CultureCase

Taking a work online may increase audiences but not diversify them

This research was conducted by **Pablo De la Vega, Sara Suarez-Fernández, David Boto-García a**nd J**uan Prieto-Rodríguez at** Com**plutense University of Madrid an**d the Uni**versity of Oviedo, Spain**

Summary

This paper examined the difference between people who attended performing arts events in person and those who watched them online. Specifically, the paper looked at people who were interested in live and online versions of theatre and musical performing arts (classical musical concerts, opera, Spanish operetta and ballet). In essence, they found that ‘the profiles of live and online cultural consumers differ’ but that socio-demographic factors like age and income ‘are much more important for explaining the likelihood’ of attending in person. ‘Whereas age, gender, educational achievements and labour status are really helpful in explaining who the live attendees are, these variables are less relevant for characterising online consumers’. Taking a performance online will widen its audience but only reach more of the same sorts of people who would have attended in person.

The study was based on data from the Survey of Cultural Habits and Practices in Spain between 2014 and 2015

It used data from a total of 15,154 respondents. People were asked: ‘Have you attended any live arts’ performance within the last three months?’ and ‘Have you watched an arts’ performance through the Internet in the last year?’

Overall the study classified respondents into four groups

‘Omnivores’, who consume both live and online culture. ‘Traditionalists’, who attend live performing arts, but do not join online. ‘Techys’, who only watch performing arts through the Internet and finally ‘Non-participants’, who do not consume live or online art performances.

When online, people consume theatre and musical performing arts differently

The researchers imagine that ‘in the case of theatre, a play is created to be watched as a [whole unit]. Therefore, it seems plausible that online consumption is easier for [musical performing arts], which can be divided into arias.’

Keywords

survey **theatre** **performing arts** **spain** **online**

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