



Transmedia Futures

Part 1:

Digital Participation



Today...

- Digital media as transmedia participatory culture
 - The Internet Age and participatory culture
 - Producer as audience/audience as producer
 - Example: Lady Gaga
- DVDs as participatory transmedia storytelling
- Key question:
 - Is digital media a tool for fans or for industry?

Learning Outcomes

- Define the concept of participatory culture
- Analyse how digital media engages audiences
- Identify the impact(s) of digital media on the workings of contemporary transmedia culture

The shift to participation...

- Thus far we have mostly discussed transmedia storytelling in terms of ‘official texts’
- However, ‘transmedia storytelling should be considered in terms of the following formula:
- **‘Media Industry (Official) + Collaborative Culture (Fandom)’**
 - Scolari, Bertetti and Freeman (2014: 3)

Stop and think...

- How, *exactly*, is the Internet different to other, older media forms?
 - How does the internet change the form of media?
 - How does the internet change workings of the media industries?
 - How does the internet change how audiences engage with media?

So, the internet...

- Makes media
 - more interactive
 - more easily consumable/sharable
- Makes media audiences
 - more active
 - more participatory
- Makes media industries
 - more networked
 - less visible?

‘Convergence therefore must be understood as both a top-down corporate-driven process and a bottom-up consumer-driven process.’

- Henry Jenkins, 2006

Participatory Culture

- User-generated content is the internet's primary source of content production and information
- 'Participation can be seen as the defining characteristic of the internet in terms of its hyperlinked, interactive and networked infrastructure and digital culture.' (Deuze, 2005)
- By privileging an active online audience, media forge stronger relationships with audiences. There may well exist a level of transparency and dialogue

Content as a reward for participating



Participatory Culture

- Consumers of media become producers of media
- ‘Producer-consumer model’; ‘prosumers’ (Toffler, 1980)
- ‘If the process of telling stories, making meaning and sharing mediated experiences becomes more participatory and collaborative, it becomes crucial to understand the roles of the producer and the consumer as (to some extent) interchangeable.’ (Deuze, 2005)

So then...

- KEY POINT #1:

Internet forges a closer relationship between audience and media content

- KEY POINT #2:

Audiences of media become producers of media

So what does this mean for transmedia culture?

Digital media has changed things!

- Social media:
 - Allows producers to communicate directly with fans
 - Makes producers more accessible to audiences
 - Blurs the distinction between ‘producer’ and ‘fan’
 - Makes promotion feel less like promotion (?)

Transmedia celebrities in the age of media convergence



Celebrity constructed across media



FILM

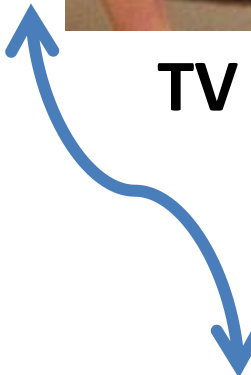


MAGAZINES

TV



SOCIAL MEDIA



The celebrity as transmedia

“The celebrity is a very useful way of connecting ... transmedia processes” (Turner, 2004, p.33)

“The mediated intertextuality of celebrity production speaks specifically to the developing mechanisms of convergence culture that characterise contemporary media use” (Jenkins, 2006).

What is 'celebrity'?

- 'The celebrity is a 'human pseudo event', fabricated for the media and evaluated in terms of the scale and effectiveness of their media visibility (Boorstein)
- 'Celebrity is not a property of specific individuals. Rather, it is constituted discursively, by the way in which the individual is represented' (Turner)
- 'Celebrity, then, is overwhelmingly a product of media representation; understanding it demands giving close attention to the representational repertoires and patterns employed in this discursive regime' (Turner)

So then...

- Let's analyse the following Twitter pages!
- How is the celebrity being constructed discursively and representationally here:
 - What type of language do they use?
 - What 'stories' from other media forms are being extended and expanded across platforms?
 - What's the role of the audience here?
- What initial conclusions might we make about the role of social media as a transmedia tool?



TWEETS 269 FOLLOWING 58 FOLLOWERS 4.09M FAVORITES 733

Follow

Robert Downey Jr ✓

@RobertDowneyJr

You know who I am.

Joined June 2009

136 Photos and videos

Tweets Tweets & replies Photos & videos

Robert Downey Jr @RobertDowneyJr · 11h

Dear Mother Nature,

Thank you for 50 years of loving tolerance...

Don't miss any updates from **Robert Downey Jr**

Full name

Email

Password



Robert Downey Jr @RobertDowneyJr · 18h

BIG NEWS. If we reach \$2m by midnight Mon, donors get an **EXCLUSIVE CLIP** of @Avengers #AgeofUltron on Tues. **GIVE HERE:** bit.ly/1F9I5IE

↩️ ↻️ 1.9K ★ 4K ⋮

View photo



Robert Downey Jr @RobertDowneyJr · Apr 1

Anyone can be a super hero. Please donate here to help the kids of Julia's House—> bit.ly/1MwE8XO

Robert Downey Jr



1:22

↩️ ↻️ 2.6K ★ 4.9K ⋮

View more photos and videos



Robert Downey Jr @RobertDowneyJr · Mar 30

Donations this wk could also win tix to **LONDON PREMIERE** of @Avengers #AgeofUltron! **ENTER HERE:** bit.ly/1CV6STY



↩️ ↻️ 2.4K ★ 5.4K ⋮

View more photos and videos



TWEETS 6,469 FOLLOWING 133K FOLLOWERS 45.4M FAVORITES 527

Follow

Lady Gaga @ladygaga

Joined March 2008

793 Photos and videos



Tweets Tweets & replies Photos & videos

Lady Gaga @ladygaga · Sep 22
Pinned Tweet
'CHEEK TO CHEEK' is #1 on the WORLDWIDE iTunes album chart! BUY HERE: smarturl.it/CheekToCheek

13K 14K

Lady Gaga @ladygaga · Apr 2
I love my grandma ❤️ so much. She had a pacemaker put in yesterday, she's already up and walking no... [instagram.com/p/0-l3qTJFBz/](https://www.instagram.com/p/0-l3qTJFBz/)

4K 8.1K

Lady Gaga @ladygaga · Apr 1
gotcha . April Fools! 🐱💋💋

13K 20K

Lady Gaga @ladygaga · Apr 1
I'm quitting pop music. 💋

21K 28K

Don't miss any updates from Lady Gaga

Full name

Email

Password

Sign up for Twitter

Trends · Change

- #HTCOneLife
- 📌 Promoted by HTC UK
- #MUNAVL
- #AlfieDeyesTwitterMeetup
- Andy King
- Joe Cole
- #AFCvLFC
- #RuinAMovieWithHitler
- Rooney
- #FrenchGate
- George Ford

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Lady Gaga @ladygaga · Mar 28
For my bday donate: gaga.crowdrise.com and support the wellness of youth. 10 ppl will receive a personal call from me to say thank u ❤️!

6.7K 11K

Lady Gaga @ladygaga · Mar 28
Instead of sending presents on my Bday it would truly mean the world if you made a simple donation to @BTWFoundation gaga.crowdrise.com

6.6K 10K

Lady Gaga @ladygaga · Mar 28
Thanku to so many fans and people all over the world for the beautiful birthday wishes! Please don't send me any gifts, your love is enough!

13K 19K

Lady Gaga @ladygaga · Mar 31
Today is the final day to donate for a chance to win a call from me! Thanks for helping building a kinder world :) gaga.crowdrise.com

3.4K 6.2K

Lady Gaga @ladygaga · Mar 31
Thank u to everyone who donated for my @BTWFoundation bday fundraiser! gaga.crowdrise.com

2.9K 5.3K

Lady Gaga @ladygaga · Mar 31
Follow me! @ladygaga on Instragram and I'll update you with all my latest puppy fashuns and outings w... [instagram.com/p/06H_gELZq/](https://www.instagram.com/p/06H_gELZq/)

3.4K 5.9K

Lady Gaga

- ‘Controlling and crafting one’s myth is hardly new ... what’s remarkable about Lady Gaga is she’s the first star born in and of the Internet Age to master this art.’ (Maureen Callaghan)
- In other words, Lady Gaga’s celebrity image is a product of the Internet’s participatory sprawl!

Participation with fans

- ‘Perception of proximity’ (Beer, 2008)
- Removes mediation of traditional media
- Makes audiences feel more involved
- Harks back to traditions of letter-writing



Lady Gaga @ladygaga · Mar 31

Thank u to everyone who donated for my @BTWFoundation bday fundraiser! gaga.crowdrise.com



2.9K



5.3K



Social media as humanising celebrity

- ‘Gaga’s skilled use of social-media platforms delivers some fans a sense of closeness and ultimately cements her authenticity as a ‘genuine person’ and ‘good citizen’” (Bennett, 2014)
- Abolishes distinctions between public/private



Lady Gaga @ladygaga · Apr 2

I love my grandma ❤️ so much. She had a pacemaker put in yesterday, she's already up and walking no... [instagram.com/p/0-I3qTJFBz/](https://www.instagram.com/p/0-I3qTJFBz/)



4K



8.1K



Producer as audience... or is it audience as producer?

- Social media is a shift in the relationship and distinction between producers and audiences



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MMY1br5e1IA>

Producer as audience... or is it audience as producer?

- Social media blends things together!
 - It creates celebrities that are media producers and amateur users, both stars *and* personalities, both extraordinary talents *and* ordinary fans
 - In other words, it creates a transmedia culture that brings (more) equal balance between the industry and the audience, between those creating the stories and those consuming them

What does this mean for fiction?

- How does participatory culture manifest as fictional storytelling in film?
- What does this digital blending of media and producer/audience functions mean for film?
- How does this enhance transmedia storytelling?

Case study: DVDs and Blu-Rays



- ‘Transmedia storytelling lures the audience into buying more and more stuff – today, DVDs; tomorrow, who knows what?’ (Kring)
- DVDs first sold as offering more film content: ‘Choose from features, like director’s notes, behind the scenes footage, trailers, and more’
- DVDs as media convergence: bringing together multiple pieces of media content – text, audio, comics, video, etc. – within the same disc format

DVDs as transmedia storytelling

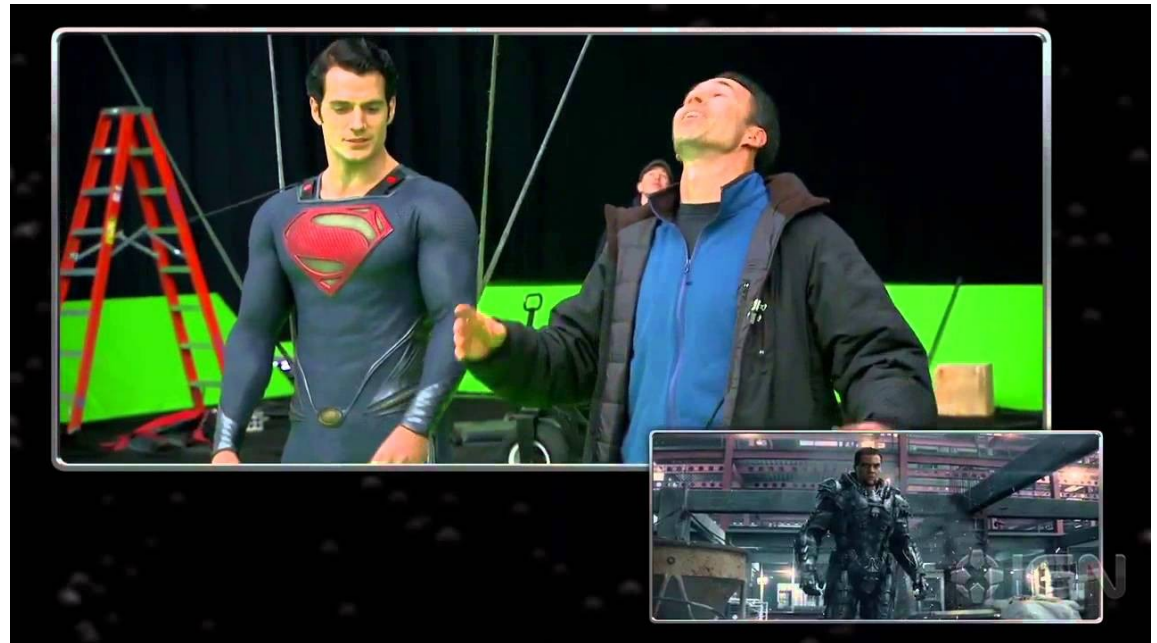
- Transmedia storytelling as adding value to DVDs as products worth purchasing
- Marvel One-Shots – ‘A Funny Thing Happened On The Way to Thor’s Hammer’
 - Bridges the gap between *Iron Man 2* (2010) and *Thor* (2011), released on the *Captain America: The First Avenger* DVD (2011)

<https://vimeo.com/140163807>



Additional (transmedia) information buried within the DVD disc

- DVDs as providing added educational content:
- ‘Journey of Discovery: Creating *Man of Steel*’



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B7GShUYBqNo>

Additional (transmedia) story content buried within the DVD disc

- DVDs as providing further story content
- ‘Extraction Mode’ – *Inception* (2010)
- Convergence of film and comic books?



Conceptual question...

- Does this represent 'transmedia' – i.e. telling stories across media and encouraging audiences to migrate across platforms...
- Or does this represent 'multi-media' – i.e. a complete blurring of what were once separate media forms into single sites of storytelling?
- Or better still: Is this now simply 'media'?

A question worth debating?

- Is digital media really for the benefit of audiences: the participatory alternative to the mass media?
- Or is digital media for the benefit of media industries: another site of commercial construction (a digitised form of promotion designed to produce more media and sell more media products)?

What to take away from today...

- Digital media as interactive transmedia culture:
 - Producers can now speak directly and immediately to their audience, without the filters of the traditional mass media
 - The internet brings an abolishment of the former distinctions between public/private and producer/audience
 - Thus making transmedia content a more participatory site
- This has possible implications for the future:
 - Will we soon be able to distinguish between media?
 - How much power will producers give to audiences?

What's coming up...?

- Lecture 6:

'Transmedia Futures Part 2: Global Perspectives'