

# Media Units 1 & 2

## Chapter 12 — New media technologies and new media audiences

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.

**Attribution:** Classbasics Pty Ltd, vwx.au

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content** has been excluded as accuracy cannot be guaranteed, and it is better to be respectful than cover the entire curriculum inaccurately.

Significant effort has been made to ensure this content is legal. Please send any areas of concern to [admin@vwx.au](mailto:admin@vwx.au) with appropriate document/legal references so errors can be verified and changes be made.

### Contents

| Section                                                               | Page |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| 12A The nature and forms of new media technologies                    | 2    |
| 12B Characteristics of new media audiences                            | 23   |
| 12C Audience interaction and engagement across converging media forms | 39   |

## Chapter 12 New media technologies and new media audiences — 12A The nature and forms of new media technologies

### Theory

This dot point asks two questions, and it is worth separating them before you read another line. The **nature** of new media technologies is *what kind of thing they are* — the properties that make a technology count as “new media” at all. Their **forms** are *the kinds there are* — the categories a technology can be sorted into once you know what job it does. The key skill attached to this dot point is **identify**: you are being asked to name and classify accurately, not yet to argue about consequences. What these technologies *do* to individuals, to society and to media industries and institutions is the work of **13A** and **13B**; the social, ethical and legal issues they raise belong to **13C**. Keep your answers here on the technologies themselves.

**What the study design means by “new media”.** The definition is given directly, and every clause in it is examinable. **New media** is a term that applies to contemporary technology used by media producers and audiences, and the social, cultural and economic practices that arise from these contemporary forms. Three parts:

1. **Contemporary technology.** Not “recently invented” — *in current use now*, by the people making and receiving media. Contemporary is a claim about the present, not about a launch date.
2. **Used by media producers and audiences.** Both sides. This is the clause that makes an audience’s phone, earbuds, console and smart television part of the subject matter, not just a professional’s camera and editing suite.
3. **Plus the social, cultural and economic practices that arise from these contemporary forms.** The term does not stop at the equipment. The practices that grow up around a technology — what people do with it, and how money moves through it — are part of what “new media” names.

Part 3 is the one students drop, and dropping it is the commonest way to lose marks in this chapter. A response that lists six devices has answered one-third of the definition.

**“New” is a relation, not a date.** Every media technology was new once: the offset press, the wireless receiver, the 16 mm camera and the videotape recorder were each, in their time, contemporary technology used by producers and audiences with new practices arising around them. So “new” here cannot mean “invented after a particular year”. It means **new in relation to the pre-existing forms, products and institutions it arrived among**. A technology is usefully called *new media* when three things are true at once: it is **in current use** by producers and/or audiences; it does something the **pre-existing** technologies of its form could not do, or not at that cost, speed, scale or reach; and **practices have grown up around it** that did not exist before. Run that test and you avoid two opposite errors. You will not call a fifteen-year-old technology “old” merely because it is familiar — a podcast feed is unglamorous and entirely contemporary. And you will not call something new media just because it is recent: a slightly faster version of an existing camera is a new *model*, and no new practice has arisen around it.

**The nature of new media technologies: the four features named in the study design.** The area of study names four, and the sentence they sit in matters as much as the list: *digital technologies, interactivity, immersive content and participatory practices have become a feature of the creation, production, distribution, engagement with, consumption and reception of the media*. Take two things from that. First, the four features. Second, the six processes — **creation, production, distribution, engagement with, consumption and reception** — which is this area of study’s own chain and the one to use in this chapter. (Chapter 1 used a slightly different five-process list when defining media forms. Use the list that belongs to the dot point you are answering.)

| Feature                     | What it means as a property of a technology                                                                                                                                                       | How to recognise it                                                                                                                 |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Digital technologies</b> | The technology stores, carries and works on information as numerical data in files rather than as a continuous physical trace, so material can be copied, edited, transmitted and re-used without | material moves between devices and stages as files; the same material can be re-worked repeatedly and delivered in several versions |

| Feature                        | What it means as a property of a technology                                                                                                                                                                           | How to recognise it                                                                                                                                |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Interactivity</b>           | degrading<br>The technology accepts input from the person using it and its output changes as a result, so the audience's action is part of how the product operates                                                   | the product behaves differently for two people; there is something to press, choose, type, aim, upload or reply to, and it changes what comes next |
| <b>Immersive content</b>       | The technology surrounds or positions the audience, addressing more of their senses and responding to where they are or how they move, so the boundary between the product and the room the audience is in is reduced | the audience turns their head, moves, or looks through a screen at their own surroundings, and the product responds                                |
| <b>Participatory practices</b> | The technology provides the means for audiences to contribute to, alter, extend, share or distribute media material themselves                                                                                        | there is a route from audience back into the product or into public circulation — upload, comment, remix, host, publish                            |

Three cautions on that table. First on wording: the study design calls the fourth item **participatory practices**, not “participatory technology”, and that is deliberate. The *practice* is what people do; the *technology* is what makes it possible, so name both — the upload and reply tools are the technology, and the responding, remixing and community-building are the practices. Second, on interactivity: here you are identifying it as a **property of the technology**. The analysis of *how audiences actually interact and engage* across converging forms is **12C**'s dot point, and the characteristics of the audiences themselves are **12B**'s. Third, **digital is necessary but not sufficient**. All four features rest on the first, which is why it is listed first — but plenty of technology is digital without being of interest here: a fax, a 2004 word processor, a spreadsheet. Note what does *not* rescue that list: interactivity alone will not, because a spreadsheet passes the interactivity test in the table above — you type, and the output changes. What makes a technology *new media* is the definition as a whole: contemporary use **in the media** by producers and audiences, with practices arisen around it, and with the other three features present to whatever degree the technology allows. That degree varies enormously. A podcast feed is barely interactive and not immersive at all, and it is unmistakably new media.

**Properties that follow from the four.** Once a technology is digital and networked, several further properties tend to come with it: **networked distribution** (the product travels over a shared network, so a producer needs no transmitter, press or shelf), **on-demand access** (the audience chooses the time and place of reception), **portability** (the point of consumption travels with them), **personalisation and data** (what an individual is offered is assembled from a record of what they have previously done), a **low barrier to production** (the tools of capture, assembly and publication are affordable and widely held), and **iterability** (a published product can be revised, patched or withdrawn after release, which a printed run or a broadcast cannot). These are useful descriptive language and you should use them — but they are **consequences you can reason to**, not a study-design list, so do not present them as though the study design named them.

**Producers and audiences use the same technologies.** This is the most distinctive thing about the nature of new media, and it follows straight from the definition's second clause. In the pre-existing arrangement, the technology of making and the technology of receiving were different objects owned by different parties: a studio had cameras, a household had a television set. New media technologies collapse much of that division.

| Technology                          | The producer's use                                                             | The audience's use                                   |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Smartphone</b>                   | camera, microphone, editing suite, publishing tool, live transmitter           | screen, speaker, reader, controller, purchase device |
| <b>Social platform upload tools</b> | a distribution channel that reaches an audience directly, with no intermediary | a means of making and publishing their own material  |

| Technology                                  | The producer's use                                                                | The audience's use                                         |
|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Games engine</b>                         | the tool the product is built in                                                  | the software the product runs in on the player's machine   |
| <b>Generative tools</b>                     | drafting concepts, rough audio, previsualisation, background and asset generation | producing and altering images, audio and text of their own |
| <b>Analytics and recommendation systems</b> | evidence about who is watching, used to commission and schedule                   | invisible to them, but it decides what they are offered    |

The last row is the exception that proves the rule: it is a new media technology whose two sides are not symmetrical at all. That asymmetry is a large part of what the rest of the chapter is about.

**Convergence.** **Convergence** is the coming together of things that were previously separate. The area of study is explicit that *media industries and institutions have adopted and adapted aspects of convergence to build and maintain audience share through new forms of interaction*, and the study specifications name **convergent or hybridised media** as one of the six media form families: *the combination or joining of two or more media forms*. Four senses of the word operate in this study, and naming which one you mean is worth a mark on its own.

| Kind of convergence                         | What comes together                                                                                    | Recognisable as                                                                                                                                                                    |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Technological convergence</b>            | jobs once done by many separate devices are done by one                                                | a single handheld device that is camera, radio, cinema, newspaper, post box, shop and darkroom                                                                                     |
| <b>Form convergence (hybridisation)</b>     | two or more of the study design's media forms combine into one product                                 | an augmented-reality picture book; an interactive documentary joining video, photography and text; a virtual-reality product joining moving image with the interactivity of a game |
| <b>Institutional convergence</b>            | an organisation built for one form operates across several                                             | a newspaper masthead that publishes video and a daily podcast; a broadcaster that runs an on-demand app and commissions for it                                                     |
| <b>Community and commercial convergence</b> | audience communities of interest and commercial opportunity are built and maintained in the same place | a platform where public and personal communication sit together and a community of common interest is also a market                                                                |

The last two need boundary discipline. *Identifying* institutional convergence — saying that this organisation now operates across these forms using these technologies — is 12A work. Arguing about **what it has done to** industries, institutions and their audiences is **13B**, and the audience side of community-and-commercial convergence, including the idea that audiences are consumers, producers and products at once, is **12B**. Say what has converged; leave the consequences to the subtopics that own them. Note also that **two** of the study design's six form families exist because of these technologies — the **digital** family, which they constitute, and **convergent or hybridised media**, whose joinings they made ordinary rather than exceptional. The other four — moving image, still image, audio and print — pre-date them and have absorbed them.

**The forms of new media technologies.** Now the second half of the dot point. The most reliable way to sort new media technologies is by **the job they do in the chain**, using this area of study's own six processes. Nearly every technology you will be asked to identify sits in this table, and many sit in more than one row.

| Process         | Forms of new media technology                                                                                                           | What makes them new                                                                                       |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Creation</b> | generative and assistive drafting tools; cloud-based scripting, storyboarding and shared planning documents; asset and stock libraries; | ideas can be drafted, tested and shared with collaborators before anything is captured, from any location |

| Process                | Forms of new media technology                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | What makes them new                                                                                                               |
|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Production</b>      | games engines used for previsualisation<br>smartphone and mirrorless cameras; stabilised and drone rigs; 360-degree and volumetric capture; portable multitrack recorders and digital audio workstations; games engines; virtual production stages; real-time motion capture | capture and assembly sit in one digital chain, so material can be reviewed and re-worked immediately rather than after processing |
| <b>Distribution</b>    | streaming servers and content delivery networks; podcast feeds; app stores; social platform upload and publishing tools; broadcaster on-demand services; cloud file delivery                                                                                                 | publication no longer requires a press, a transmitter licence or shelf space, so a producer can reach an audience directly        |
| <b>Engagement with</b> | notification and subscription systems; comment, reply, share and remix tools; live chat and reaction layers; second-screen companion apps; branching and interactive players                                                                                                 | the technology is built to accept the audience's input as part of the product's operation                                         |
| <b>Consumption</b>     | smartphones, tablets and laptops; connected and smart televisions; consoles and handhelds; wireless earbuds and smart speakers; virtual- and augmented-reality headsets; wearable and in-vehicle screens                                                                     | the point of consumption travels with the audience, so the time, place and device of reception are the audience's choice          |
| <b>Reception</b>       | recommendation and ranking systems; personalisation and profile data; analytics dashboards; automated captioning, transcription and translation; accessibility settings                                                                                                      | what an individual is offered is assembled for them, so two people using the same service receive materially different products   |

Two observations about that table are worth having ready. First, **the reception row is the least obvious and the most important to be able to name**. A recommendation system is not a device, has no screen and produces no content of its own — but it is unmistakably contemporary technology used by producers and audiences with vast practices arising around it, so it satisfies the definition completely. Students who think of new media as objects you can hold will miss the entire row. Second, **many technologies span rows, and saying so is precision rather than indecision**. A smartphone sits in production, distribution, engagement, consumption and reception simultaneously — a span that is itself an instance of technological convergence, and the single most useful example in this subtopic.

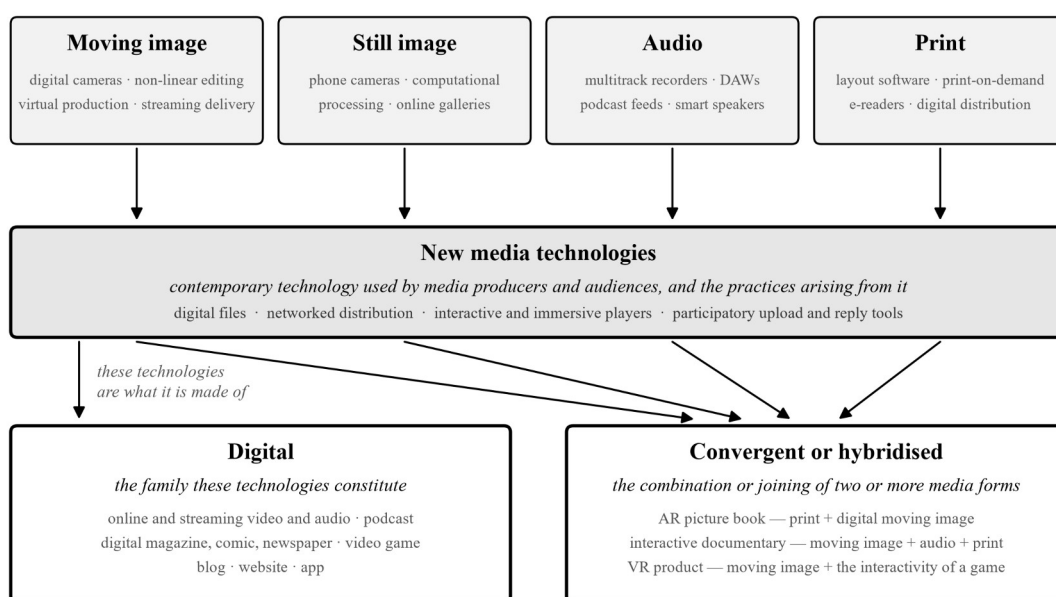
**New media technologies across the six media form families.** The other way to sort them is by which of the study design's media forms they serve, which shows that new media technologies have not stayed inside a “digital” corner of the subject.

| Media form family   | How new media technologies appear in it                                                                                  |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Moving image</b> | digital cameras and non-linear editing; virtual production; streaming rather than broadcast or print delivery            |
| <b>Still image</b>  | phone cameras and computational processing; digital retouching; online galleries and photo-essay publication             |
| <b>Audio</b>        | portable multitrack recorders and digital audio workstations; podcast feeds; spatial and binaural mixing; smart speakers |

| Media form family               | How new media technologies appear in it                                                                                                                                                                       |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Print</b>                    | design and layout software; print-on-demand; e-readers; digitally distributed zines and magazines                                                                                                             |
| <b>Digital</b>                  | the family that exists <i>because</i> of these technologies — online and streaming video and audio, podcasts, digital magazines, newspapers, comics and graphic novels, video games, blogs, websites and apps |
| <b>Convergent or hybridised</b> | augmented- and virtual-reality products; interactive documentaries; print products with a companion app; games with a live broadcast layer                                                                    |

The figure below puts that table together with the convergence section above it, and fixes the thing students most often get backwards. Each of the four pre-existing families now runs on new media technologies; the same technologies *constitute* the digital family; and it is those technologies that allow two or more of the pre-existing forms to be joined into one convergent or hybridised product.

*Four of the six form families pre-date new media technologies and have absorbed them. Two exist because of them.*



*Name the family — then name what came together. "Convergent" without saying which forms joined is the commonest vague answer.*

Read downwards and you have the shape of most classification answers in this subtopic: name the family the product belongs to, and — if it is convergent or hybridised — name the two or more forms that came together and the technology that joined them.

**Do not confuse a technology with a form, or either with a product.** Chapter 1 established the discipline; this subtopic is where it is most often abandoned, because the same word is often available at all three levels. A **media technology** is a tool used in making or receiving; a **media form** is a technological means and channel by which media is created, produced, distributed, consumed and read; a **media product** is the consumable output an audience receives.

| New media technology (the tool)       | Media form(s) it serves or creates                                | An example of a product                                         |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| podcast hosting and feed              | audio, and digital                                                | a serialised interview series released weekly                   |
| games engine                          | digital, and convergent where used inside another form            | a downloadable single-player game                               |
| augmented-reality software on a phone | convergent or hybridised — print joined with digital moving image | a picture book whose pages animate when viewed through a screen |
| a broadcaster's on-demand app         | digital, delivering moving image                                  | a drama series watched three weeks after transmission           |

| New media technology (the tool) | Media form(s) it serves or creates                                                     | An example of a product                             |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| a recommendation system         | none of its own; it operates on the distribution and reception of products in any form | the row of suggestions a particular viewer is shown |

That last row is the sharpest test of whether you have the levels straight: a recommendation system is a technology, it belongs to no media form, and the “product” it delivers is different for every person.

**The practices that arise.** Back to clause 3 of the definition. The study design names three kinds — social, cultural and economic — and an identification answer should give at least one of each.

| Kind of practice | What it looks like                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | The technologies it arises from                                                                                                 |
|------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Social</b>    | audiences replying to, sharing and arguing about a product in the same place they consume it; communities of interest forming around a creator, a genre or a single product; audiences contacting producers directly and expecting an answer                                                                                                                     | comment, reply, share and message tools; group and channel features; live chat                                                  |
| <b>Cultural</b>  | remix, response and reaction accepted as legitimate ways of making; formats that circulate and are re-performed by thousands of people; amateur and professional work appearing side by side in one feed; audiences expecting captions, transcripts, clips and behind-the-scenes material as normal parts of a release                                           | upload and short-form editing tools; remix and duet features; automated captioning and transcription                            |
| <b>Economic</b>  | the same product sold by subscription to some audiences and given free with advertising to others; products released free and funded by purchases made inside them; audiences funding creators directly by subscription or one-off contribution; advertising sold against attention data; work commissioned on the strength of an audience the maker already has | payment, subscription and app-store billing systems; analytics and advertising platforms; crowdfunding and membership platforms |

Two Australian notes belong here, because remix and reuse are the practices students most often assume are unregulated. Reuse of someone else’s material in this country is governed by the *Copyright Act 1968* (Cth), which allows specific **fair dealing** purposes — among them research or study, criticism or review, parody or satire, and reporting news — rather than the broad “fair use” standard used in the United States, so a remix practice that is ordinary on a global platform is not automatically lawful here. And “new media” is not itself a legal or regulatory category in Australia: online services are dealt with mainly under the *Online Safety Act 2021* (Cth), administered by the **eSafety Commissioner**, while broadcasting services sit under the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* (Cth), administered by the **Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA)**. Those regimes are **13C**’s material, mentioned here only so you do not treat the practices above as happening in a legal vacuum.

**The identification method.** Four steps, in this order, whenever a question asks you to identify new media technologies.

1. **Name the technology — not the product, not the platform brand, not the form.** “A podcast feed and a portable multitrack recorder”, not “podcasts”.

2. **Place it in the chain.** Which of creation, production, distribution, engagement with, consumption or reception does it serve? Name more than one where more than one is true.
3. **Name its nature.** Which of the four features does it display — digital, interactivity, immersive content, participatory practices — and is any kind of convergence involved?
4. **Name the practice.** What social, cultural or economic practice has arisen around it? Skip this step and you have identified equipment rather than new media.

### Six traps.

- **Answering “new media” with “social media”.** Social platforms are one region of the territory. Streaming, podcasting, games, on-demand apps, immersive products, generative tools and recommendation systems are all new media, and none of them is social media.
- **Stopping at the device.** The practices clause is a third of the definition, and it is where the marks that separate bands sit.
- **Treating “new” as a date.** Newness is a relation to pre-existing forms and practices, not a birthday. Say what this technology does that the pre-existing technology of its form could not.
- **Naming a product or a brand when the question asked for a technology.** A named service is a business; the technology is streaming delivery, recommendation, or an app-store billing system.
- **Drifting into consequences.** If your sentence is about what a technology has *done to* audiences, individuals, industries or institutions you have moved into **13A** or **13B**; if it is about harm, ethics or law you are in **13C**. Both are wrong answers to “identify the nature and forms”.
- **Assuming replacement.** New media technologies have entered all six form families rather than deleting the four that pre-date them. Print, radio and cinema all still operate, using new technologies, alongside the two families that exist because of them.

*Looking ahead:* 12B takes the audience side of these same technologies, 12C what audiences do with them across converging forms, and Chapter 13 the consequences. Everything those subtopics argue about depends on naming accurately what the technology is — which is why this dot point comes first.

## Worked examples

### Example 1 — scaffolded

**Identify the new media technologies used by the organisation described, and explain what makes them “new media” rather than simply media technologies. (4 marks)**

**Stimulus.** *Brackenspool* is a regional Victorian news organisation. It began as a weekly printed paper and still prints one. It now also runs a website and an app, publishes a daily five-minute audio bulletin to a podcast feed, films short vertical video on phones for social platforms, takes reader questions through a comment form and answers a selection of them each Friday, and uses a dashboard that shows which stories readers are finishing and which they abandon.

| Working                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Comment                                                                                                                                              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The <b>new media technologies</b> in use are: phone cameras for capture; a website and app as distribution and consumption technologies; a podcast hosting service and feed for audio distribution; social platform upload tools; a comment and reply system; and an analytics dashboard.     | Step 1 — name technologies, not products and not the masthead. Six named items is generous for four marks, but the list is what “identify” asks for. |
| Placed in the chain, they cover <b>production</b> (phone cameras), <b>distribution</b> (feed, app, upload tools), <b>engagement with</b> (comments and replies), <b>consumption</b> (app and phone) and <b>reception</b> (the analytics dashboard shaping what is commissioned and promoted). | Step 2. Using this area of study’s own six processes shows the technologies are not all doing the same job.                                          |

| Working                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Comment                                                                                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| They are <b>new media</b> because they satisfy all three parts of the study design's definition. They are <b>contemporary technology</b> ; they are used by <b>producers and audiences</b> — the same phone that shoots the vertical video plays it; and <b>practices have arisen</b> around them.                            | Step 3 and the core of the mark. Walk the definition rather than asserting the conclusion. |
| The practices are identifiable: <b>socially</b> , readers now put questions to the newsroom and expect a public answer; <b>culturally</b> , a masthead built for print now routinely makes audio and vertical video; <b>economically</b> , the dashboard turns reader attention into evidence used to decide what is covered. | Step 4. One practice of each kind is the safest way to show the third clause has been met. |
| <i>Takeaway</i> : the printed paper has not gone. What has changed is that the same organisation now works across several forms with technologies that reach readers directly and report back on them.                                                                                                                        | Identify the convergence without arguing about its effects — that argument is 13B's.       |

### Example 2 — scaffolded

**Describe the nature of the new media technologies used in the product described, referring to the features named in the study design. (6 marks)**

**Stimulus.** *The Drowned Orchard* is made by **Sedgequay Interactive**, a Melbourne studio. It is a printed hardback book about a valley flooded for a reservoir in the 1950s. Each right-hand page carries a photograph. Held under a phone running the accompanying free app, the photograph animates: the water rises over the orchard, and archival-style audio of the town plays through the phone. In one chapter the reader can tilt the phone to look around the submerged orchard as though standing in it. At the end, the app invites readers to record a memory of their own district and, if they choose, to submit it to a shared map that other readers can browse.

“Describe” plus six marks means each feature has to be tied to a specific thing in the product.

| Working                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Comment                                                                                                                        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The product is built on <b>digital technologies</b> : the animation, the audio, the tilt-tracking and the shared map are all files and data handled by software on the reader's own phone, which is why the same printed page can carry different content over time as the app is updated.            | Feature 1, with the consequence — iterability — named rather than just listed.                                                 |
| It is <b>interactive</b> . The reader's action changes the output: nothing animates unless the phone is held over the page, and in the tilt chapter the image the reader sees is determined by where they point the device. Two readers of the same page do not receive the same thing.               | Feature 2. The test to apply is “does the output change with the input?” — and it plainly does.                                |
| It contains <b>immersive content</b> . The tilt chapter positions the reader inside the flooded orchard and responds to how they move, and the audio plays through the phone rather than from a distant source, so the boundary between the product and the room the reader is sitting in is reduced. | Feature 3. Immersion here is modest — no headset — and describing it accurately is better than overclaiming.                   |
| It enables <b>participatory practices</b> . The app supplies the technology — a recorder, a submission route and a shared map — and the practice is what readers then do: contributing their own district's memory to a growing collection other readers browse.                                      | Feature 4, with the technology-versus-practice distinction made explicit, which is where a six-mark answer earns its top band. |

In form terms this is **convergent or hybridised media**: print joined with digital moving image, audio and interactivity. The joining is the product — neither the book alone nor the app alone is *The Drowned Orchard*.

Name the form family from the study design's own six, and justify why it is not simply "print plus an extra".

*Takeaway*: all four features named in the study design are present, and they are present *together*, which is what makes this a convergent product rather than a book with a gimmick.

Close on the principle.

### Example 3 — unscaffolded

**Explain the difference between a new media technology and a new media form, using one example of each. (4 marks)**

A **media technology** is one of the analogue and digital technologies used in the development of media products — a tool used to make or to receive. A **media form** is a technological means and channel by which media is created, produced, distributed, consumed and read. The difference is one of level, not of newness: a technology is a thing somebody operates, and a form is a whole route from making to reception that many products travel along. A **games engine** is a new media technology: it is software, a producer builds a product inside it, and it also runs the product on the player's machine. The **digital** form is a media form: it names the means and channel by which online and streamed video and audio, podcasts, video games, blogs, websites and apps are made and delivered. The engine is used within that form, and it is not the form itself. The reason the distinction matters here is that new media technologies are the thing that *created* two of the study design's form families and entered the other four. Podcast hosting and feeds are technologies; **audio** and **digital** are the forms they serve. Augmented-reality software on a phone is a technology; **convergent or hybridised media** is the form family a product using it belongs to. *Takeaway*: if you can operate it or it runs on a device, it is a technology; if it names a route from production to reception that many different products share, it is a form.

### Example 4 — unscaffolded

**Discuss the nature of new media technologies, referring to three technologies that do different jobs in the media chain. (10 marks)**

New media, as the study design defines it, is contemporary technology used by media producers and audiences together with the social, cultural and economic practices arising from those forms. Three technologies doing three different jobs show how much work that definition does: the smartphone, the podcast feed, and the recommendation system.

The **smartphone** is a **production and consumption** technology at the same time, and its nature is best described as **technological convergence**. Jobs that once required a camera, a microphone, a tape recorder, an editing bench, a darkroom, a projector, a radio receiver, a newspaper and a post box are performed by one object that fits in a pocket. It is **digital**, which is what allows one device to handle images, audio, text and data in the same file system; it is **interactive**, since almost nothing on it produces output without input; and it supports **participatory practices**, because the capture tool and the publishing tool sit on the same screen. The practices that have arisen around it are large. Socially, the audience for a product and the people making similar products are now the same population. Culturally, vertical framing and phone-shot footage have become legitimate rather than substandard, including in professional work. Economically, the barrier to producing a distributable product has fallen to the price of a device most audiences already own, which is why the number of people able to publish is not comparable to any earlier period.

The **podcast feed** is a **distribution** technology, and it demonstrates that a new media technology need not be visible or impressive. It is a machine-readable list of episodes that any player can subscribe to, and its nature is almost entirely **digital and networked**: it requires no licence, no transmitter and no permission from a broadcaster, and it delivers to any application that understands it. It is barely interactive and not immersive at all. But the practices that have arisen from it are substantial. Socially, listening moved from a scheduled shared event to a solitary on-demand one. Culturally, a form once bounded by the length of a radio slot now runs to whatever length its maker chooses, and serialised long-form audio narrative became viable. Economically, the same product is routinely funded three ways at

once — advertising, listener subscription and institutional commission — and independent producers can hold their own audience relationship rather than renting one from a station. This is the clearest case of the study design’s third clause doing the work: the technology itself is modest, and the practices around it are not.

The **recommendation system** is a **reception** technology, and it is the hardest of the three to name because it is not a device and produces no content. It is software that ranks and selects what an individual audience member is offered, using a record of what they and people like them have previously done. Its nature is **digital** and **data-driven**, and its relationship to producers and audiences is deliberately **asymmetrical**: producers see it as analytics and as something to be worked with, while audiences generally do not see it at all and experience its output as though it were simply the service. Two people opening the same service receive materially different products. The practices are again identifiable — socially, audiences increasingly encounter products through personalised suggestion rather than through shared schedules or front pages; culturally, thumbnails, titles and opening seconds are now built to survive a ranked list; economically, attention data is the thing advertising is sold against and the evidence commissioning decisions are made on.

Taken together, the three make a general point about the nature of new media technologies. They are **digital** first, which is what lets one technology serve several processes and several forms at once. They vary enormously in how **interactive** and how **immersive** they are — the feed is neither — so those two features are properties to be identified case by case rather than assumed. And in every case the technology is inseparable from the **practices** that grew up around it, which is why a definition of new media that stops at hardware is not the study design’s definition.

*Takeaway:* identify the job, then the features, then the practices — and be willing to say that a feature is absent, because accuracy about what a technology is *not* is part of identifying what it is.

---

## Practice questions

### Scaffolded

**Q1.** Define each of the following terms as they are used in this subtopic. (3 marks) (a) new media; (b) media technology; (c) convergence.

**Q2.** The study design names four features of new media. (4 marks) (a) Name all four. (b) Identify the feature most clearly shown by each of the following: (i) a headset in which the image changes as the wearer turns around; (ii) a tool that lets a viewer publish their own response video; (iii) a branching player in which the viewer chooses what the character does next. (c) State why a technology being digital is not enough, on its own, to make it new media.

**Q3.** The study design’s definition of new media has three parts. (4 marks) (a) State the three parts. (b) Name the part most often left out when a student answers by listing devices. (c) Name one social, one cultural and one economic practice that has arisen from contemporary media forms.

**Q4.** Four senses of “convergence” operate in this study. (4 marks) (a) Name the four. (b) Classify each of the following: (i) a phone that is a camera, a cinema and a newsagent at once; (ii) a picture book whose pages animate through an app; (iii) a television broadcaster that commissions a drama for its own on-demand app. (c) State which subtopics deal with the *consequences* of institutional convergence and with the audience side of community and commercial convergence.

**Q5.** New media technologies are used by producers and audiences alike. (4 marks) (a) Name two technologies that are used by both. (b) For one of them, state the producer’s use and the audience’s use. (c) Explain why this two-sidedness is part of the *nature* of new media rather than an incidental detail.

**Q6.** New media technologies can be sorted by the job they do. (5 marks) (a) List the six processes named in this area of study. (b) Identify the process each of the following mainly serves: (i) a content delivery network; (ii) wireless earbuds; (iii) a comment and reply system; (iv) a portable multitrack recorder. (c) Name one technology that serves at least three of the six processes, and name the processes.

**Q7.** “New” in this dot point does not mean “recently invented”. (4 marks) (a) State the three conditions a technology should meet before it is usefully called new media. (b) Name one technology that was new media in an earlier period and is now pre-existing, and state what practice arose around it at the time. (c) Explain why a faster version of an existing camera is not a new media technology.

## Un scaffolded

**Q8.** Identify two new media technologies used by audiences rather than by producers. (2 marks)

**Q9.** Outline what the study design means by the term “new media”. (2 marks)

**Q10.** Describe how new media technologies operate within the **print** form, referring to two specific technologies. For each, state what it allows that pre-existing print technologies did not. (3 marks)

**Q11.** Explain what **interactivity** means as a property of a new media technology, and identify one test you can apply to decide whether a technology is interactive. (4 marks)

**Q12.** (Stimulus.) Read the description below.

**Stimulus. Kolverbay** is a metropolitan television broadcaster. It still transmits a nightly bulletin at 6 pm. It now also runs a free on-demand app carrying every program plus twelve app-only series, releases the bulletin’s main story as a vertical clip within the hour, publishes a weekly interview podcast, and streams a live chat alongside its Saturday football coverage in which viewers’ messages appear on screen.

Identify the new media technologies Kolverbay uses, and identify the kind of convergence the organisation demonstrates. (4 marks)

**Q13.** (Stimulus.) Read the description below.

**Stimulus. Ninety Volts** is made by **Marchpike Games**, a Geelong studio. The player is an apprentice electrician restoring power to a coastal town after a storm. The game is played in a headset; the player reaches out physically to open switchboards, and the audio is mixed so that a generator behind the player sounds as though it is behind them. Progress differs depending on which streets the player chooses to restore first. Players can record a fifteen-second clip of any moment and post it to a public gallery inside the game.

Explain how the technologies used in *Ninety Volts* demonstrate three of the four features of new media named in the study design. (4 marks)

**Q14.** Explain what the study design means by **participatory practices**, and identify two technologies that make them possible. In your answer, distinguish the practice from the technology. (4 marks)

**Q15.** (Stimulus.) Read the description below.

**Stimulus. Tarnfeed** is a short-video platform. Anyone with an account can publish. A “reply with video” button lets a user build their own clip alongside someone else’s. Ten-second sound excerpts can be lifted from any clip and re-used in another. Accounts above a set audience size can switch on viewer subscriptions and receive a share of advertising revenue. A ranked feed decides what each user sees, and a dashboard tells publishers which second of their clip viewers stopped watching.

Identify one social, one cultural and one economic practice arising from the technologies described, and explain how each arises from a specific technology. (5 marks)

**Q16.** (Stimulus.) Read the description below.

**Stimulus. Coldreach Media** publishes *Half a Mile of River*, an interactive documentary about a river system, on its own website. The audience moves along a map of the river; at each of eleven points they can watch a two-minute video, listen to an audio recording made at that spot, read a short written account, or open a photograph that can be compared with one taken at the same place forty years earlier. There is no fixed order and no single running time.

Explain how new media technologies have produced a convergent or hybridised media form in the product described. (5 marks)

**Q17.** (Stimulus.) Read the production account below.

**Stimulus. Tinsmoke Audio** makes a six-part narrative podcast about a shearing shed that became a music venue. The team plans the series in a shared online document. Interviews are recorded on a portable multitrack recorder and on phones by contributors in other states, then assembled in a digital audio workstation with music mixed spatially so that instruments sit around the listener. Episodes are published to a podcast feed and to a video platform as static-image videos with automatically generated captions. Listeners send voice messages, and one is played at the end of each episode. A dashboard shows Tinsmoke where in each episode listeners stop.

Apply the four-step identification method to this account: identify the technologies, place them in the chain, name their nature, and name the practices arising. (6 marks)

**Q18.** Discuss the nature of **generative tools** — software that produces images, audio, video or text from a prompt or from existing material — as new media technologies. In your response, identify which features of new media they display, which processes in the chain they serve, and which practices have arisen around them. (8 marks)

**Q19.** (Extended response.) Identify and discuss the nature and forms of the new media technologies used by the producers and the audience of **one media product** you have consumed or studied this year. (10 marks)

Your response must:

- identify at least **four** new media technologies, naming technologies rather than products, brands or forms
- place each in the chain of creation, production, distribution, engagement with, consumption or reception
- identify which of the four features named in the study design each technology displays, and say where a feature is absent
- identify the media form or forms involved, using the study design's six families, and name any convergence present
- name at least one social, one cultural and one economic practice arising from the technologies identified

Product (title and media form): \_\_\_\_\_

---

## Answers

**Q1. (3 marks.)** (a) A term applying to contemporary technology used by media producers and audiences, and the social, cultural and economic practices that arise from these contemporary forms. (b) One of the analogue and digital technologies used in the development of media products — a tool used in making or receiving. (c) The coming together of things previously separate: devices, media forms, institutions, or audience communities and commercial opportunity.

**Q2. (4 marks.)** (a) Digital technologies; interactivity; immersive content; participatory practices. (b) (i) immersive content; (ii) participatory practices; (iii) interactivity. (c) Digital is the substrate the other three features rest on, but a technology can be digital — and even interactive, as a spreadsheet is — without being new media: the definition also requires contemporary technology used by media producers and audiences, and social, cultural and economic practices arising from it.

**Q3. (4 marks.)** (a) Contemporary technology; used by media producers *and* audiences; plus the social, cultural and economic practices that arise from these contemporary forms. (b) The third — the practices. (c) Social: audiences replying to and sharing a product where they consume it, or contacting producers directly. Cultural: remix and response accepted as legitimate ways of making; amateur and professional work in one feed. Economic: subscription, advertising-supported and in-product purchase funding of the same product, or direct audience funding of creators. Any reasonable equivalent.

**Q4. (4 marks.)** (a) Technological convergence; form convergence (hybridisation); institutional convergence; community and commercial convergence. (b) (i) technological; (ii) form convergence / hybridisation; (iii) institutional. (c) The consequences of institutional convergence for industries and institutions are **13B**; the audience side of community and commercial convergence is **12B**.

**Q5. (4 marks.)** (a) Any two of: smartphone; games engine; social platform tools; generative tools; laptop or tablet. (b) E.g. smartphone — producer: camera, microphone, editing suite, publishing tool; audience: screen, speaker, reader, controller. (c) Because the definition of new media specifies technology used by producers *and* audiences: the two sides using the same tools is what puts audiences in a position to produce and distribute, and it is why an audience's device is part of this subject matter. Accept the observation that recommendation and analytics systems are the asymmetrical exception.

**Q6. (5 marks.)** (a) Creation; production; distribution; engagement with; consumption; reception. (b) (i) distribution; (ii) consumption; (iii) engagement with; (iv) production. (c) The smartphone — production, distribution, engagement with, consumption and reception. Accept a games engine (production and consumption) only if a third process is justified.

**Q7. (4 marks.)** (a) It is in current use by producers and/or audiences; it does something the pre-existing technologies of its form could not do, or not at that cost, speed, scale or reach; and practices have grown up around it that did not exist before. (b) Any defensible example — the offset press, the wireless receiver, the portable videotape recorder, the compact cassette — with a practice named, e.g. the home taping and mix-tape sharing that arose around the cassette. (c) It fails the second and third conditions: it does nothing its predecessor could not do in kind, and no new practice has arisen around it. It is a new model, not new media.

**Q8. (2 marks.)** Any two of: connected or smart television; console or handheld; wireless earbuds; smart speaker; virtual- or augmented-reality headset; e-reader; a broadcaster's on-demand app. One mark each. Not creditable here: the smartphone, tablet or laptop — this subtopic teaches those as the flagship technologies used by producers **and** audiences (Q5), so they do not answer a question about technologies used by audiences *rather than* producers.

**Q9. (2 marks.)** Contemporary technology used by media producers and audiences, **and** the social, cultural and economic practices arising from those contemporary forms. Both halves needed for 2.

**Q10. (3 marks.)** Any two of: design and layout software — the page is assembled and revised as data up to the moment of printing, and one file can output to paper and to a screen; print-on-demand — a title is manufactured a copy at a time after the order, so no print run has to be guessed, no warehouse is needed and nothing goes out of print; e-readers and digitally distributed zines, magazines and newspapers — the text arrives as a file on a device the reader already owns, so there is no freight and no shelf space. One mark for each technology with its point of difference; the third mark for the point that print has not been replaced but now runs on new media technologies.

**Q11. (4 marks.)** Interactivity is the property of accepting input from the person using the technology and changing the output as a result, so the audience's action becomes part of how the product operates. The test: does the output differ for two people who use it differently? If yes, it is interactive; if the same material arrives regardless of what the audience does, it is not. Credit the distinction that this subtopic identifies interactivity as a property of the *technology*, while what audiences actually do with it is **12C**.

**Q12. (4 marks.)** Technologies: a broadcast transmission chain (pre-existing); an on-demand app; streaming delivery; vertical reformatting and short-form publishing tools; podcast hosting and a feed; a live chat and on-screen message system. Convergence: **institutional** — one organisation built for the moving-image broadcast form now operates across moving image, audio and digital, commissioning for its own app. Accept **form convergence (hybridisation)** as a secondary label where it is justified from the Saturday coverage, which joins a moving-image broadcast with an audience-written on-screen message layer in one product. Do not credit technological convergence: the stimulus names no device on either side. An answer that names programs instead of technologies caps at 2.

**Q13. (4 marks.)** **Digital technologies** — the whole product is software and data running on a headset. **Immersive content** — the headset places the player in the town, physical reach opens the switchboards, and the audio is spatialised so a generator behind the player is heard behind them. **Interactivity** — the order of streets restored changes the player's progress, so two players receive different products. **Participatory practices** — clip recording and the in-game public gallery are the technology, and posting to and browsing the gallery are the practice. Any three, each tied to a specific detail from the stimulus.

**Q14. (4 marks.)** Participatory practices are the things audiences do when a technology gives them a route back into a product or into public circulation — contributing, altering, extending, sharing or distributing material themselves. Two enabling technologies: upload and publishing tools; comment, reply, remix or duet features. Accept also modding tools, wikis, live chat, crowdfunding platforms. The distinction: the study design names *practices*, not “participatory technology” — the tool is the technology, the participating is the practice, and a full answer names both.

**Q15. (5 marks.)** Social: users replying with video and lifting sound excerpts builds public conversation between strangers out of the “reply with video” and excerpt tools. Cultural: re-performing a format and re-using a sound excerpt becomes a legitimate way of making, so amateur and professional work circulate in the same feed — arising from the excerpt and reply tools plus the ranked feed. Economic: subscriptions and revenue share turn an audience into direct income and make audience size the qualifying condition — arising from the subscription and payment systems and the analytics dashboard. Each practice must be tied to a named technology; three practices with no technology named caps at 3.

**Q16. (5 marks.)** The product joins four of the study design's media forms in one product — moving image, audio, print and still image — delivered through the digital form, which makes it **convergent or hybridised media**. The enabling technologies are web delivery and streaming, an interactive navigable interface, digital audio and video files, and digital photograph handling that allows two images of the same place to be compared. The interactivity is structural, not decorative: with no fixed order or running time, the audience assembles their own path, so no two audiences receive the same product. Credit the point that the joining *is* the product — none of the four forms alone would deliver it.

**Q17. (6 marks.)** Step 1 technologies: shared online document; portable multitrack recorder; phone recording by remote contributors; digital audio workstation; spatial mixing; podcast hosting and feed; video platform delivery; automatic captioning; voice-message submission; analytics dashboard. Step 2 chain: creation (shared document); production (recorder, phones, workstation, spatial mix); distribution (feed, video platform); engagement with (voice messages); consumption (listener's phone or speaker); reception (captions, dashboard). Step 3 nature: digital throughout; participatory practices via the voice messages; a degree of immersive content in the spatial mix; low interactivity — the episode does not change with the listener, and saying so is creditable. Also technological convergence (phones as professional capture devices) and form convergence (audio published as video). Step 4 practices: social — listeners' voices inside the product; cultural — contributors recording themselves interstate on phones, and captions and a video version expected as standard; economic — the dashboard's retention data used to shape later episodes and to sell sponsorship.

**Q18. (8 marks.)** See Fully-worked solutions for a full model. Must cover: features — digital certainly, interactive in the prompt-and-output sense, participatory where audiences use them, not immersive; processes — mainly creation, production and reception, and consumption where audiences use them; practices — social, cultural and economic,

each named; the two-sidedness (producers and audiences use the same tools); and the observation that the ethical and legal controversy is **13C**'s dot point rather than this one.

**Q19.** (10 marks.) See Fully-worked solutions for a full model, band descriptors and common errors.

---

## Fully-worked solutions

**Q1.** (a) **New media** is a term applying to **contemporary technology used by media producers and audiences**, and the **social, cultural and economic practices that arise from these contemporary forms**. (b) A **media technology** is one of the analogue and digital technologies used in the development of media products — the tools of making and of receiving. (c) **Convergence** is the coming together of things previously separate, and it operates in four senses in this study: devices (technological), media forms (hybridisation), institutions, and audience communities with commercial opportunity. *Marker's note:* the definition of new media must include the practices clause. A definition that stops at “modern technology” is worth at most half a mark, because it omits a third of what the term names and the whole reason the term is not simply “media technologies”.

**Q2.** (a) **Digital technologies, interactivity, immersive content, participatory practices**. (b) (i) **Immersive content** — the technology responds to where the wearer is looking, so the product surrounds them. (ii) **Participatory practices** — the tool provides a route from audience back into public circulation. (iii) **Interactivity** — the output changes according to the viewer's input. (c) Digital is the **substrate** the other three features rest on, not a qualification in itself. A fax and a 2004 word processor are digital and are neither immersive nor participatory. A **spreadsheet** is the sharper case, and worth using: it is digital and it is genuinely *interactive* on the test this subtopic teaches — the output changes with what the user types — and it is still not new media, because it is not contemporary technology used **by media producers and audiences in making or receiving media products**, and no social, cultural or economic practice of the media has arisen from it. So the disqualifier is not a missing feature; it is the rest of the definition. *Marker's note:* students routinely offer “it's on the internet” or “it's online” as a fifth feature. The four named features are the ones to use; networked distribution is a consequence you may describe, but do not present it as part of the study design's list.

**Q3.** (a) **1** Contemporary technology; **2** used by media producers *and* audiences; **3** plus the social, cultural and economic practices that arise from these contemporary forms. (b) The **third**. (c) *Social:* audiences replying to and arguing about a product in the same place they consume it, and contacting producers directly with an expectation of an answer. *Cultural:* remix, response and reaction accepted as legitimate ways of making, so amateur and professional work sit side by side in one feed. *Economic:* the same product funded by subscription for some audiences and by advertising for others, or a creator funded directly by their own audience. *Marker's note:* the three kinds are not interchangeable, and a common error is to offer three social practices under three labels. Test each one: a social practice is about relationships between people; a cultural practice is about what counts as a legitimate way of making or consuming; an economic practice is about how money moves.

**Q4.** (a) **Technological convergence; form convergence (hybridisation); institutional convergence; community and commercial convergence**. (b) (i) **Technological** — the jobs of many devices are performed by one. (ii) **Form convergence / hybridisation** — print joined with digital moving image, producing a product in the **convergent or hybridised media** family. (iii) **Institutional** — an organisation built for broadcast now operates a digital on-demand service and commissions for it. (c) The consequences of institutional convergence for media industries and institutions belong to **13B**; the audience side of community and commercial convergence — audiences as consumers, producers and products at once — belongs to **12B**. *Marker's note:* “convergence” used without saying *which* convergence is the most common vague answer in this chapter. Name the sense, then name what came together.

**Q5.** (a) Any two of the **smartphone, a games engine, social platform tools, generative tools, a laptop or tablet**. (b) Taking the smartphone: the **producer** uses it as camera, microphone, editing suite, live transmitter and publishing tool; the **audience** uses it as screen, speaker, reader, game controller and payment device. (c) It is part of the nature of new media because the study design's definition specifies technology used by producers **and** audiences — the term would not be defined that way if the two sides used different equipment. The consequence is structural: when the tool of capture and the tool of publication sit on the device audiences already own, the population able to make and distribute a product is no longer limited to institutions. The exception worth naming is **analytics and recommendation systems**, which both sides “use” but on radically unequal terms — producers see the data,

audiences generally do not see the system at all. *Marker's note:* the strongest answers here name the exception as well as the rule. An answer that simply asserts “everyone has a phone” has not explained why the two-sidedness is part of the *nature* of new media.

**Q6. (a) Creation, production, distribution, engagement with, consumption, reception** — this area of study’s own list. (b) (i) **Distribution**; (ii) **consumption**; (iii) **engagement with**; (iv) **production**. (c) The **smartphone**, which serves **production** (capture), **distribution** (publishing and uploading), **engagement with** (replying, sharing, notifications), **consumption** (watching, listening, reading, playing) and **reception** (the personalised feed it delivers). *Marker's note:* Chapter 1 used a five-process list — created, produced, distributed, consumed, read — when defining media forms, and this area of study uses a six-process list that adds *engagement with* and replaces *read* with *reception*. Use the list belonging to the dot point you are answering; they are not interchangeable, and substituting one for the other is a precision error.

**Q7. (a) 1** It is in current use by producers and/or audiences. **2** It does something the pre-existing technologies of its form could not do, or could not do at that cost, speed, scale or reach. **3** Practices have grown up around it that did not exist before. (b) *Model:* the **compact cassette** was new media in its period — a contemporary technology used by producers and by audiences, which recorded as well as played. The practice that arose around it was **home recording and the sharing of compiled tapes**: audiences copied, sequenced and circulated material themselves, which audiences of vinyl and broadcast radio could not do. Accept the offset press, the wireless receiver, the portable videotape recorder or similar, provided a practice is named. (c) It fails conditions two and three. A faster camera does what its predecessor did, only quicker, and nothing anybody does with media has changed as a result. It is a new **model**; new media requires a new **practice**. *Marker's note:* this question is really about the difference between an improvement and a change. If you cannot name a practice that did not exist before, you have not identified new media.

**Q8. “Identify”** wants two named technologies, one mark each. Two new media technologies that sit on the audience’s side of the definition are a **connected or smart television**, which puts on-demand and streamed material on the household screen without a broadcaster’s schedule, and **wireless earbuds or a smart speaker**, which make audio consumption portable and hands-free. *Marker's note:* equally creditable are a console or handheld, a virtual- or augmented-reality headset, an e-reader, or a broadcaster’s on-demand app. Two things are not creditable. The first is naming a service, a program or a platform brand, which is a business or a product rather than a technology. The second is naming the **smartphone, tablet or laptop**: this subtopic’s central teaching is that those are used by producers *and* audiences (see Q5), so offering one here answers the opposite question. The question is a test of whether you can separate the audience-only technologies from the two-sided ones — and the reason there are comparatively few of them is itself the point.

**Q9. “Outline”** wants the key features briefly — and there are two halves. New media is **contemporary technology used by media producers and audiences**, together with the **social, cultural and economic practices that arise from those contemporary forms**. *Marker's note:* an answer giving only the technology half scores 1. The practices half is not decoration; it is the reason the study design defines a term at all instead of just saying “digital technologies”.

**Q10. “Describe”** wants an account of two technologies, each with its point of difference. Print is one of the four form families that pre-date new media technologies, and it is the clearest case of a family that has absorbed them rather than being deleted by them.

**Design and layout software** serves creation and production. The page exists as data rather than as metal type or a pasted-up board, so it can be revised up to the moment of printing, held in several versions at once, and output from one file both to paper and to a screen. Pre-existing print technology fixed the page physically at an early stage, and a late change meant re-setting it.

**Print-on-demand** serves production and distribution. A title is manufactured a copy at a time once an order exists, so a publisher needs no print run, no warehouse and no forecast of how many copies the market will take, and nothing need ever be out of print. Under pre-existing print technology the unit cost fell only as the run grew, so the size of the run had to be guessed in advance and the guess carried the commercial risk.

Equally creditable are **e-readers and digitally distributed zines, magazines and newspapers**, where the text arrives as a file on a device the reader already owns — no freight, no shelf space — and the practices arising are audience-side: resizing type, annotating, and carrying a whole library.

*Marker's note:* the trap is to answer a question about print with a product from the **digital** family — a news website or a masthead's app. Those are digital-family products that a print institution also publishes; the print form's new media technologies are the ones that make and deliver *print* itself. The point of the question is that these technologies entered the four pre-existing families as well as creating two new ones.

**Q11.** “*Explain*” wants the property, then the test. **Interactivity** is the property of a technology that accepts input from the person using it and changes its output as a result, so that the audience's action is part of how the product operates rather than something that happens beside it. The practical test is: **does the output differ between two people who use it differently?** A branching drama, a game, a navigable map-based documentary and a comment thread all pass — what the audience does determines what arrives next. A broadcast bulletin, a printed page and a linear podcast episode all fail: the audience can choose *whether* and *when* to receive them, but not what they contain. Choosing when to press play is a choice about **consumption**, not interactivity. *Marker's note:* be precise about the boundary. This subtopic identifies interactivity as a property of the technology; the analysis of how audiences actually interact and engage across converging forms is **12C**'s dot point, and an answer that spends four marks on audience behaviour has answered the wrong question.

**Q12.** “*Identify*” twice — *technologies, then the kind of convergence*. The new media technologies Kolverbay uses are: an **on-demand app** and the **streaming delivery** behind it; **vertical reformatting and short-form publishing tools**, which re-cut the bulletin's main story to a vertical frame and release it inside the hour; **podcast hosting and a feed**; and a **live chat and on-screen message system**. Alongside these it retains a pre-existing technology, the **broadcast transmission chain** carrying the 6 pm bulletin, and naming it is worth doing because it shows the new technologies have been added to the old rather than replacing it. The convergence demonstrated is principally **institutional**: a single organisation built for the moving-image broadcast form now operates across moving image, audio and digital, and commissions twelve series that exist only in the form its app created. A second sense is present in one of the products described: the Saturday football coverage joins a live moving-image broadcast with a layer of audience-written messages on screen, so two forms are combined in a single product — **form convergence (hybridisation)**. That is the one secondary label this stimulus supports. Note what it does *not* say: nothing here tells you what equipment shot any footage or what device a viewer watches on, so a claim of **technological** convergence would be an assumption rather than an identification. *Marker's note:* full marks need technologies *named as technologies*. Listing the bulletin, the podcast and the football coverage names products, and a list of products cannot answer a question about technologies. Resist also the pull towards what this has *done to* the broadcaster's audience or revenue — that is 13B.

**Q13.** “*Explain*” three features, each anchored to the stimulus. **Digital technologies** — the whole product is software and data rendered in real time on a headset, which is what allows the player's physical movement to alter the image and the audio in the same instant. **Immersive content** — the headset places the player inside the coastal town rather than in front of it; the player reaches out physically to open a switchboard; and the audio is spatialised so that a generator behind the player is heard from behind them, addressing the player's sense of where they are in a room. **Interactivity** — the order in which the player chooses to restore streets changes their progress, so two players work through materially different products. **Participatory practices** are present as well: the fifteen-second clip recorder and the in-game public gallery are the *technology*, and posting to and browsing that gallery is the *practice*. *Marker's note:* four marks for three features means each one must be tied to a specific detail from the stimulus. “It is immersive because it is VR” is a restatement, not an explanation — name the reaching, the head movement or the spatial audio.

**Q14.** “*Explain*” the term, then “*identify*” two technologies — and the distinction is the fourth mark. **Participatory practices** are the things audiences do once a technology gives them a route back into a product or out into public circulation: contributing material, altering or extending someone else's, responding to it, sharing it, or distributing their own. Two technologies that make them possible are **upload and publishing tools**, which let an audience member place their own product where the professional product is, and **comment, reply and remix features**, which let them attach their work to an existing product. The distinction the study design's wording insists on is this: it names participatory **practices**, not participatory technology. The *tool* is the technology — a recorder, an upload button, a duet feature, a wiki, a modding kit, a crowdfunding page. The *practice* is what people then do with it: the responding, the remixing, the community-building, the funding. A technology can exist unused, in which case there is no practice; and the same technology supports quite different practices in different communities. *Marker's note:* naming two tools and stopping is a 2-mark answer. The mark for the distinction is available only if you make it explicitly.

**Q15.** “*Identify*” three practices and “*explain*” how each arises from a named technology.

*Social.* The practice is **public conversation between strangers built out of the product itself**: users reply to a clip with a clip, and the reply sits alongside the original where anyone can see both. It arises directly from the “**reply with video**” feature, which supplies a route from audience back into circulation, and from the **ten-second excerpt tool**, which lets a user carry a piece of someone else’s work into their own.

*Cultural.* The practice is **re-performance as a legitimate way of making**. Because any sound excerpt can be lifted and re-used, a format can be repeated by thousands of people and still be understood as each person’s own work, and amateur and professional clips circulate in the same **ranked feed** with no visible distinction between them. The enabling technologies are the excerpt and reply tools plus the feed that mixes their output.

*Economic.* The practice is **the audience becoming the revenue directly**. Viewer subscriptions and a share of advertising revenue turn attention into income for the publisher, and because both are gated by audience size, growing an audience becomes the qualifying commercial activity. The enabling technologies are the **subscription and payment systems** and the **analytics dashboard**, which measures the attention the advertising is sold against.

*Marker’s note:* five marks require each practice to be traced to a specific technology in the stimulus. A general answer about “social media culture” that never points at the reply button, the excerpt tool, the feed or the dashboard cannot reach the top band. Note also that reusing someone else’s material in Australia is governed by the *Copyright Act 1968* (Cth), which permits particular **fair dealing** purposes rather than a broad “fair use” standard — so a practice can be ordinary on a platform without being lawful. Mention it in one clause if it is relevant; the argument itself is **13C**’s.

**Q16.** “*Explain*” how the technologies produce the form. *Half a Mile of River* is a product in the **convergent or hybridised media** family, and it earns that classification because it joins four of the study design’s media forms into a single product: **moving image** (the two-minute videos), **audio** (the recordings made on site), **print** (the written accounts) and **still image** (the paired photographs). It is delivered through the **digital** form, on Coldreach Media’s own site.

The technologies that make the joining possible are web delivery and streaming, which carry video, audio, text and images through one channel to one screen; an **interactive navigable interface** built on the river map; digital audio and video files, which can be held at eleven separate points and called up in any order; and digital photograph handling, which allows two images of the same place taken forty years apart to be presented for direct comparison — something neither a printed page nor a broadcast sequence does easily.

The **interactivity** here is structural rather than decorative, and that is the point worth making. With no fixed order and no single running time, the audience assembles the product as they move along the river, so two audiences genuinely receive different products from the same publication. That is only possible because the technology holds all four forms as files that can be requested in any sequence.

Read together, this is why the study design treats convergent or hybridised media as a form family in its own right. The joining is not an addition to a documentary — it *is* the product. None of the four forms alone would deliver a river you travel along at your own pace, and no pre-existing technology could have combined them in one place. *Marker’s note:* the common error is to describe the four elements separately and never say what the combination produces. Name the form family, name the technologies, and then say what the audience can do that a single-form product could not offer.

**Q17.** Six marks, four steps — work through them in order and the structure does the marking for you.

*Step 1 — the technologies.* A shared online planning document; a portable multitrack recorder; phone recording by contributors in other states; a digital audio workstation; spatial mixing; podcast hosting and a feed; delivery to a video platform; automatically generated captions; a voice-message submission route; an analytics dashboard.

*Step 2 — the chain.* **Creation:** the shared document, which lets a team plan the series together without being in one room. **Production:** the multitrack recorder, the contributors’ phones, the workstation and the spatial mix.

**Distribution:** the podcast feed and the video platform — two channels for one product. **Engagement with:** the voice-message route, which brings listeners into the episode. **Consumption:** the listener’s own phone, earbuds or speaker.

**Reception:** the captions, which change what the product offers a listener who cannot or does not want to hear it, and the dashboard, which reports on how it was received.

*Step 3 — the nature.* The chain is **digital** end to end, which is why material recorded interstate on a phone can sit in the same mix as the multitrack-recorded interviews. There is a genuine element of **immersive content** in the spatial mix, which places instruments around the listener rather than in front of them. There are **participatory practices**: the submission route is the technology, and listeners recording and sending voice messages is the practice. **Interactivity is low, and saying so is part of a correct answer** — the episode is the same for every listener, and choosing when to press play is a consumption decision, not interactivity. Two convergences are present: **technological**, since contributors' phones serve as professional capture devices, and **form convergence**, since an audio product is also published as video with captions.

*Step 4 — the practices.* **Socially**, listeners' own voices are now inside the product, so the audience is audible to the rest of the audience. **Culturally**, it is now unremarkable for a professionally released series to contain interviews contributors recorded on phones interstate, and a video version with captions is expected as a standard part of an audio release rather than an extra. **Economically**, the dashboard's retention data becomes evidence — used to shape the length and structure of later episodes, and to demonstrate an audience to a sponsor or commissioner.

*Marker's note:* the two things that lift this to full marks are naming a feature as **absent** (the low interactivity) and keeping the technology and the practice separate at step 4. An answer that lists the ten technologies and stops has completed one step of four.

**Q18. Command term — discuss:** develop the point with evidence and reach a position, covering all three things the question asks for.

*Model response (8 marks).*

**Generative tools** — software that produces images, audio, video or text from a prompt or from existing material — satisfy the study design's definition of new media unusually cleanly, and working through the definition is the best way to identify their nature.

They are plainly **contemporary technology**, and they are **used by producers and audiences alike**, which is the clause that matters most here. On the producer's side they appear in **creation** — drafting concepts, generating reference images, roughing out a storyboard, producing a scratch voice track to cut a sequence against — and in **production** and post-production, where they are used for tasks such as background extension, clean-up, upscaling, transcription and translation. On the audience's side the same class of tool is used to make and alter images, audio and text of their own, at no cost and with no training. They also touch **reception**, since automatic captioning and translation change what a product offers an individual audience member.

Of the four features named in the study design, they display **digital technologies** completely: they operate on material as data, and their output is a file that can be revised indefinitely. They are **interactive** in a specific and limited sense — the output changes with the input, and no two prompts produce the same result, so the person using the tool is genuinely part of how it operates. They enable **participatory practices**, because they remove the skill barrier that previously kept most audiences out of image, audio and video making, and the practice that has arisen is a large volume of audience-made material that is not distinguishable at a glance from professional work. They are **not immersive**, and identifying that absence is part of describing them accurately: they produce content that may be delivered immersively, but the tool itself does not surround or position anybody.

The practices that have arisen are identifiable in all three of the study design's categories. **Socially**, audiences make and circulate images and audio of people and places that were never photographed or recorded, and audiences have begun to treat any striking image as possibly generated, which changes how media material is received before it is even examined. **Culturally**, the skill threshold that separated people who could make a polished-looking product from people who could not has largely gone, and the question of what counts as authorship has become an ordinary working question rather than a theoretical one. **Economically**, tasks that were previously commissioned — stock imagery, scratch voice work, translation, transcription, first-draft copy — can be produced inside a production for the cost of a subscription, and access to the tools themselves is sold as a subscription.

The position worth reaching is that generative tools are a strong illustration of why the study design defines new media as technology **plus practices** rather than technology alone. As objects they are unremarkable — software that returns a file. It is the practices around them, and the speed at which those practices arrived, that make them new media in the study design's sense. The area of study also notes that new media forms, products and processes are often controversial and may be mistrusted or devalued by existing **media** institutions, **some** audiences and groups in society,

and generative tools are the clearest current case of that; the ethical and legal argument itself, however, is **13C**'s dot point, and an identification answer should note it and move on.

*Marker's note:* the trap at eight marks is to write the ethics essay instead of the identification answer. Marks here are for the features, the processes and the practices — with credit for naming immersion as absent — not for a position on whether generative tools should be used.

**Q19. Command term — identify and discuss:** name the technologies precisely first, then develop what their nature and forms amount to. The five bullet requirements are the marking structure.

**Product:** a six-part drama series released on a subscription streaming service — **moving image** by its means, delivered through the **digital** form. (Any product the student has genuinely consumed or studied is acceptable, provided the technologies are named accurately.)

*Model response (10 marks).*

The technologies behind a streamed drama series divide by the job they do in the chain, and sorting them that way is most of the answer — not least because the features of new media are distributed very unevenly across them.

In **creation and production**, the producers used **digital cinema cameras** and **non-linear editing and post-production software**, with a **digital audio workstation** for the mix. These are **digital technologies** in the study design's sense and nothing else: the material exists as files, so a scene can be graded, re-cut and re-mixed repeatedly and delivered in several versions — one with subtitles burnt in, one at a lower bitrate — without being re-shot. They are not interactive, not immersive and not participatory. They are the substrate the rest of the chain rests on, and saying so is more accurate than claiming four features for a camera.

In **distribution**, the technology is **streaming delivery over a content delivery network**. This is what replaces the transmitter, the schedule and the shelf: copies of the episode sit on servers close to the audience and are requested rather than broadcast, which is why all six parts can be released at once to every time zone. It is **digital** and **networked** — networked distribution being a property that follows from the four features rather than one of them, and worth naming as such.

In **consumption**, the technologies are the audience's own: a **connected or smart television**, a **tablet or phone app**, and **wireless earbuds**. Their nature is **portability** and **on-demand access** — the audience chooses the time, the place and the device, and can stop an episode on one screen and resume it on another. There is a weak element of **immersive content** where a spatial mix is heard through earbuds, and it should be said plainly that the product is **not immersive in the strong sense**: there is no headset and nothing responds to where the viewer is or how they move.

In **reception**, two technologies do the least visible and most consequential work. The **recommendation and ranking system** decides which of thousands of titles this subscriber is shown, and in what order, from a record of what they and comparable subscribers have finished or abandoned — so two households opening the same service at the same moment are offered materially different products. **Automated captioning, subtitling and translation** changes what the product itself offers an individual: the same episode is a different experience to a viewer who reads it, and it is available in languages nobody re-recorded it in. The recommendation system's relation to the two sides of the definition is **asymmetrical** — the producers see it as data to design for, the audience largely does not know it is there.

**Engagement with** is the process this product serves least, and identifying that is part of the answer. The service's own affordances are thin: a watchlist, a thumbs rating, a "continue watching" row. The real engagement technology is the audience's **second device** — the phone in the viewer's hand carrying comment, reply and clip-sharing tools — and it is worth being precise that this sits *outside* the product rather than inside it.

That makes the feature audit uneven, which is the honest finding. Everything named is **digital**. **Interactivity is absent from the product itself**: the episode's content does not change with anything the audience does, and choosing whether, when and on which screen to watch is a decision about **consumption**, not interactivity. **Immersive content** is weak. **Participatory practices** are absent from the product and vigorous around it. Naming those absences is worth more than asserting all four features everywhere.

In **form** terms the series is **moving image** by its technological means and is delivered through the **digital** family — it sits in two of the study design's six families at once, which is dual membership and **not** hybridisation. There is no **form convergence** here: nothing is joined into the product, and claiming a convergence that is not present is as much

an error as missing one. **Technological convergence** is present, and it is on the audience's side: the single handheld device that plays the episode is also the store it was paid for in, the remote control, the subtitle switch and the place the audience discusses it.

The **practices** arising complete the identification. **Socially**, viewing is solitary and self-scheduled while the conversation about it is public and immediate, so audiences now manage spoilers and the pressure to stay current — a practice that a fixed weekly transmission time made unnecessary. **Culturally**, an episode is now built to survive a ranked list and an interruption: opening seconds that declare what the show is, a recap, a thumbnail, and captions treated as a normal way to watch rather than an accessibility extra; and a “series” no longer means a weekly slot.

**Economically**, the same product is sold by subscription to some audiences and delivered with advertising to others on a cheaper tier, and the completion data the service holds is the evidence a second series is commissioned — or not — on.

The general point is the one the study design's definition forces. The technologies do not merely deliver this drama: the number of episodes, the way each one opens, the languages it exists in and the decision to make another are all shaped by which technologies sit at each point in the chain — and the practices that have grown around them are as much a part of what makes this new media as the equipment is.

*Band descriptors (out of 10):*

- **High (8–10):** at least four technologies named as **technologies**, each placed accurately in the chain of creation, production, distribution, engagement with, consumption or reception; the four study-design features applied case by case, including at least one feature correctly identified as absent; the media form or forms named from the study design's six families with any convergence named and its sense specified; one social, one cultural and one economic practice named and each tied to a technology; precise media language and no drift into consequences or ethics.
- **Mid (5–7):** technologies named but some are really products, platforms or forms; the chain used loosely or only two or three processes covered; features asserted rather than evidenced, or all four claimed everywhere; the form named but convergence left unspecified; practices offered generally rather than traced to a technology.
- **Low (1–4):** lists devices or names services and programs instead of technologies; no use of the chain; no reference to the study design's features; practices omitted entirely, so only the first clause of the definition of new media is addressed; or the response is mainly about the effects of technology on people rather than about the technologies themselves.

*Common errors:* naming products, programs or platform brands where the question asked for technologies; omitting the practices clause, which is a third of the definition and the difference between a mid and a high band; claiming all four features for every technology, when the accurate answer is usually that one or two are absent; treating “new media” as a synonym for social media, which leaves out streaming, podcasting, games, on-demand apps, immersive products and recommendation systems; using Chapter 1's five-process list instead of this area of study's six; and answering with what the technology has **done to** audiences, individuals, industries or institutions, which is the material of **13A** and **13B**, or with the harms and legalities, which are **13C**'s.

## Chapter 12 New media technologies and new media audiences — 12B

### Characteristics of new media audiences

---

#### Theory

12A dealt with the technologies: what new media technologies are, and the forms they take. This subtopic turns the question around and asks about the people at the other end of them. What is a **new media audience** actually like? What can be said about it that could not be said about the audience for a television bulletin in 1985 or a suburban newspaper in 1972? The study design does not ask you to admire the technology. It asks you to **discuss the characteristics of new media audiences** — to describe this audience's properties, in media language, and to back each one with evidence.

**Start from the study design's definition.** *New media is a term that applies to contemporary technology used by media producers and audiences, and the social, cultural and economic practices that arise from these contemporary forms.* Read the second half of that sentence carefully, because most students skip it. New media is not only equipment. It is also the **practices** — social, cultural and economic — that grow up around the equipment. A phone is a technology; posting a clip of your netball grand final, tagging four friends and watching the view count climb is a practice. It follows that a **new media audience** is an audience defined by what it *does* and *is* under those practices, not by which device it happens to hold.

**What this subtopic does and does not cover.** Keep three lines clear. 12A owns the nature and forms of the technologies themselves. 12C owns the ways audiences **interact and engage** with the media as technologies grow across media forms — the behaviours. Chapter 13 owns the **influence** of technological development and the social, ethical and legal **issues** that follow. 12B sits between them and answers a narrower question: what are the *attributes* of this audience? Chapter 3 has already given you the foundations — how audiences engage with, consume and read products (3A), audiences producing representations of their own (3B), and the social and institutional relationships between audiences and the media (3C). Here those foundations are put to a single use: describing what is distinctive about the audience that new media has produced.

**The central characteristic: three roles at once.** If you learn one sentence from this subtopic, learn the study design's: *audiences are media consumers, producers and products, often simultaneously*. Every other characteristic in this subtopic hangs off that claim.

| The role        | What the audience is doing                                                                                        | What it looks like in practice                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Consumer</b> | Taking media products in — watching, listening, reading, playing — and choosing the time, place, device and order | Starting a series at 11 pm on a phone; skipping to minute 14 of a podcast; leaving a game and returning a week later                                             |
| <b>Producer</b> | Creating media content, and distributing content made by others                                                   | Uploading a clip; writing a review; making a playlist; sharing an article to a group chat; livestreaming a local match                                           |
| <b>Product</b>  | Being the thing that is sold, or that attracts the next audience                                                  | Attention delivered to an advertiser; behavioural data attached to an account; a user's own uploads becoming the material that holds other users on the platform |

**Consumer.** Most media use is still consumption; what changed is **control of the conditions**. A broadcast audience received what was transmitted, when it was transmitted. A new media audience largely decides *when* (on demand rather than scheduled), *where* (mobile rather than fixed), *on what* (phone, laptop, television, console, speaker), *in what order* and *at what speed* (pause, skip, rewatch, play at 1.5×). Consumption has been unbundled from the schedule, and with it went the idea that an audience is a group of people receiving the same thing at the same moment.

**Producer.** Members of a new media audience make and publish media content themselves — **user-generated content**, meaning media content created by members of the audience rather than by a media institution or professional

producer. 3B examined what audiences produce as *representations*; what matters here is blunter: the audience is now also a **distributor**. A share, a repost or a link in a group chat moves a media product to new people. Distribution was once the most tightly held function in the media — it required a transmitter, a press, a truck or a cinema chain — and new media handed a share of it to everybody with an account. That is why a product can now reach a large audience without any institution deciding it should.

**Product.** The hardest of the three. To say the audience is a **product** is to say it is not only the buyer but part of what is sold, and it happens in two ways. On a service free to use, the paying customer is the advertiser, and what the advertiser buys is access to a defined set of audience members plus the **behavioural data** — what an account watched, searched, paused and returned to — that makes them targetable. Second, the content the audience produces is itself the platform’s stock: one member’s uploads hold the *next* member on the service, generally at no cost to the platform. The audience supplies both the inventory and the customers. Australian law limits the first of these — the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) and the **Australian Privacy Principles** in Schedule 1 to that Act govern how organisations collect, use and disclose personal information, and generally bind Australian Government agencies and private-sector organisations with an annual turnover of more than \$3 million — but whether those limits are adequate is 13C’s argument, not this subtopic’s. Here the point is descriptive: being a product is a *characteristic* of this audience, not an accusation against it.

**“Simultaneously” is the word that does the work.** The three roles are not three groups of people, and they are not three phases of a person’s day. They are frequently occupied in a **single act**. Consider one action on **Tallowline**, a fictional short-video and social platform: a Year 11 student watches a two-minute clip about restoring a bike, films a thirty-second reply showing her own repair, and posts it. In that one action she is a **consumer** (she watched the original), a **producer** (she made and published a media product), and a **product** (her viewing and posting are logged, her attention was delivered to whatever advertising ran beside the clip, and her reply is now content that will hold the next viewer on the platform). Use this as a test in any 12B answer: take one concrete action, and show all three roles inside it. It is the single most reliable way to earn marks on this dot point.

**All engagement is situated.** The study design adds a qualifier that stops the whole picture becoming naive: *all engagement with media is creatively, culturally and economically situated*. Nobody participates from nowhere.

- **Creatively situated** — what a person makes depends on the skills, tools, time and confidence they have. A person with editing software, a decent microphone and three spare hours produces something different from a person with a cracked phone and ten minutes.
- **Culturally situated** — what a person posts, shares and joins is shaped by language, community, family expectation, religion, region and what is normal in the groups they belong to. Some people have strong reasons not to appear on camera at all.
- **Economically situated** — devices cost money, data costs money, subscriptions cost money, and connection quality varies sharply between an inner-Melbourne apartment and a property outside Ouyen. Time is an economic resource too: a student working four shifts a week has less of it.

This qualifier matters because the easy version of this subtopic — “everyone is now a creator” — is false, and marks are lost for asserting it.

**Pre-existing audience, new media audience.** The clearest way to *characterise* something is to say what it replaced. Learn this comparison as a set of properties, not as a story of progress: broadcast audiences still exist and new media audiences carry costs of their own.

| Characteristic          | Pre-existing (broadcast/print) audience                                                        | New media audience                                                                |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>How it assembles</b> | Gathered by a schedule or a print run — everyone receives the same thing at much the same time | Assembles itself, whenever and wherever each member chooses; largely asynchronous |
| <b>Its boundaries</b>   | Bounded by transmission area, distribution route and national regulation                       | Not constrained by physical, social and political boundaries                      |
| <b>Its shape</b>        | One large mass audience, described                                                             | Many small <b>niche audiences</b>                                                 |

| Characteristic                   | Pre-existing (broadcast/print) audience                                | New media audience                                                                             |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>What it does</b>              | in broad demographic blocks<br>Receives                                | gathered around a shared interest<br>Receives, contributes, curates, distributes and moderates |
| <b>How it is known</b>           | Estimated in aggregate — a sample panel, a circulation audit, a survey | Counted individually and continuously, account by account, second by second                    |
| <b>What each member gets</b>     | The same product as everyone else                                      | A personalised selection; there is no shared front page                                        |
| <b>Its relation to the maker</b> | A market the product is sold <i>to</i>                                 | Also an asset sold <i>on</i> , and a supply of content sold <i>with</i>                        |

Six of those properties carry names you should use, because questions are built on them.

**Unbounded.** Media audiences are *no longer constrained by physical, social and political boundaries*. Physical: a podcast made in a Ballarat spare room reaches Berlin at no extra cost of distribution. Social: a person can join an audience whose members they will never meet and whose class, age or workplace they do not share. Political: national borders and national gatekeepers no longer decide neatly what a person can reach. Hence an audience that is very thin in any one place and very large in total.

**Fragmented and niche.** Because supply is effectively unlimited and distribution nearly free, audiences divide into thousands of **audiences of interest** rather than gathering into one mass. A product that would once have been impossible — too few interested people in any one town — becomes viable when its scattered audience is connected. The shared national media moment is now rare, and mostly confined to live sport and emergencies.

**Networked into communities.** The study design is precise here: such platforms *facilitate convergence between communities and commercial opportunities that are developed, built and maintained through common interests and creativity*. New media audiences form **communities of interest**, bound by a shared subject, where earlier audiences were largely **communities of place**, bound by where they lived. A community of interest has members, norms, moderators, disputes and a history, and it is held together by what the members themselves make, not only by the product they gathered around.

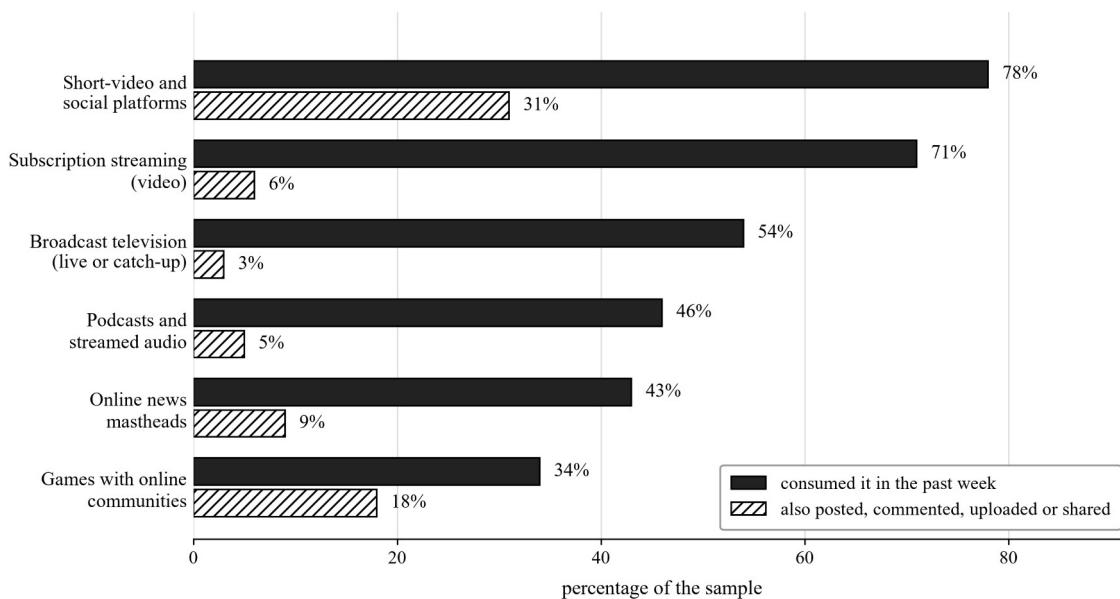
**Individually measured.** A broadcast audience was an estimate drawn from a sample. A new media audience is a **census**: every account is counted, and every play, pause, skip and abandonment is recorded against it. This is what makes the “product” role possible, and it runs backwards into production, because what is measured is what gets promoted, renewed and cancelled. Be precise, though — what is measured is *accounts and activity*, not people, so shared logins, several people on one screen and poor connections all mean the audience an institution can see is never quite the audience that exists.

**Personally sorted.** Most new media products are delivered by **recommendation systems** that select what each account sees, so two members of the same audience may never receive the same products, in the same order, on the same day. What holds a new media audience together is a shared *interest* or a shared *platform*, not a shared *text*.

**Mobile, always on, and mixing the public with the personal.** These audiences carry their media with them and consume in fragments across the day rather than in a settled block at a fixed hour, so attention is short, interruptible and competed for — which is why so much material is now built to open immediately, run short, caption itself and survive being paused. And on social media, as the study design notes, *public and personal communication is combined*: a message meant for six friends is posted in the same place and format as a message meant for the world, which is why the same post can read entirely differently to the people it was for and to the people who find it later.

**Participation is unequal.** The figure below shows one week’s use for a constructed sample. The numbers are invented and are there to show a *pattern*, not to be quoted as evidence.

Where a constructed sample of 1200 Australians aged 15 and over spent a week, and how many of them contributed



Constructed illustrative data — not a survey. The pattern is the point, not the numbers.

Two characteristics show up at once. Read down the solid bars and the audience is **fragmented** — no single form holds everyone, and most people move between several in a week. Read the hatched bars against the solid ones and you see the **participation gap**: in every form the number who contribute is far smaller than the number who consume, and the size of the gap depends on the form. Where contributing is built into the activity (games with online communities, short-video platforms) participation is comparatively high; where the form gives the audience nothing to do but receive (broadcast television, subscription streaming) it collapses to a few per cent. So “audiences are producers” is a statement about what audiences *can* do and about how the media is now structured — not a claim that most of them do it most of the time.

**Who the Australian new media audience actually is.** Two corrections worth carrying into a response. First, this is **not a young audience**. Every age group in Australia participates, and assuming otherwise produces stereotyped answers; the *practices* differ by age far more than the *presence* does. Second, participation is not evenly available — connection quality, data cost, device age, disability access, language and spare time all decide who can consume and who can contribute, which is the “situated” point again in concrete form. One legal fact bears on this audience’s composition here: since 10 December 2025 the *Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Act 2024* (Cth) has required age-restricted social media platforms to take reasonable steps to prevent Australians under 16 holding accounts, with the obligation falling on the platforms rather than on young people or their parents (position as at 2026). Its consequences are examined as an issue in 13C; here it is simply part of describing who is in the audience.

**Two cautions. “New” is a relationship, not a date** — every media form was new once, so write about the characteristic and use the platform as evidence, never the reverse. And **do not confuse the platform with the audience**: a question about the characteristics of new media audiences is not answered by listing a platform’s features, but by describing what the people using it are, do and become.

**The method for 12B.** Three moves will carry almost every question in this subtopic.

1. **Name the characteristic** in the study design’s own language — consumers, producers and products simultaneously; situated engagement; not constrained by physical, social and political boundaries; communities built through common interests and creativity.
2. **Evidence it** with a specific practice, platform behaviour or measurable action. “Audiences are active” earns nothing; “a viewer posts a thirty-second reply that is then recommended to others” earns the mark.
3. **Say what follows** — for the audience member, or for whoever makes media for them.

And when a question gives you an action, run the **one action, three roles** test on it before you write.

*Looking ahead:* the question of how much control this audience actually has — agency — is taken up formally in Units 3 & 4. Within this chapter, 12C examines how these audiences interact and engage across converging forms, and Chapter 13 the influence and the issues that follow.

## Worked examples

### Example 1 — scaffolded

**Explain how a single act by an audience member can occupy all three of the roles the study design names. (4 marks)**

“Explain” wants a chain, not three labels. The table builds the response one sentence at a time.

| Working                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Comment                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The study design states that audiences are media <b>consumers, producers and products, often simultaneously</b> — that is, the three roles can be occupied in one action rather than at three separate times.                                                                 | Open on the claim being explained, in the study design’s language, and flag the word the question turns on.               |
| Take one action on Tallowline, a short-video and social platform: a user watches a clip about repairing a bicycle wheel, films a thirty-second reply showing her own repair, and posts it under the same topic tag.                                                           | Give ONE concrete action, not a general description of “using social media”. Everything after this must refer back to it. |
| She is a <b>consumer</b> , because she took a media product in — she watched the original clip, chose it, and chose when and on what device to watch it.                                                                                                                      | Deal with the roles one at a time and anchor each to a part of the action just described.                                 |
| She is a <b>producer</b> , because she created a media product of her own and distributed it: her reply is user-generated content, published to whoever follows the tag, without any institution deciding it should exist.                                                    | Name the term <b>user-generated content</b> and include distribution — publishing is part of producing.                   |
| She is a <b>product</b> , because both the watching and the posting are recorded against her account and make her attention targetable for the advertising sold beside the clip, while her reply becomes content that holds the next viewer on the platform at no cost to it. | The hardest role. Cover both mechanisms: data and attention sold, and her content becoming the platform’s stock.          |
| Because all three descriptions are true of the same thirty seconds, the roles are not stages she moves through but positions she occupies at once — which is exactly what “simultaneously” claims.                                                                            | Close by answering the question asked: the roles coincide.                                                                |

### Example 2 — scaffolded

**Describe two characteristics of new media audiences shown by the data in the figure above. (5 marks)**

The data is constructed, so treat it as a pattern to be read, not as evidence of a fact.

| Working                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Comment                                                                      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The figure reports a constructed sample of 1200 Australians aged 15 and over, so the numbers illustrate a pattern rather than establish one; nothing here should be quoted as a survey finding.                               | Say this first. Handling constructed data honestly is itself a marked skill. |
| The first characteristic it shows is <b>fragmentation</b> . No form holds the whole sample: the largest, short-video and social platforms, reaches 78 per cent, while broadcast television reaches 54 per cent and games with | Name the characteristic, then cite the specific figures that show it.        |

online communities 34 per cent.

Because the percentages across the six forms add to well over 100, most people in the sample used several forms in the same week — so this audience is spread across forms rather than gathered into one, and no single product now reaches everybody.

Do the reasoning the data allows, and state what follows. This is the “describe” step that earns beyond a data dump.

The second characteristic is the **participation gap**. In every form the number who contributed is far below the number who consumed — 31 per cent against 78 on short-video platforms, and 3 per cent against 54 on broadcast television.

Name the second characteristic and quote a high case and a low case.

The size of the gap tracks the form: where contributing is part of the activity, as in games with online communities (18 of 34), participation is proportionally high; where the form offers nothing to do but receive, it nearly disappears.

Explain the variation rather than only reporting it.

Together the two readings qualify the claim that new media audiences are producers: the capacity to produce is general, but taking it up is a minority behaviour that depends on the form.

Close on what the data means for the dot point.

### Example 3 — unscaffolded

**Explain what is meant by the claim that new media audiences are no longer constrained by physical, social and political boundaries. Refer to a specific media product. (4 marks)**

The claim is that an audience is no longer defined by where its members are, who they are, or which jurisdiction they live in. *Untitled Goose Game* (House House, 2019) shows all three at once. It was made by a small independent studio in Melbourne and released digitally, so the **physical** boundary that once governed a game’s audience — how many boxed copies a distributor would ship to which countries — disappeared: the product was equally available in Adelaide and in Toronto on release day. Its **social** boundary dissolved too, because the audience that formed around it was not a demographic block that a publisher had targeted but a self-assembling group connected by a shared joke, spread through screenshots and clips that players themselves made and posted. And because that distribution ran through digital storefronts and social platforms rather than through nationally licensed broadcasters or retailers, no single national gatekeeper stood between the product and its audience, which is the **political** boundary weakening. The audience for the game was therefore large in total and scattered thinly everywhere — a shape that broadcast distribution could not have produced. *Takeaway*: unbounded does not mean “everywhere at once”; it means the old limits on *who could be in an audience* no longer set its edges.

### Example 4 — unscaffolded

**Analyse how a media platform turns a new media audience into a product, and explain what makes this possible. (6 marks)**

Farrowgate Media, a fictional independent publisher, closes the print edition of its monthly magazine and relaunches it as a free website carrying advertising. Nothing about the audience’s own experience appears to change: readers still read articles, and still pay nothing. What changes is what the audience *is* to the business.

The mechanism has two parts. The first is **individual measurement**. A print circulation figure was an aggregate — thirty-one thousand copies, an estimated readership, no knowledge of who read which page. The website instead records each account and each visit: which article, for how long, how far down the page, what was clicked next, what was abandoned. The audience stops being an estimate and becomes a census of behaviour. The second is **sale**. Because the audience is now described individually, Farrowgate can offer an advertiser — say the fictional outdoor-clothing retailer Tussock & Vane — not “our readers” but a defined set of accounts whose recorded behaviour suggests an interest in bushwalking. What is sold is access to those people’s attention, and the thing that gives it value is the data attached to it. The audience is, in the study design’s word, a **product**.

A second and less obvious conversion runs alongside it. Readers who comment on articles, submit photos or share a piece to a group chat are producing content and distribution that Farrowgate does not pay for and that draws further readers in. Their unpaid activity is part of the asset being sold, which is why the three roles are so hard to separate: the same person is consuming the article, producing the comment, and constituting the audience that the advertising is priced against.

Note what makes all of this possible, because it is the analytical point rather than the moral one: none of it works without continuous individual measurement. A broadcast audience could not be sold this way because it could never be described this precisely. *Takeaway*: the audience-as-product role is a direct consequence of the audience-as-census characteristic — describe the measurement and the sale explains itself.

---

## Practice questions

### Scaffolded

**Q1.** Define each of the following terms. (3 marks) (a) new media; (b) user-generated content; (c) the audience as a product.

**Q2.** The study design states that audiences are media consumers, producers and products, often simultaneously. (4 marks) (a) State which of the three roles the person is occupying in each of the following, noting that more than one may apply: (i) watching a drama series on a subscription service; (ii) uploading a two-minute review of that series to a social platform; (iii) scrolling a feed carrying advertising that was sold on the basis of what the account has watched. (b) State what the word “simultaneously” adds to the claim.

**Q3.** All engagement with media is creatively, culturally and economically situated. (4 marks) (a) State what it means for a person’s engagement to be situated in each of these three ways. (b) State one consequence of this for the claim that new media audiences are free to participate however they choose.

**Q4.** Compare a pre-existing broadcast audience with a new media audience on each of the following. (5 marks) (a) how the audience assembles; (b) its boundaries; (c) its shape; (d) how it is known by the institution that makes for it; (e) what each member receives.

**Q5.** Participation in new media is unequal. (4 marks) (a) Name the pattern that describes the relationship between the number who consume a form and the number who contribute to it. (b) Give two reasons a person may consume without ever contributing. (c) State the analytical error a student makes if they write that new media audiences are all producers.

**Q6.** Choose one platform or media form you use regularly. (5 marks) (a) Name it, and state how you occupy each of the three roles on it. (b) Name one further characteristic of new media audiences it demonstrates, and give the evidence for your choice.

### Un scaffolded

**Q7.** Identify two ways in which a member of a new media audience acts as a producer. (2 marks)

**Q8.** Outline what is meant by describing a new media audience as a product. (2 marks)

**Q9.** Describe how new media audiences form communities of interest rather than communities of place. (3 marks)

**Q10.** (*Stimulus.*) Read the extract below from a fictional publisher’s weekly summary.

**Stimulus.** Farrowgate Media, weekly audience note. Accounts active: 18,420. Median time on the lead article: 1 min 52 s. Readers reaching the final paragraph: 21%. Highest completion: a 700-word piece on tip-shop repairs (64%). Most shared: the same piece, 1,930 shares, 71% of them into private messaging. Twelve accounts read every article published this week.

Describe what this extract shows about how a new media audience is known, and name one thing a print circulation figure could not have told the publisher. (3 marks)

**Q11.** Explain how personalised recommendation means that two members of the same audience may never receive the same set of media products, and what this does to the idea of a shared media experience. (4 marks)

**Q12.** (*Stimulus.*) Read the constructed posts below.

**Stimulus.** Posted publicly to Tallowline by an account with 240 followers: a ninety-second video of a family farewelling a grandparent at Tullamarine, captioned “she made it back for the wedding”.

Three days later the same video has 41,000 views. The comments include eleven from people the account holder knows, and several hundred from strangers, some warm and some hostile. A regional radio station has asked in the comments for permission to use the footage.

Explain how this illustrates the combining of public and personal communication that characterises new media audiences. (4 marks)

**Q13.** Explain why new media audiences divide into many small audiences of interest rather than gathering into one mass audience, and what this division means for the kinds of media product that can now find an audience. (4 marks)

**Q14.** (*Stimulus.*) Read the two audience descriptions below.

**Stimulus. A.** A 68-year-old in Mildura watches a nightly television bulletin, listens to two podcasts on a phone while gardening, moderates a 4,000-member online group for orchid growers, and posts photographs to it most days.

**B.** A 16-year-old in Frankston watches short video on a phone for about ninety minutes a day, has never posted anything publicly, streams two series a week with family in the lounge room, and reads news only when a link reaches a group chat.

Discuss the claim that new media audiences are young audiences. (5 marks)

**Q15.** Discuss how the mobile, always-on character of new media audiences shapes the way media producers design products for them. (5 marks)

**Q16.** (*Stimulus.*) Read the constructed platform notice below.

**Stimulus.** Tallowline creator program. Accounts posting at least eight original videos a month, with a median of 20,000 views, may apply to receive a share of the advertising revenue earned beside their videos. Participants agree to a minimum posting frequency, to a content standards schedule, and to Tallowline retaining a licence to use their videos in promotion. Fewer than one per cent of accounts qualify.

Explain how arrangements of this kind change the producer role of a new media audience. (6 marks)

**Q17.** Explain how the three roles a new media audience occupies can pull against one another for an individual audience member. Refer to a specific practice in your response. (6 marks)

**Q18.** Discuss the claim that new media audiences are active participants who have taken control of the media. (8 marks)

**Q19.** (*Extended response.*) Discuss the characteristics of new media audiences, referring to one platform or media form you use or have studied. (10 marks)

Your response should:

- name and define at least four characteristics, using the study design’s language
- give specific evidence for each from the platform or form you have chosen
- state what each characteristic means for the audience or for whoever makes media for it
- qualify at least one of the characteristics rather than asserting it

Platform or media form: \_\_\_\_\_

---

## Answers

**Q1. (3 marks.)** (a) Contemporary technology used by media producers and audiences, and the social, cultural and economic practices arising from these contemporary forms. (b) Media content created by members of the audience rather than by a media institution or professional producer. (c) The audience is part of what is sold — its attention and behavioural data are sold to advertisers, and its own content becomes the platform's stock.

**Q2. (4 marks.)** (a) (i) consumer, and product (the viewing is recorded); (ii) producer, and consumer of the series being reviewed, and product; (iii) consumer and product. (b) That the roles are occupied at the same time, often within a single action — they are not three groups of people or three stages of a day.

**Q3. (4 marks.)** (a) Creatively — limited by skills, tools, time and confidence; culturally — shaped by language, community, family, religion, region and group norms; economically — limited by the cost of devices, data, subscriptions and time. (b) Participation is unevenly available, so “anyone can produce” describes a capacity, not a reality.

**Q4. (5 marks.)** (a) Gathered by a schedule or print run at one time / assembles itself, asynchronously. (b) Bounded by transmission area, distribution route and national regulation / not constrained by physical, social and political boundaries. (c) One mass audience / many niche audiences of interest. (d) Estimated in aggregate from a sample or audit / counted individually and continuously. (e) The same product as everyone else / a personalised selection, with no shared front page.

**Q5. (4 marks.)** (a) The participation gap — contributors are a small minority of consumers in every form. (b) Any two of: no time; no skills or equipment; cost of data or devices; cultural or family reasons not to appear publicly; fear of hostile responses; the form offers nothing to contribute to; simple lack of interest. (c) It confuses a *capacity* the media now offers with actual *behaviour*, and ignores that engagement is creatively, culturally and economically situated.

**Q6. (5 marks.)** (a)–(b) Any platform or form: three roles each anchored to a real action of the student's own; one further characteristic (unbounded, fragmented, community of interest, individually measured, personally sorted, public and personal combined, mobile and always on) with specific evidence.

**Q7. (2 marks.)** Any two of: uploading original content; commenting or reviewing; livestreaming; remixing or editing someone else's content; curating a playlist or list; sharing or reposting, which is distribution.

**Q8. (2 marks.)** The audience is part of what is sold: on a free service the advertiser is the paying customer and buys access to the audience's attention plus the behavioural data that makes it targetable; the audience's own content is also the stock that holds other users.

**Q9. (3 marks.)** Earlier audiences were largely bound by where members lived; new media audiences gather around a shared subject regardless of location, and are held together by members' own creativity — posts, moderation, norms and history — rather than only by the product.

**Q10. (3 marks.)** It shows the audience known as a census of individual accounts and behaviours — account numbers, time on page, completion rates, share destinations, and even twelve identifiable completists. A circulation figure could not have shown *whether* an article was read, how far, or that 71% of shares went into private messaging.

**Q11. (4 marks.)** Recommendation systems select per account from what that account has done, so two members receive different products in a different order; the audience is then held together by a shared platform or interest rather than a shared text, and the common reference point that a broadcast schedule produced largely disappears.

**Q12. (4 marks.)** A message made for 240 followers was published in the same place and format as material addressed to everyone; scale then removed the original context, so strangers read a family moment without it, and an institution approached the account holder as a supplier of content. Public and personal communication share one channel.

**Q13. (4 marks.)** Supply is effectively unlimited and distribution costs almost nothing per extra recipient, and no schedule or print run now forces the audience together, so members sort themselves by interest: the audience divides into many small audiences of interest, and most people move between several forms in a week. What follows: a product whose interested audience was always too small and too scattered to be reached under broadcast distribution can now assemble that audience and be viable, so niche products are sustainable where a mass audience was once the minimum — and the shared national media moment becomes rare.

**Q14.** (5 marks.) Reject the claim as stated. A is the more active participant across more forms and occupies all three roles; B consumes heavily and produces publicly not at all. Presence in new media audiences spans all ages; what differs by age is practice, not participation. Concede that some practices do skew young, and note that both descriptions are single cases.

**Q15.** (5 marks.) Consumption is mobile, fragmented across the day, interruptible and in competition with everything else on the device. Producers respond with short duration, immediate openings, captions that work without sound, vertical framing, episodic structures that survive pausing, and formats designed to be resumed. Counterweight: long-form podcasts and full-season streaming show the characteristic is a tendency, not a rule.

**Q16.** (6 marks.) A small minority of the audience is professionalised — paid, contracted to a posting frequency and content standards, and licensing their work — while remaining audience members. The line between audience and media industry blurs, the unpaid majority now competes with quasi-professional output, and the “producer” role becomes stratified rather than uniform.

**Q17.** (6 marks.) At least two named tensions, not three role descriptions in sequence: the producer’s wish to reach the people the material would help against a recommendation system tuned to hold attention; the consumer’s wish for an uncluttered feed against the advertising that pays for free access; the producer’s wish to keep control against the platform holding the work as inventory. Close on the conflict being structural — nobody has to behave badly for the roles to pull apart. See Fully-worked solutions for a full model and common errors.

**Q18.** (8 marks.) Separate the two assertions: active participation (well supported) and control of the media (not supported). For activity — the triad, participatory practices, audience distribution by sharing, communities of interest, and control over the conditions of consumption. Against control — the participation gap; situated engagement; the audience as product; personal sorting by systems the audience neither designed nor inspects. Position: the audience’s role has expanded far more than its power over the system has. See Fully-worked solutions for a full model, band descriptors and common errors.

**Q19.** (10 marks.) See Fully-worked solutions for a full model, band descriptors and common errors.

---

## Fully-worked solutions

**Q1.** (a) **New media** is *contemporary technology used by media producers and audiences, and the social, cultural and economic practices that arise from these contemporary forms*. The second half matters: new media names practices, not only equipment. (b) **User-generated content** is media content created by members of the audience rather than by a media institution or a professional producer — a clip, a review, a comment, a photograph, a livestream. (c) Describing the audience as a **product** means the audience is part of what is sold: on a free service the advertiser pays for access to the audience’s attention and the behavioural data attached to it, and the audience’s own uploads are the stock that holds the next user.

**Q2.** (a) (i) **Consumer** — the person is taking a media product in. They are also a **product**, because the viewing is recorded against the account and shapes what is recommended and what can be sold. (ii) **Producer** — they have created and published a media product of their own. They are simultaneously a **consumer** of the series being reviewed and a **product**, since the upload is both recorded activity and content the platform did not pay for. (iii) **Consumer and product** — they are receiving media, and the advertising beside it was sold on the strength of their own recorded behaviour. (b) “Simultaneously” adds that the three roles are **occupied at the same time**, frequently within one action, rather than belonging to three different groups of people or to three separate parts of a person’s day.

**Q3.** (a) **Creatively situated** — what a person can make is limited by the skills, tools, time and confidence available to them. **Culturally situated** — what they post, share or join is shaped by language, community, family expectation, religion, region and the norms of the groups they belong to; some people have strong reasons not to appear publicly at all. **Economically situated** — devices, data and subscriptions cost money, connection quality varies by location, and time is itself a resource that paid work and caring consume. (b) It follows that “anyone can now produce media” describes a **capacity the media offers**, not what audiences actually do; participation is unevenly available, so a claim about audience freedom must be qualified by the situation of the audience member making the choice.

**Q4. (a) How it assembles:** a broadcast audience was gathered by a schedule or a print run, so its members received the same product at much the same time; a new media audience assembles itself, whenever and wherever each member chooses, and is therefore largely asynchronous. (b) **Boundaries:** the older audience was bounded by transmission area, distribution route and national regulation; the new media audience is not constrained by physical, social and political boundaries. (c) **Shape:** one large mass audience described in broad demographic blocks, against many small niche audiences gathered by shared interest. (d) **How it is known:** estimated in aggregate from a sample panel or a circulation audit, against counted individually and continuously, account by account. (e) **What each member receives:** the same product as everyone else, against a personalised selection, with no shared front page.

**Q5. (a) The participation gap** — in every media form the number of people who contribute is a small fraction of the number who consume. (b) Any two, with reasons that are situated rather than dismissive: no spare time; no skills, software or equipment; the cost of data or a capable device; cultural or family reasons for not appearing publicly; a reasonable fear of hostile responses; or a form that simply gives the audience nothing to contribute to. (c) The error is treating a **capacity** as a **behaviour**. The media is now structured so that audiences *can* produce and distribute; it does not follow that most do, and the claim ignores the study design's point that all engagement is creatively, culturally and economically situated.

**Q6. Model response (platform: a short-video and social platform):** (a) I am a **consumer** when I watch clips in a feed I did not schedule, on a phone, in short bursts between classes. I am a **producer** when I post a clip of a school music rehearsal and when I share someone else's clip into a group chat — the share is distribution, so it counts. I am a **product** because everything I watch, rewatch and skip is recorded against my account, which determines both what is recommended to me and what advertising can be sold beside it, and because my own posts are content the platform holds other users with at no cost to itself. (b) The platform also demonstrates that new media audiences are **personally sorted**: two people I sit next to open the same application and receive completely different sets of videos, so we belong to the same audience without ever having received the same product. *Marker's note:* answers that describe the platform's features rather than the student's own roles do not answer the question — the subject of every sentence should be the audience member.

**Q7. "Identify" wants two named ways, briefly.** Any two of: **uploading original content** such as a video, photograph or podcast episode; **commenting or reviewing**; **livestreaming**; **remixing or editing** existing material into something new; **curating** a public playlist or list; or **sharing and reposting**, which is production of a kind because it performs **distribution** — moving a media product to people who had not received it.

**Q8. "Outline" wants the key idea, briefly.** Describing the audience as a **product** means it is part of what is sold rather than only the party buying. On a service free to its users the paying customer is the advertiser, and what the advertiser buys is access to a defined set of audience members together with the **behavioural data** that makes them targetable. The audience's own uploads are a second kind of product: unpaid content that holds the next user on the service.

**Q9. "Describe" asks for an account of the difference.** Pre-existing audiences were largely **communities of place**: a regional bulletin's audience, a suburban newspaper's readership or a local station's listeners were defined mainly by where their members lived, because distribution reached a territory. New media audiences instead form **communities of interest**, gathered around a shared subject — a repair hobby, a football club, a health condition, a genre of music — with members scattered across the country or the world. The study design describes such communities as *developed, built and maintained through common interests and creativity*: they have members, norms, moderators, running jokes and a history, and it is what the members themselves make and post that keeps the community going, not only the product they first gathered around. *Marker's note:* three marks need the contrast named on both sides — place against interest — not just a description of an online group.

**Q10. "Describe" asks what the extract shows.** The extract shows an audience known as a **census of individuals and their behaviour** rather than as an aggregate estimate. Farrowgate counts **accounts** (18,420), not copies; it records **how long** each reader stayed (a median of 1 min 52 s), **how far** they got (21% reached the final paragraph, against 64% for the tip-shop piece), **what they did next** (1,930 shares, 71% of them into private messaging), and it can identify twelve individual accounts that read everything. A print circulation figure could not have told the publisher any of the behavioural facts — most sharply, it could not have shown **whether a purchased copy was read at all**, let alone how far into an article a reader travelled. *Marker's note:* name at least two specific measures from the extract; a general answer about "analytics" does not describe this stimulus.

**Q11.** “*Explain*” asks for the mechanism and its consequence. Most new media products reach their audience through a **recommendation system** that selects what each account is shown, drawing on that account’s own recorded behaviour — what it watched, finished, skipped, searched and returned to. Because every account has a different history, the selection differs for every account. Two people may follow the same platform, share the same interests and still never be served the same set of products, in the same order, on the same day.

The consequence is that the older definition of an audience — a group of people who all received the same thing at the same time — no longer describes what is happening. A new media audience is held together by a shared **platform** or a shared **interest**, not by a shared **text**. Practically, this removes the common reference point a broadcast schedule created: there is no front page everyone saw, so audience members increasingly cannot assume the person beside them has encountered the same media at all. *Marker’s note:* four marks want the mechanism (per-account selection from per-account data) and the effect on shared experience; naming the algorithm alone is half an answer.

**Q12.** “*Explain*” asks how the stimulus demonstrates the characteristic. The study design notes that new media audiences are characterised by settings in which **public and personal communication is combined**, and this stimulus shows the combination in one object. The video is **personal communication** in its content and intended address: a family moment, captioned for 240 followers who already know who the grandparent is. But it was published through the same mechanism, in the same format and into the same scrolling column as material addressed to everyone, so it was **public communication** from the moment it was posted.

What follows is a change in the audience for the message. At 41,000 views the eleven comments from people who know the family are outnumbered by several hundred from strangers who received the video without the context that made it meaningful, which is why some of the responses are hostile — they are reading a personal message as a public one. The approach from the radio station completes the picture: the account holder, who was communicating with friends, is now being treated as a **producer** whose content an institution wants to distribute. One post, and the person is simultaneously a family member, a publisher and a source. *Marker’s note:* the mark is for explaining the combination of the two kinds of communication in one channel — not for saying the video “went viral”.

**Q13.** “*Explain*” asks for the cause and then what follows from it. A pre-existing audience was gathered into a mass by scarcity. Only so many channels, frequencies and print runs existed, each had to be paid for whether or not anyone used it, and everything it carried arrived on one schedule — so the material that filled it was aimed at the largest number of people available, and the audience was assembled into a single block because there was nowhere else for it to go.

New media removes both halves of that condition. Supply is effectively unlimited: a platform can carry an unbounded number of products, so nothing has to be left out to make room for something else. And distribution costs almost nothing per additional recipient, so serving four thousand interested people scattered across the country is no longer prohibitively expensive compared with serving four thousand in one city. With no schedule, transmission area or shelf forcing members together, they select for themselves, and what they select by is **interest**. The audience therefore divides into many small **audiences of interest** rather than gathering into one, and because a person can belong to several at once, most members move across several forms and several communities in the same week.

What this makes possible is the product that could not previously exist. A product with a few thousand interested people spread thinly across Australia had no reachable audience while distribution was territorial — too few in any one town to justify a broadcast slot, a print run or shelf space. Connected, that scattered audience is a real audience: it can be served, counted and sold to advertisers. The range of products that can find an audience therefore widens sharply at the specialised end. The same movement takes something away, though: the shared national moment — the product almost everyone received at once — becomes rare, and is now mostly confined to live sport and emergencies. *Marker’s note:* four marks want the mechanism (unlimited supply, near-free distribution, no schedule holding the audience together) and what follows for the products that can now be made; naming fragmentation without explaining why it happens is half an answer.

**Q14.** “*Discuss*” asks you to test the claim and reach a position. The claim should be **rejected as stated**, though it contains a grain of truth worth naming.

The stimulus inverts the stereotype. Description **A**, a person of 68, moves across four media forms in a week, occupies all three roles, and is the more active **producer** of the two — moderating a 4,000-member community and posting photographs most days is exactly the participatory, community-building behaviour the study design describes when it

speaks of communities *developed, built and maintained through common interests and creativity*. Description **B**, a person of 16, consumes heavily and produces publicly not at all: ninety minutes of short video a day, streaming with family, news arriving only through a group chat. B is a new media audience member without being a producer, which is the participation gap in one person.

The grain of truth is that particular **practices** do skew by age — the specific platforms, formats and posting habits differ between the two descriptions. But that is a claim about practice, not presence. Every age group in Australia is inside new media audiences, and the characteristics of this dot point — unbounded, fragmented, individually measured, personally sorted, simultaneously consuming, producing and being a product — apply across all of them.

Two qualifications keep the discussion honest: each description is a single case and proves nothing on its own, and the assumption that new media is young territory is itself a stereotype of the kind media study is supposed to test.

*Marker's note:* five marks need a position, evidence from **both** descriptions, and at least one concession; answers that simply retell A and B score in the middle.

**Q15.** “Discuss” asks you to develop the point with evidence and reach a position. New media audiences consume **mobile and always on**: the device travels with the person, so consumption happens in fragments across the day — on a tram, between classes, in a queue — rather than in a settled block at a fixed hour. Attention is therefore short, interruptible, and in open competition with messages, calls and everything else on the same screen.

Producers design around each of those facts. **Duration** shortens, and long material is cut into resumable segments. **Openings** compress, because a product that has not established itself in the first few seconds is scrolled past rather than merely disliked. **Captions and on-screen text** are added because much consumption happens with the sound off in public. **Framing** shifts to vertical for material made to be held in one hand. **Structure** changes so that a product survives being paused and returned to, which is why episodic and segmented formats have spread into forms that never used them.

The claim needs a counterweight, though. The same audience sustains two-hour podcasts, full-season streaming and long-form written journalism, and often consumes them in exactly the settled blocks the characteristic is supposed to have displaced. Mobility and constant availability describe a **tendency in the conditions of consumption**, not a rule about attention spans — the honest position is that they have widened the range of viable formats at both ends rather than simply shortening everything. *Marker's note:* the strongest answers name design consequences *specifically* (captions, verticals, cold opens) rather than asserting that “content is shorter now”.

**Q16.** “Explain” asks how the arrangement changes the role. The producer role of a new media audience is normally unpaid, unscheduled and unaccountable: a person posts what they like, when they like, and nobody can require anything of them. The notice describes an arrangement that changes all three for a small part of the audience.

First, it **pays some of the audience**. A share of the advertising revenue earned beside a person's videos converts an audience member's posting into income, and with income comes obligation: the notice requires a **minimum posting frequency** and compliance with a **content standards schedule**. The producer role stops being spontaneous and becomes contractual, with a quota and rules attached.

Second, it takes a **licence** to use participants' videos in promotion — so the audience member's own content becomes material the platform distributes on its own behalf. The person is producing content, and is simultaneously supplying the platform with an asset, which is the producer and product roles fusing rather than merely coexisting.

Third, and most importantly for this dot point, it **stratifies the audience**. Fewer than one per cent of accounts qualify, so the arrangement creates a small quasi-professional tier inside an audience that is otherwise unpaid. The line between “audience” and “media industry” — once a clean one, since producing and distributing required an institution — becomes a gradient: at one end an audience member posting for friends, at the other an audience member operating under a content schedule with a revenue share and a licensing agreement.

The consequence is that the study design's “producer” role can no longer be treated as uniform. Being a producer may mean posting a clip to forty followers, or it may mean meeting a monthly quota under contract, and the two are different positions inside the same audience. *Marker's note:* six marks want all three changes — payment with obligation, licensing, and stratification — plus the qualification that this describes a tiny minority.

**Q17.** “*Explain*” asks for a how-and-why chain showing the roles in tension. The three roles are held at once, and because they are, they can work against one another inside a single act.

Take a concrete practice: an audience member writes a nine-hundred-word review of a newly published Australian novel and posts it publicly to a books community, hoping readers deciding whether to buy the book will find it. As a **producer**, their interest is that the review reach the readers it would help, be credited to them, and stay as they wrote it. As a **consumer**, their interest is that their own feed be useful, uncluttered and worth their time. As a **product**, they are neither — their recorded behaviour and their review are inputs to a system whose paying customer is the advertiser.

The tensions follow directly. Whether the review is found at all is decided by a **recommendation system** tuned to hold attention, so a long piece of writing competes against a fifteen-second reaction clip on a measure — time held on the platform — that has nothing to do with usefulness, and material that would help a small number of readers can be shown to almost nobody. Their consumer interest in an uncluttered feed conflicts with their product role, since the advertising that funds their free access is precisely the clutter. And their producer interest in control conflicts with the terms under which they published: the review is now inventory that holds other users on the platform, and can be shown beside material they would never have chosen to appear next to, whether or not either serves the person who wrote it.

None of this requires anyone to behave badly, which is the point worth making. The conflict is structural: the same act that makes a person a producer also makes them a product, and the interests attached to the two roles are not the same. That is what it means to say the roles are occupied **simultaneously** rather than in turn. *Marker’s note:* six marks need a *named tension*, not three role descriptions in sequence — the word to look for in a strong answer is “but”.

**Q18.** *Command term* — *discuss*: develop the claim with evidence, test it, and reach a position.

The claim contains two assertions that need separating: that new media audiences are **active participants**, and that they have **taken control of the media**. The first is well supported; the second is not.

The evidence for **activity** is strong and sits directly in the study design. Audiences are media **consumers, producers and products, often simultaneously**; digital technologies, interactivity, immersive content and **participatory practices** are now features of creation, production, distribution, engagement, consumption and reception. Concretely, audiences upload original content, comment, review, livestream, remix, curate and moderate; they perform **distribution**, which was once the most tightly held function in the media, every time they share something; and they build and maintain communities of interest *through common interests and creativity*. An audience that does all of this is plainly not the passive receiver the broadcast model assumed. Its members also choose their own time, place, device, order and speed of consumption — control over the *conditions* of consumption that a scheduled audience never had.

The claim to **control**, however, does not survive contact with the other characteristics. First, **participation is unequal**: contributors are a small minority of consumers in every media form, and the gap is widest in exactly the forms that reach the most people, so a minority behaviour cannot support a claim about what audiences in general have done. Second, **engagement is situated** — creatively, culturally and economically — since skills, equipment, time, data costs, connection quality, language, disability access and family or cultural expectations decide who can participate at all; describing the audience as “in control” ignores the members for whom participation is not practically available.

Third, and most decisively, the audience is **also a product**. Its attention is sold, its behaviour is recorded account by account, and its own uploads are unpaid stock that holds the next user. An audience does not control a system in which it is simultaneously the supply, the inventory and the thing being priced. Fourth, what audiences see is **personally sorted** by recommendation systems they neither designed nor inspect, and choosing freely from a set selected for you by someone else is a real but limited freedom.

A fair position is this: new media audiences have gained **participation** and **control over the conditions of their own consumption**, and they have taken a genuine share of **distribution**. They have not taken control of the media, because the infrastructure through which they participate is owned by others, is measured and monetised by others, and decides what most of them see. The honest formulation is that the audience’s role has expanded enormously while its power over the system has expanded much less.

*Band descriptors (out of 8):*

- **High (7–8):** the two halves of the claim separated and judged differently; **four or more** characteristics used as evidence, each named in study-design language and evidenced specifically; counter-evidence (participation gap, situated engagement, audience-as-product, personalisation) genuinely weighed; a clear, qualified position.
- **Mid (4–6):** activity well evidenced but “control” accepted or rejected without testing; two or three characteristics used; evidence partly general; a position stated but thinly supported.
- **Low (1–3):** general claims that audiences “can do anything now”; no counter-evidence; platforms described instead of audiences; no position reached.

*Common errors:* accepting the claim wholesale because audiences can post; forgetting the **product** role, which is the strongest counter-evidence available; describing platform features instead of audience characteristics; reaching no position at all.

**Q19. Command term — discuss:** name the characteristics, evidence them from one platform or form, develop what each means, and qualify rather than assert. Ten marks expect at least four characteristics, specific evidence for each, and at least one genuine qualification.

Platform or media form: a short-video and social platform

*Model response (platform: a short-video and social platform):*

The study design defines **new media** as contemporary technology used by media producers and audiences *and the social, cultural and economic practices that arise from these contemporary forms*. A short-video and social platform is a convenient case for describing the audience those practices have produced, because almost every characteristic of new media audiences is visible on it at once.

The defining characteristic is that this audience is made of **consumers, producers and products, often simultaneously**. A single action demonstrates all three: a user watches a two-minute clip on how to tell a magpie-lark’s call from a magpie’s, then records fifteen seconds of a pair calling on her own back fence and posts it under the same topic tag. She is a **consumer**, because she took a media product in and chose the moment, the device and the order in which she did so. She is a **producer**, because she created and published **user-generated content** and, in publishing it, performed **distribution** — the function that once required a transmitter or a press. And she is a **product**, because her viewing and posting are recorded against her account and make her attention saleable to advertisers, while her own clip becomes content that holds the next viewer on the platform at no cost to it. The three roles coincide inside one fifteen-second upload, which is precisely what “simultaneously” claims.

A second characteristic is that this audience is **individually measured**. A broadcast audience was an estimate produced from a sample panel; here every account is counted and every play, pause, rewatch, skip and abandonment is recorded against it. This is what makes the product role possible — an audience can only be sold this precisely because it is described this precisely — and it runs backwards into production, since what is measured is what gets promoted, recommended and made again.

A third is that the audience is **personally sorted**. What each account receives is selected by a **recommendation system** working from that account’s own history, so the platform has no front page: nothing on it corresponds to a bulletin’s first story or a newspaper’s page one, and a fortnight spent watching one subject rebuilds an account’s feed around that subject while nobody else’s changes. Members belong to one audience without ever having received the same product, which means this audience is held together by a shared platform and shared interests rather than by a shared text. The common reference point that a broadcast schedule produced simply does not exist here.

A fourth is that the audience is **unbounded and organised into communities of interest**. Its members are not gathered by transmission area or print run; they assemble around a subject — backyard bird identification, a lower-division football club, a musical subgenre — from anywhere, and the community is *developed, built and maintained through common interests and creativity*, in the study design’s phrase. A person can belong to an audience whose other members they will never meet and with whom they share nothing but the subject.

These characteristics need one substantial qualification, and it is the difference between a mid-range and a high response. The producer role is a **capacity**, not a general behaviour. In every media form the number who contribute is a small fraction of the number who consume, and the gap is widest where the form gives the audience least to do. The study design supplies the reason: *all engagement with media is creatively, culturally and economically situated*. What

a person makes depends on skills, tools, time and confidence; what they are willing to post depends on language, community and family expectation; and whether they can participate at all depends on the cost of devices and data and on where they live. It is also worth saying plainly that this is not a young audience — every age group in Australia is inside it, and it is the practices, not the presence, that differ by age.

The characteristics therefore describe an audience whose **role has expanded** dramatically — it consumes on its own terms, produces, distributes and builds communities — while remaining continuously measured, personally sorted and, in an economic sense, part of what is sold. Both halves of that sentence have to be in an answer for the description to be accurate.

*Band descriptors (out of 10):*

- **High (8–10):** **four or more** characteristics named in study-design language and defined precisely; specific evidence for each drawn from one platform or form; the consumer/producer/product triad handled with a single action showing simultaneity; at least one characteristic genuinely qualified (participation gap, situated engagement, or “new” as a relationship rather than a date); consistent, accurate media language.
- **Mid (5–7):** three characteristics, at least one asserted rather than evidenced; the triad listed rather than shown working at once; qualification gestured at; evidence partly general.
- **Low (1–4):** describes the **platform’s features** instead of the audience’s characteristics; claims audiences “have all the power now”; the product role missing; no evidence tied to a named practice.

*Common errors:* **describing the technology instead of the audience** — the costliest error in this subtopic, and the reason to make the audience the subject of every sentence; omitting the **product** role, which is the hardest of the three and therefore the most heavily rewarded; treating “new media audience” as a synonym for “young people”; asserting that everyone is a creator without acknowledging the participation gap; naming characteristics with no evidence attached to a specific practice.

## Chapter 12 New media technologies and new media audiences — 12C Audience interaction and engagement across converging media forms

### Theory

**12A** sets out the nature and forms of new media technologies, and **12B** sets out the characteristics of the audiences those technologies produced. This subtopic takes the Area of Study's third dot point: *the ways audiences interact and engage with the media as a result of the growth of technologies across media forms*, and its matching skill, *explain the ways audiences interact and engage with the media as a result of the growth of technologies across media forms*.

Read the dot point slowly, because it contains four separate demands and most weak answers drop two of them.

- **The ways** — plural, and specific. The answer is a set of named audience behaviours, not the single word “interactive”.
- **Interact and engage** — two different things. An answer that treats them as synonyms has answered half the dot point.
- **As a result of the growth of technologies** — this is a *causal* claim. You must show the mechanism running from a technology to a behaviour, not simply note that both exist.
- **Across media forms** — not in one form. The interaction runs across moving image, still image, audio, print, digital and convergent products, often around a single narrative at the same time.

The key skill verb is **explain**, and in this study explain means a chain: *this technology* → *this possibility* → *this audience behaviour* → *this change in the audience's relationship with the product*. A list is not an explanation.

### **Interaction and engagement are not the same thing**

**Audience interaction** is any audience action that a media product, producer, platform or other audience member can receive, register or respond to. It is *observable* and it *goes somewhere*: a vote is counted, a comment appears, a share travels, a skip is logged.

**Audience engagement** is the audience's investment in a media product — the attention, thought, emotion, time and identification they give it, and the relationship they form with it. Engagement is *internal*. It cannot be seen directly; it can only be inferred from what an audience does.

The relationship between the two is real but loose, and the four combinations are all common.

|                  | High engagement                                                                                            | Low engagement                                                              |
|------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| High interaction | A listener who has followed a podcast for four years, posts in its forum and brings friends to a live show | A viewer who angrily comments on a post they did not read and never returns |
| Low interaction  | A viewer who watches an entire series in silence, thinks about it for a week, and never posts              | A phone left playing a video in an empty room                               |

Two disciplines follow. First, **never treat an interaction count as an engagement measurement**. Interaction is *evidence about* engagement, and it is partial, self-selecting evidence. Second, when a question asks about engagement, name what the audience is investing — attention, feeling, time, belonging, identity — and not just what they clicked.

### **Convergence is the condition, not the answer**

**Convergence** is the coming together of previously separate media forms, technologies, industries and audience practices into products and devices that combine them. A single glass rectangle now delivers moving image, still image, audio, print and interactive media, and the same device is also the audience's camera, printing press, distribution network and mailbox.

Convergence matters here for one reason: **it removed the gap between consuming a media product and acting on it**. Under scheduled broadcast and printed distribution, an audience's response had to travel by a different route from the product — a letter to an editor, a talkback call, a ratings diary, a conversation at work — and it arrived days later, in small numbers, through a channel the producer controlled. When the product and the response run on the same device, on the same network, in the same second, the audience's reply becomes instant, cheap, public, permanent and countable. Every change described below follows from that single collapse.

**Naming discipline.** “Technology” is not an explanation and neither is “the internet”. Name the specific technology or feature — the recommendation feed, the comment thread, the push notification, the in-app vote, the live chat, the share button, the second screen, the always-on mobile connection — and then say what it made possible.

### ***The seven ways audiences interact***

The study design's dot point asks for *the ways*. These seven cover the field. A strong answer names the mode, gives a specific instance, and says which media form it happens in.

| Mode                                      | What the audience does                                                                                                           | Where it shows across forms                                                                    | What the producer receives                              |
|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1 Selection and control</b>            | Chooses, searches, pauses, rewinds, skips, changes speed, turns on captions, binges, abandons                                    | On-demand moving image and audio; scrollable print and digital; game difficulty settings       | Completion rates, drop-off points, playback settings    |
| <b>2 Response and feedback</b>            | Likes, rates, reviews, comments, answers a poll, votes, replies to a push notification                                           | Every form with a digital surface, including print mastheads' online editions                  | Ratings, comment text, vote tallies, complaint volume   |
| <b>3 Circulation</b>                      | Shares, reposts, links, recommends, screenshots, clips, curates a playlist or feed                                               | Any form, once it is digitised — an audio clip travels as a video, a print article as an image | Referral traffic, reach the producer did not buy        |
| <b>4 Creation and co-creation</b>         | Makes response videos, remixes, fan fiction, memes, reviews, mods, subtitles, cover art                                          | Audience-made products cross forms freely: a print recipe becomes a short video                | New products the producer did not commission            |
| <b>5 Participation in the text</b>        | Chooses a branch, votes on an outcome, plays, moves through an immersive space, joins a live stream                              | Interactive narrative, games, live events, virtual and augmented reality, 360-degree video     | Decisions that alter what the product does              |
| <b>6 Affiliation and community</b>        | Joins a group chat, forum or server; attends a watch-along; follows a creator; argues with other fans                            | Runs alongside every form; the community is usually in a different form from the product       | An audience that holds itself together between releases |
| <b>7 Behavioural and data interaction</b> | Watches, scrolls, hovers, lingers, leaves something playing — without meaning to communicate anything or to instruct the product | Every connected form                                                                           | Watch time, scroll depth, dwell time, a profile         |

Three cuts across that table are worth making explicitly.

**Deliberate versus behavioural.** Modes 1–6 are things an audience *chooses* to do and knows it is doing. Mode 7 is interaction the audience does not experience as interaction at all. It is nevertheless the most consequential mode

commercially, because it is complete — every member of the audience produces it — while modes 2–5 are produced by a small minority.

Keep the audience's act separate from the producer's record of it, because a single act is usually both. Stopping an episode is a deliberate mode 1 control action; the drop-off point the platform stores is mode 7 data. So is the record of a skip, a rewind or a caption setting — the table's second column is the audience's act, its fourth is what the system kept. **Classify by what the audience did, not by what was logged:** an act is mode 7 only when the audience gave the product no instruction and sent no message, and simply being present generated the data.

**Synchronous versus asynchronous.** **Synchronous** interaction happens live and with others present: a live chat during a stream, a real-time vote, a watch-along. **Asynchronous** interaction happens on the audience's own schedule: a comment left at midnight, a review posted a year later. Synchronous interaction produces the strongest sense of shared event; asynchronous interaction produces the larger volume.

**With the product versus with each other.** Modes 2 and 5 point at the producer. Modes 3, 4 and 6 point sideways, at other audience members. The sideways interactions are the ones that keep an audience alive between releases, and they are the ones the producer controls least.

### ***Consumer, producer and product — often at once***

The Area of Study says that audiences are media consumers, producers and products, often simultaneously. The seven modes are where that happens, and mapping them makes the claim concrete rather than slogan-like.

- As **consumers**, audiences use modes 1 and 2 — they select, control and respond to a product someone else made.
- As **producers**, audiences use modes 3 and 4 — they distribute and create, doing work that used to belong to a distributor or a commissioned maker.
- As **products**, audiences generate mode 7 — behavioural data that is aggregated into a profile and sold to advertisers, or used to decide what gets commissioned next.

A single viewer watching a drama on a subscription service, texting a friend a clip of it, and generating a completion record that helps decide whether it is renewed, is doing all three inside one evening. **12B** takes the characteristics of this audience; the point here is that the three roles are performed *through the modes of interaction*, which is why the modes are worth naming.

### ***What the growth of technologies did to engagement***

Interaction changed what audiences *do*. The same technologies changed the *quality* of their engagement in five ways.

- **Participatory engagement.** When an audience's contribution appears inside or beside the product, the audience is invested as a *contributor* rather than a recipient. Ownership is the strongest attachment a producer can obtain, and it is bought by giving up a little control.
- **Immersive engagement.** Virtual and augmented reality, 360-degree video, spatial audio and the first-person address of hand-held vertical video reduce the audience's sense of a frame between themselves and the material. Immersion raises intensity and lowers critical distance — which is why immersive forms are used for both empathy documentaries and advertising.
- **Personalised engagement.** A recommendation feed assembled from mode 7 data means no two members of an audience necessarily see the same product, in the same order, with the same framing. The audience for a product is now assembled by a system rather than by a schedule.
- **Continuous engagement.** Scheduled broadcast released audiences between episodes. Push notifications, always-on mobile connection, creator posts between releases and a comment thread that never closes mean engagement now has no natural end point. Producers plan for it: the gap between seasons is filled precisely so the audience does not disperse.
- **Social and parasocial engagement.** Much contemporary engagement is with *other audience members* and *with the creator as a person* rather than with the product. A **parasocial relationship** — the one-sided sense of knowing and being known by a media figure the audience has never met — is not new, but reply features, direct messages and daily posting have made it far denser. It is why a creator's audience will follow them to a new platform and a broadcaster's audience often will not.

## How to explain the causal chain — the house method

The key skill is *explain*, so build every answer in these five moves. Take the first four always; add the fifth when the marks allow.

1. **Name the technology or the convergence** — specifically. “The in-app live vote”, not “digital technology”.
2. **Name the affordance.** An **affordance** is what a technology makes possible, cheap, fast or easy — the bridge between a device and a behaviour. This move is the one that is usually missing.
3. **Name the interaction.** A specific audience action, in a named mode and a named media form.
4. **Say what happened to engagement.** What the audience now invests, feels, belongs to or expects.
5. **Say who gains and who bears the cost.** Producer, platform, audience — usually not the same party.

**Technology enables; it does not compel.** The commonest fault in this dot point is technological determinism — writing as though a device produced a behaviour by itself. Audiences adopted some affordances enthusiastically, ignored others completely, and used several against their designers’ intentions. A complete explanation says what the technology made possible *and* why audiences took it up.

## Institutions design interaction on purpose

The Area of Study notes that media industries and institutions have adopted and adapted aspects of convergence to build and maintain audience share through new forms of interaction. Interaction is not simply something audiences discovered; it is **built into products as a retention strategy**.

What producers design in, and why:

| Designed interaction                                            | What the producer is buying                                                        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Hashtag, official account, live post during broadcast           | Free circulation (mode 3) and a synchronous audience for a scheduled event         |
| Companion app, in-broadcast vote, live leaderboard              | A reason to watch live, which protects advertising value against on-demand viewing |
| Comment prompt, pinned question, creator replies                | Community (mode 6) that survives between releases                                  |
| Autoplay, next-episode countdown, personalised feed             | Continuous mode 1 and 7 interaction, and the watch-time figures that follow        |
| Fan-art callouts, remix-friendly licensing, official clip tools | Mode 4 creation, which produces marketing the producer did not pay for             |
| Login, profile, watchlist, subscription                         | Identified mode 7 data, which is what makes the audience saleable                  |

The audience is not being tricked in any of this — it gets real things in exchange: access, control, community, recognition and a say. But an exchange has two sides, and a Unit 2 answer should be able to state both.

## Five limits worth knowing

- **Participation is unequal.** In almost every audience, the great majority consume without contributing, a small minority respond, and a very small minority create. This is often called **participation inequality**. It means comment threads, reviews and forums are a self-selected sample, weighted towards the most motivated — usually the most enthusiastic and the most annoyed.
- **Interactivity is not agency.** Choosing between four endings a writer wrote is participation inside a structure someone else built. The audience selects; it does not author. A useful test: *could the audience produce an outcome the producer did not anticipate?* If not, the interaction is real but its limits should be stated.
- **Interaction is unpaid work.** Audiences now perform distribution, promotion, translation, moderation and customer support that media organisations once paid for. Calling this “participation” and calling it “free labour” are both accurate; a good answer notices the tension.
- **Access is not evenly distributed.** Interaction requires a device, data, connection quality, time, confidence and accessible design, and regional connectivity, cost, age and disability all shape who can take part. Captioning is the clearest example: for free-to-air and subscription television in Australia, captioning obligations sit in Part

9D of the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* (Cth), while for online-only products captioning is largely a producer’s choice — so the same narrative can be accessible in one form and not in another.

- **Interaction is bounded by law, not only by design.** What an audience may do with other people’s material, what a platform may keep about them, and in some cases who may hold an account at all are set by Australian law rather than by the product’s interface — so an interaction that a feature makes possible is not automatically one that is permitted. Name the boundary when it bears on your answer; the instruments themselves are **13C**’s material.

**Looking ahead.** **13A** and **13B** take the influence of technological development on individuals, audiences, industries and institutions, and **13C** takes the social, ethical and legal issues arising in the industry, including the Australian instruments that set the limits just named. At Units 3 & 4 the same territory returns as a question about agency and control in and of the media.

## Worked examples

### Example 1 — scaffolded

**Explain how the growth of technologies has changed the ways audiences interact with a regional news masthead. (6 marks)**

**Stimulus.** *The Barrowvale Recorder* is a regional newspaper in western Victoria.

**1998.** Printed twice weekly. Readers respond by posting or dropping in a letter to the editor; about six are printed each week, chosen by the editor. The paper knows its circulation figure and nothing else about who reads what.

**2025.** Print edition retained. A website carries every story; a free app sends push notifications; each story has a comment thread and a one-tap reaction; court and council rounds run as live blogs; the newsroom posts short vertical videos of the same stories to Loomstack, and readers send photographs and footage through the app. The newsroom’s dashboard shows, per story, how many people opened it, how far down they read and where they stopped.

| Working                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Comment                                                                                                                                                  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| In 1998 the <i>Recorder</i> was a print product with one interaction channel. A reader could write a letter — an asynchronous mode 2 response that took days, cost a stamp, and reached other readers only if the editor selected it for printing.                                                                                                                    | Move 1 in reverse: establish the pre-existing state first, because “changed” needs a before. Note the three costs: time, money and editorial permission. |
| The technologies that grew around the masthead are specific: a website, a mobile app with push notifications, comment threads, a live-blogging tool, a short-video platform account and an analytics dashboard.                                                                                                                                                       | Move 1. Name the technologies. “It went online” would forfeit the mark.                                                                                  |
| Their affordance is the removal of those three costs. Response is now immediate, free, and published without an editor deciding first.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Move 2 — the affordance. This is the sentence that turns a list of technologies into an explanation.                                                     |
| The interactions this produced run across several modes. Readers now respond directly under the story (mode 2); circulate stories to people the paper never reached (mode 3); supply photographs and footage through the app, so they are producing content for the masthead (mode 4); and follow a court round live, refreshing as it updates (mode 5, synchronous). | Move 3. Named modes, named instances, and the shift from one channel to four.                                                                            |
| The paper also now receives interaction from every reader whether they intend it or not: opens, scroll depth and stopping points are logged for each story (mode 7), where in 1998 it knew only a circulation total.                                                                                                                                                  | The behavioural mode is the largest single change and the one students most often omit.                                                                  |
| Engagement has changed in kind, not only in volume.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Move 4. Engagement in the terms set out in Theory —                                                                                                      |

| Working                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Comment                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The live blog makes a council meeting a shared event rather than a report read the next morning; the comment thread means readers are also engaging with each other, so the masthead becomes a place as well as a publication; and push notifications mean the <i>Recorder</i> now enters a reader's day rather than waiting for it.                                        | synchronous event, community, continuity.                                           |
| The gains are not one-sided. The newsroom gets reach it did not buy, story-level evidence of what is read, and free source material; readers get immediacy, a public voice and a route into the paper. The costs are that the loudest readers are now the most visible, moderation is a new and unfunded job, and stories that measure well may crowd out ones that matter. | Move 5. Both sides, and the participation-inequality limit named without a lecture. |

**Takeaway.** “Changed” answers need a before, a named technology, the affordance in the middle, and the specific behaviour it produced — in that order.

### Example 2 — scaffolded

**Explain why the increase in interaction shown below does not by itself demonstrate an increase in audience engagement. (6 marks)**

**Stimulus.** Dilan Voss makes a short cooking series on Loomstack. After changing the format in March, Voss reports the following month-on-month figures.

| Measure                                         | February | April     |
|-------------------------------------------------|----------|-----------|
| Views                                           | 410,000  | 1,240,000 |
| Average percentage of each video watched        | 78%      | 26%       |
| Comments                                        | 2,100    | 11,800    |
| Comments containing a question about the recipe | 1,500    | 900       |
| Shares                                          | 3,400    | 22,600    |
| Followers gained                                | 9,000    | 4,100     |

| Working                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Comment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Interaction has risen sharply on three measures: views are up threefold, comments more than fivefold, shares more than sixfold. Taken alone, these are mode 1, 2 and 3 increases.                                                                                     | State the case for the claim first. An answer that only attacks the data has not read it.                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Engagement, however, is what an audience invests, and the investment measures have all fallen. Average watched has dropped from 78% to 26%, so a video that used to hold its audience for more than three-quarters of its length now holds them for barely a quarter. | The key move: separate the volume measures from the depth measures. Completion is the closest thing here to a direct engagement indicator. Note that an average is not a typical viewer — it is equally consistent with most viewers leaving at once and a few watching it all. |
| The composition of the comments has changed as well. Recipe questions — comments from someone intending to cook the dish — have fallen from 1,500 to 900 even as total comments rose to 11,800. The extra comments are therefore not extra cooks.                     | Read the <i>kind</i> of interaction, not the count. This is the highest-value observation available in the table.                                                                                                                                                               |
| Followers gained has more than halved. Following is the interaction that indicates an intention to return, so the audience arriving in April is markedly less likely to come back.                                                                                    | Distinguish interactions that indicate ongoing relationship from interactions that indicate a single encounter.                                                                                                                                                                 |

| Measure | February                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | April                                                                                                |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|         | A consistent explanation is that the March format change made the videos more shareable but less useful: they now travel well to people who watch a few seconds and pass them on, and they hold the cooking audience less well. High shares with low completion is the signature of circulation without investment. | Offer a mechanism. An explanation must account for the whole pattern, not just note a contradiction. |
|         | The safe conclusion is that Voss's <i>reach</i> has grown and <i>engagement per viewer</i> has fallen. Whether that is a success depends on what the account is for: it is good news for an advertising rate, and bad news for a cooking audience.                                                                  | Land the judgement, and make it conditional on purpose.                                              |

**Takeaway.** Volume measures reach; depth, composition and return measure engagement. Always read at least one of each before drawing a conclusion.

### Example 3 — unscaffolded

**Discuss how a media institution builds and maintains audience share through new forms of interaction. (8 marks)**

**Stimulus.** *Second Harvest* (2025) is a cooking competition on the subscription streaming service Sablebrook+. Episodes drop weekly rather than all at once. A companion app runs a live vote during the final ten minutes of each episode, and the result decides which of two dishes goes through. The app also carries recipes, a leaderboard and a “cook along” timer. Sablebrook+ posts a ninety-second clip from each episode to Loomstack within an hour, tagged with an official hashtag, and the show’s judges answer viewer questions in a live stream the following night. Viewers who upload a photograph of their own attempt at the week’s dish may have it shown on air.

### Model response (8 marks).

Sablebrook+ has designed *Second Harvest* so that interaction is not a by-product of the program but part of its structure, and every designed interaction is doing identifiable commercial work.

The most consequential decision is the weekly release. On-demand delivery gave audiences mode 1 control — watch anything, in any order, at any time — and the cost to a producer is that an audience never assembles at the same moment and therefore never forms a synchronous crowd. Releasing weekly deliberately gives some of that control back, and the live in-app vote makes attendance worth something: a viewer who waits until Saturday cannot affect the outcome. The affordance being used is the second screen — an audience already holding a phone while watching — and the interaction it produces is mode 5, participation in the text itself. Engagement changes accordingly: the audience is not watching a result, it is producing one, and a viewer who voted has a stake in an outcome a viewer who did not vote merely observes.

The material posted outward does different work. The ninety-second clip on Loomstack, published within the hour, is built for mode 3 circulation: it is short enough to be shared before the conversation moves on, and it reaches people who do not subscribe to Sablebrook+ at all. The official hashtag lets that circulation be gathered and counted, converting scattered audience talk into a visible trend. This is audience distribution — reach the service did not buy, produced by viewers acting as circulators.

The judges’ live stream and the on-air use of viewers’ own photographs are aimed at modes 6 and 4. The live stream gives the audience a synchronous event on a night the program does not air, which extends engagement across the whole week rather than concentrating it in one hour. Inviting viewers to cook the dish and upload the result converts consumption into creation, and putting a viewer’s photograph on air rewards it publicly — recognition is a powerful incentive, and it costs the producer nothing. The “cook along” timer is the same logic applied to the moment of viewing: an audience doing something physical with the program is investing more than an audience watching it.

Underneath all of this runs mode 7. The app requires a login, so votes, recipe views, timer use and upload activity attach to identified accounts, and the weekly release produces a clean weekly retention curve. That data is what tells Sablebrook+ whether the format is holding its audience and whether to commission a second series.

Two qualifications belong in the answer. First, the participation is bounded: the vote chooses between two dishes the producers selected, so the audience decides an outcome inside a structure it did not build — interactivity, not authorship. Second, the visible audience is not the audience. Voting, uploading and posting are done by a motivated minority, and if Sablebrook+ reads the leaderboard and the hashtag as the audience's view, it is reading its most enthusiastic viewers and calling them everyone.

#### **Example 4 — unscaffolded**

**Discuss what a media producer can and cannot learn about their audience from the interactions they receive. (8 marks)**

**Stimulus.** Quernstone Games released *Foldwater* (2024), a puzzle game with a story told through letters the player finds. It has 1.2 million players. The studio's official forum has 8,400 registered users, of whom about 900 have ever posted. Forum threads complained persistently that the letters were too slow to read, and in a 2025 update Quernstone halved their length. Player numbers then fell. A survey emailed to a random sample of 5,000 players — 1,100 of whom responded — found that the letters were the most frequently named reason people had kept playing, and that 71 per cent of respondents had never visited the forum.

#### **Model response (8 marks).**

What Quernstone received was real information, honestly reported, about the wrong group of people — and the case is a clean illustration of what audience interaction can and cannot tell a producer.

Start with what the forum genuinely proved. Nine hundred posting users is a substantial, articulate body of evidence, and the complaint was persistent rather than a single flare-up. Interaction of this kind gives a producer things no other source does: it is unprompted, so nobody put the idea in the audience's head; it is specific, naming an element of the product rather than a general impression; and it is free and continuous, arriving without a research budget. Quernstone was right to treat it as data.

What it could not tell them is how widely the view was held. Nine hundred posters out of 1.2 million players is under a tenth of a per cent, and the survey later showed that 71 per cent of respondents had never visited the forum at all. This is participation inequality, and it is not a flaw in Quernstone's forum — it is the normal shape of every audience. The people who interact are the people motivated to interact, and impatience is a strong motivator. The players for whom the slow letters were the point had no reason to post; satisfaction is quiet.

The second thing the forum could not tell them is what the complaint meant. "Too slow to read" is a description of an experience, not a diagnosis, and the studio treated it as a design instruction. The survey suggests the slowness was doing the work — the letters were the most frequently named reason people kept playing — so the element that generated the loudest objection was also the element carrying the engagement. Interaction reports a symptom; it does not diagnose a cause, and the two are frequently opposites.

Third, the forum could not report the audience that had already left, or the audience that never arrived. Interaction is only ever collected from people currently present and willing to speak.

The methodological contrast is the point of the case. The forum is self-selected, unprompted and qualitative; the survey was randomly sampled, prompted and quantitative. Neither is superior in the abstract — the forum found the issue and the survey sized it — but only the survey could support a decision about what most players wanted, and Quernstone changed the product on the source that could not. Two things follow for a producer: read behavioural interaction (mode 7) alongside expressed interaction (mode 2), because completion and playing time come from everybody while comments come from a minority; and when expressed interaction is strong enough to prompt a change, test it against a source that includes the silent audience first.

**Takeaway.** The audience you can hear is never the audience you have; every conclusion drawn from interaction needs to state which of the two it is about.

## Practice questions

### Scaffolded

**Q1. (2 marks)** (a) Define **audience interaction**. (1 mark) (b) Define **audience engagement**. (1 mark)

**Q2. (2 marks)** Name one **deliberate** and one **behavioural** way an audience interacts with a media product, and for each state how it reaches the producer.

**Q3. (3 marks)** Distinguish between the following, in one sentence each.

- (a) interaction and engagement (1 mark)
- (b) interactivity and agency (1 mark)
- (c) synchronous and asynchronous interaction (1 mark)

**Q4. (4 marks)** Classify each audience behaviour below under one of the seven modes of interaction, and give a one-line reason.

- (a) A listener clips forty seconds of a podcast and sends it to a group chat.
- (b) A reader turns on captions and watches a news video at 1.5 times speed.
- (c) A player writes an alternative ending to a game's story and posts it to a fan site.
- (d) A reader scrolls a news app for eleven minutes, lingering on three stories far longer than on the rest, and taps nothing.

**Q5. (4 marks)** For each technology below, name the affordance it provides and one audience interaction that affordance produced.

- (a) the push notification (2 marks)
- (b) the smartphone camera with direct upload (2 marks)

**Q6. (5 marks)** The photographer Ines Quarrow releases her series *Nightshift* (2025) in four forms.

| Form               | How it is released                          | What the audience can do                               |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Gallery exhibition | 40 prints, six weeks, one city              | Attend; write in a visitors' book                      |
| Printed book       | 200 pages, bookshops and online             | Read; lend; review online                              |
| Online gallery     | All 40 images, free, with a caption each    | View; zoom; share a link; comment                      |
| Loomstack account  | One image posted daily with a short caption | Like; comment; share; reply to others; message Quarrow |

- (a) Identify two ways the audience's interaction differs between the exhibition and the Loomstack account. (2 marks)
- (b) State one thing Quarrow's engagement with her audience gains from releasing across four forms rather than one. (1 mark)
- (c) Explain one risk of the Loomstack release for the way the images are read. (2 marks)

**Q7. (5 marks)** A viewer signs in to a subscription streaming service, watches two episodes of a drama, abandons a third series after four minutes, and adds a film to a watchlist without playing it. The next time they open the service, the top row of the home screen has changed.

- (a) Identify two of this viewer's behaviours that the service registers as interaction, and state what each tells it. (2 marks)
- (b) Explain how this loop changes the viewer's engagement with the service, and name one consequence for the audience. (3 marks)

## Un scaffolded

- Q8.** Identify one interaction an audience can perform with a convergent media product that they could not perform with the same narrative delivered as a scheduled broadcast, and state what it gives the audience. (2 marks)
- Q9.** Outline how the growth of technologies has changed *where* an audience's interaction about a single narrative takes place. (3 marks)
- Q10.** Outline the difference between an audience interacting with a media product and an audience interacting with each other about it, and state why producers care about the second. (3 marks)
- Q11.** Describe how the shift from scheduled delivery to on-demand delivery changed the ways audiences interact with a moving-image narrative. Refer to at least three specific interactions. (4 marks)
- Q12.** Describe how a media producer converts audience interaction into information they can act on. Refer to at least three specific interactions and what each is used to decide. (4 marks)
- Q13.** Explain why audiences circulate media products to other people, and what a producer gains and loses when a share of their distribution passes to the audience. (5 marks)
- Q14.** Explain how a technology's *affordance*, rather than the technology itself, produces a new form of audience interaction. Refer to one specific technology throughout. (5 marks)
- Q15.** Read the stimulus, then discuss whether an interactive narrative of this kind gives its audience real control over the narrative. (6 marks)

**Stimulus.** *The Ninth Carriage* (2025) is an interactive drama on Sablebrook+. At six points the viewer has ten seconds to choose between two on-screen options. The choices lead to one of four endings, all written, shot and edited before release. If the viewer does not choose, the drama continues on a default path. Sablebrook+ publishes the percentage of viewers who reached each ending.

- Q16.** Read the stimulus, then discuss how the platform's changes alter the ways its audience interacts and engages. (6 marks)

**Stimulus.** Loomstack announces three changes. Videos will now autoplay one after another with no action from the viewer. Like counts will be visible to the account holder but hidden from everyone else. Comment threads will be ordered by the number of replies a comment attracts rather than by the time it was posted.

- Q17.** Explain the ways audiences interact and engage with a media narrative across **two different media forms**. Refer to a media narrative you have studied this year, or one described in this subtopic, and to specific interactions in each form. (8 marks)
- Q18.** Read the stimulus, then explain how the ways Hollowbeam's audience interacts and engages have changed as a result of the growth of technologies across media forms. (10 marks)

**Stimulus.** Hollowbeam Audio is a small Melbourne podcast producer. Its interview series is hosted by Marnie Threadgold.

**2016.** Audio only, released fortnightly through a podcast feed. Listeners respond by emailing the show; about twelve emails arrive a week. Hollowbeam knows how many times each episode was downloaded, and nothing else.

**2020.** Video versions of each episode are posted to a streaming platform, and thirty-second vertical clips go to Loomstack. Listeners comment under both. A weekly newsletter carries a reader question, and a chat server is set up by listeners themselves — not by Hollowbeam — and grows to 4,000 members.

**2025.** Threadgold posts daily to Loomstack between episodes. Paying members get an ad-free feed, a monthly live-streamed recording they can type questions into, and access to the chat server's members-only channels. Hollowbeam's dashboard shows, per episode and per platform, how long the average listener stayed and where they stopped. A listener-made clip of a 2019 episode was shared 90,000 times in 2024 and produced more new subscribers in a fortnight than any episode Hollowbeam has released.

- Q19.** "Every new way of interacting with the media is also a new way of being measured by it."

Discuss this statement in relation to the ways audiences interact and engage with the media as a result of the growth of technologies across media forms. Refer to at least two specific media forms. (10 marks)

---

## Answers

**Q1. (2 marks.)** (a) Any audience action that a media product, producer, platform or other audience member can receive, register or respond to. (b) The audience's investment in a media product — the attention, thought, emotion, time and identification given to it, and the relationship formed with it.

**Q2. (2 marks.)** Deliberate — any of comment, like, rating, review, vote, share, upload, subscribe, join a forum; reaches the producer as a countable action or a piece of text they can read. Behavioural — any of how long they watch, how far down they scroll, which items they linger on, whether they let a video play out; reaches the producer as logged data the audience did not intend to send. Accept a deliberate control action (skipping, abandoning) only if the answer names the *record* of it, not the act, as the behavioural half.

**Q3. (3 marks.)** (a) Interaction is an observable audience action that goes somewhere; engagement is the internal investment of attention, emotion and time, which can only be inferred. (b) Interactivity is the ability to act within a structure someone else built; agency is the ability to produce an outcome the producer did not author. (c) Synchronous interaction happens live and with others present; asynchronous interaction happens on the audience's own schedule, at any later time.

**Q4. (4 marks.)** (a) Circulation (mode 3) — the audience is distributing the product. (b) Selection and control (mode 1) — controlling how the product is delivered, not responding to it. (c) Creation (mode 4) — the audience has made a new product from the original. (d) Behavioural/data (mode 7) — the reader gave the app no instruction and sent no message, but scroll depth and dwell time are logged for every story passed.

**Q5. (4 marks.)** (a) Affordance: the producer can reach the audience directly on a device they carry, at a moment the producer chooses, without the audience seeking the product out. Interaction: opening a story or episode on prompt, or replying to a live alert — engagement becomes continuous rather than scheduled. (b) Affordance: an audience member can capture and publish broadcast-quality material in seconds at no cost. Interaction: sending footage or photographs to a newsroom, or making response and remix content (mode 4).

**Q6. (5 marks.)** (a) Any two of: the exhibition is synchronous, single-location and requires attendance, Loomstack is asynchronous and open; the visitors' book is private and read only by Quarrow, comments are public and read by other audience members; Loomstack allows audience-to-audience interaction and direct messaging, the exhibition does not; Loomstack allows circulation, prints cannot be shared. (b) Any one of: reach into audiences who will not attend a gallery; repeated contact — the audience returns daily rather than making one visit, and the account stays open after the exhibition closes; audience-to-audience community; direct feedback. (c) The daily single image separates each photograph from the sequence, so the series is read one image at a time and the relationships between images are lost; the platform's own conventions (crop, scroll speed, adjacent content) also frame how the image is read.

**Q7. (5 marks.)** (a) Any two of: completing two episodes (interest confirmed by behaviour); abandoning a series after four minutes (a negative signal, and a stronger one than not starting it); adding a film to a watchlist without playing it (declared intention without behaviour); signing in (attaches all of it to an identified profile). (b) The home screen is now assembled from the viewer's own behaviour, so selection becomes easier and faster, viewing time rises and the service feels personally suited to them. Consequence: the audience's field of choice narrows to what its past behaviour predicts, no two viewers see the same service, and the viewer is being measured continuously as the price of the convenience.

**Q8. (2 marks.)** Any one of: pause, rewind, change speed, choose the order, comment under it, share it, respond to it publicly, vote on an outcome, join a live chat about it. What it gives: control over when and how the narrative is consumed, or a public voice about it that reaches the producer and other audience members.

**Q9. (3 marks.)** Interaction has moved off the producer's channel and onto the audience's. It used to occur where the producer allowed it (letters page, talkback line, ratings panel) and appear only if selected. It now happens simultaneously in several forms at once — a second screen during viewing, a comment thread, a group chat, a short-video platform — most of them outside the producer's control and often in a different media form from the product itself.

**Q10. (3 marks.)** Interaction *with the product* is directed at the producer and is countable by them — votes, comments, ratings, completion. Interaction *with each other* is audience-to-audience — forums, group chats, watch-alongs, fan

creation — and largely happens beyond the producer's reach. Producers care because audience-to-audience interaction sustains engagement between releases, does distribution and promotion the producer has not paid for, and holds the audience together when there is no product to consume.

**Q11. (4 marks.)** Must describe at least three of: choosing what to watch and in what order rather than accepting a schedule; pausing, rewinding, changing speed and enabling captions; binge-viewing an entire season, which changes pacing and the between-episode gap; abandoning mid-episode, which is logged; searching and browsing a catalogue instead of a channel; and the loss of the synchronous audience — everyone no longer watches at once, so shared live interaction must now be engineered.

**Q12. (4 marks.)** Three of: completion and drop-off points (whether to recommission, where to re-edit); comment and review text (what the audience objects to or wants); vote and poll results (what a live segment does next); shares and referral traffic (which material to promote and where); watchlist and subscription data (what to commission next); A/B tested thumbnails or headlines (which framing to publish). Each must be paired with a decision.

**Q13. (5 marks.)** Reasons audiences circulate: to express identity and taste; to maintain a relationship by giving someone something; to take part in a shared conversation; to gain status for finding it first; to support a creator. Producer gains: reach and credibility that cannot be bought, because a recommendation from a person is trusted more than an advertisement, at no distribution cost. Producer loses: control of context, framing and timing — the product travels as a clip, out of order, next to material the producer did not choose, and can be recirculated years later or reframed to mean something the producer did not intend.

**Q14. (5 marks.)** Must define affordance (what the technology makes possible, cheap, fast or easy) and run one technology through the chain: technology → affordance → interaction → engagement, with the point that the same technology could have produced different behaviour, and did not act by itself. Must reject technological determinism explicitly: audiences adopted some affordances, ignored others, and used some against their designers' intentions.

**Q15. (6 marks.)** Position required, either way, but the following must appear: the viewer chooses within a closed set — two options, six times, four endings, all authored and shot before release; no viewer can produce an outcome Sablebrook+ did not write; the ten-second timer and the default path mean inaction is also a choice the producer scripted; the published ending percentages turn the choice into data. What the viewer does gain: real consequence within the structure, ownership of the ending they reached, a reason to re-watch, and a stronger engagement than passive viewing. Conclusion: genuine interactivity, bounded participation, not authorship or agency.

**Q16. (6 marks.)** Autoplay: removes a mode 1 decision, so viewing continues by default and watch time rises while deliberate selection falls — engagement becomes more continuous but shallower and less chosen. Hidden like counts: removes the social proof that tells audiences what to value before viewing, so judgements become more independent, comparison and status competition between creators fall, and the producer keeps the data while the audience loses it. Reply-ranked comments: rewards comments that provoke replies rather than recent or considered ones, pushing threads towards argument and towards audience-to-audience interaction, and giving early controversial comments long visibility. Must also note that the platform, not the producer or audience, has changed the behaviour of both.

**Q17. (8 marks.)** Must contain: a named narrative and two clearly different media forms; at least two specific interactions in each form, named by mode; how the interaction differs *because* the form differs; what each form contributes to engagement (immersion, community, continuity, participation, personalisation); and a statement of how the two forms work together around one narrative — not two separate accounts side by side.

**Q18. (10 marks.)** Must trace the change across all three dates, not describe 2025 alone. 2016: one asynchronous, private, low-volume channel (email); one number (downloads). 2020: convergence into video and short-video forms; public comments; a newsletter question loop; and a listener-built chat server — community the producer neither created nor controls. 2025: continuous engagement via daily posting; paid membership converting engagement into revenue; synchronous live recordings with typed questions; episode-level and platform-level behavioural data; and audience distribution outperforming the producer's own. Must name affordances, not just technologies, and must address engagement (parasocial relationship with Threadgold, belonging, continuity) as well as interaction. Should note the costs: moderation, the expectation of constant availability, dependence on platforms, and a visible audience that is not the whole audience.

**Q19. (10 marks.)** Must contain: a position; the case for (every interaction is logged; behavioural interaction is complete where expressed interaction is partial; personalisation is built from measurement; audiences are

simultaneously consumers, producers and products, and the third role is produced by the measuring); the case against (audiences gained real, previously impossible capacities — voice, distribution, creation, community — and much interaction happens in places producers cannot measure, such as private chats; measurement is not the purpose of the interaction, it is its exhaust); at least two specific media forms with specific interactions; and a resolution that holds both — the capacities are real and the measurement is the price, and the two arrived on the same technologies.

---

## Fully-worked solutions

**Q1.** (a) **Audience interaction** is any audience action that a media product, producer, platform or other audience member can receive, register or respond to — it is observable and it travels somewhere. (b) **Audience engagement** is what an audience invests in a media product: attention, thought, emotion, time and identification, and the relationship that investment builds. Engagement is internal and can only be inferred from behaviour.

**Q2.** A **deliberate** interaction is one the audience knows it is performing — leaving a comment under a story, for example. It reaches the producer as a countable action and as text they can read. A **behavioural** interaction is one the audience does not experience as communication and does not perform as an instruction — lingering three times as long over one story in a feed as over the ones around it. It reaches the producer as dwell time in the platform's analytics, from a reader who did nothing they would call interacting. *Marker's note:* the second half of each mark is “how it reaches the producer”; naming the behaviour alone earns half.

**Q3.** (a) Interaction is what the audience *does* and can be counted; engagement is what the audience *invests* and must be inferred. (b) Interactivity is the capacity to act within a structure another party designed; agency is the capacity to produce an outcome that party did not author. (c) Synchronous interaction happens live, at the same time as others and as the product; asynchronous interaction happens whenever the audience chooses, after the fact.

**Q4.** (a) **Circulation (mode 3).** Clipping and sending is distribution — the listener is moving the product to an audience the producer did not reach. (b) **Selection and control (mode 1).** Both captions and playback speed control how the product is delivered; neither sends a message. (c) **Creation (mode 4).** A new product has been made from the original and published. (d) **Behavioural and data (mode 7).** The reader instructed nothing and communicated nothing — they simply read — yet scroll depth and dwell time were logged for every story they passed, and the three they lingered on tell the app more about their interests than a tap would. *Marker's note:* the reason carries the mark, not the label. Watch for the mode 1 trap: if the reader had skipped, paused or turned on captions, that would be a deliberate control action, and only the *record* of it would be mode 7.

**Q5.** (a) The **push notification's** affordance is that a producer can now reach an audience member directly, on a device they are carrying, at a moment of the producer's choosing, without waiting for the audience to come looking. The interaction it produces is prompted opening — a reader opens a story because it arrived, not because they went to the masthead — and the engagement effect is continuity: the product enters the audience's day rather than occupying a slot in it. (b) The **smartphone camera with direct upload** affords capture and publication in one movement, at no cost and with no gatekeeper. The interactions it produces are supply (sending footage and photographs to a newsroom or program) and creation (mode 4 response videos, remixes and reviews), which is the technical basis for audiences acting as producers as well as consumers.

**Q6.** (a) Two of the available differences: the exhibition requires physical attendance in one city during six weeks, so its interaction is synchronous and rationed, while the Loomstack account is open and asynchronous; the visitors' book is a private channel read only by Quarrow, while comments are public and are read by the rest of the audience, so Loomstack supports audience-to-audience interaction that the gallery does not; and Loomstack images can be circulated by the audience, whereas a print on a wall cannot leave the room. (b) Any one of: reach into audiences who will never attend a gallery; continuity — a daily post brings the audience back forty times where the exhibition asked for one visit, and the account remains a channel after the show comes down; a community that talks to itself; or direct, unfiltered feedback. (c) The daily single-image release separates each photograph from the sequence Quarrow built, so the audience reads forty individual images rather than one series, and the relationships between images — which in a photographic series carry much of the meaning — are not available. The platform also supplies its own framing: a crop, a scroll speed and whatever unrelated content sits above and below. *Marker's note:* “people might not look properly” is not the answer; the mark is for identifying that the *form of release* changes the reading.

**Q7.** (a) Any two, each with what it tells the service: completing two episodes confirms interest through behaviour rather than a stated preference; abandoning a third series after four minutes is a negative signal and a strong one, since the viewer sampled and rejected; adding a film to a watchlist without playing it records an intention that behaviour has not yet supported; and signing in attaches every one of these to an identified profile rather than a device. (b) The service reassembles its home screen from the viewer's own behaviour, so each visit begins with material selected by what they did last time. Selection gets faster and easier, less is rejected, and viewing time rises, which makes the service feel personally suited to the viewer — the engagement is with a service that appears to know them. The consequence is that the field of choice narrows to what past behaviour predicts: two subscribers now use materially different services, discovery outside the pattern becomes unlikely, and continuous measurement is the price of the convenience.

**Q8.** Any one of: pausing and rewinding; choosing the order of episodes; watching at a chosen time; commenting publicly under the narrative; sharing a clip; voting on an outcome; joining a live chat with other viewers. What it gives the audience: control over when and how they consume the narrative, or a public voice about it that reaches both the producer and the rest of the audience — neither of which a scheduled broadcast made available.

**Q9.** Interaction has moved off the producer's premises. Under scheduled broadcast and print, audience response occurred only in channels the producer owned and curated — a letters page, a talkback line, a ratings panel — and only a selected fraction was ever visible. It now happens on the audience's own devices and in the audience's own spaces: a second screen running during viewing, a comment thread beside the product, a private group chat, a short-video platform where the narrative is discussed in clips. Two consequences follow: the interaction is usually in a *different media form* from the product it is about, and most of it is beyond the producer's control and often beyond their sight.

**Q10.** Interaction *with the product* points at the producer — a vote, a rating, a comment under an episode, a completed view — and is countable by them. Interaction *with each other* points sideways — forums, group chats, watch-alongs, fan creation, argument — and mostly occurs in places the producer does not own. Producers care about the second because it does work they cannot do themselves: it sustains engagement in the weeks when there is no product to consume, it distributes and recommends the product to people advertising does not reach, and it converts an audience of individuals into a group with a reason to return together.

**Q11. Model response (4 marks).** On-demand delivery moved the moment of consumption from the producer's schedule to the audience's choice, and the interactions that followed are all consequences of that transfer.

The audience now **selects**: it searches and browses a catalogue rather than accepting a schedule, and it decides the order in which a narrative is consumed. It **controls delivery**: pausing, rewinding to re-watch a moment, changing playback speed and enabling captions are interactions a broadcast did not offer. It **binges**: a season consumed in two days removes the week-long gap the narrative was written around, changing how the audience holds plot information. And it **abandons** visibly — a viewer who stops at four minutes has told the producer something a viewer who switched off a television never did. The loss is the producer's: because nobody watches at the same time, the synchronous audience a broadcast produced automatically must now be manufactured deliberately, through weekly release, live events or in-app voting.

**Q12. Model response (4 marks).** Producers convert interaction into decisions by treating each kind of interaction as evidence about a different question.

**Completion and drop-off** answer “is it working, and where does it stop working” — a consistent exit at the same minute is used to re-edit a sequence, and season-level completion is used to decide a recommission. **Comment and review text** answers “what does the audience object to or want”, which shapes the next commission and the promotional framing, though it comes from a self-selected minority. **Shares and referral traffic** answer “what travels”, which decides which material is promoted and which platform gets the next clip. **Votes and polls** answer a question the producer has deliberately handed over, and the answer is acted on inside the program itself. **Subscription and watchlist data** answer “what will this audience commit to”, which is what a commissioning decision needs.

*Marker's note:* three interactions each tied to a decision earns full marks; three interactions listed without decisions earns half.

**Q13. Model response (5 marks).** Audiences circulate media products for reasons that are mostly about themselves rather than about the product. Sharing is self-presentation — what a person passes on says what they find funny,

important or true — so circulation is identity work. It is also relational: sending something to a specific person is a small gift that maintains a relationship. It buys participation in a conversation already running, and status for having found something first. And where audiences feel a relationship with a creator, sharing is support.

For the producer the gain is substantial and unbuyable. A recommendation carried by a person is trusted in a way advertising is not, it reaches people the producer's own distribution never touched, and it costs nothing. This is the audience performing distribution, and for small producers it is frequently the largest single source of new audience.

The loss is control. Once the audience distributes, the producer no longer decides the **context**, the **framing** or the **timing**. The product travels as a clip rather than whole, arrives out of order, and sits beside material the producer did not choose and would not have chosen. It can be recirculated years later into a situation it was not made for, or reframed to argue something it did not argue. The producer has traded editorial control over how the product is met for reach they could not otherwise obtain, and that trade cannot be made halfway.

**Q14. Model response (5 marks).** An **affordance** is what a technology makes possible, cheap, fast or easy — the step between owning a device and behaving differently. It matters because the technology alone explains nothing: the question is always what it made available and why audiences took it up.

Take the **comment thread published directly beneath a media product**. The technology is unremarkable; the affordance is what changed. Before it, an audience response had to travel by a separate route from the product, cost time and money, and be selected by an editor before anyone else saw it. The comment thread makes response instant, free, public, permanent and adjacent — it sits on the same page as the thing it is about.

The interactions that follow come from those properties. *Instant and free* produces volume, and volume from people who would never have written a letter. *Public* produces a second kind of interaction entirely: audiences reply to each other rather than to the producer, so a comment thread becomes a community space rather than a feedback channel. *Adjacent* means the response is now part of the product as encountered — a later reader meets the article and its argument together, and the thread frames how the article is read.

The engagement effect follows from the last of these: audiences engage with a product's discussion as much as with the product, and often return for the discussion alone. That the technology did not act by itself is shown by what audiences did with it — they turned a feedback mechanism into a public forum, which publishers did not intend and many have since closed comment threads to prevent. Technology enables; audiences decide.

**Q15. Model response (6 marks).** This format gives its audience genuine interactivity and very little agency, and the distinction is the whole answer.

The interactivity is real and should not be dismissed. The viewer's choices have consequences within the drama, the ending they reach is the ending they produced, and having made six decisions the viewer has a stake in the outcome that a passive viewer does not. That is a change in the kind of engagement available, not a cosmetic one, and it gives the product a second life: a viewer who reached one ending has a reason to watch again.

But the boundaries of that participation were all drawn before release. The viewer chooses once at each of six points, between two options Sablebrook+ wrote, and every path terminates in one of four endings that were written, shot and edited months earlier. No viewer can produce an outcome the producers did not anticipate, because every outcome had to be filmed. That is the test of agency, and the format fails it by design.

Two details sharpen the point. The ten-second timer means the viewer chooses under a constraint the producer set, and the default path means not choosing is a scripted option too — inaction has been authored. And the published ending percentages show what the interaction produces for the producer: an audience decision converted into a dataset, gathered from people who experienced it as a story rather than a survey.

The fair conclusion is that *The Ninth Carriage* redistributes selection, not authorship. The viewer chooses which of the producer's narratives to receive; the producer still decides what narratives exist. *Marker's note*: either verdict can score well, but the answer must engage with the closed set of authored endings. An answer that says "the viewer is in control because they choose" has not noticed who wrote the choices.

**Q16. Model response (6 marks).** All three changes are made by the platform rather than by any producer or audience, and each redistributes something.

**Autoplay** removes a decision. Selection and control is the interaction that makes viewing deliberate, and autoplay converts it into a default: the audience must now act to *stop* rather than act to *continue*. Watch time will rise, and so will the number of videos a viewer encounters, but the engagement behind it is thinner, because the viewer chose the session rather than each item in it. Producers benefit unevenly — a creator whose videos sit in autoplay chains gains views they did not earn; a creator audiences used to seek out loses the advantage of being sought.

**Hiding like counts** removes social proof. A visible count tells an audience what to think of a video before watching it, so hiding it makes each viewer's judgement more independent and reduces status competition between creators. It also changes what "liking" is: an interaction that was partly a public statement becomes a private signal to the platform. Note who keeps what — the account holder and the platform still see the number and the audience does not, so information has moved from the audience to the platform.

**Reply-ranked comments** change what a comment is for. Ranking by replies rewards comments that provoke disagreement over comments that are recent, considered or agreed with, so threads trend towards argument and an early controversial comment gains long-term visibility. It pushes interaction sideways, into audience-to-audience exchange, and away from a channel to the producer.

Together the changes make engagement more continuous and more social, and less deliberate. The underlying point is that the platform is a third party in every audience–producer relationship: it can change how millions of people interact without either the audience or the producer choosing it.

**Q17. Model response (studied narrative: *Second Harvest*, 2025 — 8 marks).** A single narrative now reaches its audience in more than one media form at once, and each form supports a different kind of interaction. *Second Harvest* runs as a weekly moving-image program on Sablebrook+ and as short vertical video on Loomstack, and the two are not the same product with the same audience behaviour.

In the **moving-image form on the subscription service**, the audience's interaction is largely selection, control and participation. Viewers choose when to start an episode, pause, rewind a technique they missed and enable captions — mode 1 interactions the form makes available and a broadcast did not. The weekly release then reintroduces something on-demand delivery removes: a synchronous audience, all present at once. On top of that the companion app's live vote gives mode 5 participation, letting the audience determine which dish goes through within the episode itself. The engagement produced here is investment in an outcome — the viewer is not receiving a result but producing one, and the ten minutes of the vote are the most concentrated attention the program gets all week.

In the **short-video form on Loomstack**, the audience does something quite different. The ninety-second clip is built to be circulated, so the dominant interactions are mode 3 sharing and mode 2 commenting, and much of the audience for it has never seen an episode. Interaction here is audience-to-audience: people argue about a judge's decision under the clip, tag friends, and post their own attempts at the dish. The engagement is social rather than narrative — the attachment is to the conversation and to other viewers, not to the story of the competition.

The forms work on each other. The clip recruits an audience the subscription service cannot reach, and the subscription episode is what the clip's audience must convert to in order to vote; engagement flows back the other way too, since a viewer who has voted has a stake in the Loomstack argument.

Two qualifications. The interaction available in each form is set by the form and the platform's design, not chosen by the audience — Loomstack offers no pause-and-study and Sablebrook+ no public thread. And the audience visible in either form is the participating minority; the largest group in both is watching without contributing anything except behavioural data. *Marker's note*: two forms treated separately, with no account of how they work together, caps at mid-range.

**Q18. Model response (10 marks).** Hollowbeam's audience has moved, in nine years, from a group of listeners with one narrow way of replying to a community with several media forms of its own — and almost every step in that change can be traced to a specific technology and the affordance it supplied.

In **2016** the relationship was one-directional. A podcast feed offers no interaction surface at all: the form carries the product outward and nothing back. Response therefore had to travel by a separate route, email — asynchronous, private, effortful and low volume, twelve messages a week from an audience of unknown size. What Hollowbeam knew was a single number, downloads, which counts acquisition and says nothing about whether anyone listened.

Engagement was presumably real, but it was invisible: the producer could not distinguish a devoted listener from an abandoned file.

**2020** is the convergence step, and it changes three things at once. Putting the interviews out as video and as thirty-second vertical clips moves one narrative into three media forms, and the affordance that matters is that those forms have comment threads attached — so response becomes instant, free and public, and listeners begin replying to each other as well as to Hollowbeam. The newsletter question builds a deliberate loop, a producer-run channel where audience input visibly re-enters the product. Most significant is the chat server, because listeners built it themselves: once an audience has a place to be an audience together, engagement stops depending on the release schedule, and 4,000 members are in a relationship Hollowbeam neither created nor controls. The clips are pure circulation material, made so the audience can distribute the show into a form it does not otherwise occupy.

By **2025** each of those developments has been deepened and monetised. Threadgold's daily posting makes engagement continuous, and it makes it *parasocial*: the audience's relationship is now with a person they encounter every day, not with a fortnightly product, which is why an audience will follow a host and not always a title. The live-streamed recording restores synchronous interaction to a form that lost it when radio became podcasting — and typing a question into a live recording is participation in the text rather than commentary on it. Paid membership converts engagement into revenue directly, and gives the most engaged part of the audience a way to declare itself. The dashboard replaces the 2016 download figure with per-episode, per-platform listening-length and drop-off data — behavioural interaction from the whole audience, not the fraction that writes in.

The 2024 clip is the sharpest illustration of what has changed. A listener-made clip of a five-year-old episode was shared 90,000 times and out-recruited every episode Hollowbeam has released. Three things are true at once: the audience is now a more effective distributor than the producer; the back catalogue is live rather than expired, because circulation does not respect a release date; and the material that grew the show was made and timed by someone Hollowbeam does not employ.

The costs deserve statement. Moderation is new, continuous and unpaid work; daily posting creates an expectation of availability a fortnightly release never did; Hollowbeam now depends on platforms whose design decisions it cannot influence; and the audience it can see — commenters, chat members, paying subscribers — is a motivated minority of the audience it has.

*Marker's note:* the highest band traces the change across all three dates and names affordances, not just technologies. Answers that describe 2025 and ignore 2016 have described a podcast, not a change.

**Q19. Model response (10 marks).** The statement is accurate and incomplete, and the useful answer is about the relationship between the two halves rather than a verdict on either.

The case for it is strong, because measurement is not an add-on to contemporary interaction — it is how the interaction is delivered. In the moving-image form, on-demand delivery gave audiences control they had never had: start, pause, rewind, reorder, abandon. Every one of those actions is also a data point, and the abandonment is the most valuable of them. A viewer who switched off a television in 1995 told the broadcaster nothing; a viewer who stops an episode at four minutes has reported a precise verdict they did not intend to give. In the print form, the same doubling holds. A regional masthead that once knew its circulation figure and nothing else now knows, per story, how many readers opened it and at which paragraph they stopped, because the technology that lets a reader comment and share is the technology that logs them. This is the concrete content of the Area of Study's claim that audiences are consumers, producers and products at once: the third role is not a separate activity, it is a by-product of the first two.

The case against is equally real, and an answer that concedes it too quickly loses the argument. What audiences gained was not previously available at any price. They can publish — mode 4 creation, in any form, at no cost, without a gatekeeper. They can distribute, often more effectively than the producer. They can find each other and form communities that outlast the products that occasioned them. They can respond in public, where a producer once selected six letters from a week's post. None of that is measurement; it is capacity, and it changed what an audience is. Much of it also happens where measurement does not reach — private group chats, messaging apps, conversation — and those spaces carry a great deal of the interaction that decides how a product travels.

The two positions resolve if the claim is stated causally rather than morally. The capacities and the measurement arrived on the same technologies and cannot be separated, because the network that carries an audience's reply is the network that records it. Measurement is not the purpose of audience interaction; it is its exhaust — but the exhaust is

now the most commercially valuable output of the whole system, which is why the interactions producers design in are so often the ones that also identify the audience: a login, a profile, an in-app vote, a watchlist.

One qualification completes the position. Because measurement is valuable, it begins to shape what is offered: material that measures well is commissioned again, formats that generate identified data are preferred to formats that do not, and interactions that cannot be counted attract less investment than interactions that can. On that reading the statement understates itself. Every new way of interacting is a new way of being measured, and the measurement then quietly edits what there is to interact with.

*Marker's note:* answers that only agree, or only disagree, cap around half marks. The mark is in the resolution, and it must be carried by specific interactions in at least two named media forms, not by general claims about “social media”.