

TRANSMEDIA: AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH TOWARDS UNFOLDING STORIES ACROSS MULTIPLE DELIVERY CHANNELS

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Abstract - With advancement of technology, the world is blessed with multiple media channels all of them having unique features of their own. Using these media we have wonderful options to view, share and edit contents of multimedia across the world. In transmedia, however, attention is paid to the interaction of various channels, and on designing unique messages or stories for each medium that also happen to be complementary. The idea of using transmedia is that how effectively the story is being narrated across multiple media to keep audiences interested. The part of which has a major impact over the field of education and creating awareness among the audiences. The involvement of audience, especially children, in search of information is high when the integral elements of a story or concept is being dispersed across multiple media in a systematic fashion that creates a coordinated experience throughout in unison. Transmedia helps creating an environment where a story is being transcended across media like informational sites, movies, games and videos. As the story progresses audience get to learn new ideas and facts framing illustrative dimensions and apply their experiences to the real world of education.

Key Words: Transmedia, Multiple delivery channels, Education, Multimedia, Storytelling, Core principles.

1. INTRODUCTION

Remembering those days back in time where stories were illustrated through books which were plainly written in texts and sometimes with picture descriptions. Then came the picture version of the stories having characters build up playing important roles in their story. Keeping the expressions and hand gestures in mind comics were introduced. Also the dialogues were written in bubbles to express the characters story. And finally having technology on the board, movies and videos were made out of it to better express the action and movement of characters in play. Hence, with transition of stories within multiple media give a better scope to express one's thoughts, views and their story ultimately. This representation of transcending stories into multiple form of media is generally known as transmedia or transmedia storytelling.

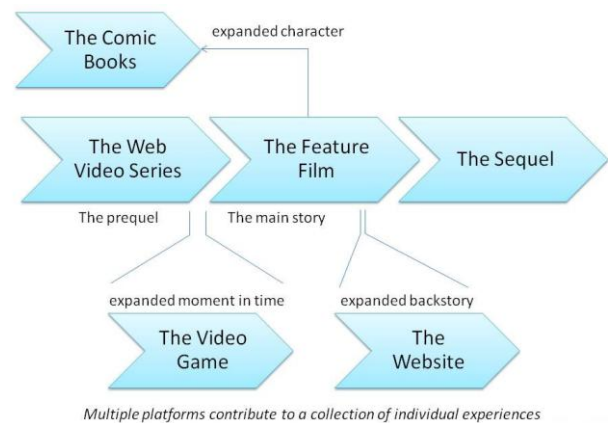


Fig -1: Transmedia Infographics [3]

This was the general interpretation on transmedia. The official definition of transmedia as our respected Henry Jenkins Sir has presented in his books is being quoted as – “Transmedia storytelling represents a process where integral elements of a fiction get dispersed systematically across multiple delivery channels for the purpose of creating a unified and coordinated entertainment experience. Ideally, each medium makes its own unique contribution to the unfolding of the story.” [1]

2. TRANSMEDIA STORYTELLING

Transmedia storytelling refers to both fictional and non-fictional narratives that are expanded across different media platforms, inviting the audience to engage and migrate from one medium to another in order to undergo an enriched experience [2]. For example, if one part of the story, say history of a character, is illustrated in a comic version. Then the next part is continued in creating its movie version depicting characters ongoing circumstances. And maybe the future version could be depicted into another form of media that would be appropriate for any other particular situation. And hence keeping your audience interested while unfolding the story by introducing multiple form of media across the platform.

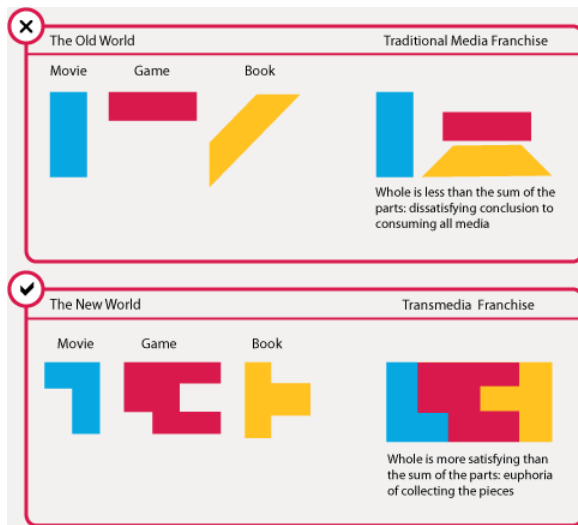


Fig -2: Latest trend on story telling [3]

Though the concept sounds very appealing, two questions that comes into the mind are: [3]

1) Why there is a need to tell stories?

Humans have the habit of imagining things that could either be random or a meaningful representation of situation and stories that surround them. Everything that comes to their mind, each thought that are unique in their own, they want to express it all to others. Humans are the social animals, they are ought to behave like that. Even the most introvert people has the tendency to express in their own style. Also these stories help inspire others and motivate them in a very relatable manner. It's interesting to realize how human minds tend to think alike even if people are living in different corners of the world.

2) Why there is a need to spread the story across multiple form of media when a story could be illustrated within one media itself?

The answer is simple. Audience are information greedy and they get bored of sticking to one form of media say books. They want to experiment with every source of media that is available to them in our world to express the thoughts, views and opinions that suit their style of storytelling. Not only that, they want their story that suits the wide range of audience. It's all about the fact that how well these story fits into its right place, right time and right kind of content delivered to your audience.

Transmedia storytelling does not only refers to style of the author he/she is delivering the story but also the individual experiences that has different impact amongst the audience.

A person gives the dynamic responses based on their level of perception and to their degree of intelligence. Not every person will understand things the way other must have done. This is where the real deal starts for the author pursuing transmedia as their platform to deliver their project. In fact it has a major impact when it comes to the field of education since every child has different level of grasping the knowledge as per their level of understanding.

3. SEVEN CORE PRINCIPLES OF TRANSMEDIA STORYTELLING

To understand how transmedia storytelling works, following are the seven core principles of transmedia that has been introduced to explain its working: [4]

3.1 Spreadability vs. Drillability

Spreadability refers to the ability and degree of sharing the content across multiple media and the capacity of public involved to participate actively in the circulation of media content through social networks. While drillability refers to the ability to develop an in-depth insight through the gathered facts and the power of imagination required to create a detailed story to discover more. Even though few audiences are engaged, they take more time and energy to get to the root of narration.

3.2 Continuity vs Multiplicity

In continuity the idea behind transmedia itself includes the continuation of the story part by part across multiple media to create a meaningful content as a whole. It strives to maintain the rational truth behind the concept. While the multiplicity insists on creating a completely parallel universe where the story takes a new avatar each time the transition takes place between multiple media in use. The characters of the story are given a fresh perspective through alternative retellings.

3.3 Immersion vs Extractability

Immersion simply means getting completely involved into the story. The listener or the reader tends to enter into the world of imagination as narrated by the author. While extractability means to learn or find something new that they can take out with them into the real world. The things consumer get to extract from the narration are applied into their day to day life.

3.4 Worldbuilding

Say, a script has a fairly good story which becomes a movie later. And with each sequel of the movie you get to familiarize with all the characters of that movie. These characters in turn supports the creation of multiple stories. And hence, you are able to create a world which would support multiple characters and multiple stories across multiple media. Worldbuilding refers to the transmedia extensions where a narrator takes the pleasure of using best of both worlds i.e. the real world and the digital experiences. The concept is very much connected to the idea of immersion and extractability where consumer get to interact with the world represented in narratives.

3.5 Seriality

The story is divided into multiple chunks that are meaningful but relatable to each other. Each chunk is called as chapters that are complete as whole yet the audience would like to come back to ask for more. TV serials are the best example that explains well the concept of seriality. Each episode has its own unique story to tell yet the audience would want to engage more to see what happens next in the other episodes of the narrative.

3.6 Subjectivity

The subjectivity relates to the storytelling from the perspective of a secondary character in support to the main characters. The whole new dimension is explored bringing up the backstories and new insights of information altogether. The documents such as diaries, letters or even transcripts help further creating the new connections between the characters. The reader is encouraged to discover who is speaking i.e. the secondary character and who they are speaking for i.e. the main character.

3.7 Performance

Two concepts are being taken care of when it comes to performance. The first one implies to cultural attracters where you need to draw attention of an audience who share common interest between them. While the other one is cultural activators motivating audience to get involve into interesting games and activities. This specially forms as process driven approach to learning, in the field of

education, where you need your students to take interest in the subjects and participate actively that will help them in grasping knowledge better.

4. EXAMPLES OF TRANSMEDIA

The most popular example of transmedia are:

- 1) Mahabharata
- 2) Ramayana
- 3) Star Trek
- 4) The Matrix Trilogy
- 5) Inanimate Alice (born digital novel, an interactive multimodal fiction)
- 6) The Blair Witch Project (Their online marketing campaign initiated the use of web storytelling)
- 7) Avatar
- 8) Lost

Out of which “The Matrix Trilogy”, a story of a computer hacker, is clear example set for transmedia. It has numerous stories that are unfolded as it proceeds with every section of the scene and with every sequel of the movie that is released.

The “Inanimate Alice” is another example that clearly has dosage of transmedia injected into it. Here the girl is entirely created within the digital domain and the readers are completely engaged into the story where they would need to play games and solve puzzles as they go ahead in revealing each segment of the story.

The latest example “Batman vs Superman” movie that was recently released in March 2016 too deals with transmedia concept. The story not only illustrate the enmities between the fictional characters batman and superman but also it give hints about the movie “Justice League” that would be soon released in continuation of the story.

5. TRANSMEDIA IN EDUCATION

With all the details discussed about transmedia, coming to the point where there is a need to realize the power of transmedia that can so much help in student’s life to understand well the laws and concepts of the world. Transmedia is a real time approach for students to learn and interact with the world around them.

Transmedia is not really in the world. People have actually came across the concept back in time of their childhood. Remembering the childhood days where poems and jingles were being taught. Teacher used to teach their students

through books and showed the videos related to the poems. So that learning gets easy and students gets to catch up with the lines. The pictures, music and animation all had greater

effect after students were being introduced to alphabets, poems and jingles through textbooks.

As students grew older and started learning the higher concepts about physics, chemistry and math, they were taught to create models of these concepts so that they get to understand better how things would work. A real life model too forms the connection with transmedia after all. And same were created digitally on computers having all dimensions covered.

Making the concept more clear and interesting, the story of "Inanimate Alice" forms a pure example that relates with transmedia education. As the story progress ahead, where Alice and her mother go on a quest to find her missing father, students are introduced with new technologies like smartphone games, Skype, and GPS. Students are supposed to click a mouse and occasionally interact with the story to explore new segments. Also the various locations that were depicted into the story provides opportunity to students to explore geography and history of the world [5].

6. CONCLUSION

We not only want to learn new things around the world but also interact with each concept that are introduced to us. We get familiar with the elements of the story and are excited to put them into practical use. Transmedia is not just limited to its definition but it also determines the degree of how well the stories are delivered to targeted audience, how much of an impact does it has with multiple media in play and how does the duration of participation of audience affects learning in real time.

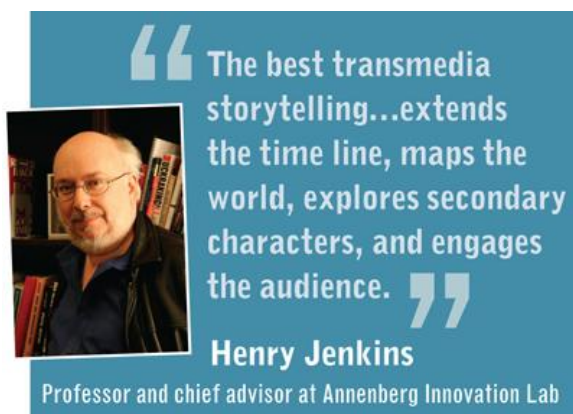


Fig -3: Concluding Quote on Transmedia [5]

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