

# 13

## Making and responding - Participation



# Part A: Production – for multi-platform

## MULTI-PLATFORM STORYTELLING

What do *The Blair Witch Project* (1999), *The Dark Knight* (2008), *The Bourne Legacy* (2012) and Disneyland all have in common? They are all multi-platform projects. Multi-platform has been used to market each of the films and expand the experience for the audience. Disneyland is itself a multi-platform experience. It was one of the first, having been established in 1955. Disneyland involves the characters of Disney movies and provides a live experience inside the story world created by the studio.

**Table 13.1** Multi-platform storytelling around *Tron Legacy* (2010) – separate but connected story worlds are created on different media.

MEDIA USED	ACTIVITY
Video games	<i>Tron: Evolution</i> was released before the film. The game world is a back-story of the film narrative.
Websites	Players were encouraged to search for the character Kevin Flynn, believed to be still alive, using websites that contained codes and clues.
Twitter	A Twitter account was opened during Comic-Con (a conference for fans of comics).
Live events	In London, a light-cycle motorcycle was set up, and fans could have their own photographs taken in front of 'Flynn's Arcade'.
Mobiles and tablets	Three mobile applications were set up to explore more of the <i>Tron</i> story world.
Social media	A Facebook page was established, and a Facebook game was created.

Multi-platform storytelling is the technique of conveying to audiences a single story, or several stories, from the same story world in a planned way across a range of different media platforms. According to media academic Henry Jenkins, multi-platform storytelling is a process whereby 'integral elements of a fiction get dispersed systematically across multiple delivery channels'. Jenkins argues that the purpose for this is to 'create a unified contribution to the unfolding of the story'.



Alamy Stock Photo/Newscom

**Figure 13.1** The band Daft Punk arrives at the world premiere of *Tron Legacy* in Los Angeles in 2010. Multi-platform media for the film involved several points of entry into the story world for the fans. One entry point, which built on an existing fan base, was via the band. Daft Punk provided the entire musical soundtrack for the film. Six songs out of 24 in the film were released early.

Multi-platform media storytelling spreads the plots, characters and settings of story worlds across several media platforms in order to create a more immersive entertainment experience for the audience. A multi-platform story has more depth. This is quite different from a straightforward conversion from one media to another. For example, a movie that is also shown on television is not usually considered to be a multi-platform story. However, a movie that is converted into a video game and gives characters their own Twitter accounts *is* multi-platform.

Multi-platform stories come about through two main ways, or some combination of them:

- 1 **A story is so popular and becomes so important in popular culture that it automatically generates lots of different versions of itself.** These might be sequels, prequels, fan homages or various adaptations. The *Doctor Who* series, *Harry Potter* series, *Star Wars* franchise and *The Lord of the Rings* are examples of this kind of development.
- 2 **A story is planned as a multi-platform product right from the beginning.** The **story world** is a very commercial franchise, and the aim is to get the audience to consume the product on as many different platforms as possible.

The *Star Wars* multi-platform narrative is an example of an immersive entertainment experience for the audience. Originally, the creators of *Star Wars* simply re-told the story from the film when they presented it on other platforms, such as via video games. Today, multi-platform products are approved

by George Lucas, and they must add something to the story world. The additional platforms must reveal something new or expand on the *Star Wars* universe, opening up a larger story world.

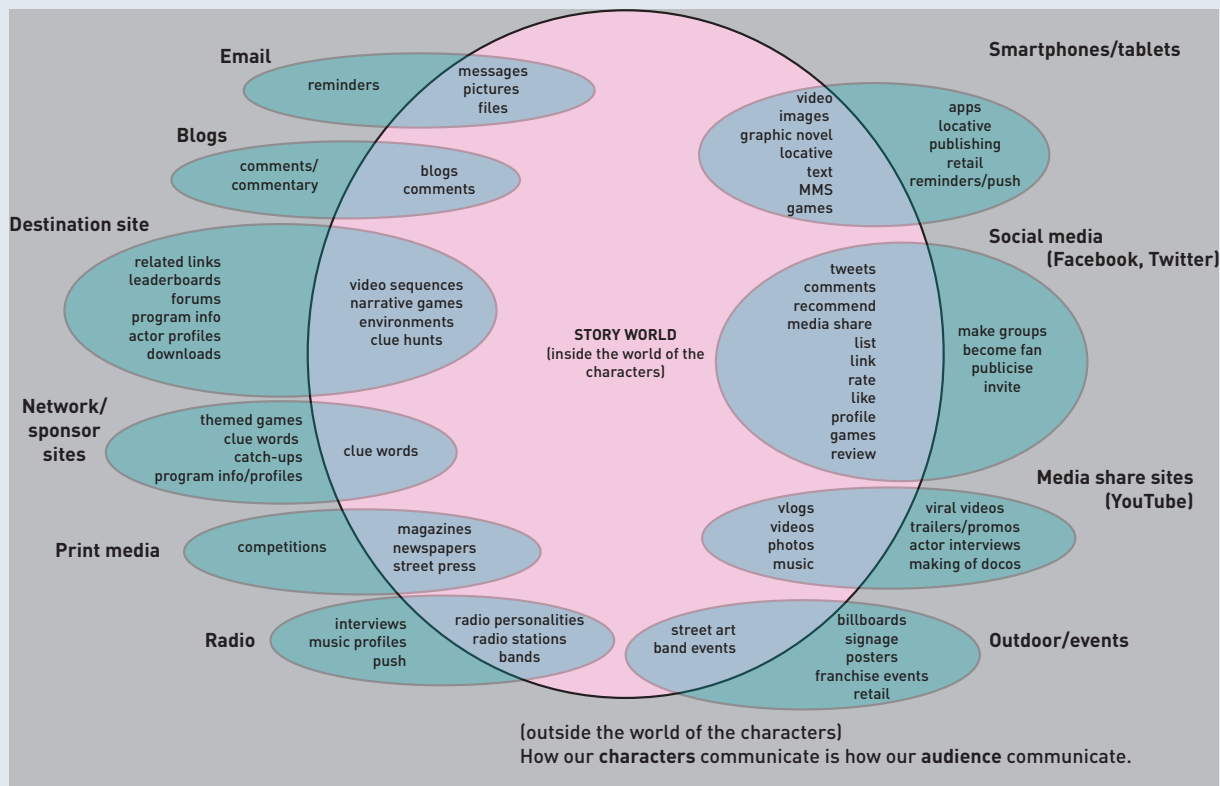
Four necessary characteristics of good multi-platform media have been identified:

- 1 **Multiple media.** The special features of each media form should be used to tell the stories.
- 2 **Different platforms without overlap.** Multi-platform media stories should be connected, but not exactly the same on each media form. Sequels and prequels are a good way of keeping the stories distinct.
- 3 **Common themes.** The different media should have different stories that are based around alternative perspectives of the same theme.

- 4 **Audience involvement.** Part of the responsibility for the story should lie with the audience so that they can have a greater feeling of participation.

The concept of multi-platform media entertainment experiences was first proposed by film scholar Marsha Kinder in 1991. She had watched her sons viewing *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* (1987–96) on television, buying the merchandise and then playing games as ‘the turtles’. She proposed the idea of multi-platform media as a ‘super-system of entertainment’ that would:

- cut across modes of production
- appeal to different generations and cultures
- become ‘collectible’
- become a media event in itself, accelerating the publicity around itself.



Courtesy Hoodlum Entertainment

**Figure 13.2** A graphic representation of multi-platform media prepared by world-leading Australian multi-platform company Hoodlum. The Brisbane-based company created the multi-platform strategy for the television program *Lost* (2004–2010). Multi-platform media differs from traditional storytelling. Hoodlum’s Nathan Mayfield states that the aim is to ‘provide a constant narrative thread through all multi-platform touchpoints. All experiences of the story are complementary and refer back to each other.’

## Features of multi-platform media

‘The best multiplatform experiences are when the broadcaster, producer and brand are thinking multiplatform from the outset – the ground floor. Most projects have two of the three on board. It’s about enabling each party to have ownership.’

**Nathan Mayfield**, Hoodlum (multi-platform production company)



Those who work in the field of multi-platform media storytelling suggest that it has many of the following features.



**Figure 13.3** *SLiDE* (2011–12) was a multi-platform program developed by Hoodlum for Fox subscription television in Australia and TeenNick cable channel in the United States. *SLiDE* focused on the lives of five Brisbane teenagers as they made their way towards adulthood. Their stories were told across television, **webisodes** and social media, and through mobile phone apps. An online graphic novel was also produced. Audiences were encouraged to get involved in games, quizzes and real-world events, such as street art production by local artists. The show also encouraged involvement in the real-world music scene and gave local bands airtime.

### Compelling stories

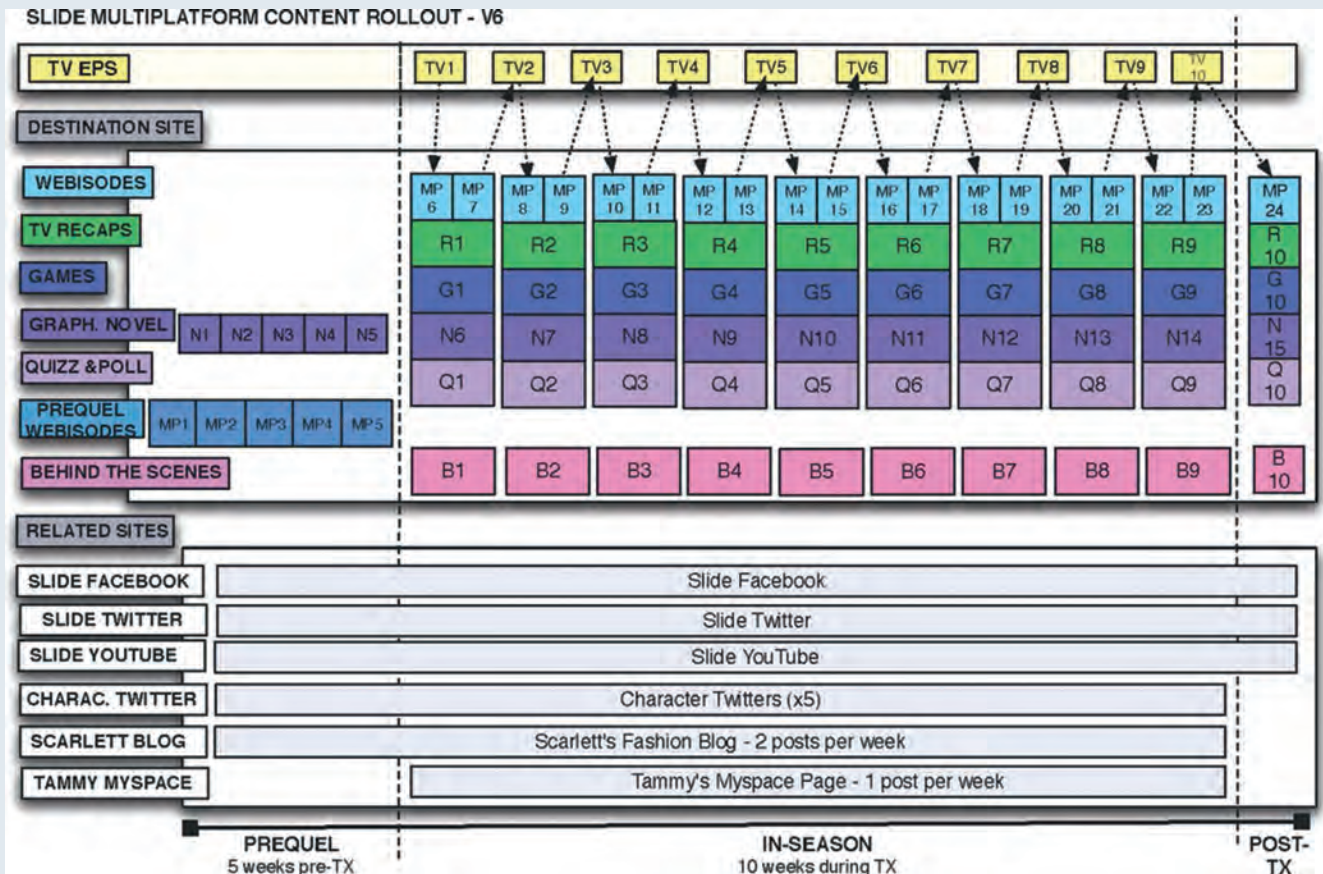
Multi-platform media stories follow the same general pattern of all narratives – a chain of events unfolding over time. The difference is that the stories are fragmented. Events may occur on one media platform that do not occur in the others. Each story or story part needs to be satisfying in its own right.

If stories are distributed across many different media forms, then the audience has many different points of entry. Ideally, the different fragments should encourage audiences towards the other narratives on different platforms.

### Story world

The story world is like a hub from which many different story possibilities can extend. It provides the base that stories extend from.

A story world is a shared universe with a setting, characters, events and actions that form part of a larger narrative. The story world is often fictional, but can sometimes be a non-fiction world.



**Figure 13.4** *SLiDE* multi-platform content plan. Fans could choose their own story 'journey' depending on what combination of media platforms they used.

Creating multi-platform media productions requires the establishment of a fictional world or universe that is large enough to encompass all of the media platforms. As with soap operas and other long-running television series, multi-platform media writers often begin by developing a ‘bible’. The bible is a collection of all the characters, their back-stories and their personal motivations.

Extensions to the story across different media platforms can be used to provide parts of the story that are not in the main narrative. This can be back-story – sometimes referred to as a prequel. Extensions to the main story can be based around particular characters telling more detail of their life stories.

### Multi-platform characters

These are characters whose adventures unfold across multiple media platforms. More details about the characters are shown in each successive media platform. Multi-platform media productions provide a lot of extra scope to develop characters. Different media can be used to reveal more about a character and their motivations. Using other platforms means that the character can be allowed to develop without taking time away from the main story. Or they can be involved in their own separate stories.

‘World build is all about efficiently conveying information about the time, place and mood of your story. In multi-platform media storytelling, though, the most effective tool is actually to create a small piece of your world and give it to your audience to play with. This piece of the world is often online – this is the realm of the oft-used corporate website.’

Andrea Phillips, freelance multi-platform media writer

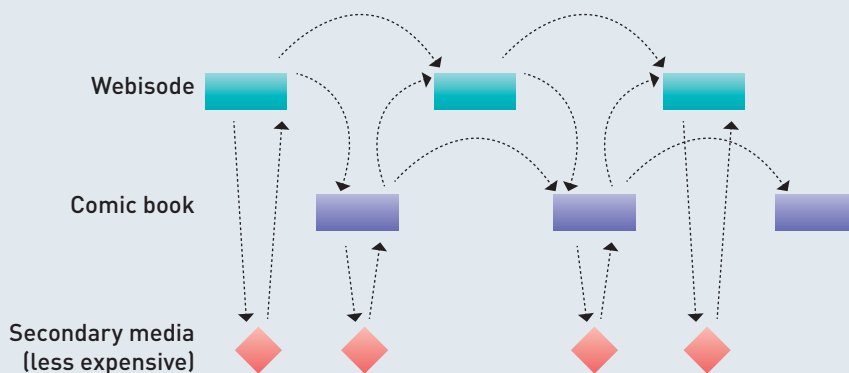
### Distinct media

**Distinct media** exists when the media platforms each give a different experience to the user. Different media have different characteristics and will therefore suit different parts of the story. These different characteristics are called **affordances** (see chapter 10, page 244).

- **Strengths and weaknesses.** Each medium has its own affordances and its own pros and cons. The multi-platform media plan should consider these and use them to advantage. For instance, Twitter is good for short messages, but Facebook would be better for an extended posting from a character.

- **Support weaknesses.** If there is a weakness in one medium, the multi-platform media plan should support this with the strength of another. For example, film is good for showing a character as they develop through a long story sequence. This could be supported by television, because it is better at allowing a character to remain themselves as they are at one point in time through many episodes.
- **Time the releases.** Using distinct media, it is possible to time events on different platforms so that there is a sequence of activity. This generates audience excitement and sometimes publicity.

### Additional media platform reinforces engagement and bridges audiences



**Figure 13.5** Multi-platform media consultant Robert Pratten’s diagram of narrative flow across distinct and different media platforms. Pieces of story are distributed across each platform, yet each makes sense on its own.

Source: Pratten, Robert (2011). *Getting Started in Transmedia Storytelling* Kindle Edition ISBN-13: 978-1456564681 page 47 Figure 36

## Real life

Not everything in the multi-platform media narrative has to be placed in the media. Sometimes a lot of extra interest can be generated by using real-life experiences. Two kinds of real-life experience are popular with multi-platform media producers:

- **Artefacts.** Physical artefacts or objects are often used to generate extra interest and to give a real world 'edge' to the fictional world. Artefacts could be business cards, perhaps mailed out to fans; or they could be products used by characters. Another type of artefact often used is specially minted coins or medallions. Sometimes clues to game problems can be hidden in the artefacts.
- **Real-life events.** Competitions, gala events or concerts incorporated into the narrative can be a way to encourage fans to be more involved.

## Audience considerations

It's important for multi-platform media producers to consider their audience. The following demographic factors should always be considered:

- age and gender
- occupation and income
- cultural factors, such as whether they are young and trendy
- media patterns of consumption – magazines, films, blogs and so on
- general consumption – clothes, cars, brands and so on.

Knowing the audience is important because it can suggest where to place pieces of the story, and what kinds of characters will appeal.

## 13.1 ACTIVITIES

- 1 **Symbolise** a multi-platform media storytelling graphic like the one in Figure 13.5 for a multi-platform media narrative that you have been involved with or have heard about.  
**Explain** in a summary the aspects of the narrative that were distributed across each media form. **Clarify** the technological advantages (or affordances) of each platform that suited a particular aspect of the story. **Give examples** of how this might work.
- 2 Select a classic story and create a multi-platform media narrative treatment. Example: for the classic text *Romeo and Juliet*, the central part of the story (the romance) could be the part that is expanded and distributed across media platforms. Example: *Pride and Prejudice* has been cleverly modernised as the multi-platform media narrative based around the YouTube vlog *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* (2012–). Respond to the areas of activity in the following table.

SYMBOLISE	CONSTRUCT	APPRAISE
<b>Symbolise</b> the migration points or story gaps that allow audiences to 'break out' to different platforms, using a diagram or flow chart to represent the information.	<b>Construct</b> a pre-production plan for how this could work, <b>systematically assigning</b> elements of the story to specific platforms and designing proposals that suit the <b>codes and conventions</b> of the genre.	<b>Appraise</b> the worth of classic literature as a subject for multi-platform application, <b>systematically examining</b> the proposed plan and <b>making judgements</b> about any renewed audience appeal.

- 3 Select three mediums/media forms that have complementary strengths and weaknesses or affordances. **Explain** what these affordances are for each platform. Give additional information about each platform's strengths and weaknesses.  
**Analyse** how affordances, strengths and weaknesses can be used to advantage in a particular story or story type. **Examine** each aspect of the story, breaking it down into **constituent components** that suit particular aspects of the platform.
- 4 Select a movie or television program that you think would work well as a multi-platform media production. **Construct** a list of real-world artefacts and events that could add to the experience for the audience. **Explain** how the real-world events and artefacts would add to the experience of the story world.

## PRE-PRODUCTION FOR MULTI-PLATFORM PROJECTS

For your multi-platform project, you will need to design a multi-platform story and create a pilot element production. The overall concept will need to demonstrate how audiences will participate with the story across two or more moving-image media platforms. The story can be told through a variety of media types such as documentary, animation, film (short or feature length), fictional or reality television, web-based video, gaming or interactive experiences. Be certain to check your task sheet for exact specifications and expectations.

### Planning the project

When planning the project, ensure that the use of different platforms is purposeful and will enhance the storytelling and participatory experience. Be careful that your multi-platform concept doesn't become simply a 'tour' of social media platforms. You will need to explain the connection between the chosen platforms and how the audience will participate with the story via these platforms.

Moving-image media platform options could include (but are not limited to):

- cinema
- broadcast television
- television websites with 'catch-up' and video-on-demand (VOD) services
- pay TV
- websites
- social media and networking
- video-sharing websites
- mobile apps
- live streaming via websites or apps
- games – console, PC and mobile
- augmented reality (AR)
- virtual reality (VR)
- video advertising platforms in real-world spaces (such as video billboards).

It is important to explain *how* the audience will engage with the story world and participate via the platforms (see chapter 11, page 270).

Consider whether the platforms will further the narrative of the story world, such as fictional websites, or provide opportunities for fan culture practices and behind-the-scenes experiences.

Depending on the type of multi-platform project, releasing certain elements on each platform

at different times may maximise the audience experience. In this case, it can be helpful to plan out the release of these elements using a timeline.

### Multi-platform treatments

A treatment for a multi-platform project will describe the usual elements of story development, characters, visual style, representations, target audience and how mood will be created (see chapter 5, page 91). Further justification includes descriptions of how technical and symbolic codes and conventions are used to create meaning and 'position' audiences. For this particular task, the treatment will also explain how the story is told across the chosen platforms, and how audiences can participate and engage with the story.

Technical codes and conventions include cinematography, editing, special effects and sound. They are called 'technical' as they refer to the technologies and equipment used to construct media products. In this treatment, you will need to explain and justify key technical choices made in order to tell the story and create meaning for audiences, including the interactive features of the platforms.

Symbolic codes and conventions are the elements within the frame that can communicate meaning to audiences. The elements of *mise en scène* are considered symbolic codes. *Mise en scène* can be used to help tell the story, evoke emotions, communicate themes and create symbolism for character representations. Often the effect is subtle,



Alamy Stock Photo/A.F. Archive

**Figure 13.6** *Mr Robot* (2015–), a cyber-thriller television show, follows Elliot Alderson who works as a computer engineer in New York City by day and a vigilante hacker by night. This show's notable use of lower-quadrant framing throughout the series is a technical code that reinforces the inner turmoil of the main character as he struggles with an anxiety disorder and depression.





**Figure 13.7** Bob Parr, aka Mr Incredible, denies an insurance claim of a customer in *The Incredibles* (2004). The bland colours in the office space combined with harsh and sterile lighting show the workers' boredom in this cold and oppressive environment. Bob, looking uncomfortable in business attire, is squeezed into his cramped office cubicle and the crowded framing emphasises his discomfort. The use of technical and symbolic codes in this scene all serve to reinforce how miserable Bob is with suburban life and a white-collar job, and how much he longs for the glory days of being a hero.

and audiences may not be consciously aware of how this is being achieved.

When describing the *mise en scène*, explain the signified meanings of important elements. These can include setting, props/décor, visual motifs, lighting, colour, costume, makeup, acting and arrangement of elements within the frame.

## Multi-platform storyboards

Storyboards in Film, Television & New Media have detailed drawings and additional written descriptions to demonstrate the use of technical and symbolic codes and conventions. Stick figures are not considered detailed enough to show an understanding of film languages.

Technical codes are shown in the storyboard through the cinematography choices (such as shot types, angles, camera movement and framing), and also descriptions of other technical elements such as sound, editing techniques or special effects. It is vital that the labelling of the shot matches the drawing.

Variety in shot types is usual in storyboards to effectively create meaning. If a storyboard contains all long shots, for example, this typically suggests a lack of understanding about the key concepts and how to tell a story visually (unless it is a purposeful, considered decision for stylistic reasons that have been explained in the treatment). Similarly, the duration of shots will often have

variation in times, unless they are being timed to music, for example.

Use of symbolic codes are demonstrated in a storyboard through including detail in the drawings and written labels/descriptions. Ensure *mise en scène* explanations in the treatment are consistent with the illustrations and overall sequencing of the storyboard. Effective storyboard drawings do not require talented artistry, but rather the inclusion of visual information such as colour, identifiable characters and settings, and consideration of staging and depth within the frame.

A well-constructed storyboard should be able to visually communicate what is happening in a sequence. A good test is to show your storyboard to someone unfamiliar with your concept, and then ask them to explain what is happening in the sequence to check if it makes sense.

Another way to check a storyboard for visual clarity, and also test the anticipated duration of shots, is to create an **animatic** of the storyboard. This involves scanning the storyboard images, and then importing them into an editing program timeline to essentially create a timed movie 'slideshow' of storyboard images. This process can be further enhanced by including music or dialogue to check ideas before finalising the design and/or creating the actual product. Animatics are particularly useful and popular in the planning process for animations.



**Figure 13.8** Alexander Witt annotates a storyboard sequence for *Resident Evil: Apocalypse* (2004). In the film industry, detailed sketches may be suitable for storyboards. However, in Film, Television & New Media, additional information in both the drawings and labelling is required to show understanding of key concepts.



## 13.2 ACTIVITIES

- 1 Choose a short sequence from a media product (such as 10 shots) to practise storyboard drawing.  
**Construct** a storyboard that represents the shots from that sequence. Aim for accurate translation of shot types and angles, as well as *mise en scène* elements such as setting, character appearance and staging.
- 2 **Analyse** the different drawing styles of professional storyboard artists and examine the similarities and differences.
- 3 Find a short storyboard sequence online, and then rearrange the shots so the sequence is out of order. Have a classmate do the same with a different storyboard. Swap this out-of-order storyboard with one your classmate has found.  
**Construct** a storyboard sequence by arranging the images so that it tells a story. **Compare** these storyboard sequences with their initial order and **determine** how closely (or not) they match the originals.
- 4 **Structure** an animatic by scanning the images of a draft storyboard and using an editing program. Add music and dialogue where appropriate and adjust the duration of each shot to match the intended production. **Determine** whether your **technical and symbolic code** choices are effective, or whether changes are required to improve the clarity of the storytelling.
- 5 Select a screenplay/script from a short film or feature film you haven't seen before. Read through the first page or two of the script.  
**Explain** the **technical and symbolic codes and conventions** that could visually tell the story. **Identify** the key characters, settings and opening events of the film.  
**Construct** a storyboard of the opening sequence of the film. Ensure the *mise en scène* elements are clearly identifiable and the **technical codes** are accurate. Find and view the opening sequence from the actual film.  
**Analyse** how the opening sequence was filmed/animated.  
**Appraise** your storyboard sequence in comparison with the completed product. **Examine** the **similarities and differences** in the **technical and symbolic codes** used, and explain whether the choices in either sequence detracted from or enhanced the creation of meaning for audiences.

## Part B: Making pilot productions

'A television pilot is like a first date. It's a sales pitch where a great first impression hopefully sets up weeks – if not years – of loyal companionship. A pilot is shiny, exciting and dressed to the nines.'

Carita Rizzo, writer, *Variety*

### PILOT PRODUCTIONS

In traditional media contexts, the term **pilot** usually refers to the first episode produced for a proposed television show. A pilot can also be a 'test' episode used by creators to secure funding and resources – if successful, a second pilot would be produced, which is what an audience would typically see as the first episode. Sometimes a pilot episode is created with high production values in the first place, and this would be the first episode released to audiences.

In the 21st century, with new and emerging media technologies, the term 'pilot' or 'pilot elements' can refer to 'proof of concept' productions for multiple types of moving-image media platforms as well as television episodes. Pilot elements can be thought of as a 'prototype' for a production in order to test whether an entertaining concept on paper is a viable product.

In Film, Television & New Media, a pilot is a sequence or production that shows the intent of a completed film, television show, web series, digital game or other media product.



**Figure 13.9** The Stark family await the arrival of King Robert and the royal party in the first episode of *Game of Thrones* (2011–). This television phenomenon almost didn't happen due to the massive problems with the original pilot, particularly in failing to establish major plot points. The creators refilmed 90 per cent of the pilot episode, and screenwriter Craig Mazin declared it 'the biggest rescue in Hollywood history'.

## Types of pilot productions

Pilot productions can be designed for different platforms and audiences, but generally they have a few elements in common. Pilots are designed to 'sell' a show, and therefore need to engage and appeal to an audience so they will want to experience more. A production will need to establish setting, characters, story, visual style, rhythm and overall tone. A pilot may also demonstrate the interactivity or gameplay elements in a digital game or virtual reality experience.

### Complete pilot episodes

A complete episode is the traditional form of a pilot that represents an episode in a television series. According to screenwriter John August, pilot episodes can be grouped into three categories: premise pilots, soft premise pilots and non-premise pilots.

- **Premise pilots.** This type of pilot includes a dramatic, significant event to mark 'The Beginning' of the story, and the underlying premise of the series.
- **Soft premise pilots.** These still set up what a normal episode will play out like, but there is a less-significant inciting incident that marks the start of a story. This can sometimes be called the 'one new guy' pilot, says August. Often used in sitcoms or procedural shows, a new character is introduced into an existing group, but they aren't the sole focus of the show.
- **Non-premise pilots.** These pilots represent a typical episode in a series and showcase the 'formula' for the show and dynamics between characters.



**Figure 13.10** *Little Lunch* (2015–) is an Australian mockumentary-style television show that follows the everyday lunchtime dramas of six primary school students and their teacher, Mrs Gonsha. Created by the Australian Children's Television Foundation (ACTF), the first episode of *Little Lunch* is an example of a 'non-premise pilot'. The story of the first episode revolves around Rory being sent to the principal's office for biting Melanie's hand, but this episode could easily have been switched with any other episode in the first season.

### Demos or presentation pilots

Funding a pilot episode can be very expensive for studios, so instead of a full-length episode they may request a demo or 'presentation pilot'. These pilots are shorter in duration than a regular episode and give an example of what a complete episode would look like. A game show or reality series might include a condensed version of the gameplay or challenges, but this would establish the tone of the show and how the host would interact with contestants. A narrative series or feature film might have the opening sequence developed as a pilot element.

### Special effects sequences

Similar to a demo or presentation pilot, if a production is using new special effects techniques to tell the story, a creator may develop a special effects sequence (or sequences) to demonstrate that the idea is technically possible.

### Trailers and teasers

A pilot production may include a selection of short clips in the form of a trailer or teaser instead of a specific longer sequence. A trailer will generally have footage from throughout the narrative and provides information about plot, characters, casting and settings.



Courtesy Dane Krams and Newspix/Michael Ross



Courtesy Dane Krams

**Figure 13.11** Brisbane-based game designer Dane Krams (pictured) released the first volume of his point-and-click adventure game *Anna's Quest: Winfriede's Tower* in 2012. This pilot volume of the game sparked the interest of publisher Daedalic Entertainment, who then collaborated with Krams to produce the completed HD version of *Anna's Quest* (2015).

A teaser is designed to create intrigue in the product, often before a trailer is released. A teaser may focus on a specific moment of a product to suggest a tone and direction, but usually doesn't give away major plot information.

### Digital game elements

For digital games, single levels or chapters can be created as interactive pilot elements to represent the completed product. Pilot elements for digital games could also include videos of cut scenes or a sample of 'walkthrough' recordings to show what playing the game would be like.

### Augmented reality and virtual reality products

Like digital games, the pilot elements for AR and VR products may be interactive prototypes, or sample 'walkthroughs' or recordings of user participation. In a school setting, traditional technologies could be used to simulate the emerging technologies for an AR or VR pilot production. For example, a combination of strategic point-of-view (POV) filming and post-production special effects could simulate a walkthrough for a VR experience.

## 13.3 ACTIVITIES

- 1 Select a recent television or web series and view the initial pilot episode.  
**Analyse** the narrative structure of the episode and classify it as a premise pilot, soft premise pilot or non-premise pilot. **Evaluate** the **strengths** and **limitations** of this type of pilot production.
- 2 **Identify** examples of a teaser and trailer for the same film, digital game or television/web series.  
**Explain** the difference between a teaser and a trailer for a moving-image media product.  
**Analyse** the **codes** and **conventions** used in the teaser and trailer. Examine the similarities and differences between the clips.  
Present your findings to the class using **examples** from the clips to support your analysis.
- 3 Choose a production of your own that you created for Unit 1 or 2.  
**Structure** a teaser or trailer pilot production for promotional purposes using this footage.
- 4 Collaborate with a small group of students to film a short science-fiction sequence at school.  
**Experiment** with adding special effects to the sequence by using various green screen special effects clips (such as flying saucers or lightsabers) and an appropriate editing program.
- 5 Research three to five examples of pilot television episodes that were considered unsuccessful by audiences and/or critics. Respond to the areas of activity in the following table.



EXPLAIN	ANALYSE	APPRAISE
<b>Explain</b> which qualities and characteristics of each episode contributed to the unfavourable reaction by audiences. <b>Identify</b> specific examples from the pilot episodes to <b>illustrate</b> these characteristics.	<b>Analyse</b> the qualities and characteristics that were considered <b>limitations</b> for each episode and determine any common trends.	<b>Appraise</b> the pilot episode for each production and <b>draw conclusions</b> about their value by rating each pilot episode using a scale of your choice (e.g. 1 to 10, or out of 5 stars). <b>Justify</b> your <b>conclusions</b> by referring to specific features of each episode. For each pilot episode, determine one change that could improve the overall impression of the pilot.

## EDITING TECHNIQUES FOR PILOT PRODUCTIONS

Without editing, there would be no story – just a collection of takes. Editing is what creates the narrative. A typical Hollywood movie contains between 800 and 1200 shots. For a narrative movie, the shooting ratio of filmed rushes (raw footage) to final selection is usually about 8:1. Editing is often thought of as a process of cutting down, but it can also be seen as a means of building up a story.

In its simplest form, editing may be defined as the process of coordinating a unit of vision (shot) and a unit of sound with the next one. This process of coordination of units of vision and sound creates the narrative – the cause-and-effect chain of events in time and space. Editing is a process of combining images so that they play off each other and create meaning.

Editing creates the cause-and-effect chain in the following ways:

- **Arranging the order of events.** Editing is the way the director deliberately arranges the sequence of events. This makes the individual differences between the story, the plot and the narrative.
- **Creating relationships between characters.** Combining images of characters as they respond to each other builds character relationships. For example, the scene in *Psycho* (1960) in which Marion is questioned by the police officer establishes a sense of threat from the officer and a sense of frightened guilt from Marion. This relationship is created by editing together shot and reverse-shot sequences.
- **Creating pace and rhythm.** As the excitement builds, the pace and rhythm quicken. However, a film cannot just relentlessly quicken from beginning to end – it must have moods. It needs periods of higher and lower intensity.



Courtesy NBCUniversal

**Figure 13.12** In *Psycho*, Marion is questioned by the police officer after sleeping overnight in her car by the highway. The editing together of shot and reverse-shot builds the relationship between the characters and increases audience identification with Marion. It also builds tension.

- **Building emotional involvement.** Building tension is one way that audience involvement is increased. However, emotional involvement with characters can be created with cuts that establish point of view.
- **Building themes and concepts.** Editing allows a director to establish the theme of the film and also to guide the audience response to it.

### How editing controls text progress

According to US film studies academics David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, editing offers the filmmaker four areas of control over the relationships between shots: picture relationships, rhythmic relationships, space relationships and time relationships.

#### Picture or graphic relationships between shots

An editor can make a connection between two scenes if there are any similarities in the actual content of the pictures. These similarities, say Bordwell and Thompson, could be in the scenery, the lighting, the costumes or what the characters are doing.

A famous match of picture action occurred at the beginning of Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968). A prehistoric man-ape hurls a bone into the air, and we watch it spin over and over. The next shot is of a 21st-century space station spinning in space. The spinning bone and the spinning space station connect prehistory with the future.

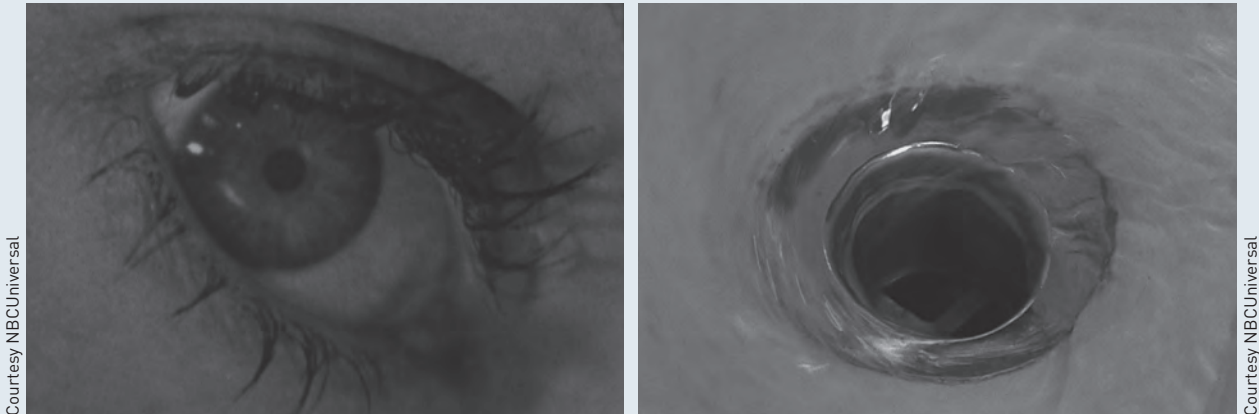
**Graphic matches** are also used extensively in *Baraka* (1992) to link the imagery as transitions are made between the scenes. In one clear example, an overhead shot of a circular group of men performing the traditional 'monkey dance' is followed by an overhead shot of the circular vents of volcanoes.

Table 13.2 gives other examples of texts in which two scenes are connected by the pictorial content of each shot.

### Rhythmic relationships

Each shot takes up a certain amount of time on screen. A shot may range in length from one second to several minutes. Just as variation in the length of notes creates rhythm in music, shot length can be used to build rhythm in visual texts. A sequence of rapid shot changes gives an impression of fast, exciting action. A sequence of longer shots may create a reflective, romantic mood. Using cuts speeds up the transition, while dissolves slow it down. Filmmakers punctuate fast passages with slow ones so that the variation in rhythm is accentuated. Accelerating the tempo creates a greater feeling of excitement than a constantly fast rate of cutting.

In the traditional Hollywood style, the rhythm of the shots also depends on the shot size. Long shots



**Figure 13.13** Probably cinema's best-known graphic match is between Marion's eye and the plughole at the end of the shower scene in Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960). A graphic match can work like a metaphor in poetry – it can say one thing is another thing.

**Table 13.2** Examples of edits made on the basis of the pictorial or graphic content of the image. The relationship of shot A to shot B is purely visual.

TITLE OF TEXT	SHOT A	SHOT B
<i>Lawrence of Arabia</i> (1962)	Close-up shot of Lawrence striking a match	Shot of a flaming desert sun
<i>Raiders of the Lost Ark</i> (1981)	Titles showing the Paramount Studios mountain	Dissolve into opening shot of actual mountain where the story begins
<i>Baraka</i> (1992)	Medium close-up of monk's head as he enters deep meditation	Long shot of natural stone archway on seashore as waves break through the gap – position of archway corresponds to the monk's head
<i>Once Were Warriors</i> (1994)	Close-up of Beth's face defiant and proud despite suffering	Close-up of face of carved Maori wooden statue
<i>The Usual Suspects</i> (1995)	Medium long shot of the mouth of a cave, which is the scene of a violent confrontation	Rim of a coffee cup belonging to the man recounting the tale of events in the cave
<i>Titanic</i> (1997)	Shot of the rusted bow of <i>Titanic</i> underwater	Shot of the bow of the ship just before sailing
<i>Hugo</i> (2011)	Shot of a large clock mechanism with a central cog	Shot of Paris streets at night radiating out from the Arc de Triomphe at the centre

are left on the screen for longer than close-ups. This is because it is assumed the audience needs longer to read the greater amount of detail in a long shot.

### Space relationships

With clever editing, a filmmaker can make it seem that places on opposite sides of the Earth are next door to each other. For example, someone can walk out the front door of a constructed set in a Hollywood studio and into a street in Egypt.

Placing shots side by side can suggest the action is occurring within the same space. The traditional progression from extreme long shot through medium shot to close-up is a device often used to create space relationships. An establishing shot sets the scene. All other shots in the sequence are much closer, allowing the filmmaker to return to the studio. The audience continues to believe the action is taking place within the setting of the establishing shot.

### Time relationships

A program can encapsulate whole lifetimes or just a few minutes of someone's life. Time can be manipulated in both the filming and the editing. There are several ways this can be done, including:

- **Compressing time (ellipsis).** Long passages of time can be shortened to just a few shots.
- **Expanding time.** Prolonging the action can prolong the suspense, increase the importance of an event or draw out the emotional response in the audience.



Alamy Stock Photo/Moviestore Collection

**Figure 13.14** Bullet time from *The Matrix* (1999). Bullet time is an extreme case of expansion of time – a technique used to heighten suspense.

- **Flashbacks.** Memories or past events can be shown by juxtaposing shots of the present with shots of the past, perhaps separated by a transitional device such as a fade.
- **Flash-forwards.** In visual texts, these are rarer than flashbacks because they create a more obvious break in the logical order of a story.
- **Cross-cutting/simultaneous time/parallel editing.** Cutting from one event to another can give the impression they are occurring simultaneously. A rule of simultaneous time is that events in the two or more parallel locations must come together in some way.

Many films rely on cross-cutting as an important feature of the film's narrative. Examples include Stephen Spielberg's first film *Duel* (1971), which cuts between a car and a menacing truck; *Jeepers Creepers* (2001), which cuts between a car and a demonic vintage vehicle; and *Run Lola Run* (1998), which cuts between a young woman extorting money and a young man about to hold up a supermarket.

Although creating suspense is one of the most common uses of cross-cutting, it does have other uses. Cross-cutting can be used to draw parallels or to create contrasts. For instance, showing images of wealth cross-cut with scenes of poverty can make the injustice much more apparent. Cross-cutting to create a contrast was used in a memorable scene from *The Godfather* (1972). At a baptism, Michael Corleone (Al Pacino) accepts God and renounces Satan. Cross-cut with this scene is one of Corleone's henchmen violently executing his enemies one by one.



Ronald Grant Archive

**Figure 13.15** The German film *Run Lola Run* uses cross-cutting/simultaneous time to explore how different everything might be if just one thing, or one moment, were changed. In the movie, Lola is running to prevent her boyfriend, Manni, from robbing a supermarket at exactly midday.



## Motif in editing

A **motif** in editing is a recurring idea, image or sound. It is repeated in the narrative and becomes significant or symbolic in some way. The word is of French origin, and should not be confused with ‘motive’. The audience may not realise the significance of a motif until the end of the film. The symbolic importance may be hidden until the end. Motifs can be used to:

- signify a character
- reinforce an idea
- develop a theme
- build a sense of unity across the film.

**Table 13.3** Examples of editing motifs in film

FILM	MOTIFS
<i>Citizen Kane</i> (1941)	The word ‘rosebud’
<i>The Sixth Sense</i> (1999)	The colour red
<i>Minority Report</i> (2002)	Eyes

## 13.4 ACTIVITIES

- 1 View the shower scene in *Psycho* (1960) – perhaps the most famous edited sequence in cinema history. Carefully use freeze frame to record each shot. Note down its shot size, shot duration and the content of the shot. **Explain** the relationship of each shot to the next. **Identify** changes in the pace of the editing as the scene develops. **Explain** the rhythmic pattern of the sequence. **Clarify** the meanings of the opening and closing shots.
- 2 View some action films and find a powerfully edited action sequence. Create stills of representative images in the sequence. **Explain** how they work in relationship with one another, **demonstrating your understanding of codes and conventions**. Present your investigation to the class.

# Part C: Writing case studies

## CASE STUDIES

This **case study** investigation task is an opportunity to explore how audiences participate with a specific media ‘case’, and to investigate how institutions and technological developments have engaged and sustained audience participation.

A case study is a research method investigating a particular product, question or real-life situation. The term ‘case study’ refers to both the investigation process and the product of that inquiry. The content and structure of a case study can change depending on the subject area or discipline, but generally it will involve research and analysis of issues involved in the case.

In Film, Television & New Media, this investigation will focus on a moving-image media case, and how technological and institutional factors influence the ways audiences participate and engage with media.

## Features of case studies

When writing a case study, it is important to establish a specific ‘case’ for investigation, have a clear structure, and show evidence of analysis and research.

### Case choice

A case study should have a case with defined focus and boundaries, and clear research questions. The case should be contemporary and, at the very least, a phenomenon specific to time and space. In practical terms, the topic of your case choice must be specific enough so that the response can be written within the word limit while still allowing appropriate scope for analysis and appraisal.

If the case choice is too broad and lacks boundaries, it could possibly result in a superficial response if completed within the word limit. That is, the response may only include identification of interactive features and contexts of use, and therefore not enough analysis of interactive features and appraisal of factors affecting audience participation.

Reading the task instructions carefully and seeking clarification if needed is an essential step in all assessment. Check the instrument-specific marking guide to ensure your idea will satisfy requirements. It is also wise to confirm your idea with your teacher. When deciding on a 'case' for investigation, conduct preliminary research to ensure there is enough information available for you to make supported judgements.

## Structure and content of case studies

Like most academic writing, a case study has an introduction and conclusion, with body paragraphs in between. Consult the task sheet and instrument-specific marking guide, and be careful not to go off on tangents. When structuring the body of your case study, you may wish to use a basic structure of:

- Introduction
- Body
  - Contexts of production
  - Interactive features
  - Social/audience impact
- Conclusion.

It is also important to check when you are expected to explain, analyse and appraise within your response.

### Case study introduction

Like most academic writing, the introduction will need to establish a clear topic or thesis for your case study. Ensure the case choice is well-defined, and that the opening is written so that readers want to learn more. Briefly set the context for the case by considering: who, what, when and where.

Once you have finished writing, it is important that you double check there is coherence between the introduction and the rest of the investigation, especially if you discovered new points about the topic during the writing process.

### Production contexts

Explaining the production context for your case study may include (but is not limited to) explanation of the following aspects.

#### Location and time period of production

When and where a production is made can influence many factors such as available technologies, ratings, settings and costumes,

representations and cultural contexts. Locations for filming or post-production services can also depend on budgetary factors, or the specific needs of production. *Aquaman* (2018) received millions of dollars in tax benefits from the Australian Federal Government, and it was primarily filmed at Village Roadshow Studios on the Gold Coast and other parts of south-east Queensland. This location choice also meant access to the largest purpose-built tank in Australia, which was perfectly suited to film the water-based scenes in the production.

### Creators of the product

A small emerging company sometimes has the benefit of more creative control over a project compared with a digital game designer or film director working for a larger corporation. A company may also have specific values or mission statements to uphold, or creators may be influenced by their own values. The digital game industry has often been criticised for being male-dominated. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, in 2016 approximately 15 per cent of digital game developers were women. As the gaming industry becomes more diverse in its makeup, it is anticipated that the representations in digital games will also become more diverse.

### Financing and budgeting

The source of funding for a project could be commercial, private, **crowdfunded**, government/public funds, or a combination of these. Consider possible requirements/limitations based on the source of funding. **Screen Australia** is a Federal Government agency that supports Australian screen development, production and promotion.

### Government regulations or other institutional restrictions

Sometimes a company will have to operate under specific restrictions. For example, when animation company Animal Logic were developing *The LEGO Movie* (2014), *The LEGO Batman Movie* (2017) and *The LEGO Ninjago Movie* (2017), the company had to work within restrictions set by LEGO as to what they were allowed to do with the minifigures.

### Intended target audience

Studio/company websites, behind-the-scenes footage and press releases can be sources of information about intended audiences. How the production is marketed and advertised can also reveal its target audience.



Alamy Stock Photo/Moviestore Collection

**Figure 13.16** Construction worker Emmet Brickowski is the unlikely hero in *The LEGO Movie* (2014). Animal Logic had to follow the LEGO rule book when creating the films. The digitally animated films only use the limited LEGO colour palette, and all the brick constructions were designed so they are ‘buildable’ in real life.

### Market research and product testing

To effectively create a product for an audience, a company may conduct market research into consumer behaviour and engagement across different media platforms. This might include releasing beta versions of digital games or interactive applications, or conducting test screenings of productions. In the film *Shrek* (2001), Princess Fiona was originally designed and animated to look more human-like. This resulted in the Uncanny Valley phenomenon (see page 77). During an early test-screening of the film, it is reported that children began to cry at the sight of Princess Fiona. This was not encouraging for DreamWorks, so they altered the ‘look’ of Princess Fiona to appear less realistic and more cartoonish.

### Product distribution and audience access

The way products are distributed and the available platform/s for a product can affect audience access and participation. The cost of certain technologies can also provide a barrier to participation.

### Available technologies

The technology at the time of production can have a significant impact on production methods, the visual style and the interactive features of production. Sometimes a product will break new ground in technological developments, such as the computer-generated animation in *Toy Story* (1995) and the motion-capture technologies in *Avatar* (2009). Virtual reality will be the next ‘big thing’ in media



Shutterstock.com/yngerman

**Figure 13.17** The Google Play Store on an Android smartphone and Apple’s App Store on an iPhone. The issue of product distribution is particularly noticeable with the development of smartphone technologies where some apps are available on iPhones/iPads but not on Android devices and vice-versa.

storytelling, says Nathan Mayfield, co-founder of Hoodlum, a multi-platform production company.

### Interactive features

With the rise of digital social networking and new media technologies, it is increasingly common for media producers to create multi-platform content to expand their story worlds or provide new levels of participation and interactivity for audiences. During the research process, determine what opportunities exist for audience interaction for the chosen case. Analyse how these interactive features can enhance participation and sustain audience engagement. Possible interactive features for audience interactivity include the following.



13.5.1  
Aquaman  
blockbuster to  
be filmed on  
Gold Coast  
in 2017,  
13.5.2  
Film,  
Television  
and Digital  
Games,  
Australia,  
2015–16,  
13.5.3  
Screen  
Australia,  
13.5.4  
Animal Logic  
visual effects



13.5.5  
The Uncanny  
Valley effect



### Social media as storytelling

While the popularity of various social media websites/apps can come and go (such as MySpace from the early 2000s), a product having a social media presence is an easy way for it to connect with audiences and provide interactive opportunities. Media producers can expand the story world of a multi-platform product and offer different narrative threads, enabling audiences to ‘follow’ or message a fictional character’s blog, twitter or Facebook page, for example.

### Social media and fandom

Social media provides a way for communities to be built around media content, and audiences are able to share favourite clips, comment on posts to show support, and generally engage in fan culture practices (see page 319). During live broadcasts, some reality shows will display Tweets or social media posts from audience members to further engage viewers.

It is important to determine if the various sites/pages are ‘official’ and created by the producers of the content, or whether they are produced by audiences. Conversations about media products will happen anyway, says Nathan Mayfield, and a multi-platform approach allows creators to have some control or ‘ownership’ of the conversation.

### Behind-the-scenes, extras and short clips

No longer only the domain of the DVD, behind-the-scenes clips for television shows, webisodes, films and digital games are available online via a product or company’s website, posts on social media or links and videos shared between consumers.

When exploring these media elements, consider how these interactive features enrich the audience experience, and the levels of interactivity available. This approach is also used for reality television where audiences can re-watch episodes or specific parts of episodes (such as the judging moments or favourite performances), learn more about contestants or view how-to videos for lifestyle shows.

### Digital games

This type of media has often been the platform to push existing boundaries of audience interactivity. New technologies such as VR allow for immersive gameplay, which is a new level of physical interactivity. In terms of social interactivity, evolving



Alamy Stock Photo/Hero Images Inc

**Figure 13.18** Teenagers play a virtual reality video game together at home. Although the technology changes, this has been a familiar scene in households for decades.

internet speeds have led to online gaming and MMORPGs where gamers can interact with each other within the games. Social media and video streaming services mean gamers can easily connect with other players and share videos showcasing their skills or asking for advice.

### Interactive movies and episodic narrative games

How a person participates in an interactive movie can be affected by whether the interactive film is viewed as a group cinematic experience or individually. It could get annoying very quickly in a cinema setting if your choice is always in the minority, and you don’t get to see the film play out as you would like. Having full control of the story would be a benefit of ‘playing’ the interactive film as a solo experience, such as episodic narrative games.

Episodic narrative games can also provide interactive opportunities that expand on existing media products and franchises. Fans of the television show *Game of Thrones* (2011–) get to further interact with the story world through an episodic graphic adventure game that features the same actors to voice the characters. *Game of Thrones: A Telltale Games Series* (2014) allows players to switch between five different characters of House Forrester, and the choices made in the game influence the future episodes.

### Audience voting

Usually a popular option for reality television or competitions, audience voting allows for comparison with judges’ decisions and, for some

shows, can determine which contestants advance to the next round. More recently, audiences are asked to download a specific app to vote, or to download an artist's latest song to count as a vote in singing competitions, for example. SBS used audience voting to sustain engagement during the finals of the 2017 Eurovision contest. The experience was enhanced for audiences as they could 'unofficially' vote for or against contestants, with results shown on screen during the TV broadcasts.

### Social/audience impact

In the case study investigation, once you have explained the contexts of production and analysed the interactive features of your chosen case, you will need to appraise the impact of audiences participating in and engaged with the moving-image product/experience.

This appraisal can include:

- inquiring into factors that contributed to or hindered audience participation
- the degree to which audiences participated in a case
- drawing conclusions about the overall experience for audiences
- the effect participation had on both the product and the audience
- making judgements about outcomes of participation
- assessing the value, significance or success of the selected case.

It is important to support such points with evidence of research such as statistics or other reports (for example, news stories) about audience participation.

Barriers to participation could include technological, financial, institutional or social barriers. An example of an institutional barrier to audience participation is the official *Game of Thrones* website, which allows audiences to explore the story world and creation of this popular television show. This website provides barriers to some fans as it contains videos that are not permitted to be viewed by Australian audiences. Glitches in gameplay or apps/websites/streaming services crashing are common concerns that affect audience enjoyment. On the surface, creators may design an experience that looks really interactive on the surface but, in reality, the opportunities for audiences could be limited. The design of



carsales.com.au/Feann Torr

**Figure 13.19** VicRoads, the Victorian Road Authority, displayed warnings of 'Don't Drive and Pokemon' on its electronic signs over major highways. Although *Pokémon Go* (2016) was celebrated for getting gamers out of the house and exercising in the fresh air, there were also issues around player safety.

interactive elements can be the difference between a successful product and a failure.

For a multi-platform case in particular, the creators may have designed a range of possibilities for audience participation, or avenues to expand the story world, but audiences may not actually use/view all the potential options. Audiences may focus their attention on a particular part of the experience, or their engagement may be more passive than the creators had planned.

Audiences can interact with media in ways that were unanticipated by the creators, which



Shutterstock.com/Lauren Elisabeth

**Figure 13.20** A 2015 advertisement for *Rise of the Tomb Raider* featuring a fully clothed Lara Croft. Since the first *Tomb Raider* game in 1996, there has been much criticism of the way Lara Croft has been represented in the video game and promotional materials. Recent instalments of the game have featured a more realistically proportioned and clothed Lara Croft.

might even result in companies making changes to the products. With the 2016 craze of *Pokémon Go*, there were reports of players trespassing on private property or being involved in road accidents. Apparently, some players were so distracted that they ended up in lakes or walking over cliff edges. To combat the issue of road safety, Niantic updated the game so that it was ‘unplayable’ at higher speeds. This decision wasn’t popular with fans who liked to play the game when on public transport.

In response to audience feedback or cultural changes, media institutions can modify or revamp representations in products. Representations of characters can be altered as media franchises expand to reflect changing attitudes or revive series. For example, in *Doctor Who* (1963–) the Thirteenth Doctor is played by actress Jodie Whittaker, which is a change from the usual male casting. When first announced, the story made news headlines around the world – finally, after 50 years, there would be a female Doctor Who.

*Overwatch* (2016) is a team-based multiplayer shooter game that features a diverse group of characters. This indicates an institutional change compared with the typical main character in video games being ‘30-something white males’. According to the game developer Jeff Kaplan, *Overwatch* was purposely designed in this way so that audiences feel included and well represented. One of the characters, D.Va, has even become a symbol for a group of Korean feminist gamers who are fighting for gender equality. Participating with media can lead to audiences creating communities and building relationships to engage with each other as well as the story world.

**Social activism**, or increased awareness of social issues, can be another outcome of audience participation with media. Through AR projects such as *The Whole Story*, or *The Artvertiser*, audiences are able to edit their environments without the obvious disadvantages of normal graffiti, says Robert Seddon, philosophy Honorary Fellow at Durham University. Virtual reality has been called ‘the empathy machine’, by tech entrepreneur Chris Milk, for its ability to put a person in someone else’s shoes. *Clouds Over Sidra* (2015) is a VR experience developed by the United Nations that follows the story of a young girl living in a refugee camp in Jordan. Early findings by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Action



“The driving on that game is simulated, but the road rage is real.”

**Figure 13.21** A man rages as he plays a driving game on his phone. The effects of media on audiences have been a concern for as long as media products have existed. Often these concerns are with the effects of violence or adult themes on audiences.

Campaign suggest that VR is twice as effective at raising funds than traditional methods.

Another factor that can enable audience participation is access to media with the increased popularity of personal devices and internet connectivity. Concerns have been raised about young or vulnerable audiences accessing mature content with our increased access to video-on-demand (VOD) services such as Netflix or SBS On Demand, and game download services such as Steam and various app stores. It is not unusual for film or television show releases on Netflix to make news headlines as experts debate their potential effects on young viewers.

Given the immersive nature of VR and the potential impact on audiences both emotionally and physically, concerns have been raised about when it is ethical and unethical for VR producers to place somebody in certain situations. Watching a news story on a screen with footage of war zones, for example, is not nearly as confronting to audiences as being placed directly in that war zone situation through wearing a VR headset. Marc Fennell, host of *Download This Show* on ABC Radio National, says that virtual reality developers are starting to come up with their own sets of rules in the absence of clear

Cartoonstock.com/Larry Lambert



13.5.6  
Overwatch  
Overwatch on  
the game's  
diversity:  
“normal  
things are  
normal”



regulations. The main agreement is that anything that is physically intrusive, such as messing with someone's sense of gravity (potentially making

them nauseated) or simulating something happening to a person's body, is unethical and should not be an option.

---

'Research shows that when you watch VR your brain understands and processes that as memory, as a lived experience. There is much more research to be done to establish the short, medium and long-term impacts of watching this material.'

Courtney Gibson, Screen NSW CEO (2016)

---

### Case study conclusion

The conclusion of your case study may include a single summative judgement about the overall success, popularity or importance of the 'case'. Depending on the nature of the case, you might suggest areas for improvement if issues were identified earlier in the piece. A summary of the main arguments is standard practice, but this is more effective if the ideas are there to emphasise a final point rather than just reminding the reader of what came before.

### Primary and secondary sources

Sources are the products, reference materials or evidence that you use to find out more information about a particular topic. It is expected that your case study follows referencing conventions such as the use of in-text citations and a bibliography.

Both primary and secondary sources are necessary in writing a well-supported case study investigation.

#### Primary sources

**Primary sources** are considered the original product/experience being investigated. They can include:

- original productions (such as film, television and online videos)
- digital games
- augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) experiences
- in multi-platform storytelling, the different media elements involved
- pre-production planning (such as storyboards and director's notes)
- evidence of audiences participating in the experience (such as social media content).

#### Secondary sources

**Secondary sources** are written/created about, or in response to, the primary sources. They can include:

- textbooks and books
- research articles and academic journals
- websites and blogs
- news stories (such as articles, radio and video)
- film/television/game reviews
- documentaries
- podcasts or video essays
- social media.

#### Finding information

Ensure you carefully consider the source of your information, its reliability and how you will use the evidence to support your judgements. Traditional sources of information such as academic journals and books are useful starting points, but occasionally it can be difficult finding information when the chosen case is a recent or current phenomenon at the time of writing.

There are a number of ways you can approach searching online for audience participation data or production information. Secondary sources can often include statistics, or comments on the outcome of audiences participating with the 'case'. Institutions such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Screen Australia and Screen Queensland release publications about topics such as audience statistics or contexts of production. News articles and film reviews can also reveal information about audiences interacting with media, or critics' reactions.

Depending on your case choice, you can check primary sources for participation data. For instance, the number of views on YouTube, or number of downloads on app stores for a product. Steam, a digital distribution platform and website for video games, even shows back-to-back bar charts displaying the number of positive and negative reviews from over a particular time period.

## 13.5 ACTIVITIES

- Choose a selection of the top YouTubers that are labelled 'Creator on the Rise' by YouTube, or another measure of popularity such as the Top 20 most subscribed last year.  
**Analyse** the types of content they produce. Categorise the YouTubers in groups such as product review videos, vlogs, gaming videos, educational videos or prank videos. Count the number of YouTubers in each group.  
**Construct** a pie chart that shows the popularity of the different video types by comparing the number of YouTubers in each group.
- Construct** a timeline showing significant events in a recent media phenomenon such as *Pokémon Go* (2016). Include **additional information** about events and key dates such as product development, release dates and updates, gamer participation events, awards, and 'milestones' and significant changes in terms of number of users.
- Select a popular mobile/tablet digital game.  
**Explain** how audiences are participating with the product experience in addition to the game. Consider social media, websites, real-life events and so on.  
**Symbolise** the various avenues/options for participation in a diagram.  
**Appraise** whether the game experience is enriched by audience participation across platforms as well as the main game. **Make a judgement** about the worth of the participation experience to both audiences and the game makers.
- Select an example of VR storytelling. Respond in writing to the areas of investigation in the following table. Present your findings to the class.

EXPLAIN	ANALYSE	APPRAISE
<b>Explain</b> how technical and symbolic codes and conventions are used to tell the story through this platform. <b>Identify</b> and <b>explain</b> any opportunities for user interaction.	<b>Analyse</b> how the user experience of the story compares to traditional media options such as film and television. <b>Evaluate</b> the <b>strengths and limitations</b> of this method of storytelling.	<b>Appraise</b> the overall value of the storytelling experience for an audience. <b>Draw conclusions</b> about whether the story was enhanced for audiences through virtual reality technologies.

## Case study example

### *Doctor Who*: A case study of multi-platform storytelling

by Dr Cameron Cliff

*Doctor Who* is one of the longest-running story worlds in modern history. Lasting over 50 years and based around a television series broadcast in over 50 countries, it is the largest export and third highest merchandise seller of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) (Chapman, 2014, p. 56). This success is linked to a complex strategy of creating many interlinked stories across multiple platforms. This strategy, in turn, is influenced by the BBC's responsibilities as a public institution.

#### The impact of production context and available technology

*Doctor Who* may have the popularity and size of a Hollywood story world like *Star Wars* or *Star Trek*. However, it is also influenced by the BBC's position as a public institution. The BBC is guided by a set of guidelines known as the BBC Charter. When creating narratives, the BBC must benefit the public with stories that are entertaining, educating and culturally relevant (Department of Culture, 2006). 'Public benefit' refers to showing 'the most creative, high quality and distinctive output' and reflecting 'the United Kingdom, its culture and values to the world' (BBC, 2018). From 2005, the charter also charged the BBC with 'experimenting with new technology' (Department of Culture, 2006).

The chronology of *Doctor Who* (see weblink) shows three distinct periods in *Doctor Who*'s development that reflect the evolution of the BBC as an institution. These are: Classic Who (1962–1989), Hiatus Who (1989–2005) and Contemporary Who (2005–present). Each is influenced by available technology and the BBC's charter at that time.

From 1962 to 1989 (Classic Who), *Doctor Who* was made for a medium that was relatively new – television. It was created to fill a programming gap on Saturday afternoons between sports programming and talk shows (Chapman, 2014 p.46). The BBC also developed books, comics and movies that followed popular characters, such as the Daleks (BBC, 1966). However, these often contradicted the central narrative of the television series or were retellings of the television series. They did not represent true immersive extensions of the *Doctor Who* world (Perryman, 2008).

During the second period of *Doctor Who*'s history (1989–2005), the central television series was taken off air as its popularity waned with British audiences. However, new *Doctor Who* content was still released every month (Yarborough, 2015). The BBC was able to produce books, comics, a movie and an animated show as it experimented with the narrative future of the show and ongoing merchandising (Jones, 2013).

The success of different extensions and the emerging internet marketplace led to a return of the television series in 2005. This reboot was underscored by a significant change in the BBC's institutional strategy.

*Doctor Who* returned to television screens with a strategy to extend the world across multiple platforms (Yarborough, 2015). Since its reboot, *Doctor Who* has included websites, blogs, animated videos, books, comics and interactive television programming. Each platform introduces the new world of *Doctor Who* and expands the central narrative by adding characters, back-stories or methods of interaction.



13.6.1  
*Doctor Who*  
chronology

'How and where we can watch comedy, drama and entertainment has undergone a revolution. The programmes themselves have not. What's needed now is a creative revolution every bit as ambitious as the technical one we've seen.'

Jana Bennett, Director of BBC Television (2004) in Perryman, 2008.

#### Multiple tiers of engagement

The reboot of *Doctor Who* introduced new layers of interaction for contemporary audiences. When each layer of audience interaction in *Doctor Who* is examined and considered, it reveals a complex structure of interactive features aimed at sustaining audience engagement across different levels of involvement.



For those just casually interested in *Doctor Who*, there is a layer of passive interactive points. These include: the main television series, as well as two spin-offs for different age groups (*Torchwood* [2006–2011] and *The Sarah Jane Chronicles* [2007–2011]). It also includes an extra layer of immersion through books, comics and audio dramas to sustain audience interest. Within this passive layer, the BBC has also fulfilled their charter obligations by experimenting with new methods of engaging fans. Since 2005, they've been using connected television technology to provide documentary content and behind-the-scenes commentary on episodes. For example, before the launch of the episode 'Rose' in 2005, hundreds of thousands of people used this technology to view a web documentary called *The Doctor Who Years* (Core, 2015).

For those interested in a more active participation with the world of *Doctor Who*, the BBC also experimented with additional interactive content to sustain audience interest. Websites authored by fictional characters within *Doctor Who* have continued since the series' relaunch, providing immersive clues based on the show. Similarly, the BBC has even created 'real-world' narratives for the audience to interact with. *The Doctor Who Experience* was a unique story to which audiences could buy tickets when they visited what was a museum for *Doctor Who* props and sets. It gave hardcore fans an experience that was part-theme park ride and part-theatre show so they could fully immerse themselves in the story. It was so popular that since its closure in late 2017, there have even been reports of families cancelling trips to Wales (Knapman, 2017).

This experimentation hasn't always been successful. *Doctor Who* has continually failed to launch a successful spin-off game franchise. While some games such as *The Doctor Who Adventures* (2010) have been well received, every attempt at a high-budget game has failed. Most notably, *Doctor Who: The Eternity Clock* (2012) was critiqued as such a poor game that planned sequels for the game were scrapped almost immediately after its release (Reynolds & Nichols, 2013).

### Social impact and fandom

Multiple factors have led to the BBC, as a public institution, creating a sustained social and cultural impact with *Doctor Who*. These include the BBC's institutional obligations, the BBC's embrace of fans and the place of *Doctor Who* fans within the BBC.

Due to its institutional obligations, the BBC has increased the worth of *Doctor Who* beyond a traditional entertainment franchise, developing educational content such as coding apps and live shows in schools. Thousands of British schoolchildren learn to code with *Doctor Who* characters in *Doctor Who* learn-to-read apps. To date, the 2014 app *The Doctor and the Dalek* (2014) has been downloaded by over 100 000 android users alone (Google, n.d.) and now comes with classroom exercises and a full curriculum for teachers.

An embrace of fans and fan culture also salvaged the television show during the Hiatus period. The United States had only just come into contact with *Doctor Who* during the 1990s but many crucial episodes of the show had been lost. Hardcore fans, who had been recording and remixing episodes on VCR, scavenged television and radio episodes in order to provide missing content to the BBC (Jones, 2013). This led to a booming international audience that has continued to grow until the present day. Gallifrey One is one of the largest fan conventions in the world, with over 3200 paying members attending the Los Angeles convention in 2017 alone (FanCons, 2017).

Prior to the relaunch of *Doctor Who* in 2005, the BBC focused on demonstrating the worth of *Doctor Who* to existing fans. They provided documentaries, websites and historical content online and on television. This leveraged the nostalgia of older fans and brought forth a wave of new recruits through word of mouth (Chapman, 2014). As a result, more than 10 million viewers tuned in within Britain alone to watch the first episode of the new series (Sullivan, 2009).

Such is the status of *Doctor Who* fan culture in Britain that its influence has become a cycle of development. Early fans of *Doctor Who* are now the ones creating the modern multi-platform version of the show. During the Hiatus period the BBC supplemented low book budgets by publishing the best of fan books. One fan author, a young Russell T. Davies, would go on to become a successful creative embedded within the BBC. This was the same Davies who, along with a group of *Doctor Who* fans promoted to high places within the BBC, would be responsible for returning *Doctor Who* to its heights of success in the contemporary era (Davies & Cook, 2010).

### Conclusion

*Doctor Who* is a significant and successful multi-platform franchise that developed due to an embrace of fan culture and the BBC's position as a public institution. Cross-platform interaction sustained *Doctor Who*

during the Hiatus years and created a platform for success as the modern version launched in 2005. Through their multi-platform strategy, the BBC brings different levels of engagement to their audience today. Modern *Doctor Who* goes beyond a successful television series, helping the BBC to fulfil their obligations as a public institution. Not only has this created a popular franchise, but adherence to the BBC's charter has also resulted in significant social impact including educational, social, cultural and entertainment outcomes.

### 1500 words

#### References

- BBC (2018). Public Purposes: Inside the BBC. Retrieved January 30, 2018, from <http://www.bbc.co.uk/corporate2/insidethebbc/whoweare/publicpurposes>
- BBC (1966). *Audience Research Report: 'The Power of the Daleks.'* BBC Archive. BBC.
- BBC (1982). *Audience Research Report for 'Doctor Who' in 1982.* BBC Archive. BBC.
- Chapman, J (2014). Fifty Years in the TARDIS: The Historical Moments of Doctor Who. *Critical Studies in Television*, 9(1), 43–61.
- Core, TD (2015, January 1). Dalek annual. *Tardis.wikia.com*. Retrieved from [http://tardis.wikia.com/wiki/Dalek\\_annual](http://tardis.wikia.com/wiki/Dalek_annual)
- Davies, RT & Cook, B (2010). *The Writer's Tale*. London: BBC Books.
- Department of Culture, M and S (2006, October 1). Copy of Royal Charter for the continuance of the British Broadcasting Corporation. Cm 6925.
- FanCons. (2017). Gallifrey One 2017 Convention Information. Retrieved January 17, 2018, from [http://fancons.com/events/info.shtml/7315/Gallifrey\\_One\\_2017](http://fancons.com/events/info.shtml/7315/Gallifrey_One_2017)
- Google. (n.d.). The Doctor and the Dalek – Android Apps on Google Play. Retrieved January 13, 2018, from <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=uk.co.bbc.drwhocodinggame&hl=en>
- Johnson, C (2013). Doctor Who as Programme Brand BT – New Dimensions of Doctor Who. In *New Dimensions of Doctor Who*. I.B.Tauris&Co Ltd.
- Jones, CO (2013). Life in Hiatus: new Doctor Who Fans, 1989–2005. In P. Booth (Ed.), *Fan Phenomena Doctor Who*. Bristol: Intellect Books.
- Knapman, J (2017). Losing the Doctor Who Experience is a sad day for Cardiff and not just the fans – Joshua Knapman – Wales Online. Retrieved January 17, 2018, from <http://www.walesonline.co.uk/whats-on/arts-culture-news/losing-doctor-who-experience-sad-13590644>
- Perryman, N (2008). Doctor Who and the Convergence of Media: A Case Study in 'Transmedia Storytelling'. *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, 14(21), 16.
- Reynolds, M & Nichols, S (2013). 'Doctor Who: The Eternity Clock' planned sequels cancelled by BBC. Retrieved from <http://www.digitalspy.co.uk/displayarticle.php?id=468711>
- Sullivan, S (2009). A Brief History of Time (Travel): Rose. Retrieved January 17, 2018, from <http://www.shannonsullivan.com/drwho/serials/2005a.html>
- Yarbrough, B (2015, February 10). How 'Doctor Who' conquered the TV universe. *San Gabriel Valley Tribune*.

Source: With permission Dr Cameron Cliff