

2025

**SOFIA
CALACIURA**

**CINECORE: BUILDING A
COMMUNITY FOR
AUDIOVISUAL NETWORKING IN
LISBON, PORTUGAL**

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Projeto apresentada ao IADE - Faculdade de Design, Tecnologia e Comunicação da Universidade Europeia, para cumprimento dos requisitos necessários à obtenção do grau de Mestre em Comunicação Audiovisual e Multimédia realizada sob a orientação científica da Doutora Rita Monteiro Mourão, Professora Auxiliar da IADE, Universidade Europeia.

I dedicate this work to all the independent audiovisual artists in Lisbon and beyond.

palavras-chave

audiovisual, comunidades virtuais, cinema português independente, plataformas digitais, networking

resumo

Esta tese explora a criação do Cinecore, uma comunidade digital experimental dedicada a cineastas independentes e criativos audiovisuais em Lisboa, Portugal. Partindo dos conceitos teóricos de sociedade em rede, comunidades virtuais e plataformas digitais, a investigação analisa as condições que tornam as comunidades digitais eficazes para a colaboração criativa e a troca de conhecimentos. O estudo parte da observação de que o mercado audiovisual português é pequeno e de difícil acesso em comparação com muitos outros mercados europeus, elementos que podem prejudicar jovens profissionais e criativos que desenvolvem projetos independentes e procuram entrar no setor. A tese investiga, portanto, em que medida uma comunidade virtual orientada para um objetivo específico pode preencher essas lacunas, tornando-se um espaço para observar necessidades, apoiar carreiras emergentes e promover a cena independente portuguesa. Para recolher os dados necessários, é adotada uma abordagem mista que combina um questionário quantitativo para mapear os hábitos, necessidades e dificuldades dos profissionais audiovisuais; entrevistas semiestruturadas para aprofundar os desafios e experiências individuais; e a criação de um grupo no WhatsApp que serve como Prova de Conceito para testar a ideia de uma comunidade audiovisual que apoia conexões, colaborações e eventos, para observar diretamente a dinâmica de interação. A investigação contribui tanto para a reflexão teórica sobre comunidades digitais e redes sociais como para a experimentação prática com a rede..

Keywords

Audiovisual, virtual communities, portugues independent filmmaking, digital platforms, networking

abstract

This thesis explores the creation of Cinecore, an experimental digital community dedicated to independent filmmakers and audiovisual creatives in Lisbon, Portugal. Starting from the theoretical concepts of network society, virtual communities, and digital platforms, the research analyses the conditions that make digital communities effective for creative collaboration and knowledge exchange. The study stems from the observation that the Portuguese audiovisual market is small difficult to access compared to many other European markets, elements that may disadvantage young professionals and creatives developing indie projects, seeking to enter the sector. The thesis therefore investigates the extent to which a purpose-oriented virtual community can fill these gaps, becoming a space for observing needs, supporting emerging careers, and promoting the Portuguese indie scene. To collect the necessary data, a mixed approach is adopted that combines a quantitative questionnaire to map the habits, needs, and difficulties of audiovisual professionals; semi-structured interviews to delve into individual challenges and experiences; and the creation of a WhatsApp group which serves as Proof of Concept to test the idea of an audiovisual community that supports connections, collaborations and events, to directly observe interaction dynamics. The research contributes both to theoretical reflection on digital communities and social media networks and to the practical experimentation with networking models within the Portuguese audiovisual context.

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List of abbreviations

AV – Audiovisual

CMC – Computer-Mediated Communication

PoC – Proof of Concept

SNS – Social Network Sites

1. Introduction

This chapter aims to outline the background, motivations and key issues driving this research. It delves into the evolution of online networking and collaboration within the audiovisual industry, especially in Portugal. In particular, it defines the research question and main objectives guiding this study.

1.1 Context of the Investigation and Motivation

The audiovisual sector today represents an extremely vast field, going far beyond traditional cinema and television to include advertising, digital videos, animation, podcasts and so much more. The independent filmmaking part represents a very important component of this industry. In many countries, independent projects are born and grow based on local social, cultural, and economic conditions, contributing significantly to the creative diversity and innovation of the sector.

Understanding how these dynamics work is essential for anyone who intends to pursue a professional career in the audiovisual industry. Indeed, despite its growing popularity, the indie part of the industry often suffers from a lack of established infrastructure and clear pathways to access. For this reason, the creation of cooperative networks and alternative spaces for visibility is essential.

The choice to focus the research on Portugal stems from both contextual reasons and academic motivations. The constant interaction with numerous creatives living in Lisbon made it clear that, access to the audiovisual market still presents significant obstacles, particularly for young professionals and emerging talent. This scenario suggests the need to investigate alternative solutions that allow a community to develop as a space for connection, collaboration, and mutual support.

For this reason, it was considered useful to investigate two complementary dimensions: on the one hand, the characteristics of a national market and its limitations in terms of access, funds, and professional networks; on the other hand, the role that virtual communities can play in reducing such barriers by creating more inclusive spaces for connection and collaboration.

1.2 General theme

The main concepts explored in this research are virtual communities and the audiovisual industry, especially in the Portuguese context, compared to other countries.

In today's hyper-connected world, the internet and social media play a significant role in both personal and professional interactions. As Manuel Castells (1996) describes, "The space of flows replaces the space of places as the dominant logic of social practices."

The increasing presence of social media platforms and virtual communities has changed networking for the most part, redefining the way artists connect and create, encouraging creatives to continuously adapt to new platforms.

Many social media networks have become more influent than traditional real-life networking systems, as their increasing popularity and dynamic nature facilitate connections that can quickly evolve into physical concrete collaborations and professional opportunities.

1.3 Identification of the Issue

With the rise of social media and digital platforms, the market for audiovisual creatives has become increasingly accessible. Filmmakers, screenwriters and other audiovisual creators as well as performers, constantly seek opportunities for collaboration, career growth, and visibility in a field that remains competitive and often fragmented. However, economic barriers, geographical limitations, and the lack of structured networking opportunities make it difficult for creators form long lasting connections, promote their work, and access professional development resources. Freelancers and independent filmmakers, in particular, struggle to navigate an area that often prioritizes established professionals and large-scale productions, leaving emerging talents with fewer and unsure opportunities to career growth.

However, economic and geographical barriers, as well as the lack of structured networking infrastructure, make it difficult to access such circuits, particularly for independent professionals or emerging creatives. This results in fragmentation, which limits the possibility of establishing lasting relationships, giving visibility to independent projects, and building stable career paths.

This fragmentation is even more evident in smaller markets such as the Portuguese audiovisual scene, where competition for funds and opportunities is more intense. Specifically, as Fonseca (2023) shows through his research investigation on public film funding, in Portugal, film production is heavily dependent on state intervention.

1.4 Objectives of the study and Research questions

The core objective of this investigation is to collect the needs and gaps in the audiovisual networking scene in Portugal, mainly in Lisbon, and to understand how audiovisual professionals and beginners react to a new purpose-driven online community, created to foster collaboration and support among its members and to generate opportunities within the audiovisual industry.

This investigation is guided by the following central research question:

RQ1: How can a purpose-driven community for audiovisual professionals and beginners serve as a space for observing needs, fostering networking, and amplifying the independent film scene in Portugal?

This primary question reflects the general purpose of this study by analyzing how a new concept created to encourage networking and collaborations may contribute to addressing unmet needs in the audiovisual industry and offering community support in the Portuguese filmmaking scene.

In addition to this overall objective, the study also aims to explore the theoretical foundations of virtual communities, whether they can be considered as real as in-person-communities and how they can be structured to support more inclusive collective practices in creative areas such as filmmaking.

This conceptual investigation is supported by the following question, addressed in the literature review section:

RQ2: What defines a virtual community, and what specific conditions make it effective for collaboration and knowledge exchange?

Moreover, two additional questions have been formulated in line with the study's objectives, in order to guide the collection and analysis of data.

- **RQ3: What are the main professional needs and challenges of audiovisual creatives in Portugal, particularly in relation to collaboration, visibility, and career development?**
- **RQ4: What limitations do Portuguese audiovisual professionals encounter when using existing digital platforms and informal online communities for networking, collaboration, and project visibility?**

These final two questions guide both the qualitative and quantitative components of the research, ensuring that the investigation addresses the concrete experiences and perceptions of those who work in the Portuguese audiovisual sector, through the combined use of structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews.

Additionally, the aim is to examine how an online community dedicated to cinema, with a clear concept and structure, can evolve from a simple WhatsApp group into a solid community.

1.5 Structure of the investigation

Chapter 1 presents the context and motivations behind the project. It introduces the general issues to be assessed: the characteristics of the Portuguese filmmaking and audiovisual market as well as the impact of virtual communities on networking, visibility, and collaboration. It outlines the main research questions and objectives of this investigation.

Chapter 2 presents the literature review of the project providing a solid theoretical foundation to support this analysis. The aim is to investigate how a digital community could enhance collaboration between professionals and beginners in the audiovisual field, examining the evolution behind the concept of virtual community and the role played by digital platforms.

The first paragraph is structured into 2 main thematic areas. The first section addresses the debate on the nature of virtual communities: whether they can be considered true social communities or whether they remain ephemeral and unstable spaces. Authors like Howard Rheingold and Wellman have highlighted both the potential of these spaces to generate collective identities and social capital, as well as the risks of fragmentation, conflict, and superficiality.

The second paragraph analyses the role of social media platforms as dominant infrastructures that regulate user access, visibility, and reputation. Specifically, the dynamics of self-promotion, algorithmic control, and user exploitation are discussed. This section links the discussion on virtual communities with the analysis of social media and how they influence opportunities for collaboration, content dissemination, and professional networking

Chapter 3 is dedicated to market analysis and positions the digital community proposal within the specific context of the Portuguese audiovisual sector. First, an overview of the national sector is presented, highlighting its main characteristics. Subsequently, through a benchmarking of local community-based initiatives, existing models are compared, analysing their strengths and limitations. The goal is to identify innovation spaces where Cinecore can position itself. Finally a presentation of the essence of the project is shared, with a report of the WhatsApp group development as Proof of Concept.

Chapter 4 explains the research design, describing the participant sample, the selection process and ethical considerations (e.g. consent forms, data privacy). It describes the use of a mixed-method approach, between qualitative and quantitative data gathering which was achieved through an online questionnaire and semi-structured interviews, and the tools used for analysis. The chapter also dives into the creation of a WhatsApp group that brings together the members of the community that was created in the process, who are at the same time the participants of the study, thus playing an important role in the collection of data and insights for the research.

Chapter 5 presents and analyzes the data collected through the questionnaire and interviews. This chapter explores how participants currently network, what their main needs and challenges are, and how they use or perceive online communities to support their careers, projects, and professional relationships. The qualitative findings are presented in thematic sections. These results are then discussed in relation to the theories and academic concepts introduced in Chapter 6.

Chapter 6 presents the discussion of the findings, connecting the results from the data collection phase of the project with the theoretical frameworks introduced in the literature review. This chapter critically interprets the data collected through the mixed-method approach, including questionnaires and interviews, and compares it to the market analysis. The discussion reflects on how these insights strengthen or challenge the initial research assumptions, and fill the gaps in the market, providing a deeper understanding of the social and technological dynamics that shape creative collaboration in the digital age.

Finally, chapter 7 of this dissertation reflects on the key findings of both the theoretical and applied phases of the project, summarizing how the development of a digital community for audiovisual creatives responds to current gaps in networking and collaboration. It discusses the implications of the research for creative industries, the limitations of the study, and proposes future directions for the development of digital platforms that better serve the professional and collaborative needs of creative communities, both in Portugal and beyond.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Virtual communities within the Digital Space

This section is focused on exploring the history, functions, and theoretical implications of virtual communities, with a focus on whether they can be considered 'real' communities and to what extent they support or complement physical ones. Comprendere questo passaggio è cruciale per analizzare il ruolo che tali spazi digitali giocano oggi nelle industrie creative.

2.1.1 The Networked Digital Condition: From Cyberspace to Network Society

In the past few decades, with the rise of the Internet, digital infrastructures and information flows have transformed the dynamics of social life. In order to understand this transformation, as well as the rise of digital communities and their role in contemporary creative industries, it is essential to explore the concept of *cyberspace*.

The term was first introduced by science fiction writer William Gibson in his 1984 novel *Neuromancer* to describe a virtual realm made of data flows and digital interactions (Lévy, 1997). Despite its literary origins, the concept quickly entered academic discourse, especially through the work of theorists like Pierre Lévy.

In his book *Cyberculture* (1997), Pierre Lévy defines cyberspace as “the communications space made accessible through the global interconnection of computers and computer memories” (p.74) and remarks how the ‘virtual nature of information’ is the characteristic that defines cyberspace. However, the author points out that the impact of this technology is entirely sociocultural (Lévy, 1997)

Building on these early ideas, sociologist Manuel Castells formulated one of the most influential theories of the digital age: *the network society*. In his work *The Rise of the Network Society*, Castells (2004) describes how contemporary social organisation is no longer based on hierarchical models or physically confined spaces, but on networks built thanks to digital technologies. The network society is therefore understood as a social structure fuelled by information and communication technologies, which make it possible to connect people, institutions, and data flows in real-time. In this way, networks become the main channel through which information, capital, and culture circulate, both locally and globally (Castells, 1996, 2004).

While Castells focuses on how networks are linked to society, Barry Wellman shifts the focus to the individual’s role within the network. He argues that in the age of networks, individuals do not simply participate in stable, localized groups, but build personal networks that span across different

areas (family, work, passions, and interests) generating personalized social configurations (Wellman, 2001). In this sense, digital sociality does not consist solely in overcoming geographical proximity, but in a more complex process of reorganizing ties, with the individual at the center of a multiple and distributed network. This reflection fits into the distinction proposed by Castells (1996) between space of places and space of flows, i.e., between territorially rooted communities and global information flows enabled by digital networks.

Similarly, in his essay *Physical Place and Cyberplace: The Rise of Personalized Networking*, Wellman (2001) describes this transition as a transformation from “door-to-door” to “place-to-place” contact, in which relationships develop across physical and digital spaces. The author emphasizes that “*It is the individual, and not the household or the group, that is the primary unit of connectivity*” (Wellman, 2001, p. 238).

The convergence between these perspectives highlights a fundamental tension: cyberspace is simultaneously a space of freedom and exclusion, of collaboration and conflict.

Both these perspectives reveal an inherent tension: cyberspace is at once a space of freedom and exclusion, of collaboration and fragmentation. It is precisely on this ground that both the concept of virtual communities and the debate surrounding it arise.

2.1.2 The Concept and Debate around Virtual Communities

Howard Rheingold was among the first scholars to introduce and popularize the concept of the *virtual community*. In his book *The Virtual Community: Homesteading on the Electronic Frontier*, he defines them as “social aggregations that emerge from the Net when enough people carry on public discussions long enough, with sufficient human feeling, to form webs of personal relationships in cyberspace” (Rheingold, 1993, p. 6).

His definition stemmed from direct participation in the WELL (Whole Earth ’Lectronic Link), one of the earliest and most long-lasting online communities founded in 1985. Through this experience, Rheingold observed how seemingly ephemeral interactions could evolve into real networks of support, long-lasting friendships, and emotional sharing. (Rheingold, 1993).

Later contributions, however, have challenged this optimistic vision. Lovink & Rossiter (2018) argue that networks actually thrive on diversity and conflict, thus challenging the idea of the digital community as a cohesive and harmonious space. According to the authors, “*organized networks*

are 'clouds of social relationships in which disengagement is pushed to the limit. Community is an idealistic construct and suggests bonding and harmony, which often is simply not there. (...) Networks thrive on diversity and conflict (the networking), not on unity" (p. 36). This view highlights the risk that online communities will fragment, losing connection and the ability to sustain the affective and ethical dimensions typical of community life.

Ines Amaral on the other hand, shows a different approach to the topic. Drawing on Marc Augé's concept of *non-lieux* (1995), the author describes many digital spaces as anonymous and transitory environments, where interactions are often fragmented, short-lived, and lacking identity roots (Amaral, 2009). At the same time, however, Amaral emphasizes that within the cyberspace, there are also '*lugares*' made of 'interpersonal relations and social organization' (Amaral, 2009, p. 62). According to the author, it is precisely these spaces, created within cyberspace, that give rise to virtual communities, which materialize through computer-mediated communication (CMC). Virtual communities, therefore, are "places" that emerge within the transitory logic of cyberspace, often overlapping with *non-lieux* but becoming socially significant through repeated practices of interaction.

Nevertheless, for these spaces to consolidate into actual communities, they must be supported by the foundations of trust and reciprocity, elements that, according to Putnam, (2000) constitute the basis of real communities.

In sum, the debate on virtual communities reveals a persistent ambivalence. On one hand, they can generate belonging and reciprocity; on the other, they remain structurally fragile, fragmented, and shaped by transient dynamics. This is precisely why, especially in creative and professional contexts, real communities are those which include the face-to-face component and not simply online participation.

From this perspective, hybrid models appear as the most viable solution to strengthen online communities. As Grabher and Ibert (2014) observe, virtual communities are primarily mediated through Internet-based communication tools, but this does not mean they are limited to the digital sphere. The authors note that "although corporeal meetings of community members are possible, not even uncommon, virtually mediated communication is the quintessential form of interaction" (p. 5).

2.2 The Role of Social Media Networks

In order to understand the dynamics of online networking today, it is essential to examine the concepts of digital platforms and social media networks. It is equally important to reflect on how social media influence both the individuals and the formation of virtual communities

Social media have taken on a central role in the organisation of contemporary social and cultural life, becoming global infrastructures that regulate access to information, content production, and the construction of social networks.

Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) propose a very detailed definition of social media: First, they clarify the fundamental definition of Web 2.0, which is '*the set of technological principles that make it possible for all users to continuously create and modify content*' (p. 61). Then they define user-generated content (UGC), identifying three fundamental characteristics: It must be published online, require a certain creative effort, and be created outside of purely professional or commercial logic. Only based on these two notions is it possible to define social media as "a group of Internet-based applications that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content" (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 61).

This perspective is shared by Rheingold (2012) who introduces the concept of participatory media. In *Net Smart: How to Thrive Online*, the author emphasises that "participatory media includes every online service that enables individuals to create as well as consume content online" (Rheingold, 2012, p. 18). The idea of participatory media or social media, is not limited to indicating the technical possibility of uploading content, but describes a deeper cultural transformation: the emergence of digital environments where users are no longer just recipients, but active participants who contribute to the circulation and re-elaboration of collective meanings. In this sense, social media differ from traditional media not only in their degree of interactivity but also because they break down the clear separation between content production and consumption, allowing users to simultaneously take on the roles of viewers, authors, and distributors.

However, many authors highlight the negative side of this participatory element. In her book, *The Culture of Connectivity* (2013), José van Dijck highlights how, behind the rhetoric of participation and sharing, social media formalise sociality in technical and algorithmic terms. Van Dijck writes that "making the Web social" actually means "making sociality technical" (p. 12), indicating how platforms translate human interactions into quantifiable, manipulable, and monetizable data.

Van Dijck (2013) also highlights that digital platforms cannot be considered neutral environments where users interact freely: on the contrary, they are socio-technical infrastructures organised by economic and algorithmic logics that shape behaviours and influence the distribution of symbolic and material resources. Digital community spaces, therefore, are not simply virtual equivalents of physical communities, but ecosystems conditioned by corporate interests and codified rules. As Van Dijck (2013) further emphasises, "coded structures are profoundly altering the nature of our connections, creations, and interactions: buttons that impose 'sharing' and 'following' as social values produce cultural effects that go far beyond the platforms themselves." (p.20) This statement points to a condition that, often unconsciously, has now become automatic in our everyday reality: if one wants to remain connected to the world, there is a price to pay, our social and personal habits become memorized and regulated by the digital space.

Many other authors have also recognized the paradoxical aspects of our relationship with social media and digital platforms. As a matter of fact, Terranova (2000), in un saggio ormai classico, introduce il concetto di *free labor*, descrivendo come gran parte del valore dell'economia digitale derivi dal lavoro gratuito degli utenti: "simultaneamente volontaristico e non remunerato, goduto e sfruttato" (p. 33). Questo lavoro invisibile comprende attività che spaziano dalla creazione di contenuti alla moderazione di forum, dalla gestione di mailing list fino alla costruzione di interi spazi virtuali. Sebbene percepite dagli utenti come forme di piacere, appartenenza o auto-espressione, queste pratiche vengono sistematicamente catturate dalle piattaforme e trasformate in valore economico.

In conclusion, the literature highlights a central paradox: social media are at once tools that enable and constrain virtual communities. On the one hand, they provide visibility, access, and opportunities for networking (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Rheingold, 2012); on the other, they increasingly take our time and labour (Terranova, 2000).

Moreover, it is important to acknowledge that networks remain indispensable infrastructures for professional life. In creative and cultural industries in particular, the ability to build and maintain a network is not simply optional, but often a necessary condition for professional visibility. As Christopherson (2008) observes, "Networks enable workers in creative industries to decrease risks, uncertainties and the costs of individual competition as well as market their skills and style" (p.

77). In other words, networks are not merely social tools, but actual infrastructures that determine who has access to growth opportunities and who, instead, risks exclusion.

Hybrid communities represent a more effective alternative to purely online networks: they not only provide visibility in ways that are more accessible than individual self-promotion, but also facilitate meaningful networking by enabling real-life encounters. These spaces allow participants to move beyond the limits of digital visibility, building genuine relationships and shared interests through direct interaction.

3. Project development

The objective of this chapter is to outline the project's concept and development together with the market analysis which explores the viability and strategic positioning of a new niche Lisbon-based community for audiovisual creators, within the audiovisual context of Portugal.

Cinecore, is an example of creative community that adopts a hybrid model. (Grabher and Ibert, 2014), as it has originated through online contacts and it is evolving into a structured networking hub, which promotes collaboration and visibility through curated events. The primary objective of the project is to assess the community model and its potential for sustainable growth, while also keeping open the long-term possibility of a platform as a natural digital extension of the network.

3.1 Market Analysis

This chapter proposes a strategic reading of networking in the portuguese audiovisual sector, with the aim of positioning Cinecore within the Portuguese industry and the broader market for creative platforms. The analysis is divided into two complementary stages.

- On the one hand, a contextual overview of the Portuguese audiovisual sector is provided, considered as a useful case study for understanding the characteristics, gaps, and needs of the local creative community. The focus is on both established professionals and young creatives, highlighting how the conditions of a small-scale market with limited resources can make it particularly difficult to access job and collaboration opportunities.
- On the other hand, a benchmarking exercise of existing platforms and communities, both formal and informal, is proposed. The goal is to highlight the strengths and limitations of

current solutions, identifying the areas where Cinecore can draw inspiration and those where, instead, it can offer an alternative and innovative approach.

3.1.1 Overview of the Portuguese Audiovisual Sector: Challenges and New Prospects

This section describes the main characteristics of the Portuguese audiovisual sector, with reference to its key players, market dynamics, and structural challenges that limit its growth. The analysis serves to position Portugal as a validation context for the project, highlighting both the weaknesses of a system where opportunities remain limited and fragmented, and the creative vitality that continues to emerge in the form of independent projects and community initiatives.

This context analysis positions Portugal not just as a geographic focus, but as a representative case study of wider market dynamics that affect small and mid-sized creative industries across Europe. It serves as a concrete testing ground to explore how niche digital communities can address gaps in networking, trust-building, and portfolio development.

The focus is on Lisbon as the main creative hub. While members from Porto and other cities have engaged with the initiative, the geographic core remains Lisbon as the main filmmaking and tv production agencies are based in the capital.

The European research project CresCine, coordinated by the Lusòfona University and financed by Horizon Europe, was founded precisely to study and support European film markets, especially small markets such as the Portuguese one, focusing on addressing challenges regarding the circulation of content, production, distribution, audiences and financing (CresCine, 2025; Graça, 2024)

As emphasized by CresCine, Portugal is considered one of the smallest and fragmented film markets of southern Europe, characterized by a strong orientation toward arthouse cinema and a heavy dependence on public funding as well as a limited circulation of domestic artwork. (Graça, 2024). The financial support is highly dependent on state funds mainly managed by the Institute of Cinema and Audiovisual (ICA), represents the backbone of audiovisual production. (CresCine, 2025)

According to CresCine (2025), there is indeed a general trend in Europe to finance films through state funds and in Portugal, the parallel private market is likely almost non-existent. As stated in the official website: “Concerning private investment, the numbers and the players are unclear, if

and when they exist. However, many Portuguese films have benefitted from co-production schemes and other European incentives, such as EURIMAGES” (CresCine, 2025)

Since 2018, however, the ICA and the Portugal Film Commission have implemented policies to make the country more competitive as an international filming location. The Pic Portugal - Cash Rebate and Cash Refund program is now considered one of the most attractive incentives in Europe: it offers rebates of up to €6 million per project, provided that a minimum level of expenditure is reached within the country (Portugal Film Commission, 2024).

Alongside this picture, it is important to remember the strong relationship that has developed over time between cinema and television. The public television broadcaster RTP has a legal obligation to produce or co-produce films every year, thus contributing significantly to the support of local production. Private networks, such as SIC and TVI, have also participated in productions and co-productions since the 1990s, albeit to a lesser extent than RTP. More generally, the audiovisual sector, including advertising, is an important source of employment for actors, directors, and technicians, allowing them to maintain professional continuity and specialize even when they are not involved in film productions (Crescine, 2025).

According to the CresCine report (2025), the almost exclusive reliance on public funding has historically been one of the main weaknesses of Portuguese cinema and “finding alternatives would help the industry stay afloat and provide an attempt for it to become prosperous.” (CresCine, 2025)

In this scenario, the foundation of new digital and physical collaborative spaces could be beneficial by offering an alternative space for independent filmmakers to connect and find visibility.

3.1.2 Competitor and Community benchmarking

This section presents a benchmarking analysis of existing digital platforms and communities relevant to audiovisual creatives. By mapping the landscape of niche creative networks, this analysis seeks to identify the strengths and weaknesses of current models in supporting professional collaboration, creative development, and community building. Through this comparative overview, the aim is to reveal both the best practices that can inform developments, while also identifying existing gaps and thus opportunities for innovation, especially in relation to collaboration access and inclusivity in the audiovisual sector.

Local Communities Landscape: Synthesis and Strategic Opportunity

Lisbon is home to a wide range of independent filmmaking and creative communities. To identify existing gaps and opportunities within this landscape, the following analysis compares the key characteristics of several active initiatives that share similar features, with diverse goals, namely, promoting collaboration, screening works, and fostering creative exchange among audiovisual professionals.

The table below highlights the defining traits of the most relevant Lisbon-based community-driven initiatives and highlights key functional gaps in their support for collaboration and inclusion within audiovisual communities.

Table 1. Benchmarking: Local Communities for audiovisual creatives

Community	Example 1	Example 2	Example 3	Example 4
N. Members/ followers	+4000	800 +	100 +	100 +
Description and features	Curated short films, live interaction, regular events, with formal competitions, expanded globally as both festival and community	Community of filmmakers showing experimental films by members or professionals.	Cinema-focused artistic community hosting screenings and informal competitions.	Networking group with in-person meetups for film projects collaborations, workshops and training courses
Frequency	Weekly	Bi-monthly	Bi-monthly	Weekly
Organization Model	Curated, semiprivate,	Curated, semiprivate,	Curated, semiprivate,	Curated, private, partnerships with more venues

	partnerships one venues	partnerships with one venue	partnership with one venue	
Engagement Format	Instagram	WhatsApp Instagram	Instagram Meetup App	App Meetup – WhatsApp
Value for members	Networking, Community, Project Collaboration	Networking, Job Search, visibility in niche circuits, recognition, project collaboration	Networking, Community	Networking, Project Collaboration
Membership fee	No	Donation-based events	No	Yes (small amount per year)

For ethical reasons, the names of the communities have been omitted. The description of their activities and engagement models is based on a combination of direct observation (through events attended in Lisbon) and information publicly available on their official websites and social media profiles. While one of the initiatives is part of a broader international franchise, the others are still under development at the local level, which further justifies the anonymization adopted in this analysis. The focus of this table is therefore not on the specific identity of each community, but on their functional characteristics they reveal in supporting collaboration and inclusion within the Lisbon audiovisual context.

The projects analyzed share comparable engagement structures: three of them are based on screening nights, while one (Example 4) centers around in-person networking for project collaboration. Despite some diversity, all projects rely on similar engagement tools, mainly Instagram, WhatsApp, and Meetup, and use recurring events as their main touchpoints.

While participation is consistently high across all initiatives, from the analysis of the table, one practical observations emerged that could help shape Cinecore's development. Most of the previous communities emphasize showcasing finished work or work in progress in public events, but do not offer much support for the earlier stages of audiovisual creation. Cinecore aims to introduce features like team formations and creative challenges to foster collaborations from inside the community.

This benchmarking tests both which areas Cinecore can take inspiration from and in which areas can Cinecore offer a different approach, and what framework supports the strategic positioning of the project within the broader landscape of audiovisual collaboration platforms.

Much like the previous examples, the aim of Cinecore, which is currently focused on connections, screenings and other type of informal events, is to gradually incorporate other features such as workshops, and official channels, comprehensive of a database and a space where members can connect and organize collaborations, positioning itself alongside existing competitors while maintaining its distinctive approach to networking. In addition, Cinecore intends to expand its scope beyond Lisbon by creating international networks and establishing a presence in other European cities.

The project also takes inspiration from global platforms that combine professional networking with community-led interaction. Among these, Stage 32 represents the most relevant example. It is a worldwide networking platform for cinema and TV professionals and offers forums, webinars, job boards and matching among creatives and professionals in the industry. (Stage 32, n.d.) The platform is also an application, and it is recognized for its wide range and educational opportunities with access to masterclasses among other functions. However, as many users reported, most of this content is accessible only by paying and the platform subscription fees are relatively high, compared to the value or experience gained; moreover some express frustration with a complex interface. (Trustpilot, 2025)

The fact that despite offering trainings and formative opportunities such as online workshops, platforms often prioritize commercial access can feel restrictive or impersonal, especially for emerging creators. In this sense, Cinecore is not created or proposed as mere marketplace or portfolio showcasing platform, but as participative network where collaboration is a continuous process, not an isolated event.

3.2 Cinecore as Proof of Concept (PoC): from WhatsApp Group to Networking Events

The aim of the project is to offer the tools that go beyond self-promotion and personal visibility in audiovisual sector, encouraging team building, feedback exchange and the documentation of shared projects, with a view to mutual support and collective growth.

The core phase of this project involved creating a WhatsApp group as Proof Of Concept (POC) to test the base of the idea of virtual community in real time inspired by Lisbon-based existing initiatives.

A PoC is generally defined as "a demonstration, typically in a simplified form, used to test whether a concept, theory, or proposal is feasible in practice" (Atlassian, n.d.). In innovation and digital project development, it serves to validate early-stage assumptions before full-scale investment or development. (Asana, n.d.).

In this study, the PoC took the form of the creation of a WhatsApp group explicitly presented to participants as part of an academic research project. Participants were informed that the group aimed to explore the possibility of building a meaningful audiovisual community in Portugal, capable of bridging the gap between beginners and professionals. The PoC itself lies in the very existence of the group and the demonstrated interest in joining it. Specifically, the number of participants who joined and the proportion of those who remained active serve as initial indicators that the concept resonates with a real target audience.

While the WhatsApp group was designed as an experimental community, it also served to explore the feasibility of building a dedicated platform or application, positioning this group as a potential early user base. In this sense, the WhatsApp group functions as an early-stage demonstration that there is demand and interest in such a space, thus supporting the platform's market and community potential.

The initial concept and long-term ambition of the project was to develop a digital platform designed specifically for audiovisual creatives. However, the first and most critical step had to be social. For this reason, it was necessary to develop a real engaged virtual community as Proof of Concept to demonstrate the strong need for connection, exchange and solidarity among creatives in the audiovisual industry.

At the same time, the visual identity of the project was developed through the creation of the logo and the official Instagram account, the main channel for promoting events and communicating Cinecore's core values: accessibility, collaboration and shared growth.

3.2.1 WhatsApp Numbers

The main group was created and opened on March 26, 2025, with approximately 50 initial members, recruited primarily through LinkedIn during the data collection period. Over a period of months, while between 20 and 30 people left the group, the number gradually increased to reach 177 members as of September 27, 2025.

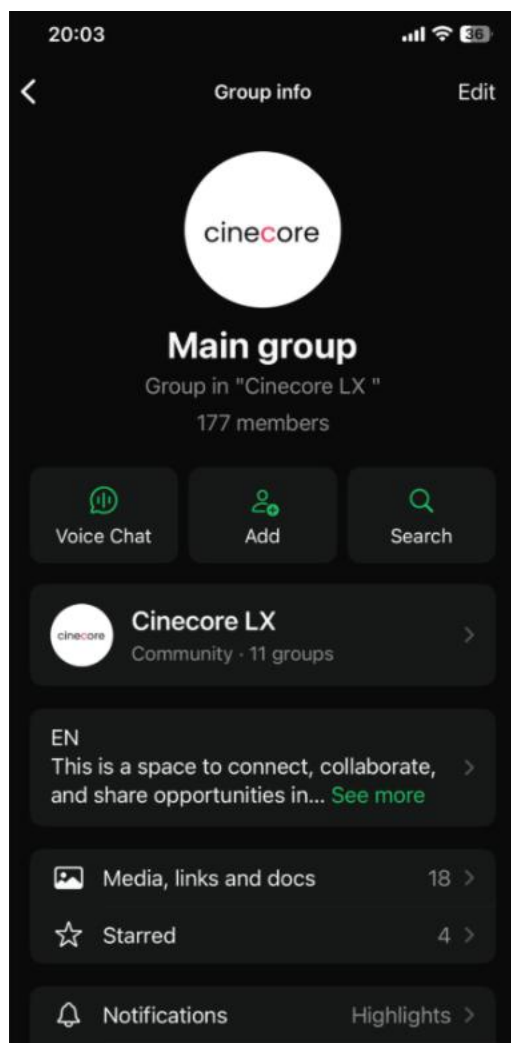


Figure 1. Cinecore WhatsApp Group

This growth was not only determined by direct invitation to the group, but also by spontaneous dynamics: some members (about a dozen) added people from their network, and in one case, users brought in over 40 new members. This demonstrates the genuine interest and the value attributed by members to belonging to the group.

An observation of the interactions shows an average of over 50 messages per week, with peaks of activity in April and May, coinciding with the beginning of the events phase and the addition of new members. Conversations in the main group tend to concentrate in 1–2 day windows, then stabilize until new discussions are triggered, usually by requests or proposals.

Contributions usually come from a variable core of 10–30 active participants, while reactions (emojis and direct responses) range between 5 and 20 per shared content, indicating a consistent level of attention even from less vocal members.

The community has also been structured into thematic subgroups, created on July 1, 2025, to facilitate more targeted interactions between professionals from different fields. The subgroups and the number of registered members are as follows:

Cinematographers / DOPs / Camera – 16 members

Directors & Filmmakers – 29 members

VFX & Animation – 7 members

Sound & Composers – 6 members

Post-production & Editing – 13 members

Cameras & Equipment (sell/buy/rent, advice) – 18 members

Costume & Set Design – 4 members

Acting & Castings – 11 members

Screenwriting – 8 members

Conversations in the subgroups is less frequent and is not present in all the groups, only the most popular ones, being the groups for cinematographers, directors and filmmakers and sound & composers.

Overall, the analysis of these metrics shows a steady growth of the community, an active core of about 10–30 regular participants, and a balance between relevant messages and intermediate silences.

3.2.2 Community Events

After the creation and the consolidation of the WhatsApp group, the next step consisted in initiating the first concrete activities, organizing real life meetings as small informal events, turning them into networking moments and potential future collaborations between participants. In this sense, the social component preceded and reinforced the digital dimension, demonstrating the existence of a concrete need for connection and interaction.

Both took place in bars, with the aim of fostering relaxed conversations around filmmaking. The first event, held on Saturday 10th of May, gathered seven confirmed participants, all of whom attended. The second event took place on Wednesday 21st of May in a different bar, followed the same format and also counted seven participants, three of whom had already been present at the first meeting, while the others were new members actively involved in the WhatsApp group.

The events started with a round of introductions, followed by open conversations stimulated through targeted questions to encourage discussion. Despite the informal setting, where participants could eat and drink freely, the main topic of conversation remained cinema—particularly technical curiosities and personal experiences on how projects had been realized. The atmosphere was perceived as positive and welcoming. However, participants also noted that, over time, discussions risked shifting toward other topics.

Screenings will be a valuable addition to future meetings, creating moments of collective engagement more directly linked to cinema. Alternating short screenings with breaks for informal conversations would allow participants not only to network, but also to showcase and discuss their own projects, thus reinforcing the sense of belonging and shared purpose in the community.

In this sense, Cinecore is a hybrid model: on the one hand, it promotes live meetings and activities to strengthen the community dimension, and on the other, it develops a digital presence, through its social media channels, which allows the concept to expand into other European cities and connect local and international creatives, first online and then in person. - sposto

3.2.3 Objectives and Positions of Cinecore

Table 2. Swot analysis

Strengths • Inclusivity and Accessibility from beginners to professionals of any level • Engagement through both social media and events • Participation and constructive feedback culture • Focus on building long lasting collaborations and not competition • No membership fee	Weaknesses • Only one community manager, event organizer and concept creator • Risk of spam and conflicts between participants either in person or online, since there are many members and the project is just starting, with little possibility to properly filter new members • Collaboration not yet structured with a strong calendar or forum, implies risk of discontinuity
Opportunities • Partnerships with venues, schools and festivals to enhance visibility and impact • Introducing workshops, videos and creative challenges, stimulating learning and active participation • Creation of an internal archive to document active members and developments as well as projects created within the community, useful for networking and professional growth • Evolution of the concept into a structure platform or app with	Threats • Competition with other screening events and communities in Lisbon, which are already established and with a clear agenda • Saturation within Lisbon's creative and cinema events scene • Risk of the community growing without consistency, and a clear vision, being reduced as an auto-promotion channel, losing its collaborative nature • Logistics and costs tied to event organization depending on the capacity

dedicated tools for team matching, project archives and database for recruiters	of venues and the number of people joining • Absence of institutional recognition and lack of support from cultural associations to access funds for projects
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One of the main critiques emerging from the Swot analysis of the project is the management of internal communication. The project is fresh and in a phase of expansion, therefore the membership is deliberately open and inclusive, to encourage growth and diversity. On the other hand, this openness has some potential harm, such as episodes of excessive self-promotion or small tension during chats.

To address these issues, clear and informal guidelines have been introduced and pinned in the group to clarify the expected tone, appropriate use of the channel, and type of content; these are periodically sent to the chat whenever they are not fully respected. This simple community management tactic allows to orient new members from the start and preserve the collaborative spirit that characterizes Cinecore.

Moreover, recurrent anonymous surveys asking feedback to those who participated to the events, especially in the initial phase, allows participants to feel involved in the creation and evolution of the community. Members will be able to contribute with their opinion and suggestions, thus promoting solid relationships.

The next step would be the creation of a dedicated web page or platform to ensure continuity, coordinating events, and making projects and participant profiles visible. This structure will overcome the fragmentation of social media, offering more targeted tools for networking and collaboration.

3.2.4. Name and Visual Identity

The choice of the name *Cinecore* was born from the intention of transmitting an idea of centrality, authenticity and belonging in the audiovisual world. The term combines the words *cinema* and *core*, evoking not only the idea of being genuinely passionate and dedicated at heart to filmmaking, but also suggesting a central, active hub — a space where professionals and aspiring creators can

come together, exchange ideas, and grow through collaboration and experimentation. The name is written entirely in lowercase to communicate openness and inclusivity, distancing itself from the visual codes of hierarchy or exclusivity. This typographic choice supports the project's mission: cinecore welcomes independent projects, emerging ideas, etc., while also aiming to be a bridge between the industry and the independent cinema. It presents itself as an accessible space, open to anyone who feels part of the creative process, regardless of background or experience, as long as there is a desire to create cinema and audiovisual projects with sincerity and intention. The word cine also resonates across languages, reinforcing the international and inclusive nature of the project.



Figure 2. Cinecore Logo

The logo visually reflects these values through a minimalist style: black typography on a white background ensures clarity and legibility, while the second c in 'cinecore' is coloured red to make it stand out. This red is not too light nor aggressive, but a warm, distinctive shade, evoking creative energy and emotional depth.

Beyond its aesthetic role, the red “c” carries symbolic depth:

- It appears at the very centre of the word, mirroring the idea of the core — the beating heart of both the project and the community;
- It stands for cinema, creativity, community, and connection—all essential pillars of the project;

In essence, the logo is designed to reflect the belief that cinema starts from the core, and that creativity thrives when shared, nurtured, and made visible, even in its earliest and most imperfect stages.

4. Methodology

This chapter presents the research design and methodological framework applied in this study, which investigates the needs, barriers, and collaborative potentials within the audiovisual area by taking as case study the audiovisual market in Portugal. Ultimately the goal is to understand how a new community for audiovisual creators can address the gaps in the networking for the audiovisual creators based in Lisbon and more broadly, Portugal.

4.1. Research design and Mixed-methods Approach

Given the exploratory and specific nature of the study, a mixed-methods approach was adopted, combining both qualitative and quantitative data collection. This study adopts a mixed-methods design, specifically a *sequential explanatory approach*, as described by Creswell (2009). In this design, quantitative data are first collected and analyzed, and the results are then used to inform the qualitative phase, ensuring that the second stage explores issues that emerge from the first.

In practical terms, firstly, a questionnaire was administered to gather demographic information, habits, challenges, and motivations, which provided also a basis for selecting participants for the qualitative phase. Subsequently, semi-structured interviews allowed for a deeper exploration of the needs, expectations, and motivations identified in the survey data.

In this study, quantitative findings outlined the measurable challenges of audiovisual professionals in Portugal, while qualitative interviews added nuance by highlighting subjective perspectives. The integration of these phases therefore ensured a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon, in line with Creswell's definition of mixed-methods research as the intentional integration of qualitative and quantitative approaches to provide stronger evidence for research problems (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

The questionnaire collected demographic data, professional profiles, and general challenges. This data is essential to understand patterns and tendencies in a larger sample. and at the same time, it provided a structured base of information from which to select potential interviewees.

The semi-structured interviews allow the research to distinguish individual or exceptional cases from general patterns, making it possible to identify when certain challenges or preferences are widespread and when they result from specific personal circumstances. Additionally, conducting these interviews face-to-face (or through direct video calls when in-person meetings were not

possible) provided an opportunity to observe honest reactions, emotional responses, and non-verbal cues, which helped to capture the participants' true motivations, feelings, and attitudes toward the idea of joining or contributing to a new audiovisual community.

Finally, the WhatsApp group played a strategic role because, in addition to testing the community idea, it facilitated the distribution of the questionnaire and the recruitment of participants.

4.2 Sample and Participant Profile

The focus of this investigation are the members or potential members of the community created as PoC, who operate as active professionals or beginners in the audiovisual industry in Portugal. Participants for the questionnaires and subsequent interviews were selected based on purposeful sampling.

The sample is composed of audiovisual professionals, student and hobbyists in Portugal, including directors, editors, cinematographers, actors, digital creatives, and other freelancers with mixed profiles. This sample was designed to reflect the target audience of the proposed audiovisual community. The goal was to recruit individuals who could provide diverse, yet relevant perspectives based on their experience in the audiovisual sector.

4.2.1 Criteria for selection

Participants were selected based on demographic data collected through the questionnaire and, when possible, verified through their professional profiles (e.g., LinkedIn). The main criterion was that they were professionally or academically active in fields related to cinema, audiovisual production, or the performing arts, regardless of whether they were freelancers, employees, full-time or part-time.

For both quantitative and qualitative samples, a minimum requirement of at least one year of practical experience in the sector or study in the audiovisual field has been set, as this period represents sufficient time to develop an initial understanding of professional dynamics and to distinguish between a casual interest and a real path to entering the audiovisual market. However, those who identified as hobbyists were not automatically excluded: They were considered eligible if they showed concrete steps towards professionalisation, such as enrolling in audiovisual courses or studies, completing practical projects, or expressing a clear intention to start a career in the sector.

The sample included both Portuguese participants residing abroad and international creatives based in Portugal, thus reflecting the transnational and multicultural nature that characterises the Portuguese audiovisual scene today. This allowed for the collection of broader perspectives on networking and collaboration practices, both locally and internationally.

As support to the data collection phase, a Proof of Concept strategy was implemented through the creation of a WhatsApp group that functioned as a practical test environment for the formation of a new digitally- born creative collective. While the PoC doesn't represent the main analysis tool, it had a strategic role in strengthening the project: on one hand, it allowed to test the real interest of people in begin part of this community, observing their behaviors while participating, on the other hand, it facilitated the spreading of the questionnaire, thus recruiting more participants for the data collection side.

At the same time, presenting the initiative of the community as part of a research project, encouraged participation from professionals, who were more prone to take part in the initiative and fill out a questionnaire, than if it had been without context. In this sense, both the practical and analytical phases served one another, providing a solid base for assessing the needs of the community.

4.2.2. Outreach process

The recruitment process for the participants took around three months, from the end of February to the end of may 2025, and was conducted in incremental phases through various channels. This allowed me to test marketing campaign strategies. The scale of outreach would vary: on some days, more than 20 people were contacted, on others no contact was made. This recruitment phase combined social media searches with professional and personal contacts in the audiovisual industry.

The outreach strategy included multiple channels:

- Personal contacts, consisting of four participants who were also part of the study and filled out the questionnaire, and brought other contacts as well
- Direct recruitment through LinkedIn messages

- Instagram, by sharing a recruitment call through Instagram Stories, after a month of initial LinkedIn recruitment. This generated three additional questionnaire respondents.
- Connections during in person networking and university events

Some participants are because of snowball sampling, as they were introduced by personal contacts. This facilitated expanding the reach and numbers of the sample, particularly among professionals in different subfields or locations.

LinkedIn Outreach

The strategy began by reaching out to existing groups on Facebook Groups and Reddit, who already have an extensive community of filmmakers and creatives within Lisbon. These groups initially showed potential because they already had public profiles and large audiences. Yet, it was challenging to engage participants directly as posts within these kinds of groups get lost among other messages or receive brief attention spans, which makes it hard to make a connection with people.

For this reason, the strategy shifted to direct connection on LinkedIn, a platform with heavier professional focus and more specialized networking devices. LinkedIn soon became the primary recruitment tool, allowing to reach out to audiovisual professionals and students directly and invite them to work on the project individually.

On LinkedIn, over 500 connection requests were sent to professionals in the audiovisual sector, prioritizing individuals based in Portugal or with professional ties to the country. Around 100 of these requests remained pending, meaning these users never received follow-up messages. For the 400+ accepted connections, I experimented with two engagement strategies:

An invitation to join the community was sent, whether with the connection request or immediately after it was accepted. Both approaches were equally effective, with no significant difference observed in the response rate. Ultimately, around 150 people replied positively, showing interest in either joining the community or participating in the study. A small number (about five) declined, citing reasons such as not being located in Portugal or not being available at the moment.

Questionnaire Distribution and Follow-Up

For participants who showed initial interest, I sent follow-up messages were sent explaining the research objectives and sharing the link to the online questionnaire. Some participants required additional reminders before responding, which helped secure a few more responses.

In addition, I leveraged the WhatsApp community by posting a group-wide message inviting all members to complete the questionnaire, resulting in four additional responses. This follow-up strategy was adopted to show persistence but at the same time respect for participant boundaries.

For participants who were added to the group by others, I sent private messages introducing myself and requesting their name and professional role, allowing me to save their contact details and invite them to complete the questionnaire if they had not already done so.

While this personalized outreach helped increase engagement, not all participants responded. This variation in engagement levels is typical in digital communities, where some members prefer to remain passive observers, using the group primarily to monitor opportunities rather than actively participating in discussions.

Interview Invitations and process

Following questionnaire submissions, I prioritized interview invitations based on participants' diverse demographic characteristics, including age, geographical diversity, and their level of experience. The goal was to achieve a balanced mix of beginners, students, and experienced professionals, ensuring a diverse and representative sample.

Only participants who had expressed willingness to be contacted by selecting the relevant option in the questionnaire were invited for the interview, or those whom I had met in person and who had verbally confirmed their interest in participating. While all willing participants were contacted, 20 interviews were ultimately completed, reflecting typical participation dynamics in qualitative research, where not all contacts result in scheduled or completed interviews.

In a few cases, interviews were also conducted with representatives of production companies, selected specifically for their organizational role. These participants were not asked to complete the questionnaire, as their contribution focused on representing the company perspective. The interview structure remained consistent, though a few questions were adapted to reflect their broader, company-level perspectives.

Interview Procedure

Interviews were conducted primarily online using platforms such as Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, and WhatsApp. Additionally, three interviews were conducted in person, depending on their availability and preference.

Participants could choose to speak in English or Portuguese, though since the research was conducted in English, they were informed in advance and asked if they were comfortable proceeding in English to facilitate analysis. The majority agreed, with only a few exceptions opting to speak in Portuguese.

All participants signed a consent form before the interview, confirming they understood the purpose of the research, the voluntary nature of participation, and that the interview would be audio-recorded for transcription and analysis, with all data treated confidentially.

Interviews typically lasted 15 to 40 minutes, depending on participant availability and the depth of the discussion. While the interview script followed a thematic guide, it was adapted in real time to the participant's background and responses, allowing for a flexible and natural conversation.

Questionnaire design

Participants were asked to complete a Google Forms questionnaire, which served both as a data collection tool and a screening tool for potential interview candidates. (Google Forms, 2025)

The questionnaire began with a consent statement, informing participants about the voluntary nature of participation, data protection measures, and the confidentiality of their responses.

The questionnaire was structured into two sections, designed to gather insights on participants' demographic and professional backgrounds, as well as their digital networking practices, platform expectations, and potential engagement with an online community. In total, the questionnaire consisted of 10 targeted questions, combining multiple-choice, yes/no, and Likert scale items. The full questionnaire, including all available response options, is provided in the Annex of this document. Therefore, a detailed listing of each answer choice is not included here; instead, the following section explains the purpose and relevance of each question in relation to the objectives of this research.

Demographic and professional Profile (screening section)

This section served to characterize the sample and filter participants based on their relevance to the research, ensuring that responses were collected from people active in or transitioning into the audiovisual field.

Key data collected included:

- Age, gender, and location (to describe participant diversity).
- Current professional role (e.g., filmmaker, sound designer, editor).
- Level of engagement (student, hobbyist, part-time, or full-time professional).
- Years of experience
- Participation in recognized projects or festivals (optional).

This section allowed me to map participant backgrounds, identify user segments (beginners, emerging professionals, established professionals), and screen participants for potential follow-up interviews. Optional questions about project experience and recognition served as an internal screening tool, in order to better assess experience levels from my part, without excluding those still building their portfolio.

Survey: Digital Networking, Platform Expectations, and Engagement Potential

The second section of the questionnaire aimed to gather practical insights into participants' current professional behaviors, perceived challenges, and expectations for a dedicated online community. This section consisted of ten key questions, each designed to inform different aspects of the concept and of individual's behaviors and needs when it comes to working in the audiovisual industry in Portugal.

Questions 1–3 explore current digital networking and visibility practices, identifying where participants already position their work and how they leverage existing platforms. This helps to understand what works, what doesn't, and what gaps the new platform could fill.

Questions 4–6 investigate the real-world challenges and collaboration dynamics of audiovisual professionals and beginners. These questions help prioritize feature development by identifying key user needs, such as finding collaborators, gaining visibility, or accessing job opportunities.

Questions 7–9 focus on motivations, preferences, and desired features, providing valuable input for shaping the platform’s value proposition, community focus, and feature set. They allow you to align the platform with user expectations and market demands.

Question 10 collects a quantifiable measure of engagement potential, offering an early indicator of how likely participants would be to join and actively participate in the community.

Interview Script Design

The interview script was built around five initial thematic areas designed to explore in greater depth the experiences, perceptions, and needs identified through the questionnaire:

1. Career background and professional challenges
2. Specific traits that characterize the Portuguese AV market
3. Networking needs and trust factors when meeting collaborators
4. Experiences with online platforms and ideal features for connecting with other creatives
5. Community expectations, such as WhatsApp groups usage, potential red flags and preferred event format

The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format (Creswell, 2009) which allowed to adapt the flow of the conversation to better investigate the individual participants' experiences, while maintaining the core structure of the interview for data comparison.

For instance, with people who work in production companies, more space was given to questions about teamwork and views on the audiovisual industry, while with freelancers, topics such as individual paths, fundings and networking experiences were addressed first.

As the work progressed, recurring themes emerged, leading to add more areas to the script. For instance, questions on the perception of the Portuguese audiovisual market and funding issues, were added after the first interview, while questions on preferred format events were added on a more advanced stage.

Therefore not all the participants addressed these issues completely. However, the responses collected were treated as an integral part of the overall body, because the number of testimonies obtained proved sufficient to outline recurring trends and perceptions.

The information that emerged from those who addressed the new topics enriched our understanding of the context, without, however, substantially changing the conclusions drawn from the thematic areas already present.

This flexible approach allowed the process to remain faithful to the methodological structure, while giving space to the real experiences of the interviewees, capturing perspectives that would have been difficult to capture with rigid questions.

Ethical considerations and data processing

The study was conducted following the principles of voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality, and data protection. Before taking part in the questionnaire, interviews, or the WhatsApp community used for the Proof of Concept, participants were informed about the purpose of the research and the use of their contributions.

Participation was entirely voluntary, and participants were assured they could withdraw at any time without providing any justification. Prior to the interviews, participants signed a consent form in which they were also informed that conversations would be audio-recorded for transcription and analysis.

No sensitive data beyond professional experiences and opinions was collected. All materials (recordings, transcripts, notes) were securely stored and accessible only to the researcher. Identifying information, such as names of people, companies, or projects, was anonymized in line with GDPR and university guidelines. This ensured the protection of participants' privacy at every stage of the research.

Analysis process

Regarding the quantitative data, the questionnaires were analyzed based on the statistics provided by Google Forms. Some open-ended responses, which needed to be reclassified to ensure greater order and readability, therefore the graphic representation of these answers were redrawn using Flourish software (Flourish, 2025), which allowed for a clear visualization of the results.

Regarding the interviews, the audio recordings were initially transcribed using Turboscribe software (Turboscribe, 2025), which ensures compliance with data protection regulations and the

anonymity of the participants. The transcriptions were subsequently manually cleaned according to clean verbatim criteria, including parentheses for linguistic or contextual clarifications.

The qualitative analysis process followed the classic approach of content analysis (Bardin, 2004), which involves transforming "raw" data into thematic categories to allow for a structured interpretation. As Vala (2005) points out, categorization can occur a priori, a posteriori, or in a mixed form. In this study, a mixed approach was adopted, as some categories were pre-defined on the basis of the research objectives, while others were created in a secondary moment, from unexpected findings in the answers of participants.

In the first phase, a manual reading of the transcripts was conducted, highlighting the relevant units of meaning. Subsequently, ChatGPT (OpenAI, 2025) was used as support for the preliminary classification of categories. This support allowed for an initial semantic reorganization of the material. Finally, the data has been manually checked and reorganized, to ensure fidelity to the original content.

5. Data Analysis

This chapter presents the results of the survey, with the aim of exploring how to access the audiovisual market in Portugal, networking practices, and the main structural challenges, as well as distinguishing which critical issues are specific to the Portuguese context and which, on the other hand, characterize the audiovisual sector in general. It also analyzes the perception of digital platforms and online communities, assessing their role as tools for visibility, collaboration, and professional development.

5,1 Quantitative analysis

The questionnaire had been designed to collect both the demographic data to create the sample and concrete answers on the needs and feelings of participants regarding opportunities and career in the audiovisual, especially in Portugal.

It is important to note that some participants have selected more than three options, even where three was indicated as the maximum possible. These answers were kept anyways, as they were consistent with the question and recurrent in the dataset, without compromising overall validity.

Sample profile and demographic data

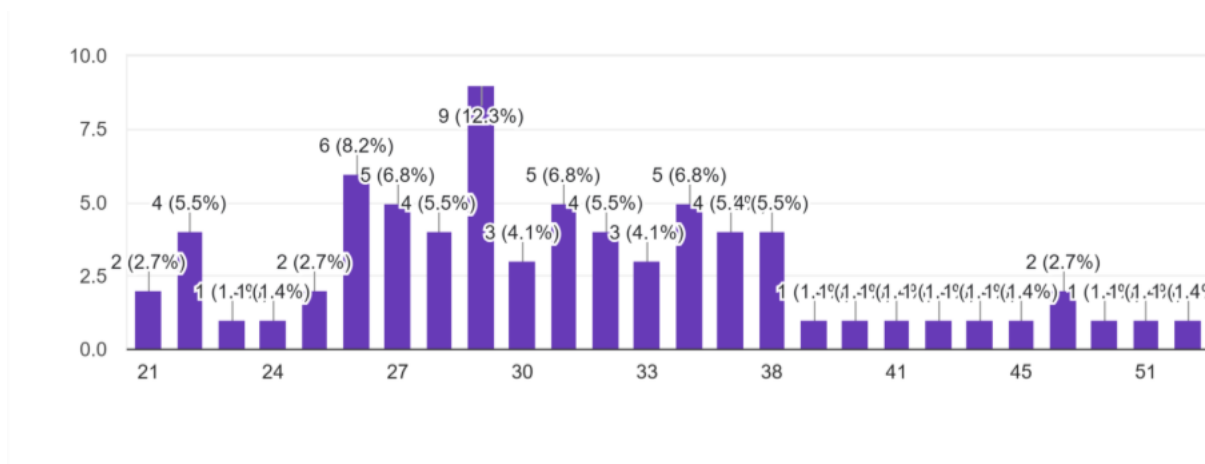


Figure 3. Age

The sample is mainly distributed in the 25-30 age group, with the majority of the participants being young adults.

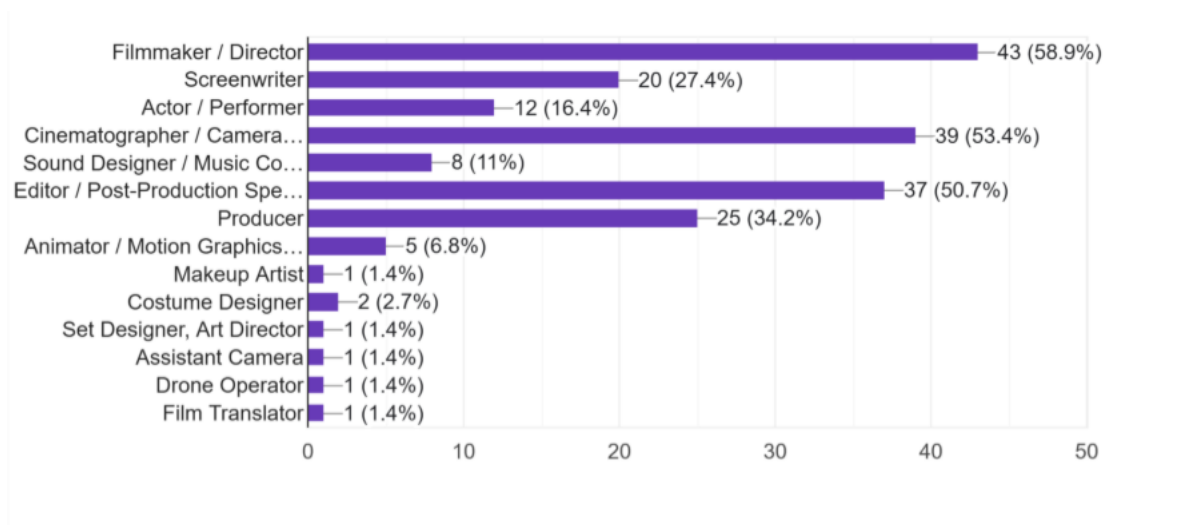


Figure 4. Main role

When asked about the roles they play in the audiovisual sector (multiple answers possible), the majority identified themselves as filmmakers/ directors, followed by cinematographers/ camera operators, editors, screenwriters, producers, and actors.

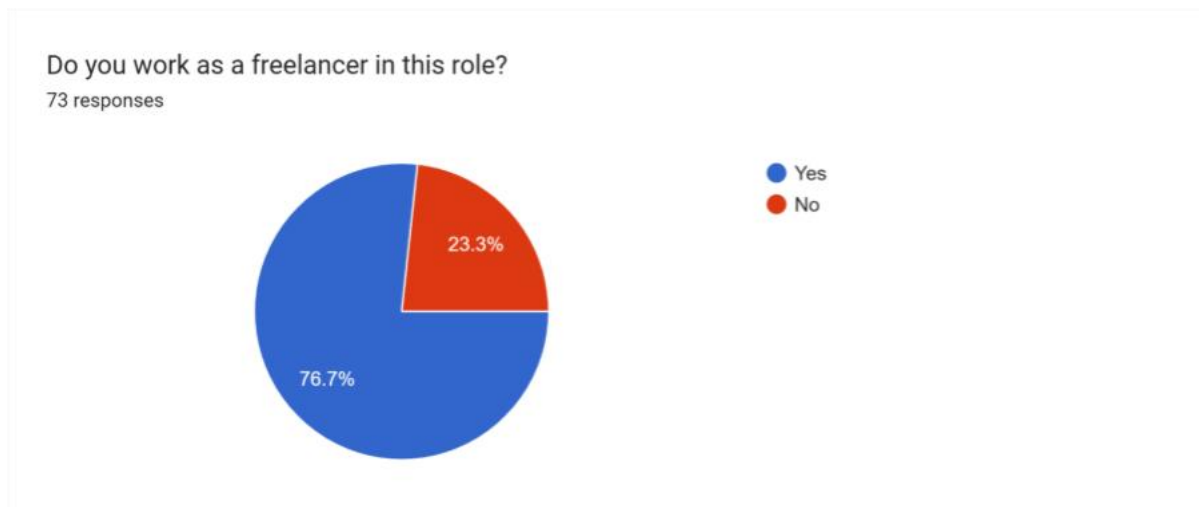


Figure 5. Freelancer status

A significant proportion of the participants indicated that they work as freelancer.

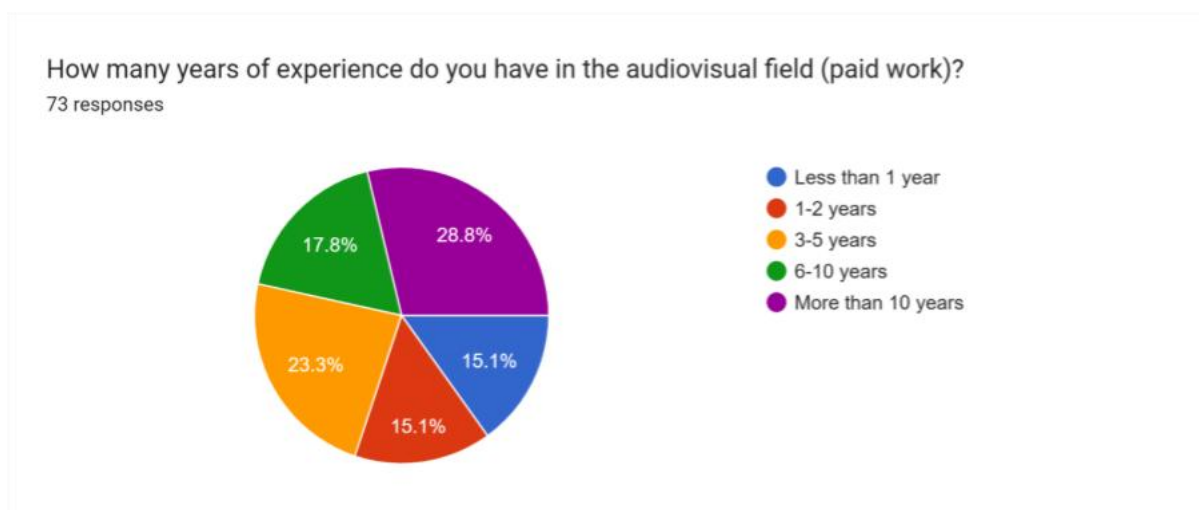


Figure 6. Years of experience

The distribution of responses shows a strong presence of participants with less than five years of paid experience, balanced by an almost equal number of professionals with more than five years of practice, with the largest group being represented by those with over ten years of experience. Overall, the sample includes a wide range of profiles, which provides a well-rounded representation of the audiovisual industry networks in Portugal.

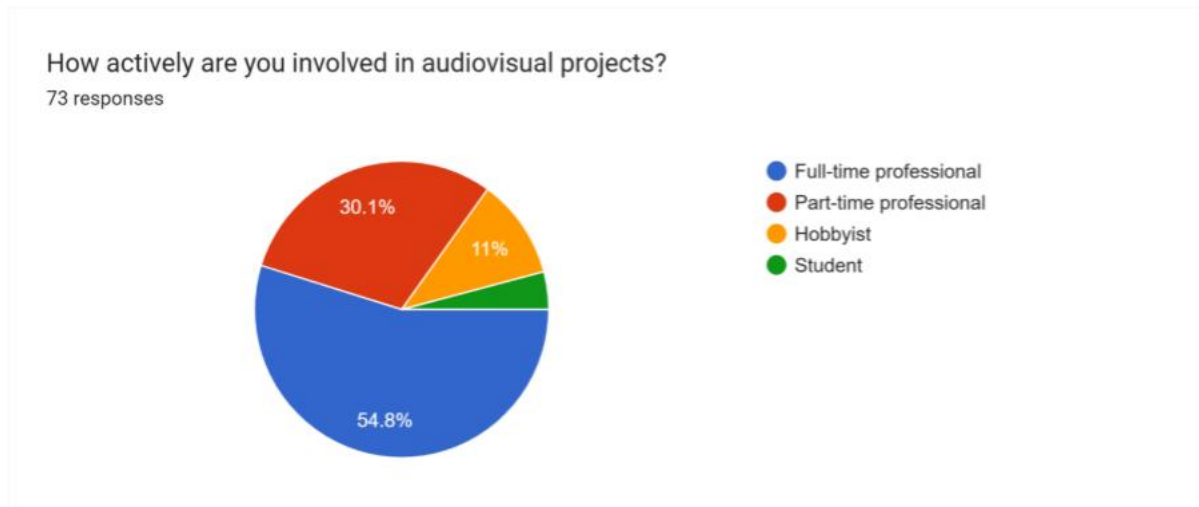


Figure 7. Level of experience

The graph shows that most of the professionals who took part in the study work full-time in the audiovisual sector. However, almost half of the sample is composed of part-time professionals, students, and hobbyists. This suggests that the target community has a balanced composition, bringing together both creatives who earn their living from audiovisual work and individuals who approach it in a more flexible or exploratory way.

Questionnaire results

After outlining the socio-professional profile of the sample, the graphs in the questionnaire allow to explore some key aspects related to networking practices and perceptions of the audiovisual sector.

Which social media platforms fo you actively use for professional networking?

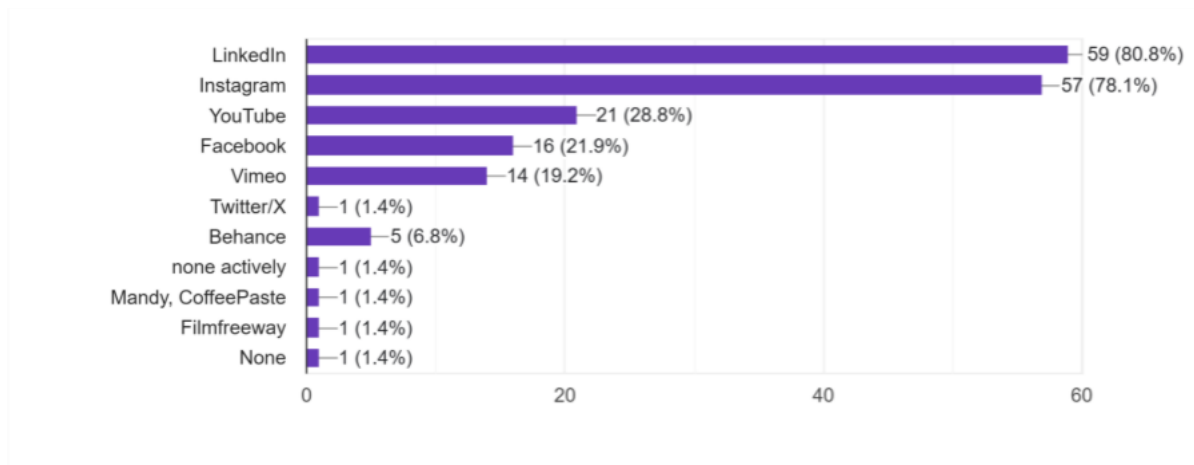


Figure 8. Bar chart on social media used to network

When asked, “Which social media platforms do you actively use for professional networking?”, LinkedIn emerged as the clear leader, followed by Instagram and, to a lesser extent, YouTube and Facebook. Other tools such as Vimeo and Behance appeared. This confirms that, despite the existence of vertical platforms, professionals in the sector continue to rely on generalist social media platforms.

What are the biggest challenges you face when using existing social media platforms for showcasing your audiovisual work?

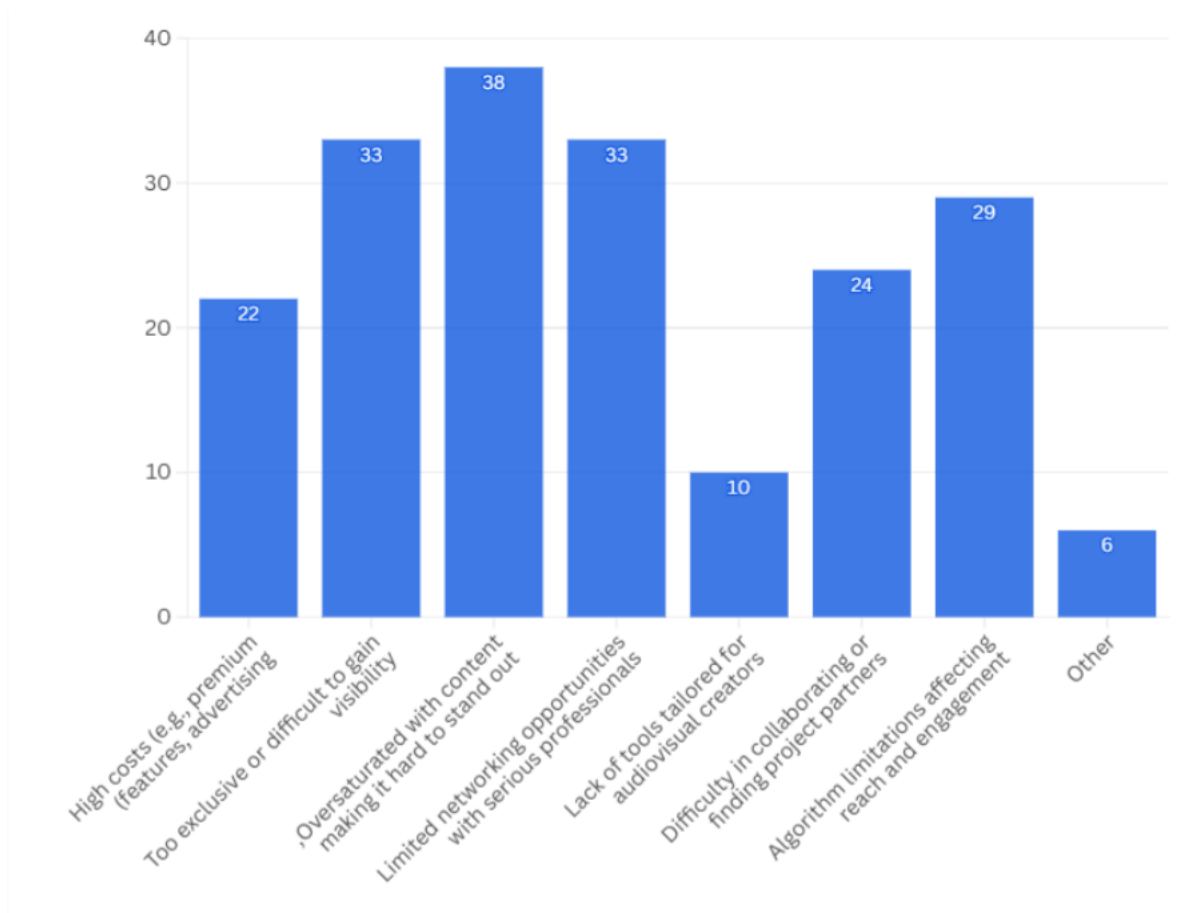


Figure 9. Column chart on the challenges faced when using social media

The results of this question highlight some common critical issues related to the use of social platforms for professional visibility in the audiovisual sector.

The most frequently reported problem concerns content oversaturation in current social media platforms (38), which makes it difficult for creatives to stand out and gain visibility. This is followed by the perception that many platforms are too exclusive or difficult to use in order to get noticed (33), as well as a lack of networking opportunities with serious and reliable professionals (33).

A significant number of participants also highlighted the lack of tools specifically designed for audiovisual creators (29) and the limitations of algorithms (24), which are perceived as an obstacle to reaching and engaging the right audience. To a lesser extent, the high costs associated with premium features or advertising (22) and the difficulties in collaborating or finding project partners

(10) were also mentioned. Only a small proportion (6) indicated other challenges not included in the options proposed.

In this section, some participants reported additional difficulties that are worth mentioning because they highlight relevant aspects of their everyday experience. These include a lack of time and patience to maintain a high-quality online presence (“it’s a full-time job”), personal resistance or inconsistency in promoting one’s work, the effort of having to create promotional content in addition to the artistic content already produced, and ego management. Although less frequent, these responses enrich the picture of perceived challenges and confirm that online promotion requires a commitment that goes beyond creative skills alone. Overall, these data show that the limitations of existing platforms are perceived more in structural terms (oversaturation, algorithms, lack of adequate tools) than in economic terms, suggesting that the main barrier is not so much access as the possibility of emerging and building meaningful professional relationships.

How do you currently showcase your audiovisual work?

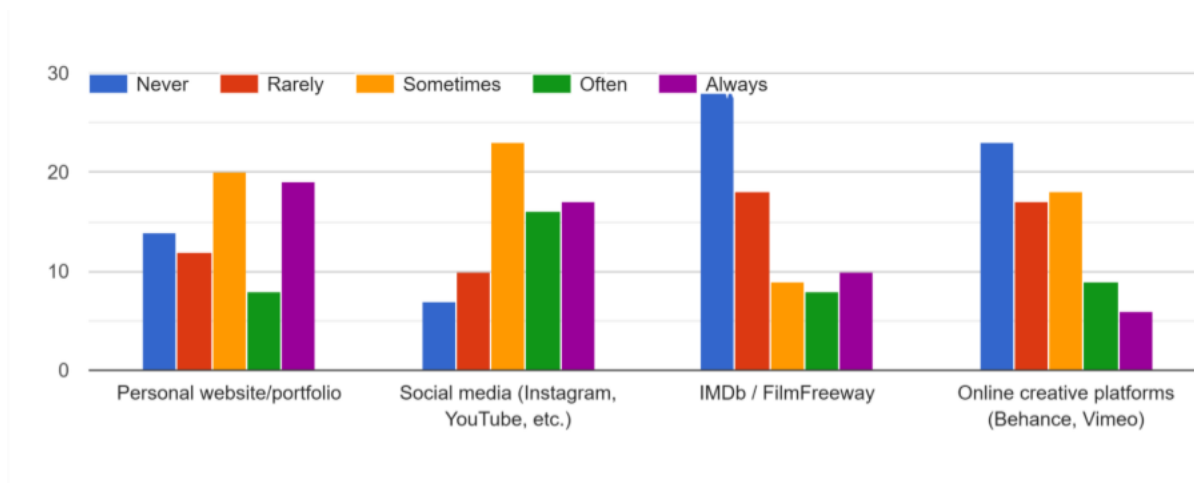


Figure 10. Multiple column charts on methods to showcase audiovisual work

The data collected shows that the most commonly used platforms for showcasing audiovisual work are social media (Instagram, YouTube, etc.), where the majority of participants say they share their projects “sometimes,” “often,” or “always.” Personal websites or portfolios are also used with some regularity, although there is a more balanced distribution between those who use them sporadically and those who use them consistently.

In contrast, IMDb and FilmFreeway are the least used tools: most respondents say they never or rarely use them. Online creative platforms such as Behance or Vimeo occupy an intermediate position, with a significant proportion of participants using them only occasionally.

What are your biggest challenges working in the audiovisual industry?

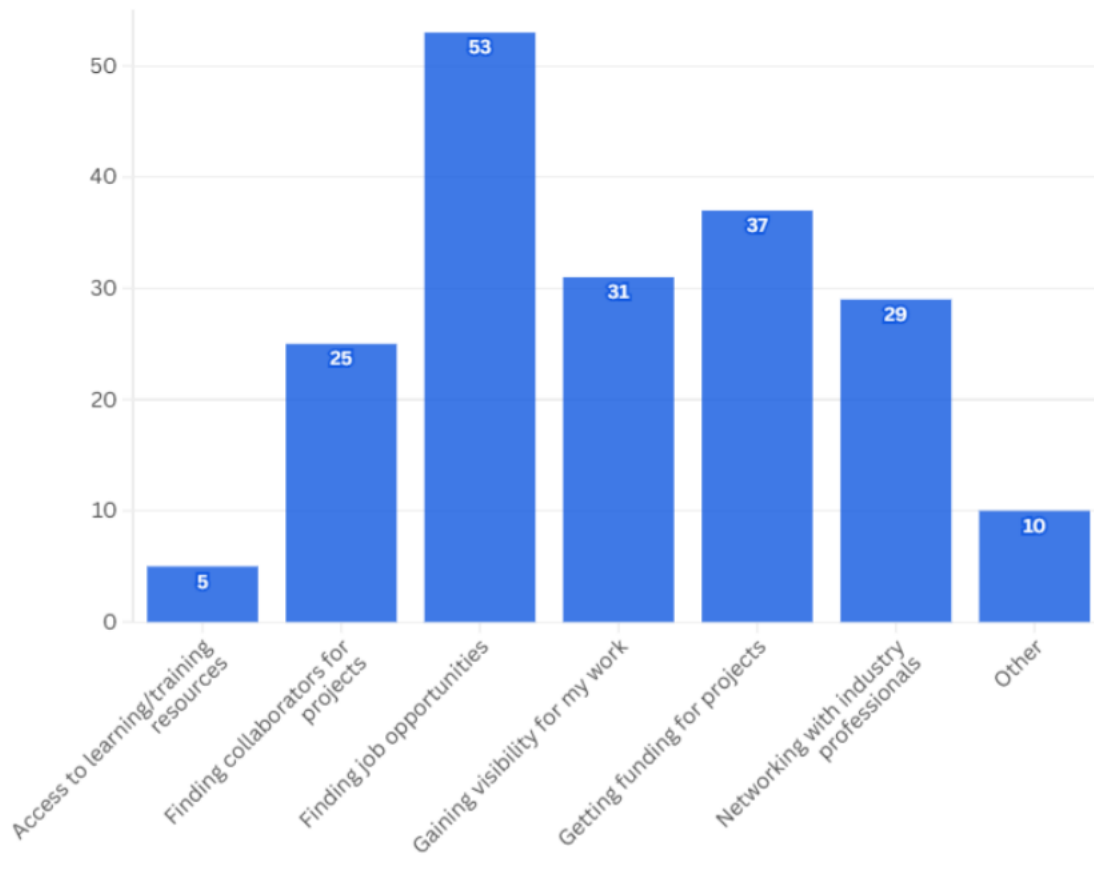


Figure 11. Column chart on the main challenges working in the audiovisual industry

The data shows that the most significant difficulty for participants is finding job opportunities (53), followed by seeking funding for projects (37) and the need to gain visibility for their work (31). Networking with other professionals in the sector (29) is also considered a significant obstacle, while less frequent but still present challenges include finding collaborators for projects (25) and accessing training resources (5).

The “Other” category includes significant responses that did not fit into the pre-existing options. Most of these highlight the problem of low pay and unfair working conditions, with references to

the difficulty of finding clients who pay adequately or to workloads that compromise the work-life balance. Another response highlighted more specific obstacles, such as pressure to take on multiple roles without adequate recognition: “Um dos maiores desafios é a exigência de um conhecimento generalista para muitas vagas. Em vez de valorizar especialistas em áreas específicas, o mercado frequentemente espera que um único profissional acumule diversas funções, como roteiro, direção, edição, produção e até gestão de redes sociais. Isso desvaloriza a especialização, sobrecarrega os profissionais e torna o mercado ainda mais competitivo, muitas vezes sem a devida compensação financeira.”

One participant wrote as one of the biggest challenges “the mafia mentality.” and it was probably referred to the the closed, relational, and exclusive nature that many recognize in the Portuguese audiovisual sector.

Although these elements emerged in the Other section, they offer valuable insights because they reflect structural issues perceived by several participants.

How do you usually find collaborators for your audiovisual projects?

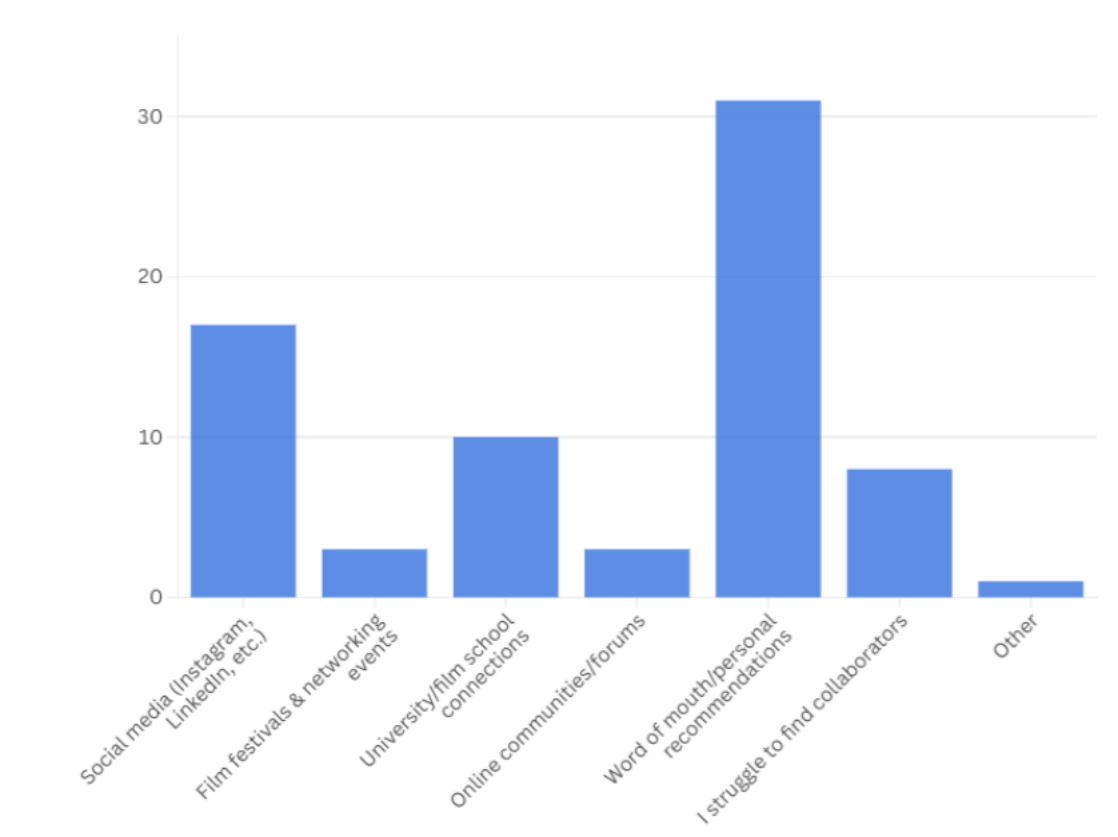


Figure 12. Column chart on methods to find collaborators

The answers to this question clearly show that the most common channel for finding collaborators remains word of mouth and personal recommendations (31). Next come social media such as Instagram or LinkedIn (17), followed by contacts made at universities or film schools (10). To a lesser extent, festivals and networking events (3) and online communities/forums (3) are also used. A significant proportion of respondents (8) said they had difficulty finding collaborators.

Which type of collaboration opportunities interest you the most at the moment?

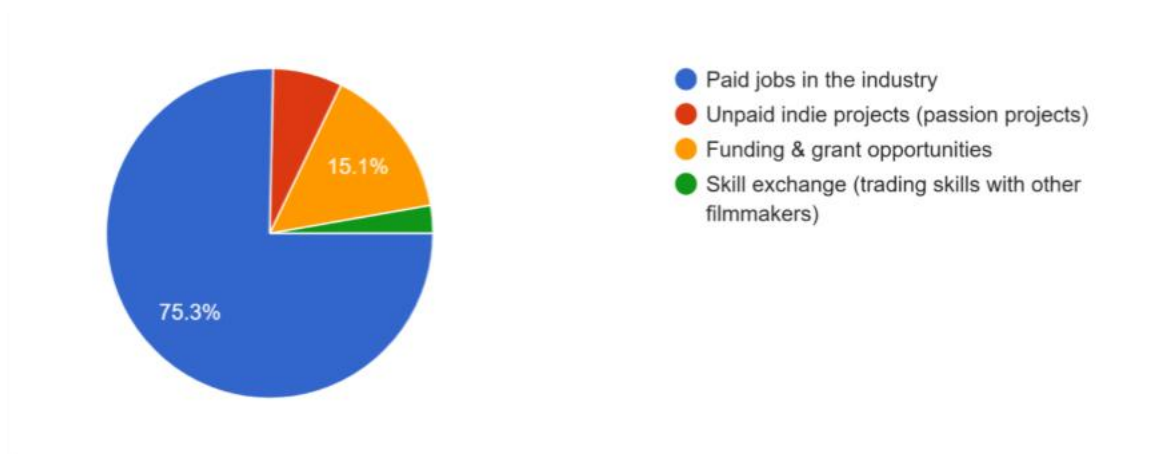


Figure 13. Pie chart on best collaboration opportunities

The results highlight a clear priority: 75.3% of participants are mainly interested in paid collaborations in the sector. Much less relevant, but still present, are opportunities related to funding and calls for proposals (15.1%), followed by unpaid independent projects (6.8%) and the exchange of skills between filmmakers (2.7%).

This data highlights how economic stability is perceived as the most urgent need, while other types of collaboration, although appreciated, take on a secondary role.

Which factor would motivate you the most to join a new online platform for filmmakers?

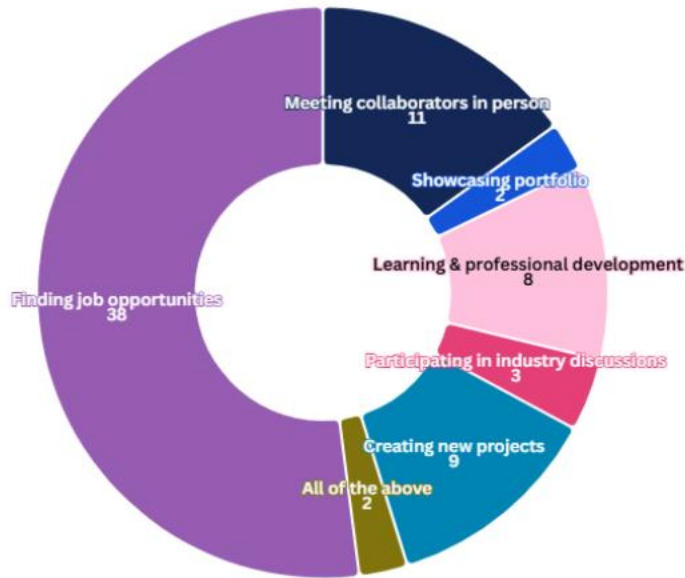


Figure 14. Pie chart on motivation factors to join a new online platform

More than half the participants (38) indicates the possibility of finding job opportunities as the main motivation. This is followed, by an interest in meeting collaborators in person (11), creating new projects (9), and learning and professional development activities (8). Other factors, such as participating in industry discussions or presenting portfolios, appear to be less frequent. Two responses were also recorded in the ‘Other’ category as “All of the above”.

Would you prefer an online community primarily focused on industry career growth, indie passion projects, or a mix of both?

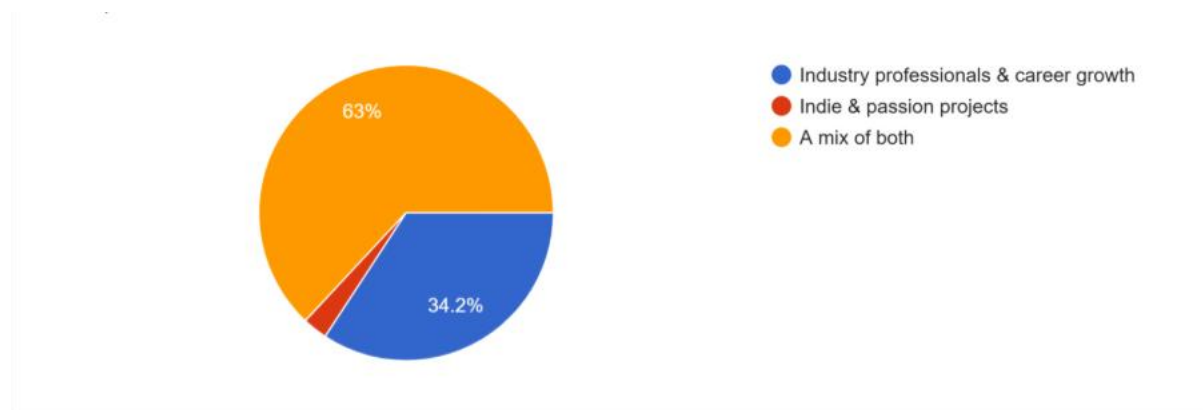


Figure 15. Pie chart on preferred focus of an online community

The graph reports an absolute majority (63%) which prefers a community that offers a mix of independent projects and professional growth, although it is clear that, a significant proportion (34.2%) prefers a space focused primarily on industry professionals and career development, over a community geared toward indie and passion projects.

Which features would you consider essential in a platform designed for filmmakers?

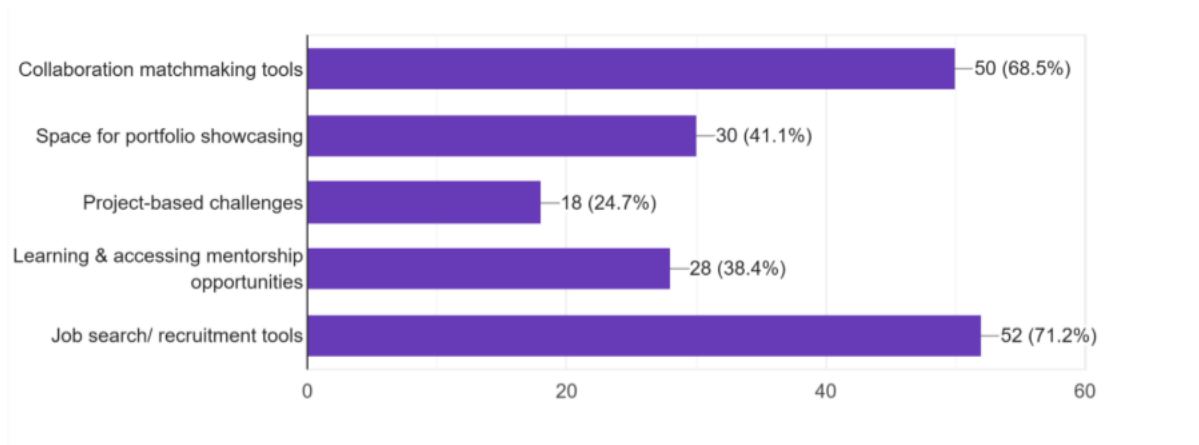


Figure 16. Bar chart on essential features in a platform designed for filmmakers

The features considered most essential are job search and recruitment tools (71.2%) and matchmaking tools for collaborations (68.5%). These are followed, with intermediate values, by the possibility of showcasing portfolios (41.1%) and accessing training or mentorship opportunities (38.4%). Design challenges are less of a priority, indicated by only 24.7% of respondents.

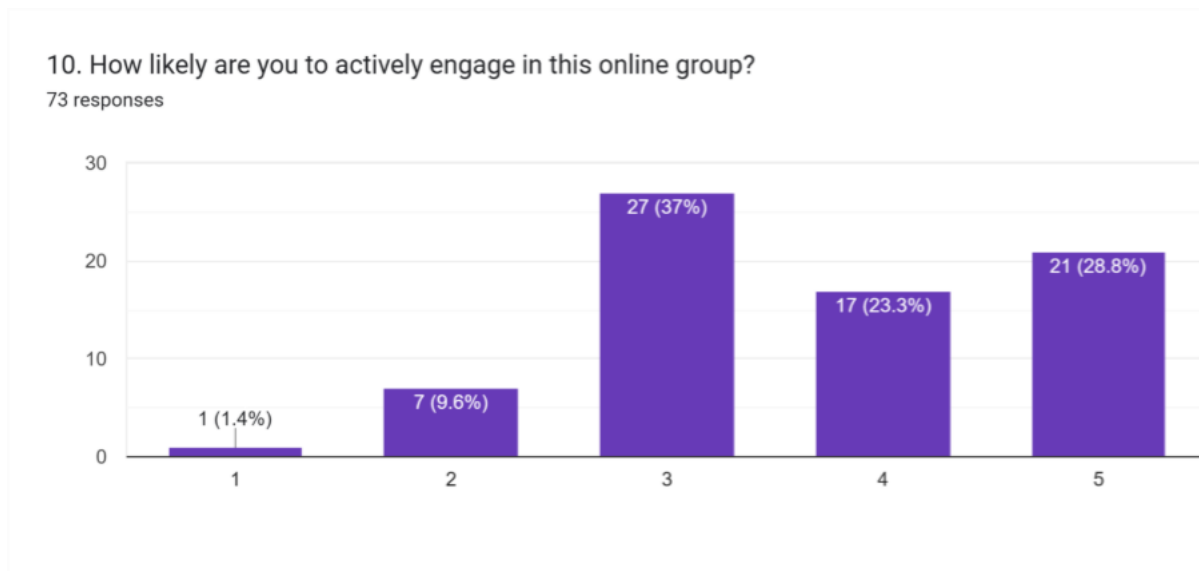


Figure 17. Column chart level of engagement (Likert scale)

The majority of participants express a medium-high level of willingness to engage: 37% give a score of 3 out of 5, 23.3% give a score of 4, and 28.8% give the maximum score of 5. Only a minority give lower scores (1.4% give a score of 1 and 9.6% give a score of 2). This indicates an overall positive propensity towards active participation.

In summary, the quantitative results provide a clear picture of the main needs and motivations of audiovisual professionals and aspiring professionals: difficulties related to visibility, access to work, and funding emerge, but also a strong demand for spaces that facilitate networking, collaborations, and concrete opportunities for growth. At the same time, the data show a positive willingness to actively participate in new online communities, provided that they respond in a targeted manner to these needs.

5.2 Qualitative Analysis

After outlining the general trends that emerged from the questionnaire, the qualitative analysis of the interviews allows us to explore the motivations and experiences behind these patterns in greater depth, offering a more contextualized understanding.

The qualitative analysis aims to go beyond the descriptive dimension of the questionnaire, highlighting the motivations, experiences, and critical issues that define the daily experience of audiovisual professionals.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted and analyzed using the thematic analysis method (Braun & Clarke, 2006). According to This approach made it possible to identify recurring patterns and significant differences within the narratives, combining:

- *a priori* codes, defined on the basis of the research objectives and the interview outline;
- *a posteriori* codes, which emerged spontaneously during the analysis of the transcripts.

In this investigation, a mixed categorisation process was followed (Bardin, 2011). Most of the main categories were defined *a priori*, as they correspond to the questions explicitly asked in the interviews and through questionnaires, (e.g., networking practices). However, most of the subcategories corresponded to a code created *a posteriori*, as they derived directly from the interviews, without any previous theoretical support or within the initial objectives of the research.

Participants interviewed

A total of 25 interviews were conducted, but 21 were considered for the complete analysis. Some participants did not give their consent to the use of their data, while in other cases the participants didn't complete the quantitative questionnaire, which was necessary to ensure comparability between the different profiles.

Overall, the demographic sample, as shown in Table 3 (see Table 3, in Appendix A) is quite diverse in terms of age, role, and level of experience. The distribution by experience shows a good balance: several participants have over ten years of career experience, while others are in the early stages, such as students, hobbyists, or professionals with one or two years of experience.

From an employment perspective, full-time professionals prevail, but there are also many part-time workers and a few students. The vast majority work as freelancers, confirming the importance of this working condition in the Portuguese audiovisual sector. Finally, the participants are mainly located in Lisbon and its surroundings, with a few exceptions.

Answers from the semi-structured interviews

The dimensions, categories and subcategories presented here, were created based on the answers of the participants to the semi-structured interview according to 5 dimensions or macro-categories: Dimension 1: challenges in the audiovisual market; Dimension 2: the portuguese audiovisual market; Dimension 3: networking practices; Dimension 4: Platform usage; Dimension 5: Cinecore

as community. These themes were pre-selected to guide the interview, while some categories and subcategories emerged during the analysis process.

Dimension I: Structural and Professional Challenges in the Audiovisual Market

This first thematic area does not directly address the specific critical issues of the Portuguese market, but rather the general challenges that characterize the audiovisual sector as a whole, although observed through the experiences of professionals working in Portugal. In this sense, this dimension serves above all to highlight the issues that remain specific to the audiovisual industry in general, while the next section will explore the specific challenges of the Portuguese context in greater depth.

The dimension has been divided into three sections:

- Difficulties in accessing the market;
- Challenges related to working in the sector;
- Cross-cutting challenges, common to both

For those entering the market, the most common challenge is restricted access: the industry is heavily dominated by networking, and it is often easier to enter through pre-existing relationships than through official channels. One participant, however, pointed out that for them the main obstacle is not the local market, but seizing international opportunities.

Among those already working in the sector, another issue expressed by a participant, concerns educating customers by explaining the actual commitment of time, resources, and equipment required to produce even a short video. At the same time, two interviewees highlighted that the success of an audiovisual project depends very much on elements such as mutual respect, the ability to collaborate, and soft skills.

Among the categories for both working in and accessing the market, eight participants reported the low social and professional consideration of audiovisual-related jobs, which are considered a passion or side job, especially in the case of freelancers.

Two interviewees also drew attention to the impact of artificial intelligence which risks replacing basic tasks in the creative industries and create uncertainty about the future of many positions in the film industry.

The interviews therefore reveal that working in the audiovisual sector already presents significant obstacles, especially for those working as freelancers. For example, as one participant pointed out: “Most of all, I am a freelancer... one of the challenges... is that we need to find our place in the market... Sometimes ...instead of learn(ing) how to become better in one craft, we need to do it all in order to sustain as a professional.” (F)

Dimension II: Specific Conditions of the Portuguese Audiovisual Market

This second section focuses on the specific characteristics of the Portuguese context, as revealed by the interviewees' testimonies. Almost all professionals emphasized that the national market is small, fragmented, and concentrated mainly in Lisbon, with very high competition for a limited number of opportunities. The theme was divided into 5 main categories.

A small and fragmented market

Many participants pointed out that there are few projects and productions in Portugal and often managed by the same professionals or companies. This makes access difficult for anyone to get opportunities in the industry. The market is perceived to be saturated, as one participant states “The number of shows per year... it’s quite low. And the market already has a lot of talented people, so that’s why it’s like, I can say that it’s a saturated market. (...) I met like several film directors like ‘yeah, I’m working as a customer service agent in the morning and then I’m a film director by night’. (...) that’s the right thing to do, but if there’s [was] like a big production market here [not audible], none of those talents will be need[ed] to do that.” (N). Outside Lisbon, opportunities are even more limited, creating a strong regional imbalance. In addition, there is a perceived separation between the commercial sector (advertising, branded content) and the film industry, which rarely interact or share resources.

Closed and competitive networks

The Portuguese market is described as dominated by exclusive networks, where access depends more on personal connections than on transparent processes. This creates a highly competitive environment, and one that is also perceived as “closed,” which discourages beginners. As reported by one of the participants, “Jobs that are with bigger budgets—which are not enough—they seem to be going to always the same people, the same professionals, with the same productions.” (F)

Another one states: “basically, all the investments that, I don't know, [I.] or other institutions make are almost always for the same people.” (P)

Informality and lack of standards

Another recurring issue is the lack of standardized professional practices: no insurance, unclear contracts, low or late payments. These characteristics increase vulnerability, especially for freelancers and young professionals.

“In Portugal, mainly, the biggest problem would be the wages, the salaries. They are very low, because most people don't understand how much work goes into making a video, even if it's a simple little video of 4 minutes” (I)

Funding

The issue of funding is central and comes up in almost all interviews. The majority of respondents emphasize the heavy dependence on public funds when it comes to financing audiovisual projects, which are difficult for newcomers to access and often insufficient to cover actual production costs. Private investment is rare, and the funds available almost always end up supporting established professionals. Some resort to self-financing or crowdfunding, but these are partial solutions that cannot guarantee long-term sustainability. As alternatives to public funding, cases of support from brands are also mentioned, as well as the importance of incentives to attract foreign productions (e.g., cash rebates).

Comparison with other countries

The international comparison highlights more the structural limitations in Portugal. Spain is seen as more solid and structured, with more funds and more productions; in the UK and US, processes are perceived as more standardized and payments more punctual; in Brazil, there are more accessible and diversified incentives, although in a much more fragmented context. However, a few participants also recognize advantages: Europe invests more in culture than Brazil, and paradoxically, Lisbon's small size can make it easier to get in touch with the right people, at least compared to megacities such as São Paulo.

Dimension III. Networking Practices and Professional Connections

Because networking plays a central role in accessing opportunities, the third theme focuses on the participants' networking habits. Respondents agree that, in the absence of official channels, building relationships remains the most effective way to access collaborations and projects.

Word of mouth and direct contacts

Word of mouth is cited as the most frequent and reliable way to get involved in a project. Many professionals say they find work through friends, former colleagues, schools, and so on. As one respondent states “Most of the things that I've gotten have been through friends that I've known or connections that I've made in a previous project—and always gone from there.” (D)

Social media

Among social media platforms, Instagram is the most popular tool for keeping in touch after real-life meetings, while LinkedIn is perceived as the most “serious” and useful environment for discovering new opportunities or presenting oneself in a professional manner. In some cases, Facebook or other platforms are also mentioned, which are particularly useful, however some platforms are more used in other countries such as the UK

Events and formal contexts

Events especially festivals but also workshops and other industry events are crucial for networking and that is where most people find collaborators for indie projects. As a participant reports, “As pessoas que eu conheci aqui do cinema, do audiovisual, foi porque trabalhei num espaço de cinema, e aí conheci as pessoas dali” (E)

Networking challenges

However, networking is not without its difficulties. On the one hand, the industry tends to rely on small circles of trust, which are difficult to enter for those who do not already have a name or established contacts. On the other hand, some interviewees described networking as socially demanding: it requires energy, self-promotion skills, and a willingness to interact constantly, aspects that not everyone finds natural. In addition, the costs associated with participating in some festivals or events can be a further obstacle.

Dimension IV. Use of Digital Platforms for Work and Collaboration

Two main categories emerge from the analysis of the interviews: first the gaps of the most common social media platforms currently available have been identified, the second category collects the features that professionals would like to see in a platform dedicated to audiovisual content.

Gaps e Criticism

Respondents highlight various limitations of the platforms currently in use. First, participants claim there is no option to perform targeted searches using tags and advanced filters in most of the platforms. A second problem concerns high costs to use some niche social media, as in the case of Stage32: “Premium subscription is €36–40, I think it's a lot” (A). In addition, some platforms such as LinkedIn, despite being useful for searching, can feel too “corporate,” for users who are creatives. “Feels a bit alien to a creative” (F). Another issue is the presence of too many different platforms, which leads to dispersion: “Problem is several platforms and you don't know which one to go” (U).

Desired features on a new platform

Some recurring requests clearly emerged, centered on the need for transparency, organization, and professionalism in a platform designed for audiovisual artists. The most requested features include:

Filters and advanced search by role, skills, budget, city, availability, and even recommendations; (9)

- Integrated portfolio and links to previous work, to avoid lengthy registration procedures: “Plataforma fácil de entrar e registrar, ... Seria interessante talvez ter algum tipo de integração que pudesse integrar o seu perfil do LinkedIn, ...para ficar de fácil registro na plataforma. Acho que muitas vezes as pessoas não se registram porque não querem passar por esse passo a passo de colocar os dados e tudo.” (G) (7)
- Project pages with the possibility to apply for open roles, see the teams involved, and receive direct messages: “Imagine: ‘we need a production manager,’ people can apply” (U). (5)
- Direct matching between supply and demand, between users seeking for other professionals, but also towards production studios and other services, with the possibility

of real-time interactions: "It would be great to have a place... to contact the studios and the productions directly, you know, instead of just sending an email" (O) (4)

- Transparency on budgets and clarity on daily or overall rates: "maybe daily rate of the person. For example, I think we as the creatives, we are afraid of sharing, of talking about the prices.." (T) (3)

Dimension V. Community Features and Dynamics

The theme of community highlights the widely shared need for spaces that are not only functional for work, but also capable of fostering exchange, mutual support, and collective growth. The section is divided into four categories: participants' perceptions of WhatsApp as the current main space for community interaction, the potential red flags or obstacles that could push them to leave, their attitudes toward a mix of beginners and experienced professionals, and their preferences regarding event formats, particularly informal meetups organized within the community.

WhatsApp as the basis of the community

Many respondents consider WhatsApp to be an immediate and simple tool for starting networking groups: notifications arrive immediately, and communication is direct. However, some people warn of certain limitations related to privacy, information organization, and the risk of message overload. Some suggest more structured alternatives (e.g. Telegram, LinkedIn), which would allow conversations to be more organized.

Potential critical issues

Respondents reported several risks that could compromise the effectiveness of a digital community: the most common one is 'spam and irrelevant conversations', which make it difficult to follow truly useful content, followed by 'conflicts and negative tone', 'static and inactive groups', and 'private use of the group for personal purposes'.

Mix of beginners and professionals

Most respondents expressed a positive opinion on the idea of mixing junior and senior profiles. This mix can encourage knowledge sharing and mutual mentoring. However, one participant

warns against the risk of exploiting the less experienced from professionals in the area by offering a position last minute or with a low compensation.

Event formats

Events are considered a fundamental component for strengthening the community and building real connections. The most popular formats include:

- Informal networking meetings (coffee meetups, dinners, cocktail parties).
- Presentations with Q&A sessions, which allow creatives to showcase their projects and receive feedback.
- Continuity and regularity: small, frequent events are preferred to large, sporadic events.
- Small groups (15–25 people), which facilitate real interactions and in-depth dialogue.
- Structured conversations, which avoids going off topic and awkwardness
- Visits to studios or production sets, seen as learning opportunities for those just starting out.
- Side events such as after parties, linked to major industry events, which allow to take advantage of important gatherings and create a more intimate and informal space to connect.

In summary, quantitative and qualitative analysis confirms that audiovisual professionals and aspiring professionals share common needs: greater access to job opportunities and funding, more suitable tools for managing collaborations and portfolios, and community spaces that balance networking, mutual support, and collective growth. Compared to the quantitative research, the qualitative analysis adds the possibility of gaining a deeper understanding of the dynamics of the Portuguese market, including through comparisons with other contexts (such as Spain and Brazil). Additionally, the qualitative analysis reported concrete examples that allowed to distinguish which challenges are related to the Portuguese market situation and which are not.

6. Discussion

6.1 Structural weaknesses in the Portuguese audiovisual market

The mixed-method analysis reveals a solid picture, in which the challenges reported transcended roles, levels of experience, age and country of origin.

One of the main findings confirmed by both questionnaire results and interviews, is the importance of personal networks: both senior and younger professionals recognize that word of mouth and personal connections matter more than official channels, at least in Portugal.

Another issue concerns informality and the lack of standards. B, a Portuguese line producer with over eighteen years of experience, spoke of a “lack of rules in the business” and the absence of standardized career paths; T, a full-time professional with over ten years of experience, also emphasized the frequency of late payments. The fact that such issues are raised by senior and established figures shows that economic and contractual precariousness does not only affect young people, but the entire sector. The same logic applies to the issue of low wages and the undervaluation of creative work, as reported by I and J, while those with international experience, such as C, who studies in London, or F, who returned to Portugal after thirteen years in Scotland, observed how the same services are better recognized and remunerated in contexts such as the United Kingdom or Australia.

Another indicator of the structural fragility of the Portuguese audiovisual market is confirmed by the issues with obtaining financial aid for both national and independent audiovisual productions.

Portuguese market: both Portuguese (B, O) and foreign participants (N, J) emphasized the dependence of Portuguese cinema on public funds, the difficulty of access faced by beginners, and the poor economic return on investment, which often fails to cover production costs.

While there is no empirical confirmation about a poor ROI, at least in Portugal, as showed in chapter 3, the reports of the CresCine (2025) official website, confirm how the sector is strongly dependent on public funding.

Interestingly, participants also highlighted the lack of a dedicated platform at the national level for accessing audiovisual work. This topic was not included as an explicit question in the questionnaire, but it emerged spontaneously, highlighting its relevance. Some respondents with

experience in the UK (C, K) referred to platforms like Spotlight, which play a fundamental role in coordinating job offers and casting in larger markets. This comparison highlights the existing gap with the Portuguese reality, where similar tools are not available. Other structural elements that emerge from the testimonies concern regional imbalances, mechanisms of exclusion, and a strong concentration of decision-making power in a few individuals or institutions. The combination of a lack of incentives, dependence on state funding, and the low economic valuation of creative work produces concrete effects such as precariousness and underfunded projects, and thus a widespread perception of instability.

The advance of artificial intelligence adds further pressure, reducing even further opportunities for more junior profiles and reducing margins for entry-level jobs.

In summary, the data analysis confirms that the sector's challenges stem not only from a small market size but also from the lack of connecting tools – both internally, between the different segments, and externally, in relation to international circuits.

The case of Portugal proves that in small and fragmented contexts, social networks take on greater importance than formal channels, making access based on relational capital more than on merit. Recommendations and word of mouth are dominant, thus being inevitably exclusionary. Therefore, it is important to implement mechanisms that break the logic of closed circles and increase the visibility of opportunities.

6.2 Networking and Platform usage

Concerning the use and perceptions of digital platforms, some interesting differences have been captured between the findings of the questionnaires and qualitative interviews. In both cases, the most widely used platforms remain the common ones: Instagram, seen as a channel for maintaining contacts already established in real life and showcasing some projects; LinkedIn, useful for more formal use or for contacting professionals; and WhatsApp, an everyday tool for quick and direct communication.

Moreover, in the questionnaires, LinkedIn emerged as the most widely used platform, while in the interviews it is also described as “too corporate” or “alien to creatives” (F, H). This shows that

LinkedIn is used in this field only because it is unavoidable to enter professional work environments, and there is no alternative.

Regarding the desired features in a new platform dedicated to audiovisual projects and collaborations, the collected data shows complementary perspectives between questionnaires and interviews.

From a quantitative perspective, the most requested function was related to job recruitment, followed by matching tools for collaboration. Considering the precariousness of the audiovisual sector, and particularly the case of Portugal, it is understandable that the search for professional opportunities emerges as the main motivation for joining such a community. The same need was, in fact, highlighted in more than one question on the questionnaire.

The interviews, on the other hand, showed a more articulated range of proposals that reflect the daily needs of professionals. Specifically, the need for dedicated project pages has strongly emerged, where available roles can be identified and work can be done directly within the project, while also providing greater transparency regarding budgets. Another frequent need is the ability to easily access the portfolios, websites, and channels of creatives, avoiding the need to manually enter most of the data.

As the benchmarking revealed, platforms such as Stage32 only partially cover technical needs (database, matching, job board), but, as confirmed through the interviews, despite it being a worldwide network and rich with industry professionals, webinars and more, the high subscription cost and difficult user interface, make it almost inaccessible and exclusive.

On the other hand, local community initiatives, such as independent cinema groups in Lisbon, demonstrate the effectiveness of proximity and mutual trust which facilitate the networking process.

Cinecore stands between these two extremes, offering a ‘glocal’ model: starting with simple, community-based tools (WhatsApp, in-person events, shared rules), and then gradually evolving towards more complex technical functions (filters, databases, integrated portfolios).

6.3 Community growth

The data analysed in Chapter 3 on the WhatsApp group show that the community is still in its early stages, but is characterised by strong interest from its members. Growth has developed organically: In addition to the people contacted directly during the research phase, several members invited colleagues and acquaintances, creating a multiplier effect that no longer depends solely on the founder's initiative.

Another relevant element concerns the style of participation. Interactions develop in cycles: periods of intense activity, followed by extended periods of silence. What might seem like a limitation actually turns out to be a functional balance. As also emerged from the interviews, several participants stated that they dislike the excessive messaging typical of WhatsApp groups and instead appreciate the fact that conversations remain relevant and related to the audiovisual context. In other words, "low noise" also encourages less active users to stay, maintaining a silent but potentially useful presence.

The group's stability is also strengthened by the rules, set out in the Portuguese and English descriptions and periodically shared in the chat, especially after moments of tension or episodes of excessive self-promotion. This self-regulation mechanism avoids chaos and preserves the relevance of content for the audiovisual sector.

Within this logic, even the smallest gestures have great value and impact: sharing a casting call, a link, or technical advice might seem like a marginal action, but in reality, it functions as a signal of social capital, generating trust and mutual recognition (Rheingold, 1993). Overall, the analysis shows that WhatsApp has been accepted primarily as a temporary tool, effective when accompanied by clear rules and minimal moderation. Without these elements, its limitations quickly become apparent: message overload, risk of spam, and organisational difficulties. The group is perceived as a "safe" and non-intrusive space where participation is not mandatory but remains useful as a potential resource.

In summary, the Cinecore case demonstrates how a digital community can gradually develop even in the absence of complex tools, based on minimal dynamics of cooperation, the ability to keep the conversation relevant, and the construction of shared social capital.

6.4 Cinecore as bridge between local community and global networks

This part of the discussion illustrates Cinecore's objectives in light of the interpretations that emerged from the quantitative and qualitative data collected.

From a structural perspective, the WhatsApp group and thematic subgroups remain the main digital support at the moment point. However, to overcome its limitations, Cinecore can be gradually supplemented by a website with an integrated forum, or by a standalone online forum, which would allow for the creation of a permanent archive of profiles, crew calls, and resources, ensuring continuity and a collective memory.

Unlike chats, where information quickly gets lost, a forum allows you to organise discussions by topic and make them searchable over time. This would result in a hybrid model: the immediacy and spontaneity of integrated chats with the stability and traceability of a digital space.

The community can also be strengthened through practices of collective trust. Verified post-project testimonials and Show & Tell moments – where the work speaks more than the profiles – allow us to move beyond the logic of individual self-promotion typical of digital platforms. These tools not only increase transparency but also value the community as shared social capital.

The digital space aims to host a bulletin board dedicated to public notices (ICA, municipalities), festival announcements, and casting opportunities, along with access to crowdfunding applications. Finally, even a small internal marketplace for renting or exchanging equipment can have a significant impact, facilitating economic sustainability and creating opportunities for practical peer-to-peer learning (G).

On a relational level, Cinecore can introduce vertical mentoring programs, in which more experienced professionals support those who are just starting out. The workshops represent a first concrete step: spaces where senior members share their skills with younger ones, creating opportunities to continue with personalised mentoring relationships. Even informal events, already organised in bars or cultural spaces, should be understood as moments of community team building: occasions where the convivial atmosphere facilitates the exchange of ideas and the formation of trusting relationships.

While Cinecore cannot solve the structural limitations of the Portuguese audiovisual sector, such as limited projects, low pay, and dependence on public funding, it can help soften their impact on independent filmmakers in Portugal, by building connections that go beyond national borders. The community gains visibility both online and offline, offering local creatives opportunities to connect with international producers, brands, and collaborators. Participation in festivals and in spaces open to global professionals reinforces this dimension.

Finally, Cinecore, positions itself as a hybrid alternative: professional yet accessible, digital yet based on in-person meetings, local yet globally oriented. It won't be able to change the structural constraints of the sector (few projects, low wages, dependence on the public), but it can build a social infrastructure capable of increasing transparency, trust, and the quality of interactions, laying the groundwork for a truly useful digital ecosystem for creatives in the future.

7. Conclusion

This dissertation set out to investigate the potential of hybrid communities to strengthen audiovisual collaboration in Portugal. At the heart of the research was Cinecore, a pilot community designed as Proof of Concept. The objectives were to understand the needs of audiovisual professionals and beginners, test the feasibility of a community originated digitally and reflect on the conditions under which such initiatives can contribute to mitigating structural weaknesses of the Portuguese audiovisual sector.

The data collected through questionnaires, interviews, and the WhatsApp PoC confirmed the original hypothesis: there is both demand and willingness to participate in spaces that offer visibility, trustworthy networking, and opportunities for collaboration. At the same time, the results highlighted significant gaps, such as the lack of structured platforms for job access, the perceived distance between cinema and other audiovisual domains (advertising, branded content, television), and the saturation of traditional networks concentrated in Lisbon.

As emerged from the literature review, hybrid communities represent an important alternative to purely online spaces. They not only offer more accessible forms of visibility than individual self-promotion but also facilitate effective networking by enabling real-life encounters. Such models allow participants to move beyond algorithmic visibility and create genuine relationships through

shared practices and interests. Cinecore positions itself precisely within this framework: as a hybrid community that combines the reach of digital platforms with the depth of face-to-face interaction, it aims to strengthen collaboration and provide audiovisual creatives with a collective space to connect, grow, and gain visibility together.

Although still in its early stages, Cinecore also highlighted that even simple tools are capable of generating interest and engagement when framed by clear rules and a shared sense of purpose. This dynamic resonates with Putnam's (2000) reflections on community life, where trust, reciprocity, and commonly accepted norms represent the essential foundations for building sustainable and meaningful networks.

7.1 Limitations and Future Research

This research also faces important limitations. Cinecore cannot, by itself, resolve the structural fragilities of the Portuguese audiovisual market, such as dependence on public funding, precarious working conditions, and unequal access to resources. The scale of the study, limited, also restricts the generalizability of results. Furthermore, the proof of concept relied on a single tool (WhatsApp), which despite being effective as a pilot, is not scalable as a long-term solution.

Future research should explore at least three directions:

- **Comparative studies** with other small European markets to test whether the dynamics identified in Portugal are replicated elsewhere.
- **Economic evaluation** of Portuguese cinema, to clarify the sustainability of the sector and to measure the real potential of communities in supporting independent production.

7.2 Final Remarks

In summary, this thesis has shown that where there is a shared desire for collaboration, individuals will find ways to connect. Cinecore, which began as an experiment on WhatsApp, has already proven its capacity to mobilize interest and foster participation.

At the same time, the model developed in Lisbon can be replicated in other European cities: the idea is to create a network of local communities, rooted in their respective territories through regular meetings and live initiatives, but connected by a common digital network. In this sense,

Cinecore presents itself as a glocal ecosystem, capable of combining the international dimension of the network with the irreplaceable value of proximity and direct contact.

Ultimately, the project contributes to both academic reflection and practical experimentation. Academically, it highlights the role of hybrid communities in mediating professional collaboration and sustaining creative ecosystems. While, on a practical level, by combining online connectivity with the value of face-to-face meetings, Cinecore offers a complementary support to networking and project development.

At the same time, the model developed in Lisbon can be replicated in other European cities: the idea is to create a network of local communities, rooted in their respective territories through regular meetings and live initiatives, but connected by a common digital network.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

Table 1. Demographic Variables of the Interviewees

Subject	Age	Location	Roles	Years of Experience	Freelance	Experience Level
A	29	Lisbon	Filmmaker, Screenwriter, Cinematographer, Producer	1–2 years	Yes	Part-time professional
B	49	Sintra	Filmmaker, Producer	More than 10 years	Yes	Full-time professional
C	22	London, UK	Filmmaker, Actor, Producer	Less than 1 year	No	Student
D	25	Lisbon	Sound, Producer	3–5 years	Yes	Part-time professional
E	26	Lisbon	Filmmaker, Screenwriter, Cinematographer	Less than 1 year	No	Full-time professional
F	35	Lisbon	Filmmaker, Cinematographer, Editor	3–5 years	Yes	Full-time professional
G	31	Lisbon	Cinematographer, Editor	6–10 years	Yes	Full-time professional
H	33	Lisbon	Filmmaker, Screenwriter,	More than 10 years	Yes	Full-time professional

			Actor, Cinematographer, Producer			
I	28	Portugal	Filmmaker, Cinematographer, Editor	6–10 years	Yes	Hobbyist
J	48	Lisbon	Filmmaker, Screenwriter, Cinematographer, Editor	More than 10 years	Yes	Full-time professional
K	44	Lisbon	Editor	More than 10 years	Yes	Full-time professional
L	28	Lisbon	Filmmaker, Screenwriter, Cinematographer, Editor, Producer	1–2 years	Yes	Part-time professional
M	35	Lisbon	Cinematographer, Editor	3–5 years	Yes	Part-time professional
N	38	Lisbon	Sound	More than 10 years	Yes	Full-time professional
O	29	Almada	Screenwriter	3–5 years	Yes	Part-time professional
P	29	Lisbon	Filmmaker, Screenwriter, Editor	6–10 years	Yes	Full-time professional

Q	48	Porto	Filmmaker, Screenwriter, Producer	More than 10 years	Yes	Part-time professional
R	38	Lisbon	Actor	1–2 years	Yes	Part-time professional
S	31	Lisbon	Filmmaker, Actor, Cinematographer, Editor, Producer	3–5 years	Yes	Part-time professional
T	33	Lisbon	Filmmaker, Cinematographer, Editor, Animator	More than 10 years	Yes	Full-time professional
U	27	Faro	Assistant Camera	3–5 years	Yes	Part-time professional

APPENDIX B

Dictionary of the Categories used to analyze the Interviews

Dimension I: Structural and Professional Challenges in the Audiovisual Market

Category/subcategory	Description	Participants	Quotes
1.1 Difficulties in accessing the market (a priori)			
1.1.1 Restricted and socially demanding network/circle (a posteriori)	Description of the industry as dominated by networking and often it's easier to have premade connections to enter in the field	B, C, F, H, M, N, S, U	In the creative field, it passes a lot ... through personal connections, and most of all, people with whom you had the affinity to work with. (C) / I always try and speak about my work confidently and promote myself, but sometimes you go through moments where you feel like that's an extra job and you might not be the best at promoting yourself, and that's why you're not seen by everyone. But I think you need to constantly keep up with these things. Work hard, but also work hard on promoting yourself. (F) / Em geral, ... para entrar neste mercado da produção é um pouco complicado sem ter uma filiação, um conhecimento lá. (S)
1.1.2. Accessing opportunities as filmmaker internationally and mobility barriers (a posteriori)	Description of bureaucratic and political difficulties related to visas limit the international mobility of film professionals. Although the European Union offers freedom of movement, the global context makes it increasingly difficult to move between countries for work.	C	I think the challenge mostly is the question of visas ... how the economy around filmmaking globally will work. (...) with ... the UK out of the European Union, my main concern is the type of visas and the type of work I can get as a filmmaker. (...) when you're in the European Union, it's a privilege because you can just work from Portugal to Poland and there's no boundaries, (...) because of the current global structure of how things are going, it's very, very hard for talents to jump around globally. (C)
1.2. Challenges related to working in the sector (a priori)			
1.2.1. Finding and ensuring teamwork and respect (a posteriori)	Indication that, in addition to technical skills, the experience of working on an audiovisual project depends heavily on mutual respect and interpersonal skills on set to ensure a healthy working environment.	C, U	There needs to be a huge common ground for respect. (C) / More important than the technical skills is the soft skills. How you deal with people, the teamwork on a film set, the empathy on a film set. If you know how to work with other people, or to collaborate on a film set, that will open more doors for you (U)

1.2.2. Talking about budgets (a posteriori)	Indication that talking openly about budgets is often perceived as difficult, but it is essential for recognizing the value of the work.	H	I think sometimes in audiovisual, people are shy about talking about budget. (H)
1.2.3. Educating clients (a posteriori)	Indication that one of the main challenges for those who work with clients, especially in branded content and advertising, is explaining the actual commitment of time, resources, and equipment required even for a short video	T	The biggest challenge that we have with clients ... it's to educate about what's behind each project and what kind of team do we need, the gear that we need. And all of this costs money (T)
1.3. Cross-cutting challenges, common to both (a priori)			
1.3.1. Low professional and social recognition for jobs in the AV industry (a posteriori)	Indication that many positions in the AV industry especially creative roles can be less valued and perceived as marginal	A, B, N, O, Q, P, S K	“ Sometimes, it's not considered a real job... like, people think it's just passion or a hobby (...) Passion doesn't pay... people have limited time.” (A)/ Most of us are freelancers, so we're always looking for jobs.” (B) / Most of all, I am a freelancer... one of the challenges... is that we need to find our place in the market... Sometimes ...instead of learn how to become better in one craft, we need to do it all in order to sustain as a professional.” (F) / “ Às vezes... a pessoa não sabe como valorizar a tua arte.” (S) / “ I met like several film directors like ‘ yeah, I'm working as a um customer service agent in the morning and then I'm a film director by night’ . Because in the end bills must be paid. ” (N) / “ Aqui quando surge uma vaga, você na verdade tem que saber fazer tudo.” (Q)
1.3.2. Impact of AI and emerging technologies (a posteriori)	Indication that the advancement of artificial intelligence especially in this industry creates uncertainty about the future of most audiovisual professions	G, J	O desafio atualmente a nível audiovisual em geral seria destacar o desafio da inteligência artificial e das novas tecnologias. Eu acho que é um momento de muita indefinição ainda... ao mesmo tempo que é entusiasmante é também preocupante. (G)

Dimension II: Specific Conditions of the Portuguese Audiovisual Market

Category/subcategory	Description	Participants	Quotes
2.1 Small and fragmented market (a posteriori)			
2.1.1. Saturated market with very few projects and productions (a priori)	Indication of limited number of professionals opportunities and too many professionals compared to the AV projects and job positions available (a priori)	D, F, J, K, N, U	It's a much smaller market and it's very closed. So, it's really hard to penetrate these more specific niches like TV and cinema. You have more space for filmmakers, for smaller projects — branded content, small commercials, music videos, stuff for internet. (J) / “ The number of shows per year... it’ s quite low. And the market already has a lot of talented people, so that’ s why it’ s like, I can say that it’ s a saturated market. (...) I met like several film directors like ‘ yeah, I’ m working as a customer service agent in the morning and then I’ m a film director by night’ . (...) that’ s the right thing to do, but if there’ s [was] like a big production market here [not audible], none of those talents will be need[ed] to do that.” (N)
2.1.2. Lack of stable and permanent job opportunities (a posteriori)	Indication of many freelancers and unstable freelance jobs in this industry, even senior professionals with a career have to look for new jobs	B, I, M, N, O, P, S, T, U	“ I’ m looking for a job now... same stage as a 20-something.” (B) / Alguma coisa que eu tenho feito muito – há dois anos e meio como freelancer – é estar atenta ao mercado. E tentar perceber o que é que anda a ser feito... Não coloco de parte. (K) / “ Most of the projects here are indie... majority of people keep asking to do a lot of work for free.” (N) / “ Speaking about Portugal first: finding a job in a production team or any place in any production ever...Most of the work is freelance, (...) I don't want that, I need stabilization in my life.” (O)

2.1.3. Lack of official networking tools or local platforms (a posteriori)	Indication of lack of official platforms D, E, F, K and structured networking tools for the audiovisual market in Portugal	It's a smaller industry... one of the problems is the lack of platforms and sort of official networking tools (D) / Não existe um lugar onde todas essas pessoas influentes do cinema aqui em Portugal estejam com um perfil... ter uma conversa fácil, direta na linguagem de cinema (...) Não existe uma plataforma de comunicação de cinema aqui em Portugal onde você possa falar diretamente com alguém sobre um projeto audiovisual, igual no LinkedIn se fala sobre trabalho. (E) / there's not so much of a community and a platform to connect with professionals in our industry. (F)
2.1.4. Exploitation risk for beginners (a posteriori)	Description of risk of being exploited B, P, U for people who are just starting out and don't know the market	Risk... the older people, the more established people having an interesting sort of predatory way... if I need somebody fast, eager and cheap, I will get to that group (B) / what those agencies do is they take too much of what the filmmaker or the artist is paying. For example, if I'm the agency, if you need, for example, a model for a music video or for a commercial and you pay me, for example, 150. What a lot of them do is they take 80 or 90 and they pay 60 or 70.” (P)
2.1.5. Regional imbalances (a posteriori)	Indication of limited opportunities I, U outside Lisbon, where all the main projects are concentrated	I know that there's a lot of competition from the people I know from Lisbon in those fields, because there's a lot, a lot of offer. That doesn't happen in Porto ... Most of them went to live in Lisbon because there were more opportunities. (I) / “ Algarve... we don' t have enough flow of short films and projects. The industry is more centered ...in Lisbon; you can have a few other projects happening in Porto, but in the Algarve I think that doesn't happen that much, and the Algarve has everything to make things happen. ” (U)
2.1.6. Gap between commercial AV industry and cinema (a posteriori)	Description of a perceived separation G, K between commercial audiovisual professionals (advertising, brand content) and those in the film industry. There is a lack of a structured bridge that would facilitate the circulation of skills and opportunities between the two sectors.	Acho que esse é um problema do mercado. Existem muitos profissionais do audiovisual e poucos profissionais do cinema, e acho que talvez seja necessário fazer uma ponte mais fluida entre esses profissionais, para que uma indústria e um mercado consigam ajudar o outro. ... é muito diferente estar filmando para um cliente comercial com o nome [marca comercial] e ter um contato com um set de filmagem ... (G) // A minha área em particular. Não há tantas pessoas a viverem só de montagem em Portugal. E acho que há muitas pessoas que só vão para a publicidade. Ainda para mais porque eu faço os dois mundos. E isso também é raro: fazer cinema e publicidade. (K)

2.2 Closed Network (a posteriori)

2.2.1. Exclusiveness and restricted network (a posteriori)	Description of an industry said to be dominated by connections to get opportunities and achieve results in the field	B, F, I, K, L, M, N, U	If you know somebody in the industry you get in,... comprehensible because you want to work with people that you know and you are comfortable with, but from a certain point it's not a good culture here. (B) / “ Looks more like an inner circle.” (M) / “ the film industry is an ego industry. That's the other challenge that I see happening in Portugal... the way we can fight that is to change the game doing that, the teamwork, collaborating with the other people” (U)
2.2.2. Few dominant players (a priori)	Indication of a few companies which control the market	B, F, L, P	“ It’ s half a dozen companies that control everything.” (B) / Jobs that are with bigger budgets—which are not enough—they seem to be going to always the same people, the same professionals, with the same productions. (F) / basically, all the investments that, I don't know, [L.] or other institutions make are almost always for the same people. (P)
2.2.3. Internal competition (a posteriori)	Description of the portuguese filmmaking and audiovisual industry especially as a competitive environment	P, Q	“ People here don't work together...They work with their friends, with people that they know are not better than them... But I can't see the professionals helping the other ones and interacting and sharing. Because when I say sharing, I mean teaching tricks so other people can reach higher levels. But here everything is a competition.” (P)

2.3 Informality and lack of standards (a posteriori)

2.3.1. Informal work arrangements (a posteriori)	Indication that many jobs are not regulated by contracts or official receipts; informal practices prevail such as lack of insurance, increasing the vulnerability of workers and creatives	B, P	“ Believe it or not, there is not a habit of using insurances.” (B) / “ There are some... Like model agencies. They are not official model agencies... here in Portugal, a lot of the work is very informal. It's not formal. People don't write receipts and stuff like that (...) It's not illegal too, but it's not formal. You don't have a market for that. You have some, but those are very few and they usually are for big jobs (...) But what those agencies do is they take too much of what the filmmaker or the artist is paying.” (P)
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2.3.2. Late retributions (a posteriori)	Indication that most portuguese clients often delay payments	I, T	“ In general, you kind of have to chase the clients to get the payments.” (I) / “ I feel like maybe clients in Portugal take longer to pay. So, they're not as professional in that way” (T)
2.3.3. Low salaries and undervaluation of creative work / freelance jobs (a posteriori)	Indication that in the Portuguese market, wages are generally low and often do not reflect the amount of work required to produce audiovisual content	I, T	In Portugal, mainly, the biggest problem would be the wages, the salaries. They are very low, because most people don't understand how much work goes into making a video, even if it's a simple little video of 4 minutes (I)
2.3.4. Lack of clear role definitions (a posteriori)	Some roles in the audiovisual sector do not have clearly defined terminology or professional hierarchies. This lack of standardization creates confusion about job functions and career paths, delaying the recognition of skills.	B	"You don't have the term ' line producer' , you have the term ' direção' , you have the term ' produtor' which is basically for anything,(...) lack of function hierarchy, in the way that if you belong to a certain profession, you have to be able to go up some stairs in order to get to be called something, you know. There's no rules about that." (B)

2.4 Funding limitations (a priori)

2.4.1. Dependence on public state funding and lack of private funding (a priori)	Indication of heavy dependence on public funds (government and I.) and limited access, no private entities for filmmaking projects	B, N, O, P, Q	"In other countries, you have private production companies, (...) But not from the government." (N)/ “ Here it’ s hyper-dependent on state funding.” (B)
2.4.2. Investment problem and limited funds for audiovisual (a posteriori)	Indication that available resources tend to be allocated to the same established professionals or producers, leaving little room for new entrants. Furthermore, investments rarely guarantee a solid return on investment (ROI), which discourages further funding and limits the sustainable growth of the sector.	B, E, F, L, P, Q, O	“ First thing they ask is guarantee of return... I can’ t.” (B) / o prêmio mais alto que existe para a produção de curtas aqui em Portugal, que é do [festival], que é 5 mil euros... não é muito, se a gente for colocar em comparação com o que a gente precisa para fazer um filme de verdade (E) / In Portugal (...) there’ s a financial problem. (...) The money that comes from the government, which is one percent only, divided between arts and sports — well, that money is not well invested. You know, it goes to a film that costs a million and then that movie goes to the theatres and gets like a hundred euros in this case. (O)

2.4.3. Funds from institutions and incentives difficult to access (a posteriori)	Description of complicated access to funds and limited investments for those who are starting out	E, K, P, Q, S	I asked my university to fund the flights, or at least the material... and they said no to all of it.” (I) / E fora de Portugal. Depois tentasse as coproduções. Arranja-se uma produtora associada. Mas, normalmente, tem que ganhar o [L.]... udo demora muito tempo. A candidatura é quase um ano. Até saber se és financiado ou não. (K) / “ Investments... almost always for the same people.” (P) / “ Deveria haver espaço para quem está iniciando... muito difícil.” (Q) / “ da experiência dos meus professores da escola, sempre disseram que não é tão fácil também, porque são muitas coisas que tem que fazer, são muitas formalidades... A equipa que tu estás a apresentar tem que ser uma equipa bem profissional” (S)
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2.5 Funding alternatives (a priori)

2.5.1. Own funding entirely or through crowdfunding (a priori)	Indication that in the absence of public or private funding, some professionals use personal resources for the entire budget or with the help of crowdfunding platforms for indie projects can be helpful but don't cover the whole budget	B, F, I, P, U	“ There is a crowdfunding platform that allows people to co-own part of businesses...” (B) / we ended up doing a crowdfunding, ... it's a comfortable, and it's a safe way to gather money, ...to do your art. It's not easy, ...especially if you do them often, because people, ...they're going to invest in your project once, maybe twice, but like three times, four times, I mean, how many times can people, you know.... (L) / Usually, every time I need to have a project in mind, I always build the project knowing and strategizing based on what I can invest. So, if it's not in my range, I don't do it. (P) / “ We used on past projects several platforms such as PPL, GoFundMe, and all other platforms... And the return that we have wasn't that much” (P)
2.5.2. Investments from brands and through partnerships (a posteriori)	Indication that attracting investors and partnerships with brands to finance one's project can be beneficial	E, K, O, R	Mas aqui... existe muita empresa que investe. Por exemplo, a [B.], que é uma empresa de apostas, criou uma competição para a pessoa ganhar 40 mil euros para fazer um filme. (E) / “ Try to find investors... maybe brands, ... they can help you [by] giving something, ... Giving the clothes, then if they get back, or, you know, just kind of a collaboration or a partnership (R)
2.5.3. Incentives to attract foreign productions (a posteriori)	Indication that Portugal is promoted as a destination for international productions thanks to some favorable conditions, such as cash rebates and natural attractive locations (e.g., the Algarve). Those attract foreign investment and strengthen the competitiveness of the local market.	R, U	“ People often say that the Algarve is the California of Europe... good weather, we have the locations, and in Portugal we have the cash rebates, ... you have to submit the project, it has something relating to the budget, the dimension of the project, so that the productions that come to Portugal, they can have a refund of the expenses they had, to do the project here.

2.6 Comparison with other countries (a priori)

2.6.1. Productions & industry structure (a posteriori)	Indication that the spanish industry tends to have more funds and more series and movie projects to produce	B, O, P, U	“ Spain is closer to the American way... we are far behind” (B) / “ Spain has Netflix Studios, HBO (...) It's mostly Spain, you know, we are just like — Spain is the center and they just bring something here, as probably it's cheaper, perhaps.” (O) / “ the film industry is growing really fast in Spain,... it's a bit unfair... Spain is way bigger than Portugal. But despite that detail, I think we could learn with Spanish crew and industry here.” (U)
2.6.2. Job access (a posteriori)	Indication that job opportunities in Portugal are perceived as limited especially when compared to more dynamic markets of bigger countries such as the United States, England, or Spain	F, K, O	In the UK, I feel like there's a space for anyone. Obviously, you still need to work hard, you still need to be a people person... (F) / “ Em Inglaterra, (...) ninguém sequer olhava para um currículo se eu não tivesse um showreel. Aqui em Portugal, ter um showreel não serve absolutamente para nada... Aqui eu nunca concorri a um trabalho em Portugal através de um site (...) foi sempre através de alguém que me conheceu e que me recomendou.” Não há sites que divulguem os trabalhos. (K)
2.6.3. Funding systems (a posteriori)	Indication that countries like the UK, the USA, but also small countries outside Europe such as Egypt and Qatar have private fundings	B, N	“ In Europe, ...tendency to have state-funded films... UK is another agency altogether.” (B) / “ in Egypt for example we have both ways, like we have a way, like you get your money from the government, and you have another way, like a parallel market that is pure private money” (N)
2.6.4. Salaries and Professional Standards (a posteriori)	Indication that in international markets (e.g., the UK, Australia), salaries are perceived as higher and better regulated compared to Portugal	I	The payments are very low. In general, you kind of have to chase the clients to get the payments. And from clients from other countries, like Australia, England, for example, I never have those types of problems... they never doubt how much my work is worth.” (I)

2.6.5. Incentives - negative (a posteriori)	Description of Brazil as more accessible because of the incentives offered	L, Q, R	“ O Brasil é muito mais acessível... muitas leis de incentivo.” (Q) / there's a lot. And there's a lot because Brazil is big, so, but normally they have a specific subject, for example... a specific topic, ... Or for having a woman in a production... they have this kind of support, which is super good (R) Acho que na Europa podem existir mais fundos, mais apoios para produção de cinema, porque a Europa investe em cultura 300 vezes mais que, por exemplo, o Brasil... eu acho que isso não é tanto uma questão de dinheiro, é mais uma questão de que a Europa sabe mesmo que a cultura é importante. (E) / Eu acho que aqui é mais acessível comparado, por exemplo, ao Brasil, ... Acredito que existem boas bolsas e iniciativas e às vezes só falta mesmo essas ferramentas chegarem nas pessoas que trabalham principalmente de forma independente para poderem desenvolver o seu trabalho. (G) “ In Brazil, since it's a much bigger country — with a much bigger public in general — you have more space, many more productions going on, regardless of their size... here in Portugal, since it's a smaller country, you have fewer productions. I think the difference between ‘ real’ productions and smaller productions — this gap is wider.” (J) “ Here in Lisbon, ... Which is a small city, if you compare to São Paulo, for example. Like, super, super small, if you compare. So here, I think I can feel the opportunities... Even if it's more closed, maybe, it's easier. I can feel that.” (R)
2.6.6. Incentives - positive (a posteriori)	Indication that Europe offers more incentives for culture compared to Brazil	E, G	
2.6.7. Smaller market - negative (a posteriori)	Indication that in countries like Brazil or Spain, the volume of production is much higher and more diverse, while in Portugal, the small market size creates fewer opportunities and a more marked gap between small and large-scale production.	J, L	
2.6.8. Smaller market - positive (a posteriori)	Indication that, despite the small size of the market, Lisbon is perceived as a place where it is easier to access opportunities and contacts than in large cities outside Europe	R	

Dimension III. Networking Practices and Professional Connections

Category/ subcategory	Description	Participants	Quotes
3.1 Word of mouth (a priori)			
Direct acquaintances: school, friends, set (a priori)	Indication that most collaborations often start with direct acquaintances, friends, classmates or colleagues	A, C, D, F, H, I, K, L, M, S, T, U, R	“ Firstly, people that I met in real life... at school... at a party.” (A) / most of the things that I've gotten have been through friends that I've known or connections that I've made in a previous project—and always gone from there. (D) / In the creative field, it passes a lot ... through personal connections, and most of all, people with whom you had the affinity to work with. (C) / cinema school was very helpful (L)
3.2 Social Media (a priori)			
3.2.1. Instagram (a priori)	Description of Instagram: used to maintain contacts already known offline, visibility and showcase portfolio	A, C, E, F, G, K, L, M, R, S, U	“ When you meet people in real life... then you connect on Instagram.” (A) / Instagram é a maior forma, porque as pessoas publicam ali os trabalhos. Você segue alguém da área, vê quem essa pessoa segue, às vezes é um artista que você acha interessante, e você segue também. (E) / I mostly use Instagram—I think it's my favorite one... I think it's mostly to showcase my work but in a more informal way, mixed with the socialite activities that I do and all. (C) / “ My Instagram is super important.” (R)
3.2.2. LinkedIn (a priori)	Description of LinkedIn: considered serious, with quick responses and the possibility of finding productions not just locally but globally	A, C, D, G, M, O, Q, T	“ LinkedIn... app is good, serious environment.” (A) / I spend a lot of time on LinkedIn and I think it compensates a lot if you're looking for a global job in Europe and just moving cities and all that (C) / “ LinkedIn, it's easy for you to search (...) is exactly where I found my mentor.” (O)

3.2.3. Other platforms (a posteriori)	Description of other platforms.however less frequently, participants have expressed their preference for other platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook. Mandy, Spotlight (mostly used in the UK), Backstage, Behance, Tik Tok, Youtube, Vimeo	C, D, G, L, R, S	In the UK, there's Spotlight, which is essential because Spotlight is a platform for actors... And we use it—for all of our own projects. I think it has paid work, from what I know, and you put your casting brief and people send you applications. (C) / Mandy, which tries to connect filmmakers and projects. It's a bit like a LinkedIn, but very focused on media things...sort of a global network, so it's not very particular to Lisbon or Portugal. (D) / “ Facebook groups are underrated... I only use Facebook basically for that.” (U)
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3.3 Events and formal contexts (a priori)

3.3.1. Festivals as networking hubs (a priori)	Description of festivals as key opportunities to meet professionals in the industry	A, Q, R, S	“ I’ ve met some other people at festivals—going to festivals, physical events.” (A) / “ Quando eu estive no (nome do festival)... conheci muitas pessoas....” (Q)
3.3.2. Informal meetups and events (a priori)	Description of informal encounters useful to meet collaborators for indie projects	M, R, T	It's a meetup. It happens monthly on Fridays... I know that I need this and as a freelancer, I need to get to know much more people (T)
3.3.3. Other formal AV contexts (a posteriori)	Description of professionals build networks in parallel contexts such as workshops, figurative sets, internships and other less informal situations	E, R, S	As pessoas que eu conheci aqui do cinema, do audiovisual, foi porque trabalhei num espaço de cinema, e aí conheci as pessoas dali (E) / “ Actually, I went to this workshop... and all the people tried to do a group.” (R) / “ lá na figuração há muitas pessoas que nós não conhecemos, que nós encontramos lá... chegas aí, “ ah, eu sou modelo,... atriz, ... realizador’ ” (S)

3.4 Networking challenges (a priori)

3.4.1. Often based on trusted contacts and recommendations (a posteriori)	Indication that there is a preference to hire people recommended by trusted contacts or keep working with the same people because it ensures a good teamwork	F, N, R, B, F, T, U	I've more than one agent. In one of them, I know the person personally, my booker. And it's easier for me to have job in this one, (...) when you have this contact, when you have this network, it's easier. (R) / We feel more comfortable if we already know the person we’ re working with, because there are a lot of conditions that we don’ t control. (T)
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3.4.2. High costs for festivals (a posteriori)	Indication that some events and festivals are too expensive	O, Q, S	“ Most of the events are expensive... 70 to 120 euros.” (O)
3.4.3. Personal challenges in a socially demanding industry (a posteriori)	Indication that the need for constant face to face networking and direct approach can become an obstacle for shy and reserved artists or those who are not comfortable in social situations	A, K, M, T	“ Sometimes you don’ t know how to talk or you are not in the mood to approach people.” (A) / Tu tens de conhecer alguém, essa pessoa fala de ti, e depois tu comesas a arranjar novos trabalhos. O que é muito difícil para alguém como eu, que sou mais tímida, mais reservada (K) / “ It’ s the first step—approaching others.” ... “ I’ m not that extrovert or that social person to just go and say hey guys...” (M) / “ I’ m really shy and even if I go, I don’ t talk.” (T)

Dimension IV. Use of Digital Platforms for Work and Collaboration

Category/subcategory	Description	Participants	Quotes
4.1 Gaps/ Criticism (a priori)			
4.1.1. Lack of labels/filters (a posteriori)	Indication of lack of filters and labels to properly search: E.g. Instagram, used for networking often do not filter specific roles or skills	A, R	“ I cannot look for Director, Screenwriter... cannot search properly.” (A)
4.1.2. High Cost (E.g. Stage 32) (a priori)	Indication that subscriptions on platforms are considered too expensive for the benefits offered	A	“ (Stage 32) Premium subscription is 36–40€, I think it’ s a lot.” (A)
4.1.3. Not very user-friendly (E.g. Stage 32, Discord) (a priori)	Indication that some apps and social media networks are perceived as more difficult to navigate	A, B	"But also, on [S.] I don't feel like it's easy to use. Like, you have to be on the computer, and you have to be looking and talking and searching, and it's a lot." (A)
4.1.4. No platform suited for creatives (a posteriori)	Indication that there is not a unique platform for AV artists that concentrates all the needs of creative audiovisual professionals.	F, U	There’ s not really a place to do this... so you still have to try either generic platforms or like LinkedIn. The language is very corporate. Feels a bit alien to a creative (F) / “ Problem is several platforms and you don’ t know which one to go.” (U)
4.2. Desired features on a new platform (a priori)			
4.2.1. Labels and advanced filters (a posteriori)	Description of the feature: targeted search by role, skills, budget, availability, but also by job, city and others such as recommendations	A, B, I, J, M, P, R, S, U	Good recommendations, based on your interest. Labels, maybe. (A) / “ Sorting... costs, driver’ s license, gender.” (B) / “ Always need a sound guy... can’ t find.” (P) / ...a filter by jobs. Like, I .. want to look for the jobs in Porto. (R) / I believe that recommendations would be really good. That's a kind of... a visit card (U)

4.2.2. Integrated portfolio & links (a posteriori)	Description of the feature: Integration of showreel, links to work, past projects and other apps without having to fill out too much data to register	B, G, I, J, L, M, R	"Links to projects, portfolios they have." (B) / Plataforma fácil de entrar e registrar, ... Seria interessante talvez ter algum tipo de integração que pudesse integrar o seu perfil do LinkedIn, ...para ficar de fácil registro na plataforma. Acho que muitas vezes as pessoas não se registram porque não querem passar por esse passo a passo de colocar os dados e tudo. (G) / "See the work they did before, portfolio." (R)
4.2.3. Project-based pages (presentation + applications) (a posteriori)	Description of the feature: Creation of project-based pages with the possibility of applying for roles	A, L, R, S, U	"Create a project page... people can join as DOP, PA..." (A) / you're applying for a job, and you get the job, and suddenly ... you would enter another tab, which would be, like, the project tab, so ...you could see the entire team that was on the film, can get in touch with that team, but it's a private tab, so only the people that are in the project can interact with it. (L) / uma página onde a gente costuma mandar coisas. "Precisamos de um assistente, precisamos do X. Neste projeto, quem está interessado pode mandar uma mensagem" (S) "Imagine: 'we need a production manager', people can apply." (U)
4.3.4. Direct matching and interactions (a posteriori)	Description of the feature: Direct matching of supply and demand	B, F, O, R	"The first thing that comes to mind is Tinder for business." (B) / "Filters + match for actress profiles." (R) / "It would be great to have a place... to contact the studios and the productions directly, you know, instead of just sending an email" (O) / It would be good to have a platform where you could directly speak and chat to people or have real-time interaction, like webinars (F)
4.3.5. Transparency about rates and budgets (a posteriori)	Description of the feature: Being able to see the budget range of the project or daily rate of each individual helps with clarity	M, N, T	"Like, they might pitch a project where you think, 'Alright, I can ask for a bigger budget because they want so many things and I have the equipment and everything,' but it turns out that they actually want you to use the phone. And they're like, 'Oh, we only have 100 euros for this one, and we want to stick within this budget.'" (M) / "maybe daily rate of the person. For example, I think we as the creatives, we are afraid of sharing, of talking about the prices.." (T)

4.3.6. Casting database with attributes (a posteriori)	Description of the feature. Databases or complete profiles for actors listing their physical attributes and skills	B, P, R	“ Man 30–50, brown-haired, rides a horse...there’ s nothing of that.” (B) / “ a filter that you can search for an agent or for an actress that has that specific, I don’t know, color, hair color...” (R)
4.3.7. Shared Calendar (a posteriori)	Description of the feature. For crew availability and project planning	B, R, U	“ Sorting also by availability would help.” (B) / “ A calendar would be nice, with filters.” (R)
4.3.8. Space for real testimonials (a posteriori)	Description of the feature: Sharing concrete experiences on projects	T	“ Maybe people can talk about recent projects, but talk in a real way, you know. "Oh, we had this challenge with this client, and we dealt with this in this way." So it’ s not just trying to show the best of the best.” (T)
4.3.9. Access to funding and crowdfunding initiatives (a priori)	Description of the feature: Direct access to crowdfunding apps integrated into platforms for filmmakers can be a useful resource to help with financing independent projects	G	Seria interessante uma plataforma onde o cineasta pudesse ter um acesso mais direto a esse tipo de iniciativa. (crowdfunding) (G)
4.3.10. Channel or space to rent/ sell / buy equipment (a posteriori)	Description of the feature: Spaces or channels for renting, selling, and exchanging equipment is useful to many professionals and can be created within an application	G, S	Um network com... pessoas que fazem aluguel de equipamentos. Sempre temos que fazer locações e estar em busca de materiais para adequar a produção. Eu acho que também é uma oportunidade. (G)

Dimension V. Community Features and Dynamics

Category/subcategory	Description	Participants	Quotes
5.1 WhatsApp as base for the community			
5.1.1 Qualities: Immediacy & simplicity (a posteriori)	Positive description of WhatsApp groups: Immediacy, priority notifications, and ease of use	A, C, D, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, Q, S, U	“ WhatsApp notifications are the first I check.” (...) WhatsApp groups are really good because it’ s straight to the point.” (A) / Eu acho uma boa plataforma para agendar encontros. (...) um grupo aqui em Lisboa ... eles fazem algo parecido, que seria a criação de uma rede de pessoas que trabalham... publicam vagas e oportunidades de trabalho do mercado. E ter isso diretamente no WhatsApp é bem fácil e interessante. (G) / “ WhatsApp... you already have the number, you call that person, and it's faster in that way.” (U)
5.1.2 Limitations: Organization, privacy (a posteriori)	Description of the limitations of WhatsApp groups: Chaotic conversations, difficult to retrieve messages, confusing, and not the first choice for people who don't want to share their number and who are dealing with a professional for the first time	C, E, N, P, R, T	The problem probably would be the privacy thing ... wouldn't have too many people willing to enter it, because their number would be exposed (P) / Normally it's for a specific project. (...) I don't know if it's good for a long-term community. First, because you lose the message. You cannot organize a message inside of WhatsApp. (R) / “ Not the best because ...it’ s always scrolling.” (T)
5.1.3 Alternatives for this specific community (a posteriori)	Description of alternative platforms or solutions suggested	E, H, R, T	Acho que o Telegram seria melhor por ter mais ferramentas de vídeo e áudio. Ele é mais rápido também. Então acho que os dois são boas oportunidades. (E) / I know some people that would prefer to have iMessage for some things and WhatsApp for others, or even Slack... I think Slack has a more professional approach and you can create several channels (H) / LinkedIn,... it looks like a dead social media, but I think it’ s still relevant for professional purposes. And I think it would be actually very nice to professionalize the audiovisual community and have business conversations (H) / "forum... you can really can organize the topics and having people comment on the specific topic. I think it's better than just a website " (R) / Whatsapp...You don’ t have a specific page where you can check.Maybe it would be cool to have some kind of database, some page, for example, on Notion. (T)

5.2 Potential red flags

5.2.1. Lack of rules resulting in parallel discussions not relevant to the context and spam (a priori)	Indication of the risk for potential spam; groups being flooded with self-promotion, or useless content if there are no rules	B, D, E, H, I, K, L, N, R,	“ Be very strict in terms of rules... otherwise I’ d get out immediately.” (B) / A plataforma não ter um objetivo claro. Um grupo com conversas paralelas, sem foco, sem regras — isso não funciona. (E)
5.2.2. Conflicts and negative tone (a posteriori)	Indication of the risk for arguments, confrontational attitudes, lack of emotional intelligence from other members	U, T	“ If it’ s negative vibes... that would be a red flag.” (T)
5.2.3. Static groups / no news (a posteriori)	Indication of potential loss of interest if no projects or stimuli emerge	N	“ If nothing new by time happened... I’ d be less active.” (N)
5.2.4. Excess of notifications (a posteriori)	Indication that the sheer volume of notifications and messages in digital groups leads to a loss of interest or abandonment of the community.	H	...seeing a huge number on my notification area (H)

5.3 Response to a mix of beginners and professionals (a priori)

5.3.1 Mostly positive: inclusion and Knowledge exchange (a posteriori)	Description of the value of skills exchange: seniors pass on experience, juniors bring new techniques, the mix is stimulating and promotes mutual learning	A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, M, N, O, Q, R, S, T, U	“ Bet on knowledge... old ones learning from new ones and vice versa.” (B) / Eu acredito que pode ser benéfico... Ter uma ideia bem desenhada, um bom guia, um desenho de produção. (E) / “ Important for beginners to be inspired by seniors.” (Q) / “ That’ s really good. That’ s exactly the reason of connecting.” (N) / “ Super good to have someone that knows more than us.” (R) / “ a pessoa que já é profissional, às vezes há coisas que ele não sabe, que da pessoa que está começando agora pode aprender também, seja de uma parte moral, seja de uma parte técnica,... hoje em dia as coisas estão sempre a mudar (S)
5.3.2 Risks and frustrations (a posteriori)	Description of possible imbalances: risk of predatory use by seniors, frustration among professionals	A, B, P	“ Frustrating if they cannot meet your level.” (A) / “ Risk... older people, the more established people having an interesting sort of predatory way... if I need somebody fast, eager and cheap, I will get to that group” (B) / “ I can’ t see Portuguese professionals helping beginners, it’ s too competitive.” (P)

5.4 Event format (a priori)

5.4.1 Informal networking (a posteriori)	Indication of preference for relaxed events (coffee, drinks) to facilitate bonding	H, L, M, U	“ People tend to bond more having a drink.” (M) / “ Meeting on a coffee, chill ambience,... the synergy ... it’ s way more efficient than to do something formal.” (U)
5.4.2 Presentations & conversation with the public (a posteriori)	Indication that events are useful if they include presentations, screenings, or workshops.	O, Q, R, S	“ We do projects... the goal is to showcase them somewhere.” (A) / “ ... a space to talk about just your projects, to show what you can do, to show how can you collaborate.” (R) / “ conversa entre os realizadores e as pessoas que vieram assistir. E isso é muito interativo, sabendo pelo menos quais são as dificuldades que as pessoas tiveram, como é que eles realizaram, o apoio que eles tiveram, as técnicas que eles usaram” (S)
5.4.3 Consistency & continuity (a posteriori)	Indication that regular meetings are important (monthly or biweekly)	M, N	“ To not be... one now and the next in three months.” (M) / “ Maybe twice a month... so people keep interested.” (N)
5.4.4 Small group and structured conversations (a posteriori)	Indication of preference for small groups for intimacy	L, T	if it's a big group, it tends to, you lose control of it more easily. I think so, yeah. And it's not as personal. (L) / “ If it’ s not too big, you don’ t lose intimacy and can really connect.” (T)
5.4.5 Structured conversations (a posteriori)	Indication of guided conversations to help keep the focus of the conversation	L	...meetings of random people and talk about random stuff, is that the conversations tend to go to weird places and it's weird topics and weird conversations... so, it's great to have some bullet points (L)
5.4.6 Industry–Community Integration Events (a posteriori)	Description of potential events that allow professionals and companies (e.g., agencies, management companies, production companies) to connect directly with creatives and aspiring creatives, creating opportunities for collaboration and entry into the market.	O	"that would be great for companies to insert themselves in, if you can find a company and see: there is an opportunity here, there is an opportunity there. And you know, in presence you see, and see the opportunities, and speak with people and perhaps you can even find management agency, if you are screenwriters and even actors, that’ d be great, because there are companies there" (O)
5.4.7 Side Events Linked to Major Industry Gatherings (a posteriori)	Description of the potential organization of parallel events (cocktail parties, breakfasts, dinners) linked to existing conferences and festivals (e.g., Web Summit), with the aim of taking advantage of the concentration of professionals and offer a more informal and accessible networking environment.	H	...take advantage of big events happening in town, like Web Summit in Lisbon, for example, and forming your own side events — like having a dinner, cocktail, or even breakfast, which is cheaper than providing a dinner or cocktail party (H)