University of Southampton

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Web Science

Revealing Structures in Transmedia Storytelling for the Purposes of Analysis and Classification

by

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Abstract

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Transmedia storytelling involves telling a story using multiple distinct media. The remit of stories that fall under this broad definition is vast, resulting in many words used to describe different categories of transmedia storytelling. There are two problems that arise from this. Firstly, there is a lack of critical tools that are able to be applied to all of the different manifestations of transmedia storytelling, disabling us from comparing different experiences using common language. Secondly, the ad-hoc categories used such as franchises, Alternate Reality Games and escape rooms are often too broad and not useful to contextualise transmedia research. The ability to use a tool to differentiate between different categories, group experiences together and apply relevant theories within these groups is a challenge that has not yet been accomplished. In this thesis, I have presented a model for describing structural features of transmedia stories (MOTS). I have analysed eight transmedia stories using this model, producing visualisations that show the high-level structure of each. I have also explored how this model can be used to extract metrics from experiences that can be used as the basis for classification, and have extracted the metrics of fifty experiences. I use a statistical clustering technique known as K-Means to process these metrics to reveal fourteen distinct categories. I explicate these categories and demonstrate how this classification is useful by referring to literature in the field by applying and updating theories in light of the categories found. The process has made clear that no model or classification is correct or empirical, but instead unique in their ability to produce results that are useful depending on the features of transmedia storytelling that are focused on.

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I declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

I confirm that:

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3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
7. Parts of this work have been published as:

The Structure of Transmedia Storytelling: A Case Study of 19 Reinos (2017) [1]
A Model for Describing Alternate Reality Games (2018) [2]
Classifying Multiplayer Hybrid Games to Identify Diverse Player Participation (2019) [3]
Structural Patterns for Transmedia Storytelling (2020) [4]

Signature: ..... Date: 14/12/2021

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Definitions and Abbreviations

MOTS: Model for Ordering Transmedia Stories

ARG: Alternate Reality Game

TV: Television

MMORPG: Massively Multiple Online Role Playing Game

Chapter 1 Introduction

> "Most film critics frankly haven't been willing to make the effort to "get" this franchise because they are stuck within a mono-media rather than a trans-media paradigm–and thus, the second two films walk away with a row of Gentleman's Bs. They can see something new is going on here but they really don't know what to make of it." *Henry Jenkins* [5]

In 1999, a science-fiction action film called *The Matrix* (Warner Bros., 1999) was released. Written and directed by the Wachowskis, the film was a box office success and quickly became a cult classic, praised for its philosophical undertones and dystopian theme. The film, set in the distant future, is about human-made artificial intelligence (AI) that has usurped the human race as the dominant species on Earth. As a way to harvest thermal energy, the AI keep human slaves that are plugged into a machine, unaware of the real world. Instead, they are connected to an extremely life-like simulation, called the Matrix, that simulates life in the 1990s. Humans that survived in the real world who are armed with the technological ability to connect to the Matrix, seek "the one", a prophesized individual with incredible abilities that they hope can destroy the AI and bring about their salvation.

The film ends on a cliff-hanger, with the AI and the Matrix still in power and fully functional. Subsequent films complete the trilogy, with *The Matrix Reloaded* (Warner Bros., 2003) and *The Matrix Revolutions* (Warner Bros., 2003) appearing on the big screen four years after the original, providing a conclusion to the issues presented in the first film. Many film critics were not nearly as impressed with the last two films as they were the first. To many audience members however, these films were simply another lens into the huge fictional world of *The Matrix*, a world that they had been following for years prior to these final releases, that began back in 1999.

Beginning soon after the release of the first film, The Wachowskis burst their story world out beyond the film onto various media channels that contributed and allowed multiple points of entry to the fictional world. Web content provided a history of the "real world" survivors and what their lives were like, comic books explored the lives of different characters, console games allowed the audience to play as characters from the film and massively multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPG) afforded players the opportunity to create their own characters inside the world of *The Matrix* and have an impact on the fictional world.

1.1 Transmedia Storytelling

The Matrix is an example of transmedia storytelling. This term, popularized by the media theorist Henry Jenkins, was defined in 2007:

> "Transmedia storytelling represents a process where integral elements of a fiction get dispersed systematically across multiple delivery channels for the purpose of creating a unified and coordinated entertainment experience. Ideally, each medium makes its own unique contribution to the unfolding story" [6]

As Marie-Laure Ryan argues, "it is tempting to regard transmedial storytelling as something radically new and revolutionary if not as *the* narrative form of the future" [7]. But storytellers have been telling stories transmedially for thousands of years, such as Christians spreading the word of God through books, tapestries, artwork, stained glass and architecture [8]. The same can be said for Greek mythology, that used sculpture, drama, architecture and oral legend passed down the generations to disseminate stories about various gods. Ryan argues such treatment is "typically reserved for those narratives that are considered foundational for the identity of a group" [7], perhaps emerging in the present day in the form of *The Matrix*, S*tar Wars* and *Lord of the Rings*, where fan culture thrives.

Although it is the case today that much focus is given to mono-medium studies of storytelling, transmedia storytelling is not ignored by theorists working in mono-medium focused fields. Different words are used to describe what is seen to be an extension of their respective disciplines. Games theorist Marcus Montola borrows the concept of the abstract magic circle of play [9] that separates a game world from reality, and describes the extension or departure from it as "pervasive games" [10]. Film theorist Sarah Atkinson studies content that goes "beyond the screen" of a film [11]. Narrative theorist Jill Walker defines "the emerging form of distributed narratives" as narratives that "can't be experienced in a single session or in a single space" [12]. Museum researcher Alan Levine recognises "Web Storytelling" as a multi-platform tool for museums to communicate with audiences [13]. Beyond this way of thinking, Robert Pratten argues that transmedia storytelling is a gestalt design philosophy that goes beyond a television show or film that has "thrown up a website", to a television show whose story works its way onto a website or a game [14]. This last definition removes the mono-medium approach that as Christy Dena argues, has obscured the study of transmedia practice "because investigations have been specific to certain industries, artistic sectors and forms" [15]. It is however, important not to throw out the theory that has been developed by these fields, but to integrate them together so that they can be applied across disciplines and to a variety of experiences.

The Matrix and all its properties is considered to be a transmedia franchise [16] and is just one example of storytelling that is not consumed via mono media. The second screen experience such as the home video release of *Prometheus* (20th Century Fox, 2012) included an app that synced with the film, periodically pausing the film to show additional content on the mobile phone screen in the form of documents, images, videos and sound. Social benefit storytelling such as *Conspiracy for Good* (Tim Kring, 2010), invited people from around the world to aid a fictitious character's journey to take down a corrupt company. Videogames such as the first-person multiplayer shooter game *Overwatch* (Blizzard Entertainment, 2016) tell their stories not only in the games themselves, but in videos, comics and websites outside the games. Escape rooms such as *Defenders of the Triforce* (Nintendo, 2017) use physical objects, themed rooms, audio, actors, videos, documents and images to tell a story and facilitate role-playing. Experiences like *Cyber Warfare* (Al Jazeera, 2016) provide the audience with a single-player, self-contained "interactive docu-drama" that tell their stories through a progression of multiple media channels. The aptly named Alternate Reality Game (ARG), popularly used as additional content to television shows and films, disperses the story in a scavenger-like adventure that sees hundreds of thousands of participants hunt down clues that reveal the story, such as *Cloverfield* (Paramount Pictures, 2008) that began its story using Web technologies, apps, physical objects and live events before providing the rest of the story in the film. MMORPGs augment the real world and use social media, websites, videos and live events to enable role-playing as in *19 Reinos* (HBO, 2016), that saw players consume backstory in the form of videos, battle each other on Twitter, develop their characters on Facebook and meet characters portrayed by actors in live events.

What has just been described is, to some, an example of the various ways transmedia storytelling manifests itself. I reference some of these categories throughout this thesis, referring to them as "ad-hoc categories" of transmedia storytelling. Some of these ad-hoc categories have well defined tropes associated with them, but largely, names have been invented to describe experiences that do not fit neatly into an existing type such as docu-drama, pervasive storytelling, and ubiquitous social storytelling. A far cry away from the original definition given by Jenkins, some of these ad-hoc categories vary not just in terms of their content, but the way in which their content is expressed. In a blog post by Andrea Philips, she comments: "that indie art scene that started with alternate reality games is, well, it's over" [17], expanding that the concept of transmedia storytelling is clearly not dead, but has changed. The buzzword that gained prominence in 2006, after it was popularised by Henry Jenkins, has become a broad term used to describe wildly diverse experiences such as; escape rooms, mixed reality games, secret cinema, virtual reality experiences, second screen apps, digital exhibitions and complex franchises to name a few. Consequently, we have defined transmedia storytelling so broadly that it sometimes becomes

unfair to justify comparisons between vastly different experiences. How can we compare an escape room to a second screen app when both experiences use different media, progress the story differently and require different things from their audiences?

In an attempt to progress computer games studies as an academic discipline, Espen Aarseth identified this very problem in relation to computer games. In his 2001 paper *Computer Game Studies, Year One*, Aarseth elaborates that:

> "Computer games are not one medium, but many different media. From a computerized toy like Furby to the game Drug Wars on the Palm Pilot, not to mention massively multi-player games like Everquest, or the recent Anarchy Online, which was tested by 40,000 simultaneous playtesters, the extensive media differences within the field of computer games makes a traditional medium perspective almost useless. We end up with what media theorist Liv Hausken has termed media blindness: how a failure to see the specific media differences leads to a "media-neutral" media theory that is anything but neutral. This is clearly a danger when looking at games as cinema or stories, but also when making general claims about games, as though they all belonged to the same media format and shared the same characteristics." [18]

Aarseth then goes on to question whether games should be seen as a separate field in itself or part of an existing field such as sociology, film studies or narratology, concluding that computer games are too culturally rich to submit to just one of these fields [18]. Though this still does not answer the fundamental question of what the object of study in computer games studies is, given the diversity of what are described as games. This question is an ongoing one, and one in which this thesis aims to help answer in a transmedia storytelling context. With computer games, although the content and media inside a game can vary a lot, players are often looking at a screen and using input to interact with the game. With transmedia storytelling, we have an additional layer of complexity added because there is no typical experience. Audiences could be expected to watch a screen, move around, surf the Web or use their phone for example. Consequently, this thesis aims to aid in the delimitation of transmedia experiences to provide categories that can be studied individually. Just as we have separate fields for film, theatre or written works due to the way in which they communicate stories or information, so to should we have fields that focus on various categories of transmedia storytelling. At the very least, we should be able to point at a storytelling experience and identify what kind of cultural object it is and understand to some degree what the category asks of its audience. This practice is a controversial endeavour, as it can be seen as rigidly confining an experience to a category, or disregarding the nuance of that object. However, for the purposes of defining and categorising diverse transmedia experiences, I take

inspiration from the philosophy known as structuralism, with the caveat that generalisations are made to produce useful results.

1.2 Structuralism

A prominent structuralist at the time, Roland Barthes succinctly described the aims and practice of structuralism:

> "The goal of all structuralist activity, whether reflexive or poetic, is to reconstruct an "object" in such a way as to manifest thereby the rules of functioning (the "functions") of this object. … Structural man takes the real, decomposes it, then recomposes it" [19]

When the rules of functioning of a particular object are discovered, comparisons can be made between them. We might group them when common functions appear in some objects but not others, or discover that other objects use their functions in very different ways. This is sometimes known as genre forming. Quite literally meaning "kind" or "class" in French, genre is perhaps one of the most pervasive structuralist concepts that is used today. Although no agreed definition exists, genre in literary theory has been described as "specimens of text" [20], with comparisons being made to botany and zoology [20]. In one of the earliest examples of genre, Aristotle and Plato used words such as poetry, epic, comedy etc. to classify different types of literature. Each of these could then be subdivided further, into smaller categories or what we now refer to as sub-genres. Today, genres in mono-media are less created explicitly or scientifically, and more emergent as the corpus of literature or entertainment grows. In this thesis, I explore genre and classification in general, making reference to mono-media. There is much to learn from this work about how one object differs or relates to another, but there is often no question as to what form an object is. To elaborate, film is not considered to be a genre of entertainment or culture as opposed to a game. I consider genres to exist *within* these things. I argue that in order to get to the stage where we can even begin to think about transmedia storytelling genres, we need to take a step back and ask ourselves, what categories of transmedia storytelling exist? In order to do this, we return to fundamental structuralist practice and attempt to unravel the functions of transmedia stories by decomposing them. As shall be discussed later, structuralism has drawn criticism for its scientific method of thinking and rigidity [21], but I argue that for certain purposes such as classification, the structuralist method is an appropriate one to follow.

In its inception, structuralism drew upon theories from various fields. One major precursor was the work conducted by Vladimir Propp in *The Morphology of the Folktale* [22]. In this work, Propp analysed a number of fairy tales and separated their component functions according to the "dramatis personae" or actions of the characters in the tales. He then compared the tales

according to the functions and their sequences, and used this to form the basis of his typology of folk tales. Of course, Propp did not need to concern himself with the task of describing a folktale. He had words written on a page, structured using the syntax of language. Unfortunately, a widely used syntax that can describe and analyse transmedia storytelling experiences does not exist, at least not one that adequately describes diverse categories. This has been an issue at least since 2007, when prominent theorist Geoffrey Long complained of the "complete lack of tools" [23] that could be used to close read transmedia stories. Since then, researchers in the field have attempted to create models and processes that decompose transmedia stories [24]–[27], but individually they have limitations that miss describing key structural components, that I argue are essential for both analysis and for categorisation. Transmedia storytelling research that discusses structure typically contains limited examples or use cases, often focusing on describing specific ad-hoc categories such as ARGs.

1.3 Research Framework

In this thesis, I aim to create a transmedia storytelling syntax by taking structuralism as the focal methodology, and present a model for ordering transmedia stories (MOTS) that can be used to describe many different categories of transmedia storytelling. This was achieved by building upon pre-existing work on transmedia storytelling and storytelling in general, and also decomposing multiple samples to reveal key structural components.

When an experience is broken down, or modelled, a quasi-object is made that reflects the structure of the original experience. We can then look to see how the narrative unfolds across the various channels involved using the syntax developed. This syntax also allows us to reveal the structural metrics associated with different experiences. These metrics not only aid in the transmedia storytelling analysis, but they can also be used to identify different categories of transmedia storytelling by comparing the metrics of different experiences.

In order to get to the stage of developing a classification, subjectivity was faced at various levels in the process. This inevitability means that we cannot put the classification on the same level as those seen in science, like the classification of species in biology. The categories identified in the transmedia classification presented are not objective truths. I instead argue that this classification is useful in that it enables us to get a better sense of how transmedia storytelling manifests itself. An example of this subjectivity can be seen when considering the question: how many forms are there of *The Matrix Reloaded* film? Some may consider there to be only one, the abstract concept of the film itself, whilst others may consider how the film is consumed. A film watched on a phone compared to the same film being watched on a television screen differs in the way in which it is

transmitted, so this suggests there are at least two forms. This is further complicated when considering other contexts such as the format e.g., DVD and BluRay, the quality e.g. HD and 4K, and any alternative versions e.g. with additional scenes or the uncut version. It is sometimes important to capture these differences when modelling because context can alter the results that are used for analyses. For example, in the case of some films, it is important to distinguish between a film released on Blu-ray to the same film being shown at a theatre. One is static, where it can be watched at any time, and the other is live and can only be watched at a specific time and place.

The subjectivity employed in this thesis is used consistently in that decisions regarding demarcation of channels and their parameters have been applied to all transmedia storytelling experiences that were analysed. As a result, the models produced can be justifiably compared and are used to form the foundation for the transmedia classification. When the transmedia classification is presented, experiences belonging to the same category are similar according to my application of MOTS and the metrics that have been extracted from them, but do not necessarily share the same themes, plot formulas or even media. In the same way that we identify games as “not film”, I am justified in saying one category of transmedia is not like another.

The approach taken in this research, as a direct result of following structuralist thought, allow quantitative data to easily be extracted from the models. Given enough data, statistical techniques can be utilised instead of manual comparisons for the identification of categories. Statistical techniques enable patterns of association to be found that may have been missed from simply comparing transmedia storytelling experiencers by eye. In the past, statistical techniques have been used to classify various cultural objects such as Web pages [28] [29], documents [30], music [31] and film [32]–[34]. These techniques typically extract “features” from the cultural objects and use these features to either predict which category they belong to, or how they relate to other objects in the dataset. Features can come from a variety of sources. In the case of film, features have been extracted from the object itself such as the synopsis [35], or the individual frames [32]. Film genre preference has even been predicted based on audience demographic, behavioural and social data [36]. However, in many of these cases such as film genre classification, the genre labels themselves are already known and are entered into the algorithm before any processing is done. This is known as supervised classification. For film, we already have a plethora of genres to choose from, and can theoretically train an algorithm to learn what a sci-fi film is by feeding it only sci-fi films, then again with Westerns and so on. The algorithm is then able to take a new film it has not seen, make generalisations based on its features, and predict which genre it is most like. When we do not have categories to begin with, we cannot train an algorithm in the same way. If we want to identify what the categories could be in the first place, a

process called unsupervised clustering can be performed, that simply takes in features and tries to identify clusters or categories based on the distances between the features. The complexity of the relations between objects intensifies as the number of features is increased.

In this thesis, I use the K-Means clustering technique to help identify transmedia storytelling categories based on data acquired from the models produced. However, classification of cultural objects is not an absolute science, and any claims made to that effect are misleading. Instead, I demonstrate that a type of classification of transmedia stories is possible, by providing both a method for classification and a classification that resulted in applying this method.

1.3.1 Hypothesis and Research Questions

As we begin to uncover what transmedia storytelling categories might look like, it is useful to start with a hypothesis that can be reflected upon at the end of the process. The discussion so far has led us to the hypothesis that: *identifying structural features of transmedia experiences can enable deep analyses and provide the basis for a transmedia storytelling classification*. In order to test this hypothesis, a number of objectives that build upon each other need to be completed. Consequently, four specific research questions have been devised that help structure these objectives.

1. What are the structural features of transmedia stories?
2. How can the identification of structural features aid in the analyses of transmedia stories?
3. How are transmedia stories classified according to their structure?
4. What is the usefulness in classifying transmedia stories?

Transmedia stories differ from conventional mono-media stories in that they use multiple media, with various interactions and connections between them. In many cases it is not easy to understand how these media evolve over time, connect to each other and progress the story over time in their respective modes of communication. The first question aims to uncover these features by decomposing a number of diverse transmedia stories and presenting a model (MOTS) that can describe many different ad-hoc categories of transmedia storytelling. The second question involves using MOTS as a vehicle to analyse various case studies to reveal their structural features, demonstrating how MOTS can be used for analyses. The third question aims to identify a number of metrics associated with these structural features, allowing comparisons to be made between experiences more empirically. The fourth question explores how these metrics can be used to help identify a number of transmedia storytelling categories. This leads to the final question, which reflects on how the transmedia classification can be used by applying and

amending research conducted by others in the field. Figure 1 illustrates work packages and the research questions they aim to help answer.

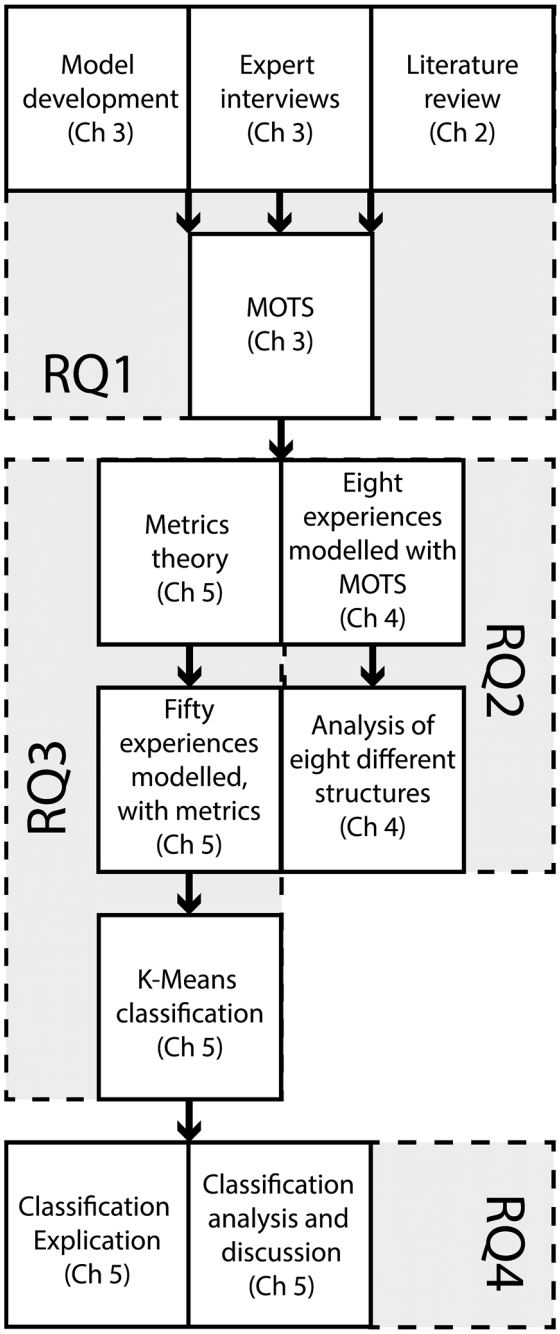


Figure 1 Research Framework Overview

1.4 Document Overview

In this thesis, I describe the process of identifying categories of transmedia storytelling using structural features from various transmedia stories. Each chapter represents a step forward in this endeavour, building upon work conducted in the former.

The next chapter explores the background literature associated with this work, including structuralism, narratology, the definition and characteristics of transmedia storytelling, previous efforts conducted to reveal transmedia structures, and theories of genre.

Chapter three presents MOTS, relating its development to the literature and case studies that were used. Each aspect of MOTS is described in detail followed by an example of how it is applied to a transmedia story. The chapter then explores expert interviews that were conducted to extract new ideas, and test the rigour and competency of the model, with thematic coding to help identify how the interviews influenced further development of the model.

Chapter four includes eight case studies that were selected in order to perform an analysis of them using MOTS. Each experience is modelled using the syntax of MOTS to reveal what their structural features can tell us about how the experience unfolded and the story told.

Chapter five explores how the metrics identified in fifty experiences can be used to conduct a classification of transmedia. The data is processed using K-Means clustering to reveal clusters that form the basis of categories. I then present fourteen distinct clusters or categories from this process that partially map to ad-hoc categories such as ARGs. I explicate each category before finally using the classification to apply and expand on some of the theory and research that was presented in the literature review.

Chapter 2 Background Literature

This chapter provides the theoretical underpinnings of work conducted in this thesis. This includes literature from a range of fields that support the methodologies undertaken in this work. The chapter begins by considering the definition of transmedia storytelling, the various ways it can be employed, how different audiences can consume the same experience differently and the importance of interactivity and participation. Next, I conduct a review of the literature in the field, exploring how transmedia storytelling has been the subject of academic inquiry from a range of disciplines. Then I look at the work most relevant to this thesis, research conducted to understand the structure of transmedia stories. Following this, an overview of structuralism and narratology, the foundational theories used in this thesis, is conducted. Lastly, the concept of genre and classification is explored by considering how it occurs in mono-medium focused fields such as film and games.

2.1 Defining Transmedia Storytelling

Literally meaning “across media”, the term transmedia was first introduced by Marsha Kinder in 1991 as a term to describe the expansion of entertainment franchises, such as the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* (ViacomCBS) “transmedia supersystem” [37]. These franchises would expand their themes, art, characters and stories beyond a comic book or television show onto other media such as games, toys and merchandise that saw audiences spend money on content that included characters they had grown to love.

In 2006, Henry Jenkins reintroduced the word with a storytelling focus and the term “transmedia storytelling” [16] has since become widespread. Much the same as transmedia supersystems, some people see the practice of transmedia storytelling as a way for huge corporations to maximise profits by reaching as many audiences as possible [3] [34], with Disney illustrating how effective it can be in generating huge amounts of revenue. This franchise centric use of the term was solidified in 2010, when the Producers Guild of America, a trade association that represents television, film and new media producers in America, recognised “transmedia narratives” as a separate mode of production. They proclaimed that:

> A Transmedia Narrative project or franchise must consist of three (or more) narrative storylines existing within the same fictional universe on any of the following platforms: Film, Television, Short Film, Broadband, Publishing, Comics, Animation, Mobile, Special Venues, DVD/Bluray/CD-ROM, Narrative Commercial and Marketing rollouts, and other technologies that may or may not currently exist. These narrative extensions are NOT

> the same as repurposing material from one platform to be cut or repurposed to different platforms. [39]

This news had mixed responses at the time. Jenkins himself praised the "clear definition" [40], but appreciated the concerns of prominent transmedia scholar Christy Dena and others that a rigid franchise-centric definition would exclude other "types" of transmedia storytelling [41]. Since then, in response to the emergence of diverse manifestations of transmedia storytelling, Jenkins has stressed that he prefers "a looser definition, one elastic enough to encompass new and emerging experiments" [42], elaborating that "this doesn't mean transmedia means everything to all people and thus means nothing to anyone. Rather, it means we need to be precise about what categories of transmedia we are discussing and what claims we are making about them" [42]. I touched upon this notion in the introduction, mentioning how different fields see transmedia storytelling through a specific lens. Since 2010, much more work has been conducted in the name of transmedia storytelling by these different fields, and has caused what Carlos Alberto Scolari calls a "semantic chaos", where "conversations about transmedia storytelling also include many other adjacent concepts: "cross media," "multimodality," "multiplatform," "enhanced storytelling," and others" [43].

To avoid getting immediately tangled in this sematic chaos, we can return to two complimentary definitions given by Jenkins, that can be applied to a wide range of transmedia story types. Jenkins states that "each medium makes its own unique contribution to the unfolding of the story" [6], with each medium making a "distinctive and valuable contribution to the whole" [16]. In order to unpack this definition, we must begin with identifying what a medium is and what makes it distinct from other media.

2.1.1 Media

At a high level, Dan Laughey comments that media can be understood as a "means of communication" [44]. Similarly, Marc Ruppel describes what he calls a *site* as "a unique material means through which a message is sent that distinguishes it from other information" [25]. The problem with these definitions lies in the word "means". The difference that distinguishes the means of one medium from another works on a variety of levels: A film is not a television show, even though they both communicate information through moving images and sound, whereas a book is neither because it uses the written word instead of images and sound. Here, we see that the word is multi-layered. Nevertheless, the different applications are often naturally apparent to us, for example as Marie-Laure Ryan identifies with the term "multimedia media" [45]. Here, media has become a class of itself, and we often have little trouble understanding what is meant

by this. We see the first media to mean semiotic categories e.g., text, video and sound, whereas we see the second media to mean the means of communication that synthesize and communicate these semiotic categories e.g., film and novels. Marshal McLuhan, perhaps exaggeratedly, argued this point when he said “the content of any medium is always another medium” [46]. This may be the case for media used the second way in our above example, but means of communication can be reduced to fundamental forms. Whether that is photons, sound waves or texture on a material, we can build up from these types of basic constituent, assigning words at each level to describe what we mean. This is exactly what Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen attempted in their adoption of the word “mode” to describe what they saw as the basic constituents of media such as “verbal, the visual, language, image, music, sound, gesture ...” [47]. However, as Ryan argues, “modes of signification do not make the concept of medium dispensable” [48] because we still cannot “distinguish the various cultural forms in which a given mode appears” [48]. As McCluhan famously says, “the medium is the message”[46], and the content we consume is not only shaped by the material means of communication. Comic books and Japanese manga both use text and image in the form of a book, but are culturally recognised as two separate media, each with their own practices, customs and style. Consequently, we must go further to define how communicative channels utilise these semiotic resources in different ways. Ryan proposes that instead of asking the question “if written text is a mode and the book one of its media, then what are the media of oral language?” [48], a different approach should be taken that “takes as its point of departure the media categories informally used in Western cultures” [48] and analyses them under three dimensions: *semiotic*, *technical* and *cultural*. The semiotic dimension encompasses basic types of sign such as image and sound, and can be analysed deeper by considering their spatiotemporal parameters such as line, colour, pitch and rhythm. The technical dimension considers the technologies underpinning the semiotic dimension such as mode of production and material support e.g., film production and silver screen for film. The cultural dimension looks at forms recognised by culture or society, that may not be distinguished from the previous two dimensions such as comic books. Ryan argues this theory provides media consciousness [48], where each dimension can be investigated further such as; investigating the power of image and sound in the semiotic dimension, issues relating to technology and the configuration of sender-receiver in the technological dimension and focusing on behaviours of producers and fan cultures in the cultural dimension.

We may want to distinguish between parts inside a distinct medium, such as episodes of a television show. Ruppel, in his conception of site as a subset of a media channel, explains that when he creates a boundary, he identifies whether a site is complete or segmented. He considers complete sites to be episodes of a television show compared to chapters in a book, that are

considered segmented [25]. We could also consider an episode of a television show to be a separate media channel from the other episodes, or as just part of a single media channel. Ryan's three-dimensional definition and Ruppel's concept of segmentation provides us with valuable insight into how we might begin to decompose an experience into different distinct media using the semiotic, technical and cultural dimensions to identify a change in the means of communication as well as internal boundaries to identify whether a medium is segmented. Reflecting on these theories, it is clear that even with these precise words in our toolset, there is still an element of subjectivity when it comes to defining media that we are unable to escape from.

Next, we have to consider the second part of Jenkin's definition, that states that a medium must make a *unique* or *valuable* contribution to the unfolding of the story. This moves us from looking at the ways in which information is communicated to the information, or story, itself.

2.1.2 Unique and Valuable Contribution

Several years ago, consumers were able to buy marshmallows decorated as a storm trooper, based on a set of characters from the *Star Wars* franchise. What value do these marshmallow storm troopers have on the transmedia franchise? It is often not clear when a valuable contribution has been made, so a spectrum of value inevitably emerges. For example, it can be argued that the *Harry Potter* (Bloomsbury Publishing) themed "chocolate frogs" that are sold in many shops provide more of a valuable contribution to the audience than marshmallow storm troopers because the frogs actually appear in the films as a food that is eaten by the main characters. Jonathan Gray argues that although film property merchandise such as figurines by themselves may not be valuable in terms of story progression, the selection of characters that are made into figurines could be [49]. He argues that action figures are bought by parents and played with by children, who create their own stories with these objects through play, which consequently changes their perception of the character when they see them in the film. Caleb Milligan argues that many practices of transmedia storytelling actually begin a film's "mise-en-scéne", a contentious term [50] used to describe the arrangements of the scenes in a film. He confidently states: "A film does not begin with the film anymore, with producers using popular media and technology to communicate the atmosphere and premise of their story long before audiences sit down and watch it" [51].

In her reflection of the progression of transmedia storytelling practice, Janet Murray comments that modern transmedia "story franchises" go beyond simply making action figures or lunchboxes themed with their story, but expand the story with additional information because audiences

expect it [52]. However, she argues that “the current transmedia proliferation is usually simultaneous with the release of the primary, often episodic story content” , that often “does not provide enough information to bring a new viewer up to speed on the highly complex story world” [52].

These insights point to an obvious problem with Jenkin’s loose definition. In order to be able to decide whether a medium is valuable to the story, we need to confidently distinguish between different categories of transmedia storytelling. With the ad-hoc category transmedia storytelling franchise, there are numerous examples of distinct media that do not make a valuable contribution to the story, such as marshmallow storm troopers. However, with another ad-hoc category like the ARG, all of the media typically come together to make up the entirety of the story. Something that may be of low value in a franchise could be integral in an ARG. For example, a playing card in *Why So Serious* with scribbled illustrations and words provided the audience with an entry point into the experience, letting them know that a main character, the Joker, was trying to recruit them into a fictitious political campaign with the ultimate aim to best Batman.

2.1.3 High-Level Types of Transmedia

Christy Dena employs the term “transfictions” [53] to denote a type of transmedia story where most or all of the media channels take their own role in creating one story, as opposed to multiple media for multiple stories in a franchise. She describes transfictions as stories that “are distributed over more than one text, one medium. Each text, each story on each device or each website is not autonomous. … The story is dependent on all pieces on each medium, device or site to be read/experienced for it to be understood” [15]. In much the same way, Robert Pratten identifies transmedia single story experiences as “Portmanteau transmedia” [14], an adjective meaning the combination of more than one object such as the word “cyborg”, a mix of cybernetic and organism. Much like the two halves of cyborg, each part of a Portmanteau is essential to the story. Pratten also identifies what he calls “Complex transmedia”, a combination of a franchise and portmanteau. In these experiences, each medium can be experienced somewhat independently, but form a larger single story if consumed together. Carlos Scolari identifies four types of transmedia storytelling expansion. The “macro story”, as he calls them, can be expanded by; interstitial microstories, parallel stories, peripheral stories and user-generated platforms. Interstitial microstories “enrich” the diegetic world by having content that is closely related to the macro story, parallel stories unfold at the same time as the macro story and can turn into “spin offs”, peripheral stories are “distant satellites” that have a weak relationship to the macro story and user generated content platforms such as blogs and wikis are “open source story creation machines” that allow users to add their own content to the story [43].

From just these high levels types, it is easy to appreciate the “semantic chaos” [43] that occurs for content creators, researchers and critics. In a now famous Facebook post, Brian Clark made this point when he identified two branching trajectories of Jenkins’ original conception, with franchise-centric transmedia storytelling dominating on the west coast of America, versus transfictions and alternative transmedia storytelling, emerging on the east coast [54]. He commented that:

> we’re all guilty of conflating the two together in ways that lead to moments where it might sound like the community is, for example, telling documentary filmmakers that they need to think more like franchisers if they want to get on the transmedia bandwagon and not be left behind as "storytelling changes forever." [54]

Andrea Philips sees the west coast and east coast manifestations to be two separate ends of a spectrum. However, Philips asserts that both methods include “fragmenting” a story or story world into pieces, like a jigsaw puzzle [55]. Philips comments that depending on the transmedia story, some jigsaw pieces are more important than others in terms of providing story comprehension, with west coast properties like *Star Wars* containing big pieces and east coast having tiny pieces. Philips argues that “No matter how big the pieces are, though, you interact with them using the same basic behaviour” [55].

With an appreciation that there is consensus amongst senior transmedia scholars that transmedia storytelling is not just franchise-centric, we can begin to explore the characteristics of transmedia storytelling further, and how these characteristics can manifest differently for different types of transmedia storytelling.

2.1.4 Participation

In *Convergence Culture*, Jenkins made the case that audiences of popular culture were changing, calling this shift one toward a *participatory culture*. This shift was seen as one of the affordances of TS. He states:

> The term, participatory culture, contrasts with older notions of passive media spectatorship. Rather than talking about media producers and consumers as occupying separate roles, we might now see them as participants who interact with each other according to a new set of rules that none of us fully understands [16].

Jenkins' notion of audiences changing from passive to active audiences can be seen as a reductionist view. For Stuart Hall, audiences of what Jenkins calls passive media are not passive at all, but are part of a conversation between producers and writers [56]. Similarly, in *Death of the Author*, famous literary critic Roland Barthes argues against the ability for anyone to determine the intentions of the author and subsequently the true interpretations of a story [57], arguably making the concept of the passive audience a redundancy. Melanie Schiller argues that transmedia narratives in particular "problematize notions of authorship" [58] by encouraging audience participation, resulting in the distinction between authorised content and fan-fiction becoming blurred. Schiller expands that transmedia storytelling "depends" on this participation. An example of this, identified by Murray, is how the creators of *Justified* made one of their characters pregnant after reading fan theories about it online [52].

The participation offered to the audience is not as straightforward as simply allowing audiences to do what they want. In a study conducted by Elizabeth Evans, it was found that participation and engagement with transmedia storytelling content is dependent on whether the audience feel emotionally invested in the content [59]. In this example, audience members were more engaged when characters they had watched on-screen had appeared elsewhere in the story. This was backed up in a similar study conducted by Maria del Mar Grandio and Jesba Bonaut, where it was found that one of the most important predictors of success for transmedia storytelling was the fulfilment of audience expectations [60].

One of the major ways audiences participate is not only via consumption and interpretation of texts, conversing with other audience members or creating fan fiction, but by having an authorial role or influence in the official story. Next, I consider how this influence can occur with reference to both mono-media and transmedia stories.

2.1.4.1 Interactivity

Stories are often created by an author and consumed by audiences, but sometimes stories emerge from the interplay between authors and the audience. Stories around a campfire are often not linearly narrated, but play out interactively as a conversation between the narrator and audience, with questions and comments changing the way the story is told. In *Playwriting Playgoers in Shakespeare's Theatre,* Matteo Pangallo discusses the multiple ways in which theatregoers in Elizabethan England were able to influence the productions through their interactions with the playmakers and actors [61]. Audiences could participate in epilogues where they would reveal what they liked and disliked, or they could decide to cheer or heckle in response to what they were watching, potentially causing the actors to change their acting style.

This effect was enhanced by the circular style of the theatre where the audience could see both the stage and all other audience members.

In the present day, the technological landscape has enabled more advanced ways audiences involve themselves in narrative creation, for example controlling the actions of players in video games. Marie-Laure Ryan explicates two ways players can interact with the story of a game; one where players control the specific actions of a character with no control over how the story ends, and another where the game acts as a sandbox for narrative generation [62]. This agency, the ability for the player to make an impact on the story, is a highly sought-after feature by many gamers, but is expensive and time consuming when the player may not even necessarily see the content. Thue et al. argue that perceived agency is more important than actual agency, in particular what the player cares about. As such, they sought to create an AI system that would learn what type of player was playing e.g. hero, collector, tactician etc. and mould the story so that actions create consequences that the player's cared about [63]. Their study was concluded to be a success, but having artificial intelligence advanced enough to account for the agency demanded by modern audiences is arguably many decades away. In any case, there is often a push-back from some storytellers wishing to convey a specific set of events, without significant intervention by players. This issue, known as the “interactive dilemma” has been an area of contention for decades [64]. A compromise, according to Peinado and Gevás, is having “game masters” or “directors” such as dungeon masters in the popular table top Role-Playing Game *Dungeons and Dragons*. Such people are “middle men”, able to guide players through a particular path, providing controlled agency when desired [64].

There are however many different techniques than can be used to guide players through a particular path in the story, without the need of a human to actively watch players and control the direction of the story.

2.1.4.2 Paths

Some games, as Hannah Wood identifies, allow players to generate narrative or change the order of events, but potentially provide limited or little influence on the ultimate outcome of the story. Such games are reminiscent of “hypertext stories” such as *afternoon*, a story that involves users clicking with a mouse to navigate through the text. These stories, although appealing to those wishing to repeat the same experience many times to get a different experience each time, incur large costs and development time that grows exponentially with the amount of choices [65].

In a “Choose Your Own Adventure” book, the opportunity for influencing how the story unfolds depends on the relationships between the pages. Does one page lead back to a previously read

one? Do all paths lead to a single ending? In an effort to help answer these types of questions in a hypertext context, Mark Bernstein developed a "vocabulary of concepts and structures that will let us understand the way today's hypertexts and Web sites work", called patterns. Bernstein argues that the patterns used affect how a story unfolds and is presented to the reader, and that by explicating them, there can be more "thoughtful, systematic and sophisticated designs" that "move toward a richer and more effective hypertext criticism" [66]. Looking at media instead of pages or sites, Pratten takes a similar approach and employs a taxonomy of "story structures", that considers the paths that audiences can take in a transmedia story [14]. They include; Linear, branching, rails, dynamic, open storyworld and linear open storyworlds. The *linear* story structure is sequential and must be followed in order, *rails* create the illusion that choice is being made, *dynamic* is a changing structure depending on the initial actions and decisions of the audience, *open storyworld* includes pieces of story scattered on multiple media aimed to be consumed in any order, and *linear storyworld* includes linear experiences that have extra subsidiary content that can be consumed in any order. Pratten accepts that "creative people don't like to be tied down to definitions and rigid formats", but nonetheless feels these story structures help authors "provoke new ideas" [14].

In an attempt to examine the topology of the graph that represents the World Wide Web, Albert-Laszlo Barabasi and Reka Albert Hawoong Jeong identify that with each new edge and links between edges, the structure of the Web, and consequently our ability to locate information on it, changes [67]. In much the same way, the connections between media in a transmedia story affect what paths can be taken, which media can be consumed and ultimately the story that is told. In his analyses of "transmedia narratives", Ruppel identifies that links, or migratory cues as he calls them, can be either external or internal [25]. External migratory cues exist outside the fiction, such as the cover of a book, the blurb or a logo. Internal migratory cues are "developed and completed within the logic and continuity of the fictional storyworld itself'" e.g., a character who appears in two media. Links can be "direct", with a URL to a website on a book cover constituting a direct external cue, or a URL inside the text itself being a direct internal cue [25]. Different links can become available at different points in the story as it progresses, or change depending on when a particular path is taken.

Occasionally, the experience that produces a transmedia story is shared, with some audience members forging the path for the whole of the audience, or even changing the outcome of an event in the story.

2.1.4.3 Participation in Shared Stories

To illustrate how shared stories can be influenced by the audience, we turn our attention to ARGs. One of the characteristics of an ARG is the layering of a fictional world on top of reality, delivering a single storyline that typically uses websites and social media to portray events that are purported to be really happening [68]. They usually involve collaborative gameplay, with the audience working together to solve problems with the clues they are given. Audience interest is sustained by updating the state of the game and narrative over time, drip feeding clues that link to the next medium. The core mechanic of an ARG according to Bonsignore et al. is "to engage players in scavenger-hunt-like missions to uncover, collectively interpret, and reassemble the fragments of a story that is distributed across multiple media, platforms and locations" [69]. Audiences are often monitored by "puppet masters", who manage, similarly to dungeon masters, the direction of the story based on how well the audience is doing. Sometimes, the puppet masters will invite the audience to decide the outcome of a story, or interact with live actors who may reveal a new medium depending on the conversation.

Bonsignore et al. state that ARGs exist on a "narrative design continuum" [69], where audiences are given different levels of participatory power depending on the type of story being told. Open ended stories such as the theme of a global oil crisis e.g., *World Without Oil* (Corporation for Public Broadcasting), allow players greater control over the narrative direction, whilst close ended stories that have pre-scripted outcomes require the audience to have less control. The design of ARGs often creates a hierarchy of audience types depending on the level of participation conducted. 42 Entertainment, the producers of various popular ARGs, have noticed the various ways in which audience members enjoy their content. They comment that "'Tens of thousands of enthusiasts mobilized in public for pervasive missions, three-quarters of a million active participants working online to talk about and solve the immersive mystery, and nearly two and-a-half million casual participants tracking the experience" [70]. Christy Dena explicates these different audience members according to their level of interaction with the ARG: enthusiasts, actives and casuals. Authors structure their story to include media with differing levels of required interaction and the audience create resources that allow casuals to read what's going on, actives to discuss the content and enthusiasts to retrieve or interact with the content.

2.1.5 Summary

In this section, I explored the definition and core characteristics of transmedia storytelling, including the problems associated with pinpointing what a medium is and how a medium has value in a transmedia story. I also introduced the concept of participation and the various ways it

can occur, including interaction and agency in video games, choosing paths in books and hypertext, and how ARGs produce groups that participate on various levels.

The next section will dive deeper in transmedia storytelling theory, starting with a high-level summary of some of the work conducted to further understanding of how transmedia storytelling functions, before moving onto literature that is strongly related to the work in this thesis.

2.2 Understanding Transmedia Storytelling

> Teaching a class on transmedia is especially challenging – in part because the topic represents an intersection between fields of research that are normally held as methodologically separate. [71]

In the quote above, Jenkins identifies both the blessing and the curse of transmedia storytelling theory. In one sense, it is incredibly insightful to get different perspectives in common areas of research. However, in another sense, it is almost impossible to keep up with all the research that is being conducted, with new syntax, tools, practices and theories being developed that add to the "semantic chaos" mentioned earlier.

In a blog series [72], [73] aimed to be a response to his own thinking on transmedia storytelling, Jenkins derived seven "core principles that might shape our development or analysis of transmedia narrative" [72] that could be used as a starting point to analyse a story, and provide the basis for further research into any one principle, where tools from other disciplines may provide additional use.

2.2.1 Jenkins' Seven Principles of Transmedia Storytelling

Spreadability vs Drillability. Spreadability refers to the capacity of the public to become vehicles of dissemination, spreading media content to their friends and followers through social media for example. Related to this is the idea of drillability, where audience members are encouraged to dig deeper into the media to reveal details about the story. Transmedia stories that focus on drillability typically focus on a smaller audience, whereas those that focus on spreadability aim primarily to grow their audience.

Continuity vs Multiplicity. Continuity refers to the plausibility and coherence of a fictional world, which many audience members put huge emphasis on. Jenkins suggests a coherent fictional world rewards the audience for their investment of time, by way of finding extra bits of story and making sense of the big picture. Relatedly, multiplicity is the affordance of a story that provides

differing perspectives of events and characters. A story that focuses on multiplicity might have multiple retellings of the same set of events, or alternative versions of those events.

Immersion vs Extractability. Immersion is understood here to be the ability of media content to invite audiences into the fictional worlds they represent, for example audiences somewhat enter a fictional world when going to theme parks filled with rides and story content. Extractability occurs when audiences extract content from that fictional world and bring it back or integrate it into their real lives, for example buying a toy from a gift shop after a ride in a theme park.

Worldbuilding. Related to the last principle is worldbuilding, a concept whereby authors and producers focus on building out the details, history, character relationships and logic of a fictional world, rather than making a story. Jenkins cites [74] *The Wizard of Oz* (L. Frank Baum) as a property that focused on world building. For most people, we think of the musical starring Judy Garland, but Baum's fictional world spanned comic strips, lectures, stage musicals and short films that together communicated what the world of Oz and areas within it was like. Worldbuilding and storyworlds, a related concept, is discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Seriality. This refers to how a story or fictional world is split up into instalments, together creating a cohesive experience and employing devices such as the television cliff-hanger to glue one instalment to the next. In a transmedia sense, seriality is achieved when multiple media are used to convey one story, or fictional world, with instalments often feeding on the content of one another.

Subjectivity. Related to multiplicity, subjectivity is the principle that describes how media content is communicated through different perspectives of characters, for example understanding how they view the fictional world. The audience may also follow secondary characters in certain media that explores an aspect of the world that was previously unknown. Subjectivity is a key principle used in many ARGs that use social media and blogs to convey the lives of characters. Here, the audience can get a better understanding of what the character is like and perhaps get their perspectives on events that are occurring within the fictional world.

Performance. This principle encapsulates several concepts conceived by Jenkins relating to how audiences act as performers rather than passive observers. Audience members can build a community, together discussing aspects of the world or trying to figure out what is going to happen next. Producers can induce even deeper participation by inviting the audience to perform certain actions, like visiting a website or interacting with live actors. Even a cryptic clue in a television episode that requires problem solving skills and determinisation constitutes a form of performance. Regardless, Jenkins argues that audiences perform even without invitation, in the

form of fan fiction and fan culture, citing the *Glee* (20th Century Fox) performance videos that fans posted on YouTube, acting as though they were themselves characters in the show.

These principles are a useful starting point to shape thinking around how a transmedia story functions, and the generality of the principles mean at least some of them are applicable to many different types of transmedia storytelling. However, as Mark Ruppel identifies [25], these principles do not answer how different stories utilise different techniques that affect the way these principles emerge. We do not know how media combinations, or the evolution of media for example, affects the way these principles occur. Next, I explore some of these issues by considering wider transmedia research, before focusing on work that attempts to answer the how question posed above by breaking transmedia stories down using frameworks and models.

2.2.2 Focused Transmedia Storytelling Research

Beyond entertainment, there is work being done on how transmedia storytelling can be used for museums [75] [76] [77], documentaries [78], childhood [79] and adolescent [80] digital literacy, corporate communication [81], tourism [82], navigating human behaviour to induce social change [83], and activism to enhance the voices of marginalized people [84], to name but a few.

One popular research topic in particular is fan culture, where researchers often import knowledge and theory from cultural studies, applying them in a transmedia context. Examples include analysing how audiences use wikis to discuss story theories [85], community interactions with television shows that create an encyclopaedic universe [86], or how a transmedia story enables a "dramatic community", where fans play out performative functions [87]. Many of these scholars place huge emphasis on the importance of fan-produced content, with Anne Kustritz emphasizing that such content not only "contribute to the narrative whole" [88], but have equal status to official content.

Some researchers conduct "deep dives" into a particular media conglomerate such as HBO [73], or a particular franchise such as Stars Wars [89], Battlestar Galactica [90], or World of Warcraft [91], studying the medium-specific ways each medium contributes to the world, or how characters are portrayed in multiple media [92].

In 2018, a collection of essays from some of the leading academics of transmedia research was published in a book called *The Routledge Companion to Transmedia Studies*. In Jenkins words:

> The editors have assembled an international rogue's gallery of some of the world's top thinkers about transmedia. I love that attempts to develop a field theory of transmedia

> have given way to efforts to describe different configurations transmedia might take in different contexts. Or in the service of different goals. [93]

Due to the breadth, currency and prestige of the authors, it is worth spending some time to consider some of the topics that are covered in the book and selecting some interesting and applicable chapters for deeper review. Some of the work presented here expands what we might consider to be transmedia storytelling and can provide fruitful insight into different manifestations that occur.

In the introduction, the editors, Matthew Freeman and Renira Rampazzo Gambarato discuss the definition of transmedia. They argue that although the definition should be wide, neither static nor explicit, the essays included in the book make clear that there is an alignment with the concept of transmedia simply being "experience via technology" [93], with a sociological aspect questioning how this experience allows us to navigate culture and our everyday lives. Even so, this book is evidence of the fact that we are still trying to figure out exactly what transmedia is and how it can occur. The subsequent chapters that contain the essays by transmedia researchers do however effectively illustrate some of these occurrences and how we can view seemingly unrelated phenomena in a transmedia context.

2.2.2.1 Transmedia Television

Elizabeth Evans applies two theories extracted from television studies in her analysis of what she calls "transmedia television" [94]. She utilises the concept of "flow", applying it in a transmedia context. Flow, seen to be a foundational and medium defining characteristic of television, is a theory developed by Raymond Williams where a session of television viewing consists of an amalgamation of a segmented episode of a programme interspersed with adverts, news broadcasts and other interstitial content [95]. Evans argues that producers of television shows extend this flow by diverting the audience from the television screen on to other media to get more content, such as websites with characters' descriptions. She argues that this extra content then creates a flow back to the television, by causing the audience to want to know more about the characters, or find out what happens next in the story.

The second theory Evans applies is John Ellis' theory of "television glance" [96], that argues television is primarily a domestic medium where audiences do not often "gaze" at the screen in the same way as audiences in the cinema. Televisions are commonly on in the background as conversations happen, food is eaten and other distractions steal the audience. Evans argues this concept of glance has evolved into what she calls the "mediated glance" [94], where portable

screens and second screen apps distract audiences without capturing their full attention, but at the same time keeping them inside their transmedial worlds.

2.2.2.2 Transmedia Games

Helen Kennedy applies "play" [97] theory and ludology to identify and analyse aspects of "transmedia play" and the "ludo-aesthetic" that exists in the games, known as "the extent to which the audience member/player is embodied as a playful subject" [97]. Transmedia games are defined and classified according to the way in which they "repurpose" a text such as a film or television show, into a mode of play, with the most basic manifestation being what are called "AAA franchise-based games" such as *Harry Potter* and *Pirates of the Caribbean*. They categorise transmedia games based on a continuum "from tight rules defined by or related to the ordinary text or narrative world to much more loosely applies genre conventions and great freedom of engagement, interpretation and movement" [97]. At the bottom are AAA games as just described, social games such as *19 Reinos*, board games, web games, ARGs, street games, TTRPGs and finally experimental art games. In this spectrum, effective mechanics seen in experimental art games that require audience participation are often identified as being lucrative, and move down the spectrum as they are adopted by different games. They argue that characteristics such as the players position in the games, the media and motivation for production, act as support criteria for analysis and classification within the spectrum.

2.2.2.3 Transmedia Attractions

Matthew Freeman conducts a case study of the *Warner Bros. Studio Tour – The Making of Harry Potter* using surveys and observations from visitors, exploring the "impact this attraction has on how its promoters encourage engagement with the Harry Potter texts" [98], and how the functions of attractions can behave as transmedia storyworlds. The attraction itself consists of a space full of props, costumes and decorations that were used in the making of the Harry Potter films. Freeman points out that an important characteristic of such experiences is immersion, a contentious term to describe audiences being part of the performance, entering the world of a story. In the study, one visitor commented perhaps negatively that "this was more like a museum rather than a theme park" [98]. Freeman points out that this is an important distinction, with attractions typically providing fun, active and controlled chaos and museums typically being associated with history and a calmer educational experience. However, he identifies that both of these can be transmedia, invoking Jenny Kidd who argues that contemporary museums act as a "mashup, as a site of active consumption, micro-creation, co-creativity and remix" [98], brought on by the rapid growth of technology and a growing culture towards participation. Freeman identifies how the attraction conducts these things; with features such as photo-taking

opportunities, gift buying, diegetic food consumption and up-close exposure to seemingly magical artefacts contributing to the attraction as a transmedia storyworld (discussed in further detail later in this chapter).

The use of gamification, the practice of applying game mechanics and play to experiences, was also identified. Freeman describes how organisers used social media to provide a small game where fans would have to stitch together a series of spider images that related to a character that was newly added to the attraction [98]. He identifies that this effort culminated in audiences being directed to the attraction itself, resulting in another entry point into the fictional world.

2.2.2.4 Transmedia Exhibits

Jenny Kidd conceptualises contemporary museums as transmedia worlds acknowledging that traditional definitions of transmedia storytelling do not neatly map to museums and heritage sites [99]. However, the "negative capability" feature of transmedia storytelling, where there is a "capacity for users to explore gaps and mysteries within a narrative" is observed strongly in museums. Additionally, experiences from visitors are diverse due to active channels such as ghost walks, festivals, music events, weddings and re-enactments that often occur within a museum to augment the experience.

Kidd argues that the "world" of the museum is both forever changing due to new exhibits, redevelopments and expansions, and almost boundless, with a museum visit inspiring the visitor to watch videos, read blogs or discuss on social media long after their visit. With exhibits, a themed event within a museum that is typically operated for a limited time, the content might relate to a larger body of work such as the robot exhibit at the Science Museum. Kidd questions how these exhibits intersect with the larger storyworld of robots and ponders the relationship between fact and fiction. Using the Charles Dickens museum as an example, Kidd argues that the museum can be "read" in light of the works that were written by the author, suggesting that the books are just as much of the experience as the museum itself. Consequently, it is made clear that identifying the "world" or "experience" of a museum or exhibit is a challenging endeavour [99].

In their concluding remarks, Kidd identifies that transmedia often rewards consumers for their efforts. She argues this is easier to identify with traditional forms of transmedia, and more ambiguous with museums: "What then, we should be asking, do visitors/users/audiences for heritage encounters take away from these media-rich experiences? And in what ways are they meaningful to them (or not?)" [99].

2.2.2.5 Where do these different categories come from?

The wider field of transmedia research presented until now illustrates the diverse language, toolset and methodologies employed to analyse these different aspects of transmedia, and hints towards an understanding of how Jenkin's seven principles manifest themselves differently. There is largely no common toolset employed by the research community as the tools used are typically narrow in their application. In one sense this is a strength as it allows different fields and perspectives to use tried and tested theories in a transmedia context, but in another sense, we struggle to use language to compare different manifestations of transmedia.

In the Routledge companion book, we gain fruitful understanding of different ad-hoc categories of transmedia storytelling, from attractions to franchise worlds, but with little insight into how we can identify these as the categories they are presented as. For example, when does an attraction become a franchise? How does an attraction differ from a museum exhibit? I argue that this is one of the biggest issues facing scholarly work in transmedia storytelling. The ability to use a tool to differentiate between different categories, group experiences together and apply relevant theories within these groups is a challenge I believe has not yet been accomplished.

To begin identifying the different categories of transmedia storytelling, we must first have a toolset that can be used to decompose stories to reveal their structure, so that these can be compared. Structural analysis of transmedia stories is not however a new concept. Models have been developed that seek to identify features of transmedia stories, which in turn can potentially be used to distinguish between various categories. Some of these models have a visual element, allowing us to more easily understand how they work. The next section considers some of the work done in this area, highlighting their insights and limitations.

2.2.3 Describing the Structure of Transmedia Stories

One of the simplest ways to analyse a transmedia story is to write an account of what happened, and on what media. We might want to split this written account into sections, with sections on characters, media used or type of interactivity for example. Two such approaches by Mariana Ciancia [26] and Renira Rampazzo Gambarato [100] aim to provide these sections so that a thorough account of a transmedia story can take place. Gambarato, who utilises Pratten's definitions of types, groups questions that are posed to a researcher conducting a close reading or analyses of a transmedia story that when answered lead to an understanding of "the essential structure of transmedia projects". Questions include for example; "what would be the summary of its storyline, what is the projects core, or is the storyworld big enough to support expansions?" [100]. The seventy-six questions that are included are a useful tool for any researcher aiming to

produce a comprehensive written account of any transmedia story, but there are limitations. Although it is possible, it would be very challenging to compare descriptions between experiences, especially if we are comparing dozens of stories.

Focusing primarily on ARGs, Koos de Beer's model seeks to show how narrative, game action and player participation evolves over time. A "component", an action that occurs in the story, is categorised as one of these three things. Disregarding the specificity of a channel, de Beer provides a timeline of components, showing which one's players will encounter. For example, the ARG may start with a narrative component, to a game component and then back to a narrative component. Each component is given an ID, with each ID having a description associated with it, describing more details about it. Being channel agnostic, the model does not provide any details as to which channels these components were embedded in, or how channels, which held these components, evolved over time [27]. However, it could arguably be used to easily compare ARGs, counting how many game actions there are etc., although the insights gained would be extremely limited.

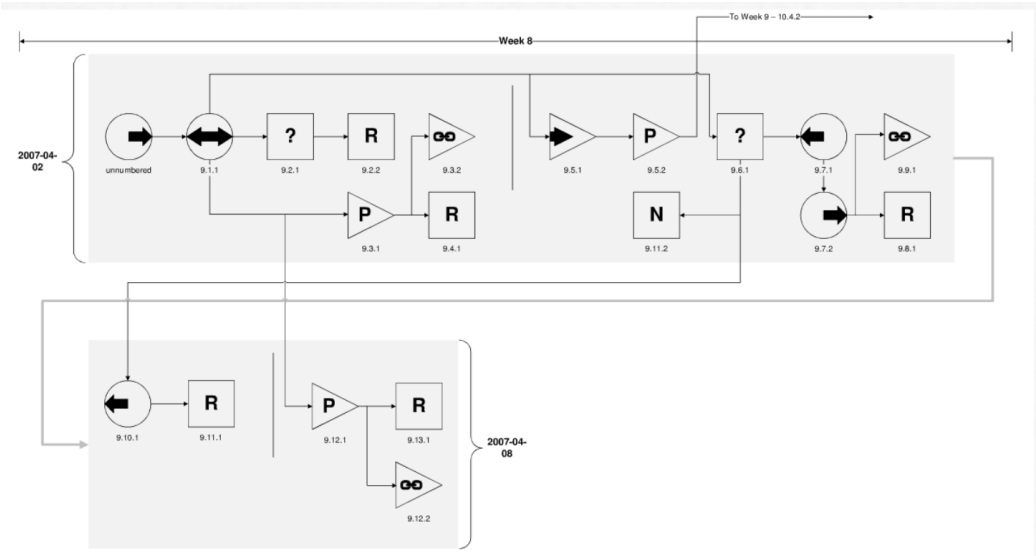


Figure 2 de Beer's model, showing sequences of narrative and game components [27]

Van der Kaa and Op den Buysch take a slightly different approach, focusing more broadly on transmedia storytelling [101]. Their "metrics model" breaks transmedia stories into scenes and beats of interaction, such as sharing content on social media or reading a blog. They track these "user journeys" by recording whether an individual interacts with any given beat in a scene. They argue these metrics can be used to classify different audience members, similarly to Dena's categorisation of enthusiasts, actives and casuals mentioned above, by counting how many times a user interacted with beat seven in scene four for example. This novel approach is useful for classifying audience members, and to some extent the various journey possibilities in a story.

However, this is only one aspect of the structure, and would result in classifying experiences based only on these specific affordances. Similarly, Stanescu et al's work seeks to model the player's journey through their choices. Players start in one place, and are then presented with choices, with each choice presenting new choices, which may lead back to a previous place [24]. This however only works effectively for single player experiences where there are choices to be made, and again only captures a small portion of what makes up the structure.

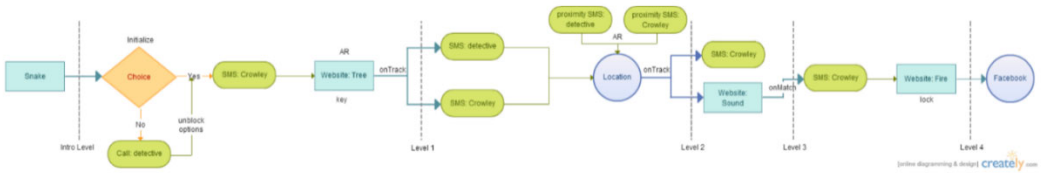


Figure 3 Stanescu et al's model showing actions, choices and media presented to players [24]

Another piece of work conducted by Marc Ruppel also allows metrics to be obtained from a model. Ruppel conceptualises transmedia storytelling as complex "networks", and applies graph theory to generate insight into its structure. In the model, media occupies the role of vertices, and the relationships between them fulfils the role of network connections or as he calls them, migratory cues. Ruppel argues that this mapping allows a close reading of transmedia stories to occur by allowing for characteristics to be identified, such as the number of links to and from a medium. These characteristics can then lead to the identification of specific network motifs and can be used as a basis for a taxonomy of transmedia networks [25], but are again very limited in what they represent. The structure of a transmedia story is more than simply the number of links to and from each medium within it.

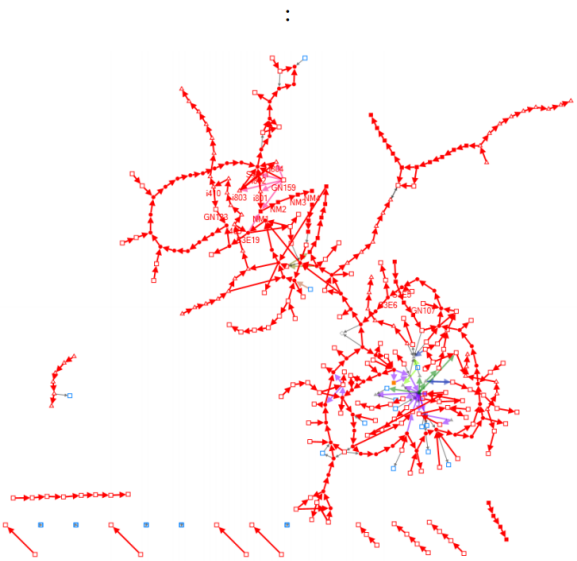


Figure 4 Ruppel's model showing a transmedia network of media edges and connections [25]

A different approach to modelling could be to capture when the media of a transmedia story is released. This approach is taken by Espen Aarseth, who uses synchronicity as a parameter with which to categorise transmedia experiences depending on when they are published relative to each other, including synchronous experiences that release content at similar times, and asynchronous experiences that release content sequentially [102]. Similarly, Philips distinguishes between loose and tight coupling in transmedia stories [55]. Franchises includes loosely coupled media that can be experienced in isolation, whereas tightly coupled experiences have media that are dependent on the rest of the experience in some way. Taking these theories as inspiration, Jai E. Jung et al developed a method [103] whereby media inside a transmedia story could be compared to each other to determine their dependency e.g. prequels, that are stories dependent on a pre-existing story, but fictionally occur before that pre-existing story. The authors argue this underlying theory can allow for taxonomies to form by analysing how transmedia stories, or "ecosystems" as they call them, organise their media. Further, they make the claim that this information can used to improve recommender systems, by recommending franchises like *Star Wars* for example, because the structure of dependency is desirable. Again, this is another element of a transmedia story structure that can be analysed and used effectively to identify categories, but much of the work discussed previously, as well as other potentially insightful structural features as we shall see later, remain ignored.

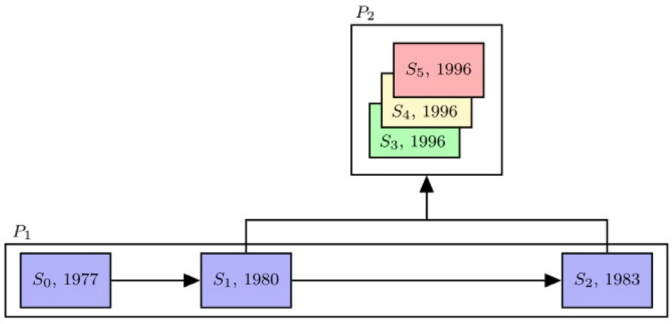


Figure 5 Jung et a's model, illustrating dependency of different transmedia stories [103]

Another way to gain an understanding of the structure of transmedia stories is analysing the design documents made by the authors themselves. Such documents provide the author and the development team with a blueprint that can be referred to and built upon during the development phase.

2.2.3.1 Design Documents

Depending on the type of experience, different aspects of the game are focused on as the building blocks of the document such as channel, story or audience.

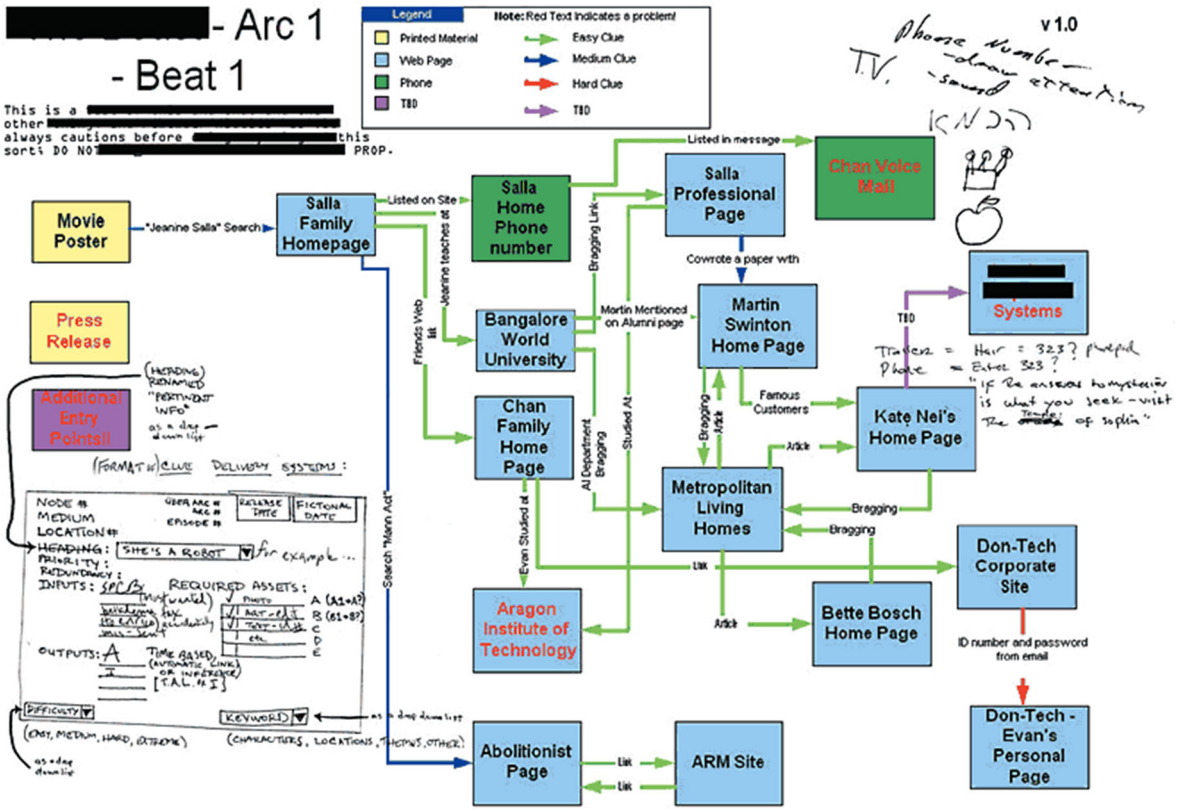


Figure 6 The Beast ARG design chart, showing media and the relationships between them in terms of clue difficulty [104]

One example is the design document for the self-proclaimed first ARG, *The Beast* (Microsoft, 2001). The Beast's design document includes the channels that were used and how they linked together. There is a mix of direct connections between channels and more abstract connections, e.g., an article on a website vs the player having to search terms in order to progress. Though there is no representation of how channels change over time, the clues included within the content of the channels are categorised on their difficulty.

The document produced for *Perplex City* (Mind Candy, 2007) reflects the previous approach, but includes more detail on what is needed for players to migrate from one channel to another.

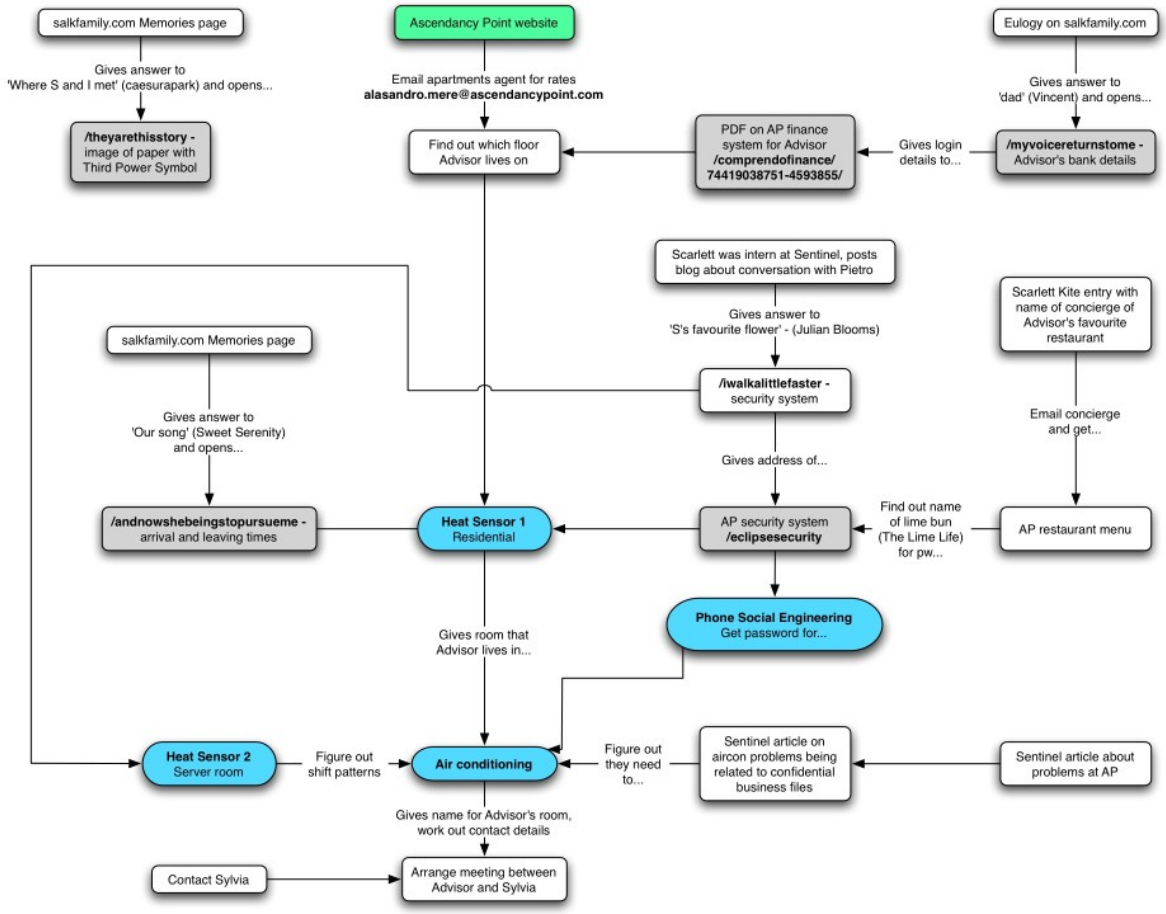


Figure 7 Perplex City ARG design chart, showing media and the relationships between them [104]

The *Metacortechs* (Project Mu ,2003) document takes a different approach, by just showing the channels, the links between them, and at which point in time channels go live without showing how the channels update over time.

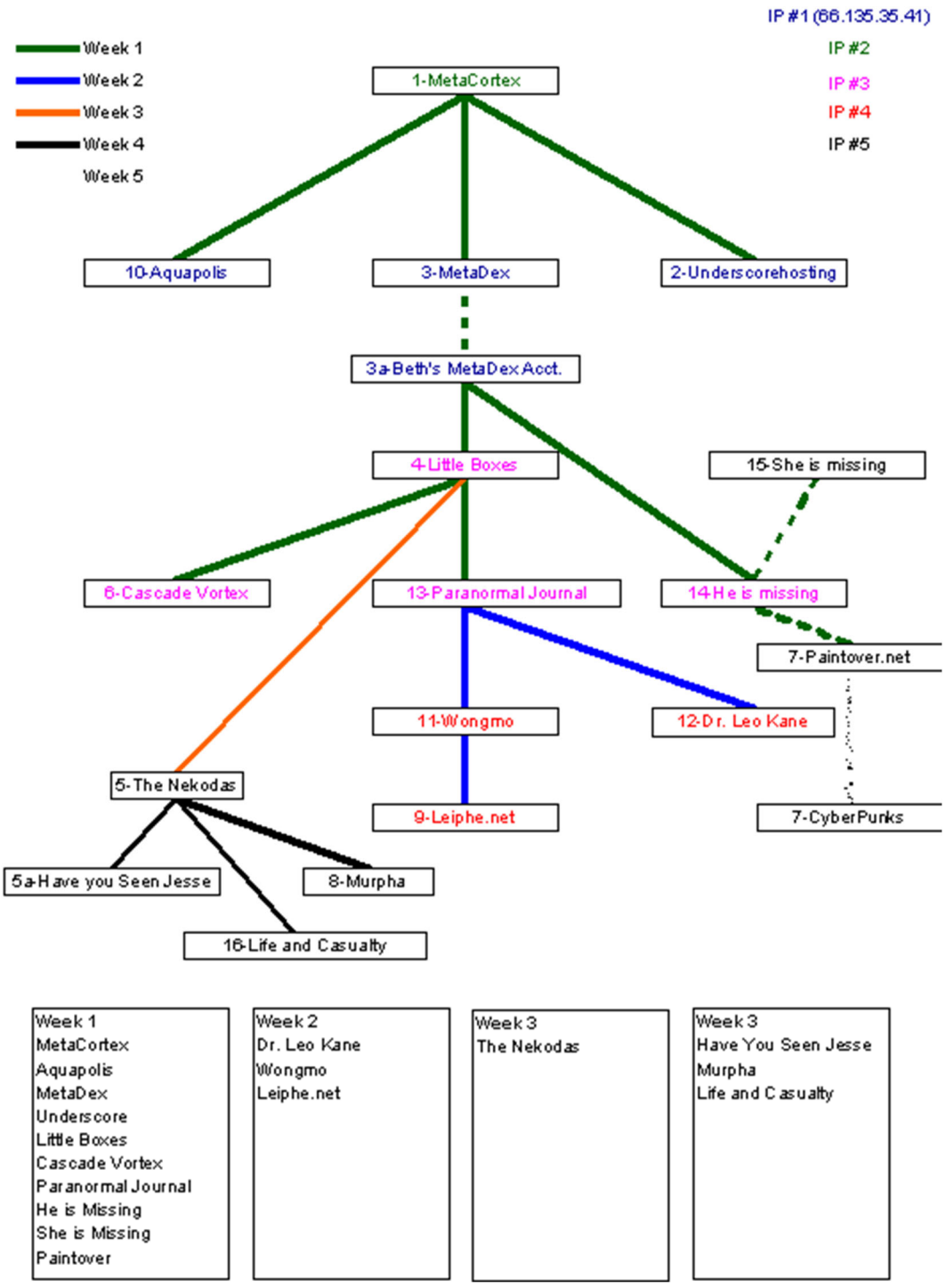


Figure 8 Metacortechs ARG design chart, showing media and links that become live over time [104]

2.2.3.2 Media Preservation

The process of media preservation involves using interdisciplinary methodologies in an effort to preserve media artefacts such as those exhibiting historical or cultural significance. A foundational part of this process is describing exactly what the experience is, and how its content was structured. Often, these digital experiences use multiple media channels, meaning

preservationists are often concerned with many of the same problems faced in this thesis. One example being the preservation of Web content. The Web, a series of connected websites each communicating information in various media, has been an area of popular interest in the past decade with preservationists. It is impossible to preserve the entirety of the Web due to its size, but we may want to preserve a series of websites that are culturally important. Schneider and Foot call this series of websites a “web sphere” [105]. Web spheres are conceptualised as ‘not simply a collection of websites, but as a hyperlinked set of dynamically-defined digital resources that span multiple websites and are deemed relevant, or related, to a central theme or “object”. The approach of web sphere analysis begins with an identification of websites related to the theme or object, their hyperlinked context, their periodicity and various ‘notes’ which create the metadata for the web sphere. It is therefore a subjective exercise in deciding what content exists inside the web sphere, and decisions have to be made to cut off links to web pages which transcend the sphere.

When the object of preservation is not Web based, identifying the sphere containing all content that requires preservation is more straightforward, but other issues such as those surrounding ephemerality arise. One such example is the preservation of games or virtual worlds. In a report by McDonough et al. on ‘Preserving Virtual Worlds’ [106] the difficulties of capturing the essence of Second Life (Linden Lab, 2003), a massive multiplayer video game, was identified. They found that whilst they could retrieve the scripts and 3D model data of the game, they were just saving a ghost town without knowing what the space was used for. As they put it, “the value and meaning of a virtual world is primarily derived from the actions and interactions of its players” [106].

Marchiori describes the process of preserving ephemeral media and performance art [107]. The process begins by analysing the work, or ‘breaking it up’. The first step is describing the work to discover what is there, identifying the structure of the work and explaining its operational processes, or its primary and natural subject matter. This description and analysis is started by converting the work from secondary modelling systems (the artworks specificity) into natural language, e.g. describing a film. Following this, secondary and tertiary objects, must be identified to understand the works connotative meanings, interpretation and socio-cultural context. For more interactive works, information such as typical and potential user journeys, space and time considerations, participation and any intercommunication between users is also seen to be important.

2.2.4 Summary of Section

In this section, I have explored existing transmedia literature, highlighting some of the many fields it involves and subjects it covers. I then looked at research that focuses on identifying the structure of transmedia stories using what could be described as reductionist techniques, aimed at drawing boxes around specific transmedia phenomena and analysing what they can tell us and how they relate to each other. However, I pointed out the various flaws associated with these approaches, summarised in the table below.

Table 1 Summary of different approaches to understand transmedia story structure

Source	**Affordances**	**Limitations**
Ciancia [26] & Gambarato [100]	• High level understanding • Thought-provoking questions that can lead to useful insights	• Typically written accounts • Time-consuming • Difficult to compare large groups of stories
de Beer et al. [27]	• Media agnostic • Differentiate between narrative and ludic components • Components are chunks that can be quantified, allowing comparison of large groups of stories	• Focuses on ARGs • Limited variation of components • Difficult to interpret
Van der Kaa, Op den Buysch [101]	• Quantitative data can be extracted • Breaks transmedia stories into scenes and beats	• Focuses on audience engagement • Binary yes/no interaction methodology • Ignores evolution of a media channel
Stanescu [24]	• Ease of use • Effective for single-player non-linear storytelling	• Single-player focused • Primarily models choice • Limited information on media
Ruppel [25]	• Quantitative data can be extracted • Visualisations provide interesting insight into structure of a transmedia network	• Focuses on nodes and connections • Limited information on media

		• Primarily ARG focused
Aarseth [102]	• Insight into relative release schedules	• Focuses on franchises • Focuses on synchronicity
Philips [55]	• Insight into relationship between media dependency and type of transmedia	• Focuses on dependency • Dependency highly subjective
Jung et al. [103]	• Insight into relationship between media dependency and type of transmedia • Quantitative data can be extracted • Can analyse differences between transmedia stories by considering their dependency and release schedules	• Focuses on dependency and schedule of media • Limited examples provided • Focuses on story rather than user journey
The Beast chart [104]	• Easy to understand high level structure of the media involved • Information on connections between media • Media is grouped	• Focused on ARG • Little information on how media changes over time • Little information on release schedule
Perplex City chart [104]	• Easy to understand high level structure of the media involved • Detailed description of links • Some detail on what is expected of the audience	• Focused on ARG • Little information on how media changes over time • Little information on release schedule
Metacortechs chart [104]	• Some information on release schedule • Easy to understand high level structure of the media involved	• Little information on links • No information about content of media • No information on what the media actually is

Much of the work described in this section can be described as taking a structuralist approach to research. This concept was introduced in the last chapter, and will be the subject of focus in the start of the next section.

2.3 Structuralism and Semiotics

In 1928, Vladmir Propp published his *Morphology of the Folktale*, but due to the political climate at the time, it was not translated outside of Russia and therefore received little international recognition. Though after some years, its translation fuelled an increased interest in the structural analyses of literature [22]. In the book, Propp analysed a number of Russian fairy tales and employed what was thought of as a "scientific" approach to folklore analysis. By reading the fairy tales, recording their structure and comparing results, Propp "uncovered" thirty-one "functions" based on the actions of the characters, such as "the hero is married and ascends the throne" [22]. These functions, when ordered in a specific way, accounted for all the variation in the fairy tales that were analysed, and made up a finite number of "types". Each fairy tale could only belong to one type, according to the structure of their functions. The seemingly scientific approach was alluring to French theorists when the text eventually reached them years later, and served as one of the pillars of a new philosophical movement, structuralism.

Structuralism is a philosophy that suggests culture can be best understood through the identification of abstract structures that are made up of relationships of differentiated objects. Structuralism was heavily influenced not only by Propp, but also by Ferdinand de Saussure, Saussure conducted work on semiotics, a branch of linguistics, that can be best understood as a methodology emerging in large part from Saussure's work.

In his work on the study of existing conventional communicated systems, or semiotics, Saussure took a bold approach in his study of language as a system. At the foundation of his theory, Saussure argued that the relationship between a word and the thing that word refers to is not only arbitrary, but differential to other words that describe different things [108]. A signifier could be the word "book" and the signified would be the concept of the physical object we understand to be a book. The consequence of the arbitrary relationship between signifier and signified suggests that there is never a "natural" connection between the two. In Saussure's terms, the "parole" or a spoken word, phrase, or basic constituent such as the written word 'tree' has no real relationship with the real-world object of the tree, but rather the word itself is dependent on other words in the "langue", or the structural system of language. The word "tree" describes something that other words do not. Saussure elaborates this point when he explains: "Concepts are purely differential and defined not by their positive content but negatively by their relations

with the other terms of the system. Their most precise characteristic is in being what the others are not" [108]. Continuing to use words as the unit of signifier, we can identify where in language the word "book" exists. We could cluster it with synonyms e.g., tome, lexicon, volume etc., or we could identify other words that are associated in other ways in the language. Applying this to non-language-based signifiers, signs are also understood as part of their contextual structure, where meaning can change for common signs in different situations, e.g., a red light means stop at a traffic light, but can mean "on air" for a radio station.

The movement known as structuralism applied this same concept to cultural objects such as texts. This approach suggested that individual texts, which Saussure called parole in the case of language, exist within an underlying structure, the langue in language, that consists of other texts. From this foundation, structuralism began to form its own identity. In his essay *The Structuralist Activity*, Roland Barthes explicates the idea of structuralism as an evolving practice, away from its formative predecessor ideas, in focusing more attention to the nature of the object or text. In it, he states that:

> "The goal of all structuralist activity, whether reflexive or poetic, is to reconstruct an "object" in such a way as to manifest thereby the rules of functioning (the "functions") of this object. Structure is therefore actually a simulacrum of the object, but a directed, interested simulacrum, since the imitated object makes something appear which remained invisible, or if one prefers, unintelligible in the natural object. Structural man takes the real, decomposes it, then recomposes it" [19]

In other words, the structuralist practice involves decomposing an object or set of objects like cultural texts, and recreating a new and separate skeleton or fundamental virtual object by identifying the "units" that make up the observed objects. A keen example of this is seen in the work of Lévi Strauss in his structural analysis of the Oedipus myth, where he argues that the skeleton text, or the fundamental structure of meaning, emerges from the analysis of various versions of the myth that exist trans-culturally [109]. Within this practice, there exists two different approaches; the syntagmatic and paradigmatic. The syntagmatic approach seeks to reveal the "chronological order of the linear sequence of elements in the text", whereas the paradigmatic approach "seeks to describe the pattern (usually based upon an a priori binary principle of opposition)", such as male/female, life/death [22].

The brief dominance of structuralism was brought to an abrupt end, when in 1965 at a lecture conducted as part of a structuralism conference that sought to progress the philosophy as a scientific endeavour, Jacques Derrida ironically laid the foundation for critical thought that sought to break the objectivity claims made by structuralism, which later led to

deconstructionism. Derrida criticised the assumption that structures were rigid, fixed from the point of their origin. In his words:

> Thus it has always been thought that the center, which is by definition unique, constituted that very thing within a structure which governs the structure, while escaping structurality. This is why classical thought concerning structure could say that the center is, paradoxically, within the structure and outside it. [21]

He later goes on to deepen this argument to suggest that the signifier-signified relationship is illusionary because of the decentralized nature of the 'centre' in that because we identify signifiers negatively, that is to say in relation to other signifiers, signifiers can only ever signify other signifiers resulting in an endless loop in search of meaning. He states:

> when everything became a system where the central signified, the original or transcendental signified, is never absolutely present outside a system of differences. The absence of the transcendental signified extends the domain and the interplay of signification ad infinitum. [21]

The illusion of the types of imperative statements permissible by Saussure and indeed structuralism is therefore, at least in Derrida's mind, destroyed. Deciding which is the "correct" view is a deeply philosophical question that at present I believe to be unanswered. I will however repeat what I said in the introduction, that structuralist methodology is often the right choice for certain activities, such as the type of classification I aim to achieve in this thesis. That is not to say that deconstructionism or any other post-structuralist methodology is wrong, they are just not ones that I believe would prove as useful in what I aim to achieve.

With the understanding that structuralist practice produces rigid generalisations and cannot claim empiricism, the work conducted in this thesis takes inspiration from structuralist thought, specifically the syntagmatic approach. I aim to describe the chronological order of events in transmedia stories or what can be called describing the experience. It will undoubtedly be the case that something will be lost in this process, but structuralism provides us with the necessary discrete boundaries that will aid in answering the research questions.

2.3.1 Section Conclusion

In this section, I introduced the philosophical movement known as structuralism, and looked at its affordances and major pitfalls, as identified by Derrida. Although it can be said that structuralism as a movement has fallen out of fashion, much of the work conducted was adopted in the latter

discipline of narratology, the study of narrative, whose name was coined by Tzvetan Todorov in an effort to plant the seed for a formal field of study [110]. Narratology is full of structuralist thinking regarding narrative, and can provide us with some of the necessary theory required for this research, and is the topic for the next section.

2.4 Narrative and Narratology

Positioned as a discipline of humanities, narratology is a collection of many theories of narrative texts that tell a story. Narratology has picked up many tools and theories throughout its history, particularly from structuralism at the inception of it as a discipline. Historical theories of narrative that were previously described as Russian formalist such as Propps *Morphology of the Folktale* have been adopted as early narratology. The tools provided by narratology can help understand "the nature of literary objects and their parts" [111], how we process narratives and their underlying structures. Although historically focusing on written works [111], narratology can provide us with a foundation for how transmedia stories can be understood.

2.4.1 Three Layers of Narrative

A common practice in narratology is the layering of the word object of study itself. This can be seen as early as Aristotle in his Poetics, where he decomposes a tragedy into its constituent parts such as mythos, the arrangement of incidents [112]. Similarly, Tomashevskij distinguishes between the fabula, a series of chronological events in a fictional world, and sjuzhet, the representation of fabula in a particular way [113]. Although not a universal law of narrative, this divide became foundational for many narratologists, with an additional term being employed by some such as Mieke Bal to describe the physical manifestation of sjuzhet, called text [111].

2.4.2 Ordering

Typically, in order for a story to exist, there needs to be a selection of events from a fabula that is arranged into an order. A major component of this arrangement, and one seen as essential for narrativity by some [114], is time. Tomashevskij distinguishes between "hypothetical time", where the events take place within the fictional world, and narrative time, defined by how long it takes to consume the text in real time or the "size of the work" [115]. The arrangement then is the selection of events from the hypothetical time placed somewhere in the story time. An additional element of time we might consider related to the presentation of the story is "narrating time", which is the narrators position in relation to the story [114]. These three elements are played with to create different artistic effects e.g., flashbacks. An apt example of

how these three definitions can be used is the film *Momento* (Summit Entertainment). In the film, the audience follows the life of Leonard who has anterograde amnesia. Some of the scenes in the film are shown in reverse order, starting with a later date in Leonard's life, proceeding to an earlier one. Here, the hypothetical time includes all the events that happened to Leonard in the fictional world in chronological order, as they would in real life, but the audience is made to feel they themselves are suffering with memory problems by watching some of the scenes in reverse hypothetical chronological order.

The selection of events can also be grouped according to their function in the story. One of the earliest examples of this can be seen in 335 BC, when Aristotle famously explained how a story can be split into a three-act structure [112], the beginning, middle and end. Building upon this, Gustav Freytag developed what is known as Freytag's pyramid, or triangle [116]. This triangle is made up of five parts, that when put together in this particular order, make up the story. The first part of the triangle is exposition, where the premise is set up, and the fictional world and main characters are introduced. The next part, rising action, includes events that become increasingly dramatic until the third part, the climax, is reached. In the climax, the conflict or main area of contention reaches its peak, such as a battle between the hero and villain. The fourth part, falling action, includes the events proceeding the climax, such as the aftermath of the battle. The final set of events is the resolution, and is the ending of the story where loose ends are tied and the audience discover the final outcome of the characters. In a similar way, Tzvetan Todorov's five step order describes a method for storytelling; an equilibrium in the fictional world where there is happiness, a disruption to this equilibrium that changes the world, a realisation by the characters that something needs to be done, a restoration where the characters attempt to repair the damage of the disruption, and finally a re-establishment of the equilibrium [117].

Another way events of a story can be ordered is using the first two of Barthe's "five codes" [118]. The first code, the hermeneutic code, captures moments or events in the story that are not fully explained to the audience. These are used as tools to keep the audience interested and thinking about the possibilities that could occur, for example in a detective story we might see a murder at the beginning without seeing the face of the perpetrator. Typically, the enigma should be present for as long as possible in order to captivate the audience. Next, the proairetic code includes events that seek to build suspense and anticipation, e.g., the audience anticipate a killing when a gunslinger draws their gun on an adversary. Suspense is created by action, rather than an enigma presented in the first code.

2.4.3 Storyworlds and World Building

The Lord of the Rings (JRR Tolkien) film and book series are clearly a set of stories selected from the events that took place in the fictional world of Middle Earth. However, what of the appendices of the books, or the encyclopaedia books that do not describe events? They might describe a character, their personality and characteristics, or give detail on what Middle Earth looks like. Such content would not neatly fit into our definition of story. We may wish to import language developed by Seymour Chatman to account for these situations. Chatman differentiates between kernels, important events in the story, and satellites that are subsidiary, filling in the gaps and if removed would not affect the comprehension of the story [119]. In our example, the book series would be kernels and the appendices and encyclopaedic books would be satellites.

A different concept that can be borrowed for this issue is the "storyworld", an idea detailed by Marie Laure Ryan in the early 2000s when such situations as we find ourselves here were occurring more frequently in the entertainment space. A storyworld is a fictional world, but unlike fabula is not defined by the chronology of events within it. Instead, Ryan proposed three properties that can be used to describe the aspects of storyworld any given text focuses on [48]. These properties are spatial, temporal and logical. The spatial property includes a fictional world that is populated with characters and objects, the temporal property includes the state changes to the fictional world caused by events of actions and the logical property includes the linking of events that cause the change of state and reveal a network of goals, plans and emotions. With these terms, we can simply say that encyclopaedic Lord of the Rings book is a text that describes the spatial and or temporal aspects of the storyworld. Indeed, Ryan suggests that different narratives focus on different properties, with science fiction and fantasy "over fulfilling" the spatial property with detailed descriptions of the storyworld, thrillers and adventure stories focusing on the temporal property with "the demand of action and changes of state", and crime stories focusing on the logical property. Building out any one of these dimensions can be called the act of world building, and can occur to varying degrees depending on what the writers, producers and developers want to achieve for their audiences.

Sometimes, storyworlds are presented in different media. After the film releases of *The Lord of the Rings*, video games such as *LotR: War in the North* were released, providing a different story to that of the films, but set in the same fictional world. This very practice is one of the core principles of transmedia storytelling for some, such as Carlos Scolari who sees this as "a particular narrative structure" [43], that presents different stories of the same storyworld on different media. Similarly, Gambarato argues this is a key characteristic of transmedia storytelling, where

"narratives include key story information over a variety of platforms, each used for what it does best; multiple entry points into the storyworld" [100].

In a similar vein to Ryan, Lisbeth Klastrup and Susana Tosca define a transmedia storyworld as follows:

> Transmedial worlds are abstract content systems from which a repertoire of fictional stories and characters can be actualized or derived across a variety of media forms. What characterises a transmedial world is that audience and designers share a mental image of the "worldness" (a number of distinguishing features of its universe). The idea of a specific world's worldness mostly originates from the first version of the world presented, but can be elaborated and changed over time. Quite often the world has a cult (fan) following across media as well. [120]

They assert that the three core principles of transmedia worlds are "mythos", "topos" and "ethos" [120]. Mythos includes the events, characters and stories of the world, topos is the setting, themes and physical laws of the world and ethos relates to the ethical and moral code of the word and the typical behaviour of characters. Here, we can see clear similarities to the spatial, temporal and logical dimensions of Ryan's storyworld definition.

Transmedia world building is the main focus of what Mark Wolf calls "world-based franchises" [121], that aim to create mental constructions of fictional worlds inside the minds of the audience. Wolf explicates world-based transmedia franchises as:

> A place to be vicariously entered, an object of exploration and speculation, and refuge from the trials and troubles of the world in which we actually live. It is a virtual place to which fans keep returning, more than a story, and something they can often see, hear and even interact with, depending on the medium used to encounter it [121]

He argues that the mental construction we have of fictional worlds is sometimes similar to the construct we have of real places we have not visited in our lives [121]. In both cases, we learn of the world or place through multiple media rather than real experience. With fictional worlds, he argues that the multiple perspectives and media come together to create a convincing illusion of an actual world that we often are very knowledgeable about. For example, many fans of the popular *Star Wars* franchise are so intimately familiar with the urban, rural, militaristic, domestic, public and private aspects of the fictional world that they do not struggle to imagine what it is like to live there. The multiple interpretations and styles invoked as a result of the multiple media used creates a similar effect seen in the real world, where different people, cultures and societies view the world with different lenses.

Wolf questions how these transmedia worlds are constructed, how the channels come together to change the construct of the world in our minds, the affordances and limitations of certain strategies and how the perception of the fictional world differs from person to person [121]. This is an active area of research that will require significant interdisciplinary work to find specific answers to. However, it is not the first attempt to understand storyworld mental constructions in the context of transmedia.

Jan-Noel Thon identifies that many narratological concepts such as world building apply regardless of the medium being analysed, but they do not always apply in exactly the same way in each medium. He argues that although a book, film and a game presents a fictional world, "these worlds differ in significant ways that cannot and should not be reduced to "idiosyncrasies of individual texts" [91]. In his analysis of the *Warcraft* (Activision Blizzard) franchise, Thon explores how the world of Azeroth is presented in videos games as opposed to other media in the franchise. He finds similarly to Wolf that indeed, fictional worlds are mental constructions inside the minds of audiences, made up of all the information presented to them. However, this mental construction is further added to and complicated by video games. In *World of Warcraft*, a popular MMO in the franchise, so called "fictional truths" about the world are made clear to players in the form of text-rich quests. Though the way in which these quests are complete, the exact journey through the landscape and the enemies faced for example, will not be the same from player to player or session to session. In fact, many quests can be repeated, enabling players to defeat important character figures many times over. Ludic events, such as a player running using their custom avatar to the boss temple and casting spells to defeat the boss, translates to the narrative event of a group consisting of Azeroth's greatest heroes assembling to defeat the tyrant Lich King (one of the main protagonists in the world). Thon argues this discord is one method whereby games present the story world to the players, with neither the ludic or narrative events being "genuine" [91]. In any case, it seems reasonable to assume that when recalling events of the fictional world, players do not believe their own personal journey is included, but rather accept the generic concept of a hero defeating the enemy.

2.4.4 Summary

In this section, I have presented various theories from narratology that provide additional language that can be used to describe transmedia storytelling phenomenon.

Up to this point, I have used what I call ad-hoc category nouns to denote different types of transmedia storytelling, such as franchises, escape rooms and ARGs etc., but I have yet to explore

in detail the concept of classification. The next section will explore these ideas in more detail, first by considering genre generally, and then by looking at how it is formed and used in mono-media.

2.5 Genres and Classification

Originating from the French and Latin word for class, genre is a widely used term to describe a category of something. Similarly to the categorisation of flora and fauna in biology, genre is used in literary theory to describe specimens of text [122]. French formalism and structuralism also makes reference to genre categorisation being a scientific process, with Propp using the analogy of botany [22]. Using scientific analogies is misleading because genres and the processes that shape them cannot be compared to the scientific method. As Feuer argues, "A genre is ultimately an abstract conception rather than something that exists empirically in the world" [123]. What is important to note here is that, similarly to narratology, no one theory of genre is correct. Various theories focus on different aspects of a work for different functions and uses; allowing the identification of common story structures, characters, delivery methods and presentation. These common features do not need to meet a minimum number of occurrences for a genre to form. Inferences can be made on a small group of works to decide what a typical work of that genre might look like. This concept is neatly encapsulated in philosopher Karl Poppers adage on swans: "No matter how many instances of white swans we have observed, this does not justify the conclusion that all swans are white" [124].

In his seminal analyses of the literary genre the fantastic, Tzvetan Todorov identifies some of the considerations that should be made when constructing or analysing genres. Building upon the last idea that genres are neither true or correct, Todorov presents the idea that genres are probabilistic in nature:

> There is no necessity that a work faithfully incarnate its genre, there is only a probability that it will do so. Which comes down to saying that no observation of works can strictly confirm on invalidate a theory of genres … works need not coincide with categories, which have merely a constructed existence; a work can, for example, manifest more than one category, more than one genre [20]

In addition, he argues against the point that individuality of texts nullifies the concept of genre, because all literary work has history, context and previous texts from which each text is born. Each new text builds upon this universe of literature, both depending on them and changing them at the same time. Consequently, we can conduct genre analyses with the point of view of how a text sits within a genre and conforms to it, or how it informs and updates the genre.

The elements or units that act as the building blocks for determining a genre depends on the characteristics and point of view chosen. For example, Northrop Frye's classification that Todorov uses as an example, classifies texts based on; the relation between the hero of the story and the audience, the laws of nature, hero archetypes, the delivery method and oppositions. We might however decide to classify texts by their theme, duration, or fictional time in which they take place. In this space, Todorov invokes the argument made by Tomashevky that the characteristics used can be determined by where we are on the ladder of genres:

> Works are divided into large classes which are subdivided into types and species. In this way, moving down the ladder of genres, we move from abstract classes to concrete historical distinctions (the poem by Byron, the short story by Chekhov, the novel by Balzac, the religious ode, proletarian poetry) and even to specific works. [20]

Although it is not clear what these abstract classes are and how we determine what characteristics belong to them, Todorov comments that we can at least be confident in identifying four types of genre. The first two types are historical or abstract, with historical genres being ones we have identified in the wild and abstract genres emerging from theory without being observed in a work. The second two types, elementary and complex, are determined by the number of characteristics identifying a genre: "The first would be defined by the presence or absence of a single characteristic … the second, by the coexistence of several characteristics" [20]. A consideration that cannot be ignored is made by Robert Hodge and Gunther Kress that as time progresses, historical genres change not only with each new work, but also "so far as a social group declares and enforces the rules that constitute them" [125]. Echoing this concept, Frye, theorises that as society progresses, the "modes" that govern genre defining characteristics become more or less popular, circling back around every so often [126].

With these theories in mind, we have to ask ourselves why classify works in the first place? The answer to this depends on how and why they were formed. For example, researchers can use them to compare works for analyses, advertisers can use them to give the audience some expectation of what a product will be like, and audiences can use them when they recommend works to others. Carolyn Miller, who defines genre based not on its form, but on the action or outcome it accomplishes, concludes that: "For the critic, genres can serve both as an index to cultural patterns and as tools for exploring the achievements of particular speakers and writers; for the student, genres serve as keys to understanding how to participate in the actions of a community" [127].

This leads to one of the aims in this thesis, where classification is conducted not for objective truth, but for use. The next sections provide some examples of how genres are used in mono-media.

2.5.1 Film and Television

Altman proposed a semantic/syntactic approach when defining genre for films [128]. The semantic aspect is concerned with things such as characters, props, setting, camera angles and music etc. For example, in a western, the audience expects to see cowboy characters and horses, in a desert type setting with a certain style of music. The syntactic aspect is concerned with the relationships between the elements stated in the semantic aspect. Taking the western example, the genre commonly involves cowboys fighting against the native Americans and law enforcement. In some cases, common elements appear in two different films which have a different genre. Such films should be analysed syntactically to determine how those elements are portrayed, for example how the alien is portrayed in *The Thing* Vs *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (horror vs sci-fi).

In his conception of the Western genre in television, Stuart Hall identifies “codes” [56], that are encoded from the content creators and decoded by the audience including morality of the characters, distinction between villain and hero, iconography, violent shoot-out climax, chases, showdowns etc. Hall argues:

> what is more, these ’rules of encoding' were so diffused, so symmetrically shared as between producer and audience, that the 'message' was likely to be decoded in a manner highly symmetrical to that in which it had been encoded. This reciprocity of codes is, indeed, precisely what is entailed in the notion of stylization or 'conventionalization', and the presence of such reciprocal codes is, of course, what defines or makes possible the existence of a genre. [56]

David Bordwell makes a similar analogy, with that of a contract, between the filmmaker and the audience. According to Bordwelll, this contract consists of clauses that promise something new based on something the audience is familiar with. He argues there is a fine interplay between convention and innovation, that is central to keeping the audience interested.

2.5.2 Video Games

In *The Medium of the Video Game*, Mark Wolf suggests that whilst there is some overlap with the word genre in literary and film usage, how it is used in video games is substantially different. He writes:

> Video game genre study differs markedly from literary or film genre study due to the direct and active participation of the audience, through the surrogate player-character who acts within the game's diegetic world, taking part in the central conflict of the game's narrative. [129]

For example, a genre of video games is first person shooter, that makes no reference to the story, themes or characters but rather refers to the way in which the game is played and the perspective of the camera. Recognising this varied usage, Dominic Arsenault asks what this controversial and problematic word is even doing in the realm of video games, concluding that tradition is to blame [130]. So, if we are to continue using this word for games, the question becomes: what characteristics are important for distinguishing between genres? Wolf argues that the "interaction required by the games primary objective" [129], or how the player controls the game and navigates the virtual world, should be a defining characteristic for determining game genres as opposed to exclusively iconographic or thematic classification. We cannot however forget about the influence other mono-media has had on games. Thomas Apperley argues that instead of scrapping previous notions of genre, games should adopt and expand upon pre-existing genres using the characteristics of the form [131]. This, as Apperley argues, has the ability to "mark the unique function and role of video games within contemporary media" [131]. This very notion is illustrated in work conducted by Chad Habel and Ben Kooyman on gameplay design in survival horror games [132]. In their work, they sought to analyse how themes and gameplay mechanics in survival horror games are tightly coupled with the horror genre in film, such as how interactivity is manipulated to produce feelings of dread and panic.

2.5.2.1 Developing Game Taxonomies

There have been several attempts in the past to categorise games using different techniques. Aarseth et al. created a typology of games using fifteen dimensions that each describe a certain characteristic of gameplay [133]. These dimensions were grouped according to their theme; space, time, player-structure, control and rules. Some dimensions cover the perspective of the camera, such as the "omni-present" dimension that exists in games such as chess and football, where the player is able to view and observe the entire arena of play. Other dimensions consider the number of players, or the "savability" of the game. The authors suggest that by attaining

dimensional values from a selection of games, a classification emerges that allows differences and similarities to be identified using the dimensions as a tool. They also argue that dimensional values could be changed to create new categories of games that do not currently exist [133].

A similar classification framework was developed by Craig Lindley. Lindley advocates for orthogonal taxonomies, rather than a "simple hierarchical system of categories and subcategories" [134]. He gives the example of games that can be released on different platforms with the same gameplay patterns associated with what many call genres. For example, a real time strategy game (RTS) can be either on PC or mobile, with the RTS gameplay patterns applying irrespective of what platform the game is played on. Lindley begins by illustrating a triangle, with "simulation", "ludic" and "narrative" in each corner. He then takes a sample of games and plots them inside the triangle, moving them closer or further away from each corner depending on whether they exhibit those features. Lindley then progressively shows how this triangle can be expanded, first in three dimensions and then as a "continuum", with corners and faces containing potential game features such as gambling, fiction, non-fiction, physical and virtual.

Providing a classification that digs deeper into the basic constituents of games, Djaouti et al "discover" a number of "game bricks", units of computer games that represent the actions of the player such as "Avoid", "Destroy" or "Shoot" etc [135]. When put together in various combinations, they are defined as "metabricks", and can include a large number of total combinations. They argue that certain metabricks have been found very often in their sample of games, but often implement the metabricks in different ways. This approach leads to a method of game classification, by finding which bricks a sample of games use and comparing them against each other, enabling them to "minimize the subjectivity introduced during the analysis of videogames".

Many of the approaches discussed in this section take a strong structuralist approach in their classification of games, but as mentioned previously, this is not the only avenue one could take. An alternate method to classifying games is presented by Talan Memmott. Memmott argues: "Rather than work from a model that hopes for a close reading through the abstraction of words from their media-rich environment, this paper proposes that critics and readers take a more choragraphic (to borrow a term from Gregory Ulmer) approach to reading that observes the entirety of a work" [136], not focusing on any one area of a work in particular, but focusing on how the work as a whole presents its own unique art. However, this is just another approach, and not necessarily a better one, contrary to what Memmott suggests. The disadvantage of subjective interpretation of this kind is that for the purposes of classification, there is little foundation to make claims about how works are similar or dissimilar from each other beyond the subjective

interpretations of the critic. With the other methods of classification presented here, there is indeed still some level of interpretation when it comes to applying the model used, but this is reduced and mitigated by the rules of the model itself.

2.5.3 Summary

In this section, I have explored the structuralist concept of genre and how it is used in television, film and games. I have demonstrated that genres can form based on a variety of characteristics such as; structure and form, cultural, thematic or the behaviour of characters. Consequently, genres are not something that exist objectively. Instead, they exist to provide a useful way for us to distinguish between different kinds of objects.

Although here the word genre is utilised, much of the theory is applicable to all levels of classification. Though as we have seen, genre can mean a specific type of classification to some fields, such as semantic oriented classification in films or ludic mechanic and pattern focused as in games. Consequently, I will continue to use the word categories to describe the transmedia stories that exist within the classification I present later in this thesis.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has provided the theoretical underpinnings of the work conducted in this thesis. I began by consider the definition of transmedia storytelling, illustrating that is it a contentious and often broad term that encompasses many different types of storytelling. I have also introduced much syntax and many tools from various fields that will be utilised in this thesis to achieve the goal of answering the research questions, such as the conception of media, participation and interactivity, genre (classification), and various narratological language. I provided Jenkins' seven broad principles of transmedia storytelling before moving onto various niches of transmedia storytelling research. I then moved onto related work, exploring previous endeavours that aimed to reveal transmedia storytelling structures.

The general work presented in this chapter such as definitions associated with transmedia storytelling and Jenkins' seven principles provides not only context and wide-reaching frameworks for thinking about transmedia storytelling, but syntax that will be used later in this thesis. We could use some of these principles as focal tools to analyse and even categorise transmedia stories, by matching stories that world build in similar ways, have the same media or implement participation similarly. However, this approach lacks the granularity I argue is required in order to confidently classify transmedia stories. I believe in order to answer the research questions of this

thesis, and uncover structural elements in structuralist fashion, we need to go deeper and uncover more fundamental aspects of transmedia storytelling.

To this end, there is much to gain from the classification work done in the area of games, one of which being that structuralist practice, the act of breaking games down to features and fundamental units, in the field is being utilised to some degree of success. Although the fundamental method of decomposition is transferable to transmedia storytelling, much game classification does not focus on how the game is communicated to the player in terms of media. If we are to use similar methods for transmedia storytelling, it is essential we appreciate which media is being used, how the media potentially evolves over time and the relationships between them. As I explored in this chapter, similar work has been done in a transmedia storytelling context, with various models and syntax created that aim to describe stories and reveal structure. Though as mentioned earlier, these insightful endeavours do not provide the necessary information needed to compare all types of transmedia; from east to west coast, or portmanteau to franchise, and everything in between.

In the next chapter, I introduce a transmedia storytelling model that builds upon previous work by enabling rapid structural descriptions of transmedia stories and comparisons to be made between them.

Chapter 3 The Model

In chapter two, several attempts at describing structural features of transmedia stories by others was introduced. It was argued that these attempts miss describing key structural functions that are required for both effective analyses and categorisation of transmedia stories. In order to achieve these objectives, I argue we must understand what media is used, how they evolve over time and how they relate to each other. In this chapter, I present the Model for Ordering Transmedia Stories (MOTS); a model that is able to describe both verbally and visually the various ways transmedia stories organise their media to tell stories. The end result allows for informed analyses of such stories, and allows for key differences between them to be compared.

The chapter begins by describing the methodology that was employed to achieve the creation of the model; a three-stage process involving an exploratory stage, an iterative development stage using case studies and a refinement stage using expert interviews. Next, the model itself is explored, including a summary of early versions and a detailed look at the fundamental syntax of the model. Following this, the results from the expert interviews are presented, and how they influenced certain changes to the model to produce the final version used in the latter chapters of this thesis. Finally, a step-by-step guide is presented that provides information about how the model is applied to transmedia stories.

3.1 Methodology

In this section, I describe the process that was undertaken in the development of MOTS. The first step involved exploring pre-existing work, and identifying gaps in their capability. This work has been presented in the previous chapter. With these limitations in mind, the first stage of development began. This exploratory stage took one transmedia story, from a sample of twenty experiences, as examples and tested different ways the structure of the story could be captured. Once an initial model had been developed, it was then tested against the remaining nineteen stories in a second stage, and an iterative process took place that refined the model each time a new function was identified, resulting in the prototype model. Following this, the final stage involved the prototype model being presented to nine transmedia experts in semi-structured interviews, where feedback was sought to provide insight and improvements to the model by refining fundamental assumptions and identifying potential gaps and limitations of the model. The model was then developed further to account for the findings from the expert interviews and is the final model that is presented in this thesis. The following sections provide more detail into each of these stages of the research.

3.1.1 Stage 1: Exploratory Stage

Beginning with the structuralist philosophy of breaking cultural objects into their "functions" [137], I first had to identify experiences that would serve as the first cases for decomposition. Consequently, a selection criterion was developed to aid in this identification. The selection criterion included three conditions that each had to be satisfied in order for the experience to be used in the sample:

Practicality. Many experiences could not be replayed due to their expiration, cost or locality. So sufficient documentation data must have existed to the extent that validation of various accounts could occur by comparing several sources. Alternatively, an experience would satisfy this criterion if it could be experienced multiple times first hand, so that an accurate model of the experience could be developed.

Diversity. In order to test the scope of the model, a diverse set was sought. This diversity derived from; how the experience was consumed, levels of audience interaction, media channel combinations and the relationships between them. Many of the experiences chosen were not self-described as transmedia, but used some other descriptor or ad-hoc category noun. This led to selecting samples that belonged to six ad-hoc categories of multi-channel experience; ARGs, franchises, games, films, escape rooms and exhibits. In order to get the data required from some experiences such as live exhibits, an opportunistic approach was taken so that first-hand experience could be used to model the experience.

Reason for production. Experiences are made for a variety of purposes e.g., for the promotion of products such as films and games, to reveal a story associated with a product, for education or as a standalone experience. When expanding the set of experiences, if alternatives were present that had the same characteristics, those that had a different motivation behind their production were selected.

The twenty experiences were not all selected at the same time, with the sample growing throughout this stage of the research when experiences that fulfilled these criteria were identified through books and the literature, social media or opportunistically such as an advertisement. If two identified experiences were suspected to be similar in diversity as stated above, the experience that was more practical to model or had a different reason for production to others in the set, was selected.

One transmedia story, *Game of Thrones: 19 Reinos*, was selected from a list of twenty experiences (included in table 2). This experience was chosen because of the amount of data and the perception that it was diverse in media structure. In this exploratory stage, first-hand data could

not be obtained because of the transient nature of the experience, but there were many sources available that provided the data required. These sources include; written accounts, post-mortems, videos, blog entries, forum and social media posts, news articles and the Wayback machine, a service provided by the Internet Archive that allows users to download old Web page "snapshots" from different moments in time. Consistency across the various sources and the ability to validate the data by comparing these sources satisfied concerns of reliability.

Several iterations of the model were created during this stage, each exploring different ways the experience could be modelled. This was an iterative process, with the initial model being applied and gaps identified before brain storming sessions considered features that the model was not capturing. For example, the first iteration included the television show (which was part of the experience) a single entity, where later this was split into its constituent episodes to better reveal how these episodes interacted with other aspects of the experience.

Table 2 Stage 2 case studies, first selection in italics

Title	**Author**	**Ad-hoc Category**
19 Reinos	*HBO*	*ARG*
Cloverfield	Bad Robot Productions	ARG
Dexter	CBS Television	ARG
Prometheus Campaign	20th Century Fox	ARG
Westworld Campaign	Warner Bros. Television	ARG
Why So Serious	Warner Bros. Pictures	ARG
I Love Bees	343 Industries	ARG
Her Story	Sam Barlow	Game
Overwatch	Activision Blizzard	Game
The Black Watchman	Alice & Smith	Game
Game of Thrones	HBO	Media franchise
Harry Potter	Bloomsbury, Warner Bros.	Media franchise
Pirates of the Caribbean	Walt Disney Pictures	Media franchise
Pokémon	Nintendo	Media franchise
The Matrix	Warner Bros. Pictures	Media franchise

Roman Baths	Bath and North East Council	Exhibition
APP	2CFilm	Second screen film
Prometheus Second Screen	20th Century Fox	Second screen film
Change The Record	Xciting Escapes	Escape room
Defenders of the Triforce	Nintendo	Escape room

3.1.2 Stage 2: Expanded Case Studies

Once an initial model (v 0.5) was developed, the remaining nineteen experiences were used to further develop and test the model so that it could capture additional structural features not seen in *19 Reinos*. This was again an iterative process whereby the model was applied to case studies and refined. If a feature was found that could not be captured by the model, brainstorming sessions occurred that made the necessary changes to the model before reapplying it to the case study. For example, when the transmedia story *Cloverfield* was modelled, characteristics such as media channels that were interactive and not live, or media channels that evolved unusually such as web pages that changed over time, were not ones that could be captured by early versions of the model. Language that could be used to describe chunks of time was also not fully developed, and was identified as a weakness of the initial model when multiple media were released at the same time for an important reason e.g., a game released at the same time as a film.

This process resulted in a prototype model that was used as the basis for the next stage in development, the semi-structured expert interviews.

3.1.3 Stage 3: Semi-structured Expert Interviews

Semi-structured interviews provide a diverse source of qualitative data from experts in the field that can be insightful even with relatively little responses [138]. The interview method allows for natural responses [139], which is important for this study in particular, as one of the intentions was that the model be generic enough to be applied by people in different fields. Allowing the expert to use their own language in response to the questions allows for additional insight into how their particular field could apply the model. Interviews have also been used in the past by transmedia practitioners to discuss similar issues, such as definitions and contentious issues [140].

The main purpose of the expert interviews was to validate the fundamental assumptions of the model, making sure that the approach was both novel and worth further development. If all experts agreed that the model was fundamentally flawed and lacked the ability to achieve useful

results, it would be a good indication that a different path forward was necessary. Beyond this primary goal, it was hoped that they would also provide insight into the development of the model and to present new ideas.

Reflecting Guest et al.'s findings, where it was found that six interviews were effective at capturing most of the issues associated with a subject matter [141], the aim was to interview at least six transmedia experts and practitioners, with the hope of increasing this given the opportunity. The experts were required to be experienced in analysing, creating, researching or critiquing transmedia stories.

A total of twenty transmedia experts were approached on social media and email and asked if they would like to participate in this study. Nine experts responded, six men and three women, and have been included in the results of this study. The study of transmedia is diverse and the experts reflected this, representing various fields and disciplines. This proved to be advantageous, as each individual brought a different perspective that could be used to further develop the model. Table 3 shows the background of each expert.

The original set of twenty transmedia experts were identified from two sources; literature and social media. All potential candidates had either an extensive publication record in the area of transmedia, or played a major role in the design and development of numerous transmedia stories, demonstrating the level of expertise necessary to understand and evaluate the model. Candidates that had different experience and expertise in areas of transmedia storytelling such as ARG design, film aspects of transmedia or transmedia franchises were sought to evaluate the model from these different perspectives, rather than selecting candidates that all had experience with ARGs.

Table 3 Experts and their Background

Expert (E)	**Background**
1	Franchise designer
2	ARG critic and games studies
3	Fan and cultural studies
4	Fan and cultural studies
5	Media and Theatre studies
6	ARG designer
7	Film studies
8	Film studies, producer
9	Media studies

Upon acceptance, a participant information sheet and a one-page PDF (included in the appendix) that summarised the model were sent via social media instant message or email. For practicality and time zone issues, interviews were conducted via instant message on Facebook, Skype, Twitter or email. Six interviews were conducted in the same day and took between one to four hours. Three were conducted over the space of a few weeks, where replies were given when the expert had time.

Kathy Charmaz in her guide to qualitative analysis advises to:

> devise a few broad, open-ended questions. Then you can focus your interview questions to invite detailed discussion of topic. By creating open-ended, non-judgmental questions, you encourage unanticipated statements and stories to emerge [142]

To prepare for the interviews, a basic plan was constructed with the aim of extracting insights that could help answer the first two research questions. The plan, shown in table 4, consisted of questions that were broad and open ended, and that touched upon the different aspects of the model. Where possible, care was taken not to rigidly apply this plan, and allow for individuals to talk about what they knew best or what they saw to be the most important or contentious aspects of the model.

For the first research question that seeks to understand what the structural features of transmedia stories are, question one sought to get a high-level view of how the experts themselves saw transmedia storytelling structures, and the tools that they use to identify them. It was intended that this question be asked early in order to understand their definitions of structure, and to set the scene for the following questions. Question two sought to understand whether the expert saw structural elements as an important factor in analysis, and potentially identify other aspects of transmedia storytelling they deemed more or less important, such as fans or communities. This touched upon both the first and second research questions as it could allow for a hierarchy of feature importance to emerge, or start the discussion about whether structural features should play a role in the analyses of transmedia stories and to what extent. Questions three to seven directly map to aspects of the model, and aimed to provoke discussion around how these features should be modelled, and how they could be used to analyse a transmedia story. It was hoped that these would enable deeper discussions about other related structural features, such as the definition of instances, channels and media, that could lead to different interpretations about how transmedia stories can be understood as a collection of objects.

Table 4 Basic questions plan

Question	**Description**
1. How do you think people should review and critique transmedia works?	To find out methodologies for analysing transmedia stories, anticipating that different experts would have different methods.
2. Do you think it's important to understand the structural elements of a transmedia story in order to analyse it?	Extracting opinions as to whether one of the core themes of the research was justified. It could also be used to lead into methods and theories of understanding structural elements, or provide insight into other important aspects of transmedia stories.
3. What would you consider to be a link between two channels? E.g., A poster on a shop window with a picture of Godzilla, with no text or website addresses. Do you think this would be enough to link people to the film?	Finding out what types of links are important to capture according to the expert, and how they demarcate between different types of links.
4. On films - Would you consider theatrical releases to be live, and then when they come out on DVD and Blu-ray to be static? Do you think it's important from an analytical point of view to distinguish between the two?	How the expert conceives of live/static media and whether they think it's important to distinguish between them (giving the specific example of film).
5. How do you define media/channels/platforms and how do you distinguish between them? (If an ARG has multiple Facebook pages for each character, would these be separate channels?)	How the expert defines media and differentiates between different media, and whether they use other syntax to describe hierarchies of media.
6. How should the flow of time be organised? In my model, I have used 'scenes' to denote narrating time.	Whether the expert is concerned with the flow of time, and how they organise it, leading to how they analyse the events of a story.

7. What's missing from my model and how do you think I can improve it?	Open-ended, capturing problems not brought up from the previous questions.

3.2 Early Versions of the Model

This section will summarise the early development of the model, showcasing some examples that illustrate the ideas being explored, and how they were improved upon. There were five manifestations of the model before the prototype model was developed.

The earliest versions (v0.1-v0.5) of the model attempted to express transmedia stories as a map of different media involved, their connections between them and when they become available to the audience over time. Attention was spent on making the model visual, using specific syntax to represent different objects within the image such as shapes for media and arrows for connections.

Fundamental concepts used in these early versions were not fully explored, resulting in unjustified assignments of media characteristics, such as Facebook as "social" to denote social media and TV as "source" to denote the source of the major narrative. Other issues included not capturing how the media themselves changed over time and the nature of what was called "flow", denoting connections between the media.

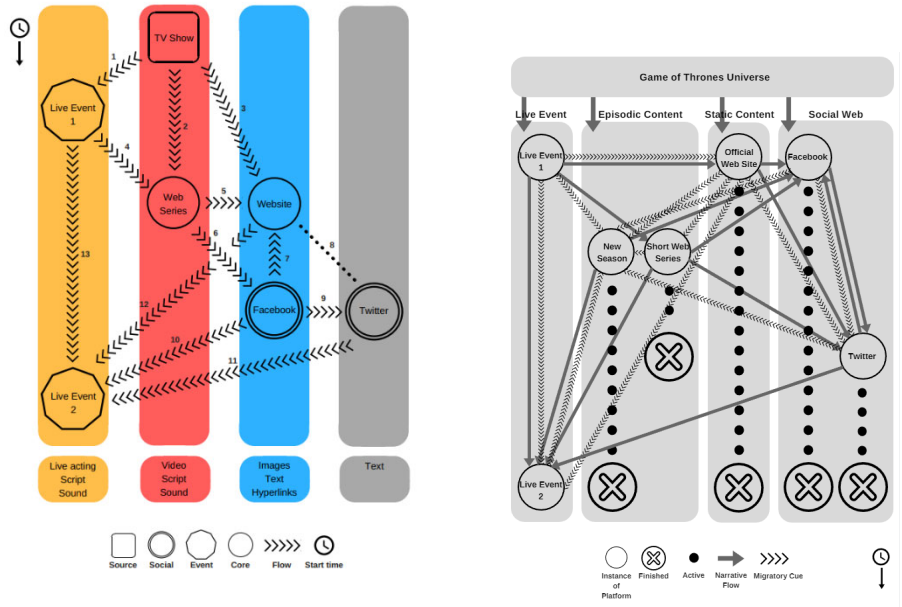


Figure 9. Versions 0.1 and 0.2 of the model

As development continued, these issues were tackled and later versions of the model attempted to better reflect how media could be organised such as recording the availability of a medium and

splitting up a TV show into separate chunks. The concept of flow changed from a vague relationship between media to a link that physically connects media together such as a hyperlink. There was also some experimentation with the type of functions that could be captured by the model, such as identifying which channels certain characters appear, or which act a group of channels were in. These were later seen as “comments” or “overlays” that sat on top of the structural features that should be the main focus of the model.

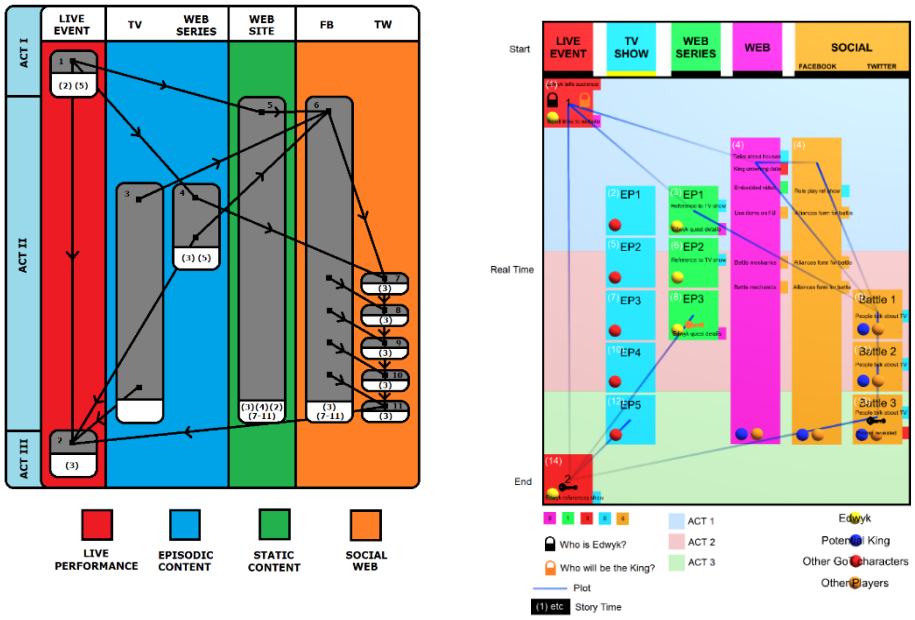


Figure 10. versions 0.3 and 0.4 of the model

One change that came in this stage compared to early versions of the model was the concept of agency and interactivity, where audiences could change the direction of the story in certain media, and liveness, where media would be available at specific times and places e.g., in figure 11, the episodes of the TV shows do not begin as archived media because they are broadcast live, but switch to archived when they become available in another non-live form.

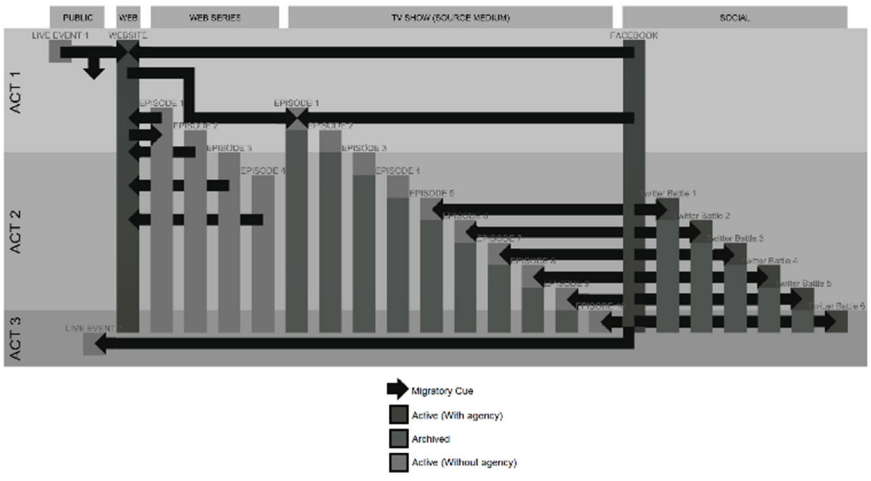


Figure 11. Version 0.5 of the model

Once version 0.5 was developed, the next stage of the methodology began. In this stage, the model was tested against the remaining nineteen stories. Major changes here include allowing for static and active instances (such as most video games), and splitting up media channels such as websites to reflect evolution, and splitting the experience up into “scenes” to improve the capability of identifying when media channels are accessible at any given time.

3.3 The Prototype Model

In this section, the prototype model is presented, and represents a version that was developed after analysing twenty case studies. This version is similar to the final version (with the changes following the expert interviews) and includes the fundamental affordances and syntax of the final model. This section will systematically consider each function, explaining how that function developed, why it is important for structural analyses and how it can be identified.

3.3.1 The Story/Experience

A major assumption that was made in the early stages of development was considering which media channels to include as “part of the story”. In the exploratory stage, these decisions seemed unproblematic, where official media that included story as part of that world were considered parts of the object of study. Similarly, with a film, or a novel, we can identify the object of study as the reels of a film, the media file or the physical book with printed pages. Upon analysing a larger set of stories, it become clear that it was not always easy to determine which media to include as part of the study. Questions would arise such as; when does an escape room end? When we leave the room or building? What about if we are emailed the conclusion of the story after we go home? This is part of what the model helps to achieve. The process of defining the story involves identifying the media that was used, and once this has been achieved, the entirety of those media is what we call the story, or experience. This is important to consider because even one medium can change the overall structure of the experience. Consequently, I use the word experience to denote the entirety of what is being modelled.

In determining what media to include, it is necessary to return to what Jenkins calls a distinct and valuable contribution. Questions that could be asked include: Does this medium give the audience any new information? How does the medium relate to the other media? Is this medium important to fans? Why was this medium even produced?

3.3.2 Channels

In the last chapter, I presented the issue with the word media itself which resulted in a foundational idea provided by Ryan whereby we could use this word in conjunction with three dimensions; semiotic, technical and cultural. In utilising this idea, we are equipped to identify all the ways in which information is communicated. We can identify the boundary of a media by identifying the dimensions of it, e.g., information conveyed through images and sound (semiotic) via a screen (technological), with an average duration between one hundred and twenty and four hundred minutes is a film. We can even extend the cultural dimension to separate this type of film from one shown at a theatre using a projector (technological), in the company of other audience members and popcorn (cultural). The above distinction may seem trivial, but in some cases, it can be important as the experience is materially different, such as a live performance that was recorded and subsequently released as a film. In 2019 a reimaging of William Shakespeare's A *Midsummer Night's Dream* was performed across the UK, using a circular stage to fully immerse the audience as if they were part of the play too. At the end of the play, the stage drops to ground level, where the performers integrate themselves into the crowd as everyone dances to the music. In the same year, the National Theatre released recordings of one of the performances in cinemas, and later to online streaming services. Just from this example, we can identify at least three different ways this particular reimagining could be experienced, without even considering the various devices, home cinema setups and contexts as the recording was released online.

There is potentially one issue regarding domain that arises with this three-dimensional definition and one that requires additional thinking before it can be imported into the model. We can easily say that *The Matrix* is separate from *The Matrix Reloaded*, because they are on two different film reels with two introductions and credits. However, this boundary becomes obscured in other media, such as two Myspace profiles of fictitious characters. In the *Cloverfield ARG*, main characters' post at different times about different events occurring to them, and the audience has to move from page to page in order to read what is happening. If we simply include this as one media, we lose detail on how the narrative unfolded that could have an impact on how we perceive the structure of the experience.

Table 5 The Four Dimensions of Media

Dimension	Example
Semiotic	Images, sound, text etc.
Technological	Phones, screens, books etc.

Cultural	“Social media”, films in cinema, DVDs, novels etc.
Domain	Separate instalments, pages within a web domain etc.

What I have summarised in the above two paragraphs and table above is the ability to identify what I have called *channels*. A channel is a subset of media that is defined by its boundary. From here, it is possible to create a corpus of media for us to choose from when doing our analyses of experiences, and add to them when novel media appear to us. Even Ryan suggests starting with “media categories informally used in Western cultures” [48], but effort spent doing this is perhaps better spent elsewhere. Instead, my model will consider part of the experience a separate channel if it changes the way information is communicated in any one of the four dimensions including; semiotic, technological, cultural or domain. We do not need to define any media prior to analysing the experience, or even name them, we simply look to see whether any change occurs in the way in which it is communicated. We can however, for the purposes of labelling the channel for readability, use words we are already familiar with in addition to any adjective.

Figure 13 shows an experience that uses various means of communicated, going from one medium to another. The dots represent the main dimension(s) that change over time, defining the boundary of six distinct channels.

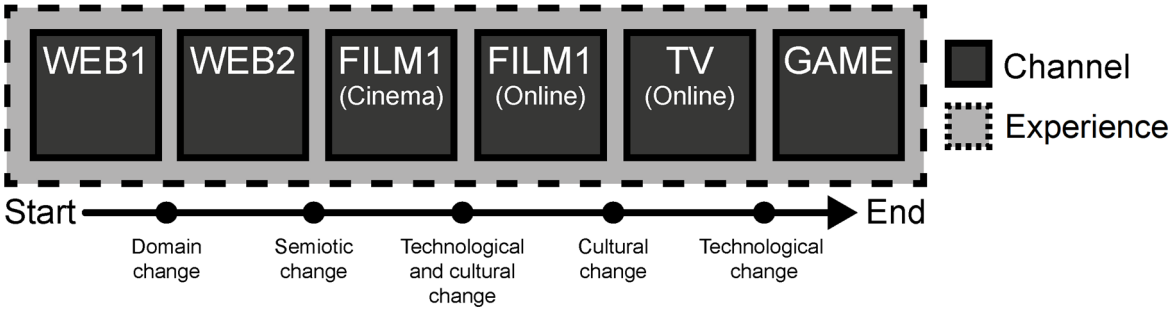


Figure 12 Channels of an experience

3.3.3 Instances

A new channel can exist where content from one channel is presented on another. For example, the content of a film is the same whether it is shown live in a theatre or on a TV screen, but as has already been commented, this can be seen as two separate channels. What about if the content of a medium changes from one day to the next? For the purposes of MOTS, we could just ignore this just as we ignore the scenes of a film. As mentioned earlier, Ruppel distinguishes between what he calls complete sites and segmented sites, with the former being complete narrative units that communicate an aspect of a fictional world, and the latter communicating only part of a narrative unit. Ruppel considers an episode of a TV series to be complete and a chapter of a novel

to be incomplete, but how can this be when in both cases we are only getting part of the experience? MOTS considers both of the above examples to be equal in that they are just one part of that channel, and the channel itself being what Ruppel calls “complete”.

It was made clear in the exploratory stage and from the analyses of the sample set that changes in a channel are integral to the structure of the experience and how the story progresses. In *19 Reinos*, newly released episodes of *Game of Thrones* were paired with different sessions, or what I have called *instances*, of Twitter role-play activity, with other channels having different relationships to different instances. If we flatten these instances to only one channel in this case, we lose the information regarding varied relationships and temporal connections between channels. As we shall see later, relationships between channels and instances becomes complex and is one of the storytelling methods that differentiates transmedia from monomedia.

Instances are therefore associated with channels and denote a change in the content of that channel, with each channel having at least one instance. Each change or update is considered a new instance of that channel. A new instance would also occur each time a television programme airs a new episode every week, with the sum total of instances for that channel being the episode count.

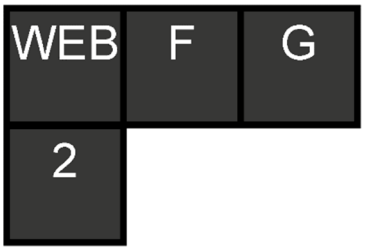


Figure 13 Three channels; web, film and game. Web has two instances

3.3.4 State

When analysing the experiences that lead to the formation of the model, instances that would disappear, reappear or be available for a limited time were widespread, especially those in ARGs. When an instance changes this *state*, the fundamental structure of the experience changes. Over time, both the content users can experience and the journey through the structure itself differs due to variable instance state. Consequently, instances can be either *live* or *static* (the word static was favoured over archived). Live instances are those that have to be experienced at a specific time and place e.g., live streams, a theatrical performance or social media gathering. Live events cannot be accessed in its original form after it has occurred. When a theatrical performance has ended, future audiences can watch a recording but this would be a separate channel for reasons discussed previously. The reverse of this is static instances, where the content of the instance can

be accessed any time in its original form after it has been released. We can watch a DVD film as many times as we like, or until we wear down the disc, so this would be considered a static channel.

Figure 14 Two channels, both films. One is static and the other is live

3.3.5 Interactivity

In the previous chapter, we explored various ways audiences interact with a transmedia story, identifying that there is often an overlap in what we mean by *interactivity* in different contexts. At a fundamental level, we could say that audiences can either impact the story or they cannot. The question then becomes to what degree can the audience change the direction of the story? This is where we find ourselves in the realms of subjectivity. Is the audience really having an impact on the story in a video game that follows a pre-determined path, because they can control the exact footsteps of the character? Does a different play through of the story in such a game conducted by different players really constitute a material difference in the story? In these cases, it is not clear, and decisions must be made on a case-by-case basis. However, in other occasions it is clearer, for example a video game that provides the player with choices that change the events in the story, rather than simply the pace, would constitute a material difference. In the sample set, it was clear that the order in which channels could be experienced varied drastically from player to player in many of the experiences, and that choices that potentially changed the story was attached to particular instances. In *Cloverfield*, there were multiple points of entry into the experience, and multiple paths that could be taken by the audience to piece together the story. However, opportunity for the audience to intervene in the events of the story was provided only in very limited parts of the experience.

For the purposes of MOTS, I have opted to use *passive* or *active* as the descriptor that denotes an instances' interactivity. An instance is passive if the audience do not engage with the instance in their consumption. A passive instance affords no ability to change the story, interact with characters or create canon. Conversely, an active instance is one in which the audience do engage with the content, affect the story by deciding the fate of characters, events or objects.

Figure 15 A film (passive) and game (active)

3.3.6 Links

Ruppel argues that the "defining trait" of transmedia fiction is the journeys audiences take through the experience, "where narrative meaning becomes a product of the movement between two or more sites" [21]. The *links* between these sites, or channels, is what creates these journeys and is an important structural function. Previously, I explored the concept of links between media and described three types of links that can occur: external links or paratexts that exist outside of the text, and internal links that function within the storyworld itself. We can further reduce these two down into link subtypes, for example dialogue spoken by a character in a film that narratively links to something another character says in a book is different to that character giving a URL address that can be accessed in real life. With this example, the former is much harder to identify than the latter. We may read into dialogue and find meaning that does not exist, or interpret dialogue in the wrong way. With the latter, we can more easily spot where one medium is referring the audience to another. This reference could be a hyperlink, a phone number, title of an app or a QR code. However, this is not obvious in every transmedia story. In ARGs, a clue is often split up and given to the audience in different media, e.g., a URL address whose first half is given in a film and second half given in the sequel. Links in the context of the model are these explicit links that attempt to physically move the audience from one channel or instance to another, to progress the story. Although we could have chosen to include narrative links, the high degree of both subjectivity and content meant that as a starting point, identifying only explicit links was justified. With explicit links, we can see how the experience was designed to promote user journeys through channel choice and specific channel transitions. Any instance that makes the audience aware of, or takes them to, another instance is considered a link including partial links such as the ARG clue example provided earlier. For example, a hyperlink between websites or a verbal referral to another instance are both links.

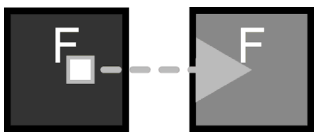


Figure 16 A static (e.g., DVD) film linked to a live film (e.g., theatre)

3.3.7 Scenes

In the previous chapter I distinguished between two aspects of narrative; fabula and story. We can understand story as the selection of events taken from the fabula. This selection is ordered in some way, such as through time. I introduced Tomashevskij's idea of the hypothetical time where

events occur inside the fictional world and the narrative time, that denotes the chronology of the text itself. We sometimes group the events shown in the story and use words like scene, chapter or level to differentiate between different groups of events. In this vein, the word *scene* is used to denote the instances and channels that are available at any given time. A scene denotes the narrative time and can be used to show which instances occurred before or after others, as well as which ones occurred at the around the same time. As we shall see later, scenes are an important function of transmedia stories because they show how channels usage changes over time, and which instances can be experienced at a later date.

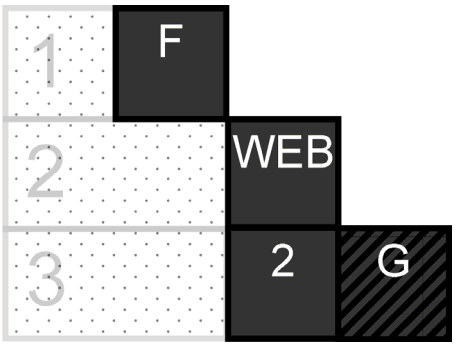


Figure 17 An experience with three scenes

3.3.8 Model Summary

The model therefore models a transmedia story as a set of channels, with each channel comprised of a sequence of instances that are part of a scene. Each instance contains the name, links to and from other instances and their interactivity/state values. A channel can be seen as the means, whereas the instance is the content.

Table 6 Syntax of the prototype model

Icon	Description
Passive	The player does not interact with the channel any more than passively consuming its content.
Active	The player has to engage with the channel in order to consume content.
Static	The content of the channel is static, remaining in its last updated state.

 Live	The content of the channel is not fixed, and changes over time.
 (Active & live)	e.g., Live event involving role play.
 (Active and static)	e.g., a video game.
Logical Partition	An overlay to illustrate a characteristic of the transmedia story. (e.g. Act 1 begins).
 Connection	A direct link between channels.

Figure 19 shows the *Cloverfield* experience modelled using MOTS and represented visually. We could however, represent this same information in the form of tables and values within the cells. An example of one such table, where a portion of the channel W1 is modelled, is shown in table 7.

Table 7 Example of W1

Instance	Scene	Links	Interactivity	State	Description
0	1		Passive	Static	Cloverfield trailer
1	2		Passive	Static	Another picture
2	3		Passive	Static	Another picture
3	4	MS1	Passive	Static	Hidden messages on the back of photos

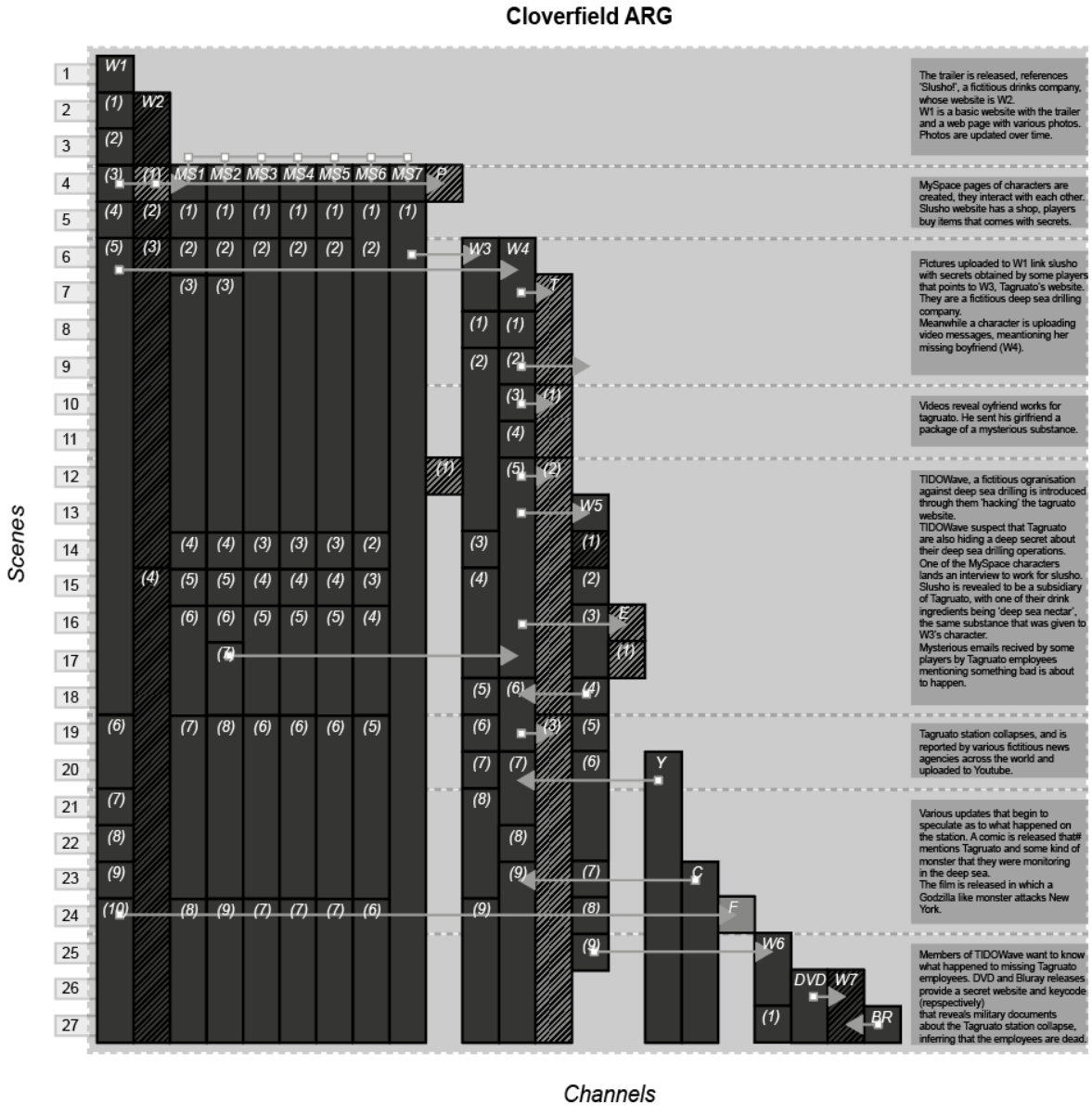


Figure 18 Cloverfield experience modelled using the prototype model

3.4 Semi-Structured Expert Interviews

In this section, the results of the expert interviews are presented. The section is organised according to the themes that emerged from the discussions. The following sections further expand the results included in table 8, summarising the findings by consolidating responses from all of the interviews.

Table 8 Summary of themes from Expert Interviews

Theme	**Experts**	**Summary**
Importance of identifying transmedia structure	E1, E2, E3, E4, E6, E7, E8, E9	Eight of nine experts thought identifying structural elements is important for various practices such as analyses, design and production. One expert felt that transmedia storytelling is still in "flux", with structural analyses proving too rigid to analyse such stories.
Current methods of analyses	E1, E2, E5	The responses showed a lack of standards, with some using their own internally developed methods of analyses, others using pre-existing mono-media theories and another mentioning a lack of transmedia story examples, perpetuating the issue of a lack of standards.
Value of MOTS	E1, E8, E7, E6, E2, E9	Most of the experts thought there was value in MOTS, depending on the use case and level of detail required. Some experts responded with how MOTS could be used in their own fields e.g., fan studies. One expert was very enthusiastic as to the ability of MOTS to explain a wide range of phenomena. Two experts commented specifically on how MOTS could be used to help design transmedia stories.
Media and channels	E1, E2, E7, E9, E3	Two experts' process for media demarcation aligned with MOTS. However, it was clear that this was an issue of contention, as the remainder of the responses included different answers.
Canon, standalone and integrity	E2, E1, E3, E5	Two experts introduced the idea of dependency and core channels, that are seen as more or less important than other media channels, where focus should be given. Determining which channels were important was seen as a subjective exercise.
Links	E5, E2, E4, E1, E3	Responses from the experts suggested that links play an important role in a transmedia story, determining the paths that the audience may take. The word link was not used in the same way between the experts, with

		some focusing on story links and others focusing on links that connect two media channels together physically. The difficulty in determining both the existence of a link and the type of link was identified.
Live and static	E2, E1, E5, E6, E4, E7	This divide was seen as an important distinction in some studies, but perhaps not so much in others.
Interaction	E1, E2, E3, E4, E5, E8	Responses suggested that the word interaction was an area of contention. Some responses saw it as a spectrum, with some media being more or less interactive than others, rather than simple dichotomies. There was some overlap with the concept of canon, or whether audiences could impact the story, as well as unique user journeys seen in 'choose your own adventures'.
User Journey	E4, E8	The ability for MOTS to describe user journeys was seen as a useful affordance, as different user journeys could be compared as well as comparisons between the intended versus actual user journeys. One expert suggested refining MOTS further to allow for the comparisons between narrative time and real time.

3.4.1.1 The Importance of Identifying Transmedia Structure

Eight out of nine experts agreed that identifying various structural components of transmedia stories was important to varying degrees, with one emphasizing that it is "crucial for truly informed analyses" [E6]. It was argued that "getting a sense of the structure of a transmedia story or ARG helps get a sense of how the pieces work together, and the narrative flow that people are experiencing" [E2]. On the importance for practitioners, one expert commented: "These issues need to be resolved by practitioners even more than researchers, because we have to deal with them during implementation" [E1]. Similarly, another expert argued that "structure gives you the freedom to be creative" [E7].

One expert thought the importance depended on the type of transmedia being analysed: "The "hard"/"true" definition of a transmedia production (a la Jenkins or Dena) would be a story that is deliberately told across multiple channels. For these stories, I think the structural elements are absolutely essential to an analysis of the story. [E4] … ""Softer" definitions of transmedia that include stories that are "unplanned" or haphazardly spread over multiple channels or platforms make this more challenging. I think these narratives are often, validly, analysed without an exhaustive catalog of the structural elements that transform the story into a transmedia

narrative" [E4]. The same expert argued that critical analysis enables us to get a sense of the individual's journey and how different media shapes the experience, as well as for producers to identify missed opportunities.

Another expert argued that "the most important thing to keep in mind when critiquing transmedia content is which platforms you experienced it on, whether or not it was still active when you experienced it" [E6]. Conversely, one expert argued for the importance of time: "One thing that is of concern is the lack of time - when things are released. That is a big thing that is needed for designers and analysts" E9].

For the one expert that did not think identifying structure was important, emphasis was placed on the story itself, or what was referred to as "the bible", meaning "Everything that has happened in the story world. All the writers use it so their scripts do not contradict anything from past episodes. For me this is the most important part of story progression. Everything that happens must sit correctly in the story world that has been created." [E5]. Consequently, using structures to differentiate between experiences was seen as unimportant: "We have no idea what interactive narratives and transmedia storytelling is going to be. I don't believe that this is what's important." [E5]. Instead, they argued that: "Once a centre has been established the story can go on any platform. Disney seem to be planning films around their potential to be a theme park ride" [E5]. When asked about the use of identifying structure for archival or descriptive purposes, the expert brought up the importance of presence, immediacy and the experiential nature of live works.

3.4.1.2 Current Methods of Analysing Transmedia Stories

For the purpose of quick reviews, one expert said that they "try and get a feel for how the creators structured things" [E2], focusing on conducting broad strokes and rarely doing detailed analyses. Though the same expert admitted that they would imagine researchers and analysts who do "deep dives" will have more systematized methods for analyses [E2], none of which were detailed. Similarly, another expert commented that: "Given the few practitioners & researchers in the field and the lack of a large, standards-setting organization, everybody makes their own rules" [E1].

One expert proposed the use of existing theory such as those found in film, game and UX studies to "explore the impact of transmedia elements and gradually we will have theories that are primarily related to transmedia" [E5]. In terms of how to describe a transmedia experience, this expert said they would "prefer a description of the work by a good writer" [E5], citing that previous attempts to record an experience ended badly because it did not capture the presence.

Another expert commented on the lack of transmedia design patterns available, claiming: “there are so few examples to work from” [E1].

3.4.1.3 Value of MOTS

Two experts commented on the model’s usefulness for the design and development of transmedia stories, with one commenting: “the attempt to articulate the complexity of transmedia design into one accessible diagram is commendable because it enables ease of translation across development roles and production stakeholders” [E8].

Expert one alluded to the difficulty of modelling the complexity of transmedia stories, but the model providing usefulness nonetheless: “I'm not sure if unified implementation tools are possible. I write screenplays and novels and it isn't possible to do them in the same tool. The formats are too different. Never mind once you reach the actual media stage. Your model is about the only level where a unified approach is possible. I could see it being the top-level user-interface in something like Adobe Creative Cloud where different plug-ins load to work on specific media.” [E1].

Expert three felt that quick analyses would not require this model because it would be time consuming, and they would “feel that I’d feel constrained by fitting stuff into this” [E2]. The same expert comments that capturing everything would make the model unreadable, and should focus on either important features or allow for flexibility/choice. Conversely, expert 5 argues that a model cannot quantify all experiences. They argued that: “the transmedia platforms are in flux Experimental. Often non-commercial. Difficult to monetise. The model you propose would be unnecessarily fixed and constrained” [E5]. Conversely, expert 7 felt the opposite: “it's super powerful in explaining such a wide range of: phenomena. So more power to you and your General Model of Transmedia!” [E7].

Expert six suggested that the model does not show the structure of different communities based on their level of participation: “I think breaking down the structure of the ARG communities themselves is missing from your model. I’ve found that there are three distinct groups of participants: Lurkers, Seekers, and Runners each with their own unique and important role within the microcosm of these transmedia communities.” [E6].

Expert 8 commented that: “Who is this model for, particularly? If it is intended as a formulation for creators and designers, then the subjectivity of audience “experience” needs addressing” [8:2], and “how this syntax model relates to different creative/production/marketing roles in the design development process. How might the model be easily accessible, translatable, and productive to these different roles?” [E8]. Related to this, expert nine warned about using certain

terminology used in the model: “Remember, when you're working in transmedia you have to be transdiscipinary with your terminology. Unfortunately, most language isn't!” [E9].

3.4.1.4 Canon, standalone, integrity

Expert two commented on the importance of highlighting prominent channels such as TV shows that are at the centre of an experience “then show the other channels weaving in and out as the support structure” [E2]. They invoked the concept of dependency: “one of the elements that either isn't present or isn't as strongly featured is highlighting whether there's...i guess the best word i can come up with is primacy and dependency? for primacy, i mean whether there is a primary channel (or channels) that are essential to the experience of the story - that is to say, if you only follow the Twitter part, will anything make sense? (sorry that was a dependency example). Basically, not all experiences are designed where all channels are created equally - if i'm writing and reviewing a web series ARG, it's nice to know that is the central portion of the experience some stories will have completely separate elements that can be viewed exclusively, while some will have channels that are secondary to a main one” [E2]. Where the researcher has to make the call between what is dependent and what is primary [E2]. Similarly, expert one made the point that some channels are core, and act as entry points for the experience [E1], but another channel might “extend the story, but it doesn’t provide an entry point into it” [E1].

Expert three commented that it might be important to include channels primarily used for marketing if they make the audience discuss or engage with the experience without offering more story [E3]. They also argued that fan culture and fanfic is part of the experience but not part of the story e.g., “dr who is a good example. Whovians are very active on twitter while the show is being broadcast. It's not part of the story but is very much part of the experience” [E5], illustrating the issue of what can be considered canon.

3.4.1.5 Definition of Media and Channel

Expert one found that differentiating between different domains were often unimportant, “I would ignore website as a channel. It's infrastructure, not media. What's on the site is the actual media. Whether it's delivered as a webpage or in an app is irrelevant for storytelling. It only matters for production and delivery.” [E1]. The same expert elaborated that media platforms that play similar semiotic media could however be regarded as different channels [E1]: “The DVD does the same on a smaller scale. Many include deleted scenes or alternate endings. That's an interaction not available in a theatre (right now), but could easily be done in an app like HBO GO or YouTube. Some DVDs allow limited angle selection that shows the differences within the main story. Obviously, within a streaming app, this could go to extremes where viewers could be

offered links real-time to select where the scene goes … A book is a book. The physical manifestations and resultant interactive capabilities are considered different formats. That allows the model to keep its simplicity while allowing the flexibility to specify a medium's capability. I believe your use of colors/shading solves that issue, if you define the top level broadly enough [E1].

Additionally, expert one suggested using the syntax of the model to define different high-level channels: “e.g., instead of "Film," maybe "Video." A static, non-interactive "video" = film. A static, limited-interaction video = DVD or smart TV. A static, full-interaction video = streaming app with extended capability. A variable, full-interaction video = AI video”. Similarly, expert two mentioned the usefulness of grouping channels [E2].

Expert two’s conception of media was multi-layered, commenting: “i tend to think less about media channels and more about separate entities … i might view two channels (website and associated twitter account) as two channels but a single entity because the two are intended to work in concert” [E2]. Expert seven gave a similar conception: “For me: (in: the `Communications' discipline, I guess u r too?) I have 2 x understandings: A) Examples of media `channels' = 1) TV 2) Radio 3) Web 4) Blu-Ray etc. and B) 1) Visual (moving images) 2) Audio 3) Text {about 5 categories} ... so it confusing - I usually have to define what I mean by `media channel' so it doesn't get confused/overlap with "platform" (e.g. web/TV/print/comics/etc.)” [E7], being very conscious of brands and platforms [E7]. Identifying this same problem, expert nine took issue with the word channel itself: “this has a particular meaning and connotation in media studies (and is criticised for implying a hollow channel that doesn't affect the "content"). TV people will read the term differently, and so will advertising people”. [E9].

Expert three commented on their inclusion of third-party content as channels: “I do include fan-fic in the discussion, given it’s an environment where ideas occur that can impact canon, and can also be a space where storytellers interact with fans, but I totally see the difficulty in including fan fic in a formal model!” [E3].

3.4.1.6 Links

The difficulty of identifying links was identified [E5]. Sometimes deciding whether something is a link depends on the effect that thing has on the audience, with expert six arguing that an eye-catching poster would be a link. Another expert elaborated, saying that it doesn’t have to be textual or explicitly pointing to another channel, citing the example of the Blaire Witch Project poster (a “missing persons” poster). Sometimes it is blurred between story links and explicit, functional links, with expert nine mentioning different kinds of links. Expert two used the term

"connective tissue" [E2], describing a story-level link between standalone channels, citing a character introduced in one channel and shown in another at an older age as a connection. With the risk of conflation between story and physical links being made, expert four suggested that the model be modified to "capture different kinds of links" [E4], such as explicit, implied or intertextual.

Links were identified as an important characteristic of transmedia stories, as they have the ability to change whether a channel is interactive or not [E1]. Expert three elaborated that they can also trick the audience into thinking they have an impact in the story by navigating the audience down a particular path that can lead them to think they have an impact on the story when they do not [E3].

3.4.1.7 User Journey

It was commented that the model could be used to demonstrate the journey a particular audience member takes in the story: "I see a lot of value in the model for mapping an individual's experience. ...For the Cloverfield ARG, this looks like a blueprint for creators of what they would like the overall experience to be. It would be interesting to then compare how individual experiences might compare and differ to that original blueprint. Right...That comparative method is something I think transmedia researchers would find useful in your model." [E4]. Expert eight also agreed, stating: "the model could pay more attention to the distinction between narrative time (story history) and audience temporality (plot sequencing)" [E8].

3.4.1.8 Interaction

In general, it was accepted that there is not one definition of interaction with expert four stating its subjective nature [E4]. Expert one saw interaction as a spectrum of different levels [E1], e.g., full control of the story vs selecting alternative endings and deleted scenes [E1]. Another expert also thought that sometimes the definition is not tied to story, but could be ludic [E5]. Related to the use of links and navigation, expert two felt it was important to note when the audience think they have agency over the story: "I don't care whether it's the illusion of agency or actual agency, just that there's a player interaction / integration point" [E2]. Additionally, it was said by expert three that even if there is no actual or perceived change to the story, "even 'static' textual elements have a degree of interactivity as an audience adds their own meaning to it [E3]". Expert four agreed that any time the user engages with the story, interaction occurs [E4]. Expert eight made a firm case against the outdated notion of a binary definition of interactivity, instead favouring a spectrum: "The notion of passive audience experience is a relatively outdated notion that is becoming less and less relevant to contemporary media and ideological understandings of

audiences. The notion of a spectrum of interactivity is indeed relevant and important, but it might be more productive to avoid dichotomies of passivity and activity when categorising audience experience of media platforms" [E8]. However, it was seen to be useful by the same expert to measure whether the audience has an impact on the story [E8]. Changing the journey of a story was seen as interactive [E9] and using the word agency was suggested. For expert five, there were instances where interactivity was used more specifically, with "cut scenes" in a game not constituting interaction [E5].

3.4.1.9 Live/Static

Expert two argued that there should be a distinction if it is important to note how the liveness changed the experience [E2], with expert one imagining new forms of media that may blur the distinction between live and static such as AI generated live action [E1]. Similarly, expert five commented on the importance of "presence" and the "experiential nature of live theatre" [E5]. Expert six said that this distinction was even more important in cultural studies, "since the audience experience will colour so much of the experience" [E6]. Expert four thought that the definition of live can depend on "what you're using the model for. From the perspective of production, a theatrical release is no different from the DVD release—both static" [E4]. Expert seven noted that it is important to differentiate between extinct or dead channels vs those that still are read or consumed, especially in film where producers will want to know how well a property did financially [E7].

3.4.2 Discussion and Evaluation

The expert interviews provided the necessary validation to continue the direction the model was going in, with eight out of nine experts seeing the importance of the objective the model was trying to achieve. However, the real value of these interviews came from the suggestions and opinions of the experts, some of which can be reflected in the final model and its usage.

Before the interviews were conducted, it was expected that much of the syntax used would mean different things to different people, and the results reflected this. Definitions of media channel, links, liveness, interactivity and transmedia storytelling itself were not universal amongst the experts. For example, in discussion the definition of media, other words were being used in the discussion such as formats, platforms and domains. This could partly be because the experts were from different fields, importing their specific knowledge into their transmedia practice or study. This lack of consistency reinforced the importance of using specific terminology to describe specific things in the model, so that stories can be justifiably compared.

As a consequence of common issues identified and amendments suggested, the model was refined further. Specifically, three areas were expanded; integrity of channels, super channels and the consideration of user journeys.

Integrity of Channels

A factor that was considered before the expert interviews but not fully developed was the integrity or dependency of channels. The results gained from the interviews suggested this was something that should be developed further. In the last chapter, I explored the difference between what Dena calls a transfiction, and a transmedia franchise. In the latter, each medium by itself is as useful as chapters in a book. We must consume all of them in order to experience the story. Conversely, we can watch films in a transmedia franchise without playing the games associated with the franchise. Consuming media in a franchise is not necessary to get a complete story as it is in a transfiction, but it enhances our understanding of the storyworld. As mentioned in the previous chapter, it is sometimes the case that a latter film or episode in a series does not make much sense if consumed in isolation, without having watched the previous instalments.

Channels therefore should have an integrity association that is *standalone*, *dependent* or *subsidiary*. Standalone channels are those that can be experienced in isolation, they are synonymous with media in a transmedia franchise. Experienced in isolation means that the channel tells a complete story, which we understand to be an ordered selection of events from the storyworld that has its beginning middle and end in that channel alone. Dependent channels are those that are dependent on another channel either technologically or narratively. The determination of the integrity of films that rely on other films in a series is problematic, but if it is clear that a latter instalment is neither intended to exist alone or logically cannot be understood alone, that instance will be considered dependent. Dependent channels are more closely related to the media in transfictions and ARGs. The beginning of a story might begin on a subsidiary channel only for it to continue on another channel. Lastly, subsidiary channels are those that either contain part of a larger story, or reveal something about the storyworld. These could be descriptions about a character with no events or dialogue, or images of the storyworld that show what it looks like for example.

Super Channels

The idea of grouping channels together was mentioned in the responses, providing the necessary motivation to explore the concept further. The concept of “super channel” was thus included in the final model, to denote a group of channels that share a technological, semiotic or cultural dimension. For example, grouping two website channels into the “web” super channel. This will

allow channels to be grouped according to how the analyst sees fit, sometimes grouping separate films together into a film super channel, or a series of books together into a separate super channel. This affordance reflects the practices of many of the experts in their separation of media.

User Journeys

A number of experts identified the potential for the model to capture particular user journeys through transmedia stories. Using the model for this purpose has multiple benefits. Firstly, the model can be used to understand how a particular user or demographic experienced a story, and comparisons can be made between different journeys.

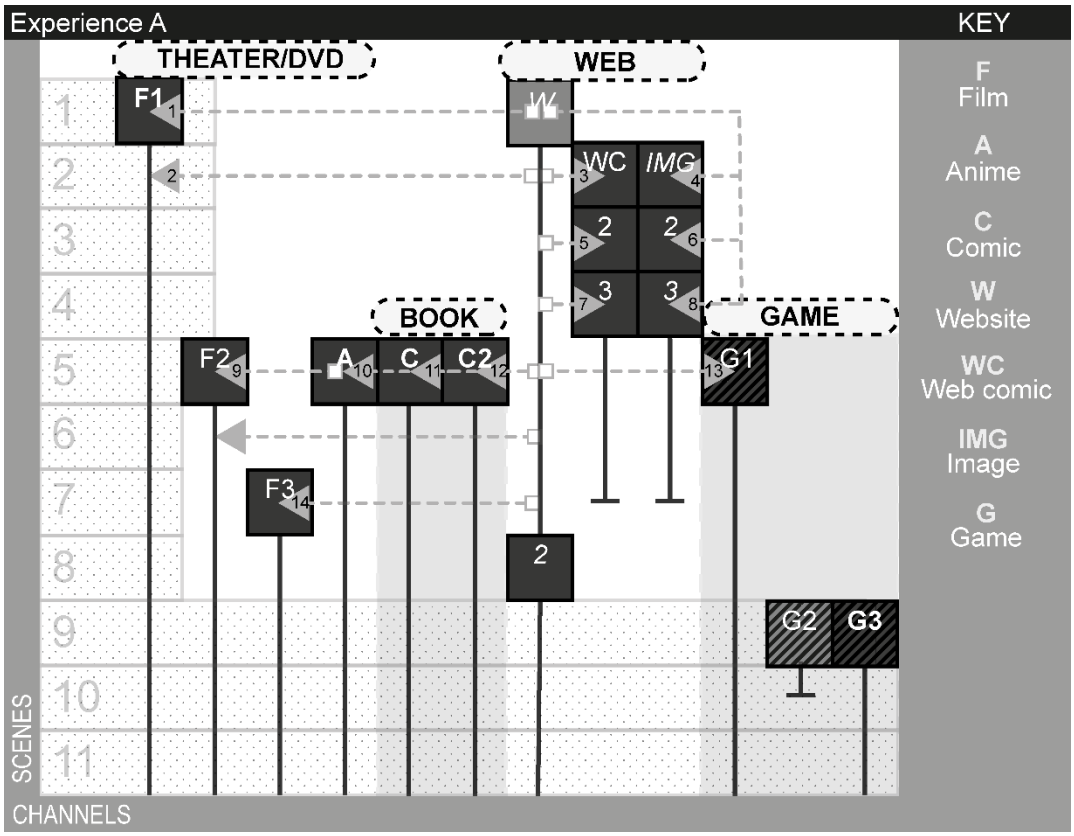


Figure 19 An experience modelled using MOTS

Secondly, as expert four suggested, user journeys can be compared to production models, showing the channel choices made by the user at each scene and how this journey differed to intended journeys. Finally, all potential user journeys can be modelled and compared to reveal the different types of experience that exist in a single story. Figure 20 shows the “actual” or production model of the experience, and figure 21 illustrates the journey a particular user took in the experience.

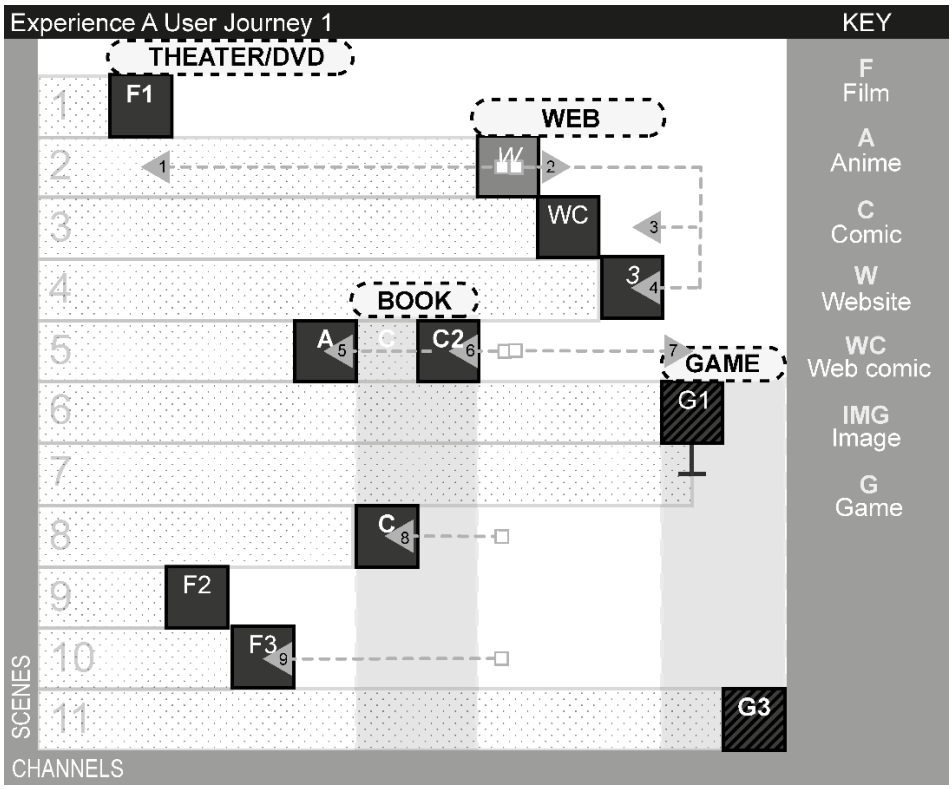


Figure 20 A user journey of the same experience

During this stage, the model underwent several changes to the style in the visual representation to allow for improved readability as shown in fig 14, with new icons shown in table 9.

Table 9 New icons in MOTS

Feature	**Icon/Style**	**Description**
Dependency	A (normal)	Dependent channel
	A (bold)	Standalone channel
	A (italics)	Subsidiary channel
Instance availability	Break	The final scene in which an instance is available
Instance availability	Persistent	The channel is available, but started in another scene
Groups of channels	Super Channel	A group of channels that share a technological, semiotic or cultural dimension

3.4.3 Summary of Section

In this section, results from the expert interviews were presented, including how they both validated the model and changed its direction. They provided feedback that allowed for some of the fundamental definitions and assumptions made by the model to be refined.

3.5 Decomposing an Experience using MOTS: GoT 19 Reinos

In this section, an example of the process of decomposition using MOTS is presented, applying the model to reveal the structure of *19 Reinos*, a relatively simple transmedia experience. *19 Reinos* (HBO, 2014), was based on the popular HBO series *Game of Thrones* (GoT) which in turn was based on a book A Song of Ice and Fire by George RR Martin. It ran for 10 weeks in 2014, at the same time season four of GoT was released. The story invited participants to imagine that Spain was part of the fictional land of Westeros (a continent in GoT), and that it had been split up into 19 realms. A live event, which communicated this concept to three-hundred fans who were invited by the authors, included a performance of a fictitious character, Edwyck. This performance primed the audience for the rest of the story, which continued as a role-play experience playing out on Facebook and Twitter. Characters were created using a website, where full descriptions and backstory were given to their character. Every Monday, simultaneously with the airing of a new GoT episode, battles between players would ensue on Twitter that involved players using keywords in their tweets such as kill, seduce and betray, to interact with other players. During the rest of the week, participants could create communities on Facebook with fellow realm members, and plan their strategy for the following Monday, whilst also expanding their character's backstory and creating quests for each other. After the TV series finale, the winner of the Twitter battle became 'King' at the second live event, where many people attended to watch the coronation of this player.

3.5.1 Identifying the Channels

The first step in the process is identifying the channels present within the experience we are modelling. The means to do this depends on the experience. In this case we have a detailed account of what happened during the experience, from which we can extract all of the channels that were used.

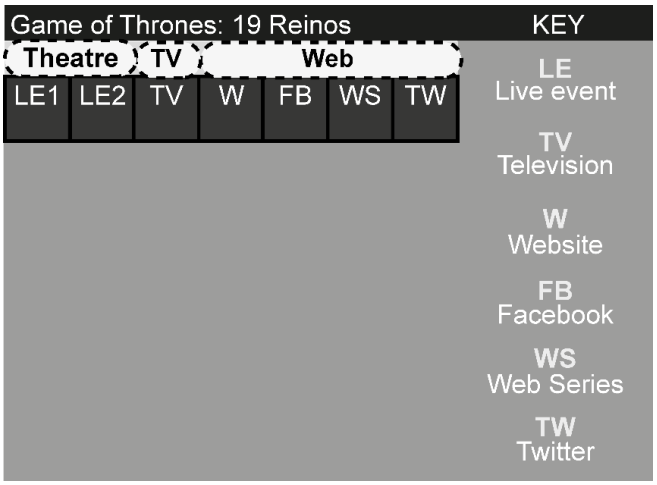


Figure 21 Identifying channels

3.5.2 Counting the Instances

The next step involves identifying all of the instances for each channel. With the TV (TV) channel and Web series (WS), we can simply include each new episode as a new instance. Similarly, we can attach a new instance to each Twitter battle that occurred. With the live events (LE), I have included the only two such events as separate channels and not as one channel with two instances, because the time, space and content of both of these are different. I have only given one instance to the website (W) and one to Facebook (FB), as each of these channels provided a space for role-play, with no author-generated content being communicated.

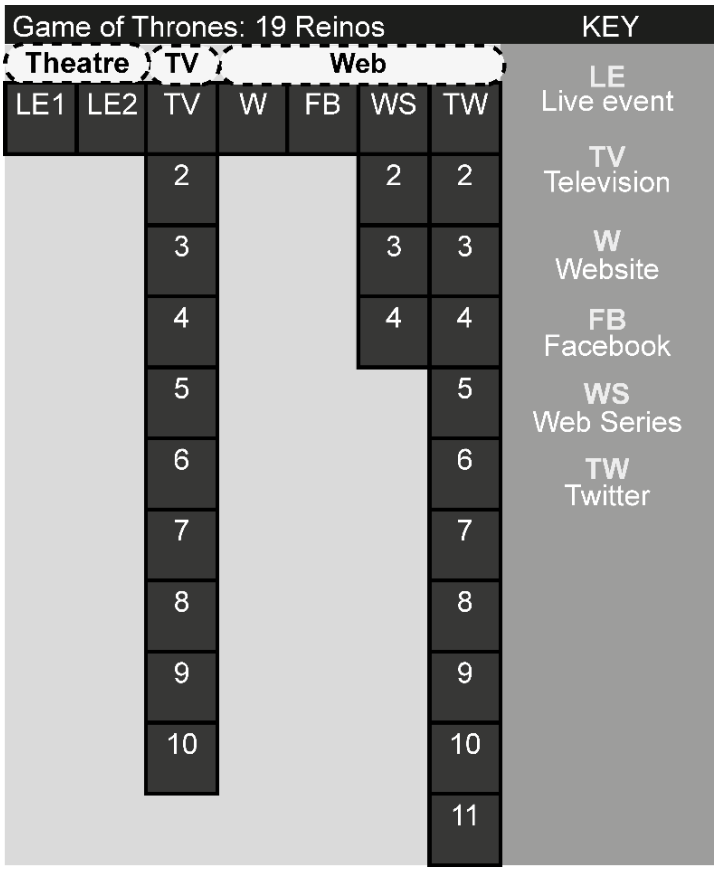


Figure 22 Counting the Instances

3.5.3 Determining Interactivity and State

We can now identify the interactivity and state parameters of each instance. Both live events occurred at a specific time and place, involving audience interaction with a main character, making these instance active/live. With each TV instance, episodes were broadcasted live, with no direct audience interaction, making all of these instances passive/live. Both the website and Facebook instances involved role-play that ran throughout the whole experience, making the instances here both active/static. The web series was released in episodes, but once uploaded could be watched at any time the audience wanted, making these instances passive/static. Lastly, in the Twitter channel instances, two different types of activity occurred; the live battles each week at specific times and the role-play that occurred during the rest of the time, making half the instances active/live and another half active/static.

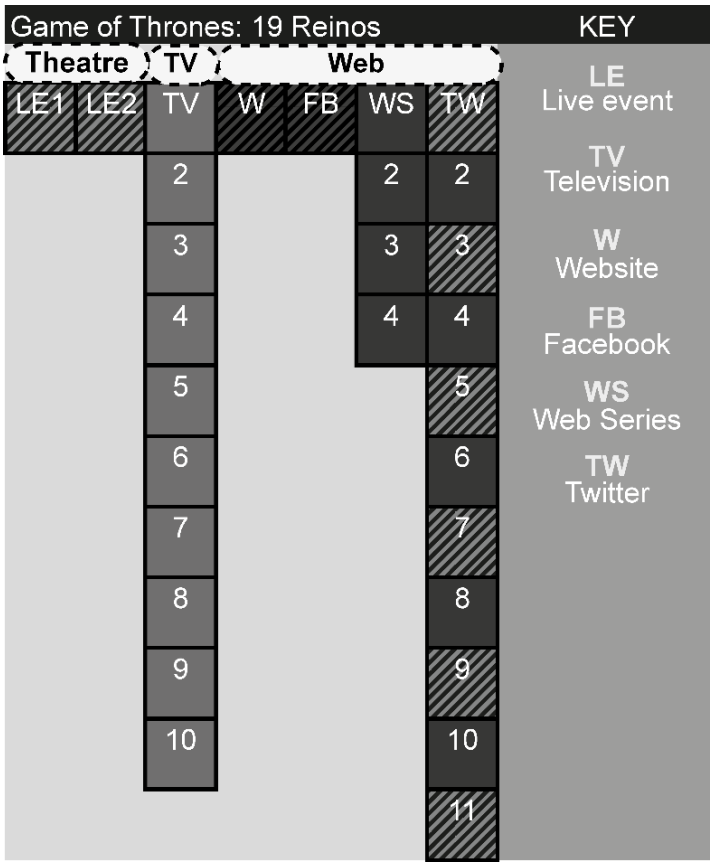


Figure 23 Determining Interactivity and State

3.5.4 Revealing the Integrity of Instances

Next, we determine the integrity of the instances depending on whether they can be experienced in isolation or not. Both live events were theatrical performances by a professional actor, with the first event kicking the experience off and last event the finale. Audiences could theoretically attend and enjoy these events with full knowledge of the experience, without even visiting other channels. The Web series and TV channels could be consumed in isolation from the rest of the experience, with most viewers of the latter never having heard of 19 Reinos, and is considered standalone. The rest of the channels are considered either dependent or subsidiary because they could not be consumed in isolation/included subsidiary story content. In order to effectively role-play on Facebook and Twitter, you needed prior knowledge of what to do. Similarly, content on the website could only be enjoyed in conjunction with other channels.

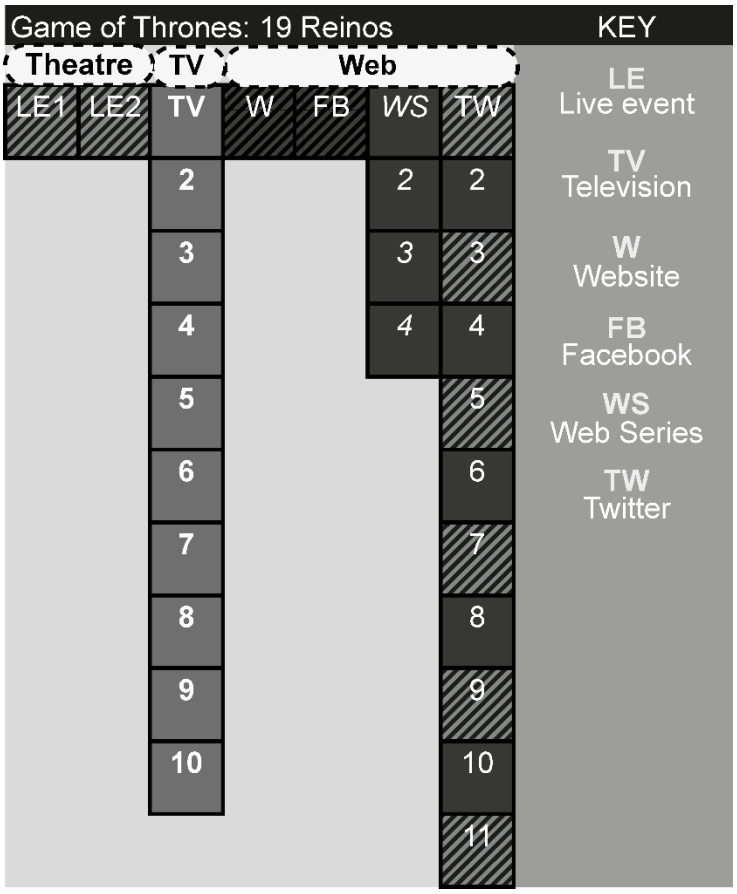


Figure 24 Revealing the Integrity of Instances, using bold, italic and standard font

3.5.5 Ordering into Scenes

The next step is ordering the instances into scenes. Here, we can show when instances occurred at or around the same time, and their position relative to other instances. For this experience the ordering is relatively simple, with both live events acting as the beginning and end, and all other content occurring in between. We can also match the TV episodes to the Twitter battles that occurred each week, and put the TW static instances in between. What results is a step by step of what happened generally, rather than a specific chronological order of events. For example, real length of time between scenes one and two is not the same length of time between scenes four and five.

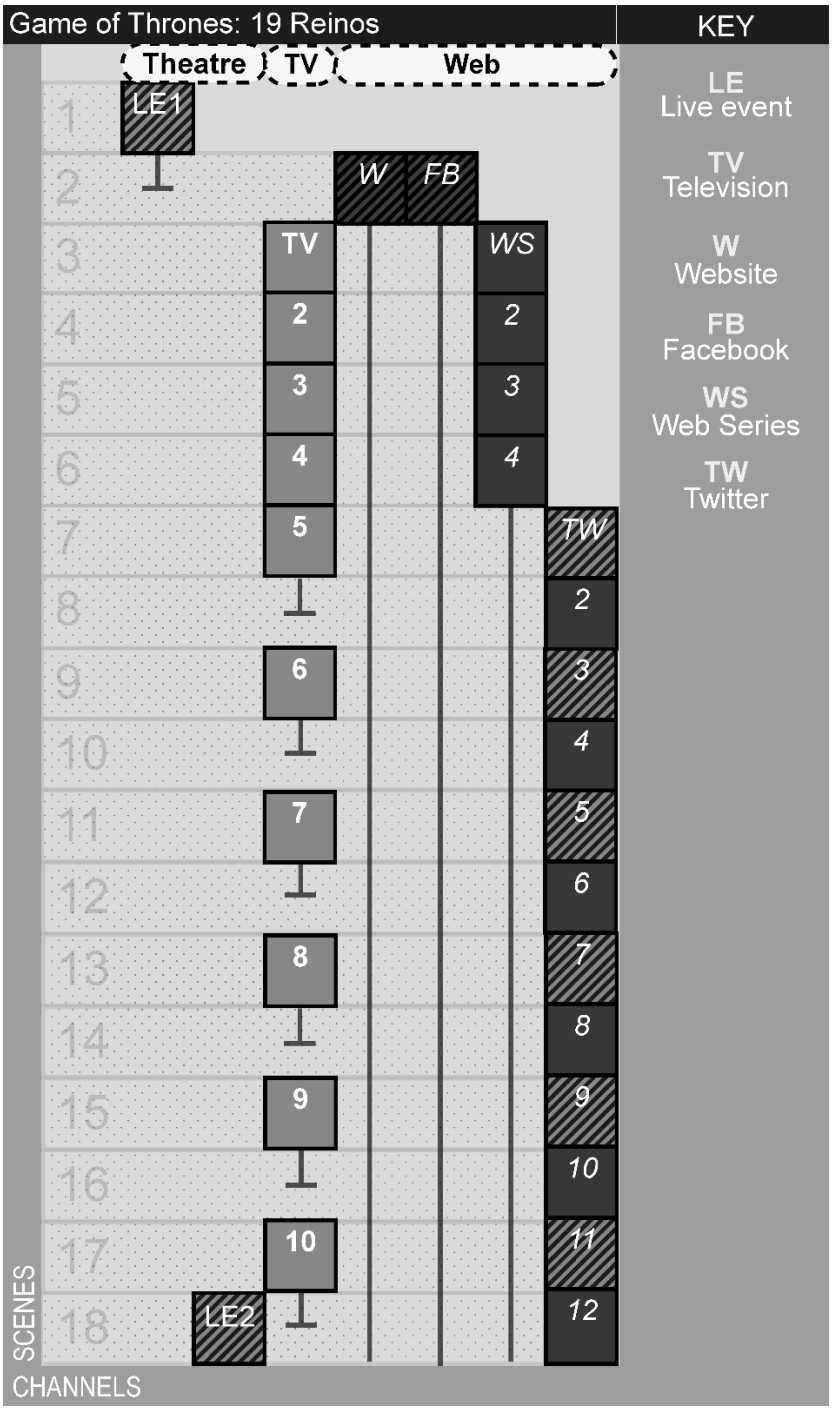


Figure 25 Ordering into Scenes

3.5.6 Links

The final stage of the process is linking the instances together. The types of links that were involved in the experience included; hyperlinks (3), verbal and paper (1), and text (12). Reflecting the main purpose of the experience as a marketing exercise, most of the links attempted to push the audience to the TV show.

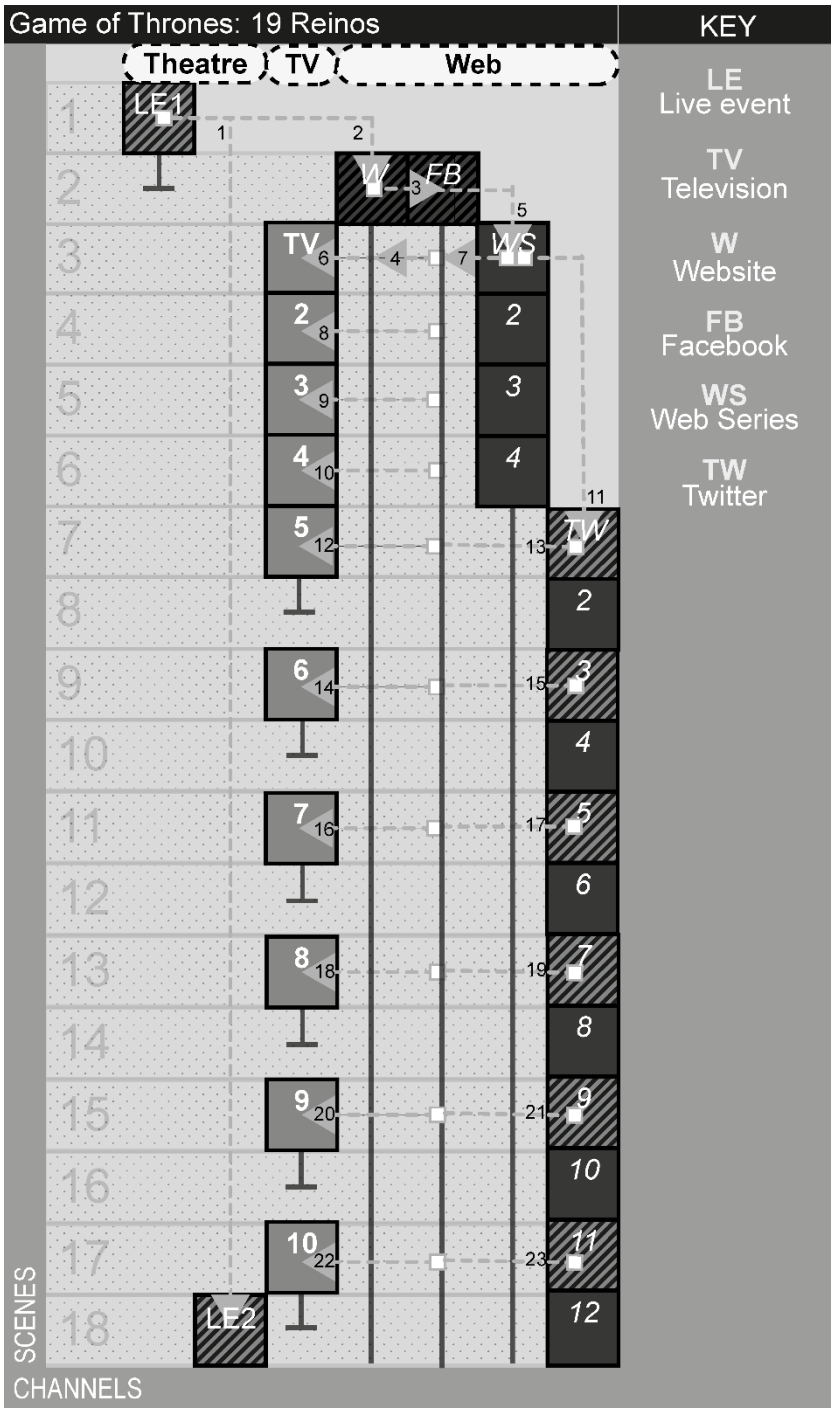


Figure 26 Links

3.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented MOTS, beginning with how the model was iteratively developed and improved using expert interviews. I then explored the model deeper, explaining how it worked and how it could be applied. In the next chapter, I apply the model to eight transmedia stories to illustrate the effectiveness of the model as a tool for analysis.

Chapter 4 Describing and Analysing Transmedia Stories

> Regardless of field, formal analysis focuses on the different elements of a work, that is, asking questions about the elements that constitute the parts of the work and the role of each element in the composition as a whole [143].

In this chapter, I use MOTS to describe and analyse the structure of eight transmedia experiences. The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate the use of MOTS as a tool for formal analyses of diverse types of transmedia stories. Much like Propp's research on the structure of Russian folk tales [22], I use MOTS to identify the structural features of transmedia stories, commenting on how they affect the way the story is told and experienced.

4.1 Methodology

4.1.1 Selection

The sample of twenty experiences used for the development of MOTS were used as the starting point for the selection of case studies in this chapter. Ten experiences, selected using the selection criteria presented in the last chapter, were added to this list as candidates for further exploration. Eight experiences that best showcased the ability and scope of MOTS were chosen from this list of thirty experiences, shown in table 10.

Specific experiences needed to be selected from the sample in order to showcase the scope and ability of MOTS as a tool for analyses. The selection criteria described in chapter three was utilised, by first selecting an experience in the sample that had the most availability for first-hand experience or data. Next, an experience that had different channels, media and links from the first was selected, favouring those experiences that had the most available data. This process was repeated until the list of case studies effectively showcased the ability of MOTS, ending with eight case studies selected for the purposes of this chapter.

Table 10 Modelled Experiences

Title	**Author**	**Ad-hoc category**
Apex Legends	Electronic Arts	Game
Overwatch: Sombra	Activison Blizzard	ARG
Cloverfield	Bad Robot Productions	ARG

Prometheus	20th Century Fox	Second screen app
Pirates of the Caribbean Franchise	Walt Disney Pictures	Media franchise
Pirates of the Caribbean Ride	Disney Parks International	Exhibit
Defenders of the Triforce	Nintendo	Escape room
Disneyland Paris	Disney Parks International	Exhibit

4.1.2 Process

In *Game Design Theory and Practice*, Richard Rouse III demonstrates a three-stage process whereby games could be formally analysed [143]. To enable these stages, a vocabulary was developed that could describe key components, or "primitives", of the video games such as the components, actions and goals of the game. The first stage uses this vocabulary to describe all the primitives and their relations, the second stage then uses this description to describe the principles of design and the third stage describes the role of primitives and design principles in the game, and their effect on the player. A similar approach is taken in this chapter, starting with a short summary of the experience, a description of the experience using MOTS, and a discussion that analyses the consequences of certain features and the structure as a whole, on the experience. Some of the visuals have been partitioned to help identify instances that are grouped together in an abstract way, such as act one of a three act structure.

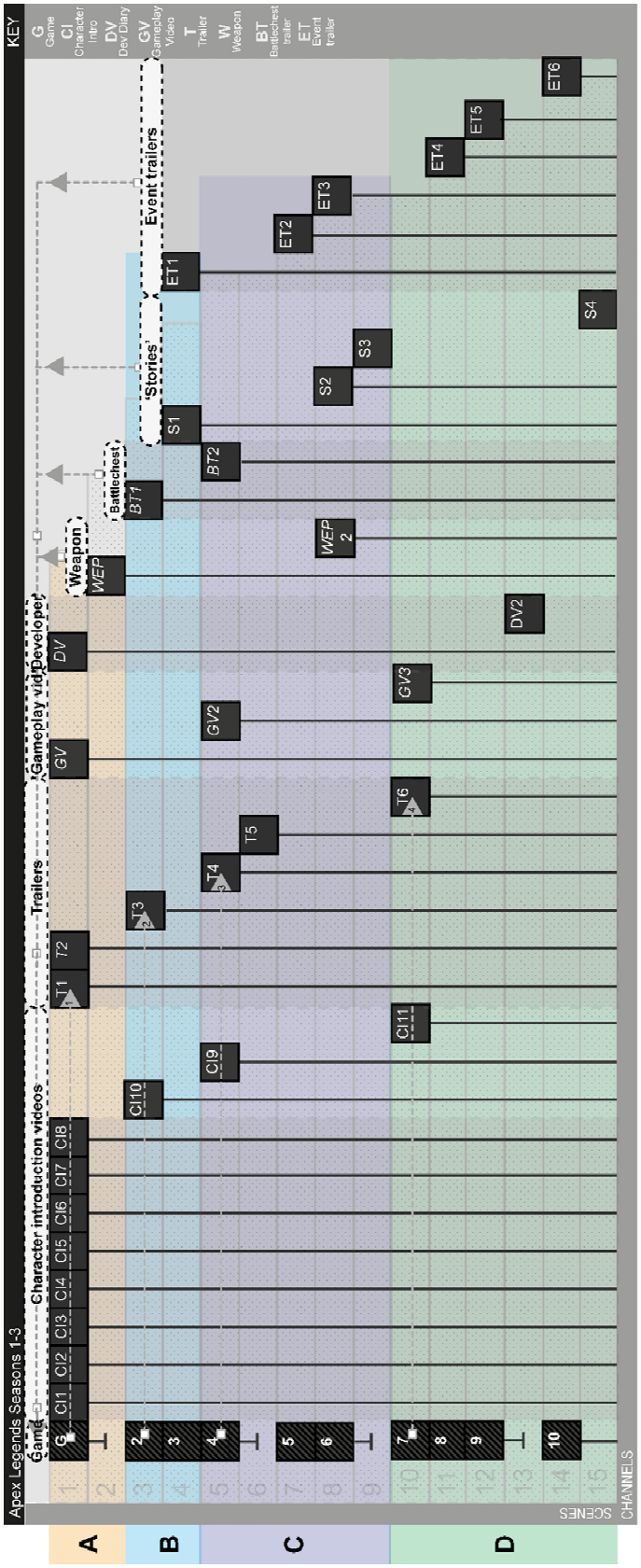
4.2 Apex Legends

4.2.1 Summary

Apex Legends (Electronic Arts) is a battle royale first person hero shooter video game set in a science fiction universe. The gameplay consists of twenty-three-person squads dropping into a battle zone, collecting loot and attempting to survive as the zone gets smaller. As a free-to-play game, *Apex* generates revenue by selling cosmetic items such as weapon skins and character costumes. Every three to four months, a new "season" begins, updating the game in some fundamental way such as changing the battle zone, adding a new character or weapon, or refreshing the cosmetic items shop. With each season came a new trailer, containing key elements of the story to relate the new content to the fictional world. The majority of the story is told mainly outside the game itself in the form of videos, such as character introductions or the "Stories from the Outlands" series that features characters from the game.

4.2.2 Model

The model shows that there are no channels before the game channel is released in the first scene, where there is a total of thirteen channels. The game channel has many instances that occur in the same scene as other channels after the first scene and is linked to most of the trailer channels, with all other channels linked to it. The partitions show that there are progressively more event channels and instances in the game channel as time goes on.



A: Apex Legends is released, with no "season" currently active. **B:** Season one **C:** Season two **D:** Season three

Figure 27 Apex Legends

4.2.3 Discussion

The lack of content before the launch of the game is atypical for many games, that slowly release new trailers in the build up to the release date. On launch day, the first trailer was released at the same time as several other videos, including videos that introduced the personality, abilities and short backstory of the playable characters. A separate video was produced for each of these characters (CI1-8) and uploaded independently on YouTube, instead of one long video. This could have been a strategic move, enabling maximum visibility on YouTube and opportunity for the audience to share videos they found particularly interesting. Instead of releasing one video that could potentially be viewed by one million people, the eight videos released could garner eight million views, growing the branded YouTube channel and exploiting the algorithm that displays popular channels on the YouTube website.

The seasons in *Apex* were intended to bring new content to the game, including story, and act as a "mini re launch" of the game to motivate players to keep playing and entice new players to join. According to an interview with the developers (DV2), the first season (partition B) was seen as a disappointment, not providing the expectations set by the audience after such a big initial release. The first season saw new cosmetics and a new playable character, whose introductory video was released at the same time. During the season, a time-limited "event" occurred, introducing a new play mode, "Elite Queue" that saw top players matched with other top players and the opportunity to win collectible items, producing buzz within the community. In seasons two and three (partitions C and D), the strategy was extended. Only one new character was introduced at the start of the season, but time-limited events were becoming more frequent, with two occurring in season two and three occurring in season three. Each event brought with it new story content both in the game in the form of map changes, and in the event trailer videos themselves.

As illustrated in the model, each new season or event created a new instance of the game. This means that the first instance in scene one does not include the same content as the instance in scene fourteen. Here we can see the fundamental difference between what we might call a traditional game, and a "game as service". When a customer buys a traditional game, they are able to go back and play the same content as they did on launch day one year later. The story already exists and is available depending on the progress of the player. With *Apex*, the story evolves over time, and dependent on when the producers release it rather than the player's progression. The advantage of this is that producers can, quite similarly to ARGs, change the direction of the story or content depending on what the community likes or dislikes. As there is no money being paid up-front, the audience is not justified in complaining about not being able to

view old content. Instead, cosmetics that are bought with real money persist regardless of the season or instance of the game.

Apex is only one example of a video game that uses transmedia techniques to tell its story. Another game, *Overwatch* (Activision Blizzard), uses similar techniques to ones we have explored here. As a "hero shooter" *Overwatch* also contains playable characters that are released over time. On one occasion, the producers of *Overwatch* sought to build up excitement ahead of time before a new character release by producing an ARG-like experience featuring the new character. The channels that were used during this time form what is colloquially known as the *Overwatch Sombra ARG*.

4.3 Overwatch Sombra

4.3.1 Summary

A few months after *Overwatch* was released, several references were being discovered by players to a mysterious character called Sombra, beginning with a newspaper in one of the maps that had the headline "Quién es Sombra?" (Who is Sombra). Little notice was given until a new character, Ana, was released. In her character introduction video, the community discovered a cryptic clue in the form of a code shown in a single frame in the video. This was the beginning of the *Overwatch Sombra*, designed to act as build-up for the release of a new playable character. The following weeks saw Blizzard release many more clues across different channels, providing backstory to the mysterious new character and challenging the community with difficult puzzles that would have to be solved collectively.

4.3.2 Model

The model illustrates that channels were either standalone or dependent, with the majority of them being static. Four channels include multiple instances, with the rest only including one. There are nineteen links between the channels, with most of the channels being linked to from another location in the experience.

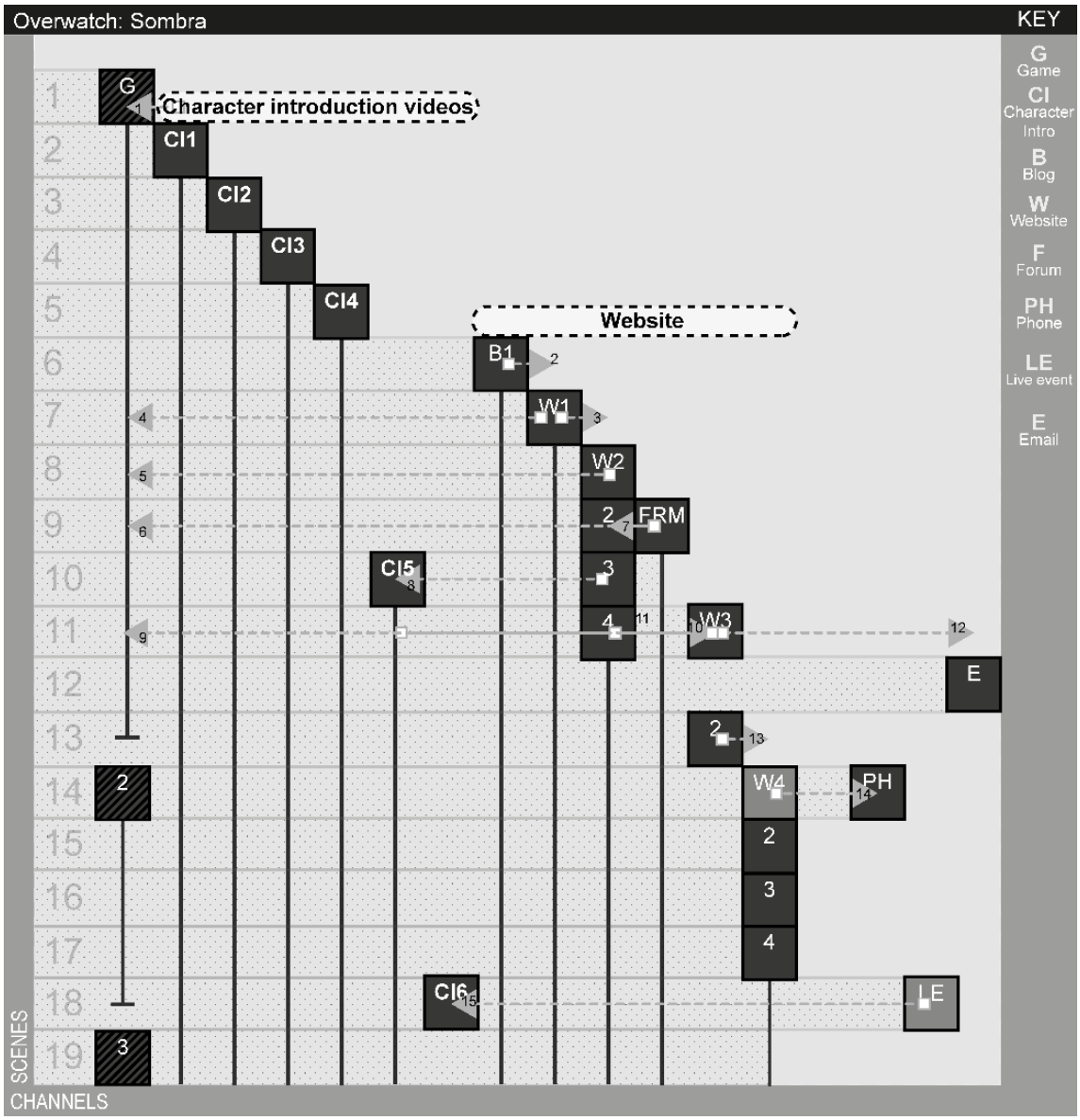


Figure 28 Overwatch Sombra

4.3.3 Discussion

From the links in the model, we can see that there is a sequential structure, suggesting the producers wanted the audience to follow a specific path. However, the link between each instance was not necessarily always easy for the audience to discover. Clues that were hidden in the character introduction videos were not direct, and instead required the audience to interpret how they could be used e.g., a code seen in CI1 was a password that needed to be entered in W3. We can see from the model that channels were released steadily over time, rather than in one go. Anticipating that there would be clues inside the game itself, players scoured maps, often inventing clues that were not there. With this knowledge, Blizzard would actively watch the community to see how far they were getting, and attempt to steer them away from such activity. An example of this is players thinking the sky in one of the maps was a clue, only for Sombra to

produce a clue that said “Why are you looking at the sky? The answer isn't over your heads, it's behind you. Sometimes, you need to analyze your previous achievements”. After most of the community was well aware of the ARGs existence, more content was being provided to active community members who would frequent the Overwatch websites and forum. As a place where much discussion was taking place, Blizzard decided to create Sombra a forum account herself and make a post containing another clue.

The choice of channels is important for this experience. Throughout *Overwatch* history, Activision Blizzard have provided story content about playable characters outside the game in the form of animated shorts, comics and images. However, with Sombra, the backstory was contained in channels within the ARG such as “hacked” websites, the forum, emails and encrypted messages in videos. This method reflected not only Sombra’s personality as a mysterious hacker, but also her playstyle and abilities in the game itself, that includes hacking other systems, invisibility and advanced technology.

The experience concluded at “Blizzcon”, a live conference hosted by Blizzard, that saw Sombra hack into one of the shows and reveal her identity. This provided both a conclusion to the experience for those who knew about it, and an introduction to the new character to many who had no idea much of the content of the experience existed.

4.4 Cloverfield

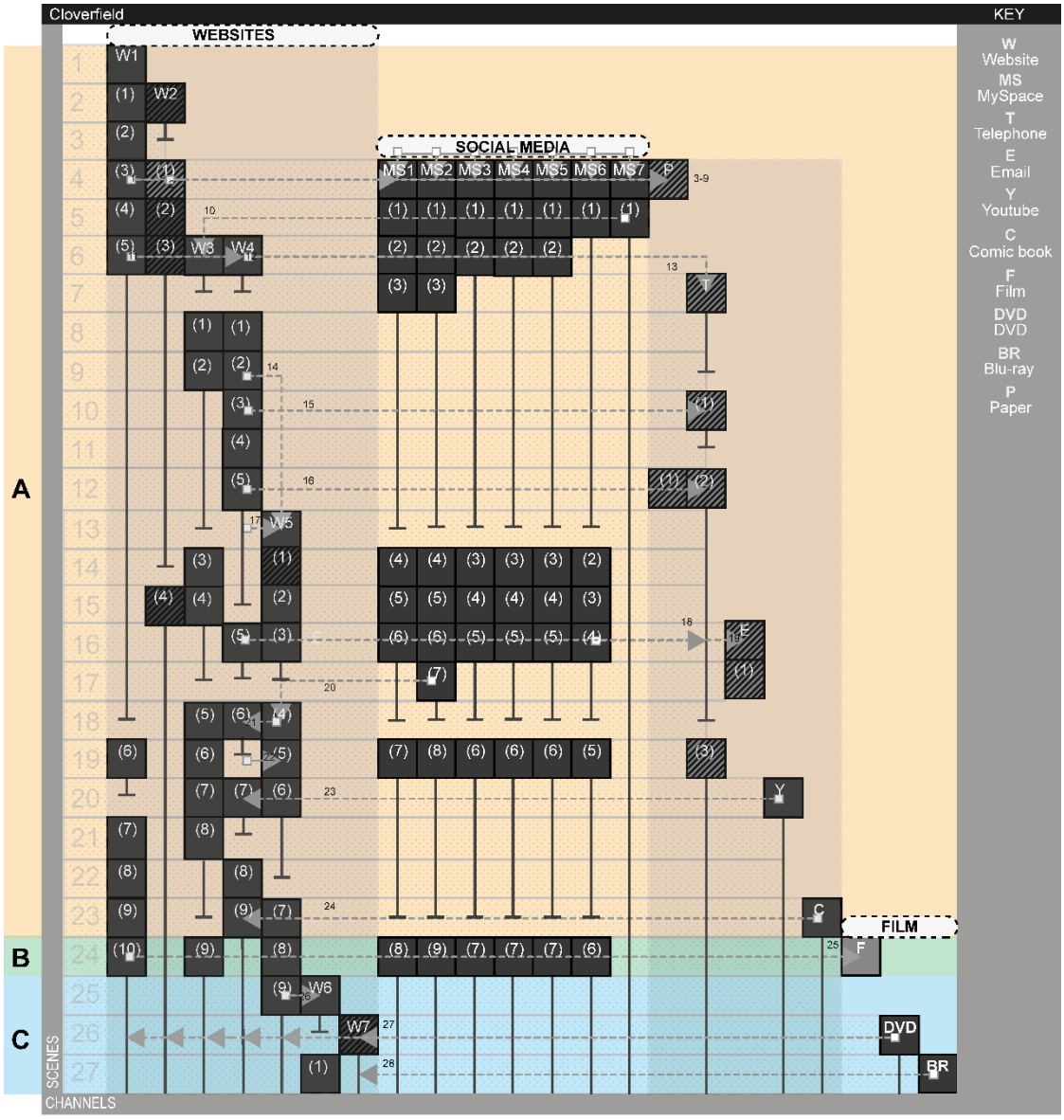
4.4.1 Summary

In 2008, the film Cloverfield was released in theatres, presenting a found-footage apocalyptic themed story of a group of people surviving the immediate aftermath of a large creature rampaging through New York City. The film starts in an apartment building showing a leaving party for one of the main characters who has accepted a job at the prestigious Tagruato deep sea drilling company. As a new viewer, very little is known about the characters or context beyond this, but as someone who consumed the experience that preceded, the film was simply the next sequence of events in an already familiar storyworld. Starting as a trailer on the official film website, the producers of Cloverfield presented a complex story spanning multiple channels that set the scene for the film.

4.4.2 Model

In the model we can see that there is a large number of channels, with all but four of them having more than one instance, with most of them occurring before the film is released. There is a high

number of links that take the audience down the experience, and then back up to the experience after the release of the DVD channel in scene twenty-six. There are few live instances, suggesting that audiences could access content any time after it was made available. Many of the scenes included multiple new instances, allowing the audience to pick which instance they wanted to consume first as the story progressed. All of the channels aside from the theatre and home release of the film were dependent, working together to deliver the story.



A: Pre-film launch **B:** Film launch **C:** Post film launch

Figure 29 Cloverfield Model

4.4.3 Discussion

We can see from the model that many of the channels were fictitious websites or social media profiles that were periodically updated. Like *Overwatch Sombra*, this produced the effect of

channels blending fiction with reality, with the events they communicate seeming to be real to the audience.

In W3 and W4, the audience learned of the deep-sea drilling company Tagruato and its secret operations, discovering a substance known as “deep sea nectar”. With other channels, the audience learns of events such as the collapse of one of Tagruato’s stations through new reports, recorded in various languages by different news networks. Leaked images presented on different websites suggested to the audience that the drilling station had been destroyed by an unknown living entity in the ocean, which Tagruato had secretly been monitoring and accidentally awoke.

Another effective method that was used to blur reality was the use of the popular social media platform at the time, MySpace. The characters we see in the film were each given a profile, that were periodically updated to emulate real social interaction between people. In one of the profiles, we learn of one of the character’s successful interview at Tagrauto for a new job, and other characters congratulating him. In the final update of the characters profiles, the content leads straight into the first scene of the film, with characters looking forward to the leaving party that is soon to occur.

In the model, we can see that many instances occur at the same time in many scenes. This allowed the audience to see how other channels reacted to a change in the story. For example, the Tagrauto website changed to reflect the station collapse that was presented in the news reports. Unlike *Overwatch Sombra*, the problem faced by the audience in this experience was piecing together the story, and interpreting new channels to reveal gaps. Consequently, the channels within the ARG were well connected, pointing the audience to undiscovered locations and further progressing the story.

The choice of channels meant that changes did not destroy the content that had come before e.g. when a new MySpace post occurred, the audience could still see previous posts. This afforded several features. Firstly, the audience could go back to old content in light of new updates to help them piece together the story, secondly it allowed new-comers to not miss content and finally, it allowed people who were made aware of the ARG after they saw the film, to get a better understanding of the fictional world and the events that led to the film. Indeed, the latter of these was an intended action of the producers, where they pushed audiences back to ARG content from the DVD and BluRay. By this time, all of the channels and their narrative connections were already worked out by the original audience, changing the ARG from a detective style hunter-gatherer experience to a more consumable and retrospective one. However, one channel that was revealed in the DVD, a military website that provided some additional information about the ending of the film, was presented and required a secret login to access. This provided the new

audience with a flavour of what the experience was like as it ran, as well as enticing them to discover the old content. Unlike *Overwatch Sombra*, where the audience was not pushed to look at old content, the producers wanted the audience to get a deeper understanding of the *Cloverfield* storyworld by consuming the old content.

The found-footage style of the *Cloverfield* film meant that using ARG tropes, with its blurring of reality methodology, was effective in presenting and expanding the story to audiences that were likely to enjoy the content. This approach may not have worked so well for other films whose audiences would not be interested in ARG-like consumption. One approach taken in the film of *Prometheus* is to provide additional story content quite literally at the same time as the film.

4.5 Prometheus

4.5.1 Summary

With the release of the film Prometheus on Blu-ray came a downloadable app, or “second screen experience” that could be played on iOS and Android devices. The app synced to the movie via Wi-Fi, displaying additional content in the form of videos, text, and images that was related to the current scene in the film. film itself is a prequel to the famous Alien film series.

4.5.2 Model

The film channel contains only dependent instances, with the rest of the channels containing subsidiary instances. As the scenes progress, the film is accessible interspersed with various subsidiary channels. Occasionally, as in scene twelve and twenty, the film would stop as instances would play out on the app. Additionally, the instance of the film would change to display alternative scenes, as in scene five, with this being communicated to the audience in the app.

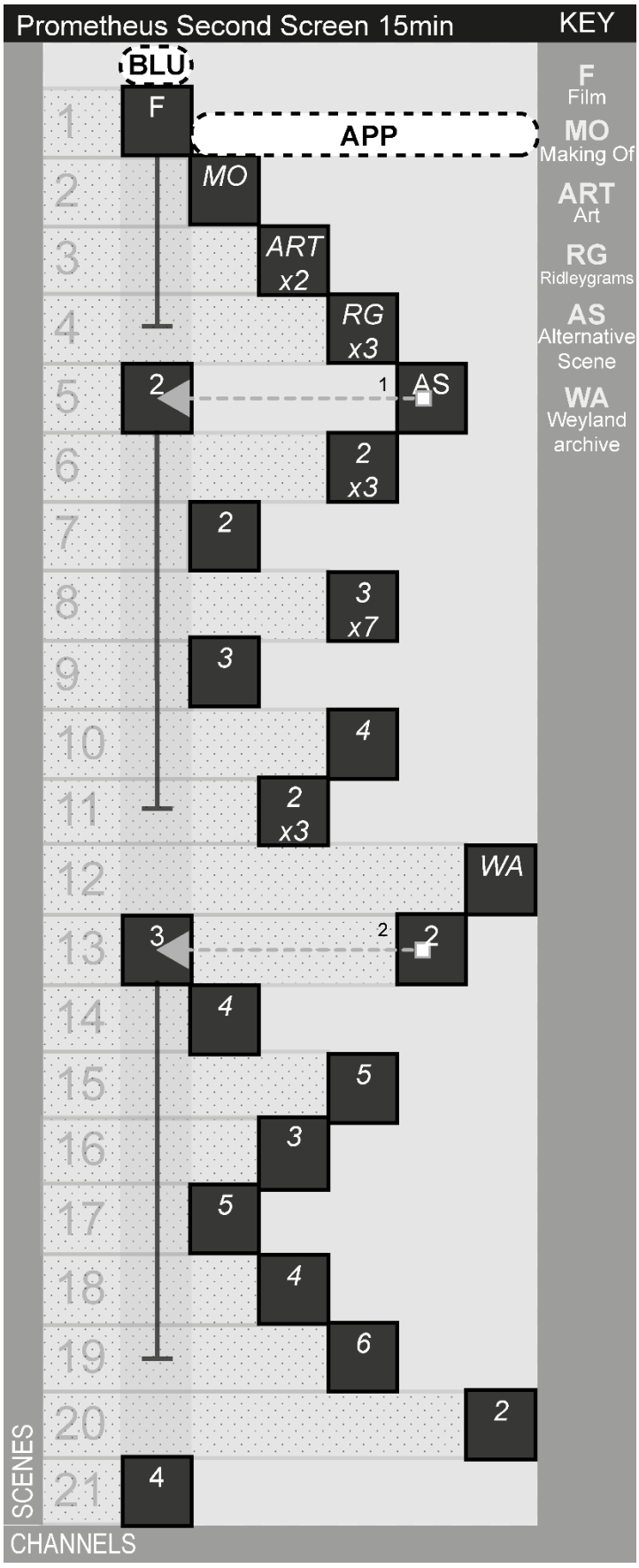


Figure 30 Prometheus Second Screen

4.5.3 Discussion

For only about fifteen minutes of the film running, the user is presented with forty-four subsidiary channels that are shown on the app. Although the film can be paused at any time, it is arguably difficult for the audience to consume all the content on the app whilst concentrating on the film. At the very least, the audience will miss certain details, visuals, sound effects or dialogue as they turn their attention to the subsidiary instances on the app.

For much of the app channels, the audience are presented with content that relates to the making of the film itself, such as concept art of short videos from the creators. These give the audience an additional perspective that they can use to interpret the film and its meanings, potentially aligning more closely to the director's vision. There are however other channels, such as the Weyland archive channel, that presents the audience with fiction that provides deeper understanding to the narrative world. For example, in scene twelve, the audience sees Mr Weyland, a frail old man, for the first time. A few moments after we see him, the film pauses and a video plays on the app. The video consists of a TED Talk given by Mr Weyland in 2023, showing him as a young man giving a speech about the past and present of technology. The audience are introduced to both the current state of technology within the fictional world, and some of the characteristics of Mr Weyland. The audience do however learn of both of these things during the course of the film, albeit from different content within the film.

One interesting feature is the ability for the audience to display alternate scenes of the film when prompted. When this occurs, the film saved where it was, plays the alternative scene that is stored on the disc, and returns to where it was. This is a different kind of disruption than with the other subsidiary instances. The audience does not need to be looking at two screens at once, but instead must keep track of the events that are "actual" versus the events that are "alternative". This runs the risk of audiences becoming confused with the series of events, or producing enigmas that will never be answered. One example of this can be seen in scene five, where the "actual" scene involves a large muscular humanoid drinking from a bowl containing a strange liquid and disintegrating. The alternative scene however is longer, and involves a group of these creatures gathering in what seems to be a religious ceremony. In this alternative scene, one of the creatures gives the other the bowl of strange liquid, portraying this to be an act of honour. The differences in these two scenes is substantial. In the actual scene, the audience do not know whether the humanoid is alone, has been exiled, or is committing suicide. Conversely, in the alternative scene, we can see that at least two of these are likely not the case. When watched consecutively as in this case, the audience is left wondering how to interpret this scene, whether to keep the events of the alternative scene in the back of their minds or not.

Up until this point, we have considered experiences that have a dominant channel that is being expanded upon using transmedia storytelling methods. Next, we consider how transmedia storytelling manifests itself in ways that does not favour any one channel. Instead, channels can be consumed in isolation, but together form part of the transmedia story experience. There are many examples of this, with one such example being *Pirates of the Caribbean* (The Walt Disney Company).

4.6 Pirates of the Caribbean

4.6.1 Summary

In 1967, the Pirates of the Caribbean ride opened at a Disneyland theme park in the United States. The popularity of this swashbuckling themed ride grew until in 2003, the *Pirates of the Caribbean: Curse of the Black Pearl* (Walt Disney Pictures) film was released. The film took the theme, costumes and premise of the ride and used them to tell a new story that was not told in the ride. The main protagonist, Captain Jack Sparrow, is joined by other pirates and noblemen on various adventures that see them ultimately doing good despite their criminal tendencies. It was a big financial success, and spawned a large franchise that now includes many films, books and games all building upon the central story conceived in the first film. This new franchise was such a success that elements of it made its way into the original ride e.g., Captain Jack Sparrow, originally not in the ride, was now being featured with state-of-the-art animatronics that look strikingly similar to the actor that plays him.

4.6.2 Model

We can see from the model that the experience starts with live channels, with static channels progressively appearing as scenes progress. There are few scenes where multiple instances occur at the same time, but most of the instances are accessible in latter scenes after they appear. The model is split into six partitions to reflect pre-film channels and then each film release. It shows how the franchise grew after each new film, with a book series starting partition B that progresses to partition D where a new book series starts. There are only two subsidiary channels included in this model reflecting the visual guide books that provide images from the films. Only the subsidiary channels are linked to the films, with other channels either providing no link, or linking to channels within their own super channel. Additionally, all of the film channels are standalone, aside from F3.

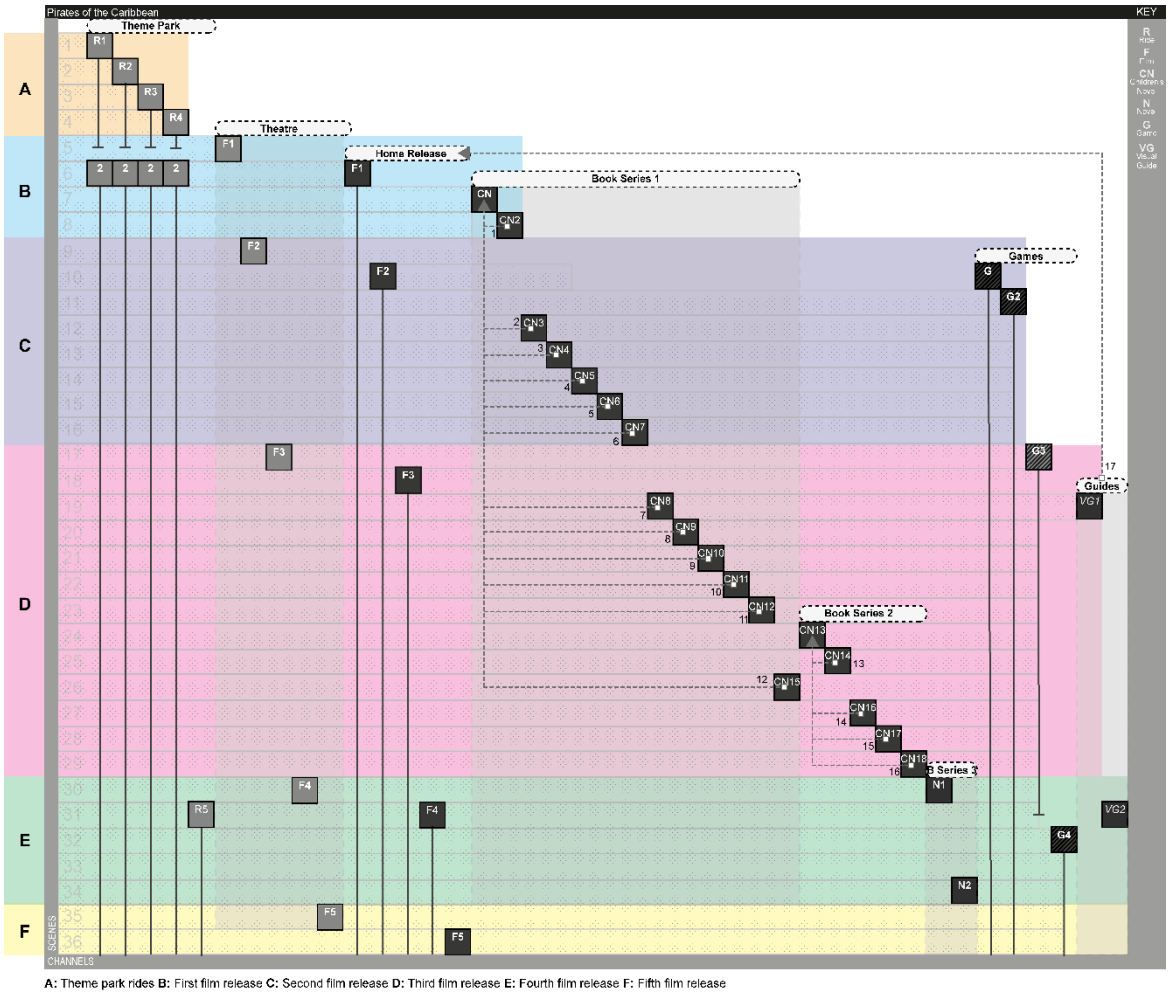


Figure 31 Pirates of the Caribbean Model

4.6.3 Discussion

We can see in the model that the transmedia story experience begins with the original ride at Disneyland California, and the first three duplicates in Florida, Tokyo and Paris. Due to its huge popularity, all four rides were updated to include animatronic characters from the film soon after its release. This feedback loop, where the ride changes with content from the film, is not a common occurrence. By the time the fifth film had released, a fifth iteration of the ride had opened at the Shanghai Disneyland theme park as shown in scene thirty-one. This ride changed dramatically, with the story and characters used being based almost entirely on the film series.

From the model we see that all of the films can be enjoyed in isolation, aside from the third film that depends on the second film, whose events directly precede it. The dependency is reinforced when we look at the release dates of the films, with the time between F1 and F2 being three years, but only one year from F2 to F3. Similarly, it was four years from F3 to F4 and six years from F4 to F5.

The films in the franchise are high-budget blockbusters full of action, polished visuals and immersive sound effects aimed to dazzle the audience. Beyond the main plot, there is very little time to explore the backstory of the characters. To remedy this, two book series and two standalone books were written to provide what was missing from the films. Books provide the space for characters to be developed using detailed prose, without having to keep the audience interested with thrilling visuals. The channel N2 on scene thirty-four even introduced two major characters before they starred in the fifth film, providing a prequel where the events led directly into the film from one character's perspective. These books are arguably only there for audiences that wish to know more about the characters they watch on screen, but for the majority of the audience, the franchise is best known for its swashbuckling action, grand visuals and interesting characters. Although much of the story and many of the characters do not exist in the rides, these three features are the essence of the franchise and ones that were communicated to the audience in the rides using transmedial techniques.

In the model presented in this section, it was necessary to include each ride as a separate channel in order to enable a high-level understanding of the structure of the franchise. In the next section, I demonstrate the ability of MOTS to go into greater detail into a channel itself such as one of the rides shown here.

4.7 Pirates of the Caribbean Disneyland Paris Ride

4.7.1 Summary

As we saw above, the Pirates of the Caribbean includes different manifestations of an on-rails themed ride. The one discussed here is the variation at Disneyland Paris that was built in 1992. This ride involves the audience entering small boats that take them through a series of scenes involving pirate battles in the sea, the pillaging of a small fishing village and treasure filled caves.

4.7.2 Model

The model shows that all of the channels are live, with only one instance in each of them. The first four scenes only include one instance per scene but as the experience progresses, this changes to two instances per scene. Once a scene has finished, the instances of that scene are no longer accessible. The channels are split into one of three super channels; space, screen and animatronics.

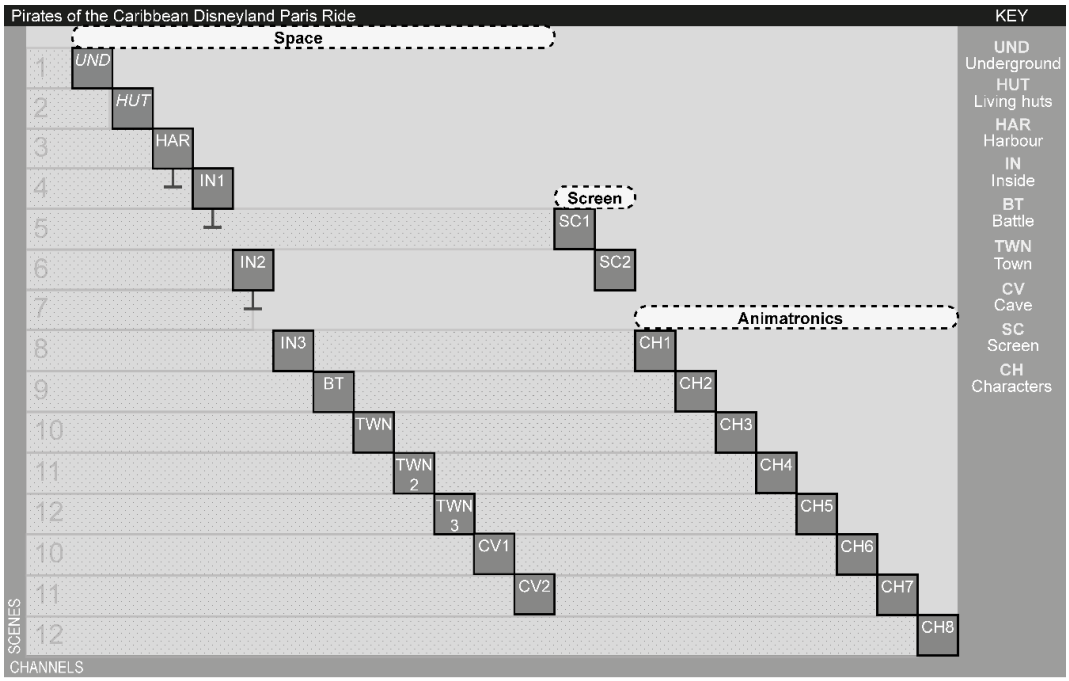


Figure 32 Pirates of the Caribbean Disneyland Paris ride

4.7.3 Discussion

The structure of the ride is similar to that of a film seen in the theatre, where we see scenes progress automatically, with no access to previous instances without restarting the experience. As the experience progresses, the audience are taken to different locations that are filled with props to make the audience feel immersed and imagine what it is like being in the Caribbean hundreds of years ago. Different locations contain different animatronic characters, each with their own personality and the role they play in the scene. For example, we see pirates battling each other and hurling insults, groups talking after they seize a town, and others stuck in a prison trying to entice the dog to give then the key it holds in its mouth, by using a bone.

The fact that the audience cannot stop the ride to consume the channels they want one by one means that they often go on the ride multiple times during their visit, potentially experiencing something slightly different each time they ride. Although every visitor is exposed to the same channels at the same time, the audiences can turn their attention to different aspects of the ride as it progresses. They might focus on the pirates on one occasion, analysing their facial expressions or dialogue, whilst focusing on the environment and the type of place the town was like on another occasion.

All of the instances of the channels are dependent, aside from UND and HUT, that only set the theme and atmosphere for the ride. As visitors enter the queue, they follow a trail through an underground prison, decorated with skeletons, cob webs and other miscellaneous props. Towards the end of the queue, the visitors enter what is presented to be outside, by a small hut. The

queue progresses through a small path amongst a jungle with a ship wreck, before visitors enter the row boats that begin the main part of the ride.

The ride analysed here is just one example where an experience consisting of almost exclusively dependent live channels can be used to tell a story. Another example of this can be seen in experiences that are described and advertised as “escape rooms”. One such example of this is the *Defenders of the Triforce* (Nintendo) escape room.

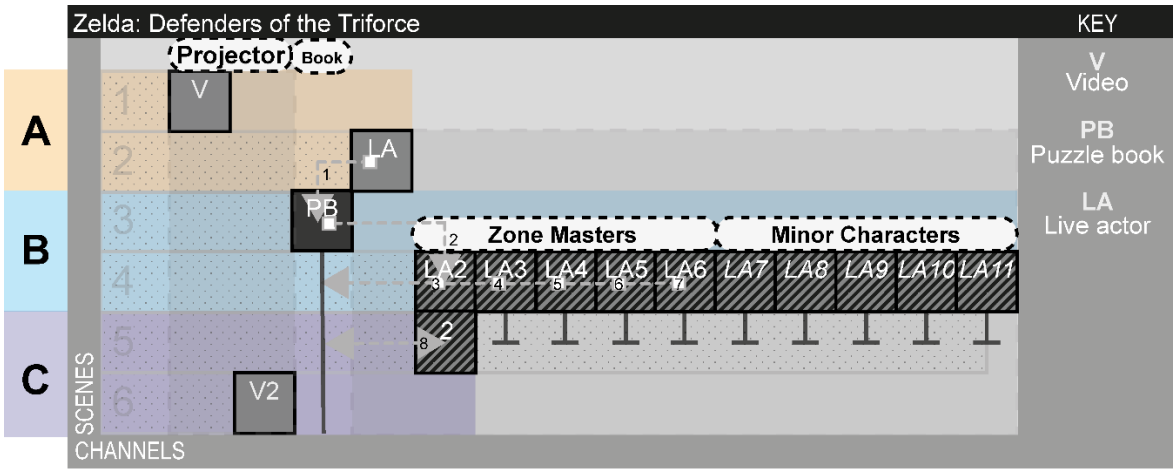
4.8 Defenders of the Triforce

4.8.1 Summary

In 2017, Nintendo sold tickets for a limited run of their “real escape room”, *Defenders of the Triforce*. The experience was themed on *The Legend of Zelda* (Nintendo), a video game series spanning many generations of Nintendo consoles. The game series involves questing and puzzle solving in a fantasy world, with the aim of destroying the ancient evil known as Ganon. The live experience invited players to take the role of the heroes who must defeat Ganon by completing several objectives such as word puzzles, physical challenges and role-play with the live actors who were playing as characters. The space where the experience is conducted was shared by a large amount of people of around one hundred people. This size varies depending on the venue location and size, but in all cases there was shared space with other unfamiliar players. This is a consequence of cost and practicality rather than artistic choice, as the experience would be similar without the other audience members, albeit with less noise and pressure to keep up with talented players who were able to solve puzzles quickly.

4.8.2 Model

The model illustrates that the first three scenes of the experience have only one instance in each of them, with ten new instances and a choice of eleven in scene four. One of the channels updates to a new instance once before the experience ends similarly to how it started. All channels are dependent, aside from five LA channels that are subsidiary. All but one instance are live, and the majority of them are active, with only one being active and static, which is available from scene three until near the end.



A: Act one **B:** Act two **C:** Act three

Figure 33 Defenders of the Triforce

4.8.3 Discussion

From the model we can see that aside from the number of live actors, there were not many channels available to the audience. The experience was designed to enable small groups to role play as heroes in the story, talking to different live actors. The majority of the time spent in the experience was in scene four, with experiences differing from audience to audience. Groups could explore different parts of the space as they chose, instead of starting off at one place and moving on to the next area. Some of the clues could be found and puzzles completed independently, allowing groups to split off if they wished to talk to different live actors. This design facilitated discussion within the group and promoted team building, with black and fourth communication about how the clues relate to each other and how the team should go about solving them.

There was structure to the role-play in the form of the booklet (PB) that often acted as the passport into an area of the room, when certain sections were filled out, whereby different characters could be spoken to in order to gain items and clues that enabled progression. In all cases, the message given by the characters was common for all teams, but the way in which it was communicated could be different depending on how the audience interacted with them.

Due to the budget afforded to the organisers, several live actors were hired that played the part of different characters in the story, some of which were from the games. Half of the live actors were playing major characters that would provide a crucial hint or reveal an aspect of the story, whilst the other half were characters that would help you or role-play their character to increase the sense of immersion. This provided both a choice of interesting characters to interact with, and a way to reduce bottlenecking, where all of the groups would go to just one character when

they needed to. In practice, bottlenecking still occurred in certain areas as it was logical to go to certain live actors first, given the initial clues presented in the book.

With the *Pirates* ride and *Defenders*, we have seen two instances of live transmedia storytelling. The last experience that is considered looks at a theme park, Disneyland Paris, and considers how MOTS can be used to model an experience that contains experiences like the previous two we have explored here.

4.9 Disneyland Paris

4.9.1 Summary

In 1992, Disneyland Paris, a theme park and resort in France with Disney based attractions opened to the public. The park now includes over fifty self-contained attractions ranging from thrill rides to theatrical performances, including the *Pirates* ride discussed earlier. Guests pick which of these attractions they want to visit and typically wait in themed queues.

4.9.2 Model

The model shows a single day in the theme park. In it, we can see the app and map channel that can be accessed before entering the park, followed by fifty-four attractions and four scheduled events; the parades and final firework show, both of which occur every day. The majority of the channels are live, and are available in all but one scene. Sixteen channels are active, and the rest are passive. The M and APP channel link to all other channels. In scene two, “x” is used to denote multiple channels of the same kind and is purely for practical reasons as the model would be too large to include as a figure.

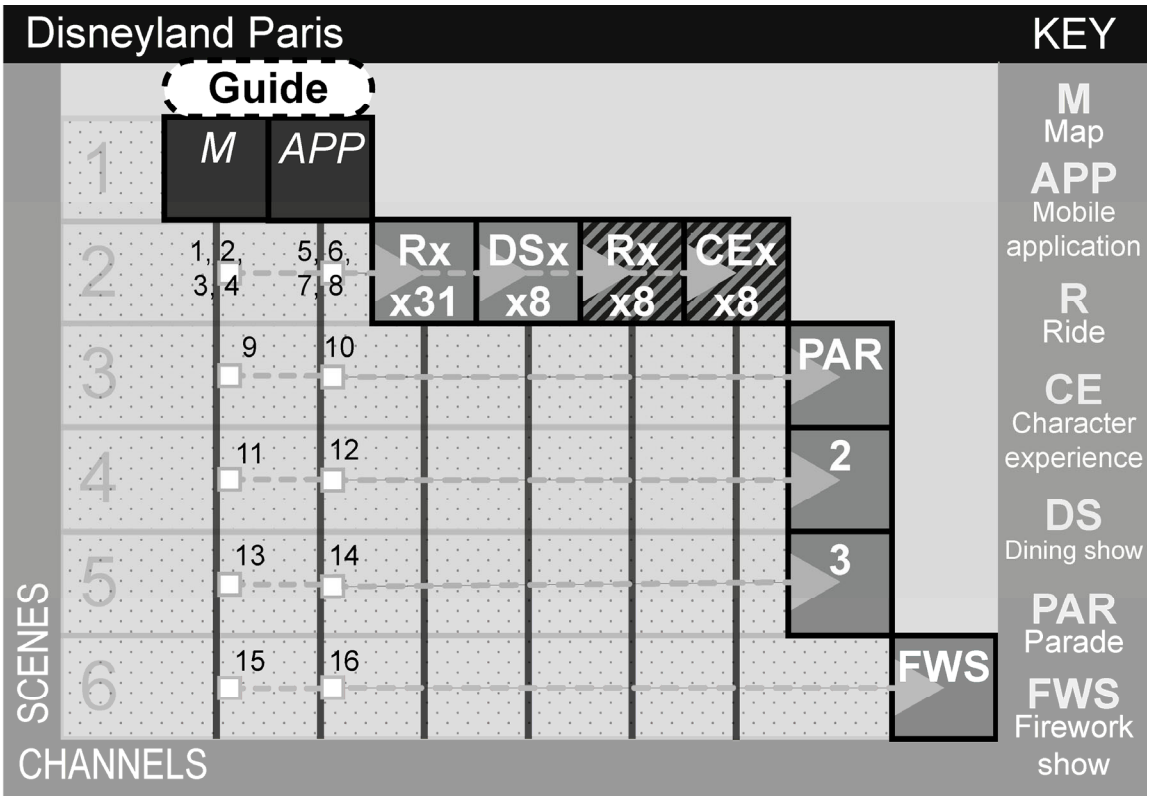


Figure 34 Disneyland Paris

With such a huge number of channels available, the possible user journeys with different channel combinations are extremely high. Consequently, I have produced two models; one of the experience as a whole and the other as an example user journey. Although example user journeys could be included with some of the previous models, the experience here is not so tightly coupled to the potential user journeys that could occur. Figure 35 shows one such potential user journey that could be taken by a visitor on any given trip.

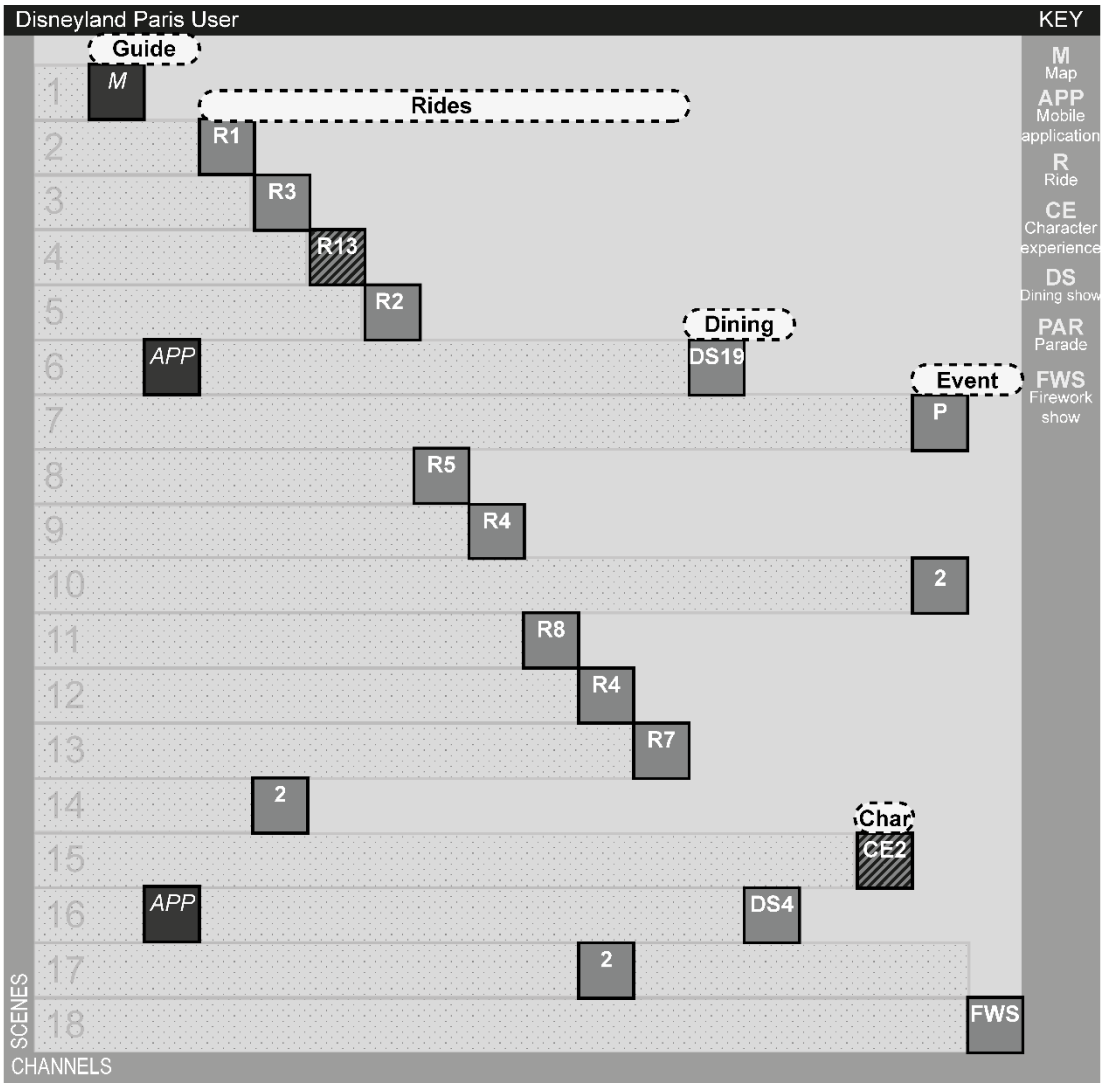


Figure 35 Disneyland Paris (User Journey)

4.9.3 Discussion

From the models we can see that most channels are passive, with audiences sitting down and linearly being shown content. Often, the content is so abundant that it is necessary to experience the ride again to look in different directions and pay attention to different areas to catch content previously missed. However, some attractions are active, where the audience is expected to interact with different characters or performers.

In the example user journey, the experience involves consuming channels one by one, occasionally consuming both the app and the dining show at the same time. Due to the number of choices available to guests, it is unlikely that any given person will experience the same day twice. One day could involve going only on thrill rides, another meeting characters and interacting with them, one mostly attending theatre shows and another that mixes and matches. Even if guests plan their journey, the variability in queue times, available characters, different seating positions

or weather conditions means that the likelihood of experiencing the same day is even slimmer. That being said, a well-known practice amongst Disney park fans involves using tools to plan days, exporting these timetables and sharing them with others. These designed days provide some structure to the experience and increases the chances that the person using the timetable will experience something similar to the person who designed it.

Although the potential user journeys are high, each one will be similar in terms of their linearity as people can only consume one channel at a time. Most channels are standalone, and involve stories with varied themes and intended audiences. Once one attraction has been consumed, it is unlikely the guest would need to remember anything at all in order to enjoy the others. However, some rides are thematically or narratively linked, and are often located in a similar area of the park. For example, the Frontier land section of the park contains the ride *Big Thunder Mountain*, a runaway coaster ride that sees guests ride a coal train into the coal mines that is owned by Big Thunder Mountain Co. This company and its work are mentioned in another ride close by, the *Phantom Manor*. Some of the characters in this ride worked for Big Thunder Mountain Co and indeed perished in an accident. At first glance, it is not immediately obvious that there is a connection between these two rides, other than the historic similarities and proximity. To find the narrative connections, guests have to keep a sharp eye when on the ride, spotting channels that are easily missed first time around.

At the beginning of the day, guests are faced with huge choices regarding which ride to go on first, sometimes checking the app to see which rides have the shortest time. From the perspective of the park, it does not matter how long a guest takes to ponder over their choice. However, this changes once the guest has made that choice, and is now consuming one of the attractions. Providing choice on an attraction is more problematic. Firstly, consideration needs to be given to how choices will be made, e.g., whether the train turns right or left, whether the guests have enough time and information to make the choice, and whether the choice should be made as a group. Second, rides would have to be designed to facilitate this choice, increasing costs each time a new fork in the ride is provided. Thirdly, choices could take too long, increasing queue times leading to customer dissatisfaction.

4.10 Conclusion

In this section, eight transmedia experiences were selected and modelled using MOTS. This demonstrated the ability of MOTS to describe a diverse set of transmedia experiences, and how it can be used to analyse their structure. I then used this description to discuss how the structure of the experience influenced the way the story was told.

It was discussed previously that the endeavour of applying MOTS is subjective; someone may think it more appropriate to model a television series as a collection of standalone channels, whilst another may prefer having one channel for the series, with each episode being a new instance.

Aside from demonstrating the affordances of MOTS, we have also explored different manifestations of transmedia storytelling, revealing what their structure looks like according to MOTS. From the visual descriptions presented in this chapter, we can see how these can be compared manually, identifying similarities and differences. From these eight experiences, it is clear to see that each one communicates narrative differently. Some tell standalone stories that are linked together in one storyworld, others have mostly dependent channels that all work together to tell one story and some use subsidiary channels to paint a better picture of the storyworld to the audience.

However, comparing a number of experiences this way is a cumbersome process that requires creating a MOTS visual for each one and manually analysing the differences in structure. In order to reveal categories, where we start to see fundamental similarities in the structure of experiences from a large set, we would need to potentially create dozens of these visual models. Another way of conducting such a study would be to extract metrics from the models, and compare these metrics to identify different categories. This practice is conducted in the next chapter, where I describe the process for metrics extraction, model fifty experiences and use their metrics to help identify fourteen categories using statistical analysis.

Chapter 5 Classifying Transmedia Stories

> "Correct classification is one of the first steps in a scientific description. The accuracy of all further study depends upon the accuracy of classification. But although classification serves as the foundation of all investigation, it must itself be the result of certain preliminary study. What we see, however, is precisely the reverse: the majority of researchers begin with classification, imposing it upon the material from without and not extracting it from the material itself." [22]

In the above quote, Propp argues that in order to conduct classification correctly, we must derive classes from the objects themselves. This chapter illustrates that process with regard to transmedia stories. Fifty transmedia stories were selected using the selection criteria described in chapter three, and analysed using MOTS to derive their metrics. These metrics were then compared and processed using statistical techniques, and clusters, or categories, were extracted. In this chapter, the categories identified are systematically analysed, discussing their characteristics and the typical unfolding of the experience.

The claims made in this chapter are not objective. Instead, metrics are derived from modelled experiences and are processed in the hopes that clusters will emerge that will aid in the identification of transmedia storytelling categories. I am not claiming these categories exist universally, but instead argue that these are the categories that have emerged given the data analysed. The aim of this chapter is to identify these categories, and discuss how they might play a role in the development or analyses of transmedia stories.

5.1 Methodology

5.1.1 Stage One: Gathering the Data

The selection of experiences began with the thirty experiences already identified. These were supplemented with twenty more using the same selection criteria used previously. The experiences that had not already been modelled were modelled, and the metrics, described later in this chapter, associated with each experience were then extracted and recorded (included in the appendix). Data accuracy was aided by first-hand exposure to the experience, as well as using a range of sources for parts of the experience that could not be consumed due to practical reasons. For example, some experiences can have up to hundreds or thousands of instances, and could not be exhaustively recorded for practical reasons. In such cases, a representative portion of the experience was modelled and MOTS data was extrapolated from them using available data.

Overall, fifty-one data points were included in the study, with two being Disneyland Paris; one pre-experiential and the other post-experiential (the user journey presented in the last chapter). A description of each experience not already covered in this thesis, is included in the appendix.

The metrics that were used for the statistical clustering (K-Means) were based on the models produced for the fifty experiences. First order metrics, such as the number of channels or links were based on values extracted from the model. Second order metrics, that make associations between first order metrics, were then used as the data for clustering. The associations that make up the second order metrics describe the salient points of the model and were logically assumed as the places where the key differences between experiences lay, and are presented in the next section. It may be the case that there are other meaningful metrics that associate different first order metrics, or ones that are more or less important than others, but this was not clear from the literature. Consequently, an analysis of every potential association was beyond the scope of this work.

5.1.2 Stage Two: Processing the Data

Once the data had been gathered, the data was processed using K-means clustering. This common technique is known as a type of "unsupervised classification", where the aim of the algorithm is to reveal categories or clusters from patterns found in a dataset [144]. Although there are many different types of classification methods [145], K-means was chosen due to its simplicity [146], common usage, fast processing time and effectiveness [147] , making it easier for results to be repeated or extended.

K-means works by assigning a centre point for each cluster and iteratively assigning data points to clusters based on its distance to a cluster centre point. As the process continues, the cluster centre points are updated as more data points are processed [148]. In order to begin the process, K-means requires an initial k value. Determining this value is highly contentious and an often-subjective exercise, as Pham et al explain:

> To use it requires the number of clusters in the data to be pre-specified. Finding the appropriate number of clusters for a given data set is generally a trial-and-error process made more difficult by the subjective nature of deciding what constitutes 'correct' clustering [149]

One popular method, the Elbow method, involves generating a graph that shows the number of clusters and "within-cluster-sum-of-squares" or WCSS (where higher means more accuracy), and identifying at which point an elbow appears on the line. Eventually, the line will curve to zero

WCSS, meaning each data point has its own cluster, resulting in useless results. However, the number of clusters associated with the elbow is argued to be a good selection, or starting point, for the k value [147].

Consequently, the elbow method was performed on the dataset of fifty transmedia stories using the K-means algorithms provided by the “sklearn” library, and an elbow was observed at around fourteen clusters. The K-means clustering algorithm was then performed to obtain the clusters themselves setting k to fourteen.

5.2 Metrics Extracted from MOTS

One of the affordances of MOTS is that we have the ability to extract metrics after we have modelled an experience. For example, we can count how many standalone instances there are, the number of channels or how many instances are static, to name but a few. Such metrics are called first order metrics and represent data that is immediately available without making any associations. Figure 36 shows the experience *The Phantom Manor* modelled with MOTS, with a table showing its first order metrics.

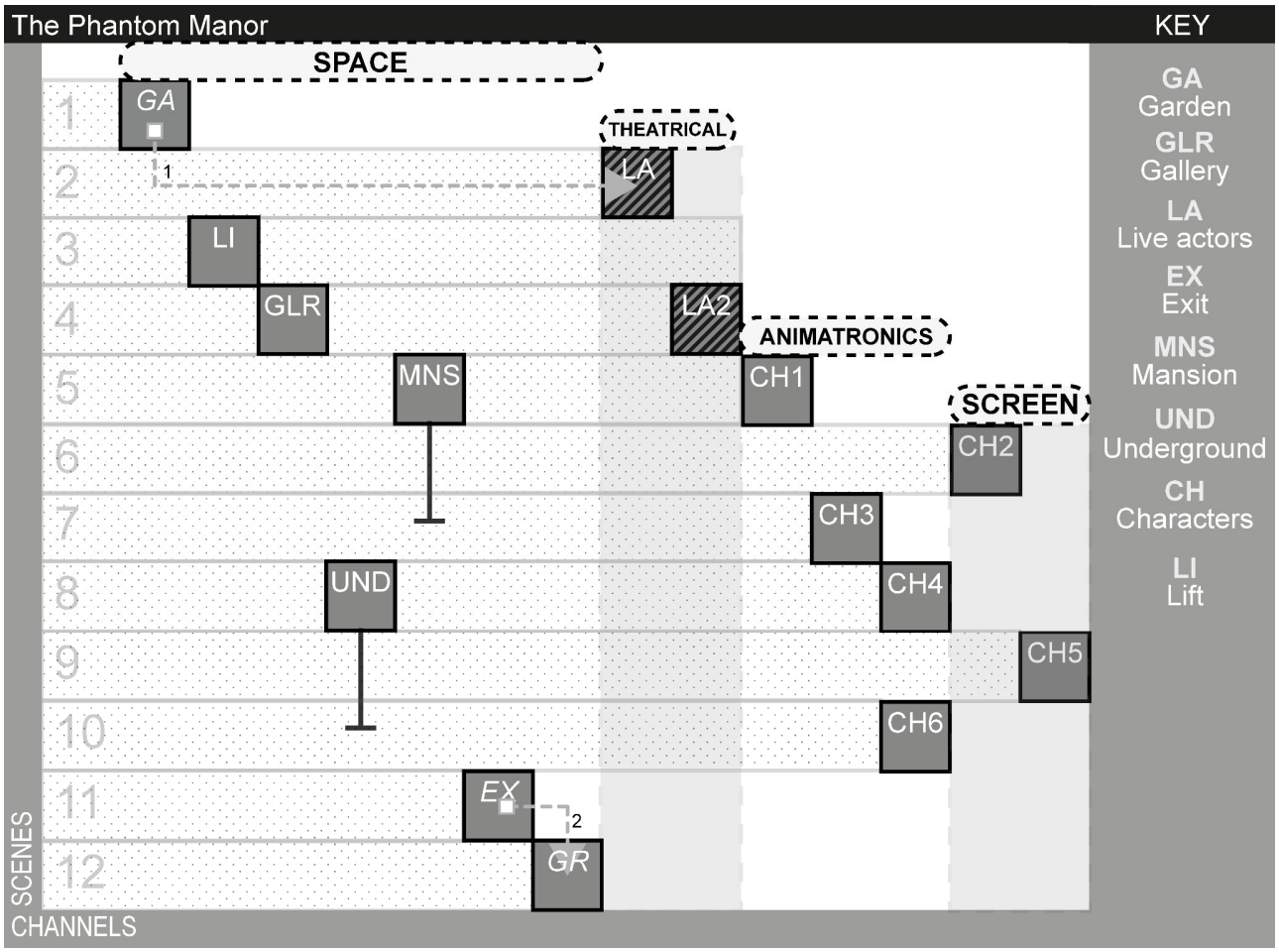


Figure 36 The Phantom Manor

Table 11 The Phantom Manor first order metrics

Ti	**Si**	**Di**	**Bi**	**Ts**	**Ls**	**Ns**	**Cs**	**Tl**	**Ai**	**Pi**	**Li**	**Ci**	**Tc**
15	0	12	3	12	5	3	4	2	2	12	14	0	14

Table 12 First Order Metrics

First Order Metric	**Shorthand**
Total instances	Ti
Standalone instances	Si
Dependent instances	Di
Subsidiary instances	Bi
Total scenes	Ts
Scenes with only one accessible instance	Ls
Scenes with multiple new instances	Ns
Scenes with one or more new and old instances	Cs
Total links	Tl
Channels with at least one active instance	Ac
Channels with at least one passive instance	Pc
Channels with at least one live instance	Lc
Channels with at least one static instance	Sc
Total channels	Tc

Once first order metrics have been extracted, we can then use them to generate second order metrics that makes associations between two different first order metrics. For example, we can calculate the “liveness” of an experience by dividing the total amount of live instances with the total number of instances. Second order metrics can be a decimal between zero and one, with one being the strongest association. For example, an experience has a “distinctiveness” metric of 0.75 if it has three standalone instances out of a total of four instances (3/4). Second order metrics can be used to not only describe transmedia experiences further, allowing comparisons to be made between metrics, but they can be used as the basis for statistical classification.

In this section, I present these second order metrics by splitting them into three groups to denote the features they are describing; narrative, navigational and presentation.

5.2.1 Narrative Second Order Metrics

Story metrics relate to the how channels are used to tell the story. We are able to differentiate between transmedia experiences that use multiple channels to tell multiple stories within one storyworld and experiences that tell only one story using multiple channels. We can also extend this to include experiences where stories are supported by channels that enhance the comprehension of the storyworld.

5.2.1.1 Distinctive

The number of standalone instances relative to the total amount of instances. **(Si / Ti)**

This metric has a high occurrence when an experience has many standalone channels that each tell a single story with a shared storyworld.

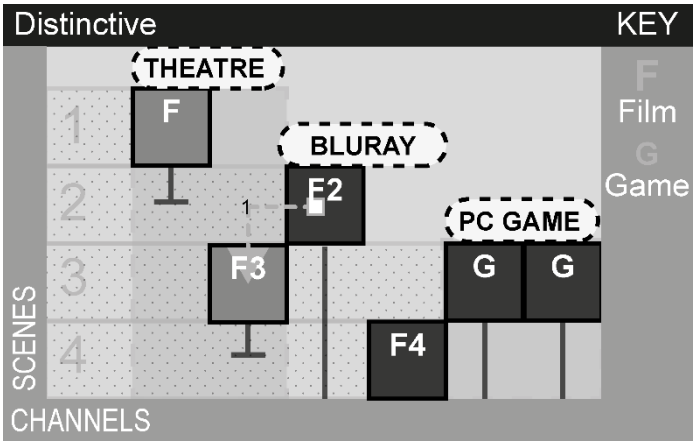


Figure 37 Distinctive metric of 1 (6/6)

5.2.1.2 Segmented

The number of dependent instances relative to the total amount of instances. **(Di / Ti)**

The segmentation metric has a high occurrence when more than one dependent channel together tells one or more stories e.g., four channels could tell one (all channels) or two stories (two channels).

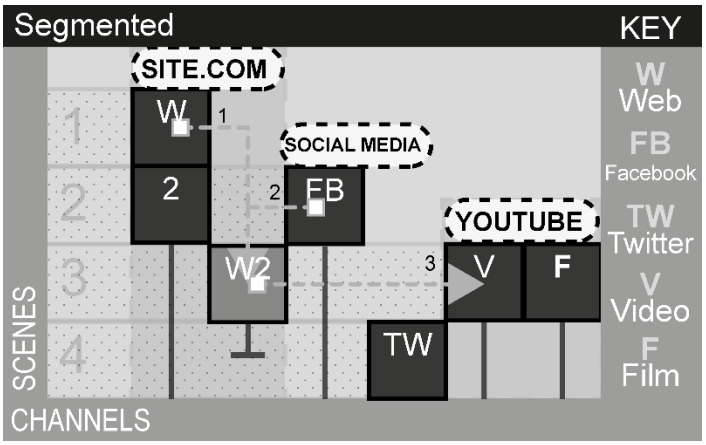


Figure 38 Segmented metric of 0.85 (6/7)

5.2.1.3 Complimentary

The number of subsidiary instances relative to the total amount of instances. **(Bi / Ti)**

The Complimentary metric goes up when one or more channels are subsidiary, contributing to the comprehension of the storyworld depicted in the other channels in the experience.

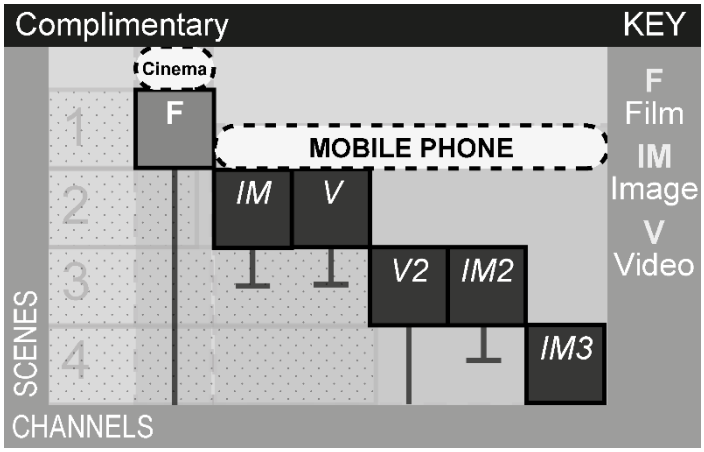


Figure 39 Complimentary metric of 0.83 (5/6)

5.2.1.4 Periodicity

The total amount of instances relative to the total amount of channels **(Tc / Ti)**

The Periodicity metric goes up when a channel has a new instance. An experience with a small number of channels with many instances would have a high periodicity.

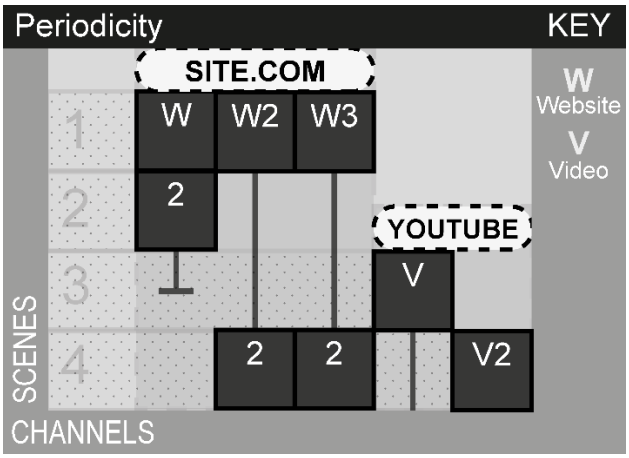


Figure 40 Periodicity metric of 0.63 (5/8)

5.2.2 Navigational Second Order Metrics

Navigational metrics relate to how an audience member navigates their way through the story as new content releases or is made available to them. We are able to differentiate between different ways an audience member is expected to experience a story, whether going from one channel to the next sequentially, having multiple options or a combination of the two.

Linear

The number of scenes with only one accessible instance relative to the number of scenes. **(Ls / Ts)**

The Linear metric increases when any given scene includes only one instance, with no ability to traverse to previously available channels.

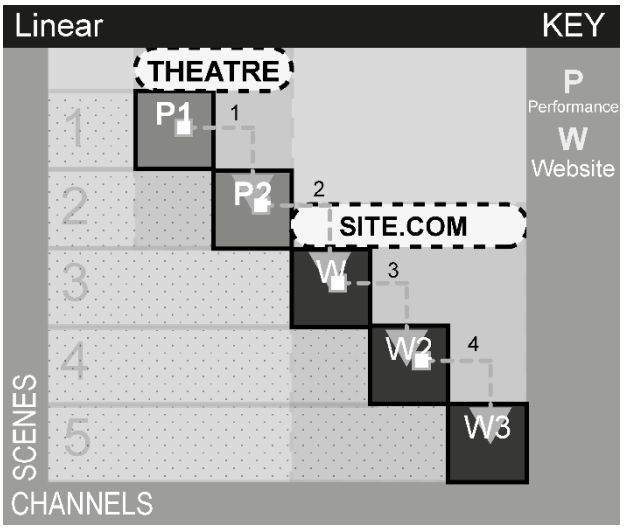


Figure 41 Linear metric of 1 (5/5)

5.2.2.1 Non-Linear

The number of scenes with multiple new instances relative to the number of scenes. **(Ns / Ts)**

The Non-Linear metric increases when a scene has multiple instances available to the audience. Sometimes instances are consumed at the same time, but other times a choice is provided for the audience to experience one.

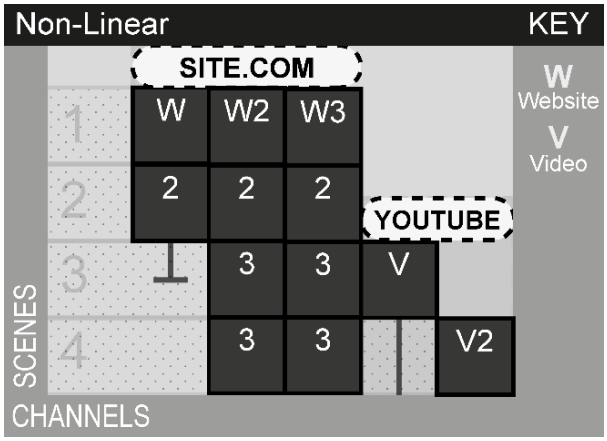


Figure 42 Non-linear metric of 1 (4/4)

5.2.2.2 Cumulative

The number of scenes with one or more new and old instances relative to the number of scenes. **(Cs / Ts)**

The Cumulative metric goes up when any given scene includes one new instance, with the audience's ability to go back to old channels. A cumulative experience is a mix between the two former patterns, producing a linear effect with regard to new content, but allow choices to be made in whether to access old content and reinterpret information in light of the new instance.

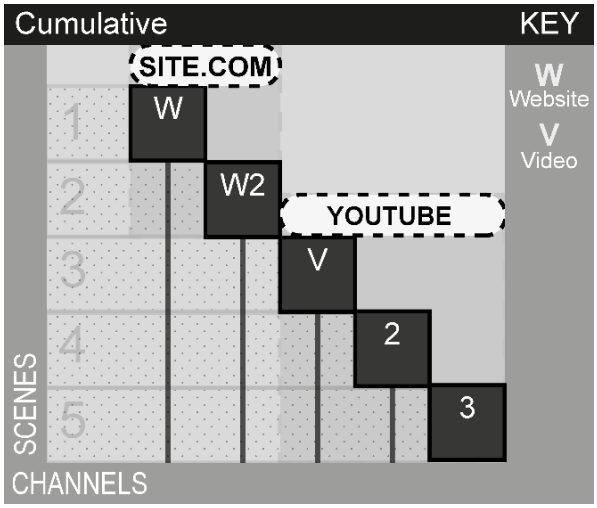


Figure 43 Cumulative metric of 1 (5/5)

5.2.2.3 Connected

The number of links relative to the total potential links **(Tl / Ti)**

The Connected metric increases when a channel is linked to another. Channels can have multiple links associated with them if their instances link to unique instances in other channels.

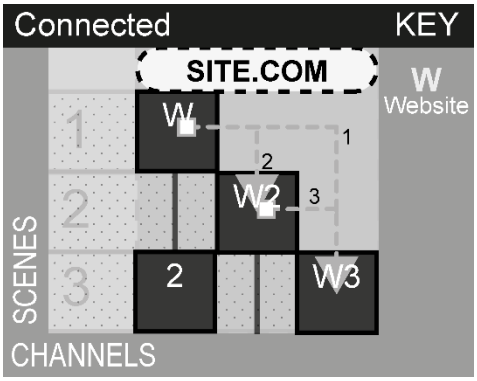


Figure 44 Connected metric of 0.75 (3/4)

5.2.3 Presentation Second Order Metrics

Presentation metrics relate to how the audience interact or consume a given channel. We can differentiate between channels that facilitate role play, are consumed passively, have to be experienced at a specific place and time and those that can be accessed at any time after they are released. The reason why these metrics are calculated at the channel level rather than the instance level is to reduce the chance of important features being lost. For example, detail would be lost if an experience had thousands of static instances and one active instance even though that active instance played a major role in the overall experience.

5.2.3.1 Influence

The total amount of channels with at least one active instance relative to the total amount of channels **(Ac / Tc)**

The Influence metric increases as the total number of channels with at least one active instance goes up.

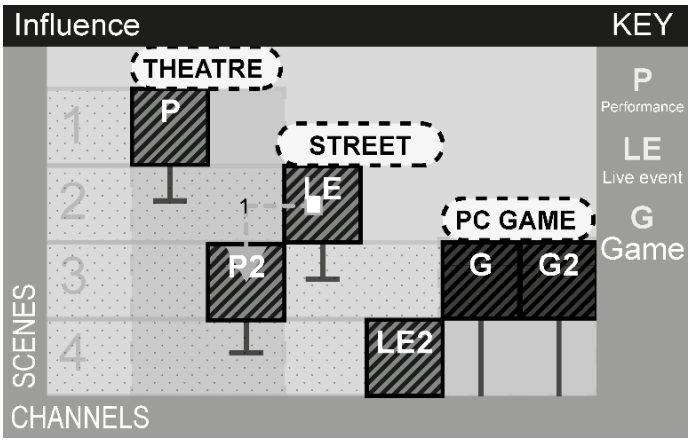


Figure 45 Influence metric of 1 (6/6)

5.2.3.2 Consumption

The total amount of channels with at least one passive instance relative to the total amount of channels **(Pc / Tc)**

The Consumption metric increases as the total number of channels with at least one passive instance goes up.

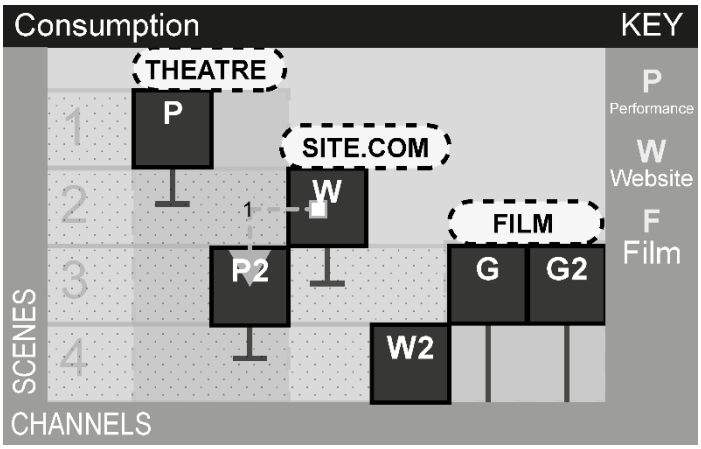


Figure 46 Consumption metric of 1 (6/6)

5.2.3.3 Liveness

The total amount of channels with at least one live instance relative to the total amount of channels **(Lc / Tc)**

The Liveness metric increases as the total number of channels with at least one live instance goes up.

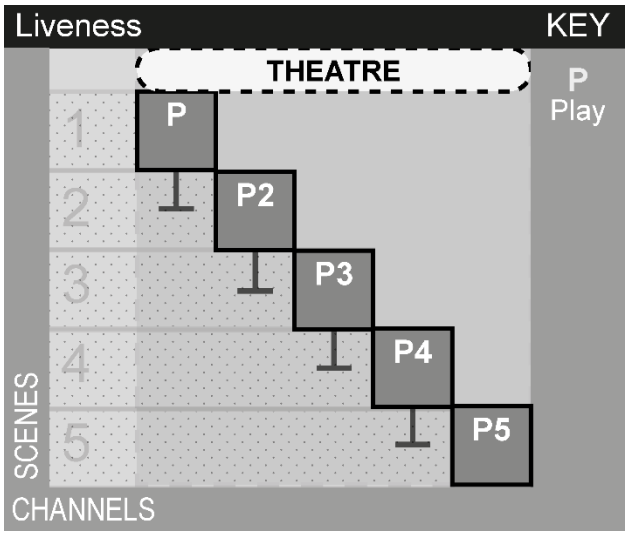


Figure 47 Liveness metric of 1 (5/5)

5.2.3.4 Persistence

The total amount of channels with at least one static instance relative to the total amount of channels **(Sc / Tc)**

The Persistence metric increases as the total number of channels with at least one static instance goes up.

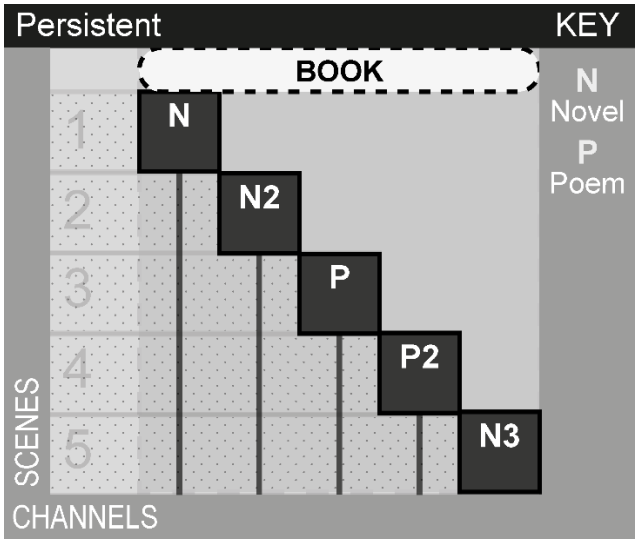


Figure 48 Persistence metric of 1 (5/5)

5.2.4 Summary

The second order metrics described here were obtained by making associations of the first order metrics as described above. They enable not only a way of quantitatively comparing experiences, but provide a new set of syntax that can be employed when analysing transmedia stories. It is the

second order metrics of the fifty modelled experiences that were used as the dataset in the K-means algorithm.

Table 13 Summary of second order metrics

Metric	**Shorthand**	**First order metrics association**
Distinctive	Dist	Si/Ti
Segmented	Sgm	Di/Ti
Complimentary	Comp	Bi/Ti
Periodicity	Per	Tc/Ti
Linear	Lin	Ls/Ts
Non-Linear	Nli	Ns/Ts
Cumulative	Cmu	Cs/Ts
Connected	Cnn	Tl/Ti
Influence	Infl	Ac/Tc
Consumption	Cons	Pc/Tc
Liveness	Live	Lc/Tc
Persistence	Pers	Sc/Tc

5.3 Results

This section presents the results from the study. The Elbow graph is shown in figure 49, illustrating the number of clusters where the elbow occurs at around fourteen.

The raw results the K-means clustering that was performed is presented in table 14. The numbers in these results are arbitrary, with the clusters themselves being the important result. An alluvial diagram is also presented that maps the clusters found with the experience's ad-hoc categories. Table 14 presents the ad-hoc categories and the clusters that were associated with them. Finally, a short description of each of the clusters found is given, providing some insight into their characteristics and the strengths of each of their metric.

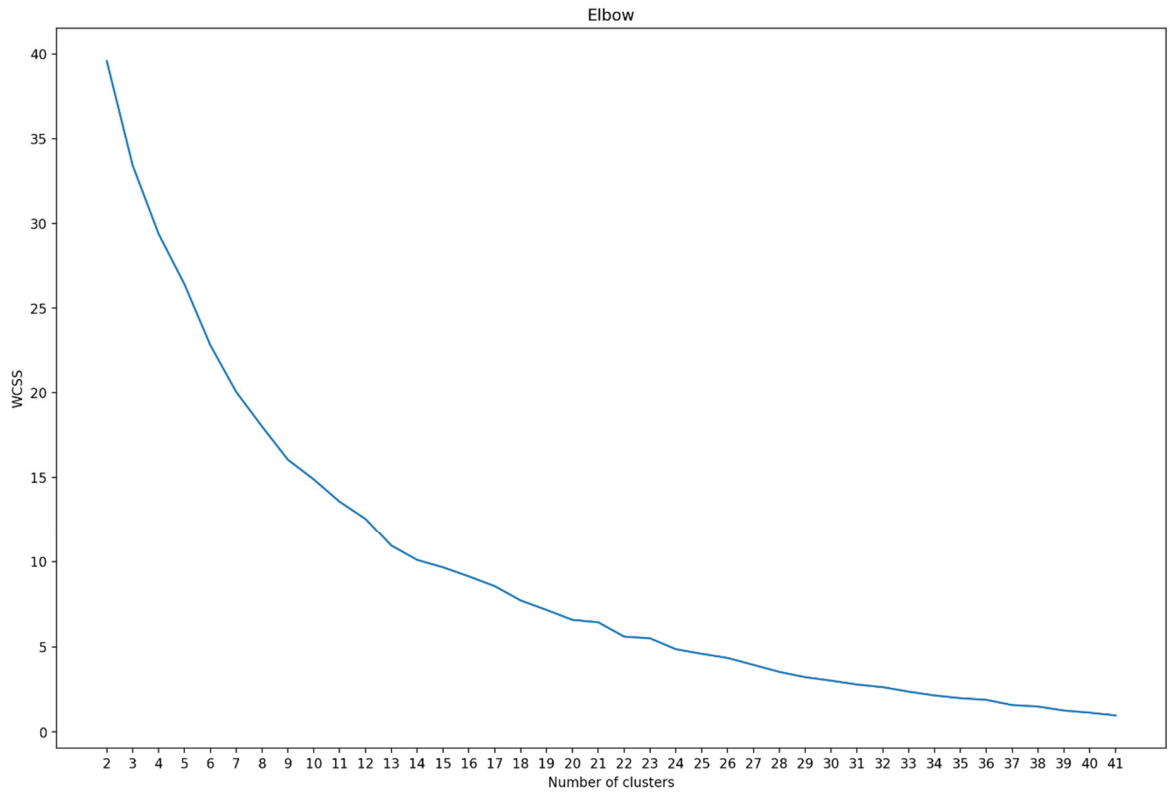


Figure 49 Elbow graph, appearing to be around fourteen clusters

Table 14 Results of K-Means clustering

Title	**No.**	**Title**	**No.**	**Title**	**No.**
GoT: 19 Reinos	8	Firewatch	5	Prometheus Campaign	13
APP	7	Game of Thrones	3	Roman Baths	4
Alien	1	Halo	0	Science Museum	4
Apex Legends S1-3	6	Harry Potter	1	Star Tours	2
Assassins' creed	0	Her Story	10	Star Trek	3
Bear 71	11	I Love Bees	13	Star Wars	3
Becoming Human	7	James Bond	0	The Black Watchman	12
Change the Record	2	Lizzie Bennet Diaries	6	The Council	11
Cloverfield	5	Mad Experiments	11	The Matrix	1
Crush's Coaster	2	Mass Effect	0	The Phantom Manor	2
Cyberpunk 2077	5	Orwell	12	The Wicker Man	2
Defenders Triforce	8	Overwatch	6	V&A Special	4
Dexter	8	Overwatch: Sombra	13	Welcome to Sanditon	6
Disney Land Paris	4	Pirates of the Caribbean	1	Westworld S2 Campaign	13
Disney Paris User	9	PotC Ride	2	Why So Serious	8
DnD	5	Pokémon	3	Warcraft	0
Fallout 4	5	Prometheus SS	7	Zelda	0

Table 15 Ad-hoc categories and their clusters

Ad-hoc	**K-Means Clusters**	**Count (Experiences)**	**Ad-hoc/cluster Percentage**
Franchise	Segmented Franchise	4	26.66%
	Standalone Franchise	6	40%
	Episodic Franchise	4	26.66%
	Augmented Core	1	6.66%
Second Screen	Augmented Core	2	100%
Game	Segmented Non-linear	4	40%
	Complete Freedom	1	10%
	Persistent Connected	2	20%
	Connected Core	2	20%
	Controlled Freedom	1	10%
Web Series	Connected Core	2	100%
ARG	Segmented Non-Linear	1	12.5%
	Segmented on Rails	4	50%
	Live Performative	3	37.5%
Escape Room	Live Performative	1	33.33%
	Controlled Freedom	1	33.33%
	Live on Rails	1	33.33%
Attraction	Live on Rails	5	71.42%
	Live Linear	1	14.28%
	Structured Freedom	1	14.28%
Exhibit	Structured Freedom	1	25%
	Controlled Freedom	3	75%

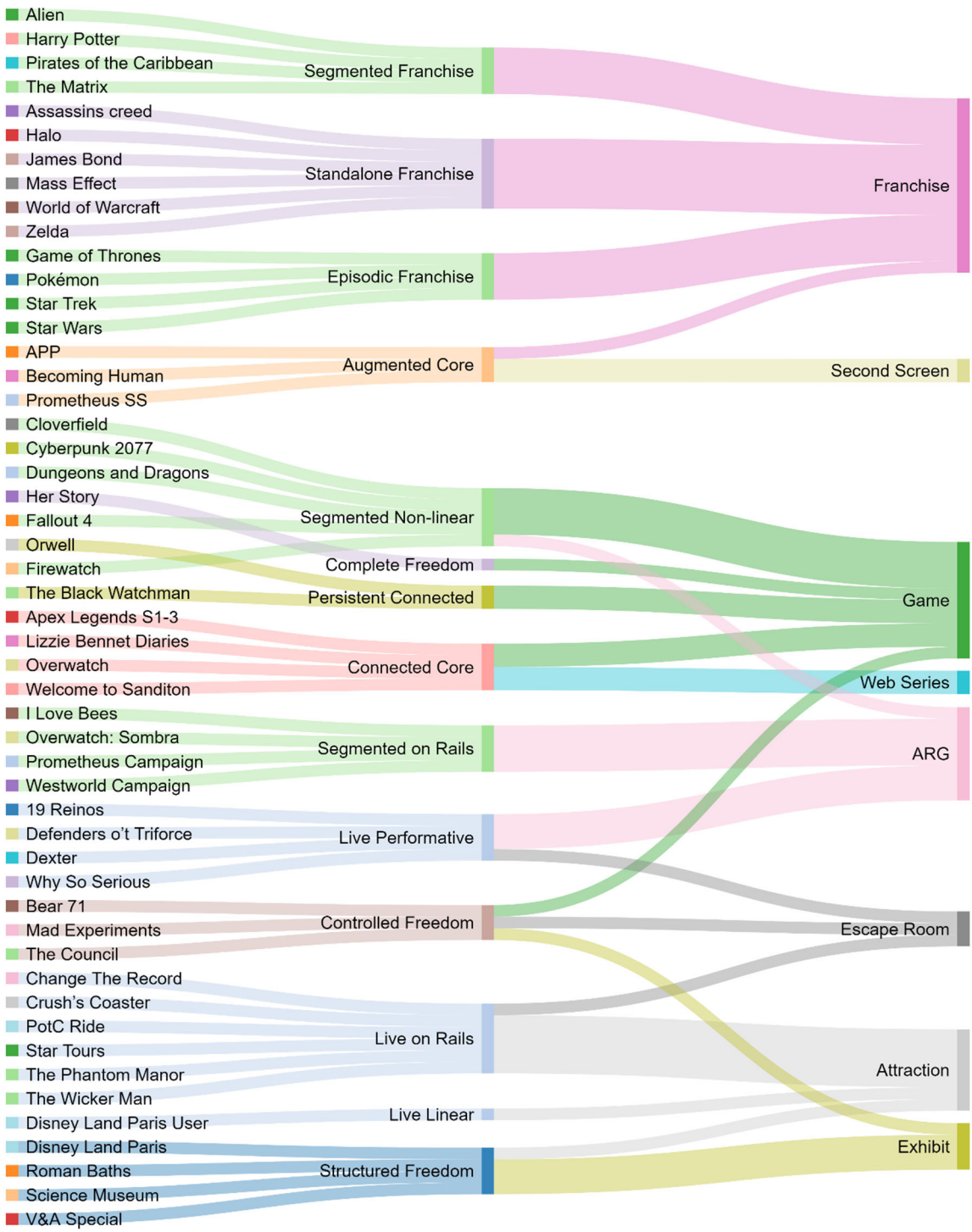


Figure 50 Alluvial diagram showing experiences, their cluster and ad-hoc category

5.4 Explication of Categories

We can see from the results that some of the experiences that were part of the same ad-hoc category were similarly grouped together such as franchises and ARGs. Others however, such as games, were much more spread out. This suggests that the word itself is so broad it provides almost no indication of what the experience is like as opposed to franchises and ARGs. In this section, I go through each of the categories that were found, providing a brief description of how they function, and the typical strength of their second order metrics.

5.4.1 Segmented Franchise

This cluster includes experiences that have low periodic distinct and segmented channels. The experiences included are all franchises that have many standalone channels such as films and games, and other channels such as film sequels that are dependent on earlier channels. For example, in *The Matrix*, the audience gains a deep understand of what the "real world" was like after watching the anime DVD containing a collection of short stories. Although this deepens the contextual understanding of the fictional world, many audience members simply watch the films in isolation, perhaps with an increased sense of mystery in relation to the "real world".

Table 16 Segmented Franchise second order metric strengths

Dist	**Sgm**	**Comp**	**Per**	**Lin**	**Nli**	**Cmu**	**Cnn**	**Infl**	**Cons**	**Live**	**Pers**
Mild	Mild	Weak	Weak	Weak	Mild	Strong	Strong	Weak	Strong	Weak	Strong

5.4.2 Standalone Franchise

This cluster includes experiences whose channels are mostly standalone with low periodicity. The experiences included are all franchises that have primarily standalone channels such as films and games, that often do not need to be watched in any particular order. For example, many films in the *James Bond* franchise can be watched in isolation.

Table 17 Standalone Franchise second order metric strengths

Dist	**Sgm**	**Comp**	**Per**	**Lin**	**Nli**	**Cmu**	**Cnn**	**Infl**	**Cons**	**Live**	**Pers**
Strong	Mild	Weak	Weak	Weak	Weak	Strong	Mild	Mild	Strong	Weak	Strong

5.4.3 Episodic Franchise

This cluster has grouped experiences that have a degree of periodicity and segmented instances. The experiences included are all franchises with a high degree of periodic content such as new television episodes, comic book issues or novels. There are typically multiple instances for many of the channels in the experience.

Table 18 Episodic Franchise second order metric strengths

Dist	Sgm	Comp	Per	Lin	Nli	Cmu	Cnn	Infl	Cons	Live	Pers
Weak	Strong	Weak	Strong	Weak	Weak	Strong	Mild	Weak	Strong	Weak	Strong

5.4.4 Augmented Core

This cluster consists of experiences that have many subsidiary channels as part of the experience. The "core" aspect can be either a standalone channel or a group of dependent channels. Both second screen apps fell within this cluster.

Table 19 Augmented Core second order metric strengths

Dist	Sgm	Comp	Per	Lin	Nli	Cmu	Cnn	Infl	Cons	Live	Pers
Weak	Mild	Strong	Strong	Weak	Weak	Strong	Weak	Weak	Strong	Mild	Strong

5.4.5 Segmented Non-linear

This cluster includes experiences that are persistent and non-linear with a high degree of periodicity and influence. For example, in *Fallout 4* and *Cyberpunk*, audiences are met with numerous characters, counted as a single channel, that communicate story over time depending on choices made.

Table 20 Persistent Non-linear second order metric strengths

Dist	Sgm	Comp	Per	Lin	Nli	Cmu	Cnn	Infl	Cons	Live	Pers
Weak	Strong	Mild	Strong	Weak	Mild	Mild	Weak	Strong	Mild	Weak	Strong

5.4.6 Complete Freedom

This cluster has separated out an experienced that has six metrics that are high; segmentation, persistence, non-linearity, connectedness, consumption and persistence. The experience included in this cluster was *Her Story.* Advertised as a game, the experience sees the audience being

presented by a computer screen that has a series of video files in a database. The audience can access any video they want, as long as they know what keyword to enter into the search bar. As the audience watches more videos, more keywords begin to emerge from the characters.

Table 21 Persistent Freedom second order metric strengths

Dist	**Sgm**	**Comp**	**Per**	**Lin**	**Nli**	**Cmu**	**Cnn**	**Infl**	**Cons**	**Live**	**Pers**
Weak	Strong	Weak	Strong	Weak	Strong	Weak	Strong	Weak	Strong	Weak	Strong

5.4.7 Persistent Connected

This cluster has one experience that has a high degree of persistence and connectivity, with a moderate degree of periodicity, non-linearity, cumulative, influence and consumption. The one experience in this cluster was *The Black Watchman*, a game described as a single player ARG, where players have to hunt down clues and solve puzzles presented in an application. This cluster is very similar to Live Performative in everything but the liveness metric.

Table 22 Persistent Connected second order metric strengths

Dist	**Sgm**	**Comp**	**Per**	**Lin**	**Nli**	**Cmu**	**Cnn**	**Infl**	**Cons**	**Live**	**Pers**
Weak	Strong	Weak	Mild	Weak	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Weak	Strong

5.4.8 Connected Core

This cluster has grouped experiences that have a strong degree of segmentation, periodicity, connectedness, consumption and persistence. These experiences typically include content episodic in nature. The existence of channels is made clear to the audience due to the high connectedness. The experiences put into this cluster seem to have one main “core” channel, that is linked to other dependent channels. For example, we saw in the last chapter how *Overwatch* and *Apex* have highly connected channels outside of the game that provide story to the audience.

Table 23 Connected Core second order metric strengths

Dist	**Sgm**	**Comp**	**Per**	**Lin**	**Nli**	**Cmu**	**Cnn**	**Infl**	**Cons**	**Live**	**Pers**
Weak	Strong	Weak	Strong	Weak	Mild	Mild	Strong	Weak	Strong	Weak	Strong

5.4.9 Segmented on Rails

This cluster includes experiences that have a strong degree of cumulative, consumption, persistence and segmentation. All experiences in this category are ARGs, but consist of experiences that although have some degree of liveness, persist after the channels have occurred. There is also a mild degree of influence where audiences can shape usually minor details of the story, but experiences in this category typically follow a trajectory that is out of the control of any one audience member. Instead, the creators, or puppet masters as they are also known in ARGs, will watch and analyse the audience as a whole and sometimes change the direction of the story according to what they observe.

Table 24 Segmented on Rails second order metric strengths

Dist	**Sgm**	**Comp**	**Per**	**Lin**	**Nli**	**Cmu**	**Cnn**	**Infl**	**Cons**	**Live**	**Pers**
Weak	Strong	Weak	Strong	Weak	Mild	Strong	Strong	Mild	Strong	Mild	Strong

5.4.10 Live Performative

This cluster includes experiences with a high degree of liveness and segmentation. Experiences in this cluster often include those that require audience participation for the story to progress, often resulting in the audience changing the ultimate outcome. For example, in *Dexter* the audience collectively decided the outcome of both the criminal and the detective in the story.

Table 25 Live Performance second order metric strengths

Dist	**Sgm**	**Comp**	**Per**	**Lin**	**Nli**	**Cmu**	**Cnn**	**Infl**	**Cons**	**Live**	**Pers**
Weak	Strong	Weak	Mild	Weak	Strong	Mild	Strong	Mild	Mild	Strong	Weak

5.4.11 Controlled Freedom

This cluster has experiences that have a high degree of consumption and persistence, with a low degree of distinction, influence and liveness. The experiences in this cluster at some point provide the audience with non-linearity, usually in chunks. For example, in *The Council*, audiences converse with various characters in a scene before moving onto the next scene, where the characters change their dialogue.

Table 26 Controlled Freedom second order metric strengths

Dist	**Sgm**	**Comp**	**Per**	**Lin**	**Nli**	**Cmu**	**Cnn**	**Infl**	**Cons**	**Live**	**Pers**

Weak	Mild	Mild	Weak	Weak	Strong	Weak	Weak	Weak	Strong	Weak	Strong

5.4.12 Live on Rails

This cluster includes experiences that have a low degree of periodicity and small degree of influence, and at least some linearity. Experiences that fall within this category are typically linear theme park rides, dramatic performances and attractions where the audience are passively watching or consuming the content. Five of the six experiences that were put in this cluster were attractions.

Table 27 Live on Rails second order metric strengths

Dist	**Sgm**	**Comp**	**Per**	**Lin**	**Nli**	**Cmu**	**Cnn**	**Infl**	**Cons**	**Live**	**Pers**
Weak	Strong	Weak	Strong	Mild	Mild	Mild	Mild	Weak	Strong	Strong	Weak

5.4.13 Live Linear

This cluster included one experience that had a strong degree of distinctiveness, linearity, connectedness, consumption and liveness. The experience captured here is the *Disneyland Paris* journey that was explored in the last chapter. It exemplifies a linear experience, where the audience go from one channel to the next.

Table 28 Live Linear second order metric strengths

Dist	**Sgm**	**Comp**	**Per**	**Lin**	**Nli**	**Cmu**	**Cnn**	**Infl**	**Cons**	**Live**	**Pers**
Strong	Weak	Weak	Weak	Strong	Weak	Weak	Strong	Weak	Strong	Strong	Weak

5.4.14 Structured Freedom

This cluster includes experiences that have a strong degree of non-linear live channels that are consumed. This cluster has grouped three of four exhibits together. Exhibits such as the *Science Museum*, consists of room layouts that enable audiences to know which direction they should be going, so explicit links are less necessary than at a big theme park that spans over nineteen square kilometers.

Table 29 Structured Freedom second order metric strengths

Dist	**Sgm**	**Comp**	**Per**	**Lin**	**Nli**	**Cmu**	**Cnn**	**Infl**	**Cons**	**Live**	**Pers**
Strong	Mild	Weak	Weak	Weak	Strong	Weak	Mild	Weak	Strong	Strong	Weak

5.5 Discussion

In the second chapter I made the case that using scientific analogies to describe genre or classifications of literature is misleading because the processes that give rise to them are not scientific, but rather they are abstract concepts that can emerge for a variety of reasons, with no one genre being invalid or wrong. What I have demonstrated here is not a discovery of the genres or categories of transmedia storytelling, but a type of classification that used the MOTS associated metrics extracted by me from fifty experiences. In this section, I discuss the results, their drawbacks and the nature of classification.

5.5.1 Classification Probability

It was commented by Todorov that genres are probabilistic [20], with works sometimes manifesting in more than one category. In fact, the feedback loop where individual works both belong to and influence the categories in which they belong, suggests that there is never a work that embodies the category completely. Instead, there are variations that distinguish the work from the rest of the works within the same category. At what point a work becomes part of a new category as a result of this variation is not clear cut, and can be a subjective exercise.

During the process of classification presented in this chapter, these concepts became familiar. The K-Means classification method processes objects and assigns them a category depending on where they are located in space. During this process, centroids are created that indicate the central point of any given cluster. With each new introduction of an experience, the centroid is recalculated and changes its location. In summary, each new experience is assigned to a category but that same experience in turn changes the category. We can conclude from this that the classification presented in this thesis is a consequence of specific metrics of the specific fifty experiences that were chosen in the sample. If another fifty experiences were classified, we might very well find categories that are unrecognizable.

5.5.2 Historical and Theoretical Categories

The categories that were found in the last chapter could be described as types of historical categories, because they are based on the metrics of real experiences. Consequently, categories that we might find cropping up multiple times using different datasets will change over time as newer experiences are included. As identified by Frye, the “modes” or characteristics that govern categories change over time reflecting what is more or less popular [126]. For example, escape rooms are a relatively new word that is used to describe a particular group of experiences and their unique MOTS structure influences the categories that we identify. If we were to conduct a

classification of transmedia experiences in 2021, we might find that escape rooms have changed their structure drastically in light of the coronavirus pandemic, weakening the liveness metric that could have been an important metric for a particular category or the classification as a whole.

Although these historical categories have been defined artificially using MOTS as opposed to emerging “in the wild”, they differ from theoretical categories that can be derived from the model without looking at a single experience. Such categories can be derived in a two ways. We could create an artificial dataset of experiences that have wildly different metrics, and run the K-Means algorithm to find new categories, or we could simply determine the strengths of each second order metric and create categories on the fly, without the need for processing any data e.g. an experience with strong X and weak Y is called Z. With this latter method, we could take the time to identify all the combinations of strong and weak for each metric and name each of these categories in turn. The usefulness of identifying these theoretical categories is less apparent than for historical categories. For example, it is difficult to relate to real world examples, using specific experiences to describe the ways in which that category communicates story.

5.5.3 Elementary and Complex Categories

For my classification, I have focused on using twelve secondary metrics associated with each experience, or so-called complex categories by Todorov’s terminology [20]. I did this because I wanted to include what I saw as the fundamental structural features of transmedia stories to get a true picture of how they can be grouped. However, in so doing I considered all secondary metrics to have equal importance. To get around this, we could weight each metric, determining which metrics should be placed with higher importance in our classification, e.g. liveness should be considered more important than links. Although the process itself would be straightforward, determining the actual weights would be a challenging endeavor that ultimately would be another subjective exercise.

Departing weights, we may also want to exclude certain metrics altogether, only selecting the ones we want to be a consideration for our classification. We could, for example, base the classification entirely on channel integrity. In fact, we can see others doing this in their own classifications as explored in chapter two; Dena and Pratten distinguish between transfictions, or portmanteau transmedia, with franchise transmedia, where the former uses multiple media to tell one story and the latter that typically uses multiple media to tell several stories in a shared fictional world. Classifications that only use one or two features are easy to conduct, even with large datasets, but are limited by the number of categories that are generated and consequently limit the usefulness of the classification.

5.5.4 Classification Point of View

In section 2.5 I quoted Tomashevsky's ladder of genres theory, where he proposed works can be divided into large classes, and subdivided into types and species. Consequently, the features that we use to determine categories depends on the point of view we have taken. The table below shows how we might visualise different levels of classification, and some examples of the features that can be used to define such classification. Classifications become more generalized the higher up the chain, from the broad phenomena of entertainment, to individual experiences. I have used the word genre to describe a sub class of category, borrowing the popular science fiction label used by many novels, films and games as just one example.

Table 30 Different levels of classification

Classification Point of View	**Name of Classification**	**Class Defining Features (e.g.)**
Form of Activity	Entertainment	Purpose
Type	Transmedia Storytelling	Delivery method
Category (MOTS)	Episodic Franchise	MOTS features
Genre	Science Fiction	Themes, historical context etc
Individual experiences	Star Trek, Star Wars	N/A

It would also not be incorrect to subdivide these further if this proved useful. For example, there are three categories that have "franchise" as the suffix. We might then include franchise as a classification layer below "Type" in the above table, and include Segmented, Standalone and Episodic Franchise below it.

5.6 The Usefulness of the Classification

In this section, I relate the results back to the literature, demonstrating how the classification can be used as a tool to apply transmedia storytelling research. By doing so, I demonstrate the usefulness of identifying transmedia categories to allow for tailored application of such theory, providing insights that would otherwise could not have been made. I begin by considering some of the narrative theories discussed in chapter two before moving onto transmedia specific theory.

5.6.1 Theories of Narrative

In chapter two, I explored narratology, a collection of theories of narrative texts that tell a story. In this section, I will revisit these theories in the context of the classification including how they can be applied or how they can be expanded, making reference to several categories.

5.6.1.1 Time

Hypothetical time, where events take place in a fictional world and narrative time, where the story is told in real time, are two concepts of time presented by Tomashevsky [113]. When applied to the classification, we see different techniques used as well as the interplay between the two behaving differently for different categories. For example, in Live Performatives, both times are synchronised, with audiences behaving as characters within the story. The hypothetical time is dependent on the narrating time, that in turn is dependent on the performances conducted by the audience, at a pace somewhat controlled by the producers. In *Dexter*, although the audience behaved as detectives attempting to solve a case, the role-play was guided with the use of live actors and social media, telling the audience what they needed to accomplish. Sometimes the synchronicity of time occurs without much audience participation, as we often see in Live on Rails. In *Star Tours*, the audience are welcomed on to a space craft and treated as tourists before embarking on an unexpected action-oriented thrill ride. The effect of keeping hypothetical time close to narrating time creates immersion and immediacy, making the audience feel as though the events are occurring and there to witness them first hand. We can compare this to Segmented on Rails that includes experiences whose hypothetical time diverges from the narrating time in that the audience are shown two events in a matter of days, when in the fictional world took many weeks, months or years. We also see divergence occurring in the three franchise categories, where the hypothetical time is manipulated to serve the purposes of telling the story succinctly to produce the desired emotional and dramatic effect.

5.6.1.2 Phases

Stories can be arranged so that the events depicted are grouped into acts or phases. The examples given in chapter two included Aristotle's three-act structure [112], Freytag's pyramid [116] and Todorov's equilibrium [117]. In the three-act structure, there is a beginning, middle and end, in Freytag's pyramid, there is first exposition, then rising action, climax, falling action and resolution, and in Todorov's equilibrium there is first an equal balance, a disruption to that balance, a realisation or recognition of this disruption, an attempt to restore balance and finally a re-establishment of a new equilibrium. In this section, I use these ideas, or "phase theories" as I call them, and apply them to different categories to compare whether or not they manifest and in

what way. It becomes clear that the classification is a useful way to perform this action, and aid in expanding these theories as required.

For some categories, it is easy to argue that there is a manifestation of one or more of the phase theories mentioned above. For example, Live on Rails experiences are often structured similarly to Todorov's Equilibrium or Freytag's triangle, with audiences being stuck to these phase structures. Using *Star Tours* again as the example, the audience begins by boarding a spacecraft in a calm sci-fi environment where boarding instructions are given reminiscent of boarding an aircraft (exposition). This is followed by entering the spacecraft and being greeted by the robot "C-3PO" who informs the audience that they are part of an under-cover operation, before they are detected and have to escape your location (rising action). Next, the spacecraft flies off, crash landing on a planet, avoiding monsters and surviving a huge space battle (climax). Then the spacecraft reaches safety and the rumbling and tumbling that was occurring eventually comes to an end (falling action). Finally, the doors open and the audience is back where they started, at the spaceport (resolution).

Applying the phase theories to other categories is not so clear cut. I will begin here by considering the three franchise categories, because these are obvious places where the use of acts and phases differ depending on the category. In Segmented Franchises, there are two levels that are important to consider; within the channels themselves and the experience as a whole. In *The Matrix* franchise, the first film includes all of Freytag's triangle. Exposition begins when we are introduced to Neo, a computer hacker who sells illegally acquired software with shady gangsters. Not long into the film, we see rising action when out of the blue, Trinity approaches Neo at a nightclub explaining that his world is not what it seems, leading him to agree in meeting the notorious character Morpheus who offers him a choice between his world and the "real" world. Next, we learn of "agents", sentient artificial intelligence that exist inside the artificial world that hunt down humans who are free. The film climax with a battle between Neo and the agents that culminates in Neo discovering he has God like powers within the artificial world. With the franchise as a whole, again using Freytag's triangle, we could consider the film channel to be the exposition alone. In the second film, *The Matrix Reloaded,* action once again rises but magnified, affecting almost the entire human population as their existence is threatened by the AI. Finally, the audience receive a climax and resolution in the final film, *The Matrix Resolutions*.

Conversely, in Standalone Franchises, these types of narrative structures can be identified at the channel level, but not so easily at the experience level. For example, for most *James Bond* films, the audience is able to enjoy each one without having watched a previous installment. There is

never a “true” resolution for the character themselves, instead they are doomed to repeat the cycle of rising action and resolution.

Similarly, within each channel in *Zelda*, there is almost always a disruption to the equilibrium of the world by an evil spirit called Ganon that is always remedied by the actions of both Link and Zelda. With Episodic Franchises, these types of narrative structures are often seen within the episodes themselves, but also within seasons of episodes. For example, many episodes of the *Pokémon* television show each contain scenes of exposition, rising action, climax and resolution, but episodes of *Games of Thrones* do not necessarily have all or most of these elements and when they do, they exist within stories within the episode. The audience often follow the story of several unrelated characters in the show, with each of these stories potentially being at different points in Freytag’s pyramid. For example, one scene might have the audience watch the character Tyrion discuss politics with his father only for the next scene to include Daenerys being abducted by savages. At a season level, we might identify the last season, where most of the characters’ stories converge, as the climax to the entire television show because we find out the ultimate fate of the characters up to a certain point in time.

One category that can be used to expand the theory of phases is Connected Core. Here, the audience is often not made aware of acts that build upon the last, reaching some kind of resolution. Instead, experiences are perpetual and organize their phases by grouping together channels that occur in a similar time frame or include common characters, for example the “seasons” in *Apex legends* or *Overwatch*. There might be an apparent three act structure or Freytag triangle structure by the time the experience ends (at the time of writing, this remains to be seen for the two examples above), but this could only be realized once the experience ends, or when the experience “dies” to use games as service nomenclature. In any case, this category has made us aware of the perpetual phase that has different rules governing transitions between phases and the nature of the phases themselves.

Another category that problematizes phase theory is Structured Freedom. Often, the experience does not strictly conform to any of the phase structures. Instead, the phases are mostly determined by the journey taken through the experience. For example, when visitors go to *Disneyland Paris,* they have a start, middle and end to the day and can even structure their day to include rising action at eleven o’clock, climax when going on a ride, falling action when attending a performance and resolution when dining. However, the experiences themselves sometimes influence the structure of the user journey, such as the optional firework show at *Disneyland Paris* that takes place near the end of the day. For other experiences in this category such as *Roman Baths*, the layout of the space can dictate a phase structure. Although the audience are free to

walk where they want to, the experience starts with the audience walking through the balcony above the baths themselves, with only one direction to walk. Next, they enter a more open space with several channels to explore before walking through another corridor that leads to the baths, where the audience can touch the water (although this is not permitted). After this, the audience can choose several rooms to enter, each with different channels. Finally, the audience have one option left that leads them through an old well and inside room where the water from the spring can be drunk. Here, we might say that this journey conforms to one of the phase structures, but this is only one such journey that (although may be suggested to the audience) does not have to be followed. If they wanted, the audience could go straight to the baths, drink the water then head back up to the balcony before going back for another drink. What I have suggested with these two examples is that it is not clear how to apply phase structures to such experiences, and that these theories require context if we want to work with them.

In the table below, I summarise what has been discussed, including how the phase theories apply to some of the categories of the classification, and where expansion is required.

Table 31 Phase theory application

Acts/Phases	**Category (e.g.)**	**Summary**
Experience	Live on Rails, Segmented Franchise	Theories apply at the experience level
Part of the Experience	Episodic Franchise	Theories apply to parts of the experience
Channel	Segmented, Standalone, Episodic Franchise	Theories apply at the channel level
Suggestive	Structured Freedom	Theories can be applied to user journeys that are sometimes informed by the experience
Perpetual	Augmented Core	Theories do not neatly apply

5.6.1.3 Enigmas

Another theory of narrative is Barthe's five codes, one of which includes the "hermeneutic" code [118], that describes enigmas presented in the story that keep the audience interested and thinking about the possibilities that could occur. In this section, I will consider some of the ways enigmas are both presented and answered differently depending on the category.

In a film or a novel, enigmas are typically presented near the start and to some extent throughout the story, and are answered near the end, with small hints given throughout. This method is often seen in several categories such as Live Performative, Segmented on Rails and Live on Rails. However, within these, there are several differences regarding how the enigmas are answered, with the former two categories requiring "hunter and gatherer" type activity and the latter category being served to the audience directly. Enigmas play an important role in particular for Segmented on Rails. From the results, we can see that almost all of the experiences in this category are ARGs, where enigmas, "rabbit holes" and cryptic puzzle solving are seen as core characteristics. These enigmas are presented in a number of ways, such as in single frame videos in *Overwatch Sombra*, or blog posts as in *I Love Bees*. Often, these enigmas are consumed and solved by communities who utilize collective problem-solving techniques such are employing the skills of programmers who are able to convert encrypted strings into readable text. The form of enigmas is presented in much the same way in Persistent Connected experiences. For example, in *The Black Watchman* and *Orwell*, we see that enigmas are often easy enough for one person to solve alone, given no specific expertise but enough time. Such enigmas might take the form of looking for a specific item in a picture, or reading a Wiki article to get the name of a key city.

Enigmas are often presented differently in the Segmented Non-linear and Complete Freedom categories. Here, enigmas are present as the experience progresses, but the order in which the answers are consumed differ from person to person. For example, in *Her Story*, the audience are tasked with finding out whether a suspect has committed murder. This enigma is answered over the course of the experience that involves the audience watching dozens of video interviews to piece together the events that led to the death of the victim. Here, there is main enigma, but for other experiences there may be multiple with each carrying the same weight. In *Fallout 4*, the audience can explore a certain area of the map to discover what happened to the inhabitants of that area, after they are made aware by a non-playable character that an event caused them to disappear.

Turning now to the three Franchise categories, it is clear that enigmas function differently depending on the category of franchise. In Segmented Franchises, they may appear in one channel and answered in another, for Standalone Channels they are often produced and answered within the same channel and with Episodic Franchises, they are often partially answered with each new installment, being made clear as time progresses. This implies that designers need to be aware of how audiences are consuming their franchises, providing answers to important enigmas where they know the audience journey will lead them, or holding back from answering other enigmas to entice the audience to a particular channel. If there are no such considerations, producers risk the audience leaving the experience unsatisfied and irritated that

they do not have the answers to enigmas they were invested in. On the other hand, producers should also appreciate the power of holding certain details back, leaving the audience wanting more and directing them to channels within the franchise that have the possibility of answering their questions.

On the subject of enigma importance, the Augmented Core is a good category for illustrating how minor enigmas are presented and answered. In the *Prometheus Second Screen*, subsidiary channels become available on the mobile device whilst the film is playing, and adds additional information to what the audience is watching on screen. For example, when we see Mr Weyland for the first time, we may want some contextual information about him, his goals and aspirations. These can be considered minor enigmas because answers are not required in order to understand the events in the film. However, this minor enigma is answered when the film pauses and a TEDx video of a young Mr Weyland is shown, providing some of the answers that were brought up by his first appearance in the film. This highlights one of the differences between watching the film alone, compared to using the "second screen" app. In the former, audiences are left to fill in the gaps in their mind, an affordance that is somewhat taken away in the second screen experience.

5.6.2 Viewing Transmedia Research in Light of Identified Categories

In chapter two, I reviewed some of the academic work conducted in transmedia storytelling and transmedia more generally. I argued that the diversity of research showcased provides the field with sharp tools borrowed from other fields and used in specific manifestations of transmedia. In this section, I will revisit this work and discuss how some of it can be utilized given the categories presented in this chapter.

5.6.2.1 Flow

Williams' theory of Flow [95], that describes the experienced sequence of events such as a television viewing session, is a concept that is similar to that of the user journey. With flow, we are concerned with *everything* an audience member encounters rather than what channels inside the experience they may encounter. In this section I will consider how the concept can be applied to different transmedia categories and where it can be expanded to allow for the nuances of different categories.

Deciding what is part of the flow is challenging and often not clear, and the transmedia classification exposes this further. In Standalone Franchises, we might include the trailers before a film starts in the theatre, or an advert at the end of a novel, but what about content between these channels? Does flow stop and start with these channels? Similarly, with Connected Core

experiences we might include YouTube adverts before a video begins as part of the flow, but what about the next website we visit after the video ends, and does this change if the next website is related to the experience? How does flow differ from a user journey in this case? I argue that there are no clear answers to these questions. However, the classification can allow us to make these types of decisions about flow for each category and apply these decisions to experiences within the same category.

With Episodic Franchises, flow can be defined in two ways; the content within episodes, or dependent channels, and content that is experienced between these episodes. For example, in the *Star Wars* franchise there are many book and comic book series that build upon the last issue. The flow within a comic might consist of an issue being interrupted by an advert for a *Star Wars* product, an unrelated advert or a short demo of an upcoming comic series. The flow between comics may consist of consuming *Star Wars* games, films or television episodes. This second kind of flow is in part a result of the user journey that is taken, as opposed to the first type that dictates the internal flow of a channel.

The two different aspects to flow discussed above have been identified by Evans, as presented in the second chapter [94]. However, what has been overlooked is the nature of flow with experiences that sit within the Live Performative category. With Live Performative experiences, flow takes on an active and participatory form where audiences themselves affect the flow by their actions beyond simply choosing the next channel. For example, in *19 Reinos* when the audience had to create characters to battle others across Twitter, the timeline or feed that people saw on their homepage would be different for each person depending on who they were following and communicating with. A Twitter exchange where a battle took place might sit between a tweet about the *Game of Thrones* television channel, and another completely unrelated tweet. In a purist sense, these tweets would be considered part of the flow as they are situated close in time and space to the current activity of the experience.

With these observations in mind, I agree that flow can be a useful tool to interrogate how tertiary content, seemingly unrelated to the experience, can influence the reception of the experience. However, I argue that in order to make efficient use of it as in a transmedia storytelling context, it is necessary to understand what category of transmedia is being considered.

5.6.2.2 Mediated Glance

Another theory related to flow is the mediated glance provided by Evans [94]. This concept, an expansion to the television glance theory by Ellis [96], argues that transmedia storytelling often

uses techniques to distract audiences, not requiring their full attention but providing content that keeps audiences anchored to transmedial worlds.

Again, mediated glance can manifest differently depending on the category involved. For some categories, it isn't obvious where we can apply the theory, such as Live Performative or Controlled Freedom experiences that typically require substantial attention from the audience. However, the concept can be used for other categories such as Augmented Core. For example, in *Prometheus Second Screen*, the audience is distracted from the film, but in a way that attempts to keep them interested in its story world before pushing them back into the film once the allure of distraction (or the enigma has been answered as described previously) has worn off. There is also another occurrence of mediated glance with *Becoming Human*, where the television show is augmented with character bios uploaded to the internet. Here, the audience might feel as though they are browsing someone's profile on social media and finding out about their life, but at the same time building up "investment" that compels them to return to the television content where they will learn of the major events that take place in these characters' lives.

Mediated glance can also be analysed in Connected Core experiences, where we can interrogate how producers exploit play downtime by providing content such as videos and text descriptions that can be consumed as players go about their daily life. Such methods keep the experience and related fictional world well within the minds of the audience as they glance at the content. An example of this is seen in *Overwatch*, where the producers used their newly created Twitter account to spark online discussion by providing character related news images purported to be from the fictional world. These tweets occasionally linked to their website and provided a full news article, filling in missing plot points or producing new enigmas to facilitate discussion. Such content could be browsed by audiences that were not currently engaged with the game itself, and implies a double usage that has perhaps been overlooked by Evans. The first usage is what has just been described, keeping audiences within the fictional world and potentially pushing them back to certain channels (that perhaps generate revenue). The second usage is a type of conversion, where the channels intended to produce mediated glance effects can entice audiences to explore these channels themselves further, as seen in the *Overwatch* example above. This same double effect can be observed in the Structured Freedom category, such as in the *V&A Special* where posters and videos can be glanced at as audiences explore the space, but can be consumed more fully when audience give the channels enough attention. An exploration into which techniques, media channels and content enables these two effects is a worthwhile endeavor that could enable increased user journey opportunity and improved return on investment.

5.6.2.3 Ludo-Aesthetics and Play

The next concept that will be explored is ludo-aesthetics and play, which considers to what extent the audience behave as playful subjects inside a transmedia story, as explained in chapter two [97]. Just as Kennedy uses her spectrum of transmedia games to frame the many facets of ludo-aesthetics, so too can the transmedia classification presented in this chapter be used to identify different ways play can occur.

The value in identifying categories in the context of play becomes apparent when Kennedy's classification is used with the transmedia classification. For example, on the lowest level of Kennedy's spectrum are the "AAA franchise-based games" that typically enable structured play using linear game design and heavily controlled role-play. When we identify different categories of transmedia franchise as per the classification, we gain a more nuanced understanding of the nature of play. For example, in *The Matrix*, at around the same time as the release of the second film, the game *Enter the Matrix* was released. Players followed the story of a group of characters, who were portrayed as minor characters in the film, that culminates in an objective being completed that affects the main characters in the film. When audiences learn of this in the film, they may have a sense of achievement that they were the ones to accomplish this, as they were the ones who actually controlled the characters to complete the objective. Compare this with *Goldeneye*, a game inside the *James Bond* franchise, that sees players play as the spy himself. The story inside the game is almost exactly the same as the film, and players have almost no impact on the story beyond deciding exactly where James steps, which minor characters he shoots or what he interacts with within the confines of the game.

Similarly, what Kennedy calls the social media game can be split into at least two categories; Live Performative and Segmented on Rails. Here, we can compare the ludo-aesthetics of each of them to discover what the differences are and the effect this has on the players and story. For example, in *Why So Serious*, audiences were given an active role in taking part in political demonstrations. Audiences flocked to the street and role-played as citizens of the Batman fictional city of Gotham in an extreme example of the blurring of reality aesthetic that such similar experiences are known for. We can compare this to the *Westworld* campaign, that included many fictional websites and instances, including some active channels that required the audience to partake in activities such as talking to a chatbot to unveil clues.

There is however a distinct affordance in using MOTS compared to how Kennedy describes experiences. They use written descriptions of experiences to determine features of play, whereas an experiences modelled using MOTS can be visualised and understood using common syntax to reveal the structure of different ludo-aesthetics.

5.6.2.4 Immersion in Attractions

A related but separate set of ideas include examining how immersion, participation and gamification in predominantly transmedia attractions occurs. In his analysis of the *Warner Bros. Studio Tour – The Making of Harry Potter attraction,* Freeman points out that an important aspect of such experiences is immersion, or the effect of audiences being a part of the performance and entering the world of the story [98]. Although Freeman focuses on attractions, we can still question the nature of this conception of immersion in different categories.

Controlled Freedom experiences include a loose sequential guide for the audience, that gently pushes the audience to follow a specific user journey. However, the experience also allows them to veer away from this to explore areas that they are interested in. This freedom provides the audience with the ability to control how they consume the experience, whether they want to dedicate more time to one channel versus another. The knowledge that they are in control of at least the pace allows them to soak in all that the experience has to offer. For example, in *Bear 71*, the story automatically plays unless audience press the pause button, allowing them to still interact with the content on screen but at a pace that suits them. In contrast, the Live Performative category requires that the audience, or at least part of the audience, embody a character within the world, without which the experience would come to a standstill. This provides a sense of power that almost obligates the audience to behave as an active participant and immerse themselves in the fictional world in order to interpret and navigate its instructions.

In his analysis, Freeman also identified the use of gamification by attractions, that arguably acts as an enhancement to the immersion, by providing the audience with a sense of agency, and an added level of enjoyment. We can see this in some Live on Rails experiences such as *Crushes Coaster*, where audiences are prompted to help a character featured in the experience by downloading a game on their phones to play whilst they wait in the queue. This strategy was likely implemented to alleviate large queue times for a new and popular ride at the theme park that often has queue times going into the hours. However, this use of gamification provides the audience, especially children, with a sense of duty to one of the characters within the fictional world of *Finding Nemo*, and adds an additional level of enjoyment that creates anticipation for the upcoming ride.

5.6.2.5 Storyworlds and Value in Exhibits

On her work on transmediality in museums, Kidd identifies the problem of defining and identifying the boundaries of a museum or exhibits storyworld [99]. She argues that “negative capability”, the capacity for users to explore holes left in a story, is a common feature of

museums. Further, she raises concern at a museums ability to provide a reward to consumers for their efforts of discovery, questioning what value can be taken away from a visit and in what way it is meaningful. These issues are easily applicable to experiences within the Structured Freedom category, where all but one of the experiences were exhibits. However, as part of this category was *Disneyland Paris*, that prompts the question: what features seen at *DisneyLand Paris* could be imported into a museum such as; expanding the storyworld, providing additional negative capability or enabling more value as perceived by the audience?

Such an activity can also be conducted with the Controlled Freedom category using Kidd's value question as our point of inquiry. An investigation could provide insights into which features of escape rooms provide value to audience members and how can this be replicated for other experiences that are perhaps focused on storytelling and education. Some surface level insights include borrowing the emotional take-way from *Bear 71* where the audience learn of the human caused tragedies that wild bears endure. Or copying the use of play, problem solving and team work seen in *Mad Experiments* where the value is in the fun to be had. Another effective strategy might be to borrow room layout, role-playing mechanics and prop placement from *The Council* to give the audience a sense of immersion. The latter of these draws us closer to attractions, where we might discover how their value generating features can be used in museums.

5.6.2.6 World-Based Franchises

The final area of inquiry that will be considered is the mental construction of fictional worlds produced by "world-based franchises" [121]. Wolf describes these as multi-sensory fictional worlds that enable exploration, providing a refuge from the real world that fans return to, often easily imagining what it is like to inhabit. Wolf is interested in how these transmedial worlds are constructed, how the channels come together to change the construct of the world in our minds, the affordances and limitations of certain strategies and how the perception of the fictional world differs from person to person. With the classification at hand, some of these questions can be refined.

In Segmented Franchises, audiences often have to consume channels in a particular order to understand character progression and construct the series of events in their minds. The question thus becomes which dependent channels are best for conveying particular bits of the storyworld, and what channels should follow and precede it? If user journeys are different, how can the producers better guide their audience through the story to invoke the desired storyworld into the mind? In Standalone Franchises, audiences are given some opportunity to pick the entry point into the world, with the option of expanding their understanding of it if they desire. The questions here could include how do the various entry points change the way the storyworld is first

conceived? Or how does the mental construction of audiences of one standalone channel differ from that of another? With Episodic Franchises, the audience rely on information given to them in small chunks as time progresses, gradually building up the knowledge of the storyworld using suspense and enigmas that persuades the audience to continue. One question here could be at what pace should certain details of the storyworld be revealed to the audience to keep them interested whilst avoiding boredom? With *Becoming Human*, which is part of the Augmented Core category, the audience are provided the main details of the storyworld in some core set of channels, with a large part of the experience providing subsidiary content that fills in the gaps of their understanding left by the core content. A question here could be what details of the storyworld should be left out of the core channels and placed in subsidiary channels?

The questions posed here are a refinement to Wolf's, and would require considerable effort to accurately answer. Regardless of what is found though, I do not think it would be useful to ask what the "best" method for communicating a storyworld would be. It is clear that there are many different methods that work, each being useful at conveying their storyworld for the effects the producer's desire. For example, in the *Game of Thrones* franchise, the storyworld was first released in chunks over time, allowing for a united audience, who had the same information available to them, to form. Each new book release, or episode broadcast culminated in people discussing the world on social media, giving their opinion on characters or guessing what will come next. Even now, when all of the episodes are available, any given audience will follow a similar journey as previous audiences, from the first episode to the last. Conversely, if we were to look at the *Assassins Creed* franchise, the paths taken can vary significantly. One person may start with the film, moving onto a book and then the third game whilst another person plays only the first two games. Both audience members are exposed to the storyworld and may have even spent a similar amount of time within, but they will come away with very different understandings of how it functions.

5.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explained how first order metrics can be extracted from experiences modelled with MOTS, and how these can be used to formulate second order metrics. Next, I presented how these second order metrics could be utilised for classification by extracting the metrics of fifty experiences and using the K-Means clustering technique to generate fourteen categories. Each category was summarised and their second order metric strengths were presented. Finally, research explored in the literature was then revisited in light of this new classification, with a discussion that sought to illustrate how this work could be applied or expanded depending on the category.

This chapter has provided several distinct contributions made by this thesis; metrics that can be used to analyse transmedia experiences further by allowing us to see how strongly associated any given experience is to a metric on a decimal scale from 0 to 1, a classification process that utilises these metrics, a classification of fifty modelled experiences and finally the theory surrounding how this classification can be used to inform and update our current understanding of how transmedia storytelling functions.

In the next chapter, I summarise the work conducted in this thesis, how it answers the research questions and hypothesis, and future work that could be conducted following the work presented here.

Chapter 6 Conclusions

In this thesis, I have presented a method for describing structural features of transmedia stories. This method provides the foundation for metrics to be extracted and processed in order to reveal a classification. This chapter will conclude that work, summarising each step of the process, the contributions made and potential future work that could be undertaken to follow the work conducted in this thesis.

6.1 Summary

In chapter one, I introduced what I argue to be two important practices in transmedia storytelling research. Firstly, the ability to structurally describe such experiences for analyses, and secondly the ability to distinguish between different categories of transmedia. Throughout the first and second chapters, I used a number of words to describe what ad-hoc categories of transmedia storytelling; franchises, escape rooms, ARGs etc., arguing that the basis for classifying experiences this way is often inconsistent.

I explored several modelling techniques, where transmedia stories were broken down into constituent parts using a variety of methods, commenting that although they all have certain strengths, they did not capture the fundamental structural features. Further, even though some of these models could be used for classification, the structural features they miss would in my view produce a classification that whilst not incorrect, would reflect the feature focus of their model.

6.1.1 Development of MOTS

Taking inspiration from structuralist thought and building upon previous attempts, I have developed and validated a model (MOTS) of transmedia storytelling that describes key structural features that are required for both effective analysis and categorisation. MOTS has the ability to describe both verbally and visually, the various ways transmedia stories organise their media to tell stories. The model was developed in stages, starting with an exploratory stage using one experience, an iterative stage using an additional nineteen experiences and a refinement stage that validated the model using expert interviews.

6.1.1.1 Expert Interviews

Nine transmedia storytelling experts with a range of expertise and experience were interviewed in order to validate the fundamental assumptions made by the model and provide insights that

would improve its performance. One key finding from the interviews was that although the objectives of my research was seen as important, it was clear words had different meanings for each person, largely reflecting what was identified in the literature as “semantic chaos”, proving that there is no objectively perfect model for understanding the structure of transmedia stories. However, the diverse views, different usage of words, suggestions and opinions ultimately proved to be useful and informed further development of MOTS.

6.1.2 Case Studies

Eight experiences were then selected from a list of thirty (consisting of the original twenty and another ten that were identified during the course of my studies) and modelled using MOTS. The eight experiences were chosen to show how MOTS could be used experiences with vastly different media channel combinations, links, state and interactivity. I went through each experience in turn, describing the structure of the experience and presenting the model visually before discussing how the structure influenced the way the story was told. Some of the experiences were partitioned to illustrate how we can identify a section of the model that performs a specific function.

6.1.3 Classification

I explicated the process for deriving first order metrics and second order metrics from MOTS that could be used for both further analysis and categorisation. A further twenty experiences were identified, providing a sample size of fifty-one (two Disneyland models were generated). All experiences that had not been modelled were done so and their first and second order metrics were derived. The second order metrics were then compared and processed using statistical techniques, and categories were extracted. Fourteen categories were identified and described. Research explored in the literature was then revisited in light of this new classification, with a discussion that sought to illustrate how this work could be applied or changed depending on the category.

6.2 Contributions

1. Development of the model that has been improved upon using expert interviews

A model that describes structural features of transmedia stories has been developed, with the development process documented in this thesis. The model (MOTS) captures a transmedia story as a set of channels that are comprised of a sequence of instances, the chunks that make up a

channel. Instances have an interactivity and state associated with them and can link to other instances in the experience.

The expert interviews that were conducted to improve the model provided confidence that its objectives were important, and that the model had value as a tool for analyses and design. The interviews serve as a useful resource and example of the various lenses transmedia storytelling can be viewed, providing insight that was ultimately adopted and built into the next version of the model.

2. Case studies analysis

The model was applied to eight transmedia stories and in so doing demonstrated its broad capability of describing transmedia structure. I used the model to discuss the structure of each of these experiences, demonstrating how it could be used as a tool for analyses, potentially providing insights into an experience that would otherwise have been missed.

3. Metrics associated with transmedia stories

I have developed a set of metrics that can be used to analyse transmedia experiences further, by counting the first order metrics (structural features) and providing formulas that generate the second order metrics. These metrics allow us to see how strongly associated any given experience is to that metric on a scale from 0 to 1, providing a quick high-level understanding of the structure of that experience. A total of fifty transmedia experiences were modelled (two Disney, making a dataset of fifty-one), their first order metrics extracted and second order metrics processed.

4. A transmedia storytelling classification

A method for classifying transmedia experiences using the extracted second order metrics was developed, presented and performed on fifty-one models, resulting in a classification consisting of fourteen categories. These categories were presented in a diagram and table to see how they compared with ad-hoc categories, showing that there was some overlap in certain cases, such as franchises clustering together. The fourteen categories identified were then interpreted and summarised, using a table to illustrate their typical second order metrics strengths.

5. Transmedia storytelling classification theory and application

In the second chapter, I presented theories such as those contained in narratology and genre. I also explored transmedia research conducted by various fields, each providing their own perspectives and findings to a range of areas. I apply and analyse portions of this research with

the context of the developed classification, commenting on how theories can be applied differently or updated depending on the category.

6.2.1 Research Questions

In the introduction, I laid down four research questions that were used as the basis for the work:

1. What are the structural features of transmedia stories?
2. How can the identification of structural features aid in the analyses of transmedia stories?
3. How are transmedia stories classified according to their structure?
4. What is the usefulness in classifying transmedia stories?

At the same time, I posed the hypothesis "*identifying structural features of transmedia experiences can enable deep analyses and provide the basis for a transmedia storytelling classification*". The contributions listed above serve to answer these questions and to some extent prove the hypothesis.

6.2.1.1 RQ1: What are the structural features of transmedia stories?

The identification of structural features of transmedia storytelling has been presented from numerous sources in this thesis. In the literature review, I explored definitions and syntax that could be used to pinpoint structural features, such as the definition of media. I then explored existing work in the area to consider what others see as fundamental structural features. I illustrated the development of the model using numerous case studies that were analysed, considering what aspects of the experience could be considered a structural feature. I conducted expert interviews, gaining insight into what they saw as fundamental features. I have proved that the features I selected for MOTS have proved to be useful for analyses and categorisation. However, MOTS is only one model of transmedia storytelling. It is not the only valid or "best" model that can exist, but one that has given focus to a particular set of features. From the expert interviews, it is clear that there is not an exhaustive list of structural features, but ones that are more or less important to people depending on their field, perspectives and agenda.

6.2.1.2 RQ2: How can the identification of structural features aid in the analyses of transmedia stories?

In chapter four, I modelled eight experiences using MOTS and demonstrated how it empowered me to analyse the experience by having a high-level understanding of what happened, which channels were used and how the experience changed over time. I demonstrated that using the

language enabled by MOTS provides another tool that can be used to interrogate an experience and understand how its structure changed the way its story was told.

6.2.1.3 RQ3: How do we categorise transmedia stories according to their structure?

In chapter four, I analysed eight experiences and produced visualisations that could be compared and inspected to produce categories. Although this can theoretically be done for any number of experiences, it would be very time consuming and taxing to compare such experiences in this way. Consequently, I demonstrated another method of classification, where metrics obtained from MOTS can be used to perform a classification. Here, instead of simply using MOTS as a visualization tool to identify categories according to what we conceptualise, the classification is based entirely on the strengths and weakness of certain second order metrics. Further, even if focus was given to different structural features, I have demonstrated a process where first order metrics and second order metrics can be obtained from an experience and utilised as part of a dataset that can be used for a classification.

6.2.1.4 RQ4: What is the usefulness in categorising transmedia stories?

In chapter five, I discussed how the results sat within the theory of classification, identifying its limitations and purpose. I then demonstrated how the classification produced could be used as a tool for applying, contextualising and updating research and theory conducted by others, including; narratological theories such as time, acts and phases and enigmas, and transmedia specific theory such as flow, glance, ludo-aesthetics, immersion, value and world building. In so doing, I not only proposed a number of changes as a result of limitations of the work when applied to certain categories, but also demonstrated that these theories could be much more specific and useful if applied in the context of the transmedia classification, by extrapolating findings from one experience to experiences found in the same category.

6.3 Publications

Four peer-reviewed papers related to the work presented in this thesis were published during the course of my studies, listed below.

1. The Structure of Transmedia Storytelling: A Case Study of 19 Reinos (2017) [1]
2. A Model for Describing Alternate Reality Games (2018) [2]
3. Classifying Multiplayer Hybrid Games to Identify Diverse Player Participation (2019) [3]
4. Structural Patterns for Transmedia Storytelling (2020) [4]

6.4 Future Work

This thesis has provided a tool, and series of processes that can lead to much further research and questions to explore. The most obvious next step would be for more experiences to be modelled and classified, generating new classifications that may lead to even more insight into transmedia storytelling. As alluded to in the previous chapter, an exploration of genres of the categories found is a piece of substantial work that could seek to identify what these genres are and how they differ from other category genres. Such an exploration would involve considering how experiences within categories use themes, characters, props and other features to invoke a particular genre.

Aside from these further developments, there are six areas of research that have been identified as the most valuable and interesting, that are explored in this section.

6.4.1 Diverse Experiences

The fifty experiences that were used in this thesis consisted of diverse storytelling methods with different media channels, evolution over time, links, state and interactivity. However, this diversity can go even further, including experiences such as; new articles, social media campaigns, events such as SpaceX rocket launches or even political events, in the sample set. Using MOTS for such experiences enables different kinds of questions to be asked, for example what news story went most viral and what was its structure? Or what was the structure of the Brexit Leave campaign? It would also be possible to classify such experiences, leading to insights such as categories of new stories, enabling us to map particular news topics to particular categories.

6.4.2 Additional or Weighted Metrics

The model presented in this thesis can be extended in a number of ways. For example, a feature can be added to instances that determines whether an audience member typically sits down or not. This first order metric can be used for a second order metrics that compares the amount of sat down instances to those where the audience stand. Such an extension is easily implemented, but caution must be observed, as each additional feature has to be determined with each experience, increasing the time it takes to model it. There must also be an appreciation for the current limitation of the model, where the consumption metric is considered to be equally important as the liveness metric. Such a limitation can be overcome if each metric was assigned an importance weight as discussed in the last chapter.

6.4.3 User Journeys

In chapter three, I introduced the difference between an experience that is modelled according to when channels become available, and one that shows a user's journey through the experience. I also included one such journey in the following chapter, comparing both types of the same experience (*Disneyland Paris*), and included this user journey in the classification dataset. However, there is much work that can be explored further in this area, such as modelling all possible journeys of an experience and comparing how each one changes the way the story is told. MOTS could also be used to model actual user journeys, gathering data about real people, and analysed to reveal certain behaviours or patterns. As identified in the expert interviews, such data would be valuable not only to researchers, but producers who wish to find out how their plans map to reality.

6.4.4 Preservation

In chapter two, I explored some of the work being done in media preservation, commenting that much of the same issue's preservationists face involve understanding the structure of a media artefact in order to preserve it. This effort could be explored further in a transmedia context using MOTS. The models that are generated from MOTS could be used as the basis for preservation, where we store the contents of instances with metadata such as descriptions, links and what the experience was like when it first became available.

Table 32 Cloverfield preservation snippet

Instance	Scene	Links	Interactivity	State	Description	Source
0	1		Passive	Static	Trailer added	Website1_1.html
1	2		Passive	Static	Photo added	Website1_2.html
2	3		Passive	Static	Photo added	Website1_3.html
3	4	MS1	Passive	Static	Hidden messages on the back of photos if shaken	Website1_4.html

The above is an example of a small portion of *Cloverfield* archived using MOTS. For experiences with a strong degree of the consumption metric, like *Cloverfield*, the process could simply be to link the data source to the associated instances. However, with experiences with a high degree of the influence metric, such as *19 Reinos*, a single source of truth is less clear, so the preservationist would have to select content from specific audience members. Of course, the data acquired would be different depending on the media channel. For websites, we can use the Wayback

Machine to save the HTML files, for films we can save the video file, and for live theatrical events we might save a video file of a recording. As with any form of preservation, the process of preservation often changes the experience. This is more or less true for certain categories, such as Live on Rails, where data could include videos, virtual reality or computer generated 3d experiences.

6.4.5 Design

In chapter two, I presented ARG design diagrams, documents that are used as blueprints for ARG designers when they implement their experiences. I argue that in much the same way, MOTS can be used as a tool for the design of many different types of transmedia experience. MOTS can be used in various ways in the design process. Firstly, the syntax and process can be utilised to create design documents with varying degrees of detail, such as high-level views showing channels and links, and more complex designs that show the media evolution over time through scenes. Secondly, designers may have a particular category of experience in mind, so may wish to look at modelled experiences that are in that category, gaining insights and design ideas that they potentially would not have been made aware of. Thirdly, designers can design their experiences whilst monitoring the second order metrics, for example deciding that they want a nonlinear, active experience. The first one of these practices can be conducted presently, with the only requirement being a working knowledge of MOTS and how to apply it. The second practice, although possible with the categorisation formed in this thesis, would perhaps need more examples for designers to choose from.

6.4.6 Modified MOTS for Hybrid Games

During the course of my research, I experimented with using a modified implementation of MOTS that sought to model “hybrid games”, or games that use multiple media. Early work indicates that by replacing “scenes” with “players”, the model can effectively describe many different categories of hybrid games in terms of which channels are available to any given player. In a study that I conducted in 2019 [3], four multiplayer hybrid games were modelled using this approach to illustrate how this usage of the model, and eight categories were identified by experimenting with different combinations of hybrid game structure, and each category was interrogated to reveal the nature of player participation within them.

This work could be expanded upon by refining MOTS further to account for the complexities that hybrid games provide. An iterative approach, similar to the process undertaken in this thesis, that identified and modelled multiple hybrid games would be required to achieve this, and a

classification could be conducted using the metrics extracted from such games using the same methods presented in this thesis. We could then use this classification to help discover which hybrid games are effective for things such as education or particular ludic mechanics.

6.5 Concluding Remarks

I believe I have achieved what I set out to do at the beginning of this thesis, laying down much of the groundwork for a plethora of avenues to take, with just a few mentioned in this chapter. Classification is not always a worthwhile endeavour, and just because something can be done, it does not mean that it should. However, I think in this case classification has proven its use, and would continue to provide insights and context that will further the field of transmedia storytelling and transmedia more generally.

Much of this thesis has focused on theories. Theories about stories, definitions, transmedia and classification. Theory is obviously important, and provides the backbone for true understanding of phenomena. However, to stay true to transmedia practice, it is my aspiration to apply these theories by experimenting with different ways stories can be told transmedially. I believe the power of transmedia storytelling has not yet been fully realised, and will only progress if authors, producers and designers are willing to take a step into the realms of the unknown. With new technologies and media becoming available every day, this experimentation is more important than ever.

Appendix A

A.1 First Order Metrics

Experience	Ti	Si	Di	Bi	Ts	Ls	Ns	Cs	Tl	Ac	Pc	Lc	Cc	Tc
Welcome to Sanditon	103	1	87	15	102	1	31	70	10	1	9	1	9	10
19 Reinos	30	1	20	0	16	1	11	6	6	5	3	4	4	7
Alien	121	44	71	6	104	1	28	75	75	20	88	6	102	108
Apex Legends S1-3	47	8	30	9	15	0	9	6	25	1	37	0	37	37
APP	14	1	0	14	14	1	0	13	0	0	6	1	5	6
Assassins Creed	139	75	55	9	120	1	25	94	40	24	45	1	68	69
Bear 71	79	0	24	55	12	4	7	1	10	0	76	0	76	76
Becoming Human	88	2	44	42	16	0	8	8	8	0	12	3	9	12
Change the Record	24	0	16	8	4	2	1	1	8	1	22	23	0	23
Cloverfield	117	4	113	0	27	1	22	4	4	6	17	5	18	22
Crush's Coaster	4	0	2	2	3	1	1	1	2	1	3	4	0	4
Cyberpunk 2077	1700	0	1100	600	900	10	450	440	100	100	40	0	200	200
Defenders of the Triforce	15	0	10	5	6	2	1	2	9	10	4	13	1	14
Dexter	46	1	45	0	13	1	5	7	9	14	9	16	8	19
DisneyLand Paris	92	67	0	25	20	0	20	0	90	30	60	89	1	90
DisneyLand Paris User	20	14	0	3	18	16	2	0	14	2	14	14	2	16
Dnd User Journey	34	0	33	1	14	8	6	0	2	5	2	5	2	7
Fallout 4	1400	0	1100	300	1020	10	500	510	75	102	52	0	154	154
Firewatch	500	0	410	90	84	15	54	15	16	25	110	0	135	135
Game of Thrones	130	10	100	20	145	1	10	134	20	15	30	1	39	45
Halo	94	65	17	12	84	1	10	73	40	13	54	2	66	67
Harry Potter	37	6	27	4	28	1	8	19	15	3	34	12	25	37
Her Story	274	0	271	3	1	0	1	0	271	2	272	0	274	274
I Love Bees	70	0	60	10	50	1	17	32	4	4	5	4	5	8
James Bond	175	165	0	10	150	1	20	129	50	14	161	25	150	175
Lizzie Bennet Diary	331	1	300	30	140	1	100	39	7	1	6	2	5	7
Mad Experiments First Lvl	16	0	11	5	5	2	2	1	4	1	15	0	16	16
Mass Effect	70	50	15	5	50	1	5	44	50	5	65	1	61	70
Orwell	30	0	24	6	14	4	4	6	22	6	16	0	22	22

Appendix A

Overwatch	60	16	20	19	36	1	17	18	5	2	6	2	6	8
Pirates	46	25	19	2	36	1	4	31	21	4	37	11	30	41
Pirates Ride	22	0	20	2	15	3	8	2	0	0	22	22	0	22
Pokémon	1403	176	1212	15	1350	1	53	1296	68	130	72	26	176	202
Prometheus 2nd Screen	76	1	7	68	76	0	1	75	0	0	10	0	10	10
Prometheus Campaign	14	2	12	0	8	0	5	3	8	3	8	4	8	11
Roman Baths	70	34	25	11	6	0	6	0	25	1	27	27	1	28
Science Museum	79	54	25	0	3	0	3	0	14	2	77	77	2	79
Sombra	25	6	19	0	19	1	5	13	15	1	15	2	14	16
Star Tours	8	0	7	1	5	3	2	1	0	1	7	8	0	8
Star Trek	856	46	790	20	830	1	50	779	80	15	95	10	100	110
Star Wars	2550	761	1762	27	2500	1	40	2459	624	150	571	9	712	721
The Black Watchman (M1,2,3)	19	0	19	0	13	1	6	6	7	4	5	0	8	8
The Council (0-30 mins)	37	0	22	15	7	4	3	0	5	18	16	0	34	34
The Matrix	17	8	6	3	9	0	4	5	11	3	12	5	11	15
The Phantom Manor	15	0	12	3	12	5	3	4	2	2	12	14	0	14
The Wicker Man	5	0	4	1	5	4	1	0	0	0	5	4	1	5
V&A special	46	18	28	0	7	0	7	0	10	0	46	46	0	46
Westworld S2 Campaign	36	8	28	0	19	1	9	9	12	4	12	3	14	14
Why So Serious	15	2	13	0	13	1	2	10	12	6	7	9	4	12
Warcraft	89	60	19	10	80	1	7	72	20	13	48	0	61	61
Zelda	68	36	12	5	60	1	5	54	22	30	36	4	33	38

A.2 Second Order Metrics

Used for the K-Means Clustering

Experience	Dist	Sgm	Comp	Per*	Lin	Nli	Cmu	Cnn	Infl	Cons	Live	Pers
Welcome to Sanditon	0	0.8	0.1	0.1	0	0.3	0.7	1	0.1	0.9	0.1	0.9
GoT: 19 Reinos	0	0.7	0	0.2	0.1	0.7	0.4	0.9	0.7	0.4	0.6	0.6
Alien	0.4	0.6	0	0.9	0	0.3	0.7	0.7	0.2	0.8	0.1	0.9
Apex Legends	0.2	0.6	0.2	0.8	0	0.6	0.4	0.7	0	1	0	1
APP	0.1	0	1	0.4	0.1	0	0.9	0	0	1	0.2	0.8
Assassins Creed	0.5	0.4	0.1	0.5	0	0.2	0.8	0.6	0.3	0.7	0	1
Bear 71	0	0.3	0.7	1	0.3	0.6	0.1	0.1	0	1	0	1
Becoming Human	0	0.5	0.5	0.1	0	0.5	0.5	0.7	0	1	0.3	0.8
Change the Record	0	0.7	0.3	1	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.3	0	1	1	0
Cloverfield	0	1	0	0.2	0	0.8	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.8	0.2	0.8
Crushes Coaster	0	0.5	0.5	1	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.8	1	0
Cyberpunk 2077	0	0.6	0.4	0.1	0	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.2	0	1
Defenders of the Triforce	0	0.7	0.3	0.9	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.6	0.7	0.3	0.9	0.1
Dexter	0	1	0	0.4	0.1	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.7	0.5	0.8	0.4
Disney Land Paris	0.7	0	0.3	1	0	1	0	1	0.3	0.7	1	0
Disney Land Paris User	0.7	0	0.2	0.8	0.9	0.1	0	0.9	0.1	0.9	0.9	0.1
Dnd User Journey	0	1	0	0.2	0.6	0.4	0	0.3	0.7	0.3	0.7	0.3
Fallout 4	0	0.8	0.2	0.1	0	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.7	0.3	0	1
Firewatch	0	0.8	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.6	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.8	0	1
Game of Thrones	0.1	0.8	0.2	0.3	0	0.1	0.9	0.4	0.3	0.7	0	0.9
Halo	0.7	0.2	0.1	0.7	0	0.1	0.9	0.6	0.2	0.8	0	1
Harry Potter	0.2	0.7	0.1	1	0	0.3	0.7	0.4	0.1	0.9	0.3	0.7
Her Story	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1
I Love Bees	0	0.9	0.1	0.1	0	0.3	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.6
James Bond	0.9	0	0.1	1	0	0.1	0.9	0.3	0.1	0.9	0.1	0.9
Lizzie Bennet Diary	0	0.9	0.1	0	0	0.7	0.3	1	0.1	0.9	0.3	0.7
Mad Experiments	0	0.7	0.3	1	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.9	0	1
Mass Effect	0.7	0.2	0.1	1	0	0.1	0.9	0.7	0.1	0.9	0	0.9
Orwell	0	0.8	0.2	0.7	0.3	0.3	0.4	1	0.3	0.7	0	1
Overwatch	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.1	0	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.3	0.8	0.3	0.8
Pirates	0.5	0.4	0	0.9	0	0.1	0.9	0.5	0.1	0.9	0.3	0.7
Pirates Ride	0	0.9	0.1	1	0.2	0.5	0.1	0	0	1	1	0
Pokemon	0.1	0.9	0	0.1	0	0	1	0.3	0.6	0.4	0.1	0.9
Prometheus 2nd Screen	0	0.1	0.9	0.1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1
Prometheus Campaign	0.1	0.9	0	0.8	0	0.6	0.4	0.7	0.3	0.7	0.4	0.7
Roman Baths	0.5	0.4	0.2	0.4	0	1	0	0.9	0	1	1	0
Science Museum	0.7	0.3	0	1	0	1	0	0.2	0	1	1	0
Sombra	0.2	0.8	0	0.6	0.1	0.3	0.7	0.9	0.1	0.9	0.1	0.9
Star Tours	0	0.9	0.1	1	0.6	0.4	0.2	0	0.1	0.9	1	0

Star Trek	0.1	0.9	0	0.1	0	0.1	0.9	0.7	0.1	0.9	0.1	0.9
Star Wars	0.3	0.7	0	0.3	0	0	1	0.9	0.2	0.8	0	1
The Black Watchman	0	1	0	0.4	0.1	0.5	0.5	0.9	0.5	0.6	0	1
The Council	0	0.6	0.4	0.9	0.6	0.4	0	0.1	0.5	0.5	0	1
The Matrix	0.5	0.4	0.2	0.9	0	0.4	0.6	0.7	0.2	0.8	0.3	0.7
The Phantom Manor	0	0.8	0.2	0.9	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.9	1	0
The Wicker Man	0	0.8	0.2	1	0.8	0.2	0	0	0	1	0.8	0.2
V&A special	0.4	0.6	0	1	0	1	0	0.2	0	1	1	0
Westworld S2 Campaign	0.2	0.8	0	0.4	0.1	0.5	0.5	0.9	0.3	0.9	0.2	1
Why So Serious	0.1	0.9	0	0.8	0.1	0.2	0.8	1	0.5	0.6	0.8	0.3
Warcraft	0.7	0.2	0.1	0.7	0	0.1	0.9	0.3	0.2	0.8	0	1
Zelda	0.5	0.2	0.1	0.6	0	0.1	0.9	0.6	0.8	0.9	0.1	0.9

*lower means more periodicity (lots of instances compared to channels)

Appendix B **Model Cheat Sheet**

A Model to Describe Transmedia Experiences

Ryan Javanshir

Introduction

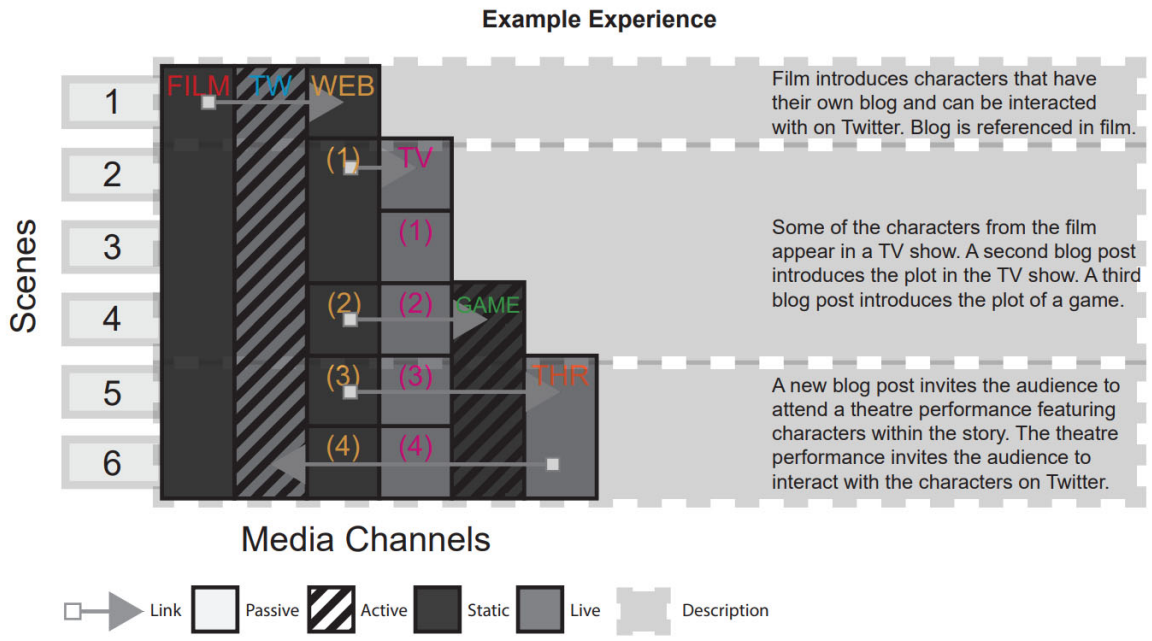
This model was developed with the intention of describing transmedia experiences using a specific syntax that is succinct yet informative.
This representation then enables a deeper understanding of the structures of diverse stories that use multiple media that evolve over time, and provides an initial starting point for various practitioners to understand how different experiences unfold.

The main objectives of this model include:

- Representing different media channels of a transmedia experience
- Describing how channels evolve over time (e.g. website updates)
- Defining whether there is potential for the audience to change the story
- Representing potential audience navigational routes
- Facilitating distinctions between different types of transmedia (ARGs vs. escape rooms) - Capturing what elements of the story were told in the different media channels

Syntax

Channel: Subset of media channel, defined by its boundary. e.g. two websites communicate their content in the same way, but have their own channel e.g. W1 and W2.
Instance: Periodicity of a channel, with any change to the channel spawning a new instance e.g. blog post *Interactivity:* Passive if the audience do not meaningfully engage with channel e.g. reading a book. Active if they interact to change the story e.g. roleplay.
State: Instance is live if it cannot be accessed in its original form after it has occurred e.g. LARP, and static if the content is still available in its original form after an update (films, some websites).
Links: Connections between instances that represent potential navigational paths e.g. hyperlinks.
Scenes: A scene signifies a period of narrated time. They are associated with instances that are playable at any given time, used similarly to books, plays and films.
Description: The description associated with an instance, scene or section of the experience. e.g roleplay occurs on twitter, main character dies etc.


Example Experience
Scenes
1
2
3
4
5
6
FILM
TW
WEB
(1)
TV
(1)
(2)
(2)
GAME
(3)
(3)
THR
(4)
(4)
Film introduces characters that have their own blog and can be interacted with on Twitter. Blog is referenced in film.
Some of the characters from the film appear in a TV show. A second blog post introduces the plot in the TV show. A third blog post introduces the plot of a game.
A new blog post invites the audience to attend a theatre performance featuring characters within the story. The theatre performance invites the audience to interact with the characters on Twitter.
Media Channels
Link
Passive
Active
Static
Live
Description

Appendix C **Expert Interviews Ethics Approval**

C.1 Participant Information Sheet

Study Title: Transmedia Storytelling Stakeholder Validation

Researcher: Ryan Javanshir

ERGO number: 47235

You are being invited to take part in the above research study. To help you decide whether you would like to take part or not, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the information below carefully and ask questions if anything is not clear or you would like more information before you decide to take part in this research. You may like to discuss it with others but it is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you are happy to participate you will be asked to sign a consent form.

What is the research about?

As part of my PhD research, I have developed a model that aims to describe fundamental structural features of transmedia stories, that can be used a basis for a critical reading of such stories. I am seeking to validate this model by speaking with a number of transmedia storytelling experts, gaining their insight into how effective the model is in achieving its goals. Does it identify all the key structural elements needed to describe a transmedia story? What components does it miss? What are the affordances of the model for critical analyses of transmedia stories? Is the language used in the model appropriate?

Your participation in this research will help answers these questions when I describe the development of the model in my thesis.

Why have I been asked to participate?

You have been asked to participate because you have been identified as a transmedia storytelling expert, and your opinions on the model I have developed will provide the necessary feedback for its validation.

What will happen to me if I take part?

You will be presented with a document outlining the model, what it is intended for, and how it can be applied. We will discuss how this model can be applied to several transmedia stories, either using examples provided by me, or stories you are interested in. Once the process of modelling a story is complete, I will then seek your feedback regarding the process of applying the

model, and the effectiveness of the model in describing key structural features. The feedback given should attempt to answer the questions identified in the previous page. The process will take accumulatively approximately 1 hour.

Are there any benefits in my taking part?

Although there are no physical benefits to you for taking part, you may be interested in discussing transmedia storytelling and apply a developed model to stories identified by you.

Are there any risks involved?

There are no risks involved in this study.

What data will be collected?

Collected data will include your name, Web contact details (email, social media handle) and anonymized feedback. Any personal information attained (email address, names etc) will be deleted at the end of the study.

Will my participation be confidential?

Your participation and the information we collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential.

Only members of the research team and responsible members of the University of Southampton may be given access to data about you for monitoring purposes and/or to carry out an audit of the study to ensure that the research is complying with applicable regulations. Individuals from regulatory authorities (people who check that we are carrying out the study correctly) may require access to your data. All of these people have a duty to keep your information, as a research participant, strictly confidential.

Do I have to take part?

No, it is entirely up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide you want to take part, you will need to sign a consent form to show you have agreed to take part.

What happens if I change my mind?

You have the right to change your mind and withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without your participant rights being affected. If you would like to withdraw, please contact Ryan Javanshir (rj1g15@soton.ac.uk).

If you withdraw from the study, we will keep the information about you that we have already obtained for the purposes of achieving the objectives of the study only.

What will happen to the results of the research?

Your personal details will remain strictly confidential. Research findings made available in any reports or publications will not include information that can directly identify you.

The results will be presented in my final thesis, where I validate the model and evaluate its effectiveness in describing structural features of transmedia stories. This includes where feedback highlights what the model is useful for and what it fails to capture. Feedback will be anonymized and stored in a document on an encrypted local hard drive.

Where can I get more information?

If you have any questions or wish to know further details on something, please contact Ryan Javanshir at rj1g15@soton.ac.uk.

What happens if there is a problem?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should speak to the researchers who will do their best to answer your questions (Ryan Javanshir at rj1g15@soton.ac.uk).

If you remain unhappy or have a complaint about any aspect of this study, please contact the University of Southampton Research Integrity and Governance Manager (023 8059 5058, rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk).

Data Protection Privacy Notice

The University of Southampton conducts research to the highest standards of research integrity. As a publicly-funded organisation, the University has to ensure that it is in the public interest when we use personally-identifiable information about people who have agreed to take part in research. This means that when you agree to take part in a research study, we will use information about you in the ways needed, and for the purposes specified, to conduct and complete the research project. Under data protection law, 'Personal data' means any information that relates to and is capable of identifying a living individual. The University's data protection policy governing the use of personal data by the University can be found on its website

(https://www.southampton.ac.uk/legalservices/what-we-do/data-protection-and-foi.page).

This Participant Information Sheet tells you what data will be collected for this project and whether this includes any personal data. Please ask the research team if you have any questions or are unclear what data is being collected about you.

Our privacy notice for research participants provides more information on how the University of Southampton collects and uses your personal data when you take part in one of our research projects and can be found at http://www.southampton.ac.uk/assets/sharepoint/intranet/ls/Public/Research%20and%20Integrity% 20Privacy%20Notice/Privacy%20Notice%20for%20Research%20Participants.pdf

Any personal data we collect in this study will be used only for the purposes of carrying out our research and will be handled according to the University's policies in line with data protection law. If any personal data is used from which you can be identified directly, it will not be disclosed to anyone else without your consent unless the University of Southampton is required by law to disclose it.

Data protection law requires us to have a valid legal reason ('lawful basis') to process and use your Personal data. The lawful basis for processing personal information in this research study is for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest. Personal data collected for research will not be used for any other purpose.

For the purposes of data protection law, the University of Southampton is the 'Data Controller' for this study, which means that we are responsible for looking after your information and using it properly. The University of Southampton will keep identifiable information about you for 2 years after the study has finished after which time any link between you and your information will be removed.

To safeguard your rights, we will use the minimum personal data necessary to achieve our research study objectives. Your data protection rights – such as to access, change, or transfer such information - may be limited, however, in order for the research output to be reliable and accurate. The University will not do anything with your personal data that you would not reasonably expect.

If you have any questions about how your personal data is used, or wish to exercise any of your rights, please consult the University's data protection webpage

(https://www.southampton.ac.uk/legalservices/what-we-do/data-protection-and-foi.page) where you can make a request using our online form. If you need further assistance, please contact the University's Data Protection Officer (data.protection@soton.ac.uk).

Thank you.

Appendix D **Expert Interviews Consent Form**

UNIVERSITY OF Southampton

Study title: Transmedia Storytelling Stakeholder Validation

Researcher name: Ryan Javanshir

ERGO number: 47235

Please initial the box(es) if you agree with the statement(s):

I have read and understood the information sheet and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.	
I agree to take part in this research project and agree for my data to be used for the purpose of this study.	
I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw (at any time) for any reason without my participation rights being affected.	

Name of participant (print name)……

Signature of participant…….

Date…….. ……..

Name of researcher (print name)……

Signature of researcher …….

Date……..

[29/01/19] [Version 1]

Appendix E **List of Experiences**

Experience	**Producer(s)**
19 Reinos	Conducttr, HBO
Alien	20th Century Studios
Apex Legends S1-3	Respawn Entertainment, Electronic Arts
APP	2CFilm
Assassins Creed	Ubisoft
Bear 71	National Film Board of Canada
Becoming Human	Toby Whithouse, Sullivan Entertainment, Mehra Entertainment
Change the Record	Xciting Escapes
Cloverfield	Bad Robot Productions, Paramount Pictures
Crushes Coaster	Walt Disney Imagineering, Disney Parks
Cyberpunk 2077	CDProjekt Red
Defenders of the Triforce	Nintendo
Dexter	CBS Television Distribution
Disney Land Paris	Disney Parks
Dnd User Journey	Wizards of the Coast
Fallout 4	Bethesda Game Studios
Firewatch	Campo Santo
GoT	HBO, George R.R Martin
Halo	Microsoft, Bungie, 343 Industries
Harry Potter	Warner Bros Pictures, Bloomsbury, J.K Rowling
Her Story	Sam Barlow
I Love Bees	42 Entertainment
James Bond	Ian Fleming, Eon Productions
Lizzie Bennet Diary	Pemberley Digital
Mad Experiments First Lvl	PlayTogether Studio
Mass Effect	Microsoft Game Studios, Electronic Arts
Orwell	Osmotic, Fellow Traveller
Overwatch	Activision Blizzard
Pirates of the Caribbean	Walt Disney Pictures, Disney Parks
Pirates Ride	Walt Disney Imagineering, Disney Parks
Pokemon	Nintendo, The Pokémon Company
Prometheus 2nd Screen	Scott Free Productions, Brandywine, Dune Entertainment, Fox Digital Entertainment
Prometheus Campaign	Fox Digital Entertainment
Roman Baths	Bath and North East Somerset Council
Science Museum	Science Museum Group
Sombra	Blizzard Entertainment
Star Tours	Walt Disney Imagineering, Disney Parks
Star Trek	ViacomCBS
Star Wars	Lucasfilm Ltd, Walt Disney Studios
The Black Watchman	Alice & Smith

The Council (0-30 mins)	Big Bad Wolf, Focus Homan Interactive
The Matrix	Warner Bros. Pictures, The Wachowskis
The Phantom Manor	Walt Disney Imagineering, Disney Parks
The Wicker Man	Merlin Entertainment
V&A special	Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
Welcome to Sanditon	Jay Bushman and Margaret Dunlap
Westworld S2 Campaign	HBO Entertainment
Why So Serious	42 Entertainment, Warner Bros Pictures
Warcraft	Blizzard Entertainment
Zelda	Nintendo

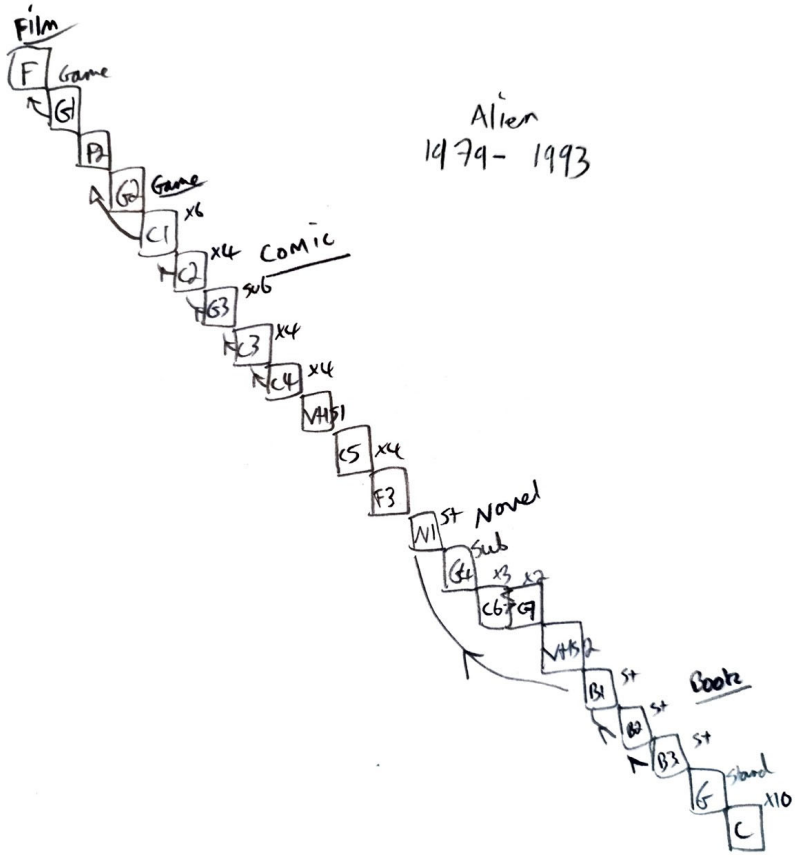
Appendix F **Experience Model Data**

Below are models and extracts associated with the experiences used in the thesis that have not already been included and described as part of the text itself. For practical reasons, some models show a portion of the experience and include a mix of digital and handwritten.

F.1 Alien

The Alien franchise, is a collection of media channels that are set in the future, where human civilisation has mastered space travel and is able to cryogenically freeze themselves to travel vast distances. The franchise began in 1979 and followed the fate of a crew who encountered an aggressive and powerful alien (called Xenomorphs) that sought to kill all crew members. All channels in the franchise feature these aliens in one of their various forms, and usually involves following characters that encounter these aliens in various scenarios.

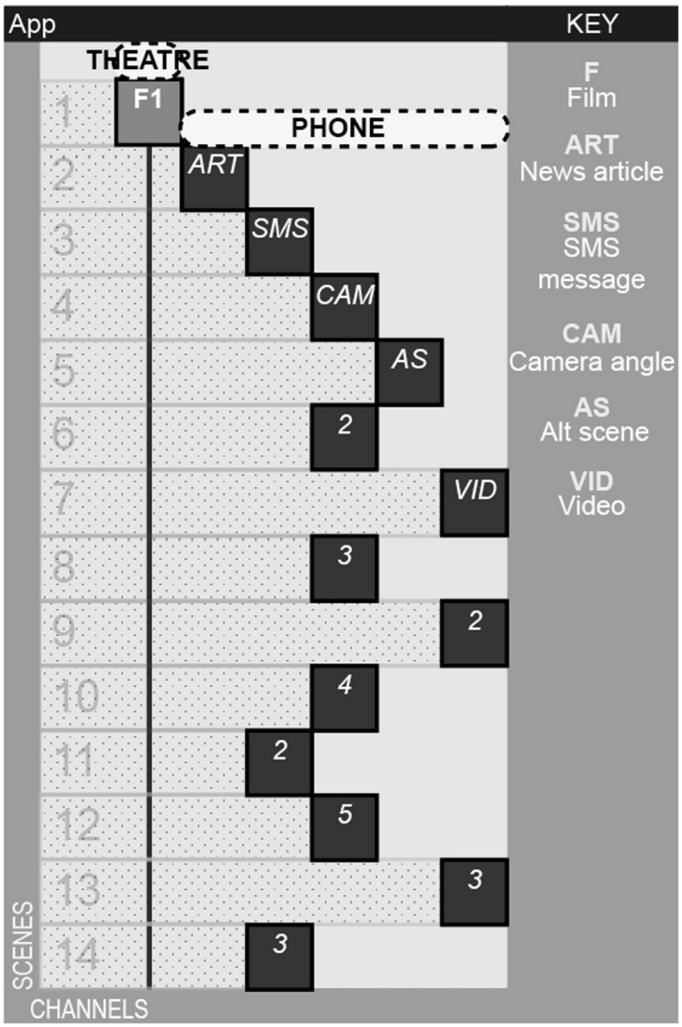
The model below shows the Alien franchise from 1979 to 1993.



F.2 App

App is a Dutch science fiction film about a sentient artificial intelligence terrorizing a young woman. The producers utilised the “second screen” technology for their theatrical release, and allowed audiences to download an app on their phone before the film started. The app used audio syncing software to know the timestamp of the film, and would “play” various media on the phones of the audience.

The model below shows the experience including the film, and content on the mobile phone.

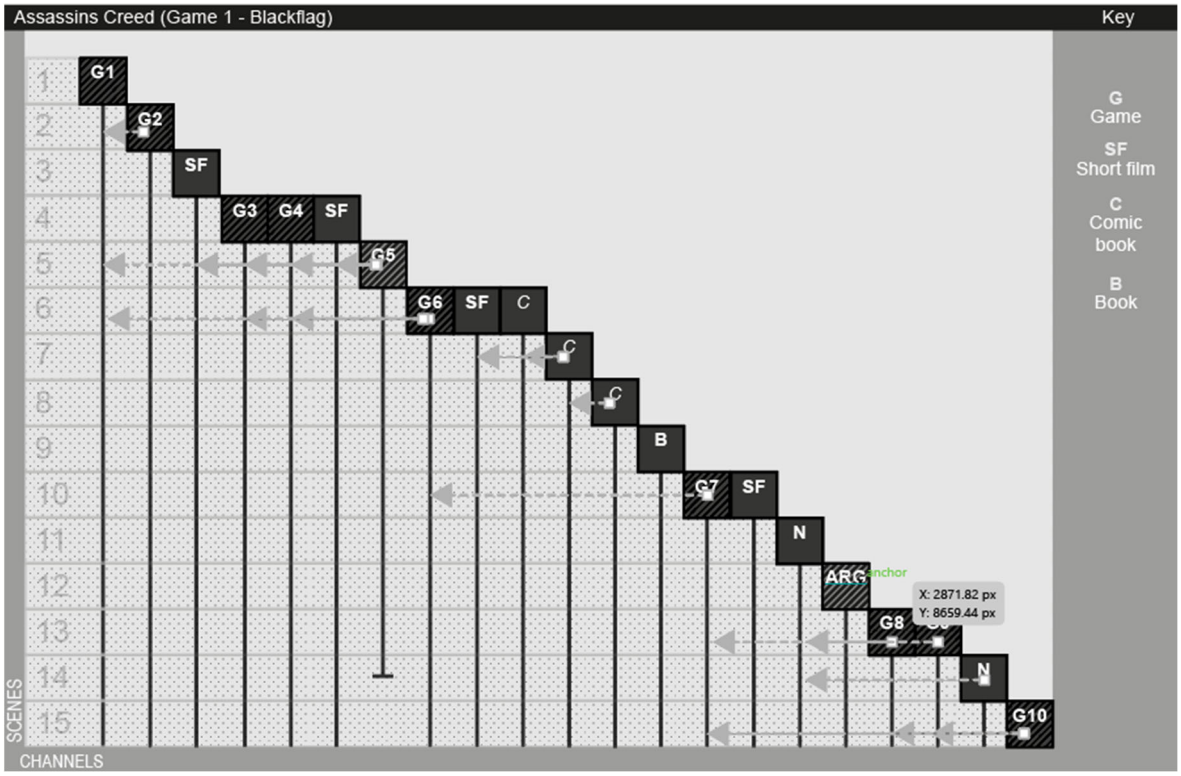


F.3 Assassin’s Creed

Assassins Creed is a media franchise that began as a game. Set in the future, the main character enters a machine that extracts his ancestor’s memories, and allows him to relive life as said ancestor, who was a secret assassin thousands of years ago. The secret group of assassins lasts generations, with new people picking up the mantle and interacting with various major event

throughout history such as the American civil war. Comics, short films and novels etc tell the stories of these characters as well as in the games themselves.

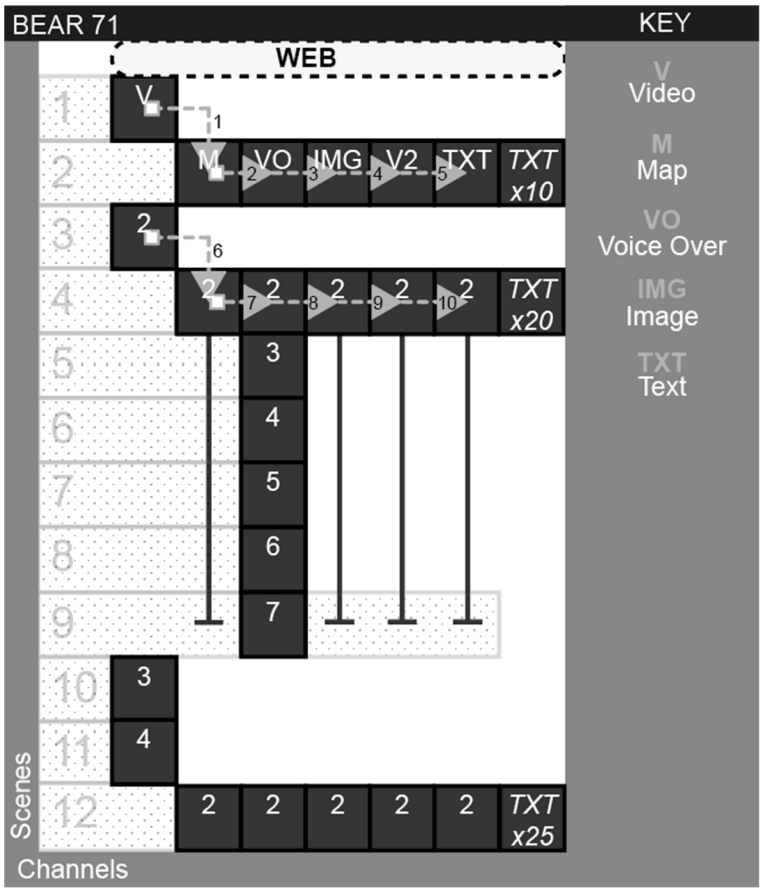
The model below shows the Assassin's creed franchise, from the release of the first game up until another game, "Black Flag".



F.4 Bear 71

Bear 71 is a Web-based experience that presents the life of a real bear that had been tagged. The audience watch videos, read and listen to narration to understand what the bear is doing as the virtual timer progresses. The audiences can track the bear on an interactive map to see where it is at any given time.

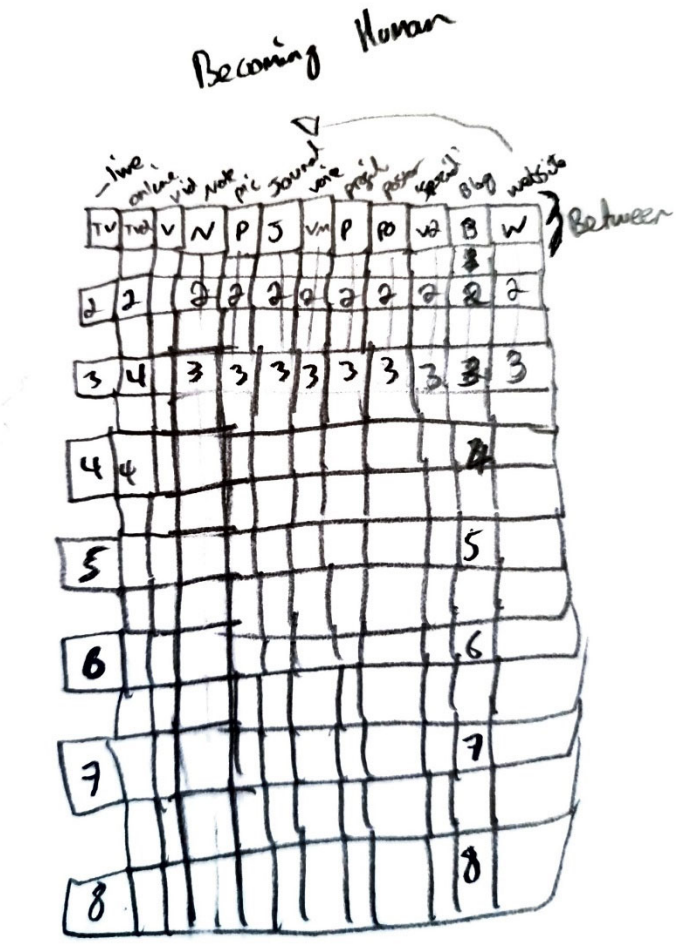
The below experience includes all channels as part of the "interactive experience" contained on one website.



F.5 Becoming Human

Becoming Human is an experience based off of the popular show Being Human, a show about a ghost living with a werewolf and a vampire. Becoming Human started as television spin off to the main series, and follow minor characters from the main show. As the show progressed, various media such as journals, blogs, character profiles and notes to name a few, were uploaded as the episodes became available.

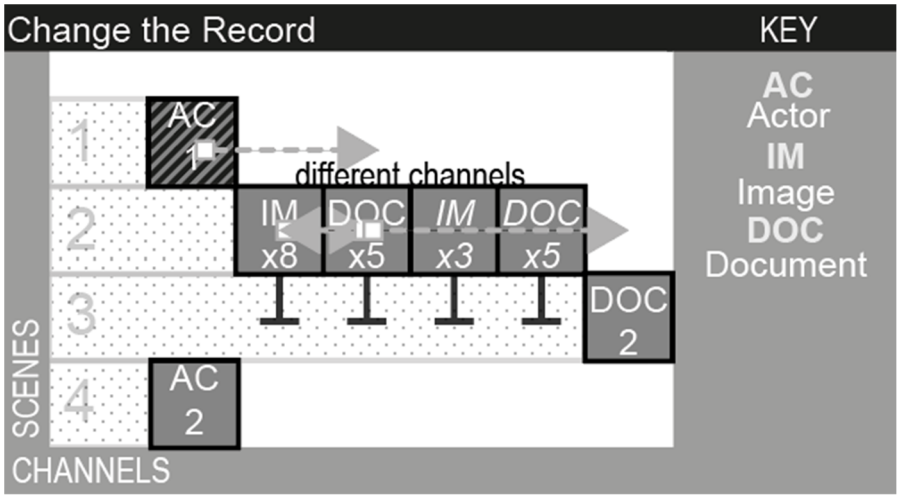
The below experience including the Becoming Human web series/franchise and includes all content related to it on the Web.



F.6 Change the Record

Change the Record was an escape room, designed by Xciting Escapes based in Shirely, Southampton. The experience was played with a group and began by speaking with a live actor who gave a synopsis for the scenario (the audience acts as secrets agents, undercover to thwart an assassination attempt). The audience is then taken to a room and the door is locked, with the aim of solving puzzles to find the “key” that unlocks the door.

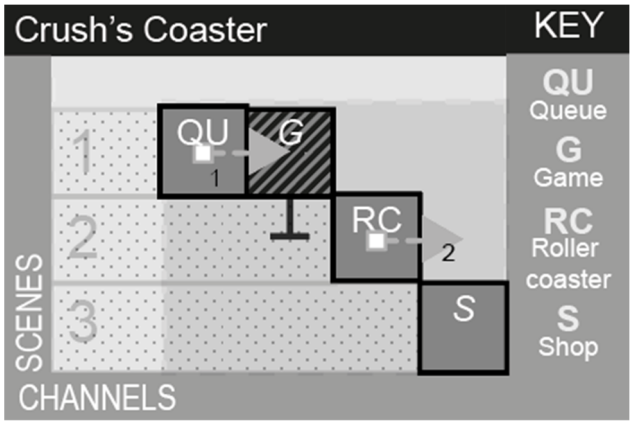
The below model includes the escape room, from entering the door to the room and leaving the same door.



F.7 Crush's Coaster

Crush's Coaster is a rollercoaster ride located at Disneyland Paris, based in the same world as Finding Nemo, a film produced by Disney. The ride itself is a fairly standard roller-coaster with a seat that spins around as it moves, though the queue and area are designed to entertain ride goers as they wait upwards of two hours for their turn. The audience is made to feel like they are in a tropical environment as they wait, and promoted to download an app on their phone, containing a game that features the main character of the ride.

The below model includes the ride, from the moment the audience go past the entrance, to the point they leave the gift shop.

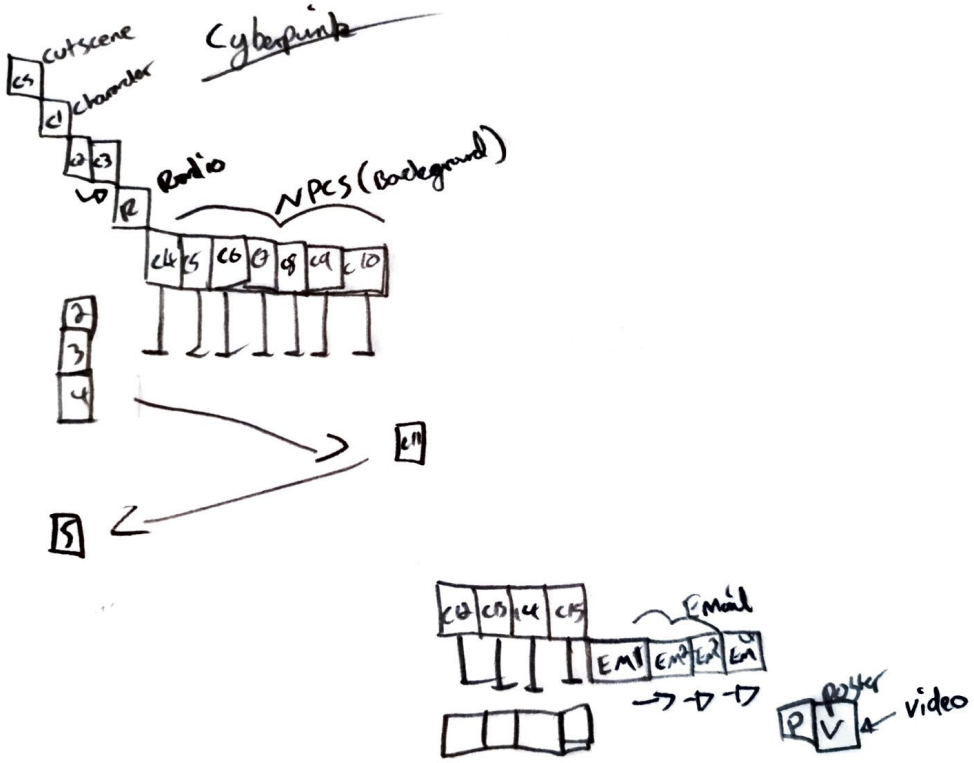


F.8 Cyberpunk 2077

Cyberpunk 2077 is a game released on PC, Xbox and PlayStation consoles. The player role-plays as a character that inhabits "Night city", a dystopian futuristic city in which advanced body modifications are the norm. In the game, players watch cutscenes, talk to non-playable

characters, read journal articles, use computer terminals and listen to the radio in order to consume the story as they battle enemies and drive cars.

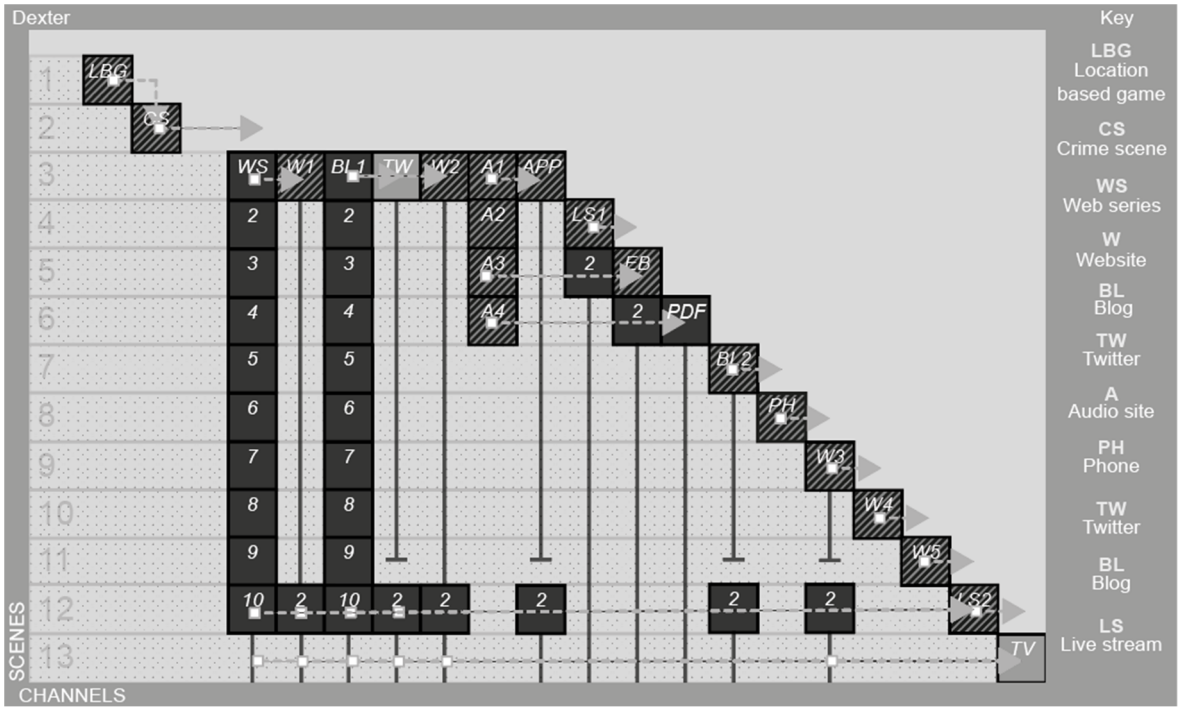
The below model illustrates the first twenty minutes of Cyberpunk 2077, including the media channels inside the game.



F.9 Dexter

Made to promote the upcoming Dexter television series, the Dexter ARG involved the audience attempting to hunt down a murderer from the clues they had been given by a detective. In the end, the audience as a collective had to decide who ultimately 'won', the detective or the murderer.

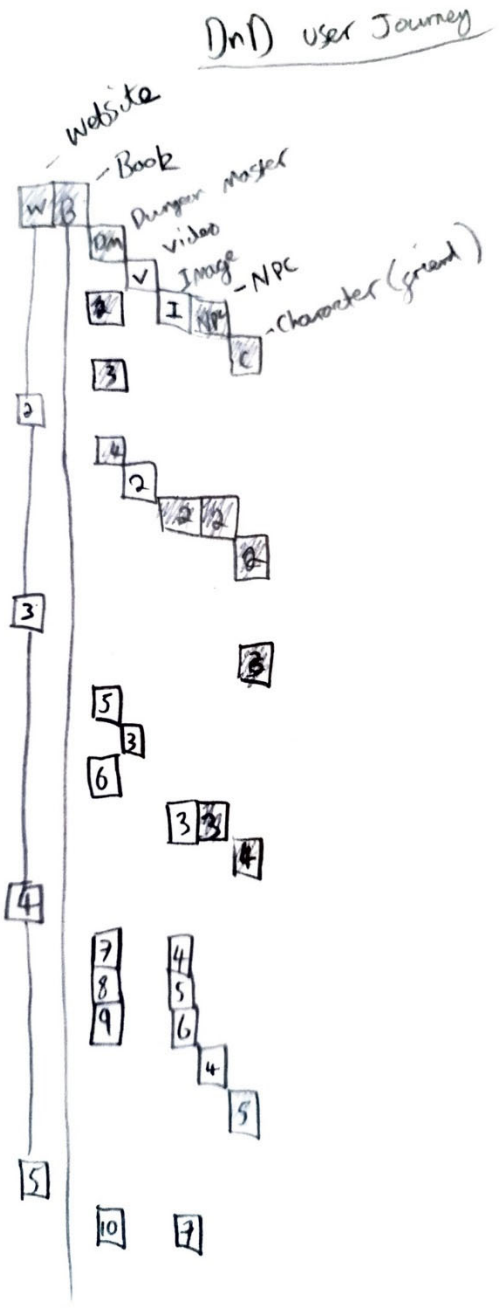
The below model Illustrates the "ARG" from the channel that mentioned it, up until the television show started.



F.10 Dnd User Journey

Tabletop role-playing games, popularized by Dungeons and Dragons that was first published in 1974, are games that involve a ‘dungeon master’ who interprets a manual of lore and roleplaying rules to create a hand-crafted narrative for a party of players. Often, these narratives involve the players reading, looking at images, listening to voice and sound effects, listening to the narrator and sometimes watching videos.

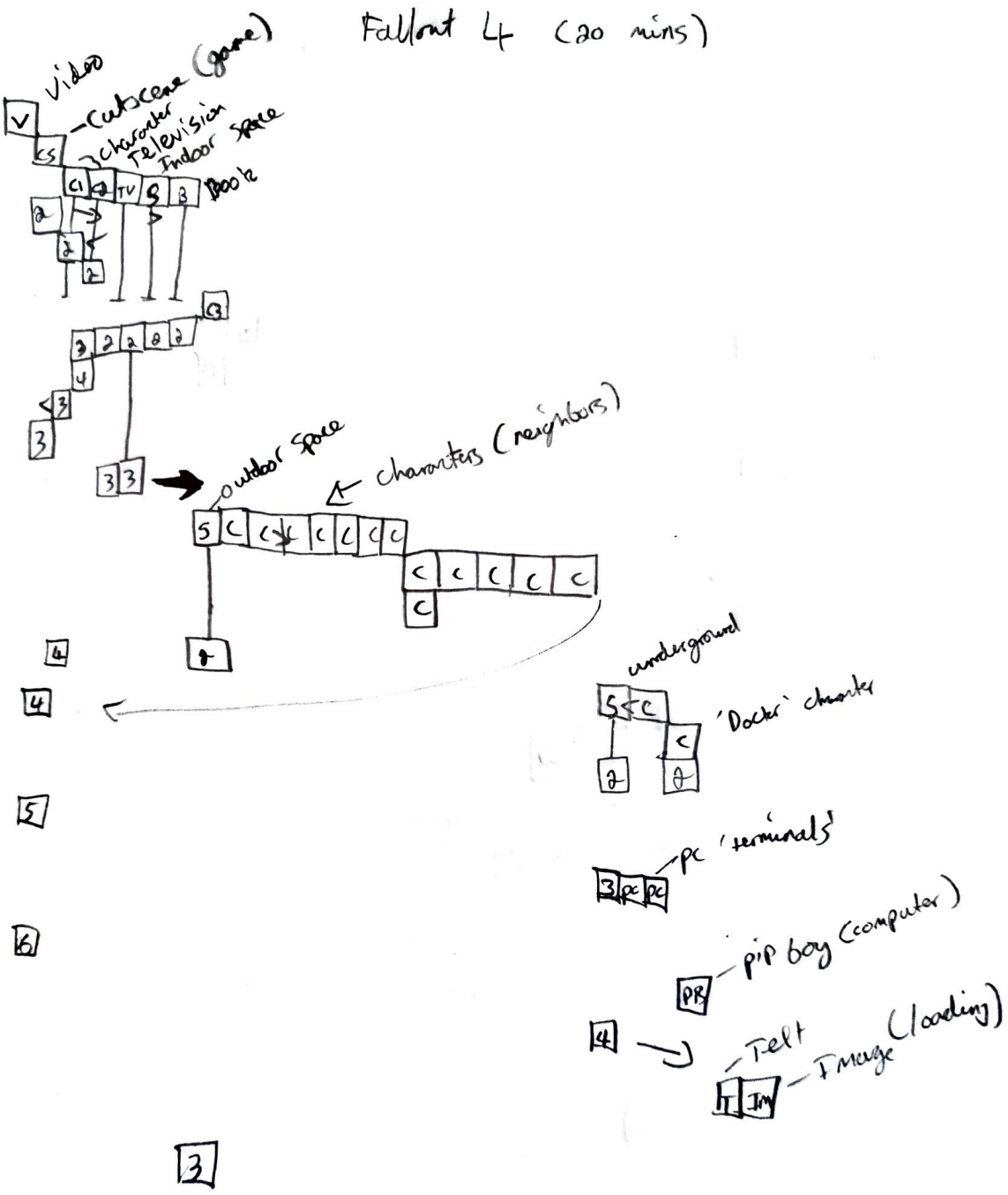
The model below shows a user journey of Dungeons and Dragons, including commonly associated channels. All channels that are involved in the “session” are included.



F.11 Fallout 4

Fallout 4 is a video game set in a dystopian future in the US where nuclear war has broken out, and several bombs hitting high profile cities across the US. The audience start the game in the past before a bomb has hit their town, but eventually up being cryogenically frozen and wake up in the future when their town is completely destroyed and infested with criminals, killers and mutants.

The below model illustrates the first twenty minutes of Fallout 4, including the media channels inside the game.

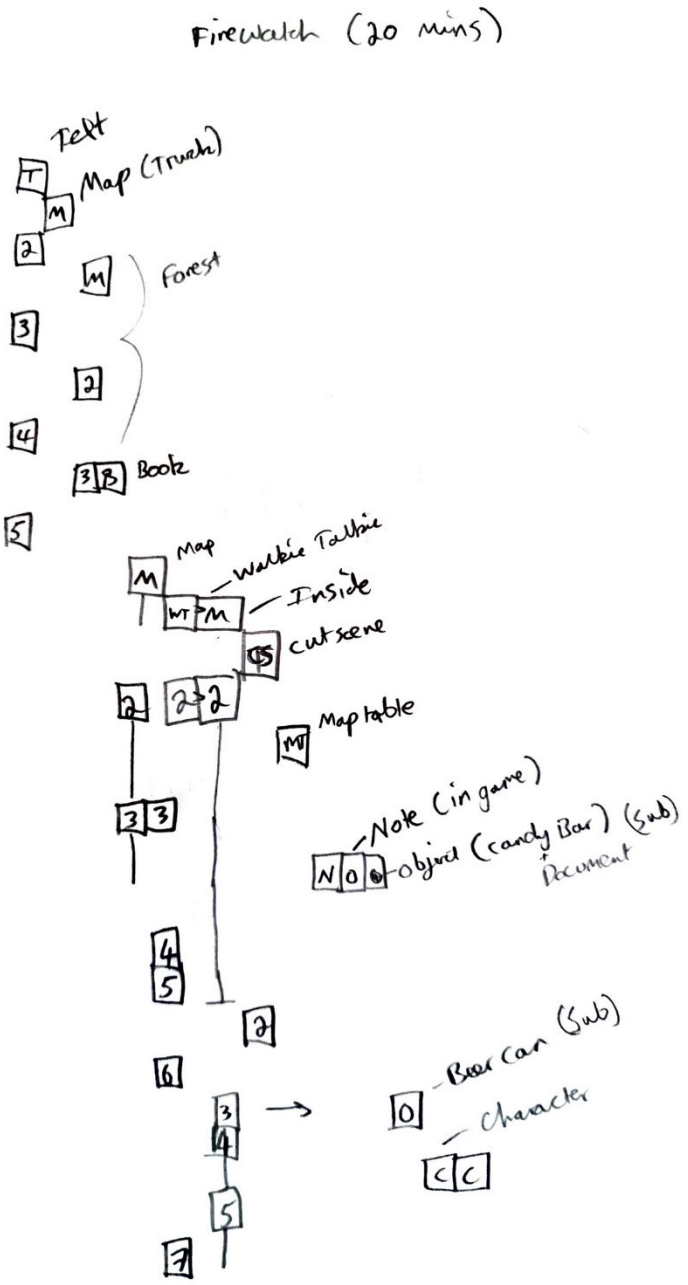


F.12 Firewatch

Firewatch is a single player adventure game set in the wilderness of Wyoming. The game starts off providing exposition in the form of text that tells the story of a man whose wife was diagnosed with dementia, causing him to take a job as a fire lookout. In between this, the player is put into the 3D world and controls the character as he gets ready to go to his new job. When he arrives, he

is able to communicate to another fire lookout via a walkie talkie, and the mystery of the story unfolds at this point.

The below model illustrates the first twenty minutes of Firewatch, including the media channels inside the game.

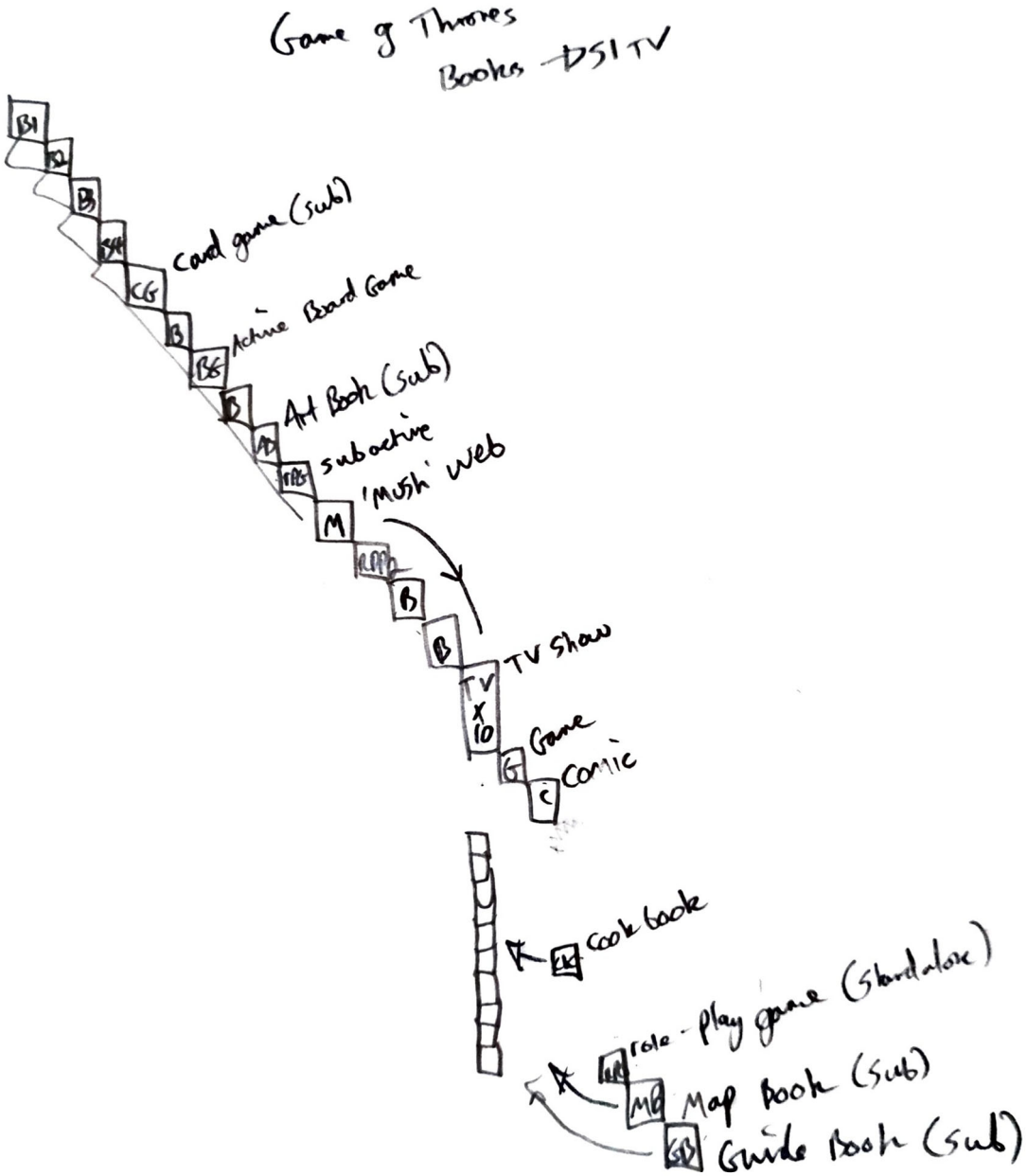


F.13 Game of Thrones

First published as a series of books under the name A Song of Ice and Fire, Game of Thrones is a television show that has reached global fame, arguably like no other television show has by creating a deep impact into popular culture. Mostly based off of the same content as the books, the television show takes place in a fantasy world called Westeros, where gods, magic and

fantastic creatures exist. The plot is concerned with the lives of different families, who ally, fight and scheme to become the rulers of Westeros. The Game of Thrones Franchise is also known as the “A Song of Ice and Fire” franchise.

The below model includes all media channels in the franchise, from the first *A Song of Ice and Fire* book, to the channels immediately released after season one of the television show.

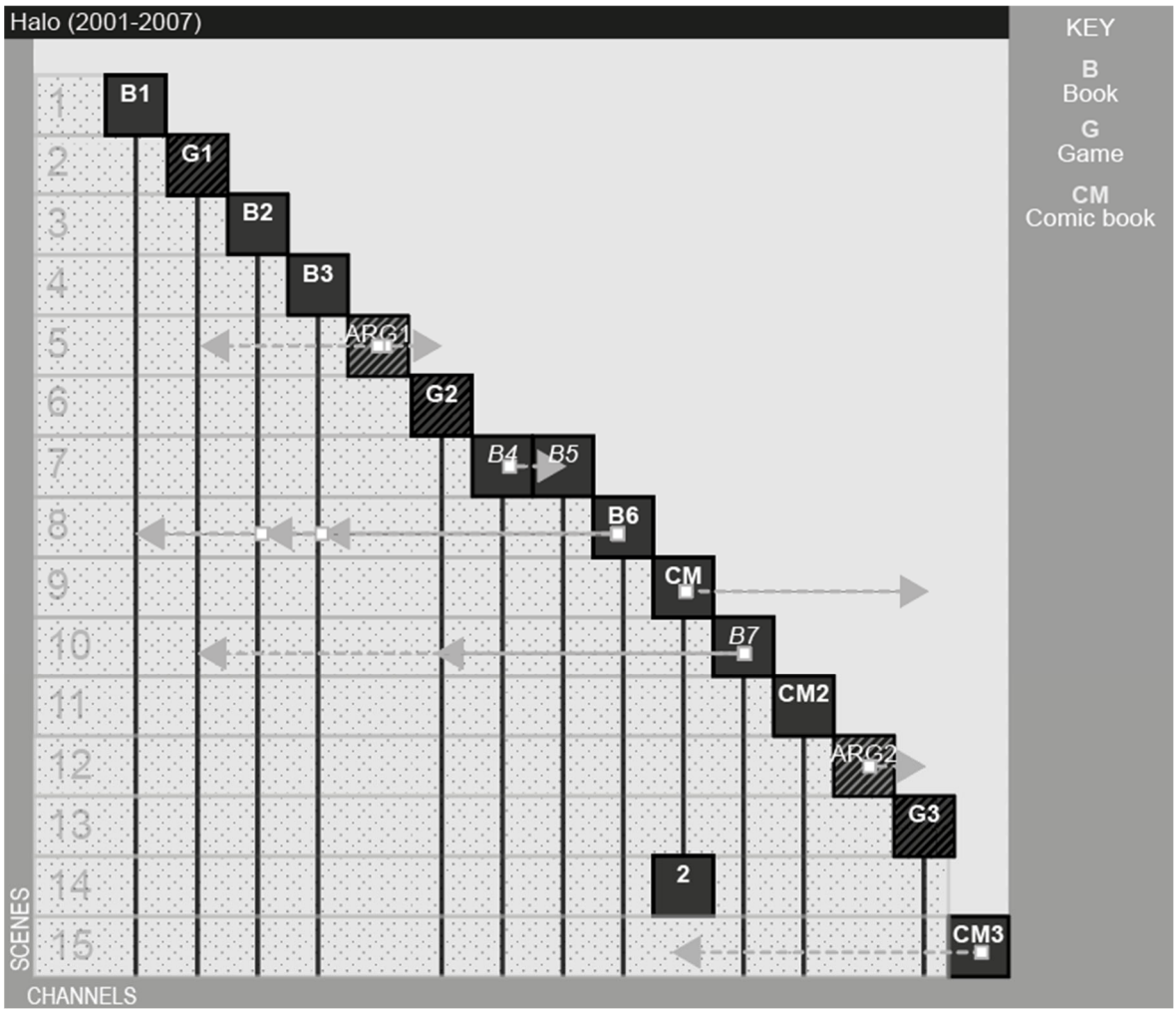


F.14 Halo

Halo is a media franchise, becoming popular with the first-person shooter game released on the original Xbox console. The story is dispersed across media outside of the game such as books and

comic books, and largely follows the story of the master chief, a genetically enhanced super soldier whose goal it is to defeat the invading aliens and protect humanity.

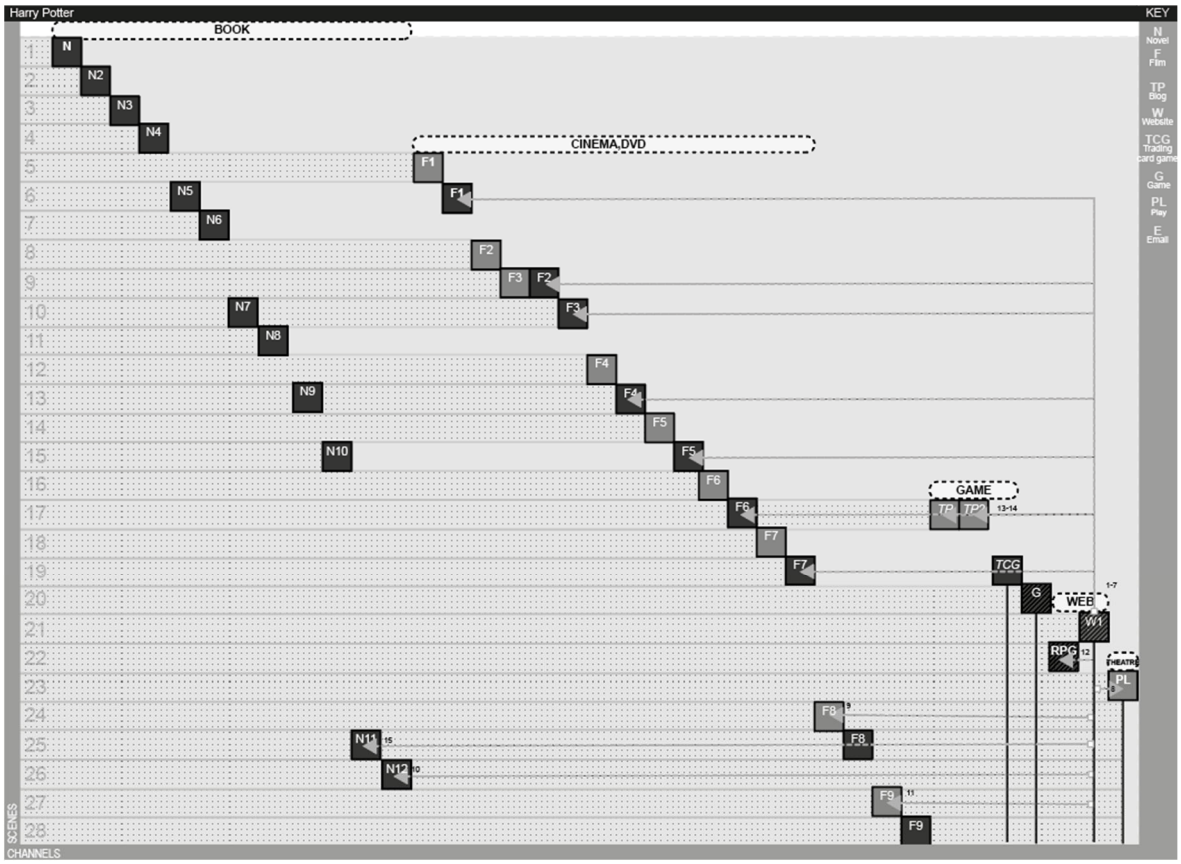
The below model includes all channels in the Halo franchise, from 2001 to 2007.



F.15 Harry Potter

Starting with a series of books written by J.K Rowling, the Harry Potter franchise is a collection of media channels that each communicate a storyworld where magic exists, witches and wizards live side by side with non-magical people, known as muggles, and mythical creatures walk the Earth.

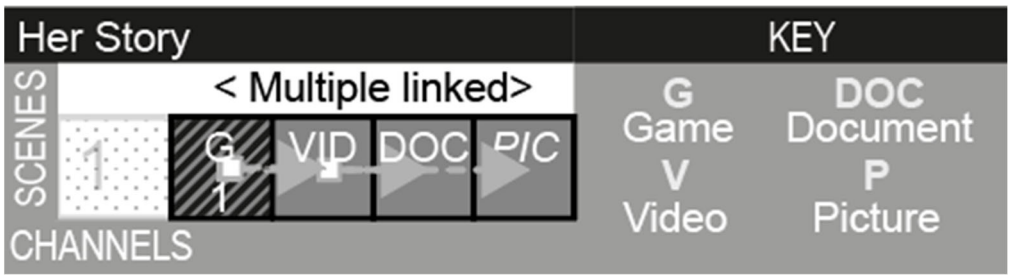
The model below shows the Harry Potter franchise, from the first novel, up until the ninth film.



F.16 Her Story

Her Story is a game released on the Steam platform that advertises itself as an interactive movie. The game involves the player taking the role of a police officer who has been tasked with investigating the death of a man using a computer. The interface behaves as though you are on a computer, able to view all of the documents, emails and video interviews that are saved on the hard drive.

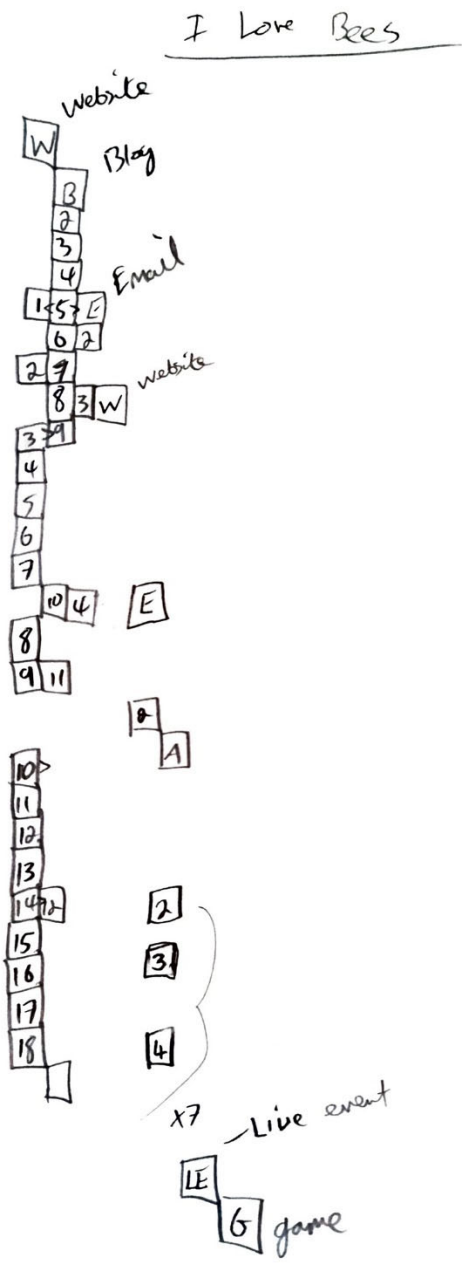
The model below shows the indicative experience (there are multiple videos, docs and pics) included inside the game.



F.17 I Love Bees

I Love Bees was created in order to promote the upcoming first-person shooter game Halo 2. It featured a convoluted time travel story that fit in with the events of the Halo storyworld. The initial call to action was revealed by a trailer for Halo 2, which flashed for a split second on the screen the URL www.ilovebees.com, one of the main websites of the experience.

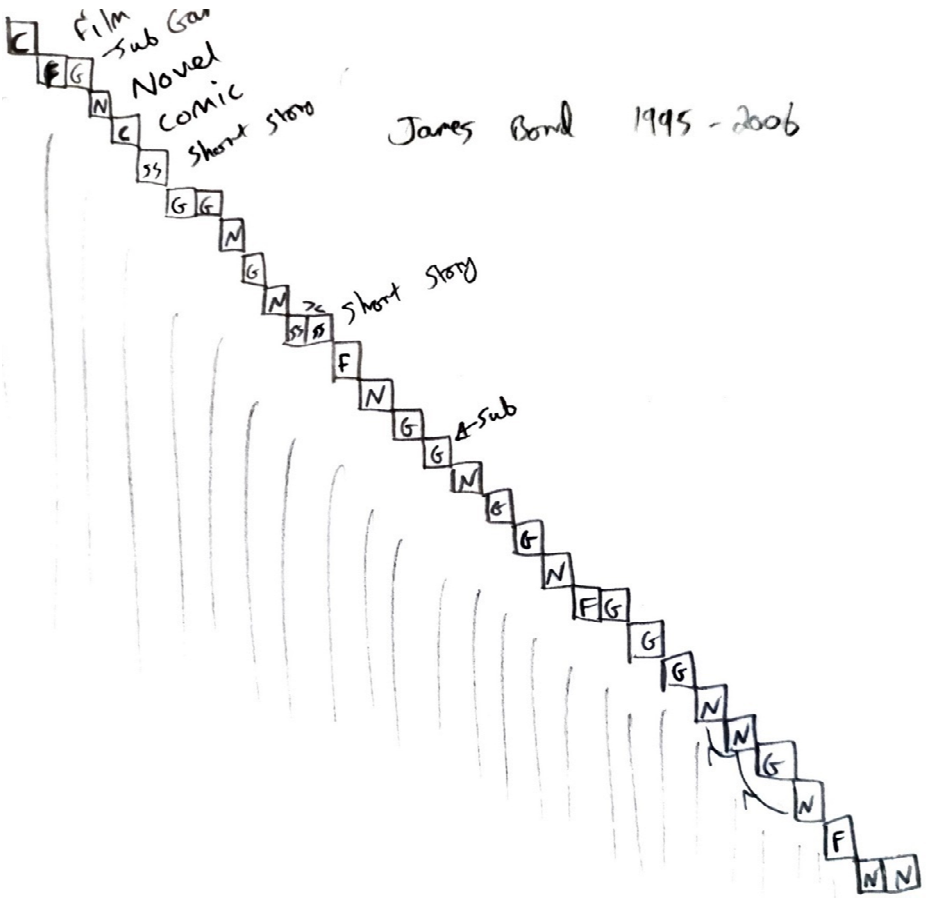
The below model shows the “ARG”, from the first channel that mentioned the ARG, to the live event that showcased the game it was advertising.



F.18 James Bond

James Bond is a media franchise that focuses around the fictional character of James Bond, a secret agent that works for a British intelligence agency. The various media involved tell various stories about James Bond on his various missions across the world. He is seen as more of a symbol or archetype as opposed to the same human throughout the stories included in the media of the franchise.

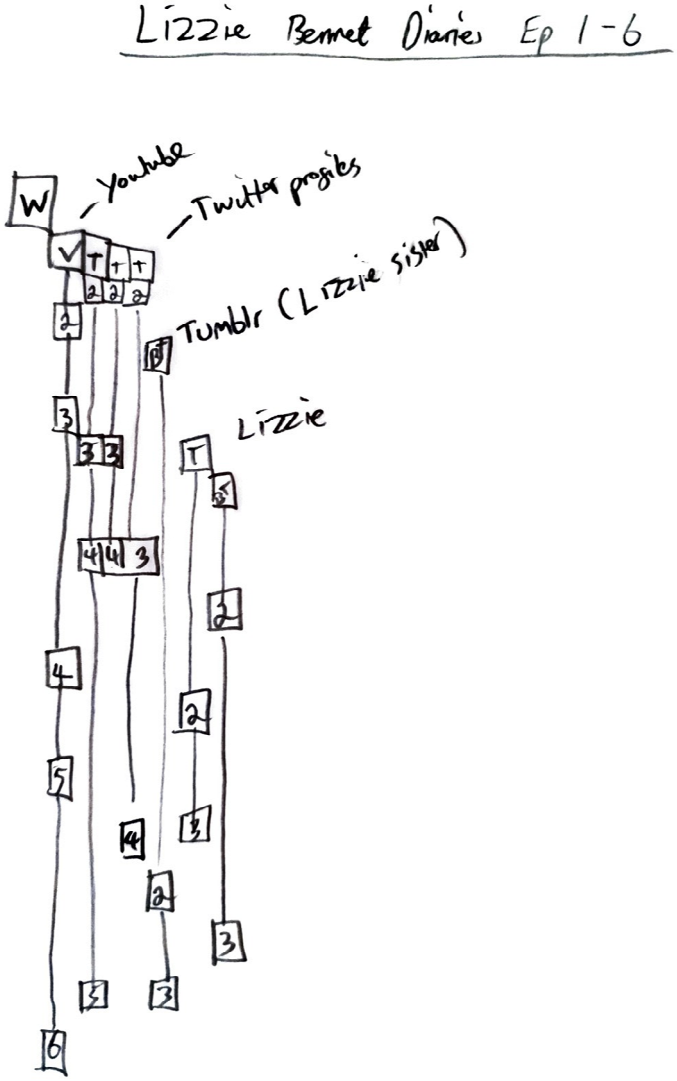
The model below includes all media channels of the James Bond franchise from 1995 to 2006.



F.19 Lizzie Bennet Diary

The Lizzie Bennet Diaries is a web series focused experience with a story adapted from the famous Novel Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen. The story is told using videos (YouTube) and social media such as Twitter and Tumblr.

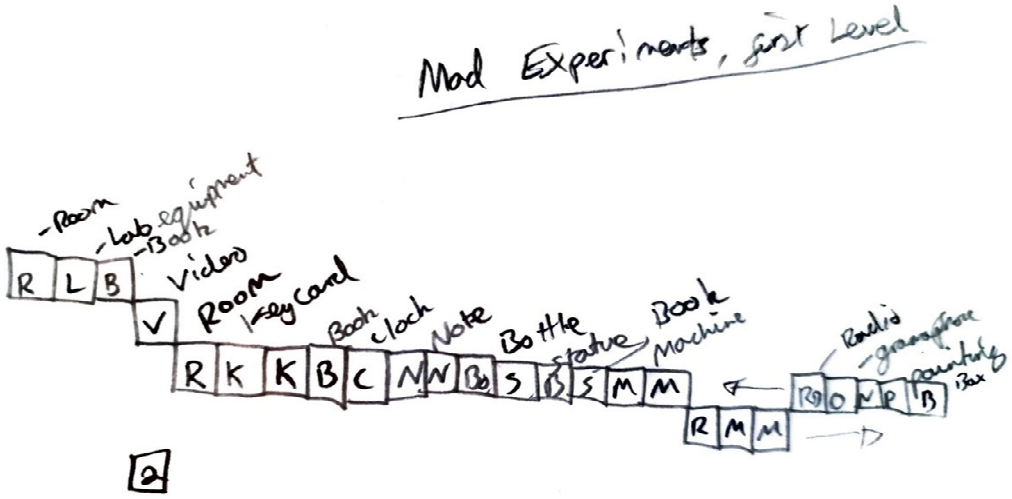
The model below shows the “web series”, including media content associated with it. It includes channels from the inception of the website, up until episode six.



F.20 Mad Experiments

Mad Experiments is a digital escape room released on the Steam (PC) platform. It copies mechanics from live escape rooms in that players are locked in a room and must consume various media channels in order to solve puzzles and get the code or key to open the door to the exit.

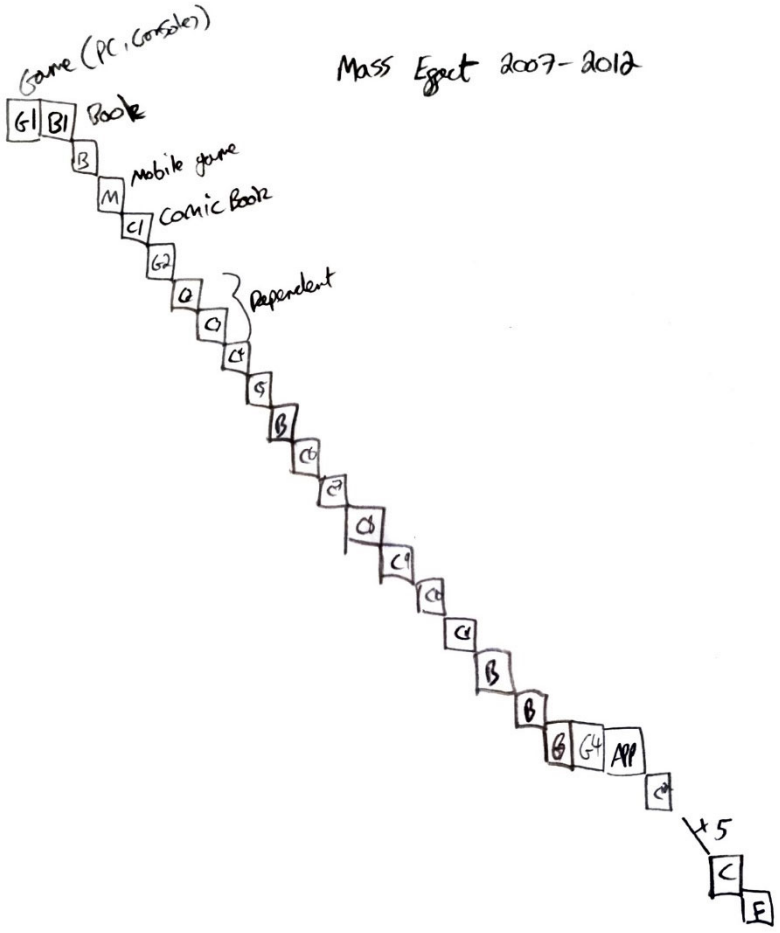
The model below includes all the channels within the first level of the game.



F.21 Mass Effect

Mass Effect is a media franchise that started as a third person role-playing game set in a science fiction universe many decades in the future. Humanity is part of a collective of sentient aliens who, for the most part, live in harmony and are able to travel vast distances using technology left from ancient civilisations. Together with the aliens, humanity must protect the galaxy from a race of aliens whose aim it is to kill and destroy.

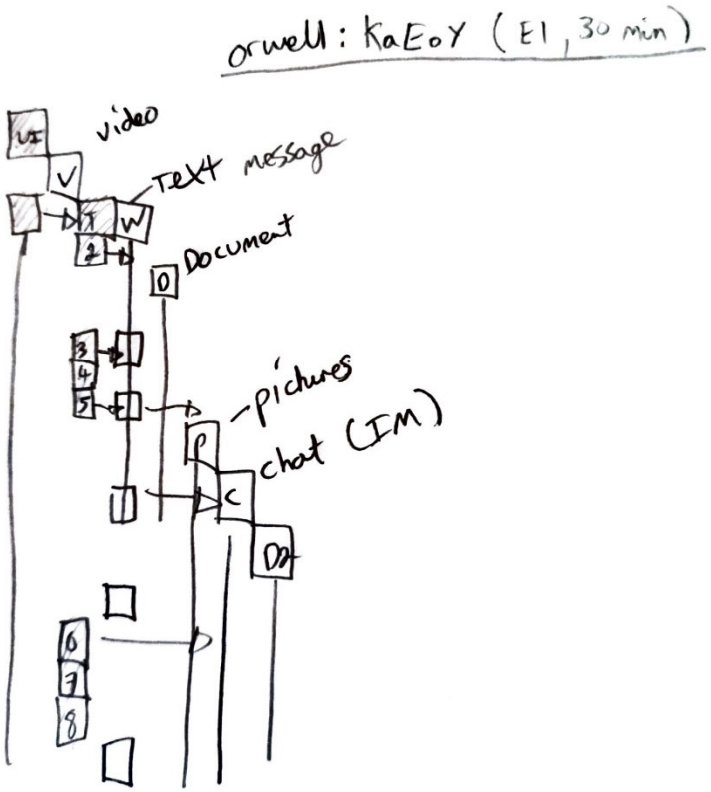
The model below includes all the channels of the Mass Effect franchise from the first game that was released, starting the franchise, to 2012.



F.22 Orwell: Keeping an Eye on You Episode 1

Orwell is a “political simulation” game where players act as an operative that seeks to find security threats such as terrorist attacks. Players use multiple media such as videos, documents, images, files and websites to identify such threats to protect society.

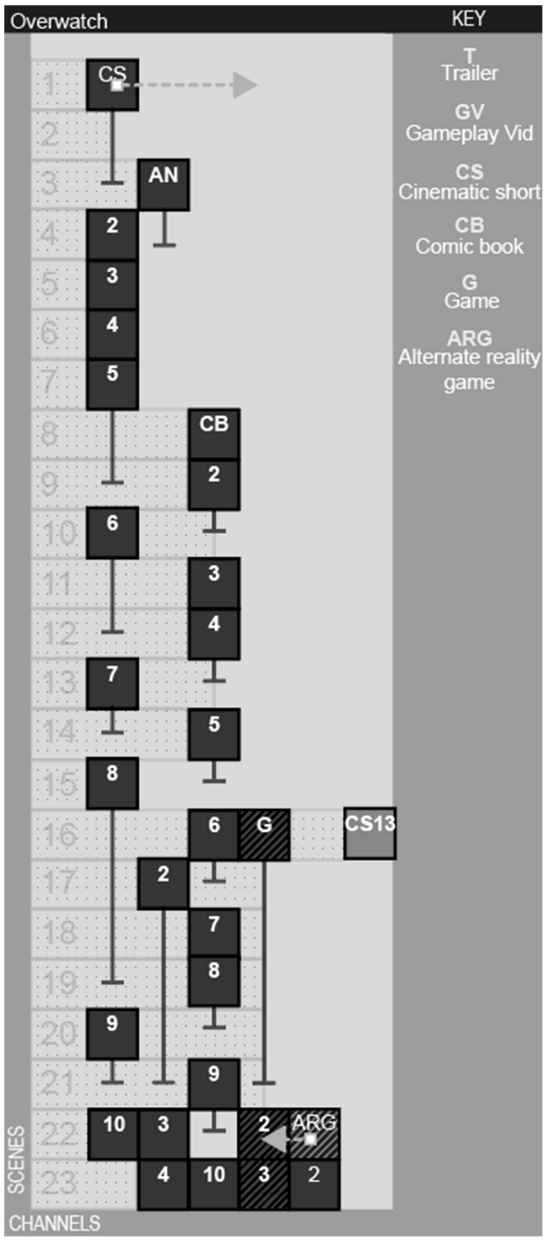
The model below includes the first thirty minutes of the first episode included in the game.



F.23 Overwatch

Overwatch is a multiplayer first person shooter game that was released in 2016. The game itself does not have a conventional campaign mode as like many other games. Instead, it tells its story using multiple media that together enable the audience to construct the fictional world in their mind and piece together narrative hints in the game itself.

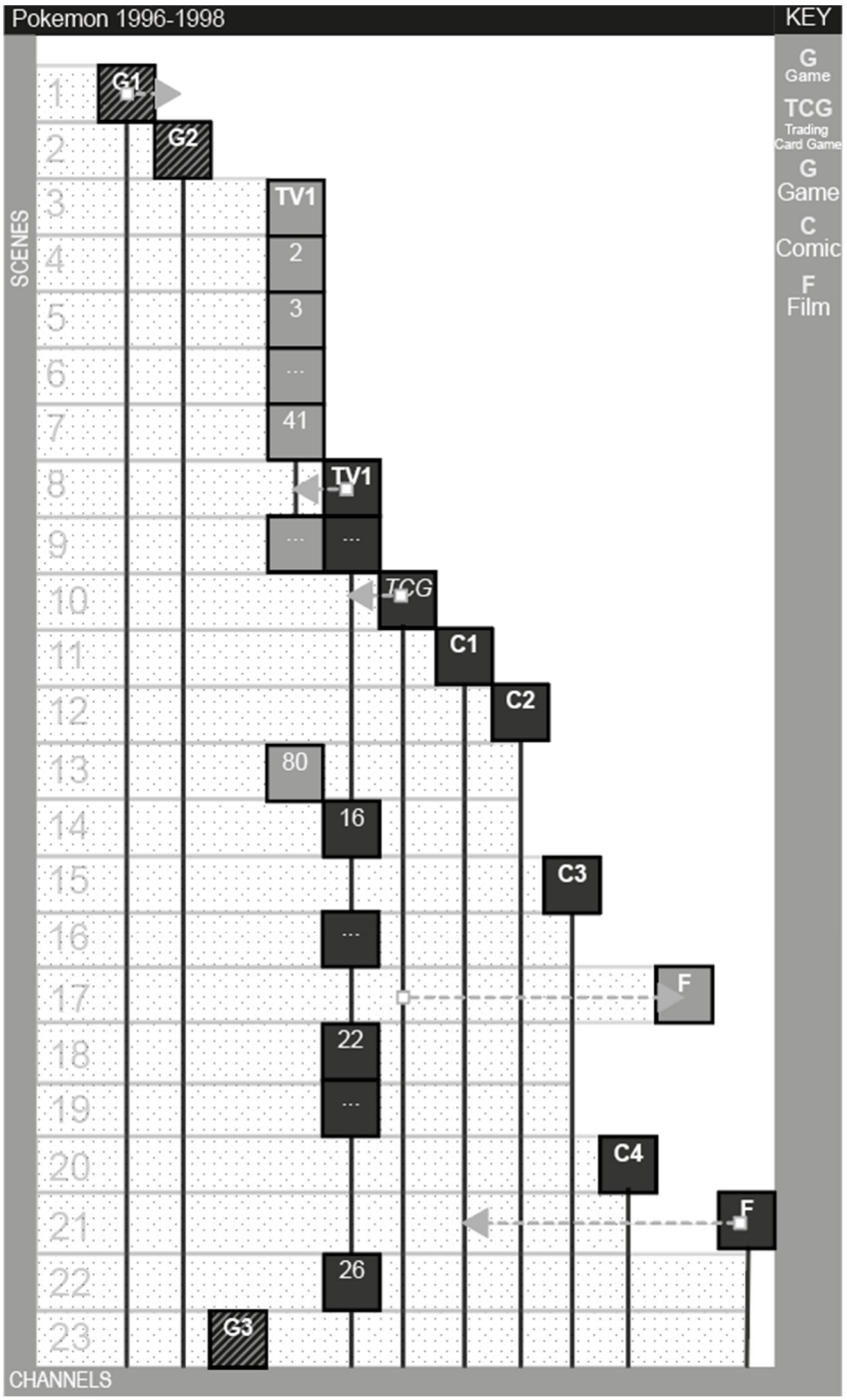
The model below shows the Overwatch franchise, from the first cinematic short, until the end of the Sombra ARG (modelled in this thesis in chapter four).



F.24 Pokémon

The Pokémon franchise is a collection of anime shows, films, games and manga that share the storyworld of Pokémon. In this fantasy world, magical creatures with fantastic abilities can evolve instantaneously and are 'caught' by humans, trained and used to battle other trainers Pokémon. However, there are gangs of people who use Pokémon for crime and bad deeds, one of which is known as Team Rocket, who feature dominantly in most of the media.

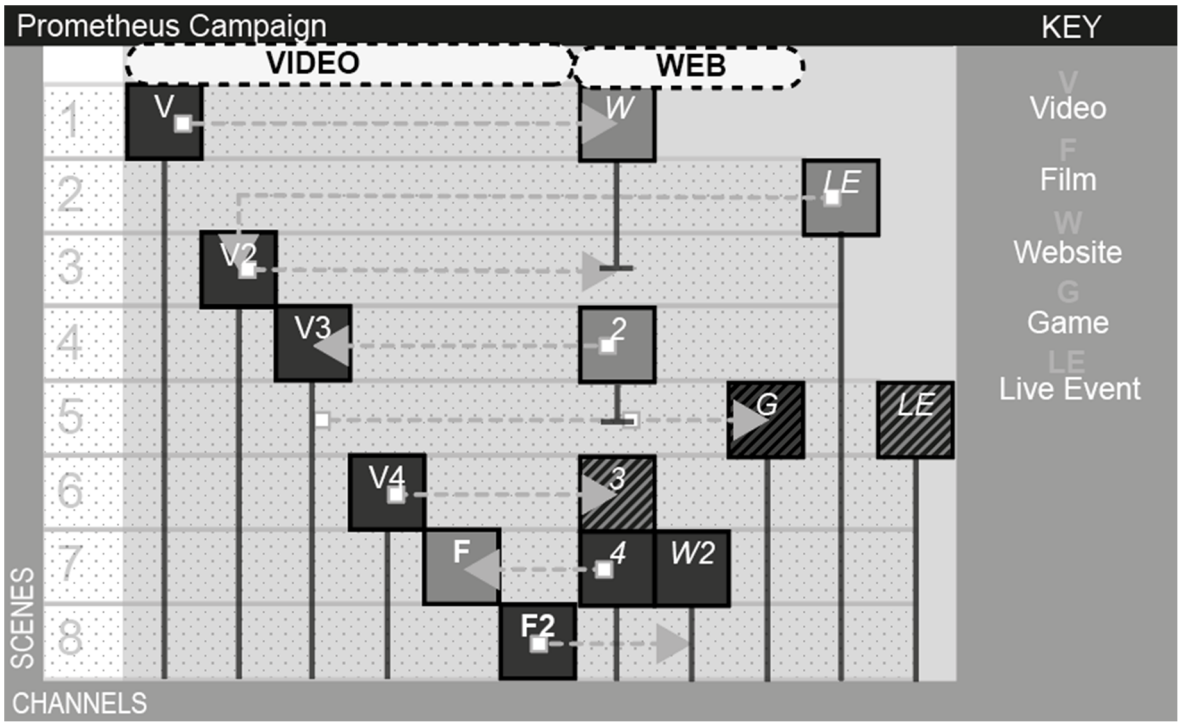
The below model includes the Pokémon franchise, including all channels from 1996 to 1998.



F.25 Prometheus Campaign

To promote the new Alien prequel film, Prometheus, that was due to come out in theatres in 2012, a campaign was made that introduce the audience to the concept of the film, with some of its key characters. The campaign used ARG-like tropes to bring the audience into the fictional world. For example, one of the videos introduces “David” a robotic with seemingly human-like intelligence, in a way that makes it seem David is a real machine that exists.

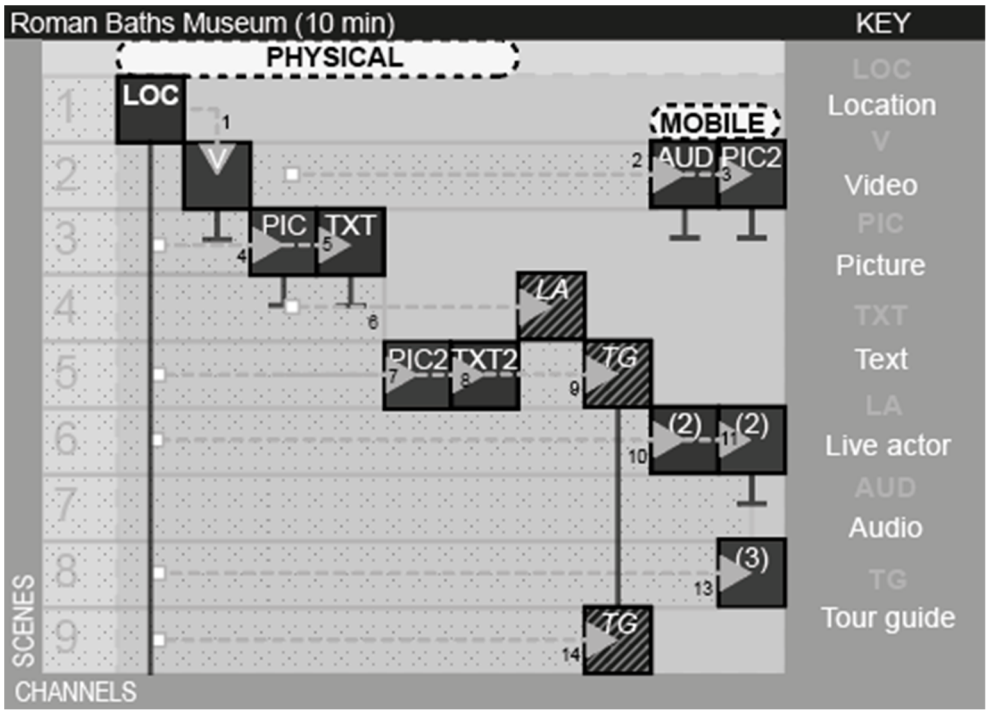
The model below shows the campaign, from the first video mentioning the new film Prometheus, to the home release of the film.



F.26 Roman Baths Museum

Once the site of a Roman public bathhouse, the Roman Baths located in England is a now a historical landmark that is kept preserved and open to the public to view as an exhibit. The exhibit uses various media to teach visitors about the site, and provide narratives of Roman life including how the baths were made, their religious connotations and what types of people used them. The media used also attempt to create a sense of what it would have been like to visit during Roman times.

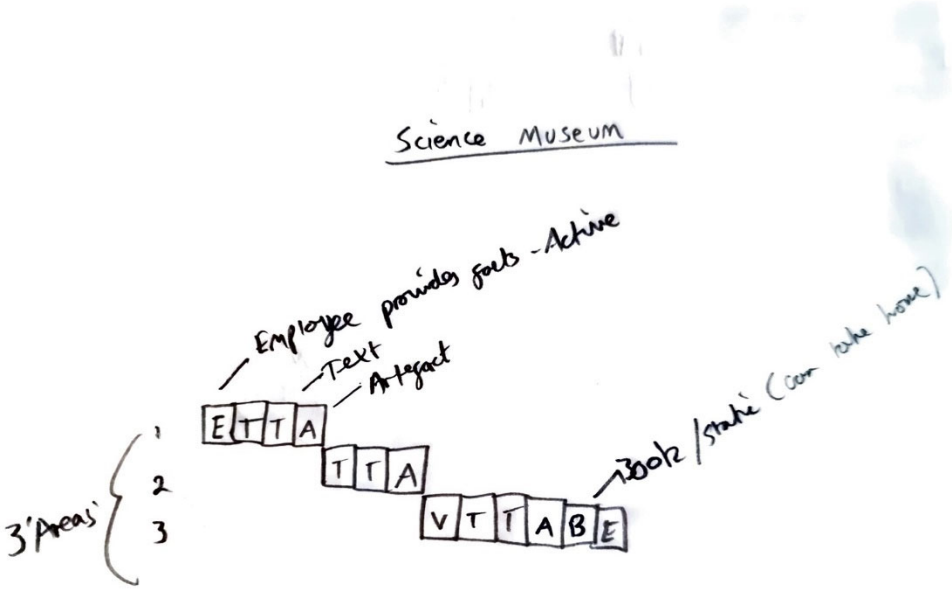
The model below includes the first 10 minutes of the Roman Bath museum from the moment visitors enter. All channels are consumed within the confines of the museum.



F.27 The Science Museum

The Science Museum, based in London, is a museum that showcases scientific, technological and engineering educational content and artefacts such as mock rockets and motors. Every few months, a time-limited exhibition is set up that focuses on a particular subject area such as cryptography (that has been modelled). The visitors typically enter a series of rooms that each contain multiple media that each communicate their own narrative and educational content.

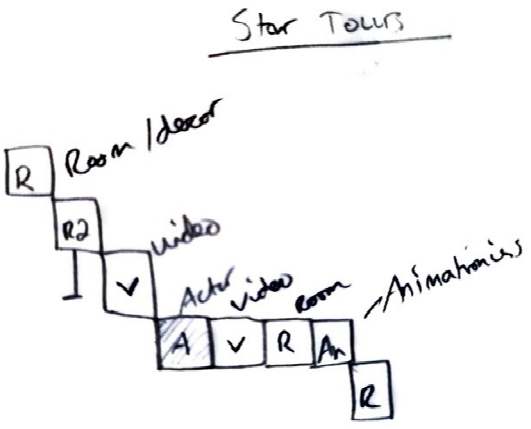
The model below includes the channels associated with one exhibition at the museum, and are consumed inside the museum.



F.28 Star Tours

Star Tours is a ride themed and based on the Star Wars media franchise. After entering what seems to be a futuristic space port, the audience are welcomed on to a “space craft” and treated as tourists before embarking on an unexpected action-oriented thrill ride inside a simulator ride equipped with a 3D capable screen and animatronics.

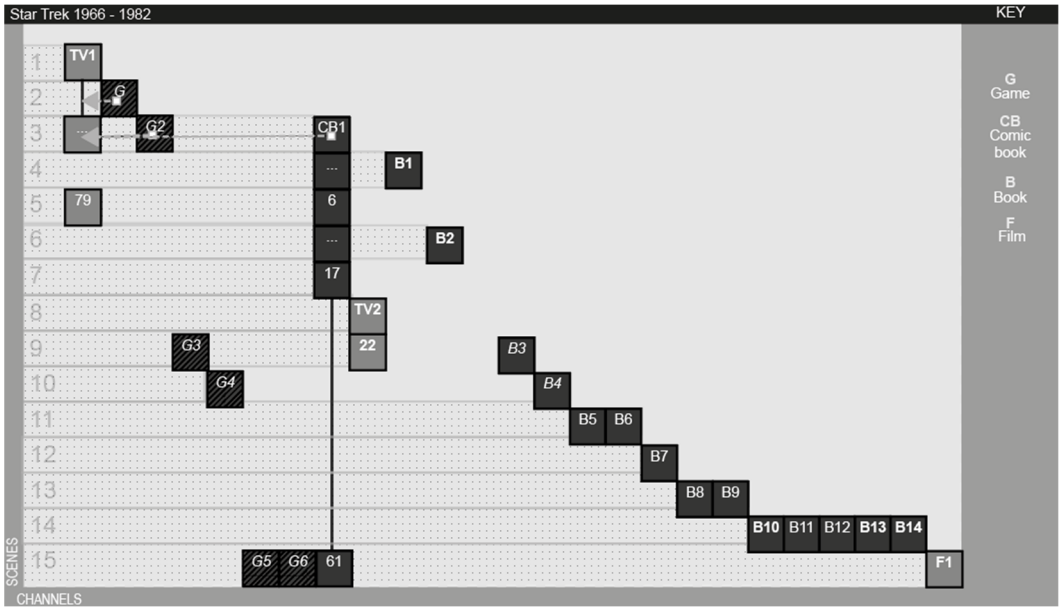
The model below includes all channels associated with the experience from the moment visitors go through the entrance, until the room where they exit.



F.29 Star Trek

Star Trek is a media franchise, beginning as a television show in 1966. It is set in a science fiction world many decades in the future where humanity has mastered space travel, and cooperate with numerous sentient species from across the universe.

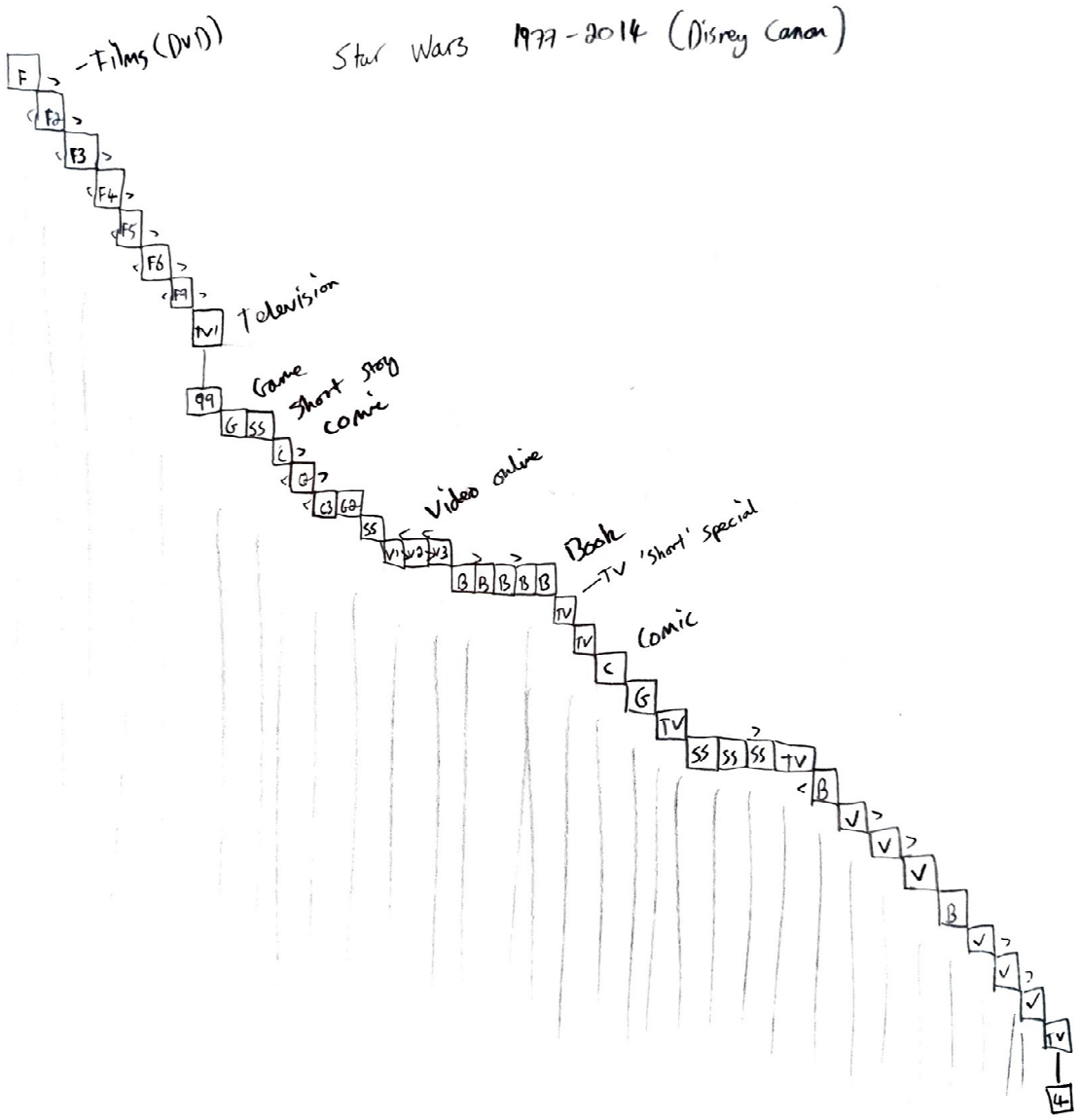
The model below includes all channels associated with the Star Trek franchise from 1996 to 1982.



F.30 Star Wars

Star Wars is a media franchise that began with a science fiction fantasy film that was released in 1977. The world is one in which the laws of nature are different to our own, with a mystical force known as “The Force” controlling many aspects of life. Some individuals follow the “light side” and others the “dark side”, with much of the content of the franchise focusing on the battle between these two groups.

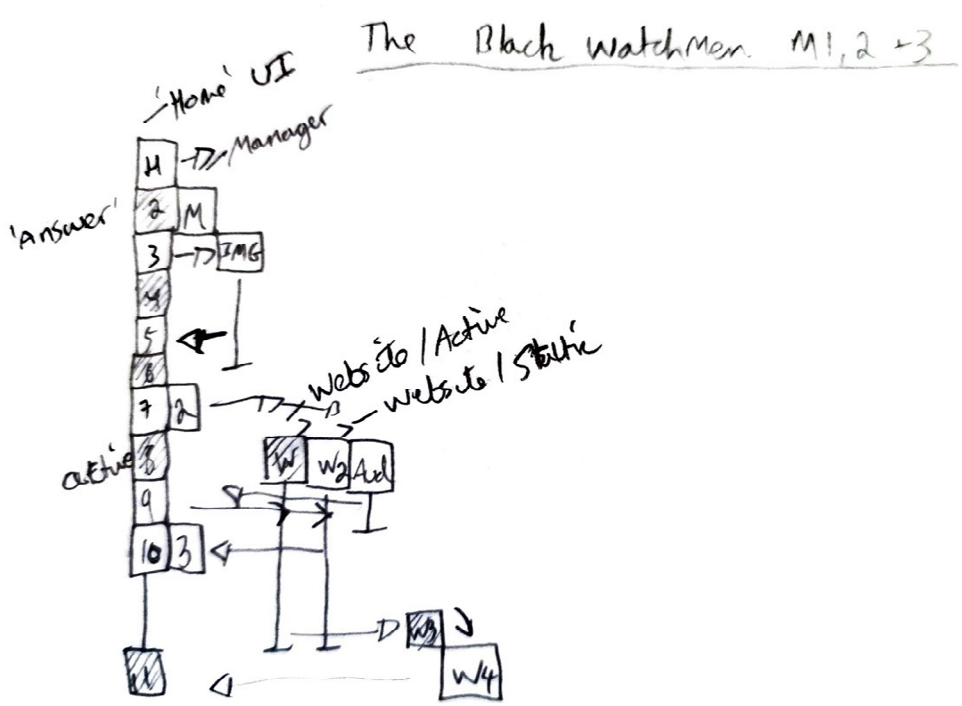
The model below includes all channels associated with the Star Wars franchise from 1977 to 2014, and includes only those that are considered “canon” by Disney.



F.31 The Black Watchmen

The Black Watchmen is a single player video game released on the Steam platform, that involves the player scanning documents, watching videos, listening to audio files and surfing the Web to find answers that when inputted into the user interface, unlock the next set of media. The pretext to these puzzles is that the player is a secret agent operative that is tasked with observing these various media channels to find paranormal activity.

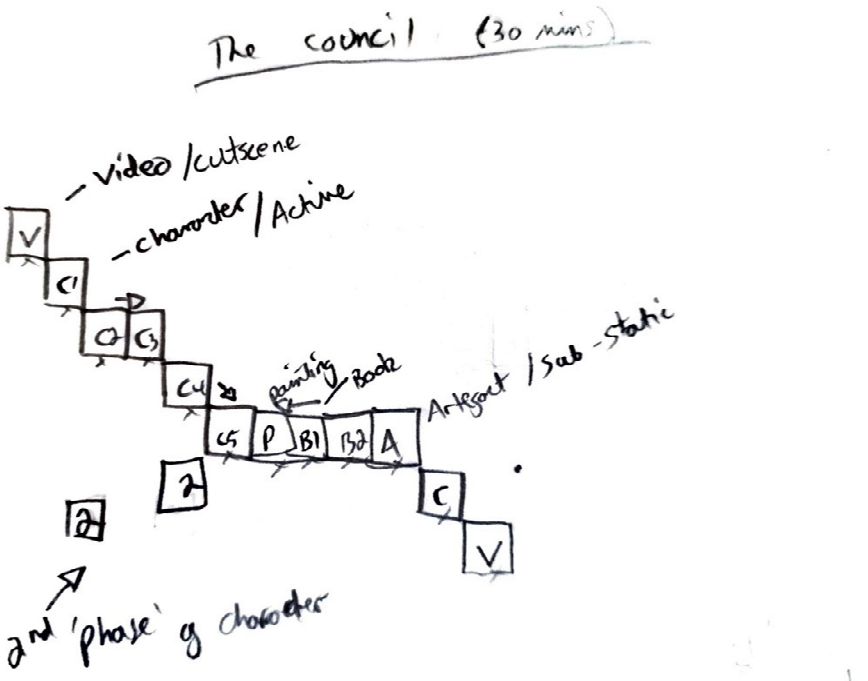
The model below includes the first three missions and includes all the channels inside the game.



F.32 The Council: Episode 1

The council is an “interactive adventure game” set in 1793, that involves playing as a Frenchman searching for his missing mother. The majority of the first episode is spent exploring a large mansion filled with interactable objects such as books and characters that can be spoken to, providing clues and narrative as to the whereabouts of your missing mother.

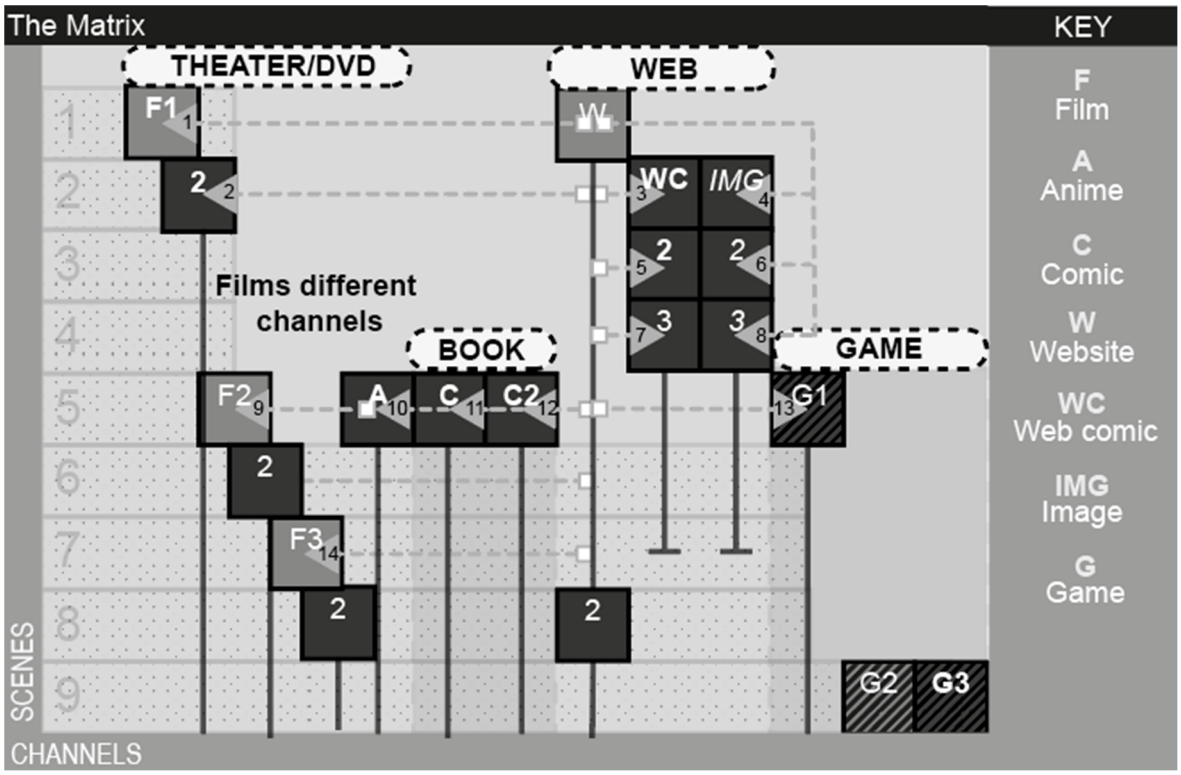
The model below includes the first thirty minutes of the game and includes channels inside the game.



F.33 The Matrix

The Matrix is a collection of media that began with the 1999 release, the Matrix. The film, set in the distant future, is about human-made artificial intelligence that have usurped the human race as the dominant species on Earth. As a way to harvest thermal energy, the AI keep human slaves that are plugged into a machine, unaware of the real world. The creators used different media to tell different stories set inside the world of the Matrix. Described further in chapter one.

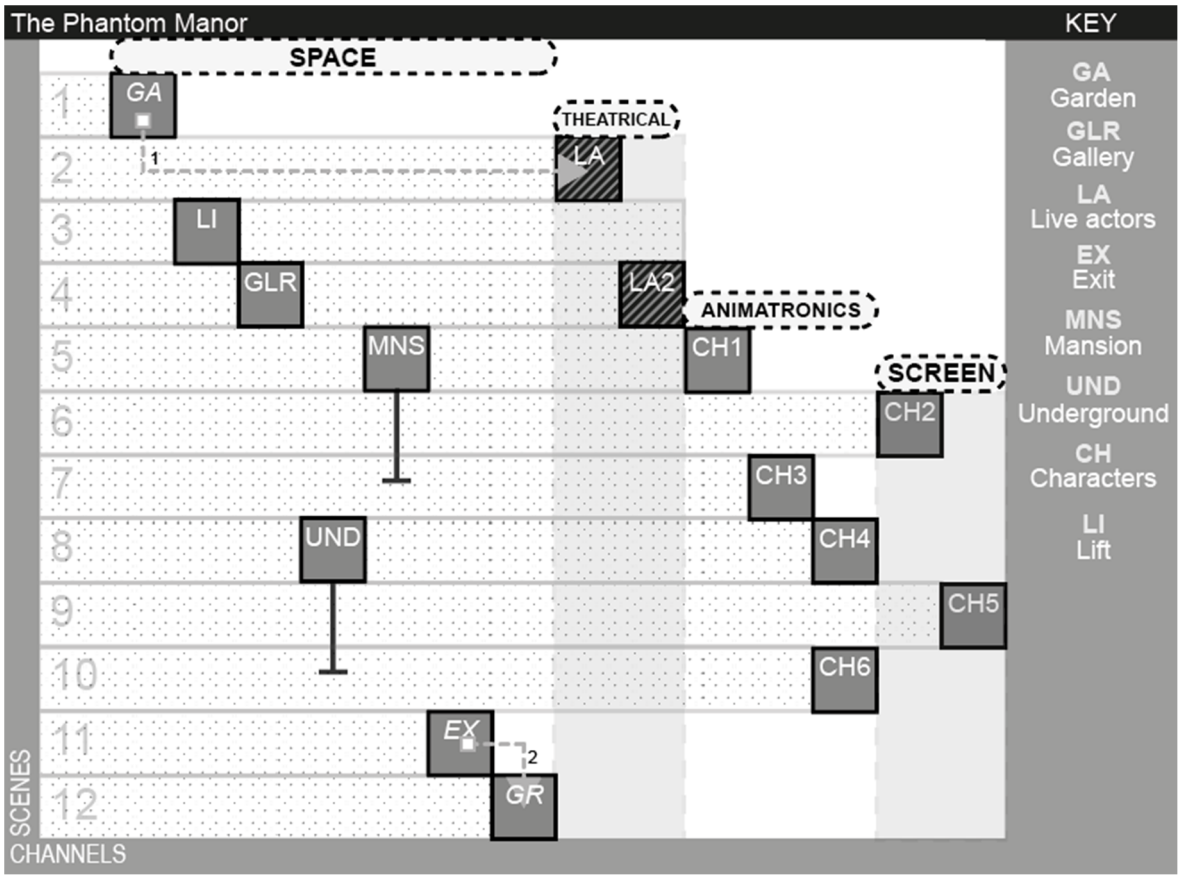
The model below illustrates The Matrix franchise, from the first film (1999) until The Path of Neo game was released (2005).



F.34 The Phantom Manor

The Phantom Manor is a ride and experience as Disneyland Paris. Audiences begin the experience by entering a garden of what seems to be an abandoned mansion. They then enter a lift that takes them underground into a hallway and then onto the main attraction. This part of the ride involves animatronics and voice overs telling the story of the old inhabitants of the house.

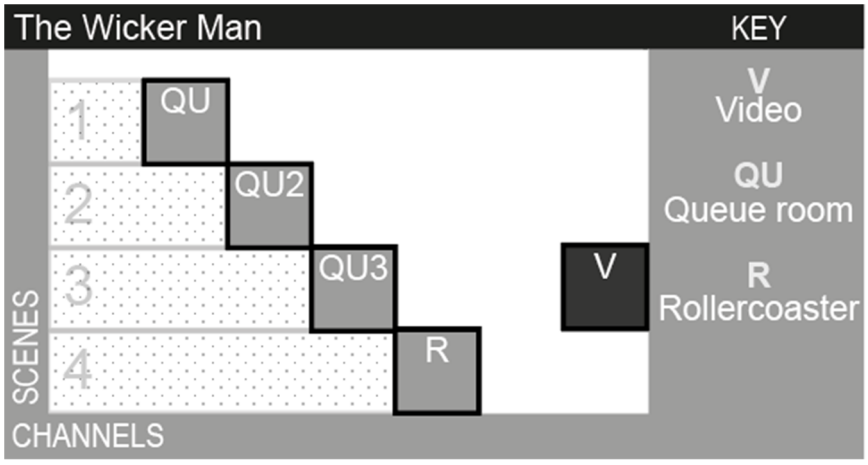
The model below includes all channels associated with the experience from the moment visitors go through the entrance, until the room where they exit.



F.35 The Wicker Man

The Wicker Man is a roller coast ride and experience at Alton Towers, a theme park in the UK. Audiences move through different themed areas before entering a room where a video is played that provides some information about the mysterious Wicker Man entity and going on the roller coaster that includes sound and lighting effects throughout.

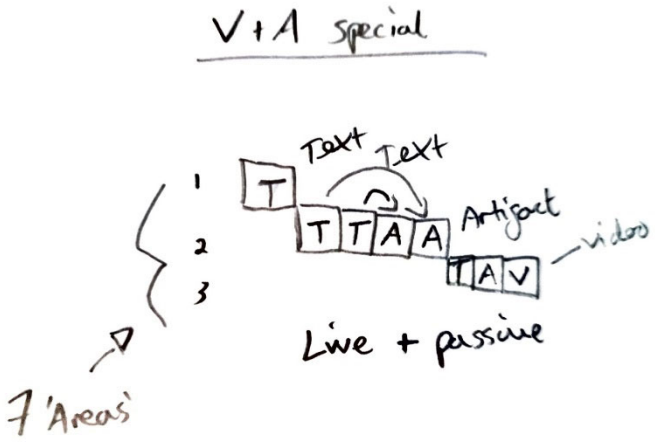
The model below includes all channels associated with the experience from the moment visitors go through the entrance, until the room where they exit.



F.36 Victoria & Albert Special Exhibit (video games)

The Victoria and Albert museum is a large museum based in London that houses objects of historical significance such as statues, art, tapestry and documents among other things. Every few months, a “special” time-limited exhibition is set up that focuses on a particular subject area, such as particular art movements, artists and countries. This particular special exhibit was on video games, and focused on showing some of the history of British video games as well as some detail as to how they are developed, and the social aspects surrounding them.

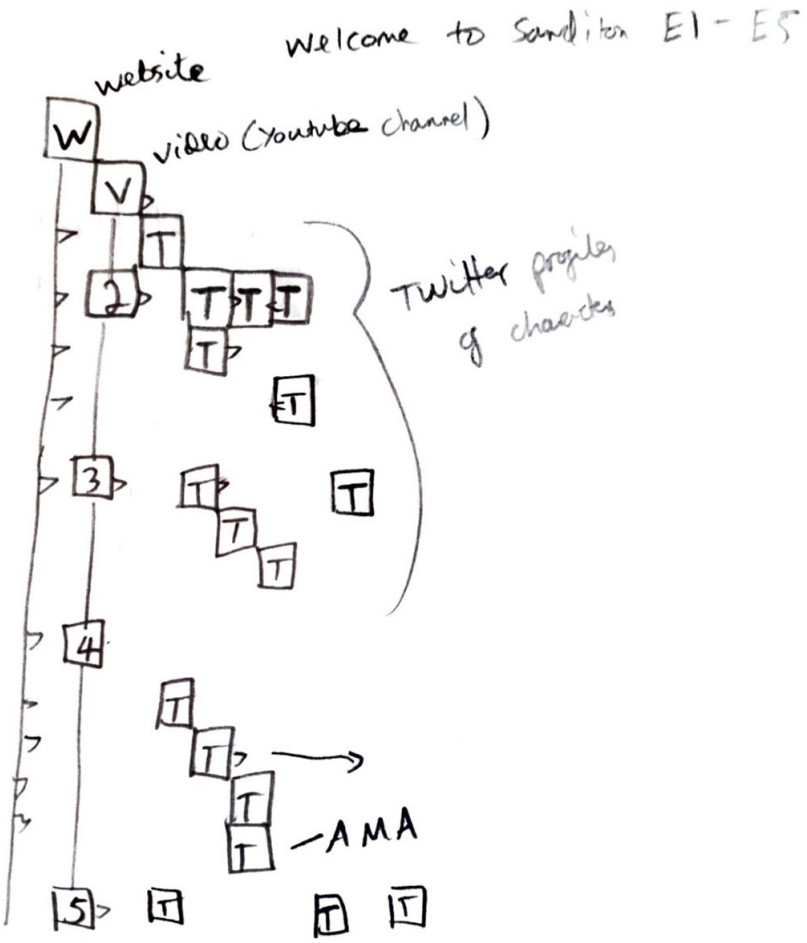
The model below includes the channels associated with one exhibition at the museum, and are consumed inside the museum.



F.37 Welcome to Sanditon

Welcome to Sanditon is a web series based on a Jane Austen novel and a spin-off of “The Lizzie Bennet Diaries”. Videos were uploaded blog style to YouTube by the main character, a developer who is running a demo of a new application, inviting several members of the town of Sanditon. Other secondary characters were communicated on Twitter as if they were real people with active profiles.

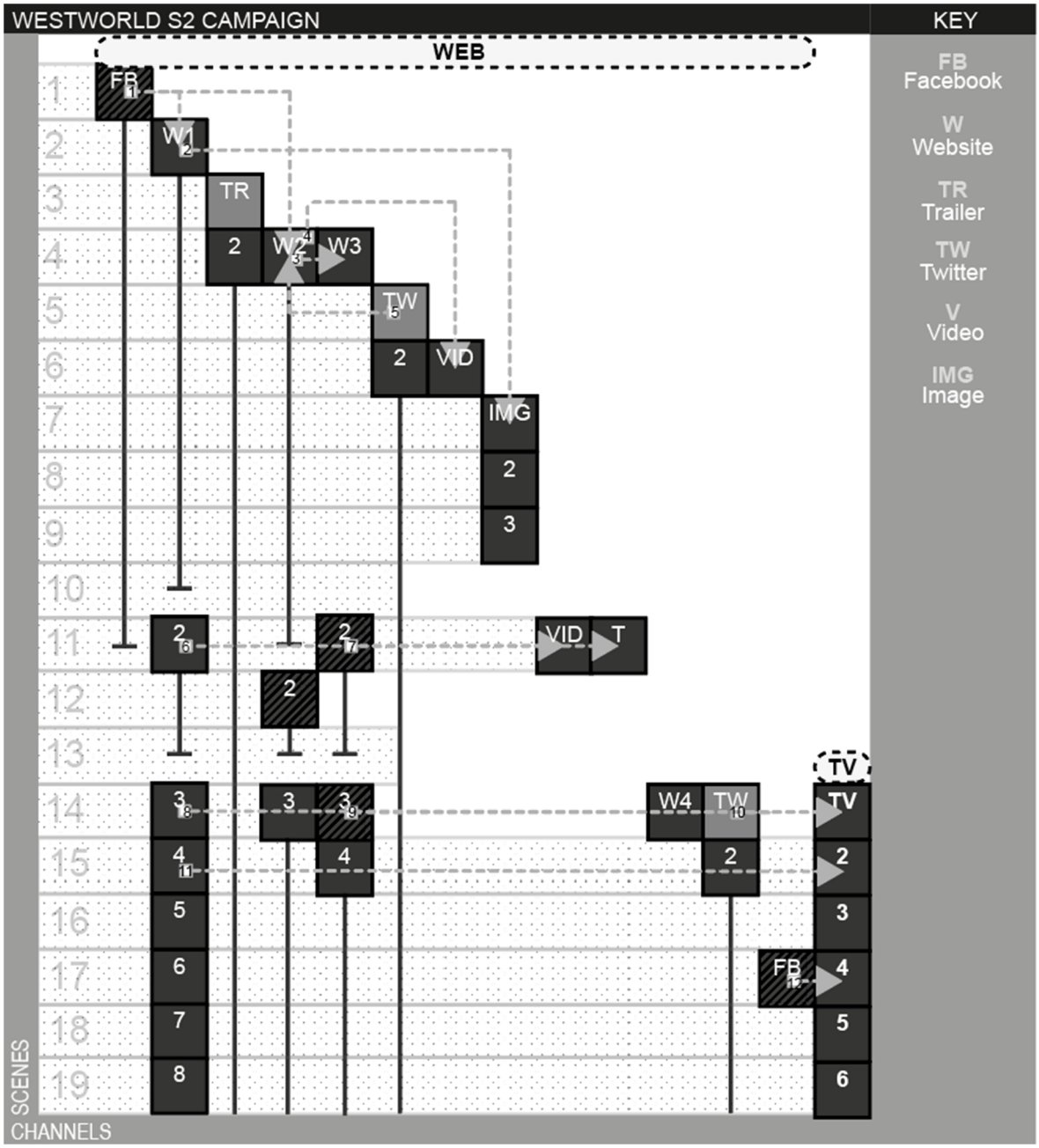
The model below shows the “web series”, including media content associated with it. It includes channels from the inception of the website, up until episode five.



F.38 Westworld Campaign

Based on the 1973 film of the same name, Westworld is a television show based in the distant future, when humans have made near-sentient life-like robots. In the show, a company has created a theme park called Westworld, that is filled with these robots that behave as though they are characters from the wild west. People buy tickets to go to Westworld to role-play as characters, who interact with the robots, go on quests and experience what is known as the ultimate narrative experience.

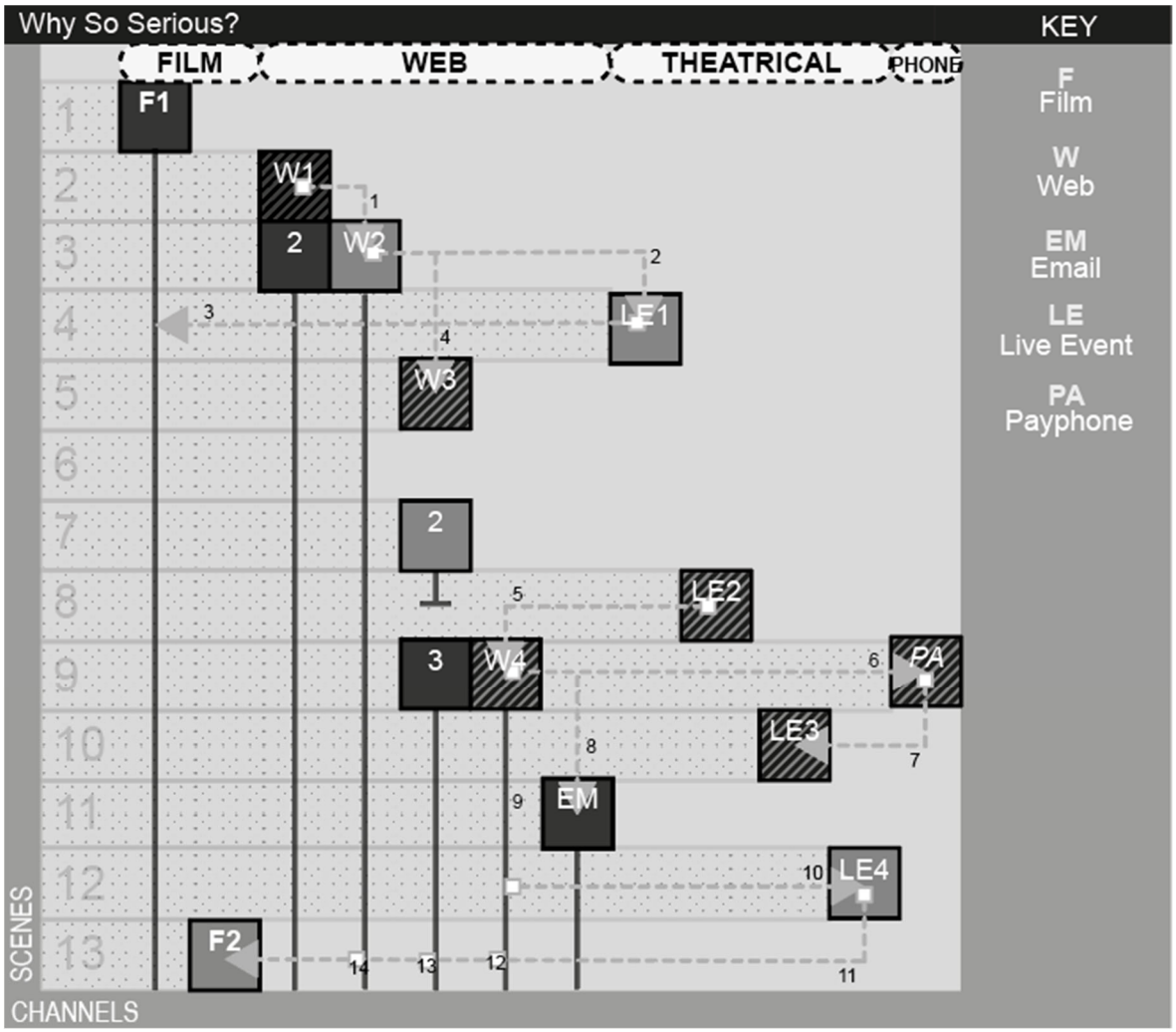
The below model Illustrates the “ARG” from channel that mentioned it, up until the television show started.



F.39 Why So Serious

Set in the Batman universe, Why So Serious was an ARG created to promote the upcoming The Dark Knight film. The story involved two characters set to feature in the film, Harvey Dent and The Joker, with the events and actions performed by the players leading to the film.

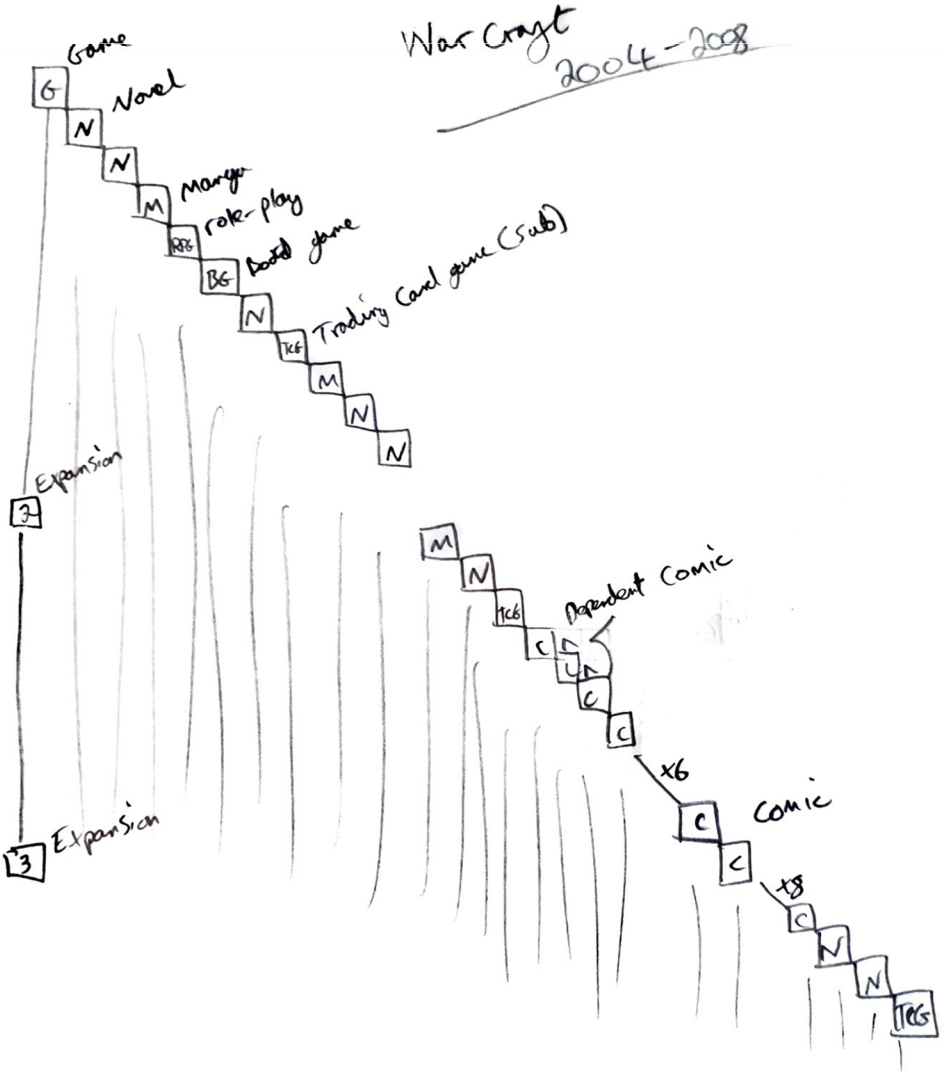
The below model Illustrates the “ARG” from the first Batman film, up until the new Batman film was released.



F.40 Warcraft

Warcraft is a media franchise consisting of multiple media that tell the stories of various characters (often not shared across media), set in a fantasy world where orcs, elves and magical creatures exist. The most popular media channel in the experience is the game World of Warcraft, an MMO with millions of players.

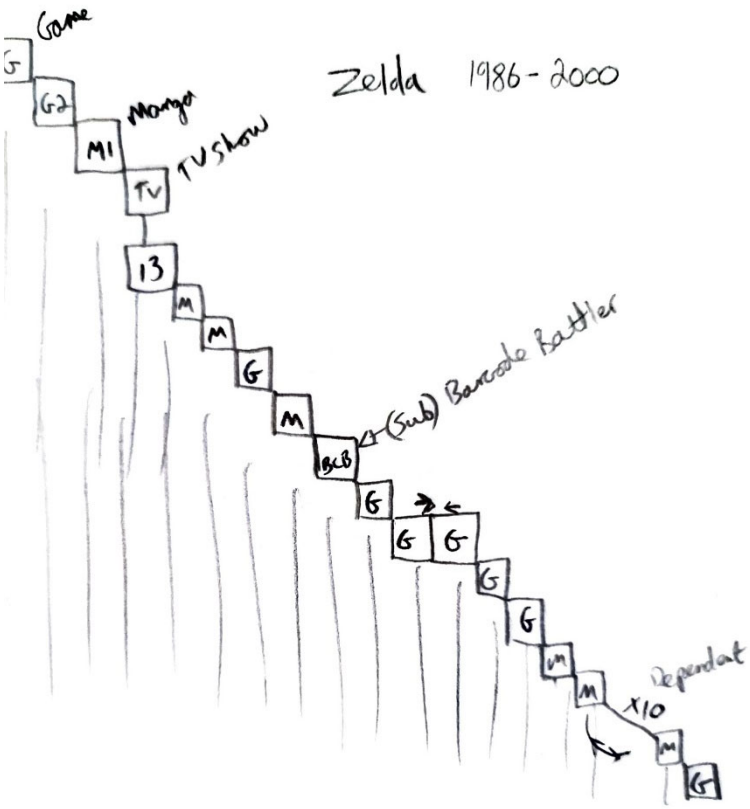
The below model includes the Warcraft franchise, from the first World of Warcraft game phase (2004) up until 2008.



F.41 Zelda

Zelda is a media franchise set in a fantasy world that consists of both light and dark forces that are eternally locked in a battle for dominance. In each media channel there are characters (e.g., Link, Zelda and Ganon) that share the same name across media, but are not necessarily the same person, highlighting the trope of 'destiny'. The franchise is primarily known for its video games, but the fictional world of (primarily) Hyrule is communicated through other media.

The model below shows the Zelda franchise, from 1986 to 2000, starting with the first game attached to the Zelda franchise.


Game
Zelda 1986 - 2000
G2
Manga
M1
TV show
TV
13
M
M
G
M
(Sub) Barcode Battler
BCB
G
G
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G
M
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Dependant
x10
M
G

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