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91248



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Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

Level 2 Media Studies 2023

91248 Demonstrate understanding of the relationship between a media product and its audience

Credits: Three

Achievement	Achievement with Merit	Achievement with Excellence
Demonstrate understanding of the relationship between a media product and its audience.	Demonstrate in-depth understanding of the relationship between a media product and its audience.	Demonstrate critical understanding of the relationship between a media product and its audience.

Check that the National Student Number (NSN) on your admission slip is the same as the number at the top of this page.

You should write an essay on ONE of the four statements in this booklet.

If you need more room for any answer, use the extra space provided at the back of this booklet.

Check that this booklet has pages 2–10 in the correct order and that none of these pages is blank.

Do not write in any cross-hatched area (DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA). This area will be cut off when the booklet is marked.

YOU MUST HAND THIS BOOKLET TO THE SUPERVISOR AT THE END OF THE EXAMINATION.

Low Excellence

TOTAL 07

Page 1

INSTRUCTIONS

Choose ONE **media product** and its **audience**.

Write an essay discussing the extent to which you agree or disagree with ONE of the statements below, in relation to your chosen media product and its audience.

STATEMENTS (Choose ONE)

1. There is always a two-way relationship between a media product and its audience.
2. Design elements are informed by a media producer's understanding of their audience.
3. Marketing is the most essential ingredient for the success of a media product.
4. A media product should appeal to an audience's emotions.

Media product:

Audience:

Select your statement: ▾

PLANNING

B *I* U |  ▾ |  ▾ |  

ESSAY

Type your essay in the space below. You should aim to write a concise essay of no more than 750–800 words. The quality of your writing is more important than the length of your essay. (The counter will change colour when you reach the recommended word count.)

Make sure you **respond only to your chosen statement** *throughout* your essay, and support your discussion with **evidence** from media text(s) and / or other sources, which may include your own production experience.

B *I* U |   |  

Wednesday is a 2022 streaming series produced by MGM and Netflix. It is a spin-off of the original Adams Family series and follows the story of Wednesday Adams, the only daughter of the family, as she is sent to Nevermore, a school for extraordinary children. The series was initially directed by Tim Burton and achieved global success, being streamed in over 150 million households. As Brand Vision states, "the success of the series can be largely attributed to the comprehensive marketing campaign implemented by the streaming giant." The relationship built by Netflix with the audience of Wednesday demonstrates the importance of marketing for the success of a media product.

In order to market the series effectively, Netflix used a variety of techniques to collect audience information. They then used this information to target the audience with advertisements. When subscribers to the platform create their accounts, they are required to enter personal information such as age, gender, and geographical location. This information is measured using an internal algorithm called the Netflix Recommender System (NRS). This system takes into account the actual viewing habits of these subscribers. In the words of Netflix's CEO, Ted Sarandos, "we have insight into every second of the viewing experience. I know what you have tried and what you have turned off. I know at what point you turned it off. It's very sophisticated." This is used not only to recommend viewing for subscribers, but also to inform Netflix of how demographics consume the content. To assist with this venture, Netflix employs an analytics tool called Nielsen Media Research. Using these tools, Netflix are able to create an audience profile, that they can use to target their advertisements, the response to which, they will further analyse to influence future advertising. This level of detailed understanding of viewers raises questions about corporate greed and exploitation of audiences for financial gain.

The audience of Wednesday was enormous, and the show has been streamed for well over a billion hours worldwide, as a result of the extensive marketing that Netflix employed. Studies showed that the viewer base of Wednesday included both older fans of the original series, and younger, uninitiated audiences. Approximately 50% of the viewers of the show were between the ages of 18 and 49. It was also found that the audience was 25% Hispanic, likely due to the casting of Latino actors such as Jenna Ortega, Isaac Ordonez and Luis Guzman. Additional statistics show that the audience of Wednesday was largely multicultural, trans-national, and 60% were female. This could have been due to the star power of Jenna Ortega in the leading role. The audience was low to middle income, which makes sense, as higher income individuals are unlikely to spend their time watching Netflix, a subscription based service.

Through marketing, Netflix was able to build an incredibly successful relationship with the audience of Wednesday, leading to success on an unprecedented scale. Netflix, being an internet based business, has hundreds of active social media accounts in different countries across many different platforms. These accounts churned out promotional content for the series that encouraged viewers to interact and engage. They used a social listening tool called Keyhole, to view and analyse audience responses to online content in real time. This allowed them to tailor future content based on the posts that internet users interacted with most. YouTube channels for the series uploaded a constant barrage of teasers, trailers, and behind the scenes videos. The online campaign included collaborations with influencers and celebrities, the official Wednesday accounts would even comment on posts related to the series, drawing more and more attention and anticipation. A viral TikTok dance was created, based on the one performed by Ortega in the show, and consumers were encouraged to join in and imitate it. This viral trend garnered billions of views and resulted in increased traffic to the subscription site. The Wednesday media onslaught continued in the physical realm as well. Posters lined every street, and appeared on every billboard and bus stop. They would often include quippy, relatable quotes, some congratulating citizens on looking up from their "soul sucking device". Jenna Ortega's face stared at drivers through their windshields from the backs of busses, and ads for the show even appeared on the ground. They could also be found in elevators, on escalators, even in the baggage trays in airport customs. As Brand Vision puts it, "from traditional avenues such as bus stops and billboards to the viral popularity of the show on social media sites like Instagram and TikTok, the marketing team has left no stones unturned in promoting the series." This marketing campaign was implemented in a way that made sure almost every person on the planet had at least heard of Wednesday. The success of Netflix's marketing has implications for the future of unhealthy binge watching and the danger of corporate agendas that go way beyond the show itself.

The relationship built by Netflix between Wednesday and its audience is responsive, interactive, relatable, and above all, innovative. Netflix, using the information it gathers about viewers, is able to actively and effectively respond to market trends, and the changing habits of consumers. It does this in a way that gets audiences essentially addicted to their content, and in doing so forms a symbiotic relationship; Netflix and its audience feed off each other, viewers get a hit of dopamine, and Netflix get paid. The marketing campaign for Netflix excelled at making its relationship with the audience as personal as possible. They did this by making interactive content that piqued viewers interest, before the show had even premiered. This created an incredible hype for the series and an insatiable demand for a second season. The customer-centric marketing model used was fairly simple, but hugely effective, as evident in the 230 million active Netflix subscribers. Other companies, such as Amazon Prime, Hulu, HBO Max, and Disney+ will undoubtedly be looking to replicate the marketing of Wednesday for their own shows. This is the future of advertising, particularly for television. This will lead consumers down a path of perpetual internet use and mindless consumption, while corporations continue to profit.

In conclusion, the relationship Wednesday shares with its audience is evidence that marketing is absolutely the most essential ingredient for the success of a media product. The quality of a product is irrelevant if no one has heard of it. Netflix's methods of collecting and analysing audience information, are certainly questionable. Even if media producers don't particularly like the direction that media marketing is going, they will be forced to use the technology to their advantage if they wish to remain competitive. Netflix do not seem to consider the potential negative implications of this revolutionary technology for society. It is the responsibility of media producers to make sure this technology is used ethically. The dangers of binge-watching are numerous and severe and Netflix does not discourage it because it makes them make huge sums of money. These companies hold an increasing level of control over the thoughts of their audience and there is not much stopping producers from pushing their own personal agendas on the populous. Do they really have our best interests at heart?

1199 WORDS / 800 RECOMMENDED

Excellence

Subject: Media Studies

Standard: 91248

Total score: 07

Q	Grade score	Marker commentary
1 (3)	E7	<p>The candidate wrote convincingly about the relationship between Netflix and the audience of Wednesday, in response to statement 3: "Marketing is the most essential ingredient for the success of a media product". There was a very good theoretical understanding shown of the nature and nuance of how this relationship was formed and developed, with examples from Wednesday's marketing used to exemplify this understanding. Throughout the essay, an argument was developed on how invasive Netflix's marketing strategy was, potentially skirting an ethical boundary.</p> <p>To gain a higher Excellence grade, further evidence could have been provided about the negative implication of binge watching, and more hard evidence or media theory about the negative consequences of streaming companies holding sway over the thoughts of their audience due to binge watching. Although the evidence provided was slightly limited, the candidate provided a clear argument in relation to the statement.</p>