the property in transmedia terms from the outset) but rather licensing (where the story originates in one media and subsequent media remain subordinate to the original master text.)

8. Transmedia storytelling is the ideal aesthetic form for an era of collective intelligence. Pierre Levy coined the term, collective intelligence, to refer to new social structures that enable the production and circulation of knowledge within a networked society. Participants pool information and tap each others expertise as they work together to solve problems. Levy argues that art in an age of collective intelligence functions as a cultural attractor, drawing together like-minded individuals to form new knowledge communities. Transmedia narratives also function as textual activators -- setting into motion the production, assessment, and archiving information. The ABC television drama, Lost, for example, flashed a dense map in the midst of one second season episode: fans digitized a freeze-frame of the image and put it on the web where together they extrapolated about what it might reveal regarding the Hanso Corporation and its activities on the island. Transmedia storytelling expands what can be known about a particular fictional world while dispersing that information, insuring that no one consumer knows everything and insure that they must talk about the series with others (see, for example, the hundreds

of different species featured in Pokemon or Yu-Gi-O). Consumers become hunters and gatherers moving back across the various narratives trying to stitch together a coherent picture from the dispersed information.

9. A transmedia text does not simply disperse information: it provides a set of roles and goals which readers can assume as they enact aspects of the story through their everyday life. We might see this performative dimension at play with the release of action figures which encourage children to construct their own stories about the fictional characters or costumes and role playing games which invite us to immerse ourselves in the world of the fiction. In the case of Star Wars, the Boba Fett action figure generated consumer interest in a character who had otherwise played a small role in the series, creating pressure for giving that character a larger plot function in future stories. From the point of view of the audience, the ideal transmedia text is spreadable (making it possible for us to share our discoveries with each other) as well as drillable (allowing us to dig as deep as we want and still make new discoveries). The text may also be immersive (allowing us to feel a part of the world of the story) as well as extractable (allowing us to take meaningful elements from that world back with us to our own everyday lives).

10. The encyclopedic ambitions of transmedia texts often results in what might be seen as gaps or excesses in the unfolding of the story: that is, they introduce potential plots which can not be fully told or extra details which hint at more than can be revealed. Readers, thus, have a strong incentive to continue to elaborate on these story elements, working them over through their speculations, until they take on a life of their own. Fan fiction can be seen as an unauthorized expansion of these media franchises into new directions which reflect the reader's desire to "fill in the gaps" they have discovered in the commercially produced material. The viewer's contributions to the transmedia franchise are more fully accepted when the property embraces a concept of multiplicity, allowing for a pleasure in seeing the same characters and situations depicted in different ways, rather than continuity, seeking to insure the total integration of elements across the transmedia texts.

Toby Miller

Environmental Concerns

Cross-media used to be a term to describe ownership--the scary thought that a small number of media owners might control reading, watching, and listening--why it was bad for TV owners to run newspapers as well. The idea was that a limited number of outlets and proprietors generated a limited variety of ideas and access to them. Somewhere along the way, as media technologies multiplied and moved away from the sealed-set model of the radio--where physical know-how and distributional power were melded as one--people lost their anxiety about such questions. It was part of the media sublime, where truth and beauty became one with universal access, where users became producers, universal creativity was unlocked, and audiences ceased to exist. As did professionalism. Anyone could be a journalist, anyone an artist, anyone a film-maker. Unlike the promise of modernity, that knowledge was available to all if they had the expertise, knowledge itself ceased to matter. The ontology of the cross-media utopia of the internet ensured that the old anxieties no longer really applied. All was happy in the Panglossian world of new media.

Or not. Here are a few warnings. Take a peek at new media/cross-media theory. New media savants are fond of invoking pre-capitalist philosophers, thereby dodging questions of labor exploitation through wages, heading instead for aesthetics. Why? What is not being disclosed in the celebrations? We are all aware of utopic rhetorics about the environmental cleanliness of cross-media. The high-technology service and cultural industries of the "new" economy seem to embody pleasurable and clean business–a post-manufacturing utopia for workers, consumers, and residents, where jobs are joyous, purchases are fun, and by-products are code, not smoke. Yet in 2004, the Political Economy Research Institute's Misfortune 100: Top Corporate Air Polluters in the United States placed media owners at numbers 1, 3, 16, 22, and 39. Why? It is well-known that the production of much media equipment begins when sixteen year-old girls leave villages in northern China to build television sets and computers in indentured compounds run by multinational corporations in the south. What happens at the death of these technologies is less well-known.

Millions of personal computers and television sets are thrown out each year, leading to millions of pounds of toxic waste. The amount will increase staggeringly in degree and velocity when the periodic take-up of new TV technology occurs across the globe over the next few years. This accumulation of electronic hardware throughout the world has caused grave environmental and health concerns that stem from the chemical and material composition of these commodities, and their potential seepage into landfills, water sources, and, of course, the bodies of workers. Much of this hardware wends its way back to where it was made, in Guiyu, China. This time, pre-teen Chinese girls pick away–without protection–at the discarded technology full of leaded glass in order to find precious metals, then dump the remains in landfills. They retain precious metals for sale to recyclers, who do not use landfills or labor in the First World because of environmental and industrial legislation contra the poisonous chemicals and gases in these machines (although Federal prisoners often undertake the same, dangerous recycling as the girls of Guiyu.

The relevant multinational manufacturers of these goods have largely resisted assuming any responsibility for the post-consumption histories of their dangerous products. The few recycling programs they sponsor in the US, for example, rely on customers paying them to take away these poisonous goods. The Environmental Protection Agency is largely silent on the topic, and Washington has used the World Trade Organization to counter efforts at diminishing pollution from this equipment. The 1989 Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal (the Basel Convention) gives a framework for understanding structural obsolescence as a problem of post-industrial economics and cultures, but is not applied adequately. Thankfully, a combination of European market power and the European Union's Restriction of Hazardous Substances legislation, plus other mandates already in place, means that certain US firms specializing in hazardous computer parts adhere to relevant safety standards. On this score, Sony's PlayStation consoles are illegal in some countries (not the US) because of the deadly levels of cadmium contained in their cables.

But are these topics addressed by most of us who celebrate the new possibilities of cross-media? Hardly at all. It's time we fixed that. Right now.

Summary

In this chapter we offered some commentary and critique to help critically consider cross-media communications. In terms of commentary, we first assessed the current state of cross-media in our lives today and then looked ahead to where we might like to see it evolving in the future. In terms of critique, we covered some of the problems and promises of cross-media to help us determine what cross-media should be. Looking critically at cross-media communications is the best way for us to ensure that we design and develop experiences that we want to integrate into our lives.

Questions

by Alice Robison

- Do you agree with the authors when they write that what we are experiencing in today's media climate "gives us the promise of more integrated and engaging cross-media communications?" Or do you think that this maybe cross-media communications are a fad? Will this all just burn out?

- What is the difference, if any, between transmedia and "cross-media communications?"

- What do you think is important for building brand loyalty? What is important for building fan cultures?

- This chapter identifies several potential areas for concern with regard to cross-media communications. At the top of the list are privacy and ownership. Though considered separately here, how are they related to one another? Which is more important, do you think?

- What are some important concerns that we often ignore when we celebrate the potential of cross-media communications? Why do you think we tend to ignore them?

- What do you think is the biggest problem with cross-media communications as they are currently?

Chapter 12

Transparency & Ubiquity

Chapter Learning Objectives

Understand why and how cross-media should be transparent

Discover the importance of quality content

Understand the benefits of on-demand content

Learn how recommendations and tags can help us get more meaning out

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Donna Leishman

Dr. Donna Leishman, has recently completed her PhD in interactive storytelling at the Glasgow School of Art and is principal of 6amhoover. com. Her Masters in Design (1999-2000) produced the darkly romantic Little Red Ridinghood, which has been widely acclaimed. Donna has worked commercially in both Scotland (with Flamjam, MMI, Itsnotrocketscience and BBC Choice) and New York as a web designer, illustrator, and animator, for which she was an Emmy award nominee for her work on the Rosie O'Donnell Show and development of broadcast Flash with Bullseyeart.com / Rawpower.tv. Her animations have also been showcased in both the New York Times and the Guardian Online. At present Donna is the programme leader in Illustration at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art where she also continues to work freelance, exhibit and research.

Angela Love

A long time caricaturist raised by cartoonist wolves, Angela Love has been on the Media Arts & Animation faculty at Art Institute of Pittsburgh since 1996. Angela holds a Master's degree in entertainment technology from Carnegie Mellon University.

Ms. Love was the driving force behind Animation Destination--an animation symposium culminating in a poignant discussion of terrorism's effect on the animation industry. Ms. Love has participated as a subject expert in radio/print/web regarding the portrayal of the female figure in animation, particularly video games. Additionally, Angela's moderated videogame/industry podcasts for the Ottawa International Animation Festival.

Toby Miller

Toby Miller is Professor of Media & Cultural Studies at the University of California, Riverside. He is the author and editor of over 20 books, and has published essays in more than a hundred journals and collections. His latest books are Cultural Citizenship (2007), Makeover Nation (2008), and The Contemporary Hollywood Reader (2009). You can read his blog at greencitizenship.blogspot.com.

Michelle Riel

Michelle Riel is a researcher, artist, designer and educator based in San Francisco. Her interest in performance and time based arts stems from her professional experience in scenic design focused on the integration of media in live performance. Previously she was New Media Director at a leading broadcast design firm that pioneered virtual sets.

In her current creative practice and theoretical research with communication technologies, responsive environments, and realtime data manipulation, she explores social relations to public place. She is interested in creating playful and contemplative experiences through unexpected encounters with technology in public environments that draw attention to the overlooked.

Recent research has included the application of narrative-based, alternate and mixed reality game models for learning and assessment of strategic thinking and reasoning. This work explored affect and immersion in collaborative, scenario-based game prototypes.

Current projects include the ongoing ORDinary Stories, a mobile media narrative project using location aware technologies to deliver site-specific speculative future-histories of place that engage social, cultural, political, and military stories of the California Central Coast's former Fort Ord. Mobile media work continues in a new project collaboration with the Moss Landing Marine Labs, and partners, for inquiry-based science education.

Michelle's work has been experienced via broadcast, web, disc, mobile media and at national venues, including SIGGRAPH, Whitney Museum of American Art Performance Series, and A.S.K. Common Ground Festival. She has received grants and awards including an Emmy Award for broadcast set design and NEA funded net art commissions. Michelle is Associate Professor of New Media in the Teledramatic Arts and Technology Department at California State University Monterey Bay. She received her MFA in Theatre Design from the University of California San Diego.

Alice Robison