Multi-channel networks:
A look at organizational structure
monetization and creative control

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Master’s thesis in Nordic Media
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A Study on multi-channel networks, with an emphasis on Scandinavia, providing an in-depth view into organizational structure, monetization, and creative control.
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Abstract

This master thesis examines the internal and external functions of multi-channel networks in Scandinavia. Multi-channel networks are relatively new media companies that manage talent with YouTube as their main distribution platform. In order to understand what multi-channel networks are and how they operate, this master thesis first looks at organizational structure with an emphasis on culture management. Then, monetization of creative content and division of revenue. Last, creative control with a focus on ownership of content. To illuminate structural functions of multi-channel networks, empirical data was collected thorough qualitative interviews with executives of the three largest multi-channel networks in Scandinavia, SPLAY, United Screens, and Nordic Screens, and two of the largest YouTubers in Norway, PelleK and PistolShripms. In addition, document analysis was conducted to provide a more nuanced look at the media companies.

The main findings show, first, that multi-channel networks are less formally structured than traditional media companies, with YouTubers operating as separate contractors. Second, monetization of YouTube content is highly lucrative and the division of wealth favors content creators. Third, YouTubers are owners of creative content, and Scandinavian multi-channel networks offer transparent contracts with short terms, in contrast to their American counterparts. In addition, it is identified that niche markets make up the majority of multi-channel networks’ portfolios.
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Henrik Smehaug.
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Figure 1. Multi-channel networks monetization model targeting niche markets (Venturini et al., 2015).

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Figure 3. YouTube’s ecosystem ("How Ads Work on YouTube," 2016).
1 Introduction

The viewing habits of video consumers have evolved as a result of more and more content migrating online, a trend, Vollmer, Blum, and Bennin (2014) find is especially true among younger audiences. Advertisers are also spending more on online content, accounting for almost 9% of the American advertising market in 2009 (Evans, 2009). YouTube is a contributing factor here because it provides a distribution platform for cheap user-generated content, which allows for niche content to be distributed globally (Vollmer et al., 2014).

Over the past few years, multi-channel networks have sprung up. Multi-channel networks operate within the YouTube world as representatives of prominent YouTube “talents” by connecting them with advertisers, and as curators of their YouTube content. The talent represented by multi-channel networks are sometimes called “influencers” and are users of social media with large bases of following (Freberg, Graham, McGaughey, & Freberg, 2011). The rise of multi-channel networks globally has shown rapid success with networks such as Broadband TV exceeding 5 billion monthly views and growing on average by 10% every month (BroadBandTV, 2015). In late 2013 and early 2014, multi-channel networks started to emerge in the Scandinavian media market as well. The four multi-channel networks that entered the market are United Screens and SPLAY, both native to Sweden, the Norwegian multi-channel network Nordic Screens, and MAZE in Denmark.

1.1 Background for this Master Thesis

On January 16th 2016, the Norwegian financial newspaper Dagens Næringsliv presented grim numbers from Norway’s leading commercial television station, TV 2. A representation of a market in rapid change, the figure shows the change in viewership from 2014 to 2015, and the station’s overall market share since its birth in 1992, all the way up until 2011. It displays a decrease in viewership of over 12% among Norwegian youth (Tobiassen, 2016). What becomes evident is that the market is shifting, and that TV’s steady flow of consumerism is decreasing. This is further emphasized by the fact that “NRK1 has lost one third of the hours teenagers spend watching the channel since 2010. TV2 has lost half. TV3 to thirds. TV Norge is somewhere in between NRK1 and TV” (Huseby, 2016). This shows some indication that the TV market is clinging on to its traditional and linear media model, which Holt and Perren classifies as outdated by stating that younger
consumers are finding new, portable, ways of absorbing content. They are clear in stating that younger viewers are adapting, and being increasingly accustomed to watching “what I want, when I want, where I want” (Holt & Perren, 2011, p. 77). While the consumption of traditional television is declining, video consumption among youths is at an all-time high. A report by Defy Media suggests that 13-24 year olds are watching online videos at an average of 11 hours a week (DefyMedia, 2016). With the introduction of streaming services such as Netflix, and social media platforms like YouTube, one can argue that there exists two categories for video consumption, that of the professionally produced “long-form” video and that of “short-form” spontaneous video shared to social media platforms. YouTube is mostly a platform featuring “short-form” videos, and most of its consumption occurs on portable platforms. To explain why this shift in viewership occurs, Holt and Perren (2011, p. 65) look into the age gap and find that a significant portion of the American television audiences are “not early adapters, relatively immobile, and in the 26+ markets.” An important disclaimer here is that data on television viewership mostly originates from The United States, mostly because American media outlets produce an enormous amount of information about themselves (Holt & Perren, 2011). This makes it difficult to discuss the implications of television viewership in Scandinavia because data can only be used as an indicator of change and not as definite proof. Nevertheless, a declining consumption of television raises the question of why the industry is throbbing over digital video and not traditional TV, even if the viewing trends favor the former. Trends are also moving towards a more fluent media market where online consumption is paramount. As is evident in the information pulled from DN, this is especially true in Norway and the Scandinavian countries. YouTube is the driving force behind this shift in viewership, and with the introduction of multi-channel networks, it is growing with record speeds. In order to establish some sense of why the media market is shifting from a linear and static platform to a more fluent one, where content is consumed at anytime and anywhere, one can, as noted by Holt and Perren (2011, p. 147), look towards the trend of a global media community. This is reflected in what they describe as the roles of advertisers, media producers, and consumers coming together, and in some fashion turning into the same. Arguably, the global ecosystem that enables the new market to diminish physical boarders and cultural boundaries is another great advantage YouTube have in the new media economy, as it allows viewers to come together from all over the world in greater and greater quantities. Global communities seem vital to the success and traction YouTube achieves, and companies and organizations like Multi-Channel Networks and advertisers seem to benefit greatly from the vast exposure. Furthermore, greater audience bases calls for
greater arrays of content. In other words, consumers are drawn to YouTube, and content
provided by YouTubers, merely because the video and its content is of significant interest to
them. Social media, and YouTube in particular, with the rise of increasingly cheap recording
equipment and fast internet connection, consumers are able to produce, and consume quality
content from their own living room.

1.2 The Motivation Behind Research

There have been many newspaper articles and reports about multi-channel networks and
their impact on the global media marked. However, few have written about the phenomenon
academically, as multi-channel networks are relatively fresh to the media markets. Previously
written works on multi-channel networks include Cunningham, Craig, and Silver (2016) who
writes about multi-channel networks as a byproduct for Google and similar streaming giants’
conflict with traditional media companies, and Mueller (2014) who explores YouTube’s
contribution to participatory culture through the American multi-channel network Machinima.
Similarly, a search in JSTOR (May 2. 2016) showed zero results for multi-channel networks,
and there has yet to be written about their core structures. This master thesis aims to explore
multi-channel networks on an academic level through extensive qualitative interviews and
document analyses. When researching for this master thesis, three aspects of multi-channel
networks that are worth exploring further.

First, the organizational structure of multi-channel networks seems to be less structured
than that of traditional media industries. In Scandinavia, multi-channel networks have only
operated for three years (Cederskog, 2014). Moreover, because the business strategies of
multi-channel networks are so new, it raises questions of value creation. Value is one of many
structural factors that are uncertain in multi-channel networks’ business models, for how do
one value whether or not YouTube videos, or influencers, are economically viable in the long-
term? Therefore, it is important to look into the challenges multi-channel networks come
across in forming a foundation in the Scandinavian media market. This, because consumers
are increasingly turning to the internet for content creation (Bakshy, Karrer, & Adamic, 2009)
while distribution is democratized thorough the rapid increase of near professional-quality
video production (Burgess & Green, 2013). It is, therefore, valuable to explore the
organizational structure of multi-channel networks as a way of understanding their position in
the Scandinavian media markets. A point here may be to look at how value is created in the
content YouTubers produce for multi-channel networks as a way of understanding how they operate.

Second, multi-channel networks generate revenue through the monetization of YouTube content, and brokering advertisement deals. Multi-channel networks also have the potential to become serious competitors to the traditional television industry. To date, investors have spent $1.65 billion on multi-channel networks, and many traditional media companies such as Disney are among them (Gutelle, 2014), presumably indicating that multi-channel networks are vital players in the future of television. Therefore, one might assume multi-channel networks are proving to be huge financial success stories. A report published by Ampere Analytics shows that the average multi-channel network is worth 10 cents per monthly view, which makes a multi-channel network that averages 1 billion views every month worth $100 million (Dredge, 2015). The motivation for this section of the master thesis comes from the desire to develop an understanding of how revenue flows through multi-channel networks, and how it influences them.

Third, multi-channel networks might have a different approach to creative control than traditional media companies, as YouTubers are their content creators. Traditional television projects are often built up of production networks containing large teams, and production usually spans over weeks or months (Manning & Sydow, 2007). MAZE, SPLAY, United Screens and Nordic Screens, however, all advertise that they give partnering YouTubers full creative control. Similarly, British YouTuber Jim Chapman wrote, in an article for The Independent, that he is not produced by anyone, and that he plans, shoots, and edits all of his YouTube videos by himself (Chapman, 2014). It becomes interesting, then, to look into the division of creative control between multi-channel networks, sponsors/advertisers, and partnering YouTubers.

1.3 Research Questions

This master thesis is focusing on multi-channel networks and their work with YouTubers. The focus of the research conducted, is the structure of multi-channel networks, the monetization and division of funds between YouTuber and multi-channel network, and the influence a content creator has over creative content. These three main points will be examined through the theoretical frameworks of convergence culture, participatory democracy, and culture
industries. The aim of this master thesis is to shed some light on the process where one goes from amateur content creator on YouTube to joining the ranks of media professionals.

Based on this, three research questions were formulated:

1) **How are multi-channel networks organized compared to traditional media companies?**

2) **How are multi-channel networks influenced by the monetization of YouTube content?**

3) **How is creative control displayed and divided among content creators and advertisers in multi-channel networks?**

Research has been conducted through a combination of structured and semi-structured interviews with the chief executives of the three leading multi-channel networks in Scandinavia, and Norway’s most successful YouTubers. Research has also been conducted by analyzing and examining existing material such as reports, articles, and books, as well as supplementary data gathered from the multi-channel networks. Method is described in detail in chapter 3.

### 1.4 A Brief Explanation of Muti-Channel Networks

Multi-channel networks are not common knowledge. This is mostly due their recent introduction to the media market. In Scandinavia, multi-channel networks did not exist until 2013 (Cederskog, 2014). In Norway not until 2014 (Jerijervi, 2014). It is therefore important to give a brief overview of what multi-channel networks are, in order to avoid misconceptions throughout this master thesis.

In the beginning, YouTube’s core function was as a free hosting platform for video files with a focus on user-generated content. Now, the company is pushing for premium content in an effort to position itself as a real contender in the media market. YouTube is one of the fastest growing websites ever (McManus, 2006), with over 500 hours of video added every minute (Robertson, 2015). Over the past decade, YouTube has implemented measures to generate revenue from YouTube videos by ensuring stricter copyright protection through Content ID, and developing a partner program where content creators easily can connect with third party advertisers ("YouTube Partner program overview," 2016). According to YouTube’s website:
Multi-Channel Networks are entities that affiliate with multiple YouTube channels, often to offer content creators assistance in areas including product, programming, funding, cross-promotion, partner management, digital rights management, monetization/sales, and/or audience development. MCNs are not affiliated with or endorsed by YouTube or Google

("Multi-channel network overview," 2014)

Since multi-channel networks are independent companies, they have a unique window into the YouTube world looking from the outside in. The strength of the multi-channel network lies with their ability to thrive in the “always-on” environments of social media. YouTube provides a unique opportunity for individuals to establish strong feedback relationships with their viewers. This is displayed by YouTubers through speaking directly to the viewer and encouraging them to actively participate in the discussion and provide feedback, as told by YouTuber Jim Chapman: “I Tweet and Facebook and Instagram directly from me to my audience which makes for a genuine connection” (Chapman, 2014). The multi-channel networks’ objectives may be capitalizing this content creator/follower connection.

1.5 How This Master Thesis is Structured

This master thesis is built up of seven chapters. Each chapter is divided into sub-sections. Chapter 1 gives a brief overview of the motivation for this master thesis, some sense of its structure, and a description of its main points. This chapter is also, where the three research questions are introduced. And it offers an introduction to multi-channel networks. Chapter 2 provides an introduction and exploration of the theoretical framework used in contextualizing this master thesis. Chapter 3 accounts for the research methodology. Here the justification for qualitative research and the understanding of semi-structured interviews will be discussed. Research questions are divided into three separate categories, and the analysis is therefore divided into three separate chapters. The structural decision is made to clearly separate the findings and give each section the amount of devotion needed to comprehend the functions of multi-channel networks. Chapter 4 is dominantly covering the organizational structure of multi-channel networks, with sub-sections covering guidelines for establishing a network, their partnering relationship with Google, and how cultural production is managed. Chapter 5 looks at monetization and how revenue is managed with sub-sections covering multi-channel networks’ monetization models, YouTube revenue, and user data collection. Chapter 6
explores creative control and how it is divided among the YouTubers, multi-channel networks, and advertisers. Chapter 7 is the conclusion. Here the findings of this master thesis will be summarized and the research questions answered.
2 Theoretical Framework

Multi-channel networks are companies that nurture YouTube talent. In many cases, they start out as consumers of creative content and turn into content creators on par with professionals in traditional media. As mentioned in the introduction, arguments of convergence can be made to justify the grandiose popularity and appeal of YouTubers. In this chapter, the aim is to give a comprehensive look at convergence culture, participatory democracy, culture labor, media economy, and fan culture.

2.1 Convergence Culture and Fandoms

Convergence Culture, first induced by Henry Jenkins, discusses the merging role of consumer and producer. For Jenkins, convergence culture may lead to a changing media industry where “new and old media collide, where grassroots and corporate media intersect, where the power of media producer and the power of the consumer interact” (Jenkins, 2006, p. 2). The essence of convergence culture is a cultural shift where consumers battle for more control over creative content. This calls for active participation from consumers circulating media content across multiple platforms. An example here is how creative content such as images, stories, and videos can exist simultaneously on books, movies, blogs, and social media platforms such as Tumblr, Facebook or YouTube.

The internet is becoming a site for consumer participation (Jenkins, 2006, p. 137). With this comes the claim that web 2.0 and social media with cheaper technologies such as the smart phone or digital camera factored in, will result in a more democratic society. In turn, this breaks down cultural and geographical barriers that previously contained one audience and one culture within limited geographical boarders. The notions of participation and democratic society relates to the creation of online communities that come together to express shared interests, solve common problems or reach joint goals. For Jenkins, participation means communities are growing to become “voluntary affiliations reaffirmed through emotional investments” (Jenkins, 2006, p. 27). Fans and fandoms are important to Jenkins’ theory of convergence culture. It is, however, important to make the distinction between the structural dominance of online communities and the ability to participate. This because digitalization does not make fandoms more participatory. Rather, it “expands who get to participate in fandom” (Jenkins & Ito, 2015, p. 17). What that means is that a broad access to
technology gives consumers and producers a place to come together, participate and form new communities. In the traditional media industries, production, distribution, and consumption occur on a top-to-bottom, trickle-down level. Here little to no participation is required of the consumer. Normally, one would watch a television program comfortably at home, and then discuss creative content on an interpersonal level with close relatives or friends. With new technologies, discussion of creative content can instantly occur with large numbers of other fans simultaneously. This allows consumption to occur on a bottom-up level. On social media sites such as Twitter, interactions between the consumer and the producer are maximized, and sometimes required. Social media platforms also allow fans to actively become producers of content. There seems to be a trend where new technologies become a tool for consumers to actively engage with old media content (Jenkins, 2006, p. 175). This is evident in fanfictions adding a sub-plot to an existing book, or fan art posted online. Because consumers take a central role in production of media content relating to their fandom, the argument then becomes that “there can be no easy separation between fans and producers” (Jenkins & Ito, 2015, p. 14). The question then turns to whether or not this new media culture will replace the old, and become a media industry without gatekeepers, led by the converging minds of consumer and producer on the increasingly accessible social media platforms of publication. Jenkins stresses that fan producers and social media are not yet replacing traditional broadcasting platforms, instead they interact in ways that are more complex. Media producers and advertisers have a desire to monetize fan participation, and are seen as likely to embrace these new models of storytelling that creates openings for consumer participation (Jenkins, 2006, p. 175).

A growing relationship between consumer and producer of creative content is emphasized through convergence and participatory cultures, and are contributing to traditional media in three key ways. First, social media platforms encourage interpersonal interactions between producers and consumers, and translates to much higher brand loyalty for endorsed products. Second, because creative content can be distributed and advertised through multiple channels, the reach is wider. Third, younger audiences want greater influence over the media, and higher authority over media companies, with the ability influence production of creative content so that it is reflected in their tastes and interests (Jenkins, 2006, pp. 254-255). If anything, convergence culture and social media provide a “linking of symmetrical participation and amateur production” (Shirky, 2008, p. 107). Nevertheless, amateur fan productions can only go so far. Jenkins writes: “there has to be a breaking point beyond which
franchises cannot be stretched, subplots can’t be added, secondary characters can’t be identified, and references can’t be fully realized” (Jenkins, 2006, p. 127). Arguably, this indicates that convergence culture is mainly cultural, and separated from commercial interactions or incentives, which Jenkins (2006, p. 114), further emphasizes by saying:

While we may safely ascribe some kind of commercial motivation for most of the content produced and distributed by mass media, no such shared agenda shapes the production and distribution of grassroots media.

This pure cultural emphasis on creative production makes convergence culture widely discussed and criticized. Therefore, it is beneficial to look to other scholars in order to achieve alternative perspectives of convergence culture, participatory culture and cultural work.

2.2 Social Media and Creative Labor

One of Jenkins’s critics is Christian Fuchs, who illuminates what he calls participatory democracy, as a response to Jenkin’s participatory culture, where political, political economic, and cultural dimensions are accounted for (Fuchs, 2013, p. 55). The main emphasis in Fuchs’s critique of participatory culture is founded in the fact that he feels Jenkins disregards the ownership of the social platforms and companies in which participation occur. Fuchs stresses that “participation means that humans have the right and reality to be part of decisions and to govern and control the structures that affect them” (2013, p. 57). The ownership argument is grounded in his observation of large corporations like Google owning social participation platforms such as YouTube, providing neither users nor waged employees with the ability to perform business decisions. Consequently, the power relationship is not equal in the decision-making process, and therefore deems Jenkins’s definition of participation, where consumers actively participate in creating and sharing creations (Jenkins, 2006, p. 331), outdated (Fuchs, 2013, p. 56).

For Fuchs production of culture boils down to cognition. Without cognition, one cannot communicate and without communication on cannot co-operate (Fuchs, 2015, p. 74). In many ways, this is the basis of producer influence over consumer, and a powerful notion as the exchange of symbols among individuals prompts change in behavior or knowledge structures. In regards to convergence, an emphasizes is put on its classical reality in the form of an occurring convergence of media and machine. Here, the distinction is made between media,
which essentially is social activates of cognition and communication, and machines or technology that is generally condensed to the “labor and production with the help of machines” (Fuchs, 2013, p. 43). The personal computer is a converging tool because it allows for cognition, communication, and co-operative labors while remaining a classical machine, merging production and distribution of culture into one tool by opening up for both consumption and co-operative production of information. The leading argument is that structures of control in the economy, political systems, and culture productions are based on power asymmetries that changed when the internet was introduced “in order to guarantee the continuity of commodity culture, exploitation, surplus value generation, and capital accumulation” (Fuchs, 2013, p. 43). Similarly, the term mass self-communication is used to describe a message with the potential to reach a global audience while simultaneously being self-communication through the self-generated production of cultural content, and thus marking the beginning of the creative audience (Castells, 2013, p. 132).

As a result, the modern internet is formed out of the conflict between the large and global media conglomerates’ desire for commodification of creative online content, and the creative audiences’ fight for both creative freedoms and rights of expression without corporate interference (Fuchs, 2013, p. 75). The tension that occurs is reflected in asymmetrical media power, where “media power” and “counter-power” are contradicting and dominant factors (Fuchs, 2013, p. 80). This is evident in services such as YouTube that are privately owned, and may have factors other than individual exposure at play. This comes in the form of monetization with advertising and the logic of consumption, and dominant elites who require and obtain largely dominant positions, leaving alternative amateur actors with fewer assets and scarce consideration. According to Fuchs there exits three types of media power. First, economic media power, where media power is dominated by capitalistic goals triggering market pressures that only produce, package, and distribute homogeneous content in combined segments targeting a large audience sample. Forms of counter-media power here are grassroots media, and publically funded content or consumer power. Second, political media power, displays media power in the form of state censorship or a public relations or political machine whose main objectives are persuading an audience towards one specific stance. Here, media regulation and alternative news agencies that find a way of redistributing dominance are some of the counter-powers. Third, cultural media power, is evident in prestigious institutions or celebrities whom have increased amounts of influence, and show some dominance in the media. Forms of counter-power here might be the development of
alternative institutions or companies (Fuchs, 2013, p. 81). Arguments of validity can be rooted in notions of the internet being accessible for almost all people, and that for every single media-power, there might be ten counter-powers. Which, in some sense is true, but one has to consider the ability to access such information. The internet is a vast entity with much information but mostly what surfaces and reaches the average individual is drawn to certain information that is determined and promoted by powerful actors (Fuchs, 2013, p. 82).

The mindset that builds upon the fact that value, satisfaction, and willingness to contribute in a community validates cultural labor through the joys of participation ignores corporate social media’s desire to generate capital through targeted advertisements and free participatory labor. Capitalism is built on the offset of increasing productivity and generating more and more capital. When corporate social media utilize targeted advertisement, and watch audiences in terms of demographics, it is a form of relative surplus value production (Jhally, 1987, in Fuchs, 2013, p. 104) because it allows advertisers to display different adverts simultaneously. In short, relative surplus value is the enhanced productivity, which allows for a surplus of content or merchandize to be produced within the same time period. This seems to be achieved in social media through the monitoring and gathering of personal user data mapping consumer behavior (Fuchs, 2013, p. 105). Consequently, because targeted advertisement depends on free social media networks such as YouTube and Facebook, consumer participation becomes a commodity that is sold, purchased, and consumed. In other words, “you the audience members contribute your unpaid work time and in exchange you receive the program material and the explicit advertisements” (Smythe, 1981/2006, p. 233, 238, quoted in Fuchs, 2013, p. 107). Given the fact that the internet follows a decentralized structure, which urges many-to-many communication, participating individuals are consumers and content producers simultaneously, Fuchs (2013, p. 110) argues that consumers are “exploited by capital.” Although, it is worth noting that not all creative work is commodified, companies urging consumers to participate in unpaid labor while collecting personal browsing habits, and user data, which are then sold to advertisers, suggests the lines between play and labor are becoming blurry, and questions whether participation on social media is really unmotivated by capital.
2.3 Going Viral and the Creative Audience

Traditional television networks now coexist with diverse social media platforms, and Green and Jenkins (2011) use Susan Boyle who became an overnight sensation after auditioning for Britain’s Got Talent, as an example where footage shown on television migrated, and spread among online media platforms, such as YouTube. Form this one witnesses the collision of new and old media, and see a shift towards an interpersonal level of communication where the lines between producer and consumer blur, because “new convergence media enables communal, rather than individualistic models of reception (Jenkins, 2006, p. 28). In many ways, this takes it one step further in its understanding that the appeal, and rapid growth, of YouTube comes from a collective sense of togetherness among consumers, as Castells (2013, p. 127) projects:

The industry has evolved from a predominantly homogeneous mass communication medium, anchored around national television and radio networks, to a diverse media system combining broadcasting with narrowcasting to niche audiences.

What this boils down to is the increasing interdependence shown among participants and collaborators, which combined with the technologies and publication platforms transcends into an era of culture production driven, possibly even dominated, by non-elites and non-experts. With this, the notion of community might shift because consumers are drifting towards immediate interaction around their favorite television shows, and as a result feel a stronger sense of belonging, and expresses a deeper sense of brand loyalty. A general focus then resonates the notion of everyday people gaining the access to culture production and distribution. With this comes the inclusion of moral economy, as investments in amateur culture production are deeply rooted in the value of both stories told and the producer’s ability to expresses personal motives for production and distribution of content. And, while motives in shaping cultural production varies, deep down the prominent motive for individuals to participate in culture production is gaining recognition, influence culture, and expressing personal meanings (Jenkins, Ford, & Green, 2013, p. 61). Therefore, decreasing costs of media devices and the increasing access to 4G internet lowers production costs, which expands the availability of distribution channels, and grants consumers an active role in archiving, alter, produce, and redistribute media contents. Consequently, everyone produce culture together in a democratic process. Similarly, culture production becomes dependent on participatory interactions among consumers, and between consumers and producers, thus,
while media ownership is becoming increasingly more concentrated, everyone have the opportunity to become a content creator in some form or fashion, through the convergence of old and new media, which inevitably triggers a shifting balance of power.

Circulating media online has become a common process that is now highly integrated in societies, mostly through the easy access to smart phones, the internet, and platforms like YouTube. In other words, media consumption is no longer confined to “productions that radiated outwards from a limited number of production/distribution points and were received by members of a separate, larger, ‘mass,’ the ‘audience’” (Couldry, 2012, p. 13). Rather, they co-exists with multiple online platforms where consumers, who are more literate about social networking, produce and share content through continuous interactions with one another (Green & Jenkins, 2011). The introduction of technology companies such as Google into the culture industries is seen as a game changer because the company validates the importance of interaction, while simultaneously operating as a navigational tool in the vast space of the internet, by providing options for searches. Consumers have grown to become dependent on the search mechanism provided by Google, making it irreversible (Couldry, 2012, p. 45). This also, gives them a great advantage, and plenty of power, as those who control the tool for searches, controls where consumers look and how they navigate. One of the most prominent factors that made Google a large player in culture production was its accusation of YouTube in 2006. This, mostly due to the fact that YouTube “provides a vast new space of showing where heterogeneous actors can post and discuss video material. Much of YouTube’s material is itself placed there by institutional actors as a cheap unregulated alternative to broadcasting” (Couldry, 2012, p. 47).

2.4 Establishing Value in Social Media

“Value is a complex concept” (Fuchs, 2013, p. 112) that is characterized in numerous ways, often socially produced, and discussed in terms of the monetary worth of a thing or a phenomenon (Bolin, 2011). In other words, while objects might have lost economical or cultural value for some, they may hold significant sentimental value to others (Jenkins et al., 2013, p. 85). Because value is socially produced, problems arise in the form of subjective and objective meanings being mixed up to the extent that some suggest the concept of value is indefinable (Magendanz 2003 in Bolin, 2011, p. 16). Value can be understood through a subjective sense where value provides mental worth or something is considered important, and in an objective sense where value is monetary or emphasized in the amount of time
people spend on a specific thing (Fuchs, 2013). In capitalism, value is also seen to have two sides, first use value, which is achieved through concrete labor deeming a good’s qualitative value sufficient for human needs, and second, value obtained through abstract labor where a good’s quantitative side allows its exchange for other goods (Fuchs, 2013, p. 112).

When attempting to understand value in the context of social media, one also have to consider the longevity of goods, as box of chocolates might be gifted, consumed, and then cease to exist, but social media posts, and YouTube videos alike, can be shared, consumed, gifted or sold at the same time without being used up in consumption (Bolin, 2011). For users of social media, one can argue that they actively engage in cultural production when they shoot, edit, and share videos, but also when they browse content, communicate on platforms through comment sections, and edit their profiles. There is a need among people to belong, which relates to three underlining principles of group-seeking behavior. First, inclusion, which emphasizes the need to belong or be a part of an inner circle, second, affection or the need to be loved by others, and last, control, which is all about displaying power over others (Shutz 1966 in Gangadharbatla, 2008). These three behavioral traits are subjective, and may increase the chances of individuals actively engaging with user-generated content on social media sites. Similarly, Jenkins et al. (2013, p. 85) theorize that users interacting with social media platforms, and actively participating in fandom by creating and sharing content, produce value as content is both sentimental and transmits mental worth. Further, value in this regard, “illustrates how the collective choices of audiences make content culturally meaningful, socially fungible, and economically valuable” (Green & Jenkins, 2011, p. 112). There exists some sense of value in production of culture content for producers, as “the millions of individuals providing videos for YouTube take pride in their accomplishments.” Similarly, the argument for culture production is emphasized in the rewarding feeling of contributing with content for a community, and a sense of value not being motivated by financial gains, rather in the pride of sharing content and the desire for dialogue (Jenkins et al., 2013, pp. 57-60).

Fuchs (2013, p. 112), on the other hand, argues that since social media platforms like YouTube have corporate owners, users work each time they actively consume or engage with content hosted on such platforms, and therefore value created due to their participation only benefits platform owners financially. Often objective, value, in this regard, is evident in how social media provides large advantages for businesses, such as the ability to engage directly with consumers, both instantly and at low costs (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010), which may
indicate that businesses have to participate in social media in order to stay relevant. Another way to look at the value businesses see in consumers is thorough the collection of user-data. Companies such as Google index user-generated content and use it as a tool for enhancing and providing keyword searches (Girard, 2009, p. 98). Google has a compulsive hunger for quantitative data, and currently retains so much data, that it can, in fact, “narrowly segment user demographics and discover niches that would be invisible with smaller samples” (Girard, 2009, p. 99). Fuchs (2013, p. 131) emphasize that Google’s collection of personal user data would not have been possible without the free labor of consumers creating and sharing user-generated content, and thus the company actively exploit them, although, Girard (2009, p. 156) stresses that Google has a good reputation among its users. In addition, Google see monetary value in the storage of such data, as the company is able to sell data to external advertisers who then enable personalized, targeted advertisement (Fuchs, 2013, p. 131).

2.5 A Brief Look at Traditional Media Industries

Traditionally, media industries are heavily influenced by corporate control (Holt & Perren, 2011, p. 45), which for Couldry has made television “a apace where conglomerates compete” (2012, p. 15). Within media conglomerates, production is shaped by three core factors. First, oligopoly, which, essentially, is the concentration of power within a single few huge companies. This is essentially done in such a fashion to ensure that the collective control remains within the grasp of company. Second, integration is the effort industry giants make to “consolidate control of multiple industry sectors by merging multiple entities onto one efficient and internally coherent system.” On other words, this is the process of large conglomerates like SONY acquiring different “skills” in order to become self-sustaining. This can be the venture into music, or video games, or publishing. It basically means removing dependence on any and all external actors. Last, there is distribution control, which broadly is the “flow of a product through the marketplace.” A process, which also has been consumed by the industry elite swallowing and running their own distribution companies (Holt & Perren, 2009; p 46). Some argue, however, that conglomerate media companies are not rigorously bad, rather there are a natural consequence of capitalism’s need to increase productivity in order to maximize profit (Fuchs, 2013, p. 57). Therefore, one can look to Hesmondhalgh’s view of synergy for a more nuanced look at conglomerate control. He says synergy is “how two elements might work together to produce a result greater than the sum of two parts”
The argument here seems to be that media company’s wish to control most aspects of culture production under one company. This might be the creative production and the commercial distribution, for example. As evidence suggests this lead to the formation of the large media conglomerates. Synergy also translates into the converging media markets, as is evident by Google buying YouTube in 2006, for $1.65 billion (Clark, 2006). Not only does this introduce the merger of the IT world with the culture industries, but Google’s acquisition of YouTube also give them a seemingly large advantages when it comes to the search engine market and targeted advertisement. In the end, Hesmondhalgh argues that the purchase of YouTube underlines the fact that dominant control in the culture industries translates to control over its distribution and circulation (2007, p. 128), in a media society where conglomerates are switches in “a space of networks through which all power flows (Couldry, 2003, p. 86).

2.5.1 Cultural Labor

When looking at Hesmondhalgh (2007) it becomes evident that there are a number of ways in which cultural workers are characterized in research literature. For one, cultural workers tend to hold multiple jobs as most are predominantly freelancers or self-employed, and work is mostly characterized being irregular, prompting short contracts with little to no job protection. Second, the distribution of earnings is unequally divided between creative producers and production companies. Last, cultural workers seem to be younger (2007, p. 254). Still cultural work is highly desired by a majority of individuals, which might be a result of the high forms of self-exploration caused by high degrees of personal autonomy cultural work allows. On an external level, cultural work produces “meanings and representations that have emergent qualities that take effect in society as a whole” (Fuchs, 2015, p. 63). In any case, companies extracting cultural labor operate in a functional hierarchical structure where workers are divided into sections with corresponding positions. The creative manager is in charge of the technical work surrounding creative talent. Here the tasks differ, as more senior workers with more experience might devote their time to the biggest talents, leaving lesser tasks such as paper work or contract managing to newer members of the work team. Second, there are the symbol creators, who are the artists, usually working under harsh conditions with minimal rewards. Hesmondalgh credits this perseverance among fresh symbol creators to the desire, and inner wish, to generate name recognition (2007, p. 261). Considering the reward of potential fame and the glamour of cultural work with the currency and measurement of
ownership, one again can to look to Hesmondalgh, who emphasizes that “in the Professional era, copyright law and practice has been the arena in which the rewards for cultural labor have been determined” (2007, p. 257). This is important in the understanding of how culture industries earn revenue, which also give some indication as to how companies are structured around the task of accumulating it. Hesmondhalgh in his extensive research on the cultural industries introduces the characterization of cultural industries as diverse and highly complex. At its core lies “the attempt to examine and rethink culture by considering its relationship to social power” (Hesmondhalgh, 2007, p. 51). With this notion comes the complex professional, which determines the dominant factor in a period the media industries evolved after the 1950’s, a time where media production is increasingly professionalized, and an emphasis is put on what Hesmondhalgh (2007, p. 81) calls the “stages of cultural production.” The stages do not follow a on from one and another, like a production line in a factory, rather they correspond, intermingle and sometimes conflict. With them follows a natural form of hierarchy.

First, creation, entailing conception, and execution, which details the beginning stages of cultural production from the writing of a screenplay, to the recording of an album in a studio, to producing multiple copies ready for distribution. Second, circulation includes advertising, packaging, publicity, and distribution. This anatomy influences the cultural production as deviating from the model felt ill-disposed to the content creators when “companies in the business of cultural production exert much stricter control over the other stages of making texts after the creation stage” (Hesmondhalgh, 2007, p. 81). Consequently, there exists a combination of loose creative control within the creation and execution of content, and a strict control over the reproduction and circulation of the product. The relationship between creativity and commerce is a widespread notion of success and potentially the drive force behind the assumption that the greatest artists are most prone to commercial failure. In the end, all content creators must find an audience, and Hesmondhalgh (2007, p. 82), argues this to be close to impossible without the help of technological mediation or the financial support of large organizations.

Then there is the notion of what constitutes as work. The fact that there has occurred a shift in how cultural work is produced and consumed is argued by Bolin (2011, p. 67) to be the result of digitization. The computer is an example here. For while the computer can be of use without a human participation, social media would be absurd without the continuous interaction, communication and relationship building that occurs within. This allows for a
predisposition where commercial actors, in the search for maximized profits, push content creators towards a facilitated genre by targeting a specific audience, which potentially work as a creative limitation that may damage content production. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that what remains of the relationship between content creators and commercial facilitators, in the cultural industries, is tension, which point to organizational struggle, negotiation and conflict. Marx writes, “productive labor is only that which produces capital” (Marx 1857; p. 58, quoted in Fuchs 2015, p. 22). In this regard, one has to look at economics and culture as one entity. Marx uses the example of the piano player whom produces culture and only exchanges labor in return for capital, and thus not work in the economic sense. While arguments can be made as to whether or not social media users obtain capital (Fuchs, 2013, p. 128), the argument remains the same: When user-value is created, and catered, to satisfy some sort of human need, it becomes work, and thus also an economic practice. This is further reflected when Fuchs claims that “the basic role of culture in society is that it guarantees the reproduction of the human body and mind” (Fuchs, 2015, p. 32). The introduction of tech companies such as Google to the culture industries effects the way cultural labor is represented in social media, mostly because there is a rising trend where, otherwise traditionally separate ideals, such as work and play, and consumer and producer, merge. The argument resides in the fact that communication is the mutual sharing of meaning through symbols, which is not possible without media because of its abilities to store knowledge and information, and distribute that content to the public. Therefore, one presumes that “culture has its own economy and politics” (Fuchs, 2015, pp. 327-238) and that there are two active audiences, one signifying economy and the other politics (Bolin, 2011, p. 72).

2.5.2 The Economics of Cultural Work

Gillian Doyle argues that one has to assume companies take an interest in advertising because of their desire to maximize profits, which in turn also can be used to predict a company’s behavior (2013, p. 2). Spending money on advertising, then, is all about persuading consumers to buy products, increase sales, and build relationships with the consumer (Doyle, 2002a, p. 49). Naturally, this gives advertising some power as its effects depend on its appeal to the audience. It also suggest that advertising correlates with competition and, in some form, finds its place in the commercially motivated world of marketing. Knowing this, it becomes important to look at some features that characterized media economics.
For one, as mentioned above, media companies often operate within two major sections, one being the production of cultural content, and the other being the commercial distribution of said content. Doyle argues that there also exists a third one, audiences. In essence, creative productions should concentrate on catering creative content to audiences at an equal capacity to producing and distributing content. Audiences are an important factor, as it is argued to be the main currency for most media companies, so much in fact, that audiences are sold to advertisers as separate and distinct user groups (2013, p. 13). She further expresses the notion of value originating from meaning, although the value is not material, which suggests consumption of cultural products, like television shows or artworks, does not get used up or destroyed, as one individual’s consumption will not take away others’ opportunities to watch it or weakening its value (Doyle, 2013, p. 14). In this equation, it is also important to introduce the internet and digital technology, as they are projected to obtain a dominant position in the advertising market. Doyle argues that the internet is clearly better suited for some forms of advertising, mostly evident in the evolution of classifieds, usually found in newspapers, and banner ads, usually found on websites. Digitalization continues to have huge impacts on production costs, allowing for atomized content that is displayed on different devices simultaneously and have the potential of reaching a global audience. Doyle stresses, however, that while online platforms where advertising is displayed change, consumers’ “good characteristics of media content and the prevalence of economics of scale and scope – remain unchanged” (2013, p. 18)

Vertical integration is another way for cultural industries to make money without exposing themselves to too much risk. When it comes to vertical integration, Hesmondhalgh (2007, p. 200) notes, it is all about the distribution of products, as the notion often refers to one large company owning the supply chain of the product they produce. One of the advantages making vertical integration attractive to cultural industries is the minimized risk that follows not having the necessity to selling and buying services from others (Doyle, 2013, p. 49). Vertical integration is not a term that is exclusive to the culture industries, but what sets it apart from other industries is the consistent demand for an audience. As established above, media content has little value without access to an audience. The value of vertical integration, then, becomes the security it brings in regard to control over the marketplace. In more recent years, one can argue that vertical integration also give cultural industries some form of control over output and input, in the form of feedback from consumers. This might be evident in the way culture communication steadily shifts from one-to-many-communication to
one-to-one-communication. It is, however, equally true that a company founded with the purposes of playing into national culture or, through good intentions, shape a local market, over time is forced to alter its path, replace terrain, and redistribute its creative means in order to secure its survival, and boost profitability (Holt & Perren, 2011). In any sense, one can argue that vertical integration traces back to the monopoly and conglomeratic behavior. It becomes necessary, then, to look in that direction when using vertical integration to discuss the economic powers of multi-channel networks further.
3 Methods

This master thesis uses qualitative interviews as its main method of gathering empirical data. When it comes to multi-channel networks, there currently exist two forms of publicly available data. 1) Statistical data regarding their growth, user demographic, and position in the media market, and 2) newspaper articles and press releases detailing their existence. Therefore, when choosing qualitative interviews, as method, a heavy emphasis was put on its ability to generate purposeful and realistic access to the phenomenon of multi-channel networks.

This chapter will provide a brief overview the chosen method. It will also explain the motivation for choosing qualitative interviews as well as a statement on the sample, and describe the supplementary data that make up this master thesis.

3.1 Why Qualitative Interviews?

When conducting the interviews for this master thesis, the hope was determining how to define multi-channel networks. A desired outcome was to establish a better understanding of multi-channel networks’ position in the Scandinavian media market. Choosing qualitative interviews was based on three basic arguments.

First, the depth in which qualitative interviews bring to the table. The sole purpose of taking use of qualitative research methods is to “understand themes of the daily world from the subjects’ own perspectives” (Brinkman & Kvale, 2015, p. 27). Similarly, Willig (2013, p. 146) argues that qualitative interviews are concentrated around informants providing meaning, and how they make sense of the world. As a result, they allow the researcher a unique opportunity to sit down and engulf in a dialogue with individuals whom hold key positions in the industry. Furthermore, because qualitative interviews openly enquire about situational meanings or motives, and allows for the collection of everyday theories and self-interpretations (Hopf, 2004, p. 203). This can prove to be beneficial when exploring a concept or phenomenon that is new. In this master thesis, informants are predominantly elites. Therefore, their opinions and motives matter. Multi-channel networks are a relatively new phenomenon, and situational motives and self-interpretations can allow for intriguing and well-formed empirical data. A downside, however, when allowing self-interpretation is that the responsibility of collecting consistent information from all of the informants is exclusively
in the hands of the researcher. For while qualitative interviews are a good way for researchers to explore others understanding of a phenomenon, the real understanding might be vague as a result of conflicting world views (Qu & Dumay, 2011). This is something to consider when interviewing elites who might present a glorified view of multi-channel networks.

Second, Barriball and While (1994) suggest there are five superior factors to qualitative interviews. First, it is easier to eliminate the factor of poor response rates quantitative research often faces. Second, it is well matched to the expiration of “attitudes, values, beliefs, and motives.” Third, it allows the researcher to evaluate the validity of the subject’s responses through the observation of nonverbal cues. Fourth, the researcher feels confident that the questions are answered by the same subject throughout. And last, it makes sure the subject is not influenced by exterior factors when delivering responses. One also has to factor in the notion of multi-channel network being a fairly new concept in the culture industries, which means there only exist fractions of data collected on the matter. A qualitative interview is therefore beneficial to this dissertation, as they provide the opportunity to sit down and have first-hand access to information and knowledge from the individuals that stand closes to the subject in Norway. Another factor that also plays into the superiority of qualitative interviews for this dissertation, is how qualitative research aims to find knowledge that is expressed in an everyday tone, and similarly, is free form quantification, as “it works with words not with numbers” (Brinkman & Kvale, 2015, p. 33). Further, qualitative interviews encourage the subject to be as descriptive as possible in their answers provides diversity to ones finding, allowing for unique and wholesome data, which is especially important when one ventures into a field that is relatively young in regards to prior research.

Third, Qu and Dumay (2011) explores the neopositivist view that sees interviews as an effective tool capable of establishing a context-free truth about an objective reality with relevant responses and little bias. Here, informants are looked at as truth tellers. This becomes relevant because the academic data that exists on Scandinavian multi-channel networks is scarce. It also becomes relevant because the informants for this master thesis are elites with high positions in the respective multi-channel networks. With the neopositivist view it is important to give a brief overview of some limitations that come with qualitative interviews. One being that the gathering of data through talking with people is disregarded because of its lack of structure (Alvesson, 2010). Some even argue that data from interviews cannot be stated as facts because the informants’ accounts are “limited by the existence of unacknowledged conditions, unintended consequences, tacit skill, and unconscious
motivations” (Alvesson, 2010). This can be considered when moving forward with this form of qualitative interview.

3.2 Semi-structured interviews

Choosing the interview style for a research paper can be a delicate procedure. After arguments have been made for qualitative interviews, it is therefore, important to explore the different variation of qualitative interviews to make sure the right approach is taken. According to Hopf (2004) there are three key questions one have to ask before choosing an interview style. First, should questions and sequencing pre-formulated? Pre-formulated questions are most common among quantitative research, while most quantitative researchers follow a set study guide that allows for movement in the formulation of questions. Second, should one concentrate interviews around a focused subject, or should focus be on an understanding a broader specter of themes? Third, whether or not the narrative in important, or if the purpose is to get a collection of general meanings. For the former, listening and forming a story is in focus, while the latter emphasizes active questioning and probing.

When conducting semi-structured interviews the intent is to elicit responses from an informant. This is done through predetermined questions in an interview that is conducted in a conversational manner (Clifford, French, & Valentine, 2010). Semi-structured interviews are planned and flexible approaches to interviews where the researcher has creative control. This is demonstrated through follow-up questions (Barriball & While, 1994, p. 330). In essence, semi-structured interviews are about paying attention to the informant, being nonjudgmental, creating a comfortable environment, and being systematic with the data given to the researcher (Clifford et al., 2010). This makes semi-structured interviews ideal because they have the ability for the researcher to probe and seek clarification in the subject’s response, which results in deep and thoughtful answers that are well defined and thoroughly explained. Furthermore, the wording and the sequence of the questions in the research conducted for this dissertation were the same for all six participants, thus one can argue that interviews conducted in this master thesis take the form of a combination of structured and semi-structured interviews. A great advantage as “… we can be sure that any differences in the answers are due to differences among the recipients rather than in the questions asked” (Gordon 1975, quoted in Barriball & While, 1994, p. 330). Naturally, the validity of the data collected through the semi-structured approach to qualitative research, will depend on the
researchers ability to report the interviews. Moreover, semi-structured interviews have some limitations due to the fact that they are very difficult, if not impossible to replicate, which may affect validity when comparing the responses.

Probing may then be used to encourage the interview onward. Harrell and Bradley explain probes as a tool in which researchers use “when they do not understand what the respondent has said and thus need further clarification” (2009, p. 44). Probes are unique to semi-structured interviews, and equally important, as they seemingly aid the researcher to further elicit an explanation from the subject. This proved especially important when interviewing the leaders of multi-channel networks in Norway, as much of the information provided by the subjects was internal phrases and concepts not widely known to the public. Examples of probes are “can you be more specific?” and “If you had to pick one answer, what would you choose?” (Harrell & Bradley, 2009, p. 45)

Kvale and Brinkmann’s seven stages of thematizing and structuring an interview study was used as guidelines throughout the research period (2015, p. 123). Although, most researchers advise against having a set plan for interviewing, it is beneficial to have some sense of direction when it comes to the purpose of the master thesis. This is because it will be easier when analyzing of data (Brinkman & Kvale, 2015, p. 129). For the interviews conducted in this master thesis, all prior knowledge about the informants was obtained through newspaper articles and statistical reports available online.

Recruiting informants had three conditions: 1) Working/Prior employee of a Scandinavian multi-channel network with extensive knowledge of the subject. 2) YouTuber affiliated with a Scandinavian multi-channel network. 3) Norwegian. There was no interpersonal connection with the informants prior to the interviews so the interview guide was designed with warm-up sections as a comfort to informants.

3.3 Understanding the Sample

A combination of structured and semi-structured qualitative interviews are the main empirical base for this master thesis. When constituting what makes an appropriate sample, scholars tends to shy away from concrete suggestions (Mason, 2010). Some, such as Morse (1994, p. 225) recommends at least six, while others such as Bertaux (1981, p. 35) says 15 is the minimum. Mason (2010) argues that a sample must be “large enough to assure that most or all participants that might be important are uncovered, but at the same time if the sample is too
large data becomes repetitive and, eventually, superfluous.” The time to complete the master must also be considered (Baker & Edwards, 2012). Although, there are no absolute rules, only guidelines that have to be assessed with good judgement (Guest, Namey, & Mitchell, 2012, p. 60). For this master thesis, six interviews have been conducted. In justifying the sample size it is important to look at a few contributing factors.

First, it is worth noting that finding participants who are willing to be open is of great importance. This is also the main challenge. The aim of the data collection for this dissertation was getting firsthand knowledge about multi-channel networks. During the initial stages of data collection, reaching out to elite informants who have direct leadership within multi-channel networks in Scandinavia was paramount. To this date, there are four multi-channel networks operating out of Scandinavia. They are United Screens, SPLAY, Nordic Screens and MAZE. Of those four, United Screens, SPLAY, and Nordic Screens are the only ones with offices in Oslo. As a result, the access to a viable sample is limited.

Second, the lack of available informants working in a multi-channel network was countered with expanding the sample to include YouTubers. The sample was chosen based on the following criteria: Informants have to be Norwegian YouTubers and affiliated with either United Screens, SPLAY or Nordic Screens. They have to above the age of 18, and they have to have a follower base of 100,000 subscribers or more.

Third, making contact is not always easy. This may be especially true when it comes to elites because they have busy schedules, and may find it harder to respond. For Goldstein (2002) getting an elite interview through ‘cold calling’ is more art than science. And King and Horrocks (2010, p. 32) say: “If a request is coming through a known and trusted colleague, people are more likely to give it proper consideration than if it had arrived from a stranger, where it might be seen as just another form of junk mail (this may be especially likely to happen with ‘cold’ requests received via email.” In this master thesis, the chief executives in United Screens, SPLAY, and Nordic Screens were contacted through ‘cold’ requests. An e-mail was sent emphasizing the scope of the study (one-year master thesis at the University of Oslo), requesting their participation. The responses were positive. A similar approach was made to contact YouTubers with no success. A total of ten YouTubers were contacted, four came back negative, six did not respond back. A push was therefore made to approach YouTubers through the informants previously interviewed. Only two were willing to participate.
3.4 Informants

After an extensive search for informants during the fall of 2015, six interviews were successfully acquired and conducted. Below is a run-down of the six elite informants in this master thesis.

**Multi-channel networks:**

**Nordic Screens:** Nordic Screens is the smallest player in the market. They are currently only operating in Norway; however, they are leading the market with 250 Norwegian channels. Their biggest player is “Noobwork,” for heavy gamers, claiming 2 million views each month. An interview was conducted with Nils Ketil Andersen, the former head of Programming at TV2, and founding CEO of Nordic Screens, and **Thomas Lien** a previous employee of the organization. It is also worth mentioning that Nordic Screens bought 25% of MAZE earlier this year.

**SPLAY:** The largest Multi-Channel Network in Sweden, currently at 250 channels, 50 of which are Norwegian, and averaging roughly 140 million views each month. They house the biggest Norwegian YouTube stars “Prebz og Dennis,” with an estimated 5 million views each month. An interview was conducted with the Norwegian Country Manager, Christina Parker.

**United Screens:** The last multi-channel Network operating out of Norway is United Screens. United Screens claim to be the largest Multi-Channel Network in Scandinavia. They are currently managing 380 channels and averaging 170 million views each month. Their largest players, in Norway, include “PelleK” and “PistolSchrimps.” Each with four and three million views each month respectively. An interview was conducted with Marie-Louise Alvær, the Country Manager for Norway.

**YouTubers:**

**“PelleK:”** The biggest YouTuber in Norway with over 1,3 million subscribers. His YouTube channel focuses on music, and most of the tracks are produced by himself. An interview was conducted with Per Fredrik Åsly, which is his actual name. He started YouTube in 2006 and have been affiliated with United Screens since 2014.

**“PistolShripms:”** Has over 440,000 subscribers and is one of the biggest comedy YouTube channels in Norway. “PistolShrips” is the work of Stian Hafstad and Christer Larsen. An interview was conducted with Christer Larsen. They started YouTube in 2008 and have been affiliated with United Screens since 2014.
3.5 Elite Interviews

Kvale and Brinkmann describe elites as “persons who are leaders or experts in a community, usually with powerful positions” (2015, p. 171). For this master thesis, the involvement of elite informants is important. For Hochschild (2009), the general purposes for elite interviews are that they may provide the material itself when it comes to topics such as group identity, attitudes towards newly developed policies or explanations for political activism. Elite interviews also give first-hand accounts, and provide rich depth to a phenomenon (Bozoki, 2011). When going forward with interviewing elites there are a few points to consider. For one, elites are used to interviews and may have produced talking points prior to the interview (Bozoki, 2011). It is therefore important for the researcher to have extensive knowledge of the informants and their positions a given subject. Research is very important prior to interviewing elites (Bozoki, 2011). This because elite interviews should aim to elicit subjective perceptions rather that the objective truth. Similarly, a researcher should never ask elites for objective or factual questions, as all the information should be learned when preparing for the interview (Bozoki, 2011). When it comes to this master thesis, avoiding preset biases was done by examining data regarding the multi-channel networks before the interviews occurred. Thus, the researcher was able to challenge arguments and probe for more accurate answers. Further, Bozoki (2011) notes that deviations in interpretations are valuable as it gives the data nuance. One must, however, be aware that some elite informants may not like having their interpretations challenged. In this master thesis, this was taken into consideration when developing the interview guide. The interview guide was set up in such a way that milder interpretations were requested in the beginning stages of the interview as a warm-up. The more challenging questions were asked towards the end of the interview. This allowed the researcher to test the waters and develop some understanding of how to formulate the questions that challenge an elite informant’s interpretation.

3.6 Ethics

As Kvale and Brinkmann (2015, p. 72) point out, during interviews the researcher becomes the main instrument for collecting data, which not only demands skills and knowledge, but some sensitivity towards the informants as well This becomes important especially when using informants’ real names and occupations, even though permission has been explicitly given to do so. Mostly because the researcher has to take into consideration their integrity.
First, all interviews were done in correspondence with the guidelines of the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD). Approval for the study was given early 2016. Because of the status and position of the elite informants, it was decided to not make them anonymous. Every single informant was explicitly informed thusly, although Goldstein (2002, p. 671) argues that elite informants will be familiar with the “common journalistic rules for use of information gathered in interviews.” In addition, information was provided giving informants the option of withdrawing their consent from the master thesis at any time. Explicit permission was given to move forward with the thesis. All have consented to the terms, and nobody have chosen to withdraw their consent.

Second, consideration has been made in regard to the interview situation, Kvale and Brinkmann (2015, p. 85) suggest, the researcher have the moral responsibility to create a comfortable environment where the informants are comfortable sharing information. One must consider the personal consequence such as stress of discussing certain topics, as Bozoki (2011) notes elite informants are confident and proud, and used to speaking into a microphone. The way this was enforced in this master thesis was by finding a balance. Prior to the interview, informants were informed of technicalities. First, they were informed about factors such as the use of a voice recorder. Second, informants were informed about the choice not to answer any questions they may find uncomfortable. Last, some direction was given as to the master thesis’s theme.

Third, when it comes to the ethical proceeding surrounding transcription, a subjects confidentiality has to be protected and some skepticism has to be given the transcript’s accuracy in regard to their oral statements (Brinkman & Kvale, 2015, p. 85). For this master thesis, all interviews have been recorded and then transcribed. Upon the completion of the transcriptions, the voice recordings were deleted to ensure informants’ integrity. As already mentioned, all interviews were conducted and transcribed in Norwegian. For the purpose of this master thesis, sections of the data has been translated into English. According to Kvale and Brinkmann, “the researcher’s ethical responsibility to report knowledge that is secured and verified as possible” (2015, p. 86). All translations are true to the original transcripts. Their accuracy was ensured through the help of a validation check done by a second party.
3.7 Data Collection and Interview Guide

As mentioned previously, the main emphasis on this interview series has been to gain some insight into the world of multi-channel networks by exploring the focus that lies behind their core ideologies, as well as determining how they operate on a practical level. Within this, the focus of the interviews and the structure of the study guide revolved around the three main categories of the problem statement. First, creative control: In linear television, content is usually the result of countless steps of approval, and thus a heavy focus was put on how this works for multi-channel networks. The aim here was getting some responses as to how creative control is divided and organized between a YouTuber a multi-channel network, and commercial sponsors involved in creative production. There also was a focus towards YouTubers motivated by the desire of understanding the ideology of their channel and how that influence interaction with advertisers, as most YouTubers are fairly young and unexperienced content creators. Second, money. The goal here was mainly understanding the source of revenue for both YouTubers and multi-channel networks. Is it mostly internal advertising before, during or after a video facilitated by YouTube, or is it externally driven sponsored content generated through multi-channel networks? Consequently, this stance leads to the second motivation for this section, which was how wealth is distributed between the multi-channel network, Google, which owns YouTube, and the YouTuber. Third, organizational structure, which revolves around the main functions of multi-channel networks and their position in the culture industries and the media market. Because all the subjects are Norwegian, the main objective was an understanding of the Scandinavian media market, with little emphasis on the rest of the world.

The overall goal of the interviews was getting first-hand information from elites whom are highly qualified to answer for the industry, in order to get a grasp of what multi-channel networks are, how they operate, and what seems to be their position in the Scandinavian media market.

3.8 Supplementary Data and Document Analysis

A document is classified simply as text (Gaborone, 2006). Analyzing documents enables a broader understanding of this master thesis objective. It also allow for a more nuanced look at multi-channel networks. Yanow (2006, p. 411) says of document analysis that “the researcher
is ‘armed’ with evidence that can be used to clarify, or perhaps, to challenge what is being
told.” Access was not given to obtain information about the three multi-channel networks that
were a part of this master thesis, which was not already public. This because multi-channel
networks operate in a highly competitive market, and leaving technical materials such as
contracts or payment slips private, secures their integrity. Some empirical materials were
gathered beside the interviews with executives of multi-channel networks, however. These
come in the form of ad-packages showing the statistical figures of their most popular
YouTube channels. For the purpose of this master thesis, reports and newspaper articles
relating to multi-channel networks have been analyzed. A considerable amount of data was
collected through the internet. Analytical company websites, newspaper archives, and multi-
channel networks’ websites also contributed with valuable information.

According to L. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2013), four factors should be taken into
consideration when it comes to analyzing documents: 1) Authenticity, the document has to be
genuine, complete, and reliable. 2) Credibility, is the document free from mistakes and
misrepresentations? Steps taken to ensure the documents’ credibly and authenticity includes
determining the source’s reliability and making sure the authorship is unquestioned. 3)
Representativeness, are the documents representative of a sufficient sample. 4) Meaning urges
one to look behind the surface meaning. As most of the data collected for this master thesis
are statistics, little focus was given to this category.
4 The Organizational Structure of Multi-Channel Networks

This first chapter of the analysis will present the data collected during the research. First, by looking at the organizational structure by exploring both internal and external structures of multi-channel networks. The quotes are translated from Norwegian to English. It is important to emphasize that translation carries some risks of losing meaning. The original context has been preserved as precisely as possible.

To recap, the research question forming this section of the analysis is:

1) How are multi-channel networks organized compared to traditional media companies?

4.1 How I Became a YouTuber

In order to get a genuine impression of how a multi-channel network is structured, it is beneficial to first look at the YouTubers they represent. Specifically, their motivations when venturing into YouTube and joining a multi-channel network. For this master thesis, two of the most popular YouTubers in Norway were interviewed. Both PelleK and PistolShrips became a part of YouTube early on in its existence. PelleK in 2006 and PistolShripms the year after. Back then, YouTube was a platform where users uploaded content more as a way of storage, it was not the entertainment platform it is today. PelleK is devoted to making music, and YouTube became the best platform available in 2006 for uploading content. They are both a part of the Scandinavian multi-channel network United Screens. And both are based in Norway.

4.1.1 PELLEK

Per Fredrik Åsly makes YouTube videos under the handle name PelleK. He is 30 years old, from the small town of Sandefjord in Norway, and one of the most popular YouTubers in Scandinavia, with 1.4 million subscribers as of April 2016. YouTube is not unfamiliar with niches, a category PelleK fits into as he specializes his music channel on heavy metal cover songs. Mostly anime, and sometimes, in Japanese. Although he is not fluent in the language,
he makes it work with help from software touch-ups that perfect his pronunciation. He was first introduced to YouTube in 2006, and used it as a platform for uploading his music, but launched a new channel in 2011, after a series of unsuccessful videos. He is now devoted to YouTube and music full-time. The name PelleK comes from being nicknamed Pelle as a young child and the K comes from meeting a letter requirement for usernames on videogame communities. When PelleK was first introduced to YouTube, making a living off the platform was not a widespread phenomenon. He emphasizes his motivation for becoming a YouTuber this way:

I managed a sales company that was going very well. I had a nice car, and a good life. But when I was 20 I realized that there has to be something else out there. That money isn’t everything. I quit my firm, bought a guitar and a microphone, and I knew I was not going to make much money for a while, but it didn’t matter because I only wanted to do music. That was the beginning when you just started posing music videos on YouTube instead of MTV, so I understood early on that you could be successful with a YouTube channel… This was 2006, when people didn’t know what YouTube was. If you wanted to put a video file on the internet, you used YouTube. Now you use YouTube as an entertainment channel.

For PelleK becoming a YouTuber comes as result of loving music, and seeking out the platform in which he could best share his passion and his hobby with the rest of the world. Going by definition, anyone with a camera and the internet can become a YouTuber, but becoming a successful one requires much more. Generating an audience and nurturing a follower base is what allows YouTubers such as PelleK to make YouTube their job. It is difficult to pin point exactly what the appeal that draws audiences towards YouTubers is. What is evident, is that most YouTubers, like PelleK began their YouTube career because they simply enjoyed being creative. But becoming a YouTuber is hard work. For PelleK success did not come easily. After two years of focusing on his music career next to his day time job, with little success, he reached a point of no return, and decided to “all in” and devote his time to YouTube. For PelleK, that meant giving up the things that were most dear to him:

I said goodbye to my girlfriend and my friends, and quit everything. I started singing four hours every day, and practicing new vocal techniques. After a period of two years my channel started to grow, I got the opportunity to go on tours, and gained many fans… For many years people told me this was the wrong genre and there is not enough money to live off this.
Albeit the hard work, it is the most fun he has ever had with a job. Most comes from the joy of nurturing his passion through sinning every day. PelleK has a posting schedule of roughly one or two videos each week, although, none is required by United Screens, the multi-channel network he is affiliated with. For most of his videos, he generates the track, plays all the instruments, records and edits by himself. A process that take anything from 10+ hours to complete. Much of the songs he produces and posts on YouTube is done by request from his audience. The audience is a vital part of a YouTubers success, and continuous interaction with his fans is very important to PelleK. In addition to taking song requests from his audience, PelleK have a lot in common with them. They all enjoy music and share a devotion to anime. When it comes to the statistics, the subscribers and viewers of PelleK’s YouTube channel are manly American, closely followed by Japan. Although PelleK lives and operates out of Norway, few of his followers are Norwegian, he explains: “I have around 10 million views each month, and Norway is only about 100,000 of those views.” The size of the American and Japanese markets might be a factor here. The struggle for PelleK in all this is being connected to United Screen, which has a substantial advertising share in Scandinavia and Europe but is lacking in the rest of the world. With a majority of his audience residing outside Europe, finding sponsored campaigns targeted towards American or Japanese audiences is difficult.

4.1.2 PistolShrimps

PistolShrimps a Norwegian YouTube duo residing and operating out of Bergen. The channel was founded by Christer Larsen and Stian Hafstad in 2008. They are currently the second most subscribed YouTube channel in Norway, with 417,000 subscribers as of April 2016. PistolShrimps is a comedy sketch channel where the creators edit themselves into well known movies and television shows. Perhaps best known for “Titanic SUPER 3D” a spoof of the titanic series that has generated close to 22 million views. And “Trolling Saruman” an alternative take on The Lord of the Rings has over 28 million views. For many YouTubers, the scope of their success was blurry, and for PistolShrimps, they surely did not know YouTube could be a full-time career until it already was. The name PistolShrimps comes from the animal with the same name. It was conceived through a long and democratic process where the duo Googled extensively and made lists. The only criteria for their YouTube name was that it had to be short, easy to remember, and logo friendly. PistolShrimps was the result of Stian Haftad Googling “cool animals,” and stumbling upon PistolShrimps, a small shrimp species in the tropics that is recognized by its oversized claw (Bauer, 2004, p. 24). For the duo
behind PistolShrimps, their YouTube adventure started when they both were studying film at the University of Bergen: “Our study program was very academic, there was little “hands-on” activities until the last semester.” PistolShrimps coming together was far from planned. Back in 2008, they were both studying at the same university, working at the university television channel, and frequenting in the same circles. Both wanted to work with film, and explore their creative sides. But it was not until a party where they happened to be bumping into each other that things started to shift into gear:

We discovered that we both had the idea of editing each other into a Harry Potter scene. We both had the idea before we met. I had already ordered a Hogwarts robe. I ordered one but got two by accident. So, it just happened like that.

Much like PelleK, for PistolShrimps becoming YouTubers was a byproduct of the desire to nurture a passion. In PistolShrimps’ case it is a passion for film making. Uploading videos to YouTube is not work for PistolShrimps it is fun. It is about gathering experience from filmmaking. And it is about sharing creative products that match their humor in order to make them laugh. The sketch comedy theme comes from themselves. Every video is planned, written, shot, and edited by themselves. Like so many YouTubers, PistolShrimps are not produced by anyone. Making a living of YouTube is hard work, and for PistolShrimps, one video means hours of work. Similarly, to PelleK, they are not required to produce a given amount of content. Currently, their posting schedule is aiming at one video each week. This is due to restrictions such as high production value of their videos and the fact that Stian Hafstad lives in New York City. The channel is managed in Norway by Christer Larsen. United Screens, their affiliated multi-channel network, helps cover traveling costs so that PistolShrimps are able to meet and make videos. They usually come together twice a year and produce content over an extended weekend in a rented house. When it coes to determining the reason for success, PistolShrimps credits their dedication to make high quality productions:

We started in 2008 long before anyone could become rich off YouTube. There was no high quality productions back then. We didn’t focus on doing something grand and cool. I think (our success) came because what we made looked very professional, and people were impressed by that. And because our humor hits home. We make things we like, and have grown up with that humor everyone whom have grown up without the internet shares.
PistolShrips has grown by a substantial amount over the years, and generated one of the highest subscriber counts in Norway. Similar to their statements, their audience is mainly mirrored in themselves. PistolShrips’ audience is male dominant with 82%. Women count for 18% of the total audience. 50% are in the age group 18-24, and the majority of their audience response is among 20-year-olds. Similarly to PelleK, PistolShrips does not have a large Norwegian demographic. The majority of views and subscribes come from The United States, Great Britain, and Germany.

4.2 The Multi-Channel Networks of Scandinavia

What becomes evident when interviewing PelleK and PistolShrips is that their level of success require professional management. It is too much work for one person alone to handle. At first, YouTube provided some help through their “Partner Program.” The program offers YouTubers help with monetization, paid subscriptions, and merchandise ("YouTube Partner program overview," 2016). Multi-channel networks are a natural evolution from the partner program, serving as a what can be described as a manager for YouTubers. Multi-channel networks flourished in the United States at the end of 2013 and majority of 2014. In Scandinavia, multi-channel networks have been introduced to the media markets over the past two years, venturing into Norway in the summer of 2014. Currently, there are three dominant multi-channel networks in the Norwegian media market. They are Nordic Screens, United Screens, and SPLAY.

4.2.1 Nordic Screens

Nordic Screens is a Norwegian multi-channel network that was established in 2014 by previous executives from TV2 the largest commercial television channel in Norway. Nordic Screens is the only multi-channel network currently operating in Norway that was established in Norway. As a response to seeing viewership, migrating online Nordic Screens was created by using “YouTube as our main distribution platform… and collects many independent YouTube channels within one network with a focus on generating traffic, and grow talents.”(Nils Ketil Andersen, Nordic Screens). The multi-channel network has 250 YouTube members affiliated with them, and generates roughly 35 million views each month. The largest YouTuber within Nordic Screens is “GlitterGirlC,” a channel that focuses on beauty
products and make-up tutorials. The channel has 211,000 subscribers and generates roughly 2 million views each month, as of April 2016 ("Nordic Screens," 2016).

4.2.2 SPLAY

SPLAY is the largest multi-channel network in Scandinavia, with offices in Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Finland. The multi-channel network was founded in 2013 by Vigor Sørman. He as a television presenter for the Swedish channel TV4, and saw that there was a market among young viewers outside of traditional television, as told by Christina Parker, country manager for SPLAY:

Vigor was told to make a program of youth when he worked in television. With little success. He went to YouTubers and asked why they didn’t like it. They said they don’t watch TV. So he thought, what can we do to make them better and help them make a living from YouTube?

SPLAY ventured outside of Sweden in 2014 and established offices in Norway, Finland, and Denmark (Ullrich, 2014; Svedjetun, 2014). In the global scope, SPLAY has 21 million subscribers, and generates close to 200 million views each month, as of April 2016 (SPLAY.tv). In the Norwegian market, SPLAY has 6.9 million views each month, and roughly 400,000 subscribers. There are a total of 520 YouTube partners in SPLAY, 50 of those are Norwegian. The highest grossing YouTube channel affiliated with SPLAY is “Hydraulic Press Channel,” which only focuses on crushing various objects with a hydraulic press. As of April 2016, the channel has 473,000 subscribers and generates 44 million views each month. In Norway, “PrebzOgDennis” is the largest YouTube channel from SPLAY. It has 180 subscribers and generates roughly 3.4 million views each month ("SPLAY," 2016). A growing trend among multi-channel networks is that traditional media companies buy into them (Vollmer et al., 2014). Modern Times Group bought into splay in 2015 gaining an 81% share in the multi-channel network (Clover, 2015)

4.2.3 United Screens

United Screens is the latest multi-channel network to come into the Nordic media market. The Sweden based multi-channel network was founded in 2013 by former Google VD Stina Honkamaaa and former TV4 executive Malte Andersson (Wisterberg, 2013). From 2014 to
In understanding the composition of the core of this dissertation, it is natural to being with a look into what categorizes a multi-channel network. This will be done by examining the fundamental aspects of organizational structure. This section will further look at sub-issues surrounding contracts, service value, and division of power.

Hesmondhalgh brings up Davis and Scase (2000) when discussing the structuring of cultural industries where large conglomerates are involved. For Davis and Scase large conglomerates attempt to bureaucratize creative work by “rationalizing and specializing” work tasks in such a way that a strict management of cultural work is established (Hesmondhalgh, 2007, p. 230). There are many contributing companies surrounding the Scandinavian multi-channel networks. On one hand, Google owns and manage YouTube, which is their main distribution platform. On the other hand, large media conglomerates such as Modern Times Group and Bonnier Media have acquired SPLAY and United Screens, respectively (Fossbakken, 2015; Jerijervi, 2015; Clover, 2015). Davis and Scase (2000, p. 139) argue that the acquisition of smaller companies by large conglomerates results in them becoming “highly decentralized organizational structures (with) operating units functioning as subsidiary companies.” In other words, companies see implemented changes in structure in
the form of tight budgets, strict deadlines, and measuring outputs (Hesmondhalgh, 2007, p. 231). There is a high level of secrecy when it comes to inquiring about guidelines and financial goals set by the conglomerate owners of the multi-channel networks interviewed for this master thesis. The market is very competitive in Scandinavia. Multi-channel networks have already had rivals poaching talent. One example being the beauty vlogger Stina Bakken (YouTube-handle: StinaBlogg) moving from Nordic Screens to United Screens (Michaelsen, 2016). What can be touched upon is the integration of YouTube content curated by multi-channel network with traditional television:

We talk a lot about (broadcast) syndication, and we practice it already. In Sweden, we have car channel with a Swedish YouTuber named Gustav Trefsson who produces so much material that we can easily edit it as separate show for TV2 Sumo. I believe in syndication, especially in Norway we have to be innovative because the market is smaller.

- Marie Louise Alvær, United Screens.

The emphasis on market size might characterize the relationship between conglomerate owners and multi-channel networks. It may be that new media companies are dependent on cooperation and integration with traditional media organizations. Broadcast syndication can be seen as a second motive when investing in YouTubers, as it may lead to exposure and revenue through traditional media platforms. There are structural differences between traditional conglomerate media industries and multi-channel networks, and there might be some tension when it comes to producing creative content. Traditional media conglomerates operate as commercial bureaucracies where control is strict and management distinctly formalized. In this notion there exists a prominent organizational hierarchy, in which observing employees and assessing performance tightly, is highlighted through the desire of maximizing profits (Hesmondhalgh, 2007, p. 230). Multi-channel networks are still figuring out the right structural approach. When it comes to the Scandinavian multi-channel networks:

I think a lot will happen very quickly. We have to look towards the U.S… Look at Maker (Studios), they produce most of their content themselves. They interfere with more concepts and more ideas in order to increase the production value of their content even more. Then we end up with a tighter creative control. We are not interested in that because we gain the most, both financially and morally, when the YouTubers are left to do what they do best by themselves.
Minimal interference in the creation of creative content is one factor multi-channel networks in Scandinavia voice with great enthusiasm. YouTubers know their audience best and at this point it seems multi-channel networks are taking a step back and observing before making a decision for what is the right approach. At the same time, there is also a touch upon the contrasting practices of Scandinavian and American multi-channel networks. Multiple informants stressed this distinction crediting a lack of micro managing and personal investment from American multi-channel networks. Therefore, if taking the informants at face value, giving YouTubers complete creative control is assumed to be common practice. It also seems logical to assume that their conglomerate owners do not heavily police the multi-channel networks in Scandinavia. In that regard, one can say Scandinavian multi-channel networks are Charismatic organizations. Hesmondhalgh use the term when describing companies that achieve high levels of coordination through an emphasis on shared values, which means the mechanisms of formal control, are relatively less developed (Hesmondhalgh, 2007, p. 230). Similarly, organizations are often managed by a leader’s charismatic vision or a set of “clearly defined goals.” Among the Scandinavian multi-channel networks, there seemed to be strong sense of building a brand, growing a healthy environment where talent can grow, and an overall emphasis on working life rather than profits:

We have started with generating traffic, build (YouTube)-channels, and creating a good environment. Right now, there are plenty of experiences to gain across all levels of employees, something that increases the quality level on all of our (YouTube)-channels. And then the commercial part will become important after a while.

- Nils Ketil Andersen, CEO, Nordic Screens.

At the same time, because statements indicate that multi-channel networks operate as charismatic companies, they are presumed to have a more devoted focus on nice markets. It is common for multi-channel networks to represent hundreds of YouTubers at the same time. As already established the three Scandinavian multi-channel networks in this master thesis have a total of 1200 affiliated YouTubers. YouTubers both own and produce their own content, which Google then distributes through YouTube. Multi-channel networks become the link between the two and potential third party sponsors/advertisers. Hence, one can also categorize YouTubers affiliated with multi-channel networks as Network organizations, which according
to Davis and Scase, are micro-companies that operate out of larger networks, as they are too small to have any kind of formalized control or coordination (2000, pp. 99-102).

Google is a large conglomerate that drives distribution and traffic through YouTube while “tapping consumer wisdom collectively by watching what millions of them do and translating that into relevant search results” (Anderson, 2007, p. 56). Arguably, one can associate this with the long tail phenomena Anderson describes as “a culture unfiltered by economic scarcity” (2007, p. 53). In other words, the internet allows the media market to become increasingly comprehensive when it comes to the amount of content available. For Lunenburg (2012), “organizations exist to achieve goals”. And as multi-channel networks, presumably, are structured by unregulated goals that are achieved through shared values, one goal seems to be tapping into the niche market, as explained by Marie Louise Alvær, Country Manager of United Screens:

We are drawn to towards 15-36 year-olds and try to be as broad as we can within that group. We usually tell our partners to be as quirky as possible because niche videos does very well on YouTube. We want many different niches and develop them to become large enough to compete with big traditional media like TV or magazines. We want something for everyone.

From her statement, it also appears that niches are becoming economically attractive through the internet, which might contribute to the charismatic approach to management correlated to most employees either being connected to YouTube or other creatively dominant workplaces.

4.3.1 Google and Guidelines

Multi-channel networks are working towards establishing a connection between influencers, defined as content creators with large follower-bases on social media, such as YouTube, Vine, and Instagram. Multi-channel networks may originally have sprung out of YouTube’s Partner Program, and YouTubers stand for most multi-channel networks’ revenue. Some general knowledge have previously been provided on the statistics of the multi-channel networks in Scandinavia. To fully understand how multi-channel networks function, one has to have some understanding of the qualities that make up their core. Nils Ketil Andersen of Nordic Screes explains multi-channel networks this way:
Nordic Screens is a multi-channel network, which mainly uses YouTube as a distribution platform. Multi-channel network basically means collecting individual YouTube channels together under the same roof as one big network with the intention of generating traffic, create a community, grow and nurture talent, and commercializing it.

Initially multi-channel networks operated within the realm of YouTube. From his statement, one can assume that the focus on managing YouTubers and their content, relates to a desire to drive traffic to their YouTube channels. A tactic multi-channel networks use to generate traffic to their videos is “collaborations.” In essence, when YouTubers collaborate, one more successful YouTuber make a video with another YouTuber on their channel that help generate traffic between them. Similarly, multi-channel networks offer management services helping YouTubers with graphic profiles, understanding and activating advertising, locations and props for production, and general hints and trick on how to engage with an audience. What seems to be relatively prominent in the way multi-channel networks operate is the fact that they may end up managing a small fraction of the internet. A task, which might be highly chaotic because of the Internet’s vast scale and lack of structure. In the words of Holt and Perren, it has no real center (2011, p. 27)

Google owns YouTube and one can argue that the company guides multi-channel networks through the internet world. Google is one of the largest tech companies in the world, and have recently ventured into the media world with the acquisition of media companies such as YouTube (Girard, 2009). Further, Google is one of the largest transnational companies in the world managing large amounts of web traffic through internet searches, cloud computing and advertising technologies (Fuchs, 2013, p. 131). A multi-channel network is not truly affiliated with Google, as they operate as separate entities, which is important, as one has to assume Google has some influence and control over multi-channel networks. For one, Google owns the distribution channel, YouTube, and manage the advertising revenue that comes from it. This becomes crucial when looking further into the multi-channel networks as a business because Google owns YouTube, and multi-channel networks use YouTube as their distribution platform. Therefore, one can argue that Google have some influence in how multi-channel networks are structured. YouTube is a free hosting site for video content and anyone can upload a video to it. However, there are strict guidelines all who upload videos to YouTube must follow. Similarly, Google gives Multi-channel networks their own set of guidelines. Not anyone can start a multi-channel network, but if one want to
start a multi-channel network, one is subjected to various tests and requirements from Google in order to properly be affiliated with them:

- **Add value.** You should not simply aggregate channels in order to obtain advertising revenue without providing a service in return. MCN services could include dedicated partner management, technology/tools, production facilities, promotion, channel optimization, advertising sales support, and/or other services.

- **Communicate with your partners.** Keep channels in your MCN updated on YouTube policies and practices. Give your channels visibility into their performance and their revenues. Make sure your creator partners have a point of contact within your organization.

- **Affiliate with channels responsibly.** Before adding a channel through YouTube’s system, you must contact the channel owner and agree on the terms of your affiliation. Do not transfer channels to other MCNs or receive channels from other MCNs without the explicit permission of the affected channels. Respect channel owners’ privacy; don’t request to access more information than is necessary. Be sure you abide by all applicable laws relating to your relationship with your channel partners.

- **Be fair.** Keep your commitments to your channels, including those relating to payment. Release channels when appropriate. Don’t ask channels to enter into one-sided agreements.

- **Be honest.** Be clear, honest, and transparent in how you define and describe representations about your services. Do not imply an official association with or endorsement by YouTube or Google. Do not suggest that channels must join MCNs to earn revenue and gain access to YouTube tools. Do not suggest that you are representing the views or opinions of YouTube or YouTube personnel.


When a multi-channel meets all the criteria, they can further move to become YouTube Certified:
YouTube Certified is an exam of 70 questions that shows you are a YouTube expert. It you have three or more employees whom are YouTube Certified the multi-channel network gets the status as ‘YouTube Certified.’

- Thomas Lien, Previously Nordic Screens.

Multi-channel networks can operate without being YouTube certified, although it is difficult to operate without one. Benefits include being certified as a YouTube professional and the eligibility of inclusion into Google’s “service provider directory,” a list of companies that help content creators with their YouTube channels ("About YouTube Certification," 2016). Multi-channel networks are usually found in the “service provider directory.” YouTube certification has have an impact on how multi-channel networks are perceived. YouTube certification becomes a symbol of competence. YouTube certification is valid for twelve months, and to achieve status as YouTube Certified, these requirements must be met:

- Be a YouTube Partner.
- Actively managing channels through Content ID with potential to accelerate views and support growth.
- Achieve 15,000 watch time hours in the last 90 days.
- Has a sustained operational business.
- **In compliance with all YouTube policies, including Terms of Service and community guidelines.**

("About YouTube Certification," 2016)

Similarly, multi-channel networks are structured around the YouTuber. And so a hierarchy of power does exist, however, it is non-structured and building on a deep relationship with partnering YouTubers. This became highly evident during interviews with the YouTubers, as they explicitly expressed a deep connection to the network, and a sense of seeing business relationships as friendships, arguing that multi-channel truly work on their behalf, as a mutual supporter that wants to see them achieve greatness.

When I first joined United Screens I got my own contact representatives, and I can send them an email late on a Saturday evening, and they will always reply at once.

- PelleK

In many ways, his statement reflects this, and one can argue that YouTubers having ownership over the content they produce and publish on their respective YouTube channels
shows that multi-channel networks are less likely to interfere with their creative work. One can also argue that this approach to management has something to do with age. All three of the Scandinavian multi-channel networks expressed a high focus on young adults, and most of the YouTubers in their arsenal, as well as the employees in their organization, match such suggestions. The aim for multi-channels is seemingly to find a broad specter of niche YouTube channels, but like the traditional media, they seem to be structured in similar ways in a media market dominated by a single few conglomerates.

4.4 Managing Cultural Production

Now that some knowledge has been produced on the basic guidelines and structural functions of multi-channel network, it is beneficial to look at the way cultural production is managed within multi-channel networks, and how such management might differ from traditional media companies. One factor to emphasize here is what the currency becomes on YouTube, and how success is measured, and how YouTubers and their YouTube channels are sold to advertisers. Although managing culture production, in its entirety, is dominated by commercial approaches, Davis and Scase (2000, p. 99) suggest the management of creative work must be “anti-bureaucratic.” When dealing with multi-channel networks, this becomes presumably important, as creative content does not have to be policed or distributed outside YouTube for the multi-channel networks or the YouTubers to profit. Hesmondhalgh (2007, p. 83) suggests that “all human beings are symbol creators at least some of the time,” and advocates the notion that professional creativity is just the tip of the iceberg, which, with the evidence available, motivate the idea that more people have “wanted to work professionally in the cultural industries that have succeeded in doing so.” With YouTube, however, exploring and expressing one’s own creativity, and sharing it with the world, is easier than ever. Nurturing hobbies or indulging in passions, no doubt create subjective value. How such value translates into objective value, in which one can monetize, is more difficult to define. YouTube have two major way in which one can measure value: subscribers or views, although informants disagreed on which one is more valuable. Thomas Lien, previously in Nordic Screens, explained how value is measured thus:

In the media world, the currency is ‘followers’ (or Subscribers). It is synonymous with money, and if you have managed to generate around seven million followers on a
social media platform, I guarantee you will be invited to all the movie premieres. If you have a lot of followers you will most definitely meet Justin Bieber.

His statement may indicate that the power and control of creativity has shifted, giving the creator more control. This, however, appears to only constitute YouTubers with large follower bases. At the same time, other informants projected value in views as too static:

(Advertisers) only care about how many views they get on a video they have bought. If you have a channel with 100,000 subscribers but have been inactive for an extended time, you will not have high viewing stats… So, views are more important to me, but I am sure there are people, even in SPLAY, that disagree with me.

- Christina Parker, SPLAY

Measuring a YouTubers value may not be determined, which makes sense given multi-channel networks age. Also, little has previously been spent on online advertisement. For the Scandinavian multi-channel networks in the early stages of development was building confidence in YouTube as an advertising platform, where advertisers have minimal control of creativity, and the content creators are far from professionals. Likewise, advertisers may seek control of creativity in working with talent as it provides reassurance that a product is presented and promoted in accordance with their intentions. More than one informant experienced this in the beginning:

I have experienced a lot of running around trying to build relationships and establishing competence among the largest media buyers. There are a lot of different views on the importance of online video advertising.

- Marie-Louise Alvær, United Screens

Another factor that likely contributed to the YouTuber’s increasing power of creativity is the multi-channels networks’ position in the matter. Arguably, it is in both the network and the YouTuber’s interests that control lies with them. And multi-channel networks working with the ideology of being a representative of the YouTuber seems to have taken the role of negotiator between the YouTuber and the world. It is also crucial to revisit the notion of ownership. Most of the time, a YouTuber owns the content he publishes on YouTube, similarly they are employed by neither by YouTube nor a multi-channel network. Going into negotiations of whom has the right to dictate over creative content, then, YouTubers potentially have the upper hand. Furthermore, the role multi-channel networks do as a broker
of creative freedom, further strengthens this belief. Christina Parker, the country manager of SPLAY, in Norway, explained their approach to negotiating advertising deals this way:

Our role in this is going to the client and saying: ‘this will cost this much to produce this is what we propose you do with the concept. The last we figure out together. When we have this in place, we tell the client: ‘You cannot make a script and you cannot direct in any way. This is why you pay us; to reach a target audience you cannot reach yourselves.’ We work to give our channels as much artistic freedom as possible because they know their audience the best and what works and what doesn’t. If they go into a partnership that is forced on them it will not work for the advertiser because it will not appeal to viewers and it will affect the YouTuber negatively because they lose credibility.

- Christina Parker, SPLAY.

That is not to say the YouTuber has complete control of producing creative content for their channel. Multi-channel networks negotiate on the YouTuber’s behalf, but they are also the curators of the content that flows through their network. In other words, in negotiations of creative content, multi-channel networks have a responsibility to the advertiser that YouTubers in their network execute the sponsored content in such a manner that is consistent with the advertiser’s desires.

In the scenario that the content is bought we will review the video because it becomes ‘our’ product and we want the client to be happy. But we manage over 400 channels, it would be impossible for us to go through everything that is published.

- Marie-Louise Alvær, United Screens

This is important because it means that the involvement of a multi-channel network has some influence over a YouTubers creation of creative content. It show that a YouTuber has full creative freedom until there is an advertiser or sponsor involved.

We give them instructions from Xbox saying don’t play badly in the game, don’t do this, don’t do that. There is not necessarily pressure to mention sponsors, but is feels natural for the YouTuber to thank them.

- Thomas Lien, previously in Nordic Screens
It is seemingly evident that multi-channel networks, while it is fractions, takes some form as commerce. There exists a potential division of roles where YouTube is the platform in which content is distributed from, the YouTuber is the creator, and the multi-channel network is somewhere in between, connecting the two together with advertisers. Presumably, YouTubers in a multi-channel network do not have full creative control. For while, both YouTubers interviewed in this dissertation express great freedom in what to produce and which advertisers to work with, it is ultimately the multi-channel network that brings them together. Also, the individuality of YouTube together with the close relationship that exists between a YouTuber and a multi-channel network suggest that opinion of whom to work with are not only similar but equally easy for one part to skew.

When we are ‘selling YouTubers we sell the popular term ‘influencer.’’ Basically the genre of the channel, the YouTuber’s ideology, and how many people you can expect to reach.

- Nils Ketil Andersen, Nordic Screens.

From his statements one may suggest YouTubers are not perceived as entertainers paid to produce professional content by consumers, rather they are projected as close friends with similar interests, believes, and ways of communicating. Arguably, this is where the importance of building a trustful and strong relationship between YouTubers and multi-channel networks becomes important, as good multi-channel networks presumably recognize that YouTubers know their product and their audience best. One of the more prominent examples of this is Minecraft videos. Most of the time, Minecraft channels or other similar gaming channels are run by young teenagers, and their audience is reflected in that. An executive in a multi-channel network may not be in a position to understand the content or the audience. Informants from the Scandinavian multi-channel networks emphasized that they are not owners of YouTubers or a YouTube channels, they are friends, helpers, managers and advisors. This is firstly shown in the way contracts are drawn in regard to protecting and accommodating the YouTuber in the best fashion, and secondly, reflected in the less structured hierarchy within multi-channel networks. However, at its core, a multi-channel network is driven by its desire for economic stability. One cannot ignore the YouTubers’ roles in these partnerships, neither, as a player in a network organization within multi-channel networks nor as a separate creative entity. Nevertheless, it seems relatively evident that the success of a creative artist depend on the big machinery of the “complex professional,” as YouTube has made exposure and visibly available to all. Success is no longer dependent on
the financial help or the distributor powers of large media conglomerates. A YouTuber still has to find his audience, but it is reasonable to assume that the control over creativity has shifted, and when they do, commercial actors come their way.
5 Monetization of Multi-Channel Networks

For any company, advertising is one of the main sources of revenue (Doyle, 2013, p. 141). She argues that the purpose of advertising is persuading consumers to buy products or services, or reinforce brand loyalty (Doyle, 2013, p. 143).

This chapter of the analysis will focus on the way revenue is collected, how it is divided among the parties, and its influence on management decisions, as they are more in focus because advertisers are increasingly migrating online (Doyle, 2013, p. 142). Multi-channel networks have two main sources for revenue. First, producing sponsored content for paying third party advertisers. Second, advertising played on YouTube, before, during or after a video. A third source of revenue, although, not directly linked to multi-channel networks is the collection of personal data.

Chapter five uses data collected from interviews as well as document analysis of financial reports measuring multi-channel networks’ growth, usage, and revenue, and official documents pertaining to the revenue practices of YouTube and Google.

To recap, the research question forming this chapter of the analysis is:

2) How are multi-channel networks influenced by the monetization of YouTube content?

5.1 The Monetization Model

Third party advertisement deals are lucrative for both YouTubers and multi-channel networks, as Christina Parker, COO of SPLAY, explained it:

Everyone who wants ads on their channel can have it, and if you are big you can make good money from it, but it will not make you rich.

In her statement, it seems evident that enabling monetization on YouTube, in the form of videos running before, after or during a video, is not enough for YouTubers to make a living. It may explain the foundation in which the relationship between multi-channel networks and third party advertisers is built. When looking at the monetization model where third party advertisers are involved, it is worth noting that most of the content available from YouTubers affiliated with multi-channel networks follow Direct to Consumer (D2C) models (Venturini,
Tuma, Morelli, Buono, & Carlier, 2015). Direct to Consumer models are beneficial because they provide broadcaster with the ownership of end-to-end customer relationship, which in turn can help them mine user data, and build upon the feedback. This can build stronger relationship with the consumer based on personalized advertising. When it comes to advertisers, Multi-channel networks follow a structural model that can be divided into five sections. Note that figure 1 is only for sponsored content, and does not include revenue generated from YouTube’s banner ads.

![Multi-channel networks monetization model targeting niche markets](image)

**Figure 1. Multi-channel networks monetization model targeting niche markets** (Venturini et al., 2015).

The model becomes important because it shows the way multi-channel networks operate by giving a clear indication of the roles and tasks filled in the process they go through when implementing sponsored content into their YouTube videos. Multi-channel networks brining media professionals into the user-generated world of YouTube may suggest that they are progressing as curators of premium content. Therefore, when discussing monetization or revenue, one also have to determine the value of a product. As already established in chapter four, multi-channel networks share the goal of tapping into niche markets. And, as niche markets build value among a core of devoted fans, niches may make it easier for multi-channel networks and advertisers to transform a product into a sustainable revenue stream. Users are motivated to use social media because of an inner drive to be social and communicative (Fuchs, 2013, p. 64), and consumes are willing to pay to be a part of the experience (Enders, Hungenberg, Denker, & Mauch, 2008). Anderson’s (2010) Long Tail concept may be used to understand the success of niches in multi-channel networks’ monetization model. The economical concept of the Long Tail is a desire to lower the costs of selling because then you sell more (Anderson, 2010, p. 88). For Anderson, “Google aggregates the Long Tail of advertising” by making extensive amounts of services available,
cheap, and easy to find (2010, p. 88). Multi-channel networks have an advantage because Google host their content on YouTube for free as well as giving them access to analytics tools and user data. Besides, advertisers increasingly find online advertising attractive because the internet lowers distribution, production, and promotion costs (Brynjolfsson, Hu, & Smith, 2006). Figure 2 shows that multi-channel networks’ content production costs are lower, compared to the content production of traditional media companies.

Figure 2. Cost per minute of production (Venturini et al., 2015).

The YouTubers interviewed for this master thesis claim to be highly independent content creators. They have a large devoted niche audience, only endorse products they connect with, and demand to present it in their own words. As a result, one can argue that all endorsed videos coming from YouTubers are personalized adverts. Christina Parker, the COO of SPLAY illustrated the impact of nice audiences and personalized advertisements this way:

We had a good dialogue with the advertisers, who are the creative part in all this, and they gave “Prebz&Dennis” (Norwegian YouTubers) free reigns… We had an estimated organic view count in the hundred-thousands, today that number is doubled. We did not put a dime into distribution, they even made a behind the scenes free of charge, so you could say the customer got three times the exposure. If anything, it shows you that they know their own audience best.

From her statement, it seems YouTubers are the creative power behind sponsored content on their YouTube channels, which may suggest it is difficult for advertisers to mimic the functions and personality of the YouTube content. In a sense, one may say that YouTubers automatically, and perhaps unknowingly, personalize sponsored content. Doyle (2013, p. 81) makes a distinction between digital and traditional broadcasting channels, saying the latter is defined by passive revivers (consumers) and static viewing schedules. When Christina Parker, COO of SPLAY, indicates “Prebz&Dennis” know their audience well, it is because they have
access to constant feedback in the form of comments on YouTube videos or post on other social media platforms, indicating degree of success. Most YouTubers, PelleK included, actively use social media to request ideas for videos. Therefore, it is presumed that niche markets and digital broadcasting channels such as YouTube make it possible for advertisers to interact directly with consumers, thus forming a close D2C relationship.

Advertisement on YouTube is only just emerging, and especially in Norway, as YouTuber PelleK emphasizes there is still a long way to go:

I feel that Norwegian brands are stuck in the past… They are afraid of committing to YouTubers. But the campaigns speak for themselves. I did a campaign for Oreo, which they said produced great results, you could not achieve on TV.

As this quotation illustrates, YouTube advertisement is lucrative but Norwegian advertisers may seem reluctant to migrate online, as the value of YouTube content is not yet established. One may argue this is a result of YouTubers demanding complete creative freedoms, a notion that might seem unsettling for advertisers who do not want their product or reputation damaged. Advertisers are also concerned with the context in which advertisements are shown, and hesitant towards YouTube as an advertisement platform because they do not want it next to low-quality home videos (Kim, 2012). Marie-Louise Alvær, COO of United Screens, combats the reluctance to hand over creative control this way:

We have a trustful relationship with (the YouTubers). What we produce in our network is highly predictable, and that is very reassuring for advertisers.

The active relationship between YouTubers and multi-channel networks seems like a vital part for a sponsored video’s success. As is evident in these statements, for achieving some success with sponsored content from third party advertisers, multi-channel networks and YouTubers have to make sure that sponsored videos feel like native content. In other words, videos have to represent the YouTubers persona, and the esthetics of their YouTube channels.

5.2 YouTube Advertising

Besides external advertisement deals, multi-channel networks and YouTubers earn revenue through advertisements on YouTube. Doyle suggest technology is at the core of media businesses, making economic success “naturally dependent on the ability to adjust to and
capitalized on technological advantages” (2013, p. 26). Google is a tech company, specializing in online advertising, which gives it an advantage when it comes to adapting to technological change within the media world (Anderson, 2010, p. 88). Advertising is one of Google’s main sources of revenue, generating $21.2 billion in total income in 2015 (Peterson, 2016). Advertising on YouTube is divided into two categories, “Cost Per Mile” (CPM) and “Cost Per Click” CPC. Initially revenue was mainly distributed through YouTube’s Partner Program “based on a split off advertising revenue from first dollar,” selling adverts based on the CPM model (Cunningham et al., 2016). CPM is a view-based advertisement model that pays out a set amount for every 1000 views (Evans, 2009). CPM was the norm until 1996 when Procter & Gamble struck a deal with Yahoo! where Yahoo! only got paid when a user clicked on the advert (Evans, 2009). Thus, CPC was born. YouTube uses a combination of CPM and CPC in their monetization model, and advertisers choose which they want to buy. However, YouTubers have to be a part of the Partner Program and enable monetization on their channels to generate revenue.

In the economic word of YouTube, the ecosystem is built up through the actors that revolve around YouTube. This is showed in Figure 3 produced by google and presented in their advertising guide. In many ways, one can argue that this ecosystem has some relation to vertical integration, in the sense that YouTube is not one platform, rather it is built up of four different sections, depending on which way one sees it. For one, this seems to be evident in the way Google operates with multi-channel networks. The figure shows YouTube’s ecosystem consisting of the creator, viewer and advertisers. In many ways evidence suggest these are not separate entities, rather, with the inclusion of multi-channel networks, the control over creators and advertisers merge under the same authority. Further, one can argue that Google’s analytics programs in some form control the viewer as the input their bring influence the decision making and the creative production in such a way that it accommodated their behavior in such a way that it elicit further exposure and continuous traffic through the platform.
Figure 3. YouTube’s ecosystem ("How Ads Work on YouTube," 2016).

When it comes to advertising on YouTube, they are again divided into five sub-groups. The following section show where the advertisement is placed on YouTube and how it generates revenue for the YouTuber:

**Display ads:**

Appears to the right of the feature video and above the video suggestions list. Views will only be monetized from desktops, and **YouTubers are paid** when the advert is clicked on.

**Overlay ads:**

Semi-transparent overlay ads that appear on the lower 20% portion of the video. Views will only be monetized from desktops, and **YouTubers are paid** when one clicks on the overlay to expand and view the full ad.
**Skippable video ads:**

Most common. Viewers can skip the ad after 5 seconds, if they choose. Inserted before, during, or after the main video. The only ad that is monetized on all devices and **YouTubers are paid** if a viewer watches 30 seconds or to the end of the ad.

**Non-skippable video ads and long, non-skippable video ads:**

Non-skippable video ads that must be watched before your video can be viewed. Long non-skippable video ads may be up to 30 seconds long. Views will only be monetized from desktops, and **YouTubers are paid** if the advert is watched all the way to the end.

**Sponsored cards:**

Only available to videos over 15 minutes. Viewers will see a teaser for the card for a few seconds. They can also click the icon in the top right corner of the video to browse the cards. **YouTubers are paid** if the video is viewed for 30 seconds or the viewer watches until the end, if it is a CPM-based ad, and (**How Ads Work on YouTube,” 2016**)

When advertisers buy adverts on YouTube, they have the possibility to fraction in demographic characteristics, of their target audience, such as gender, geographic location or age. This allows for a more thorough exposure rate, and may have increased influence on the target audience. Doyle argues that media economics is all about supplying content or consumers through production and distribution (2013, p. 20). In regard to YouTube and multi-channel networks, evidence suggests that both production and distribution is made possible through commonly used digital technologies; YouTubers only need access to a camera and internet in order to share content. Similarly, viewers consume content on devises such as smartphones, tablets, gaming consoles, and computers over the internet. According to Doyle, whether or not a company chooses to take part in advertising and competitive behavior is dependent on the company’s managing style and its position in the market (2002a, p. 50).
Statements from informants show enthusiasm towards YouTube advertisements such as these. One of the benefits of advertising through YouTube was explained this way by an informant:

(YouTube ads) are a better experience for the advertiser. You never know how many or who watches your video on TV. And it will cost you 80,000 of 20 seconds. If You put 80,000 into YouTube you get to see how many viewers it got, where they come from, which videos they watched before or after, their gender, age and much, much more.

- Thomas Lien, Previously Nordic Screens.

From his statement, one may suggest that Google that YouTube advertising is very lucrative. Running advertisements on YouTube is cheaper than on traditional television. Also, user data is beneficial because it makes up the foundation for personalized advertisements.

### 5.3 Who Gets What?

Multi-channel networks have a forward managing strategy when it comes to dividing revenue. In any fashion, as Google owns the distribution platform, and manages ad sales on YouTube, they take larger percentages of advertisement revenue. Now that some understanding of how multi-channel networks and Google monetize YouTube content, it is beneficial to look at how revenue is divided among the parties. During the interviews for this master thesis, this has been a difficult area, as informants were reluctant to provide concrete numbers. Having said that, both YouTubers and multi-channel network executives suggested that the percentage of revenue division is relatively similar across all three:

We have guidelines to follow regarding how much we share with the YouTuber. Generally, its equal regardless of the status you have within the YouTube community, it does not matter if you are King Salomon or an Average Joe, you get the same share from YouTube. The cut we take vary on how much we offer the YouTuber, if its help with the press, copyright or production, for example. If it’s a demanding partner our share gets bigger and if it’s an independent YouTuber, they get a bigger cut.

- Marie-Louise Alvær, United Screens.
The emphasis on equality for every YouTuber is continuous throughout the three Scandinavian multi-channel networks. And it may be a response to the inequality among YouTubers of American multi-channel networks, where the less successful YouTubers are often ignored in regard to sponsored deals and other monetization perks (Bokhari, 2015). There are also different factors that determine how much of the total revenue YouTubers get. When it comes to the Scandinavian multi-channel networks interviewed for this master thesis, definitive figures cannot be determined, as no access was given to examine contracts from either three. Similarly, no insight was given into contracts from the YouTubers interviewed. This is firstly due to multi-channel networks operating in a highly competitive market, and therefore have no interest in competitors gaining access to sensitive data. Secondly, some contracts have a non-disclosure clause that prohibits YouTubers from sharing its content. However, insight in division of revenue comes from information gathered during interviews and analysis of contracts from muti-channel networks that were collected online.

Sharing YouTube revenue is a complicated process and is best dived into two categories.

### 5.3.1 Sponsored Content from 3rd Party Advertisers

Advertisement deals that are brokered through multi-channel networks, and not related to YouTube’s ecosystem, are relatively straightforward. Rates are dependent on the degree of involvement by multi-channel networks, and the projected success of the advertisement, as one of the informant emphases thusly:

“We take a big cut if we are heavily involved, taken initiative, and negotiated on their behalf, which is mostly when sponsored videos are involved. And we take a smaller cut if they manage more on their own. We usually help by making creative campaigns, and on the biggest ones it’s not YouTubers that make them, we do. That is where the biggest cash flow comes from. And also from merchandise and live events.”

- Christina Parker, SPLAY

As her statement suggest, multi-channel networks get most of their revenue from sponsored deals. One may argue, for her statement, this is due to multi-channel networks taking larger cuts because they play a vital part in brokering and outlining advertisement deals. Having said that, revenue percentages will differ from multi-channel network to multi-channel network,
but as Nils Ketil Andersen, CEO of Nordic Screens stated, among the Scandinavian multi-channel networks the split is somewhat similar:

“We normally have a division of 30/70%, where The YouTuber gets 70% of the revenue and we take 30% for administrative duties.”

His statement may suggest that regardless of degree of involvement of multi-channel networks, YouTubers get the largest cut of the revenue. This seems to correspond with figures found in other multi-channel networks’ contracts. In a contract obtained from the Irish multi-channel network Creative Nation, it is stated that content creators (or YouTubers) are entitled to 75 per cent of revenue from third party advertisers. Naturally, payments may vary in size dependent on the deal struck between advertisers and multi-channel networks, but evidence suggest that the percentage is roughly the same across multi-channel networks, and that YouTubers is awarded the majority of revenue from sponsored advertisement deals from third party advertisers.

5.3.2 YouTube Advertising Through Google

Advertisement that goes through YouTube’s ecosystem are structured differently, mostly because advertisement is managed, and sold by Google. As already established in 5.2., unlike sponsored third party advertisement that are native in video, YouTube advertisements run before, after or during a YouTube video. Advertisers choose what type of action is required for airing revenue. Normally, this will be either Cost Per Mile (CPM) or Cost-Per-Click. When calculating revenue, Google uses what is called effective CPM (eCPM), which is the average YouTubers earn for every 1,000 monetized views that a video generates (Pinsky, 2014). Calculating eCPM over a specific time period, YouTubers need to know their view count and revenue for that period. Pinsky (2014) displays the formula this way:

If your videos received 20,000 views over the past 14 days, and you earned $70 from ads during that time. To calculate your anticipated eCPM, divide your earnings by your monetized views, then multiply by 1,000. In this case, your eCPM would be $3.50: $70 ÷ 20,000 × 1,0000 = $3.50

When looking at this formula it is important to note that not every view is monetized. For PelleK the lacking capacity from YouTube to monetize every view was emphasized thus:
Advertisements are divided equally among every YouTuber because it’s supposed to be fair. If I have 10 million views each month, I only get payed for 3 million of those views. Approximately one third of all my views are monetized, the rest doesn’t show advertisements. So, if my multi-channel network had managed all the advertisements on my YouTube channel, I would’ve earned three times as much.

From his statement, one can assume that Google adverts are not as lucrative for YouTubers as sponsored advertisement through third party advertisers. It also give credibility to informants’ previous statements emphasizing revenue equality among YouTubers. This mentality continues when advertising revenue is divided between YouTubers and multi-channel networks. Similarly, to third party advertisement deals, advertisement revenue generated through Google adverts, go through multi-channel networks. YouTubers that are affiliated with a multi-channel network are not paid directly from Google, rather their revenue flows through multi-channel networks, which take their cut and the rest to YouTubers. Contracts obtained from Creative Nation suggest that YouTubers are normally paid within thirty days of them receiving payment from Google. Similarly, the contract of the UK based multi-channel network Freedom! states they distribute revenue within thirty days for YouTubers who earn $20 or more, and within 45 days for YouTubers who earn less than $20. Based statements from informants, it is assumed that procedures are similar among the Scandinavian multi-channel networks.

The percentage division is also different from sponsored adverts with third party advertisers. In this case, they are much higher. Analyzing contracts indicates that the division of Google is 90% to YouTubers and 10% to multi-channel networks. Statements made from informants reflects these findings:

We made 5600 from Google ads in December, and they took 1100 of that. They help us make money. We are always have a surplus.

- PistolShripms

From his statement, one can also see some reflection of multi-channel networks generosity. Considering the YouTube channel PistolShrips has close to 500,000 subscribers, and actively produce one video every week, one can also assume that informants statements emphasizing that one does not “get rich” from Google advertisements alone has some adhesion.
5.4 Demographics and User Data

Google is an advertisement company, and have control over both the input and output of creative content on YouTube (Waugh, 2012). This is because they manage the distribution platform and the analytical tools to measure traffic. Arguably, one can say Google has become what Doyle calls gateway monopoly, which “describes firms that gain control over some vital stage in the supply chain or gateway between media content and audience.” (2013, p. 24). When it comes to YouTube, this is evident, as YouTube is the dominant navigation system that is an essential interference for consumers who wish to see creative content from YouTubers. One of the factors Doyle stresses from the beginning is the issue of measuring impact, mostly as it is “difficult to define what constitutes a unit of media content” (2013, p. 14). As established in the earlier in this master thesis, determining the value of YouTube content, in a financial sense, is difficult. When it comes to multi-channel networks selling YouTubers to advertisers, or Google monetizing their videos, views are seen as a currency. Similarly, informants stated subscribers add value to YouTubers, as Nils Ketil Andersen, CEO of Nordic Screens explained: “you don’t sell subscribers, but subscribers says something about loyalty.”

There is a third value, however, user data. Collecting personal data from online consumers is a widespread practice for Google that uses such data as a basis for targeted advertising, resulting in huge profits for the company (Fuchs, 2013, p. 61). In the traditional television industry, measuring effects of advertisements is a much bigger part of the economic structure:

The problems of measuring the effects of advertising are not simple and, in particular, it is very difficult to establish proof of some degree of causality, i.e. that x expenditure on advertising will have y given effects on sales

(Doyle, 2002a, p. 61)

With Google’s collection of user data, however, measuring effect is less complicated. This because user data provide insight into who watches advertisements, which is valuable when conducting personalized and targeted adverts (Tucker, 2014). And while research suggests consumers react positively to personalized adverts (Goldfarb & Tucker, 2011). Collecting personal data benefits multi-channel networks as well. Tools such as Google Analytics help them pin point success by looking at detailed information of their viewers. In other words, by collecting user data, they not only are control of the output, in the form of videos posted on
YouTube, they also control input in the form of views, comments, as well as detailed information of the demographics of audience, as emphasized by informants:

We use Google’s analytic programs. They have fantastic analytics programs. We can see that our viewers are mostly men. We have 82% male and 18% female audiences, reaching approximately 40-50% of 18-24-year-olds even though we measure best with 20-year-olds in the USA, UK, Germany, Norway, and Poland.

- PistolShrimps.

What his statement suggests is that Google Analytics may remove some of the difficulties when measuring the effect of advertising, Doyle projects. One key distinction, here, is also the notion of analytics programs being a big influence on YouTubers as well. Input is extremely important. This because cultural industries are dependent on audiences to achieve a sustainable economy. It might be suggested that analyzing user data benefits YouTubers because content quality often depends on feedback from consumer, as YouTube is a social platform where consumers engage with producer in one-to-one communication. The advantage multi-channel networks then have compared to traditional media companies, appear to be connected to the vertical integration of Google, where advertising, distribution, and feedback are channeled through one ecosystem. Multi-channel networks, as the manager of creative content, becomes an extended part of the ecosystem while simultaneously operating outside of it. They are not a producer nor a distributor of content, which allows multi-channel networks with the advantage of two seemingly important aspects of creative productions. First, their content creators use YouTube as their main distribution platform which removes the risks that come with selling content to a distributor, such as a television network or a movie studio, as they are not depended on the willingness of such actors to distribute their product. Second, through their relationship with Google they enjoy the freedom of access to Google’s analytical tools and search mechanisms, in which they use user data to demonstrate YouTubers’ value potential advertisers, as explained by Christina Parker, the country manager of SPLAY:

Before any operation, advertisers always know which demographics they want to reach, and then we exclusively use Analytics to see who watches the content.

Her statement may indicate that multi-channel networks use personal user data as a sales pitch to advertisers in the sense that advertisers disclose their target audience, and multi-channel networks point them in the direction of YouTubers with that demographic. Collecting large
amounts of personal data also leaves some ethical question. As Fuchs eagerly points out, Google see huge monetary benefits in user-generated content because the more sites, or YouTube videos are out there, the more data Google can index to provide search results, leading consumers towards using Google’s platforms, which means they are confronted with advertisements that match their searches (Fuchs, 2013, p. 131). Informants, however, stressed that their use of user data does not violate consumer’s privacy:

There’s a lot of personal data, which often sounds scary but we are mostly concerned about the demographics variable like who you are, boy or girl, and your geographic location. And we look at the big picture, basically where you come from (on the internet prior to viewing the video), what you do once on the channel, and where you go afterwards. All of this we call ‘channel management,’ which of course is personal data, but is never used on an individual level.

On one hand, when informants use language such as the bigger picture, one might argue it emphasize a desire to overlook certain aspects of data collection’s ethical uncertainties. On the other hand, it may also justify collecting personal data, indicating that YouTubers only use user data to adjust their videos in such a way that they become more appealing to their audience. This statement from Thomas Lien indicates how user data can be used to improve videos:

(In Analytics) we can see where people stop watching videos, which is very useful. If, for example, your videos are, on average, seven minutes, we can use might discover that people stop watching after two minutes. Then we may suggest you make your videos shorter.

Multi-channel networks are a relatively new phenomenon in the media industry, and part of what makes the collection, and use, of personal data to excel their business lucrative, especially when trying to appeal to advertisers. Arguably, they would not show the same amount of success without it. User data is rather complex, however, especially in terms of how multi-channel networks operate as in relation to Google. Although multi-channel networks use Google’s analytical tools, there are no contracts involved between their relationship, and few restrictions for access to their data. Similarly, YouTubers affiliated with multi-channel networks hand over their user data to them, as is evident in I use Google Analytics all the time. I’m biggest in the USA and Japan. I have around 10 million views a month but Norway only makes up 100,000 of those.
Naturally, this makes placing multi-channel networks within YouTube’s ecosystem difficult. For one, they are a part of the value chain of cultural production, as they oversee content and influence YouTubers’ content, while continuously being in direct contact with advertisers, and overseeing viewership numbers. On the other hand, they have no involvement in YouTube at all. They do not share business models or financial targets with Google, and operate as an entirely separate company.
6 Creative Control in Multi-Channel Networks

This last chapter of the analysis focuses on the creative control YouTubers have, as content creators, within the multi-channel networks they are affiliated with. It becomes interesting to explore the creative dynamic within multi-channel networks, as “YouTube reflects a hegemonic tension between an amateur led, individually driven media landscape and a professionally led, institutionally driven professional media landscape” (Morreale, 2014). In other words, how does one divide and manage the merger of creative content from amateur creators with the professionalism commerce requires?

In attempting to understand the operational functions and intentions of multi-channel networks, it may be beneficial to look at a couple of things. First, the content of the contracts YouTubers sign with multi-channel network, how they are interpreted and enforced. Then, copyright’s representation and policing. And, last how the tension between creativity and commerce creates a hierarchy.

To recap, the research question forming this chapter of the analysis is:

3) How is creative control displayed and divided among content creators and advertisers in multi-channel networks?

6.1 Contracts

The first section of chapter six examines the contracts YouTubers sign when they become part of multi-channel networks. It will cover terms and conditions, and how they are enforced. It is important to cover contracts because they play a “significant role in structuring the relationships and defining the stakes media workers hold in conglomerate franchise production” (Johnson, 2013, p. 44). Access was not granted to include contracts from the three multi-channel networks that were interviewed in this master thesis. As mentioned earlier, the lack of access might be because of highly competitive markets where multi-channel networks have little interest in competitors gaining access to sensitive data. In addition, some contracts have a non-disclosure clause that prohibits YouTubers from revealing the terms of their contract. As compensation, contracts have been obtained from three UK based multi-channel networks: Freedom! and Creative Nation. All three contracts have been collected from online
databases. In this section, they will be analyzed and compared to statements made from informants.

Before YouTubers can begin to consider signing contracts, they have to be accepted by multi-channel networks. And generally, YouTubers can requests to become a part of multi-channel networks through online application forms. All of the Scandinavia multi-channel networks interviewed in this master thesis, and the three UK based multi-channel networks that provided contracts, have online forms that aspiring YouTubers can submit. Reviewing applications and determining whether or not YouTubers are accepted, is then in the hands of multi-channel networks. Nobody are automatically accepted, as one informant projected:

Usually there are many requests. In the beginning, we said no to a lot because there are a lot of people with five subscribers and one or two Minecraft videos. A lot of them are young, so you always have to think of that… We had to set some boundaries, like you should not apply unless you have at least 500 subscribers, you should not apply unless you have at least 1,000 views a month, and so forth.

- Thomas Lien, Previously Nordic Screen

Nordic Screens is the only Scandinavian multi-channel network that has contact forms, SPLAY and United Screens both have designated e-mail addresses. All three British multi-channel networks have contact forms. His statement may suggest there is a limit that has to be met before joining a multi-channel network, and 1,000 views a month seems to be a common number among multi-channel networks, as Creative Nation and Freedom! both require YouTubers to have 1,000 monthly views or more (Freedom!, 2016). YouTubers who meet their requirements are then evaluated on an individual level:

It’s about the quality of their work and how dedicated they are to the work they do. They have to do YouTube for the right reasons. It is dangerous to think ‘easy money’ because it’s such hard work, which requires heaps of dedication.

- Marie-Louise Alvær, United Screens

When asked about what they look for in YouTubers, one of the most common decision factors was dedication to the platform. The emphasis on dedication suggests multi-channel networks look for YouTubers that can cross over into professionalized content. A second motive may be that dedicated YouTubers stay on longer, as Chrisina Parker, COO of SPLAY stressed, young YouTubers might move on: “A trend in Norway is that many (YouTubers) graduate
The YouTube youth that quit are often those who play
games or make make-up tutorials for fun, and then move on when they get older.
Scandinavian multi-channel networks took this into consideration when formulating contracts.

6.1.1 How Contracts are Structured

The Scandinavian multi-channel networks had the advantage of developing after American
multi-channel networks. Some American multi-channel networks are known for their strict
contracts that are hard to terminate (Stuart, 2013). The most famous contract dispute came
when Ray William Johnsson, Maker Studio’s biggest YouTuber, sued the multi-channel
network for refusing to release the advertising rights to his YouTube channel (Gutelle, 2013).
When asked about American multi-channel networks way of doing business, Marie-Louise
Alvær, Country Manager of United Screens responded thus:

> They harvested young people who had yet to sign a lease and made long, complicated
> contracts with small withdrawal windows and automatic renewals. Future plans seems
> like a life time away to a fifteen-year-old.

The informants from the Scandinavian multi-channel networks all expressed a sense of
responsibility to have a transparent and open contract, and her statement indicates a deep
concern for the well-being of their partnering YouTubers. There are Scandinavian YouTubers
still bound by American multi-channel networks and their contracts, however, they are able to
join multi-channel networks regardless. SPLAY is one multi-channel network that offers
basic contracts:

> It allows you to be connected to an international multi-channel network that controls
> all of your ads. That is YouTube ads. It exists because before the multi-channel
> networks reached the north, many American multi-channel networks swallowed
> YouTubers and locked them in never ending contracts that are impossible to get out
> off. They are automatically renewed without warning. Unfortunately, there are some
> of our YouTuber’s whom are bound to these contracts. They will never get an offer to
do sponsored content through these contracts. We give them the possibility of join us
> can be a part of all the social, the cool, the fun, and the teachable we have to offer. But
> we cannot sell their ads.

- Christina Parker, SPLAY
SPLAY have three types of contracts, which is not uncommon for multi-channel networks. In addition to basic contracts, SPLAY offers full-membership contracts to the majority of their YouTubers. If offers all of their services included in the basic contract, such as legal representation, production help, and branding, as well as monetization. YouTubers who are not bound by another multi-channel network’s contract are eligible, and channel sizes range from 500 to 100,000 subscribers. The last contract SPLAY offers is a management contract, because, similarly to traditional media companies, popular YouTubers require increased supervision and involvement from multi-channel networks:

It’s only for our biggest stars whom have so much going on that they are unable to manage every request by themselves, and there is a lot of money involved. In Norway, we only have ‘Prebz og Dennis,’ in Sweden there are about four or five under this contract.

- Christina Parker, SPLAY

YouTubers who chose to become part of multi-channel networks have some ground rules laid for them. The fact that success comes from motivation was a reoccurring theme in interviews, but most off all informants emphasized that they want YouTubers to have fun. However, multi-channel networks are businesses with a goal of generating revenue. Although contracts are transparent, from informants’ statements one presumes focus lies heavily with the process of professionalizing user-generated content, with an emphasis on high quality YouTube videos.

### 6.1.2 Ownership and Control over Creative Content

For Johnson, contracts “establish social hierarchies by formalizing the dominance of the intellectual property owner over the creative process” (2013, p. 141). Informants reacted to the question of ownership thus: “We don’t own their content” assured Nils Ketil Andersen, CEO of Nordic Screens, PelleK specified “I own everything I do,” and Marie-Louise Alvær, Country Manager of Unites Screens said: “We don’t have time to look over content from 400 YouTube channels nor is it anything we want.” Similarly, PistolShripms stressed that multi-channel networks only are “there as a management,” and Christina Parker, COO of SPLAY said, “If we ever end up owning YouTubers, their channel is screwed.” Because informants show such degrees of consistency, one may assume that YouTubers have full control over
creative content. One might also argue that that gives them dominance over multi-channel networks when producing creative content. Looking at contracts obtained from the British multi-channel networks seem to validate this argument, as the contract issued by Freedom! states in its fifth clause:

> Talent will retain full control and ownership of, and absolute liability for, the Talent’s Channels and all content contained therein. This will include creation, procurement, and uploading of any and all content therein, and the ongoing management and look and feel of the Talent’s Channels.

The emphasis on look and feel of YouTube channels shows that YouTuber ultimately have control and responsibility over more than just their own videos. One can argue that the look and feel of YouTube channels includes, but is not limited to, profile pictures, cover photos, banners, and color schemes. The statement in Freedom!’s contract also indicates that YouTubers are responsible for all content that is published to their YouTube channel, and that multi-channel networks are not held accountable should consumers find content offensive. A notion further reflected in a statement from the fourth clause in CreativeNation contract:

> Network will not have the ability to upload content, alter the design or layout, etc. of the Content Creator YouTube Properties; provided, however, that Network shall have the absolute right to require Content Creator to remove content immediately upon any notice of copyright violation, or violation of any party's rights, or concern thereof.

The multi-channel network’s emphasis on rights to upload videos, may further suggest that YouTubers have dominance over creative productions. Albeit, this statement also indicates multi-channel networks maintain some control through the rights to remove content from YouTube channels. One can further argue that YouTubers’ dominant ownership over creative content is a vital part in sustain a YouTubers success, as YouTube as a media platform calls for an interpersonal interaction among consumers and producers. Jenkins emphasizes fragmented ownership of creative content is necessary for participatory cultures to flourish (2006, p. 68) Similarly, Doyle urges an ownership model based on pluralism as a response to conglomerate media ownership (2002b, p. 13). With conglomerate ownership of media, Doyle argues that creative content is dominated by few rather than many owners, and that pluralism is necessary for a diverse and sustainable media ecology (2002b, p. 14). Marie-Louise Alvær, the country manager of United Screens elaborated on multi-channel networks’ lack of dominance over creative content this way:
We know our YouTubers… and the mutual trust that builds among us is very important so that you don’t surprise me, or even worse, and advertiser, by spewing racial slurs.

Her emphasis on trust may be used to understand the relaxed approach to ownership of YouTube channels and creative content. In traditional media companies, media ownership is concentrated, and creative content is often owned by companies, not creative creators (Jenkins et al., 2013, p. 137). Her statement also reflects a mutual sentiment among Scandinavian multi-channel networks that they are only in the game to help manage YouTubers and guide them towards, and through, success, which may also be evident in the sixteenth clause of Freedom!’s contract:

This Agreement will not render the Talent an employee, partner, agent of, or joint venturer with the Company for any purpose. The Talent is and will remain an independent contractor in relationship to the Company.

In this section of the contract, there is an emphasis on YouTubers’ independence. Further, it gives the impression that YouTubers are the owners of the creative content they produce. Arguably, YouTubers are the on top of the hierarchal culture production in their relationship with multi-channel networks.

### 6.1.3 Copyright Claims

Copyright is a highly debated issue in cultural work. On one hand, it is seen as a disturbance of cultural exchange (Gillespie, 2007). On the other hand, copyright is seen as a tool that give creative individuals an incentive to work (Hesmondhalgh, 2007, p. 159). Regardless, copyright laws are often intricate and complicated, and the lawsuits plentiful. Google and YouTube are no exceptions. In 2014 Google settled a seven year long copyright dispute with Viacom, after the media conglomerate filed a lawsuit in 2007, claiming “YouTube users were illegally uploading thousands of videos of Viacom TV shows… and movies from its Paramount Pictures film studio” (Rabil, 2014). As a result, YouTube provides a service called content ID. Content ID is a library of video clips ranging from music videos to feature films, and each time a video is uploaded to YouTube and are used as references. Copyright owner decide if YouTube videos shall be muted, blocked or have monetization rights removed ("How Content ID Works," 2016). PelleK, whom mostly produce cover songs, explained the process thus:
When you make music like I do, there are a lot of copyright regulations. United Screens make sure everything is handled properly so that I make money from my videos, even if I don’t write the songs myself. They make sure the copyright owner gets his 15%, and they negotiate deals with companies so that my videos stay unlocked and monetized.

His statement may suggest that uploading videos without the management of multi-channel networks is difficult. In addition to providing legal help, multi-channel networks have large libraries of music for their affiliated YouTubers to use, as well as negotiating deals with record labels for access to professional music. As established in the section above, YouTubers are owners of the creative content they upload to YouTube. However, they are subjected to the copyright laws of the country in which they publish their content. In Creative Nation’s sixth clause, the repercussions for a YouTuber infringing on copyright law, is stated thus:

If content on Content Creator's YouTube Properties is suspected or determined to be in breach of the said terms or infringing on said material, Network may withhold any payments owed and have the right to terminate this Agreement retroactively and permanently, or until such time as the matter is resolved to Network’s satisfaction.

This statement emphasizes that multi-channel networks have strict guidelines when it comes to copyright violation, presumably as a safeguard from copyright lawsuits. J. Cohen (2007) states good copyright laws should seek to promote creativity, but as multi-channels have the right to revoke videos, revenue, and contracts, one may argue that copyright enforcements can severely damage YouTubers. Many have seen parodies, cover songs, and homages been removed (Bayley, 2014). Jenkin’s (2006) idea of participatory culture urges fans to share interpretations and extensions of their favorite creative works. For YouTubers who are not affiliated with multi-channel networks, however, that seems to be increasingly more difficult.

6.1.4 Termination and Obligation

YouTubers that are affiliated with any of the Scandinavian multi-channel networks, create content on an individual level. They work from home, have full control of their channel and content, and know what they stand for, and what they viewers expect from them. Multi-channel networks are businesses with a goal of creating revenue, although informants emphasize a stronger wish to be helpers for YouTubers. Regardless, some expectations must
be there for production of content. When asked about the obligation YouTubers have to produce content, PelleK responded this way:

There are no specifics on how many videos you have to make, but they require that you are active. They only expect continuous video production like one video every week.

In his statement the emphasis on YouTubers being active may seem to indicate that there are few obligations for YouTubers in multi-channel networks. In the contracts from the British multi-channel networks, there are no mention of required productions or work hours. Determining what constitutes being active from a multi-channel network may seem difficult because it subjective, as Christina Parker, COO of SPLAY, indicates:

It depends on your (YouTube) channel. If you make music videos once a week is enough, but if you make Minecraft (gaming) videos, you should have at least three a week. The PistolShrimps boys don’t produce a lot because their product is of a higher quality and takes time to produce.

From her statement, one can assume multi-channel networks have an understanding of what it means for YouTubers to be active. What happens, however, if they are inactive? YouTubers might start making videos to share hobbies or talents, and then interest may fade over time. Christina Parker explained what happens if YouTubers are inactive thus:

We have channels that are inactive today. They are not thrown out of SPLAY, but they are not the ones we promote to advertisers either.

One can assume from her statement that multi-channel networks pay little attention to inactive YouTube channels, as they do not generate negative revenue nor do they implicate the success of other YouTubers. Presumably, inactive YouTube channels remain affiliated with multi-channel networks indefinitely. For most multi-channel networks, contracts do not expire by themselves. Contracts are terminated in two ways. First, contracts are terminated voluntary when YouTubers cancel their accounts. Reasons for cancellation may be anything including but not limited to unsatisfying service or results, quitting YouTube or joining a competing multi-channel network. Voluntary exits are managed differently among different multi-channel networks. Most contracts are automatically renewed after a 24 month period unless canceled within that period. For all of the contracts analyzed from the British multi-channel networks, a thirty day written notice has must be presented, for any reason or no reason.
When it comes to termination notice, SPLAY requires YouTubers to give a notice 90 in advance. For Creative Nation, the procedures after termination of contracts is stated thus:

Neither party will have any further obligation, rights or duties to the other party, except: that any undisputed payments owed by Network to Talent prior to the date of termination will still be deemed payable in the manner.

The use, and weight on no further obligations is similarly worded in all three contracts from the British multi-channel networks. This may indicate a standard among multi-channel networks. Second, multi-channel networks can choose to terminate YouTubers’ contracts. This may happen for one of two reasons: As explained in section 6.1.2, one factor for termination of contracts by a multi-channel network is copyright violation. The Second reason muti-channel may choose to terminate YouTubers’ contracts is stated in Freedom!’s contract thus:

(If a) talent’s YouTube channels is suspected or determined to be so-called "action fraud," "click fraud" or "impression fraud," or fraud of any other kind, whether in any automated or human way, by the use of a person, an automated script or a computer program to click on an any form of response mechanism.

In short, action fraud or click fraud is any kind of mischievous work with either subscriber counts or viewer figures. This can be anything from willingly persuading friends or family to generate likes, comments, views or subscribers on videos to buying ghost views or followers, which are usually computer-generated. For the Scandinavian multi-channel networks terminating YouTubers’ contracts is rare. When asked what constitutes termination of YouTubers’ contracts, Thomas Lien, previously employed by Nordic Screens, responded thus:

Nothing really. Only that the content should not be offensive. There is no requirement that you have to grow this much this fast… When you are in, you are in. I cannot recall anyone being thrown out.

6.2 The Tension between Creativity and Commerce

I quit my job, bought a guitar, and a microphone, and knew I wasn’t going to have a steady income for a while, but it didn’t matter, I just wanted to make music.

- PelleK.
From his statement, one can see that a strong motivation for YouTubers producing creative content is nurturing a passion. The origin stories of YouTubers are presumably the same across genres when it comes to the activity and the desire behind joining the YouTube community and seeking success within it. Both YouTubers expressed deep emotional reasons behind signing up for YouTube and using as a platform for publication. They also mention that they first became active on the platform in the late 2000’s, a time where YouTube was just a video sharing application, and not the entertainment community it is today. Similarly, multi-channel networks would not come to exist for another few years. Naturally, this has to be taken into consideration, as the motives for individuals looking to create a YouTube channel today, might be skewed differently. Never the less, one of the main drivers for YouTubers to join is to nurture a hobby and share it with other, like minded individuals. The key behind YouTube and its success, appear to correlate with the consumer taking the role of the producer, generating creative content motivated by personal interest, not financial gain.

We were both studying film at the University of Bergen where students have access to professional equipment. The program was very academic, not so much hands-on until senior year. At the party where we met we discovered that we both had the same idea of editing ourselves into Harry Potter movies. I had already bought one Hogwarts robe but got two by accident, so it just sort of happened. It was more like it’s nice to have a platform where we can upload stuff and have fun, and maybe have something to show future employers. We had absolutely no plans of getting big.

- PistolShrimps.

This notion of the consumer taking the role of the consumer is important when it comes to understanding the bond between a YouTuber and a multi-channel network. It becomes equally important in discussing the position and effect of power when it comes to creative control, especially in regard to advertisers and revenue. It is reasonable to assume that YouTube is a purely creative platform, as the YouTuber, or the individual with a YouTube channel, is the creator of content and circulation instantly occurs when a video is uploaded. There is no external advertising, no marketing campaigns, and no reproduction of content. Conceivably, the YouTuber, being the content creator, has full creative control, and creates content with no regard to financial gain or commercial actors. Additionally, this forms a belief that content created and uploaded to YouTube belongs to the YouTuber, and only the YouTuber.
I own everything I make. I play all the instruments and I sing every line myself. The only thing I don’t own is the composition. The guy who owns the composition is only taking 15% of the cut.

- PelleK

It may be said that the concept of ownership skews the tension between the creative and the commerce from the content creators and marketing executives in charge of distribution, to content creators and advertisers promoting a product through their YouTube channel. Hesmondhalgh (2007, p. 243) is rather brutal when describing the influence of marketers have on creativity, suggesting marketing and marketing research to be “threats to creative autonomy and to the way in which symbol maker might enrich contemporary societies.” An, while this is somewhat true in regard to advertisers’ behavior towards YouTubers, it is not reflected in the autonomy of multi-channel networks. Multi-channel networks, usually, have no influence over the YouTubers creativity or content produced for their YouTube channel, which has been expressed explicitly by all participants:

We don’t own the YouTuber. The time we own them is the time their YouTube channel goes down the drain.

- Christina Parker, SPLAY.

As evident by her statement, multi-channel networks in Scandinavia follow the same trend of ownership, and one might assume, the creative content YouTubers produce is theirs to keep. The tension between creativity and commerce can be seen as nonexistent, then, in the relationship between YouTuber and multi-channel network. Multi-channel networks guide YouTubers through content productions, which may indicate that they are less formally structured and cater to the participatory culture. This is justified in the regard that they are not an owner of content, and relates back to the notion of the consumer taking the role of the producer. A YouTube channel is a highly individual medium where personal interests and believes are the drive force behind the production of creative content. For a multi-channel, then, the position as a distributor or reproduction manager is understood to be counterproductive. With the ownership of creative content, comes the presumption that YouTubers have some control pertaining to advertising content shown on and around their YouTube videos, as well as the possibility of participating in the decision making surrounding which sponsors to work with. Therefore, it becomes important to look further at the amount of freedom content creators on YouTube have, and the role multi-channel networks inhabit,
opposing advertisers. Going of the notion of YouTube being highly individual, one can try to understand the tension among creativity and commerce within the YouTube ecosystem by looking at the way YouTubers position themselves towards what kinds of advertisers they choose to work with, as emphasized by one of the YouTubers:

YouTubers, in general, are very picky about who they choose to work with, and that is rubbing off on advertisers. We are the ones who know the audience and the channel, and are going to produce the content, they don’t get to dictate.

- PistolShrimps.

Although, his statement indicates that YouTubers have the final word when choosing which sponsors to work with, one has to assume that multi-channel networks have some influence over their decisions. For one, multi-channel networks are hierarchically structured. Second, with cultural work, scholars often look to Marx and his notion of alienation, which generally characterizes the worker as a separate entity, with no control of the labor process and no connection to the products he produces (Marx 1844 in J. Cohen, 2007, p. 142). Although, as both YouTubers express deep personal value and connection to the work they do, evidence suggests cultural work within multi-channel networks is the complete opposite of alienation. Similarly, YouTubers write, perform, and publish their own content, which enables not only self-expression, but also grants them full autonomy in the labor process. PistolShrimps and PelleK have over 1.7 million subscribers combined on YouTube, suggesting great opportunities to participate in wholesome human activity. However, one can argue that the tension driving creativity and commerce will never prevail as, Slater and Tonkiss suggest nothing will ever be purely the product of creativity, as long as the desire, or rather, urge to profit from it exists.

Autonomy of culture here means at least two things: first, autonomy from economic values, the creation of art in relation to its own inner gods rather than the idols of the marketplace; and second, autonomy from the false and inauthentic ‘culture’ that arises in and through the marketplace, the seedy demon born when the ignorant tastes of the people mate with the fiscal lust of the capitalist

(Slater and Tonkiss, 2001, p. 152-3 quoted in Banks, 2010, p. 3)

When it comes to creative control, it is presumed that YouTubers are more self-sufficient without their connectivity to multi-channel networks. Most research suggest cultural
industries are becoming less and less about mixing creativity with bureaucracy (Banks, 2010). YouTube, itself as a platform, seems to be an example here, as allows for grandiose self-expression and autonomous labor merely by signing up to it. Similarly, the understanding of creative freedom among YouTubers connected to multi-channel networks is presumed to induce some restrictions in regard to creative control, as multi-channel networks aim to produce YouTube-like content on a professionalized level. Regardless, YouTubers actively participate in the production of creative content, which is emphasized in the deep bond that is created between YouTubers and multi-channel networks. Christer Larsen from the YouTube duo PistolShripts explained it this way:

They want us to succeed. They want us to produce as much as we possibly can. And they go out of their way to make it happen. Everything is about us focusing on ‘PistolShripts’ and not have to deal with anything else.

Naturally, one cannot ignore the fact that traditional linear television industries also are organizations that thrive on the success of their talents. Early on, traditional media industries have given creative freedoms and production control to talent agents. The main difference between traditional media companies and multi-channel networks seem to be the degree to which such freedoms occur. In every business setting there exists a natural hierarchy. In that hierarchy, each position has different amounts of power. One of the arguments made for the multi-channel networks is the fact that management is less formally structured. As established above, YouTube is dominated by niches, and therefore, one can argue YouTubers have superior knowledge of which content appeals to their audience, and which sponsors that represent their YouTube persona. This, is however, equally true for traditional media industries. In large productions, talent may have huge influences on the direction of the production. The difference is the size. In multi-channel networks, while it is divided into sections, every single YouTuber has his own contact person, which generally becomes their manager and advisor. These advisors have little to no control of content.

Then there is the question of whether or not creative autonomy can thrive by itself outside the commercial interests, which (Banks, 2010) emphasizes through notions of autonomy’s fundamentality, which suggestively can only be described as economic interest and stability of the field. Both YouTuber’s emphasize a certain desire to be self-sufficient of YouTube, which gives merit to Banks’s notion. Similarly, for both YouTubers there never was an alternative to joining a multi-channel network. PelleK, described the importance of being a part of a multi-channel network this way:
I have never considered not joining a multi-channel network because don’t have the expertise. Besides, the percentage they take every month is so small that I would lose more by not joining.

His statement emphasizes, in some sense, that the idea that commerce and autonomy is something the culture production industry is dependent on, and it leaves multi-channel networks as no exception. It also suggest that creative workers, such as YouTubers, have a hard time maintaining financial stability without larger institutions like multi-channel networks, behind them.
7 Concluding Remarks

This master thesis set out to explore the topic of multi-channel networks, with the aim of understanding their internal and external structural factors. Multi-channel networks are media companies that represent YouTube talent and connectors of amateur user-generated content with professionalized advertisers and media produces. The goal of this master thesis was to obtain a deeper understanding of the foundational elements of multi-channel networks, mainly in regard to organizational structure, monetization, and creative control.

This master thesis obtained data through a combination of structured and semi-structured interviews with executives from the three largest multi-channel networks in Scandinavia, SPLAY, United Screens, and Nordic Screens, as well as two of Norway’s largest YouTubers, PelleK and PistolShripms. Document analysis was also conducted to obtain a more nuanced picture of multi-channel networks.

7.1 Summary of Empirical Findings

First, findings suggest that multi-channel networks may be seen as a natural evolution from YouTube’s Partner Program, as they become curators, providing YouTube assistance in managing its vast database of content. In this regard, multi-channel networks are introducing a hierarchical structure and a strong sense of security in an otherwise unstructured sea of user-generated content by monitoring production and ensuring high quality content. When it comes to building a hierarchy, the organizational structure of multi-channel networks shows similarities to traditional media in the sense that there exists some form of commercial bureaucracy where multi-channel networks broker advertisement deals on content creator’s behalf. Similarly, multi-channel networks manage YouTube content, help with copyright, offer production facilities, and practical YouTube information. In contrast to traditional television companies, however, multi-channel networks do not own the rights to YouTubers’ creative content. YouTubers are independent contractors, and multi-channel networks are contractually denied the privileges of uploading, altering, or removing content from affiliated YouTube channels. Content is mostly niche dominant, concentrated around short video clips lasting up to 20 minutes, and distributed primarily through YouTube, with topics ranging from comedy and documentaries to fashion, beauty, cars and video games. Scandinavian multi-channel networks also have a more charismatic structure with user friendly and
transparent contracts that are easy to terminate, and show emphasis on building friendships with YouTubers. Traditional media companies are structured around large and scarce conglomerates, and in many ways this trend continuous with multi-channel networks and YouTube. In addition, evidence suggests video consumption is migrating online, thus YouTube is presumed to be the logical next step in the consumption of video, and the emergence of multi-channel networks can be seen as an attempt to manage or scale YouTube content.

Second, when it comes to *monetization and revenue*, multi-channel networks are shown to have a steady increase in revenue, mostly due to advertisers spending more and more on online advertisements. Multi-channel networks’ revenue is advertise driven, as they currently generate revenue in two ways. 1) Their source of revenue is predominantly sponsored advertisements from third party clients. This comes from sponsored deals multi-channel networks broker for YouTubers, and include, but is not limited to, product placements in video, mentions in videos, and full-length sponsored videos. 2) Multi-channel networks take a small percentage of the revenue from advertisements running on YouTube. The division of revenue favors YouTubers, as multi-channel networks take fractions, unless they are heavily involved in the production of YouTube content. The collection of user data also contributes to the monetization model of multi-channel networks because personalized user data categorizes viewer demographics and enables targeted personalized advertisements. Multi-channel networks use this to give YouTubers value when negotiating with advertisers. Findings also suggest that the monetization of YouTube content influence multi-channel networks to focus on niche markets. This because niche markets combined with Google’s analytical programs are valuable when generating personalized and targeted advertisements. Their influence is also evident in YouTube transforming from a platform devoted to user-generated content to an entertainment platform pushing premium content, which might be credited to multi-channel networks bringing in professional advertisers and media producers.

Third, in regard to *creative control*, there is some tension between creativity and commerce, however, it is nowhere near as large as with traditional media. When an advertiser or sponsor is involved, findings suggest multi-channel networks have some influence over the creative production of YouTube videos. When an advertiser is not involved, and YouTubers are self-sufficient, multi-channel networks are rarely involved in creative production. Mostly, this trend comes from the convergence of media, which allows traditional consumers to take a central role in production of media content, which is evident in how the YouTubers
interviewed for this master thesis expressed that they became a part of YouTube as it allowed them to share their passions with likeminded individuals. In this perspective, it is very difficult for an outsider to infiltrate the community with the same passion or enthusiasm. As a result, multi-channel networks monetize YouTubers’ content and sell their YouTube videos to advertisers on the basis of YouTubers’ ability to have full creative control. It is suggested, however, that as advertisers pay for positive representation and exposure of their product, that creative control is not entirely free. It is mostly free. In many ways, the continuous acceptance of YouTubers having full creative control is built upon a deep, interpersonal relationship, and trust between multi-channel networks and YouTubers.

7.2 Discussion: Placing Multi-Channel Networks in the Theory

This master thesis builds on previous research done on convergence culture, participation democracy, culture industries, and social media economy, specifically those of Jenkins (2006) and (Fuchs, 2013). When looking at the founding theories and the analysis of data in this master thesis, it becomes evident that multi-channel networks are hybrids of Jenkins’ and Fuchs’ theories.

In participatory culture, meaning has to be created, knowledge should trickle down from the more experienced, and participants must feel that their contribution matter in these social connections with one another. YouTube is a social platform that provides a distribution model where amateur users actively participate in the making and exchanging of creative content. In this master thesis, YouTubers put a heavy emphasis on the fact that they began their YouTube careers because they love making videos or music or art. For them, YouTube is not work, it is a platform where one share deeply personal interests with the world. For anything to be considered participatory, one has to bring together resources and combine skills in such a way that the collective becomes superiorly intelligent. Fandoms live naturally on YouTube, and YouTubers actively engage with each other, and include their audiences in the discussion, asking for feedback. In return, fans actively participate in comment sections, remake famous videos or create fan art or fanfiction. At this point, there is no argument against the fact that consumer/producer converge or that technologies interconnect, as cheaper cameras and free hosing sites like YouTube provides consumers with an opportunity to create content and then participate in social media platforms. YouTubers affiliated with multi-
channel networks operate as individual contractors and plan, produce, shoot, edit, and upload content independently. They are not bound to large production teams following a strict hierarchical structure like most of their counterparts in traditional television.

Multi-channel networks are media companies, which actively invest in YouTube’s niche markets with the desire to generate revenue. They manage YouTubers by providing legal help, production space, and travel budgets. In return, they monetize their YouTube content, collect user data, and sell their videos to advertisers. They do not require a set number of videos, only a certain standard. However, media conglomerates own most multi-channel networks, and YouTubers are not able to participate in business decisions. Similarly, not all YouTubers affiliated with multi-channel networks have an equal opportunity to participate in the decision making process of their channels or in the multi-channel networks themselves. There exists a hierarchy where YouTubers with low subscriber or viewer counts are less likely to be promoted or have the opportunity to participate in larger advertisement campaigns. Multi-channel networks have huge arsenals of YouTubers, averaging in the hundreds, which is a major disadvantage, as success is harder to achieve for smaller YouTube channels. Similarly, outside the major multi-channel networks, YouTubers find it difficult to compete without the access, influence, and wealth large multi-channel networks provide. In addition, Google owns YouTube, and mediates input and output through cultural expressions and participations on their platforms. Multi-channel networks operate as gatekeepers of YouTube content by organizing, controlling, and monetizing it. In other words, multi-channel networks are not immune to commercial influence.

Essentially, multi-channel networks display the convergence of commerce and cultural production. They are hybrids of Jenkins’ convergence culture and Fuchs’ participatory democracy. YouTubers make videos reflecting their passions and/or hobbies that consumers are drawn to because they are of significant interest to them, and because they wish to participate in the fan community. Google then collects personal user data on such videos and sell it to advertisers who implement their brands into the YouTube videos, which are managed and curated by multi-channel networks. In short, multi-channel networks are both participatory in the sense that YouTubers have ownership and responsibility of creative productions, and capitalistic entities, as they are semi-hierarchically structured, and target niche markets with the goal of generating revenue.
7.3 Future Research and Limitations

The findings in this master thesis helped shed some light on how multi-channel networks in Scandinavia are structured. The combination of structured/semi-structured interviews and document analysis was helpful as they provided a nuanced look, which only strengthens the trustworthiness of the findings. However, this master thesis also encounters some limitations, which may encourage further research.

First, this master thesis was limited to six participants who all are affiliated with multi-channel networks located in Norway. To validate findings further, it could be interesting to conduct this study on a larger scale, which could elevate the significance of the findings. In addition, because the perception of contract transparency is seen to be different in The United States, it would be interesting to see a similar study conducted in a different country.

Second, the generalization of the Scandinavian multi-channel networks may not be applicable to other industries. This master thesis conducts descriptive research and does not include statements on multi-channel networks’ current position in the media markets. Therefore, it would be interesting to examine a similar study that looks at multi-channel networks in a broader perspective.
Reference List

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Morse, J. M. (1994). Designing funded qualitative research.

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Appendix 1 – Interview Guide

Separate interview guides were made for each interview, however, this interview guide was the bases for all interviews.

1) **Elites from MCN-organizations:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section I: The Warm-up</th>
<th>Vil du begynne med å fortelle meg litt om hva din rolle er innenfor (bedrift)?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Led meg gjennom en vanlig dag på jobben.)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kan forklare meg med egne ord hva et Multi-Channel Network er?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section II: Explore discussion points</th>
<th>Med dine egne ord, hvordan vil du beskrive MCNs utvikling i dagens mediemarked?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I hvilken grad vil du si MCN bidrar til dagens mediemarked?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hvor mange YouTube-kanaler samarbeider dere med for øyeblikket?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section III: Core Questions</th>
<th>Hva vil du beskrive som den beste egenskapen til et MCN er?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vil du fortelle meg om den siste YouTube-ern du/dere signerte, fra begynnelsen hvor dere først ble kontaktet/fikk øynene opp for ham/henne, til slutten hvor dere ble partnere?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hvordan ser en typisk samarbeidspartner (YouTuber) ut for (bedrift)?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hvordan er den kreative kontrollen fordelt mellom MCN og YouTuber?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Veldig «tight» regime i tradisjonell kringkasting.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Hvor mye dikterer dere innhold?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hvordan vil du si MCNs (bedrift) skiller seg ut fra de tradisjonelle mediehusene (NRK/TV2, etc.)?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Google gikk i vår forbi TV2 i reklameinntekter i Norge, hvordan påvirker det MCNs (bedrift) positivt og negativt?</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kan du fortelle meg litt om inntektsmodellen til (MCN()?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Hvordan er inntektene fordelt mellom dere og YouTube-er?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hvor mye tjente dere i fjor?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brukerdata er en annen stor faktor som gjør digital media så attraktivt. Kan du fortelle meg hvordan MCN (bedrift) forholder seg til slike data?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Hvordan blir de samlet inn?</td>
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<td>- Hvordan blir de analysert?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Hvordan blir de brukt?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Section IV: Summarizing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vi snakket litt om MCNs og dets posisjon i mediemarkedet, er det noe du kommer på som du vil legge til?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hvor ser du deg selv/(bedrift) om 5 år?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Er det spesifikke punkter du gjerne vil se at (MCN) endres?
Helt til sist, er det noe du vil legge til ang. det vi har snakket om?

Section V: Potential Probes
Hva mener du med…
Kan du fortelle mer om…
Det høres ut som du sier…

2) YouTubers:

Section I: The Warm-up
Til å begynne med, fortell meg hva som kategoriserer din YouTube-kanal?
Kan du huske tilbake og fortelle om da du bestemte deg for å begynne med YouTube?
Hvorfor valgte du akkurat dette navnet for kanalen din?

Section II: Explore discussion points
Med dine egne ord kan du fortelle meg hva et MCN er?
Hvor hørte du først om MCN?

Section III: Core Questions
Du har (… av følgere) på kanalen din, fortell litt om eventyret og prosessen du har vært gjennom for å komme dit.
Hva gikk gjennom hodet ditt da du bestemte deg for å bli med i et MCN?
Hvorfor valgte du nettopp dette MCN-et?
| Section IV: Summarizing | Fra begynnelsen hvor du søkte om medlemskap til slutten hvor du signerte partnerskapet, kan du fortelle hvordan du ble med i (MCN-et)?
| | Fortell meg om inntektene du får fra YouTube/MCN/reklame. |

| Section V: Potential Probes | Hvor ser du for deg selv/YouTube-kanalen din om ti år?
| | Helt til sist, er det noe du vil legge til ang. det vi har snakket om? |

| Section V: Potential Probes | Hva mener du med…
| | Kan du fortelle mer om…
| | Det høres ut som du sier… |
Appendix 2 – NSD Confirmation

Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS
NORWEGIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA SERVICES

Espen Ytreberg
Institutt for medier og kommunikasjon Universitetet i Oslo
Postboks 1093 Blindern
0317 OSLO


TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 18.01.2016. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

46732 Multi-Channel Networks: Function and Influence on Digital Culture Among Nordic Consumers
Behandlingsansvarlig Universitetet i Oslo, ved institusjonens øverste leder
Daglig ansvarlig Espen Ytreberg
Student Henrik Smehaug

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger er meldepliktig i henhold til personopplysningsloven § 31. Behandlingen tilfredsstiller kravene i personopplysningsloven.

Personvernombudets vurdering forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korresponderende med ombudet, ombudets kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.


Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 10.05.2016, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen
Vigdis Namtvedt Kvalheim

Siri Tenden Myklebust

Kontaktperson: Siri Tenden Myklebust tlf: 55 58 22 68

Dokumentet er elektronisk produsert og godkjent ved NSDs rutiner for elektronisk godkjenning.

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