

Uddrag:

Cross Media Communication (Drew Davison mfl)

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### **Cross-Media**

It makes sense to start with cross-media. Cross-media refers to integrated experiences across multiple media, including the Internet, video and film, broadcast and cable TV, mobile devices, DVD, print, and radio. The new media aspect of the "cross-media experience" typically involves some high level of audience interactivity. In other words, it's an experience (often a story of sorts) that we "read" by watching movies, dipping into a novel, playing a game, riding a ride, etc. And this experience is connected across the various media involved through the story and the audience interactivity.

### **Transmedia**

Transmedia is a term coined by Henry Jenkins and it's very similar to cross-media. In fact, they could correctly be considered synonyms. In both cases, they are referring to inter-related and integrated media experiences that occur amongst a variety of media. The main difference would be one of emphasis on interactivity. Cross-media communications require a pro-active role by the audience to interact with the experience and get more directly engaged and involved. In general though, crossmedia and transmedia are fairly inter-changeable.

### **Story and Play**

There is an active debate between two academic perspectives that focus on story (narratology) and play (ludology) in relation to videogames. We're not interested in the details of this debate, but we are interested in how cross-media experiences come into being through a combination of both story and play. The various media involved are tied together with a story that travels across all of the media. In order to follow the story, we have to play across media and get involved with each. So, cross-media communications enables us to play through stories.

### **Participatory**

Cross-media experiences are participatory. They engage us to get us more actively involved in the media experiences and we are rewarded with more awareness and ownership. We become more a part of the cross-media communications and have more stake in what happens and we may even have some influence on what happens.

### **Augmented Reality Games**

Augmented Reality Games are media experiences that build on physical spaces. So the games are set in a specific location and technology (often cellphones and PDAs) are used to create an experience that incorporates the location as a fundamental aspect of the experience. Beyond games, these technologies can be used to enhance tours of historic districts and museums. Technology is used to augment our reality and help us see the world in new and different ways.

### **Alternate Reality Games (ARGs)**

Alternate Reality Games (ARGs) are a great example of cross-media at work. An ARG is a multiple media game that often incorporates the internet to make connections across various websites and pages with clues hidden everywhere. An ARG usually has a direct relationship with another media moment, like a movie or a television show, but can also exist on its own. There are community websites that serve as guides to the various ARGs that are up and running and most ARGs spawn community websites that help orient you to a specific ARG. These games are huge interstitial puzzles that require dedicated sleuthing in order to unpack the meanings and get further immersed in the world of the game/ movie/show.

### **Mixed Media (multimedia)**

Mixed media is a term that refers to combining several media together into a collage of one experience. This can happen on several levels. An artistic collage can combine photographs, paint, paper, etc. together in one work. Or in a performance, there can be acting on stage, projected film and live music. Mixed media is not directly related to cross-media, which is more focused toward a diversity of different media experiences that are related, but mixed media can be incorporated into cross-media.

### **Connectivity**

Connectivity refers to being able to get online and have a high speed, broadband connection that enables media to be experienced with a fair degree of ease and success. So, with good connectivity, we are able to play the games, or access the websites and all of their multimedia content. Without it, we aren't able to take full advantage of the internet and miss out on the pro-active ability to get more involved in the cross-media communications. In another sense, connectivity can be used to describe the awareness of the range of media available in a cross-media experience. By having (internet) connectivity, we are able to discover the full range of cross-media available.

## **Ubiquity**

When discussing the connectivity, wireless networks come into play and these networks enable ubiquity in our cross-media communications. A ubiquitous experience is one that we can have whenever and wherever we want. As wireless networks spread and cellphones get more media features, we're able to always have media content at our fingertips. This allows for cross-media experiences to be as much, or as little, a part of our daily lives as we like.

## **Transparency**

With all this technology enabling our media experiences, we're also getting added complexities to our lives. A great example of this is the universal remote control that works with our television, stereo, VCR, DVD and cable (and more), but it's so difficult to use that it's practically useless. Transparency refers to when technologies become better designed to the point that they become fully integrated into our lives because they are so easy to use. These technologies are such a part of our lives that they become transparent and we don't even notice them. For example, cell phones have reached a point where everyone carries one and they've made getting in touch with people instant. Granted, with all the additional features (like cameras and such) cellphones can be a bit complex, but our society has adapted cellphones into our lives.

## **Metamorphic**

Espen Aarseth uses the term, metamorphic, to describe literary experiences that are ever-changing and adapting to our interactions. In other words, technology enables them to continually mutate based on our experiences with them so that they evolve into new experiences again and again. Metamorphic content can be incorporated into cross-media communications to more fully encourage us to get actively involved as our interactions matter and have an impact on the experience. So, our participation actually has an influence on what happens in the cross-media experience.

## **Networked Performance**

Technologies can enhance our cross-media experiences and networked performance speaks to this. Jo-Anne Green, Michelle Riel and Helen Thorington coined the term to describe live performances that incorporate computer networks to add to the experience. They started a weblog to discuss networked performances. Networked performances are a great example of mixed media and a powerful way to get us directly involved with cross-media in a variety of ways.

## **Pervasive**

Cross-media communications can become as much, or as little, a part of our lives as we want. Pervasive experiences are meant to be a big part of our lives so that we get more immersed in them. Majestic was a game that's a great example of this. To play this game you submitted your email addresses and phone numbers and then characters in the game would email you and call you as part of the experience. Pervasive media can be very powerful, but it can also be a bit much for some people who want a break from the media experience and who want a little more say on when and where they engage and get involved.

## **Tentpole**

Tentpole is a term used to describe one big media experience that supports a lot of other related media experiences. A great example of this is the original Star Wars movie. That movie was the tentpole that supported all the other games, movies, toys, websites, cartoons, books, comics that followed. Tentpoles can work in two ways. There can be the one big experience (often a movie or television show) or there can be several smaller tentpoles that work together (books, comics, etc). In both cases the result is the creation of a fanbase that follows the cross-media experience from media to media in order to get the full story.

## **Tie-ins**

Tie-ins can be entertaining. Any time you have a successful media tentpole moment, say a hit movie, any cross-media additions added are often viewed as commercial tie-ins that are made primarily to make more money. There is some truth in this, and sometimes a tie-in is nothing more than a t-shirt or baseball cap that tries to capitalize on a fans enthusiasm and adds a little more to the bottom line. But if the creators are a little more sophisticated, the tie ins can actually enhance the original experience and add value to the audience's experience of the overall story as it is related across media. We get to have more fun with the story through the cross-media campaign.

## **Inception**

Cross-media communications have to start somewhere. The idea forms and the process begins. Generally, this can happen in two ways; retroactive and pro-active. Often, cross-media is considered after some media event is successful enough to become a tentpole and support other related media experiences.

## **Retro-active**

So, when the Harry Potter books became so popular, game and movies started to be considered to add to the overall Harry Potter experience. Cross-media ideas start after the fact and so design and development take place with an established story and the related media experiences are interwoven with the existing media.

## **Pro-active**

Just as often, cross-media communications are considered up front. A cross-media campaign full of tie-ins can be planned from the get go. So the movie is going to roll out with a console game and some merchandise as well as a website that leads us into an Alternate Reality Game. This type of campaign tries to create a tentpole event that will already have supporting media experiences so that there can be a huge reward for both the creators and the audience.

## **Start**

Either way, or some variation therein, the idea that cross-media communications can be incorporated to tie various media together starts the design and development of an experience that will span a diversity of media and give us a lot of inter-related media to explore.

## **Development**

Concurrently, these various media experiences need to be developed. Again, depending on when a cross-media decision is made determines how the development proceeds.

## **Different Cycles**

After the fact means that things are in production on different cycles and there may be some possibility to repurpose assets from the initial media experience, but often it requires new assets to work best in different media. This works fine, but can have some redundancy in the process that is hard to avoid due to the retroactive decision.

## **Parallel Cycles**

Prior planning means things are going into production around the same time with the goal of timing releases together and assets can be created that are intended to be used across media. This can be done simultaneously to have one huge splash of cross-media, or it can be staggered to try and entice people to move from one medium to the other across time. In both cases, all development needs to focus specifically within the media themselves and have a big picture view of how it all integrates together.

## **Implementation**

Implementation is when it is made available for public interaction. As before, the timing of the cross-media decision makes a difference here as well. With one tentpole experience already public, you have an audience primed for more. You can roll out cross-media experiences for them as soon as possible so that they can get even more invested in the story. Pre-planning this can help roll out a more cohesive cross-media experience overall. The diversity of media is already in place for us to explore.