

The reappropriation of time in television

How traditional qualities of broadcast media are being adopted by their video-on-demand services

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ABSTRACT

As on-demand media claim an increasing amount of the time we spend on digital media, traditional broadcasters have adopted video on-demand (VoD) services as a means of presenting their programmes. This article analyses two Danish VoD services offered by legacy broadcasters – that is, BVoD services. It argues that the traditional features of broadcast television, to communicate liveness and immediacy, are reappropriated in the publishing practices of the BVoD services. With an analytical focus on the use of temporal paratexts, the article finds that whereas both services emphasise liveness and immediacy in their publishing practices, they apply different means of expressing the temporal qualities. These differences can be attributed to organisational differences. Finally, the article concludes that competitiveness, distinctiveness, and the public service identity of the broadcasters are explanatory factors for the reappropriation of time-structured publishing in the two Danish BVoD services DRTV and TV 2 Play.

KEYWORDS: liveness, BVoD services, publishing practices, paratexts, scheduling studies

Introduction

Traditionally, liveness has been a key characteristic of the television medium despite the fact that most of the technical constraints of live broadcasting are long gone (Bolin, 2009; Bourdon, 2000; Evans, 2018). When we look at video-on-demand (VoD) services, Amanda Lotz (2017: 15) has called our attention to the obvious, but nonetheless important, fact that “the key distinction of internet-distributed television from that of broadcast or cable distribution is that it does

not require time-specific viewing”. However, even though the linear flow has been complemented by a catalogue of files to be chosen by the user, temporality has not disappeared from VoD services, and understanding these services as merely libraries or portals (Lotz, 2017) is misleading as we then, with the words of Catherine Johnson (2019: 123), “overlook the ways in which linear logics continue to structure online TV services”. Thus, I argue in this article that our understanding and discussion of what the television medium is and is becoming can benefit from revisiting older theories of the medium’s characteristics, including its temporal anchoring. As such, the theoretical starting point of the article is the concepts of eventfulness, dailiness, and immediacy, as introduced by Paddy Scannell (1996) and John Ellis (1982). Through their work on scheduling and the televisual experience, Scannell and Ellis have offered an understanding of the communicative structures of the television medium, which is useful when considering the editorial curation of a VoD interface.

More specifically, I study how television’s traditional defining features of liveness and immediacy are reappropriated by broadcasters’ VoD services: BVoDs. In this article, I scrutinise the publishing strategies and visual communication of two BVoD services and ask *how* temporality is expressed in the interfaces and *why* this is chosen as a publishing strategy. To answer these questions, I link paratexts of linear television to those of non-linear streaming services. Based on Gérard Genette’s understanding, Jonathan Gray (2010) has described paratexts as different sorts of texts (e.g., posters, reviews, merchandise) that tell us what to expect from a text and shape our reading strategies. Whereas Gray’s definition of paratexts includes a variety of (tangible and intangible) formats, I apply Johnson’s (2019) use of the concept, as she described how still images, descriptions, and prominence within an interface play an important paratextual role in our encounter with content in a VoD service. Thus, I scrutinise placement of programme types, badges, headlines, and integration of live broadcasts as important elements in the publishing strategies of two BVoD services, DRTV and TV 2 Play.

The two BVoDs discussed in this study are part of the Danish media market and amongst the most popular VoD services in Denmark. However, they differ in their funding models and regulation, as DRTV is a publicly financed public service offering, whereas TV 2 Play is a commercial service driven by the television company TV 2, which is funded through advertisements and subscriptions, but owned by the state. TV 2 has public service obligations for the main television channel, but TV 2 Play is not included in that remit.

In this article, I first address the television medium from a theoretical perspective by identifying key characteristics of the broadcast medium and VoD streaming services. After a short presentation of the two cases and the method used in this study, I continue with the analyses of the interfaces of the two BVoDs through the lens of time-related communication. Finally, I discuss the findings in relation to competitiveness, distinctiveness, and the public service identities of the two companies. With this article, I aim to contribute to the understanding of the form and production practices of the television medium

and to the ongoing development of the field of scheduling studies, including the role of “old” theories applied on “new” services.

Television’s temporal and spatial characteristics

Two approaches to the study of television in its online format inform this study: The first is represented by Paddy Scannell (1996) and John Ellis (1982, 1999, 2000) and centres on communicative strategies and the programme schedule as cornerstones of the television medium; the second draws on the scholarly work on online television and streaming services of Derek Kompare (2002), Daniel Chamberlain (2010), and Catherine Johnson (2019). Together, these two approaches form the basis for an understanding of how two BVoD services seek to translate some of the traditional characteristics of the television medium into a digital environment, as television transforms from a time-structured to (also) a space-structured medium.

Television as a time-structured medium

As the coronation of British monarch King Charles III was transmitted live on Danish television on 6 May 2023, Scannell’s set of key characteristics of broadcast media came to mind. Regarding the introduction of radio and television in public life in the 1920s and 1930s, Scannell wrote:

Thus, real-world, real-time events – which hitherto had been accessible only to their self-selecting and particular publics – now became available for anyone. Millions of people now had access to events-in-the-world that had previously been outside their realm of possibility. (Scannell, 1996: 153–154)

Scannell applied the concept of eventfulness to the experience that broadcast media offer the public. The key elements of broadcasting events are their liveness and the sense of access to a given event: “It is not just that radio and television *compress* time and space. They create new possibilities of being: of being in two places at once, or two times at once [emphasis original]” (Scannell, 1996: 91).

Throughout his work, Scannell emphasised how radio and television have contributed to creating an experience of shared time, and a shared calendar, for the British population:

Much has changed in substance since the twenties and thirties, but the fundamental temporal structures of broadcasting remain the same. New events have been discovered, old ones discarded: less emphasis now on the royal ceremony perhaps, more on sport. But now, as then, there is a stable temporal framework to the output of radio and television working through the days of the week, the months and the years. (Scannell, 1996: 155)

It is worth noting that Scannell did not emphasise only major events (e.g., a coronation) – quite the contrary. A key concept in his writing is *daily*ness, which, according to him, describes the organising principle of the activities of

radio and television (Scannell, 1996). Scannell accentuated the daily services, the never-ending flow of programmes, which assist us in structuring the day, week, and year: the breakfast television show, the news on the radio throughout the day, children's programmes in the afternoon, and the evening news. Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost – the winter and summer season. According to Scannell, broadcast media produce and reproduce everyday life in society.

Broadcast media are able to occupy such an important part of the daily lives of millions of people as a result of the special kind of communication that characterises them, according to Scannell. Aside from being a matter of appropriate language use, he described how an important instrument of the broadcaster's communicative intentionality is the schedule. To Scannell (1996: 9), scheduling is "crucial to the normalization of output as something that in parts and as a whole is meant and is found to be 'user friendly'". He described how systematic programme planning and serial production breed viewing habits and easily recognisable programme and channel identities.

Ellis (1982, 1999, 2000) has outlined the same mechanisms that we find in Scannell's work, those of television providing a national calendar and time frame for daily activities. However, Ellis's (1999, 2000) writing reflects the development of the British television landscape, from scarcity, to availability, to plentifulness. And whereas Scannell emphasised what was common for the population, Ellis covered the characteristics of television in a time when audience surveys formed the basis of scheduling and viewers identified with segments rather than a mass audience (Ellis, 2000: 65). In the extensive supply of channels and programmes, Ellis (1999) characterised the televisual experience as one of discontinuity: "Television itself proves that there is nothing inherent in its technology that forces it to provide the experience of co-presence and the low level of narrative resolution that it characteristically employs" (Ellis, 1999: 67). According to Ellis, the discontinuity is a result of scheduling adapting to the domestic life of the audience. As such, the role of the schedule is to arrange the segments that make up a day's broadcasting, "so that particular programmes coincide with particular supposed events in the life of the family. Scheduling provides a regular, week by week, slot in which the repetition of particular series formats can take place" (Ellis, 1982: 116). And, importantly, the schedule ensures a balance of the various segments of broadcast television (Ellis, 1982). Ellis also related the schedule to a sense of presence and immediacy, which he found are distinctive features of the television medium. Although originally immediacy was a technical condition of the medium, it has become an effect: "Immediacy is the effect of the directness of the TV image, the way in which it constitutes itself and its viewers as held in a relationship of co-present intimacy" (Ellis, 1982: 132). Thus, even though television was liberated from the constraints of simultaneous transmission decades ago, the impression of being live is still a strong characteristic of the medium (see also Bourdon, 2000; van Es, 2017).

Television as a space-structured medium

With the development of electronic programme guides and streaming services, we have seen how television is transforming to become space-structured as well as time-structured. Similarly, the users seemingly gain more control over the medium. This section draws on scholarly contributions that shed light on the features and layout of streaming services, to demonstrate the importance of the functionalities, design, and curation of the interface.

Drawing on Raymond Williams's concept of flow, Kompare (2002) compared broadcast television's traditional textual form with files as the new mode of access. On the one hand, Kompare (2002: 4) contrasted the forms of flow and file:

The file is the opposite of flow. As flow creates large, synchronous audiences over long stretches of time, the file is made available directly to individuals in small packages on an ad hoc basis [...] its primary characteristic is individual choice and access, rather than collective participation.

As is evident from his statement above, Kompare linked flow to the large, joint broadcast audiences, whereas he emphasised the individual use of the file. On the other hand, Kompare foresaw that flow and file will co-exist in the years to come. This he attributed to the television programmers' and advertisers' business model, whereas "individual users are not likely to give up the newfound convenience of the file" (Kompare, 2002: 8).

User control of the television experience is also something Chamberlain focused on in his work on interfaces and the interactivity of digital television. We are reminded that old(er) television sets also required interaction, such as turning a knob or pressing a button, but now, watching television "increasingly includes navigating menus, following links, registering preferences, and programming subscriptions" (Chamberlain, 2010: 85). Chamberlain emphasised the interactivity of the interfaces, and by extension, of the television experience:

Television interfaces demand interaction from viewers. They require viewers to make choices about how they will negotiate the streams and databases of possible viewing options, calling on viewers to scroll through choices, make selections, respond to prompts, and otherwise engage with the devices that control the delivery of content. (Chamberlain, 2010: 86)

Although he conducted his work over a decade ago, before streaming services such as Netflix and HBO achieved their global breakthrough, Chamberlain predicted that interactivity and personalisation would be the future of television. While this is essentially an accurate characterisation of today's television medium, Johnson (2019) has explained how it is a truth with modifications. In line with Chamberlain, Johnson stated that "the layout of an online TV interface and the menus, tabs, and buttons that help users navigate within that service offer and encourage certain behavioural choices (to watch, search, browse and so on)" (Johnson, 2019: 111–112). Johnson linked this arrangement of functionalities to that of the linear schedule and the ambition of preventing viewers from switching channels, thus retaining the users of the service (Johnson, 2019).

Drawing on Lotz's (2017) work, Johnson described the complex interplay between the time-structured and space-structured features of online television services. As scheduling has been replaced by curation, the temporal constraints of the linear schedule have been replaced (to some degree) by the interface's spatial constraints (Johnson, 2019; Lotz, 2017). Importantly, however, Johnson (2019) stated that temporality still structures the content offer of online television: When is a programme available and for how long? Also, Johnson found that a number of online television services offer access to live streams, thus integrating the linear flow into the nonlinear database of VoD services (Johnson, 2019). The linear and nonlinear modes of distribution complement each other as different ways of engaging the user. Whereas the schedule was the structuring feature of linear television, nonlinear VoD services operate with other kinds of paratexts: Johnson (2019) directs our attention to still images, programme descriptions, ratings, and the placement of a programme in the interface as a spatial mode for communicating content, thus influencing user choice. As such, in the literature we see the development from accentuating user agency and control to stressing the power of interface design and editorial curation, and a return of the temporal characteristics of television. In the words of Kelly (2011: 125): "Simply put, streaming is the application of the logics of flow to a medium of files".

In discussions of user control and choice it is, however, important to be aware of the difference between intended usage and actual usage. Within the past few years, contributions from, amongst others, Frey (2021) and Johnson, Dempsey, and Hills (2020) have offered extremely valuable insights, as they demonstrate how users not always act as intended by the service providers. Thus, the design and functionalities within an interface do not provide information about the users' actual perceptions and actions. However, in this article, I contend that user agency, to some extent, is influenced by curation and interface design. My interest lies in the intention of the broadcasters and how this intentionality is expressed through practices and logics. Understanding the publishing practices is important work to be done in production studies, not least with regard to VoD services of the public service broadcasters, as their publishing strategies have traditionally been a crucial tool in meeting the cultural-political obligations and legitimising their existence (Ytreberg, 2002). Thus, understanding how content is being prioritised and communicated is relevant to both the continued academic study of the television medium and to the societal discussion of the role and development of public service media.

This article contributes to the body of scholarly work which analyses VoD services from the perspective of the sender – that is, the layout of the interface, the content on offer, and the placement of the programmes. In a Nordic context, such work has been carried out by, among others, Bruun and Bille (2022), who studied how documentaries are prioritised by DR and TV 2 to enhance their competitiveness; Kelly and Sørensen (2021), who carried out a distant reading of the BBC iPlayer and DRTV to compare size, structure, and repetition of programmes; Spilker, Johannessen, and Morsund (2020), who analysed Norwegian NRK's linear channels and VoD service through the lens of genre distribution; and most recently, myself and Jannick Kirk Sørensen (2023), where we have of-

ferred an analysis of the presence and prioritisation of selected genres on DRTV. In a British context, Kelly (2021), Grainge and Johnson (2018), and Johnson (2017) are amongst those who have analysed the interfaces of the iPlayer and ITV Hub (now ITVX). However, a great part of the work on VoD services has dealt with Netflix (Jenner, 2018; Lobato, 2019; Lotz et al., 2022; Van Esler, 2021), Amazon Prime Video (Lobato & Scarlata, 2019; Petruska, 2018), and Hulu (Sanson & Steirer, 2019). While we can learn a lot from these contributions – not least regarding differences and similarities between countries, players, and catalogues – they do not inform us on the continuities (or discontinuities) in the production practices of the broadcasters who, after all, still play a key role in providing the televisual experience.

The following analysis demonstrates how various paratexts on the landing pages of DRTV and TV 2 Play identify the BVoD services as close relatives of linear television, thus resonating with Scannell's concepts of eventfulness and dailyness and Ellis's concept of immediacy. Specifically, the analysis scrutinises headlines, badges, and integration of live broadcasts as paratexts indicating temporality. Whereas such paratexts are present in both BVoD services, a key finding of the analysis is that their approach to and expression of temporality differ. It is important to note that previous studies of DRTV and TV 2 Play (Lassen, 2018; Bruun, 2019) have not found considerable prevalence of temporal features in the interfaces of the two BVoD services. Thus, this article contributes to the ongoing research of the publishing practices of BVoD services by demonstrating the existence of temporal paratexts and, against this backdrop, arguing that we see a development in the direction of a reappropriation of traditional television characteristics, and a move away from the archive and catch-up logic that previously characterised the two BVoD services.

Presentation of cases and method used in this study

Two players dominate the Danish television market: DR and TV 2. If we look at the linear television channels, in 2022, the two companies had a combined share of 81 per cent of the viewing audience (DR Medieforskning, 2023). Also, amongst streaming services in the Danish market, DR and TV 2 hold strong positions. For some years, DR's streaming service, DRTV, has been amongst the preferred streaming services in Denmark, together with Netflix and YouTube. However, in 2022, TV 2's streaming service, TV 2 Play, experienced an increase in the number of subscribers and became the second most popular streaming service in the Danish market (Olsen, 2023).

DR's television offer consists of three linear channels and the streaming service DRTV, which includes three online universes dedicated to various age groups. In addition to television, DR offers several radio channels, a news web page, and a number of apps, each of which is subject to public service regulation. Access to DR's content is free of charge and does not require a log-in. DR is an independent public institution and is 100 per cent funded by taxes. The organisation of the company TV 2 Danmark A/S is more complex than DR's: TV 2 Danmark A/S is a limited

company owned by the Danish state but commercially driven by advertising and subscription revenue. TV 2's television portfolio consists of seven linear channels and the streaming service TV 2 Play, of which only the main channel TV 2 has public service obligations. However, whereas DR's obligations are extensive and rather detailed, TV 2's obligations primarily concern provision of news and Danish fiction, distribution of regional programmes, and diversity and universality in the programming. In addition to on-demand content and access to the linear channels, TV 2 Play also offers the online-only brands TV 2 Sport X and Oiii, the latter being a children's universe, and access to the streaming services SkyShowtime and C-More.

Two aspects of the Danish television market are evident: The market size is relatively small, as the Danish population comprises 5.9 million people, and the Danes are a heavily digitalised people. Approximately 98 per cent of the population has access to the Internet, and the use of streaming services and podcasts is increasing, whereas print newspaper, linear television, and radio consumption are (to varying degrees) decreasing (Slots- og Kulturstyrelsen, 2021a, 2021b, 2021c). Reflecting this tendency, both DR and TV 2 have launched strategies that focus on their digital platforms (DR, 2021; TV 2, 2021), and both companies describe their VoD service as a front door to the television offerings. Thus, because of their key strategic roles and their popularity with the Danish population, a study of the publishing practices and communication of these two Danish BVoD services is highly relevant to understanding the development of the television medium.

The analytical design underpinning this article was inspired by previous analyses of interfaces and VoD services by Bruun and Bille (2022), Kelly and Sørensen (2021), Bideau (2020), and Johnson (2019). The data for the study consist of screenshots of the landing pages of the BVoD services DRTV (www.dr.dk/tv) and TV 2 Play (www.play.tv2.dk) taken in week 6 (Monday–Sunday, 7–13 February) and week 40 (Monday–Sunday, 3–9 October) of 2022. The services were accessed through the Google Chrome browser on a laptop. The most anonymous version of the streaming services was employed for this study. For DRTV this meant that the anonymous version with no log-in was used, whereas TV 2 Play was accessed with a profile from which no programmes had been viewed. All browser cookies and history were deleted prior to the visits to the services. The screenshots were taken between 18:00 and 21:30, the main channel's prime time. Finally, a note on the vocabulary of this analysis: "tile" is used to describe the thumbnail images, including captions, that provide access to the programmes; "decks" refer to the horizontal collections of tiles; the "hero board" is the top deck on the landing pages of the VoD services, which typically comprises eight to twelve large tiles that change automatically after six to eight seconds. In the following, all Danish titles are translated to English for the clarity of the reader.

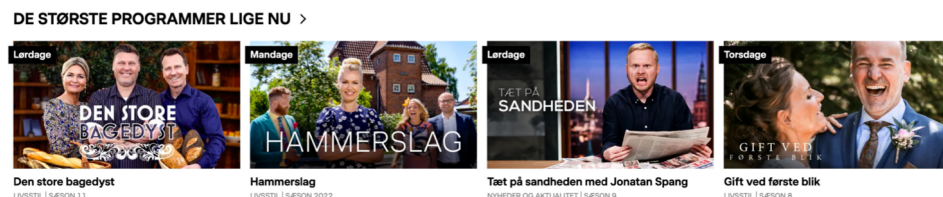
Temporality in the paratexts of the interfaces

DRTV is updated once or twice a day, whereas TV 2 Play is updated at least twice a day. Both services communicate that topicality is considered a key value. The titles of the decks indicate this: *De største programmer lige nu* [*The greatest*

programmes right now] (DRTV), *Det bedste fra P3 lige nu* [*The best from P3 right now*] (DRTV), *Senest tilføjet* [*Most recently added*] (DRTV), *Populært lige nu* [*Popular right now*] (TV 2 Play), *Tilføjet i dag* [*Added today*] (TV 2 Play) and *Aktuelt lige nu* [*Topical right now*] (TV 2 Play) refer to up-to-the-moment offerings and time-related services. Both DRTV and TV 2 Play offer news and current affairs programmes, and the positioning of these programme types indicates that both companies deem these to be important genres: During the sampled weeks, the news and current affairs programmes are placed as deck number two or three (of about 15–20 decks). Unsurprisingly, these programme types are deployed to indicate that the services are continuously updated. On DRTV, we see specification of broadcast time as badges on the news programme tiles and captions that state the date and time of day the news and current affairs programmes were broadcast. On TV 2 Play, we find some of the same features; for example, captions on news programmes state, *Latest: Today 19:00* or *Yesterday 20:00*. Through such descriptions, and owing to the fact that the news and current affairs programmes are continuously replaced by the most recent programme, the BVoD services communicate a continuous immediacy. Similarly, such paratexts emphasise the structure of the day and can thus be related to the concept of dailyness.

Other paratexts are also used to communicate immediacy and dailyness: As seen in Figure 1, DRTV uses small badges in the top left corners of the tiles to provide users with an overview of the day of the week on which episodes of a programme series are broadcast. By emphasising repetition in its publishing, DR aims to create what Ellis (1982: 142) termed a “pattern of familiarity”.

FIGURE 1 “The greatest programmes right now”



Comments: Badges indicate on which day of the week series episodes are aired by DRTV. For instance, episodes of *Den store bagedyst* [*The Great Bake Off*] are broadcast on Saturdays [Lørdage] (the leftmost tile), whereas episodes of *Gift ved første blik* [*Married at First Sight*] are broadcast on Thursdays [Torsdage] (the rightmost tile).

Source: Screenshot captured from DRTV, Wednesday, 5 October 2022, 20:40.

The deck shown in Figure 1, *De største programmer lige nu* [*The greatest programmes right now*], is editorially selected, not algorithmically generated. However, the deck’s four in-screen tiles represent four very popular programme series, three of which fall within the lifestyle genre and one of which is a satiric, current-affairs talk show. Thus, these are programme series that many users will be interested in being able to find and that DR has an interest in promoting. The practice of labelling the tiles with the publishing day echoes the linear schedule’s weekly structure, and thus the concept of dailyness. Besides making the programme publishing recognisable and clear, ideally this practice establishes

user habits – both being aspects aimed at drawing users back to the service.

Another way in which DRTV uses the weekday badge, which has a pronounced parallel to Ellis's descriptions of the scheduling practices of the linear channels, is what could be found on the service on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday in week 6 of 2022, namely, a collection of trailers for new series and seasons. As seen in Figure 2, the badges were a mix of weekdays and dates, depending on how soon the episode or series would be available.

FIGURE 2 "Coming soon on DRTV"

KOMMER SNART PÅ DRTV >
Trailere for nye serier og sæsoner



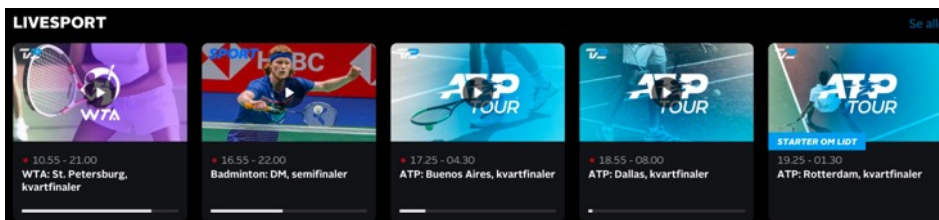
Comments: DR's trailers for upcoming programmes on its VoD service.

Source: Screenshot captured from DRTV, Friday, 11 February 2022, 19:30.

With the headline *Kommer snart på DRTV* [*Coming soon on DRTV*], the deck shown in Figure 2 illustrates the VoD version of the kind of trailer that Bruun (2016: 40) described as “here and in the future (a few days from now or later this season)”. Only one of the four in-screen trailers is for a new programme (second tile from the left). The other three trailers are for (Nordic) fiction serials, generally well-known to the users. Thus, this is branding of the service, rather than “just” promoting new content and a feature we recognise from the linear television schedule: Ellis wrote that “TV’s characteristic form of repetition is the series or the serial, a form of continuity-with-difference that TV has perfected” (Ellis, 1982: 123). By advertising new seasons of familiar serials, DR emphasises the continuity of its (online) television offerings.

TV 2 Play does not use weekday badges. However, in this BVoD service we find paratexts that mirror eventfulness, the concept to which liveness is important. As is evident in Figure 3, some tiles function as links to on-air programmes and provide the programme’s start and end times, as well as a time bar that indicates how much time the programme has left.

FIGURE 3 Live sport on TV 2 Play

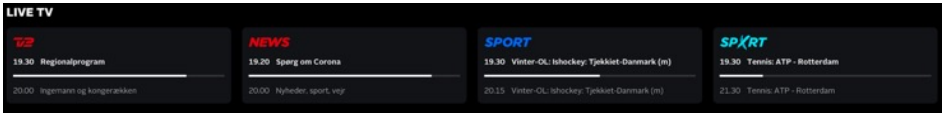


Comments: On TV 2 Play, time bars display how much time a programme has left. On the right-most tile, the badge states that the programme will begin shortly.

Source: Screenshot captured from TV 2 Play, Friday, 11 February 2022, 19:20.

This feature was found in the *Live sport* collection on every day of the sampled weeks. Given that sport is a genre where simultaneity is typically of utmost importance (what Lotz et al., 2018 termed “time-sensitive content”), the liveness of the programmes is an important quality to emphasise. However, time bars and start and end times are also provided for other programme types on TV 2 Play: They always appear on the first tile of the *Danmarks bedste comedy* [Denmark’s best comedy] collection, which is a contrast to the live sport programmes, as this collection includes several programmes from the archive. However, TV 2 offers the linear channel TV 2 Zulu, which is dedicated to comedy, and thus, the time bar connects the streaming service and the linear channel. At the bottom of the page, there is a deck with information about and links to each of TV 2’s linear channels – broadcast as well as online-only – where time bars for the current programmes and the start time and title of the next programme are shown (see Figure 4). All of these paratexts – the links to on-air programmes, broadcast time, and time bars – emphasise liveness in the sense that programmes are being broadcast *right now*.

FIGURE 4 Live TV, TV 2 Play



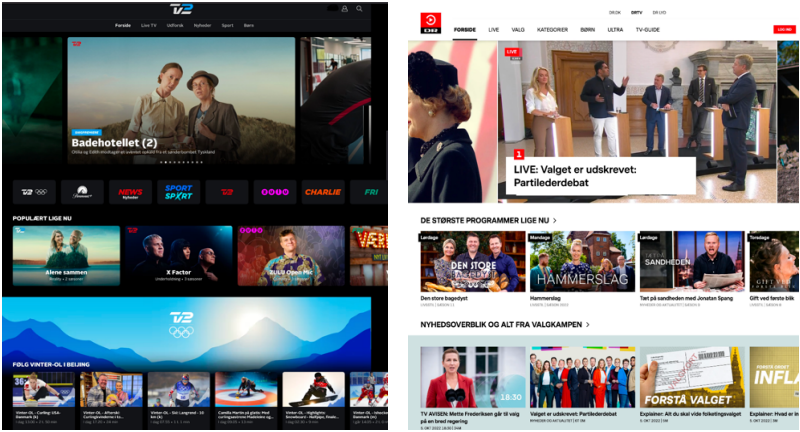
Comments: Links to four of TV 2’s 13 live channels (broadcast and online-only). No thumbnails, only programme titles and start times.

Source: Screenshot captured from TV 2 Play, Wednesday, 9 February 2022, 19:55.

TV 2 Play’s hero board is worth highlighting as another example of the integration of liveness and linear television into a BVoD service, as here, on each day of the sampled weeks, we find one or more links to live programmes. In general, the live programmes are news and sports programmes. This is an iteration of the programme types that are related to topicality through other paratexts throughout the landing page, as described above. Throughout the day, a tile offers a link to the 24-hour news channel, TV 2 News, and twice (Sunday, 13 February and Thursday, 6 October) the news programme was accompanied by two live football matches, and two football matches and a political debate programme, respectively. In comparison, in the dataset we find only four links to a live programme on the DRTV hero board. Of these, two are game shows (Saturday, 12 February and Friday, 7 October), whereas two fall into the category of news and debate programmes (Wednesday, 5 October and Thursday, 6 October). However, according to DRTV’s publishing editor, Agnethe Pontoppidan Sasaki, at DRTV, the publishing practice is to stream all live transmissions on the hero board (personal correspondence with author, 1 December 2022). Thus, the difference between DRTV and TV 2 Play in terms of the number of links to live programmes on the hero board may be attributed to the number of live programmes broadcast by the companies, and the fact that the data collection has been performed at different times during prime time and has not been based on the airing of live programmes.

Whereas deck titles, badges, time bars, and links to live programmes are persistent paratexts that indicate dailyness and eventfulness on a day-to-day basis, during the two sampled weeks there were three events of a larger scale. The Winter Olympics and the fiftieth birthday of the Danish crown princess took place in February, and the announcements of the 1 November Danish parliamentary election took place in October. Figure 5 illustrates how the coverage of the Winter Olympics and the announcement of the parliamentary election obtain prominent placement on deck number two (below the hero board) in the interfaces of TV 2 Play and DRTV, respectively, with a combination of live and on-demand content.

FIGURE 5 Winter Olympics and announcement of parliamentary election



Comments: TV 2 Play's coverage of the 2022 Winter Olympics and DRTV's coverage of the announcement of the Danish parliamentary election to take place on 1 November 2022.
Source: Screenshots captured from TV 2 Play, Thursday, 10 February, 21:30 and DRTV, Wednesday, 5 October 2022, 20:40.

As an example of eventfulness, these are interesting incidents, not just because they clearly mirror Scannell's descriptions of the broadcast media's coverage of events of societal significance, but because they demonstrate how the idea of eventfulness may be reshaped as linear and on-demand formats merge. Whereas Scannell emphasised the liveness of the broadcast events, and the principle of being in two places at once, these events were stretched out over a longer period of time on DRTV and TV 2 Play. Both services offered access to live transmissions of the Winter Olympics, and several live news and debate programmes addressed the parliamentary election. However, these live broadcasts were supplemented by several on-demand programmes that were not (that) time sensitive. The same goes for the celebration of the royal birthday: The birthday was on Saturday, 5 February, and thus preceded the sampled week, but DRTV and TV 2 Play both offered programmes that covered the celebration and the crown princess. As such, eventfulness is here not limited to live broadcasts of programmes but interpreted as the coverage of a current event of particular national interest,

and we see examples of how users may benefit from the affordances of both the linear and non-linear television formats provided by the same service.

To summarise, liveness and immediacy are evident in DR's and TV 2's VoD services. Both companies dedicate prominent positions to time-sensitive content and apply paratexts to emphasise topicality and time-structured publishing. However, the companies have different approaches to, or means of expressing, the temporal quality: Whereas DRTV seeks to establish viewer habits by highlighting weekdays, a practice that resonates with the concept of dailyness, TV 2 Play promotes more live programmes, which echoes the concept of eventfulness. The differences between the two services may be due to the fact that DRTV is not updated as frequently as TV 2 Play, that DRTV does not offer sports programmes to the same extent as TV 2 Play, and that TV 2 has more linear channels to refer to. However, the underlying question is why we see this development of liveness and immediacy being reappropriated by the two BVoD services. In the following section, I consider the companies' motives for integrating and emphasising temporal structures and paratexts into their VoD services and link these to the companies' public service identities.

Why is liveness and immediacy being reappropriated by the BVoD services?

Across Europe, average daily television viewing time was 3 hours and 22 minutes in 2022. Of this, 88 per cent was live viewing, whereas 12 per cent was time-shifted (EBU Media Intelligence Service, 2023). Thus, despite the fact that VoD services are increasing their share of viewership, year by year (Nielsen, 2022), live-broadcast content is still in high demand. This is also reflected in recent announcements from some of the global subscription video-on demand (SVoD) services: Whereas for years, HBO has used the weekly broadcasting model for their crowd-pullers, dailyness and eventfulness are now being picked up by the Netflix and Disney+ streaming services. After 16 years on ABC, the entertainment series *Dancing With The Stars* moved to Disney+ in September 2022 as its first live series (Layton, 2022), and Netflix offered its first live global streaming event with comedian Chris Rock in March 2023 (Dortheimer & Urbanski, 2022). Also, Netflix is offering the linear format in France, with the Netflix Direct web feature – which resembles a linear channel – as an option that allows users to “lean back” and not have to decide what to watch (Griffin, 2020). Thus, after years of emphasising the value of choice (not just *what* to watch, but also *when* to watch it; see also van Es and Keilbach, 2018), we now see the shared viewing experience being introduced by some SVoD services. The question is whether live broadcasting will become a resource that will enhance competitiveness in the same way that fiction series has for years. After all, it seems an obvious choice for DR and TV 2 to maintain their linear offerings as a part of their VoD services. Regarding dailyness and eventfulness, the national BVoD services do have some clear advantages. As “TV natives” (Johnson, 2019), DR and TV 2 have offered

linear channels for decades, and merging the two modes of broadcasting is rather simple and straightforward for them, as demonstrated in the analysis. Whereas Netflix can offer a global live-streaming event, DR and TV 2 are constantly close to, not to say participating in the creation of, a national agenda. The celebration of the Danish crown princess's birthday or coverage of the parliamentary election are examples of events that are key to DR's and TV 2's offerings, and they would not be found on global SVoD services. Similarly, the daily news offer, which the analysis has shown is prominent and highly prioritised in the curation of the two Danish BVoD services, makes these services stand out in a crowded streaming market. This strategy was confirmed by Uffe Høy Svenningsen, strategic publishing editor in DR:

Being synchronous, being in the present, and creating topicality is one of the distinctive features that we absolutely care about and have a lot of focus on being a part of DRTV [...]. After all, it's a vibrant offer. We don't want to be a library. We really want to be able to create an agenda, and we really want to be able to give people an overview of what is happening, make people more aware of some of the big stories that shape society [translated]. (Personal interview with author, 12 August 2022)

In addition to the ability to stay relevant according to the development of the media usage and differentiating oneself from the (global) competitors, the two broadcasters' role as public service media (PSM) companies is essential to include in an understanding of the applied paratexts and prioritisation of the content in the BVoD services – not least with regard to the prominence of the news content. Based on Philip Napoli's concept of differentiation and a comparative study of PSM VoD services in Belgium, Italy, and the UK, D'Arma, Raats, and Steemers (2021: 18–19) have suggested the following:

At a discursive/rhetorical level PSM seek to differentiate themselves from online streaming services by emphasizing their distinctive features as national public service providers. [...] Distinctiveness is supposed to be reflected in PSM services which US SVoDs, apart from landmark drama, do not currently provide. In our three cases, these include provision of accurate and impartial news, coverage of national issues and events, and commissioning practices that reflect issues in different communities and the diverse people that live in them.

In the case of DRTV and TV 2 Play, we can note that the differentiation or distinctiveness is not just at a rhetorical level. As documented in the analysis, the two Danish BVoD services prioritise some of the same content highlighted by D'Arma and colleagues: news and coverage of national events. Together with reflections of different communities and the diverse people that live in them, these are key obligations in the remit of DR and TV 2.

As noted previously, both DR and TV 2 have launched strategies in which their VoD services play a key role, and the news genre is highlighted as of special importance both to the companies as a whole and to the VoD services (DR, 2021; TV 2, 2021; see also Lassen & Sørensen, 2023). As such, the public

service identity of TV 2's main channel is being projected onto the company's VoD service (for an elaboration of TV 2 Play's role and identity, see Bruun, 2023). But it is one thing to be obliged to provide news on a linear channel, and another to continuously place news and current affairs programmes on the most prominent positions of a VoD service. Besides the aforementioned distinctiveness, two explanations seem applicable for the publication practices of DRTV and TV 2 Play. First, for years the Danish population has regarded DR and TV 2 as trustworthy news providers, and the news programmes continuously perform well in the linear offer; the prioritisation of the news in the VoD services can be understood as a continuation of this well-known and popular identity. The second explanation is related to the cultural-political circumstances of the companies: In a media market where PSM are under attack from both competitors and politicians, prioritising the traditional public service genres comes across as a sensible strategy if one wants to overcome accusations of distorting the market.

Summing up, being connected to the everyday life of the Danish population and being a part of the national agenda, differentiating the content offer from that of the global SVoD services, and displaying a well-known public service identity is advantageous for DR and TV 2 and can explain why we see time-sensitive genres like news and current affairs being prioritised and an emphasis of immediacy and liveness in the interfaces of DRTV and TV 2 Play.

Conclusion

This article demonstrates that liveness and immediacy, traditional qualities of linear television that are thoroughly described by Scannell and Ellis, still appear to be important features of the two Danish BVoD services, DRTV and TV 2 Play. This is evident in content prioritisation, publishing practices, and paratexts on the landing pages. Although most of their content is on-demand, we see a prioritisation of time-sensitive programme types, such as news, current affairs, and sports, given their good positions on the upper part of the landing pages.

The analysis finds that the two BVoD services have similar priorities but follow different strategies and use different paratexts to emphasise the temporal aspects. Hence, DRTV emphasises the continuity of its offerings by highlighting the weekly structure, and through this, reflecting the qualities of dailiness described by Scannell (1996). TV 2 Play applies a slightly different approach, as this service accentuates liveness, which is key to the concept of eventfulness, another characteristic of broadcast media, according to Scannell.

However, I argue that video *on-demand* platforms provide new opportunities for the character of eventfulness, as we find examples of events that are covered by both live programmes and on demand-content that is less time-sensitive. This finding is important to highlight in relation to the aims of the article, that is, to contribute to our understanding of the television medium and the development of the field of scheduling studies, including the role of "old" theories applied to "new" services. Whereas the analysis clearly demonstrates that concepts such as liveness, immediacy, dailiness, and eventfulness can fruitfully be employed in the

curation of VoD interfaces, it is also evident that we need a flexible vocabulary as the linear and VoD formats merge. However, dismissing the old theories would be disadvantageous, as we then risk overlooking the continuity in the practices and logics that govern the television medium.

Throughout the article, I have accentuated how there are both differences and similarities between the activities of DR and TV 2 and their respective BVoD services. As demonstrated by the presentation of the cases in this study, there are several dissimilarities between the two companies' business models, regulatory frameworks, and organisational structures, which could explain the differences between the BVoD services' day-to-day practices. However, in understanding why we see a reappropriation of temporal paratexts, I suggest that competitiveness, distinctiveness, and emphasising the public service identity all serve as explanatory factors for both companies, and thus emphasise the similarities in their working conditions. Additionally, it is important to keep in mind that DR and TV 2 both operate within a highly digitalised, small language area. Therefore, moving on, the scholarly field of scheduling studies and television production practices could benefit from comparative studies of BVoD services in different national contexts. Such work could reveal whether the Danish cases are unique or a part of a tendency and shed light upon how the television medium is developing in the complex interplay between regulation, media usage, and organisational practices.

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