

Change the flow of a TV show or a quiz-game by web voting and talking to your co-viewers

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Nowadays there is a huge trend in extending the available tasks of the TV viewers so as to allow them to communicate with co-viewers. Social TV research and development projects try to allow geographically dispersed friends to chat and watch TV together. Making TV a more interactive and social medium is the proper answer to the criticism that TV is a passive medium [1].

In this paper we try to show how social TV can become a compelling community medium for interaction between viewers that watch a TV game show or their favorite soap opera, while at the same time they can share opinions and feelings with friends or other co-viewers. In the next lines we will try to picture two usage scenarios of a system that we developed (see Figure below) in an effort to increase the opportunities for TV viewers' communication and fun.



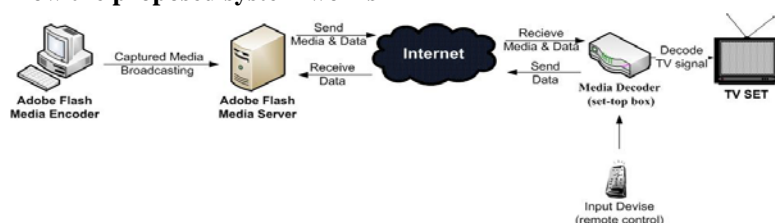
Imagine TV quiz-games like the "Beat the Nation" [2] or "Power of Ten" [3] where people have to guess the answers that most people given after off-line surveys. With the proposed system the audience could give answers online just few seconds before the question is shown to the player. The player will have to choose the choice that he/she thinks is the one that most people who watch the TV show at that specific time just gave. The system will present on the screen the results of the voting and also the percentage of viewers who participated on the voting. Moreover viewers will be able to write messages using the virtual keyboard in order to discuss with other viewers the possible answers (even giving links to

online resources) while at the same time they can read messages from other viewers.

Another usage scenario of the proposed system offers is related with the idea of enabling the viewer to make decisions and some times even to change the flow of a tv-program (most often soap opera) itself. In an IPTV variation of the "you can decide" TV program, the viewers could decide about the end or the sequels of a TV show or even how a specific character should act in the next episodes of that show. While one is watching his/her favorite show, a question can arouse in the screen regarding the show's plot or for the character's actions. The viewer will have the opportunity to answer this question by choosing specific options appeared on screen. Except of voting there will be the ability of posting comments on the chat board as to influence other viewers either on their answers or just to exchange opinion about interesting issues. Finally the system will present the voting results among with statistic data as the percentage of viewers who participated on the voting etc. The TV show will continue according what most viewers voted. This scenario is inspired after analyzing the web forum of the Greek version of the famous soap opera "Ugly Betty Betty's". Users "bombarded" the forum with opinions for present or future cases without even the producers ask or promote such an involvement from them. It is important to note that although the show had ended on June the forum had posted messages of August.

In the future we will make use case scenarios with TV news or talk shows, where producers can set up "real-time" polls for social and political subjects that concern the wide public. The results of the public opinion might influence the flow of the discussion during these shows.

How the proposed system works



For capturing and streaming media to the server we used Media Live Encoder software which is designed to capture live audio and video (even in high definition quality) while streaming it in real time to Flash Media Server software [4]. Interactive Media Server is used to allow live streaming delivery of

media and data between web viewers application. Our interactive social media web application developed on Adobe Flash CS3 platform, allows real time text communication between peer viewers and interaction with the tv-program, through data transfer with the Interactive Media Server.

References

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