17	79	5
83	Smart Guy	17	75	7
84	The Jamie Foxx Show	16	84	3
85	Malcolm & Eddie	12	86	1
86	The Steve Harvey Show	11	85	2

Table 20: Favorite Programs (Write-In Votes)

Program Name	Votes
1. The Sentinel	169
2. Due South	100
3. Felicity	91
4. Star Gate SG1	83
5. Charmed	73
6. Star Trek: The Next Generation	71
7. Cupid	64
8. Will & Grace	54
9. Dr. Quinn Medicine Woman	45
10. Seinfeld	44
11. Sliders	43
12. Forever Knight	41
13. Real World (MTV)	41
14. Mystery Science Theater 3000 (A & E)	39
15. Quantum Leap	39
16. Red Dwarf (BBC)	39
17. Star Trek (The Original Series)	39
18. Biography (A & E)	38
19. Daria (MTV)	38
20. Mystery!	33
21. Fantasy Island	32
22. The Magnificent Seven	31
23. MASH	30
24. Space: Above and Beyond	30
25. Hyperion Bay	25

Table 21: Favorite Programs for Internet Use (Write-In Votes)

Program Name	Vote Tally
1. The Sentinal	124
2. Due South	59
3. Magnificent Seven	36
4. Star Gate SG-1	34
5. Forever Knight	29
6. Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman	27
7. Red Dwarf	27
8. Sliders	24
9. Mystery Science Theater 3000	18
10. Real World	18
11. Star Trek: The Next Generation	17
12. The Monkees	16
13. Doctor Who	15
14. Space: Above & Beyond	14
15. Felicity	13
16. Prey	13
17. Star Trek: The Original Series	13
18. Road Rules	12
19. Daria	11
20. Battlestar Galactica	10
21. Charmed	10
22. Late Show with David Letterman	10
23. Seinfeld	10
24. Man From U.N.C.L.E	9
25. Northern Exposure	9

It is also interesting to observe distinct differences in the representation of certain genres in the two ranked lists. While comedy programs account for 11 of the top twenty favorite television programs, only three comedy shows are represented in the top twenty choices for favorite Internet programs. The rest of the programs are either science fiction or drama. This appears to be consistent with the large representation of fan pages on the Internet that focus on dramatic television programs. Future research needs to address the issue of why certain types of programs are more or less effective at commanding the attention of cyber-fans and mediating their involvement via cyberspace?

Exploring Gratifications

The *Television Fan Survey* included a single open-ended question that asked respondents to share their thoughts about the survey and their use of the Internet for keeping up with their favorite television program. This question generated 49 pages of text from 757 of the respondents in the survey. As an addendum to the empirical analysis, this section provides a brief qualitative sampling of these remarks. Excerpts are included in an effort to more fully understand some of the unique gratifications being experienced by cyber-fans within the electronic fan culture of the Internet.

Affiliation and Reinforcement

Locating other people who share a similar interest in a particular program is important to cyber-fans. The Internet helps to extend the individual's social

network and alleviate the perceived isolation created by people who do not share the same program interests or level of fandom. The Internet is particularly useful for finding fans of minority-interest programs for which there is not a large general following.

> My favorite program is a syndicated Action/Fantasy show that's not as popular as Hercules or Xena. It's Highlander, and finding other fans to discuss the show with was darn near impossible before I got online. I found other fans and learned about mailing lists and chatrooms. The Internet has enabled me to make a lot of cyber-friends with whom I can discuss a common interest.
>
> I actually became interested in the Internet because I was looking for information on my favorite show. Once I started looking around (surfing), I became aware of such things as fan sites, forums, and e-mail lists. These put me into contact with other people who not only enjoyed the same show, but enjoyed discussing it with enthusiasm. Something my real life friends and family tolerate without really understanding.
>
> It's nice to talk to people about your favorite show because the people you're talking to know how great you think it is - especially when all of your friends think your stark mad because you like it so much!
>
> People tend to sneer and look down on soap opera viewing, but I have been able to meet others that watch "my soaps" and no longer feel bad about watching them!
>
> One of the best things about the Internet is that it so easily brings together people with similar interests. In the "offline" world, it may take a lot of effort to locate someone who has similar likes, especially when it comes to television shows (I always like what my friends hate). But on the Internet, you find that you're not alone, and that others do like the same shows.

Program Advocacy

The Internet has become a campaign tool by fans seeking to save a favorite program or interested in bringing a cancelled program back on the air.

On-line advocacy was credited by cyber-fans for saving *The Magnificent Seven* and *The Sentinel* from cancellation by network executives.

> Members of The Magnificent Seven Internet discussion list used the Internet to conduct a multi-part campaign in which we were able to have the show renewed after the network had cancelled it. This was the first successful Internet campaign of its kind and is credited by the producers of the show with being the reason the show was renewed.
>
> I am the campaign coordinator for the nationwide effort to bring a canceled show, "Prey", back to television. We have been working on this campaign for the last 6 months. This is the first show I have ever enjoyed enough to want to fight for. Prey has given me a reason to use the Internet to make our views known. Our campaign has the support of the show's creator and has been written about in the LA Times and other media. There are many people who are utilizing the Internet in a variety of ways to support television programming.

Staying Connected

When a program has been cancelled, the Internet is useful for keeping fans of the program connected. As one person observes, cyber-fans use the Internet to "keep in touch with those old TV shows. In cyberspace they never die."

> Even though my favorite show has been canceled, and can only be seen, now, through re-runs, I use the Internet to stay connected to discussions regarding my show, as well as to read fan fiction and visit fan pages to entertain me.

When a program is off the air for an extended period of time, the Internet helps to fill the void created by the program's absence. Several international fans mentioned the difficulty of receiving their favorite program in their country and that the Internet helps them to keep up with what is going on. This seems particularly true of American programming that is not easily accessible in other

parts of the world. When a person misses their favorite television program, the Internet provides a way of obtaining information about the missed episode.

Specific Program Loyalty

Several of the respondents made a point of saying that their television viewing is highly selective and purposeful in nature. There appears to be a more active commitment to specific television programs than to the medium of television in general.

> Not everyone who is obsessed with a particular show is obsessed with Television. I only watch 3 shows and an occasional football game, but I really only visit sites related to those shows.

Intelligent Discussion

If cyber-fans are selective in the types of programs they watch, they seem to also be selective in the types of discussions they engage in with other fans about their favorite programs. This is consistent with the high education level of the on-line television fan that was reported earlier.

> My main criterion for what I watch is if a program is intelligent (like Babylon 5, as opposed to Baywatch). And I certainly am not interested in talking to people on line about programs that don't give me something to think (and hence talk) about.
>
> I felt it might be appropriate to add that the majority of posters to this particular newsgroup are not gushing fans, but perhaps the show's harshest critics. It's a usually intelligent exchange that goes light-years beyond the show itself. We've discussed everything from philosophy and English history to the formulas to see what your "porn name" and "romance novelist name" would be. This is not a group of folks fawning over the "beautiful people". The regulars really spur one another into intelligent debate about esoteric subjects. Some of the time we even discuss the show!

Making Friends

Making friends in cyberspace appears to be a common by-product of on-line interactivity. Many cyber-fans have created a social network or virtual community via the Internet. On-line relationships sometimes turn into real social relationships as people get an opportunity to meet one another in real life.

> The Internet has enabled me to make a lot of cyber-friends with whom I can discuss a common interest.
>
> Making friends on-line is one of the most exciting things about the Internet. Common interests, such as TV programs, certainly help to start such friendships.
>
> I use the Internet to communicate with other fans of my favorite shows, and to discuss the shows. Many of the fans have become close friends because of the Internet.
>
> I have been a regular visitor to the linear board at The Official *Buffy, The Vampire Slayer* Web site. We have built a wonderful community of friends and its one of the most unique places I have found on the Internet. We gather for parties and stuff, its wonderful.
>
> Without the Internet, I would not have known about a US convention that I attended two years ago, which led to many real life friendships, and which led to me running a convention in the UK this year. My life has changed for the better - and I have traveled all over the US and to Canada as a result.

The comments of cyber-fans in this study provide some interesting clues into the gratifications that are being derived within the electronic fan culture of the Internet. While future research should invariably focus more attention on these gratifications, it is clear from the current study that the electronic fan culture of the Internet is providing numerous opportunities to cyber-fans for

keeping up with their favorite television programs and for connecting and interacting with other fans.

Summary of Results

The data that have been presented in this chapter are provided in order to extend our knowledge about audience behavior within the electronic fan culture of the Internet. The presentation of the results was organized around the formal testing of empirical hypotheses, but also included a more general exploratory analysis of media use by the cyber-fan. Participation in the *Television Fan Survey* was encouraging. Several of the participants took the time to send personal e-mail messages to comment on the survey and to request access to the results when they are published. The Internet has proven to be a useful and efficient medium for conducting a study of this nature. On-line research methodologies will no doubt play an important role in future studies of communication behavior within the channels of cyber-space.

The data analysis represents a first look into the interesting uses of the Internet that are being explored by cyber-fans to extend their involvement with their favorite television shows. The next chapter will build upon this presentation of the data by summarizing the key findings and discussing the implications of this analysis on future research.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Introduction

Three fundamental research questions have guided the current investigation into the audience behavior of cyber-fans. First, how is the cyber-fan's involvement with their favorite television program related to their on-line communication activity within the electronic fan culture of cyber-space? Second, how are the needs and motives of cyber-fans related to their use of the Internet as a supplement to the viewing of their favorite television programs? And third, how are the specific resources of the Internet being utilized by cyber-fans within the electronic fan culture of the Internet? This chapter includes a discussion of each of these questions in light of the current study and data that it generated. The chapter also provides a summary of the key research findings and discusses the implications of these findings for future research.

Research Question #1

How is personal involvement with the viewing of a favorite television program related to the on-line communication activity of the cyber-fan within the electronic fan culture of the Internet?

The first six hypotheses were designed to empirically test for specific relationships between each of the variables associated with television viewing

involvement and the on-line interpersonal communication of the cyber-fan. These hypotheses were cast within an integrative model of cyber-fan activity that predicted empirical links between the television world of the cyber-fan and the on-line communication environment of the Internet. The model received a great deal of support from the data that were generated by the *Television Fan Survey* (refer back to Figure 18). Each of the six activity-related hypotheses was successful in predicting significant and positive associations between the specified variables in the model.

Television-viewing involvement was conceptualized as a multidimensional and variable construct encompassing parasocial interaction, post-viewing cognition, and favorite television program affinity. The current study identified significant empirical links between each of the television involvement variables and the three activity variables associated with the cyber-fan's on-line interpersonal communication. These links support the underlying theoretical assumptions of the uses and dependency model, which suggests that the individual's use of mass media is related to supplemental activity through alternative channels of communication. This study helps to confirm the existence of a symbiotic relationship between the utilization of mass media content and supplemental communication activities via the Internet. The word symbiotic is used because it seems to encapsulate the reciprocal nature of a relationship of mutual dependence upon two media channels without necessitating a cause and effect relationship.

The fact that interactivity was found to be positively associated with both parasocial interaction and post-viewing cognition is encouraging and lends support to Rafaeli and Sudweek's (1998) notion that interactivity is a hybrid construct that serves as a "bridge between mass and interpersonal communication" (p. 175). While the data do not specify causal direction, the results support the idea of a reciprocal relationship between television viewing and on-line supplemental activities related to the cyber-fan's dependency upon specific television programs. In the case of parasocial interaction, Rubin (1994) summarized that

> investigators have usually treated PSI as an outcome of interaction potential and media behavior (e.g., Rosengren & Windahl, 1972). Levy (1979) suggested that the causal direction is from exposure to PSI, but that those who find these relationships gratifying then increase their exposure to expand their contact with a persona. (p. 275)

This view tends to support the uses and dependency model, which views television involvement and dependency as a conceptual antecedent to the use of alternative channels for supplementing the viewing experience. The supplemental activity then contributes to increasing the viewer's dependency on the television medium or specified program. This results in an on-going cycle of activity in which both mass media and on-line communication behavior are mutually reinforced by the positive gratifications of each channel.

Looking at it from a humanist perspective, on-line interpersonal communication activity may serve to mediate the viewer's involvement with their favorite shows by prescribing "the manner in which conversational interaction as an iterative process leads to jointly produced meaning" (Rafaeli & Sudweeks, 1998, p. 175). One cyber-fan made the comment that

> being in a discussion group about a show, where the plot, characters, etc are analyzed after each episode, is a lot like being in a book club where you read a book each week. You get a lot more out the show after reading other people's reactions and opinions, and if you don't understand something, there's always someone who can explain.

The electronic fan culture of the Internet seems to offer a diverse and interactive environment where shared meaning and insight contribute to a richer viewing experience for the cyber-fan. As Massey (1995) discovered, audience activity can transcend fixed periods of actual exposure to media content. She specifically found that "important activity can occur or is constantly being developed without the prerequisite of exposure and that audience members can be actively involved with the media creating meanings outside or away from encounters with specific texts" (Massey, 1995, p. 345).

Research Question #2

How are the needs and motives of cyber-fans related to their use of the Internet as a supplement to the viewing of their favorite television programs?

Hypothesis seven predicted that instrumental television viewing motives would be positively associated with the cyber-fan's affinity for their favorite television program, parasocial interaction, and post-viewing cognition. This hypothesis received modest support from the data analysis which revealed mild to moderate associations between the six instrumental viewing motives and the three involvement variables. The seventh viewing motive (to pass time/habit) was reflective of a more ritualistic orientation to television viewing. This motive had weak empirical ties to television viewing involvement.

For the most part, it would appear that cyber-fans are largely instrumental in their use of television. Pleasure and relaxation were the two strongest motives among cyber-fans for watching television. Pleasure encompasses the entertainment dimension of television viewing. Because of concerns about the length of the *Television Fan Survey*, motives were not specifically assessed for interpersonal communication. However, the data would suggest that the motives for watching television are not necessarily the same mechanisms driving cyber-fans to the Internet. This is inferred because of the consistently small associations between instrumental television viewing motives and on-line

communication activity. The on-line communication activity of the cyber-fan was empirically unrelated to each of the seven television viewing motives.

Previous uses and gratifications researchers have tended to target a much more general audience in which television fandom is not heavily concentrated. The television viewing motives scale was designed with traditional television viewing in mind. It is also worded to reflect the reasons for watching television and does not single out motives that might be associated with watching specific television programs. Today's television viewers have a greater array of program choices and media options, which compete for their attention. When you add to this the opportunities available to the cyber-fan via Internet communication channels, the television viewing motives scale may be in need of revision. While the scale successfully delineated between several different motives for watching television (as it has in previous studies) it was not designed to encompass the full diversity of instrumental gratifications associated with the cyber-fan and their rather specific viewing preferences.

The result of living in a multimedia age has produced a savvy media consumer who accesses various channels of communication for distinctly different purposes. For example, the motives associated with the cyber-fan's viewing of their favorite television programs are not necessarily the same as their motives for delving into the electronic fan culture of the Internet. As interpersonal channels continue to be used conjointly with traditional mass communication channels, researchers will have to find better ways of explaining

the complex relationships that are a byproduct of such technological accessibility.

Research Question #3

How are the specific resources of the Internet being utilized by cyber-fans within the electronic fan culture of the Internet?

Information Channel or Social Network?

Sproull and Faraj (1997) suggest that there are two primary views about people who use the Internet. The first view holds that people "are motivated to contribute to and benefit from the explosion of information found on the net" (p. 36). Another view suggests that people are social beings who "need affiliation as much as they need information." This view holds that the Internet is a social technology where people congregate around common interests. The current study confirmed the presence of both cognitive and affiliative uses of Internet channels for extending television-viewing involvement. However, the study identified a definitive preference for the more informational and cognitively oriented resources of the Internet.

This study broke the Internet down by asking respondents to indicate their personal preference for using specific on-line channels and resources for extending television fandom. Cyber-fans showed a distinct preference for informational channels (fan pages, episode guides, and official television web sites), over alternative channels that are more related to interpersonal

communication with other people. This was confirmed by the fact that cyber-fans indicated a much stronger interest in using the Internet for acquiring information than for interacting with others in an effort to keep up with their favorite television programs. As far as the social channels of the Internet are concerned, newsgroups ranked the highest in importance. Cyber-fans were found to be less interested in mailing lists, message boards, and chat rooms for interacting with other fans.

Seeking information appears to be a greater priority to the cyber-fan than connecting with other people to discuss a favorite program. And even though connecting with other people has definitive social consequences, such as affiliation, reinforcement, and making friends, these on-line encounters also foster opportunities for information exchange. Despite the attention to on-line discussion groups centered on specific television programs, cyber-fans view the Internet as more than just a social network. While this pattern varies somewhat across gender (females seek people contact more than their male counterparts), it tends to support the paradigm of the Internet as an Information channel first and a social network second.

Differentiating the Cyber-Fan Population

The current investigation was apparently successful in identifying some of the underlying characteristics of cyber-fans associated with the variable nature of on-line television fandom. The study specifically found that the gender of the

participants and their involvement as on-line opinion leaders mediates communication activity within the electronic fan culture of the Internet.

Web Page Authors

It was suggested earlier in the paper that some participants within the electronic fan culture of the Internet might serve as opinion leaders for other fans who are less demonstrative of their fan status. The authors of television fan pages were conceived of as a specific segment of the cyber-fan population that caters to the informational and affiliative appetites of other fans. The eighth hypothesis successfully predicted that the authors of television fan pages would be more interactive in their on-line communication than cyber-fans who had never produced a television fan page. In addition, the analysis found that web page authors have a greater affinity for their favorite television programs and consistently scored higher on each of the activity measures than their less active counterparts. Web page authors were also found to have a greater affinity for the Internet in general and are much more interested in seeking out people to discuss their favorite television program than those who do not have a personal web site.

The stark contrast between the authors and non-authors in this study is encouraging. Web page authors may very well be the new opinion leaders of cyberspace. This may help to explain why fan pages rank as the top Internet resource among cyber-fans. Cyber-fans are utilizing fan pages en masse for

information and social contact with other fans that share an affinity for their favorite television program.

Gender Differences

One of the most surprising findings of this study is that a large majority of respondents to the *Television Fan Survey* were female (63.2%). Given the large number of cases and the fact that this study tracked so closely to previous GVU studies in three out the five demographic categories, it is difficult to believe that differences in gender participation are simply a statistical blip or artifact. Not only are woman more highly represented in the sample, they are more highly involved with television viewing then male respondents. Women are also more interactive in their on-line communication and tend to derive a greater amount of on-line interpersonal communication satisfaction. The data also revealed that television fan page authorship was higher among the female segment (65.7%) of the cyber-fan sample. In an environment traditionally dominated by men, women seem to have found a unique niche in cyberspace.

While the data are not able to explain why female fans outnumber the males in cyber-space, there is some precedence in the literature for these findings. Compesi (1980) solicited respondents for a study of television soap opera viewers by advertising through several local media channels (newspaper, radio, and cable television). The sample of 221 television viewers in this study was predominately female (87%). In a more recent study, Baym (1997) noted

that the large majority of the people posting messages to an on-line newsgroup for soap opera fans were woman. Given the diverse participation of respondents in the current study, it seems reasonable to believe that the gender differences are valid and not merely the result of self-selection bias.

Research Implications

The current study has attempted to expand the research and theory of uses and gratifications into the arena of television fandom and the Internet. A great deal of attention has been given to establishing a conceptual rationale for investigating the audience behavior of the cyber-fan within the electronic fan culture of the Internet. This section seeks to evaluate the success of the current study in accomplishing its objectives and for extending the field of uses and gratifications research. The implications of the empirical findings and suggestions for future research will be presented.

Comparability

The current study attempted to measure and compare several attributes associated with television viewing involvement and interpersonal communication activity via the Internet. Chaffee and Mutz (1988) suggested that

> the assumption that two kinds of channels are comparable implies in turn that the research on them involves measurement of each in a way that permits juxtaposing one against the other…. Indeed, in the case of

> communication contexts as different in nature as personal interaction and mass media, absolute comparability is all but impossible. (p. 24)

While television viewing and communication activity via the Internet are contextually different in nature, the current study initiated a method of comparison that was centered upon similarities in the content and uses of two media channels that are conceptually related by virtue of their mutual association with television fandom. By doing so, the current study has found a way to empirically observe and compare communication activity across multiple channels. This study has contributed a model and a methodological approach that can be adapted to future studies of mass media, the Internet, and interpersonal communication.

Perse and Courtright (1993) suggested "that communication channels possess 'normative images,' that is, widely shared perceptions about a medium's typical usage, which are based on the functions that they serve" (p. 486). They went on to note that

> the normative images of different channels vary because some are better than others for satisfying different communication needs. Research has also observed that certain channels are functional alternatives, that is, channels that fill similar needs and have similar normative images. (p. 286)

These thoughts were confirmed in the present study, which showed that cyber-fans are able to discriminate between the uses of several different Internet

communication channels based on their perceived value for extending television fandom. Based on these findings, future research must avoid the temptation of treating the Internet as a single composite medium of communication. Instead, researchers need to approach the Internet as a complex network that facilitates several unique sub-channels of communication.

Interactivity

The current investigation marks the first known time that interactivity and interpersonal communication satisfaction have been used within a uses and gratifications type of study designed to empirically document associations between mass media use and on-line interpersonal communication. The interactivity scale which was created for this study received high marks for reliability (α=.94). The data analysis supported previous research, which has consistently identified interactivity as a variable construct (Rafaeli & Sudweeks, 1998). A few selected comments from cyber-fans are presented here in an effort to corroborate this point.

Cyber-fans were found to vary in their desire for interactive communication within on-line discussion groups. At one end of the interactive continuum are the so-called lurkers as described in the following comments.

> My Internet use is more to get away from people than to interact with them. But I do like to read what others think!

> I don't give my opinions in discussions. I'm a lurker. I like to read other peoples opinions, hear other points of view on a character, a show, [or] a topic presented in one of my favorite shows.

Other cyber-fans appear to thrive on the potential benefits of interacting with other fans within on-line discussion groups.

> The Internet has helped change following a TV show from something passive into something interactive. Discussing my favorite show online has become part of the experience of watching it.

In an exploratory study of bulletin board use, James, Wotring, and Forrest (1995) admonished researchers to design studies that would effectively include lurkers. The current study was apparently successful in this regard by drawing a diverse sample that varied considerably in their level of interactivity with others. While some self-described lurkers show disdain at the thought of interacting with others, this does not necessarily preclude them from participating in an anonymous on-line survey.

One thing that was not particularly measured in the current study was how interactivity might vary within the individual channels of the Internet. The current study measured interactivity as a global construct that reflects general on-line communication behavior. However, one respondent indicated that their level of interactivity tends to vary across Internet channels.

> While I participate fully in IRC discussions (chat rooms), enjoying the give and take of ideas, I'm a "lurker" elsewhere. I read newsgroups the way I would letters to the editor in my local newspaper, skimming them daily for anything that looks interesting but not contributing anything of my own. I'm only slightly more involved in mailing lists to which I've subscribed, though I read them more thoroughly and often respond to threads privately when appropriate.

While the variable of interactivity was successful in differentiating the on-line communication behavior of cyber-fans, future research should expand on the

current study to more fully explore and identify the underlying reasons for this variance.

Given the already broad scope of this study, it was not possible to measure Interactivity within each of the possible on-line channels of communication. However, future research should look more closely at the contextual aspects of interactivity. Are certain Internet channels more conducive to interactive communication behavior than others? Is the desire for interactivity within on-line channels of communication related to an individual's propensity for interaction in real-world social settings? Do the uses and gratifications of the Internet vary for "lurkers" and other segments of the fan population that are more fully interactive?

The current study has apparently just broken the surface in its use of interactivity for explaining the audience behavior of cyber-fans. And while interactivity has been empirically linked to the cyber-fan's involvement with their favorite television programs, the intrinsic dynamics of this relationship need further exploration.

Industry Implications and Future Research

The current study uncovered a very active segment of the television fan population who are using the various channels of the Internet to exchange information about their favorite programs and to interpersonally interact with other fans. The research also revealed that the Internet provides increasing

opportunities for interactions between program producers and their audiences. A condensing of the feedback loop gives fans greater access, either directly or indirectly, to the content providers and gatekeepers of the television industry. For cyber-fans, there is the potential for a greater sense of participation and ownership in the ongoing development of the characters and storylines that characterize their favorite programs. Fans openly discuss the plots and twists of their favorite programs in communication channels that are readily open to the public, as well as to the private sectors of the entertainment industry.

Program producers have an opportunity to change, adapt, or even re-invent the ways in which they conduct audience analysis and research. In addition to the de-personalized ratings data which guides many of the programming decisions that are made regarding the fate of television shows, network executives can access some of the most active segments of their fan base directly via the Internet. The potential for more qualitative data acquisition is enormous. New life can be breathed into an otherwise lethargic program series with the help of fans eager to be more actively involved in the production of their favorite programs. In fact, as it has already been mentioned, several on-line fan groups have taken credit for saving programs that have been slated for cancellation by network executives. The Internet gives fans an opportunity to consolidate their masses and organize more unified and focused advocacy campaigns.

Opportunities for applied research abound. One area of great potential is in the area of personal fan sites. The current study found that cyber-fans prefer unofficial fan pages to those produced by television networks or program producers. The idea that cyber-fans are more likely to seek out information and contact from fan pages rather than through more official channels of communication should be of interest to industry professionals. Content analysis along with other methods of empirical research should be used to investigate cyber-fan's perceptions of on-line content and opportunities for interpersonal interaction.

On-line research methodologies should not serve as a replacement for more established methods of quantitative analysis, but rather as another research prong that can uncover the answers to certain questions that cannot be addressed through conventional research. The television industry should carefully explore the possibilities that exist for greater access to their audiences and for examining how cyber-fans are extending their involvement with their favorite programs via on-line communication channels.

External Validity

The findings of this study are narrowly generalized to a specific segment of television fandom, and not to the global population of television fans. An important question to ask is whether the methodology was effective in reaching a representative sample of cyber-fans?

Several validity checks were introduced into the methodology in an effort to assess the effectiveness of the sampling process. The first was alluded to in the previous chapter where comparisons were made between cyber-fans and people in the general Internet population. The GVU Internet User Surveys have been conducted bi-annually since 1994. Their methodology has consistently produced trend data on the general Internet population of World Wide Web users. With the exception of gender and marital status, the cyber-fan sample matched up very well to the general Internet population. While the cyber-fan sample was found to be more heavily composed of female respondents and single people, this alone was not deemed to be a sufficient reason for dismissing the validity of the sample. Other validity checks were built into the design of the study, which provided logical support for this conclusion.

External validity was partially confirmed by the diversity of programs that fans associated themselves with. While the sampling methodology centered on 86 television program titles, the fans that took the survey identified 498 additional programs as among their personal favorites. Many of these programs also included genres that were excluded from the original selection criteria such as talk shows, sports programs, and news. The broad range and diversity of television fandom expressed by the respondents in this study tends to support the external validity of the sample.

Attention was also given to the task of tracking how respondents came to the on-line survey instrument. Respondents came to hear about the survey

through a diverse set of messages and links sprinkled throughout the social networks of television fans on the Internet. Some fans reported back via e-mail that they had re-posted the invitation to participate in the survey on other mailing lists and discussion boards that they were a part of. Cyber-fans took an active part in extending word about the survey to other participants within their on-line social network. Approximately half of the participants heard about the survey through a posted message to an Internet newsgroup. Approximately twenty-five percent of the respondents linked to the survey from a television fan page or web site. The remaining participants heard about the survey through an e-mail post or some other method of contact. The diversity of access to the survey instrument was encouraging and lends partial support to the idea that the sample is indeed a valid one.

Finally, the large number of respondents would seem to give strength to the argument for accepting the validity of the current sample. The practice of oversampling the population has been suggested as a partial compensation for the lack of randomization in on-line sampling methodologies. The large number of cases in the current study is encouraging and no doubt accounts for a great amount of the variability associated with television fandom on the Internet. While it may be necessary to be somewhat conservative in generalizing the results of this study to the larger population of cyber-fans, these observations provide some reassurance that the sample is indeed representative.

Additional Comments and Suggestions

This study did not take into consideration the international scope of the Internet in that it is a truly global medium. When a survey is posted to the Internet, it is accessible to a diverse, multinational pool of respondents. Several respondents made a point to mention their nationality and how the Internet served their unique television viewing needs. Future research should explore the potential differences between American viewers and those from other countries. Because of the length of the survey, this variable was not included for analysis. The fact that the programming criteria focused on distinctly American programs did not preclude international participation in the survey since, many of the shows are distributed to foreign countries.

Only limited attention was given to the personal program preferences of cyber-fans in the current study. However, it looks as if significant differences may exist between those programs identified as the personal favorites of cyber-fans and programs that are both a personal favorite and ones that the Internet has been found to be a useful resource for keeping up.

Dramas and science fiction programs appear to be more popular for Internet use than comedy programs. Comedies, on the other hand, are very well represented in the top ten favorite programs of cyber-fans. This is an informal but interesting observation. Do certain programs foster more participation in cyberspace than other programs or program types? In their study of soap opera viewers, Rubin and Perse (1987) suggested that,

> the basic staple of soap operas, the development of personal problems encountered by attractive characters, encourages affective involvement. Audience members are invited to participate in the experiences of characters through several mechanisms: the central role of characters in plots, the insight given into how characters think and feel, the resemblance of characters to everyday people, and the time spent on character history and plot development. (p. 251)

These qualities could be equally true of prime-time dramas and science fiction programs and may help explain the heightened participation and involvement of cyber-fans with these particular genres. Future research should explore the relationship between program structure and related Internet use by cyber-fans.

Future research should also consider the unique contribution of fan pages on the Internet and look more closely at ways in which the authors of these pages serve as opinion leaders, information providers, and social conduits for interactivity among cyber-fans.

The uses and gratifications of television and the Internet need to be more carefully examined within the context of both interpersonal communication and mass mediated communication. As Rubin (1993a) observed,

> both personal and mediated communication have typically been studied separately. Media and interpersonal channels… are potentially equal alternatives whose influence varies depending on individual and situational factors; 'the salience of needs and motives, the awareness of

> various communication channels, and the perception of the utility of communication channels are important variables in human interaction, both in interpersonal and mass communication.' (p. 163)

The contribution of interactivity and interpersonal communication satisfaction in the current study may be helpful in bridging the gap between these somewhat independent areas of academic research.

Conclusion

This research project began as an attempt to explore the rather unfamiliar world of the cyber-fan and to look at ways in which the Internet was extending viewer's involvement with their favorite television programs. To this end, the current study represents only a modest beginning. While it is clear that the Internet enhances the television viewing experience, it is not an across-the-board phenomenon. Just as people use television for distinctly different purposes, Internet users selectively choose various channels at various times for various purposes. Cyber-fans are not uniformly equivalent in their desire to interact with other people about their favorite television program. While some people embrace the social networking opportunities provided through the Internet, others deplore them as a tremendous waste of time. For them, the Internet is nothing more than a tool for information acquisition.

Regardless of the reasons, the Internet has fast become a potent communication channel for extending the gratifications of television viewing. The

current study discovered a very active segment of the television audience that is using the Internet as an extension of their involvement with their favorite television programs. No doubt, television fans have always found ways to acquire information about their favorite programs and television celebrities. Fan clubs and magazines have been around since the early days of television. But never before has a single medium been able to provide such a diverse venue of opportunity for supplementing the television viewing experience and building social networks around television fandom. The Internet offers researchers an opportunity to observe these social networks in action and to study both the interaction of people as well as the interaction of media and content in the new communication age. The Internet also provides an avenue of access that was not previously possible. And if the current study is any indication, cyber-fans appear to be very willing to participate in on-line survey research.

The cyber-fan is a fascinating unit of analysis for future research. If mass communication researchers are timid about crossing over into the alien worlds of computer-mediated and interpersonal communication, they only have to look to the cyber-fan to lead the way. Cyber-fans are technological entrepreneurs who have broken the constraints of traditional mass media. They are pushing the envelope of opportunity in the virtual domain of cyber-space. Researchers need to push the envelope as well. The future is ripe with opportunities to recast and reshape the theories of human communication… the byproduct of which could

be integrative theories that more fully encompass the diversity of communication that has become the everyday repertoire of the Internet.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Master Television Program List

Master Television Program List

Animated Comedy	
King of the Hill	FOX
South Park	Cable - Comedy Central
The Simpsons	FOX
Comedy	
3rd Rock From the Sun	NBC
Boy Meets World	ABC
Caroline in the City	NBC
Clueless	UPN
Cosby	CBS
Dharma & Greg	ABC
Drew Carey	ABC
Everybody Loves Raymond	CBS
For Your Love	WB
Frasier	NBC
Friends	FOX
Getting Personal	FOX
Home Improvement	ABC
Just Shoot Me	NBC
Mad About You	NBC
Malcolm & Eddie	UPN
Moesha	UPN
Mr. Show with Bob and David	Cable - HBO
NewsRadio	NBC
Sabrina the Teenage Witch	ABC
Sister, Sister	WB
Smart Guy	WB
Spin City	ABC
Suddenly Susan	NBC
The Jamie Foxx Show	WB
The Nanny	CBS
The Steve Harvey Show	WB
The Wayans Brothers	WB
Two Guys, A Girl and a Pizza Place	ABC
Unhappily Ever After	UPN
Veronica's Closet	NBC
Working	NBC

Drama

7th Heaven	WB
Ally McBeal	FOX
Baywatch	USA Network
Beverly Hills 90210	FOX
Buffy, the Vampire Slayer	WB
Chicago Hope	CBS
Dawson's Creek	WB
Diagnosis Murder	CBS
Early Edition	CBS
ER	NBC
Hercules: The Legendary Journeys	USA Network
Highlander	Syndication
Homicide: Life on the Streets	NBC
Jag	CBS
La Femme Nikita	USA Network
Law & Order	NBC
Love Boat: The Next Wave	UPN
Melrose Place	FOX
Millennium	FOX
Nash Bridges	CBS
Nightman	Syndication
NYPD Blues	ABC
Pacific Blue	Syndication
Party of Five	FOX
Pensacola (Wings of Gold)	Syndication
Profiler	NBC
Promised Land	CBS
PSI Factor: Chronicles of the Paranormal	Syndication
S.O.F. Special Ops Force	Syndication
Silk Stalkings	Syndication
The Practice	ABC
The Pretender	NBC
The X-Files	FOX
Touched by and Angel	CBS
Walker, Texas Ranger	CBS
Xena	Syndication

Sci-Fi

Babylon 5	Cable - TNT
Earth: Final Conflict	Syndication
Star Trek: Deep Space Nine	Syndication
Star Trek: Voyager	UPN

Soap Opera

All My Children	ABC
Another World	NBC
As the World Turns	CBS
Days of Our Lives	NBC
General Hospital	ABC
Guiding Light	CBS
One Life to Live	ABC
Port Charles	ABC
Sunset Beach	NBC
The Bold and the Beautiful	CBS
The Young and the Restless	CBS

Appendix B

Sample E-Mail Post

Sample E-Mail Invitation Sent to 806 Authors of Television Fan Page

I am a doctoral student in the College of Communications at the University of Tennessee and a faculty member at Gardner-Webb University in Boiling Springs, NC. I am conducting a survey of television fans and their use of the Internet for keeping up with their favorite TV programs. I recently visited your X-Files web site and would like to invite you to take the TV Fan Survey. You may take the survey now by clicking on the link below. It only takes around 10 minutes or so to complete.

http://152.44.9.23/fan_survey/weblink.shtml

In an effort to reach as many on-line television fans as possible, I am also asking site owners like yourself if you would help me to promote the survey to other TV Fans who visit your site. I have attached a graphic file (GIF) that you can place on your home page if you are willing to do so. It is an attractive and simple graphic of a television set that says TV Fan Survey. You simply have to link the graphic to the URL given above. By doing so, you will help us to reach a much broader cross-section of on-line television fans. I would like to promote the survey through November 7th (approximately 4 weeks) to give people ample opportunity to respond. The survey will be discontinued after this time.

This is a non-commercial, academic research effort to study the world of the on-line TV fan. If you choose to participate in this study, all information obtained will be strictly protected and will not be given to any outside parties or individuals. Please let me know if you are able to add the survey link to your web site.

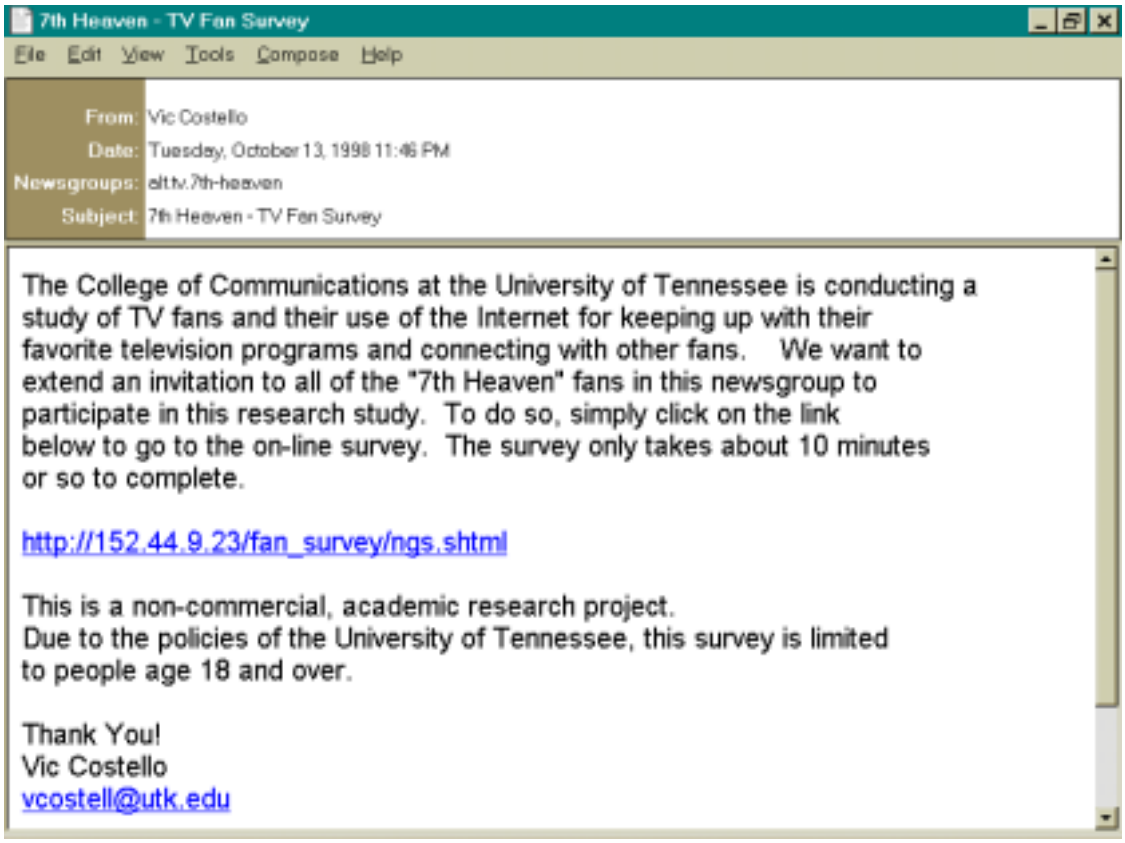
Sincerely,
Vic Costello

_____
vcostell@utk.edu
(704) 434-4391

Appendix C

Sample Newsgroup Post

Sample Invitation Sent to 60 Usenet Television Program Newsgroups


7th Heaven - TV Fan Survey

File Edit View Tools Compose Help

From: Vic Costello
Date: Tuesday, October 13, 1998 11:46 PM
Newsgroups: alt.tv.7th-heaven
Subject: 7th Heaven - TV Fan Survey

The College of Communications at the University of Tennessee is conducting a study of TV fans and their use of the Internet for keeping up with their favorite television programs and connecting with other fans. We want to extend an invitation to all of the "7th Heaven" fans in this newsgroup to participate in this research study. To do so, simply click on the link below to go to the on-line survey. The survey only takes about 10 minutes or so to complete.

http://152.44.9.23/fan_survey/ngs.shtml

This is a non-commercial, academic research project.
Due to the policies of the University of Tennessee, this survey is limited to people age 18 and over.

Thank You!
Vic Costello
vcostell@utk.edu

Appendix D

Newsgroups Included in survey invitation

3rd Rock From the Sun
alt.tv.3rd-rock

7th Heaven
alt.tv.7th-heaven

All My Children
alt.tv.all-my-children

Ally McBeal
alt.tv.ally-mcbeal

Another World
alt.tv.another-world

Babylon 5
alt.tv.babylon-5
rec.arts.sf.tv.babylon5
rec.arts.sf.tv.babylon5.info

Baywatch
alt.tv.baywatch

Beverly Hills 90210
alt.tv.90210
alt.tv.bh90210

Buffy, the Vampire Slayer
alt.tv.buffy-v-slayer
alt.tv.buffy-v-slayer.creative

Caroline in the City
alt.tv.caroline-city

Chicago Hope
alt.tv.chicago-hope

Dawson's Creek
alt.tv.dawsons-creek

Days of Our Lives
alt.tv.days-of-our-lives
Dharma & Greg
alt.tv.dharma-greg

Early Edition
alt.tv.early-edition

Earth: Final Conflict
alt.tv.earth-final-conflict

ER
alt.tv.er

Frasier
alt.tv.frasier

Friends
alt.tv.friends

General Hospital
alt.tv.general-hospital

Hercules: The Legendary Journeys
alt.tv.hercules-legendary-journeys

Highlander
alt.tv.highlander

Home Improvement
alt.tv.home-imprvment

Homicide: Life on the Streets
alt.tv.homicide

King of the Hill
alt.tv.king-of-hill

La Femme Nikita
alt.tv.lafemme-nikita

Law & Order
alt.tv.law-and-order

Mad About You
alt.tv.mad-about-you

Melrose Place
alt.tv.melrose-place

Millennium
alt.tv.millenium
alt.tv.millennium

NewsRadio
alt.tv.newsradio

NYPD Blue
alt.tv.nypd-blue

Party of Five
alt.tv.party-of-five

Port Charles
alt.tv.port-charles

Profiler
alt.tv.profiler

Sabrina the Teenage Witch
alt.tv.sabrina

Silk Stalkings
alt.tv.silk-stalkings

Soap Operas
alt.tv.daytime-shows
rec.arts.tv.soaps.abc
rec.arts.tv.soaps.cbs
rec.arts.tv.soaps.misc

South Park
alt.tv.southpark

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine
alt.tv.star-trek.ds9

Star Trek: Voyager
alt.tv.star-trek.voyager

The Nanny
alt.tv.the-nanny

The Practice
alt.tv.the-practice
alt.tv.thepractice

The Pretender
alt.tv.pretender

The Simpsons
alt.tv.simpsons
alt.tv.simpsons.itchy-scratchy

The X-Files
alt.tv.x-files
alt.tv.x-files.analysis
alt.tv.xfiles

Working
alt.tv.working

Xena
alt.tv.xena

Appendix E

TV Fan Survey

Thank you for taking the TV Fan Survey. Following each question is a series of response items. To make a selection, simply click on the circle which corresponds to your answer choice. Please do your best to answer all of the questions in the survey.

How often do you use the Internet to get information about your favorite television program?

Never | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | A Lot

How often do you use the Internet to discuss your favorite television program with other people?

Never | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | A Lot

How important are each of the following Internet resources to you for keeping up with your favorite television program.

Unofficial Program Web Sites (Fan Pages)	Not Important || at All ||	❍1 ❍2 ❍3 ❍4 ❍5	|| Very || Important
Official Program Web Sites	Not Important || at All ||	❍1 ❍2 ❍3 ❍4 ❍5	|| Very || Important
Chat Rooms	Not Important || at All ||	❍1 ❍2 ❍3 ❍4 ❍5	|| Very || Important
Episode Guides	Not Important || at All ||	❍1 ❍2 ❍3 ❍4 ❍5	|| Very || Important
Fan Fiction	Not Important || at All ||	❍1 ❍2 ❍3 ❍4 ❍5	|| Very || Important
Mailing Lists	Not Important || at All ||	❍1 ❍2 ❍3 ❍4 ❍5	|| Very || Important
Message Boards or Forums	Not Important || at All ||	❍1 ❍2 ❍3 ❍4 ❍5	|| Very || Important
Newsgroups	Not Important || at All ||	❍1 ❍2 ❍3 ❍4 ❍5	|| Very || Important

Photo Galleries	Not Important || at All ||	❍1 ❍2 ❍3 ❍4 ❍5	|| Very || Important
Video Clips	Not Important || at All ||	❍1 ❍2 ❍3 ❍4 ❍5	|| Very || Important
Sound Files	Not Important || at All ||	❍1 ❍2 ❍3 ❍4 ❍5	|| Very || Important

Have you created a personal web site for your favorite television program?

- ❍ Yes
- ❍ No

Approximately how many hours do you usually watch television on an any given day?

- ❍ Less than 1 hour
- ❍ 1 - 2 hours
- ❍ 2 - 3 hours
- ❍ 3 - 4 hours
- ❍ 4 - 5 hours
- ❍ 5 - 6 hours
- ❍ More than 6 hours

Approximately how many hours do you usually spend on the Internet on any given day?

- ❍ Less than 1 hour
- ❍ 1 - 2 hours
- ❍ 2 - 3 hours
- ❍ 3 - 4 hours
- ❍ 4 - 5 hours
- ❍ 5 - 6 hours
- ❍ More than 6 hours

I use the Internet to keep up with currently running television programs.

Never |	**❍ 1**	**❍ 2**	**❍ 3**	**❍ 4**	**❍ 5**	**| A Lot**

I use the Internet to keep up with older television programs that have gone out of production.

Never |	❍ 1	❍ 2	❍ 3	❍ 4	❍ 5	| A Lot

I have on-line discussions with other fans while watching the very same program we are talking about on television.

Never |	❍ 1	❍ 2	❍ 3	❍ 4	❍ 5	| A Lot

Each of the questions in the next section pertain to your feelings about the Internet in general and more specifically, how you are using the Internet to communicate with other people. Please do your best to indicate the degree to which each of these questions applies to your own personal experience.

Using the Internet is one of the more important things I do each day.

Strongly Disagree |	❍ 1	❍ 2	❍ 3	❍ 4	❍ 5	| Strongly Agree

I am very satisfied with conversations I have with other people on the Internet.

Strongly Disagree |	❍ 1	❍ 2	❍ 3	❍ 4	❍ 5	| Strongly Agree

Other people on the Internet express a lot of interest in what I have to say.

Strongly Disagree |	❍ 1	❍ 2	❍ 3	❍ 4	❍ 5	| Strongly Agree

I feel like I can talk about anything with other people on the Internet.

Strongly Disagree |	❍ 1	❍ 2	❍ 3	❍ 4	❍ 5	| Strongly Agree

If my Internet connection wasn't working, I would really miss it.

Strongly Disagree |	❍ 1	❍ 2	❍ 3	❍ 4	❍ 5	| Strongly Agree

Each person gets to say what they want on the Internet.

Strongly Disagree |	❍ 1	❍ 2	❍ 3	❍ 4	❍ 5	| Strongly Agree

Other people frequently say things during Internet discussions which add little to the conversation.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

People often talk about things I am not interested in during Internet discussions.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

The Internet is very important in my life.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

Other people let me know when I am communicating effectively on-line.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

Nothing is accomplished talking to other people on-line.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

Other people genuinely want to get to know me on-line.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

I could easily do without logging onto the Internet for several weeks.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

Other people show me that they understand what I said on the Internet.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

I would feel lost without my Internet access.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

I like to share my personal opinions with other people during on-line discussions.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

I have very little interest in sharing my ideas with others on the internet.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

I use the Internet primarily as a vehicle for interacting with other people.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

I like seeing what other people in the discussion group think about my ideas.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

Other people's comments during an on-line discussion often triggers in me an urge to respond.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

Communicating with other people on-line is important to me.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

I like to avoid on-line discussions of any kind.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

I like interacting with other people on the Internet.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

I like to contribute messages to discussion groups.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

I may contribute multiple times to a message thread that interests me.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

I do not like to participate in on-going discussion topics or threads on the Internet.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

I love to talk with others on-line.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

Many people have more than one favorite television program and/or television character. For this next section, it may be easier if you think about your most favorite program and character as you respond to each question.

After viewing my favorite television program, I spend a lot of time thinking about what happened in the story.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

I feel sorry for my favorite television character when he or she makes a mistake.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

My favorite television character makes me feel comfortable, as if I am with friends.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

Watching my favorite television program is one of the more important things I do.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

After viewing my favorite television program, I spend a lot of time thinking about what I saw or heard.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

I see my favorite television character as a natural, down-to-earth person.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

I look forward to watching my favorite television character on this week's episode.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

If my favorite television character appeared on another TV program, I would watch that program.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

If the television set wasn't working, I would really miss my favorite television program.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

After viewing my favorite television program, I spend a lot of time thinking about what will happen in the next episode.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

I miss seeing my favorite television character when they are not on TV.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

Watching my favorite television program is very important in my life.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

My favorite television character seems to understand the kinds of things I want to know.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

After viewing my favorite television program, I spend a lot of time thinking about the characters.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

I would like to meet my favorite television character in person.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

I could easily do without watching my favorite television program for several weeks.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

I find my favorite television character to be attractive.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

I would feel lost without my favorite television program to watch.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

If there were a story about my favorite television character in a newspaper or magazine, I would read it.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

In previous research, people have indicated many different reasons for watching television. The next section lists several of these reasons. Please indicate the degree to which your own reasons for watching television are the same or perhaps different from the ones given below.

I watch television because it's something to do to occupy my time.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

I watch television because it entertains me.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

I watch television because it relaxes me.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

I watch television because it makes me feel less lonely.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

I watch television because it's thrilling.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

I watch television because I find it sexually arousing.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

I watch television so I won't have to be alone.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

I watch television because it passes the time away, especially when I'm bored.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

I watch television because it amuses me.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

I watch television because it's something to do when friends come over.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

I watch television just because of the sex appeal of the program.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

I watch television because it's like a habit, something I do each day.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

I watch television so I can talk with other people about what's on.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

I watch television to learn how to do things I haven't done before.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

I watch television because it's exciting.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

I watch television so I can be with other members of the family or friends who are watching.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

I watch television because the characters are sexually attractive.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

I watch television because it allows me to unwind.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

I watch television to learn things about myself and others.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

I watch television because I just like to watch.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

I watch television so I can forget about school, work or other things.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

I watch television when I have nothing better to do.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

I watch television because it's a pleasant rest.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

I watch television when there's no one else to talk to or be with.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

I watch television just because it's on.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

I watch television because it's enjoyable.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

I watch television to get away from the rest of the family or others.

Strongly Disagree | ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4 ❍ 5 | Strongly Agree

ALMOST DONE!! The last few questions help us understand a bit more about you. The information which you choose to provide will remain confidential and is solely for the purposes of academic research.

What is your age?

- ❍ 18-20
- ❍ 21-25
- ❍ 26-30
- ❍ 31-35
- ❍ 36-40
- ❍ 41-45
- ❍ 46-50
- ❍ Over 85
- ❍ Rather not say!
- ❍ 51-55
- ❍ 56-60
- ❍ 61-65
- ❍ 66-70
- ❍ 71-75
- ❍ 76-80
- ❍ 81-85

What is your sex?

- ❍ Female
- ❍ Male

Please indicate the highest level of education completed.

- ❍ Grammar School
- ❍ High School
- ❍ Vocational/Technical School (2 year)
- ❍ Some College
- ❍ College Graduate
- ❍ Master's Degree (MS)
- ❍ Doctoral Degree (PhD)
- ❍ Professional Degree (MD, JD, etc.)
- ❍ Other

Please indicate your current household income in U.S. dollars.

- ❍ Rather not say!
- ❍ Under $10,000
- ❍ $10,000 - $19,999
- ❍ $20,000 - $29,999
- ❍ $30,000 - $39,999
- ❍ $40,000 - $49,999
- ❍ $50,000 - $74,999
- ❍ $75,000 - $99,999
- ❍ Over $100,000

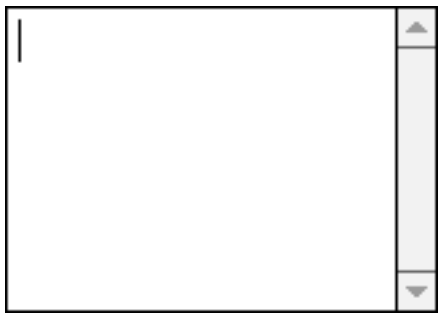
What is your current marital status?

- ❍ Rather not say!
- ❍ Divorced
- ❍ Living with another
- ❍ Married
- ❍ Separated
- ❍ Single
- ❍ Widowed

How did you link to the TV Fan Survey?

- ❍ From a link in a newsgroup posting
- ❍ From a link in a personal e-mail message
- ❍ From a link on a TV Web Page
- ❍ Other

Do you have any thing you would like to share with us about how you are using the Internet to stay connected with your favorite television program, or about how this survey was conducted?



You may stop at this point and go directly to the end of the page to submit the survey. However, if you have a few more minutes, please continue to the final section and tell us about your favorite programs.

CONTINUE SURVEY

END SURVEY NOW AND SUBMIT FORM

Below is a list of currently running television programs. We would like to know (1) which shows are among your personal favorites, (2) which shows you regularly use the Internet to keep up with, or (3) which shows are both a personal favorite and a show that you use the Internet to keep up with. Simply select those programs for which one of these three choices applies and mark the appropriate response. Space is provided at the end to write in shows which are not listed.

All My Children	
Ally McBeal	
Another World	
As the World Turns	
Babylon 5	
Baywatch	
Beverly Hills 90210	
The Bold and the Beautiful	
Boy Meets World	
Buffy, the Vampire Slayer	
Caroline in the City	
Chicago Hope	
Clueless	
Cosby	
Dawson's Creek	
Days of Our Lives	
Dharma & Greg	
Diagnosis Murder	
Drew Carey	
Early Edition	

Earth: Final Conflict	
ER	
Everybody Loves Raymond	
For Your Love	
Frasier	
Friends	
General Hospital	
Getting Personal	
Guiding Light	
Hercules: The Legendary Journeys	
Highlander	
Home Improvement	
Homicide: Life on the Streets	
JAG	
The Jamie Foxx Show	
Just Shoot Me	
King of the Hill	
La Femme Nikita	
Law & Order	
Love Boat: The Next Wave	
Mad About You	
Malcolm & Eddie	
Melrose Place	
Millennium	
Moesha	
Mr. Show with Bob and David	
The Nanny	

Nash Bridges

NewsRadio

Nightman

NYPD Blue

One Life to Live

Pacific Blue

Party of Five

Pensacola (Wings of Gold)

Port Charles

The Practice

The Pretender

Profiler

Promised Land

PSI Factor:
Chronicles of the Paranormal

O.F. Special Ops Force
(Soldier of Fortune)

Sabrina the Teenage Witch

7th Heaven

Silk Stalkings

The Simpsons

Sister, Sister

Smart Guy

South Park

Spin City

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine

Star Trek: Voyager

The Steve Harvey Show

Suddenly Susan	
Sunset Beach	
3rd Rock From the Sun	
Touched by and Angel	
Two Guys, A Girl and a Pizza Place	
Unhappily Ever After	
Veronica's Closet	
Walker, Texas Ranger	
The Wayans Brothers	
Working	
The X-Files	
Xena	
The Young and the Restless	

Because of space limitations, we could not possibly list every show ever produced. So please let us know if there are any additional programs that are among your personal favorites.

Program Name

Program Name

Program Name

Program Name

Program Name

Are there any additional shows not listed that you regularly use the Internet to keep up with?

Program Name

Program Name

Program Name

Program Name

Program Name

Submit Survey

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Select Submit Survey now to send your responses to us.

Appendix F

Survey Invitation Page

About the TV Fan Survey

Greetings and thank you for visiting this page. The College of Communications at the University of Tennessee is looking at ways that television fans are using the Internet to keep up with their favorite television programs.

If you are at least 18 years of age, please take a few moments to complete the on-line survey. Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. The survey only takes about 10 minutes to complete, so please try to answer each question.

Just click on the appropriate response for each question and then click the submit button at the bottom of the page. It's that simple! Your answers will not be recorded until you click the submit button. All information will remain anonymous and you will not be added to any mailing list.

Select one of the following options to continue.

- Click Here if you are at least 18 years old and want to take the TV Fan Survey

- Contact Information

- Click Here if you are at least 18 years old and want to take the TV Fan Survey

Contact Information

I am a doctoral student at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. I am also a faculty member at Gardner-Webb University in Boiling Springs, NC. Please feel free to contact me with any questions concerning the TV Fan Survey.

Vic Costello
Doctoral Student
University of Tennessee
vcostell@utk.edu

If you wish to verify the survey's origin, you may contact:

Dr. Benjamin J. Bates (Research Advisor)
Department of Broadcasting
University of Tennessee
bbates@utkux.utcc.utk.edu
(423) 974-4291

Appendix G

Sample TV Fan Pages With Link to the Survey Instrument

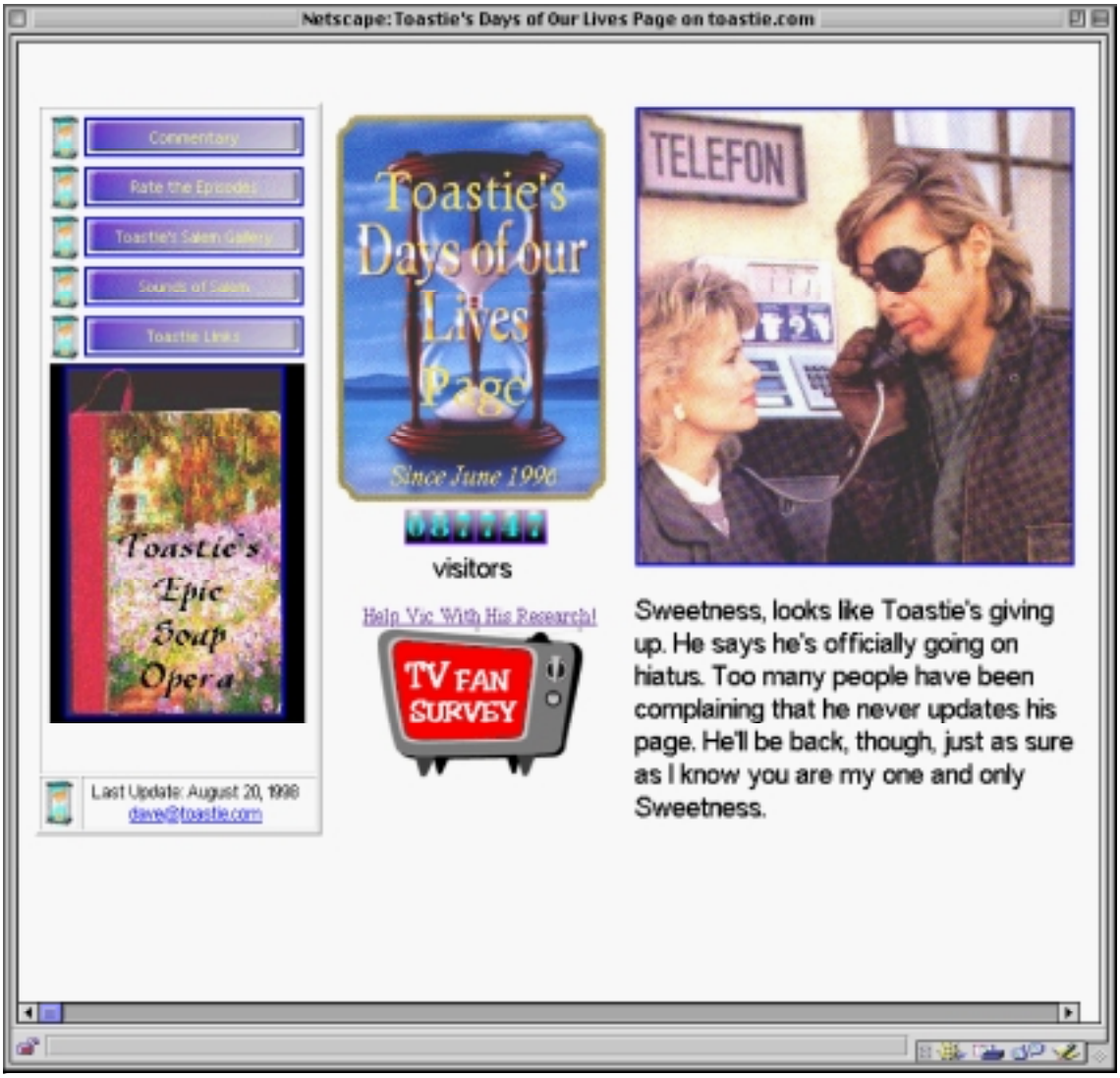

Netscape: UltimateTV -- TV News Daily
MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY SUNDAY
Updated daily at midnight PDT, 8 a.m. and throughout the day as TV news breaks.
UltimateTV News Daily
Friday, October 23, 1998
Page One
What are you watching? Share your viewing habits and take part in a University of Tennessee TV Survey!
NBC Wins Thursday With Repeats
Not wanting to program original shows against the World Series, NBC stuck with a night of repeats even though the Series ended Wednesday. The Peacock won Thursday's 40 overnight metered markets (October 22) with a 12.9 rating /21 share (off from last weeks 18.0/28). CBS had an 8.6/14 (8.1/12) to place second. FOX was third with a 6.2/10 (4.4/7) and ABC was a close fourth with a 6.1/10 (5.6/9). The WB had a 3.8/6 (3.7/6) for fifth and UPN had a 3.6/6 (2.0/3) for sixth. More Info
Hewitt Sings New Single
Jennifer Love Hewitt ("Party of Five") is venturing out into the world of pop music. She will be singing the first song from the soundtrack of "I Still Know What You Did Last Summer." Hewitt performs the single "How Do I Deal," and on Monday wrapped production of a music video for the song. More recordings by the hot 19-year-old star may follow if the single catches on. Jennifer Love Hewitt currently plays Sarah Reeves on "Party of Five," which airs Wednesdays at 9:00 p.m. on FOX.
Wilcox Speaks Out on Estrada
When asked about his rocky relationship with Erik Estrada at a recent UltimateTV chat, "CHiPs" star Larry Wilcox replied diplomatically, "Erik and I are very very different people. Being different does not mean we do not get along, simply means we do not have brunch every Sunday." Wilcox added, "However, I enjoyed very much the new "CHiPs 99" show and working with Estrada, and in fact, we were even a little misty eyed as we hugged and said our good byes!" "CHiPs 99" reunites Ponch and Jon Tuesday, October 27 at 8 p.m. on TNT.
News From The Networks
ABC Presents "Boo To You, Too! Winnie The Pooh"
ABC Presents "The Birdcage"
NBC Kicks Off Thanksgiving with the "Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade"
Letterman's Top Ten "Signs Mike Tyson Is Calming Down"
More News
TV Biz Headlines
Clear Channel grabs Jacor
Clear Channel decisions
How will this affect TV?
More TV Biz Stories
Search UltimateTV News
Search


Netscape: Ambrosia's Pretender Page
GeoCities
We've seen 30,000 movies... See what we thought!
Movie
Title:
Search Now!
movie guide
Inside The Web
Get a FREE Custom Message Board
Talk about:
Hobbies
Go!
LinkExchange
Ambrosia's Pretender Page
2178
BeSeen.com
There ha ve been
visitors to my site since the 6'th of July 1998
Make your number count,
SIGN the GUEST BOOK
What's New?
Fan Fiction
Links
Ambrosia's Thought
Pretender Family Photo Album
Quotes and Sounds
Miscellaneous
A Little about me
Cast your Vote
I'm a proud member of the MTW Apreciation Society
MTWAS
become a member too!
Take the
TV FAN SURVEY
And Help Out a Student
Sign Guest Book
View Guest Book

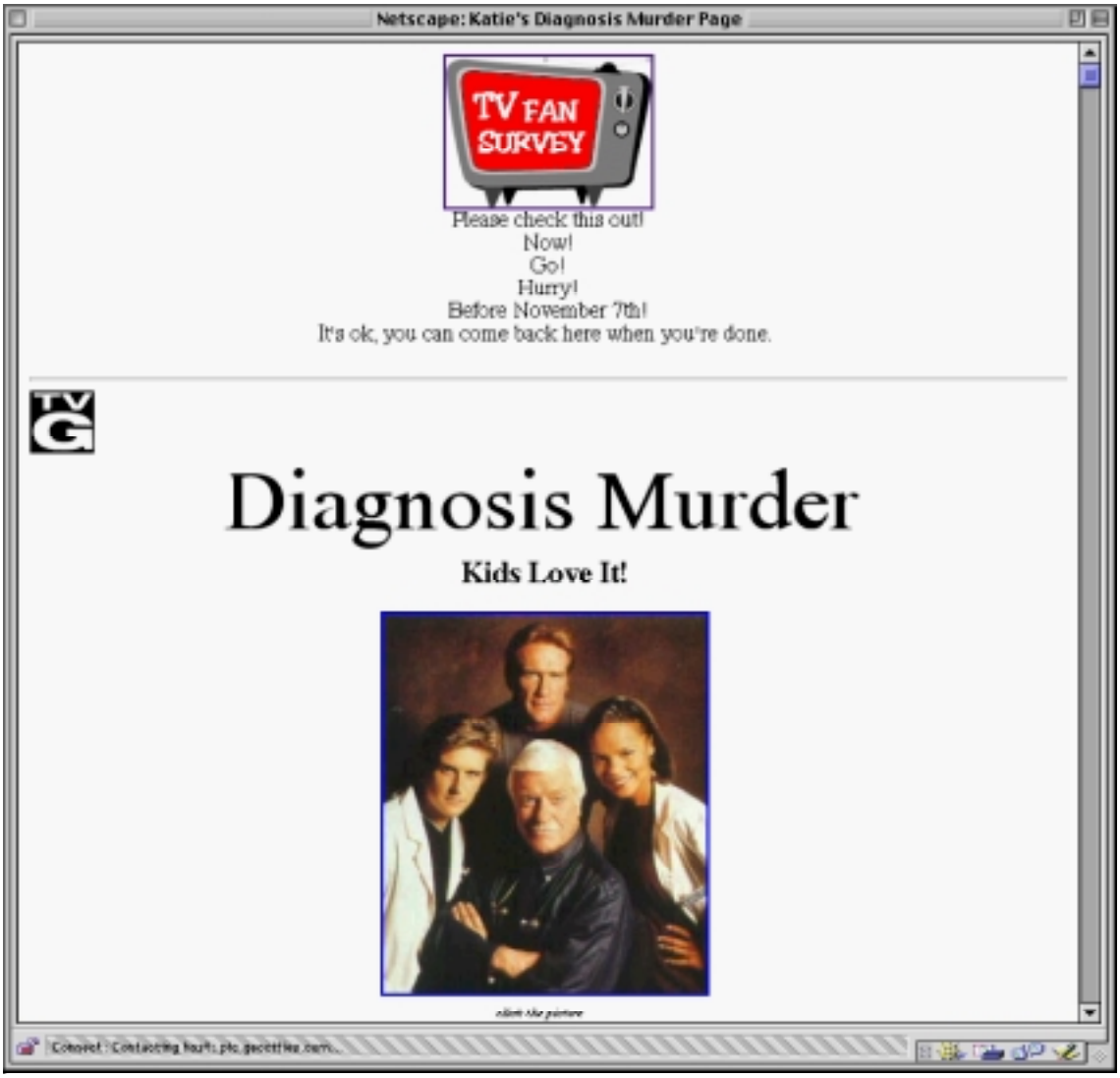

Netscape: The Salinger House
TV FAN SURVEY
Welcome to the Salinger House
Come in and make yourself at home. Don't trip over Timber's dog dish. This is the place to discuss the show. To just chat with your friends, please do so in the Yakkking Tavern . All flames should be released in the Firehouse . If you're new here, please read the webmaster's notes .
[Post Message][Return to Main Page]
Missed PO5 Family Album - Laine Worrix 10/22/98 (0)
What happened to Nina? - Snowblader 10/20/98 (8)
Nina adendum to previous message - amye 10/21/98 (0)
Re: What happened to Nina? - amye 10/21/98 (6)
Re: What happened to Nina? - Snowblader 10/21/98 (0)
Re: What happened to Nina? - Snowblader 10/21/98 (2)
Re: What happened to Nina? - conehead 10/22/98 (1)
R.E. to conehead - Snowblader 10/23/98 (0)
Re: What happened to Nina? - Snowblader 10/21/98 (0)
Re: What happened to Nina? - Snowblader 10/21/98 (0)
Fox and movies roles - Shakes 10/20/98 (2)
Re: Fox and movies roles - Carrie 10/20/98 (1)
Re: Fox and movies roles - amye 10/21/98 (0)
Charlie's Choice..... - Carrie 10/19/98 (3)
Re: Charlie's Choice..... - amye 10/19/98 (2)
Re: Charlie's Choice..... - Kevin 10/19/98 (1)
Re: Charlie's Choice..... - Carrie 10/19/98 (0)
Who Played the First Griffin??? - Brandi 10/17/98 (4)
Welcome - conehead 10/18/98 (0)
Re: Who Played the First Griffin??? - Sofia 10/18/98 (2)
Re: Who Played the First Griffin??? - Shakes 10/19/98 (0)
Welcome, Sofia - conehead 10/18/98 (0)
End of PO5 Wicked Plot Summaries - amye 10/16/98 (0)


Netscape: Walker, Texas Ranger Fan Forum by T.W. Message Board
DELPHI FORUMS
Walker, Texas Ranger Fan Forum by T.W.
Message Board Preview
Invite Friends!
Preview of Conversations
WTR, our FAVORITE show!
2037 Total Msgs
Post Here
CN on cover of Inside Karate
2 msgs - Newest 10/23/98 3:08:00 PM
Radio Interview
14 msgs - Newest 10/23/98 2:14:00 PM
Fan Fiction Collection
12 msgs - Newest 10/23/98 1:19:00 PM
Martial Law
4 msgs - Newest 10/23/98 10:40:00 AM
"The Wedding 2"
6 msgs - Newest 10/23/98 9:53:00 AM
You people are GREAT
20 msgs - Newest 10/22/98 10:15:00 PM
Check out our Delphi description
5 msgs - Newest 10/22/98 10:08:00 PM
Chuck to be on Roseanne
1 msg from 10/22/98 8:29:00 PM
New story
9 msgs - Newest 10/22/98 7:11:00 PM
Whitewater on this weekend
1 msg from 10/22/98 7:08:00 PM
T.W. is HAPPY!!!
7 msgs - Newest 10/22/98 3:01:00 PM
"The Wedding" on USA
5 msgs - Newest 10/22/98 12:42:00 PM
T.W. - Fanfic
45 msgs - Newest 10/21/98 7:44:00 PM
The day after Halloween
7 msgs - Newest 10/21/98 1:18:00 PM
Chat on Wednesday
3 msgs - Newest 10/21/98 12:47:00 PM
Fanfic List
FREE!
Set up your own FREE forum!
You control access to your own message board and chat room!
Create Forum
I am posting the following link as a service to a university researcher, who is studying TV fans' online habits. To take their survey, click the link.
-T.W.
TV FAN SURVEY
Current Chats in this Forum:
None active now.
Hello, WTR fan! A few things to bear in mind.
I: neither I nor this site are affiliated with the show. I am a fan just like you. THEREFORE, I have no access to the cast, and cannot procure autographs, pictures, etc. Refer to the "Contact" section for the show's address.
II: As before, if you are not running the message board from inside our homepage, please do so.
And, as always, suggestions are welcome, and ENJOY THE SHOW!!
-T.W.
Jersey Life
Come Join Jersey's
New Jersey
http://www.jerseylife.
fastest growing website!


Netscape: Earth: Final Conflict (E-F-C Home)
GENE RODDENBERRY'S
EARTH
FINAL CONFLICT
This Page has been accessed 4065 times. And was last accessed on Fri Oct 23 12:43:46 CST 1998 by a user at mbsc104pc19.unomaha.edu . Hello User at 152.44.60.207!
This Page was last updated: Oct 22 10:04 .
If you want to bookmark this page, please bookmark it as this link: http://e-f-c.home.ml.org.
Don't forget to look for the NEWEST information near the bottom on this page!
CLICK HERE for my EFC TRIVIA QUIZ
TV FAN SURVEY
TV Fan Survey Until Nov 7/98!
Program Synopsis
made in CANADA
Three Years ago... 71 aliens calling themselves the Companions establish themselves in countries throughout the world. Anatomically different from us, they possess a phenomenal knowledge of science and technology vastly superior to ours. The Companions cured the world's most dreaded diseases and rid the Earth of hunger and pestilence. They put an end to global divisions. Their power and presence grows as they become an invaluable resource to the world's governments.
Despite the extraordinary changes implemented by the Companions, suspicion of their true purpose gives rise to an underground resistance. Even still, the majority of people on Earth do not suspect that the aliens'
Connect: Host www.geocities.com contacted. Waiting for reply...


Netscape: Toastie's Days of Our Lives Page on toastie.com
Commentary
Rate the Episodes
Toastie's Salem Gallery
Sounds of Salem
Toastie Links
Toastie's Epic Soap Opera
Last Update: August 20, 1998
dave@toastie.com
Toastie's Days of our Lives Page
Since June 1996
visitors
Help Vic With His Research!
TV FAN SURVEY
TELEFON
Sweetness, looks like Toastie's giving up. He says he's officially going on hiatus. Too many people have been complaining that he never updates his page. He'll be back, though, just as sure as I know you are my one and only Sweetness.


Netscape: Daniels X-Files page
TV FAN SURVEY
THE TRUTH IS HERE.
Last Changes (October 15, 1998)
Character information added about The Lone Gunmen
X-Files
Forever
This X-Files Forever site owned by Daniel Ofervaag.
[Previous 5 Sites | Skip Previous | Previous | Next | Skip Next | Next 5 Sites | Random Site | List Sites]
Want to join the ring? Get the info...
NEXT


Netscape: Katie's Diagnosis Murder Page
TV FAN SURVEY
Please check this out!
Now!
Go!
Hurry!
Before November 7th!
It's ok, you can come back here when you're done.
TV G
Diagnosis Murder
Kids Love It!

Appendix H

Correlation Matrix

Variables	Statistics	Age	Income	Companionship	To Learn	Pass Time	Pleasure	Relaxation	Social Utility	Voyeurism	FPA	IA
Age	*r*	1.000										
	N	2896										
Income	*r*	.272**	1.000									
	N	2864	2960									
Companionship	*r*	-.075**	-.139**	1.000								
	N	2859	2920	2955								
To Learn	*r*	.052**	-.012	.211**	1.000							
	N	2845	2904	2924	2938							
Pass Time	*r*	-.184**	-.093**	.495**	.122**	1.000						
	N	2800	2860	2884	2870	2892						
Pleasure	*r*	-.217**	-.101**	.258**	.276**	.255**	1.000					
	N	2806	2866	2889	2871	2840	2897					
Relaxation	*r*	-.150**	-.072**	.380**	.238**	.471**	.499**	1.000				
	N	2831	2889	2912	2896	2855	2862	2922				
Social Utility	*r*	-.249**	-.074**	.279**	.320**	.413**	.370**	.359**	1.000			
	N	2841	2902	2924	2906	2865	2872	2892	2936			
Voyeurism	*r*	-.045*	-.019	.292**	.203**	.211**	.345**	.261**	.295**	1.000		
	N	2847	2908	2933	2914	2875	2878	2902	2915	2942		
FPA	*r*	-.165**	-.161**	.330**	.172**	.201**	.489**	.339**	.292**	.304**	1.000	
	N	2833	2893	2912	2894	2849	2854	2877	2890	2897	2929	
IA	*r*	.035	-.010	.159**	.112**	.062**	.209**	.130**	.136**	.153**	.375**	1.000
	N	2852	2913	2914	2899	2855	2857	2885	2895	2901	2892	2975

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Variables	Statistics	Age	Income	Companionship	To Learn	Pass Time	Pleasure	Relaxation	Social Utility	Voyeurism	FPA	IA
ICS	*r*	-.045*	-.059**	.026	.161**	-.029	.217**	.101**	.154**	.145**	.245**	.393**
	N	2724	2789	2779	2768	2726	2730	2753	2762	2768	2763	2817
Interactivity	*r*	-.118**	-.079**	.055**	.157**	-.022	.211**	.082**	.172**	.114**	.230**	.351**
	N	2706	2766	2769	2758	2715	2726	2746	2753	2758	2755	2777
PSI	*r*	-.166**	-.159**	.309**	.260**	.182**	.480**	.361**	.306**	.342**	.718**	.305**
	N	2775	2836	2854	2838	2797	2799	2826	2835	2842	2843	2834
PVC	*r*	-.219**	-.114**	.200**	.223**	.053**	.447**	.236**	.265**	.248**	.658**	.274**
	N	2835	2898	2912	2894	2852	2855	2881	2891	2899	2895	2894
Chat Rooms	*r*	-.110**	-.098**	.063**	.116**	.027	.138**	.086**	.159**	.117**	.227**	.154**
	N	2885	2949	2943	2927	2882	2887	2911	2924	2930	2918	2964
Episode Guides	*r*	-.038*	-.034	.016	.089**	.000	.151**	.091**	.091**	.050**	.205**	.127**
	N	2888	2952	2948	2931	2885	2890	2915	2929	2935	2923	2969
Fan Fiction	*r*	-.064**	-.113**	.024	.121**	-.033	.151**	.082**	.097**	.198**	.252**	.168**
	N	2884	2948	2944	2927	2881	2886	2911	2925	2931	2919	2965
Fan Pages	*r*	-.095**	-.103**	.039*	.119**	-.063**	.185**	.078**	.095**	.136**	.310**	.218**
	N	2890	2954	2949	2932	2887	2891	2916	2931	2936	2924	2970
Mailing Lists	*r*	-.069**	-.103**	.070**	.128**	-.029	.172**	.075**	.103**	.166**	.303**	.272**
	N	2888	2952	2947	2930	2884	2889	2914	2928	2934	2922	2968
Message Boards	*r*	-.043*	-.042*	.045*	.096**	.024	.122**	.069**	.093**	.094**	.247**	.134**
	N	2886	2950	2946	2930	2883	2888	2913	2927	2934	2921	2967
Newsgroups	*r*	.050**	.016	-.028	.069**	-.024	.002	-.031	.032	-.029	.031	.119**
	N	2885	2949	2943	2927	2880	2885	2910	2924	2930	2920	2965

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Variables	Statistics	Age	Income	Companionship	To Learn	Pass Time	Pleasure	Relaxation	Social Utility	Voyeurism	FPA	IA
Official TV Sites	*r*	-.050 **	-.055 **	.055 **	.144 **	.044 *	.211 **	.145 **	.105 **	.053 **	.259 **	.104 **
	N	2893	2957	2952	2935	2889	2894	2919	2933	2939	2927	2973
Photo Galleries	*r*	-.151 **	-.154 **	.100 **	.145 **	.025	.258 **	.148 **	.162 **	.234 **	.351 **	.172 **
	N	2880	2944	2940	2924	2878	2883	2908	2921	2928	2915	2960
Sound Files	*r*	-.209 **	-.151 **	.098 **	.151 **	.057 **	.230 **	.140 **	.190 **	.155 **	.298 **	.157 **
	N	2880	2944	2939	2922	2876	2881	2906	2920	2926	2914	2961
Video Clips	*r*	-.191 **	-.146 **	.102 **	.131 **	.048 **	.235 **	.140 **	.185 **	.178 **	.314 **	.125 **
	N	2883	2947	2943	2925	2879	2884	2910	2924	2929	2917	2963
Info Seek	*r*	-.092 **	-.058 **	.028	.109 **	-.048 **	.209 **	.059 **	.101 **	.098 **	.314 **	.266 **
	N	2878	2942	2937	2920	2874	2879	2904	2918	2924	2912	2958
People Seek	*r*	-.040 *	-.068 **	.021	.099 **	-.075 **	.156 **	.044 *	.090 **	.122 **	.265 **	.275 **
	N	2882	2945	2940	2923	2877	2882	2907	2921	2927	2915	2961
Old Shows	*r*	-.039 *	-.083 **	.120 **	.196 **	.042 *	.170 **	.116 **	.126 **	.131 **	.192 **	.190 **
	N	2884	2948	2942	2926	2880	2885	2910	2923	2929	2918	2964
New Shows	*r*	-.133 **	-.061 **	.065 **	.129 **	.008	.280 **	.122 **	.144 **	.113 **	.330 **	.267 **
	N	2886	2950	2945	2929	2883	2887	2912	2926	2932	2921	2966
Same Time	*r*	-.073 **	-.101 **	.072 **	.125 **	.035	.151 **	.083 **	.172 **	.138 **	.221 **	.183 **
	N	2888	2952	2947	2930	2884	2889	2914	2929	2934	2922	2969
Internet Usage	*r*	-.028	-.037 *	.080 **	.060 **	.089 **	.068 **	.003	.070 **	.067 **	.066 **	.400 **
	N	2882	2946	2940	2925	2877	2882	2907	2921	2927	2917	2961
TV Usage	*r*	-.022	-.091 **	.232 **	.123 **	.404 **	.222 **	.209 **	.188 **	.104 **	.279 **	.062 **
	N	2886	2951	2946	2928	2882	2887	2913	2926	2932	2920	2966

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Variables	Statistics	Age	Income	Companionship	To Learn	Pass Time/Habit	Pleasure	Relaxation	Social Interaction	Voyeurism	FPA	IAS
Official TV Sites	*r*	-.050**	-.055**	.055**	.144**	.044*	.211**	.145**	.105**	.053**	.259**	.104**
	N	2893	2957	2952	2935	2889	2894	2919	2933	2939	2927	2973
Photo Galleries	*r*	-.151**	-.154**	.100**	.145**	.025	.258**	.148**	.162**	.234**	.351**	.172**
	N	2880	2944	2940	2924	2878	2883	2908	2921	2928	2915	2960
Sound Files	*r*	-.209**	-.151**	.098**	.151**	.057**	.230**	.140**	.190**	.155**	.298**	.157**
	N	2880	2944	2939	2922	2876	2881	2906	2920	2926	2914	2961
Video Clips	*r*	-.191**	-.146**	.102**	.131**	.048**	.235**	.140**	.185**	.178**	.314**	.125**
	N	2883	2947	2943	2925	2879	2884	2910	2924	2929	2917	2963
Info Seek	*r*	-.092**	-.058**	.028	.109**	-.048**	.209**	.059**	.101**	.098**	.314**	.266**
	N	2878	2942	2937	2920	2874	2879	2904	2918	2924	2912	2958
People Seek	*r*	-.040*	-.068**	.021	.099**	-.075**	.156**	.044*	.090**	.122**	.265**	.275**
	N	2882	2945	2940	2923	2877	2882	2907	2921	2927	2915	2961
Old Shows	*r*	-.039*	-.083**	.120**	.196**	.042*	.170**	.116**	.126**	.131**	.192**	.190**
	N	2884	2948	2942	2926	2880	2885	2910	2923	2929	2918	2964
New Shows	*r*	-.133**	-.061**	.065**	.129**	.008	.280**	.122**	.144**	.113**	.330**	.267**
	N	2886	2950	2945	2929	2883	2887	2912	2926	2932	2921	2966
Same Time	*r*	-.073**	-.101**	.072**	.125**	.035	.151**	.083**	.172**	.138**	.221**	.183**
	N	2888	2952	2947	2930	2884	2889	2914	2929	2934	2922	2969
Internet Usage	*r*	-.028	-.037*	.080**	.060**	.089**	.068**	.003	.070**	.067**	.066**	.400**
	N	2882	2946	2940	2925	2877	2882	2907	2921	2927	2917	2961
TV Usage	*r*	-.022	-.091**	.232**	.123**	.404**	.222**	.209**	.188**	.104**	.279**	.062**
	N	2886	2951	2946	2928	2882	2887	2913	2926	2932	2920	2966

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Variables	Statistics	ICS	Interactivity	PSI	PVC	Chat Rooms	Episode Guides	Fan Fiction	Fan Pages	Mailing Lists	Message Boards	Newsgroups
ICS	*r*	1.000										
	N	2842										
Interactivity	*r*	.750**	1.000									
	N	2700	2802									
PSI	*r*	.357**	.339**	1.000								
	N	2714	2701	2870								
PVC	*r*	.312**	.331**	.692**	1.000							
	N	2767	2756	2842	2934							
Chat Rooms	*r*	.404**	.404**	.302**	.269**	1.000						
	N	2834	2793	2860	2923	3029						
Episode Guides	*r*	.115**	.057**	.164**	.243**	.171**	1.000					
	N	2836	2799	2864	2928	3024	3033					
Fan Fiction	*r*	.337**	.273**	.373**	.341**	.326**	.205**	1.000				
	N	2831	2793	2860	2924	3020	3025	3029				
Fan Pages	*r*	.272**	.242**	.327**	.385**	.260**	.347**	.407**	1.000			
	N	2837	2798	2865	2929	3026	3030	3026	3035			
Mailing Lists	*r*	.375**	.370**	.391**	.340**	.328**	.196**	.492**	.395**	1.000		
	N	2835	2797	2864	2927	3024	3028	3024	3030	3033		
Message Boards	*r*	.300**	.323**	.275**	.257**	.409**	.158**	.262**	.290**	.326**	1.000	
	N	2835	2796	2862	2926	3021	3024	3020	3026	3024	3029	
Newsgroups	*r*	.110**	.187**	.036	.091**	.112**	.134**	-.019	.111**	.094**	.284**	1.000
	N	2833	2794	2859	2923	3018	3022	3018	3024	3022	3021	3027

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Variables	Statistics	ICS	Interactivity	PSI	PVC	Chat Rooms	Episode Guides	Fan Fiction	Fan Pages	Mailing Lists	Message Boards	Newsgroups
Official TV Sites	*r*	.155**	.109**	.284**	.223**	.250**	.342**	.135**	.314**	.221**	.293**	.087**
	N	2840	2801	2868	2932	3029	3033	3029	3035	3033	3029	3027
Photo Galleries	*r*	.255**	.193**	.445**	.333**	.311**	.246**	.352**	.396**	.344**	.262**	.051**
	N	2830	2793	2857	2921	3014	3019	3015	3020	3018	3016	3015
Sound Files	*r*	.197**	.171**	.354**	.306**	.307**	.279**	.289**	.283**	.280**	.221**	.028
	N	2829	2791	2855	2920	3015	3018	3014	3020	3018	3017	3015
Video Clips	*r*	.193**	.119**	.355**	.296**	.322**	.267**	.298**	.292**	.270**	.241**	.042*
	N	2832	2793	2858	2922	3018	3021	3017	3023	3021	3020	3018
Info Seek	*r*	.253**	.239**	.315**	.371**	.198**	.315**	.268**	.477**	.328**	.273**	.198**
	N	2828	2788	2854	2917	3012	3016	3012	3018	3016	3012	3010
People Seek	*r*	.548**	.648**	.355**	.363**	.418**	.117**	.372**	.363**	.491**	.382**	.215**
	N	2828	2791	2857	2920	3014	3018	3014	3020	3018	3014	3012
Old Shows	*r*	.204**	.181**	.239**	.232**	.174**	.246**	.265**	.282**	.303**	.124**	.025
	N	2833	2793	2860	2922	3017	3021	3017	3022	3020	3017	3015
New Shows	*r*	.245**	.239**	.317**	.382**	.160**	.323**	.230**	.429**	.316**	.236**	.158**
	N	2834	2795	2862	2925	3020	3024	3020	3026	3024	3021	3019
Same Time	*r*	.395**	.397**	.284**	.255**	.470**	.122**	.316**	.234**	.305**	.286**	.107**
	N	2837	2797	2864	2927	3021	3025	3021	3027	3025	3022	3020
Internet Usage	*r*	.278**	.257**	.060**	.095**	.176**	.057**	.088**	.103**	.157**	.069**	.100**
	N	2829	2790	2858	2921	3015	3019	3015	3021	3019	3016	3014
TV Usage	*r*	.023	.001	.167**	.084**	.091**	.051**	-.015	-.027	.036*	.087**	-.003
	N	2833	2795	2861	2925	3020	3024	3020	3026	3024	3021	3019

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Variables	Statistics	Official TV Sites	Photo Galleries	Sound Files	Video Clips	Info Seek	People Seek	Old Shows	New Shows	Same Time	Internet Usage	TV Usage
Official TV Sites	*r*	1.000										
	N	3038										
Photo Galleries	*r*	.338**	1.000									
	N	3023	3023									
Sound Files	*r*	.316**	.648**	1.000								
	N	3023	3012	3023								
Video Clips	*r*	.336**	.698**	.797**	1.000							
	N	3026	3016	3016	3026							
Info Seek	*r*	.293**	.249**	.193**	.199**	1.000						
	N	3021	3006	3006	3009	3022						
People Seek	*r*	.150**	.253**	.166**	.143**	.437**	1.000					
	N	3023	3008	3008	3011	3016	3024					
Old Shows	*r*	.159**	.260**	.226**	.186**	.243**	.246**	1.000				
	N	3025	3011	3011	3014	3010	3012	3027				
New Shows	*r*	.287**	.233**	.194**	.200**	.641**	.363**	.250**	1.000			
	N	3029	3015	3015	3018	3013	3015	3020	3030			
Same Time	*r*	.191**	.268**	.257**	.251**	.224**	.425**	.213**	.208**	1.000		
	N	3030	3016	3016	3019	3013	3015	3020	3022	3031		
Internet Usage	*r*	.071**	.115**	.144**	.132**	.155**	.201**	.133**	.153**	.223**	1.000	
	N	3024	3010	3011	3013	3008	3010	3014	3017	3018	3025	
TV Usage	*r*	.115**	.111**	.125**	.126**	.058**	-.006	.093**	.098**	.140**	.221**	1.000
	N	3029	3015	3015	3018	3013	3015	3018	3022	3022	3018	3030

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

VITA

Victor Costello was born in Washington D.C. on June 28, 1960. He graduated from Doherty High School in Colorado Springs, Colorado in May, 1979. He began his post-secondary education at Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, North Carolina where in May, 1984 he received the Bachelor of Science in Communication. A year later he began graduate school at Regent University, Virginia Beach, Virginia where in May, 1986 he received a Master of Arts in Communication. From 1986 to 1988 he was Director of Media for the Narramore Christian Foundation in Los Angeles, California. From 1988 to 1990, he served as Operations Director for WTJC-TV in Springfield, Ohio and WTLJ-TV in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He has also worked extensively as a freelance corporate video producer. In 1991, he began his doctoral studies in the College of Communications at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville where in 1999 he received the Doctor of Philosophy Degree.

In 1995, he accepted a position as Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication Studies at Gardner-Webb University, Boiling Springs, North Carolina where he continues to teach courses in Television Production, Communication Technology, Communication Law and Ethics, and Communication Theory.