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Manuel Castells
Transmedia Critical | Limitations of Transmedia Storytelling for Children: A Cognitive Developmental Analysis
Daniel Pietschmann, Sabine Völkel, Peter Ohler

Abstract

Transmedia storytelling involves unfolding narratives across multiple media platforms, with each text making a distinctive and valuable contribution to the whole. Transmedia narratives for children have several limitations, as they require advanced media-literacy skills and appropriate cognitive, emotional, and moral development. Transmedia consumers are more involved in the story than single-medium consumers, resulting in more engagement, intrinsic motivation, and media enjoyment. Many modern entertainment franchises have been created for cross-generational appeal, with media extensions specifically targeting child audiences. This article discusses children’s cognitive limitations and their relevance for transmedia narratives. These limitations are illustrated using an analysis of Disney’s Cars transmedia franchise.

Keywords
transmedia storytelling, developmental psychology, child audiences, limitations

Full Text:
Transmedia storytelling is the practice of designing, sharing, and participating in a cohesive story experience across multiple traditional and digital delivery platforms - for entertainment, advertising and marketing, or social change. Have you ever read a book, seen a movie, watched a television show, or played a game that centred around different aspects of a larger story or universe? You may be familiar with popular examples of such universes like Star Wars, Marvel, and The Walking Dead (to name a few). How do the professionals develop such expansive narratives? How do they ensure that each Transmedia storytelling is inextricably linked to scholar Henry Jenkins. Jenkins 2003 is considered the first significant discussion of the movement of characters and story worlds across platforms that grew into his recognition of transmedia storytelling as a distinct form. His work on fandom and convergence culture, which can be found in Jenkins 2006 and Jenkins 2013, built on the foundation for his concept of transmedia storytelling. As can be witnessed in Jenkins 2016, Jenkins has continually re-assessed his definition and examined his own understanding of transmedia storytelling using curr