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TRASH STREAMING: CHARACTERISTICS AND METHODOLOGICAL GUIDELINES

Abstract: Livestreaming is an opportunity to participate in digital social life, both for streamers and their audience. This participation is associated with the possibility of spreading content considered as socially harmful. Although trash streams have been popular in Central Europe for several years, they are still not fully characterized. Previous studies define them rather operationally – for the needs of a given analysis. This study fills that gap. Based on long-term observation of trash streamers activity and review of the literature and press reports, the authors provide a comprehensive description of trash streams pointing to differences in nomenclature used in Poland and worldwide. The article also provides methodological guidelines for the analysis of trash streams. The authors developed these guidelines on the basis of the analysis of the literature and their own research experience.

Keywords: social pathology, online communication, livestreaming, hate speech, user-generated content, trash-content

Introduction

The streaming market is currently one of the fastest-growing media markets. Live streaming is one of the most popular forms of content consumption on social media.[1] Introduction of this technology has also created the conditions for new forms of audi-

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[1] J. Santora, *75 Live Video Streaming Stats Every Marketer Should Know*, Influencer Marketing Hub, 21.05.2021, https://influencermarketinghub.com/live-streaming-stats (accessed: 25.07.2022).

ence engagement. For social media, streaming technology has proven to be a success, opening new avenues for development. Users take advantage of its potential for various purposes, such as fast access to world news, integration with idols, or building online communities.

Usually, a typical streaming activity involves a broadcaster (streamer) who broadcasts his video and audio content in real-time, e.g. video games, talent shows, daily life, or whatever he wants to share. The audience on the broadcaster's channel can comment and communicate with each other using the text chat feature. The streamer is an active participant in this process, can also engages in dialogues and interactions with its audience during the broadcast.[2] Additionally, viewers can make donations during the broadcast. Donations are made, for example, via text message, PayPal, or quick transfer. The audience can thus directly reward streamers while supporting individual activities.

Donating is an opportunity not only to provide financial support for the content creator. Special dedications can be attached to donations, thus offering the donor the opportunity to feel their presence during the broadcast. Streamers can also set a target for individual collections. It creates a space for co-directing the broadcast.[3]

Michael H. Goldhaber pointed out that in the age of information overload brought about by interactive media, attention rather than information has become one of the cornerstones of media economics.[4] Streaming exists because of the audience, and live video streaming audiences have a hitherto unprecedented ability to interfere with the broadcasts they are watching.

Live video streaming offers unique communication opportunities; therefore, various dimensions of this phenomenon have recently become the subject of research analysis in different fields and contexts, such as social participation,[5] online communities,[6] education,[7] commerce,[8] and marketing.[9] Most of the studies focus on the

[2] M. Hu, M. Zhang, Y. Wang, *Why Do Audiences Choose to Keep Watching on Live Video Streaming Platforms? An Explanation of Dual Identification Framework*, "Computers in Human Behavior" 2017, no. 75, pp. 594–606.

[3] J.-H. Tammy Lin et. al., *Setting the Digital Stage: Defining Game Streaming as an Entertainment Experience*, "Entertainment Computing" 2019, vol. 31.

[4] M.H. Goldhaber, *The Attention Economy and the Net*, "First Monday" 1997, vol. 2 (4).

[5] M. Hu, M. Zhang, Y. Wang, op. cit.

[6] N. Edge, *Evolution of the Gaming Experience: Live Video Streaming and the Emergence of a New Web Community*, "Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communications" 2013, vol. 4 (2).

[7] M.Y. Fuller, S. Mukhopadhyay, J.M. Gardner, *Using the Periscope Live Video-Streaming Application for Global Pathology Education: A Brief Introduction*, "Archives of Pathology & Laboratory Medicine" 2016, vol. 140 (11), pp. 1273–1280.

[8] K. Kang, J. Lu, L. Guo, W. Li, *The Dynamic Effect of Interactivity on Customer Engagement Behavior through Tie Strength: Evidence from Live Streaming Commerce Platforms*, "International Journal of Information Management" 2021, no. 56.

[9] M.A. Gilbert, *Strengthening Your Social Media Marketing with Live Streaming Video* [in:] A. Al-Masri, K. Curran (eds.), *Smart Technologies and Innovation for a Sustainable Future*, Springer, Cham 2019, pp. 357–365.

potential and new possibilities of using livestreaming. There are fewer studies on the limitations or risks associated with this form of communication.

While the phenomenon of live video streaming itself has in recent years attracted increasing interest of researchers worldwide,[10] it is usually mentioned in the context of other considerations, e.g. regarding crime detection,[11] or in the context of the specific culture of online communities.[12] The issue, however, seems worth exploring, not only because it evokes high emotions, concerns, or controversies but also because of its multidimensionality.

In this paper, we focus on streaming in the context of the content of a vulgar, violent, and potentially dangerous nature. Our goal is to explore the trash streaming phenomenon, which has not yet been fully elaborated on, due to its novelty, difficulties with archiving materials and the accidental occurrence of it. This article aims to present the available knowledge about trash streaming as a negative and potentially harmful form of communication occurring in live video streaming, as well as to give the foundation for the future analyzes in this area. Systematic analysis of the literature revealed gaps in the area of research on undesirable content occurring during live video streaming, and on this basis the following research questions were posed.

1. What is trash streaming and how it is defined in literature and press reports?
2. What are the differences in trash streams nomenclature in Poland and worldwide and where do they come from? What are the implications of these differences?
3. What should be taken into consideration when researching trash streaming?
4. What are the limitations of research in this area?

In the first part of the paper, we focus on theoretical background and assumptions. We operationalise the concept of trash streaming, taking into account the local context concerning nomenclature. In the second part, we propose a typology of trash streams and present the local context of this phenomenon, providing methodological guidelines for the study of this issue.

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[10] Y. Hu et al., *Content to Cash: Understanding and Improving Crowdsourced Live Video Broadcasting Services with Monetary Donations*, "Computer Networks" 2020, no. 178; Y.-C. Shen, *What Do People Perceive in Watching Video Game Streaming? Eliciting Spectators' Value Structures*, "Telematics and Informatics" 2021, no. 59; M. Törhönen, J. Giertz, W.H. Weiger, J. Hamari, *Streamers: The New Wave of Digital Entrepreneurship? Extant Corpus and Research Agenda*, "Electronic Commerce Research and Applications" 2021, no. 46; E. Yu, C. Jung, H. Kim, J. Jung, *Impact of Viewer Engagement on Gift-giving in Live Video Streaming*, "Telematics and Informatics" 2018, no. 5 (35), pp. 1450–1460.

[11] G. Horsman, *Reconstructing Streamed Video Content: A Case Study on YouTube and Facebook Live Stream Content in the Chrome Web Browser Cache*, "Digital Investigation" 2018, no. 26, pp. S30–S37.

[12] J.-H. Tammy Lin et al., op. cit.

1. Trash streaming: Review of definitions and approaches

The issue of the presence of trash content during live streams is problematic already at the stage of formulating the term itself. The terms used for naming this type of content vary. Although most of sources, especially press reports, seem to use the name 'trash streaming', this is not the only term used. It is worth emphasising that in Poland "trash streaming" is referred to as "patostreaming." The term was coined by combining the words "pathology" and "streaming." It is worth pointing out that the term was not coined by researchers of the phenomenon but by Polish internet users.[13] However, the case of its first use is not known. In Polish, the prefix "pato-" used in combination with nouns is supposed to indicate their pathological character in the sense of social pathology. The prefix "pato-" in Polish understands social pathology as an umbrella term for social wrongs, so, according to Arto Laitinen and Arvi Särkelä, more or less synonymous with social evils, criticisable social arrangements.[14] This understanding of "social pathology," while not exhaustive of the term's meaning, is helpful in understanding trash streaming.

The lexeme "patostreaming" has such forms as "patostreamer" or "patostream," which have already penetrated the Polish academic language. At the same time, their English-language equivalents are "trash streamer" or "trash stream." In this paper, we use the term "trash streaming" due to its more global nature. It is important to note, that, we do not distinguish between patostreaming and trash streaming as separate things. Such a distinction seems unjustified. The differences in nomenclature are local and related more to the language itself than to the occurrence of separate phenomena. What is called patostreaming in Polish literature is usually referred to as trash streaming in English-language literature. However, there are no clear differences in the defined object, therefore, however different names are used, they describe the same thing.

Since trash streamers are financed by their audience, the issue of donations given to them during their streams is not without significance. Researchers who take closer look into trash streams will quickly notice, that trash-content is published not only by streamers, but also by donors and chat users. In context of content published by audience, adopted nomenclature may determine whole analysis. Since prefix "pato-" refers to social pathology, and prefix "trash-" refers to something unwanted or of low value, there will be different scope of studies focused on "patocontent" and on "trash-content" published by audience. The main difference includes the issue of spam. While spam donations meet the assumptions of "trash-content" they do not meet the criteria of social pathology, so studies on "pato-content" will not cover them.

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[13]   P.Z. Angielczyk, *Homo Crudelis in the Era of Internet*, "Parezja" 2019, no. 2 (12), pp. 48–64.

[14]   A. Laitinen, A. Särkelä, *Four Conceptions of Social Pathology*, "European Journal of Social Theory" 2018, vol. 22 (1), pp. 80–102.

Every paper written in Polish, that we have reached in our literature review, translated term "patostreaming" to English as "patostreaming" or "pathostreaming," while English term "trash streaming" never occurred. This situation raises concern that a) Polish researchers, who search for English-language publications on trash streaming, will not find them due to the unfamiliarity with the term "trash streaming;" and b) researchers worldwide, who seek for studies on trash streaming, will not reach Polish studies due to the lack of appropriate translation.

It is worth mentioning, that reviewing literature and press reports, we have found one online news written in Polish, which recognized both "patostreaming" and "trash streaming." Its author, Jakub Tyszkowski, claims, that "patostreaming" is typical for Poland and has already been "eradicated or marginalized," and "trash streaming" is a little bit different type of content, typical for Russia and has developed a lot. Tyszkowski also claims that Russian "trash streaming" is more cruel and violent than Polish "patostreaming."[15] We did not conduct a comparative study of content from these two countries. However, we see a need for a general definition for the phenomenon itself, without distinguishing between the country of origin, but rather the type of content. It seems to us that it would be better to develop a general definition within which it would be possible to distinguish subgroups relating to specific types of content.

To operationalise the concept as accurately as possible, the authors embarked on an analysis and synthesis of the functioning definitions of trash streaming/"patostreaming."

Agnieszka Kmieciak-Goławska defines "patostreaming" as "real-time online transmission of vulgar, obscene, and violent content."[16] In this understanding, language and violence play a special role.

According to Aleksandra Karaś "patostreaming [is] live broadcasting of socially unacceptable behavior [and] a phenomenon related to the functioning of new media."[17] This definition underlines the role of streaming media in popularization of trash streaming. However, one should not look for the reasons for the existence of trash-content in streaming media. Examples such as "Jackass" show that violence and socially unacceptable behavior were also popular in the era of television.

In the report *Patotreści w internecie: Raport o problemie* (*Patocontent on the Internet: A Problem Report*), Polish Ombudsman Adam Bodnar defines "patostreaming" as "live broadcast material containing vulgar, degrading, physically, and ver-

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[15] J. Tyszkowski, *Trash streaming, czyli zarabianie na okrucieństwie. Dlaczego w Rosji jest to trend?*, Vibez, 5.03.2022, https://vibez.pl/wydarzenia/trash-streaming-czyli-zarabianie-na-okrucienstwie-dlaczego-w-rosji-jest-to-trend-6743682085870144a (accessed: 25.07.2022).

[16] A. Kmieciak-Goławska, *Pathostreaming as a Way of Popularising the Subculture of Violence*, "Biuletyn Polskiego Towarzystwa Kryminologicznego im. Profesora Stanisława Batawii" 2019, no. 25, pp. 171–183.

[17] A. Karaś, *Patostreaming i jego społeczny odbiór* [in:] A. Kampka (ed.), *Doświadczanie społeczeństwa – muzyka, obraz, media*, Wydawnictwo SGGW, Warszawa 2019, p. 222.

bally violent messages often recorded under the influence of alcohol or other intoxicants. It is one of those online phenomena that we cannot remain indifferent to – all the more so because it reaches mostly young people."[18] This definition further points to trash streamers being under the influence of intoxicating substances and the potential negative impact of this phenomenon.

Michał Jas, on the other hand, states that "patostreaming" is "all content of pathological provenance broadcast, disseminated, and promoted through new media, that is, content that conflicts with the society's moral and ethical system acceptability."[19] This definition can be misleading as it does not point to the broadcasting of live content. Instead, the strength of this understanding is that it points to the social context. Not necessarily what will be considered vulgar or obscene in one culture is so for another culture (e.g. marijuana is legal in some regions of the world). Hence, the local social context is critical in understanding trash streaming and attempts at defining it.

Defining "patostreaming," Wojciech Kułaga states, that "this phenomenon is about sharing your privacy in new media in real-time, while presenting users performing activities that can be considered harmful social deviation."[20] The strong point of this definition is emphasis on trash streamers' private live. Trash streams are rarely directed and they almost never use an artificial set design – they put emphasis on authenticity. The guarantee of reality and impossibility of predicting the ending are features that attract viewers to trash streams.[21] Like Jas, Kułaga points out that transmitted behaviour "can be considered" as harmful – but not necessarily will be in every culture.

The case of authenticity is also raised by Miłosz Wojtyna, who defines "patostream" as "a quasi-autobiographical neo-genre functioning in the transmedia, performative order of Internet transmission organized on the social media platform YouTube." According to Wojtyna "are Polish-language, culture- and medium-specific YouTube profiles run by individuals who broadcast radically violent, odd, transgressive content to a relatively small audience in order to solicit financial support."[22] Such definition has limitations, because it omits i.a. Russian and Ukrainian culture of trash streaming, and assigns this phenomenon to YouTube only, while trash streamers use various streaming platforms, sometimes mainstream-independent. Author points out to "relatively small audience," but the size of audience depends on many factors,

[18] S. Wójcik, Ł. Wojtasik (eds.), *Patocontent on the Internet: A Problem Report*, Empowering Children Foundation, Warsaw 2019. Maciej Czuchra's translation commissioned by the authors.

[19] M. Jas, *Patostreaming – the Dark Side of the Internet: Analysis of the Occurence on Selected Examples*, "Media Business Culture: Journalism and Social Communication" 2020, no. 1 (8), p. 178.

[20] W. Kułaga, *Transmission of Social Pathologies to the Internet: Threats Posed by Media Activity of Patoinfluencers, Patostreamers and Patousers*, „Com.press" 2022, vol. 4 (2), p. 70.

[21] V. Ryabikova, *Welcome to the World of Russian Thrash Streams, Where People Get Insulted and Bullied for Money*, Russia Beyond, 21.01.2021, https://www.rbth.com/lifestyle/333280-welcome-to-world-of-russianp-trash-streams (accessed: 25.07.2022).

[22] M. Wojtyna, *Boredom, Bovver, Subjectivity: Pathostream as Genre*, "Tekstualia. Literary Artistic Academic Palimpsests" 2019, no. 58 (3), p. 55.

starting with selection of the streaming platform, ending with the occasion of the stream and popularity of invited guests.

Assigning "patostreaming" to YouTube only can also be found in Sylwia Pawłowska's paper. According to Pawłowska "patostreaming is defined as the activity of YouTubers who publish reports on their activities with an original commentary, but in their case, these are behaviors considered pathological: alcohol consumption, violence, destroying something without a reason, presented with extreme vulgarity. […] Viewers of these reports become passive witnesses of violence."[23] Contrary to what Pawłowska claims, viewers' passivity is only optional – they can actively participate in streams by persuading streamers to perform various activities, using chat or donations.

Malavika Pradeep states that "'Trash streaming' is a disturbing YouTube subculture where streamers get paid to broadcast abuse."[24] This definition limits trash streaming to the YouTube platform only; however, examples of trash streaming may also appear on Twitch or other independent streaming platforms.

Shenbaga Lakshmi states, that "the basic idea behind trash streaming is straightforward. You invite some friends for drinks, live stream your party, and complete dares for donations."[25] This description emphasizes not only the streamers behaviour, but also one of the most important features of trash streams: collection of donations. Yet, the authors know from their field research, that trash streams may be single-broadcasted, or performed IRL – "in real life," for example on the streets, not necessarily during parties.

According to The Slang Dictionary "Slangit," trash streaming is "when a person streams himself online (usually intoxicated) performing offensive acts in exchange for donations from viewers. It may be performed by any person that has access to the Internet, a camera, and a platform to stream the video."[26] The strength of such definition is pointing to the unprofessional character of trash streams. With such unprofessionalism comes sensation of authenticity. Yet, since the majority of trash streams is performed by male streamers, not necessarily the streamer has to be "him."

Synthesising the ways of understanding trash streaming mentioned above, we propose our own definition:

> Trash streaming is a form of live video streaming consisting in broadcasting trash-content, i.e. behaviour that is hateful, inciting aggression (including self-aggression), violent (in the sense of violence against animals and people), and vulgar, socially unacceptable in the culture of the

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[23] S. Pawłowska, *The Dark Nooks of YouTube – Patostreaming*, "Remedium" 2018, no. 6, p. 4.

[24] M. Pradeep, *'Trash Streaming' Is a Disturbing YouTube Subculture Where Streamers Get Paid to Broadcast Abuse*, Screen Shot, 7.06.2021, https://screenshot-media.com/visual-cultures/internet-culture/trash-streaming-subculture/ (accessed: 25.07.2022).

[25] S. Lakshmi, *The Alarming Rise in Content Creators Who Profit from Cruelty*, An Injustice!, 7.02.2022, https://aninjusticemag.com/the-alarming-rise-in-content-creators-who-profit-from-cruelty-da9401045210 (accessed: 25.07.2022).

[26] *Trash streaming*, Slangit, https://slangit.com/meaning/trash_streaming (accessed: 25.07.2022).

broadcaster, called here a trash streamer. The content is often broadcast under the influence of alcohol or intoxicants, whereas the streamed activities are located on the edge of the law or outside the law. From the technical side, the broadcasts are not specially prepared, so they give the impression of authenticity. Trash streaming is sustained by audience donations, which may include text messages. The content of these messages may regulate the behaviour of trash streamers. As a phenomenon popularising abuse and habituating violence, trash streaming has an anti-social character.

2. Trash streaming: Typology and methodological comments

The academic literature on the phenomenon of trash streaming is not extensive. Based on the studies we have accessed and also based on our own research, we have developed a typology of trash streams. However, it is worth mentioning that pure representations of a given type are infrequent, so one trash stream may represent multiple types to varying degrees.

In terms of form, trash streams can be divided based on:
- Number of hosts
  - Single-broadcasted streams – broadcast by one person
  - Double-broadcasted streams – broadcast by two persons
  - Multi-broadcasted streams – broadcast by three or more persons.
- Guest presence
  - Non-guest-starring streams – without any form of guest participation
  - Guest-starring streams – with the participation of invited guests, physically present at the place and time of recording
  - Online-guest-starring streams – with the participation of invited guests who are physically absent but who connect online with the broadcaster(s) of the stream
  - Mixed-guest-starring streams – involving invited guests, at least one of whom is physically present and at least one of whom is connected online.
- Active viewer participation
  - Streams with limited active viewer participation – viewers may try to use only chat and/or donations to communicate with the broadcasters
  - Streams with active viewer participation – in addition to chat and/or donations, there is also the option to call the "studio" and talk to the hosts in real-time, for example, video calls using chat roulette.

The above typology may help assess the potential harm of a given trash stream. It can also be an essential sampling tool in trash stream research, as each of the above types requires a slightly different scope of analysis and researcher input knowledge.

In line with ideas on the community-building potential in social networks,[27] we assume that well-established streamers have their circle of regular viewers, forming a community with its specific netiquette, ethics, myths, and language. An important superstructure in this area is also the particular theme/character of the stream. The unique culture found in these communities is often a mixture of different elements. Therefore, the analysis of each stream requires knowledge of the community context: knowledge of who the broadcasters are and what rules prevail among the audience. This principle also applies to trash streams. If there is more than one host, it is essential to identify each host's typical roles or character traits and the possible hierarchy between them. If the law is broken during the trash stream, it is worth considering the previous history of the presenters, for example, whether illegal activities are carried out by the person with the fewest convictions or whether hosts swap activities to spread criminal responsibility.

When trash streamers host guests in their broadcasts, knowledge of their activities and views is important. If the guest is another (trash-) streamer, knowledge of their work may be essential in decoding the streamed meanings. Streamers worldwide use "hosting" to circumvent penalties and warnings imposed on them by platforms. When one person's account is punitively suspended for a period of time, they make guest appearances with others.[28] Furthermore, it is important to remember that guests invited to participate in trash streams may have fans and even have their own online community built around them. Therefore, a guest trash stream can potentially reach a wider audience, and thus its impact can be amplified. A hitherto unexplored issue, which seems extremely interesting, is the impact on the nature of the guests' presence (physically or online) on their behaviour on the trash stream. In the future, it will be interesting to explore whether remote participation in a trash stream affects the scale of pathological behaviour of those who participate online, i.e. whether the online disinhibition effect[29] applies here.

When analysing trash streams from a formal point of view, it is worth noting the form of audience participation. Since trash streamers make their living from audience donations, this form of audience activation is almost always present. There are, however, trash streams in which the audience's activity goes beyond the standard tools of communication with trash streamers. Examples include broadcasts in which viewers can call the broadcasters directly. The greater the availability of tools allowing to influence the shape of the broadcast, the potentially greater the chances for more extreme content.[30] Viewers are often curious about what extremes trash streamers are

[27] T. Bucher, *Networking, or What the Social Means in Social Media*, "Social Media + Society" 2015, no. 1; J. van Dijck, *Facebook as a Tool for Producing Sociality and Connectivity*, "Television & New Media" 2012, no. 2 (13), pp. 160–176.

[28] CNET News Staff, *YouTube's Super Chat Hijacked for Hate Speech*, CNET, 3.11.2018, https://www.cnet.com/news/youtubes-super-chat-hijacked-for-hate-speech/ (accessed: 25.07.2022).

[29] J. Suler, *The Online Disinhibition Effect*, "Cyberpsychology & Behavior" 2004, vol. 7 (3), pp. 321–326.

[30] C.G. Artwick, *Social Media Livestreaming: Design for Disruption?*, Routledge, London 2019.

capable of going to. The possibility of directing what happens during streams creates a high probability of unpredictable situations, which further activates the audience. Occasionally, tragedies of various kinds also occur. In 2020, in a live stream, a Russian YouTuber, encouraged by a large number of donations, caused the death of his 28-year-old pregnant girlfriend. The entire situation was broadcast live, including the arrival of the paramedics on the scene.[31]

In terms of content, we adopt the typology of trash streams proposed by Bek and Popiołek[32] as appropriate:

- Alcohol-streaming – streaming alcohol abuse and "drunk activities," also known as "drunk-streaming." An example is Russian streamer German Vasilyenko[33] or Rafonix – one of the pioneers of alcohol-streams in Poland.
- Violence-streaming – streaming violence of various types; physical violence: live beatings, verbal violence: racist content, incitement to violence, threats, insults, etc. Russian streamer Mellstroy[34] or Polish streamer Rafonix[35] are examples of violence-streaming.
- Sex-streaming – streaming situations with various types of sexual deviation, including acts of paedophilia. An example is Polish streamer Gural, who encouraged minors to undress in front of the camera during his streams.
- Daily trash streaming – streaming everyday life, with a particular emphasis on transmitting so-called 'fights.'[36] A Polish example is the Uniwersum Szkolna 17.

As Paweł Siedlanowski indicates, the tradition of watching the suffering of others is almost as old as human history.[37] It is by no means a result of the emergence and spread of streaming media technology. However, this does not change the fact that

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[31] The Storyteller, *Russian Streamer Kills Pregnant Girlfriend Live for $1000 Tip*, Medium, 17.05.2021, https://medium.com/lessons-from-history/russian-streamer-kills-pregnant-girlfriend-live-for-1000-tip-a05755bd8cc4 (accessed: 25.07.2022).

[32] D. Bek, M. Popiołek, *Patostreaming – Characteristics and Legal Contexts of the Phenomenon*, "Media Management" 2019, vol. 7 (4), pp. 247–262.

[33] M. Luxmoore, *'Sign on and Take Part in Something Real': Inside the Dark, Lucrative World of Russian 'Trash-Streaming'*, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 26.02.2021, https://www.rferl.org/a/russia-trash-streamiing-dark-dares-pranks-lucrative-livestream-youtube/31123624.html (accessed: 25.07.2022).

[34] K. Davis, *TWISTED TREND Inside Horrific 'Death-Streaming' Craze Where Viewers Pay to Watch Torture, Humiliation and Death Live on YouTube*, "The Sun", 30.03.2021, https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/14466280/russias-disturbing-trash-streaming-trend/ (accessed: 25.07.2022).

[35] M. Obszarny, *Rafonix skazany za polowanie na „wykopka" w Piotrkowie. Sąd uznał, że to był samosąd*, "Dziennik Łódzki", 23.04.2019, https://dzienniklodzki.pl/rafonix-skazany-za-polowanie-na-wykopka-w-piotrkowie-sad-uznal-ze-to-byl-samosad/ar/c1-14071477 (accessed: 25.07.2022).

[36] Bek and Popiołek define 'fights' (pol. *dymy*) as "The most spectacular events during streams, often directed or provoked. Usually these are brawls, drinking alcohol or taking drugs, provoked brawls, etc. Fights are is quite popular because they increase the number of donors," D. Bek, M. Popiołek, op. cit., p. 251.

[37] P. Siedlanowski, *Homo crudelis? Patostream – kolejna patologia w sieci*, "Biuletyn Edukacji Medialnej" 2018, no. 2, pp. 44–57.

this technology dramatically facilitates the spread of this type of "entertainment." Thanks to mobile devices, streaming can be done from anywhere, as long as there is Internet access. A variety of free streaming software is also available online. As a result, reaching a broad audience with radical, violent, or hateful content is now easier than ever.

Conclusions

The live streaming technology offers numerous possibilities to activate Internet users, but it also carries potential threats. Trash streaming is a phenomenon that occurs in the media space for a relatively short time, with varying local intensity. This is one of the reasons why there is still no uniform definition, despite the fact that the number of studies on this subject is increasing. Different approaches are conditioned by local variations of this type of content. Both the type and intensity of trash content vary in different countries.

Research challenges are an additional problem. It should be noted that the study of trash streaming is much more difficult than live streaming in general. Only a tiny portion of streams is archived. Moreover, abusive content is systematically removed from platforms, which generates difficulties at the stage of collecting research material. For obvious reasons, various practices of blocking this type of content are being developed, so actually we cannot clearly indicate whether the phenomenon is developing itself or not. As a result, netnographic observation seems to be one of the best methods to study this issue and is becoming the dominant approach. These objective limitations in the availability of material make it difficult to undertake quantitative analyses. However, the scarcity of quantitative analyses may hinder the discussion of the problem, e.g. when one wants to place it in a broader socio-cultural context. Cultural determinants are still another challenge. The social and cultural norms are not the same, and the acceptable content is different in different cultural circles.

Taking it all into account, we recommend a broad definition and we proposed a definition that includes various content that can be considered as trash streaming. Within this definition, individual trash content can then be categorized. The authors have made every effort to ensure the research conducted and the theoretical concepts proposed meet the highest scientific standards. However, we are aware that the solutions we presented are not without limitations.

When analysing literature and journalistic texts, we limited ourselves only to sources published in Polish and English out of necessity. However, the popularity of trash streaming in Eastern Europe suggests that it is worth extending our research to include also texts inCyrillic. Not only could such a study present the phenomenon at issue in a broader perspective, but also – perhaps – indicate national and regional differences.

Our study is based on trash streamers broadcasting in Polish and receiving donations mainly in Polish. Therefore, one cannot speak of representativeness here. However, the results we presented may provide an interpretative framework for future research or even meta-analyses. Yet, it is worth bearing in mind that in identifying content from the perspective of community members, it is essential to know the language, sayings, or inside jokes of that community. Nevertheless, the need for contextual knowledge does not facilitate comprehensive and representative analyses – this would then require involvement in the study of experts or members of particular communities to help decode meanings.

Researchers looking at live video streaming from the perspective of uses and gratifications theory have made interesting observations in this regard. In addition to the educational dimension associated with stream viewing, they have also observed its substantial role in, e.g. tension release, social integrative, and affective motivations.[38] Therefore, it is worth considering and exploring to what extent these issues (especially in the area of disinhibition) may foster unacceptable audience behaviour during streams.

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