

Learning Needs in the Modern Edutainment System (On the Base of Partworks)

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Abstract

The close proximity between mass media and education has increased during the last few decades, and entertainment education ('edutainment') has been one of the results. We have a long-standing instance of informal educational patterns within media with regards to the modern terms of peripheral commercial mass media that appeared in the second half of the twentieth century and that still holds a niche market. It exists in the form of collectable serial magazines (partworks), that impart a degree of practical skills or knowledge in some specific field. Ostensibly an encyclopaedia in a narrow field of human activity or knowledge, partworks demonstrate a wide range of interests: practical skills (e.g. cake decorating), natural sciences (e.g. geographical encyclopaedias), humanitarian sciences (e.g. history), technology (e.g. 3D printer), popular culture (e.g. Star Wars Millennium Falcon). In the article, partworks are seen as creative goods and tools for building up a special learning environment for their customers on the principles of edutainment and infotainment.

Keywords: informal learning, mass media, edutainment, infotainment, partwork magazines.

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Introduction

In the modern world, the sphere of education experience a massive influence from the side of the mass media, and this influence is increasing during the recent years. From one side, it leads to the development of the professional educational media, specially designed for providing learning functions for both children and adults. From the other side, this proximity between the mass media and education promote anxiety about the quality of the media products for educational use. The accessibility of the mass media and their abundance of nearly any kind of information in all fields of human knowledge make it a very popular source for informal learning, which is often based on the information given for educational purposes in an entertaining way. In this relation, two phenomena are in the focus of this study – *infotainment* and *edutainment* – portmanteau words combined of *information/education* and *entertainment*.

This paper is an attempt to analyze the principles of entertainment education on the example of partworks (collectable magazines), which are marginal elements of the modern media system, but rather significant and popular as media-based sources of informal learning. Partworks publishing is a big global business and similar magazines appear in many countries. Partworks were not under detailed analyses of educators while they could illustrate the close ties between education and the media. This study hopes to bring some questions about educational perspectives of partworks and shows the directions of learning interests, which are covered by these sources of information. To investigate these questions, I try to outline partworks as a part of the creative industries and as an informal learning source in the edutainment system using document study methodology, thematic and content analyses.

Infotainment and Edutainment as new approaches for information and knowledge

The *infotainment* term was firstly used to describe the new principle of arranging television and radio programmes (e.g. news, talk shows), according to which they should contain the elements of both information and entertainment programmes. The understanding of infotainment has developed and now includes not only television and radio, but also print media (newspapers, magazines) and digital media (Molek-Kozakowska, 2017). In the investigation of the print-based media, the text and its elements have become the focus of the researchers. To stress the most significant aspect for our study, *infotainment* describes mostly the form in which information is given, rather than the content. Infotainment is the base to determine a new hybrid media genre with its mix of formats for television and radio programs, newspapers and print magazines, e.g. so called ‘soft’ news given in the entertaining form (Otto, Glogger, & Boukes, 2017). Thus, the principle of creating the media product as an informative and entertaining blend has come to the press from the television and nowadays connections between information and entertainment become the base for further development of media information design.

The *edutainment* term, coined by Walt Disney in 1948, is used for *educational entertainment* or *entertainment education*, but really does not have one clear meaning. Edutainment, as it referred to Disney films, aims ‘to educate as well as entertain: to actively convey factual information about the real world, while using it as a backdrop for comedy or drama that, in turn, leavened the educational elements of the productions’ (Van Riper & Bowdoin, 2011, p. 2), as a result the content becomes

“information-rich, but lively and engaging” (ibid., p. 4). Buckingham (2007, p. 123) describes edutainment as ‘a hybrid mix of education and entertainment that relies heavily on visual material, on narrative or game-like formats, and on more informal, less didactic styles of address’. The *edutainment* term can also be referred to ‘informal education’ from the audience’s point of view because since 1960s the process of informatization creates the diffusion of the mass media and education among the audience (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009). Although edutainment seems to be an answer to the question about the balance between education and mass media in a new digital world, there is the massive amount of critical issues directed on the convergence between education and entertainment which is personified in the influence of Walt Disney and his company on the contemporary culture and modern society. For instance, the term ‘disneyfication’ unifies academic criticism of global entertainment business among which Disney Company is one of the biggest representatives (Willis, 1995). Harris (2005, p. 50) writes about the activity of the modern leisure and entertainment business as ‘converting cultural capital to economic capital’. The analyses of consumerism and commercialism of ‘big business’ in cultural life of the modern society leads to critical examination of the values embedding in most ‘cultural’ products. For instance, the representation of countries in Disney products are influenced by many stereotypes: e.g. China is always presented as ‘pre-revolutionary’ (ibid., p. 52). Being used as a source of information in the global edutainment media environment, such kinds of mass media products can influence their consumers’ perceptions of the world and caused problems in their understanding of the human culture and history. In general, media shape our worldview by ‘a patterning of actions and production which limits the forms in which the social world gets presented’ (Couldry, 2012, p. 106).

Research on *edutainment* phenomenon can answer the questions about the difference between educational media and entertainment media, and ways to measure the balance between education and entertainment in order to be able to define median phenomena, which cannot be undoubtedly classified. For example, educational media can be defined as ‘curriculum-driven products developed around a deliberate plan to teach’ (Kirkorian & Anderson, 2008, p. 188). Consequently, *Sesame Street* programme is an educational product, because it has ‘educational advisors’, works from a ‘formal curriculum’ and is based on some educational theory, and though *Tom and Jerry* may teach some information, it is ‘purely entertainment’ programme (ibid., p. 189). Admitting educators’ understanding of educational media, I should notice that the main problems with definitions begin when *Tom and Jerry* is used to teach children mathematics (e.g. “Tom and Jerry Addition Game”).

Partworks as creative goods

Partworks as media products are a part of the sphere, which has multiple names – media industries, entertainment industries, information industries, leisure industries, cultural industries, creative industries (the overview is in Hesmondhalgh, 2015; also Roberts, 2004; Gopalan, 2009; Flew, 2012). The latter term, coined in 1990s in Australia, now is the most accepted one. Creative industries include film industry, journals and newspaper publishing, television, etc. – all of them lie ‘at the crossroads between the arts, business and technology’ (Gopalan, 2009, p. 6) and reveal considerable influence of popular culture. Nowadays, researchers critically describe popular culture on its way to transforming to ‘consumer culture’, which is a

'degradation of culture' (Adorno, 2001, p. 17). The unification of culture and commerce make this process faster and the existence of the culture began to be driven via the processed of commodification, standardization and reification (ibid., p. 21). Creative industries can be also seen as a part of world innovation system as a tool to disseminate new knowledge and technologies (Potts & Cunningham, 2008; Keane & Zhang, 2009). Hesmondhalgh (2015, p. 4) defines one of the key characteristics of cultural industries – their ability to influence on 'our understanding and knowledge of the world', and most usually cultural industries 'make and circulate texts'. The negative element is that commercial enterprises pursue mostly their profit, and thus commercial interests dominates in many spheres of entertainment, cultural and social life. Creative industries are 'big business' in the modern world and as they want to make profit, the educational goals can go as only secondary ones (if they ever present). Partworks are a good example of the creative industry product. While they accumulate almost all negative features of this industry, the commercial use of learning still contributes to knowledge dissemination and influence the consumption of specific products, e.g. *Ultimate Real Robots* series (EagleMoss International) has influenced consumers' interest for robots (Wyatt, Browne, Gasson, & Warwick, 2008).

The result of unification of culture and commerce is the production of cultural (or creative) goods. These products usually convey ideas in their content, present symbolic interpretations, inform, entertain, and contribute to creation of collective identity of a person and a society (Gopalan, 2009; Dayton-Johnson, 2000). Caves (2000) makes the distinction between simple creative goods (e.g. writing a novel) and complex creative goods (e.g. making a motion picture). The *complex creative goods* term means 'the end product of a production chain which involved not just many different teams of people, but also multiple projects that converge' (Davies and Sigthorsson, 2013, p. 135, as adopted from Mayer, Banks, & Caldwell, 2009). Hesmondhalgh (2015) names the print media among the core cultural industries, which are considered to be synonymic to complex creative goods (Flew, 2012, p. 90), as well as film production, broadcasting, digital games, etc. Nevertheless, while applying the analyses of the creative goods made by Caves (2000) and the typology of creative content (e.g. provided by film, printing media, etc.), creative originals (e.g. provided by visual arts), creative experience (e.g. provided by museums and tourism), creative service (e.g. provided by advertising and architecture), Flew (2012) considers publishing and print media an example of simple creative goods. Below I argue that the partwork industry as a part of print media belongs to the type of complex creative goods, rather than simple creative goods, because many partworks are the result of the convergence of the previous creative products.

In the world media system, the partwork industry presents a long-standing instance of educational patterns which appeared in the second half of the 20th century and still has a growing niche market. Partworks are 'totally unique business model' (Stam & Scott, 2014, p. 173), as they are collectable serial magazines published weekly or fortnightly, issue by issue creating a completed product (e.g. models, encyclopedias, cookery courses), running for a finite time period (50-80 weeks). Usually partworks contain a collectable element, such as details of the future model of the car, bones of the dinosaur's skeleton, dolls, toys, silicone moulds for sweets, etc. Thus, partworks offer their consumers an opportunity to complete a collection on a given theme. This type of magazines demonstrates a wide range of interests targeting both adults and

children – from model ships, cars, and trains to knitting and cake decorating, from dinosaurs to dolls. They cover natural sciences, arts, music, literature, history, and various hobbies – accommodating almost all spheres of human activity.

The creation of a partwork is usually a complex process of applying people's interests for popular topics. This process reflects the convergence paradigm in modern culture which means, according to Jenkins (2006, p. 2) 'the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behavior of media audience who will go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they want'. The content of partworks is usually based on existing contents of popular films, popular scientific books, and other trends in modern popular culture. Most of the facts are given in partworks in the light of popular culture and driven by the stereotypes connected with an inevitable simplification on the basis of an average customer (Dracheva & Ilyina, 2014): e.g. *Harry Potter Chess Set Collection* (DeAgostini) is the result of the popularity of *Harry Potter* books by J. K. Rowling and *Harry Potter* film series (Warner Bros.); the same can be said about *The Lord of the Rings Chess Collection* (EagleMoss). Thus, convergence becomes the key to understand the process of storytelling in partworks.

While partworks' production and distribution are consistent to existing models in magazine publishing, their consumption is a more interesting object to investigate from educational perspective. The increasing role of the consumption practice in the production and distribution of partworks is associated with the development of convergence and participatory culture. Jenkins (2006, p. 4) notices that consumption 'has become a collective process' which in the case of partworks means the growing contribution from partworks buyers to the process of consumption. Hilton (2012, p. 505) describes the active consumers' movements in general: 'consumers do not just shop, they organize'. Today, while working with the audience, newspaper and magazine publishing companies have a trend to create a digital environment for their readers to give them a platform to exchange opinions. In audience-media relation research, the problem to estimate and define 'active audience' leads to emerging different approaches to its study. According to uses and gratifications theory, the media audience behavior is directed by people's needs and clear goals (e.g. seeking for information) (see the overview in McQuail, 2011). In the study of media use and goals, McQuail, Blumler, and Brown (1972, pp. 155–156) states four types of interaction between the audience and the media: diversion (as escape from the constraints of the routine and problems, as emotional release), personal relationships (as companionship and social utility), personal identity (as personal reference, reality exploration and value reinforcement, and surveillance (sharing information and opinions, wider access to information). Nowadays, an active audience perspective has become the basis of much media audience research (Sundet, Ytreberg, 2009; Kwak, 2012) and contributes to the understanding of modern 'participatory culture' (see Jenkins, 2006, 2014) in which audience acts like citizens rather than consumers (see these approaches in Gillespie, 2005). For instance, Bolin (2012) points out emotional engagement, socializing and experimenting among main motives for participants of 'active audience'. In order to give customers diversion, surveillance, and opportunity for forming personal identity and making social contacts, the modern partwork industry reveals a tendency to predict audience behavior by reinforcing the process of creating active audience and building up a special digital environment for consumers where they could contribute to the process of learning consumption and have a space

for social engaging and interaction. Partworks are distributed as magazines but consumed as convergent media products, which are connected to different media platforms (print magazines, Internet sites and forums) and aimed at making their customers an 'active audience'.

Learning as a consumed object in partworks

In the competition between publishers for new audiences, the idea of the functional characteristic of a new product (or improving an existing product) becomes the important factor for its success, e.g. 'a coffee table book' is an oversized, hard-covered book filled with illustrations and small blocks of text and used for entertaining guests (Shcherbina, 2016). A partwork is also a publishing product with obviously declared functions, and very often, the main function of partworks *is declared* to be learning. Therefore, whether partworks can be used as educational tools is controversial. Whilst they can be observed as means or sources of informal education, self-study, and lifelong learning, the quality of the information is often doubtful. Besides, although partworks does not present a conceptual educational model to be considered 'pure' educational media, they still have the ability to disseminate knowledge according to McLuhan's (2001, p. 63) perception of media: 'all media are active metaphors in their power to translate experience into new forms'. Nevertheless, McLuhan warns about 'the Narcissus illusions of the entertainment world' (ibid., p. 67), which could influence people's understanding of the information given via the media. In this part of the paper, I try to reveal the partworks' approach to learning as a consumed object and to show its edutainment and infotainment features, as well as the learning needs which are constructed by the partwork industry. In general, I would like to answer the question how they sell learning.

Learning needs in partworks

Modern collectable magazines cover nearly all spheres of people's interests where it is possible to gain numerous consumers as a potential audience for the partwork industry. Nevertheless, the main and traditional spheres of the partwork industry are practical interests and skills (mostly homecrafts), educational interests (natural and humanitarian sciences), technology (making model and working items), popular culture (commonly based on popular film series). This classification is not full, because partworks can cover almost all well spread hobbies of people and emerging new spheres of people's interests.

A large number of partworks cover practical skills, for example, in knitting, cake decorating, making sweets. Usually this type of partwork aims at home crafts, for people who are engaged in such hobbies as knitting (e.g. *Simple Stylish Knitting*, DeAgostini UK, 2015), *The Art of Knitting*, Hachette Partworks, 2016), crochet (e.g. *The Art of Crochet*, Hachette Partworks, 2015–2016), quilting (e.g. *The Art of Quilting*, Hachette Partworks, 2015), cooking (e.g. *Something Sweet*, DeAgostini UK, 2014), *Cake decorating: Learn how to create beautiful cakes*, DeAgostini UK, 2013). The pursuing of practical skills as hobbies is understood as human leisure existence made for pleasure rather than for result. For instance, there is no more necessity to produce needlework to have some items of clothing, but it has become leisure time activity. Maines (2009) writes that needlework does not have any practical aim after the industrial revolution, but nowadays it is 'consciously archaizing' in a

technological sense and presents a 'leisure activity like sex, gourmet cooking, and amateur photography, and like them its technology has adjusted to a market that privileges the enjoyment of the process over the goal of efficient production' (ibid., p. 2).

Scientific interests in partworks divide into two big branches – natural and humanitarian sciences. Partworks aimed for interest in the natural sciences often target children audience – from dinosaurs to bugs, from stone sample collections to geographical encyclopaedias. Among them, I have chosen some children's partworks to compare the advertising and educational paradigms for the grown-up auditory and the under-aged auditory: e.g. *My 3D Globe: Build your model and discover the planet* (Hachette Partworks, 2015), *Dinosaurs and Friends: Read, Learn, Play* (DeAgostini UK, 2015). Humanitarian partworks (literature, history, music, art, etc.) target both children and adult audiences: while the first ones have more educational perspective and could be used as a learner's guide (e.g. *Wally's History of the World*, GE Fabbri, 1998), the second ones are mostly 'collections' (e.g. *Discovering Opera*, Fabbri, 1993; *Great Artists*, Marshall Cavendish, 1993, *Great Writers*, Marshall Cavendish, 1986–1988).

The classification of learning needs in partworks would not be complete without popular culture dimensions. Frequently, partworks impart a degree of practical skills or knowledge in some specific field under the strong influence of popular culture. For example, among partworks, which are very popular nowadays, there is *Star Wars Millennium Falcon* series (DeAgostini, 2016–2017). Partworks of this type are commonly based on popular film series: e.g. *The Official Star Wars Fact File*, (DeAgostini UK, 2014), which is a representative of the core characteristics of this type of collectable magazines. Very often, partworks of other types are given in the light of popular culture driven by the great interest in the heroes and the story of the previous successful films and books: e.g. *Harry Potter Chess* (DeAgostini), *Star Wars Helmets Collection* (DeAgostini), *Pirates of the Caribbean: Build The Black Pearl, the legendary pirate ship* (Hachette Partworks).

A large part of the partwork industry is dedicated to technology. These collectable magazines can accumulate interest for the history of technical knowledge and suggest models of old cars, planes, trains and other items as building models or collections of items: e.g. *Spitfire* (DeAgostini), *Build your own Ford Mustang 1967 Shelby GT-500* (DeAgostini UK, 2016), *Mallard: Build the world's fastest steam locomotive* (Hachette Partworks, 2014). The partwork industry fast responds to innovations in technology and suggests making buildable robots and other items: e.g. DeAgostini's partworks *3D Printer*, *Robi Robot* or *Sky Rider Drone*.

Edutainment in partworks

Edutainment approach in adults' partworks is built mostly similar to how it is given in the children's ones, where edutainment elements present more obviously and straightforwardly. The examples below describe the results of the analyses of *Dinosaurs and Friends* (DeAgostini UK, 2015), *DINOSAURS!* (Orbis publishing, DeAgostini group, 1992), and *Wally's World* (Fabbri Publishing, 1997), which target children in comparison with some adults' partworks.

The idea of conjunction of learning and entertainment (play) is shown in the advertising issues on the background of four activities – reading (as getting information), learning (as getting knowledge / acquiring skills), collecting (as making a collection of objects directly or indirectly related to the theme of the partwork), and playing (as doing the two first activities in the entertaining mode and without big efforts): ‘Explore the amazing age of the dinosaurs! Millions and millions of years ago, in the AGE OF THE DINOSAURS, gigantic beasts like the brontosaurus and T-Rex walked the Earth... READ ALL about their lives - LEARN what they liked to eat, how they fought off their enemies and cared for their little ones. COLLECT enchanting MODELS inspired by the beautifully illustrated books and go on amazing adventures! PLAY in a world of prehistoric animals, people and places’ (*Dinosaurs and Friends* series guide, 2015). Personal addressing to potential customers, defined as children and their parents, also helps to create the atmosphere of ‘easy and amusing learning’: ‘Hello! Let’s find out about the triceratops!’, ‘Our customer care guarantee begins with our products: quality, innovative companion guides that provide education, enjoyment and inspiration’ (*Dinosaurs and Friends. Issue 1. Triceratops*, 2015).

In the partworks of previous years, educational aims were declared more explicitly: e.g. ‘*DINOSAURS!* is a brand new educational series...’, ‘Packed with facts’, ‘Issue by issue, the series builds into an invaluable reference work. But it’s more than just an encyclopedia. The activities and models bring to life the spine-tingling appeal of these giants of pre-history so children learn as they play’ (*DINOSAURS!*, 1992). This series introduction targets parents rather than children: e.g. ‘*DINOSAURS!* is ideal both for school projects and for learning at home... Designed for learning, the clearly laid out pages combine essential information with surprising new facts to answer all your children’s dinosaur questions’ (ibid.). The educational character of this partwork is emphasized with the use of the expert’s opinion on some interesting facts: e.g. the part under the heading ‘Dr. David Norman of Cambridge University answers your dinosaur questions’ (ibid.). In today partworks, ‘experts’ are preserved in adults’ series rather than children’s ones: e.g. ‘Look out for these great tips from our knitting experts’, ‘pick up handy hints, get expert advice and discover the wonderful world of knitting’ (*Simple Stylish Knitting* series guide, DeAgostini UK, 2015).

In adults’ partworks, produced by many publishing companies, the edutainment model is built on the same grounds. For example, the stage of getting information means that in *Something Sweet* (DeAgostini UK, 2014), consumers will have an encyclopedia of basic confectionery techniques, will make a collection of moulds and tools which come with every issue, and will learn necessary skills. The simplicity of the suggested activity is accentuated: e.g. ‘The construction of the *Black Pearl* is designed for adults, but children can be involved in the assembly under the responsibility and careful supervision of an adult’, ‘Each issue includes detailed photographs and simple instructions, which brings making this impressive model within the reach of all ages and abilities’ (*Pirates of the Caribbean* model guide, 2013). The educational value of adults’ partwork stress results and skills rather than pure getting knowledge: e.g. the subheading ‘Learn how to create delicious confectionery’ (*Something Sweet*, 2014). The skills are presented in partworks as ‘easy-to-gain’ and fast in getting results: e.g. ‘Every issue of *Something Sweet* comes with creative tools and easy-to-follow, step-by-step guides to help you make delicious sweet treats and confectionery’ (ibid.), as well as these skills are shown as a possible

basis for improving social interactions of consumers: e.g. ‘... you’ll impress both friends and family with your irresistible creations’ (ibid.). In the partworks for adults, material learning objects in the form of kitchen tools, details for models, needles and yarns for knitting replace toys given as freebies in the magazines for children. The idea of play is not so explicit, as in children’s partworks, it is leisure and hobby activities that present an element of play.

Thus, it is possible to postulate that the *creating an edutainment learning object* is one of the learning models in partworks. McGreal (2004) summarizes the definitions of learning object as anything related to learning, anything digital related to learning, anything for learning, and creating specific learning environment. This latter understanding of learning object is used in this paper. McGreal (2004) defines learning objects as ‘any reusable digital resource that is encapsulated in a lesson or assemblage of lessons grouped in units, modules, courses, and even programmes’. I argue the necessary digital character of learning objects, and I show on the example of partworks that learning environment, which they try to build up, is consist of both digital and non-digital elements, although in the modern circumstances we can observe the growing use of digital learning objects. In the advertisement of the series the producers emphasize the quality and professional characteristics of the learning objects: ‘Collect incredible prehistoric creatures! A beautiful, hardback book collection illustrating the world of the dinosaurs!’ (*Dinosaurs and Friends* series guide, 2015), ‘From professional-standard moulds to decorative tools like cutters, piping nozzles, stencils and embossers, we’ll show you how to use them alongside your magazines to create impressive sweet treats’ (*Something Sweet*, 2014).

Infotainment in partworks

What learning objects are present in partworks? Usually partworks as collectable magazines contain two kinds of learning objects: texts and artefacts. In *Dinosaurs and Friends* series (2015) information is given in engaging and amusing format, which is possible to compare to the media infotainment principle. Textual edutainment learning objects also include dictionaries, articles, fictional stories, amusing facts, tables and charts, etc. The articles in each issue about dinosaurs are categorized under such topics as *Who am I? What am I like? Where do I live? What do I eat? My family*, etc. (*Dinosaurs and Friends. Issue 1. Triceratops*, 2015) with additional fictional stories – e.g. *You’re great, daddy!* (ibid.). The chart of eras, periods and epochs contains short explanations – ‘The history of our planet is divided into geological eras...’ (*Dinosaurs and Friends* series guide, 2015). In the first issue of this series, material objects (artefacts) are two toys – *Dino*, the triceratops and *Ben*, the baby T-Rex.

This infotainment principle already worked in the 1990s when Wally’s partworks were rather popular. For example, *Wally’s World. Issue 11. Find out all about the British Isles* (Fabbri Publishing, 1997) contains a dictionary (which is a constant part of many partworks): e.g. ‘Beheaded - when someone’s head is chopped off we say that he or she was beheaded’, ‘Keep - a castle's main building’; and a number of entertaining facts given in the ‘Wally’s favourite facts’ part: e.g. ‘Queen Elizabeth the First, who ruled England 400 years ago, was bald by the time she was 50 years old. She owned more than 70 wigs. One was bright green!’;

‘Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwllllantysiliogogoch in Wales has the longest place name in Britain’ (*Wally’s World. Issue 11, 1997*).

Creating the digital environment for consuming learning via partworks

A consuming subject of partworks is usually a person having interest in some particular sphere of human knowledge or skills. The main aim of partwork publishers at the first stages of distribution of collectable magazine is to involve as much people as possible in buying partworks to create their own ‘collection’ or to study something new, because final issues of the series will be bought by people who already have got initial issues. In order to make an audience more involved and engaged in partwork activity and to give them motivation to go on their ‘collection’ of partworks, companies try to create a special digital environment for their consumers: e.g. *Simple Stylish Knitting* series suggests its customers ‘online technique library’ and invites them to ‘master every technique with our online video tutorials’ (the *Simple Stylish Knitting* series guide, DeAgostini UK, 2015). This series has Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and Instagram pages, covering the most popular sites for social engaging, as well as the collection’s site (simplestylishmakes.com) containing ‘video tutorials, expert advice, design ideas, inspiring blogs’ (ibid.). This Internet activity of the partwork producers can be seen as an instrument to create own ‘active audience’: e.g. ‘Join in our online community & get inspiration for living a creative life’ (ibid.).

Conclusion

Nowadays, when creative industries pay attention to the idea of learning and produce the media-based sources of informal education, it is necessary to research them not only from the perspectives of media or cultural studies, but also from the educational point of view. In partworks as creative goods, learning needs of people has become the framework for building up commercial learning environment with declared educational goals. The learning environment of partworks combines edutainment principles for the content of the learning objects and infotainment in the format of the educational information. Of course, thematic and content analyses of partworks is limited because it presents only producers’ understanding of learning as a consumed object, and ways of commercialization of learning. Thus, although the case of partworks helps us to realize certain learning needs of the media audience, it is important to undertake additional research and to show learning process through partworks from the customers’ point of view.

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Resources

“Tom and Jerry Addition Game”:
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