Authentic and professional
A comparative study of the readers’ relationship with lifestyle blogs and women’s magazines

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In the second millennium, the number of blogs, alongside with other user-generated content has grown explosively all over the globe. In Finland, blogs have a strong foothold in the genre of lifestyle media. Bloggers have become independent media entrepreneurs and they have also been employed by media companies. Lifestyle blogs and women’s magazines intersect in many respects. One of the most important intersections is their readership. Many magazine readers read blogs and some have also replaced magazine reading with blog reading.

The aim of this study was to find out why the reader’s relationship with lifestyle blogs is different from her relationship with women’s magazines and what implications this may have for the future of lifestyle media.

The field of lifestyle blogs has thus far not been widely researched and very little is still known about the reading practices of blogs. In this thesis I compare the reading of blogs with the reading of women’s magazines. I study the role of the blogosphere by examining previous literature about women’s magazines, user-generated content and blogging as a phenomenon. I examine the reader-relationship of blogs from the point of view of journalistic professionalism, in the sense that it applies to women’s magazines; as well as authenticity, a concept previously associated with representations of ordinary people in the media.

For my empirical analysis I have conducted a reader-study of the readers of the Finnish Costume magazine. The participants of my study were females from 16 to 32 of age. I employed a set of mixed methods to study the relationship that these readers had with blogs and magazines.

My main findings in this study were that the reading of women’s magazines is motivated by the professionalism of magazine journalists whereas lifestyle blog reading is motivated by the perceived authenticity of the blogger. As such, blogs and magazines appear to fulfill two different functions. I also discovered that some of the reading practices previously associated with magazines have been transferred as such to blogs but some of them have been highlighted or reshaped by the reading of blogs. A key implication of this study is that blogs and magazines remediate each other and reshape the expectations that readers have of the lifestyle media genre.

Keywords: Lifestyle blogs, women’s magazines, readers, authenticity, professionalism, remediation
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1 Introduction

I used to buy a lot of magazines still a few years ago, but now these blogs have bypassed all of these magazines.
- Participant 01-

The above quote is a citation from the empirical data I gathered for this thesis from interviews with female blog and magazine readers within the age group of 16 to 32. The comment serves as a representative of the change that has been concerning journalism professionals ever since the rise of new, more user-driven media, also known as web 2.0. As consumers are spending more and more of their media time online, the question is, how can the traditional media hold on to their audiences and legitimate their existence?

Jill Walker Rettberg (2008), the author of the book Blogging, has argued that “while use of the Internet is clearly increasing, this does not seem to be at the cost of other media usage, which remains stable. It seems likely that some media are used simultaneously” (p. 45). According to another blog researcher, Agnes Rocamora (2012), the blogosphere is a space where movement is the premise to its existence (p. 96). These two quotations have shaped the question that I became interested in when I first started to map out this thesis: how does the constantly reshaping lifestyle blogosphere stand next to its predecessors, and more specifically, the printed women’s magazine?

In recent years the blogosphere has evolved from personal online diaries into a business of its own. According to Statista Statistics Portal (2011), the total number of blogs grew from 35.8 million in 2006 to 173 million in 2011. As aptly described by journalism teacher and blogger Jay Rosen in a blog post in 2006, “the people formerly known as the audience” are here to be seen and heard, and they are not going anywhere. Instead, they are changing the power balance of the media industry.
In Finland, 54,299 blogs are currently registered under *Blogilista*, which is the largest blog-database in Finland and creates weekly rankings of the most popular blogs in different categories. In Sweden, the blogosphere is over double the size. According to *Bloggportalen*, the Swedish counterpart of *Blogilista*, there are currently 130,621 blogs in Sweden. What is interesting about the blog rankings in these databases is that both in Finland and in Sweden the majority of the most popular blogs appear to be diary-style blogs, written by young females who blog about a variety of lifestyle topics. These diary-style blogs have also been discovered to be the most popular blog-genre on a global scale (see Herring et al., 2004b).

The reason why I wanted to study diary-style lifestyle blogs as opposed to other genres such as political blogs was inspired by their popularity as well as their unique closeness with their readers (see e.g. Rettberg, 2008, McQuarrie et al., 2012). Journalists have traditionally been characterised to fulfil a gatekeeping action (Shoemaker et al., 2009; Ferguson, 1983), as they transmit selected, important information to their readers. As such, journalism professionals are inherently different from their audiences, even when they try to maintain a close relationship with their readers, as is characteristic for women’s magazines (see e.g. Winship, 2987).

However, in recent years the fragmentation of media audiences, the rise of user-generated content and the decrease in the circulation of printed magazines has challenged the relationship traditional journalism has with its audiences (see e.g. Väliverronen, 2009). This has encouraged journalism professionals to adopt new, more engaging, audience-oriented ways to speak to their audiences (Holmes, 2008; Napoli, 2010), similar to those previously adopted by magazines (Helle, 2009; Töyry, 2009; Hujanen, 2009). In current media research, the ways in which audiences engage with media has become a key focus of study both in the media industry and in academia (see e.g. Napoli, 2010; Perälä, Forthcoming; Ahva & Hellman, Forthcoming). As such, the
blogosphere may be considered an important source of information and an example of creating and maintaining a close relationship with the readers.

Women’s magazines remain an area of journalism that has not been as widely researched as news journalism. Because of their reader-driven nature, magazines have been considered less worthy of academic research (see Holmes & Nice, 2012). Also, the previous research in the field of lifestyle blogs remains scarce. The most comprehensive study of the Finnish lifestyle blogosphere can be traced to Noppari and Hautakangas (2012); however the weight of their study was more on bloggers than the blog readers. This is the case with international blogging literature as well, as most of them have focused on studying blogs as a phenomenon (see e.g. Rettberg, 2008; Bruns, 2008) and from the blogger’s perspective (see e.g. Lövheim, 2011a; Rocamora, 2012; McQuarrie et al., 2013; Marwick, 2013) instead of the reader’s perspective.

The relationship readers have with blogs is a key element of blogs as they are produced by the users of media for other users of media, and as such they are initially situated close to their readers (see e.g. Bruns, 2008; Rettberg, 2008). The popularity of social media as a result of direct communication between ordinary people and their imagined or real audiences (see Marwick & Boyd, 2010) has made this relationship worth looking into. Also, what makes the comparison between lifestyle blogs and magazines particularly interesting is their shared knowledge of lifestyle topics. Lifestyle blogs as well as women’s magazines discuss the same topics and promote the same products. Also, a recent development has been that blogs and magazines are written by the same people, as bloggers are being incorporated to lifestyle magazines as guest editors, columnists and interviewees. Also, in Finland, the printed women’s magazines are involving their readers more and more in their production processes (see e.g. Aitamurto, 2013). Women’s magazines use their websites as a platform for reader interaction and many also host blogs on their websites or have started up their own blogging portals. These acts show that
the roles between readers, bloggers and magazine editors are blurring and challenging the traditional ways of content production.

As the printed magazine, and especially the women’s magazine, has always been subject to the powers of the advertising market (see e.g. Gough-Yates, 2003; Töyry, 2005), the increase of advertising in blogs has turned many “ordinary girls” into professional bloggers and extracted blogs from the private sphere into the public sphere (see Lövheim, 2011), introducing them as a potential contender in the race for audiences as well as for advertising euros.

The commercialisation of the lifestyle blogosphere does not seem to make it less appealing in the eyes of blog readers but instead, its resemblance with traditional media has been discovered to even encourage blog reading (Hautakangas & Noppari, 2012; McQuarrie et al., 2012). This idea is supported by statistics regarding blog readerships. In 2006, only 20 per cent of people who were using the internet admitted to use it for blog reading (Statistics Finland, 2006) but in 2013, 40 per cent of Finnish people in all age groups read blogs (Statistics Finland, 2013a). The most active blog readers in Finland are to be found in the age groups of 25 to 34 (58 per cent) and 16 to 24 (52 per cent) (Statistics Finland 2013b).

As the lines between bloggers and media professionals have blurred, the blogger’s role as a media professional has become subject to debate. However, up until now journalists and bloggers are still considered to play two different roles. (See e.g. Rettberg, 2008; Domingo & Heinonen, 2008; Bruns, 2005; Neuberger & Nuernbeck, 2010.) According to Rettberg (2008), “blogs rely on personal authenticity, whereas traditional journalism relies on institutional credibility” (p.92).

Authentication has become a key word in describing the legitimacy of ordinary people in the media (see e.g. Turner, 2006; Tolson, 2010; Lövheim, 2011a). It has been argued that “consumers increasingly value authenticity in a world
where the mass production of artifacts causes them to question the plausibility of value” (Rose & Wood, 2005, p.286). The manifestation of authenticity in the lifestyle blogosphere is a particularly interesting point of analysis as the blogosphere is, in increasing amounts, subject to similar pressures from the advertisers that have been previously associated with women’s magazines. The secret to blog popularity appears to be their authentic communication (see e.g. McQuarrie et al., 2012), a point to which I will get back to in several points of this study.

My personal interest for the comparison of lifestyle blogs and women’s magazines was inspired by my own professional background in the medium of women’s magazines. Within the past few years I have worked as a journalist and been involved in projects where the roles and co-existence of online and offline media have been debated. I have also previously been involved in audience research while working as a research assistant for doctoral student Riitta Perälä in Aalto University in the spring of 2014. This thesis is a result of the combination of interests that have risen from these experiences. However, this research is independent from the media industry and despite my own professional background in the field, I have tried to keep my position as neutral as possible and study the comparisons between women’s magazines and blogs as an outside observer.
1.1 Aim of this study and research questions

The aim of this study is to find out why the reader’s relationship with lifestyle blogs is different from the relationship she has with women’s magazines and what implications this has to the development of the lifestyle media genre. I will approach this topic with the help of the following research questions:

**Q1:** Why is the user-generated media of blogs considered to be more authentic than the professionally-produced media of women’s magazines?

**Q2:** Does the popularity of lifestyle blogs change or remediate the role and reading practices of women’s magazines in the genre of lifestyle media?

The weight of this study is on blogs, however, women’s magazines function as a comparison throughout the study. To study the reader’s relationship with blogs and magazines I have gathered an empirical data. I have employed a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods to study how women’s magazines and lifestyle blogs stand next to each other and what is their value to their readers. In my empirical study I interviewed the readers of *Costume* magazine about their overall magazine and blog consumption within the lifestyle media genre.

The concept of *Costume* magazine is strictly defined to include only fashion and beauty-related topics, and as such it appeared as a natural comparison to the lifestyle blogosphere, which is widely focused around these topics. The magazine brand, brought to Finland in 2012 by *Bonnier Publications*, was designed as multi-channel brand and it has taken up modern production practices such as involving the internet community in the production and inviting bloggers as editors in the magazine (see *Bonnier Publications*, 2012). As suggested by Rettberg (2008) as well as Schröder (2011), the current media consumption is characterised by its simultaneous use of several media. This is why I thought it was of interest to study the readers’ use of magazines and blogs from a wider perspective, by interviewing the readers with reference to all of the lifestyle blog and women’s magazine titles they use. I will introduce my methodology and object of study in more detail in chapter 5.
1.2 Theoretical framework and key concepts

To analyse the relationship of women’s magazines, lifestyle blogs and their readers I will use a theoretical framework that includes previous literature about women’s magazines, user-generated content and lifestyle blogs. However, as the field of lifestyle blogs and their relationship with women’s magazines has not been widely studied, I will also include studies that deal with other types of blogs and their relationship with (news) journalism. I will discuss this literature with reference to my key concepts: authenticity, professionalism and remediation.

Authenticity

In this thesis I discuss authenticity as a characteristic of user-generated media. Historically authenticity has been characterised as a modernist angst as consumers are increasingly longing for authentic experiences that they seem to have lost along with a post-modern culture (Rose & Wood, 2005, p. 286). Authenticity has also been opposed with inauthenticity and associated with primitive humanity that is considered to exist outside the plasticity of the modern sphere of life (Trilling, 1972, p.102). Authenticity is seen as something that is ascribed and not inscribed, meaning that it is defined from outside (Moore, 2002; Zukin, 2008). In modern cultural studies, authenticity has been understood as a performance (Zukin, 2008) that is communicated by an author to its audience in an unmediated space, meaning that the space between the author and the audience is perceived to be minimal (Moore, 2002). As such the concept is highly applicable to user-generated media culture, as the author speaks directly to his or her readers without intermediaries. As authenticity is defined from outside, it is the readers of media texts that get to determine what they consider to be authentic. In this thesis I analyse the experience of authenticity from the readers’ perspective with reference to the current media culture and blogs.
**Professionalism**

The word professionalism is derived from the word profession, and suggests that one has to have a qualification in order to be considered a professional. Unlike becoming a doctor or a lawyer, journalism does not require a degree but anyone who works as a journalist can be a journalist (Holmes & Nice, 2012; Deuze, 2005). Journalism has therefore been considered to balance in between a profession and a craft (Holmes & Nice, 2012). What journalism is and what purpose it serves has traditionally been a matter of self-determination instead of reader-determination (see Schudson & Anderson, 2009; Deuze, 2005). Journalistic professionalism has historically been associated with ideals such as objectivity, self-imposed requirements such as professional training and ethical codes, representation of knowledge, and autonomy from other sources of power. The ideal of objectivity has been reshaped and contested throughout the history of journalism and its importance has even been denied. (Schudson & Anderson, 2009.) Objectivity has not been considered an ideal for magazine journalism (see e.g. Holmes, 2008; Johnson, 2008). However, magazine journalism is not a profession of its own but the same journalists that could be working for newspapers work for magazines. The difference between a magazine journalist and a newspaper journalist is therefore usually (but not always) a matter of work place and not of qualification. The profession of magazine journalists has been associated with an understanding for the reader as well as for marketing imperatives joint with an in-depth knowledge about the subject matter of the magazine (Holmes & Nice, 2012, p.52). Professionalism may also be interpreted as “media credibility”, combining such aspects of journalism as believability, accuracy, fairness and depth of information (Johnson & Kaye, 2004, p. 627). In this study I examine professionalism from the reader’s point of view to find out what and who is considered to be professional in the current lifestyle media.

**Remediation**

The process of remediation can be understood as interplay between media where new and old media constantly reshape each other. Bolter & Grusin
(2002) argue that “what is new about new media comes from the particular ways in which they refashion older media, and the ways in which older media refashion themselves to answer the challenges of new media” (p. 15). The authors suggest that new media fluctuate in between its predecessors and other contemporary media and that no media exists in isolation from other media (p. 19). Remediation can also be described as a two-way process: old media is being reshaped by new media and vice versa (Rocamora, 2012). Here I will discuss remediation with reference to how women’s magazines and lifestyle blogs have taken influence from each other and how they are currently reshaping the field of lifestyle media.

1.3 Outline of this study
This study examines the role of lifestyle blogs in the lifestyle media genre from the point of view of blog and magazine readers. In this study I compare lifestyle blogs with women’s magazines and study how their unique characteristics manifest themselves in the reader’s relationship with these media. I will start this thesis by introducing my theoretical framework. In chapter two (2), I will introduce women’s magazines from a historical perspective and examine their role in the media industry as well as their relationship with readers. In chapter three (3), I will introduce the changes in media culture and perception of audience that have shaped the magazine industry, and made possible the establishment of the blogosphere. In chapter four (4), I will examine previous literature about blogs as a new medium and sort out what is currently known about blog readers. In chapter five (5), I will move onto my empirical study by introducing my research methods and analysis methods. In chapter six (6), I will introduce the key findings of this study with reference to my research questions. In the last chapter I will summarize my findings and discuss their implications for the magazine industry.
2 Women’s magazines as a special interest medium

To study the current role of women’s magazines in the lifestyle media genre, we must first understand their history and their given role in the media industry. In this chapter I will introduce previous literature about women’s magazines with reference to their media concepts, their production and their readers.

2.1 Women’s magazines as media concepts

Magazine journalism has traditionally been excluded from the sphere of "serious" journalism, as it does not seek to fulfil the same obligations of objectivity as traditional news journalism (see e.g. Holmes & Nice 2012). Magazines can be defined in a variety of ways and nowadays they can be online as well as offline. What is common for the majority of them is their periodical nature, their selection of writers and their unique perception of the audience. (Holmes, 2008.) Magazines are different from newspapers because they are produced to serve the needs, desires, hopes, fears and aspirations of the reader, unlike newspapers that have only recently started to “discover” the reader (Holmes, 2008, p. xii).

All commercial media products are involved in a media market of four components: media organizations, audience measurement organizations, advertisers and consumers (Napoli, 2003). The media market thus defines its audiences in two ways. First, the audience product is created in an interaction between a sample of consumers, audience measurement firms and media organisations, after which the audience product is sold to the advertisers (Napoli, 2003, p. 23). As the cover price of a magazine is not enough to make a profit, it is their attractiveness to advertisers that really matters (Winship, 1987, p.38).

What is common for traditional (news) journalism and advertising is that they both perceive the audience as something separate from production, as “the other” (Schudson & Anderson 2009; Puustinen, 2008). Traditional (news) journalism has adopted an autonomous role that separates it from societal
forces as well as from its audience (Schudson & Anderson, 2009), whereas advertising perceives the audience as consumers who need to be understood, listened to and tamed at the same time (Puustinen, 2008).

However, a close relationship with the reader makes the magazine more appealing in the eyes of the advertisers (Gough-Yates, 2003). As commercial special interest media concepts, magazine journalism has adopted a more audience-oriented approach than news journalism, an approach that speaks directly to chosen audiences (Holmes & Nice, 2012). This “unique closeness” with the readers cuts down the journalistic distance and includes the magazine journalists and the readers in the same community (Abrahamson, 2008, p. 148).

Women’s magazines have always been targeted for niche audiences, as women have been perceived as a special interest group of being “not men” (Ballaster et al., 1991, p. 79). Behind the instructions and guidance offered by women’s magazines lies an assumption of the female incompetence as opposite to the powerful, confident, know-it-all male (Ferguson, 1983, p. 2). The feminist critique has earned a substantial amount of space in the previous literature of women’s magazines (see for example Zuckerman, 1998; Hermes, 1995). It has been argued that commercial women’s magazines have excluded themselves from the women’s movement as they concentrate on speaking to women on an individual level and apart from feminist ideals (Winship, 1987, p.80). Gender representations cannot be truly put aside when studying women’s magazines, but here I will not further analyse women’s magazines from the point of view of their gender representations or power structures because the focus of this study is on studying women’s magazines within the genre of women’s lifestyle media and not in comparison to other, more gender-neutral media.

In addition to the gendered practices depicted in women’s magazines, they also include the assumption that most women are interested in the same topics (see Winship, 1987, p. 13). This makes their nature paradoxical: they are special
interest (only for females) magazines with a general audience of all women (Ferguson, 1983, p.1). Women’s magazines have perceived women mainly as consumers (Ferguson, 1983, p.185) and when advertisers have gained a stronger foothold in the women’s magazine market, the female consumer identity has been further emphasised (Ballaster et al., 1991, p. 80; Töyry, 2005, p.44).

The establishment and success of the “glossy” women’s magazine market in the 1980’s constructed new commercial femininities as advertisers became more interested in staying close to the fast-moving consumer market (Gough-Yates, 2003, pp.56-57). As females had stepped into the working life, the advertisers saw a need to address women in terms of different lifestyles and not as a unified mass. This encouraged the construction of an “ideal reader” that could be then sold to the advertisers. The “working woman” or “busy woman” became the new target audiences, and even a divorced, self-supporting woman was acknowledged for the first time. In the 1980’s the female representations faced a great amount of criticism and different representations were publicly contested. Because the women’s consumer market was rapidly changing, the advertisers had to seek out new strategies to study different lifestyles and find new ways to approach the new female target audiences.(Gough-Yates, 2003, pp. 73-78) As the advertisers were trying to get closer to the consumer, the problem was not only how the female consumers should be approached but also where they should be approached (Gough-Yates, 2003, p. 75). This led to the birth of so called lifestyle-journalism. The advertisers realized that even though the working woman was a new, important female representation for them, it was not work that the women wanted to read about after a long day at work: work was perceived as an element of realism but magazines were rather associated with fantasy and pleasure. (Gough-Yates,2003, p. 95.)

The creation of a variety of women’s magazines with well-defined target groups shows that women’s magazines are carefully designed media products, or as suggested by Töyry (2005), media concepts. A media concept can be
understood as “the logic that ties together the different perspectives, purposes and values of the participants involved in producing and consuming media products” (Helle & Töyry, 2009, p.498). A media concept can be broken down into three levels. The first (1) level includes the publisher’s goals and values and definition of audience as well as the overall journalistic and visual culture. The second (2) level of the media concept consists of the architecture of the actions of the editorial office and the architecture of the media product, i.e. page plan, story types and publishing platform. The third (3) level of the media concept involves the details of the production such as daily workflow, the voice and tone of the media product and the choice of visual elements. (Helle & Töyry 2009.) The idea of a media concept embodies the complexity of the medium, from the journalistic work to the values that are transmitted from the publisher to the audience (ibid.). This theory implies that women’s magazines are commercial products in the same sense as any other products. Therefore the values that they communicate cannot be reduced to representations of femininity but instead, each publication communicates a unique set of goals and values, which aim at merging the production and consumption of a magazine into a profitable and enjoyable form (Töyry, 2005).

2.2 Magazine editors as gatekeepers of a shared world

In women’s magazines, editors have been considered to be the gatekeepers of the female world (Ferguson, 1983, p.10). The gatekeeping function is an inherent characteristic of journalism. By having access to sources that are out of reach of the normal citizen, the journalists are expected to provide a picture of the world to its audiences. (Shoemaker et al., 2009, p. 73.) The act of gatekeeping is a process where a variety of items are selected into the channels of the media and some of them are passed through the gate and made available to the media audiences (Shoemaker et al., 2009). This process is by no means truly objective as the choices of what is passed through the gatekeeping process and how the item is processed during the gatekeeping process are dependent on several factors such as the specific interests of the
media, the individual journalists, professional codes of conduct and even computer algorithms. (Shoemaker et al., 2009, p. 73-74.)

In special interest magazines, the ability to filter relevant content through the gatekeeping process demands a certain level of expertise of the subject matter of the magazine. This is why magazine journalists are often experts on a field outside of journalism. (Holmes & Nice, 2012.) The magazine editor’s ability to combine his or her expert knowledge with the expectations defined by the magazine concept and the magazine’s readers may be seen as a characteristic of the editor’s level of journalistic professionalism (see Holmes & Nice, 2012, p.52).

Even though magazine editors are a part of the same community of interest as their readers, it is their role as experts and gatekeepers of information that creates a hierarchy between them. The gatekeeping function thus strengthens the separate roles of the editors and the readers as “us” and “them” and supports a power nexus of producer (journalist) and consumer (reader) (see Holmes & Nice, 2012, p. 52). In magazines, readers have traditionally functioned as a source of feedback and “human experience” rather than a co-operative force (Heikkilä et al., 2012).

Because women’s magazines strive to diminish the distance between the editors and the readers, they speak to their readers from a personal perspective, as “I” and “we”, to create an illusion of sharing the same space, i.e. “the woman’s world” (see Winship, 1987, p. 66). This is a distinct difference between newspaper journalism and magazine journalism, as newspaper journalists have traditionally remained in the shadow of the news they publish (ibid.). Women’s magazines have adopted a friendly tone of writing that makes the magazine a mutual experience for individual women and the editorial staff. The magazine encourages its readers to be involved in a friendship that works both ways as “mutual exchange of ideas, experiences and interests” (Winship, 1987, p. 66).
However, combining the worlds of readers and magazine editors in real life has not proven itself to be as easy. In Finland, co-operative efforts have been implemented in the genre of women's magazines as the readers of *Olivia* magazine have been involved in the production of a special issue of the magazine, called *Oma Olivia (My Own Olivia)* (see Aitamurto, 2013). The project highlighted the unequal roles of magazine editors and readers as the journalists saw themselves as experts and did not include the magazine reader in the same sphere of knowledge. From the journalists' perspective, the readers’ expertise was limited to everyday experiences as consumers and citizens. The readers suggested stories that the editorial staff considered too boring for the magazine concept. The journalists felt it was difficult to balance between the concept of the magazine and the reality of the readers: the magazine is produced for an ideal reader that does not match with the real reader. The journalists also thought it felt forced to constantly engage with the readers and had trouble finding time for interaction as it was not included in the traditional journalistic working processes. (Aitamurto 2013.)

### 2.3 Women's magazines as reading experiences

The previous literature about the reading of women's magazines has considered magazine readers as an active audience, as opposed to the early traditions of mass media studies, such as *Mass Communication Research* (MCR) or *Uses and Gratifications Approach*, of which the first deemed media audiences merely as recipients of media effects whereas the latter argued that media texts offer their readers continuous gratifications (see e.g. Morley & Brunsdon, 1999; Wilson, 2009). Already in 1973 it was discovered by Stuart Hall that different audiences read the meanings of media texts in very different ways. The *encoding/decoding model* (Hall, 1973/1980) challenged the previous views of the audience as passive recipients and functioned as a basis for the conceptualisation of the active audience (see e.g. Alasuutari, 1999). The idea of the active audience has since then been employed and contested in television
studies, where it has been proven that audiences use media texts also for other purposes than their content, and that media choices are affected by the environments the readers are involved in (Ang, 1985; Morley, 1986; Morley & Brunsdon, 1999). The idea of the active audience has been challenged by the discovery that people do not always know what they use media for (Ang, 1985) and that media may be considered meaningful only in terms of its role as a daily routine (Hermes, 1995).

2.3.1 Reading as a meantime activity and relaxation

The reading experiences of women’s magazines can be considered a part of the reader’s everyday practices, and as such they are not consciously analysed on a daily basis. The readers may find it hard to reflect upon the reading experience in terms of how and why they read what they read because the meaning is constructed only when the reading experience is analysed from outside. (Hermes, 1995, p. 23.) Media consumption creates structure in the daily lives of people and therefore the routines of consumption override the meaningfulness of the media. Media use is always dependent on other media available, i.e. media is not usually used with full concentration. Therefore media use is not an isolated but rather a collective process in which all the different media used at all different times play a role in the architecture of people’s daily lives. (Bausinger, cited in Hermes, 1995.)

The readers of women’s magazines have described women’s magazines as a meantime activity, something that does not require much attention and that fills the “white spaces” in between the daily routines (Hermes, 1995; Ytre-Arne, 2011a; FPPA, 2008). Media use as something that is done alongside with other tasks has proved to be adopted by women also with reference to television viewing (Morley, 1986). In comparison to books, women’s magazines are perceived as easily “pickupable” and “putdownable”. Books appear to represent a higher social value than magazines and they demand more devotion from the reader’s end. (Hermes, 1995, p. 32.) The reader does not feel guilty when she interrupts the reading of women’s magazines. (Hermes, 1995; Ytre-Arne,
Women’s magazines are considered as “second-choice reading matter that adapts to a noisy background, to other obligations” (Hermes, 1995, p. 34). However, despite the easy-reading nature of women’s magazines, the reading experience can be considered very engaging as the reader can be very absorbed in the magazine’s content even when there are other disturbances (Ytre-Arne 2011a).

The reading of women’s magazines has also been characterised by the readers as a relaxing and rewarding ritual (Ytre-Arne, 2011a). According to Sonkamuotka (2013), the main function of printed women’s magazines is to provide a space and time for private relaxation and to offer contrast to the mundane daily duties. This idea has been supported by the findings of television studies, as women have described television viewing as a “guilty pleasure” and as “time for yourself”, as something they allow themselves when the rest of the family is away (Morley, 1986; Ang, 1985).

It has been discovered that the pleasure women receive from women’s magazines is connected to their visuals. Advertisements and editorials present a dream world that the reader can get lost in. The visuals of women’s magazines acknowledge the mundane labours that the reader is involved with, but offer an “enjoyable pathway to their accomplishment”. (Winship, 1987, p. 57.) To better understand the concept of pleasure I find Ang’s (1985) determination of pleasure relevant here. Ang argues, with reference to her studies of the viewing of television series Dallas, that pleasure cannot be rationally sought out but is experienced “spontaneously”:

Experiencing pleasure is not a conscious, directed activity (although one can strive for it), but something that “happens”, something which comes over the viewer according to his or her feelings. The experience is diffuse, bound to time and context, heterogeneous: so much is going on in the viewer’s head. (Ang, 1985, p. 83.)
This is in line with the previous notions that media use may be a subconscious act and the reader does not necessarily know what she uses media for (see Hermes, 1995).

2.3.2 Printed magazines as a tangible product and relaxing read

The relaxing function of women’s magazines is connected with their physical nature as printed, tangible products (Sonkamuotka, 2013, pp. 23-26). In comparison to magazine websites, printed magazines are considered relaxing because they are a non-screen activity. Screens are associated with work whereas printed magazines are linked with leisure time (Sonkamuotka, 2013; Ytre-Arne, 2011b). Also, magazines (including electronic magazines) have been considered as a lean-back experience as they deliver content their content to the reader in a limited form, as opposed to internet reading and smartphone reading, which are considered as lean-forward experiences because they demand activity from the reader’s end (Johnson & Prijatel, 1999, p. 25).

The readers of magazines also appreciate the temporal nature of the printed magazine for two reasons. Firstly, they enjoy the waiting. Being able to read a magazine after work feels like a luxury for many readers. Second, the readers consider the slow pace of reading as an important characteristic of the printed magazine. In comparison to magazine websites, the readers appear to have a stronger relationship with the printed magazine than with the magazine websites (Sonkamuotka, 2013; Ytre-Arne, 2011b). However, this is not necessarily an indication of the printed magazine as a more engaging read than websites but rather a sign of the fact that the reader’s relationship with the printed magazine was created long before the creation of the magazine websites. Because of this, the reader’s relationship with the magazine websites is expectedly weaker than with the printed magazine. Because the websites of a magazine are created to reflect the magazine brand and to provide an online extension to it, they cannot be compared as two equal products in terms of production and content. This is why I chose to study readers of a magazine with reference to another media, i.e. blogs that are independent from the magazine.
brand and its publisher. To get a balanced view of the difference between magazine and blog reading and to avoid overemphasizing a single brand, I also required that all of the participants of this study were reading other magazines in addition to Costume magazine.

The printed, offline magazine, especially in the genre of interior design and fashion, is also enjoyed by its readers because of its aesthetics. The look and feel of the paper, the quality of the images and the layout of the magazine appear to be meaningful to the reader. However, the meaning of the visual elements often becomes visible only when the aesthetics change dramatically. However, even a more crucial element of the magazine is the writing. The headlines on the cover of the magazine have appeared to be more important than layout and images when deciding whether to buy the magazine or not. (Ytre-Arne, 2011b.)

The physical interface of the printed magazine is important to the readers, even if they cannot really describe why. An important characteristic of the magazine seems to be the shape and feel of the object, its tangibility. (Ytre-Arne, 2011b.) Also, a heavier glossy magazine with a spine feels as more valuable than a thin weekly magazine (Sonkamuotka, 2013, pp.24-29). The importance of the physical nature of magazines is further highlighted by the fact that offline content is considered to be more in-depth and offer a broader perspective than magazine websites. In studies of the users of printed magazines and magazine websites the participants were found to believe that the production of offline content required more effort from the editors. (Sonkamuotka, 2013.) Again, this attitude highlights the fact that magazine websites cannot be considered as independent but rather complementary products to the printed magazine.

2.3.3 Women's magazines as a space for contradictory identities
Contradiction is a fundamental characteristic of the concept of women’s magazines (Töyry, 2005). Women expect the magazines to allow opportunities
for self-recognition and escape, to offer light entertainment but also to speak to them on a profound level. They want to be inspired by products in the magazine but do not want the magazine to be too extravagant. They want to hear about real-life experiences but do not want to be absorbed into misery. (Ytre-Arne, 2011a.) Women’s magazines are a space for identity creation, and in that space women are given reflections from their own life as well as continuous opportunities for improvement (Töyry, 2005, p. 93). Women’s magazines portray the female life to be full of contradictions and the magazine repeats these contradictions with a collection of story types that rule each other out. The maintenance of the contradiction is crucial for the magazine’s existence because the magazine upholds its relationship with the reader by suggesting contradictory views and by offering answers to them. This creates a relationship between the magazine and the reader where the magazine produces and repeats contradictions that the reader can familiarize herself with and offers answers but also opportunities for continuous self-improvement. (Töyry, 2005, pp. 93, 327.)

Women’s magazines function as an important source for inspiration and ideas (Sonkamuotka, 2013). The need for inspiration and ideas is characterised by Hermes (1995) as a “reading repertoire of practical knowledge” (p.36). This repertoire plays a key role in the creation and maintenance of the “ideal self”. The repertoire of practical knowledge describes the type of reading that involves taking practical advice from the magazine such as cooking and cleaning instructions and film and music reviews. This repertoire functions also as a legitimation for the price of the magazine and as a rational reasoning for reading women’s magazines. More importantly, the reader uses this practical knowledge to develop a better version of herself: the know-it-all woman who has everything under control. (Hermes, 1995, pp. 36-40.)

The magazine’s role as an important source for identity construction is encouraged by two additional reading repertoires (see Hermes, 1995). The repertoire of emotional learning and connected knowing, describes the reader
as someone who is in need for knowledge about her own emotions as well as other people’s emotions. It has been discovered that women use magazines to find answers and support to their own insecurities and to gain control over their lives. The repertoire of melodrama comes across in tragic real life stories that are a common characteristic of women’s magazines as well as gossip magazines. These repertoires of reading portray contradictory ideals of being emotional yet strong, being in-control and in need of advice. (Hermes, 1995, pp. 31-48.)

The inclusion of ordinary women in the pages of women’s magazines serve the purpose of being close to the readers (Winship, 1987) and support the contradictory nature of women’s magazines as they represent the “real woman” as an opposite to the “ideal woman” (see Duffy, 2013). The ordinary women are invited into the pages of the magazine to describe the experiences and struggles of the female life and offer opportunities for reader-identification and empowerment (Winship, 1987, pp. 70-71).

However, Hermes (1995) argues that the empowering effects of women’s magazines are only temporary and the feeling of empowerment does not usually extend beyond the moment of reading. Also, the practical knowledge may function solely as inspiration rather than a point of learning. For example, recipes and instructions may be considered useful but they are not often used for anything else than inspiration. Therefore the pleasure of practical knowledge is of fictional quality, as the satisfaction lies more in the imagining of the ideal self than in the realization of the practical knowledge. (Hermes, 1995, p.48.)

The identities provided by women’s magazines may also be enjoyed by the readers when they represent something opposite to the existing standards, as has been observed to be the case with gossip magazines (Hermes, 1995). The reading of gossip magazines has been characterised by Hermes (1995) as a mixture of “camp” (a play with other people’s cultural values and judgements) and irony (“a way of distancing oneself from low culture or laughing it away”)
Reading gossip magazines can be paralleled with oral gossip as they both fulfil the functions of belonging as well as debating social norms and power structures between “good” and “bad” taste (Hermes, 1995, p.141).

In this chapter I have introduced women’s magazines as commercial media concepts with carefully defined target groups. I have also examined the relationship magazine editors have with their readers. I have stated that the editors of women’s magazines act as gatekeepers and experts of “the female world” but that they work hard in order to create an illusion of sharing this world with the readers. I have also argued that women’s magazines are read for their easily “pickupable” and “putdownable” nature, as a meantime activity. The reading of women’s magazines also seems to be encouraged by the relaxing nature of the printed magazines, the pleasure of reading and the visual nature of the magazine. The reader’s identification with the magazine is encouraged by offering practical advice and opportunities for self-improvement. However, the opportunities for identification are always contradictory as the magazine is based on creating contradictions and solving them at the same time. Next I will move my analysis towards interactive media audiences and analyse the recent changes that have influenced media’s perception of the audience.
3 Audience members become media players

The internet has made it possible for anyone to become a producer and publisher of information. It has allowed media audiences to create their own media sites, take part in social media or participate in the production of traditional media. Bruns (2008) argues that new spaces for journalism, such as blogs, were initially created in response to the commercialization of journalism, as an alternative media outlet. The idea of blogging as a type of journalism has been debated (see e.g. Zúñiga et al., 2011; Domingo & Heinonen, 2008; Blood, 2002; Neuberger & Nuernbeck, 2010). However, this debate has mostly concerned the field of political blogs as filter and knowledge blogs (see Herring et al. 2004a) and not diary-style blogs because they have been considered more journalistic than diary-style blogs (see Zúñiga et al., 2011).

Bruns (2008) has argued that blogging can be seen as citizen journalism and its role is to present critique and opposing views to mainstream journalism. However, recently this form of citizen journalism has taken a foothold of its own and started to produce content that is independent of the mainstream media. (Bruns 2008, p.86-87). This idea also applies to the genre of lifestyle journalism as some lifestyle bloggers have become independent actors who publish content that can be paralleled with that of women’s magazines (see e.g. Rocamora, 2012; Lövheim, 2011a; Noppari & Hautakangas, 2012). Whether blogs should be seen as a form of participatory media culture, as a new form of celebrity culture, as potential opportunity for exploitation of user-generated content, or as a learning point for traditional journalism is a matter of point-of-view. Here I will discuss such recent development of the media and its audiences that has allowed the shaping of the lifestyle blogosphere into its current form.

3.1 From users to “produsers” and participators

Bruns (2008) argues that the traditional production value chain, producer -> distributor -> consumer, has evolved into a chain where “produsage” controls the input and output of the media. “Produsage” is characterised by Bruns (2008)
as “the collaborative and continuous building and extending of existing content in pursuit of further improvement” (p.21). The theory implies that the roles of producers, distributors and consumers have been replaced by a mass of users, who take part in all of these actions. This mass contributes to the production and improvement of information in a circular mode, so that the production process becomes infinite. According to Bruns (2008), “produsage” is highly community-based and collaborative and dependent on networked, participatory environments. (pp. 19-23.)

This idea of users as content-producers can be seen as an example of what Jenkins (2006) has called “participatory culture”, which he defines as a media culture that encourages artistic expression, civic engagement and the act of creating and sharing with others. Participatory culture supports informal mentorships where experience is passed from the knowledgeable to the novices and includes a certain degree of social interaction between people interested in each other’s creations (Jenkins, 2006). As users have become each other’s followers and content travels as a continuous flow from one media to another, the separation between who is a user, producer or an audience member appears to be difficult. (Noppari & Hautakangas, 2012, p. 158).

User-generated content (UGC) may be defined as content: i) which is made publicly available over the Internet, ii) which reflects a certain amount of creative effort, and iii) which is created outside of professional routines and practices. User-generated content is by its nature user-driven and non-profit-making. (OECD, 2007.) The rise of UGC has resulted in explosive amounts of content compared to what was previously available through traditional media outlets. However, the enthusiasm about the endless possibilities of UGC has been shadowed by UGC’s perceived potential for user-exploitation (see Andrejevic, 2011). As users turn into voluntary content-creators and participate in the production of media, they may also be exploited as free labour. Many social networking sites have complex terms of agreement where they claim the ownership of all rights to the content provided by users. (Andrejevic, 2011.)
Becoming exploited by media companies is not a matter of experience, i.e. feeling of being victimized but it takes place also without the users paying attention to it (Andrejevic, 2011, p.91).

3.2 From ordinary people to micro-celebrities

Before the rise of UGC, ordinary people have been most visible in television. The idea of reality television is rooted in the assumption of the media connecting us with a shared social reality (Couldry, 2003, p. 102). The television schedule has for long been filled with factual reality shows, talk shows and soap operas, in which social issues have been plotted into the storylines. More recently, reality television has taken its viewers into people’s homes and invited ordinary people to participate in different simulations of reality. The role of ordinary people in the media has been emphasised as the television has had to find new ways to survive in the competitive media environment. (Couldry 2003, pp. 102-104.) According to Turner (2006), the success of reality-television is a well-considered tactic of the television industry to remain interesting in the competition between the television screen and its highly produced content and the internet screen and its user-generated content.

Installing ordinary people into game shows, docu-soaps and reality TV programming enables television to ‘grow their own’ celebrity, to control how they are marketed before, during and after production – all of this while still sub-ordinating the celebrity of each individual to the needs of the particular programme or format. (Turner, 2006, p. 156)

Ordinariness is a construct that makes visible the power play between media and ordinary people: to appear on television is something out of the ordinary, it is special (Couldry, 2003). In this relationship the media holds the power. By crossing over from a private space into a rarely entered public space, one is stepping from one category to another. It makes the media space a valued space in comparison to the ordinary space. (Couldry 2003, p. 119.) The power structure of the media/ordinary boundary is also characterised by the notion that in order “to appear as significant agents in the media world, ‘ordinary people’ need to do ‘extraordinary things’, they have to be ‘over the top’” (Couldry, 2003, p. 121).
Ordinariness has always played a key part in the construction of celebrities: ordinary individuals are discovered, removed from their ordinary lives and manufactured into stars (Turner, 2006, p. 154). The internet has allowed celebrity culture to step closer to the reality of people’s everyday lives and offered a mode of cyber-self-presentation. The emergence of DIY-celebrities has made celebrity an almost normal expectation from the ordinary person’s life. (Turner 2006, p. 156.) According to Turner (2006), the fusion of celebrity into reality has made ordinariness a performance: even when staged, the feeling of being ordinary must be communicated (p.158).

UGC has paved the way for the rise of new internet elites and created an “aristocracy of opinion” (Turner, 2006, p. 139). In this sense UGC cannot be seen as a sign of the democratization of celebrity culture but it rather signifies the creation of a new one (Turner, 2010, p. 139). These new internet celebrities have been called as micro-celebrities, meaning regular people who use social media to increase their virtual popularity (Senft 2008, p.25). However, celebrity status does not translate as such to the internet environment. Celebrities and micro-celebrities are both dependent on branding as a tool for survival, but their brand is not communicated to the consumer in the same way. Web audiences are more interested in testing the authentic nature of the web-celebrity than they are in buying products endorsed by them. “Real” celebrities are characterised by their separation from their audience whereas web-popularity is dependent upon the celebrity’s connection with the audience. In fact, it is the in-between space of celebrity and ordinary that web’s micro-celebrities are trying to inhabit. (Senft, 2008.)

3.3 From fragmented audiences towards personal audiences
Media industries have previously been mainly interested in studying the exposure of media products and bypassed the aspects of how and why media products are consumed and what effects their consumption may have (Napoli,
Sandvoss (2011) argues that the concept of *active audience* emphasizes audiences’ *autonomy from* the text and suggests that more focus should be placed on audiences’ *engagement with* the text, the choices of media texts and *the process of reading*. In contemporary media research, *media engagement* has become a key word to describe the different types and levels of media experiences people have with media products (see e.g. Perälä, Forthcoming; Napoli, 2010; Ahva & Hellman, Forthcoming). However, the concept of engagement is hard to encapsulate and is often used as a synonym to concepts such as connectedness or involvement (see e.g. Napoli, 2010).

Engagement may be characterised "as the ways in which audience members focus on, connect with, and become involved in journalism and the world it depicts" (Ahva & Hellman, Forthcoming, p. 5.) According to Napoli (2010), appreciation and emotional response, recall of content, attitude changes and behavioural responses are equally important components of engagement that can provide new information about media audiences.

The interest for the level of engagement can be seen as a consequence of the fragmentation of media audiences, i.e. the distribution of audience attention across a variety of content and the replacement of mass audience by a mass of small audiences (Napoli 2010, p. 57). The current media market is characterised by its “long tail”, meaning that only few media titles bring together a large audience whereas many titles appeal to small niche audiences (Anderson, 2004). This revolutionary change of media audiences as well as the decline in the circulation figures ¹ of printed magazines and newspapers has put more emphasis on the readers of journalistic publications and also encouraged newspaper journalism to adopt a more magazine-like, audience-oriented approach with their readers (see e.g. Töyry, 2009; Helle, 2009).

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¹ Recent data about the decline of Finnish newspaper and magazine circulations have been collected by e.g. Finnish Newspapers Association (2013), see: http://www.sanomaledet.fi/sanomaleditetito/levikki/sanomalehtien_lukumaara_1810_2013 and Finnish Audit Bureau of Circulations (2013), see: http://www.levikintarkastus.fi/levikintarkastus/tilastot/Circulations2013.pdf
The fragmentation of audiences and the long tail theory have shown that current audiences may be focused around very specific media. This idea has been encouraged by social media, where it is typical for people to construct personal audiences or “imaginary audiences” who are often considered to be a mirror image of the user (see Marwick & Boyd, 2010, p.120). In blogs, the imaginary audience is not just one’s friends as in social networking sites but it can be a much larger audience, even a mass audience (see McQuarrie et al., 2012). This has turned the concept of audience upside down as audiences are built by ordinary consumers and not for them.

The fragmentation of media may also suggest that media are used simultaneously and that the nature of relationships people have with media might be changing. It has been suggested by Hermes (2009)\(^2\) that rise of web 2.0 requires a new conceptualisation of the audience, or audiencehood as she calls it. According to the author,

> 2.0 media use is thematically organized. Sites are not something you necessarily belong to, instead they are a place to visit, to attach to temporarily. They do not necessarily bestow an identity, and if they do, it is likely to be fleeting, one among many other identities which have been temporarily put on hold. (Hermes, 2009, p. 115.)

This suggests that audience should be studied in its fluid nature, without overemphasizing the audience member’s role as an active and engaged media user but as an identity that is under constant negotiation. This challenges the ideas made by Bruns (2008) and Jenkins (2006) about producers and participators who are involved in creative communities. Drawing from Hermes (2009), it can be argued, that users, produsers or participators may not belong to communities but they are rather just bypassers of interesting information. Their attachment to the content created by other users is light and may be replaced by a new attachment at any time.

\(^2\) The idea of audience studies 2.0 is originally derived from Gauntlett’s (2007) theory of Media studies 2.0.
4 Blogs as a challenge to the printed magazine

Blogs pose challenges to magazines in several respects. First, they challenge the concepts of media and audience as they allow private people to turn a private journal into a popular media. Second, they stretch the shape of a media as they allow their readers to enter an infinite space of networks. Third, they reshape the online media environment by mixing new and old media in individual ways. Fourth, they put journalistic professionalism into scrutiny as many bloggers make a career out of blogging and interact with audiences in ways that have thus far been unknown to the culture of journalism. In this chapter I will examine the intersections of blogs, media and journalism from different points of views. Because the challenges that lifestyle blogs pose on magazine journalism have not been widely studied, I will apply also such literature that discusses blogs as a challenge to (news) journalism as well as web 2.0 as a challenge to traditional views of the audience.

4.1 Lifestyle blogs as a genre of the blog medium

Blogs can be seen as the first form of social media that was adopted by the large audience, and as such a first glance to the world of user-generated content (Rosenberg 2009, p. 13). Blogs are by nature social, in the same sense as other social media, because they are written for an imagined or real audience (see e.g. Marwick & Boyd, 2010). However, in comparison to other user-generated, social media sites, such as Facebook, Twitter or Instagram, blogs are mainly used for publishing content made or curated by the user, and not for building networks (Van Dijck & Poell, 2013, p.5).

Originally named as web-logs, blogs are characterised by their reverse chronological order, informal style of writing, wide selection of topics and space for reader comments. Other characteristics of blogs are their sense of community, the biases of the blogger, convenience, need for the latest information, interest for in-depth analysis and follow-up on current issues (Kaye, 2007). In the constant information overflow of the internet, blogs have offered
their users a channel where words are few and well-chosen (Domingo & Heinonen, 2008, p. 5). Regardless of the establishment of several other, user-friendly publishing platforms, such as Twitter and Instagram, blogs have maintained their status as a space for personal reflection and citizen journalism. Nowadays blogs are used for publishing anything from photos to text, from quotations to music and from hyperlinks to videos.

Whether blogs can be characterised as a medium of its own or not may be debated. However, blogs seem to match the basic characteristic of a medium, as defined by Altheide & Snow (1979): “a medium is any social or technological procedure or device that is used for the selection, transmission and reception of information” (p.11). Lüders, Prøitz and Rasmussen (2010) have suggested that blogs should be seen as a medium instead of a genre because they have adopted specific technological aspects, such as user-friendly blogging platforms with a wide range of templates and a (usually) public comment section (p. 952). Also blogs do not fulfil genre requirements as they apply different conventions and meet different expectations. (Lüders et al., 2010.)

Blogs can be seen as a media of its own also because genres and sub-genres may be recognized within the blogosphere. The blogosphere can be subdivided according to the conventions and expectations that they serve. Blog genres are for example filter blogs, k(nowledge)-log, and journal blogs, also known as diary-style blogs (Herring et al., 2004b). The filter blogs consist mainly of links to external sources whereas journal blogs reflect the thoughts and feelings of the blogger. The k-log blogs are focused on gathering and recording information about a specific topic of interest, often technology. (Herring et al., 2004b.) These “technological categorisations” may also be complemented or supplemented with topical categories such as political blogs or fashion blogs (see Rettberg, 2008, p. 20.). Female bloggers, and especially teenage females have more often associated with journal type blogs (Herring et al, 2004a; Noppari & Hautakangas, 2012) whereas the two other types, filter and k-log, are more common among males.
However, the overall amount of journal blogs exceeds all other categories across all demographic units. The exceeding amount of journal type blogs may be explained with the looseness of the category, as “a journal” can arch over several categories and allow a wide range of variety. (Herring et al, 2004b.) The blogs that I discuss in this thesis are diary-style-blogs, and they could also be categorised as audience blogs or consumer blogs but here I refer to them as lifestyle blogs because the blogs that can be paralleled with women’s magazines mainly discuss the lifestyles of private people.

The definition of lifestyle may be understood in different ways, depending on the context where it is used. The words life and style indicate a way of living. Taylor (2002) suggests that “lifestyle” has replaced the traditional “way of life” along with the shift from civic to consumer culture (p. 479). According to Chaney (as cited in Taylor, 2002), the loss of traditional, communal ways of life has resulted in the rise of “lifestyle projects” as a coping mechanism for the changes delivered by modernisation (p.480). Women’s magazines and blogs fit this description as they offer their readers a variety of lifestyles to choose from. These lifestyles are often picked from the sphere of private life, or more specifically “the female life” (see Ferguson, 1983). The female life, in this respect, includes topics such as fashion, beauty and home. In this study I regard all commercial women’s magazines to belong to the women’s lifestyle genre.

Some of the blogs that I discuss here could also in some cases be described as fashion blogs. However, I have chosen to use the word lifestyle instead of fashion, because I see the concept of fashion blogs as somewhat problematic. What is often referred to as fashion blogs, tend to be focused on a blogger’s personal style and not on fashion culture. Because fashion is a strong search word in the online environment, calling a blog a “fashion blog” may be seen rather as a strategic choice than a descriptive category (Soxbo, 2010, p.37). To give an example, here is a blog description of Pupulandia, which is currently
listed\(^3\) as one of the most popular Finnish fashion blogs. The blogger characterises her blog as follows:

29-year-old girlie, who enjoys life with a passion for fashion, style, beauty, decoration, music and culture, and is also seeking the joy of exercise and wellbeing. *Pupulandia* ponders upon the more superficial aspects of life, sometimes lightly and sometimes more profoundly. (Blogilista, 14\(^{th}\) of April, 2014)

This example shows how blogs are not necessarily defined by any specific topic but they may rather encompass the whole sphere of life. As such lifestyle seems to be the best classification for them.

### 4.2 The blogosphere as an infinite space of hypertextual networks

The blogging industry is characterized by its networked shape, meaning that blogs are connected to one another and so is their consumption: the people who read one blog often read several others. A reader of a blog usually does not know the blogger or the other readers but through the act of reading the crowd is involved in a community. This community may expand further into a larger network of blogs if a popular blogger recommends and links others to hers. These *weak ties* (see Granovetter, 1973) between people make it possible for an individual to be involved in a large network, as by knowing one well-connected person an individual has the opportunity to grow his/her own network by extending the amount of weak ties between friends and their friends (Rettberg, 2008).

The blogosphere is a hypertextual space where electronic linking, also known as hyperlinking, of different types of content results in constantly shifting configuration of networks. The links allow the reader to jump from one piece of content to another and beyond the text or image she/he was first encountered with. Blogs are created upon hypertextuality, meaning that the blog is always a

\(^3\) Ranking by Blogilista, retrieved April 11th 2014 from: http://www.blogilista.fi/avainsana/fashion/1/suosio
part of a larger formation – a formation that is accessible here and now with the help of hyperlinks⁴. (Rocamora, 2012, p. 94.) There are two kinds of hyperlinks: internal and external (Deuze, 2003, p. 212). Internal hyperlinks refer to sites within the same site (for example previous posts in a blog) and external hyperlinks refer to other sites (that exist outside the site). The use of hyperlinks has been considered to allow the reader to verify the blogger’s claims and contextualise information (Blood, 2002, pp. 10-13).

Hypertextuality makes the reading experience of blogs nonlinear, as a blog does not need to be read in a linear order, word-by-word, picture-by-picture, but instead, each reading experience is dependent on the hypertextual links that the reader chooses to follow while reading. (Rocamora 2012.) Blogs, as well as the rest of the internet, is characterised by the act of replacement: the current visual space is constantly replaced by another with the help of windows, scroll bars and menus (Bolter & Grusin, 2001, p. 44).

Magazines are linear constructions because they are by nature linearly constructed of a set of editorial elements, even if they are read in different order. In blogs, no such construction exists, as Rocamora (2012) states: “With blogs there is no beginning and no end, only a moment in one’s encounter with a text” (p. 96). Even though printed magazines are a part of a larger construction, their content is always limited to its materiality. Links to the surrounding world are rather abstract than straightforward. Hypertextuality emphasizes the interconnectedness of media by reminding the reader of the existence of other content and makes the transfer from one product to another fairly easy. (Rocamora, 2012.) Hypertextuality is also characterised by replacement. As Joyce (1995) aptly describes: “Print stays itself; electronic text replaces itself” (p. 232). The electronic text is not a solid construction but a

⁴ Hyperlinks are underlined, bolded or highlighted parts of the text or they can also be images, in which case a virtual hand icon usually appears when the cursor is placed upon the image. When the reader clicks on a hyperlink, a new page opens either in the same web browser window or into a new one (see Rocamora, 2012; Deuze, 2003).
matter of constant replacement. However, Schröder (2011) points out that all media experiences are relational because the user recognizes the existence of other media products, based on prior experience.

4.3 Reading blogs for identity choices and authentic voices
The reading of blogs grows and the reading of magazines declines the younger the readers get. According to Perälä and Helle (2014), magazine use is most important in the age group of 60+ and the importance of magazines decreases the younger the readers get, as opposed to the importance of blogs, which is higher among younger readers (p.12). Blog reading has been previously studied from a uses and gratifications perspective (Kaye 2005; Kaye 2010) and with the help of quantitative surveys (Kaye & Johnson, 2004; Nordicom, 2012; FPPA, 2008) content analysis (McQuarrie et al., 2012; Lövheim 2013) and ethnography (Marwick 2013). According to Kaye (2007), online media use and interaction is motivated by the need to be entertained, to escape reality, to socialize, to pass time and to find information (p.130).

Whereas political blog reading has been associated with surveillance functions and informational needs (Kaye, 2005, p. 89-90), lifestyle blog reading has been characterised by the readers’ interest for a specific topic, identity construction, inspiration and consumption (see e.g. Lövheim, 2011a; Rocamora, 2012). The variety of motivations reflects the heterogeneous nature of the blogosphere. Whereas the need for information is a key motivator for all internet use, blogs are preferred as a source of information because they offer a wide selection of opinions, perspectives and alternative sources (Kaye, 2010, p.205).

Being active in the blogosphere creates bonds within the community, and keeps the members on top of the latest issues. Blogs are perceived as a space, where one can look for support for one’s own thoughts and opinions, but it has a more

5 This estimation is based on a qualitative study of five focus groups of twelve people each. The participants were readers of five different magazines.
active presence than a bulletin board or a chat room. The time readers spend in the blogosphere positively correlates with the gratifications they receive from it. (Kaye, 2005.)

Being active in the blogosphere is also motivated by the ambiance of the blogosphere: the readers are interested in the relations between bloggers and their supporters as well as the personalities of the bloggers. The interactive nature of the blogosphere is acknowledged but it is not a key motivator as most of the readers are passive users, who follow blogs without actively expressing their opinions through interaction. The feeling of interactivity and community is more important to blog readers than the act of being involved. Also, the fact that blogs are not traditional media outlets appears to be more important to some readers than their content. (Kaye, 2010.)

Blog reading has been paralleled with the reading practices of women’s magazines, and as such blogs are not considered a space for critical commentary but rather as spaces for relaxing and dreaming of a better life. Blogs and magazines create a possibility for escaping reality and in blogs this works both for the author and the reader. Blogging itself can function as a tool for escaping and creating a parallel, improved version of their life. (Noppari & Hautakangas, 2012, p. 40.) In lifestyle blogs, identity is constructed with the help of personal style and consumption choices (Noppari & Hautakangas, p. 156). Also, the discussion of themes such as self-confidence, love and relationships and body ideals in diary-style blogs may be considered as points of identification between the blogger and the reader (Lövheim, 2011b). By offering their readers multiple choices of identity, blogs may be perceived as alternatives to women’s magazines (Lövheim, 2011a; Lövheim, 2011b; Rocamora, 2012).

A journal-type blog allows young female bloggers to treat their blog as a safe environment for self-expression and a platform for social interaction where social acceptance is gained through potential readers (Lövheim, 2011a, p.4). In
blogs, self-representation is a constructed identity of the ordinary girl. This takes place by performing as an ordinary girl like the readers, and by performing as a friend of the readers. This includes choosing topics and values conventionally associated with “femininity”, such as fashion, beauty, family life and relationships, as well as by using informal, personalized and emotionally expressive language. In this way, the bloggers relate themselves to the “ordinary girl's” everyday life, dreams and tone of voice. At the same time the blog as a personal rather than professional project is strengthened through the connection to domains and discourses traditionally associated with a “private”, feminine sphere. (Lövheim 2011a, p. 12.)

The mundaneness of the “ordinary” life of the blogger is balanced by choosing favourable aspects of the blogger’s life as blog posts. Bloggers often choose what they publish according to the type of personal profile they want to construct. Many bloggers choose to portray their life as light, positive and happy, to counterbalance the harsh reality they are faced with every day. (Noppari & Hautakangas 2012, pp. 19, 39.) At the same time they construct their lives as a frequently updated serial that invites readers to stay tuned for follow-up (Noppari & Hautakangas, 2012, p. 61). However, the popularity of this life story is dependent on its everyday nature. In the blogosphere it has become a generally known fact that readerships decline as soon as intervals between posts become longer (Noppari & Hautakangas, p. 62).

In the fashion blogosphere, good taste functions as cultural capital, which makes the bloggers specialists in the genre of style. The blog readers feel appreciated by the fact that a fellow consumer has taken the leadership of style, and the readers can follow her instead of struggling with the unlimited choices available in terms of personal style. (McQuarrie et al. 2012.) In blogs, the audience is usually built up from a community when the blogger gains more popularity. Advertising in the blog or signing up under a media house or a blogging portal often means increased revenues and popularity but makes the personal diary a public rather than a personal space. (Lövheim, 2011a.)
Increased popularity challenges the idea of the blogger as a “fellow consumer”. The fashion bloggers may get pulled into the exclusive world of fashion that remains inaccessible to the readers. This means that the bloggers appear as not an alternative to the traditional fashion system but become included in it. (McQuarrie et al., 2012)

However, this does not appear to be a negative consequence in terms of blog readership but rather a node in a positive feedback loop. As the bloggers strengthen their role in the fashion world, they may get better deals with advertisers, increase their finances and are able to continue their ventures in shopping. This further enhances their stance in the eyes of their audiences as style leaders and invites even more readers. (McQuarrie et al. 2012.) Here authenticity is not perceived as an opposite to commercial interests but rather a matter of negotiation between them (Moore, 2002, p.218; McQuarrie et al., 2012). The preserving of authenticity is a matter of communicating authenticity. According to McQuarrie et al., 2012), the bloggers fight against their separation from their ordinary readers with feigning similarity and self-deprecation. The former refers to the continuous enhanced misrecognition of their fame and exclusive role that becomes apparent when bloggers describe their ordinariness as a contrast to the life that they lead. (p. 150)

In previous studies about representations of authenticity in reality television, it has been discovered that authenticity is seen as a combination of real and fantasy (Rose & Wood, 2005). The viewers of reality television enjoy the balancing act of the authentic with the produced. The real life situations and reactions involved in reality-television allow the viewer to identify his or herself with the characters but at the same time there is a risk that this experience becomes “too real” in its mundaneness. It has been discovered the readers find the contradictions most appealing: the beautiful people vs. ordinary-looking people, the common goals vs. uncommon surroundings, and the unscripted scenes vs. necessary manipulation. (Rose & Wood, 2005, p.294).
In a study of video-blogs (vlogs), Tolson (2010) discovered authenticity to be a performance of the accentuated ordinariness of the vlogger: the colloquial style of speech, the modest settings of pictures and videos, the transparency of the production process and the open amateurism of the blogger (Tolson, 2010, p.281). The “realness” of the blogger serves as a guarantee for authenticity and all aspects of the independence and honesty must be highlighted in communication with the readers. In fact, it appears that perception of authenticity is not endangered by a blogger’s close ties to commercial culture, but authenticity is rather embedded in the truthful self-expression of the blogger, her connection with and responsiveness to the audience as well as an honest engagement with commodity goods and brands (Marwick, 2013, p.2).

Fashion blogs are considered to be more authentic than magazines because they are “more authentic, individualistic and independent than the traditional fashion media” (Marwick, 2013, p. 1). Like the internet in general, fashion blogs are considered as an unmediated space and portray “real” life and clothing, worn by real people as opposed to magazines where fashion is “staged”. (Rocamora, 2012, p. 102.) Fashion magazines are also associated with clothes that the readers cannot afford whereas blogs offer clothing choices from real people’s wardrobes (Rocamora, 2012; Marwick, 2013).

4.4 Blogs as remediations of old and new practices
Being authentic representations of ordinary life, or performances of such, blogs gain a few advantages in comparison to traditional media. The uniqueness of the blog medium is derived from the way in which they can combine personal narrative with performance and from the fact that they are free to interact with the audience in ways that are controlled only by the author herself (Scheidt, 2006, p.4). Another advantage is that blogs are “native to the Web” (Blood, 2002, p. 9). As such, blogs are created upon the assumption that no content can be owned or separated from other content. Whereas websites of commercial media companies have for long aimed at keeping the visitors on
their website and their website only, bloggers have always been eager to push the readers forwards to the networks of the web by posting hyperlinks to other sites (ibid.)

According to Töyry (2013), magazines and blogs differ on all three levels of the media concept. First, the magazine represents the values and purposes of the publisher and not the writer, whereas in a blog, the content is based on the personal values and preferences of the blogger. The magazine is dependent on the existing journalistic culture of its genre whereas the blogger is independent and only responsible to his- or herself. Second, the architecture of the magazine is composed of different story types, which are produced by different journalists with diverse tasks. In a blog, the story type is the entire blog, as it tells the bloggers personal story in a linear mode. The differences of blogs and magazines are visible also on the third level of the concept, the level of the daily work. A magazine is a result of genre expectations and the style of the magazine whereas the daily work of a blogger is guided by his/her personal style. (Töyry, 2013.)

The popularity of user-generated content has challenged the idea of journalism as a gatekeeper with exclusive access to information (Deuze, 2005, pp. 452-454). Blogging has also been coupled with the term “gatewatching” as opposed to the journalistic term “gatekeeping” (Bruns, 2008). Whereas gatekeeping is a practice of selection and production within the journalistic organization, gatewatching refers to the bloggers' ability to keep an eye on traditional news sources as well as original sources and create and share their own combinations of newsworthy information (Bruns 2008). This idea may also be applied to lifestyle blogs. According to McQuarrie et al. (2012), in the endless overflow of information and identities, audiences are currently looking for something or someone to hold on to and show the way, and bloggers as “taste leaders” seem to fit right into this gap (p. 146). Bloggers make use of traditional sources for style and style information but add a personal touch to it (see Rocamora, 2012, p. 98).
The audiences’ movement from traditional outlets of journalism into the blogosphere may be explained by the fact that journalism represents organizational power whereas blogs represent individual agency (Rettberg 2008). The fusion of user-generated content and traditional production processes is a matter of readjusting the journalistic professionalism (Schudson & Anderson, 2009) as the understanding of professionalism in blogs is very different. The professionalism of the blogger as well as the size of her audience is determined by not the bloggers themselves but their audiences and advertisers. In Finland, all of the most popular lifestyle bloggers include advertisements in their blogs. As such, advertising may even be seen as a determinant for the blogger’s professional status. A blogger may be considered a professional when she provides for herself with the profits she makes from advertising in the blog (see e.g. Hautakangas & Noppari, 2012, Rettberg, 2008). This idea is similar to the double-market-logic of traditional commercial journalism: success is dependent on the producer’s ability to sell the product to the readers and then sell the readers to the advertisers (see e.g. Napoli, 2010).

From an advertiser’s point of view, blogs represent new marketing opportunities. The professional ethics of journalism have traditionally demanded that journalism and marketing remain at a distance from one another (Rettberg, 2008, p.130). Singh et al. (2008) argue that “the fragmentation of media and information overload has led customers to become less and less interested in companies’ brand messages delivered through traditional media” (p.281). The author suggests that the new media environment demands for more imaginative strategies for marketing a feelings and experiences instead of a product or brand commercials. The new media has offered marketers new ways to target their customers but also given the customers more control over how they are targeted. (Singh et al., 2008) Instead of the “hollow, untrustworthy voice of PR”, people are more interested in getting their product information through internet communities by discussing products with other consumers. (Rettberg, 2008, pp. 128-131).
Blogs have become favoured spaces for advertising because of the informality of the blogosphere: the bloggers are seen as peers and fellow consumers instead of a media (Noppari & Hautakangas, 2012, p. 152; McQuarrie et al., 2012). Whereas social media marketing can spread a message fast across several channels (a phenomenon known as viral marketing), blog marketing is considered more interactive and has a longer life span (Singh et al. 2008, p. 284). Blogs also host a strong communicative dimension as they allow unlimited commenting and discussion among the readers. Following the comment section of a blog post can therefore offer a great amount of information about the readers of the blog. (Singh et al. 2008.)

In lifestyle blogging the boundaries between paid-for content and independent content have blurred. According to Rettberg (2008), the bloggers’ turn to advertising is encouraged by the fact that many bloggers see themselves as professionals, and considering the time they spend on blogging, they have realized they ought to get paid for it. Some also start blogs only for the purpose of making money out of it. Advertising in blogs is characterised more as brand building than advertising. Lifestyle bloggers are often given free hands in terms of what they write and the advertisers have accepted that bloggers’ reviews of products may sometimes be critical. However, this is not considered a bad thing because it seems to strengthen the authenticity of the advertising and appeal to the readers. Because bloggers are appreciated for their positive tone of voice, it has become a concealed rule that bloggers only speak of products that they can speak highly of. (Noppari & Hautakangas, 2012, pp. 151-152.) However, the rise in blog advertising in recent years questions the plausibility of this argument.

In the lifestyle blogosphere hyperlinks between blogs and online retailers have become a common advertising strategy. Hyperlinks to online shops highlight the connected nature of fashion and blogging. In real-life, shopping is connected to browsing shop windows and in magazines the shopping takes place in the
imagination. In blogs the act of shopping is available everywhere (Rocamora, 2012, p. 98).

In addition to advertising, it has been argued that blogs may also play a role in the remediation of journalistic publications. Even though blogs and journalism have been considered to play different parts (see e.g. Neuberger & Nuernbeck, 2010) the rise of the blogosphere may have implications for the future of journalism. According to Domingo & Heinonen (2008), blogs cannot be excluded from the sphere of institutional media and journalism because they have a substantial role in the re-shaping of online journalism (p. 13). This act of re-shaping can be associated with Bolter and Grusin’s (2001) idea of remediation. In the fashion genre remediation can mean that blogs can use magazine editorials as a part of their blog posts, and might even have photos of specific pages of a fashion magazine that they have read. Bloggers may also refer to magazines that they have read or borrow the imagery of magazine editorials or advertisements as illustration for their blogs. The effect of fashion magazines on fashion blogs can also be a subconscious one. The bloggers are often posing in their own images in similar ways that fashion models are photographed in fashion magazines. The topics, the tone of voice and the story-types of blogs are adaptations of what the bloggers are used to see in women’s magazines.

In women’s lifestyle magazines, the remediation can be seen as the street-style-influence that blogs have brought into fashion magazines. (Rocamora 2012, p. 101-104.) Many fashion blogs, such as the American The Sartorialist or the Swedish Stockholm Street Style are based on photos of regular people spotted on the street presenting their style. Several magazines, including the Finnish Costume magazine that I have included as an example in my empirical research, have adopted these street-style images on their pages next to the high-fashion-editorials. Another influence from fashion blogging are the do-it-yourself instructions that have appeared in fashion magazines in recent years,
showing the readers how they can modify or re-use a garment or an accessory according to the latest trends.

In this chapter I have studied blogs from various perspectives. I have examined the foundations of the blogosphere and argued that diary-style blogs have become an important media force due to their popularity, networked nature and authentic voice. I have also argued that blogs have challenged the concept of media professionalism and encouraged new ways of advertising. I have argued that lifestyle blogs and women’s magazines remediate each other by borrowing from one another. Next I will move towards my empirical study by first introducing the methodology that I used to collect my data.
5 Methodology

To study the relationship between readers, blogs and women’s magazines I chose to conduct a reader study with a mixed-method approach. The group that I focused on was a group of female magazine and blog readers, between the ages 16 to 32. The readers were recruited in cooperation with the magazine publishing house Bonnier Publications from amongst the readers of Costume magazine.

Costume is a young women’s magazine title that was first launched in Denmark in 2002 and since then it has been launched in Norway and in Finland in 2012. The magazine was brought to Finland by Bonnier Publications, and the circulation of the magazine is 50 000. In Finland the magazine is profiled as a young women’s fashion magazine with a main target audience of 18 to 29 year-old women. The magazine’s content is limited to beauty and fashion. Costume was created as a multi-channel brand, with a community-based website, print magazine, mobile application and reader events. (Sierilä, 2014.) Costume is targeted for young women who have a high level of interest for fashion, and who represent an age group that is very familiar with social and user-generated media. The magazine concept is designed to attract audiences that are active in the web and who experience fashion as a lifestyle. (Bonnier Publications, 2012; Sierilä. 2014.)

The initial idea of Costume magazine was to involve readers in the production of the magazine in new ways. The digital platform, Costume.fi was created to inspire co-created content that could be used as a part of the printed magazine. Some of the magazine content is copied from the Nordic sister magazines and localised to suit the Finnish target audience. (Bonnier Publications, 2012.)

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6 In February 2014 Costume, along with other Bonnier lifestyle magazine titles, was sold to Aller Media.
7 Aikakausmedia,
Costume has been one of the very first lifestyle magazines in Finland that has hired bloggers as assisting editors in the magazine. The blogger-editors are present in the magazine with their names and faces and also write journalistic articles, such as interviews. (Bonnier Publications, 2013.) In my study I was interested in finding out how the readers describe the writers of blogs and magazines in relation to one another and how they feel about bloggers as magazine editors.

I was motivated to study the readers of Costume magazine because I expected this group to read several magazines and blogs and to be active users of the internet and mobile platforms. The most important aspect from my point of view was that the participants would be using a multitude of magazines and blogs with overlapping topics, which are in this case lifestyle and fashion.

5.1 Data collection

My empirical research phase included three parts: pre-questionnaire, personal interviews with a modified version of Q-sorting-method and personal interviews with stimulated recall of Costume magazine and a blog of the participant’s choice. I used these methods to answer my two research questions that are:

Q1: Why is the user-generated media of blogs considered to be more authentic than the professionally-produced media of women’s magazines?

Q2: Does the popularity of lifestyle blogs change or remediate the role and reading practices of women’s magazines in the genre of lifestyle media?

Here I will introduce the different phases of my data collection and their relevance with this study.

Pre-questionnaire

In my empirical study, Costume magazine worked as a connective title for the chosen participants. However, the rest of their media use was determined by each participant. My aim was not to study Costume as a brand or media title but rather as one node in the participants’ lifestyle media genre. To ensure this, I
chose my participants according to the variety of magazine and blog titles they used in addition to *Costume* magazine. I did this by sending a pre-questionnaire to *Bonnier Publications*, which they sent out to their “reader-panelists”, meaning people who are signed up under *Costume.fi* as volunteers to participate to the development of the magazine by giving feedback about the magazine and to answer questions about the magazine and its advertising.

In the pre-questionnaire I asked the participants to give their contact information, age and to itemize all the magazine and blog titles they read. The pre-questionnaire was out from November 12th 2013 until November 24th 2013.

**The study object**

The pre-questionnaire resulted in 29 replies. Most of the replies came from females aged from 16 to 32, with the exception of one 52 year-old. I chose my participants according to age but more importantly, according to their stated media consumption. I wanted the group to be representative especially in terms of blog reading, but I also included participants that had fewer titles in their listing. All of the participants were readers of *Costume* magazine as well as of other magazines.

For my data collection I chose a mixed-method, with both a qualitative and quantitative aspect. However, as my research question was qualitative, I wanted to analyse my data from a qualitative perspective, i.e. the *what* and the *how* instead of *why, how much or how good* (see Shemmings & Ellingsen 2012, p. 415). The methodology is divided in two parts: 1) genre landscape interview with the help of a modification of Q-sorting-method, and 2) stimulated recall interview which included an interviewed about specific media titles. I chose to employ a mixed-method approach because it produces data that is both specific and measurable.

Because I chose to use qualitative, rich-data methodology, I could only concentrate on a small group of 10 people from my region, i.e. the Helsinki area. If I would have used a quantitative method, such as a web-based survey,
it would have been easier to interview a larger group without any geographical limitations. (see e.g. Alasuutari, 2011). However a web-based survey would limit the amount of questions and offer less variation in the structure of the interview. This would make the interview less personalized. The qualitative interview method allowed me to ask detailed questions from each participant, and because the interviews were only semi-structured they allowed space also for unexpected outcomes.

Also, both parts of my methodology include the use of physical objects, and therefore a face-to-face interview is an obvious choice. This interview could also have been done with the help of video call software such as Skype but I believe that the physical presence between the interviewer and the interviewee may result in a more in-depth discussion about the titles than a mediated interview would do. The interviews were held in December of 2013 and January of 2014 in the university library in the Kaisa-building.

5.1.1 The Q-sorting interview
In the first part of my interviews, i.e. genre landscape interview with Q-sorting, my aim was to find out which media titles are significant in the participants’ daily lives and what motivates them to use specific titles. The readers of a magazine or blog were not likely to read only one magazine or to follow only one blog, instead it was presumed that their media use is fragmented and consists of several overlapping media titles. This idea was supported by the statement that the interest in one title does not require a disinterest in another and contemporary audiences may always be considered as cross-media, as argued by Schröder (2011):

Audience practices and audience experiences are always relational, from the media selection phase to the sense-making phase, and (if applicable) onwards to the participation phase, because the media that were available to users in a given situation, but not chosen, maintain a shadow presence in the mind of audience members, due to their previous experience of these other media. (Schröder, 2011, p. 6.)
To be able to draw conclusions about why a person uses a certain media title it is important to find out what motivates the same person to use another media title and why one is preferred over the other, or used more often than another. The Q-sorting interview allows me to visualize the ensemble of media titles that the interviewee uses and to ask questions about how each of these media titles stands in relation to another.

Shemmings & Ellingsen (2012) describe Q methodology as “an empirical research method to explore and investigate patterns of shared viewpoints, attitudes, beliefs, opinions, and other subjective aspects of social life” (p. 415). The “Q” in Q-sorting is used to make a difference to “R”, which is used in quantitative research to denote correlation coefficients (McKeown & Thomas 1998, p. 9-10). As introduced by Davis & Michelle (2011) Q-sorting method roots back to behavioural sciences, where it was first developed by psychologist-physicist William Stephenson as a method to study human subjectivity. Q-sorting is a hybrid of qualitative and quantitative methodology as it offers measurable data and acknowledges the complexity of individual responses (Davis & Michelle, 2011). In a Q-sorting interview the participant is asked to sort a set of subjective statements, or as in my study, a set of media titles, according to how they relate themselves with these titles. In my study the participants are asked to sort the cards according to significance: how significant they feel a certain media title is to them. Significance is not determined prior to the interview but is open for the interviewee’s interpretation.

Q-sorting can be treated as an interview because the categorization process is often accompanied by a discussion that elaborates the interviewee’s subjective statements. The participants are allowed to make comments while sorting and also after all the cards have been placed to the categories. Q-methodology is interested in subjectivity – the self-reference of the interviewee. Therefore the method is not supposed to offer quantitative generalisations about a larger group than the one studied. However, the results of Q-sorting can be studied and compared in terms of commonalities and differences within the group.
(Shemmings & Ellingsen 2012.) In media studies, Q-methodology has been previously used to study complex audience practices such as “perceived worthwhileness” regarding which media titles are perceived worthwhile the reader’s investment of time, money and energy (Schröder, 2011), as well as audience engagement (Perälä & Helle, 2013).

To best answer my research question I used an adaptation of Q-sorting, similar to the adaptation that has been used by Perälä and Helle (2013) in their Personal Media Day research. The researchers have used Q-sorting to study how people become engaged with different media titles and what makes a certain media title more engaging than another. I chose to employ Q-sorting as a part of my study because the method allows me to grasp the width and depth of the interviewee’s media use. Q-sorting will support my research question by providing information about why people use specific online/offline media products and how they compare them with other media products within the same genre.

The titles that the participant is asked to sort in the Q-sorting interview were same titles that she has mentioned in the pre-questionnaire. In addition to the blog and magazine titles mentioned by the participant, I added six well-known Finnish blogging portals to the card decks of each interview (MyCosmo, Lily, Indiedays, Costume.fi, Olivialehti.fi, and Re:fashion) because I was interested in the attitudes the readers had towards blogging portals and I wanted to find out if the blogging portals were paralleled with magazines, i.e. if they were used as platforms for a variety of content.

I have previously been acquainted with this method in my work as a research assistant for Perälä and Helle’s (2013) research. Through this experience I knew that when people are put to organize their own media behaviour with the help of a visual mapping tool, they have to think about the reasoning for their choices in a new way. When asked, why a certain title is significant, one may describe it in terms of time spent with the title and another might describe it
through the quality of the content. This is also the challenge of Q-sorting. People do not always know why they use specific media titles and they have different interpretations about what significant means. However I have experienced that the interpretation can be relevant as for example different age groups can define significance in different ways. Also, because Q-sorting involves the use of paper cards that display the names of the media titles, the genre landscape is available on the table (see image 1) throughout the whole interview and it can be changed during the course of the interview.

The structure of a Q-sorting interview

Before the Q-sorting, the relevant media titles are listed and images/names of titles are printed on paper cards. This is called the concourse, or the variety of subjective options that is used to satisfy a similar need (see Shemmings & Ellingsen 2012, p. 418). In my interviews the concourse will consist of all the media titles that were mentioned in the pre-survey (for a list of titles see appendix 1). I used a set of white and brown cards to separate online and offline titles in the concourse (see image 1).

Image 1: Photo of the media landscape of participant 9
1) The participant is asked to sort the media titles she uses into five (5) categories, according to significance (see image 1). The most significant titles come to the right and the least significant ones to the left. In previous studies, the Q-sorting has typically included eight or nine categories. However, I chose to narrow down the categories into five because I am focusing on a niche genre with a large amount of similar titles so additional categories might not give any extra information but rather force the interviewee to make value statements that might not be realistic. Also, the differences and similarities become more visible when the interviewee has to think if specific titles can be placed in the same category.

3) When all of the cards have been placed on the Q-sorting-grid the compilation of cards is discussed with the participant by going through each individual title in the form of an interview.

4) The participant is asked several questions about each media title. The questions are designed to find out what motivates the participant to read these titles and why is one title more significant than another. Examples of interview questions are:
   - Why did you place this media title in this category?
   - How often do you use this media title?
   - How would you compare this media title with another media title?
   - Where do you use this media title (e.g home, at work, on the bus etc.) and in what form (print/digital, mobile/on the computer)?
   - For what purpose do you use this media title?
   - Is there another media title that would be suitable for the same purpose?
(For a detailed list of interview questions, see appendix 2).

After the media landscape interview, the media landscape, i.e. the final Q-sorting grid is photographed (see image 1) and all the media titles are written down as a table (see appendix 3), in the order that they appear in the media landscape. The Q-sorting-interview is recorded as an mp3-file and transcribed into text. All the data will be stored digitally.
As an end result of the Q-sorting interview I have a picture of the participants’ Q-sorting grid which I will refer to as the participants personal genre landscape\textsuperscript{8}. I also created an Excel table (see Appendix 3) of the grid and used colour coding to visualise how many magazine and blog titles the participant has included in her media landscape. In this way the landscapes are easy to compare with each other and this will provide me with some measurable data, e.g. how many magazine and blog titles were included in the media landscapes and does this have an impact on the reader’s attitudes towards magazines and blogs.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
Connection & Little black & Fashion Hipp & Mungolife & SUM OF TITLES \\
5 inch and up & Ring my bell & Yummu J & Mariannan & 23 \\
JAVS & Elle (Suomi, 1 Costume.fi & Annika 0 & Song of style & \\
Re: fashion & Indiedays & Elle UK & Si Moda & \\
Lily & Vogue USA & Vogue UK & Trendi & \\
& & & Costume & \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Personal genre landscape of participant 9: 13 blogs, 6 magazines, 4 blogging portals}
\end{table}

The main function of Q-sorting interview is to structure the interviews and provide a picture of the participants overall use of lifestyle media titles. I will use the personal genre landscapes as context to the comments, to reflect what the participant says about different titles and to find connections between the comments and the placement of the titles.

5.1.2 The stimulated recall interview

In the second part of the study I will use a modified version of a method called stimulated recall (SR). Stimulated recall has been used extensively in cognitive sciences, to study learning and decision-making processes. (Lyle 2003, p. 862-868)

\textsuperscript{8} In previous research the Q-sorting grid has also been referred to as e.g. “personal media landscape” (Perälä, 2014), “media menus” (Livingstone, 2003), “media repertoires” (Schroder, 2012; Hasebrink, 2012). Because this study is limited to a specific genre I chose to narrow down the name of the landscape to “personal genre landscape”.
There are several modifications of the stimulated recall method and similar methods are used under different names. Perälä and Helle (2013) have used stimulated recall in their research under the title “reading aloud”. The SR method is introspective as it focuses on the participants’ cognitive processes. In stimulated recall the participant is invited to recall their thoughts and decision-making processes with the help of external stimuli (Lyle, 2003, p. 861). In this case the stimuli is the magazine and the blog. In the stimulated recall situation the participant can be encouraged to think aloud and the recall can be guided with the help of a series of open-ended questions (Lyle, 2003, p.863).

In the stimulated recall interview the participant was presented with the December/January 2014 issue of Costume magazine that the participant had had possibility to read through beforehand. The participant was given the chance to re-read the magazine in the way she did before and point out what she found interesting/uninteresting about the content. The interview was carried out with the help of a set of questions. This interview was semi-structured, which means that the course of the interview could be altered according to need, i.e. in case the interviewee said something that was interesting to discuss in more detail or the interviewee did not have anything to say about some issues. After this, the same interview was carried out with a blog that the participant had listed earlier on the Q-sorting grid as one of great significance (placed in the first category of the grid).

The aim of the stimulated recall interview is to find out what in particular is interesting / uninteresting about the media title. (For a detailed list of interview questions, see appendix 2). The interviews were recorded as an mp3-file and transcribed into text.

5.1.3 Ethical issues

The participants were recruited through voluntary participation. In the pre-questionnaire, the context of the study, the time and place were introduced. The media company offered to reward the participants by giving them a year’s
subscription with a magazine of their choice (women’s lifestyle magazines \textit{Costume, Olivia or Divaani}). Most of the participants were adults but three of them were underaged. In these cases I contacted these participants’ parents through email and explained the purpose of the study and asked them to reply to the email to confirm their acceptance. In the beginning of each interview I asked the participants to sign a form where I re-stated the purpose of the interview and made clear that the interview material will be used in the thesis and references to the age and gender and city of the participant might be made. The participants’ names and addresses were enclosed and the participants will from here on be referred to anonymously as with codes Px (x=number of participant).

5.1.4 Validity and limitations

The validity of qualitative research may be considered from three perspectives. Firstly, descriptive validity refers to factual accuracy and indicates whether the researcher is honest and accurate in his/her arguments. Second, interpretative validity refers to how accurately the researcher has understood and described the viewpoints and accounts of the participants. Third, theoretical validity describes how compatible the theory derived from the research is with the data, and how credible the work is as a whole. (Johnson 1997, p. 282.)

There are several methods to ensure the validity of the research. One is triangulation, which means that the research must involve several theories, methods, data or researchers to answer the same research question (Johnson 1997, p. 283). In my study triangulation is supported by the choice of a mixed-method-approach. Another method is the negative case sampling, where the researcher goes through the material and tries to disprove the analysis by looking for statements that do not support the hypothesis. The critical view will also show whether the data is an accurate source to make these conclusions (Johnson 1997, p. 283; Warren & Karner 2010, p. 243). This is why I had to use my coding frame to look for negative examples that did not agree with my conclusions. In my study I have created the coding frame during the data
analysis and not before because I wanted to ensure that the frame is supported by the data and not by theory or my own hypothesis.

In qualitative research, a key limitation is the generalizability of the data. Generalizability is not the aim of qualitative research, because it is more focused on producing new perspectives on issues that have not been widely researched or that haven’t been researched from that specific perspective (Alasuutari 2011, p. 234).

In my empirical study I study 10 individuals from a very specific demographic group and therefore I cannot generalise the results to apply beyond that group. Also, the media titles that were discussed in the interviews were determined by the participants themselves (apart from the additional blogging portals) and therefore the results do not describe the genre as a whole but from the perspective of the participants. In audience research it is important to keep in mind that when the audience is asked about their media consumption, the replies might not always match with reality. The so-called “legitimate taste” (Bordieu, 1984) defines what media choices are considered morally and socially acceptable. This problematic of social legitimacy was aptly and openly confirmed by one of my participants, who said she only follows one blog, Tyylitietotoimisto⁹ on Facebook even though she admitted to follow over one hundred blogs overall:

P3: In Facebook, the only one I probably like is Tyylitietotoimisto.
I: So that is the only one you follow?
P3: Yes.
I: Is there a particular reason for that?
P3: Well, maybe it is one that I can publicly admit to follow. These other ones feel sometimes a bit superficial. Sometimes when I tell my friends how many blogs I follow, they always get surprised […] That one [Tyylitietotoimisto blog] is sort of neutral. And when I have so many

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⁹ Tyylitietotoimisto is a topical fashion blog that deals with fashion phenomena instead of personal lifestyle, see http://www.lily.fi/blogit/tyylitietotoimisto.
colleagues from work, professors and such, so I’ve wanted to keep my Facebook profile quite neutral.

My empirical study was conducted between December 2013 and January 2014 and therefore its results are tied to a specific time. However, because the research methods are precisely structured, the interviews would be very easy to repeat in further studies. The interviews were held in the Helsinki University library and not in a natural setting such as the interviewee’s home. Also, my presence in the interview affects the outcome of the interview and therefore the data must be seen as a result of my cooperation with the participant.

To ensure the validity of my study I have had submitted my work for peer review and acknowledged my role in the research. The research as well as its results will reflect my own socio-cultural background, as I am the only interviewer and researcher. My own interest and professional background in media has affected the choice of topic and also the framing of the research question. My background as a research assistant for doctoral student Riitta Perälä in Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Architecture has also affected my choice of research methodology. However, I feel that my professional experiences both in the field of journalism and research have offered me insight on the topic and allowed me to better formulate my research question and also place my study in the broader context of the media industry and media research. My previous acquaintance with the methodology has allowed me to be critical towards its suitability for my research and also prepared me for the challenges and disappointments that may arise during interviews.

5.2 Data analysis
For my data analysis I employed qualitative content analysis (QCA). I chose this method because it is suitable for analysing verbal data and allowed me to analyse only the data that was essential for my research question (Schreier, 2012). My data collection methods produced a great amount of rich data that I went through with the help of QCA to answer my research question.
Compared to other qualitative data analysis methods, qualitative content analysis reduces the amount of data, as the focus is on specific aspects of the data. With the help of QCA I could focus on the material that is relevant for my research question instead of analysing everything in the data. This also helped to reduce the quantity of data. (Schreier, 2012, p.3-7.)

However it is important to acknowledge that by choosing certain coding units or categories, some data will be disregarded if it does not give information about the chosen categories. Therefore it is important to find balance between preserving the unique and allowing comparison (Ibid, pp.30-31). Qualitative content analysis focuses on analysing what is being said but it can also be applied to how it is being said (Ibid, p. 19). For my purposes, the emphasis was on the what. My analysis did not concentrate on semiotics or the discourse of speech but my research question was set out to answer why the participants use certain titles and what is important about their specific content and form.

5.2.1 Qualitative content analysis
According to Alasuutari (2011) qualitative analysis is also a result of two actions that take place alongside with each other: the reduction of observations and the solving of the riddle (p.39). The reduction of observations limits the amount of analysis to the point of view of the research question and combines observations into categories. The solving of the riddle describes the interpretations that arise from the observations and their relevance to the research question.

The first step in a qualitative content analysis is to build a coding frame. The complexity of the coding frame is determined by the research question. The coding frame consists of main categories and sub-categories. This process of organizing content according to selected themes has also been described as analytic ordering (Warren and Karner 2010). The main categories help to
reduce the amount of material into what is relevant in terms of the research question. The sub-categories are specifications about the main categories and they can be concept-driven or data-driven. This means that they can either be created in advance (concept-driven) by using a theoretical background, previous research or other knowledge about the research topic, or then they can be created simultaneously with the analysis (data-driven). (Schreier, 2012, p. 58-61.)

The problem with producing sub-categories alongside with going through the material is that it is easy end up with too many categories that will eventually prove themselves insignificant. Therefore some sub-categories might have to be reduced from the final coding frame if there is for example only one comment in the data that is suitable for that category. However, singular comments that do not seem fit to any categories can also be included in the coding frame by creating a sub-category titled as “miscellaneous”. (Schreier, 2012, p. 89.)

According to Schreier (2012, pp. 194-199), the coding part starts with marking the units of coding, i.e. what is relevant in the data. I chose to go through the material twice before I defined the categories and sub-categories for my analysis. The recoding phase is important especially when working alone to be able to get new insight to the material (Schreier, 2012, pp. 198-199).

When I started my analysis I first went through the quantitative data, i.e. the personal genre landscape tables and recorded the amount of blogs and magazines and blogging portals mentioned by each participant. I also color-coded the different media so that I could get a better view of each participant’s overall blog and magazine use (see attachment 5). Alongside with the personal genre landscapes I started analysing my qualitative data to see if there were connections to be made between the placement of media titles in the media landscapes and the comments that were made about these placements. I categorised this information as “significance”.

I started analysing my raw interview data by going through what was being said about blogs, magazines and blogging portals. I started categorizing the raw interview data according to my research questions. As introduced in the beginning of this thesis, in my research questions I was determined to find answers to why young women read blogs and how they compare them with magazines, what is unique about blogs as a medium and how does the user-generated nature of blogs affect the reader’s relationship with the media.

In the first round of coding I looked for general comments about blogs and magazines. My initial categories in this phase were blogs, magazines and blogging portals. On the second round of coding I focused on what was being said about them, and which of these comments were relevant to my research question, why did the participants admit to read them. With reference to blogging I derived the following categories and sub-categories (in parentheses): blogger's persona, authenticity, style of writing, quality, products (sponsored posts, product reviews). With reference to magazines I derived the following categories: content (storytypes, readers’ comments), magazine concepts, editors (bloggers as editors), products (editorial, advertisements).

I also looked for comments that could be classified under the category comparisons as I was interested in how the blogs and magazines were compared with each other. Here I created sub-categories in order to categorise what was being compared: online vs. offline, professional- vs. user-generated content, quality of content, reading practices, advertising.

I this thesis I present the results of the interviews as text because my emphasis is on what and how instead of how many. However, I also paid attention to the frequency of comments in each category in order to draw relevant conclusions. My analysis was based on a qualitative study, in which sense all comments, similar or dissimilar to one another are meaningful. However in the coding frame I narrowed down the amount of data according to the recurrent themes to be able to find an overall picture of the meanings attached to each medium.
5.2.2 Transcription and translation

I transcribed half of the interviews myself and used a transcription service firm called Annapura\textsuperscript{10} for the transcription of the rest of the interviews. As I did all of the interviews myself I had a good picture of the content of the interviews prior to the transcription phase. I chose to transcribe the most “fruitful” interviews myself because I wanted to get to know the material and start to form categories during transcription. I had prior experience from transcription and I used software called *Express Scribe* for my own transcriptions. I thought it was important to transcribe some of the material myself because the transcription phase includes choices that affect and are a part of the analysis of the data (see Nikander 2010). However, I listened to the interviews that I did not transcribe myself one extra time to check the accuracy of the transcriptions.

Transcribing shapes the data according to what is considered relevant and also draws a picture of the participant by defining the precision of the transcription. The transcribed material should be seen as an imperfect representation of the data and not as equal to the data. (Nikander 2010.) My choice was to transcribe the data word-by-word, excluding extra expletives. I also excluded speech that was not a part of the interview, i.e. free talk before and after the interview and interruptions that did not have to do with the topic of the interview. I also gave the same instructions to the transcription company I used. However, I noticed that some of the ordered interviews were transcribed with higher precision than I had instructed. Overall I thought that using an outside service alongside with my own transcriptions was helpful as it made me question my own choices and see the transcription phase as a meaningful part of my analysis.

According to Nikander (2010), the translation phase should also be regarded as a point of analysis, as it reinterprets the data in a new context. Translation should be regarded as a set of political as well as representational and practical issues (Nikander, p.439). Challenges in the translation phase arise especially

\textsuperscript{10}http://www.annapura.fi/yritys
when translating colloquial expressions. The translator has to make choices about whether to translate what is being said word by word or whether it is possible to translate them in their original context. This applies especially to idioms and metaphors. As I translated all of the quotes myself, I came across these issues and tried to translate the text as precisely as possible but also include the context to the extent that it was possible. In order to preserve the context I also had to remove some extra expletives, in cases where their use did not translate into English. Due to grammatical differences, I had to reshape the word order in some sentences. To ensure easy readability and stay close to the context I added additional information in square brackets [ ] to mark removed text […] and to clarify which media titles were discussed if they were not apparent from the text itself. To allow the Finnish-speaking reader to make his/her own interpretations of the translations, I chose to include the original Finnish versions of the quotations as an appendix (4).
6 The authentic and professional lifestyle media

In this chapter I will go through the results of my empirical study and provide some examples from the data. I will first introduce comments that were made about the lifestyle media genre as a whole and then go into the differences and similarities that appeared to be essential with reference to lifestyle blogs and women’s magazines.

Lifestyle media showed itself to be an important source for inspiration and practical advice, especially in terms of consumption. Lifestyle media reading was also characterised by its multitude of titles. The most important characteristic of the blog medium was its perceived authenticity. Blogs were read mainly because of their interesting personas and identification opportunities. The blog medium was also characterised by its networked reading and reading as browsing.

Women’s magazines appeared to be appreciated for their professional attitude and multitude of story types. Magazine concepts were well-recognized in the genre of women’s magazines. Women’s magazines were enjoyed because as printed products and their reading was associated with relaxed environments. In the next sections I will elaborate these findings with reference to the comments made by the participants of this study.

6.1 The lifestyle media of inspiration and practical advice

In this study it was clear from the start that different media titles are used alongside with each other (see Rettberg, 2008; Schröder, 2011). The personal genre landscapes (see appendix 3) of the participants showed that blogs are read as a mass as the number of blog titles varied from 3 to 24 with an average of 8.1. However, the participants also included several magazines in their personal genre landscapes and the number of magazines varied from 2 to 9, with an average of 5.4. However, considering the comparative nature of this research, this result was also encouraged by the research question and chosen
methods. Overall, these numbers indicate that blogs are read in larger quantities than magazines.

The most important function of women’s magazines and lifestyle blogs was to offer inspiration and to give advice on consumption. In blogs inspiration was delivered through the interesting personalities and their perceived expertise in different areas of lifestyle. The readers said they could be inspired by the blogger’s attitude, personal style or even dietary choices. In magazines inspiration was often combined with style advice and shopping. Consumption appeared to be an important characteristic of the lifestyle media.

The participants said they use blogs to find reviews about products and get inspiration for their personal style. The participants enjoyed the shopping advice in women’s magazines and prioritized the shopping features over fashion editorials. As has been previously discovered about women’s magazines (Hermes, 1995; Sonkamuotka, 2013), both magazines and blogs seem to be used as a source for practical information. Considering the importance of practical advice in terms of consumption, it appears that the strong connection between women’s magazines and consumerism (see Ferguson, 1987; Töyry, 2005) seems to have transferred as such into the lifestyle blogosphere. This can be illustrated with the following example:

I: Is it more interesting to read about a person or her style?
P10: Well not really, it’s more the style-features that I think are the best. Usually I have a feeling when I start to read these, a blog or a magazine, that I would like to renew my style or buy something new but I don’t know what. So I start to read and browse and look for inspiration. Or if I’m looking for shoes, like winter shoes or something, and I don’t have an idea about what I want from my winter shoes this winter. So I look for the current style, what is available, what could I be interested in. So it’s mostly the shopping features. And as said, it’s not the stories really […] I don’t read these magazines for the stories, only for the…
I: The products?
P10: Yes, yes.
Blogs are often considered as a source for alternative views (see e.g. Lövheim, 2011a; Kaye, 2010; Noppari & Hautakangas, 2012) and according to my data, they can function as an extension to magazines. As lifestyle blogs and magazines were considered to be a source for inspiration, the participants said they might continue their reading in the blogosphere if they did not get enough inspiration from the magazine’s pages. Lifestyle blogs also appeared to be an important source for product reviews and many of the participants said they would read product reviews from blogs whenever they were considering buying a specific product.

The participants considered it to be important that both magazines and blogs offered product information next to the products presented. However, only two of the participants said they had actually followed the hyperlinks from blogs and bought something from the webshops linked to them. This suggests that even though blogs are directly connected with shopping, the blogs may still be read apart from the actual shopping. Therefore the practical shopping advice does not necessarily lead to action but can remain an “imaginative project”, in the same way that has been considered characteristic for women’s magazines (see Hermes, 1995; Rocamora, 2012).

Blogs were also considered a good tool for shopping because they allow the readers to see clothes on “real” people as opposed to fashion magazines where fashion is “staged” (see Marwick, 2013, p.1; Rocamora, 2012). Because the participants were familiar with the bloggers they could compare the clothes with reference to other clothes that they had seen on the blogger. The bloggers also acted as trendsetters who tested and tried new things that the readers could then get inspired of or buy.

In this section I have introduced inspiration and shopping as main motives for using lifestyle media. I have also argued that blogs and magazines are used overlapping and that blogs can function as an extension to magazines. Next I
will introduce the unique characteristics that the participants of this study associated with the blog medium.

6.2 Authentic narratives and networked spaces

In eight cases out of ten, the first category of the participants’ personal genre landscape was dominated by blogs (see appendix 3). The blogs that were placed in the first two categories were followed on a daily basis or several times a week. The blogs that were placed in the third, fourth and fifth categories were read more occasionally and their reading was often highly dependent on the individual posts whereas the blogs in the first two categories were considered important because of the blogger’s persona. The division to important and less important blogs was characterised by one of the participants as follows:

P1: These in the third and fourth start to roll towards sort of nonsense, so that somehow they are always alike. [...] These are sort of anything goes. These are not. These in the first and second, they are all sort of individuals, they include something special.

Many participants commented that the personal genre landscape constructed in the interview did not include all of the blogs that the participants were following in real life. The reason why the participants chose to leave them out was that they either could not name these blogs or they were not considered significant enough to be included.

The relationship that the participants had with the most significant blogs was often developed under a longer time period and the participants agreed to have read all or nearly all of the blog posts. The attachment that the reader had with the most significant blogs appeared to be a result of the appeal of the blogger’s personal narrative, the reader’s ability to identify oneself with the blogger, the blogger’s style of communication and perceived authenticity and the frequency of blog updates (see also Noppari & Hautakangas, 2012; McQuarrie et al., 2012; Marwick, 2013). Next I will elaborate these findings in more detail.
6.2.1 Following personas and negotiating identities

In the interviews I asked all of the participants to name what they thought was most important about their favourite blog. The comments were (all dissimilar arguments included): photos of daily outfits, personal story, personal style, daily life, style photos and travel pictures, style of writing, positivity, fresh information, photos, a blogger’s dog, new apartment and baby. These comments suit the idea that diary-style blogs are created upon individual personalities and reflect the lifestyle of the writer (see e.g. Herring et al., 2004b). The comments also reinforce the statement that the blogger’s personal narrative is a key motivator for blog reading (see e.g. Noppari & Hautakangas, 2012; Lövheim, 2011a). The blogger’s personal narrative works like a frequently updated serial (see Noppari & Hautakangas, 2012) that is built upon the everyday life of the blogger, the normal and exciting events of life:

I: So what do you think is the best or most interesting about Xenia’s blog?
P7: Well, at the moment it is the dog.
I: The dog, yes.
P7: And then, they bought a new apartment, so that too. And then of course, also their upcoming baby is interesting. That receives the most attention right now [ in the blog ] and why I have maybe started to read this one more.

The blogger’s ability to create a personal engagement with the audience may be interpreted as a sign of the development where the special interest audiences of “all women” (see Winship, 1987, p.13) have narrowed down into small niche audiences (see Gough-Yates, 2003; Napoli, 2010) and further into personal audiences, as is characteristic for social media (see Marwick & Boyd, 2010; McQuarrie et al., 2012).

The frequency of blog posts appears to be the most important strategy for the blogger to hold on to the engaged audience (see Lövheim, 2011a; Noppari & Hautakangas, 2012, p.62). This idea was supported in my data as blogs that were updated often appeared to be ranked higher in the personal genre landscapes. The ability to follow the bloggers daily life was a key element of engagement. Another was the style of personal narrative. The blogger’s positive
view of the world appeared as a motivation for reading. As argued by Noppari & Hautakangas (2012), positive attitude may be seen as an unwritten rule in the blogosphere as blog writing and reading is motivated by the possibility to escape from the negative aspects of reality (Noppari & Hautakangas, 2012, p. 40). This is also a common characteristic of blogs and magazines as women’s magazines have been perceived as a source of pleasure and fantasy and an escape from mundane duties (Winship, 1987, p. 57). As described by one participant:

P9: If I read for example a post where someone talks about her life or how she has changed or something, that she has started to think in a more positive way, it does give a positive feeling. You don’t want to read something, where someone complains how everything went bad but rather something, that even though things went bad, one tries to look for the positive.

The reader’s interest in a blog is dependent on her ability to identify herself with the blogger (see Lövheim, 2011b; Noppari & Hautakangas, 2012). As the focus was on the lifestyle genre of magazines and blogs, it was natural that the identification was often physical, i.e. the personal style of the blogger matches with that of the reader’s or with the “ideal self” (see Hermes, 1995, p.39) of the reader.

The identification with the blogger is dependent on the life situation of the blogger as the lifestyle blogs often deal with their everyday lives (see e.g. Lövheim, 2013). If the blogger’s life situation changes, the blogger loses the identity connection with the reader, and the readers are easy to replace the blog with another. This was supported by my data, as is presented in the comment below:

P10: Now her situation in life has changed so much so I’m not interested in reading it anymore. Kind of like, that one Olivia blogger, wonder what her name is, she also recently had a baby, the dark haired one... Strictly Style. So I don’t read hers anymore either. Before she had more style-related issues but now when she had a baby it’s a whole different lifestyle and her style has changed.

I: So in the case where your own lifestyle does not match with the blog’s, you lose touch?
P10: You fall out, yes. The stories become such that it’s not your own life, you can’t relate yourself to it.

The participants’ identification with the blogger was made stronger by the fact that the blogger is situated in the same environment as the reader. Because of this, identification could also take place through commodities:

I: So how about Stella Harasek? Have you been reading it for long?
P2: Yes, I have been reading her blog for probably about a couple of years. Probably because there are clothes that are very similar to the style that I prefer. And I have noticed that I have bought something myself and then I found it in the blog. That’s why. Also the interior design stuff there fits my taste.

In some comments identification also served the purpose of dreaming of a future self, as blog-reading offered an escape or a window to another world outside of one’s own environment (see Hautakangas & Noppari, 2012). For example one of the participants was dreaming about studying in London and many of the bloggers she was currently following were either studying or living in London or had done so previously.

P9: And I want to sort of follow her because she has studied fashion, so I want to know where she eventually ends up.

Many of the participants also admitted to read blogs that presented a wholly different kind of life than the one the participants were living or that they idealised. When discussing these blogs, the participants often expressed a self-awareness of the hierarchies between the “respected” narratives and the purely entertaining, ridiculed narratives. The blogs with ridiculed narratives were placed further along the grid as they were considered less significant.

P5: This is a bit of a stupid thing to say but she is a bit of a bimbo, so it’s nice to watch her. But she is, she has nice pictures and all, but Silja is somehow a much more real blogger, so she is maybe nicer to watch.

P1: She has the kids and it’s somehow really, not to mean in a bad way, but it is so far from what I am. She lives in the countryside and she is very religious, so it’s really corny. But for some reason I go to see the handicraft stuff and things like that. It annoys me and intrigues me at the same time.
This type of reading is similar to the reading of gossip magazines as the “otherness” of these bloggers is negotiated with reference to current social norms and interpretations of taste (see Hermes 1995, p.141). The entertaining narratives were presented as a kind of a guilty pleasure and the blogs mentioned here included a social function as they were sometimes gossiped about or made fun of with other people:

P10: When there are people who are very different from us and they have a blog, so they are funnier. This sounds mean but we laugh at them, kind of like “do these people really exist!” So those are the ones we talk about if there has been something really funny.

Some of the participants were also following bloggers that they knew in real life. Sometimes these were friends who had moved abroad, sometimes they were acquaintances, friends of friends. It also turned out that some bloggers were a topic of interest amongst the participants and their friends, and as such they could be characterised as “micro-celebrities” (see Senft, 2008). Sometimes the participants spoke of these kinds of bloggers in a very friendly way which gave the impression that they were very familiar with their lives, even though they had never met in real life. This was highlighted by the fact that the readers spoke about the bloggers with their first names. This can be seen as characteristic for social media where friendship and intimacy are ambiguous concepts (Marwick & Boyd, 2010, p.118) and shows how the informal relationship between bloggers and their readers is a two-way-construction (see e.g. Lövheim, 2011a; Rettberg, 2008).

6.2.2 Communicating “realness” and authenticity

Ordinary people in the media are often coined with the expectation of authenticity (see Marwick, 2013; Tolson, 2010; McQuarrie et al., 2012). This notion was supported by my data, as the bloggers that the participants followed were consistently described in terms of their authenticity. Authenticity does not translate in Finnish as such and therefore the concept itself was not mentioned in the interviews. However, in my analysis I combined comments about
genuineness, honesty, credibility and ordinariness of the blogger under the category of authenticity. These manifestations of authenticity appeared in nine interviews out of ten.

The authenticity of the blogger is considered a matter of constant negotiation, i.e. how well the blogger can communicate her “realness” to the reader (see McQuarrie et al., 2012; Marwick, 2013). In my interviews authenticity was highlighted with reference to blogs the participants had been following for years. The participants credited a blogger for “staying the same”, “not changing” and “being real”.

I: How would you compare that one to another blog? Why do you think his style of writing and taking pictures is good?
P5: Well, I don’t know. Janne just seems always so real. And the fact that he is so happy and somehow, yes. It’s the realness and that he’s not like… He writes so well and in his own way. You can see the true him in the blog.

The bloggers’ ability to preserve their authenticity is challenged by their evolvement from ordinary people to micro-celebrities (see Lövheim, 2011a; McQuarrie et al, 2013; Senft, 2008). It was acknowledged and accepted by the participants that some of the bloggers had become famous in the blogosphere and that they had ties with advertisers and media. The elevated status of the blogger or advertising in blogs were not considered to diminish the authenticity of the blogger per se but it was how the blogger coped with these ties that determined his/her authenticity (see Marwick, 2013, p.1; McQuarrie et al., 2012).

The expectation of authenticity was apparent in comments that the participants made about advertising in blogs, i.e. sponsored or paid-for product posts, in comparison to advertising in magazines. Most of the participants felt that if a blogger describes or tests a product in her blog, it is initially more interesting, less annoying and more credible than a magazine advertisement or a banner or pop-up advertisement in the web. The closeness with the readers and authentic voice of advertising has been considered the reason for the advertisers’
increasing interest for blogs (see Noppari & Hautakangas, 2012, p. 152) as opposed to the inauthentic voice of marketing (Singh, 2008; Rettberg, 2008). Also, the argument that bloggers only advertise products that they feel highly about (Noppari & Hautakangas, 2012) was verified by the participants. The positive image of the blogger was considered to transfer from the blogger to the commodities, as described by one participant:

P1: She [blogger Eeva Kolu] actually writes really well about cosmetics. Usually I am not interested in make-up tips but she has somehow such a good attitude towards everything and she has written about organic cosmetics and such. I think I have opened some of the links and probably also bought something because of that.

However, the miscommunication of authenticity, such as a sudden increase in “advertisement posts” or an unconvincing review of a product, may lead to the loss of credibility and authenticity (see e.g. McQuarrie et al., 2013). Some of the participants said to have stopped following a blog if the blog had become filled with advertisement posts. Also, the increase in advertisement posts was considered to be a sufficient reason to stop reading a blog. In case of loss of authenticity, the participants could often sympathize with the blogger’s pressure to change. However, even in cases where the blogger is “derailed”, she appears to be forgiven, if she finds her way back to the authentic self. Here one of the participants describes how she thought it was a good thing that her favourite blogger took a break from blogging.

H: How do you think it [the break] was good for her?
P8: Well I think it is more like it was back when I first started reading it, that somehow the writer’s own personality is more present. I like that. And maybe, because she had been blogging for so long, she felt that she has to write and so on. Now you can see that there is new inspiration, that she enjoys the writing.

As suggested by Rose and Wood (2005), the experience of authenticity is a paradox, where fantasy and reality are balanced with each other so that one or the other does not dominate the stage. The “too real” mundaneness of life is not attractive without something out of the ordinary (see also Noppari & Hautakangas, 2012). As micro-celebrities, bloggers balance somewhere in
between the media/ordinary divide (as conceptualised by Couldry, 2003). This inability to decide whether a blogger is an “ordinary” person or a media professional came through in my interviews:

I: So how about Fashionable Fit, how do you feel about that one as a fitness blog [in comparison to Fit Fashion blogging portal]?
P10: Well I started to read Fashionable Fit first, so maybe it’s because of that, and also, it’s somehow of better quality, whereas the other ones are more like… It’s somehow more professional what she does there. […] It’s of better quality, better pictures and better constructed. In Fit Fashion, it’s like all sorts of “hillbillies” who write.

6.2.3 Browsing in the networked space

The blogs that appeared in the media landscapes in the first two categories were often read on a daily basis. Mobile reading was highly adopted by the group and it allowed blogs to be read as a meantime activity: on the bus, at school or while waiting for someone. Women’s magazines have been traditionally characterised as a meantime activity (Hermes, 1995; Ytre-Arne, 2011a; FPPA, 2008) but mobile media use appears to offer new ways to fill the “white spaces” (see FFPA, 2008) of the day. Most of the participants said they read blogs mainly with their smartphones. Tablet computers were not common among this group. Reading blogs was often a meantime activity and practiced outside of the home environment. As one participant described:

P1: Mostly it is on the bus or somewhere, if I’m waiting for someone. Now the last weeks have been a bit, it feels like I haven’t had time to read anything even though I probably still have. And just now when we drove to Kokkola, my boyfriend was driving and my mobile phone ran out of battery because I was going through all of them [blogs] as I hadn’t had time for it for a long while.

However, some of the participants said that continuous screen use felt straining and that they do not read blogs before they go to bed because they try to cut down their mobile use. The straining nature of mobile use is supported by the previous findings made about the reading of online magazines (Sonkamuotka, 2013; Ytre-Arne, 2011b). It also fits the idea of electronic reading as a “lean-
forward” activity that requires more effort from the user’s side in comparison to lean-back media, such as magazines (Johnson & Prijatel, 1999, p. 23).

Browsing\(^{11}\) as a style of reading appeared in the interviews as a key characteristic of both blogs and magazines. However, in blogs browsing was an inherent characteristic of their reading, and typical for internet reading (see Rocamora, 2012), because blogs could be often flicked through without ever reading the actual posts. Browsing also refers to blogs as a compilation of information. Blogs are not read as singulars but rather side by side with other blogs and websites (see e.g. Vainikka & Herkman, 2013; Rocamora, 2012). The act of browsing blogs as a mass was supported by the fact that most of the participants read blogs as a newsfeed with the help of filter services such as Blogger or Bloglovin.\(^{12}\)

The act of browsing can be seen to reflect the easy-reading nature of the lifestyle media titles and associated with previous discoveries about the genre of women’s magazines being an easily “pickupable” and “putdownable” media (see Hermes, 1995, p.32). Browsing was linked to blogs being a meantime activity but the participants also considered browsing as an enjoyable mode of reading. The browsing nature of blog reading appears to bring lightness to their reading and makes them subject to easy replacement (see Noppari & Hautakangas, 2012; Rocamora, 2012). As a non-linear space, the blog medium allows the reader to move between spaces and interrupt their reading at any time (see Rocamora, 2012; Bolter & Grusin, 2001), as described by one participant:

P10: I like to read from the internet because, if you see something that is uninteresting, it is easy to skip. When you read a magazine, you are tied to it, when you only buy one magazine at a time. So if you run out of interesting articles, you will eventually have to go to the internet anyways, if

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\(^{11}\) Translation from the Finnish word “selata, selaila”

\(^{12}\) The filter services Blogger and Bloglovin allow the user to save the blogs she reads into her profile so that each new post is updated to the profile and the latest posts (or recaps of the posts) can be read in a single newsfeed. In this way the user does not have to open each web address but she can read the posts while remaining on the service platform.
you want to read more style things or something. In the internet it is easier to just open a new tab and see the next blog, or if you find a nice product, you can go straight to the websites of the webshop and order it directly. If you have a magazine, you have to separately go to the computer and open it and go to the websites or even the shop to buy, so that you have to walk also. [...] Most times when I start to read a blog I have ten different tabs open, as I have moved to from one story to another or followed hyperlinks.

The fluidity of the reading process supports the idea that the relationships readers have with blogs can be simultaneously engaging and disloyal (Noppari & Hautakangas, 2012, p. 62). This argument is parallel to the ones made by Hermes (1995) and Ytre-Arne (2011a) about how women’s magazines adapt to a noisy background and that their reading can be engaging even when there are other disturbances.

The fluid nature of reading was highlighted when discussing the reading of blogging portals. The blogging portals themselves did not seem appealing to spend time in but if the participant was following an individual blog in the portal she might sometimes end up going through the rest – if she had time and she was interested in finding something new or spotted an interesting post.

P10: They are all good, the blogs there [in blogging portal MyCosmo]. So if I don’t know what I’m looking for or I would like to read something new, if I’ve read through all the other ones, then I go there to read the rest of them. But I don’t follow any other blogs than Vilma P. and PS I love fashion.

Overall, spending time in blogging portals was encouraged by a personal relationship with one or several blogs or in some cases the familiarity with the portal. The well-known, established Finnish blogging portals such as Indiedays and Lily rose higher in the overall ranking either because the participants were following a specific blog in these portals or they had been doing so previously.

In this chapter I have studied my data in terms of comments made about blogs. I have discovered that blog reading is motivated by the bloggers’ personal

\[13\] Both appeared 8/10 times in the landscapes and were placed in the first two categories more often than the other blogging portals.
narrative, the authenticity of that narrative and the fluid nature of blogs as a meantime activity. Next I will analyse my data with reference to the characteristics associated with women’s magazines.

6.3 Professional content and uninterrupted readings

In my interviews I discovered that magazines are associated with an expectation of professionalism that ensures the variety of story types and quality of content. Magazines are also perceived through their concepts and their reading is encouraged by the relaxed nature of the offline reading experience. In this section I will elaborate my findings with reference to my data.

6.3.1 Determining professionalism

In my data, magazines were paired with an expectation of professionalism. The participants appreciated the professional tone of voice of the magazines, and in some cases a strong journalistic voice was even considered annoying. The expectation of professionalism was also associated with the perceived effort put into the journalistic work. As the journalists were getting paid for working for the magazines, the magazine had to be consistent in quality. The participants associated the credibility of the magazine with the correctness of the language and quality of texts. This suggests that the participants’ perception of magazine professionalism is in line with previously introduced ideals of accuracy and depth of information (see Johnson & Kaye, 2004; Holmes & Nice, 2012).

In magazines, the good quality of editorial images appeared to be a given whereas in blogs the quality of images was contested as it seemed to be a key determinant of whether the blog was of good quality. This can be considered as a way in which the ideals of magazine journalism have been remediated into blogs: good bloggers are able to match the visual quality with what the readers are used to in magazines. Good writing and correct grammar were appreciated as well but bloggers were often forgiven for their errors and shortcomings, whereas for magazines such errors were considered unacceptable. The participants appeared to be able to sympathize with the bloggers un-
professionalism or “open amateurism” (Tolson, 2010, p.281) if the blog’s appeal was strong enough:

P8: Well, Uino has dyslexia, so she makes mistakes because of that. But they don’t bother me, if the story is interesting and you can still read it, then it doesn’t bother me. I would not give up on reading it because of that. And then also, the text is quite well balanced with the images, so that’s why I also like to read it.

The most important content of *Costume* magazine was considered to be (all dissimilar arguments included): fashion-related articles, reader survey about fashion, tips for shopping and personal style, street styles, fashion and hair tips, cosmetics recommendations from the editor, letter from the editor and interviews. In the interviews, the magazine’s role as a balanced source of information was emphasized. This idea can be associated with the magazine’s function as a gatekeeper (see Ferguson, 1983, p. 10) of information and its nature as a compilation of story types (see Töyry, 2005; Töyry, 2013).

Even though some participants found celebrity interviews interesting, overall the interviews were not considered the most meaningful content of magazines\(^\text{14}\). Also, the people interviewed in *Costume* magazine appeared to be interesting not because of their interesting personas but because the story type presented the person from an fashion perspective:

I: Did you read the Antti Tuisku [a Finnish singer] interview?
P9: Yes, I read it. I don’t really like Antti Tuisku too much, but it was really nice to read it because it was focused on his on stage outfits and style overall.

P1: In *Gloria* [a Finnish women’s magazine], I like the story, or at least there used to be a story, where people introduce their closet. So that was really interesting [...] kind of like this one [refers to an article where a blogger introduces her wardrobe]. This shows sort of what the key pieces of her style are and tells a story, I think it’s quite nice. Whether it is a blogger or not doesn’t matter, if she has an original style.

\(^{14}\text{Only 1/10 interviewees said interviews were the most interesting content of }\) *Costume* magazine.
The demands for quality of information were high, especially with regard to *Costume* magazine’s brand as a special interest magazine. As most of the participants were active followers of fashion, they expected the magazine to match their level of knowledge. An example of this was an article about the history of the fashion house *Louis Vuitton* in the December/January 2014 issue of *Costume* magazine. Some of the participants described the article as “bad”, “pointless” or “uninteresting”. One of the participants seemed almost offended by the magazine’s underestimation of the readers’ level of fashion knowledge. She motivated her feelings about the article as follows:

P10: This story that they had about *Louis Vuitton*, I thought it was really bad. Or like, why would I want to read about why *Costume* thinks *Vuitton* is like a legend? Like if this was some new brand, or one that I was not familiar with, I might be interested to read some background information about it but when it’s so old and such a classic basic thing. I wasn’t really interested and I wondered why were they were thinking this would make a good story. Introducing a *Speedy* bag… maybe some peasants, who haven’t really heard about it, maybe they are interested in reading more about it, because all they know is the *Speedy*. Maybe it’s for them.

Magazine editors were not associated with a personal appeal but rather as invisible actors behind the magazine’s content. In a magazine, the editors were expected to focus on serving the reader (see also Holmes, 2008) instead of personal commentary. The participants also perceived product reviews differently in magazines and in blogs. In a magazine the products were expected to be reviewed by several people whereas in blogs a subjective approach was accepted. As described by one participant:

P5: If I read a blog, I read *that* blog, I think about *that* blogger. But then if she [an editor] writes about a winter coat, the editor in this magazine, I don’t think about the editor, I only think about the coat.

Bloggers as magazine editors did not seem to be especially appealing to the readers. The readers did not pay much attention to who had written the story and as such the blogger’s personal touch did not play a significant part here. However, if the participants did not consider the blogger to be a credible style
leader (see McQuarrie et al, 2012) they weren’t interested in having them as experts in the magazine:

P2: Then if someone is like, not what I consider stylish, then it is annoying that she is here in the magazine giving some advice.

However, some participants saw the bloggers-as-editors issue as a part of the bloggers personal narrative as micro-celebrities. As such the bloggers can even be considered as subjects to fandom (see also Senft, 2008).

P5: It feels nice that someone has started to write about her own style just for fun and then she has ended up in a magazine to write about it. It feels a bit like she has more of her own perspective on things.

When bloggers were used as magazine editors, some considered that it was a good learning process for the bloggers because in a magazine they had to be more professional. The magazine was considered to be of certain quality that the bloggers had to live up to if they were incorporated in magazines. This result supports the idea of magazines and blogs as different media concepts of magazines and blogs. As blogs serve the values of the blogger and magazines serve the values of the publisher (Töyry, 2013), the cross-over from blogging to editing is expected to require much effort from the blogger’s side:

P7: In a blog you can write whatever but in a magazine I think it’s like, you have to have a style that suits everybody, you can’t use slang or things like that. I don’t mind if bloggers write [in magazines] but in a magazine you have to be bit more matter-of-fact, so […] When the magazine is not just one person who is making it, it means that it has to include different perspectives.

The participants were critical about employing too many bloggers or readers in the magazine. Even though most of the participants found the readers’ contributions to the magazine as relevant and interesting, that was not the main reason why they were reading the magazine. Some thought that when magazine editors are paid to work for the magazine, they should be the ones in charge of the magazine.

P2: If there’s a lot of reader- or blogger-generated content, you sort of get a feeling that the magazine is made by other people. So the point of the
magazine is sort of lost. Even though someone puts the content together you don't get the real experience of a fashion magazine.

6.3.2 Choosing magazines by concept and price

As characterised by Helle & Töyry (2009) media concepts define the logic with which the producers and consumers of a media perceive and experience different media products. In women’s magazines, the concepts may be very precisely defined (see e.g. Töyry, 2005), as in the case of Costume magazine. In this study, the participants appeared to be very well aware of the different magazine concepts of Finnish lifestyle magazines. Due to the fact that blogs are free to use and magazines are not, the choosing of magazines appeared to be a process of careful consideration. Most of the readers were not subscribers of magazines but bought magazines as single copies. Price appeared as a key determinant for the choice of magazine and an even more important one than the cover headlines, as most of the participants said to pay little or no attention to them when buying. This is contrary to what has previously been discovered about the importance of cover headlines for magazine readers (see Ytre-Arne, 2011b).

As argued by Winship (1987, pp.66-80), a magazine must communicate itself as a part of the same world as its readers. This appeared to be true in the case of Costume magazine, as one of the motivations for reading the magazine was its presentation of ordinary people and low-priced commodities. The participants found the street style –features\[^{15}\] to be much more interesting than the editorial fashion –features. Some of the participants did not like the editorial fashion-features of the magazine because the products were not clearly visible or available and the styles could not be worn as everyday outfits. The street styles were complimented in several occasions because they offered inspiration and variation. As described by one of the participants:

\[^{15}\] The street-style feature is a recurrent fashion feature in Costume magazine, which consists of photos of people in their own clothes. These people are often photographed on the street and the images chosen for the magazine are taken from around the world.
P7: This is like, you see how people dress in the everyday life. And then of course, you get a sense of style and stay up to date of fashion when you see how people dress, so it’s sort of universal. And I think that all of those fashion editorials are sort of too constructed. And then when you’re not like that yourself… so these are nice to look at because you maybe get more out of them.

Overall, the readers’ interpretations of magazine concepts seemed to be quite fixed. For example, the magazine title *Olivia* appeared in many of the personal genre landscapes and it received positive comments from the participants even though some of the participants said they had not read it for years. It seemed that once the magazine concept is recognized it may be hard to change the reader’s perception of it. If a magazine concept loses its identity the readers are easy to switch to another magazine. This means that the magazine must be able to restate its value for its readers in every issue so that the connection with the readers is not lost (see Töyry, 2005). However, one participant also commented that no matter which magazine, they all start to repeat themselves after a while and that’s why she likes to switch between magazines.

6.3.3 Reading magazines in uninterrupted spaces

As introduced in the previous chapters, blogs are characterised as meantime-entertainment and the act of reading blogs and magazines is often described as browsing. I have also argued that the reading of blogs functions in a serial nature as blogs are followed on a day-to-day basis and that magazine selection is dependent on the reader’s perception of the magazine’s concept. According to my results, the engagement with blogs is not tied to a calm reading-situation. Magazines on the other hand seem to be associated with an uninterrupted space and time which suggests they act as relaxation rather than meantime-activity. This is different from what has previously been concluded about magazines as reading matter that adapts to a noisy background and other activities (Hermes, 1995, p.34).

The comments made about the reading practices of blogs and magazines match the conclusions Sonkamuotka (2013) has made about the comparisons
of the printed magazine and magazine websites: off-screen products are considered less straining, the temporal nature of magazines makes the magazine a focus of anticipation and the physical aspects of the magazine make it appear as more valuable (pp. 23-29). As described by the participants:

P9: Blogs I read every day, but because magazines only come out once a month, the magazines are somehow more luxurious, so that, blogs are more kind of a routine, so that you read them every day.

P1: Magazines you read somehow with more concentration. They are somehow, like now when I got Deko and Trendi last week I took both of them along when we travelled away to spend the independence day weekend, so I didn’t read them right away. I sort of held them back until the right moment. And then again, blogs are like, I read them on the bus and on the tram and more like to spend time. I rarely read them at home really. Or I only read them on the mobile when I’m at home, I never open the computer at home to read blogs.

The relaxing nature of magazine reading may also be characterised by its limited amount of pages, in comparison to the blogosphere as an infinite space of hyperlinks and networks (see Rocamora, 2012). Here a difference must be made with the different interpretations of the verb “concentrate”, i.e. magazines are read with concentration whereas blogs demand concentration. This implies that the reader chooses to concentrate on reading a magazine whereas the screen-environment offers constant distractions, which forces the readers to concentrate in order to enjoy the reading. As described by one participant:

I: How would you compare the reading experience of blogs and magazines?
P3: Maybe it’s like, of you read something from the screen, you have to concentrate more, plus it is more tiring, whereas if you have a magazine, you can slowly go through it. It’s easy to go into the mode where you scroll, scroll, it’s almost like devouring, the eating of blogs… reading I mean.

Due to the offline, relaxing nature of magazine reading, the idea of online magazines or mobile magazines was not supported by the group. Some had tried a mobile issue of a magazine in the case of a free trial but the participants did not think it was equal to the reading experience of a printed magazine (see also Ytre-Arne, 2011b, Sonkamuotka, 2013). Some participants commented that
if they want to read something online, they can go to the webpages of the magazine or read blogs instead. The physical aspect of the magazine appeared to be crucial (see also Ytre-Arne, 2011b):

P2: I don’t really like to read online magazines or books or anything. Some short stories I might read but I’m not really, I don’t like to use the internet for lengthy reading. I think it’s nicer that it’s more tangible, something you can hold on to and browse.

The term browsing was also understood differently when speaking of blogs and magazines. Whereas online it referred to the endless networks of the web, in magazines it was strongly associated with its physical nature:

P7: I do prefer the fact that you can flick through the issue of a magazine […] If you get an idea, you can make notes. That is something I like about the printed magazine. I don’t think I would, even if I had a tablet computer, I don’t think I would start subscribing it [a digital version of a magazine].

In this section I have examined my data with focus on the comments made about women’s magazines. I have argued that the magazine as a medium is coupled with an expectation of professionalism. The results presented here have offered reason to assume that the quality expectations for a magazine are higher than for a blog. The participants of this study have appeared to be sceptical about employing too many bloggers or readers in the magazine because this might turn the magazine into something else than what the readers expect. The effort of professional journalists also serves as a crucial determinant for quality and credibility. I have also discovered that women’s magazines are not a unified mass but rather an assortment of distinct media concepts. The commitment readers have with magazines seems to be light and renegotiated with every purchase.
7 Conclusions and discussion

In the previous chapter I have examined my empirical data in the light of my research questions. I have summarized my findings into a table as presented below. In addition to this I have made conclusions about the overall use of lifestyle media as a source of inspiration and easy reading. This table illustrates and summarizes the main differences of my analysis in terms of the relationship that the medium has with its readers, the unique characteristics of each medium and the reading practices associated with each medium.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Media</th>
<th>Relationship with the reader</th>
<th>Unique characteristics of the media</th>
<th>Reading practice</th>
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<tr>
<td>Blogs</td>
<td>Close to the reader</td>
<td>Open amateurism</td>
<td>Browsing</td>
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<td>Negotiation of authenticity</td>
<td>Free content</td>
<td>Meantime activity</td>
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<td>Personal</td>
<td>Infinite content</td>
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<td>Personal narrative</td>
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<td>Magazines</td>
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<td>Expectation of professionalism</td>
<td>Browsing</td>
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Table 2: Main differences between blogs and magazines

In the beginning of this thesis I introduced an argument that blog reading might be replacing magazine reading amongst young female lifestyle media users. I problematized this argument with a quotation by Rettberg (2008), saying that the increasing use of internet media is not necessarily replacing old media but rather, different media may be used simultaneously (p. 45). In addition to the differences between blogs and magazines presented above, I have discovered
that blogs and magazines are read simultaneously, i.e. the reading of blogs does not seem to correlate with a disinterest in magazines. However, while both of them compete over the free time of the readers, it appears that blog reading has replaced some of magazine reading. This is supported by the fact that blogs are free-of-charge whereas magazines are not.

The results of this study show that women’s magazines and lifestyle blogs have distinct roles but also serve similar needs. Because they both offer inspiration and practical advice as well as function as an enjoyable reading, it is the unique characteristics of the media that seem to determine whether the reader chooses to read one or the other. All of the different characteristics presented in the above table seem to play a role in the reader’s relationship with women’s magazines and lifestyle blogs. However, the key findings can be summarized as follows. Lifestyle blogs seem to offer a personal narrative that is legitimated by the blogger’s authentic persona. The reading of blogs is encouraged by their function as a meantime activity, the frequent updates and free content. Women’s magazines appear to provide the reader with a multitude of story types, reliable, in-depth content characterised by its good quality. Magazine reading is associated with uninterrupted reading and magazines are enjoyed as tangible, printed products.

In this thesis I have examined the overlapping media concepts of lifestyle blogs and women’s magazines and inspected them from the point of view of the recent changes in media culture and especially with reference to the changing roles of media audiences. The aim of this study was to find out why the reader’s relationship with lifestyle blogs is different from the relationship she has with women’s magazines and what implications this has may have for the development of the lifestyle media genre. Now I will elaborate my findings with reference to the two research questions introduced at the beginning of this thesis.
My first research question was: why are user-generated blogs considered to be more authentic than the professionally-produced women’s magazines? In this study I have discovered that blog authenticity is not a given but a matter of constant negotiation with the readers. Even though women’s magazines may be considered to renegotiate their relationship with the reader with every issue (Töyry, 2005), the production of magazines is characterised by its institutional nature and the predictability of the magazine’s concept.

Women’s magazines are designed for carefully chosen target audiences (see e.g. Töyry, 2005; Gough-Yates, 2003) and their perception of audience is determined by the logic of the media market, i.e. selling products that appeal to both consumers and advertisers (see e.g. Napoli, 2003). As suggested by Töyry (2013), women’s magazines and blogs differ on all three levels of the media concept, with reference to their values, selection of story types and daily work. Considering the institutional nature of the production of women’s magazines, it is only natural, that their relationship with the reader is one of institutional nature, as opposed to blogs, which are grounded in their personal authenticity (see Rettberg, 2008, p. 92). Drawing from the findings of this study and from previous arguments by Rettberg (2008) and Töyry (2013), it can be concluded that the main difference between blogs and magazines as media concepts rises from the fact that magazine concepts are designed for an audience whereas blogs concepts are built up and shaped by the audience. Blogs are characterised by their fluidity and immediacy (see Rocamora, 2012) and as such they are more flexible and can adapt to the needs of their readers faster than magazines that are a result of complex production processes.

The audience construction of blogs is a negotiation where the readers’ most important expectation from blogs is their authenticity (see e.g. McQuarrie et al., 2013; Marwick, 2013). Because the reader’s relationship with a blog is intimate (see e.g. Lövheim, 2011a; Lövheim, 2013) and the reading of blogs is of serial nature (Noppari & Hautakangas, 2012) the authenticity is reclaimed in each post: in the style of writing, in addressing the readers as well as in choices.
regarding product endorsement (see also McQuarrie et al. 2013). The communication of authenticity is a form of accentuated ordinariness (Tolson, 2010) where the blogger must convince her readers of her ordinariness even if she has stepped from the ordinary space into a media space (see Couldry, 2003; McQuarrie et al., 2012). The findings of this study support these arguments and suggest that the authenticity of the blogosphere cannot as such be remediated into the magazine medium as they lack the expectation of ordinariness but are rather associated with institutional professionalism.

The results of this study have shown that the engagement the reader has with blogs is strongly connected with the reader’s ability to match her identity with the blogger’s (see also Lövheim, 2011a; Lövheim, 2013). This is a major difference in comparison to magazines as the readers do not expect the magazine to speak to their identities on a personal level, despite the fact that magazines have previously been determined by their “unique closeness” with the reader (Abrahamson, 2008, p. 148). It seems that blogs have taken the closeness with the readers into a new level. Blogs appear to function as a space for identity encounters whereas magazines are read for their variety of views and content. Because blogs are legitimated by their authenticity, the bloggers are considered to be ordinary people rather than media professionals, even in cases where bloggers are making money out of blogging.

However, the findings of this study suggest that the readers’ perception of the blogger changes when the bloggers step into the space of traditional media. In magazines, bloggers are expected to adopt the same professionalism that is associated with magazine editors. Therefore the employment of bloggers as editors of magazines seems to be problematic. It appears that it is not the bloggers’ lives or opinions the readers are interested in while reading magazines. Because magazines are paid for and blogs are not, the readers are selective of the magazines they buy and want the magazine to be worth paying for, i.e. they want the paid journalists to do the work and not the bloggers or readers. This view may be paralleled with the idea of participatory media as
exploitation (see Andrejevic, 2011). The readers do not feel it is right for magazines to take advantage of the bloggers and readers as content producers, but rather want to see the journalists do the work they are hired to do.

This supports the idea that magazine journalism is grounded in its institutional nature (see Rettberg, 2008). Even though blogs are employed in magazines as editors, their role in the magazines appears to be viewed as similar to that of ordinary people or celebrities, as something different from the magazine editors. Magazines are expected to serve their readers with the production of a variety of story types with accurate, in-depth content. This shows that the perception of magazine professionalism does exist in the same sense that it has been previously defined (see Johnson & Kaye, 2004; Holmes & Nice, 2012) and supports the idea that blogging and journalism represent different functions (see also Neuberger & Nuernbeck, 2010; Rettberg, 2008; Bruns, 2008; Domingo & Heinonen). Magazine editors are still considered to work as gatekeepers for their genre (see e.g. Winship, 1987) whereas a blogger’s expertise has more to do with personal style.

My second research question in this thesis was: does the popularity of lifestyle blogs change or remediate the role and reading practices of women’s magazines in the genre of lifestyle media? This study has shown that lifestyle blogs and women’s magazines remediate one another not only in terms of production and content (see Rocamora, 2012), but also in terms of their relationship with the readers and practices of reading. Lifestyle blogs see their readers as consumers, in the same way that has been previously considered characteristic of women’s magazines.

Also, some of the reading practices traditionally associated with women’s magazines, such as browsing and reading as a meantime activity have been transferred into blogging. This remediation of reading practices has changed the reading practices of women’s magazines as women’s magazines are
associated more with relaxed, uninterrupted reading than blogs, and as such they resemble the reading practices traditionally associated with books (see Hermes, 1995; Ytre-Arne, 2011a). According to the findings of this study, blogs also fulfil similar functions than women’s magazines, such as escaping the mundaneness of life, need for inspiration and gossip.

This study has implied that overall, magazines appear to have held on to their traditional functions and characteristics but it seems that blogs have highlighted these functions and challenged some of them. The results of this study suggest that blogs are a source for immediate inspiration and personal experience. This highlights the magazine’s role as a slow reading and source of professionally-produced, in-depth content. The tangible nature of magazines appears to be a preferred option of magazine reading as it offers a balance to the straining (see Ytre-Arne, 2011b; Sonkamuotka, 2013), lean-forward-nature (see Johnson & Prijatel, 1999) of blog reading. Also, because magazines are paid for, their value appears to lie in their reading experience, and as such they are not in direct competition with blogs, which are read as an in-between activity, from small smartphone screens and while on the move. Whereas a key motivator for blog reading appears to be that they are updated frequently, magazines are characterised as a monthly luxury and their reading is looked forward to with anticipation. This seems to match previous arguments about women’s magazines as a source of pleasure (Winship, 1987) and relaxed reading (Sonkamuotka, 2013; Ytre-Arne, 2011b).

The current development of ordinary people into media figures (see e.g. Tolson, 2010; Senft, 2008; Lövheim, 2011a) has also posed some changes to the lifestyle media genre. Blogs seem to reshape the production of media by offering new, more credible and authentic channels for advertisers (Singh, 2008; Rettberg, 2008) that may be considered to compete with print advertising. Blogs have also introduced a more down-to-earth fashion culture, where “real” people are admired for their “authentic” style (see e.g. Rocamora, 2012; McQuarrie et al., 2012). The results of this study suggest that readers enjoy the
everyday fashion examples not only in blogs but also in magazines. The preference of street-style features and straightforward fashion advice linked with product details shows that fashion consumption has evolved from an imaginative project towards a more tangible project (see Rocamora, 2012). Blogs have also turned lifestyle bloggers into style leaders who are perceived to belong to the same sphere of fashion and style that used to belong to fashion institutions and fashion magazines (see e.g. Rocamora, 2012; McQuarrie et al, 2012). The role of ordinary people as style-leaders has also transferred to the magazine medium as the readers enjoy the street-style features of fashion magazines more than they enjoy the “staged” fashion editorials (see also Rocamora, 2012; McQuarrie, 2012).

The results of this study have also suggested that the fluid, constantly evolving nature of the blogosphere and its logic of replacement (see Rocamora, 2012; Bolter & Grusin, 1999) appears to have an overall effect in the nature of the reader’s relationships with lifestyle media titles. The reader may have a strong relationship with individual blogs and magazines but the relationship is characterised by light attachment and as such it is subject to replacement (see also Hermes, 2009; Rocamora, 2012). This may be seen as a remediation where the nature of the internet as a network of “weak ties” between users and communities (see Rettberg, 2008) has become embedded in the relationships these users have with media titles.

This study has offered an analysis of the role of blogs in the lifestyle media genre and studied blogs as a medium from the reader’s point of view. The selection of literature in this thesis has described blogs and magazines as two nodes of the lifestyle media industry and presented the main differences between these media. The mix of qualitative and quantitative methods has offered a glance to the overlapping use of lifestyle blogs and magazines, and revealed internal hierarchies within the lifestyle media genre.
However, being a comparative study where participants were chosen according to their media use highlights the role of these media in the participants’ lives. As I was dealing with a small sample, it later appeared that there was still quite a lot of variety within the group. Thinking back, the age group of the participants could have been even more focused as it turned out, unsurprisingly enough, that people between the ages 16 to 32 use media in very different ways. Therefore it is hard to tell, whether the specific participants of this study used magazines and blogs in a way that is typical for other people of the same age.

Also, a study that shows the full compilation of media titles (also outside the lifestyle media genre) might offer new insight to the importance of blogs and women’s magazines to these participants. Also, an issue that was not thoroughly addressed in this study was how the everyday practices and daily rhythm of blog and magazine use affect the reader’s relationship with them. An ethnographic research approach might offer answers to these questions. However, this study may be considered to offer a starting point to the study of lifestyle blog audiences and the chosen research methods may very well be applied to study other groups of readers.

This study has implied that even though lifestyle blogs and women’s magazines share some of the same characteristics, their relationship with readers is initially different. Based on the evidence provided by this study I would like to argue that in order for women’s magazines to hold on to their readerships they should prove themselves to be something different from lifestyle blogs rather than try to become similar to them. Women’s magazines need to be able to match their world with the current world of their readers, but they also need to stay faithful to the characteristics that make the women’s magazine a unique medium.
List of references


Statista Statistics Portal. Retrieved 1


Additional blogs and blogging portals mentioned in this thesis (body text):
MyCosmo. http://mycosmo.fi/
APPENDIX 1: List of media titles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BLOG TITLES</th>
<th>BLOGGING PORTALS</th>
<th>MAGAZINE TITLES</th>
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<td>5 inch and up</td>
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<td>Private blen</td>
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<td>Sara K</td>
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<td>Ostolakossa</td>
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</table>
APPENDIX 2: Interview questions

The Q-sorting – interview
- Why did you place this media title in this category?
- Why is this media title significant / insignificant to you?
- How often do you use this media title?
- Where do you use this media title (e.g. home, at work, on the bus etc.) and in what form (print/digital, mobile/on the computer)?
- Could you imagine using this media title in a different form?
- For what purpose do you use this media title?
- Is there another media title that would be suitable for the same purpose?
- How do you compare blog reading with magazine reading?

The stimulated recall – interview
Questions about the magazine:
- How would you describe your relationship with the magazine?
- How long have you been reading the magazine?
- Do you pay attention to the cover of the magazine?
- How do you read the magazine?
- What did you think was most interesting / uninteresting about this issue?
- How would you describe the content of the magazine?
- What would you want more / less of in the magazine?
- How do you feel about the visuality of the magazine?
- How do you feel about the advertisements in the magazine?
- Do you pay attention to the writers in the magazine?
- How do you feel about the bloggers as writers?
- Would you like to read more content from the readers or bloggers?

Questions about the blog:
- Describe your relationship with the blog and the blogger
- How long have you been reading this blog?
- Why do you read this blog?
- How do you follow the blog (through a blogging portal or with an URL)
- How would you describe the content of the blog?
- How would you compare this blog with other blogs?
- How do you navigate in the blog?
- Which interface do you use to read the blog (computer/tablet/mobile)?
- Do you comment on the blog?
- What is most / least interesting about the blog?
- How do you feel about the advertising in the blog?
- Do you discuss the blog topics with your friends
## APPENDIX 3: Personal genre landscapes, participants P1-P5

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**COLOUR CODES**

- P = Participant number
- A = Age of participant
### APPENDIX 3: Personal genre landscapes, participants P6-P10

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**P** = Participant number

**A** = Age of participant
APPENDIX 4: Quotations in Finnish / Haastattelusitaatit suomeksi

Sitaatti osiossa 5
P3: Facebookis on varmaan ainoo, mistä mä tykkään on toi Tyylitetotoimisto.
I: Eli se on ainoo mitä sä seuraat?
P3: Joo.
I: Onks sille joku syy?
P3: No ehkä se on sellanen, mitä mä pystyn julkisesti myöntää et mä seuraan. Et nää tuntuu jotenki välillä pinnallisilta, välillä myöntää kavereille et kuinka montaa blogii mä seuraan, neki yllättyy aina. […] Mut niinku toi on sellanen neutraali. Mut se ei myöskään sekoitu, ku on töistä paljon kollegoita, jotai professoreita ja tällasin, ni sit halunnu pitää sen aika neutraalina sen Facebook-profiilin.

Sitaatit osiossa 6
I: Onks se kiinnostavampaa sit lukkee jostai henkilöstä tai sen tyylistä?
I: Lähinnä tuotteiden?
P10: Niin, niin.

H: Onks siin jotain, mikä on erityisen hyvää siinä portaalissa tai minkä takii se on tuol kärjessä?
P10: No mä tykkään, kaikki on hyvii ne blogit mitkä siel on, ne omat blogit tavallaan. Ni sielt löytyy, et jos mä en tiia mitä mä haen, tai haluu lukkee jotai uutta, jos mä oon lukenu kaikki muut läpi ni mä meen sinne lukkee ne muut mitä siel on. Mut sielt mä en mitään muita blogijaa seuraa ku toi Vilma P. ja sit toi PS I love fashion.

H: Jos sä vertaat blogin ja lehden lukukokemusta, ni miten ne eroavat, ihan vaan toi muoto, onks jompikumpi et saat siitä enemmän, on helpompi rentoutuu tai?
P10: Mä tykkään taas lukee netistä just siksi, että jos tulee jotai mikä ei kiinnosta ni sen voi helpommin skippaa. Et sää oot sidoksissa tohon lehteen ku sää luet sen, ku ostaa vähän yhen lehen kerrallaan, ni jos siitä loppuu ne mielenkiintoiset jutut, ni sää joudut kuitenki menee sinne nettiin, jos sää haluat lukee lisää jotain tyllyjuttuja tai jotai. Ni netis on kivempi vaan avaa uus välilehti siihen ja katoo seuraava blogi, tai jos sää löydät just kivan, niinku tuotteen, sää voin meneen suoraan sinne nettikaupan sivuille ja tilaa se siit suoraan. Ku jos sää on lehti sää joudut erikseen sit voin meneen suoraan sinne tietokoneelle ja avata sen ja menen sinne nettsivuille tilaa tai kauppaan jopa ostaa, et joudut kävelemään. [...] Toi on enemmän ajatusvirran mukana kulkemista. Et useimmitten ku mä alan lukee jotain blogii ni sit mul on kymmenen eri välileheer auki mihin mä oon aina siirtynyt jostain jutusta tai jostain linkistä.

P1: Sit nääh ehkä alkaa niinku valua tätä kolmosta ja nelosese semmosen hömpänpõmpaaän et ne on niinku, et jotai ne on aina samantapasia [...] Joo, et nääh on ehkä sillai et ihan sama mikä. Nää ei niinku oo. Nää on kaikki, ykkösessä ja kakkosessa ni ne on kaikki niinku yksittäisiiv, mis on jotain erityistä.

P10: Ja nyt sit taas sen elämäntilanne on muuttunu niin paljon, et mua ei kiinnosta oikee lukee. Samal tavalla, kuka se on Olivian bloggaaja, se yks, mikäköhän sen nimi on, se sai kans just lapsen, se tummahiuksinen, joku V... Strictly style, joo. Ni emmä sitäkään enää, ennen sil oli enemmän tyllyjuttuja mut sitku se sai sen lapsen ni sit se on taas ihan elämäntyyli ja tylly muuttuu.

I: Nii, eli siinää vaiheessa jos se oma elämäntilanne ei enää vastaa sitä ni sit se katoaa?

P10: Tipahtaa, niin. Ne jutut menee sellaaks, et ei oo enää yhtää oaa elämää, ei voi rinnastaa itteensä yhtää siihen silleen.

P9: Ja sitten mä haluan vähän seurata sitä, kun se on opiskellu muotialaa, niin mä haluan seurata vähän, mihin se päätyy siitä sitten.

P9: Jos mä luen esimerkiks jonkun postauksen, missä joku puuhuu just jostain elämästään tai puuhuu siitä, että miten on muuttunut tai jotain, että ajatteleee positiivisemmin tai jotenkin, niin kyllä siitä tulee itellekin paljon enemmän semmosen positiivisempi olo, ettei halua lukea kuitenkaan semmosta, että jossa valitaan, että kuinka kaikki on menny huonosti, vaan enemmän sitten semmosta, vaikka meniskin huonosti, niin sitten etsii kuitenkin ne sitten ne positiiviset.

H: Millää tavalla sun mielestää se teki hyvää tai tuliko sitä jotenkin...

P8: No musta tuntuu tavallaan, että se on enemmänkin semmoineen, mikä se oli silloin kun mä aloin lukea sitä, että siinää tavallaan tulee se kirjoittajan oma tavallaan persoonaa enemmän siihen. Mä
tykkään siitä. Ja ehkä just tästä, kun oli kirjoittanut niin kauan, niin sitten siitä oli vähän tullu semmoinen, että on pakko kirjoittaa ja tällleen. Näkee kyllä, että on tavallaan uutta semmoista intoa tai silleen, että haluaa enemmän kirjoittaa sitä ja näkyy kyllä.

I: No mikä sun mielestä tossa Xenjan blogissa on parasta tai kiinnostavinta?
P7: No nyt mä olen just, tai tällä hetkellä on toi koira.
I: Koira joo.
P7: Ja sitten se, että kun ne osti uuden asunnon. Ja sitten tietenkin, kyllä toi on toi niitten tuleva vauvakin ihan mielenkiintenen asia tässä, mitä, mihin on nyt periaatteessa kiinnittäny eniten huomiota ja minkä takia sitä nyt ehkä ruvennu lukemaan tässäkin enemmän.

P5: Sanon vähän tyhmästi, mutta siis se on vähän sellainen bimbo tai sellanen, niin sitä on sille kiva katella. Mutta siis se on, sillä on kivoja kuvia ja tällée, mutta sitten Silja on vaan jotenkin sellanen aidompi blogisti tai silleen, niin sitä on ehkä kivempi katella.

P7: Tää on ihan tämmönen, näkee, miten arjessa ihmiset pukeutuu, niin se on. Ja sitten tietenkin siitäkin saa vähän tyyliä ja ehkä vähän jotenkin pysyy muodissa mukana, kun kattoo, että miten ihmiset pukeutuu, niin sitten sellanen yleismaailmallinen. Ja sitten mun mielestä no kaikkei tommoset muotikuvat on vähän viimesen päälle laitettuja. Ja sitten kun ite ei kuitenkaan ole semmonen, niin sitten näitä on just kiva kattoo, koska näistä saa just ehkä enemmän sitä irti.

P1: Et useemmiten se on siellä bussissa tai jossain mis mä odottelen jotakin. Nyt kyl viime viikot on ollu jotenki, tuntuu et ei oo ehtiny lukee mitään mut varmaan on silti luken. Kyl me nytki ku me ajettiin Kokkolaan, mun poikaystävä ajo ja mä niinku, mult loppu kännykäst akkuki ku mä kävin kaikkei läpi ku ei ollu pitkää aikaa ehtiny. Kyl se useimmiten on siel bussissa ja jossain semmosen, et odottelee jotai kaveria.

I: Joo. No entäs sitten toi Stella Harasek? Oletko sä sitä kauan lukenut?
P1: Joo, äitiys-, sil on ne lapset ja sit se on jotenki niinku tosi sillai, ei niinku pahassa, mut tosi kaukana siitä mitä ite on, se asuu siel maalla ja on tosi uskovainen, se on siis tosi sillai imelä. Mut jostain syystä, mä käyn niit askarteluj ja jotain sellast. Se samaan aikaan ärsytää ja kiehtoo mua.

I: No entä sit ku on toi *FashionableFit*, ni miten se susta tommosena treeniblogina?
P10: No mä aloin eka luee tota *FashionableFit*, et sen takii se on ehkä, ja se on jotenki vähän laadukkaampi, ku noi on enemmän semmossii, tai se on niinku ammattimaisempaa se mitä toi tekee siellä. [...] Mut on laadukkaampi, paremmat kuvat ja paremmin konstruoitu ne kaikki tekstit ja silleen. Tuol on vähän niinku kaikki jokamaijat kirjottelee tuulla *FitFashionissa*. Sillee, et vähän mitä sattuu aina välillä, mut on siel iha hyvii juttui.


P1: Se itse asias kirjoittaa kauheen hyvin kosmetiikasta, yleensä mä en oo kiinnostunu niinku mistään meikkausvinkeistä, mut sil on jotenki semmonen hyvää asenne kaikkeen ni sit jostain tommoste luomukosmetikasta ja muusta kirjottanu, ni oon mä niitä itse asias niit linkkei joskus suku ja varmaan jotain ostanuki joskus sen perusteella.

H: Millä tavalla sun mielestä se teki hyvää tai tuliko siitä siitä jotenkin...
P8: No musta tuntuu tavallaan, että se on enemmänkin semmoinen, mikä se oli silloin kun mä aloin lukea sitä, että siinä tavallaan tulee se kirjoittajan oma tavallaan persoono enemmän siihen. Mä tykkään sitä. Ja ehkä just tästä, kun oli kirjoittanut niin kauan, niin sitten siitä oli vähän tullu semmoinen, että on pakko kirjoittaa ja tällleen. Näkee kyllä, että on tavallaan uutta semmoista intoa tai silleen, että haluua enemmän kirjoittaa sitä ja näkyy kyllä.

P10: Et jos on sellasii tosi erilaisii ihmisii ku me ja ne pitää blogii, jotka on sit enemmän huvittavii, et me nyt niinku ilkeesti sanottuna naairesellaan niille, silleen vähän niinku et ”ei vitsi onks tällasii ihmisii olemassa”, ni sellasist me saatetaan puhuu sit. Jos siel on ollu jotain tosi hauskaa.

P7: Kyllä mä enemmän tykkään just siitä, että saa selailla sitä versiota että. Se on ehkä jotenkin. Ja sitten siihen pystyy ite, jos saa jonkun ideaan, niin sitten siihen voi laittaa muistiinpanoja, että se se on semmonen juttu, mistä mä tykkään just tommosessa paperilehdessä. Emmä nyt ehkä ihan, vaikka jos tabletti olis, niin sinne lähtis sitä tilaamaan.
P9: No ehkä siis, koska bloggeja tulee luettua joka päivä, mutta sitten kun lehti kuitenkin ilmestyy vaan kerran kuukaudessa, niin lehti on jotenkin semmonen, että se on sitten, että blogit on vähän sellanen rutini, että sen, ne lukee joka päivä ja.

P1: Suurin osa tästä niinku, lehti luettelee sen keskittyneemmin. Ne on jotenkin sellasii, nytki ku mul tuli Deko ja Trendi tuli molemmat viime viikolla ni mä otin ne mukaan molemmat, ku lähetin itsenäisyyspäivän viikonloppuun viettämään, et mä en lukenu niit heti. Mä niinku panttasin niit siihen et on niinku se hetki. Sit taas blogit on semmosii, et niit mä luen niinku bussissa ja ratikassa ja silleen niinku ajan kulukse vieläkeskus niinku enemmän, mut aiha ehkä vähän kotona kuitenkaan. No joo, mut vaan kännykästä kotona, mä en koskaan niinku kotona avaa enää tietokonetta ja lue sieltä bloggeja.

P2: Mä en oikein tykkää lukea verkosta hirveesti lehtiä tai kirjoja tai mitä. Jotain lyhyttä juttuja saatan lukea, mutta en, emmä, mä en ole silleen, että mä tykkäisin hirveesti käyttää nettiä tollaseen pitkäkestoiseen lukemiseen. Musta on kivempaa, että se on koinku, mistä voi, tai siis konkreettinen, mistä voi pitää kiinni ja selaila ja.

H: Luitko sä tosta esimerkiksi sitä Antti Tuiskun haastattelua?

P9: Joo mä luin sen. Sekin on vähän semmonen, että mä en hirveesti pidä Antti Tuiskusta, mutta se oli tosi kiva lukea, koska se keskitty niin paljon sen semmoseen lavapukeutumiseen ja muutenkin pukeutumiseen.

P1: Glorias mä tykkään siit, ku siin on ainaki ennen ollu. Mis ihmiset esittelee niiden vaatekaappia, siin on ainaki ennen ollu semmonen. Ni se olis aina, ainaki ennen, niinku nuorempanaki tosi kiinnostavaa, vähän niinku tässä. Tää nyt näyttää vähän et mitkä on niit kulmakivii ja sit kertoo jonkun jutun, must se on ihan kiva. Se et onks se just bloggaaja vai joku muu, ni ei siil oo väliä, jos se tyyli vaan on niinku, et on joku omintakeinen tyyli.

P10: Itse asiassa tää ku täs oli Vuittonista juttu, ni musta tää oli kyl tosi huono. Tai siis miks mä haluaisin lukee, tai miks Costumen mukaan Vuitton on niinku legenda, tai ku tää on jotenki, ku ois jos tää ois joku uus merkki, joka ei ois mulle tuttu, ni sit mua saattais kiinnostaa lukeen sen taustaa mut ku toi on niin vanha ja klassinen perusjutu, ni sit taas ei kiinnostanu, ni mä ihmettelin just et miten ne on miettini et tää on nyt hyvää juttu. Esitellään joku Speedy-laukku… ehkä jotku maalaiset, jotka ei oo hirveesti kuullu, ni niit kiinnostaa lukeen laajemmin, ku ne tuntee vaan just sen Speedyn. Ehkä sit heille.
I: Miten sää vertaisit sitä lehden ja blogin lukukokemusta?

P3: Ehkä siin on sellanen, et jos lukee näytöttä jotain, ni siihen pitää jotenki keskittyv enemmän plus et se väsyttää enemmän, kun sit taas et sul on lehti ni sit sää, hitaasti voi käydä läpi sen. Ku sit taas helposti menee taas sellaseen et skrollaa, skrollaa, skrollaa, se on melkeen sellasta ahmintaa melkee se blogien syöminen, siis lukeminen.

P2: No mun mielestä sellä ei ole vaan oikein tyylitaju sillai, niin sitten jotenkin. Tai no tyylitaju nyt on suhteellista, kuka tykkää mistäkin. Sitten jos ei ole semmonen, mikä omasta mielestä on tyylikästä, niin sitten jotenkin se ärtyttää, että se on täällä lehdessä sitten, joka on antamassa jotain neuvoja.

P7: Blogissahan saatt kirjottaa mitä sää haluat, mutta lehdessä se musta on vähän, että pitää olla semmonen kaikille sopiva tyyli oikeastaan, että ei saa puhua millään slangilla tai semmosella, että semmotti. Ei haittaa, jos bloggaajat kirjottaa, mutta että lehdessä kuitenkin pitää olla vähän semmonen tyylikäs ilme, niin sitten. […] Kun lehti ei ole periaatteessa, lehti ei ole vaan yks ihminen, ketä sitä tekee, niin sitten se on just, että pitää olla erilaisia lähtökohtia.

P5: Jos mä luen blogii, niin mä luen sillei pelkästään sitä, sitä bloggaajaa tai sillei mietin sitä bloggaajaa siinä. Mutta sitten jos se kirjottaa tyyliin jostain talvitakista, se kirjottaja täässä lehessä, niin emmä sitten mieti oikein silleen, että se kirjottaja tässä, vaan mä mietin sitä takkia.

P2: Sitten tavallaan tulee jotakin sellaanen olo, että jos on hirveesti lukeutauojen tai bloggaajien tuottamaa sisältöä, niin sitten tulee vähän semmonen olo, että se on muiden tekemä tavallaan se lehti että. Sillon sen, tai jotenkin niinkun, että sitten se lehden pointti menee vähän siinä. Vaikka kyllähän joku sen kokoaa, mutta sitten siitä ei enää tule sellasta oikean muotilehden kokemusta.

P8: No, tuossa Uinollahan on toi lukihäiriö, että sen takia tulee virheitä, mutta ei ne häiritse kuitenkaan, että jos se jutu kiinnostaa ja sitten se on kuitenkin silleen selvää luettua, niin ei se sitten häiritse. En mä sen takia jätä lukematta tai näin. Sitten kuitenkin kun tuoossakin blogissaa on aika hyvin tasapainossa tekstiin noitten kuvien kanssa, niin sitten senkin takia tykkään lukea.

P5: Se on vaan sillei kivantuntusta, että joku on lähtenyt sillei huivikseen kirjotteleen siitä omasta tyylistään ja sitten se on päätynyt johonkin lehteen kirjottelemaan siitä. Tällä. Sitten on jotenkin - niin. Tai tuntuu vähän sellaselta, että se on sen omaa näkemystä vähän enemmän kun sillei, niin.