Lecture 6

Transmedia Futures Part 2:

Transnational and Global Perspectives

Today…

- Global (and local perspectives)
- Transnational TV formats and the global audience
  - Transmedia in the UK right now
  - Preference for transmedia audiences but global content
- Global transmedia
  - International differences
  - Socio-political functions

Local roles for transmedia in the UK

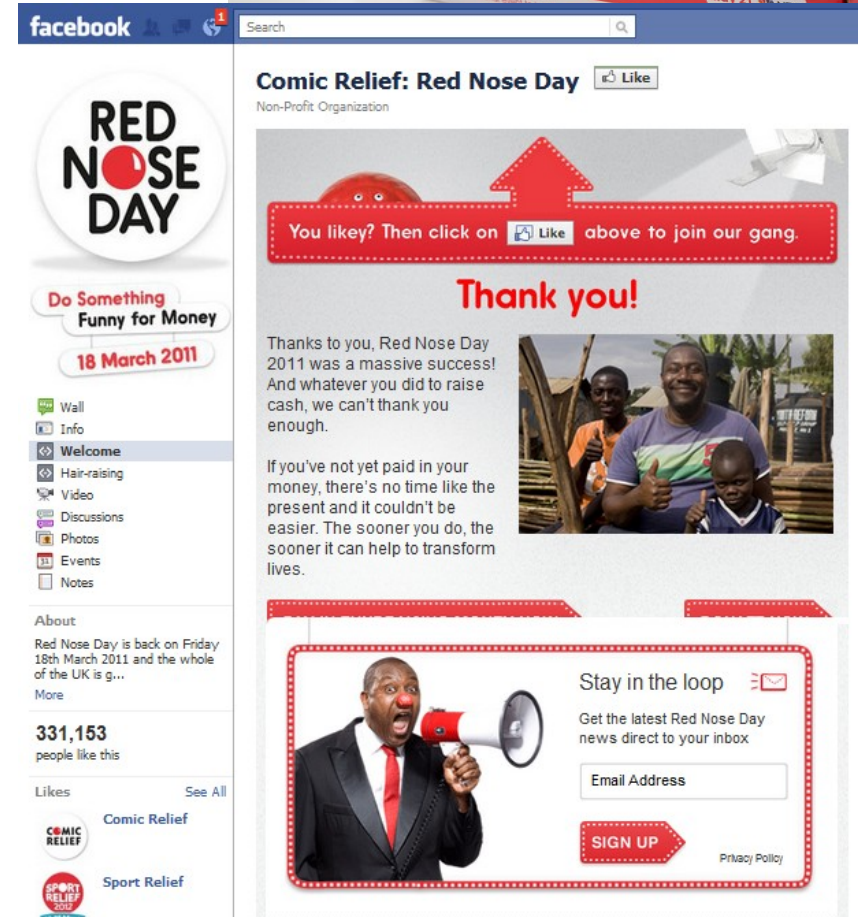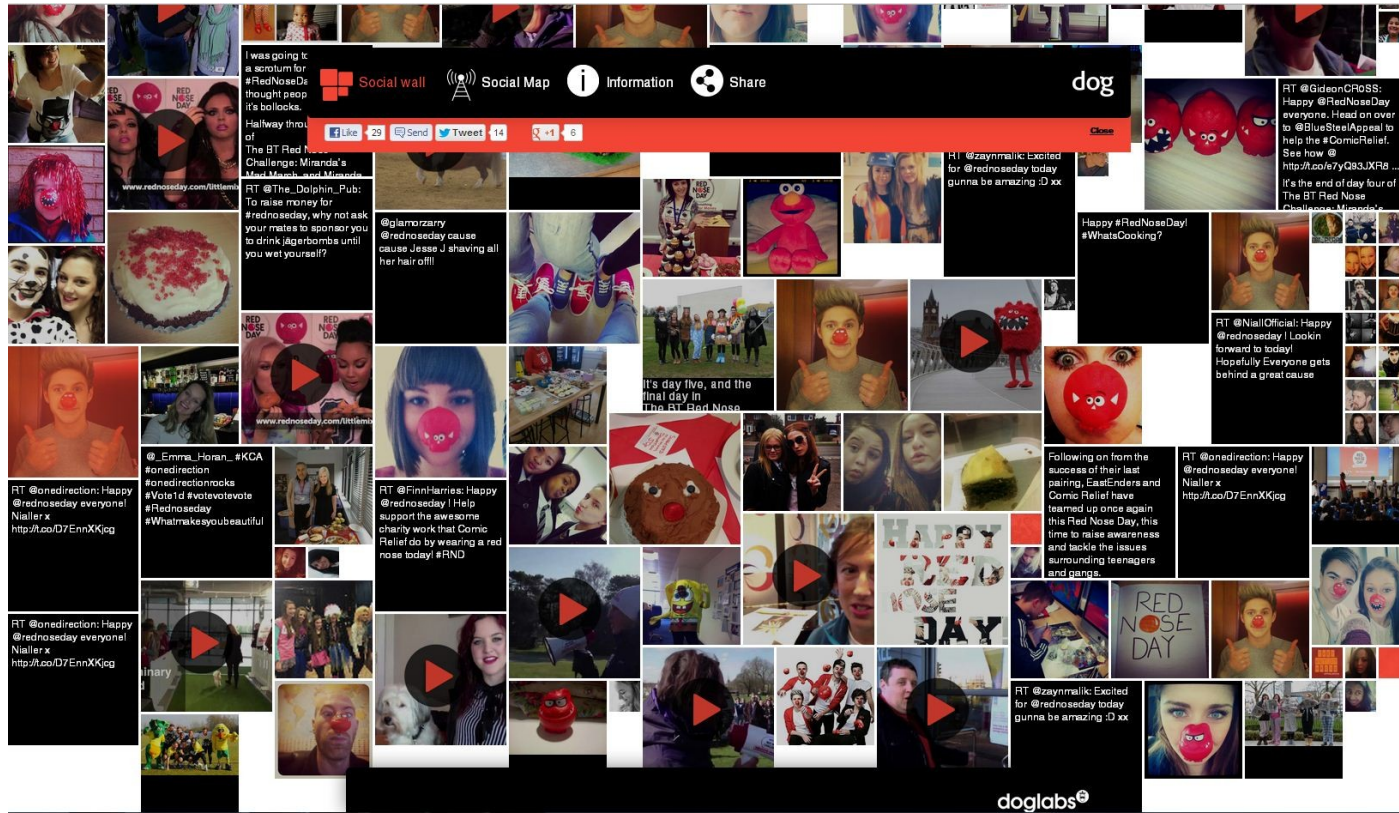Transmedia as 'informing, educating and entertaining' (Grainge, 2015)
- BBC's coverage of the London 2012 Olympic Games
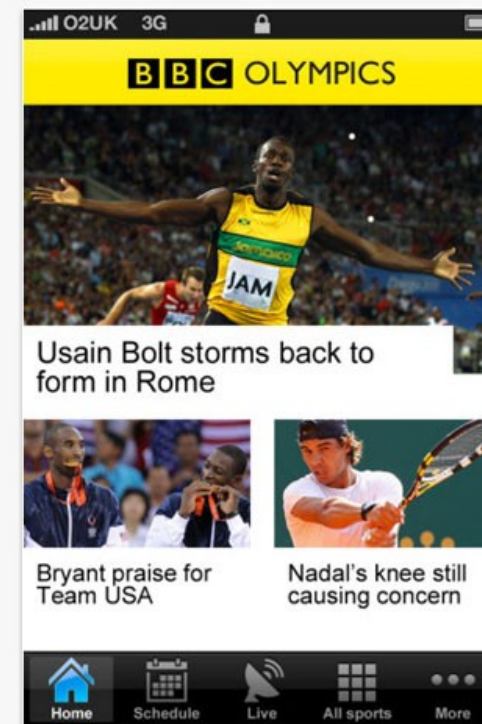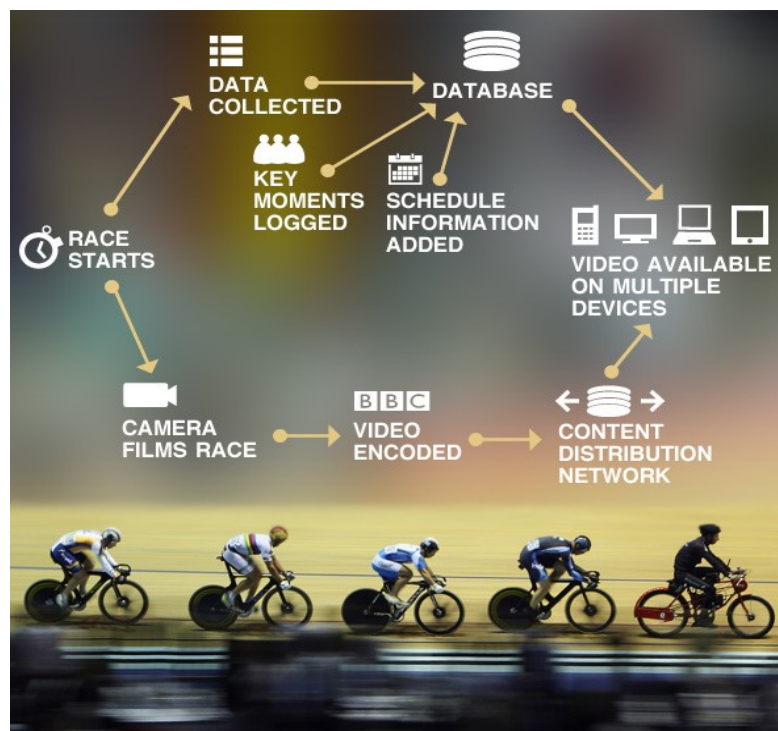
Local roles for transmedia in the

Transmedia as national charity campaign

- BBC's coverage of Red Nose Day

Local challenges for transmedia… in the UK

- "Transmedia storytelling has struggled to find itself a clear foothold in the UK … transmedia [storytelling] may have seen some recent successes, but the evidence here suggests that the multi-platform world is still largely at the stage of "porting" projects across borders rather than developing new models where industry cooperation and collaboration is more key." (Johnston, 2013)

Local challenges for transmedia… in the UK/US

- "Most of the UK/US-based transmedia projects today are funded through promotional and marketing funds." (Brian Clark, 2013)

- Raises questions (and problems!) in terms of value, relevance, not to mention salaries!

Local challenges for transmedia… in the UK

- Transmedia… and promotional and marketing funds in the UK

- Digitization, gamification, involved fans… highly <u>creative</u> strategy!

http://www.redbeecreative.tv/work/bbc-one-sherlock-lives
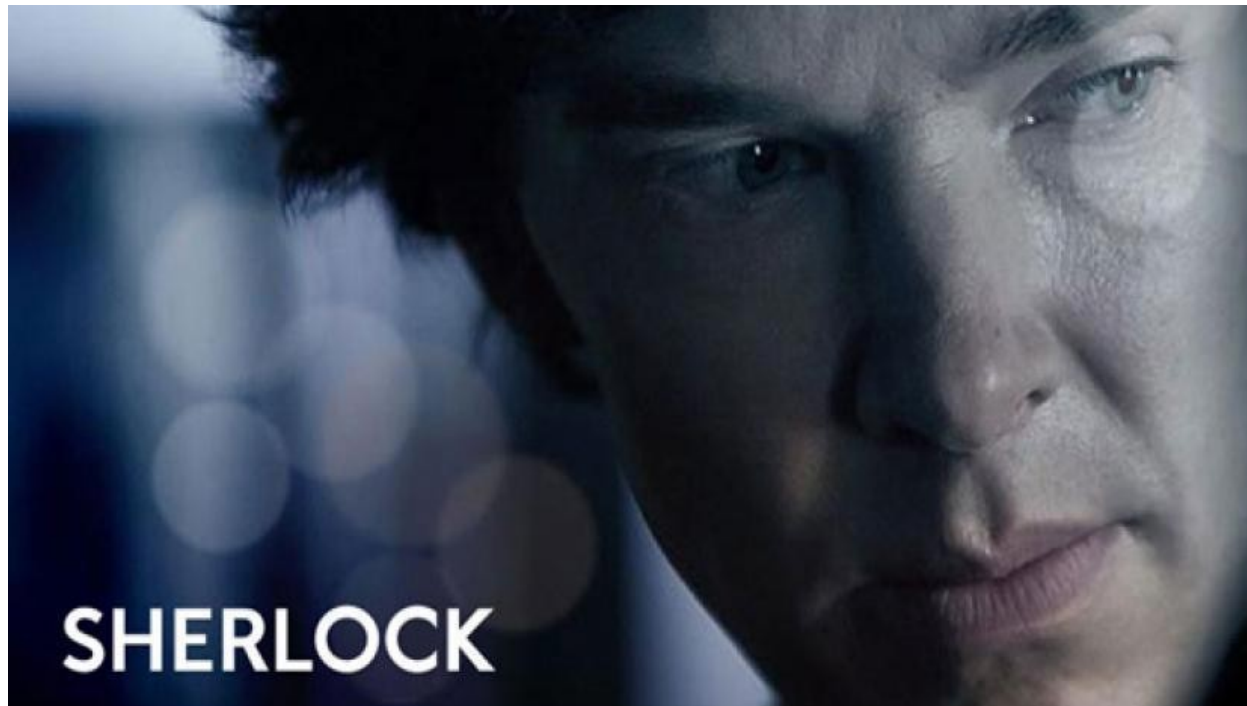
Local challenges for transmedia… in the UK

The 'marginalization' of transmedia stories online:

- *Doctor Who* TV episodes averaged 6.47 million to 8.44 million (2013)
- '*The Night of the Doctor*' online episode watched by 2.5 million during its entire week available online (2013)
- So, is online content the <u>marginal</u> home of transmedia stories in the UK?
  - *Doctor Who* showrunner Steven Moffat: "When will we stop calling [online episodes] 'webisodes' or 'prequels' or 'promos' or 'minisodes' or whatever else. When will we just start calling them '*Doctor Who*'?" (2014)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EobSTIc-ywA

Uncertainties over transmedia's future…?

- 'There is someone out there who will no doubt figure out how to relate the Internet as a tool of narrative beyond my old-fashioned notions. But I think whoever cracks that is not going to be someone who has made it big in television or film. It is going to be someone we just do not know about yet…'
- Joss Whedon (2014)

  - **Industrialisation to consumer culture to government to conglomeration to digital convergence to… *Where next???***

And so, looking from an industry perspective…

We are entering a phase (in the UK) where the model is often less about extending content across the borders of media and countries…

And more about, at best, the imagination of creative digital media agencies, and, at worst, the **repurposing** of content across countries

TRANSNATIONALISM IN TELEVISION FORMATS:

TV's greatest opportunity is also its greatest challenge at the moment
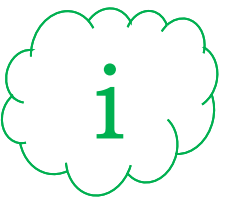
So then…

1. Rise of convergence culture and digital spread of media has led to a proliferation of media content and continues to grow and grow

2. This transmedia culture creates more demand on audiences

3. Because of this proliferation of content, the media landscape is more competitive than ever before, and as a result…

4. …Producers are looking for global content that travels easily and cuts through this crowded and over-proliferated media landscape
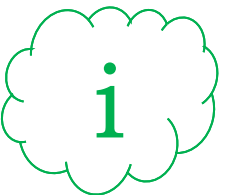
Case study: Narcos

- About drug kingpin Pablo Escabar
- Available in dual languages
- Shot in dual locations
- Hired film directors – 'filmic'
- Global social issues – drugs

A global audience by design
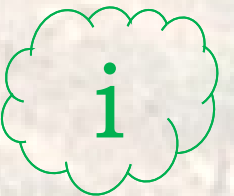
Drama & entertainment travel the best

" We are building real momentum as we continue to invest in a strong and healthy creative pipeline, focusing specifically on genres that return and travel, namely drama, entertainment and factual entertainment. "

ITV plc Annual Report and Accounts
for the year ended 31 December 2014
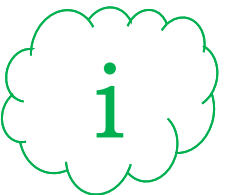
Rooted in universal truths or topical issues
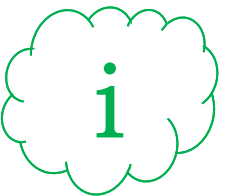
Formats with broad appeal embedded
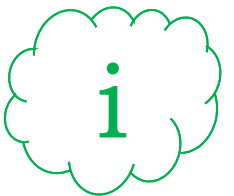
Formats which can be made to feel local
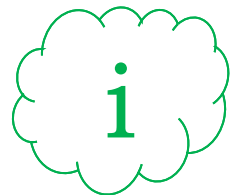
The importance of audience research

"The show is as much for adults as it is for children"

■ Strongly agree ■ Tend to agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Tend to disagree ■ Strongly disagree

Country	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree
All People	24%	42%	23%	8%	2%
United Kingdom	37%	43%	14%	4%	2%
United States	34%	41%	17%	6%	2%
Australia	32%	47%	15%	5%	1%
Mexico	21%	36%	30%	9%	4%
Brazil	21%	38%	31%	7%	4%
Germany	16%	37%	28%	15%	4%
South Korea	12%	50%	30%	7%	1%
Russia	19%	46%	21%	11%	3%

27%

Germany   UK
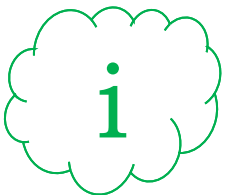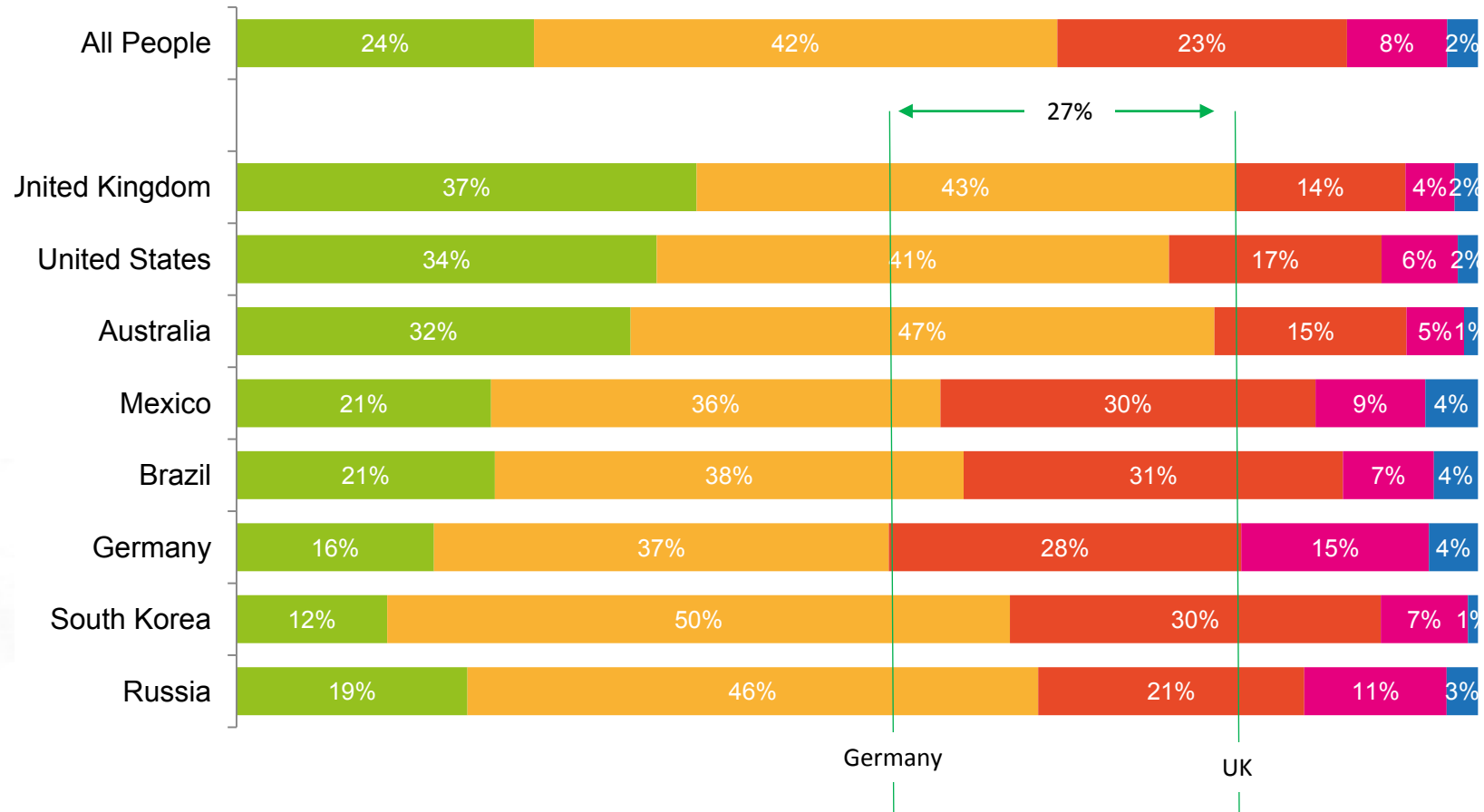
The importance of audience research

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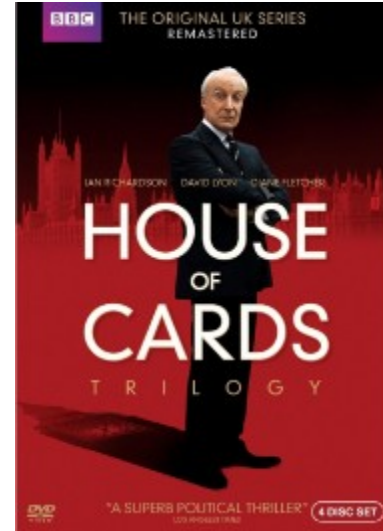
The Social Network very
popular in the US

Kevin Spacey
very popular globally

Well-rated British
drama

3m boost to subscriber base
+
First Emmy win for a non-
broadcast series

Hollywood actor/director
billing: for fans of 'Se7en'

High crossover
between viewers
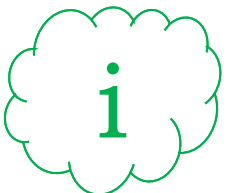
Shows that are made for local audiences, but work very well abroad
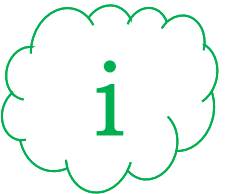
Shows from abroad that haven't worked as well in UK

So You Think You Can Dance

Rising Star

Married At First Sight

Shows from UK that have not worked as well abroad

The Inbetweeners

Gavin & Stacey

Skins
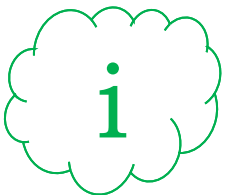
Shows that continue to have a global market after they've ended in the UK
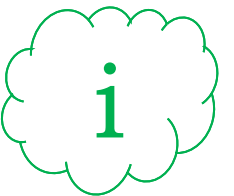
Summary so far…

- Transnational formats are sometimes seen as 'easier' to produce and to maintain than transmedia stories, at least by some media companies in the UK

- The ideal is when a global appeal is 'baked in' to the idea from the start

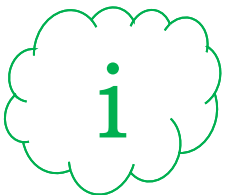- There is greater efficiency and more likelihood of success in embedding global appeal from the start through formats that appeal to lots of different audiences or can be made local, but are rooted in a universal truth or topical subject

- But it is not always an exact science – there is also skill in recognising where an idea might stretch transnationally, even if it has not work in its original country

Thinking about transmedia globally?

- What does it mean to understand transmedia NOT as a product of US convergences or US/UK industrial manufacturing models?

- Is transmedia about more than monetizing media products?

- If transmedia is about participation and is a form of communication, then what are the potentials of transmedia around the world?

- How are other cultures and communities making use of transmedia?

- And can we define transmedia as simply 'one' phenomenon – or is it too many things, with too many functions, to pin down concisely?
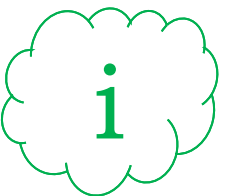
Transmedia's many variations…?

- "International differences are obscured by the generality of the term 'convergence culture', and it can be helpful to consider convergence 'cultures' in the plural."
- Hay and Couldry (2011)
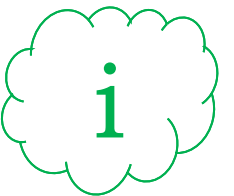
# Transmedia differences around the globe

- Franchising and participatory/digital storytelling

- Marketing and brand development

- Digital space for virtual reality games

- Media tool for religious radicalisation

- Creative tool for documentary filmmakers

- Political/social activism communication

- Construction source for re-building communities

The Transmedia Earth Network
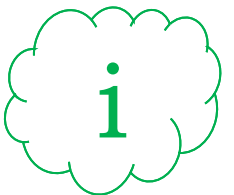*(Freeman & Proctor)*
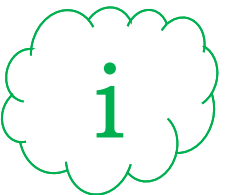
Transmedia as online documentary
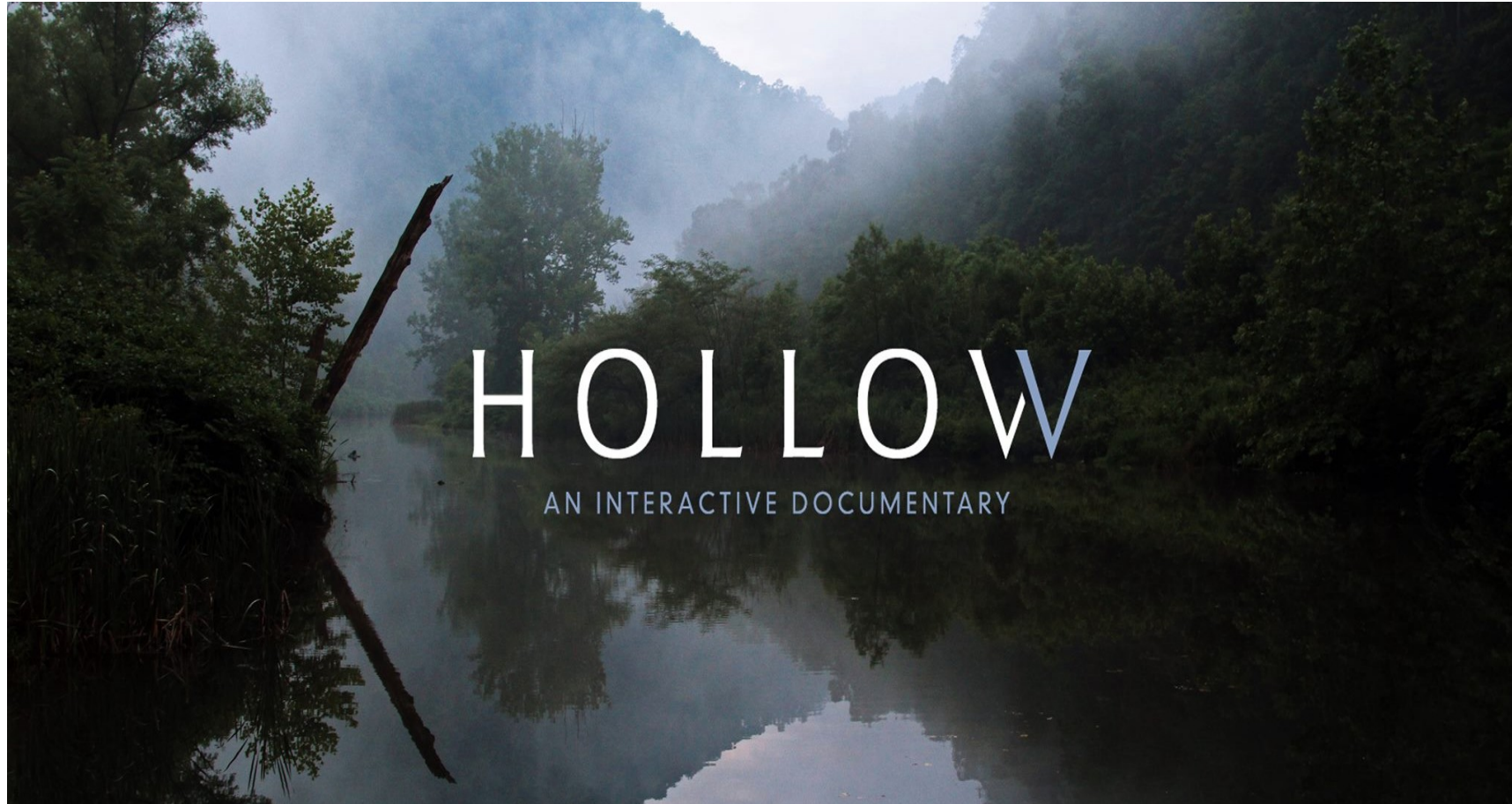
Hollow:

- Looks at how natural disaster in a small town impacted people
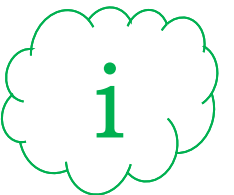 - Websites
  - Online game
  - Social media

Transmedia as online documentary

High Rise:

- Examines impact of urban living on Western society

- Looked at class, age and religion
 - Website
  - Social media
  - YouTube

Transmedia as memory-making

- "The project is about preserving the memory of the population and seeks recognition of the settlers, victims of internal displacement by generators of violence (criminal gangs)."

- Camilo Tamayo Gomez, EAFIT University (2015)
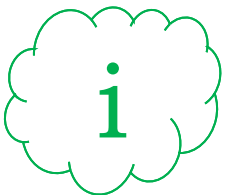
Transmedia as reconciliation

- "I believe that transmedia in Colombia can contribute to creating processes of memory, recognition and solidarity for the victims of the Colombian armed conflict. I think that using and developing transmedia with local communities can be the clue to starting real processes of reconciliation in our country."

- Student enrolled on MA in Transmedia Communication at EAFIT University (2015)
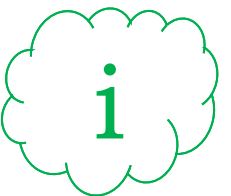
What to take away from today…

- Transmedia and convergence cultures have led to a proliferated and crowded media landscape with seemingly endless content

- Global formats that travel are seen as the solution because it is cheaper and easier (with less perceived risk)… in the UK

- Thinking internationally, **"transmedia is always an important strategy for generating impact on the public sphere…"**
  - Economically?
  - Promotionally?
  - Narratively?
  - Culturally?
  - Socially?
  - Politically?
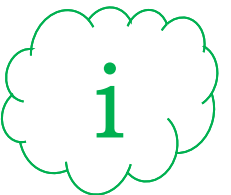
Thank you

m.freeman@bathspa.ac.uk