



08, 09, 10 e 11 de novembro de 2022
ISSN 2177-3866

Putting Consumers to Work: Prosuming Work in a Trend Scouting Company

ROSANA CÓRDOVA GUIMARÃES

UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DO RIO GRANDE DO SUL (UFRGS)

Putting Consumers to Work: Prosuming Work in a Trend Scouting Company

Abstract

This paper aims to understand, from the categories of work and consumption, how the relations of the collaboration networks of the trend scouting company are constituted, and how they create value for the organization. In the academic field, recent literature reveals the emergence of new concepts, such as prosumer, co-creation and productive audiences to explain the changes in the world of work that increasingly involve consumer participation. Data collection took place, for the most part, at the company's headquarters in London during 2015, comprising 29 semi-structured interviews with spotters, employees and customers of the company. One of the main findings of the the research shows the spotter – so called the individual who is part the trend scouting collaboration network – is the main product/service sold by the company.

Keywords: Consumption; Prosumption; Trend Scouting Company.

Introduction

During the last decades, it is possible to observe a variety of attempts to make sense the transitions of contemporary capitalism, through discussions about changes related to post-Fordism, post-industrialism and network society (BAUMAN, 2001; BOLTANSKI, CHIAPELLO, 2002; CASTELLS, 2009).

There are a number of articles, especially from the 2000s, which point out that we can no longer look at production alone, without considering the consumer (see GABRIEL, LANG, 2008; RITZER, GOODMAN, WIEDENHOFT, 2001; RITZER, 2014). However, it is in the third wave, from Toffler (1980), that for the first time the boundaries between production and consumption are blurred.

The term prosumption, for example, already presented the process of shuffling the frontiers that separated the producer from the consumer in the 1980s (GABRIEL, LANG, 2008). At the present time, this term has gained strength and has become increasingly associated and integrated with the production of value for capitalism (ARVIDSSON, 2008; FONTENELLE, 2015a). This term is essentially "hailed as a form of consumer empowerment. From a critical perspective, authors point to a new form of alienation and exploitation of work" (FONTENELLE, 2015b, p. 84).

The alienation and exploitation of labor can take place from the extensions of work to the sphere of consumption (OLIVEIRA, 2003). For example, the scope of work includes a wide range of consumer co-creation, coproduction and co-participation processes. It is the "do-it-yourself" proposed by Toffler (1980).

Thus, the idea of unlocking the "productive potential of the consuming public" (ARVIDSSON, 2013) seems to be a vital strategy. It is interesting that individuals participate actively, but it becomes even more attractive the interaction and participation in groups. Even if this cooperation is not determined by economic bias (because the creative elements are strictly linked to the values that only the forms of life produce), it is through the control of the communication, the information and its organizational processes that the economist tries to access, manage and regulate the activity of immaterial labor (LAZZARATO, 2001; 2006).

That said, the purpose of this paper is to discuss how consumers are creating value for organizations on the assumption that borders are blurred between production and consumption. Empirical data were collected during a qualitative research in a trend scouting company located in London.

Entanglements between work and consumption

Seminal authors in different fields as Organizational Studies, Marketing and Sociology understand that the contemporary consumer and consumption cannot be understood separately from the world of work and production (GABRIEL; LANG, 2008; HARVEY, 2011; MARX, 1971; RITZER, 2014). Although today the terms “consumption” and “consumer” are widespread, the prominent place that studies on production had during the period of the Industrial Revolution is notorious (RITZER; GOODMAN; WIEDENHOFT, 2001).

For Ritzer (2014), the prosumer has always been seen as a “primitive” process that has occurred at various times in history. Likewise, Vargo and Lusch (2004) will also state that the consumer, in some way, is always involved in the production of value.

In an article published in 2014, Ritzer (2014, p. 3) states that the “main changes in prosumption, the interrelated process of production and consumption, as well as the phenomenon itself, were generally not recognized, at least until recently”. For Ritzer (2014), the subject began to draw more attention from academics who, starting with Toffler, created or used new concepts based on this idea, such as craft consumer (CAMPBELL, 2005), co-creation (PRAHALAD; RAMASWAMY, 2004), produser (BIRD, 2011), among others. Even so, the concept of prosumption remains the most popular and the most used to understand social and economic changes (RITZER, 2014).

Although Marx's best-known theory emphasizes the means of production, in exploration and surplus value, in the work *Grundrisse* (1971), Marx addresses the dialectical relationship between production and consumption. There is an interdependence: in the production of objects, human energy is consumed while, when consuming objects, some aspect of the consumer is produced (RITZER; GOODMAN; WIEDENHOFT, 2001).

Even though Toffler (1980) can be considered a pioneer in the creation of the term Prosumer, authors from Marketing and Organizational Studies have developed works within this theme. As examples it's possible to point out terms as Free Labor (TERRANOVA, 2000; 2013; HESMONDHALGH, 2010; ANDREJEVIC, 2013), Crowdsourcing (BAUER; GEGENHUBER, 2015; KLEEMAN; VOB; RIEDER, 2008), Cocreation (PRAHALAD; RAMASWAMY, 2004; ZWICK; BONSU; DARMODY, 2008) and Productive Publics (ARVIDSSON, 2008; 2013; ARVIDSSON; PEITERSON, 2013). There are terms which are similar in some aspects and others that, despite using the same term, differ in definition.

The prosumer

In order to understand what Toffler's Third Wave (1980) would be, we must first go through the first and the second. Toffler (1980) will say that the First Wave is related to the Agricultural Revolution, the Second concerns the Industrial Revolution and, finally, the Third Wave is characterized by technological and informational transformations.

It is possible to state that, during the First Wave, most people consumed what was produced by them, not being producers or consumers in the usual sense of the word. They could be called prosumers. It was during the Second Wave that the separation of activity in production and consumption was observed, and this separation led to the system of markets, exchange networks and channels through which goods and services are distributed (TOFFLER, 1980).

Toffler (1980) explains this process through two sectors, A and B, with sector A doing all the unpaid work performed by people and sector B would be all the production of goods and services for sale and exchange in the markets. From this definition, it would be possible to determine the First Wave or sector A - based on production for use - seriously huge, while sector B would be minimal. In the Second Wave, the industrial period, we observed an opposite movement, with a prominence of sector B in relation to sector A.

But how can we define this new moment in the prosumer, with limits of production and consumption are increasingly borrowed? (TOFFLER, 1980; RITZER, DEAN; JURGENSON, 2012; RITZER, 2014; GABRIEL; LANG, 2008; HUMPHREYS; GRAYSON, 2008). According to Toffler (1980), the appearance of a professional brings about a fundamental change in the relations between sectors A and B, transforming the roles of markets in society.

Starting from Toffler, contemporary authors have been working on developing the theme:

- In the view of Ritzer (2014), the growing importance of consumption after the Second World War is emphasized, and the work of Baudrillard (2005) was decisive for the change of focus. Ritzer (2014) sees prosumption as a 'continuum', that is, for it there are no 'ideal types' (WEBER, 2004). For the author, in a way, we have always been 'prosumers': "we are prosumers even before there is a distinction between producers and consumers, prosumption is our first condition" (RITZER, 2014, p. 18).
- Comor's (2010a, 2010b) look at prosumer rests on Marx's conceptualization of alienation, in which people are compelled to become mere tools of a production process. Although it seems that the prosumer is aware of and under the control of its activities related to production and consumption, even in a free and autonomous way, the prosumer still proves to be dependent on companies that command the essential infrastructures in which people produce and consume, leaving little room for genuine autonomy.
- Fontenelle (2015a, 2015b) points out gaps in the literature on the prosumption that there is a lack of analysis on how work can become consumption. The author cites López-Ruiz's (2009) studies as references, which discusses how the worker has consumed as a way of investing in himself and Abílio (2011). Abílio (2011), from the research carried out with the consultants of the Brazilian cosmetics company Natura, came to the conclusion that they consume branded products to perform work, also revealing the blurring of the boundaries between working and non-working time, the from the sphere of consumption (FONTENELLE, 2015b).

Methods

In this study, we conducted a qualitative research, as it is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world and allows the use of a variety of empirical materials (MORGAN; SMIRCICH, 1980; DENZIN; LINCOLN, 2000; FLICK, 2009). With a qualitative approach, this research works with the universe of meanings, motives, aspirations, beliefs, values and attitudes of those involved (MINAYO et al., 2009).

Furthermore, this research can be described as a case study. The Case Study is inserted within the subjectivist school of thought, which understands that social science requires different methods of analysis compared to the natural sciences, which, in turn, belong to the objectivist tradition (LEE, 1989). Although Lee (1989) suggests the possibility of carrying out case studies as natural experiments - and, therefore, with an objectivist view -, in this study we accept that the Case Study follows the subjectivist strand.

Qualitative semi-structured interviews were made with people who collaborated as spotters, employees and customers of the company. The qualitative semi-structured interviews generally meet 3 main characteristics: (1) the researcher is looking for rich and detailed information, looking for examples, experiences, narratives and stories; (2) categories of answers are not given, the interviewee can respond as he wishes, including raising new

questions; (3) the questions are not fixed, the interviewer can change the order or even skip questions (RUBIN; RUBIN, 2012).

The charts below show the list of respondents who act as spotters in several countries. The first chart shows the list of interviewed spotters, the second one the employees and the third Contacts with the spotters took place mainly at the Trend Seminars events in Amsterdam and London, although some people were also nominated by the person responsible for the TW: IN community, the main channel of communication with the spotters and between spotters as well. The names of interviews were changed to preserve anonymity.

Chart 1 – Interviews with spotters

Name	Country of origin	Where interview took place
1) Miles	Netherlands	Amsterdam
2) Ryan	Netherlands	Amsterdam
3) Rita	Netherlands	London
4) Peter	Netherlands	London
5) Alicia	Netherlands	Amsterdam
6) Marta	Netherlands	London
7) Fiona	Netherlands	Amsterdam
8) John	Netherlands	Amsterdam
9) Polly	Polland	London
10) Isabela	Brazil	London
11) Carolina	Brazil	London
12) Pilar	Spain	Amsterdam
13) Dimitri	Russia	London

Source: the author.

Chart 2 – Interviews with employees

Name	Job position at trend scounting company	Where interview took place
14) Ronald	Owner	Skype/London
15) Donatella	Owner	Skype/London
16) Samantha	Content creator	São Paulo
17) Bianca	Speaker	London
18) Ashley	Content creator	London
19) Marie	Intern – Marketing	London
20) Louise	Seminar Manager	London
21) Enrica	Intern – Design	Amsterdam
22) Georgia	Temporary intern – Marketing	Londres

Source: the author.

Chart 3 – Interviews with clients/users of premium content of the company

Name	Company/Job position/ Country	Where interview took place
23) Bart	Vlisco/ <i>Brand Innovation Director</i> /Netherlands	Skype – Porto Alegre
24) Raul	Edelman/Research Leader/Brazil	Skype – Porto Alegre

25) Diego	Itaú/Research and Market Analysis/Brazil	Skype – Porto Alegre
26) Caio	Agência3/Brand Strategy/Brazil	Skype – Porto Alegre
27) Kurt	Capacent/CEO/Iceland	Skype – Porto Alegre
28) Fernando	Futurebrand/Brand Strategy Director/Brazil	Skype – Porto Alegre
29) Nora	Pond/Consumer Insight and Foresight Director/Sweden	Skype – Porto Alegre

Source: the author.

The next session will discuss the findings of the collected data field.

Findings

The context: the trendscouting company

The studied trendscouting company began in Amsterdam in 2002 with a Dutch entrepreneur called Ronald (names were changed to preserve anonymity), who was already working with innovative, internet-oriented ideas from his previous company – an information site focused on business innovation. The beginning of the company was with Ronald himself, who realized a business opportunity that consisted of gathering material on consumer trends and producing annual reports that were sold only once during the year.

The business went on in this format until 2010, with the arrival of Arthur, who contacted Ronald to show some ideas he had to improve the company. After this conversation, Arthur became Ronald's right-hand man, and the company began to take on new directions.

The year 2014 marks a shift in the company's strategy with the hiring of Vivianne, responsible for coordinating the entire Happy Spotting network of people. Vivianne is hired at a time when the company was focused on making the site more interactive and also strengthened the relationship with Happy Spotters, now renamed TW:IN community – Happy spotting, spotters and TW:IN community can be understood as a network of people around the world which is connected with this trend scouting company and send, without payment involved, insights and trends of theirs regions. In Arthur's words, “there is now an interest in having 'trend partners', creating a collaborative network”. At this point it is curious to realize that what was perhaps only a 'decoy', a tool of self-promotion – the trendscouting company has a network of 3000 spotters (volunteers which send trend informations) scattered around the world - becomes a real concern: who are these people? Where are they from? How often do they contribute? How to engage them even more in this activity?

The spotter

We believe that the first point that needs to be demystified deals with the question of the age of the spotter, which helps us better characterize it. In the Coolhunting literature (GLADWELL, 1997; MAIOLI, 2013; RIEZU, 2011; LINDKVIST, 2010), there is the profile of the trend hunter as a young person between the ages of 18 and 24. Over time in the field, we realize that the question of age, something that usually stands out in this type of literature, is not something present within the universe of the spotters. They can be very young or more

experienced, because somehow already work with trends and have the time and will to send the content through the platform, as we can see in the following section:

*There are no employees. **They are just people who love doing it as a hobby. They have other jobs, this is not something they can do to earn their wages.** They are students or experts on certain subjects. The age varies greatly, from very young to older people, who are experts in various fields and like to do this (Donatella, who works at the comp).*

There is an effort on the part of the company to know better who these people are and engage them in various activities live. There is Spotters Meeting, free meeting and with indefinite periodicity that occurs in several places of the world, and some have already occurred in the city of São Paulo. One of the interviewees made the following observation about the profile of the participants:

Yeah, of the spotters here in Brazil. I found it interesting, but I found the audience that is much more junior, people who are starting, so maybe for other people it was more interesting than me. But I always like to change, I teach, so it's always a nice thing to be with people arguing (Carolina, spotter).

The holding of these meetings, in which people move in their respective cities to attend the presentation on the latest news in terms of trends is a way of mapping who these people are and how active they are for the community. After talking with the community manager TW:IN (online community that allows interaction between employees and spotters), we realized that, despite the fact that the web site of a network of thousands of spotters present in 90 countries, the reality is somewhat different: it is estimated that about 10% of spotters actually contribute with some frequency, and even if they work in areas that have some affinity with consumption trends, the material shipped in general is of poor quality:

***It has a lot of branding. Even the numbers they put there "so many customers, so many spotters" leave you with eyes full and in fact it's not all that.** The content that is there, free of charge, is basically the content they have, because the premium content is the innovations that come from the spotters as well and does not have much depth of what is put in relation to what is put in the free content... (Enrica, spotter).*

In these lines, it becomes clear that the spotter often sends insights that are used, but that are not necessarily considered of quality, with the curation and deepening that such material requires. It's a spotter that needs to be trained, educated for the business.

The company profile is what we have coined the "super spotter", which is those people who send material with certain periodicity, quality, a material that, in Ashley's words, "can be used all the time." Either way, we need to better understand how spotters capture their insights. This is what we will discuss in the following section.

Information search made by spotters

Every spotter has an online profile on the company's website where he can view his history of spottings, among those that have been approved and rejected. When respondents – mostly spotters – were asked about how they seek insights that are subsequently sent through the site, several have cited as sources other databases and magazines. According to the following interviewees:

*Every trend hunter has a favorite bar where they save the sites and say they do not show to anyone and also do not divulge for anything, where every day they look for references and information. There they also consult magazines like **Wired, Fast Company and Monocle** (Louise, employee).*

It's a great black book made from websites, magazines and people (Alicia, Spotter).

I use Warc, Contagious, WGSN and PSFK a lot, mainly as source, not only source of trends, but also as source of information (Isabella, Spotter).

From the interviews it was possible to build a list of sites and magazines that are accessed by spotters and also by company customers in their day to day. This is quite interesting: realize that the sources of inspiration cited by the spotters sometimes match those of customers who access paid content on the website. Some sources cited were: Forester, E-marketer, PSFK, WGSN, Contagious, Brainstorm9, Mintel, Now and Next. All these sites offer a material curation that facilitates (and accelerates) the search for innovations and trends mainly in the area of fashion and consumption, as can be seen in the speech of this premium customer:

Increasingly we have replaced traditional search engines, type, open Google and put anything, by already go straight into sources. So if I need a die I'll go for the direct e-marketer, if I need a case, if I need a presentation, if I need to put one thing that goes over the storytelling line, I know I'll use more this one instead of another company (Diego, premium customer).

It does not appear in the interviewees' speeches – spotters and clients – the question of getting information "in the street" and innovations. This does not necessarily mean that the work of coolhunting is extinguished, but rather that the work can be composed of the two stages. In the following speech, the interviewed spotter made his academic training in the area of technology and consumer trends, works in his everyday with trends and points out that the search through the internet would be a secondary moment, when the person already has a more trained look with what you learned offline (on the street).

Perhaps this information helps us understand why the material often sent by the spotter is considered to be of poor quality by content analysts, since most of the search is focused on what is available online.

The following will discuss what motivates people to become a spotter because they decide to sign up for the site and contribute information they find during their daily routines.

Spotters motivation and rewards

One point that helped guide the questions to the interviewees was the motivation to collaborate with the spot network and the TW: IN community. An uneasiness that was raised shortly at the entrance on the field dealt precisely as to what would be the motivation of the spotters to send their insights through the company's website and to undergo an evaluation of the material sent, that is, to wait for that content to be approved or disapproved by the network manager of spotters. Once the content was approved, the spotter would be awarded 10 points, and in so far as it was accumulating points, could exchange for rewards available on company's website.

What the field research has shown is that the motivation of the spotters to send material to the site lies in the fact that for them it is possible to be in touch with updated content, from newsletters and briefings that are sent by email:

In fact this is an interesting part, because at the beginning the motivation was different (the rewards). Now I do this because it helps keep me updated, it's like a second job. Basically you stay updated. My motivation is to improve myself. It's also something fun, open your head, I really like the process of looking for insights that close with what they propose. In the end, it is actually "self-improving" (Pilar, spotter).

*It's not what I want to win or win things for free, **I want to know what else is out there** (Fiona, spotter).*

*It's a way for me to stop, you know? If I was not a spotter here, that report would have passed and would not have been in my head, understand? **So it's a way for me to keep up to date**, to remember these innovations and to have them more deeply in my head (Enrica, spotter).*

In the case of the spotter Pilar, additional information is that it can be considered a super spotter because her photo has already appeared in company's annual printed reports and she was invited to participate, free of charge, from both the trend seminar that took place in Amsterdam and the dinner the night before with Dutch customers. Another interesting point is how much her speech brings up the question that by doing these activities she is investing in herself, as if this were some kind of reward.

It is important to note the trendscounting company has an orientation for spotters, called "requests": every month the requests to the spotters are modified to fit the trends the company is seeking to add to their online database. One of the activities carried out by the researcher during the data collection was participation as spotter, with the sending of insights to the trendscounting compan. At the time, in 2015, one of the "requests" was called "Branded Government," in which they sought news and insights on greater interaction between brands and governments if there were indications of a closer rapprochement between these two spheres. That is, there is clearly an orientation to what news the spotter needs to be aware of.

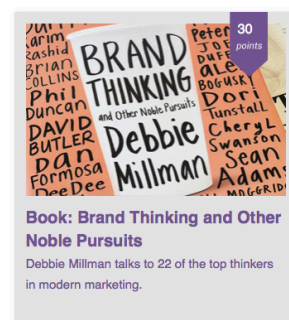
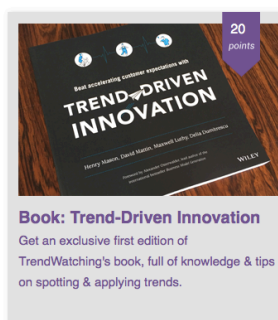
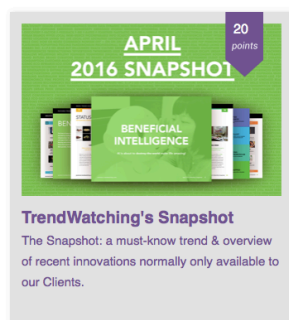
In the speech of the spotter Carolina, also invited to attend the seminar and dinner with clients, we noticed that she started her activities as a spotter to stay updated and better understand the dynamics of the platform, not only to consume the content, but also to help produce it. Going the same way as Pilar and Carolina, spotter Fiona shows her curiosity to know more about trends, saying that this would be her real reward.

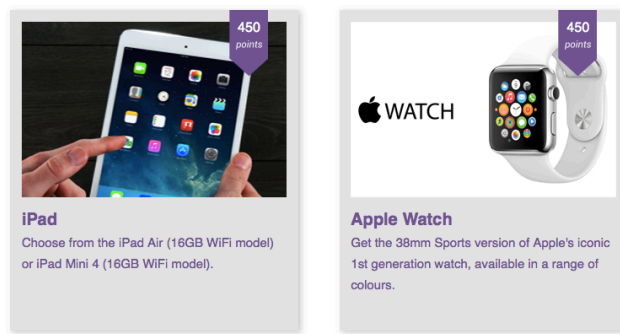
It should be noticed that there are different awards available as rewards on the website. In the two figures below you can see from the prizes that cost 20 points, such as recent reports prepared by the company's content team, books on brands, innovation and trends up to premium awards, where the spotter needs to reach 450 points to get one of the last iPad models or the wristwatch, both from Apple.



CLAIM A GIFT

We are still working on this page. If you would like to claim a gift please email spotters@trendwatching.com.





The interesting thing is that within the category "spotter motivation" we can show that the reward through the points collected on the site and the exchange for prizes is a secondary aspect, and the activity is seen as a kind of exchange:

The system is ok, but not the only motivation. I would say the points are great, and now I have seen that they have changed the awards, there are some different, it is becoming more attractive and interesting, but I would say this is a second point, because the first is just having access to the briefings, see what's happening, this is interesting (Polly, spotter).

At this point in the presentation of the research findings, we come to three important points: 1) what motivation of the spotter is the material that he can access to, consequently 2) keep up to date and 3) the material rewards in the form of awards are considered as secondary in the motivation system of the spotters.

The company offers spotters the ability to put on their LinkedIn profile that it performs the spotter activity. This is also a motivation for the spotter, who can often attract customers to their own (paid) business from the spotter activity. It is a possibility viewed in a positive way by the spotters, as can be seen from the sections below:

I put that I'm spotter on LinkedIn and for me it's really cool because when you stay out of agency so you have little news to put on your LinkedIn profile, you're not promoted, you do not have an approved project that you disclose... so, huh. People call to talk to me through LinkedIn and I end up also following the company and people end up getting through it (Isabella, spotter).

In the talk of the spotter Pilar, an important issue appears that treats of the Community TW:IN, space created which allows the interaction of spotters and employees of the company. This is what we will detail in the next category.

Spotters and TW:IN Community









Recently, the Trendscounting company added in the Community TW:IN different badges, as a way to stimulate the participation of the spotters. This type of site interaction with users can be found in different companies that follow the model of collaborative participation, such as the Brazilian company Enjoei (www.enjoei.com.br), a clothing and accessories offers distinctives for sellers, as they go, for example, buying / selling products, accepting offers, sending the product in the mail within 3 business days, etc. Another company that works the same way is the American company AirBnB (www.airbnb.com), which has become known worldwide for connecting individuals willing to host unknown people in their homes. They also have a badge system, for example, the "superhost" label, given to hosts who hold several positive reviews received from guests.

More specifically in this case, the badges are related to the spotter's share in the TW:IN Community. In the figure below you can see the beginning of the page with the

badges. You can earn badges when you, for example, first send a comment, when you like a comment, add a link to a topic, etc. This occurs at the platform starter level (Getting Started).

Badges






Getting Started

	First Emoji Used an Emoji in a Post	2		First Flag Flagged a post	1		First Like Liked a post	44
	First Link Added a link to another topic	6		First Mention Mentioned a user in a Post	25		First Onebox Posted a link that was oneboxed	44
	Read Guidelines Read the community guidelines	13		Reader Read every reply in a topic with more than 100 replies				




There are also other levels that can be achieved, for example, at the confidence level, the spotter can earn different badges that qualify as "new user", "spotter", "super spotter" and "strategist". There is also the category "others" with badges for posts that have been appreciated, respected and admired by an increasing number of users. In the image below, being new to the platform, the researcher has only the distinctive "new user", along with 66 other people. The "spotter" is 36 people, and the distinctive "super spotters" and "strategists" are composed of a total of 15 people.

As the TW:IN Community platform is still at the beginning, most people who have the "super spotter" and "strategist" stamp are employees. This may explain the TW: IN manager's insistence on getting people to participate and collaborate more on this platform.

Trust Level

		New User	66		Spotter	36		Super Spotter	15
		Strategist	15						

Other

	Appreciated Received 1 like on 20 posts	10		Respected Received 2 likes on 100 posts			Admired Received 5 likes on 300 posts	
---	---	----	---	---	--	---	---	--

In addition to the TW: IN Community, there is also a blog inside the company's main site that is updated collaboratively by employees and spotters.

Discussion

The spotter fits as an example of a prosumer (FONTENELLE, 2015a, 2015b; RITZER, 2014), since he produces content for the company and at the same time consumes this material, he participates as a guest at the Trends Seminar and also, during the coffee

break, explains to the other participants the activities of the spotters, in a space called “spotter's hub”. Such attitudes corroborate the thinking of countless authors (ARVIDSSON, 2013; FONTENELLE, 2015a; 2015b; GABRIEL; LANG, 2008; HUMPHREYS, GRAYSON; 2008; ZWICK et al, 2008) that the existing borders between production and consumption are blurred, and that different concepts are needed to account for the changes arising from these changes.

In the dynamics of the spotter's relationship with the company, the activity is seen as healthy by both. A fundamental contemporary change, which characterizes this spontaneous acceptance of spotters to participate in unpaid activities, finds support in the concept of Immaterial Work (LAZZARATO, 2006; NEGRI, 1991; GORZ, 2005). Within the Italian “operaista” movement (HARDT, NEGRI; 2001; 2005; LAZZARATO; 2001; VIRNO, 2003), there was the idea of refusing to work - understood as a political and potentially revolutionary act (GILL; PRATT, 2008). In the perspective of immaterial work, the idea that it is the antagonisms, and not the contradictions, that stand out and, in a way, the power relations become the background from this perspective, is contained.

The research reveals that the spotters do not show resistance and also do not feel controlled or exploited when contributing to the TW:IN platform. Classic categories of management analysis that seek to analyze power, control, resistance within organizations and with vast production are not enough to explain this current phenomenon, because, as the study reveals, spotters feel that they are updated throughout the production process / consumption of trends, when interacting and participating in the TW:IN Community. It is a “spotter-prosumidor-você S/A”, which reveals a concern to invest in itself.

Although human capital is not the motto of this paper, it is important to note that López-Ruiz (2009), in a study carried out with executives, discusses the dilution of conceptual boundaries between consumption and investment. In this sense, “you also invest (...) when taking a language course, or a postgraduate degree in administration, you invest in developing your career (...). Everything or almost everything becomes an investment object, something in which one can, or many times, should invest ”(LÓPEZ-RUIZ, 2009, p. 219). The spotter invests in updating his knowledge about consumer trends by sending spottings and also by adding the name of the Trendscounting company to his resume on LinkedIn, even if there is no employment relationship. In fact, the practice of having a curriculum with connections to different places and references is a practice widely used by freelancers.

We would dare to say, from the analysis of the profile of the spotters, they are mostly already involved in jobs related to marketing, advertising agencies and advertising and branding. During their paid activity, they end up with topics involving consumer trends and new technologies and, when something comes up that fits what the company is looking for at a given moment, the spotting is sent for evaluation by the TW Community manager. Being a spotter means being an extension of what they already do during their production/work time.

Conclusion

In order to achieve the main objective, to answer how the relationships of collaboration networks of trendscounting company are constituted, and how they create value for the organization, based on the categories of work and consumption, we first seek to understand the elements that would provide a basis for analysis, situating the reader about what is meant by value, work and consumption. The theoretical foundations reveal, based on what has been produced recently, that there are different definitions of the process of co-creation between companies and consumers present in the Marketing and Organizational Studies literature. Some of them see the co-creation process as a positive movement for both parties, companies and consumers. Others, with a critical bias, question issues such as alienation, control and precariousness (through non-payment of activities performed) of the

consumer. We show how value – through the concept of social factory and factory without walls – expands to be realized in other spheres besides production.

Firstly, we seek to understand how the organization's network of spotters works, and we decided to interact with the platform and perform the submission of spottings. This interaction led to an interaction with the spotter network within the TW:IN Community. Through this interaction, it was discovered that the main motivation for spotters to participate in the community is the possibility of accessing updated content, material that it helps to produce.

Among the different definitions of co-creation, we identified the existence of a “spotter S/A”, that is, a spotter that sees its participation in the collaboration network and in the activities proposed by the company – for example, working in the seminar's spotter's hub trends - as an investment in yourself. The reward, more than points raised on the site, is the possibility of meeting spotters from other regions, having contact with employees who work at the company and adding on LinkedIn this activity.

Aware of this, the company has been rethinking its business model, in order to more often include the presence of spotters. If, in 2002, when the company was created, spotters were just a marketing tool, there is now a genuine interest in making co-creation, from collaboration networks between spotters really happen.

The potential contribution of this paper was to show the relationship between prosumption and practices of a trend scouting company in its relationship with its consumers/spotters, showing new interfaces between work and consumption and how consumption theories might be valuable to comprehend the shifts in the work arena.

References

- ABÍLIO, L. “*O Make Up do Trabalho: Uma Empresa e um Milhão de Revendedoras de Cosméticos*”, Tese de Doutorado, Universidade Estadual de Campinas, 2011.
- ANDREJEVIC, M. Estranged Free Labor. In: SCHOLZ, T. (Ed.) *Digital Labor: the internet as playground and factory*. New York: Routledge, 2013.
- ARVIDSSON, A. “The ethical economy of customer coproduction”. In: *Journal of Macromarketing*, v. 28, n. 4, 2008, p. 326-338.
- _____. “The potential of consumer publics”. In: *Ephemera: theory & politics in organization*, v. 13, n. 2, 2013, p. 367-391.
- ARVIDSSON, A.; PEITERSEN, N. *The Ethical Economy: Rebuilding Value after the Crisis*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2013.
- BAUER, R. M.; GEGENHUBER, T. “Crowdsourcing: global search and the twisted roles of consumers and producers”. In: *Organization*, v. 22, n. 5, 2015, p. 661-681.
- BAUMAN, Z. *Modernidade Líquida*. Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar, 2001.
- BIRD, S. E. “Are we all prosumers now?”. In: *Cultural Studies*, v. 25, n. 4-5, 2011.
- BOLTANSKI, L.; CHIAPELLO, E. *El nuevo espíritu del capitalismo*. Madrid: Ediciones Akal, 2002.
- CAMPBELL, C. “The craft consumer: culture, craft and consumption in a postmodern society”. In: *Journal of Consumer Culture*, v. 5, n. 1, 2005, p. 23-42.
- CASTELLS, M. *A sociedade em rede*. São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 2009.
- COMOR, E. “Contextualizing and Critiquing the Fantastic Prosumer: Power, Alienation and Hegemony”. In: *Critical Sociology*, v. 37, n. 3, 2010a, p. 309-327.
- _____. “Digital prosumption and alienation”. In: *Ephemera: theory & politics in organization*, v. 10, n. 3-4, 2010b, p. 439-454.
- DENZIN, N. K., LINCOLN, Y. S. *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. 2ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2000.

- FLICK, U. *Introdução à pesquisa qualitativa*. Porto Alegre: Artmed, 2009.
- FONTENELLE, I. A. "A Prosumption: as novas articulações entre trabalho e consumo na reorganização do capital". In: *Ciências Sociais Unisinos*, v. 51, n. 1, 2015b, p. 83-91.
- _____. "Organisations as producers of consumers". In: *Organization*, v. 22, n. 5, 2015a, p. 644-660.
- GABRIEL, Y.; LANG, T. "New faces and new masks of today's consumer". In: *Journal of Consumer Culture*, v. 8, n. 3, 2008, p. 321-340.
- GILL, R.; PRATT, A. "Precarity and Cultural Work in the Social Factory? Immaterial Labour, Precariousness and Cultural Work". In: *Theory, Culture & Society*, v. 25, n. 7-8, 2008, p. 1-30.
- GLADWELL, M. *The Coolhunt*. The New Yorker, 17 March 1997. Disponível em: http://www.gladwell.com/1997/1997_03_17_a_cool.htm Acesso em: 30 jun. 2019.
- GORZ, A. *O Imaterial: Conhecimento, Valor e Capital*. São Paulo: AnnaBlume, 2005.
- HARDT, M.; NEGRI, A. *Império*. Rio de Janeiro: Record, 2001.
- HARVEY, D. *O enigma do capital e as crises do capitalismo*. São Paulo: Boitempo, 2011.
- HESMONDHALGH, D. "User-generated content, free labour and cultural industries". In: *Ephemera*, v. 10, n. 3-4, 2010, p. 267-284.
- HUMPHREYS, A.; GRAYSON, K. "The intersecting roles of consumer and producer: a critical perspective on co-production, co-creation and presumption". In: *Sociology Compass*, v. 2, n. 3, 2008, p. 963-980.
- KLEEMAN, F.; VOß, G. G.; RIEDER, K. "Un(der)paid innovators: the commercial utilization of consumer work through crowdsourcing". In: *Science, Technology & Innovation Studies*, v. 4, n. 1, 2008, p. 5-26.
- LAZZARATO, M. "Immaterial Labor". In: VIRNO, P.; HARDT, M. (Ed.). *Radical Thought in Italy: a Potential Politics*. United States: University of Minnesota Press, 2006.
- LAZZARATO, M.; NEGRI, A. *Trabalho imaterial: formas de vida e produção de subjetividade*. Rio de Janeiro: DP&A, 2001.
- LEE, A. S. "Case Studies as Natural Experiments". In: *Human Relations*, v. 42, n. 2, 1989, p. 117-137.
- LINDKVIST, M. *O guia do caçador de tendências*. São Paulo: Editora Gente, 2010.
- LÓPEZ-RUIZ, O. J. "O consumo como investimento: a teoria do capital humano como ethos". In: *Mediações – Revista de Ciências Sociais*, v. 14, n. 2, 2009, p. 217-230.
- MAIOLI, F. *Manual de Coolhunting – métodos e práticas*. Porto Alegre: Vidrágua, 2013.
- MARX, K. *The Grundrisse*. New York: Harper & Row, 1971.
- MINAYO, M. C. S.; DESLANDES, S. F.; GOMES, R. *Pesquisa social: teoria, método e criatividade*. Petrópolis: Vozes, 2009.
- MORGAN, G.; SMIRCICH, L. "The Case for Qualitative Research". In: *The Academy of Management Review (pre-1986)*. Oct 1980; 5. p. 491
- NEGRI, A. *Marx beyond Marx: Lessons from the Grundrisse*, London: Pluto, 1991.
- PRAHALAD, C. K.; RAMASWAMY, V. "Co-creation experiences: the next practice in value creation". In: *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, v. 18, n. 3, 2004, p. 5-14.
- RIEZO, M. D. *Coolhunters – caçadores de tendências na moda*. São Paulo: Editora Senac, 2011.
- RITZER, G. "Prosumption, evolution, revolution, or eternal return of the same?". In: *Journal of Consumer Culture*, v. 14, n. 1, 2014, p. 3-24.
- RITZER, G.; DEAN, P.; JURGENSON, N. "The coming age of the prosumer". In: *American Behavioral Scientist*, v. 56, n. 4, 2012, p. 379-398.
- RITZER, G.; GOODMAN, D.; WIEDENHOFT, W. Theories of consumption. In: RITZER, G.; SMART, B. *Handbook of Social Theory*. (pp. 410-427) London: Sage publications, 2001.

- RUBIN, H. J.; RUBIN, I. *Qualitative interviewing: the art of hearing data*. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 3. ed, 2012.
- TERRANOVA, T. "Free Labor: producing culture for the digital economy". In: *Social Text*, v. 18, n. 2, 2000, p. 33-58.
- TERRANOVA, T. "Free Labor". In: SCHOLZ, T. (Ed.) *Digital Labor: the internet as playground and factory*. New York: Routledge, 2013.
- TOFFLER, A. *The third wave*. New York: William Morrow, 1980.
- VARGO, S. L.; LUSCH, R. F. "Evolving to a New Dominant Logic for Marketing". In: *Journal of Marketing*, v. 68, n. 1, 2004, p. 1-17.
- VIRNO, P. *Grammar of the multitude*. Estados Unidos: Semiotexte, 2003.
- WEBER, M. *Economia e Sociedade: fundamentos da sociologia compreensiva*. Brasília: Universidade de Brasília, 2004.
- ZWICK *et al.* "Putting Consumers to Work: 'Co-creation' and new marketing governmentality". In: *Journal of Consumer Culture*, v. 8, n. 2, 2008, p. 163-196.