The X-Files: an analysis of the social TV strategies of the @thexfiles profile

The X-Files: uma análise das estratégias de social TV do perfil @thexfiles

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Abstract: *The social TV marks the convergence of television experience with social media. The phenomenon refers to content sharing through social networks and second screen apps simultaneously to television broadcasting. In this context, this article aims to discuss the features explored by Fox during The X-Files 10th season to engage the interacting viewers with social TV. We analysed the dialogue between the fictional universe of the series and the backchannel through a monitoring of @thexfiles profile postings on Twitter during the exhibition of series episodes.*

Keywords: *social tv; television; Twitter; The X-Files*

Resumo: *A social TV marca a convergência da experiência televisiva com as novas mídias. O fenômeno se refere ao compartilhamento de conteúdos por intermédio das redes sociais e dos aplicativos de segunda tela de maneira síncrona ao fluxo televisivo. A partir desse contexto, este artigo tem o objetivo de refletir sobre as ações de social TV adotadas pela Fox durante a 10ª temporada de The X-Files. Analisamos as postagens da página (@thexfiles) gerenciada pelo canal no Twitter a fim de entender como contribuem para o aprofundamento e a compreensão do universo ficcional da série. Concluímos que as estratégias de engajamento da emissora reforçam o laço social, estimulam a participação dos telespectadores interagentes e ampliam os arcos narrativos de The X-Files.*

Palavras-chave: *social tv; televisão; Twitter; The X-Files*

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Introduction

Although it is a recent phenomenon, the discussions around social TV started in the beginning of the 2000's. According to Fechine (2016), the reflections initially were linked to the field of digital interactive television, known as iTV. Later, with the popularization of multimodal networks and mobile devices, social TV began to be designated to describe the convergence between television and social media (PROULX and SHEPATIN, 2012). In this context, the phenomenon refers to the sharing of contents (comments, memes, videos, photo-montage, pictures, etc.) and through the second screen applications3 (TV Showtime, TV Tag, Viggle, etc.) in a synchronized way with the television flow (PROULX and SHEPATIN, 2012; BORGES and SIGILIANO, 2016).

However, even though it is set in a convergence environment, social TV is characterized by aspects that always integrated the television experience. According to Wolton (1996), TV is a conversational object, because, regardless of time, this mean bring up subjects and stimulate the dialogue between viewers. The author says that "[the] television is a formidable instrument of communication among individuals. "The most important aspect is not what was seen, but the fact that people talked about it" (WOLTON, 1996, p. 16). The capacity of the instrument of instigating the debate goes beyond the constitution of a public sphere. According to Summa (2011, p. 9), "[…] Television is not only a big influence upon society, but a driving force for social interaction" The process of reception itself enables the interlocution of the viewers:

> [...] TV, unlike the cinema, admits a conversation while the program is broadcast. If a viewer talks aloud in the cinema, they would probably be warned by someone in the same environment. With the television, however, it is common to make comments during the exhibition (CANNITO, 2010, p. 59).

3   Refers to the paralel, synchronized interaction with the television experience through mobile devices (PROULX and SHEPATIN, 2012).

However, on social TV, the comments, that previously were restricted to the living room, to the group of friends, family and coworkers, are shared to the social network and the second screen apps, enabling new appropriations, subversions and amplifications of the water cooler effect4. In this sense, the intermediation of conversation through digital platforms changes the significance of the viewer's interlocution.

Another aspect of television ambiance that gains new developments on social TV is the collective experience. According to Wolton (1996, p. 15), television is capable of gathering individuals and audiences even though everything cooperates to their separation and offers them the possibility of participating individually of a collective activity". The aggregating factor of television and this connection with the plurality that surrounds the mean, is related to what Anderson (2008) calls imagined community. The discussions of the author help us reflect on how the collective consumption of the same cultural product enables the construction of community and identity bonds. The imagined community formed by the exhibition of a television show evokes, even if in a fanciful way, the notion of belonging to a nation, connecting the individual to the planetary. In this sense, the collective experience materializes a symbolic collectivity when it gathers different viewers around the same television content (SILVERSTONE, 1994).

However, with the fragmentation of audience caused by the popularization of services on demand and by new forms5 of distribution, the viewer is distancing himself from the appointment television6. Thus, as social TV is characterized by the sharing of content in a synchronized way to the television flow, the phenomenon brings back the collective experience. As pointed out by Jost (2011, p. 102),

4   In the United States, the habit of socializing with friends, family and coworkers through na informal discussion about the television schedule is called water cooler effect. The term makes an allusion to the office environment, where people would gather around the water cooler to comment on what they've watched the night before (BENTON e HILL, 2012)
5   Such as the availability of episodes through YouTube, recording shows through devices supplied by signature TV operators and HDs of Smart TVs.
6   TV by appointment, watching a show at the time it is originally on.

> Nowadays, social network websites allow the guarantee that we see the same thing, in the same time that, due to the multiplicity of channels, cannot be naturally said. [...] Finally, social network contribute to elaborate these imagined communities which television had been habituated us and were on the verge of extinction.

The viewer can even watch the show individually, but, when he accesses social network and second screen apps, he will be connected to a variety of viewers that, just like him, are also watching, at that time, the same show.

Twitter: The digital watercooler

According to Nielsen (2016), Twitter is the most used social network between American interactive viewers7 in the posting of contents related to the television schedule. In 2015, 68% of the 310 million active users of the microblogging twitted about what they were watching at the time (TV SEASON, 2016). Wolk (2015, p. 67) says that the strong popularization of the social network in the field of social TV is not fortuitous: "Twitter always has been an obvious platform for social TV. It is public, succinct and easy to organize posts around a topic using the hashtags"

The aspects highlighted by the author can be observed in the main characteristics of the informational architecture of Twitter. The social interaction of the microblogging is based on the 'always on' temporality, […] in which the past is less important, the future arrives quickly and the present is omnipresent" (SANTELLA and LEMOS, 2010, p. 61). In this sense, the social network enables the instant sharing of information, in which only the "now" matters. According to Santella and Lemos (2010), this instant temporality is an exclusive characteristic of the social network which makes the postings to quickly spread around the web. "The conversation and discussion of ideas in real time are the main differences in the use of this media" (SANTELLA and LEMOS, 2010, p. 79).

7   According to Primo (2003, p. 8) the interactive viewer is the one who "[...] pour the idea of interaction, i. e., the action (or relation) that happens between participants".

In the social TV, this rapid dynamic of Twitter meets the unilateral and regular flow of television. Cannito (2010, p. 49) says that the language of the TV is characterized by the uninterrupted reproduction of contend independently from the viewer. In this sense, social TV gathers two present continuous: the 'always on' temporality of Twitter and the form of distribution of TV. The user can even talk about previous events in the microblogging or recording a show to watch in the schedule that is more convenient to them, but that does not lose the specific language of these means. As social TV refers to the sharing of contents in a synchronized way to the exhibition of the show in the TV schedule, Twitter is the platform that best suits this factor, because the interactive viewers can reverberate their impressions in real time.

Another characteristic of the informational architecture that contributes so that the microblogging becomes the central platform of the phenomenon and the focus of social interaction. Unlike social networks as, for example, Facebook or the late Orkut, the connections "[...] on Twitter are not based on preexisting bonds, but rather the individual penetration of flow of ideas, open collective flows of ideas shared in real time, that are in continuous movement" (SANTELLA and LEMOS, 2010, p. 91). In other words, on Twitter, the social interactions are not restricted to family, professional and friendship bonds. According to Recuero, (2014, p. 132), this aspect makes Twitter enable the formation of asymmetric connections, those that do not essentially depend on the reciprocity of the creation of interactions. Thus, it is possible to "follow" a user without them "following" you back. The focus of the social interaction on Twitter contributes to the plurality of the backchannel8: when accessing the microblogging, the interactive viewers can reverberate the show which is on air with interlocutors that go beyond their personal contacts. In this sense, the informational architecture of Twitter reinforces not only the temporality of social TV, but amplifies the conversation around the television schedule.

8   Secondary channel of sharing content (text, image, vídeo, etc.) formed specifically during the exhibition of a show (PROULX and SHEPATIN, 2012).

Social TV in the field of American serial fictional narratives

American channels9 started to use massively Twitter in 2008; initially, the social network had the function of publicizing the shows on schedule and work along with the websites (WOHN, 2011). In 2009, however, MTV and CNN started to stimulate backchannel during the exhibition of their shows. Nevertheless, social TV was only popularized in the television field in 2011 (PROULX and SHEPATIN, 2012).

Considered by Proulx and Shepatin (2012, p. 11-12) the starting point of the phenomenon, the edition of the Video Music Awards fed the dialog between Twitter and appointment television. It was the result of a big marketing action that involved a partnership with GetGlue10 and exclusive content for the social network, the award generated, during its exhibition, on August 28th, 2011, 5.482.861 million of tweets (STATE OF THE MEDIA TRENDS, 2011). In the presentation of the singer Beyoncé alone, there was an influx of 8.868 thousand comments per second, reaching a record at the time (STATE OF THE MEDIA TRENDS, 2011). All the buzz11 generated during the event made the American channels notice the relevance of the phenomenon in the audience engagement.

In the field of American serial fictional narratives, the actions of social TV go beyond the simple stimulus for appointment television. The strategies enable the expansion and the deepening of fictional universes and the participation of interactive viewers (ANALYSIS, 2015-2016). According to Colletti and Materia (2012, p. 97-108), series such as, for

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9   In Brazil, the popularization of social TV began through the telenovela Avenida Brasil (Rede Globo, 2012). The story mobilized thousands of interactive watchers on Twitter – in the last episode alone, there were 108 thousand tweets in the social network. Nowadays, the actions developed by the national channels to stimulate backchannel explore from second screen apps to partnerships with Twitter Brasil in the creation of directed strategies (BRANDÃO et al, 2015, p. 409-411; SIGILIANO and BORGES, 2016). According to Kantar Ibop Media (2015), 42% of the Brazilian viewers share contente in the social media in a synchronic way to the exhibition of the show. Amongst the most commented formats on Twitter are the reality shows, game shows and telenovelas.
10   Second screen app.
11   According to Trinta (2015, p. 4-5) in the current ecossystem of connectivity, buzz means contents that propagate vertiginously through the web.

example, Grey's Anatomy (2005-, ABC), The Walking Dead (2010-, AMC) and Pretty Little Liars (2010-2017, ABC Family), promote live chats on Twitter during the exhibition of the episodes. Besides commenting the main events of the season, the screenwriters and the cast answer questions sent by the interactive viewers. The profiles of the shows on social media also offer complimentary content such as videos, photos and emojis12 and stimulate audience participation through posting comments, memes and photo-montages about the story.

Through this context, this study has the objective of reflecting about the actions of social TV adopted by Fox during the 10th season of The X-Files – i.e., how the posts of the page managed by the channel on Twitter contribute for the deepening and understanding of the fictional universe of the series. In order to discuss these issues, we are going to analyze the tweets posted, synchronically to the exhibition of the episodes on the profile (@thexfiles)13 of the series on the social network.

The X-Files revival

Around the 90's, Fox was trying to establish themselves in the American television industry. While NBC, CBS and ABC were worried about the fragmentation of audience caused by the popularization of cable TV, the channel invested in the enlargement of their attractions. As Johnson says (2005, p. 61), "[…] Fox was a new channel, their strategies were different from the strategies adopted by other channels that were already established for some time". After reaching significant ratings with the series Simpsons (1989-currently), Married...with children (1987-1997) and Beverly Hills, 90210 (1990-2000), the American channel was searching for a drama series to attract the audience between 18-49 years old (MITTELL, 2010). According to Reeves, Rodgers and Epstein (1996), Fox aimed at reaching the age group of the shows Roseanne (1988-1997, ABC), Home Improvement (1991-1999, ABC) and

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12 The emojis are unlocked when the interactive viewer uses a certain indexation proposed by the channel. See Sigiliano, 2015.

13 Available at: https://twitter.com/thexfiles. Accessed in: March 17th, 2017.

Mystery Science Theater 3000 (1988-1999, Comedy Central); however, the formats of these productions demanded costs that were beyond the channel's budget.

After a long process of pilot season14, Fox decided to produce two shows, The X-Files (1993), from Chris Carter and The Adventures of Brisco County (1993), from Jeffrey Boam and Carlton Cuse. The shows competed directly with the group of sitcoms from ABC, shown on Fridays by 8 PM (JOHNSON, 2005). Even though both series showed elements of science fiction, The Adventures of Brisco County was cancelled by Fox right after the exhibition of the first season due to low ratings. The X-Files, on the other hand, called the audience's attention right from the start: The pilot episode was watched by 12 million viewers (PORTER and PORTER, 2010, p. 15-21).

The plot of the X-Files revolves around the FBI agents Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) and Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson). The characters investigate cold cases involving paranormal activity and/or phenomena without scientific explanation, known as the X-files. However, as the investigations go further, Mulder and Scully discover a conspiracy net involving the American government. The series was produced until 2002, totalizing nine seasons with 201 episodes produced. The fictional universe of the show has also been expanded through comic books, books, videogames, movies – The X-Files: Fight The Future (1998) and The X-Files: I Want to Believe (2008) —and the spin-off The Lone Gunmen (2001).

In July, 2013, Comic-Con invited the main characters of The X-Files and the screenwriters Vince Gilligan, Howard Gordon, Darin Morgan, John Shiban, James Wong, David Amann, Glen Morgan, and Chris Carter to join a panel celebrating the 20 year anniversary of the show (FOUTCH, 2013). The event took place in San Diego, California, put the show in evidence again and ended up calling Fox's attention. "I got a call from the CEOs of the channel, Dana Walden and Gary Newman,

14 According to Bennett (2014, p. 64-68), the pilot season is a system of anual pitch in which creators, producers and series screenwriters gather with channels and studios to pitch their projects.

talking about their thoughts on producing the show again", says Chris Carter (CARTER, 2016)15.

The channel's idea was to follow the steps of production and distribution adopted on 24: Live Another Day. Produced by Fox in 2014, the story of Jack Bauer (Kiefer Sutherland) showed a development logic from cable TV, i. e., instead of having a season composed by 24 episodes, there were only 12 produced. The format made the return of the X-Files viable and attractive to the cast and crew.

During an annual convention of shows in March 2015, 13 years after the series finale16, Fox announced the return of the X-Files. The 10th season of the show, available at the United States between January and February 2016, was composed by six episodes.

Monitoring and analysis of the engagement actions of The X-Files on social TV

Before we analyze the actions on social TV performed by Fox on the 10th season of the X-Files, it is important to detail the market approach of monitoring used in this study. The collection of twits posted by the profile @thexfiles during the exhibition of the episodes My Struggle, Founder's Mutation, Mulder and Scully Meet the Were-Monster, Home Again, Babylon and My Struggle II consisted in a combination of procedures of observation and mining of data generated on Twitter in a synchronic way to the schedule (ZUELL and PRERADOVIĆ, 2013; SIGILIANO and BORGES, 2016). In this context, what is pertinent is the qualitative analysis of these publications, since the quantitative would indicate, for example, the number of comments, sharings, etc.

Weekly, between January, 24th and February 22nd, 2016, the monitoring of the Twitter profile of the show was performed. The posts made by the X-Files page were projected on the Tweet Deck17. The app native of the microblogging enabled the capture of the twits by the soft-

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15 Transcription from the áudio of the DVD Arquivo X – Uma série de casos (CARTER, 2016).
16 Last episode of the show
17 Available at: https://tweetdeck.twitter.com/ Accessed in: March 17th, 2017.

ware Snagit18. That way, each post made during the exhibition of the episodes was saved.

Later, we performed the mining of the 463 twits generated by Fox. The individual filter of publications indicated that, out of the total, 372 posts were mentions to other pages in the social network and 91 were twits without mention. From this mining, we limited the corpus of analysis of 463 postings and correlated the publications with the narrative arcs shown on the episodes of the 10th season of The X-Files and with the fictional universe of the show.

While the 10th season was on air, the profile of the X-Files on Twitter developed many actions of social TV, such as the publication of twits that highlighted the social bond and encouraged the propagation and production of content, the exchange of messages between interactive viewers and a chat with the cast of the show. The strategies of Fox had also comprised the posting of twits that, beyond emphasizing and creating new meanings to the fictional world, stimulated the attentive reading of the audience.

The contents generated by @thexfiles during the episodes reinforced the collective experience and stimulated the backchannel. With Sentences such as "let's watch together", "we're all watching the X-Files together", "watching with us" and "all together", the publications in the profile called attention to the social bond, reinforcing the meaning of presence in the group. Wolton (1996) says that the notion of social bond was formulated by Durkheim and by the French school of sociology. According to the author, the discussions around the concept had a perspective towards the institutionalized social practices (work, education, family, etc). Later, the notion of social bond was used and expanded by the cultural anthropology, and, in this field, television is one of the main examples.

Wolton (1996) says that the generalist TV constitutes a social bond in both senses. The first refers to the fact that "[…] the viewer, while watching TV, adds to this potentially immense and anonymous audience

18   Available at: https:www.techsmith.com/screen-capture.html. Accessed in: March, 17th, 2017.

that watch the show simultaneously, establishing thus, as him, a type of invisible bond" (WOLTON, 1996, p. 124). This silent bond creates a common knowledge between the viewers and between the different communities that constitute the society. The second meaning points towards the TV being the "mirror of society". In this context, "[...] Television creates not only an image and a representation, but offers a bond to all of those who simultaneously watch" (WOLTON, 1996, p. 124).

However, even though it arises in the environment of convergence, social TV potentializes the silent, invisible bond of television when it crosses the 'always on' temporality of Twitter and the television flow. That is, if Wolton (1996), the phenomenon reinforces this aspect of television, so weakened by the individual consumption and by the fragmentation of the audience. In this sense, while highlighting the collective experience of twits, Fox reinforces the social bond.

To help the propagation of content, the page asks the interactive viewers to retwit (RT) the message with the saying: "this person is watching The X-Files". Thus, the audience not only disclosed in their timeline that the show as on, but they could, even indirectly, influence their followers to turn on the TV.

The stimulus to backchannel surrounded the engagement actions on Twitter on all the episodes of the 10th season of the show. As the scenes were being shown, the profile @thexfiles encouraged the interactive viewers to share memes, photos, videos and, mainly, comments while they watched the show.

However, one of the most relevant points of strategy on social TV in @thexfiles was the dialogue the profile could establish with the audience. Instead of only stimulating the conversation around the show, the webpage exchanged messages with the interactive viewers about different subjects. In addition to informing the schedules of re-runs and details from the synopsis, @thexfiles answered questions related to the narrative arcs and future events in the story. The publications were made in real time and in a personalized manner, i. e., each mention contained a different text, distancing themselves from mechanical, scheduled posts.

Image 1. The official profile of The X-Files reinforces the collective experience in television and stimulates interactive viewers to share their impressions during the exhibition of the episode.
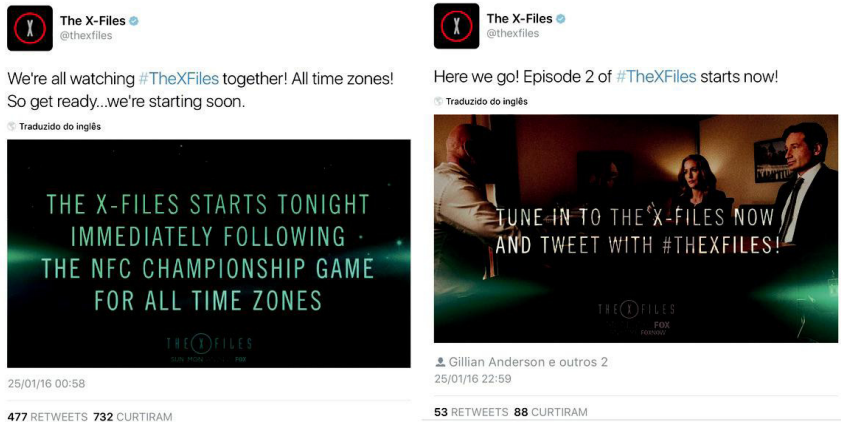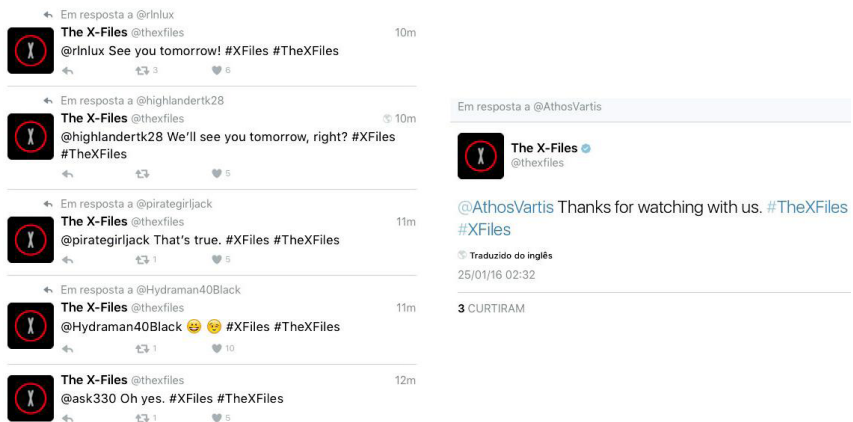

Image 2. the official profile of the TV series The X-Files exchanges twits with interactive viewers during the exhibition of episodes of the 10th season.

Source: Research data (2016).

The actors Gillian Anderson[19], David Duchovny[20], and Mitch Pileggi[21] also contributed to the plurality of the watercooler effect of The X-Files. Through their personal accounts in the microblogging, the cast talked with the followers about the new season. In this sense, the action of Fox not only established a dialogue with the interactive viewers, but stimulated the appointment television. Therefore, the audience can even choose to watch the show in the schedule that is more convenient to them, but would lose the opportunity of exchanging twits with the cast and solving doubts about the show

In addition to distancing themselves to a unilateral communication, the profile of the show on Twitter valued the participation of the audience. During the exhibition of the six new episodes, some postings of the interactive viewers were retweeted. The publications included compliments to the show and memes[22] involving the themes of the story.

With a complex plot, The X-Files had their fictional universe detailed in the second screen. The contents that integrated the actions of social TV of the show helped the understanding of the plots[23] from My Struggle, Founder's Mutation, Mulder and Scully Meet the We-re-Monster, Home Again, Babylon and My Struggle II. During the exhibition of the episodes, the profile of the show on Twitter highlighted the main arcs of the plot through pictures, GIFs and polls.

The pictures were always followed by lines and/or dialogues of the scenes – in this context, the sentence highlighted by @thexfiles reproduced an important moment of the story that would influence directly in the development of the narrative. The GIFs called attention to the main plots of the season, such as, for example, the reencounter of Mulder (David Duchovny) and Scully (Gillian Anderson), the whereabouts of William the details of the investigations and even the elements that are typical of the fictional universe of the X-Files. Therefore, recurring moments of the

19 Available at: https://twitter.com/GillianA. Accessed in: March 19th, 2017
20 Available at: https://twitter.com/davidduchovny. Accessed in: March 19th, 2017.
21 Available at: https://twitter.com/MitchPileggi1. Accessed in: March 19th, 2017.
22 According to Gleick (2013, p. 17), a meme is "a replicator and a propagator – na idea, a fashion, a current of correspondence".
23 Story of the show or season linked to the main narrative arc.

show that always integrated the episodes, as the opening theme, the flash-lights, the sentences "Mulder, it's me", "But Scully, aliens" and the pencils in the office ceiling. The postings worked as a type of guide for the interactive viewer, indicating the most important events of the show.

Another strategy adopted by the profile was the presentation of new characters of the 10th season. Each appearance of Tad O'Malley (Joel McHale) and Sveta (Sheila Larken) in My Struggle and My Struggle II was highlighted by the @thexfiles. The tweets contained the picture and the name of the character in scene and helped the audience familiarize with the new arcs of the show. Polls were also created to reflect about the nature of Tad and Svete, whose options called attention to the reasons that made these characters take some decisions and helped with the understanding of the interactive viewer.

However, the actions of social TV created by Fox for the 10th season of the X-Files were not limited to the fictional world of the story. Some scenes were re-signified by @thexfiles – the profile highlighted an image that was on air, but putting it into another context. Such as, for example, the tweet published during the exhibition of Founder's Mutation.

The post showed Sanjay (Chris Logan) having a mental breakdown; however, if, in the episode, the character was a victim of a genetic experiment, in the meme, the profile made an analogy to an overdose of caffeine. With the sayings: "Us after too much coffee", the page made jokes about Sanjay's (Chris Logan) behavior when relating his aggitation to the effects caused by the overconsumption of caffeine.

The use of memes helped in the propagation of the profile's tweets when they explored daily situations, such as a stressful routine of work, the traffic jam in big cities and the excess of coffee. The publications also called the attention of users that were not related to the show, but related to the context.

In addition, The X-Files page on twitter stimulated the attentive reading of the interactive viewers. The narrative arcs of the show were surrounded by references to the fictional world and the intertextualities.

In this context, the profile of the show asked the audience to share the easter eggs[24] present in the episodes.

Image 3. Posts of the official profile of The X-Files highlight a dialogue between Scully (Gillian Anderson) and Tad O'Malley (Joel McHale) arc that is presented in the episode My Struggle and directly influences the season finale of the show – and the emblematic flashlights from the FBI agents, respectively.
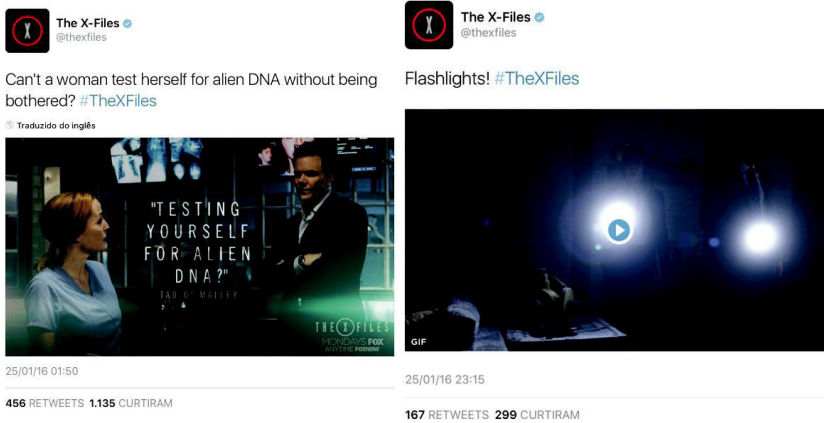
Source: Research data (2016).

The engagement strategy of the channel enabled, even indirectly, the formation of informational frameworks around these elements of the story. When someone clicked on the tweet of the profile of the show, it was possible to see all the answers sent through the publication of @thexfiles. That way, interactive viewers had access to new perspectives in the 10th season. Although they were not fundamental to the understanding of the episodes, easter eggs expanded the meaning of the scenes. For instance, in Mulder and Scully Meet the Were-Monster, when Mulder (David Duchovny) gets near a grave with Kim Manner's ID. Within the plot, the name does not change the course of any event, but the intertextuality was

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24 Easter eggs are little references, allusions, information, jokes and/or contents shown in an occult way in softwares, TV shows, movies, videogames, etc. (CLARKE, 2010).

a homage to one of the directors of The X-Files who passed away in 2009. The same could be seen in the ending of Babylon, in which there is an analogy to the last scene of the film I want to believe, released in 2008.

Image 4. X-Files profile re-signify the scene of the episode Founder's Mutation.

25/01/16 23:03

95 RETWEETS **193** CURTIRAM

Source: Research data (2016).

In short, the actions of social TV developed by the profile of the show, @thexfiles, during the 10th season of The X-Files go beyond a simple stimulus to appointment television. The publications reinforce the collective experience and sharing of contents on Twitter in a synchronic way to the exhibition of the episodes, contributing to the plurality of

backchannel. Another important issue in the strategies adopted by the channel was the dialogue with the interactive viewers, that is, each mention to the profile was answered right away.

Tweets also helped the understanding of the fictional world of the series. As the episodes aired, @thexfiles highlighted important scenes and dialogues in the unfolding of narrative arcs. Some moments of the episodes were re-signified, giving birth to memes that satirized daily situations. Finally, the show's profile on the microblogging website encouraged the attentive reading of the audience, highlighting easter eggs that surrounded the story.

Image 5. The X-Files profile asks the viewers to share easter eggs present in the episode. When you click on the tweet, it is possible to access the answers from the audience.

Source: Research data (2016).

Thus, the actions of the channel in the field of social TV potentialize the social bond, calling attention to an imagined community formed through the television flow, in addition to contributing to the deepening and expansion of The X-Files' fictional universe. In this context, the engagement strategies stimulated the buzz around the episodes: During the exhibition of the show, about 85 thousand tweets were posted and the indexation #thexfiles got to the worldwide trending topics three times. Generally, the contents shared by the interactive viewers reverberate the scenes that aired, reflected about the unfolding of narrative arcs and highlighted the main themes approached in the episodes through memes, photo-montages and GIFs (SIGILIANO, 2017).

Final considerations

The publications made by the Fox channel during the 10th season of The X-Files highlighted the social bond; in this sense, by following the tweets, the interactive viewers felt as being a part of a collective activity. Another important issue in the channel's strategy is the profile @thexfiles stimulated and aggregated contents produced by the audience. This cooperative posture of the page not only propelled the backchannel, but also enabled that the fictional universe were approached through many perspectives.

To encourage the appointment television, the cast of the show promoted live chats on Twitter. The actors Gillian Anderson, David Duchovny and Mitch Pileggi exchanged messages with the interactive viewers and commented the show. The dialogue has also been extended to @thexfiles: during the episodes, the profile of the show answered the audience's questions about the narrative arcs, schedules for re-runs, special appearances, etc. However, every tweet sent by the page were different, i. e., the answers did not consist in pre-programmed texts, on the contrary, the interaction varied according to the interlocutor.

The actions of social TV of Fox for the 10th season of The X-Files contributed directly for the understanding of the episodes of the show. As the scenes were being shown, the profile highlighted specific issues

of the story with pictures, GIFs, texts and also presented new characters of the show. In this senses, the contents worked as a type of guide for the complex and intricate narrative arcs of the show. The page of the show on Twitter also re-signified events of the episodes, creating memes that mocked some daily habits. Finally, the story's profile stimulated the attentive reading of the interactive viewers, asking for the audience to send easter eggs present in the sequences of the show.

From the analysis of the social TV strategies developed for the 10th season of The X-Files, we conclude that Fox channel went beyond a simple encouragement to appointment television. Therefore, each tweet had a function on backchannel, either on the comprehension of the complex fictional universe, on the loyalty of the audience through live chats or the deepening of the story. The posture of the channel not only meets the environment of mediatic convergence and participative culture, but reinforces the importance of the second screen in the field of serial fictional narratives.

In this context, social TV starts working as a support for the dense fictional aspects of post-network television when establishing that synergy with the narrative arcs of the 10th season of The X-Files. The second screen works as an extension of the show on air, contributing for the deepening and detailing of the story. However, it is essential that the tweets that reinforce and detail the fictional universe do not distance the interactive viewers from the cognitive exercise of breaking these stories down. After all, the depth of narrative arcs and the way they demand an attentive reading of the audience are central aspects of the contemporary series.

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