



Christy Dena's video lecture

Students watched the video, and then participated in an online discussion. One of the posts Christy added during this discussion is the following post:

Christy Dena's Cross-Media Reading List

I have some examples of small-scale projects for you. To be honest, I'm surprised that the techniques I talk about in the lecture are interpreted to be scale-specific. I utilized big names projects because I expected you all to have some familiarity with them, and therefore be able to relate. I see now that it is important to have more small-scale projects so the format can at least feel accessible to you as practitioners. But as I said, the techniques are scalable. Indeed, smaller projects can do more, they can explore just about all of the techniques I outlined—whereas the bigger projects cannot (because each media has different audiences and they're also trying to balance territorial conflicts among other reasons). Aha! Now that would make a good lecture: a comparison between large & small-scale projects. Anyway, to the projects. I've selected a few that show the different approaches of replication, transformation & expansion across different artforms, using different combinations of media platforms.

Hopstory

Hopstory is a locative project by Valentina Nisi, Alison Woods, Glorianna Davemport, Linda Doyle in 2001 & 2004 (Hopstory II). The interactor (guest) walks around the brewery (hopstore) with a little iButton device. Whenever they see the cat sculpture they can choose to collect an audio fragment of a character's story. There are four characters, whose stories of their shared single day in the brewery in the 1930s, is distributed throughout the location. Not only can the guest listen to the audio files in any order, but the device they carry around records them for them to take back and listen to in the order they collected them. In other words, the person becomes a navigator, collecting the story in the order they want to experience it in. <http://www.valentinanisi.com/hopstory.html>

Beyond the Supernatural

This 2005 book, a second expanded edition role-playing game, included a diegetic website, where the players of the RPG can converse with each other in character. The Lazlo Society (<http://www.lazlosociety.org/>) enables the players to create stories & adventures set in the fictional world of the RPG but without the RPG.

Broken Saints

Broken Saints is an experiment in visual storytelling that was embraced by people worldwide. It began in 2001 with flash animation—a cross between a print graphic novel & an interactive comic. Since then it has been podcast & released on DVD. This is an example of replication. Although Broken Saints doesn't require anyone to attend to the different media

platforms, it is important to highlight because it is a good example of how some artforms are better suited for multi-platform distribution than others. These short stories work well on the small screen & large screen. Animation, I've found is one artform that is transmedial – it keeps its integrity across media platforms. <http://bs.brokensaints.com/dvd/buzz.html> [N.B.: it also includes a fictional website for the character Raimi Matthews: <http://64.40.97.143/>]

Next, I Hem a Cyclic Door

This is a podcast by comic book artist Tim Dedman and Gabriel Walsh of Code Owl Productions. It began being podcast in Feb 2005 and continues until March 2006. What the creators did with this science-fiction story is tell it through episodes that were some weeks low-budget live-action and some weeks graphic novels (all digital downloads though). The project has been taken offline but it is another example of a multi-platform episodic structure. What is interesting to note about this small-scale approach is that unlike TV series, film & comic book expansions, these episodes are small in volume and are the primary narrative. Each episode in each medium is not an option but pivotal to the story.

24 Hour Count

For the launch of the Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art's event southwestNET in Dec 2005, a group of artists & musicians got together and conducted a 24 hour blog jam. Here is the blurb:

“To kick off the opening of the exhibition *southwestNET: techno*, on December 17th, 2005, artist **Rick Silva** will be in Scottsdale for a 24 hour, international "blog jam" event called **24 Hour Count**. Along with artistic collaborators **Mark Amerika** (in Sydney, Australia) and **Nathaniel Wojtalik** (in Boulder, Colorado), Silva will record, mix, interpret and respond to current events using technologies that include the mobile phones, digital video, mini-disk recorders, musical instruments and numerous computer software programs. As the artists record images, sounds and other information, they will send their findings in the form of digital messages and files back and forth to one another, continually mixing sound, images and text, like DJs. Hour by hour their mixes will be uploaded onto a blog, which will document live their intercontinental "jam session." source: http://www.scottsdaleperformingarts.org/smoca_12_08_05

As you can see, the artists use lots of different media platforms together but the audience only gets two possible mediums to experience the work through – the internet or live at Scottsdale. This work fits into the “transformation” ethic (in terms of how the project was created & the relation between the live event & blog) but it could of gone further – to have audience members receive mobile messages etc too. Main work site: <http://www.djrabbi.com/24/>

Catching the Wish

In 2006, popular alternate reality game (ARG) creator Dave Szulborski launched *Catching the Wish*, his sequel to his first ARG: *Chasing the Wish* (<http://www.chasingthewish.net/>). The fiction begins with a comic book, created by the fictional characters and featuring advertisements to fictional companies and locations. The work is distributed over various websites and responds to the players interactions with the characters. It is an example of one of the many independent ARGs. <http://www.chasingthewish.net/>

Implementation

Nick Montfort and Scott Rettberg's *Implementation* (2004-2006) is a novel where paragraphs are stuck on poles, walls and fences around the world. This is an example of replication across media though, as the 238 paragraphs that can be experienced on the main website, on other sites such as flickr, printouts of the sheets, live locations and public readings. <http://nickm.com/implementation/>

GoFigure.Net.Au

Here is an example of a multi-platform series expansion from the art world. In 2005, the prestigious Australian art competition, the Archibald prize, had an usual entry. TonyJohansen.com (he changed his name by deed poll) entered his work: *GoFigure.net.au*. The work consisted of three paintings at the gallery and a fourth at the artwork's namesake website. TonyJohansen.com described this artwork as

“This is a painting about painting and the act of painting. In this case it takes the form of a triptych in 4 parts.”

The Rome Air Naked

This book and exhibition (at PICA) was created by Australian author Philip Salom (and his partner Meredith Kidby) in 1996. The novel is a collection of poems, of "concurrent poems" as he calls them because the poems are visually set inside each other on the page. He worked so long on the poems, reworking and revising them that when he viewed his partners multimedia work he suddenly realized the poems could continue beyond the page. So, as well as the publication of the book, Salom had a installation, which included adaptations of the poems in the book, as well as those not included in the book. As he explained on her personal site (no longer online):

"Normally speaking, a printed poem signifies a closure and a collection of poems in a book is the point at which the poet stands back, the work complete. I wanted to show something of the process earlier and later.... The possible continuum. [â€¦] With these explorations, I was trying to are move closer to the processes we actually go through when reading, viewing and re-creating."

Another transformation poet is Australian David P Reiter. He has created a "multimedia" video of poems & images in a special DVD to augment his text-based book: *Hemingway in Spain and Selected Poems*. <http://www.ipoz.biz/titles/his.htm>. The trailer is here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9P0-RooxB9g>.

Hosts

Martin Rieser's locative work sounds lovely. It involved a participant walking around the Bath Abbey with a portable media device. As they walk around the Abbey they see "ghosts" or "hosts" move along the screens and on their mobile device. There is also spatial sound. I like this piece because unlike a lot of locative works, this one has characters moving with the participant (more like augmented reality works then).

<http://www.martinrieser.com/Hosts.htm>

In Conversation

But as for telematic artworks, I'm a big fan of Susan Collins. Her work In Conversation was first experienced in 1997. It had three locations (and media platforms): gallery, street (Brighton) & home computer (website). Although Collins doesn't write any story, she supplies the environment in which people can write their own emergent (real life) narratives. When a person walked down the street, they were stopped by the sound of a person saying hello. When they look down they see that there is a big mouth of the ground, talking to them. And then, when they talk back, so does the mouth. Indeed, people on computers can see the person in the street via webcam & microphone. So simple but a really elegant and fun interaction across mediums & spaces. <http://www.inconversation.com/>

1001

Jason Grote's 2007 play, 1001, has a fictional newspaper online, with one of the characters blogging, and a wiki. He hoped to get audience members co-creating stories on the wiki too and plans to extend the online pieces to social networking sites. <http://1001nyc.com/>.

Mean Manning Martin

Scott Stein's 2007 novel Mean Manning Martin is a fun expansion of the storyworld onto the web. Characters in the novel have sites that readers can interact with: <http://www.meanmartinmanning.com/>, <http://www.mmm4prez.com/>, <http://www.itsdrkaren.com/>, and the character's also blog (<http://www.myspace.com/meanmartinmanning> and <http://alicepitney.blogspot.com/>). Alice also comments at other people's real life blogs.

Shadow Falls

In 2006, Mark Yoshimoto Nemcoff's popular audiobook, Shadow Falls, continued in the online virtual world Second Life. Locations set in the town of Shadow Falls were created, with audio clues given in the podcast, so that listeners could wander around and discover new story information. <http://shadowfalls.podshow.com>. The Shadow Falls Experience was created to (among other things) build up to season 2 in 2007. Trailer: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T65uLAYQ3lk>

This is a non-fiction example, but many expansions are found in non-fiction areas (TV & print etc). In Australia there was a collection of small books you can buy at the counter of stores. They were called "Sixty Minute Books". They had titles like "How to Be A Cool Dad" and "25 Things to Do Before You Get Married". Their idea is that they were so short and succinct you could read them in 60 minutes. Well, at the end of every book was a codeword that you could enter on the company site to access an extra chapter.

I also really enjoy Miranda July's book marketing site: <http://noonebelongsheremorethanyou.com/>. Jeremy @ WRT gave me a heads up about this one. It isn't a replication, transformation or expansion of the story in any way. It is outside the work, pure marketing only. But I like to cite it to show how you can play and be creative with marketing too.

Of course, most of the filmmakers who work in this area are not part of Hollywood in the traditional sense. Aronofsky, Whedon, Greenaway etc may be big, but they work with an independent ethic. Indeed, most of their multi-platform expansions are due to studio-system & artform obstacles. So, it is, as I've said before, quite incorrect to bundle all these emergences into a mass entertainment and especially Hollywood grouping.

Hope these provide more inspiration! Let me know (via email) if you have any works that you've been excited by.

All the best,

Christy

Lecture date: 5th Feb 2008