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Training Graduate Students as Young Researchers to Study Families' Use of Media

Educar a jóvenes investigadores para el estudio del uso de los medios en las familias

ABSTRACT

This article presents a research and teaching experience that took place within an international research project, Digital Inclusion and Participation (2009-2011) involving researchers from Portugal and the USA (Texas). The main aim of the project is to understand the conditions and tendencies of access and appropriation of digital media by users and non-users, with a particular focus on families and groups which are more vulnerable to digital exclusion (elderly people, immigrants, ethnic and linguistic minorities). Together with this aim the project also includes advanced education in digital media, focusing on the training of graduate students through supervised research among those social groups. These two objectives came together in an interdisciplinary Seminar on Methods of Researching Media. This article focuses on the process of research and teaching that was activated in the Seminar, how graduate students were prepared and supervised to conduct interviews with two members of the same family from different generations, how they were actively involved in the adaptation of the original questions, used at the University of Texas in Austin, into a narrative script focused on life stories and relationships with the media (see Annex), and in the sampling process of the interviewee families. The implications of using such a qualitative methodology and research-based learning for the students, as well as the other advantages and pitfalls found during this process, are discussed in detail.

ABSTRACT (Spanish)

En este artículo se presenta una experiencia de investigación y formación en el contexto del proyecto internacional de investigación «Digital Inclusion and Participation» (2009-11), en el que participaron investigadores y expertos de Portugal y Estados Unidos (Texas). El objetivo principal del proyecto es analizar las condiciones y tendencias en el acceso y la distribución de los medios digitales en manos de usuarios y no usuarios, con especial atención hacia las familias y grupos más vulnerables a la exclusión digital (mayores, inmigrantes, minorías étnicas y lingüísticas). Además de este objetivo, profundiza en la educación en el ámbito de los medios digitales y en la formación de estudiantes de posgrado a través de un estudio supervisado de estos grupos sociales. Estos dos objetivos confluyeron en un Seminario Interdisciplinar de Métodos de Investigación en Medios (2009-10 y 2010-11). Este artículo incluye el proceso de investigación y formación que se puso en práctica en el seminario. Se centra en la preparación y supervisión de los estudiantes, que realizaron entrevistas a miembros de familias de distintas generaciones y participaron en la adaptación de las preguntas usadas originalmente en la Universidad de Texas en Austin, creando un guión narrativo centrado en la trayectoria vital y relaciones con los medios (véase el anexo). También se contemplan los procesos de muestreo de las familias entrevistadas y se analizan las implicaciones que tiene en los estudiantes esta metodología cualitativa de aprendizaje basada en la investigación, así como otras ventajas y deficiencias del proceso.

KEYWORDS

Research, teaching, learning, qualitative research, life stories, digital media, digital inclusion.

Investigación, formación, aprendizaje, estudio cualitativo, trayectoria de vida, medios digitales, inclusión digital.

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1. Introduction

In the summer of 2008, when the Digital Inclusion and Participation Project was designed for submission to the UTAustin-Portugal Program (www.utaustin-portugal.org), the US partner Joseph Straubhaar, Professor of Global Media at the University of Texas in Austin, stressed the relevance of involving students, illustrating this by drawing on his own experience: for a decade he had activated the process of research and teaching with graduate and undergraduate students, involving them in supervised field work collecting life stories with the media among their own families, and in areas of rural Texas or poor neighborhoods in the city of Austin where Latin American families live. Besides their learning in Media Studies, students contacted with and gathered up different life experiences while contributing with their own individual efforts to a collection of life stories with the media among generations of families in a long-term view, therefore also developing a sense of belonging and participating in a strong research project.

For these reasons, the project proposal included advanced research and education in the digital media with a transnational and interdisciplinary perspective: «Educate and train young student researchers in research about digital media»; «Promote methodologies of participatory research»; «Generate educational resources». Approved by the UT Austin-Portugal Program, the project started in April 2009 and the first seminar for graduate students was held in September 2009.

This aim of advanced research and education was seen as a challenge and an opportunity by the three Portuguese universities that participated in the project: the University of Oporto, the University of Coimbra and the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences (FCSH)-New University of Lisbon. In the latter, where the authors lecture, students would not only benefit from the experience of participation in the data collection but also gain educational credits (ECTS) if they participated successfully in a specific seminar directly related to the project. In fact, the faculty Board approved the reformulation of an existing MA seminar on Media and Journalism Studies, «Methods of Researching Media and Journalism», in its aims, skills and content in accordance with the purposes of this research project.

In May-June 2009, some months before the beginning of the seminar, a public appeal through wall posters and the FCSH intranet went out to graduate students from different Human and Social Science courses. A certain level of interest from these «young researchers» was anticipated, but in the first year what

little interest there was came only from students of Anthropology, while some Media and Journalism Studies students initially reacted negatively to the new orientation of the seminar. The research and teaching model was unusual and an innovative learning process for all was just beginning.

2. The research and teaching model

It has been stressed that awareness of the learning processes and identity development is particularly demanding in «knowledge societies» where students should not only be «engaged in the production of knowledge» but also «educated to cope with the risks and uncertainties generated by the advances of science» (Scott, quoted by Huet & al., 2009: 577).

How is this pedagogical model replacing traditional learning realities based on content transmission, in universities? International research evidence suggests that the interconnections between teaching and discipline-based investigation is not readily revealed in practice (Brew, 2006; Huet & al., 2009). While the Bologna Declaration in 1999 stressed the importance and the need to promote research both at graduate and postgraduate levels in the European educational landscape, and many academics do consider that Higher Education should be distinguished by interconnecting university teaching and research roles, a brief comparison of national scenarios shows that the application of this approach varies considerably (Healey, 2005: 184-5): in the USA, student integration in research projects as a way of promoting «greater opportunities for authentic, interdisciplinary and student-centered learning» was recommended by the Boyer Commission Report (1998) and other national institutions related to Science and Research; in New Zealand, the necessity of linking research and teaching is incorporated in legislation; in the UK, some departments and universities claim that teaching and learning is «research-led»; in France, most scientific research occurs in special research institutes outside the universities. Recently in Portugal, research units and associated laboratories, mostly in universities, started offering research grants to undergraduate or graduate students involved in research projects (Huet & al., 2009).

The debate on the potential of students' ability to learn and problem-solve beyond their current knowledge level through guidance from and collaboration with an adult or group of more able peers, inspired by Vygotsky (1978), has been visible particularly in Education related to concepts such as constructivist learning, communities of practice or identity development (Hunter & al., 2006). Among other perspectives,

Baxter's constructivist-developmental pedagogy clearly emphasizes students' development of identity as part of their professional socialization process. Based on an «epistemological reflection» on young adult intellectual development, Baxter (2004) presents four intellectual categories, from simplistic to complex thinking: from «absolute knowing» (where students understand knowledge to be certain and view it as residing in an outside category) to «transitional knowing» (where students believe that some knowledge is less than absolute and focus on finding ways to search for the truth), then to «independent knowing» (where students believe that most knowledge is less than absolute) and lastly to «contextual knowing» (where knowledge is shaped by the context in which it is situated and its veracity is debated according to the context). According to the author, this move is a shift from an externally directed view of knowing to one that is internally oriented, promotes identity development as «self-authorship» (including learning through scientific inquiry) and is better supported by a constructivist-developmental pedagogy situating learning in students' experience (Baxter, 1999).

The narrative and the discussion of this «research and teaching» experience is the subject of the following sections of this article.

3. Preparing students for fieldwork

The first sessions of the seminar introduced the theoretical model of the project and provided the 23 students of this mixed group with the methodological approach for the qualitative fieldwork. In order to get students acquainted with theories that span from Media Studies to Sociology, together with basic theoretical guidelines, several discussions took place during these initial sessions. In fact, the theoretical framework of the project was based on several key concepts, which reflected distinct traditions and orientations in the field. Our approach attempted an integration of different interdisciplinary contributions ranging from the concept of media domestication (Silverstone, Hirsch & al., 1993) to theories of digital inclusion and exclusion (Selwyn, 2006; van Dijk, 2006), cultural and social capital (Bourdieu, 1984) and generations and families (Bertaux & Thompson, 1993; Bertaux, 1997).

Students received a basic knowledge of such theories in order to help them understand the project's aims as well as to provide guidance during the fieldwork. The latter was particularly emphasized in these initial sessions in the task of selecting the families to be interviewed, since the sampling procedure was to follow a purposive logic based on clear theoretical assumptions regarding fundamental characteristics to be included in the final sample.

As for the methodological approach, the initial sessions also explored epistemological as well as practical issues concerning qualitative methods (Bryman, 2004; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2000; May, 2001; Lobe & al., 2007; Silverman, 2009). On the one hand, we launched a broad methodological discussion regarding

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the basis of the research approach, presenting students with an essential knowledge of its aims. On the other hand, we explained in detail the basic principles of the qualitative methodologies adopted and, at the same time, made an effort to involve students in building instruments tailored to the specific aims of the research.

Students' interest in the research project gradually increased in these first sessions. They were interested but the sessions were not very different from the classic expository lecture. Two factors contributed to the turning-point and much more active involvement: 1) the elaboration of the interview script; and 2) student responsibility in finding the families needed for the purposive sampling.

In producing the script, the guide used by our US colleagues for the qualitative interview organized around direct questions on topics was reformulated into a new and more narrative type of script, facilitating a more conversational approach between interviewers and interviewees; this had already been used in similar research with families (e.g. Clark, 2009).

The new script consisted of three parts: life course; personal history with media; and current media uses (See Annex 1). While most of the questions were factual and relatively easy to answer, others activated judgments and evaluations on attitudes, beliefs and changes in the dynamics of the family (what do you think differentiates your family from others? and, what do you think makes your family similar to others?), or on personal course and family influence (Do you think that being male/female affected your life? In what ways?).

Students greatly appreciated being involved in this process of reformulating the original guidelines. After small changes discussed collectively, we proposed a role-play where one student acted as interviewer and another as interviewee, answering according to

The levels of embeddedness and domestication of the communicative devices, such as mobile phones, computers or game consoles, depend on the moment when and how these were introduced into the household: for instance, the interviewees who stated they had long been connected to the Internet had greater technology know-how while they also expressed a lower level of enthusiasm for its potential uses. On the other hand, the interviewees who have used the Internet for less time are still in an initial phase of appropriation and assimilation of its potential uses, where the levels of novelty and excitement are still considerable.

his/her own experience and life story. In spite of their apparent familiarity with the questions, being directly asked about their experience stimulated a different approach, an «objective look at the self» (Blumer, 1969: 70). The role-play and the subsequent analysis of the performances of interviewer/interviewee contributed to student self-awareness and to a greater enthusiasm towards the research topic, as if they had at last accepted the project. Being questioned about sensitive issues stimulated reflective thinking: «Oh, I just realized that I had never thought about this before...».

This role-play dynamic helped students to displace from the periphery to the center through their mutual

engagement and our guidance, and the following sessions on sampling the families would confirm this outcome. As already stated, the sampling design was purposive, focusing on specific characteristics which included: families that used the public access Internet; rural and urban families; families with children under 18 and those who do not; families involved in community outreach programs; immigrant and non-immigrant families; families that didn't send their children to university. In both countries, Portugal and the US, the researchers were to monitor the selection closely, in order to make sure that the final sample was not unbalanced by gender, social class and level of education, which ultimately functioned as control variables.

Students took very seriously their responsibility for finding two families that fit the criteria. In the session dedicated to sampling, the blackboard soon became full of family indicators that complied with the design demands mentioned above, while the negotiation and cooperation that emerged among them ensured equilibrium. Another factor was that enlisting their own families or families through friends or persons already known to them in their everyday lives (such as the coffee-shop employee or the doorman) meant they did not have to face complete strangers. As they wrote in their essays:

— «The choice of the two families was essentially based on the direct knowledge of the youngest members that would be interviewed, since these

seem to be good examples of families within the threshold of exclusion. In both cases we were facing parents that had just four years of schooling and were all but excluded from the digital media» (Pedro).

— «I selected families that were part of my social network, whose life trajectory I was already aware of, but whose relationship with the media I knew very little about, particularly the digital media. Viewing my colleagues' choices of subject (a procedure discussed in the class), migrant families seemed to be over-represented and Portuguese families under-represented, thus leading me to choose two Portuguese families» (Inês).

Interviewing her own family members allowed

Catarina to get a better understanding of their own personal life stories and the impact on their usage of the media, as she concludes: «Although they were my family members, I wasn't aware of certain childhood experiences, particularly of Maria [grand-mother], António [uncle] and Paula [mother]. It became clear that gender greatly influenced the life trajectory of each one».

4. Fieldwork and assessment

The fieldwork took place in December 2009, just before Christmas. Students were instructed on distinct relevant procedures, such as the importance of obtaining written informed consent from interviewees to participate in the study; the necessity of recording the whole interview to avoid missing any relevant details; the meaning of conducting the interview as far as possible in the form of a natural conversation, following the interview script as a general orientation guide; and on gathering information regarding the household when possible, noting what was visible in the «domestication» (Silverstone, Hirsch & al., 1993) of the media.

In fact, most of the interviews took place in peoples' homes, in living rooms but also in kitchens and in young people's bedrooms, allowing interviewers to capture the «appropriation» of the media by the householders, the places and positions they occupied.

— «In Carla's house, which is also a flat, one can see a lot of electronic devices, namely the television set, the radio, the DVD player and the computer, all in the same room. The practice of using the television for companionship was obvious when her first gesture was to switch it on, even with visitors present» (Ana).

«Besides the laptop, one can find in the living room lots of devices that show the need for contact with the media: two radios, a large TV set, a DVD player, a camera tripod, a digital photo frame, earphones, about five remote controls and other devices that I couldn't identify, all laid out near the main armchair, so all could be reached with minimum effort» (Mariana).

Students were also instructed on the transcription procedures (literal transcription of questions and answers, introduction of silences, pauses, laughs...). Every student was to transcript and send part three of the interviews, referring to Internet and computer use, to all group members, therefore enabling collective discussions on the answers concerning these themes in the final sessions of the seminar.

The final essay (around 4,000 words) should analyse the research process and, based on the data collected, highlight similarities and differences in the families interviewed. In order to do so, students were

asked to explore the «narratives-in-interaction» (Blumberg, 2004, in Clark, 2009), a method of analysis where the researcher «should pay attention not only to what is said but also to what is not said, and why certain statements might have been made in a particular context to elicit a desired response among a specific audience», a way of reading how the interviewees «are managing their social identities in context» (Clark, 2009: 391).

Students had to copy the interviews onto CD for transcription in their entirety by the project research assistant. This yielded a collection of 92 interviews from 46 families, a considerable portion of the 130 individual life stories gathered from 65 families by students at the three Portuguese universities.

Besides the full transcriptions that provided a comprehensive corpus of discourses concerning life trajectories, childhood memories with (or without) the media and current media interests and uses by their interviewees, these essays also contain interesting notes on the domestication process and on the media culture at home. Precisely due to the fact that the interviews occurred at home, in some cases other members of the family added contributions that revealed the digital gaps in the households.

Among the diversity of angles provided by the interviews, gender gaps emerged as one of the most visible to the young researchers: women from different social and educational backgrounds tended to be less involved in the digital technologies at home, as illustrated in the following transcripts:

— «Both of the mothers interviewed [43 and 46 years old, both working class, educated to primary school level and non-Internet users] consider that it is normal that they don't use technological devices because they have almost no schooling. The lack of literacy and growing up in a context where these issues were not familiar make the family vulnerable to feelings of apprehension. In both cases it was obvious that fear of the Internet resulted from what «one hears around» (Pedro).

— «In the taped interview and in the offline moments, it was visible that Teresa's [64, middle class, incomplete secondary school education and non-user] husband and son had already stimulated her to have more consistent contact with the internet. Upon repeating that she 'would like to know more', she would like 'to use the Internet and the computer more', her husband said with an impatient look on his face: 'It is over there! Go on!' provoking an enormous laugh from Teresa and her son. It was obvious that the interviewee is the one who excludes herself from the digital media» (Ana).

In this latter case, the presence of other members of the family during the interview, previously discussed as problematic, indirectly provided a different picture of Teresa's digital exclusion, contrasting her «politically correct» answers with her everyday refusal to access the computer. Other unexpected situations in the households enriched the landscape of family life with different media. For instance, in a formal interview with her husband and son in which she did not take part, Paula (53) clearly reveals the media divide in that middle-class household:

— «Paula is the only member of the family who doesn't identify herself with electronic devices. She states that she is no good at using these «trendy gadgets» and expresses regret at the family's digital inclusion: «those little gadgets stole my husband and child. They don't pay attention to anything else, sometimes I have nobody to talk to, because Armando (73) is glued to the TV or to the computer, and let's not even mention Diogo». Paula's hobbies are cooking and looking after her grandchildren» (Mariana).

Among other adults, the lack of literacy was noticeable in the ways some occasional users with low levels of schooling expressed their online experience, as noted:

— «It is clear in David's [53, primary school education only] speech that there is a lack of linguistic skills when using exact terms: 'I know how to look up this and that but I don't know how to explain it in technical words...I have some difficulty in explaining it, yes. Using it is easy, but to explain it...» (Inês).

Other conclusions emerged from the comparison between families' appropriation of the technologies, showing how factors such as experience and routine have an impact on them:

— «The levels of embeddedness and domestication of the communicative devices, such as mobile phones, computers or game consoles, depend on the moment when and how these were introduced into the household: for instance, the interviewees who stated they had long been connected to the Internet had greater technology know-how while they also expressed a lower level of enthusiasm for its potential uses. On the other hand, the interviewees who have used the Internet for less time are still in an initial phase of appropriation and assimilation of its potential uses, where the levels of novelty and excitement are still considerable» (Marisa).

5. Lessons from the process: advantages and pitfalls

From a data collection point of view, this research and teaching program enabled us to gather an impres-

sive amount of life stories and experiences with the media. As in other data collections that rely heavily on work by inexperienced students quality varies: some interviewees were too dependent on the interview script and didn't ask obvious follow-up questions, while others did exactly the opposite and obtained vivid descriptions of family life stories and experiences with different media.

The fact that the interviews took place in the interviewees' homes enabled students to capture the household atmosphere, thus recording feelings and evaluations from other members of the family beside the interviewees – for instance, the fact that most women are excluded from the technological world within their households and the feelings of exclusion they bear.

The majority of the essays produced by the students show self-reflection and critical evaluation of their data; in fact, some of them were extremely reflective and well-sustained theoretically, thus indicating a clear integration of the methodological guidelines and the theoretical frameworks. Besides the educational credits and a reference in their résumés, this participation provided students with important methodological training as well as experience for their own research activities.

Epistemologically supported, they had a chance to not only incorporate external knowledge but also build «contextual knowing» of the digital media in the lives of families, how they are diversely appropriated by age, gender, level of education, and of the particularities of a person's life story; they had the opportunity to read and understand practices and discourses of adhesion, resistance or refusal as well as to identify related constraints, such as a low level of literacy. In sum, they were involved in active processes of construction and reconstruction of knowledge throughout our guidance and collaboration/cooperation with their peers. Quoting Ana: «This kind of academic study makes us reflect on identity issues while it also provides us with an excellent exercise for self-reflection. This was an enriching experience not only in the fieldwork but also in the perspective outlook of issues related to the digital integration in our society».

The pitfalls of this experience may be interpreted differently according to the students' perspective or that of teachers/research supervisors. In the former, some frustration may arise from not having appropriate previous experience and the consequent difficulties related to that fact. Also, the amount of time available in the seminar for discussing different methodologies might not have been enough for some students, especially bearing in mind that they came from a range of

academic backgrounds. In the latter case, we might feel some frustration of our own, considering our high hopes and that the work produced did not always meet those standards. Difficulties also arise from the fact that the time available for training was not as long as it should have been, and because not all students showed the same interest and had the skills to perform the tasks assigned to them. Contrary to our expectations, there was no rush by graduate students to sign up for this experience when it was first announced but we did not explore why.

Overall, our assessment of this training experience is highly positive given that all the problems that arose during the fieldwork were solved, and that the quality of the materials gathered is quite good. In addition, from a pedagogical point of view the continuous exchange of ideas proved to be useful, and not to mention that we also learnt from unexpected situations as well as it being a rewarding experience for us as lecturers and researchers.

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Annex 1 Project Digital Inclusion and Participation (UTAustin | Portugal/CD/0016/2008)

Interview guide on Life Story and the Media

NB: The question order does not really matter. Once a topic or a main question is introduced, the remaining questions should be used only with the aim of initiating a missing answer or specifying incomplete information.

PART ONE

1. Origin and family characterization

Let's start by talking about you and your family...

- Could you tell me about the place where you were born? What memories do you have? How was your childhood?
- Is your family from that region? Tell me a bit about the place where your family is originally from (where were your parents born? And your grandparents?)
- And what about the rest of your family? Do you have any brothers or sisters? (Ask if they were born in the same area/region/country). Are they older or younger?
- Do you have children? Where were they born?
- Nowadays, do you live with any family members?

NB: Information on the place where the family is from should be entered in the genogram.

2. Family mobility

Tell me about where you live... (city/town/village)

- How many years have you lived here?
- How long have you lived here? And your family?
- Where did you/they live?
- Where did you prefer to live?
- (If the person has moved from another place) – Why did you move here?
- (If the person has moved from another country) – Did you have difficulties (or your family) in moving to Portugal?

3. Occupation and schooling of the family members: personal course and family influence

- Tell me more about your job and your schooling history... and what do the rest of the family members do?
- What are your school qualifications? When did you stop studying?
- What is your parents' level of education? And your grandparents?
- Are you happy with your level of education? Would you have liked to have studied longer?
- Did your family give a lot of or little importance to school?
- Does your current job correspond to what you imagined when you were a child/or younger?
- How did you come to have this current job? Did you have any other jobs?
- Did anyone in your family influence your professional choices?
- What are/were your parents' professions?
- And what about your grandparents?
- And in reference to your schooling, was there anyone in your family that influenced your choices? Who?
- Looking back at your life, was there anything important that you learned from your family?
- Do you think that being male/female affected your life path? In what way?

NB: Information on the family's employment and schooling should be entered in the genogram.

4. Practices and personal and family experiences

Tell me about your daily life...

- Could you describe a typical day, for instance, yesterday?
- What do you do when you have a day off, for example Saturday or Sunday?
- When you were a child, what type of parties did your family usually have? For what occasions did your family get together and celebrate?
- And nowadays, has anything changed? Could you kindly describe a typical family party?
- (If he/she came from a foreign country) What was your life like in your country? How did you spend a typical day there?
- (In the case of being a parent) In what ways are your parents/children/grandchildren different from you?
- What do you think differentiates your family from other families? And what do you think makes your family similar to other families?

Essential topics that should be covered in the 1st part of the interview:

- Migration, travel, history
- Education and family history
- Work/Socio-economic status and history
- Ethnicity, traditions and family inheritance, identity and social networks.

PART TWO

1. Personal history with the media

Let's talk about your free time when you were a child or a young person... and also nowadays.

- When you were a child, what were your favorite activities, how did you entertain yourself? And later on, in your adolescence/youth?
- When you were a child/adolescent what did you usually read? Why?
- In reference to TV, which programs did you watch normally? Why?
- And in reference to the radio, what did you usually listen to?
- Do you remember when your family got a radio/a TV set? Who brought it home? Who set it up at home?
- What other information and entertainment devices/equipment did you have at home when you were a child? (Radio, record player, tape recorder, video, gaming console, computer and so forth...).
- And nowadays, does your family have cable or satellite TV? When did they get it?
- (Other personal communication media). Do you have a cell phone? What type of mobile phone do you have? What are its characteristics? What kinds of activities do you use it for?
- Going back to your family, who was the first person to own a mobile phone?
- (If the interviewee is an immigrant) Do you use the mobile phone to contact your family and friends? What other media do you use to contact your family?
- Do you have a camera or a camcorder? What do you usually use it for? When you were a child, did your family also have any of these types of equipment?
- Do you usually listen to music? What kind of music do you prefer? How do you usually listen to it, what media do you use?
- Do you usually watch films? What kind of films? What media do you use for films?

2. Current media use

Tell me about the media you use today...

- What mass media (newspapers, magazines, radio, television...) do you usually use?
- Which mass media do you spend more time with? Why?
- What for? Do you use it for any special reason?
- What mass media do you use to keep yourself informed, to get the news?
- Why do you prefer this mass media over the others?
- For instance, which mass media did you use to follow the last electoral campaign?
- (Only for immigrants): What is the best way for you to follow events in your country?
- What mass media do you mainly use for entertainment?

PART THREE

1. Computer and internet use

Let's talk about computer and internet use

- Does your family have a computer? How long have they had it? In your home, where is it?
- Who was the first person to bring a computer home?
- Do you have your own computer?
- What are the main uses of a computer for you?
- Does your family have access to the Internet at home? How long have they had it? Is it broadband?
- Where can you access the Internet at home?
- How often do you use the Internet? (if they access it in different places, ask about the most frequent)
- Do you usually use the Internet outside home? Where? How frequently do you use it?
- In general, what do you use the Internet for? Why?
- Do you use the Internet for different things in different places? (This question assumes the person speaks Portuguese; if this is not evident ask if the person uses the Internet in Portuguese). Besides Portuguese, do you use the Internet in any other language? Which?
- How did you learn to use the Internet? Were you helped by any family members? Who? Were you helped by a friend? Were you helped by a work colleague?
- Do you usually use the Internet with anybody else at home?
- And with your friends, do you normally use the Internet with them?
- Do you usually play videogames? How do you play (computer, gaming consoles and so on...). And what about the other family members?
- (For those who use the Internet outside the home). When you use the Internet outside the home, do you usually use it with anybody else?
- (For those who don't use the Internet). If you don't usually use the Internet, do you know where you can access it?
- Why haven't you done it yet?
- If you haven't used the Internet yet, do you have any idea what you could do with it?