

ADVICE AND EXPERIENCES HANDS ON ALL MEDIA PRODUCING

Hands On – All Media Producing provides some key answers to the pressing question facing screen practitioners “How do I produce for multiple platforms?” Based on the experiences of filmmaker Marcus Gillezeau and some of the world’s best All Media producers, this is a friendly and entirely accessible guide.

All Media projects represent the future of the screen industry. The entire cultural and entertainment business landscape is changing in response to the growing integration of story, content and brand across media platforms. Combined with the role consumers are playing in shaping how they want to be entertained, it is at once a daunting, yet exciting space to be working in.

Hands On – All Media Producing fills in the gaps by providing tips, advice and experiences from the front line of All Media production. Combined with a series of case studies, it aims to help screen practitioners, producers, directors and writers plan, finance and produce their next All Media production.

*Written by International Digital Emmy® and
Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts winner
Marcus Gillezeau.*

firelight
FILM | TV | ALL MEDIA

HANDS ON - ALL MEDIA PRODUCING

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AND EVELYN SAUNDERS

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INCLUDING ALL MEDIA CASE STUDIES
STORM SURFERS 3D, HEROES, CONSPIRACY 365,
JEFF GOMEZ, BRITAIN FROM ABOVE

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My creative, business and life partner Ellenor Cox and my wonderful, inspiring and fun daughter Elsie Lyla make it all possible.

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“Wow
wow
wow.
Like!
wow!”

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MARCUS GILLEZEAU

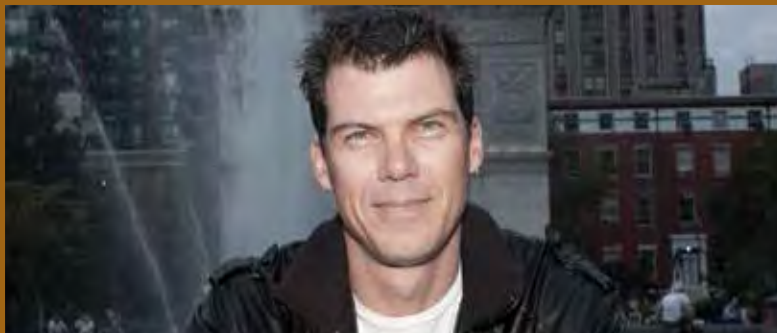
AACTA and Emmy® award winning producer, executive producer and entrepreneur Marcus Gillezeau is the CEO of Firelight Productions, a Sydney based film and television company specialising in All Media drama, documentary and 3D production.

Marcus has over 25 years experience in the film and TV industry and has delivered prime time television to all the major Australian networks and notable international broadcasters such as Discovery Channel, National Geographic, ZDF, 3Net and Sky3D.

Whilst Marcus is best known for the documentary feature *Storm Surfers 3D* and the all media drama *Scorched*, his films have screened in 52 festivals worldwide, garnered 28 major international and domestic industry awards and consistently been critically acclaimed as industry game changers – particularly in the area of All Media.

In 2004 Marcus published *Hands On: A Practical Guide to Production and Technology in Film, TV and New Media* and has subsequently facilitated and spoken at many industry events and workshops. He has also published extensively and contributed to industry publications.

He is currently on the board of Television Sydney and was President of Metro Screen from 2007-2010. Marcus has a Masters in Media Arts Production from UTS and is currently completing a Masters in Screen Arts Business at AFTRS.



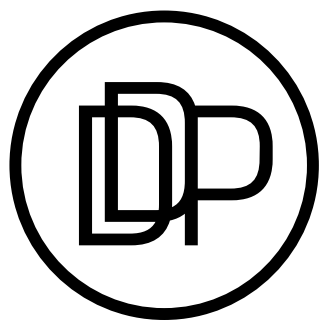
EVELYN SAUNDERS

In 2010 Evelyn studied Multiplatform Content Production at the AFTRS; collaborated on Lance Weiler's socially focused transmedia project *Robot Heart Stories* in 2011; and for the past two years has lectured in storyworld creation for transmedia iterations for both documentary and foundation courses at the AFTRS.

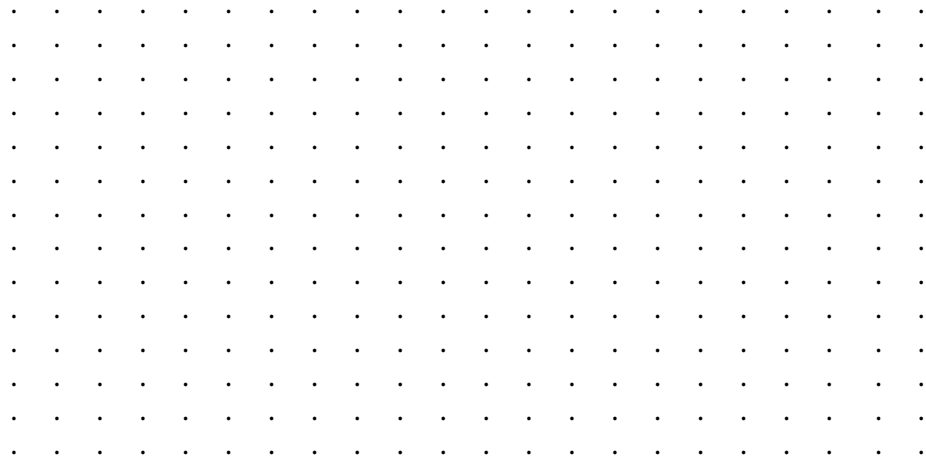
She has experience in production, script and story departments for film and TV. Evelyn has researched crime, military, hospital and environmental storylines for documentaries, feature films, adult and children's television drama as well as educational, entertainment and infotainment programs.

Her roles include that of storyliner, script editor and writer for adult 1/2 hour drama, children's drama, education and infotainment programs and she has worked as an external reader for the NSW-FTO (feature films). Since 2009 Evelyn has developed multiplatform concepts for web, mobile and live action role playing experiences.





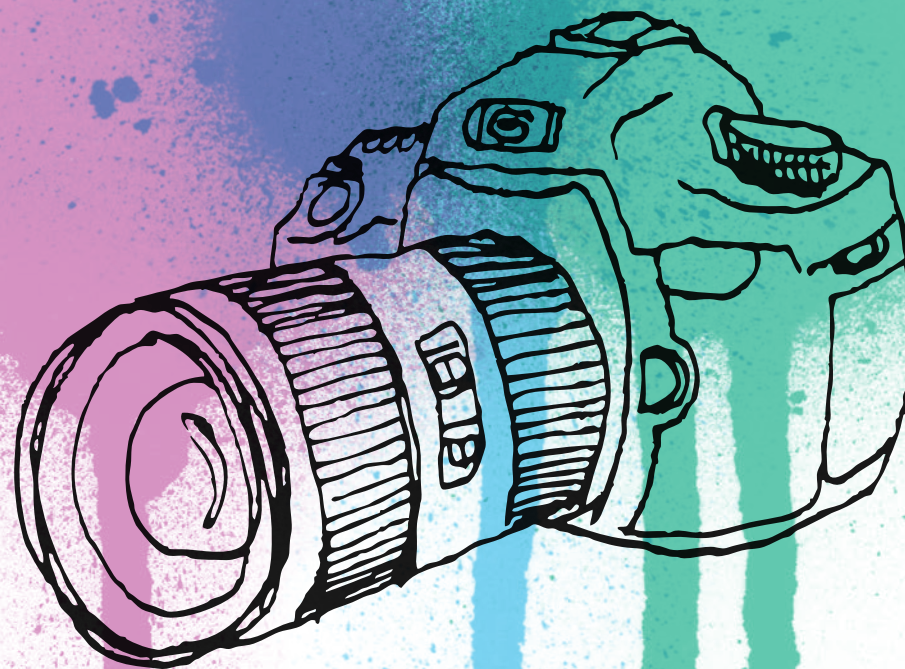
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PREFACE

Technology, Story and All Things Digital

Hands On is a life long project for me. It began when I was 14 years old and bought my first Super 8 camera to shoot a documentary about street protests. (I still haven't quite finished that project... one day!) The following year I left school with a single ambition: I wanted to make films.

I was lucky enough to be selected for the North Sydney Technical College film course when I was 15 years old and so began my training in screen technologies. Fast forward to 1993 when I found myself working at the Australian Museum in their Audio Visual department asking if I could research the new digital video technologies. It was a great assignment and I discovered a raft of soon to be released non-linear editing technology and this thing called the "Internet". The world was about to change.

Within just two years screen production was transformed. By 1995, we had Avid editing systems, the first digital cameras were being released and the Internet was becoming ubiquitous. At 25 I had the opportunity to take over the management of Sydney's

first boutique digital post-production house. I even convinced my girlfriend Ellenor Cox, to come and help me manage this exciting project. We've been married and working together ever since.

It was around this time that the potential to stream video over the Internet was emerging and the word 'convergence' first entered the language of film and TV. The concept of a range of screen based entertainment media being produced and delivered digitally to homes, work, and on mobile devices was becoming a genuine possibility. It was an exciting concept that I knew I had to pursue.

Less than three years later in 1999 I found myself in the hold of a small 16th century tall ship in the middle of the Timor Sea with a merry band of sailors and scientists. Together with my small production team, we shot, cut and delivered over the Internet a 30 part web series, along with a Captain's journal and a one hour prime-time television documentary *Little Dove Big Voyage*. The project further evolved into a rich, interactive DVD and a broadband Flash website. We had delivered our first All Media project.

Hands On – Sixteen Years in the Making

Hands On first came to life in 1996 when Sonja Armstrong, Project Manager at the Australian Film Commission asked me to write a short five-page paper on the new digital video camera and editing technologies. The aim of the paper was to assist documentary makers and short filmmakers with gaining a better understanding of the practical requirements for shooting and editing with DV.

I sat down to write five pages and when I got up from the desk discovered I'd written fifty. *Hands On* was borne and published and soon became a popular paper amongst filmmakers and in film schools. When I learnt that one university had based an

entire course around my paper I realised there was a real thirst for practical, hands on information coming from the perspective of a screen practitioner at the coal face of production.

In 2004 I published the next iteration; *Hands On – A practical guide to production and technology in Film, TV and New Media*. The book is a straight-out 'how to' aimed at emerging screen practitioners that has loads of technical and theoretical advice. The book was a great success and ten years later people tell me they are still using it as a reference.

In 2009, we won the International Digital Emmy Award for Best Fiction for our All Media drama production *Scorched* that screened on the Nine Network and internet publisher Ninemsn. Soon afterwards, we found ourselves pitching a new drama series with an All Media wrap-around not dissimilar to what we'd just done. We had assumed that since we'd won the most prestigious award in the world for a multi platform delivery that it would be easier to convince network executives to invest in an All Media production. It wasn't. There were still the same issues of concern around how to determine the value of the 'other' content being created outside of the primary property.

I knew it was time for a new *Hands On* so producers could better articulate in their proposals their ambition to produce and deliver a genuine All Media project.

Hands On – All Media Producing

Hands On – All Media Producing is a compendium of tips, advice and experiences for producers and filmmakers.

When I set out to write this publication in 2011, I was embarking on the production of our biggest project to date: *Storm Surfers 3D*. It was delivered as a 3D movie, a four-part 3D TV series, a 20 part web series, an app, game, eBook, soundtrack album and rich media website. ...Yep, all of that, all in one go. Much of this publication draws on our experience making *Storm Surfers*, so the information is current and hopefully relevant to your own endeavours.

We have also conducted a series of case studies on All Media projects produced by a range of production companies and people working in this space. To give you insight into the successes as well as the pitfalls, we've interviewed some of the world's most celebrated practitioners as well as some of the bravest. The case studies delve into the issues inherent in All Media production, as well as some tricks of the trade.

Since our first All Media production in 1999, we have always pushed to be at the leading (and often bleeding) edge of multi-platform delivery. Every project we've produced this way has been hugely rewarding and definitely paid dividends.

Our goal in writing *Hands On* is to share what we've learnt over the last fifteen years and to hopefully encourage you to make your next project an All Media production.

Marcus Gillezeau (Jillezo)
November 2013

INTRODUCTION

All Media – What is it?

There is a wide range of terms used to describe the delivery of original stories across platforms. Recently *transmedia* has come into use. The terms *Multi-platform* and *cross-platform* have been around for some time and are used by ABC and SBS. *Innovation* is used by the screen agencies and describes well the desire of those organisations to get innovative project submissions. Another term used by broadcasters to describe the commissioning approach was *360 Commissioning*. However this terms seems to be less commonly used now. *New Media* is rarely used now, yet the term *digital* is still used in many instances.

In some respects, all of these terms are aptly suited for their intended use and are adequate descriptions in terms of their meaning in a practical sense. However, for the purpose of this publication, we will be using the term *All Media*.

All Media literally represents the notion that a story can be told across *any media*: that is, print, TV, radio, apps, game consoles, online, mobile, theatrical release, live events and more. The term therefore liberates the original content creator from the constraints of the heritage, single platform delivery model.

All Media projects represent the future of the screen industry. The entire cultural landscape is changing in response to the growing integration of content and brands across media platforms and the increasingly prominent roles that consumers are playing in shaping how they want to be entertained. That is, anywhere, anytime, on any device.

The Overall Aim

Screen practitioners, producers, directors and writers have traditionally developed and delivered projects to one of two platforms - television or cinema.

We have now entered a new era where All Media production will become the norm. The fundamental creative basis upon which stories have been told for thousands of years is being challenged. Form, genre, structure, format and duration are rapidly evolving and developing and in doing so, are opening up huge possibilities and new opportunities.

Conversely, these same opportunities present enormous challenges for producers as they grapple with financing structures and revenue models that will work in the new landscape of All Media production.

Why We Are Sharing This Information

Screen content creators are keen to see their projects leveraged across all available platforms, but few have the knowledge or resources to determine if the project will work on other platforms or media and how to implement and fully maximise the digital rights and revenue models available in these new areas.

Screen practitioners including writers, directors and producers are hungry for information on how to develop, produce and finance All Media productions. Broadcasters, funding agencies and distributors are all calling for screen content producers to develop the multi-platform opportunities for their projects from the outset, yet there is a dearth of information on how to go about doing it.

Producers are seeking a clear guide as to what is best practice in All Media production, who to team up with, what new skills sets are required, what are appropriate budgets and time frames, what are the new deliverables and how they should be costed and produced. They also need a means by which to 'test' concepts and scripts before they commit to developing them.

Producers and content creators often find it difficult to determine if an All Media project proposal has the right elements to be a successful property due to the vagaries of terminology, the speed with which new platforms are opening up and the lack of information on what constitutes a successful All Media production.

This publication aims to help fill in some of the gaps by providing tips, advice and experiences from the front line of All Media production. Combined with a series of case studies and supporting material, it should go some way to helping you plan, finance and produce your next All Media production.

THE FIRELIGHT PRODUCTION MODEL

Origins of the Model

The Firelight Production Model was first developed by my partner Ellenor Cox and I when we started our first production company in 1995. It was a simple idea that evolved more by accident than by design. We were walking along a beach on the South Coast discussing each phase of production. Up until that point, I had tracked projects on a straight line from concept through to distribution. That is, you dream up the idea for the film then way down the track you think about distributing it.

As I was drawing this idea in the sand with my toe, I drew a circle and stumbled across an approach to production that has been the basis of our approach to making film and TV ever since. The start of the circle had the Concept phase, the end of the circle the Distribution phase. The two had met up - with Concept and Distribution right next to each other.

We realised a very simple principle. If the concept was right, and we got the distribution right, we would find our audience and produce a successful project and get the chance to make another film or TV project.



Linear Model for Producing



Firelight Model - A non-linear approach with Concept at the beginning of production cycle.

How the Firelight Production Model Works

In *Hands On - All Media Producing*, we have decided to reproduce the model with Distribution as the first phase of the production cycle. We have done this because it is perhaps the most important phase when determining what you are going to be producing with your All Media production. We believe there's a co-dependent relationship between Concept and Distribution and the two should always be considered together to attain full creative effect and maximise returns. Whilst Concept (that all important nugget of an idea) will always be foremost in your minds, it is Distribution (the media across which you'll be delivering your properties and to whom), that will determine the various iterations of your All Media components.

As you can see from the circular graphic, the key creatives, producers or production company occupy the middle pod. As you move from phase to phase, always consider the middle pod in relation to these phases. Check the project's key parameters against the existing skill sets of the key creatives and the aims and objectives of the business as a whole. Reflection upon these elements will also help identify the skill sets and combinations of skill sets you'll require when appointing other creatives at the various stages of the project's life.

At the Concept phase, you look at Distribution and determine who you think your key audience might be and on what platforms the final assets might be delivered. The attributes of each platform will subsequently influence the kind of experience you deliver on those platforms (more about this in the Adaptation section of the Distribution chapter).

Similarly during Development, you can look at the Marketing phase and identify the needs of the campaign to promote iterations that might include an app, web series and online interactive elements to name a few. To determine the budget for Financing, you'll work through the other phases to establish the costs of Pre-Production, Production and Post-Production of your deliverables, as well as their marketing and on-going distribution and roll-out costs.

In essence, the model works as a great visual tool to ensure you are always cross referencing each phase of production and testing its needs creatively and operationally against the other phases of production. It facilitates checking back to the core concept to ensure you're maintaining the integrity of your vision whilst creating relevant, integrated All Media properties.



New Firelight model - with Distribution at beginning of production cycle.

DISTRIBUTION



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INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we outline a wide range of tips, advice and experiences in Distribution that should help as a guide in the Concept and Development phases and assist as a counterpoint for when you are marketing your primary property and the various iterations of your storyworld.

The idea is to help open up the possibilities beyond just the TV and big screen of where your All Media project can be seen, engaged with, monetised and promoted. We believe that when you are working the concept up, it's important to be thinking about what's possible and asking important questions around which platform the project might be viewed, experienced or interacted with; how you might expand the storyworld or; how you might tell the story in a different way.

Until recently, we had always approached production from the Concept phase first as the story is the most critical factor in producing any project across All Media. If the story is weak it doesn't

matter how big the budget is or how many different iterations of the project are delivered across how many platforms as there is nothing that will save the project and engage the audience.

However, when we started to work on this publication, we increasingly realised that Distribution is the real key to ensuring a project is successful. Why? Because this is where the audience is found. This is where the audience will engage, download, watch, buy a ticket, interact, recommend and play. If there is no audience out there for your story and you can't find a way of getting that audience to engage with your project, it doesn't matter how good the story is, it simply won't succeed.

AUDIENCES FOR ALL MEDIA CONTENT

As Producers, we often ask ourselves the big question: "Is there an audience for what I'm producing?" With all the effort of managing an All Media team, of involving them in the development and creation of the different iterations, along with the cost in production, marketing and publicity - it's a reasonable question. In nearly every case the answer is "Yes, absolutely."

One of the key objectives when producing an All Media project is to increase your audience for the primary property whilst garnering an audience for the wrap-around properties. By doing this you are increasing the awareness of your 'brand'.

Whilst the effort in producing an All Media project may seem daunting, difficult to manage and expensive, there is a flow on effect between the properties that will, over time, increase the audience, number of views, ratings, box office return and number of downloads. In the same way that delivering a TV show with no on-air promotion or marketing is unlikely to find an audience, delivering an eBook for a project with no other properties, social media campaign or marketing, is likely to result in it getting lost in the online app stores.

There's a lot of noise and competition in the marketplace, so the more assets you can create to engage your target market so that they can find your content and share their experiences to a broader audience again, the greater your chances of success in driving traffic to your principal property.

TRANSITIONING AUDIENCES ACROSS PLATFORMS

Producers are often hoping they will get an audience to migrate from one platform to the other with a call to action. However a call to action has to appeal to its target audience either because the audience has a vested interest in the topic or because they perceive a reward such as kudos, increased knowledge or something of material value.

Call to action:

Audience = 100,000 > 1% migration: Audience = 1000
> Engagement > 10% = 100 audience engagements

There seems to be a simple rule of thumb, a 1% rule, where the maximum migration you can get from one platform to another is around 1% at best. Whilst this seems like an incredibly low level of migration, the flow on effect from that audience sharing their experience will increase the result exponentially.

This flow on effect occurs when the audience engages by 'clicking through', commenting or digging deeper. The rate of conversion for engagement is often around 10% of the audience who migrated.

It's important to note that transition might not necessarily occur on the day, but the following day or days after broadcast or a screening, when people have been talking about it through the media or on social media. This principal extends to long-running

All Media campaigns where you might be building an audience on Facebook, then encouraging them to download an app or check out a webisode you have produced. There's not always an immediately trackable transition across platforms, however that doesn't mean that it won't grow over time.

A Firelight example: Migrating audiences

We promoted the free version of the *Storm Surfers* game before the screening of the film in the cinema, however the audience didn't download the game that night. The bump in downloads occurred the day after. We then saw a 10% conversion rate with users downloading the premium paid version of the game.

BRIDGING CAMPAIGNS

Bridging campaigns are often employed to engage a drama series or soap opera's key fan base between series and seasons. These bridging experiences can take the form of a single web series however often it's an entire campaign that's delivered across multiple platforms. It has to be treated the same way as you would to re-launch the next series of a soap and may utilise billboards or even sky-writing like with the Dutch "*Wie is Tim?*". (See case study)

There is clear evidence that if you engage people in a more dynamic, interactive campaign that includes the whole storyworld that you've rolled out and that still works within the storyworld of the soap opera or drama series, that your core fan base is going to get really excited and probably tell everybody to tune in for the launch of the next season.

TEASING, NOT SPOILING STORY

Questions or concerns are often raised about delivering All Media content that could be seen as spoilers. Your fan base wants to see the killer moment, the killer wave, the big VFX scene... because that's what excites them and makes them want to go and see the film.

You're not giving the whole story away. You're giving a taste of the story. Clearly you don't give away the ending, but you can give away other stuff. You certainly don't give away the boring bits (e.g. dropped scenes) otherwise you'll send the wrong signal to your audience. Take *Harry Potter* for instance, everybody already knows

the stories and the endings. There is no such thing as a spoiler in that case. Everyone has read the book. But fans in their millions still go to see the films.

A Firelight example: Teasing not spoiling

Storm Surfers: Our fans, if you give them five seconds of the fantastic wipeout in a webisode or teaser, they replay it over and over. They never tire of it.

So we wondered if they'd think, "I've watched this on a tiny little screen on my phone, I'm not going to go and see it on a 30 foot screen at the cinema IN 3D..."

Are you kidding? Of course they wanted to see it in 3D on the big screen! In fact, they wanted to see it even more!

WHAT IS... A WRAP-AROUND?

We use the term wrap-around to describe when you have a primary property, be it a movie or a TV show, and you literally wrap around it a storyworld and a range of assets that are then delivered across different media and platforms. An example is a TV drama series with a web series, an app and a game 'wrapped' around it, i.e. a set of adapted stories that all speak to the core storyworld.

SELLING ALL MEDIA CONTENT

Your primary objective should be to have the All Media wrap-around support your primary property to make it as successful as possible. Your secondary objective will then be to make additional income out of these iterations.

One of the things we have discovered with All Media delivery and distribution is that charging for content such as apps does not generally work. People are not willing to pay for additional content as they perceive it to be marketing the main property.

There are windows of opportunity to monetise content through revenue sharing on video platforms such as YouTube, partnering with advertisers or selling short form content to subscription TV channels. However, these sorts of deals are not easy to make a lot of money from and instead are more of a bonus if they happen.

When you can start to make money out of the All Media assets, is if the project is a raging success and you have a hit. You can start to produce products such as merchandising or a 2.0 version of your game. You might even be able to create a magazine that has a subscriber-base that's delivered online or in print such as *Top Gear*.

One area that has been a pleasant surprise for us has been our ability to sell the webisodes we have produced for *Storm Surfers*. In one case, an advertiser was looking for cool content to help promote their brand and embedded ten of our webisodes into a pop-up banner ad. It was a very successful campaign delivering over 1.5m views of the videos and we were paid quite well for the content.

WORKING WITH THE DISTRIBUTOR OR BROADCASTER ON THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE ALL MEDIA ASSETS

An issue that comes up with Distribution—that ultimately, should be dealt with back at the Financing stage when you're doing the contracting—is between the exploitation of traditional and digital media rights. Traditional rights are far more valuable, and people pay a lot more money for them and rightfully want to protect them and the audience they need to get an return on investment (ROI).

We have found when we are trying to deliver the All Media products there can be a tension with the broadcaster or distributor around whether you're cannibalizing the audience by giving them too much content. We try to ensure that we have the right to be able to distribute the All Media products as the producer without any encumbrances.

We often find ourselves telling the broadcaster or distributor that they would be insane not to want us to be creating all these other fabulous products. It's free publicity. It's great marketing. The way that we've overcome this issue sometimes is to kind of a 'crash and crash-through'.

DISTRIBUTION BY PLATFORM

Apps

Apps are now very cheap to produce and are becoming an essential part of any All Media delivery. For as little as \$2000 you can produce an app that acts like a simple website that will carry information about the project, the storyworld, when the show is being released, and have links through to your other All Media platforms such as your website, the network website or the cinema to buy tickets.

At the other end of the spectrum, you can spend \$100,000 plus on a highly sophisticated app that is a full blown multi-level game with 3D graphics and loads of bonus content, back-end leader board database systems and monetisation tools.

If you're distributing an app, it's very easy to deliver across Android and the Apple iOS platform. Accommodating different screen sizes is also less of a problem now than it used to be. However the digital production house you work with has to be up to speed when it comes to updating your app to make sure it works properly across all of the Android platforms and the iOS platform. You also need to have budgeted for this.

There's a basic rule with trying to get people to download your app where if you can get in the top 10 there's a kind of snowball effect and you're going to get lots of downloads. There's a few things you can do to be pushed into that top 10 and convincing the editors of the online app stores to put you in the top 10 editor's picks is a good start. You could also woo influential bloggers to test your app and talk about it, or engage in concerted marketing activities to get your app into the top 10.

eBooks

eBooks are a rapidly growing market with over 50% of books being bought as eBooks for e-readers. E-readers are currently the primary platform for books as they are cheap, light and the batteries last forever. Tablets are also used for eBooks and can deliver a much richer experience for the reader than an eBook. They have more sophisticated interface, quality colour screens and are more powerful in computing terms allowing greater interactivity. Tablets are enabled for apps, where as e-readers are only for page turn books.

We have produced a very rich media eBook for our franchise *Storm Surfers - Mission Diaries* that includes loads of stills, articles, videos and links to other content. We found that we struggled to get significant downloads. Our theory is that people who own tablets are mainly using them as mini computers to do emails, surf the net and watch videos whilst travelling. On the plane I have seen people on their tablet close their email, then watch a film, before turning the tablet off and picking up a print magazine.

Games

The games market has exploded since the introduction of smart phones. The 'casual' gamer can be just about anyone, not just a 'gamer' or person who is a dedicated user of games. This has opened up a huge market and alot of opportunity for producers to extend their storyworld across to a game at a relatively low cost. You can spend as little as \$5,000 on a basic game for smart phones delivered as an app using software such as Unity. We produced a great little game for a documentary we did for Discovery Channel called *Rocket Compulsion* for \$25,000.

Rocket Compulsion Game: <https://itunes.apple.com/au/app/rocket-compulsion/id432034672?mt=8>

Console games is an exciting space, but you will need a big budget to get into production. The introduction of the Screen Australia Interactive Game Fund should provide opportunities for production companies and game producers to team up on projects based on significant Australian owned franchises.

BROADCAST: ENGAGING THE AUDIENCE

There's a lot of opportunity to engage with the audience during the broadcast with certain forms, particularly if you're in factual entertainment. The most common form is second screen interactivity via SMS voting, Twitter and Facebook and certainly gives the impression of a faster result than the 'red button' on your remote control.

In terms of the effort or focus that should go into genuine interactive TV, we feel it's important to remember the majority of television viewing is still for straight out entertainment. This is especially so with the growing market in high budget HBO style drama that is more akin to watching a movie at home.

Interaction with specialist factual is probably at its best on Blu-Ray or DVD as an additional feature, where you can drill into a whole bunch of additional content.

One of the most successful examples involves interaction with a live audience around a political issue, such as Q&A on ABC TV in Australia, that also facilitates the TV audience tweeting in real time. It makes it a richer experience, but it's also a bit like talk-back radio, where people are interested in the other audience members' opinions and they like to debate those issues.

FILM DISTRIBUTION

Producer And Theatrical Distributor Collaboration On The All Media Roll-Out

One of the things that we try to do is work as closely as possible with our theatrical distributor on the All Media roll out. One of the issues that comes up frequently for producers however, is that the Distributor is reticent to commit to how much money they're going to spend on the marketing, and therefore, what the nature of the marketing campaign is going to be, until they see a cut of the film.

There's an enormous risk involved in the marketing P&A (print and advertising) campaign for a film. What you need to do is try and get the distributor to be sitting at the table right from the early development or financing stage. Try to have them involved with the publicity from Pre-Production onwards and make sure that you have your own publicist speaking to their publicist.

It's important to have an understanding of what the distributor is proposing to do in marketing at different levels. Even if they're not willing to commit to a budget, you've got to find out that if they are planning to spend \$250,000 on P&A – what will they do? What will they do if they spend \$1m or \$3m on P&A?

The more you understand what they do at each level, the more that you can ensure that the All Media wrap-around that you're creating is going to work in an integrated way with what the distributor is doing.

We have found one of the key things to ensure a smooth collaboration, is to agree on the positioning of the film and that it is discussed from an early stage, revisited and potentially adjusted throughout the production and marketing.

Producer and Cinema Exhibitor Collaboration on the All Media Roll-out

We believe there will increasingly be a more direct connection between producers and cinema exhibitors. As producers seek to improve returns to their investors, they will be seeking ways to be involved in the strategy and management of the theatrical release of their film, rather than leaving it entirely to the distributor. As such, the All Media Campaign becomes a critical part of the marketing of the film and the producer will be able to work closely with the exhibitor to ensure that they can reach their target audience as directly as possible.

An exhibitor has a powerful tool at their disposal; a fantastic database of the people that come in to their cinemas and buy tickets. The most successful independent theatres engage directly with their core audience in their neighbourhood to get them to their theatres to see movies. If you can tap this database through your digital media outlets such as your website and app, you will be able to market directly to your fan base that you have built over the life of the project.

A Firelight example: Interactive Experiences

There is scope to create fun interactive experiences in theatres by providing exclusive content that can only be downloaded in the theatre where the film is playing or is going to play. In-theatre marketing is still one of the most powerful forms of advertising for your film. We did an experiment with *Storm Surfers* where we set up an in-theatre free Wi-Fi that allowed patrons to log on to the internet for free. When they clicked yes, they got a pop-up page on their phones that had links to the upcoming films in that theatre and to the links to download the free *Storm Surfers* app.

PRODUCER / CAST COLLABORATION ON ALL MEDIA ROLL-OUT

If you can get the talent involved in the All Media roll out, it's brilliant and it makes a massive difference. If you've got a long running drama series, you're going to want to use main cast or supporting cast and their characters in the All Media roll out. It can generate a really big bounce in your engagement rates.

When it comes to big name actors, it's tough because they've got very demanding schedules and they're expensive, but you can ask them to do really simple things like Tweet for example, which works for everyone as most actors have significant fan bases. Make sure

that with those tweets they've got the URL for your website, e.g. "Hey everyone, *Storm Surfers* is really cool www.stormsurfers.com/buyticket" Click. It goes straight to that page and boom! You will sell more tickets.

PRIMARY PROPERTY

Digital Distribution and Monetisation

Digital distribution of your primary property offers a plethora of ways to monetise your content. For example you can put ads in front of your film or TV show and there are all sorts of video-on-demand (VOD) and subscription-video-on-demand (SVOD) opportunities. SVOD and subscription platforms like Netflix will pay a lot of money up front now-a-days.

You can make some really decent sales in this space and you can also do pre-sales so you can actually bring money to the table for your production budget. It is possible to negotiate a window with them where you do a 'day and date' release for your movie and it goes out on SVOD at the same time.

If you write a list, track every single way you can possibly monetise your product and you have the resources to explore these options, you could do pretty well out of it.

Revenue Share with Online Video Platforms

One of the things about revenue sharing of advertising with your video content is the returns are extremely poor for content creators. If you have really popular video content that gets 30-20 million views and you only get paid \$20,000-\$30,000 by the video platform it will result in you feeling like you've been ripped off. And you have been ripped off.

If you could walk into a network today and say, "I guarantee you 20 million viewers over the next 20 episodes of my series," they would hand you cheque for \$10m on the spot. Let's say we halve that because maybe the advertising is less valuable on a video platform compared TV, that's still \$5m. Ultimately, video platforms can't be out there charging a CPM (cost per thousand viewers) that is \$20 and returning \$1 to the content creators; particularly not when your terms are meant to be a 50-50 revenue share.

Releasing Content Across Global Platforms

There's a lot of concern around this area, particularly for the networks or studios in other territories who have put up pre-sales for your film or TV program when you are proposing to release your All Media content globally. Their concerns will include ensuring that the project is positioned properly, that you don't deliver a spoiler in story terms and that you don't generate press in key outlet too early.

The release of content that has been geo-blocked or the release of content globally is frequently counter-intuitive to the traditional heritage media release models. In many cases far too many risk factors have been placed across the top of the release of All Media content that are unwarranted.

In our experience we have never found the release of webisode content to be detrimental to the delivery and release of the primary property. That said, it is important to think through the specifics of each marketplace.

A Firelight experience: Form, Format and Strategy

A classic example was with *Storm Surfers* when we were determining the best time to release the “How to surf a wave” series on the web.

For the Australian market we decided not to deliver it before the movie because it was presented direct to camera by the talent and our core audience, who were familiar with the Discovery Channel TV series, may have become confused. We didn’t want them to think the movie was going to be an instructional video!

We might have been paranoid, we were probably wrong, but didn’t want to take the risk. So that’s why we produced a 10 X 3min Profile series instead, because the profile series was talking about the characters in the film and making of the film.

LIFE BEYOND THE INITIAL ROLL-OUT

An important consideration when producing All Media assets is they can and should have a life beyond the initial roll out and campaign around the project. The website, web series, eBook and app will be available and able to be used by distributors and networks globally as the project goes into its global release cycle.

As a producer, we have found that buyers get really excited about the additional assets that we bring to the table. In most instances, they do not have the resources themselves to exploit them in their particular territory, but it is possible as the producer to work with them by understanding their schedule and to help promote the release or transmission.

Many producers would suggest that this is not their responsibility and in most cases it isn’t worth the effort, however it has had several beneficial results for us. We get a bump in interest for the brand that helps build the project over time; it’s helped us get repeat business and it has led to sales in other territories.

CONCEPT



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INTRODUCTION

The Concept phase is always one of the most exciting stages in a project. Anything is possible. There are no limitations to how you tell the story, the budget, the cast, the locations or duration. Once you have decided that your concept is worth taking forward, it is time to consider the other phases of production with Distribution being the most important. If there is no audience for the project, there will be no finance and there will be no production.

The term “All Media” says it like it is; it takes the story of the primary property and enables you to explore that story across all the other media be it radio, television, film, novels, comic books, games, apps etc. The term helps remove any confusion about platforms, the definitions of which can vary quite wildly.

One of the great things about an All Media approach to production is you have the chance to expand the scope of how you reach your audience. You might find them through a web series, a game, a graphic novel, by making a documentary about the true story of the

main character or through a series of articles about the issue. By testing your concept against all the possibilities in Distribution you will begin to find your audience and have a much better chance of moving to the Development phase.

Importantly, consideration for all the phases of production should also be considered such as how you might finance the project, who the development team might be and where and how you can shoot it. It's about using the model in a non-linear way.

CREATING ALL MEDIA CONTENT

A good All Media project is one where there's a storyworld that's capable of being expanded and capable of growing over time.

All genres can work as an All Media project. That said, certain genres work better than others. According to transmedia guru and author Henry Jenkins, science fiction and childrens are two areas in mainstream production that demonstrate the effective use of All Media storytelling techniques. In our opinion romantic comedy requires work to iterate across platforms and make sticky in a commercial sense - *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* on Youtube being an indie success story.

When developing an All Media project, first of all look at the core story and the premise of that story. You immediately test that story across other platforms i.e. would it work as a: novel; web series; game; app? Apply due diligence to research stories within the same genre that have also been told over multiple platforms. Fundamentally you'll come back to "Is it a great story?" And if it's a great story with great characters that have loads of scope within

their storyworlds (i.e. they have fantastic journeys and take great actions within those stories) then it should be capable of working across all platforms and All Media.

ADAPTATION

You treat the notion of All Media as the adaptation of that storyworld across platforms. In the same way that novels are written with an entire storyworld and are adapted for the screen, you can also take a story – a primary property - that is being delivered as a TV show or a TV series and say, "Okay, how do we adapt this to other platforms?"

The term "adaptation" is used because you're not simply picking up that story and repeating it on another platform, you're adapting it to that platform in a way that utilises the platform's unique qualities to best deliver the story. The result is an iteration or a number of iterations of the storyworld; elements in the principal property that either haven't been explored or drilled down into; that can be developed into new experiences and distributed via the different platforms.

To illustrate further, some hardware platforms are more suited to telling certain types of stories than others. Think about the way in which you use these platforms and play to their strengths. Smart phones are personal devices that enable you to perform and explore a multitude of activities via touch screen interface, but you also hold it to your ear when you receive calls and speak into it to communicate in a way that is very intimate. Tablets have the same

interface but aren't as personal. Laptop and desktop computers have a different interface but contain personal files. Televisions and cinema screens are different again.

Also the way you 'share' these different devices with friends and strangers varies as does the way you interact online with different social networks. Think about what each media platform facilitates and allocate story and content accordingly.

A Firelight example: staying true to the storyworld

At its core, *Storm Surfers* is a big adventure about going to an unknown place and surfing a wave that's never been surfed before. When it came to the webseries, we knew we couldn't tell that style of story in a three minute webisode. So we looked at the platform, looked at the media and realised the thing people want is to understand *how to surf* and, by extension, understand how our main characters surf a giant wave. So we created a how-to webseries - *How to Surf a Giant Wave* - around this premise. The series has proven to be really popular across mobile and TV platforms.

SUMMARY

In essence the Concept stage involves adapting story across All Media by looking at your core story, looking at the media you want to deliver to in order to reach the largest possible audience, and asking yourself, "How do we adapt across to this medium and which characters within our story will be best to carry across to that media?"

DEVELOPMENT



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INTRODUCTION

The Development phase is perhaps one of the most critical as this is where you have the opportunity to work up all the possibilities with the creative team and then begin planning how you are going to finance, produce, market and distribute those assets.

There are numerous factors that are important to consider at this early stage of the production such as how you're going to pull the deal together, how you're going to access cast and whether you need a separate team to acquire content for the All Media assets. You need to be thinking about when the content is delivered, how it's going to be promoted and ensure that when it's delivered you have a roll-out strategy.

One of the exciting things about developing an All Media property is the integration of each of the products that are created and how they relate to the overall campaign and roll out of the content.

In the Development phase, it is also likely you will touch on each other phase of production. You may need to produce an electronic proof of concept or a sizzle reel which then involves working across the Production phases. The sizzle reel, along with the brochure and scripts will then end up being used as a Marketing tool when you take the project out to raise Finance. It is possible during Development to be engaging with your audience through social media as a way of gathering knowledge and building your fan base.

In other words, use the Firelight Production Model in a non-linear way, ensuring you consider all phases of production during every other phase of production.

CONSISTENT OUTCOMES IN ALL MEDIA

One thing that's interesting about looking at All Media wrapped around a primary property is that there's an increasing consistency with the different forms in the different genres.

If you look at a TV drama series, tele-movie or mini series, you'll see that increasingly people are creating prequel stories that are being run on the internet in the lead up to the premier or a webseries that sits between the cliffhanger of one series and the launch of the next.

Geo-locative game play is another popular iteration with TV drama. With documentary series, patterns include multiple choice quizzes or representations of what your life would be like under different conditions such as *Get Back to Where you Came From*.

What's important is that you can look at what's been done, see what's successful and determine what's manageable. Manageability is key as you need to not only factor in financial and time constraints, but also operational constraints.

STRATEGY

Once you have a script or treatment for your principal property, you can bring in your creative experts (usually your principal writer and director) to join your All Media producer to brainstorm the potential All Media properties you want to produce. This team should be thinking about where, when and how your audience will interact with the genre, format and subject matter of your principal property. A menu of options is then created of what properties can be produced and how the story can be told across All Media.

A Firelight example: The All Media Producer

We find it useful to bring the All Media Producer into the development workshops so they are across the process from the start and, are able to research various ideas and technologies, advise on their findings and help shape the wrap-around content.

The All Media Producer needs to understand the demands of film and television production as they'll be working across crews as well as with the post-production team. We also believe it's important they have experience producing television or film. The All Media Producer should also have experience in digital media production (websites, apps etc) and a working knowledge of technical language so they can instruct their technical team on what needs to be done to produce the wrap-around content.

LEADING THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Ideally, the Executive Producer, Producer (or Project Director) will lead the development process because it's difficult for the individual producers (of content on a particular platform) to see the whole picture, all of the time. Firelight Productions has had the most success when as Executive Producers we have had the overview and control of all aspects of the project.

Development Workshops

Once the menu of options for the All Media properties have been identified and outlined, the Executive Producer can commission the key All Media creative team members and bring the principal writer and director into the process. Development workshops need to be run over a couple of days. If you're serious about doing an All Media delivery, allocate 25% to 30% of your development funding to this area.

The main aim of the development workshop process should be ensuring that the storyworld is cohesive, that the actions of the characters are consistent, and that every component makes sense in its own right.

All Media projects can become difficult to manage if key All Media personnel haven't been part of the process from the beginning. They tend to end up competing for resources including access to cast, crew, key creatives and storyworld creatives to produce the outcomes that are expected from them.

Writing For All Media - Teamwork

The primary property will always be dominant over your wrap-around content as the story, actions of the characters or the way the story unfolds all need to be served and not driven by the supporting content.

One of the first steps that can be taken is to detail in concept terms what's required for the proposed wrap-around properties. This has to happen in tandem with planning your All Media strategy. You can't control everything so write what you'd like to have happen whilst being aware that you may need to be nimble on the day when it comes to producing these iterations as scripted.

It's at this point you bring in your specialists. Who they are will depend upon the genre you're creating, however increasingly there are people who are experts in writing webisodes for factual content, as well as people who write drama webseries. If you're creating fictional news stories you want to maintain the veracity of the message so you should hire a journalist to write the content and a news reader to present it.

Writing for games, apps, social media and participatory media needs specialist writers. Alternatively if you have a good core team, make sure you have enough time to research the tone and form of the content. Games are a different beast again. It's definitely worth creating a game brief and then putting it out to tender with digital production houses or game producers.

If you are planning to acquire content for your web series or other All Media content as part of the principal photography, you will need to take into account that things can and will change on the day. A degree of flexibility in the scripting and planning will be needed.

EXTENDING STORY ACROSS MEDIA

If you are intending to extend a story to other media it is important to look at that media and ask, "Who is engaging with that media?" "How are they engaging with it?" and, "When are they engaging with it?". You're looking for evidence that what you're proposing to create is going to be of interest to your target audience and that they will engage with the story via that particular media.

For example, if your primary property and your primary story is aimed at a 60+ audience and you're wanting them to engage with a story extension on smart phones, the first thing you should ask is, "What is the smart phone penetration for 60 year old people?" And for those with smart phones, "How are they using and engaging with them?" There's a high probability they're engaging with email, a very low probability they're playing first-person shooter games and, a very high likelihood they're playing card games. In which case then, you look at the media and let the media help write what you're going to create and adapt your content accordingly.

Which platform first?

When considering your storyworld a question you might want to ask is, "Should it be developed first on a primary platform such as TV or Film?" The answer is, "Not necessarily." Look at the story and ask the simple question, "What is the best way for us to develop this story?" And if you've got time and money, you may find you're better off writing it as a novel or graphic novel first to build out the storyworld, understand it, and test it with an audience. Then if people go for it, excellent!

By taking this approach you'll build out the storyworld and potentially make it a lot easier and cost effective to develop your script or scripts afterwards, because you've tested the concept and possibly solved many of the story problems upfront.

You may also have attracted a fan base. A significant number of top grossing box-office films are adaptations of existing franchises that were based on books; evidence that a project doesn't need to always be designed for a primary platform first.

DEVELOPMENT ACROSS EACH FORM

Factual Entertainment

Factual entertainment, in every respect, leads the way in All Media wrap-around and delivery as well as engagement with the audience. It's a form that's been refined over the last 50 years of television quiz shows and variety shows, where the audience answered the call to action at home, and had a go at guessing the answers or got to call into the host. This is, of course, a form of interactivity.

Factual entertainment has also harnessed monetizing the wrap-around better than any other platform. *MasterChef*, is a perfect example. Not only does the show entertain but the recipes, the list of ingredients and cooking method are printed and given away in supermarkets which also stock *MasterChef* labelled ingredients, so that people can create the same meal the next night.

Shows like this lead the way right now and are by far the most refined and sophisticated in their ability to produce content across all media. A lot can be taken out of the *MasterChef* example in terms of strategy and monetization.

Specialist Factual

The All Media opportunities in specialist factual are pretty exciting. Documentaries can leverage the assets that have been acquired during the research process and the shooting of the program, and utilize them across other platforms.

The challenge is to not simply deliver out-takes. You have to deliver on another medium an immersive story that is a genuine extension. For example, an interactive eBook will support the core thesis of the specialist factual program providing greater opportunity for their audience to explore the subject matter. Apps involving quizzes about the subject matter and media rich websites are examples of further All Media extensions.

Feature Films

In our experience, feature films can be a challenging territory around which to wrap All Media properties if you haven't been considering an All Media delivery from the outset.

What you have to do is build the storyworld out from the script. This would necessitate your All Media Producer working with the script writer or script writing team to create an extended treatment which then enables you to adapt elements across to other platforms.

Scripts, prototypes and electronic proof of concepts of the wrap-around properties you're considering producing should be made well before you go into production. Test these prototypes with the director and get their buy-in to ensure that they can be produced alongside the primary property. This process will facilitate the efficient scheduling of resources so that the All Media content will have the same production values as the principal property, and thereby speak to the same brand. The content is also guaranteed to be in place for when the film is released, and will facilitate driving your audience to the principal property in a concerted and strategic campaign.

The factual space can be the narrative of making the feature film, and is by far the easiest to do and most exciting because you don't have to give the plot away. Another factual space can be around the subject matter of the film. Making a documentary that helps build interest in the subject, particularly if it's a controversial one, can be a great way to build a Zeitgeist that then translates through to increased interest, publicity and discussion that leads into the marketing campaign for the film.

FRANCHISING

One of the most exciting possibilities with All Media production is that you can create a franchise that you as the producer own and can go on to exploit in sequels, spin-offs and remakes. Rather than making a huge investment in the concept and development process and then just having a script, single movie, TV series or one-off documentary as an outcome – you can decide upfront “we want to create a franchise out of this”.

This enables you to address other territories, sequels and spin-off series and means your storyworld will be capable of living beyond its first generation on the platforms on which it has been released. It means that you will have amortised development costs across several outcomes and are building a loyal fanbase and repeat buyers and financiers in multiple territories.

Ancillaries and Spin-offs

Ancillary is another description for multiple iterations of your primary property. In the traditional legal sense, ‘ancillary’ pretty much captured everything and extended through to merchandising, spin-offs and other products such as soundtrack albums. We now make the effort to split our ancillary, spin-off and All Media rights during the contracting.

As the ancillary rights could individually become successful they need to be defined and separated so that you have the ability to exploit them. When developing a project, it is important to think about this aspect of the financing, legal and exploitation rights to ensure that you are clear about who owns what and what obligations if any you might have to the creators.

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INTRODUCTION

The Financing phase covers three key areas; budgeting, financing (or raising the finance) and legal rights management. This chapter focuses on some of the key areas that need to be addressed when putting together an All Media project to ensure that you will have sufficient enough budget, that the exploitation rights for the All Media assets will not be in any way compromised and that you are maximising your financing opportunities.

The Financing phase is usually one of the most difficult and vexed stages in the production cycle. The stresses and pressure around the financing and contracting of the primary property will often be extremely intense and overwhelming. Many Producers find the idea of adding another layer of complexity to the project by trying to produce, what is in essence, a whole suite of additional content incredibly daunting. It is easy to give up. But don't! It will be worth it.

When you get to the release of your project, you will be very glad you hung in at this stage and got the finance over the line, got the budget right and ensured the contracts enable you to exploit the All Media properties to help build buzz and value around your project.

It is also important to address the All Media needs of a project at this stage in terms of finance, budget and contracting as you will not have time during the pre-production phase to deal with these issues. By then you should be concentrating on getting the project underway.

BUDGETING ALL MEDIA CONTENT

A simple rule of thumb for the minimum you can spend on an All Media wrap-around is 10% of the total budget. Ideally features should be a much higher spend than specialist factual TV drama, or a children's All Media wrap-around. Features should ideally amount to at least 15% to 20% of the total budget and P&A combined.

e.g. Feature budget = \$5m + \$1m P&A = \$6m

\$6m X 15% = \$900,000 = All Media Budget

As soon as you go below 10%, you're really going to be stripping back what you're able to produce to the point that it will be difficult to successfully integrate into the campaign. The assets may end up being cute add-ons that are bit of a bonus for the audience rather than a genuine All Media delivery.

As to the specifics of budgeting, we break down within the budget separate worksheets in Excel that are specific to the production of the All Media assets. We then bring the sub-totals across into the main budget and they become line items within the main budget with a link through to the other sheet.

Firelight approach: How we value each All Media property

We have a unique approach to the notion of the idea of treating the cost of each individual asset as having an intrinsic cost equal to the entire budget. When people asked us how much did the eBook cost, we say the face value cost of the eBook was \$20,000, but the total cost of the eBook was \$3 million or the cost of the film. Why? Because the eBook contains content that was shot in the process of shooting the film. We couldn't have made the eBook if we hadn't have been able to send the stills photographer and journalist on location with the main unit. The main unit shoot has a value that is intrinsic to the value of the entire production.

Cost and Budgeting for Delivery

It's important to remember that the budget for each All Media asset needs to include the costs associated with the ongoing roll out of all of the All Media content - which often extends far beyond the delivery of the primary property. If you're delivering a TV series, you need to not only be accounting for when the TV series is first broadcast, but it's potential future broadcasts or second series.

You also need to take into account if you've got a 4 X 1 hour TV Series that's going to work globally, that as the series rolls out in each territory it has the potential to reach an increased audience through its All Media properties. If you have a team that's continuing to maintain and promote the experiences through social media, you stand to increase the price of the property in those territories.

PRIMARY PROPERTIES AND FINANCING

The film that is made for theatrical release, the TV show that is made for free-to-air TV or subscription television, VOD or a video platform, is the primary property. Film and television are the two biggest, most powerful mediums. What then gets wrapped around that is the All Media or multi-platform delivery. The primary properties drive the financing of your project because the distributors and networks are often the only places where you can get money in advance to produce your project.

ALL MEDIA PROJECT FINANCING

Screen Australia facilitates a unique situation in financing an All Media project through the Producers Offset. You can utilise it to pay for the multi platform iterations wrapped around the primary property. What many people don't realise is that if you want to produce a web series, an app, a whole behind-the-scenes series, build a website, deliver a graphic novel... and you produce the properties before the film or TV show is delivered, most of those items fall within the Qualifying Australian Production Expenditure as marketing. This is one of the key ways to fund your All Media project.

To give a very simple example, if you're making a \$3 million movie and you're getting back 35% of the total budget from the Producers Offset, you can utilize some of that money to create the All Media iterations of the primary property. Similarly in television where you get 20% back, you can utilize that money to create the All Media properties that qualify for the rebate.

There's also a range of other sources including direct government investment from the State and Federal funding agencies. It is best to visit the websites of each of the agencies to get up to date information on their digital media programs.

It's also possible to go to the private sector for advertising, sponsorship or in-kind support. If you do this you need to budget for a full time person to handle those accounts in the same way that any agency handles accounts, and to manage those relationships which often run for many months if not years. Their interest will extend through the pre-production, production and distribution of the primary property. It's sensible to try and work in this space, but you also have to have someone who's very experienced in working with agencies, advertisers and marketing directors because their objective is to sell their products, not your project.

With the commercial networks, there's a lot of scope to find money by putting together integrated campaigns for advertisers that include delivery to other platforms. This is also happening in feature films, where the large franchise features are doing deals with advertisers and companies where they have a product that is exclusively tied to an app or a game.

Sponsorship, Advertising And Investment

The definitions around Sponsorship, Advertising and Investment have to be made very clear within this space. Sponsorship is money that you're given that goes towards your project that is delivering back brand exposure. So if you just have the logo on the back of a t-shirt, that's the brand and the brand gets a lift. Advertising is where a company places and pays for an advertisement for their brand or a specific product. Investment is where a company or funding agency invests and expects a return on that investment.

A Firelight example: Sponsorship and integration on Storm Surfers

With *Storm Surfers*, the money we attracted from the companies we were involved with was a combination of investment and sponsorship. Red Bull Media House invested in the film with the expectation of getting a return from the back end - which is why they have so little exposure of their brand within the film. Their interest was in expanding the media arm of their company and having their athletes' profile raised. The more their athletes' profile is raised, the greater the benefit for their drink brand.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

One of the things that executives and investors grapple with the most is how to quantify the Return on Investment (ROI) for what seems to be a huge amount of effort and expenditure on the All Media wrap-around of the primary property.

It can become an issue if you look at any individual iteration, i.e. the webseries or the website, and try to quantify a ROI on that specific asset. Doing this doesn't take into account that the wrap-around is a holistic strategy tied to building awareness of the primary property. For example, if you took away the website and you only did social media, then where do you point people to get the in-depth information and find out when the show is on, or when is the film screening? You cannot put character profiles in a 120 character tweet! You need the full range of All Media assets to be able to build the campaign. In the same way that when you advertise a product you do more than just put up billboards (i.e. you advertise across TV, radio and print, utilise celebrity endorsements, have testings etc), All Media requires PR and is part of a whole campaign.

If you want to determine a ROI treat the All Media project as a whole and, then, look for the key identifier which is: Did we get more ratings or did we sell more tickets to the film than the last film or TV show we did in that genre?

How much should you spend?

The question around what you should spend is never simple. We have found that in almost every case, people want to pay the least amount for the highest return.

Some key tips are:

1. Producers often pay too much for apps and games;
2. They pay too little for websites, not accounting for the reality that they need to be maintained on an ongoing basis;
3. They pay too little for behind-the-scenes content and completely underestimate the power of this format;
4. They pay too little for their stills and the editorial of those stills.

Often producers are confused or disappointed when a webseries doesn't match the production values of the primary property; the \$150,000 app only delivers 1,000 downloads; and the other iterations that they paid for are not delivering the audience they expected. It's the same as spending a lot of money in advertising and the show doesn't rate. It's crucial that money is allocated to marketing these All-Media assets to secure a ROI. More on that later in the Marketing section.

Coming back to what you should spend on the All Media assets, the most important thing is not to ask a digital production house for a quote. Tell them what you have to spend instead and what your expectations are in terms of a ROI and negotiate from there. That's why it's important to get someone on your team who understands All Media and costs of production.

A Firelight example: Cost of getting a Website built

In 1999 we got one quote for \$1000 and another for \$350,000 off the same brief to build a website for a multi-platform delivery for our All Media documentary *Little Dove Big Voyage*. From that point on, I've been deeply sceptical about the cost involved in producing websites and apps, so I ask digital production houses to break their costs down into as many line items as possible.

A Firelight tip: Produce the All Media Properties simultaneously

Producing All Media content separate to the primary property will cost you approximately four to five times as much as producing it simultaneously to the production of the Primary Property. If you wait till after completing the project to start on the All Media production, the assets you can leverage across from the Primary Property are no longer likely to be available and you'll also have lost access to the original key creative team. You've also lost the window for building your audience during production.

RIGHTS MANAGEMENT: OWNERSHIP OF THE ALL MEDIA CONTENT

When you're financing a production, one of the most difficult questions that comes up during the contracting process is who owns the All Media Content?

What is really important is to first ask the question "Who's paying for it?" If the network is 100% financing a TV series, and then they say, "Oh by the way I want an entire wrap-around for this and I'm not going to pay for it," the answer is very simple about who owns it - the producer. If the network then says "I want to place a whole lot of caveats and restrictions around the roll out of that content because it might cannibalise our audience, but I want all of that content so I can utilise it to run a campaign for the show." The answer is simple "You're going to have to pay for it."

If they're not going to pay for it then you own it and you can do what you like with that content as you own the underlying rights. It becomes a more vexed question when you're talking about a property that has been developed in conjunction with other companies or in conjunction with the network or studio as to who then owns the underlying rights. In this case, splitting the ownership of the rights and being clear about exploitation rights can be a simple solution.

Protecting Your Interests

We have found as producers that to protect your property, particularly in the world of All Media, the most important thing is to read the fine print in every single contract. We then create a rights matrix and work out on a map of the world exactly what properties

are being exploited where and who has the rights to exploit them across those territories. We then come back to the questions of "What am I willing to give away? What do I want to retain in case this thing becomes a hit?" You will never know where your hit is going to come from, so when it comes, you absolutely want to have the ability to be able to continue to exploit it.

Webisode Rights Management

With our webisodes, we ensure that everyone is clear that the rights are non-exclusive and non-territorial. We treat territories for our webisodes as the publisher's territory. Our theory is that every publisher has their own niche audience that might be anywhere in the world. There is a good chance that they are not competing with other publishers even if they might be sharing some of the same readers and viewers. Why? Because the video content on their site is non-exclusive and unless that publisher is a video only site, people are generally going to the publisher's site first for information and second for entertainment.

You can do a global deal and a territory deal with the same product as long as the territory that has the property on a global basis has a small, niche market and serves to promote the brand, rather than cannibalise the audience of a customer such as a TV network purchasing it for their territory.

A Firelight example: Webisode rights

If you take, for instance, the Surf Channel that launched in the USA, we did a deal with them and said, “If you create the permanent *Storm Surfers*’ micro-site within your channel, we will give you all our webisode content for free.”

Another extreme sports channel on the YouTube platform asked us if they could have an exclusive license for our content on a revenue share basis and we said “Sure, if you pay us for global exclusive rights, which is about \$15,000 per minute, you can have them exclusively.” Of course they declined.

Similarly with *Storm Surfers*, we have a brand that can continue forever in all sorts of iterations, because ultimately we’re dealing with the same story each time: an adventure to find a giant wave that’s never been surfed before.

You know your storyworld has become a franchise when you get re-commissioned in one or more of the iterations to further explore the storyworld.

Franchise Rights

It’s entirely possible to set up a franchise around your All Media project and your storyworlds. Some storyworlds are more difficult to set up as a franchise particularly if you’re dealing with socio-political material. There are certain stories, especially in the world of features, where it’s very difficult to adapt them further and do sequels and spin-offs.

The Screentime production *Underbelly* is a great example of a franchise. *Underbelly* is based on stories of criminal gangs or big crime figures who inevitably rise and fall. So you have an endless supply of stories under the *Underbelly* brand.

PRE-PRODUCTION



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INTRODUCTION

The thing to remember when producing an All Media project is that planning is the key to everything. You've nominated your properties in the concept and development process; you've identified audience sectors and devised strategies for engaging them across different platforms and keeping them involved in your storyworld.

Chances are you've started herding your audience through crowd sourcing and social media updates. Your finance is in place and you're gearing up to realise your scripts, treatments and asset lists. Like any film and television production, you need to do it on time and within budget – except in this instance, you're producing a multitude of inter-related properties, simultaneously.

Pre-Production is a hugely exciting period, as you'll be able to maximize the potential of the assets you create and the items you capture on film. Your All Media Producer's been on-board since development and is not only across the requirements of your wrap-around properties, they're aware of the potential to capture special unexpected moments during the pre-production, production and quite possibly the post-production and delivery stages as well. You'll be helping them create in-storyworld material to drive traffic to your principal property, by being across the production process and providing feedback from here on in.

It's time to make it work.

INTEGRATING ALL MEDIA PRODUCTION INTO THE MAIN PRODUCTION

It's vital there be a crew or unit that's specific to All Media Production. That said we've also found that the best way for the main crew to appreciate the value of the All Media team and understand that they're an essential part of the production, is to refer to them as "2nd unit". It's important they be considered in this light because if the All Media budget isn't protected, and sufficient time and resources aren't allocated to what you're trying to achieve with your All Media strategy, there won't be enough assets to work with in post-production. As a result, the marketing and distribution strategy you've been working towards will fall flat.

We mentioned earlier that the budget of an All Media wrap-around should be equivalent to approximately 10% of the principal property's budget. This ratio also applies to the overall time and resources that need to be dedicated to the pre-production, production, post-production and delivery of All Media materials.

It's possible the ratio may be greater in certain circumstances such as creating visual effects for a game within an app, or creating dramatised All Media components in support of a specialist factual documentary. If the main unit and the All Media unit are sharing resources, be they cast, crew, locations, sets, props, costumes etc, all of these requirements need to be reflected in the main unit's production schedule.

Integrating your All Media production with the main production will make demands upon all of the principal property's departments. Time is an obvious consideration and it's a resource that needs to be built into every part of every department's schedule – not just the shoot.

Time needs to be incorporated into the production of assets, access to locations, availability of cast, use of post-production facilities and scheduling of crew. It's an added pressure and one that shouldn't be underestimated, but with careful planning and effective communication strategies, your goals will not only be achieved, but you'll also find the process gratifying.

ALL MEDIA CREW AND TEAM

On a drama shoot the Production Manager, 1st AD and Director need to work closely with your All Media Producer to accommodate access to locations, cast and crew. The Production Manager of the principal property needs to be across All Media activities because of the demands on budget.

The 1st AD will determine when access can occur in terms of the schedule and by default the budget; and the Director of All Media content (which might also be the main unit director) will determine what access to main unit will be required. The same principal applies when shooting a documentary although it's possible your Production Manager would be controlling the schedule.

In general, the All Media crew can be quite small, particularly if grips and gaffers can be sourced from the main crew. However, if the main unit schedule is such that this isn't possible, you'll need to budget accordingly. Dedicated All Media crews include a camera operator, sound recordist and stills photographer. Stills are a major component of All Media content and a main unit stills photographer cannot be across both units. The job of a main unit stills photographer is to get promotional stills; promotional stills are not All Media content.

A Firelight Example: All Media Crew

Right from the beginning of the documentary *Little Dove Big Voyage*, we had a unit specifically for the 30-part Web Series. On *Scorched* we had an entire drama team specifically to make the TV drama and a news team to make the news reports. On *Storm Surfers*, we had a team dedicated to the production of All Media Content.

With our documentary wrap-arounds the best results haven't come from behind-the-scenes filmmakers, they've come from photo journalists. And when it came to surf photography we hired a surf photographer because they specialise in capturing iconic surf moments.

In our experience documentary typically requires a lot more stills for the wrap-around than for the principal property because stills will not only feature in a lot of the content you share on your website and social media but they're also a vital component of an eBook. Stills take time – so you need to schedule and manage your resources accordingly.

With regard to keeping the various Above The Line producers abreast of what's happening with the dynamically responsive All Media team, regular meetings should be scheduled to discuss the content capturing process and how it's feeding the All Media strategy. These meetings are also a good opportunity to canvass any new developments that have come to light, be they unforeseen

opportunities or changes in circumstances. Ultimately these meetings will facilitate changes being integrated into the main unit schedule.

SCHEDULING ALL MEDIA CONTENT PRODUCTION

It's important to schedule production meetings for your All Media crew. These will include both All Media production meetings and main unit production meetings. The whole All Media team should also be involved in any workshops so they're across everything that's going on, and can anticipate potential opportunities. All Media cast may also be required to be at some of these meetings.

With regard to scheduling your All Media shoot, your All Media wrap-around properties will determine the type of content that needs to be acquired as well as the complexity of scheduling across the required units.

Another thing to factor in is that your All Media post-production schedule will run slightly differently to that of the main unit. All Media may only have one or two edit suites running, cutting and doing the assemblies, however entire webisodes may need to be completed and published before the end of the film shoot, in which case producers need to schedule in time for approvals.

The range of assets your All Media team might need to pursue could include:

- Documentary style sound grabs, short video or stills of cast, props, costumes, sets, locations and the crew in action on the main unit shoot;
- Dramatized sound grabs, short video or stills of characters, props, sets and locations on the main unit shoot;
- Specially scripted dramatized All Media content: sound grabs, short video and stills;
- Specially scripted documentary style All Media content: sound grabs, short video and stills;
- Live events such as sports events, music concerts, news style footage, vox pops etc.

As the list implies, there needs to be clear communication channels between both units to ensure cooperation and the efficient use of resources.

A Firelight Tip: Scheduling and Delivery

We've found that scheduling generously and appropriately, has provided enough time during the shoot to acquire assets for our All Media wrap-around. We also recommend allocating sufficient time to cut and deliver. You can't deliver sub-standard quality video on the internet. If it is sub-standard it shouldn't be published; it has to match the quality of the Primary Property.

TIME AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

A lot of the tips and advice we have to offer for Pre-Production centre around time and human resource management. Our experience and the case studies in this book show that storyworld continuity benefits from having your key creatives work across all of the platforms.

An ideal situation in terms of storyworld uniformity and integration is for your Director to work across all of the content. However, be aware from a budgeting and scheduling point of view, they are going to need time before or afterwards (most likely afterwards), to do it. They'll probably be able to drive the edits through, but you'll also need a creative producer to help drive the process.

Similarly, you'll want access to the cast playing the characters that inhabit your core storyworld as they're conduits to the audience enjoying the experience you're creating for them. The audience identifies with your characters and your characters carry your storyworld.

CAST AND TALENT INVOLVEMENT IN ALL MEDIA CONTENT

With factual programming we've always found everybody more than happy to participate in the All Media wrap-around. With TV drama, it's relatively easy now, in Australia, to negotiate access to cast under the union agreements. We've found feature films however to be a different experience and believe the only way to get the participation of the main cast would be to have them involved from the very beginning.

It would have to be clear from the very first day the project is pitched to the agent, that the actor's job involves being in the movie and being in the All Media content; and that the agreement encompasses the actor providing the same confidence they have in the director, to the people who are creatively managing the All Media Content.

There is scope and it's certainly a lot easier to use feature film or TV drama series or support cast in any kind of All Media content. What has to be assessed is the value of the story you're creating around that cast member against the cost of negotiating access to them (although this might be mitigated by them having the opportunity to play the lead in the All Media iterations). Ensemble cast in an ongoing TV drama series are potential gold because they'll already have their own fan base and you can motivate and activate that fan base.

The perfect world is where you find an actor who absolutely loves the project and understands from the beginning, from the producer and director and writer, what you are trying to achieve. If they understand the wrap-around is an integrated part of the marketing campaign for the primary property and, that they are involved creatively in what is going to be made, then you'll probably get a really great response.

Certainly in our experience that's when we've had the best response - when we've literally involved the lead cast members in the writing of the scripts - they just tell their agent "I'm doing it."

WEBSITE CREATION AND PRODUCTION

It's easy to think when you're caught up in the Pre-Production of film and TV, that assets such as websites are less important than the show you're creating. However nothing could be further from the truth.

Your website is one of the most important things you can create as a content producer, regardless of whether you're producing All Media or not. It's the destination hub for everything about your film. That might sound crazy given what social media can do but websites can do more. They can contain all the elements you need to deliver your All Media wrap-around (e.g. video, stills) and they can sell tickets to your film or detail when, where and how the public can view the TV program or DVD.

Integrate your URL into every social media interaction and advertising blurb and you can't go wrong. As long as you maintain your website, it'll function as a resource. Social media on the other hand are based on feeds and feeds disappear on a person's social media wall within minutes.

It's amazing what simple off-the-shelf platforms like WordPress can do for relatively little outlay. This is an important consideration at the Pre-Production stage given your marketing and design elements are still being determined. Ideally you'll have someone who can build your website in-house. If you have the budget to outsource it that's fantastic but, you need to account for all the editorial rounds during the build and, you also hand over control when things can't be done in-house.

A Firelight example: Website design

We've found the best approach when setting up a look on a website at the Pre-Production stage is to keep it simple. Select a colour palette and font. You can elaborate on this later.

From your fans' perspective, they're looking to find content – stills, videos, the synopsis, maybe a Facebook and Twitter link. Further down the track, they'll be looking to buy tickets – you can add a link then.

It's surprising how many websites for Australian films don't have a link to buy tickets. It's the same for TV shows. Often there's no information regarding what network the program is screening on let alone the time and date.

A Firelight example: Why websites are important

On *Storm Surfers*, our analytics showed that 50% of our box office ticket sales were made directly through our website. Anywhere that users could click to find out more about *Storm Surfers* took them straight to the page that listed cinemas and screenings. The user only then needed to scroll and click once more to make a purchase. Two clicks and they had a ticket. You can't achieve this through a Facebook page.

POST-PRODUCTION ALL MEDIA TEAM

Your post-production team will be liaising with the team publishing your All Media content and this relationship could continue with the project, way beyond post-production and possibly way beyond delivery. Be aware of this when contracting personnel and choosing digital platforms and software for your content management systems. Identify the system everybody is using and don't use anything else. There's a tendency to look for an alternative that might be better but still has a few bugs... you soon discover why it's not the most popular one - it's because it's got a few bugs!

At the Pre-Production stage you'll also be looking to engage your All Media post-production team. Chances are you can keep your team quite small by employing an editor but utilizing the assistant from the main unit to help manage the rushes. In terms of the online, consider whether you want to pipe the online through the offline machine. Alternatively, if you have the budget, you should drive any kind of web content through a full online process.

SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT

Remember, you're in the business of telling stories not creating bespoke software. If you have a technology partner who believes there's an opportunity to create or develop a piece of technology to solve a creative problem, then contemplate partnering with them on its production however, never let them be the exclusive owner of the technology because you could lose control of it.

This becomes a very real issue if you are dependent on that piece of technology or software for your production and the relationship goes sour. You don't want to find yourself in the situation where you're not able to keep the technology, use it or extract your content. There is no marriage that you should not be able to get divorced from.

MANAGING SOCIAL MEDIA DURING PRODUCTION

It takes time to build a social media fan base: a year, two years, three years. So if you are starting a production and you're going to air in 18 months time, you need to start now on your social media. If you post something once a day – it's achievable and you're going to succeed. Post something twice a day - that's cool. Five times a day however is uncool. Less frequent is alright as well, say once every three days. If it's once a month though, you might as well not do it.

The management of social media during Pre-Production requires a basic framework and a basic set of rules for the process of approval that are not too onerous, but provide the social media manager with a clear understanding about what they can and can't say. The best rule is, "If you're in doubt, ask about what should get published." It's much easier for them to ask you, the producer, about whether something could compromise the production ahead of time than it is for you to have to manage a meltdown.

Starting a Facebook page, a Twitter account and an Instagram account takes 15 minutes. You don't need to do any design, all you do is set it up and start plugging in content.

A Firelight example: Social Media

We've set up a simple approach where we provide access to pretty much everybody in our crew - certainly all the lead creative people. We encourage them to talk about their journey and what's going on in their department that will enhance the storyworld (whilst not giving away the plot). Naturally because everything that's published on social media is public and instant, you specify that they think first before they publish and set up clear guidelines about what should be published (and what shouldn't). However it's important to be encouraging as you don't want to paralyse them with rules. In other words, put stuff up as it can always be taken down if it's not appropriate.

CONTENT ROLL-OUT DURING PRE-PRODUCTION

Your social media roll-out also supports your content roll-out. And your website launch is tantamount to both.

There's a great opportunity that is being increasingly exploited by major directors such as Peter Jackson and Baz Luhrmann, to create a narrative around making the film. A lot of people forget that there is a massive fan base out there who not only love movies but also the stories behind how those movies get made. Movies are glamorous. It is a thousand times more interesting making movies than it is working in a supermarket.

Our job as entertainers is to entertain our audience and that means more than delivering the principal property. Entertain them with the story of how you made it. To call it “a making of” is probably not quite right – that’s your half hour EPK (Electronic Press Kit). What we are talking about is a genuinely narrative extension; a behind the scenes extension where you can hopefully follow the main character who is more often than not, the director.

A Firelight tip: Meta-films

If you look at some of the most successful documentaries, they’ve been films about making films: *Heart of Darkness* made by Elena Coppola about *Apocalypse Now* ran in the cinemas for years; there was also Terry Gilliam’s *Lost in La Mancha*. Take these examples as your foundation idea and create a well produced story about the trials and tribulations of the director dealing with the crazy stuff that goes on.

It’s important to trust the person who’s producing the content to respect the politics and complexities of producing. You can’t give away secrets or denigrate people however, you can have the director talking about their hopes and aspirations.

With specialist factual programming, during Pre-Production there’s a whole lot of content you can be rolling out that’s tied to the project’s research. If you got a super topical matter that you’re addressing, you want to start publishing material as early as possible to get the conversation happening.

PRE-RELEASE CONTENT SCHEDULE

It is important to try and create a pre-release content schedule that everybody agrees to. It needs to be consistent with all the cast and crew agreements that the Executive Producer has approved in advance. There needs to be a liaison person - the All Media producer - who works closely with the Executive Producer or line producer and the people managing the content roll-out to ensure that the protocols and procedures for the approval of content are expeditious. Otherwise it’ll all get road-blocked and you won’t get anything out when you realise that you need actor approvals, music clearances, writer’s agreement or other approval rights that preclude you from being able to release material according to the schedule.

A Firelight example: Content roll-out during Pre-Production

With both drama and factual, we’ve found the best strategy for rolling out content during Pre-Production, is to distribute our lighter content such as photos or texts via social media platforms; and save our richer content until further down the track. Create a build for the principal property by dissemination elements of the richer content during the principal property’s production, post-production, release and post release periods.

PRODUCTION



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INTRODUCTION

In the Producing phase, all your planning will come to fruition as you set about collecting all the assets you need to produce the All Media properties. However, no matter what happens, the production of the primary property will always dominate your time and energies. It's at this point that your All Media producer will become critical to ensuring that you can concentrate on the main event whilst they focus on the production of the other assets.

A key consideration during production is looking for opportunities that were not planned. As the All Media production will be subordinated to the main production, all the best laid plans do not always come to fruition. So it is important to ensure that the All Media team and the rest of the production team are looking out for opportunities. They may come in the form of a scheduling change that has left a set free for a day; one of your talent in your shiny floor show finding out she is pregnant or a demonstration you have just

found out about that is relevant to your social issue documentary. Whatever it is, the beauty of having an All Media team at the ready is they can Hoover up assets to form part of your All Media delivery.

Production also requires you to consider what material you will need to market the primary property and the All Media iterations. Whilst in production, the key creative team will be focusing entirely on the project, the subject matter and the underlying themes. I have found that this is a great time to explore the potential marketing angles that can eventually translate into the strategy for your campaign.

Most importantly, Production is the time when you will be able to acquire the assets you are going to need for the All Media iterations. It is very expensive and time consuming to gather assets after principal photography.

BRIEFING CAST AND CREW

Pre-Production has finished, the All Media unit's schedule has been integrated in with the main unit's schedule where required, and it's all systems go.

Drama Production

As you're aware with drama productions in particular, crew and cast start dates are staggered throughout the pre-production and production schedule. As the producer, you may find it necessary to reiterate to the 1st AD and casting agencies, the need for their departments to brief newcomers about what's happening well before their first day on set. As mentioned before, it's vital the All Media Unit is treated as part of the primary production unit and referred to as such. They have to have equal status and the crews need to work together to achieve targeted outcomes.

Prior to the first day of shoot, the All Media crew need to be briefed by the 1st AD about channels of communication and the need to respect protocol. It's imperative they inform the AD department about what they're filming and why, so the AD department can inform cast and crew and reassure anybody who may be concerned that the All Media crew's objectives may compromise their ability to do their job. This particularly applies to cast as whenever a camera is pointed in their direction, they're going to assume the shot could end up in the public domain.

Photographic content cannot be collected in a random fashion otherwise the All Media crew risks losing access to the set. The 1st AD will keep cast and crew apprised of the All Media unit's presence and intentions via the call sheet, morning briefings and other communication channels at hand.

Children's Drama Production

Children's television is stricter again. The All Media crew need to be informed of the legislative rules regarding working with children. The limitations regarding the period of time children are legally permitted on set apply to the shoot as a whole. As a result the demands upon the main unit to move through the schedule efficiently is high.

Communication between the ADs and the All Media crew is vital so that access to child cast can be accommodated. Working With Children clearances are also necessary. For all these reasons, the All Media crew need to know they can't just wander off with a child cast member. Strict coordination and supervision rules apply.

Factual Production

In comparison, specialist factual programming is a much smaller unit and a lot more manageable. Everybody on a documentary shoot will expect that the All Media crew is there to shoot what's happening on the spot - especially in the case of observational documentaries. That said, protocol should be respected and interviewees, other subjects and crew should all be made aware that they might end up in shot.

ASSET ACQUISITION

Stills

On top of the stipulations of what you can and can't shoot, when it comes to the acquisition of assets for social media you'll find you never have enough content. It doesn't matter whether you have taken 10,000 photos, you'll still find yourself wanting for that shot you couldn't get for a sponsor or magazine, newspaper, social media site or online publication. It's maddening.

Behind the Scenes

On the other hand, when it comes to shooting your behind-the-scenes material, there's every possibility you'll have way too much and, what you do shoot, will have little use unless there is a clear or definitive narrative that the footage is attached to. That's why planning is imperative. The more you plan, the more likely you'll meet your requirements for the various iterations be they webseries, apps, graphic novels and the website, as well as the social media side of things.

Webisode Production

There's every likelihood that a significant number of the assets required for the All Media content will be the same as those used by the primary property - which is why scheduling both within and across departments is so important.

The All Media team will have condensed the primary property's scripts into assets lists such as props and costumes and liaised with the various departments to either utilise those props or have doubles produced. They'll also have liaised with the research department to acquire access to various materials for leveraging across the different platforms.

Utilising Sets

A great opportunity for capturing content on any kind of production be it drama, documentary or factual entertainment, is the sets. Once they're built they're often under-utilised for significant periods of time. Your 1st AD will have availed the All Media unit of gaps in the schedule but it's always useful for your All Media Producer to establish a relationship with the Heads of Department to ensure opportunities can be taken advantage of, should they arise.

Locations

Locations also provide a unique backdrop to the story you're telling. Once the logistics of transporting the All Media crew to the location and their accommodation has been dealt with, everything falls into place. The location permits and location releases will have already been acquired, the four-wheel-drives hired and helicopter hours booked. The best part is that your All-Media content will have the same production values as your primary property.

A Firelight example: Little Dove Big Voyage

An example of an historical asset identified by the research department then leveraged across multiple platforms, is the first known map of Australia charted by the Dutch sailing vessel Duyfken in 1606. *Little Dove Big Voyage* revolves around the story of this first recorded voyage to Australia. We gained permission to use the image across our content: the website, webisodes, poster artwork, the film itself and the interactive DVD.

DIGITAL ASSETS MANAGER

One of the most important people on your All Media production, is the person assigned to managing the digital assets. Depending upon the size of your production or production house, this person might be the Digital Assets Manager in their own right, an assistant editor, the All Media producer, the production researcher or the production coordinator.

Whoever it is, they'll be cataloging a vast quantity of digital assets acquired from data wranglers, camera operators, content capturers, stills photographers, researchers and archivists. These digital assets are then aggregated and carefully managed so they can be made available at a moments notice to various stakeholders all the way through production, post-production, marketing and delivery.

CONTENT ROLL-OUT DURING PRODUCTION

There's loads of material you can release in terms of the narrative of making the show to build buzz and attract an audience. That said, it's imperative the person responsible for publishing content abides by the set of editorial rules established by the Lead Producer, regarding what can and can't go out. The last thing you want to do during the highly pressured production phase is antagonise the Director, talent or crew by publishing the wrong thing. You also want to avoid your project being compromised in any way.

It's unlikely you'll have much if any fictional wrap-around content ready for release during the production process so unless you create 'making of' material, the other most likely content will be social media based.

Peter Jackson's series on the making of *The Hobbit* is a good model to aspire to as it was unbelievably cool, incredibly popular, and people absolutely loved it. You might retort "Yeah, but that's Peter Jackson and you're talking about *The Hobbit*!" But it could be any movie. If it's a cool enough, presented well enough and produced well enough, there'll be a fan-base. The beauty of the online digital space is that you can engage with Peter Jackson's community and invite them to check out *your* content. You already know they're into what goes on behind the scenes - they're a ready made audience.

Social Media During Production

The various iterations of social media have their own quirks and specialties, that guarantee the social networking platform an audience for the particular forms of content they share. Twitter,

Instagram, Snapchat, Flickr, Tumblr and Pintrest are just a few of the social media platforms your social media manager will use to connect with your potential audience.

An example of how this might work would be to think about the vast amounts of awesome images, stills, drawings and research references that someone like Catherine Martin, the Production Designer of Baz Luhrmann's films, utilises on any one production. If you were the Producer, you might have a person assigned to capturing or photographing that material. They'd hand it to the Digital Assets manager, who'd then make it available to the Social Media manager.

What you might find is that Pinterest goes ballistic with people pinning the sketches of the costumes for *The Great Gatsby*. Your All Media Producer would then suggest contacting your publicist to sell a story about these costumes to a fashion magazine and, on the back of that, do a deal for a coffee-table book. The result being two impromptu iterations of the storyworld that will drive traffic to the principal property.

Real-time Publishing and Video Roll-out

Other digital platforms facilitate near real-time interaction with participants of formats such as adventure documentaries. Young sailor Jessica Watson's amazing around-the-world voyage is a case in point. Her webcast was probably more engaging than the final packaged documentary as you were on the edge of your seat waiting for the next instalment. It felt far more honest and exhilarating in comparison to the final documentary because we didn't know whether she was going to make it or not.

THE FEEDBACK LOOP

Documentaries where there's a thesis require a different approach such as engaging the audience in a debate. This can occur across a variety of platforms such as radio, social media, in newsprint, live events etc and can be fed back into the thesis and documented as part of the film.

A Firelight example: The feedback loop

On the adventure documentary *Little Dove Big Voyage*, during the production we published webisodes and blogs, and had kids writing back to us and asking questions. As we were on a four month voyage, we were able to answer these questions during the production, publish them and integrate their interests into the documentary treatment. This engagement with the audience during the voyage led to a much better understanding of what people really wanted to know about the ship, the adventure, the history and the crew and led to the film being well received and getting high ratings.

PRODUCING ALL MEDIA ITERATIONS

Mobiles and Tablets

An important consideration with the production, budgeting and to a great extent the delivery of an app and its distribution, is coping with the design requirements for different handset and tablet screen-sizes; as well as the various upgrades of the operating systems and subsequent updates to your app.

Mobile phone and tablet operating systems are regularly updated, be they iPhone or Android, so when you produce an app you'll need to budget for it to be updated accordingly. In the case of Android, upgrades occur on a handset by handset, and tablet by tablet basis. There's no one quick fix, unless you only produce for iPhone and iPad - which may reduce the size of your target market, so make sure you research your audience thoroughly before making expensive decisions one way or another.

The question of who pays for the ongoing maintenance of an app can also become troublesome and is an area where you might like to consider how you use the Producers Offset. Leave enough of a margin for the ongoing maintenance of the property and all its iterations after the delivery and the first window of distribution.

APP PRODUCTION

Apps can be very sophisticated little websites. They have the ability to store video content, contain games, hold character biographies, function as an interactive book, connect through to social media sites and send push notifications to announce that your principal property is about to go to air or that tickets are on sale. In the latter instance, a single tap of the screen will connect your audience member through to an online ticket selling facility. As a marketing tool apps are a god send.

Also, if you produce your app in a generic software like Unity 3D, you can update it - not just because you have to, but because you may want to extend upon the experience in some way.

Budgeting an App

In terms of budgeting, apps can cost as little as \$2000 all the way through to the hundreds of thousands. We recommend starting small i.e. around \$5000 if you've never made one before. Get it out there, spend the same amount again (\$5000 dollars) on marketing it (we recommend a 1:1 production to marketing ratio for all media content) and see how people respond with what they like and don't like.

Get feedback. Collect data. Find out who downloaded it by getting them to connect out to your website with a link "join". If it works really well, have some additional budget put aside to update and upgrade the app.

It's better to spend a small amount upfront to test the market, than spend a lot of money creating something for the wrong operating system. If then your app has traction, go back and invest further to create a deeper and richer experience.

This process will also inform your decision as to whether you want to keep working with the same team that built it.

Making your App Sticky

Find a way of capturing the audience/users imagination so they'll feel happy about providing their email address or data through Facebook Connect to keep up to date with your property. The latter being a great way to get their feedback and hopefully benefit from them sharing your experience with their friends.

GAMES PRODUCTION

Game Research

Do your homework and research games that speak to your target market within the genre you're creating. This information will also serve to inform your decision as to whether you're producing a game for casual gamers or hard-core gamers - the experiences being two entirely different things.

A guiding principal when producing a game might be whether it's purely for people to engage with the brand, whereby the game might be fun and simple. Or whether you're trying to get to the hard-core gamer audience, to expose them to the brand with the intention of migrating them across to the primary property.

A third scenario is that you're producing for the hard-core gamer because you believe your storyworld is cool enough for them to engage with on that platform alone. In the latter two instances, there are going to be genres that are clearly more popular with hardcore gamers than others such as first-person shooter games.

Try to get someone to research whether the game you're pitching has ever been produced, and if not, why not. Is it that there's a genuine *gap in the market* or an imagined *market in the gap*. Chances are if you can't find an example, there's not a market in the gap because someone, somewhere, tried it once and it never worked.

Budgeting a Game

With casual gaming there's lots of fun to be had. When it comes to budgeting, an app with casual game-play could cost you as little as \$10,000 dollars. For something with good graphics, interface and interaction that can also be played through an internet browser can cost up to \$50,000.

If you're making a game for hardcore gamers, you need to be thinking of a minimum of \$50,000 up to \$500,000 and more. By the time you're engaged at that level make sure you've done due diligence on the game production company and the success of their previous games i.e. how well they were received and the numbers of downloads or units sold.

In all instances, regardless of what the budget is, make sure you get a complete and thorough budget break down. It can be worth paying for an independent opinion from someone experienced in game production (not a competing company) to look at the budget and tell you whether sufficient time has been allocated to the three key aspects of game production: design, coding, and testing.

Testing is frequently under-budgeted but all important as you don't want to find yourself in a situation where your primary property has been released, but your game isn't ready because it is still buggy. You'll not only have wasted your game budget, you will also have a gap in your All Media strategy.

Game Production Team

Unless you're a really serious gamer who has spent a lot of time thinking about creating games, we'd recommend asking various companies to pitch ideas. It's certainly worthwhile if you have enough development budget to pay them, as you'll get some amazing ideas that will inform your choices about what may or may not work.

Whilst games can be contained within an app, it's important when developing the game component that you do a lot of meet and greets before settling on someone you believe understands narrative, is a total gaming nut, shares your passion for the subject matter and will deliver.

EBOOK PRODUCTION

eBooks, particularly interactive eBook apps would have to be one of the best opportunities available for leveraging assets into a property your audience can view time and again at their leisure.

eBooks can take two forms - the kind that are delivered to Kindle and E-readers using traditional text style format with limited if any interactivity; and the interactive eBook app which has far greater scope in terms of delivering hyper linked text, photographs and video content in an interesting and immersive way which incorporates interactivity with the interface beyond swiping or tapping to turn the page and reveal content.

To produce an eBook, you need someone with strong writing and editorial skills. You also need a team member who is across the possibilities of interactivity and who is capable of making discretionary choices rather than overcomplicating the design.

The production methodologies and tools can be quite varied from the use of a simple Adobe Suite package to something more complicated like Unity 3D. It's not necessarily an inexpensive exercise but you do need to budget reasonably for the production and delivery. The minimum for a text-based property is still going to be \$5,000 (including writing). But if you want something that has bells and whistles, you'll need to budget around \$20,000.

The level and depth of interactivity in an eBook needs to be qualified against who you think will be utilizing it and how much time you believe they'll spend drilling down into all aspects of the interactivity. The genre and subject matter will answer some of these questions - as is the case with Al Gore's *Our Choice* where the storyworld is deeply rich and complex enough to invite the

reader back to investigate further in their own time. However if the eBook exists to just tell or illustrate a story, then probably less interactivity is needed.

A Firelight example: eBooks

With the production of the *Storm Surfers - Mission Diaries* eBook, we found a lot of time was spent aggregating the content. We were dealing with a lot of stills that needed to be edited down, allocated to chapters and adjusted. We then engaged a design team experienced in designing traditional books, and married them with a digital production house, experienced in creating interactive books.

PRODUCING FOR THE INTERNET

Websites

As covered in Pre-Production, in the section on All Media infrastructure, your website is the destination hub for everything to do with your principal property. It's amazing what you can achieve with a WordPress site and premium WordPress themes and templates range from \$20 to \$60.

WordPress is pretty self explanatory, so if you have all your content ready such as photos and text, you can populate your site within a few hours. If you were to employ someone and had yet to choose an ISP, register a URL, identify your theme and template and put the site up, it'd probably take around 8 hours and cost you between \$500 and \$1000 (excluding the cost of producing the content).

A Firelight example: Websites

We've found that spending minimal money on websites and rebuilding and updating them as required works better for us than outsourcing the build. Our approach is to agree upon a basic look, which might just be a font and background colour, with the priority being to establish an online presence at the beginning of a project and to get content up and available. Then, as the project evolves and we come to understand better how the product should be positioned when the marketing people become involved, we either update and reprogramme the original site or repopulate a new one.

WEB SERIES

The first thing in producing a web series (i.e. webisodes) is to look at who the audience is going to be, understanding where the webseries needs to be delivered to reach that audience, and then working backwards from there.

Duration is a key factor in web series. The classic mistake is to make webisodes that are either too long in duration or number too many in instalments. The reality is that most webisodes are going to be consumed on an interactive device, which facilitates your audience viewing other content very easily.

Duration is ultimately going to tie back to whether the narrative within each webisode is compelling. You'll also want to consider whether your series has an over-arching narrative, or whether you're delivering self-contained curated stories. Whichever way you slice it, each webisode has to work in and of itself and work as a piece of entertainment.

Webisode Production Cost

In terms of the actual cost of production, it'll be similar to any shoot save for the limitations imposed by the constraints of the story. For example, does the story only take place in one room, with limited set-ups and characters - as with the *Lizzie Bennet Diaries*?

You also need to budget enough for your sound mix as a large percentage of your audience will be consuming this content wearing headphones, so the sound quality needs to be equal to or better than what you might normally deliver for a television show.

Leveraging production assets into a web series

In more ambitious cases where you're leveraging off the principal property's sets and locations, our rule of thumb is that you should be spending on a per minute basis, much the same as you're spending on the primary property. If you were to take away the primary property and try and produce the web series independently, it will cost the same.

Rights considerations in a web series

Depending upon territory, rights are an important consideration when producing a web series and can often be as expensive or more expensive than those for your principal property. There are a whole lot of rules around how much you need to pay actors for a global delivery and rights clearance is ultimately, for any web series, going to be global. If you only get clearance on a geo-block basis, you're going to have a complex journey every time you want to roll that webisode series out in other territories.

Clearance of global rights is, in some instances very expensive. Also, there are rules that apply to the number of runs and residuals for television that are hard to apply across to the web, so you need to take that into account and you need to negotiate for those rights.

One of the things you'll find that's interesting is you can often negotiate directly with the agent and establish a deal with the agent that you can then take to the respective union that you might be dealing with.

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INTRODUCTION

Post-Production can be at once one of the most exciting phases on an All Media production and one of the most crazy. In taking on the production of multiple assets, you are also taking on the Post-Production, delivery and publication of multiple assets. That means that you are in effect in post, marketing and distribution simultaneously across many of the All Media wrap-around iterations.

Whilst all that is going on, you still have to ensure that the Post-Production on the primary property is not being compromised. It still needs the same attention that it would if you weren't producing any other assets and in some cases, even greater attention especially if it's a truly integrated production with transmedia story elements. On the flip side, some great opportunities arise when you have multiple creatives working across different disciplines on the different assets that can help with solving story problems on the primary property.

There is a great opportunity in Post-Production to truly exploit the assets that have been acquired during production. If managed carefully, the whole team should be able to access all the rushes, cuts, stills, story, artwork, GFX, CGI, scripts and transcriptions and be able to leverage them across each of the All Media projects. However, this means ensuring that your assets are extremely well managed.

Perhaps one of the biggest challenges for the producer in Post-Production will be managing the project creatively, whilst keeping under control the logistical and operational demands of having a much larger team to what would normally be associated with a single platform project.

However, with good planning at the development stage, the challenges will be more easily overcome as many of the issues that will arise will have been anticipated.

SOLVING STORYTELLING PROBLEMS

One of the things that happens with most productions is you're going to discover creative story-telling problems that can't be anticipated. One of the fantastic things that can happen in post-production is that you've got all your key creatives in one place at one time. If this is the case, you should be able to utilize that creative team to work across each iteration of the All Media project.

For example, the team working on the webisodes may well discover a great way into a particular story point in the storyworld that can then be used to solve a problem in the cut of the TV series or feature film. Or the editor of the eBook maps out a back story of one of the main characters that helps explain their actions in the film.

This is probably the most exciting phase for the Producer and Director—the lead creatives on the project—because you can harness all of the creative power of the team. I try to encourage each team member to look at what the other people on the team are doing and give feedback.

A Firelight example: Defining the Storyworld - fixing the Web series

On *Storm Surfers 3D*, we were post producing a four part TV series, feature and web series simultaneously. What started out as a project to make a digital magazine soon evolved into an eBook as we realised that there was this great storyworld and history behind the evolution of big wave tow in surfing and the *Storm Surfers* team. The eBook team then started doing profiles on all the main characters and the guest surfers that had come on the missions over the last seven years and also on the science and behind-the-scenes of shooting a massive 3D surf sequence.

The web series team were looking to try and find a way to package up the various little micro-docs they were producing at the time. When we saw the first page plan for the eBook, we realised that the web series should be split and packaged up as a 'Profile' series on the surfers and a 'How To' series on how to be a big wave surfer. Problem solved.

ROLL-OUT OF CONTENT DURING POST-PRODUCTION

During Post-Production, there's a wide range of content that can start to roll out and be distributed as you begin to complete some of the more rich media content that you have been creating. The webisodes or the app should be ready to launch. They might contain a whole bunch of rich content including a game, trailer, stills and links to your social media.

At this point you need to be involving the marketing and publicity team, the distribution team or the network. If you've done as much scheduling as you should have during Pre-Production, you'll find that the point at which you've got to roll out all that content in post-production is where your campaign really kicks into gear.

Now is the time you need to get your content out, because if you don't get it out now, it may be too late. There is no point producing all these fabulous All Media assets for the wrap-around if they come out after the release of the TV series, the movie or the broadcast of the documentary. They need to get out before hand or at the same time as the release.

If you're rolling out beforehand, you're going to be delivering to the fan base that you've built. The sooner you have that content out, the better because you can start to read in real time how your audience is responding to it, and that can start to actually inform how you might run the publicity campaign for your principal property.

POST PRODUCING MULTIPLE ALL MEDIA PROPERTIES

The scheduling of your post-production in the first instance will be done by your line producer or your production manager. The best thing you can do in post-production is to bring your post supervisor and your post-production house into the picture, because they will be very realistic about what can and can't be done within the time frames that you've got.

The ultimate person responsible for scheduling the Post-Production of the All Media assets is the producer and the All Media producer, but you also need to be consulting very closely with any other suppliers—like digital production houses or game production houses—because they're going to have their own time frames and their own needs.

One thing that's changed dramatically with digital acquisition and digital asset management, is that you're dealing with a much more complex set of variables than traditionally with film or tape. Vast quantities of data have to be very carefully managed from an IT perspective; and that's something that has to be factored in as well.

Ultimately with your scheduling, you need to be building in buffers for simple things, like the transfer of data. If you need to move five terabytes of data, that does not happen in a few minutes. Even if you've got a ten gigabyte connection, that's still going to take a day or so.

What we found is that our Digital Assets Manager needed to work with the post producer who was in charge of the delivery materials and the assistant editor to constantly adjust the scheduling across all the suites. There's a little bit of improvisation as you go, but the

best thing you can possibly do is budget for twice as much time as you think you are going to need for each aspect of Post-Production and be pleasantly surprised you did it in two-thirds of that.

MANAGING ASSETS

A Digital Assets Manager handles all the assets at a purely physical level. One of the things that you need to do with your production manager and your post supervisor (or whoever is managing the Post-Production) is to have a proper operational plan to manage the assets because they're going to be vast, no matter what. Even if you're doing the smallest drama, documentary or children's project – you're going to end up with a lot of digital assets.

Our approach is to load all the data on a centralized hard drive that everybody can access (and have it backed up of course). We then break it down by individual All Media property, such as app, book, TV series, behind the scenes, EPK etc. Then further again into stills, video footage and sound grabs for each of those assets. If you're creating an eBook, you can pull all the stills out of the central storage and copy them across into the eBook asset management system, and so forth.

It's vital at the beginning of Pre-Production to establish an asset management system nomenclature (or naming protocol) that everybody agrees to and be disciplined about using it, otherwise you won't be able to find anything. The best people to determine the naming system would be the assistant editor together with the digital asset manager, all media producer and finally the producer. The naming system has to be interpretable, otherwise if there is a staff changeover nobody will know what is what. As the producer,

it's important to dip in to make sure you know how it works because you're the one who will hold the corporate memory that carries on beyond the delivery of the project.

Chances are the naming system will alter as the assets are moved across to the digital production house, the game production house, and any of the other suppliers, because they themselves may have their own language to describe what's being produced. The same property may end up being named in different ways, but you can overcome it by having a top-line naming system in place in the first instance.

MARKETING



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INTRODUCTION

The Marketing phase is one of the most critical and most neglected phases of production for most producers and production companies. Traditionally, producers didn't need to pay a lot of attention to marketing as once the production was completed the producers task was complete. The network or distributor then took over the marketing and the producer had little or no involvement.

With All Media producing, the roll-out of the content, the social media strategy and the relationships with sponsors, talent, audience and fans are all critical to the success of the project. As the producer you will need to be involved in all aspects of the roll-out and as such, you will be involved in the marketing.

The Marketing phase also involves publicity, media relationships and PR. A truly integrated All Media campaign will work with these areas seamlessly with the All Media content roll out.

CONTENT, PUBLICITY, ADVERTISING

When discussing marketing in the context of All Media, it's always useful to look at what differentiates marketing, publicity and content. Marketing is a discrete spend on advertising; publicity is editorial by a third party about what you're creating, be it the primary property or the All Media properties; and the content release is the specific roll-out of the content that you've created.

We then have what we term the All Media Campaign. Everything you've been doing on social media and the All Media content you have created and are rolling out - regardless of it being genuine story extension - has been part of your marketing strategy to drive traffic to your principal property. It's been a true campaign in every sense of the word, and an exciting and dynamic one because it will have started well before you get to the point when you'd traditionally be marketing your principal property.

In an ideal world, you will have been working as closely as possible with the marketing and publicity teams on the content roll-out. Bear in mind that the nature and concerns of the marketing teams will vary depending upon whether your principal property is a film or TV show. And depending upon your property, the number of publicists stands to be huge. They won't just be your own.

MARKETING MULTIPLE ASSETS

The marketing of different All Media iterations at the same time can be quite a complex and difficult thing to manage and of course you've got to be careful. You won't want to end up with a massive budget blow-out in your marketing spend. Each of the iterations needs their own marketing and the money that you're spending on marketing can be very targeted and is often a smarter spend than shotgun marketing (such as an advertisement on TV).

If you got a million people watching when you put an Ad on television, that's great and it will have reach if you are trying to get to a mainstream generalist audience. But if you're talking about reaching a particular niche then that's probably a pretty expensive line of advertising.

Your marketing spend on the digital iterations that you've created doesn't need to be as much as this as you know exactly who you are trying to reach. The cost-per-thousand is a lot lower in the digital space and can cost as little as 50 cents per thousand users reached.

So you can cut a deal and know that for \$10,000 you are going to reach 200,000 people who are all into surfing or car racing for example and that's great value. You still need to be looking at your primary property being the one you must spend the most marketing dollars on but you can also look at integrating the digital products in to that marketing campaign and into a sponsor campaign.

You might be able to bring a sponsor in if you've done a deal during the Development or Financing phase where for example, you put a car in the show, then you could put it into a cool little app that you've created and it's integrated in a really fun way. You can then

have a competition to encourage people to click through to your site - a call to action - and they have the chance to win a car. Fantastic! And it's got your brand all over it.

One of the things that you need to be aware of with any sponsorship deal is that you're not asking them to market your film. They're in the business marketing their product i.e. cars or drinks. They're not in the business of marketing films. What you're doing is providing a vehicle for their product to be marketed.

THE MARKETING AND PUBLICITY TEAM

The marketing team will generally have a much bigger budget than the publicity team. They will be looking at a marketing campaign that may have an agency involved. The agency's ideas will not necessarily be consistent with your ideas. As a producer it's important to listen and assess the best approach. But it's also important to stick to your guns about what you believe the project is about and who the audience is.

If you're working with a Distributor who's spending a large amount of money on P & A for the theatrical release, the earlier you involve the Distributor and their marketing and publicity departments in the process, the better they will understand your requirements in terms of All Media production.

What adds another layer of complexity is that if there are sponsors and/or advertisers involved, they too will have their own campaign and their own demands and needs around their products. To

avoid hiccups, make sure you communicate regularly and involve them in the planning of your campaign from the development stage onwards.

A Firelight example: Storm Surfers

At one point during the roll-out of *Storm Surfers* there were no less than 36 publicists involved. They had to serve their clients (the distributor, the network, the sponsors etc), which was fair enough, however we were the ones supplying the content and we were controlling the roll-out in accordance with various complex, exclusivity deals.

In order to ensure clear communications we explained to the publicists that ultimately as the Executive Producers they needed to consult with us first and that it was vital they followed the agreed strategy, otherwise we'd be stepping all over each other. There was no choice, but for all the traffic to come through us and in the end one of our producers was assigned to managing all of the publicists. We all had a giggle when one of the publicists gave them the credit of Executive Publicist Wrangler. Fun!!

CONTENT ROLL-OUT

There are some general rules for planning the roll-out of multi platform campaigns that come from heritage media such as releasing a piece of content once a day, such as a still or a tweet from one of the cast.

You should also create a calendar of the roll-out, including story points and reactions to news reports, that all parties across the marketing and the campaign are aware of. This will include your publicist, distributor, International Sales Agents, relevant personnel within the television network and everybody within the production who is attached to the public face of your production.

If you have Sponsors who are going to be taking the content to roll-out on their own platforms (such as an IP TV channel within their website), you'll want to include them in the planning also. They might stipulate that their demographic favours consuming material all in one go, so you might need to negotiate exclusivity for key press. It's very important to integrate PR in with your roll out.

A Firelight tip: The All Media roll-out

Increasingly, there is a consistency to the type and kind of All Media assets that are produced and the order in which content is rolled out. Generally, you will begin with social media, stills and setting up a destination website. This provides the foundation upon which to move towards richer content.

The richer interactive content will often be delivered during post-production, so it is likely that it will not be released until the second or third phase of the roll-out. The closer you get to the distribution of the primary property, the richer the content should become.

CREATING A SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY

First and foremost identify who the most likely core fan base is going to be. This facilitates you growing a fan base through the 'water cooler' champions and enthusiasts who love your project and are only too happy to recommend it. If you are able to identify that core fan base - your fanatical fan base - they will do more work for you than a passive social media fan. Identifying that core fan base requires you spending time investigating analytics.

It's amazing what information is available at the back-end of any social media site. Tracking people just requires fundamental logic. Finding and identifying your audience requires you to consider generic age and gender brackets as well as income and education brackets. But at the core, the key thing that's going to attract your audience is interest.

It's important to put your own head in the head space of your core fanatic audience and ask, "What's going to switch them on?" and "How do I reach those people?" And do your research beyond checking out Facebook.

Social media is not the silver bullet that enables you to neglect researching and communicating through other media such as digital publishing, newsletters, websites and targeted email campaigns. Audience creating strategies have to happen synchronously. What's great about combining social media with the research process is that it helps build the conversation and the buzz.

An approach we use when identifying interest is to think along the follow lines: *Fatal Storm*, for example, is a film that has at its heart a yacht race disaster. It has a vast audience as there are 800,000 boat owners in Australia. However when it comes to marketing the

film you still have to find your fanatics. So straight away we set about making educated guesses so we can research and identify our audience. An example might be “people who race on yachts are my core, niche audience”. They will be the fanatic audience and if they love the film and they believe in it then recreational yachties and leisure yachties will spread the word to everybody who likes yachting, “Guess what, this is an amazing film project, you really should check it out.” Then if this crowd think it’s interesting, their influence will extend to people into motor yachts who influence the people who’re into the smaller floater boats, then tinnies and so on down the line.

This strategy works - but only if you get the people at the start of the chain who love yacht racing; otherwise you’ll certainly never get the guy who’s thinking about buying a boat.

Enlisting Your Fans To Build Your Audience

One of great things about All Media is that by making an effort to identify who your fans are you can save a lot of money in Marketing.

You can further enlist these fans to learn about who your audience might be by engaging them in qualitative testing. Carefully select some of the core fan base you’ve been interacting with on social media, and invite them to come in, watch your project and give feedback. Ask them to bring close relatives who might not have any interest in the subject matter whatsoever. Whilst they’re watching your film, observe their response and make some amazing discoveries.

How you go about identifying and enlisting your fans might depend upon the genre of your storyworld and/or whether it has an existing fan base. If your property is the adaptation of a popular book, your fans and potential audience may come to you once they hear

about the project. They may also have opinions about what you’re wanting to produce. The same applies to certain genre fan bases such as sci-fi and fantasy. Social media will help you engage with them. Listen to them, interact with them and they will not only become your fans, they’ll become your champions and help you find a larger audience.

A Firelight example: Audience Testing

We discovered with *Storm Surfers* very early on that the most important audience in the decision-making process in terms of purchasing our brand were women. It seemed counter-intuitive to the male surf-adventure story we were telling, but we discovered that women were the best people to bring a male audience to our program.

Women are the ones in the household who ultimately make decisions around family activities. And not just mothers and wives - daughters, aunts and sisters purchase gifts because they like to make people happy – including their husbands, sons, fathers, brothers or uncles. Women were our best advertising and our best publicity advocates.

Social Media Team

Remember that social media does cost – it costs time and you need somebody to be spending time on it. Also, social media isn't an everyday medium for everyone across every demographic. And it's a feed, so unless your target audience catches the feed, they've missed it. In other words, social media is vital, but its effectiveness can only be realized in conjunction with a traditional marketing campaign, which involves both traditional advertising and digital marketing.

Managing a Social Media Campaign

With our social media campaign, we hire a social media campaign manager and they work for us. We also, ourselves, engage. It only takes 5 minutes a day to engage with social media and that is not a lot of time for the director or producer or other key creatives to engage. If each of the social media outlets had one of the key creatives posting, that's 30 minutes of time spent pushing content out each day. These little bits of information on social media going out is going to have a better result for your campaign.

You can also have a social media manager or if you wanted to take it another step and you have the budget, you can hire whole companies that will manage your social media campaign. You've got to be careful you don't run into a problem of authenticity at that point, because social media has to be genuine. You can't just put out straight marketing via social media.

Data Base Hitch Hiking

Digital Marketing involves working with publications and utilising their database so you can directly email people. Partnering up with magazines and offering content for publicising your property through their database is another option.

Online subscription publications are invaluable as they have access to an incredible amount of data and will ensure you speak directly to your intended audience during your campaign. There are various partnering options available such as content deals, buying advertising or taking over a site for a month.

A Firelight example: Database publicity

With *Storm Surfers*, we worked with Surf Life Saving Australia who probably have over a million people on their database. We offered them the opportunity to be able to screen the film at fund raisers, and in return they publicised *Storm Surfers* across their database.

Social Media: There are no rules

In social media there's a huge amount of confusion and concern around what you should and shouldn't say on social media. Building out a social media strategy that identifies what content should be released on Facebook is very important, but if you apply too many rules, you're going to miss out on opportunities that come about as a result of experimentation and interaction with your fans in that space.

A Firelight experience: Too many rules for social media

On *Storm Surfers*, we ended up with so many rules about what should and shouldn't be said on Facebook that we paralyzed our team and nobody was posting anything in the end because everybody kept reprimanding one other. In the end I got frustrated and said, "Anybody can say what they want with their voice because we know what our brand is. We are the most sophisticated surf entertainment brand in the world and everybody on my team is part of that." So it didn't matter what language was used because it was the content that was important.

A Firelight example: The theatrical market for Storm Surfers

In the case of identifying the potential market for a film, it's possible to use film comparisons. With *Storm Surfers*, we looked at films within the genre and broke down how much money those films made in particular theatres. We also did an analysis on a map of where the best surf breaks were that had nearby theatres and married that data against other documentaries and films in the surf or adventure genre and how they played in those towns.

We then drilled down into the digital marketing capabilities of Facebook and other social media. We identified particular towns and specific demographics, all the way down to the 380 men interested in surfing, between the ages of 25 and 65 in Port Macquarie. So we marketed to them through the social media interface and then a week before the release of the film, we marketed to their wives and partners.

Ultimately you need a budget to purchase the digital data that's out there and have someone analyse it to identify the best way to maximize your audience when you release your film, television show or web series. This cost should be built into your marketing budget. The quality of the analysis may vary in accordance with what you can afford, be it a logical person with skills in statistics and analytics, a company or person you engage on a basis to drive traffic to your website, or an agency you commission.

CONVINCING THE USER TO ENGAGE

The three primary places where your audience – potential or otherwise - engages with any kind of digital media is: in the home; on the phone; and on the computer.

When you approach your potential audience via each platform, consider all the factors that come into play that might prevent you from achieving a conversion, for example, whether they'll go to your website to access further information about your primary property. You can then build safety measures into your approach so that the consumer can remember the details of your property when they are able to access content in their own time.

This is why All Media is such a good strategy because it engages and seduces users through a variety of platforms and media, across demographics, at varying times of day, potentially around the world.

An example of this is to think about the attention span of a commuter on public transport and whether that's the right time to deliver content to them and if so, what kind of content and how - via their mobile phone probably, but in what form? A tweet, an SMS, an email, advertising on a game platform, an endorsement by a YouTube superstar...?

Depending on who they are, they may or may not be interested in engaging with your film or TV property directly. However they might be inclined to read their Twitter feed and visit your website via a recommendation; or play a game in your storyworld and remember the name of the cool movie it's based on; or watch their favourite YouTube star and follow up on their endorsement of your property.

Converting Engagement into Screening Success

All of these approaches facilitate conversion if not immediately, then at a later, more appropriate time. And if you can build in a feature that enables the user to tag your property's details so they can come back to it later, all the better.

We can't stress strongly enough that the purpose of All Media properties is to raise awareness of and drive audiences to your principal property. That's why All Media content should generally be free. It's marketing. In fact it's marketing that requires advertising to reach it's market – so it's important that each piece of content has its own budget and its own marketing strategy.

Hence, if you're trying to seduce an audience segment through your game, advertise your game in a space that'll reach people who play games through a gamer's magazine or on a YouTube game review site. The same applies to each and every element of your All Media wrap-around.

Keeping your Fans Engaged

As much as possible, we make sure we answer every single question that we get asked through our social media sites. We try as much as possible to respond to comments that people make when engaging on those threads. That's your five minutes a day. So once you've put up your post, if it suddenly gets great traction and 5,000 people have liked it, you are going to have loads of comments and you've got to engage.

The more you engage the more the other people engage - including with criticism. If there's criticism and you respond positively rather than in a negative way, you can turn it around and you'll get an

incredible result. We've found with internet nasties, when they say really nasty stuff, as soon as we engage with them they come back and apologize. They're just calling out to be loved. You've got to be very unlucky to have someone that is so vitriolic that they keep going. If they really keep going and they're really annoying, you just delete them.

SPENDING MONEY ON MARKETING ALL MEDIA CONTENT

When budgeting the marketing of the all media iterations, there are different ratios you can apply. Ultimately the best ratio you can apply is a 1:1 ratio. For every dollar you spend on the eBook, you spend a dollar on marketing it; the same with the game, app and so forth. I think when it comes to webisodes, you can give them a nice push really easily through basic digital marketing mechanisms that are inexpensive.

But where you should spend your money is not just on advertising in terms of marketing, it's actually on someone getting out there and pushing for subscriptions and pushing for people and engaging with people who might comment and so forth.

One of the things to be thinking about with social media is making sure what you're posting is new and original and gives your fan base something more.

BUDGETING FOR ANALYTICS

You need to be spending a reasonable amount of time on analytics. In budgeting terms, whoever is running your social media, your website and so forth should be at least dipping in once a day for 15 minutes or so to have a look at what's going on with the analytics and utilize that information.

If you have a long term campaign that's running over a couple of years, it'd be worthwhile budgeting for someone who's an expert to once, every few months highlight any trends and suggest strategies.

One of the best things is that social media gives you incredible access to data about the people who are out there on that social media platform. However the question around whether it is the be all and end all of your marketing is a really simple one, it's not. It still needs to be supported by other content.

THE PROJECT WEBSITE AS A HUB

In our experience, we have found that making the website the hub of everything around the primary property you're creating is the most successful strategy. You have to be sending people back to the website to get to what they want because a single Facebook post doesn't deliver anything except a comment.

If you want them to engage, you need to include in your post a link that in one click will bring them back to your content. You want them to go to your website and find what it is they're looking for as fast as possible. They want to go "I want the app" or "the game" or "the book" or "the TV series" or "the movie" and they can just get it in one mouse click. They've got to be able to find it in one place easily.

You won't believe this, but the number of times we've gone to a website for a film to try and find out where it's on, when it's on and to buy a ticket and can't find a single link for the single most important pieces of information. This is incredibly common.

"I want a ticket." A really simple thing. In two clicks, "I want a ticket" and one more click and they are purchasing a ticket at their local cinema online.

STORM SURFERS

A CASE STUDY WITH ELLENOR COX, MARCUS GILLEZEAU

& ESTER HARDING

Written by Evelyn Saunders

See: www.stormsurfers.com.au to get to all Storm Surfers content

BACKGROUND

Storm Surfers has become one of Australia's most successful and endearing All Media brands. The current franchise includes 6 x 1 hours of television documentary (4 hours in original 3D), 1 x 95 minute theatrical length movie (both in 3D and 2D), 30 webisodes, 2 games, a 140-page eBook, soundtrack album and a massive social media presence with nearly 13 million online page impressions.



Storm Surfers is an epic, real-life adventure following two best friends, Aussie tow-surfing legend Ross Clarke-Jones and two-time world champion Tom Carroll, who enlist the help of surf forecaster Ben Matson to hunt down and ride the biggest and most dangerous waves in the Great Southern Ocean.

Directors Justin McMillan and Christopher Nelius of Sixty Foot Productions, approached Firelight in 2007, to assist them with taking their big wave surfing adventure concept to the next stage. Before 2007, the team had produced three one-off fully brand funded (Quiksilver and Red Bull) documentaries that had received limited distribution.

Marcus Gillezeau and Ellenor Cox from Firelight brought not only expertise in factual content, but also a passion for All Media delivery and franchise building. Firelight put together a five year business plan and strategic All Media plan for the development of *Storm Surfers* with the directors and key talent.

The title and branding for *Storm Surfers* was conceived and Discovery Channel Asia became a co-production partner in two further one-hour documentaries (*Storm Surfers: Dangerous Banks* and *Storm Surfers: New Zealand*). Strong international sales of these two properties into 100 plus countries ensured that close to 20 million viewers became familiar with the brand.

With its dedicated international fan-base, time-specific action, pop science and technology, the brand had become an ideal vehicle for extension across multiple platforms and these two documentaries were augmented by a series of webisodes and a simple game app.



In 2010 the second film *Storm Surfers - New Zealand* was completed. At around this time, the theatrical 3D market was booming and 3D TVs started to appear on the market. The marriage between big wave surfing and 3D was an obvious one and development of the next iteration of *Storm Surfers* in 3D and as an All Media project commenced.

When conceiving of an All Media project, it's useful to look at the distribution channels to ensure there is both a path to market and an audience for your content.

Storm Surfers 3D had the benefit of a pre-existing fan base keen to re-engage once more with the brand. Distribution channels were this time extended from a television only outcome to include a theatrical release version.

DEVELOPMENT

The aim during the Development phase was to look at creating unique content for each platform and each audience demographic and to capitalise on the diversity of the characters' experience.

Development focused on creating genuine narrative extension which not only provided insight into the lives of the stars and characters in the TV Series / Movie but also extended the immersive experience of 3D filmmaking by taking the content out of the television / cinema screen and placing it in the hands of the audience.

The development phase identified the following potential All Media iterations for Storm Surfers:

- 95 minute adventure / bio-pic feature documentary
- 4 x 1 hour factual entertainment television series
- 10 x 2 minute How-To Series
- 10 x 3 minute Profile Series
- Game for iOS and Android mobile devices
- eBook for iOS and Android tablet devices
- Rich media website
- Extensive social media and partner website marketing campaign

The treatments for the feature film and TV series were written and the development of the All Media extensions (the App, eBook, Webisodes, Social Media) commenced in tandem with script development.

An All Media Producer, Ester Harding, was employed from this stage onwards. Together with producers Marcus and Ellenor and the team from digital production house Explore Engage, a number of workshops were undertaken to brainstorm a wide range of ideas and possibilities for apps, games, webisodes, e-magazines and cross platform engagement.

In 2011, the team did an intensive three day workshop facilitated by XMedia Lab at the Opera House where mentors and experts from around the globe engaged with the team to contribute ideas. All of these ideas were then re-worked back into a final proposal and budget that could fit within a realistic finance plan.



Marcus Gillezeau - doing the deal

FINANCING

Marcus Gillezeau travelled extensively during the development period shoring up investment support from various sources around the world.

The initial budget for *Storm Surfers 3D* was around \$3 million and the project moved into pre-production early in 2011. During production additional financing and partners were sourced with the final budget around \$6 million.

Financing partners required different outcomes. TV pre-sales from new dedicated 3D Channels in the US (3Net) and UK (Sky3D) wanted as much content as possible and invested in a 4 x 1 hour TV series.

Red Bull Media House came on board first for the movie and then agreed to pre-buy the TV series offering both investment and a pre-sale for their German speaking channel Servus TV.

In Australia the plan was always to create a theatrical 3D movie and Madman Entertainment offered a Distribution Guarantee for Australia and NZ rights.

Post production services facility Deluxe came on-board as a post production partner and offered an investment in all aspects of the project. Fulcrum Media cash-flowed the Producers Offset tax rebate.

The producing partners agreed to roll their Producer's Offset margin back into the budget to fund the All Media elements and the marketing campaign.

In April 2011, *Storm Surfers 3D* was successful in receiving a grant from the Screen NSW DMI (Digital Marketing Initiative and now known as IMF) for various All Media extensions to the project. Sadly this fund no longer exists.

Matched investment for this fund came from Explore Engage, a digital agency that built the *Storm Surfers* big wave surfing game.

Screen Australia provided production investment and accepted Arclight as an international sales agent along with Red Bull Media House as the agent for Europe.



The production team with director Chris Nelius.

PRE-PRODUCTION

Pre-production was lengthy on *Storm Surfers* due to the 3D Research and Development (R&D) testing requirements and the extended financing period.

During this time, the All Media team were able to continue with the development and financing of the wrap-around. It was also an ideal time in which to start engaging with the various investors, broadcasters and distributors to determine the strategy for the roll-out of the content.

Producer Marcus Gillezeau attended a number of key events to shore up distribution, exhibitor interest, digital platform interest and potential sales. These included American Film Market (AFM), MipTV, the Australian International Movie Convention and the Storyworld Conference in San Francisco along with the key Australian conferences.

In terms of planning for the production of the All Media properties, the scheduling of production ran alongside the scheduling for the main unit. Similarly, the budget management, reporting, logistical planning and testing also ran alongside the main unit. Broadly, the team aimed to completely integrate the production of the All Media assets and to ensure that enough content was acquired during production.

PRODUCTION

Storm Surfers 3D was an incredibly challenging project to make. Filming took place from January 2011 through until December 2011 with a full-time block from April – October. R&D on 3D acquisition and 3D post-production workflow continued throughout the entire duration of production as camera technology and editing systems were continually evolving.

Directors Christopher Nelius and Justin McMillan did an incredible job to secure 1500 hours of 3D footage that was shot at nine different surf locations around Australia and one shoot in Hawaii. The production utilised seven different camera types and three different bespoke 3D camera rigs. The editing system settled upon only became available in September 2011.

Interstate shoots involved moving 23 crew and over a tonne of equipment to remote surf destinations often with only 72 hours notice.



*Heading 75km out to sea for the final mission on *Storm Surfers 3D*.*

A dedicated All Media crew worked in tandem alongside the main unit capturing material for the webisode series. This crew worked closely with the All Media producer and producer who were continually reviewing and evolving the story ideas for the All Media iterations and the stories for the eBook.

A genuine feedback loop between the main unit production team, the post production team, the All Media team and the audience that fed in to the ongoing conceptual development of the project. The focus and aim of this was always to ensure that what was being created had a specific audience in mind and a clear path and distribution channel to reach that audience.

During production of the TV series and movie, the All Media producer worked with Explore Engage on the development of the app and ensured that extensive stills were being secured for the eBook and website.

Towards completion of the Production phase, the website and social media campaign were launched and regularly updated.

POST-PRODUCTION

Post-production commenced in March 2011 and continued through until July 2012. In order for the team to ensure the material was technically acceptable, all 1500 hours (x 2 for 3D) had to be perfectly frame matched (260 million frames) and accessible on drives right through to final delivery.

The TV series and the feature film also had to be edited concurrently, with the ability for editors to simultaneously access the same material. Many of the post paths and editing solutions for enabling this to occur were considered world class and the post team at Deluxe, Spectrum and *Storm Surfers* deserve a special mention for this achievement.

During the production of the movie and TV series, a dedicated 2nd unit All Media crew also wrote, shot and edited a 20 part webisode series, with ten webisodes being in native 3D.

The All Media team also worked with Explore Engage for eight months on the creation of a big wave surfing App *Storm Surfers Big Wave Hunters* (available for download to all Apple and Android Smart Phones). A 140 page eBook 'Storm Surfers Big Wave Missions' was also created for iPad which showcased all the previous *Storm Surfers* missions as well as the current ones in *Storm Surfers* 3D.

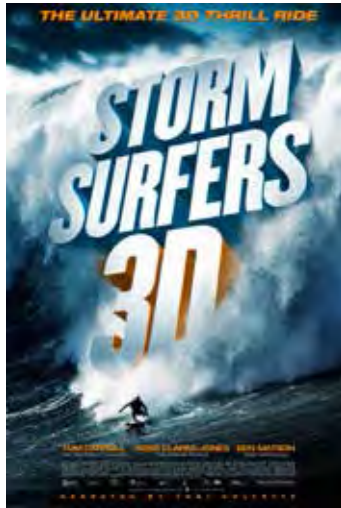
The existing *Storm Surfers* website was overhauled and the social media campaign launched during the shooting period to encourage a growing fanbase in the lead up to the film's release. A soundtrack album was also created and released just prior to the film's Australian premiere.



MARKETING

The 4 x 52 minute TV series was delivered to 3Net and Sky3D by May 2012 and went to air in the second half of the year with both networks promoting it as their 'flagship 3D series of the year'.

Sixty Foot Films (the Production Company) co-distributed with Madman on the theatrical release in Australia in order to remain heavily involved in all aspects of the film's marketing and release.



It was agreed that rather than a traditional release pattern, *Storm Surfers 3D* would emulate an old fashioned 'surf film tour' with the stars Tom Carroll and Ross Clarke Jones making themselves available for a 30 screen, six week tour across Australia. Madman subcontracted Ice Edge Marketing to co-ordinate the tour. Ice Edge run the annual Warren Miller tours.

The Australian release date commenced in mid-August with a six week marketing lead up www.stormsurfers.com.au became the portal site for all ticket sales and showcased the wide array of All Media assets to accompany the film. The back-end of the site fed directly into each cinema's booking page but was updated and maintained by *Storm Surfers 3D* staff. Over 40% of ticket sales came directly from www.stormsurfers.com.au

A 'Grommets on the Ground' campaign engaged fans in each of the 30 locations to put up posters and flyers.

Costs specific to the tour were reduced via sponsorship from sponsors such as Carlton Dry, Yamaha, Quiksilver, Sony and Red Bull Australia. Advertising was limited to digital spend only and massive mainstream publicity was garnered with 100's of pages of publicity generated.

Two weeks out from the August 14th release all 30 shows were sold out across Australia with a \$240,000 Box Office already banked. Cinemas who had previously exercised a wait and see approach to *Storm Surfers 3D* now extended the film's screening into a traditional release pattern which ended up with the film screening in approximately 70 locations.

Storm Surfers 3D continued to screen regularly in cinemas from mid August to mid October with some cinemas such as the Cremorne Orpheum, Sydney running the film for over 20 weeks.

The DVD release was in February 2013 and initial sales were strong. VOD and DTO sales occurred simultaneously and were similarly successful with the title currently available on Fetch TV, Foxtel Digital, i-Tunes, Hybrid Television Services, Sony Network Entertainment and Quickflix.



DISTRIBUTION

One of the highlights of the *Storm Surfers 3D* project was seeing how positively the film was received by both men, women and children as young as five! It had always been a core aim of the production team to provide PG family entertainment that everyone found engrossing and inspiring and that the film was perceived as 'much much more than just a surf movie'.

Press for the film was overwhelmingly positive with Margaret Pomeranz giving it 4 stars. Paul Byrnes made a special mention of it as one of his highlight films of 2012. The film is currently rating 5 Stars on iTunes and the fan feedback via the film's website, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter feeds is overwhelmingly positive.



Storm Surfers fans lining up around the block at the Randwick Ritz.

OTHER ANCILLARY RESULTS

Festivals

Storm Surfers 3D has had an extremely successful festival result. At the Toronto International Film Festival it came First Runner Up in the Audience Award for Best Documentary and demand was so high that an additional screening was conducted.

At San Sebastian, a sold out audience of 1100 viewed the film in 3D on a 60ft screen. The US premiere was a red carpet affair at the Arlington Centre in Santa Barbara and the film also screened at San Luis Obispo.

Storm Surfers 3D screened at the Doha Tribeca Film Festival, the Fribourg International Festival (Switzerland) and the Riviera Maya Film Festival (Panama).

In Australia *Storm Surfers 3D* screened at the Noosa Surf Film Festival and Surfworld International Film Festival where it won the major prize of the Peter Troy Spirit Award.

Awards and Nominations

- *Storm Surfers 3D* has been nominated for and has won numerous awards:
- AACTA 2012 Best Feature Length Documentary – winner
- 3D International Society Best Achievement in Documentary 2012 – winner
- SPAA Interactive Producer of the Year 2012 – winner

- Australian Surf Awards Film of the Year – winner
- AACTA 2012 Best Cinematography in a Documentary – nomination
- AACTA 2012 Best Editing in a Documentary – nomination
- ATOM 2012 Best Documentary – nomination
- APRA 2012 Best Documentary Soundtrack – nomination

All Media Exposure

During the *Storm Surfers 3D* marketing campaign it is estimated that close to 1 million people engaged with the bespoke online content created. The film trailer has had more than 200,000 views alone.

To date the app has been downloaded close to 22,000 times and the eBook is now approaching 2000 downloads.

The Facebook page has nearly 20,000 fans.

How-To Series

From 'How to Tow Surf' to 'Survive a Wipe out', this series is a slightly tongue-in-cheek look at the methods behind the *Storm Surfers* madness.

- It was purpose-shot in native 3D, to create material for marketing / brand building in territories with access to 3D devices but little knowledge of the *Storm Surfers* franchise.
- It was presented by lead characters Ross Clarke-Jones, Tom Carroll and Ben Matson.

- It was broadcast as interstitials on 3Net (US) and Sky3D (UK), available OTT on the Sony Bravia 3D Experience Channel and Yabazam (Global).
- It is being rolled-out to 3D enabled mobile devices (Global).
- It is used as unique content (in 2D) for supporters, sent via eDM.

Profile series

Utilising behind-the-scenes, outtakes and purpose-shot footage, the Profile series is a huge asset. It allowed audience members to 'get-to-know' the stars and invest further in their journey, raising the emotional stakes and encouraging them to share the stories with other friends who may not think *Storm Surfers 3D* is for them.

- The series was intended for release via YouTube and as collateral for partner sites (including Red Bull, Quiksilver etc), as well as broadcast interstitials on Servus TV (Europe).
- It was used as a genuine narrative extension for fans and newcomers keen for a greater insight into the 'off-camera lives' of the main characters.

APP – Storm Surfers Big Wave Hunters

Built entirely in Unity 3D software, the audience is invited into the underwater headquarters of the team and given a weather mini-game to enjoy, before being invited to join Ross Clarke-Jones and Tom Carroll on big-wave surfing missions. Completing Jet Ski, tow and surfing challenges, players feel part of the adventure. The game is another first for *Storm Surfers*, creating a new pathway into the storyworld to appeal to the next generation *Storm Surfers* audience.

- The app was designed for iOS and Android smartphone and tablet distribution.

eBook – Mission Diaries

Providing another genuine narrative-extension for the *Storm Surfers* storyworld, the eBook is a rich-media, interactive experience aimed at a sophisticated, engaged audience. It utilises:

- Photos from the *Storm Surfers* missions archive.
- Motion graphics from the TV series and theatrical feature.
- Profile pieces on members of the *Storm Surfers* team.
- Unique perspectives on the making of the series.
- Detailed explanations of the technical challenges of producing a documentary.



Social Media and Web

Using social media as a tool during the tour of the film around Australia, our social media and web strategies connected fans to Ross, Tom and the team throughout the theatrical release.

- Took the key lesson: “be interested as well as interesting.”
- Engaged with content / ideas / updates relevant to the *Storm Surfers* 3D world and drawing audience attention to other fun / cool / fascinating content.
- www.stormsurfers.com.au
- www.facebook.com/stormsurfers
- @stormsurfers (Twitter)
- www.youtube.com/stormsurfers
- #stormsurfers (Instagram)



Marcus Gillezeau and Ellenor Cox - Winning the Australian Academy of Cinema Television Arts Award 2013

CONSPIRACY 365

A CASE STUDY WITH LINDA KLEJUS, MICHAEL BRINDLEY, MARK

SHIRREFS, ANTHONY MULLINS & PETER JENETSKY

Written by Evelyn Saunders and Marcus Gillezeau

BACKGROUND

Written by Gabrielle Lord, *Conspiracy 365* is a young adult novel franchise of 12 monthly instalments. Publisher, Scholastic, had just commissioned the series when it came to the attention of Circa Media's Linda Klejus. She optioned the series and took the concept to Peter Jenetsky at the Australian premium television movie service Movie Network Channels (MNC). MNC was looking to re-brand the Family Movie Channel (FMC) as of January 2012 and *Conspiracy 365* ticked all the boxes in terms of target audience, an existing fan base and a multi-platform rollout across social media that would act as an important storytelling tool whilst promoting the FMC and driving traffic to it.



Key Tips –

- Identify and extrapolate upon how you're going to expand your storyworld from the beginning
- Resource your multi-platform strategy with funds and personnel
- Create a tight, integrated marketing and distribution model for reaching and building an online audience

CONCEPT

In exactly 365 days, teenage fugitive Cal Ormond must solve the mystery of the “Ormond Singularity”, a family secret that took the life of his father and links Cal to the Virgin Queen of England, Elizabeth I.

Whilst the core storyline centres around Cal, the multi-platform delivery broadened the storyworld to encapsulate a strong female character and historical elements – criteria that met the family target market.

DEVELOPMENT

Development commenced in October 2010, with writing workshops in December and the series and episode outlines were completed in February, 2011. The series was formally commissioned in March, 2011.

Michael Brindley and Mark Shirrefs were the series story producers with Shirrefs doubling as Multi-platform Story Producer. They began work deconstructing the novels “January” through to “December”, and then constructed 12 x 48 minute webisodes.

Anthony Mullins, Hoodlum’s Multi-platform Writer and Creative Director, attended the series development process helping writers think about how the story could be executed across other platforms. A core requirement was the creation of unique content that was easy to share. The team realized the hero’s father had come close to solving the mystery before he died, so they created and told his backstory through 12 x 4 minute webisodes. When joined together these webisodes form a prequel that complements and builds on Cal’s journey.

Mullins wrote the webisodes working directly within the story department. Across the various platforms they added news segments tracking Cal’s movements; a virtual phone, where users could log in and hear phone messages left for the hero; and a video diary created by Winter, the heroine. The writers felt that Winter would connect particularly with a female audience and wanted to make that happen. Cal’s Vlog, a one-minute piece to camera every month was another addition that enabled the writers to relay what the books did so well: Cal’s thoughts and feelings as a kid on the run.

From the start all of the webisodes were laid out in a story outline version, as were the news reports and Winter's dossier. The show was treated as the primary content, "the mother ship" that could exist entirely on its own as the producers believed that's where the biggest audience would be. It had to make sense for people who didn't go online.

For those that did dig deeper, they were rewarded with a wealth of online content. According to Michael Brindley, "...The online content doesn't appear in the books at all... (it's) an inference from the book, 'if (character) did this, then (character) must have done that', so we'll put 'that' in the online content and 'this', that's in the book, in the show."

One of the biggest adaptation challenges was that the books are told from Cal's point of view, which would've exhausted the actor. By changing the point of view they were able to expand, jump in time and go other places – all the time asking "Is this scene about Cal even though he's not present?"

Another consideration was updating the material in such a way as to capitalize on social media. Kids in 2012 are on YouTube so Cal's blog became a Vlog – with some of the material appearing in the episode and the rest made available online. In consultation with the writing department, MNC also created complimentary content in the form of "Case File 365" to market the series across MNC. Online video content can be viewed at: <http://www.youtube.com/user/conspiracy365/videos>

ADDITIONAL CONTENT PRODUCED

Content beyond the principal property was included online at the destination website, Youtube, Facebook, on-air (MNC) and contained within an app. The All Media wrap around consisted of:

- 12 part Webisode series
- 12 Cal Vlogs
- 12 Winter's Dossier videos
- 12 story inspired news reports
- 13 "Interactive Environments" (1 prequel, 12 in-season)
- Regular text and voice messages from characters
- User generated video
- Story inspired polls, quizzes, puzzles
- 12 Behind the Scenes documentaries
- Exclusive TV Preview and Recap videos
- Photo Galleries
- Countdown to Conspiracy 365 Screenings
- Basic MNC EPG
- Links to external content and communities (MNC, iPhone app, Facebook, YouTube)
- Program details
- Facebook Wall discussion prompts
- Personal Progress page so users could see what content they'd consumed and what content was remaining

FINANCING

MNC fully financed the series. According to Klejus, “most Australian drama is between \$800,000 and a million dollars an hour. Because we haven’t wasted a lot of money on financing we’ve got more money to spend on the production.” She was of the opinion that *Conspiracy 365* was “probably the highest multi-platform budget of any Australian drama series” enabling them to embed a multi-platform specialist in the production from the beginning. According to Peter Jenetsky’s case study, at \$13m investment, *Conspiracy 365* was the largest ever subscription television drama production in Australia. The multi-platform investment consisted of approximately \$1m in additional content creation and digital assets.

The multi-platform component was treated as part of the main budget. Circa produced all the narrative, so they shot the narrative webisodes, dossiers and Vlogs. Hoodlum produced the non-narrative online content out of Queensland and provided cost reports to the main budget.

PRE-PRODUCTION

Pre-production took place in May, 2011. The shoot was scheduled as three blocks of four episodes. The webisodes, also shot by main unit, were plotted out to be complementary (i.e. webisode one is relevant to episode one etc), facilitating the efficient use of resources.

PRODUCTION

Production commenced June 20 and finished December 16, 2011. According to Klejus, multi-platform added a level of complexity to the production they didn’t expect. Negotiating with cast and capturing the rights to their performances was an expensive exercise to undertake.

Production planning had military precision: Hoodlum had a content capturing person collecting stills and assets every day; webisodes were shot, edited and material sent up to Hoodlum once or twice a week. The main unit shot around 120 minutes of additional material - almost three episodes. Only some elements such as the news reports were carved off to an occasional second unit shoot.

POST-PRODUCTION

Klejus produced the webisodes to the same broadcast standard as everything else so it wasn’t like ‘that’s the main shoot over here and multi-platform and online is over there.’

The roll-out of the online content was handled by Hoodlum over the 2012 calendar year. Their involvement in the project was across some two and a half years.

MARKETING

In terms of the novel, *Conspiracy 365*'s fanbase was 10-16, evenly distributed across male and female. For MNC, the property promised a locked-in viewership through subscription retention and upgrades as parents responded to their children's enthusiasm. On top of that, social media stood to attract a new audience as it turned viewers into fans and the curious into subscribers.

Part of the mandate was that all materials on the website be easily shareable and publicly available. It was important that the ancillary video content be easy to find so that traffic could then be directed back to the principal property. YouTube provided the answer.

Facebook's social media strengths was similarly utilised with cast announcements being made on the FMC *Conspiracy 365* page to attract and sustain an engaged audience prior to production.

The multi-platform strategy had two objectives: (1) to build the tween audience for the broadcast and keep them engaged, excited and loyal for 365 days; and (2) to promote the series. The marketing wasn't limited to the internet and the TV series, the producers had also utilised the property's original platform i.e. the novel series in further cross-promotional bids with publisher Scholastic.

The novels were re-released with cover artwork that featured the actor, a driver to the series, FMC, the show's URL and Foxtel. Further information about interactivity could be found on the back inside cover, with production stills contained within the book itself. MNC also acquired inclusion in monthly marketing to the Scholastic *Conspiracy 365* fan database; involvement in Scholastic book fairs

and book clubs; as well as book retailer cross promotion. Books were given away as prizes and MNC had media access to author Gabrielle Lord to support the launch of the TV series.

MNC marketed *Conspiracy 365* across its various subscription channels. They also brought in an independent production company to produce *Case File 365* – a short form series of interstitials – to be the voice of the show and act as a conduit. The lead character, Bardy, contemplated questions that would help audiences unravel the mystery, whilst pointing them to online destinations for exclusive multi-platform content. *Case File 365* was screened on FMC, it was available on YouTube and funded independently by MNC.

DISTRIBUTION

"January" the first episode in the series premiered Saturday January 14, 2012, with subsequent episodes screening on the first Saturday of each month through to December. Catch up sessions and screenings of multiple episodes became available as the series progressed to benefit new subscription audiences. Further drivers to FMC included Episode 1 enjoying a limited release window on YouTube; and a staggered release on iTunes from the second half of the year.

The rollout strategy for broadcast and online mimicked that of the book – one episode per month accompanied by a release of interactive content. This bold programming decision was made with the intention of keeping an audience engaged for a whole year. There were 365 pieces of content released across 13 instalments – 1 prequel followed by 12 in-season. Each content release was

designed to sustain the audience for the 30 or so days until the next episode and release of content. Some members of the audience would devour the content in one hit, others would have a more relaxed approach; motivations varied from wanting more of the show, to wanting to be the first to experience the content, to wanting to savour the experience – it was up to the individual.

Some of this content was gleaned from Peter Jenetsky's case study to Film Victoria at: http://www.film.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0015/21246/Conspiracy-365-Film-Vic-Casestudy-PJ-final.pdf

SUMMARY

Conspiracy 365's All Media wrap around certainly ticks all the boxes. It maintains the rules and pressures of the novels' storyworld and expands upon them to create new story elements across multiple platforms. This strategy was designed to appeal not only to its established audience, but speak more comprehensively to the female tween sector and draw in parents. In other words, it fished where the fish were and met its audience where it lived.

However, there's a certain critical mass All Media projects need to achieve to have a self sustaining publicity drive. Yes, the All Media content was available online to anybody - established fans and new - and, these elements were designed to be spreadable across social networking platforms to draw in new audience members.

Yet the principal property (the series) was housed on a premium tier of a subscription TV platform making the main event highly exclusive and, quite possibly, out of the reach of many of the champions the novel series would have already recruited. The

audience reach of the principal property therefore, was limited until the episodes were commercially available by which time the hype generated by the wrap around would have abated.

It's important to remember also that the average TV series has a three month campaign prior to the release of weekly episodes. The marketing spend after the premiere drops because each episode takes on some of the marketing role. The monthly release strategy employed with *Conspiracy 365* whilst true to the novel series' rollout (a book for each month of the year), was highly ambitious as it had to maintain audience interest and marketing momentum.

FMC met this challenge by instituting a heavy pre-promotion campaign for each new episode and scheduled multiple plays in each month and, there was also the app and online elements. However whilst the show was reported to be a success for FMC, one has to wonder how much more successful it might have been on free-to-air television where anybody and everybody could access the principal property and enjoy the full wrap around experience that was on offer.

BRITAIN FROM ABOVE

A CASE STUDY WITH KIRSTY HUNTER

Written by Evelyn Saunders and Marcus Gillezeau

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/britainfromabove/about/>



Britain From Above was inspired by Google Earth and the idea that you could be anywhere in the world, plug in your address and zoom down into your location. The central tenet was about the hidden secrets and patterns you can only see when you look at something from above. The concept was very much story led: *What could you see from above that changed your perspective?*

Produced in 2008 by Lion Television for public broadcaster BBC, *Britain from Above* was a complex project delivering three hours for BBC1, three half hours for BBC2, an hour for BBC4 and a major website for providing the content online. Deliverables also included a book and a DVD. Development



Rick Shaw (Head of Development, Lion) and development researchers found the initial stories and Kirsty Hunter (Head of Interactive TV, Lion), her interactive producer and other members of the digital team, wove multiplatform aspects into the treatment. They brainstormed how it would look online, how it would geo-locate content, how multiplatform would change the proposition for the web, Red Button interactive TV and mobile.

They developed the proposal in tandem, laying out potential running orders of episodes, contributors, presenters and so forth. The process was overseen by Nick Catliff, one of Lion's managing directors, and he and Rick then pitched it as a joint proposition to the BBC Factual Department.

Key Tips –

- Plan how everyone will work as a cohesive unit from the outset
- Where possible have the same personnel work across the various platforms
- Have a platform agnostic series producer sit across all of your properties
- For a substantial project have two production managers sit across the properties
- Engage an archive producer to research material for all properties
- Physically locate your team as practically as possible next to each other
- Deal with properties in order of deadline
- Work closely with the client to maintain a coherent voice and strategy regarding deliverables
- Collaborate with your post production house early in proceedings to identify the format of your assets coming in and determine deliverables going out.
- Regularly discuss the audience's user journey with publicity and promotions to ascertain the best way to release content within and around the network.
- Whilst traffic figures might not always be available, success can be measured by taking into consideration: impact, critical acclaim, achievement of educational objectives and the long tail of the project.

FINANCING

Lion is one of the BBC's key suppliers in the UK. Eighty percent of their work is for the BBC, so they have regular routines with BBC commissioners. With *Britain from Above*, they didn't shoot a teaser tape or provide storyboards, rather, they provided a very detailed sixty-page treatment.

Emma Willis (a BBC commissioning editor) had been looking for big factual ideas that were about national identity and about Britain. Excited, she brought in Nick Cohen, the Multiplatform Knowledge Commissioner and they commissioned the project in tandem. Cohen brought his own budget to the project and Willis fully funded the TV series. According to Hunter, "The web budget was around 14% of the TV budget." The two budgets were combined and *Britain from Above* was run as a multi-platform production.



www.bbc.co.uk/britainfromabove/archive

PRE-PRODUCTION

Hunter, an experienced multiplatform strategist, recommends planning how everyone will work as a cohesive unit from the outset, “even though it seems torturous and it seems to take a long time, spend time planning those aspects, your production and your post-production particularly. It makes it much more seamless, and it also helps to have the same personnel working across different platforms.”

From day one a series producer sat across all of the platforms, overseeing BBC1, BBC2 and BBC4, inputting on the web, the DVD and the book.

“It (the series producer) became a hugely important role because everything was as important as each other. She was very much agnostic in terms of where the resources went because she was juggling everything.” (Hunter)

Two production managers also sat across everything. The DVD and the book were separate budgets but they ran all the budgets together, combining the money but reporting separately back to the BBC on the TV and web aspects.

An archive producer was engaged to research all the material for the television series as well as the web. Hunter advises taking the same approach with assets, agreements and talent, “When you engage your presenter you should be thinking ‘what do I need them to do for the web?’ -it needs to be incorporated into the same deal.” The same applies to music.

The team was also physically located next to each other (eg the interactive producer sat next to the television producer) to facilitate sharing assets and information.

With regard to the book, the team had initial editorial meetings with Anova, the publishers, after which they went their separate ways to create their own products. Anova had to create a property for someone to read as a coffee table book - a much different proposition to online and getting people to lean forward and interact.

Hunter's approach enabled properties to be dealt with according to deadline. Typically the website came first.

"If you're building a website it probably has to launch two or three weeks prior to the show going out. Already you've got a compressed schedule and you need to start designing pretty quickly at the start. We had our web designer brief the TV graphics company and the opening titles house on the look of the whole series. From the start we had one cohesive voice over 'what is this about' 'how is this series going to look'. The web team were involved in those discussions and also leading those discussions." (Hunter)

Map specialization was a high priority for the project. On the BBC's recommendation, Lion outsourced technology to Numiko, an agency based in Leeds. To build the website, Numiko had a project manager, some developers, and a lead technologist. The project management system "Basecamp" enabled everyone to know what the other was doing regardless of location.

Lion's dedicated interactive producer was responsible for finalizing all of the site's content including 'Rewind', the strand which told the story of a particular place through historical aerals. A dedicated video producer produced a lot of the 'behind the scenes' content and a bit on 'Rewind'. There was the designer, a web copywriter who rewrote all of the content required for the site; and three video editors employed at various stages to cut the stories.

On the BBC side there was a commissioning editor, a technical project manager and a design lead who worked with Lion on all the deliverables.

According to Hunter, with multiplatform production, "Who's supervising who and how the content or deliverables are being signed off by the client, are important considerations." With *Britain from Above*, all of the video content was being signed off by Television Commissioning Editor, Emma Willis - even though the budget had come from Knowledge Multiplatform. Hunter worked closely with Willis and the series producer (who sat across everything) to ensure they had a coherent voice and strategy about what was being delivered to the BBC.

With regard to the book deal, there was a certain amount of deliverables Lion needed to provide such as stills and information for their author to work with. These requirements were integrated into the series' production so that a stills photographer would be shooting for both the web and book media. The website team worked quite closely with Anova to 'ring-fence' some stills exclusively for the book.

"It was important for us that the website didn't become television on the web, and we didn't want the book to become the web in a book. So we had people who are leaders in their fields in each of the platforms, taking what they needed from the central pool of content and from the idea - the central idea of Britain from Above - but then translating it for their own platform." (Hunter)

POST-PRODUCTION

Hunter was conscious of the importance of managing post-production work flow. Rather than risking digital becoming the poor cousin to TV, the team sat down with their internal post-production house and discussed the sort of assets that would be coming in, the sort of deliverables going out, and what would be happening in the middle. They had approximately twenty different formats coming in (VariCam, lipstick cameras, DV) and had to deliver five and a half of HD material for BBC transmission, and 120 web clips.

"We worked out that we would ingest everything at DV res, which is good enough for the web so we wouldn't have to end up doing an online or a grade or a mix, a formal mix. That brought the cost down. We had something like seven edit suites going at once: a couple doing BBC1, two doing BBC2, one doing BBC4 and then two doing the web - and we would all be sharing the same media and material." (Hunter)

Basecamp assisted with version control, documentation and transparency as everyone across the project could read the posts and messages.

MARKETING

Britain from Above had a project team that included not just the TV Commissioner but also the Multiplatform Commissioner, Publicity, Promotions, Picture Publicity - and they all met as a group once a fortnight.

"This proved to be the key to getting everyone's buy-in across the 'beast' that is the BBC. The team put a lot of consideration into the user journey and how the audience might discover the experience, not just online but around the BBC universe."

"We were trying to think about how we would move people around the network so they'd hear about the show. They'd maybe taste a bit of the content, they'd come to the site, start exploring it and then they'd watch the show, (or) if they missed it or if they wanted to watch it again they could go to iPlayer." (Hunter)

Andrew Marr, the series presenter, was interviewed numerous times for Radio Times and the Sunday Times. A lot of the content was placed online for people to explore as a linear experience prior to the series going to air. There was also the catch-up service on iPlayer. Working very closely with BBC publicity, one of the first things Lion did when they launched the series before transmission, was to give BBC News clips to feature on the BBC News broadcast.

"One of those was the iconic clip, the data visualisation of taxi-cabs in London. (It) had 250,000 views on the BBC News website after it had gone to air. We quickly realised we had a bit of a hit on our hands." (Hunter)

The clip aired on the Saturday, the site launched on the Monday with all of the behind-the-scenes content, all of the Rewind content and the clips from the series. The BBC didn't have an issue with putting everything up a week before transmission.

"It built a buzz around the show." (Hunter)

DISTRIBUTION

Lion was in a unique position in that the show and the website was fully funded by the BBC. The distribution model was effectively about distributing in and around the BBC network. They didn't have to think about getting further funding from distribution.

The brief from the BBC was to redefine the documentary online. Lion addressed this by focusing on was the idea of 'how to index content' and 'how to create a seamless experience'. They worked hard on the user interface to achieve that.

The designer's vision had been to create a video rich, immersive experience without text, where the user could consume the content they were interested in, without having to watch a linear program. To achieve this, the Content Management System (CMS) was built entirely from scratch by Numiko. A lot of consideration was given to the back end - what assets were needed on particular pages, how it would work and the easiest way to input and update content (the stories, the video, the slideshows, all of the assets); as well as how it looked on the front end. Jaron Ghani, the Lead Technologist was also key in thinking about how the content would be shared – how people were going to use it. As a result the content not only

sat on BBC.co.uk for people to access via the site, it could be pulled into Google Earth and watched there. According to Hunter, "If someone wanted a piece of video they could put it on their own blog or on their own site."

This approach was a huge success and they found people who'd gone to the site to watch a clip they'd heard about - such as the taxi's around London and then stayed for half an hour because it was easy to jump from story to story in a non-linear journey through the video content.

Britain from Above went out on BBC1 and BBC2 for three weeks, followed by the BBC4 special, which stayed on the iPlayer for another four weeks post-transmission. It's success was reflected in it being the most watched program on iPlay the day after the show went to air each week.

"They were getting massive spikes on video-on-demand on the Monday as word-of-mouth spread about the shows. Traffic to the site was spiking on Sunday nights and Mondays, but then steady during the week with other spikes around transmission." (Hunter)

Whilst traffic figures aren't available, Hunter believes it's impact can be measured by the fact it achieved its goals: impact, critical success, educational impact and a long tail. The knock-on effect proves the success of their distribution strategy.

"All of the video content on the site was shareable and embeddable on external sites. The British Geography Association took all of the clips and created a standalone education site with learning materials wrapped around

*the video content. Now, every single fifteen year old in Britain who studies geography watches the clips on the **Britain from Above** website.” (Hunter)*

This was something they’d intended from the outset. Lion licensed the clips on the site for ten years to the BBC – no geo-blocking. *Britain From Above* won the Digital International Emmy for Non-Fiction in 2009.

CONCLUSION

Britain From Above is a fine example of an All Media project that from the outset, seamlessly integrated its development, production, marketing and distribution processes.

The model used to produce, market and distribute this property is also worth considering when working with public broadcasters to deliver documentary content to a mainstream audience. It demonstrates how cross promotion of All Media iterations across a variety of media and channels can drive traffic to the various experiences and ultimately the principal property; the news clip data visualization of London taxis and the ability to pull content into Google Earth being a case in point.

“I don’t think there is the option anymore to ignore other platforms outside of television. Your audience is splintering and they are consuming content wherever they want, whenever they want.” (Hunter)

According to Hunter, the advent of mobile and tablet apps has also had a huge impact on the television and content market with this trend likely to continue well into the future.

“It’s no longer the case that people don’t get it, it’s the case that you need to be thinking about how are you going to use those platforms to disseminate or distribute your content. And obviously your content... it can’t just be television. (Hunter)

Which points to exciting times ahead in the area of All Media content creation and delivery.

HEROES

A CASE STUDY WITH TIM KRING (2012)

Written by Marcus Gillezeau and Amanda Keeling

BACKGROUND

An All Media success story, *Heroes* is an example of a large US network reaching out to the audience through All Media. The *Heroes* world or universe played out across the TV show, web comics, wiki sites, satellite websites for characters and organisations, online scavenger hunts, mobile strategies and fan sites. With first season ratings for the TV show all coming in at over 10 million viewers per episode (topping 16.03 million at season high), there were also millions of people engaged with the All Media content.

Heroes' executive producer Tim Kring, has written and produced some of the most successful serial TV Shows in the United States. Making his start in TV as a screenwriter for TV shows and telemovies in the 1980's, on shows like *Knight Rider* and *Teen Wolf Too*, Kring went on to write and produce major TV shows such as *Chicago Hope*, *Providence*, and *Crossing Jordan*, before beginning development for *Heroes* in early 2006.



We Can Be Heroes: Tim Kring for the Future of StoryTelling 2012



<https://vimeo.com/61269956>

This 10 minute video is a brilliant interview with Tim Kring about the future of Storytelling and the projects and the All Media projects, he has worked on.

This video is from the Future of StoryTelling summit and can be found on Vimeo. The summit is a one-day, invitation-only event that aims to further our understanding of the art and science of communication in the 21st century and beyond. The inaugural FoST summit was held October 5, 2012. Top thinkers and practitioners from diverse fields gathered to explore current evolutions and revolutions in the creation, marketing, and consumption of information.

Key Tips –

- Fish where the fish are – find out where your audience is and meet them on those platforms.
- Build a closer relationship with the audience – allow them to become part of the narrative.
- Build funding for All Media into the production or show budget.
- Plan for a large uptake of the All Media content and be willing to work with fan created content.
- Collect content as you go and use what you have.
- Forge partnerships with brands and the ‘new distributors’.
- Multiplatform content doesn’t just promote the show, it promotes the broadcaster and their other shows.

CONCEPT

The idea of working with content outside the television format came from the realisation that there was a very limited relationship with television audiences and that this lack of connection was behind sliding ratings. While working on *Crossing Jordan*, the network asked Kring to come up with show material that would live online. The problem was that *Crossing Jordan* was a procedural drama and there seemed to be very little scope for online content. Kring vowed that if he ever got another chance to step up, he was going to figure out a way to forge a better relationship with the audience.

Kring's resolution was to 'fish where the fish were'. He decided to simply try to go wherever the audience was, 'to cast a line and tell a story there'. In the planning/development phase of *Heroes*, Kring saw an opportunity to experiment with this idea of building a closer relationship between the show and the audience. *Heroes* had a comic book genre base, and the idea was to run an online comic book concurrent with the show. "I went into the network with the idea that I was going to try and make a show that had a relationship with the audience; that had a little bit more of a dynamic feedback loop between us and the show," says Kring. The material that didn't make it into 'the mother ship' of the TV show, would live online.

In a remarkable case of being in the right place at the right time, the mandate from General Electric was that the network, NBC, was to figure out how to reach their audience on multiple platforms. Kring walked in with a show that had a big splashy comic book feel that suited the demographic that was on multiple platforms.

On the day *Heroes* was picked up the NBC.com division consisted of seven people. Three weeks later, there were 67 employees in that division. *Heroes* became, in essence, a kind of beta testing

ground for this brave new world of integrated storytelling that had never been tried at NBC. The team tried all sorts of ideas from webisodes to websites for companies and characters in the show. Kring recalls that the *Heroes* team became this kind of factory for making ancillary content. *"We had this very deep cannon that burrowed deep into of mythology of the show, so it lent itself wonderfully to all this kind of content,"* says Kring.

FINANCING

Due to the network's mandate to reach audiences on a number of platforms, Kring's team were living in a very idealised and rare situation. Kring remembers, "At the time there was no pressure to justify how it was meant to make any money." It was deemed to be promotion and marketing for not only *Heroes* itself, but for the NBC.com division, the platform that was also promoting NBC's other shows.

According to Kring, multiplatform content is mostly funded or 'cobbled together' with found dollars between marketing, promo, and brand money. However, he feels a better way to plan financing for multiplatform content is to literally, 'bake it into the production budget' so it is not an after thought or overlay on top of the traditional budget.

Brand funding came when Sprint and Nissan approached NBC to sponsor webisodes and other All Media content.

Kring estimates that around 2.5% of the overall budget went to the production of the digital aspects of the show. The value of the NBC.com department that helped out with the ancillary content for *Heroes* is not included in this percentage, but would have lent significant staffing and resources to the production.

Asked about the value of online engagement and audience building through ancillary content verses the number of eyeballs on the TV show, Kring believes there's real value in the All Media content, however for the networks, it's still all about the show.

"The studios actually make the product and they can sell DVDs, sell a property into syndication and sell merchandise. The networks are the single source of revenue business. They only make money one way. They sell ad time so for them it's all about the mother ship of the show until they see some real value in the number of people who are engaging in this stuff."

Kring points out that some networks believe that the audience that will engage in the digital realm or with ancillary content of a show, is the audience they reach anyway through the TV show. It's something of a chicken and egg scenario that can be drawn out by the fact that significant numbers of people engaged with the *Heroes* ancillary content. By March 2007, The *Heroes* Evolutions website had 48 million page views. Millions of fans found and created *Heroes* content online, with 2.5 million fans joining the *Heroes* Official Facebook page. These people were consuming and sharing content online and drawing, one would hypothesise, significant numbers of viewers to the principal property both within the USA and across the world. This hype should not be undervalued as it would've drawn exponentially increasing audiences to the property.

MARKETING

There is an interesting line in Hollywood between All Media content production costs, and promotion and marketing costs. If a studio or network deem a production activity to be marketing and promotion, there is less impact on the profit participation agreements. In other words, it is cheaper for the networks.

For broadcasters launching a new show, the priority is getting the TV audience. Once the numbers start looking good, then the dollars for All Media content may become available. Kring's contention is that the ancillary content creates new audience members for the show and vice versa. Kring thinks it's hard to see where production ends and marketing begins, "We're doing this to generate more and more interest and enthusiasm – to make the fan and audience participation in the show deeper and richer."

POST-PRODUCTION

It was clear that *Heroes* would need more resources and staff than a traditional TV show, along with crew members specifically dedicated to the All Media content. The engine room was the writer's room. The story lines for *Heroes* were all generated in the writer's room but Kring hired four full-time people for the transmedia or new media division. Their job was to come up with the extra content, liaising between the *Heroes* writing staff and the NBC.com engine room of coders and web designers. Kring recalls, "There was no wasted piece of content. Anything that fell out of the ship of the show could then have a life on some other platform."

NBC.com had literally thousands of pages of content to inform, entertain and engage fans. The audience members were encouraged to interact with the show's characters online and through mobile connections. Fans could receive texts from characters asking them for help, could create and submit artwork, mash-ups, suggestions for new characters and concepts that would become *Heroes* online graphic novels. There were widgets, news updates and original *Heroes* content that fans could tailor for their own home pages and blogs.

One of Kring's most important lessons from *Heroes* was the speed at which the All Media audience consumed content and their demand for new material. After several years of stretching his team to produce additional content, Kring realised the only solution was to create a situation where the *Heroes* audience could generate content for themselves. Kring believes when it comes to fan audiences, it's less about creating content and delivering it and more about giving the audience a world that they can inhabit. It's about creating a world that's increasingly social and allows the audience to become inserted into the narrative in some way, to participate in the world of the show.

DISTRIBUTION

Kring believes that one of the ways to turn the tide and to make real money from storytelling across multiple platforms is to forge new partnerships across networks, brands and distributors. Kring's feel good project, *Conspiracy for Good* (2010) is an example of brand integration, with Nokia willing to become part of the narrative rather than front and centre.

As a storyteller, Kring was looking for tools to help him reach people and to communicate with the audience. A big tech company like Nokia had interesting tools that aid storytelling. "It works if you can partner with a brand, platform or distributor that can actually speak to their customers - somebody that has thousands of customers that they can push content to with a press of a button," says Kring. Leveraging free promotion for your show by tapping into partner Facebook communities, advertising dollars and promotional spend should be part of the deal.

With networks, deals like this are often difficult to navigate. Although the money is out there, Kring points out that there's a lot of old world business butting heads with the new world. The sales departments at networks want to land the deals with the major brands, rather than having All Media producers win the pitch. With new business models emerging, Kring wants to give all the options a go and would rather find partner dollars to fund multiplatform content. His plea to the networks is, "We don't have to pay for it. Just give me permission to go out and shake the trees."

Kring notes that some brands have done this themselves, building content divisions to better connect with their consumers.

"There are brands that are now ready, willing and able to almost become broadcasters themselves. Brands like Red Bull are making huge amounts of content and closing content deals. AT&T and Starbucks are out there too. There is now real business to be had out of going directly to the brands themselves for sponsorship of this content. Working with Nokia on Conspiracy was certainly an example of that."

THE FUTURE

Kring believes that in the near future the electronics and technology companies who are beginning to equip themselves with the ability to become broadcasters may offer up some real challenges to the networks. Delving deeper, Kring comments that the most interesting aspect of All Media storytelling as we move forward will be the data that companies will be able to acquire.

"The data is going to be the new gold. Who are these people in the audience and what are their behaviour and habits?"

DIRTGIRLWORLD

INTERVIEW WITH CATE MCQUILLEN

Written by Evelyn Saunders

dirtgirlworld.tv

BACKGROUND

Cate McQuillen, co-creator of *dirtgirlworld* delightfully described the *dirtgirlworld* experience as a blended animation and live action All Media project for kids about growing vegetables. But for those of us in the know, it's far more than that. It's a number one rating show that evolved from Cate McQuillen and Hewey Eustace's award winning album of 20 songs, a dedication to permaculture and education and, a passion for making a difference. *dirtgirlworld* is all heart and you can check it out at a variety of online sites, one of them being YouTube.

Prior to perfecting the concept and approach, Cate and Hewey packaged their music CD and story concepts to networks and television shows they believed were a good fit. This strategy garnered good wishes but no results. Feeling that perhaps the time wasn't right, they decided to trial another concept "Hit It". It was whilst pitching this to Disney that the executive noticed the music CD and on hearing Cate's impromptu pitch, suggested they develop something to illustrate the concept. It's from this point that *dirtgirlworld* took shape and a multiplatform life.



dirtgirlworld has subsequently won numerous awards including:

- 2013 International Digital Emmy;
- 2010 AFI (AACTA) Award for Best Children's Television Animation;
- 2010 Australian Director's Guild Award for Green Production of the Year;
- 2010 Australia Day Award for Culture and the Arts.

Nominations include:

- 2010 BAFTA for Children's International Production of the Year
- 2010 Prix Jeunesse Festival, Munich
- 2010 Logie for Outstanding Children's Program

"Never in their realm of possibility did it occur to us we'd have this success. dirtgirlworld wasn't and isn't about that. But it's nice that something with such a beautiful heart has been recognised and, that's lovely. " (Cate McQuillen)

Key Tips –

- Wear your heart on your sleeve.
- Don't be scared to show how passionate you are about your project.
- The people who connect with your story are 'people'.
- Physical, creative and financial stamina is vital, so look after yourself.
- Small teams become big teams to make big things happen.
- Take time to look carefully at agreements and ensure everything is in place to protect all parties, especially yourself.
- Everything will cost more than you think.
- Budget properly for your overheads.
- Allow your brain to just go to places – don't be scared to dream and write things down.
- When discussing digital concepts – keeping it simple is really good advice. It's keeping it simple NOT keeping it boring.

CONCEPT

“...It's about a girl with a big head, kind of animated, and there's dirt.” (Cate McQuillen)

Cate's delightfully honest about her impromptu 'pitch' to Disney. She says if she'd had more experience pitching at this level, she'd have asked for development money then and there.

Never-the-less, after reflecting with Hewey on how they'd entered a post *An Inconvenient Truth* world, they decided the time was ripe to make eco-logical-tainment.

“...For people who are like us... who want to tell stories, the basic premise is: we protect what we love. If kids can never go outside, if they can't stand in a forest, how can they ever protect it? How can they take their love for the characters in the TV show and move it into reality?” (Cate McQuillen)

Which is a whole lot why *dirtgirlworld* is about sustainability and the environment; and possibly why part of the *dirtgirlworld* experience involves planting seeds!

In line with this ecologically friendly approach, mememe productions refuses to do any merchandise and licensing that isn't sustainable – they closed the door on that route to market. “But that,” says Cate, “is a good thing,” as this was a path they didn't want to go down. Similarly, their policy extends to not advertising to kids; they've taken an atypical licensing path.

DEVELOPMENT

When it comes to *dirtgirlworld* being an All Media production, mememe productions had always seen TV as an entry point rather than a facilitator for the whole raft of experiences.

“The broadcaster's role is to love the TV and supporting web content; it's not up to the broadcaster to understand and be across everything.” (Cate McQuillen)

With this in mind, Cate and Hewey created a massive map of all the stories and ideas they wanted to communicate. They looked at the way kids play, learn and watch as well as where they do it and how they do it. They identified that their audience is split: (a) the child audience and, (b) the parent audience who choose what their kids watch.

Identifying where parents play, watch and interact to obtain knowledge for their kids, Cate and Hewey then assessed where they wanted to have story, where the values of the show would be best reflected and, all the different ways and media they could use to tell the story. They then matched the strongest value with the strongest use of each platform and itemised the experiences they wanted to develop.

As technology developed, the process continued to evolve and numerous iterations emerged. Taking into consideration that many of the fans don't read, the experiences for the children are voice and vision:

- dirtgirl as you see her on TV;
- A cookie cutter web-based avatar that lip-syncs to media on dirtgirlworld Club where the kids can create an avatar of themselves and join in (clubdirtgirlworld.com);
- The live action version of dirtgirl played by the actor on TV;
- Live entertainment event versions played by female artists in a dirtgirl wig and outfit with accompanying Bee Band (rock band);
- The *dirtgirlworld* App and Happy Snapper (camera) with 3-D augmented reality version of dirtgirl;
- Early childhood sustainable curriculum with dirtgirl and scrapboy presenting on Interactive White Boards (coming soon to preschools);

"We feel like the luckiest people in the world because we have this beautiful story, an international audience and a million tools to connect the story to. Especially since technology, modes of delivery and audience became aligned between the initial release of dirtgirlworld in 2009 and (what Cate calls) 'the great year of 2012'. For example if we'd released everything on day one, we would've used Flash." (Cate McQuillen)

An example of this is dirtgirl being local ambassador for rubbish at certain councils. Vehicles were painted white with dirtgirl and scrapboy's image on the side so kids could wave as their rubbish was collected. There's also the dirtgirl and scrapboy newspaper print and radio show campaign "Let's Talk Rubbish", podcasts and, a compost caddie for houses. This initiative was hugely successful and exceeded one council's target of recycling and composting 67% of potential landfill.

FINANCING

To develop the concept Hewey and Cate sold their assets and paid over \$100,000 for a little over a minute's worth of animation. The Regional Film Fund from Screen NSW allowed the hiring of regional crew to shoot live action footage in the Northern Rivers region. mememe productions obtained a coproduction agreement with Decode Entertainment, a Canadian producer. The ABC, the Canadian Broadcasting Commission as well as the BBC and its children's channel CBeebies, commissioned the project. Financing took a year, followed by two years of animation to make Day 1 of broadcast.

Mememe productions wanted to create a really successful, sustainable business in all sense of the words: sustainable as a business but also, sustainable on the planet. They set up a number of licenses (such as for their live shows) and in some cases they are the licensee as well as the owner. They're also an aggregator on iTunes. Cate says none of this is a big golden cloud, but the system enables them to take in little bits of money to keep them ticking, so they can grow the business in such a way as to keep content flowing.

The *dirtgirlworld* business model also extends to incorporating sustainability targets with financial partners. (more on this in "Distribution")

PRE-PRODUCTION

The Pre-Production process involved creating a digital style guide for the look and feel of the show as well as rules for *dirtgirlworld* which have been subsequently demonstrated across all platforms. An example of this is the way everything a user/player "clicks" on is sticky-taped down.

Pre-Production also involved identifying the best software for liaising with creatives across multiple cities and countries given this was a coproduction. Cinesync software from Adelaide proved to be the solution. It enabled users to draw on frames or illustrations in virtual meetings so that everyone could see the result, write notes and understand what was required in real time. It also meant that broadcasters could view the episodes in their own time and write notes. According to Cate, 127 hands touched the project between her verandah, overseas and back. She and Hewey couldn't have done it without the technology.

All 300 props were built on Cate and Hewey's property and they had six artists living there for six weeks to do it. "Everything the characters touch is real," laughs Cate. The budget was so tight that in one episode they built a bicycle because to buy it would've cost a third of the budget.

Meanwhile Hewey created all of the music.

When it comes to pre-production on other iterations of *dirtgirlworld*, Cate and Hewey write all the live shows even though they're licensed to other companies.

PRODUCTION

The production model followed a fairly traditional coproduction arrangement. However, nobody had created 52 episodes back to back of this style of show before, so they were flying by the seat of their pants. Data management became a key consideration and it was vital to not lose a shot. The Editor was onset (often running the clapper board), so able to select shots as soon as they came out of the camera and deposit them straight into a rough.

Animation took two years – the average time for an animated product. Cate and Hewey coproduced and wrote the episodes and sound track. Things didn't go quite to plan in that some of the All Media elements Cate had envisaged weren't ready to launch on Day 1. However this was because they were so busy working on the production itself. In retrospect Cate believes that had they built the All Media budget into the production budget and had an All Media producer at entry to TV – things would've been different.

mememe productions involved the local primary school in the shoot, engaging the students and using the school's fabulous garden as a backdrop. The school also has a history of winning animation prizes, so *dirtgirlworld* provided a new camera and editing facilities for the grade 5 and 6 students to film the making of the show, while the younger children are in the show itself.

During production mememe productions appointed an Assistant to look at sustainability and reinforce this value in everything the production did. Initiatives included rewarding crew for car pooling, crew washing their own plates and establishing a sun farm to offset carbon emissions. This approach has not only been good for the environment, it's bonded the crew in a positive, pro-active way.

POST-PRODUCTION

Online and digital assets that can't be produced in house are created by a variety of different studios in rural and urban settings around the world. These studios are chosen according to their strengths.

As for the social media aspect of *dirtgirlworld*, rather than train a social media expert in the nuances of the character, they trained *dirtgirlworld* actor, Maree Lowes in social media – so the kids really are talking to their hero. Maree works part time every day keeping in touch with her fans and releasing bits of content.



MARKETING

mememe productions' approach to marketing covers a number of bases including where to find its audience, and how to best reach them without reinventing the wheel.

Cate's aware that there are parents with kids on their knees checking out social media sites such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and Pinterest for *dirtgirlworld* information; as well as parents who want to be able to download *dirtgirlworld* now via online media libraries such as iTunes. *dirtgirlworld* has a social media presence on all of these platforms and supplements this approach with traditional marketing methods such as newsletters, media blogs and everyday publicity.

Whilst the company doesn't have the marketing budget of other childrens edutainment businesses such as the Wiggles, they've achieved much through partnering with and supplementing the marketing campaigns of other eco-friendly / sustainability businesses. Examples include dirtgirl's involvement with World Environment Day at school eco carnivals, National Tree Day, the Sustainable Living Festival in Melbourne, her ambassadorship with Clean-Up The World Weekend and the Australian Conservation Foundation. All have been perfect vehicles for reinforcing the sustainability / eco-logical-tainment theme of *dirtgirlworld*; and with social media sharing, a happily symbiotic relationship. dirtgirl is a great way to attract new people to the cause through example - dirtgirl's recyclable plastic gardening tools being one such illustration.

DISTRIBUTION

The TV show, online components, social media, live shows and traditional DVD, books, greeting cards, scrapbooks, clothing and jewellery merchandise – are all part of *dirtgirlworld*'s distribution strategy and integrated marketing campaign. mememe productions either run these elements themselves or they've been licensed to people who take care of the sustainability criteria, such as with Madman's bid to distribute *dirtgirlworld* DVDs using compostable plastic. (Winning this contract resulted in Madman introducing a recycled paper ethos into its own business plan and subsequently winning a sustainable business award). Similarly the game that The Project Factory is building for *dirtgirlworld*, is being offset by Cate and Hewey's power grid.

In screening terms, most of the broadcasters around the world have a seven-year license on the show. It works for everyone as the broadcasters get a lot of runs all year for seven years; and *dirtgirlworld*'s audience is continually being replenished. According to Cate, the audience grows in and out of the show within six months, so they have a flood of audience for a good two or three solid years between the ages of four and seven; with children between the ages of seven and twelve loving it because they have younger siblings, and may be growing a garden.

The screening cycle on the ABC is along the lines of 52 episodes played seven days a week, with a four to six week off-air period before the next screening cycle. The series is run approximately six times every 14-16 months which means mememe productions has the opportunity to observe, assess and respond to audience demand. As Cate says, "We can make great successes from mistakes because we have a long time on air."

dirtgirl also has a variety of online presences:

- ABC4Kids: which features a number of interactive games including the chicken jam where kids can put a photo of their face on one of the chicken band members, compose a song and dance to it.
- [dirtgirlworld.tv](#): (which redirects to ABC4Kids) includes Dirt Girl Scrap Book; 10 sustainability games; a virtual garden where you plant and manage slugs; and a catchup player.
- [dirtgirlworld.com](#)
- [dirtgirlworldshop.com.au](#)
- [clubdirtgirlworld.com](#)
- iTunes
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Pinterest
- YouTube

Cate and Hewey also made great a success out of living away from the cities; the demands of distance helping them find creative ways to connect and distribute *dirtgirlworld*. As mentioned, dirtgirl attends events, however if organisers can't afford this or there are other mitigating circumstances, dirtgirl can Skype in or record messages that can then be sent to everyone's iPhone. She's a true product of the modern world that 'inhabits' the world, whilst being a positive force for awareness and change.

CONCLUSION

dirtgirlworld is an inspiring example of getting it right; of how being passionate about something important can resonate at a world level. Cate describes the All Media process as 'talking to all the fingers on the same hand – because they are on the same hand. You then need to work on all of the fingers putting in energy and effort, agreeing on a time line, following the paths to communication and talking through ways to be more cohesive.'

"We haven't reached a level of transmedia yet where we realize we're all in the same family." (Cate McQuillen)

Part of this process in Australia, involves addressing marketing budgets and making them a substantial component of the project as a whole.

RESERVOIR HILL

A CASE STUDY WITH DAVID STUBBS & THOMAS ROBINS

Written by Evelyn Saunders and Marcus Gillezeau

<http://tvnz.co.nz/reservoir-hill/ta-ent-index-group-2985476>

BACKGROUND

Beth Connolly is a 16 year old who has just moved to the mysterious suburb *Reservoir Hill* with her mother. Along with missing her friends, boy problems and the separation of her parents, everyone around Beth seems to find her unsettling.

Soon, Beth discovers she is the spitting image of a girl who went missing a few months before. This sparks a whirlwind of intrigue as she strives to find more out about what is really going on in *Reservoir Hill*. <http://www.abc.net.au/abc3/shows/14598.htm>



Watch: Interview with creators

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PFvqhcsXKxM>

Watch: Excerpts From Show:

<http://khfmedia.com/projects.html>

Key Tips –

- It doesn't matter how good the show is if no-one knows its there.
- Story is number one, don't overcomplicate the interactivity.
- Online doesn't mean the budget is smaller; crews charge the same so create broadcast quality content.
- A serious broadcaster or platform that has the money to back the show makes life easier.
- If you can get it, sponsorship and advertising money is gold.
- A line producer or production manager across all content is important.
- If you want to cut together a broadcast telefeature, ensure your series has an overall dramatic arc.
- Forge partnerships with brands and the 'new distributors'.
- Multiplatform content doesn't just promote the show, it promotes the broadcaster and their other shows.



CONCEPT

"Beth arrives in a place called Reservoir Hill. She uncovers a mystery and then bounces around in that world, following her nose. With the help of her mates (the viewers), she's going to sort out and discover what the mystery is." (Stubbs)

David Stubbs and Thomas Robins were interested in creating an 8 webisode drama series at the same time Television New Zealand were promoting 'video on demand' (TVNZ Ondemand). They pitched a set-up, a storyworld about Beth using the public as allies to find out what's going on.

Stubbs and Robins liked the idea of being able to relate to the lead character and interact like you were part of the story – the obvious way being through social networking. TVNZ had the largest teen audience in the country so they saw promise in developing something for teenagers, female skew, that was a bit edgy and had genuine drama.

The creators believed for a program to be truly interactive it wasn't possible to script it in advance. For the pitch they explained how the interactivity would work, who the crew were, their history and what they'd done. They had a budget and provided a schedule of what they'd be doing each day, per week, over eight weeks. The proposal included a sponsorship strategy for the third of the budget that would not be covered by the fund. New Zealand On-Air came on board and the project received digital content funding.

DEVELOPMENT

Stubbs and Robins had a brief in as much as they were given a target market and, direction regarding the hero; they came up with everything else. They were attracted by the idea of friends texting friends to help each other out.

They wanted the web series to have a classic arc so that if the episodes were watched together it would have a good beginning, middle and end.

FINANCING

Robins has an advertising background and was aware of the match between a teenage audience and their interests, social marketing and teen issues. They approached the New Zealand Transport agency which promotes road safety and the Alcohol Liquor Advisory Council that operates in the interest of moderate drinking. Some characters and storylines were developed around these concerns, but not in an overt way as they knew the audience would switch off.

Sony and Telecom were also perfect sponsors as every time Beth, the lead character opened up her phone the audience would see the kind of phone she had and that she was with Telecom. She also had a Sony TV.

TVNZ's investment included promotion and advertising of the show as well as the build of the website.

One of the criteria of the NZ On-Air deal was accessibility, so making revenue through premium SMS was not possible. They also had to make a free option available so they added a virtual phone on the website where players could type a message and hit send.

PRE-PRODUCTION

Stubbs and Robins were very aware of the need for good production values. According to Robins their philosophy was “just because we were making it for the web doesn’t mean that we don’t need a good crew or to shoot on HD.” The decision paid off as they received compliments at MIP and Cannes for picture quality and performance. It also meant they had broadcast quality material for the telemovie they pieced together at the end as a bonus for the broadcaster.

PRODUCTION

Webisodes ranging between eight to ten minutes went live at 5pm each Monday afternoon. The schedule was so tight across a seven day week there was no room for error.

“Once you jumped on this machine, you couldn’t get off until it was finished.” (Robins)

The script would be written, finished and signed-off on Wednesday/Thursday. Thursday would be the beginning of a prep day with the script signed-off by the Network late that day. Friday was the organisation and prepping of additional cast, art department and scheduling for the Saturday shoot. Cutting occurred on Sunday and was sent up to the Network that evening for a 7pm/8pm sign-off. Sound design and score composition would occur Monday to be delivered by 3pm for the mix. This would be laid up against the image, rendered and stuck on an STP site for TVNZ to download at 4pm. The webisode went live at 5pm.

The audience would watch the show then text their responses regarding what Beth should do. Stubbs and Robins would monitor them as they came in then on Tuesday night/Wednesday someone would determine the general consensus and identify a text that said it all so it could be featured in the next webisode. Scripting would begin Wednesday morning and the process would start again.

The experience also included blogs and vlogs by other characters, which Stubbs and Robins created and fed back up to TVNZ to put on the site. A writer acting as the online Beth character interacted with individual viewers thanking them for their texts in such a way as to have them feel they were being spoken to directly. It was an intense process.

“...We did it for two years and got away with it, you know, ...writing, shooting and post producing an episode every week.” (Robins)



POST-PRODUCTION

Post production was very much caught up in the tight production cycle. A popular feature was the audience becoming characters in that their texts were put on screen. It's possible this factor influenced everybody treating the site with respect so that Stubbs and Robins had no need to be heavy handed with moderation.



MARKETING

One of the reasons *Reservoir Hill* was successful was that TVNZ regularly promoted the on-line experience on free-to-air television. TVNZ also set up magazine articles and there was a radio competition: “watch episodes and answer questions, and you’ll get to appear on one of the days.” They had the biggest teen audience in NZ and during the school holidays promoted “first online drama, you can help her out, starts Monday.”

Stubbs and Robins wrote the bi-line and worked out a strategy for how to market the show. They also made a spec commercial and gave it to the network suggesting they do something similar to promote the show.

DISTRIBUTION

Social networking was integral to the show's distribution strategy, with viewers sharing their experiences and discussing the mystery online. The first series used Bebo as its social network, however the following year they changed to Facebook. The same writers were involved, taking the part of multiple characters and responding to people's Facebook comments.

With regard to viewing figures, the results need to be considered within the context of New Zealand being a country of four million people. With its first series *Reservoir Hill* was competing against the TV on Demand channel which has popular shows like the New Zealand soap *Shortland Street* and series from the US and UK. At its peak, *Reservoir Hill* came in at number two. It's important to note that the other shows were on free-to-air, people could go to free-to-air or watch them on-demand, whereas *Reservoir Hill* was only on-demand. Also, the audience had no previous experience with the brand or the story or the characters. Robins believed they had "twenty five to thirty thousand people watching each episode - which made us number two or three, never lower than six." They outdid *Masterchef* and other programs with huge followings. With regard to texts, *Reservoir Hill* would receive around two thousand texts each week over Monday and Tuesday.

At the end of the series Stubbs and Robins cut the webisodes together to create a telefeature, taking out the interactive scenes (eg where she was checking her phone for audience feedback) to make it more linear. TVNZ and New Zealand On Air were delighted as this was an unexpected bonus. The sponsors were particularly thrilled because it was screened on free-to-air.

Stubbs and Robins kept the worldwide rights and won the Qantas Film and TV Award for Best Youth Program - proving that an online series could transfer to TV and win an award. The telemovie was subsequently sold to the US.

With the second series the creators discovered the first series' success didn't secure an easy run. Two sponsors dropped out and they had difficulty securing replacements.

Then, when series 2 went to air, the audience didn't grow – most weeks remaining the same as series 1, some weeks a little less. This surprised the creators as they'd introduced a new interactive element called 'Dreamspace'. The viewer could enter Beth's dreams providing greater opportunity to interact with the characters and dip into the story than they had with the first series. Presented as another feature on the website, it's possible the audience was choosing to explore that space rather than text. Stubbs and Robins weren't sure why numbers dropped.

CONCLUSION

Interactive webseries can yield surprising results creatively as well as critically. When Stubbs and Robins embarked on series 1 they envisaged the story arc would move from point A to point B. However interactivity resulted in Beth ending up at point C. This result would be exciting for the creators and an audience with a vested interest, however it begs the question of whether the success is transferable when on-sold to free-to air TV.

Interactivity, especially with a tight turnaround, reduces the amount of control creators have when structuring the series. This in turn would increase the risk for the broadcaster and investors. What might yield a significant, immersed fan base during the interactive / creative process, might fail in its dramatic impetus when the series has to function on its dramatic merits alone.

Reservoir Hill series 1 was produced in New Zealand in 2009. ABC3 screened the series 1 and series 2 telemovies in Australia, in a 6.55pm Sunday timeslot on August 4 and 11, 2013. The 'series' enjoyed just three posts on the ABC3 Facebook page and received 22 likes and seven positive or interested comments on Sunday August 4 after 'series' 1 went to air; 8 likes and no comments on August 8 before the launch of 'series' 2 and; 17 likes and two comments indicating disinterest on August 11 the day 'series' 2 screened. Also, the posts referred to *Reservoir Hill* as a series rather than a telemovie. Whether this confused the audience isn't known; neither is the amount of publicity the show received on ABC3 in the lead up to the screenings.

Another factor is the different durations of the two series. The television guide indicates that 'series' 1 ran for 65 minutes, whilst 'series' 2 ran for 90 minutes - which would make scheduling a little more difficult than average two part telemovies.

A further challenge was raised by Stubbs regarding the barriers to broadcasters commissioning All Media projects, beyond site development and maintenance costs.

"There's very small financial incentive. It was early on for that particular on-demand channel, but it's perspective, they can make a lot more money selling thirty second slots on free-to-air than they can on a web page."

The webseries and telemovie versions of *Reservoir Hill* by no means mark the end of the journey for producers Stubbs and Robins. Screen Hub's 18 October 2013 article reveals that SVT, Sweden's largest broadcasting network is remaking *Reservoir Hill* as a TV series, and that Stubbs' and Robins' KHF Media has received early development support from New Zealand Film Commission for a feature film version. The mysteries of *Reservoir Hill* will continue to enthrall for a while yet.

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WIE IS TIM?

A CASE STUDY WITH GUY GADNEY & JENNIFER WILSON

Written by Evelyn Saunders and Marcus Gillezeau

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fue5C-jBIL0>

BACKGROUND

In 2010, when Guy Gadney gave a MIP talk about The Project Factory's (TPF) platform for creating transmedia experiences around narrative properties, he attracted the interest of Ian McClelland, Senior Vice President New Media of RTL Group, Europe's leading entertainment network. Together they workshopped concepts and with McLelland's blessing, Guy pitched to various productions within the RTL Group. RTL Netherlands and Endemol embraced the approach and invited TPF to work with them on existing serial *Goede Tijden Slechte Tijden* (GTST) – giving birth to the *Wie is Tim?* (*Who is Tim?*) transmedia experience.



GTST is based on the 1980s Australian format of the serial *The Restless Years*. The Netherlands' most watched soap, the series attracts approximately 10% of the population 5 nights a week. *Wie is Tim?* was launched during the summer break of 2012 and enjoyed "280,000 downloads, millions of game plays and a 25% rise in the TV audience on its return". It also won 4 major awards. This success resulted in RTL Netherlands commissioning a second transmedia experience *Spring Levend* for the summer break in 2013 prior to the series entering its 25th season. The experience finished with over 540,000 downloads, the app having shot to #1 at iTunes in the Netherlands in the first week. The number of downloads exceeded that of *Wie is Tim?*



Wie is Tim? was the first cross platform content project to be used for a mass audience. Designed to engage fans through summer between season 23 and 24 of *Goede Tijden Slechte Tijden (GTST)*, it ran from the end of series cliff-hanger through to the new series launch.

Released in July 2012, the free app had its own storyline and centred around Tim, a new character in the show. The app contained "9 weeks of scripted content, video mobisodes, nine games, competitions, and hidden content, all forming part of a hand-written notebook that viewers 'unlocked' week by week." (Gadney)

Key Tips –

- The closer a transmedia company works with the production company and the broadcasting company around a particular show, the stronger the All Media construct will be.
- With All Media there are tricks to the trade and a lot of complexities. Considerations include: the way that you release or market the app; how you build it; and how you maintain communities.
- Staggered Release: the methodology is about building intrigue; a staggered release of story lines and narrative twists and turns that naturally lead to speculation.
- There's a critical mass of audience on smart phones and tablets and social networks, that truly want to engage in your programme.
- Broadcasters need to create a total experience around a show, not just TV content.
- There has to be a sustainable commercial model behind creating transmedia experiences around TV content.
- TV is a fantastic medium for moving an audience from one place to another.
- The app itself is great marketing for a property as it can have scheduled push notifications.
- A team that's on top of story and technology can turn unexpected situations into intrigue and marketing pluses.

DEVELOPMENT

Kirsty Hunter, Managing Director of TPF's London office and Lauren Fenner TPF producer, were invited into the *GTST* story room to advise about what could be achieved on the platform and help marry it to the series narrative. According to Gadney, there was a break through moment when everyone realized the key construct could be around the new character Tim, and his notebook - which had been heavily featured in the lead-up to the cliff hanger of the series. The head writers then developed a storyline that built on the question "Who is Tim?" and used this mystery, his notebook and other devices such as mini-games, map challenges and hidden content as a basis for the app's game-play.



FINANCING

The strong, commercial model that sat behind the experience was key to the project's initial success and it being given the green light. Match-making between broadcasters, brands and sponsors was vital and *Wie is Tim?* was financed through Endemol and RTL Netherlands with the South Africa Tourist Board and Samsung as sponsors. Players won weekly prizes for their interaction with the experience and, the ultimate winner, won a role as an extra and a trip to South Africa.

Whilst Gadney was not able to discuss the budget, he did mention that it was cheaper than drama. "We have an advantage. With the help of Screen Australia we've created this format which allows us to go to market with a complex piece of technology that has proven itself under enormous strain from major mainstream audiences, at a budget level which is competitive because we aren't re-inventing the wheel every time."

PRE-PRODUCTION

In terms of pre-production the timeline was incredibly tight. Pre-production was a small number of brain storming meetings that quickly merged into the production process.

The project was scoped out so that all of the video content would be contained within the app whilst the website supported the leader-boards, forums, previews and promotional videos. The fact that TPF had *Appisodic*, an existing platform, helped facilitate this although some adaptation was required to make sure the story line would 'fit' into the platform. Also, the back end had to be modified to accommodate certain RTL Netherlands requirements.

According to Gadney, "These are not easy apps to build because basically we are doing the one thing that audiences hate, we are holding back content."

PRODUCTION

GTST: *Wie is Tim?* was designed and overseen in London; the video content was written, shot and post produced in The Netherlands; and the build (or production) took place in Sydney. The time difference between the three countries assisted with the tight turnaround of the project. The budget for the content was borne by the production company.

Scalability was a also major consideration.

"When you are shifting a quantity of people into an interactive environment and asking them to register, play games and interact, we have to be prepared. It's a bit like a May Day Sale: when those doors open, you have to make sure you can cater to everybody simultaneously." (Gadney)

POST-PRODUCTION

Post-production is also an ambiguous term. For Gadney the term post-production resonates most with testing the app, making sure it's scalable and ensuring there are no glitches.

"You can test as much as you want with closed groups of people, but when you've got about a quarter of a million people hammering it the whole time, people find new things. And it's a unique environment: it's not like putting out a DVD and you've got a locked off edit and that's it. This is a live, highly interactive, incredibly responsive conversation we're in. The platform that we've got and the format we build plays to that. We keep an eye on everything - every anomaly we check into. Even now if one user out of a quarter of a million people reports a problem, we get to know about it and we'll look into it and make sure it's not indicative of any issue. We're very responsive." (Gadney)

Roll-out is another important consideration, as is website maintenance and keeping the app up to date. *Wie is Tim?* is an iOS and Android app. With Android, every brand is different so an Android app has to meet the specification of each handset.

"It's a real art to get it right and it changes every 6 months. When a new handset comes out you have to cater to it. Decommissioned handsets, upgrades, it's just part of what we do." (Gadney)

MARKETING

RTL Netherlands, the broadcaster, marketed *Wie is Tim?* on-air, in the press, on the radio, and utilised novel approaches such as sky-writing. The number of downloads and active users show that TV is a fantastic medium for moving an audience between platforms.

The app itself was an effective marketing tool: it drove audiences to the principal property, associated events and the destination site for content releases via its scheduled push notification system. *Wie is Tim?* used both push notifications and social media to keep word of mouth alive and drive traffic to the various *GTST* iterations.

According to MIPBlog, "Tim had an online life on Facebook and Twitter, following fans back when they followed him. They could also track his movements across the Netherlands using the app.

"The market research we did showed that people were more engaged when they used the app than when they didn't." (Gadney)

This translated to one in six TV viewers downloading the app. There were more than 280,000 downloads and it achieved #1 position in the iTunes store and #8 worldwide." An RTL Netherlands press release stated the experience had "65,000 active users".

Prior to *Wie is Tim? GTST* the series averaged 1.5 million viewers every day during its on-air season. After *Wie is Tim?* was rolled out, the new series premiered with 1.92m viewers, a rise of 25%.

In 2012, the *GTST* Facebook page received over one million hits a week – nearly seven visits per fan. Between 2012 and 2013, the number of likes on the *GTST* Facebook page increased from 147,000 to 187,000, meaning 40,000 new people (a 27% increase) receive regular updates from the series that they are then free to share or comment on - building the buzz.

DISTRIBUTION

Of the power of social media in general, Gadney reported "Last year, Nielsen put out research that a nine percent increase in social media "buzz volume" corresponds to a one percent increase in ratings." It appears that with richer All Media content, RTL Netherlands and The Project Factory did better.

Sources:

http://www.rtlgroup.com/www/htm/home_news.aspx?ID=E3FB573725414E4EA049BBDA14D9A5AE

<http://blog.mipworld.com/2012/10/liveblog-why-fans-are-a-tv-companys-most-precious-asset/>



SUMMARY

Wie is Tim? was the first major commissioning of The Project Factory's *Appisodic* platform. It provided the opportunity for TPF to lay the foundations for a strong storytelling infrastructure capable of spanning a variety of genres. The fact that it's successfully been employed by the same series over two seasons, implies the format works as a story delivery technique in its own right.

According to Gadney the special sauce is a complex set of ingredients that if done right, is a beautiful thing. *Wie is Tim?* and *Spring Levend* have interactive narratives, scheduled content, games and videos within a state of the art app. However success isn't just about technology, it's also about integrating with a broadcaster and its commercial and marketing arms, brand integration and media buying agencies. Most of all, it's about audience.

One of the tips Gadney has for producers wanting to create this iteration of All Media content is to contemplate audience reach: how your audience consumes content, where they find it and the kind of conversations they're having. If your show has a Facebook page and your fans are actively engaged with this page, it shows they're looking for a deeper experience than just the TV show. So if you cut short the conversation at the end of a series, you're cutting short your creativity and their enjoyment. As a production company you're also cutting short your potential to cultivate the audience as a new revenue source.

Should you decide to create All Media content for smartphones, ask yourself why you might want to create content for both iOS and Android and, ipso facto, why you might discount one or the other. To maximise audience reach you have to use both platforms, especially since Samsung smart phones are becoming increasingly popular with the Australian market. That said, there are more security issues with Android apps so it's necessary to think about how this might affect your business. No one can guarantee your app isn't going to be hacked, so it's important to ask questions and have answers ready for whatever the audiences want to do.

ALPHA 0.7

A CASE STUDY WITH SEBASTIAN HUNERFELD

Interview by Amanda Keeling

See: www.alpha07.de/en/home/ for all Alpha 0.7 content

BACKGROUND

In 2009, German public broadcaster Südwestrundfunk (SWF) was looking for a way to celebrate the 25th anniversary of their film graduate timeslot Debut on Channel 3. They wanted to create something that explored the future of storytelling and how audiences rarely experienced media on just one platform. SWF (Commissioning) Editor Sebastian Hunerfeld called for pitches themed Future-proof Storytelling that had a story universe with a six part TV series at its centre and stand-alone elements in other media.

Alpha 0.7, pitched by producer Dominik Frankowski, and writers Sebastian Büttner and Oliver Hohengarten of Zeitsprung Pictures GmbH, was a perfect fit. Its theme was current, controversial and promised to not only capture the imaginations of an audience but provide a storyworld they could contribute to.



Key Tips –

- Your core creative team (the people responsible for writing and developing the content) need to be across the project from the beginning; you can't introduce a person into the mix part way through.
- Fewer directors rather than more will result in a more unified vision and efficient production.
- Budget adequately to complete all components – particularly your website. Having to cut back on delivery of one component will impact negatively on the experience as a whole.
- Pay attention to your audience demographics and advertise accordingly.

Developed as a transmedia property from the outset, *Alpha 0.7* was an ambitious project given it was the first of its kind in Germany. Hunerfeld had done a lot of research into international transmedia properties but geo-blocking and lack of information regarding experience launch dates had frustrated his attempts to find trail heads in a timely manner. As a result he'd had to enter experiences mid-story which had not only inhibited full exploration across all platforms, but also prevented him from entering the experience organically as a 'native' audience member.

Hunerfeld believed an immersed audience would be keen to see and hear everything about a storyworld so they could play within it and become part of it. Zeitsprung's idea was to play out across a television series, the internet, a six-part radio play, short podcasts, fictional coverage, comedy, a radio science show and live concerts featuring a bespoke band from 2017 named crash:conspiracy.

"I think the good thing is that transmedia multiplatform stories can reach people where they are. You can build a universe and make your world approachable (so that) everyone can be part of the story. You get feedback (from) the user and you can react," (Hunerfeld)



Alpha 0.7 describes a transparent society where fear of terror attacks has led to personal freedom being eroded away in the name of homeland security. It asks the question: "What if all that data we share so readily, ends up in the wrong hands? What if it is used against us?"

DEVELOPMENT

Hunerfeld and the Zeitsprung team began work on the storyworld bible in October 2009. This was completed in January 2010 and content was allocated across the platforms. The TV series was to go into preproduction in April, so scripting of the series was first priority.

Asked whether, on reflection he'd do anything differently,

"The TV part of the whole project was too big and time consuming. I would try to have more time for every other medium to get their part of the story, and more possibilities to have an exchange with the user. People really liked to be part of 2017 Germany. They liked to play and we couldn't make enough games." (Hunerfeld)

FINANCING

Contemplating the challenges of finding finance for transmedia properties, Hunerfeld said that in Germany projects are typically funded through TV broadcasters who don't see a reason to experiment with earning an audience. "They're interested, but there's not a need... They're still learning as well."

Alpha 0.7 was a co-production between the broadcaster SWR, MFG Film Funding, and extra funding from NRW GmbH, a public company tasked with the cultural and economic promotion of the film and media industry in North Rhine-Westfalen. The whole budget was one package for SWR, the broadcaster.

Hunerfeld recalls there was some difficulty pulling in all the funds but the budget breakdown was roughly €400,000 from MFG, €200,000 from NRW and €1.1M from SWR - with approximately €1.6M coming through for the whole project. Zeitsprung was responsible for producing the TV series. The radio series was funded separately by the radio arm of SWF; the radio commissioning editor helped develop the story with the writers then brought in a radio drama director.

PRE-PRODUCTION

The writers had a script delivery date of April for the TV series, after which they scripted the radio drama play (effectively the second season of the series) prior to developing materials for the internet. An attempt to bring in a third writer was unsuccessful as she wasn't across the story universe and time was ticking schedule-wise.

"This was tough... The story was hard. We had the base in the bible already but we had to write everything else." (Hunerfeld)

Hunerfeld believes that having the two "masterminds as writers" across the whole experience – developing the concept and writing the content – was crucial given the tight schedule.

PRODUCTION

The production process involved a number of different directors across the platforms. The director of the TV-series wasn't the director of the transmedia elements. The director of the internet series was from a film school; and the two art directors made a number of the *Alpha 0.7* transmedia short films. Hunerfeld believes this situation was less than ideal as a lot of specialists were responsible for only some of the parts. It created more work for the core team of four as they had to reiterate the final vision time and again. Other members of the production team included a loose network of graphic designers, block writers and web developers.

Budget-wise, Hunerfeld was of the opinion that had they not run low on funds before developing the internet component, a web-focused line producer would've made things smoother. Also, as a public broadcaster, SWF was not permitted to make video content just for the internet. This meant the *Alpha 0.7* site had a unique URL (<http://www.alpha07.de/en/>), accessible via the SWF website, but with an about page detailing it was a fictional property sponsored by SWF. The website was created in Wordpress and Typo3.

With regard to the radio component, some short one-minute podcasts were created to promote the experience between broadcasts. Branded science background features were also created to integrate the experience.

MARKETING

Whilst a marketing agency was keen to come aboard from development, budget limitations meant their strategies couldn't be employed. Instead, SWR's marketing department created a campaign along the same lines they'd use to promote a regular TV series.

In line with the team's vision for the experience to start on the internet and then move between the internet and TV series, the web component of *Alpha 0.7* went live in September 2010. Visitors were able to search a mysterious, cryptic page with icons and links to other pages and videos about a fictitious company.

The newspapers became excited and reported how the project was new and fresh, which had the added benefit of instilling confidence across SWF's various platforms for doing something innovative. It was also good publicity.

DISTRIBUTION

Two weeks prior to the launch of the TV series, the team launched a short alternate reality game (ARG) on the web gateway page. They'd created bespoke band crash:conspiracy and some live events that were also delivered via radio so as to utilize all three media. This further served to set things up for the second season of the series which was to be experienced via the radio drama.

The team followed their plan of having all components accessible via the web page once they'd been released on their native platform. Even though this had been promoted at the end of the TV and radio series, Hunerfeld said traffic across the different media via the website wasn't huge.

Reflecting on the success of the experience in terms of numbers across all demographics, Hunerfeld feels that *Alpha 0.7* didn't reach the youth audience it would've most appealed to. The SWR demographic is not a youth audience and no-one was expecting SWR to commission something like *Alpha 0.7*. Not having the funds to engage a marketing agency meant they were at a disadvantage.

Hunerfeld isn't sure how many people the project reached across the board – they ran focus groups to find out how people moved across media, but as far as accurate measurements, it isn't possible

to get radio numbers. Furthermore, the strategy they employed for gaining internet page impressions was in keeping with the story world's theme of data security: they didn't feel comfortable telling the audience to beware surveillance whilst using Google Analytics to monitor their internet activities. According to Hunerfeld, broadcast numbers were quite good for the TV series, but dropped off towards the end. He agreed that qualifying the success of the project was difficult.

SUMMARY

Alpha 0.7 is an interesting case study as it demonstrates how innovation in and of itself won't guarantee and/or sustain an audience if the concept doesn't match the interests of the broadcaster's demographic. Whilst the success of *Alpha 0.7* can't be quantified, we can extrapolate from the experience and say that in environments where broadcasters don't have to earn an audience yet are interested in exploring new frontiers through multi-platform storytelling, content creators and commissioning editors need to identify what their audience wants when it comes to genre and story, and develop All Media content in line with that demand.

It's not enough to develop a multi-platform project on the grounds that its genre has a successful track record in the field. The project might be a critical success but if it fails to meet the key performance indicators of the broadcaster in terms of eyeballs, the chances of future All Media projects being commissioned are reduced; and nobody benefits.

JEFF GOMEZ

A CASE STUDY ON PRODUCING TRANSMEDIA BIBLES

Written by Marcus Gillezeau and Evelyn Saunders

See: <http://www.starlightrunner.com/about>

BACKGROUND

Jeff Gomez is CEO of Starlight Runner Entertainment, an entertainment studio that specializes in creating and producing transmedia franchises. Starlight also advises companies on story world expansion to maximize return through iterations that can be marketed across a variety of platforms. Jeff has worked on: Disney's *Pirates of the Caribbean*, *Prince of Persia* and *Tron*, Microsoft's *Halo*, James Cameron's *Avatar*, Hasbro's *Transformers*, Mattel's *Hot Wheels* and Coca-Cola's *Happiness Factory*.

Whilst non-disclosure agreements prohibit Jeff from going into the specifics of developing certain properties, he is able to offer a guide to Starlight's approach to creating transmedia bibles. This case study is an amalgam of an interview with Jeff Gomez in 2012; the transcript from Gomez's StoryWorld 2012 Keynote Address; and a published interview with Caitlin Burns, Transmedia Producer, Starlight Entertainment.



CONCEPT

When consulting, Starlight's job is to provide documentation based on the principal property's story world so that various marketing departments can leverage authorised canonical content into the property's marketing and licensing programs. Caitlin Burns describes her role as Transmedia Producer as:

"Making sure that the story you see in the theatre, on your game console, on TV, in a book, or a comic are each different from one another, and that they all fit together so they make sense and add something to the story world." (Burns)

Key Tips –

Gomez's StoryWorld 2012 Conference keynote speech breaks down an approach he said is doable by everyone.

"10 Commandments of 21st Century Franchise Production" by Jeff Gomez

1. Know the essence of your brand and never stray from it
2. The story world is unstoppable and rules over all
3. Franchise visionaries must put up tent poles now, even if they have to move them later
4. Studio and producers must secure the best possible talent for the job, but talent must never roadblock ongoing story world
5. Create highly organized resources for canon and assets
6. Studios and Producers must establish a franchise clearinghouse and regular cross-divisional meetings in support of the story world
7. Stakeholders must be incentivized to support the strategy behind the rollout of the story world
8. Franchise visionaries and story world implementation must validate and celebrate audience participation
9. Licensing, Merchandising and Marketing must nurture and expand the story world
10. Story world must be accessible across an array of digital and traditional media portals, each piece adding to the narrative whole

Source: Business Insider Australia, 20 October 2012.

Key Tips – Caitlin Burns, Transmedia Producer, Starlight Entertainment

1. Story is key.
2. Film to Video Game or Video Game to Film transition has very different production processes. It's rare to find truly experienced people in both methods of production.
3. Projects that appear the same on the surface are always very different when you break them down to core themes and internal cosmologies.
4. One type of story cannot sit comfortably on every media.
5. 3D adds a layer of complexity. This complexity will be different within each of the media it's being used.

Source: "Meant To Be Seen" Interview with Caitlin Burns
Written by Neil Schneider, Sunday, 25 March 2012

http://www.mtbs3d.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=12966%3Ainterview-with-starlight-runner-entertainment&catid=37%3Ainterviews&Itemid=75

Opposite Page: Text taken from Jeff Gomez keynote speech to Storyworld 2012 Conference. For the full article please visit <http://www.businessinsider.com.au/10-commandments-of-21st-century-franchise-production-2012-10>

Films tell the protagonist's story and every scene plays out to progress the protagonists journey. However films exist within a story world, which has a past, present and a future. Multiplatform properties explore that world and allow the audience or player to do the same.

"There is a richness to the narrative that understands that when someone is out of the audience's field of vision, they have stories of their own." (Burns)

DEVELOPMENT

"Whenever we're bought into a situation the first order of business is to connect with the producer and possibly the director, whoever was involved in generating the story content in the first place. It's a matter of absorbing all of the information at hand. This would include the screenplay but it also would include any materials that were fabricated in pre-production, that were descriptive of the story world. Everything from the props all the way down to production notes about things like make-up and hairstyles." (Gomez)

Once Starlight has absorbed all of the existing information about the property and been briefed on the marketing history, they assess the underlying meaning of the narrative so they can dig deep into what the film is trying to say – its mythic underpinnings and message.

They then sit down and look at a potential transmedia super structure identifying intellectual property and how the story can potentially play out as, for example, one or a series of video games that are not replicative of the movie but help to nurture and grow the story world and, give the player something new and exciting to discover about the story world.

"We are working at the concept level, creating the documentation that then can be extrapolated upon by a 'Cameron' or a marketing division, or the production itself." (Gomez)

PRE-PRODUCTION

Starlight's intention is to expand upon the experience the audience has or will have when watching the primary property. According to Gomez, if you're going to do a proper inventory for transmedia development, it's important to have as complete access to the set as humanly possible. Photographs are really important because they provide meaning, character, illustration and context.

"I'd like to think that in any project that we're involved with where we're asking questions of the filmmakers as a movie is in production - that sometimes we are pursuing inquiries they might give further consideration to and that can impact the screenplay in some small way so as to bolster the potential for transmedia. So that perhaps a reference is made to some back story that will be covered in some future novel. Because those are the things that fans love to discover, these little 'Easter Eggs'." (Gomez)

PRODUCTION

“For any franchise mythology or universe bible we include a log line and summary of the entire property as it stands on a platform neutral basis, a description of the story world, all of the main characters, locations, creatures, magical or science fiction aspects of the world.” (Gomez)

Starlight bibles also include a chapter about the essence of the brand, how to understand what it's really about and its mythic underpinnings; as well a chronology of all the events that are official within the context of the story world. This information helps everyone to have a sense of what happened when, for the property.

“From there, we look at how these stories are being told: film, games, 3-D, 2-D, and where they're going (film + games, novel + comics, etc...) - and figure out how these stories branch from one another, how they all fit together, and how they can allow for the best storytelling, and most engaging experiences possible.” (Burns)

Burns goes on to explain that these robust resource guides facilitate ‘writers understanding (of) what’s at the storyworld’s core, so that they can create stories within that framework.’

To not approach the development of multiplatform story properties in this way would create elements that jar against the storyworld and confuse the audience. Whether the audience is aware of it or not, they treat entertainment properties as they would a brand – they have expectations. As a producer of multiplatform iterations, as a distributor and as an exhibitor, to not meet audience expectations discredits the brand and ruins the potential for maximizing revenue return.

MARKETING

Large studios plan their marketing extensions and licensing programs and multi-platform implementations in the years leading up to the release of the film. Gomez is of the belief that “in the future if you’re investing hundreds of millions of dollars in anything that is entertainment related, a percentage will need to be allocated in the development process - not the marketing process.” This approach will ensure that the potential of the brand is maximized across different media platforms in different ways. Once these iterations have been determined and developed, there should also be a marketing budget for implementation of those plans as they move into production.

When it comes to marketing transmedia content, Gomez postulated “if I am marketing some aspect of a major entertainment release, wouldn’t it be cool to be able to utilise a piece of canonical content to help me market that release?”

He used *True Blood* as an example where HBO advertised products that would be useful to vampires (bottles of *True Blood*), as a part of their marketing campaign. “It felt like the universe of *True Blood* was being extended and made real in some way.” This ability to immerse the audience in the storyworld then extends itself across distribution models, for example marketers had the ability to move beyond posters and taglines for their marketing, to engage in star and story power. “Some people didn’t know what was going on but it was intriguing and laid down the breadcrumbs that led people all the way back to the show. That’s cool and something that would be perceived of as an asset to marketers.”

"I feel, with great story – there is just enough detail there to make you believe, at least for a little while, and you immerse yourself in it and are washed in it, and when it's done you miss it a little bit." (Gomez)

CONCLUSION

One of the things that stands out when looking at truly successful All Media campaigns is that pretty much everything works as advertising and advertising can't be seen to be a dirty word.

Every prop, effect, element of the filmmaking process that went into the creation of a property is story. To meet the public's demand to deliver this story makes good business sense.

If the story is worth telling, it's worth telling the 'whole' story.

SOME INSIGHT INTO AVATAR

Jeff's work on *Avatar* began when he was called in by the 20th Century Fox Studios' Director of Marketing as physical production was getting under way. The job was to provide documentation based on the story world of *Avatar*, so that Fox Marketing could leverage authorised canonical content into its marketing and licensing program. Whilst Jeff's NDA prohibited him from providing too much detail, his enthusiasm for the project was palpable.

*"We were fortunate with 20th Century Fox on *Avatar* because we were given absolutely full access to those materials and that sped the process along for us." (Gomez)*

"I don't know that I'd say that we had an enormous impact on the film itself, I don't think so, (Cameron) had matters well in hand." (Gomez)

Gomez was particularly enchanted by the Navi, "The Navi were very, very precious to us and a very important component to the project that we were doing. We devoted a special volume to the Navi, and Navi culture in our work, and hopefully that proved helpful to the production. There was also someone working on the project who had devised the Navi language and we were very, very interested. It was reminiscent to us of Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*, or the Klingon language in *Star Trek*. We would've loved for the language to proliferate and we did a lot to try to promote within Fox the notion of extending that language out to the fans, either before or during the implementation of *Avatar*. It's something that didn't quite make it, but that we're sure is going to (be) in future iterations of the property."

Regarding the potential for multiplatform iterations, it's interesting to look at what audiences created for themselves as fan fiction.

"The 'Avatar Depression' that was so noted in the wake of the release of the film... the fans went off, at least the real hardcore fans, and built (experiences) themselves. On YouTube everything from makeup tips, all the way through to people who were launching protests, for whatever purpose, anywhere in the world, who painted their skin blue to affiliate themselves with the plight of a race whose land was being usurped by some greater and far more

powerful entity. It's all there and more: live action role players who painted themselves blue and ran off into the forest and recorded their daily Navi rituals.” (Gomez)

Gomez isn't surprised, “you can't help but smile at the spectacular technological innovation. Jim did absolutely amazing things and I can best illustrate that (with) a very, very brief shot where Neytiri turned and the sunlight struck the back tips of her ears and you could actually see the veins and the translucents of the flesh in her ears. That level of detail – he was generating a sense of verisimilitude, convincing us that this world was real. That, to me, was the hallmark of not just a great storyteller (but) someone who believes in his world and therefore gives me permission to believe in the world.”

“When something works that gracefully to have you believe in it, you believe, many people believe. There's a relationship between that and some of the world's most persistent religions. There's information coming at you from so many different angles through the engine of this 'organised religion'. The ethos and stories are being communicated to you with such passion that you become convinced of its veracity. You embrace it and take from it the savor, the nurturing that you yearn for and that is why the religion persists.” (Gomez)



Jeff Gomez, CEO of Starlight Runner Entertainment

HIGHRISE

A CASE STUDY WITH KATERINA CIZEK

Interviewed by Amanda Keeling,
Researched and written by Evelyn Saunders

<http://highrise.nfb.ca/>



“Highrise the towers in the world, the worlds in the towers.”

Highrise is a story universe that explores vertical living in suburbs around the world. Produced across a number of years, this project is still being rolled out in instalments - a collaborative documentary experience that is an experiment with form and content: to not just make documentary films about people, but with people. Katerina Cizek works in-house at the National Film Board of Canada to research and direct the project produced by Gerry Flahive. The various properties include mixed media, interactive documentaries, mobile productions, live presentations, installations and films.

Key Tips –

- When working collaboratively and remotely be sure your brief is explicit about legal issues, what is expected and when.
- Collaboration using digital media and digital communications can create a shift in the filmmaker’s perspective. The audience become users and subjects become participators, collaborators and colleagues.

To date, the instalments include:

- *Prologue*, an interactive documentary, tells stories of Toronto alongside an overview of the vision, thoughts and philosophies of urban study.
- *The Thousandth Tower* explores how highrise living influences the lives of 6 Toronto residents.
- *Out My Window* expands the concept to a global level. Collaboration occurred across multiple platforms to create a virtual highrise using a 360° game-like interface.
- *Installation* took the *Out My Window* experience offline and brought it into the real world at the International Documentary Festival of Amsterdam (IDFA).
- Participate adds a new functionality to *Out My Window* by allowing the audience to share their views by adding their own photos and texts.
- *One Millionth Tower* uses animation to bring to life the vision of six Toronto highrise residents as they imagine what their neighbourhoods could look like.

The project continues today, exploring and expanding upon the “hyper-glocal” (global and local) universality of the storyworld: the highrise experience - what happens inside the building as well as outside, and how similar peoples’ experiences are regardless of where they live in the world.

Highrise is a long term look at humanity as an urban species.

DEVELOPMENT

Working in-house has meant Cizek is able to conduct significant research before deciding what media a project is going to be. *Highrise* came out of her interest in Toronto and eight months research. “Ultimately the story or investigation is at the heart of what the project’s all about and then the media or medium is chosen to best tell that story.”

Cizek doesn’t consider *Highrise* a transmedia production as they didn’t conceive all of the components right from the beginning. That said, it is multiplatform as all of the properties exist within the same storyworld. They extend from the same concept.

With regard to *Out My Window* “One day I just had a really simple idea: imagine if we had all these apartments in these different places around the world, all in just one building... one building that was accessible online. It kind of flowed from there. And the concept was so simple, the idea so simple. It really translated well into a web-documentary.”



FINANCING

Whilst Cizek isn't across the financial aspects of the project, she did say that is one hundred percent funded by the National Film Board of Canada (English programming). The production budget was handled by Producer Gerry Flahive and various NFB departments.

PRE-PRODUCTION

Out my Window had an innovative approach towards collaboration and being realized as an online documentary. Cizek and her team provided a creative and technical brief to contributors so she could direct the documentary via email, phone, Facebook and Skype. It was a project made for the internet: for the web, by the web. A practical decision according to Cizek as there would be no way they could have, with the timeline and budget or even conceptually, filmed in each location conventionally. Because they were working virtually, the brief had to be very explicit about legal issues, what was expected and when.

The brief included some visual cues on how to shoot the collages that became the three hundred and sixty degree environments and, how to look for a story. Every story is triggered by an object seen either in the interior environment or the exterior one. The brief explained how to develop that idea as well as a list of specific questions for the audio interview, technical concerns such as format, the minimum requirements for the photography, how to send the photography, and consent forms.

PRODUCTION

For *Out My Window*, Cizek worked with over a hundred people around the world in thirteen cities (reduced from twenty five). There was a different kind of team in every city often composed of either a journalist and/or a photographer or sometimes a housing advocate or sometimes a high-rise resident doing self documenting.

The creative and technical brief was used as a starting point for the conversations with everybody, so they knew what to look for as they gathered the materials and story.

Contributions to the main *Out My Window* site were made by photographers on contract: materials were either supplied with non-exclusive rights to their photography forever; or they were commissioned and the images became the National Film Board of Canada's.

Contributions to the *Participate* site were made as a user / contributor to the 'NFB *Participate* Group' on Flickr, giving the NFB permission to use the images. These photographs were then moderated and the API taken from Flickr and put into the site's Flash to showcase them.

As for the *Out My Window* shoots Cizek was physically present for, she discovered that the Yellow Bird camera (same as Google Street View camera) required her to hide under the tripod to avoid being in shot. They adapted the camera to capture twenty-four frames a second and created a player for streaming the playback. Rendering the images took three days and playback showed one frame every three seconds, so it was difficult to get a true representation of what was going on.

POST-PRODUCTION

Cizek uses technology companies from all over the world. Yellow Bird, the 360° video team, are based in Holland; a team in Kitchener did the architecture and site design; art design and animation was done in Toronto by Helios. Many other elements were performed in-house by the NFB in cities across Canada.

With *One Millionth Tower*, photographs were blown up, traced and then the residents and architects sat down together and sketched out ideas for the spaces. Animators took the sketches and brought them to cinematic life, then the web developer, Michael Robbins from Helios, brought what was a 2D documentary back into a 3D virtual world.

"It was a story about 3D space so he wanted to put it back in virtual 3D space." (Cizek)

The documentary was built using new open source technologies: HTML5, WebGL and Mozilla's Popcorn.

MARKETING

Cizek's *Installation* premiered at the International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA) and served to bring *Out My Window* into the physical environment. Although a project in its own right, *Installation* would've served to drive traffic to the 'replayable' online experience.

Installation was created by interactive artist Priam Givord and the CFC Media Lab in partnership with Cizek and the NFB. It was a "spatialised cinematic experience" on an eight metre wide collage of screens and utilised motion trigger interactivity. To achieve the final result, the assets were taken out of Flash and put into Toronto company Derivative's TOUCHDesigner software.



DISTRIBUTION

In terms of how people consume *Highrise*, the website is built in WordPress and accessible by all devices that carry Flash. Some of the iterations have mobile sites.

Out My Window the website was licensed to SBS. <http://www.sbs.com.au/outmywindow/>

At the time of interview (2010), Cizek mentioned the National Film Board of Canada was interested in exploring how the format could be sold.



CONCLUSION

Technology allows people all around the world to find themselves in the loungerooms of total strangers, discover similar points of view and collaborate. As documentary filmmaker Cizek says,

"We're all using this stuff, our audiences and us, everybody's using it. I call them the people formerly known as the audience – they're users now. I call 'subjects', you know, 'people formerly known as subjects', they're participants and collaborators and colleagues. I think we're all learning from each other in new exciting ways, and that's what the new technology and not so new technology is allowing us: the transformation of those relationships."



HENRY JENKINS

INTERVIEW

Written by Marcus Gillezeau and Evelyn Saunders

<http://henryjenkins.org/aboutme.html>

BACKGROUND

Henry Jenkins is Provost's Professor of Communication, Journalism, Cinematic Arts, and Education at USC. He is famously referred to as the "father of transmedia storytelling" following his use of the term in the 2003 publication of the same name.

Transmedia Storytelling "Moving characters from books to films to video games can make them stronger and more compelling" (by Henry Jenkins on January 15, 2003)

"Several years ago, I asked a leading producer of animated features how much creative control his team exerted over the games, toys, comics, and other products that deployed their characters. I was reassured that the distribution company handled all such ancillary materials. I saw the movement of content across media as an enhancement of the creative process. He saw it as a distraction or corruption." (Jenkins)

Source: MIT Technology Review, <http://www.technologyreview.com/news/401760/transmedia-storytelling/>

Key Tips –

- Goals of transmedia include: extending engagement; herding consumers who have been left behind; establishing multiple touch points with brands; promoting an existing media property.
- Tested genres: sci-fi / fantasy media / horror; and childrens.
- Opportunities for development: historical fiction and documentary.
- Audiences expect transmedia storytelling with certain properties.
- As people watch TV and film more socially, they demand greater complexity.
- Twitter is a pretty good prediction tool for where audiences are going to go.

We spoke to Henry Jenkins in 2010 about making practical decisions when it comes to investing in multi-platform projects.

Please note, Jenkins' comments have been interspersed with our own to give this interview context within the structure of the Hands On series of case studies



The future of Transmedia Storytelling

“Let’s assume the current moment of transmedia is one of growing pains. All signs suggest that transmedia is going to be the reality of the world that we’re working in, that more executives will get it, that more audiences will understand it and expect it, and more creators will begin to see the creative opportunities it represents. I think as that happens we’re going to see it spread to all genres and I think we’ll see some pretty rich examples of quality dramas, sitcoms and whatnot. Much richer than it is now, (it will have) moved from being a novelty to a fundamental aspect of the way certain stories are constructed. The audiences are demanding it in at least as high a quality they’re demanding other kinds of entertainment they’re watching; and it’s not something that’s done by the big boys but is something that operates at every level that media operates.” (Jenkins)

When considering whether Jenkins’ statements describe the future, where we’re at the moment is best explained by his assessment of the specific genres and forms of story that have gained traction.

Tested Genres

“The two zones where transmedia seems to have most effectively rooted is children’s media and science fiction / fantasy media / horror, at least in the American context. These genres support the tenet that transmedia is based on world building, strategies of engagement and, strategies of reaching out to audiences. Especially the 18-27 year old males that television is losing -

and trying to reach them through the digital platforms. They are genres that have strong existing fan infrastructures that are easy to support”. (Jenkins)

“I think films have embraced the idea of promotion but primarily in advance of the release. Transmedia becomes a strategy that filmmakers are using to build up awareness. With television it seems to go mostly to build awareness and to stitch together the seasons and fill in the empty spaces when the show is off the air and, then, to build up ancillary markets around a particular program.” (Jenkins)

This interview was conducted with Jenkins as a matter of course. What became affirming whilst interviewing other creatives, was that their experiences generally reflected his observations.

DEVELOPMENT

The Goals of Transmedia

“The film industry struggles with “what’s the payoff ” when doing a one shot movie. I think that’s why certain genres are much more likely to embrace transmedia. You more or less know if you’re making a superhero saga or a science fiction film, or a fantasy sorcery epic or a horror film that you’re hoping it does well enough that you can build sequels. So you start to look at a structure that will hold together over time, and transmedia becomes very attractive at that point.”

“And what are the goals of transmedia? It’s centrally about extending engagement. It’s centrally about herding consumers that are left behind. And it’s about establishing multiple touch points with brands. I would say they are the three central goals, the fourth maybe being the promotion of the existing media property.” (Jenkins)

Underdeveloped Opportunities

“If you ask me where the creative opportunities are I think they extend across all genres. But I think the two most underdeveloped areas that are so rich for transmedia is historical fiction and documentary - for different reasons.”

“Historical fiction research is a vast world that’s up there on the screen and people are really into that world and want to know more about what’s going on. I would kill for transmedia around *Gangs of New York* for example, which really spoke to me and seemed like such a densely realized world. I love *Rome*, the HBO show and would have loved transmedia there.”

“With documentaries you shoot so much footage that doesn’t end up in the finished film. That costs money for a fictional film - you’re making stuff that wouldn’t have been made otherwise. But a documentary is about re-utilizing and spreading out content that you would have otherwise thrown away, and it’s about recovering some of your costs, not extending your costs. So for me those two genres are no brainers in terms of extending the creative opportunities around transmedia.”

Original Works

The development of a multi-platform property in many instances, is the development of a storyworld and original IP, all of which have budgetary considerations. As an academic Jenkins did not feel qualified to express firm opinions about budget allocation, however he did offer informed thoughts.

“We again have to decide what kind of property we’re talking about and what’s the model they have of what they want the transmedia to do for them. If the model simply is to draw people into watching the primary show then the amount of money put into it should be consistent with the kinds of money you would put into promotion otherwise. If you’re seeing it as a way of extending experience and reaching a broader base of viewers and keeping them —and you think there is revenue to be made off of it, then it becomes a totally different proposition. But the challenge is if you’re talking about something that is not pre-sold. The odds are it’s going to fail not because transmedia fails, but because more shows that are not pre-sold fail and indeed many shows that are pre-sold fail. “

Investment, ROI and Audience Expectation

“If you’re pitching and saying not only do I need a budget for TV show, but I need a budget for this and this, you up the risk factor for the network - unless you can demonstrate that stuff is going to actually yield payoff. “

“With certain kinds of properties there is now a transmedia expectation on the part of the audience. They’re going to look at the show a certain way if it does have transmedia, and a very different way if it doesn’t. It’s an early marker for a lot of fans of how intelligent the show is, how rooted it is in the genre and the

fan culture. Is it a show that is really trying to do innovative work within the genre - or is it simply trying to exploit fan interests for something that’s going to be cheap and stupid? So I think there is now a question of reassuring the audience as much as there is of attracting audiences through transmedia once we’re into the genre fan world.”

If the development of a multi-platform property is the development of IP, finding a business model that suits that property is also part of the development phase.

Business Model

“I think the challenge of figuring out what the business model looks like, is being felt more and more. There have been some great blog posts in the last year or so of people really trying to drill down and say how do we figure out what the revenue model is to support some of this. Early on, here in this country (US), I think transmedia came out of the PR and branding budget for media properties and so the success was determined by “did it increase buying into the mother ship?” “Did it increase sales of the thing they were going to make money off of?”“

“You don’t necessarily expect the website to make you money. (But) I think as people discover there actually is money to be made off of some transmedia extension content their expectations shoot up really fast. And suddenly the sense of these being all additional revenue streams becomes really strong for a lot of people. But there’s not yet a fully developed model for how to develop a business plan for some of these transmedia extensions. How do you? —I think most of our business models are medium specific still.”

Online Platforms as Financiers

With regard to the question of whether online platforms that require content will partner with creators ...

“I’ve been predicting it as being a media for some time and they keep making announcements that suggest that’s what they’re starting to do and there certainly are some signs of some real success stories there but I’m not sure I know why we’re not seeing more of it yet. It’s a question I’m asking more and more loudly because it looks like we’ve been on the threshold of that being a model for at least four or five years now so I don’t know the answer to that to be honest with you. I keep reading the tea-leaves and thinking well that looks like it just clicked in and that was successful so why don’t they make that next step but we’re not quite there yet.”

But whilst Twitter, Facebook etc, aren’t partnering with content creators, they are excellent facilitators for transmitting content in new and interesting ways. They’re also pretty useful when it comes to measuring success.

Social Networks and Consumption

“More and more research is showing Twitter is a fairly good predictor of where the audience is going to go in a relatively quick order. The shows people are talking about on Twitter turn out to be shows that have big booms and audience attention much of the time. This is in part because the people on Twitter are the people who are going to the movies. They are the trend-setters but it’s also because once it’s on Twitter it reaches a much broader range of people. So if we see transmedia content as sharable content or spreadable media they can talk about, they can discuss, they can add the pieces together and try to figure out what the puzzle looks like - those kinds of behaviours build into social networks and are a means of getting buzz, awareness, engagement, maintaining engagement, fostering interest, and so forth. So I think of transmedia as part of a larger picture of online behaviour. That a certain set of audiences expect the transmedia to be there. And they’re not going to be engaged unless there are things for them to do around the television content. This is a concept I talk about in “Convergence Culture”, I talk about textual attractors and textual activators, and the attractors draws the audience in and the activators gives them something to do, and right now transmedia serves both of those functions often.”

To date producers, broadcasters and distributors have used social network infrastructure to market their content, share it and in many instances, add to it. But we still haven’t nailed the whole of it. We haven’t quite capitalized on the potential of these media to assist in the creation of content and keep it being sustained.

Interactivity and User Generated Content (UGC)

“You can play around with interactions between viewers and producers and user generated content but I haven’t seen a lot that television has done in this space that’s particularly interesting. I think there are other spaces where that’s a significant factor but I haven’t seen the mainstream media yet, really use that in a way that either audiences really enjoyed, or that extended and enriched the storytelling experience. But I do think that recognizing an audience is not just one or two people watching in their living room but a group of people who regularly interface online, and fuelling that, is a fundamental shift we have to make as television and film enters into a social media era.”

Social Networks and Consumption

“Consumption is more and more networked. It’s tied to the social networks people are part of. They exchange bits of media with each other, media references and media content pops up on Facebook and Twitter quite often.”

Some stories even use Twitter as one of its main platforms – The Lizzie Bennett Diaries for example – but that was produced in 2012. In 2010, The Guild was cutting edge – and still is if their July 2013 incorporation into The Dawn of the Dragons MRPG is anything to go by.

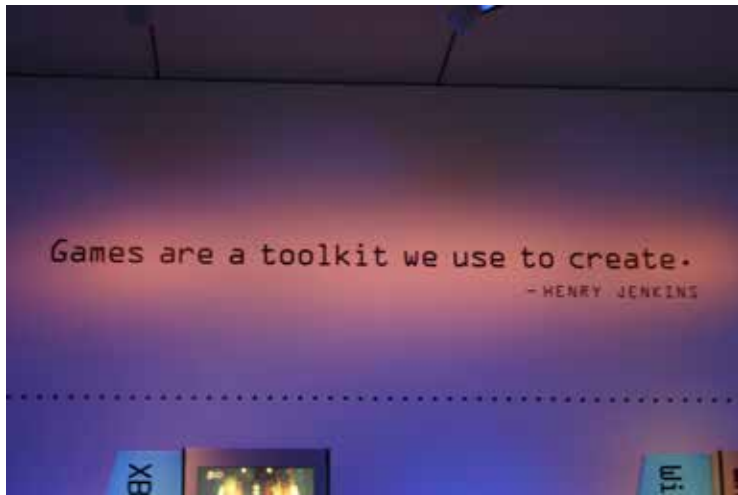
Successful online content without film or television iterations

“I would say that The Guild is a great example because it’s moved from 4 or 5 seasons online to having its own comic book series and doing a variety of other things. That’s a transmedia success that hasn’t passed through television and hasn’t passed through film. It’s built its following gradually through online distribution. I think we’re going to see more and more of those. Dr. Horrible’s (Sing-Along Blog) has done some of that same thing. It’s been basically 3 instalments of something that’s fairly self-contained whereas The Guild was ongoing, but I think it similarly was transmedia’s top social-network-developed fan following that is fairly strong without ever crossing either the film screen or multiplex or the television network. I think we’ll see more of that.”

“One of things we’re discovering is that as people watch television socially or films socially they demand greater complexity. And I think that’s where we’ve seen the greatest impact so far: that move towards serialization or long-term story arcs, that move towards a more complex set of characters, that move towards a stronger focus on character back story – all can be tied to the social phenomena of collective viewing.”

CONCLUSION

Jenkins' 2003 observation regarding ancillary materials and the generation of the term transmedia, was revolutionary for filmmakers, as it marked a change in perspective regarding story, platforms for delivery and, control. Ten years on and the trickle-down effect is only just beginning to take hold. Producers are now looking to create sustainable film and TV production models from their storyworld and format brands. As technology and the marketplace becomes more sophisticated, more exciting, engaging and profitable projects will result.



Games are the toolkit we use to create. - Henry Jenkins.

Taken at the Smithsonian American Arts Museum by Ryan Somma

RECOMMENDED READING

“How to Write a Transmedia Production Bible”

by Gary Hayes for Screen Australia

A template for multiplatform producers with responsibility for overseeing multiplatform production.

<http://screenaustralia.gov.au/getmedia/2b6459ab-3d05-4607-8fc6-10e1a8fff13d/Transmedia-prod-bible-template.pdf>

“Moments of Innovation” An interactive installation and research project from MIT Open Documentary Lab and IDFA DocLab.

An overview of documentary innovation from early forms of representation to the digital age. A must read for All Media creators looking for inspiration.

<http://momentsofinnovation.mit.edu/>

RECOMMENDED LINKS

Online Brand Value

- www.alexa.com (free quick search facility)
- www.emarketer.com (platform – subscription)
- www.compete.com (free 24 hour trial)

Other Evaluation Tools

- Google Alerts <http://www.google.com/alerts/>
- Google Trends <http://www.google.com/trends/>

Social Media Management Tools

- Hootsuite <http://hootsuite.com/>
- Tweetdeck <http://tweetdeck.com/>
- Tweepi <http://tweepi.com/>