



CINEKID
FOR PROFESSIONALS
CONFERENCE REPORT 2011



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/OPENING WORDS - AUDIENCE BUILDING FROM AN EARLY AGE

The next MEDIA programme, to be implemented in 2013, will encompass specific measures to encourage media literacy in children. This was announced by MEDIA-representative Matteo Zacchetti during his opening words at the second Cinekid Conference. Cinekid director Sannette Naeyé was overjoyed: “We’ve been running in place, waiting for this moment to come. Now we can start to really run!”

“What do Europeans have in common today?”, Matteo Zacchetti asked the audience of professionals at the start of his opening words for the second Cinekid Conference, held on October 18 and 19. The answer he gave may be surprising coming from the Deputy Head of the DG Information Society and Media Unit ‘Media Programme and Media Literacy’ of the European Commission: “What unites us is a love for American cinema.”

However much the MEDIA programme (20 years old this year) has done right in the past, Zacchetti admitted, the programme has not been able to create a consistent audience for European films. But this, Zacchetti announced, will have to change. The next MEDIA programme, which will be implemented in 2013, will encompass specific measures to encourage media literacy in children. “The main struggle for the next 20 years lies in engaging the next generation, or better: the next generations.”

More than anything, Zacchetti said, he hoped to learn from the specialists gathered for the conference about how best to engage a new generation of children – a generation that (as Cinekid director Sannette Naeyé had reminded the audience in her word of welcome) by now spends more time behind a screen than they do in school. The upcoming MEDIA programme will reflect this, Zacchetti said, and encourage audience building from a very early age, at schools. After all, Zacchetti reminded the audience: “Movies helped to invent and perpetuate the American dream, and we can do the same for Europe.”

Polarised galaxy

A first introduction of the ‘galaxy far away’ these new generations of children are living in was given by Marc Goodchild. The multi-award winning producer of linear and interactive content started his duties as moderator for the conference, which he would share with children’s television presenter Lisa Wade (“Lisa’s the professional presenter, I’m the amateur presenter”) with a keynote outlining the many paradoxes of the modern-day child’s polarised galaxy. It’s a world of infinite choice where fewer and fewer titles rise to the surface; a world of convergent technologies but fragmented behaviours; a world of ultra-local interests but global tastes.

The paradoxes have their consequences for media producers as well. For one thing, the implied promises of this brave new world go hand in hand with a whole host of (imagined) risks parents (and newspaper columnists) can worry about. While ‘unhealthy’ advertising is banned, commercial models based on ‘pushing’ product dominate. And while people expect digital stuff to be free, the traditional patrons are disappearing. Nevertheless, Goodchild saw opportunities more than barriers, and hoped the following two days of discussions would confirm his optimism.



“I wish I had all day! I’d lock the door and keep talking until I had you convinced.” There was no denying Jacqueline Harding’s commitment to her cause. Based on years of research her company Tomorrow’s Child carried out, she gave an energetic lecture arguing that the human brain is changing in fundamental ways. Therefore, she argued: **“We should prepare children for their future, not our past.”**

Recalling a comment Marc Goodchild made in his opening keynote, Harding reminded the audience that children are the native inhabitants of the brave new digital world: *“We are the digital immigrants, we have come into their world. (...) If we want to have good citizens of the future, we have to be able to connect, we have to be relevant.”*

The human brain is changing, both physically and chemically, Harding said. Gone are the days of the solely left-brain thinker. More and more, the dominance of the left side of the brain, which is responsible for linear thought, is coming under question, and the more creative, out-of-the-box, right-brain thinking is becoming more prominent. Harding: *“Children will only survive in this future world if we equip them to think from the right-hand side of the brain and with the left-hand side of the brain.”*

Mirror neurons

Neuro-plasticity is central in this development: the brain is forever assimilating, accomodating, re-arranging, and the media mind likes to play, since as Harding put it: *“the neurons that play together, stay together.”* Central in this play are interpsychological and intrapsychological development, as Harding illustrated with a video clip showing the research her company specializes in: observing children observing, and interacting with, different kinds of media. What the research has shown is that children learn about emotion from others, interpsychologically, before they learn it inside, intrapsychologically – and this process is not only at work in real-life interactions vut also in children’s dealings with mediated characters.

Central in this process are mirror neurons. *“I’m pretty in love with mirror neurons”*, Harding said jokingly. These neurons constitute the part of the brain that specialize not only in carrying out our own emotions, behaviors and intentions, but also in understanding those of other people.

Five tips

Harding ended her talk with five concrete tips for the audience:

- research the reaction – *“no guessing! You have to know that you’re producing something that is of value to children.”*;
- label emotions that are incorporated in your story;
- reduce cognitive load – *“make it easy for the child to learn”*;
- employ great humour;
- use characters that are ‘like them’.

/SUSAN NEWMAN-BAUDAIS - RESEARCH FILMS AND TV FOR CHILDREN IN EUROPE

After Jacqueline Harding's passionate words and before delving deeper into the brave new digital world that was outlined by Mark Goodchild, Susan Newman-Baudais looked at something that she herself described as "a bit more traditional": children's film. But the research this Film Industry Analyst at the European Audiovisual Observatory based in France presented, carried out especially for Cinekid's 25th Birthday, definitely worked to drive home the importance of the children's media production. For starters, 12% of European cinema admissions over this period were for children's films.

The research focused on four questions, which Newman-Baudais answered in turn after outlining how the researchers came to the sample that was used for the research. After all, as she reminded the audience, "There is no generally accepted definition of what a children's film is." The final sample of 564 European children's films was based on combined data from European Children's Film Association, the KIDS Regio subgroup of Cine-Regio, the Observatory's own Lumiere database and Cartoon.

The first question was: which countries are the most active producers of children's films. The overwhelming leader in this regard is Germany, with France a close second and the much smaller Denmark a surprising third. When you look at children's film production in relation to the total film production of the countries, however, "it looks completely different." When the data is examined in this way, Scandinavian countries are clearly at the forefront: Denmark (29%), Norway (24%), Sweden (19%) and Finland (18%) are in 1st, 2nd, 4th and 5th place respectively. On average, in Scandinavia 22,3% of film production are children's films, while in the other regions that the research designates (the Big 5 countries; Western Europe; and Central/Eastern Europe) this percentage is well below 10%.

Secondly, the research focused on how these films travel; in other words: in how many markets they get released. On average, European children's films are released in 3.9 markets. Animation travels a bit better, reaching 4,1 markets on average against 3.7 for children's fiction, but both outperform general fiction films, which reach an average of 3.1 markets. Dividing the films by region, children's films from the Big 5 countries and Western Europe travel much better than those from Scandinavia and Central/Eastern Europe. Another salient statistic is that only 21.8% of children's films are released only in their countries of origin, against a much higher 53.4% of general fiction films.

The third question the research asked was how European children's films performed. On average, a European children's film sold 116,451 tickets in all markets combined, with live action films performing slightly better than animation. Both in turn perform significantly better than general fiction films, which generate median admissions of 38,886.

Finally, and related to the third question, the research answered the question how important non-national markets are for European children's films. Whereas general fiction films, wherever they may originate from, generally depend on their home markets for most of their revenue, children's films often generate a significant percentage of their revenue in non-national markets. This is especially true of children's animation films, and more especially for those originating in Scandinavian countries, which generate 70% of their admissions in non-national markets, and Western Europe, which generate no less than 98% of admissions outside of the home market.

As Newman-Baudais closed her lecture, Cinekid director Sannette Naeyé took the floor to enthusiastically drive home the importance of the Observatory's report: "We knew it, but now we can prove it: we're bloody successful!"

/PANEL CHILDREN'S FILM IN EUROPE

Susan Newman-Beaudais, Matteo Zacchetti, Xiaojuan Zhou

For the first Panel of the Conference, Susan Newman-Baudais and Matteo Zacchetti were joined on the stage by Xiaojuan Zhou, President of Delphis Films, a Montreal-based world sales agent specialized in quality family feature films and children's TV programming with a catalogue of about 200 titles, including several Dutch films.

Starting the conversation, Marc Goodchild asked Newman-Baudais what can be learned from the Scandinavian countries' star performance with regards to children's film production. The researcher responded: *"The secret there is that the film funds in Scandinavia earmark budget for the production of children's films. It's a bit wider than feature film production – it's also for short film production and children's interaction with media. But there are funds earmarked for children's film production, and as the statistics show that this works."*

Zacchetti continued on from this, saying that first and foremost, he had a lot of questions for the researchers. *"Mostly, I'm asking: Why? Why do children's movies travel better than regular movies? Is it because the audience is, let's say, more universal? Or is there something else in the industry or in different uses that make it that these films perform better outside their home market?"* Newman-Baudais stated that part of the reason may lie in a statistical advantage: *"Although I can't quantify this exactly, there are less children's films made which gives them a better chance at success. Having said that, there is, I think, a whole range of different reasons for the success of children's films. Number one, there is an element of universality in the stories that are being told. Also, throughout Europe, there's an enormous amount of effort made to bring children to film and to bring cinema to children. Another aspect that we should remember is that most European countries have some kind of program for children's media literacy, which also gives these films a further life. And finally, there is the European Union program, which helps a lot."*

Asked how the 2014 MEDIA programme would incorporate these issues, Zacchetti responded that the member states of course remain responsible for their own policies. *"But MEDIA is trying to encourage cooperation and dialogue between the different member states,"* he said, *"because if something is done well in one country, the other European countries must learn from that."*

Closing off, Goodchild asked Xiaojuan Zhou what the secret ingredient for Dutch live action children's films could be, since the research reflected they are remarkably successful. *"They're Dutch!"* joked Xiaojuan. More seriously, she commented on the research by stressing that a film's performance must be looked at relative to its budget: *"Small revenues for a small film may still be more profitable than a huge performance by a film with a budget of 50 million dollars. Look at the return on the investment."*



“Laugh yourself smart” is the key belief of Lion TV’s Richard Bradley, producer of the popular British TV series Horrible Histories. He discovered that transmedial content is more than digital platforms: the series even got transformed into a concert in the Royal Albert Hall.

Horrible Histories is storytelling and learning history combined with vast amounts of humour. The series fit in the typical English tradition of combining history and comedy, for example in the famous series Monthly Python and Blackadder.

In Horrible Histories accurate historical information is presented with lots of blood, battle and comic relief. The TV series is based on a series of illustrated history books, with titles like The Angry Aztecs, The Incredible Incas or The Vile Victorians. The first books in the series, The Terrible Tudors and The Awesome Egyptians, were published in 1993. The live action TV series for children aired on British television in 2009.

Bradley explains the choices he made to make the popular series of books into the hugely successful children’s tv series, next to the series’ popular website, that’s stuffed with interactive games and music. *“Children love the content”, he says, “They eat it up”*. Horrible Histories shows these elements of history that grabs young kids’ attention: a lot of *“poo, wee, gore and blood”* is involved in the storylines.

Being relatively new to the children’s TV business Bradley quickly learned that education and entertainment don’t need to collide and realised that a stimulating and sparkling website, chock-full of games, fun and information was indispensable. Online, children can view sketches, sing along with the songs or play games. There are four interactive games to be played, in which the player can embark on a treasure hunt in four different eras (Rome, Shakespearean London, Medieval England and Ancient Egypt). Kids can ‘talk’ to the live-action characters, finding clues and learning history as they search for the treasure. The games are set up for children between the age of 7 and 13.

Bradley emphasizes that there’s more than the digital world to think about when multimedia are concerned. In Horrible Histories a lot of singing and music takes place, so the BBC suggested setting up a concert in London’s Royal Albert Hall. Bradley proudly shows a piece of the recording of the show, in which four versions of King George enter the stage singing and acting like they’re a boyband. Dressed in long wigs and white stockings the characters sing *“We were born/ to rule over you”* and *“I was the sad one/ I was the bad one/ I was the mad one/ I was the fat one”*. The 6000 (free) tickets for this Prom 2011 sold out in 17 minutes, Bradley adds.

An impressed spectator in the audience asked Bradley whether this form of education-meets-entertainment could also be applied on the subject of art.

“Why not”, he says. “As long as you stay away from being patronizing. At the same time, you certainly want to add an attitude: that’s what kids like. And most importantly”, Bradley says, “don’t forget humour. Kids just love to laugh.”



Through emerging technologies and mass use of social media, storytelling is evolving into a multi-platform experience. But what is the platform that suits your story best? There are many options and it's easy to get lost.

Digital strategist Esther Lim specialises in making stories transmedial. She runs her own company The Estuary and was involved in many transmedial projects for clients like NBC, Sun Microsystems and Kodak.

Transmedia?

First of all: what is transmedia, and what happened to multimedia?

According to Lim multimedia is more of a spectator experience: I give you the content, you consume it: I don't expect you to participate. In transmedia I give you the content but I expect you to participate and I hope for evolution. So: multimedia is a message, transmedia is a story coloured by our own experience. It is the way to bring users into your world, into your story. Lim calls transmedia an evolving art form. A transmedia story unfolds across multimedia platforms, with new added and dynamic elements making a distinctive contribution to the whole.

Danger

The big danger of transmedia is that there is too much content. That will create chaos or a fragmented experience. How to follow the story? What way to go? Lim compares the development with the rise of 3D technology: at first everything in a 3D-film jumped right out of the screen. Now they've taken a step back and it's gotten more evolved. Now 3D is more used as a tool than just to scare the audience.

Strategy

How do you transform your story? How do you define your audience? Lim emphasizes that first you have to realise what you want with your story. Do you want to teach something or change the mindset? Call for action? What experience do you want to build and from which platform. Do you even WANT your audience to interact? According to research only five percent of users want to create something actively. The majority just wants to be passive and rely on the content that other people created.

Analytics

Lim insists that producers make use of social analytics, as it is a direct communication with the audience. Lim uses persona: profiles of the target audience. Using stereotypes, traits and characters get you an idea of who your audience is. Where do they live? What do they do? What devices are they using? It is very hard to make people, or the audience, change habits. Thanks to social analytics, if you regard 'trending topics', you get an idea what the audience thinks about your characters. What is most popular? What storyline is resonating most with your audience?

Social graphics

Social graphics is about the time spent online. Where do they spend it and with whom? What do they want to get out of it? Do they use Twitter or Tumblr? Lim calls this preliminary mapping.

Participation

An interesting example of participating audience is the medical television series House. In one episode the writers introduced a crazy, male nurse. He was just supposed to be part of the series for one episode. But the audience loved the character. What ended up happening was that the producers of House, in between seasons, hired a social media team to make a story within a story about this nurse. They wouldn't have picked this up without social media.

Fan-co-creation

Youth consume huge amounts of content, Lim stresses; always make more than you think you need. She gives another example of participating audience: "There was this kid that had a outrageous storyline for one fo our games. Everybody in the online community loved it. So we integrated that in our game and the kid ended up co-producing with us." This so-called fan-co-creation can be very rewarding. Lim noticed people making tributes, microsities or even a soundboard about one fictional character. But everything else aside, Lim urges to always remember: the story is key. "Without a good story you have nothing."

/JAN WILLEM HUISMAN - IJSFONTEIN

War and sex: two perfect subjects for integrating transmedia, according to Dutch cross media company IJSfontein. Since 1997 the company specialises in game development, webtools, interactive installations and cross medial concepts. Founder Jan Willem Huisman points out his company always asks itself if it is really necessary to involve cross media in a project. He cites two examples of projects that show how cross media really creates added value to media experiences.

Dutch TV documentary series/online project “13 in de oorlog” (13 in wartime) was bound to be made interactive, because war is a decisive situation, says Huisman. Lively visual and narrative situations challenge the player to think about the choices he would make in morally ambiguous situations. The online game is about finding your father, who got lost during the 1940 bombing of Rotterdam. During the quest, children need to make choices. Shall I steal this ring off this poor girl, even if I can save other people’s lives with it? There is no right or wrong way to go in the game, every choice leads to another dilemma. Kids have to deal with these dilemmas that, outside the game, trigger discussions about right and wrong.

Another project was made for the AIDS Foundation and deals with feeling comfortable about sex. This is an example that proves you can attract audience participation. The AIDS Foundation wanted to get rid of the general prevalent assumption: “Girls are responsible, otherwise they are sluts, and boys are always in the mood.” IJSfontein made some short films with different scenarios in which a boy and a girl come together. The goal of the player is to make both unhappy partners happy again, by pressing the ‘fix it’ button. Then you can choose the perspective from either the boy or the girl, so the user can hear the difference between what the characters are thinking, and what they are saying. What’s there to gain? The user, usually a testosterone inflicted boy, gets to see more and more skin of a girl as he progresses, and can send the result to his friends. It is also possible to consult the ‘love coach’, a program that will answer questions on sex. The ‘love coach’ is downloadable to mobile phones, to make it possible to get a consultation anytime, anywhere...

/HUGH WELCHMAN - THE FLYING MACHINE

What is the secret of the success of The Flying Machine? The story is simple; Chopin’s music is beautiful. The film’s visuals recall Walt Disney’s Fantasia.

Also: the world is changing. With China as an important investor, British film producer Hugh Welchman learned how important this country can be for children’s cinema, especially if classical music is involved. Did you know that at this moment 14 million Chinese kids are studying the piano?

The Flying Machine is the second feature film of Hugh Welchman, the producer of the Oscar winning animation film Peter and The Wolf. But his journey once started out of misery. Not being happy as a graduated film producer, he wanted to find a new way to break the cycle of spending five years making a movie that stays in cinema for 3 weeks and leaves you with huge financial debts. At some point he was asked by a conductor to make a combination of cinema and classical music. This idea of ‘cinema plus’ stuck with him, and the idea of making the animated feature film ‘Peter and The Wolf’, based on Prokofjev’s music, was born. The initial distribution of the 30 minute version of ‘Peter and The Wolf’ started in the Royal Albert Hall, a film with no dialogue that accompanied a live orchestra. It sold out. “Then I knew it was going to be fine”, says Welchman. Luckily, ‘Peter and the Wolf’ won an Oscar, and then live orchestras queued to screen it during their show. The film got 110 screenings in the first year.

‘Peter and the Wolf’ was a UK-Polish co-production. Especially Poland was really excited by the Oscar, so the minister of culture called Welchman if he was interested in making a film to promote Chopin’s music, for children around the world. In the two years that followed he produced ‘The Flying Machine’, containing 2 feature films, 2 video games, 2 books, 26 short films and a premiere in the Forbidden City in Beijing, with Lang Lang playing live to the film. The short films are all made by different directors, but the animated object of ‘The Flying Machine’ is the connecting element.

Welchman did the development, the production and the financing at the same time: “Which I wouldn’t recommend to anyone”. The whole project was set up to celebrate the 200th anniversary of Chopin, “which we only missed by a year”. The Flying Machine combines animation and live action and has a 3D version. Welchman: “I didn’t really like 3D films, but I concluded it would help getting it distributed.” In terms of costs, the making of 3D would only add 10 percent.

In search of a good Chopin piano player, Welchman luckily ended up with the best-known piano player in the world, Lang Lang, and with that, entered a Chinese co-production that he didn't regret. In fact, in China there is no stigma on classical music, says Welchman, and among children, Lang Lang is considered a superstar – one that even wears sunglasses at midnight.



/REBECCA DENTON - THE AMAZING WORLD OF GUMBALL

Combining 2D and 3D animation with live action The Amazing World of Gumball makes the best use of all that is available in terms of transmedia. The series characters fill their own YouTube channels, join dating sites, add pictures and make home videos.

Together with Turner Broadcasting's senior producer Rebecca Denton, a huge cat (Gumball) and pet fish (Darwin) enter the auditorium. These are the two lead characters in the The Amazing World of Gumball series. Since its UK and US launch on May 2nd and May 9th the series has already proven itself a big hit.

After showing a short trailer of the series Denton explains how her company wanted to come up with children's entertainment that could reach the entire family and be present on all digital platforms. *"We were looking for a cohesive experience"*, she points out. The animations are unique; 2D, 3D and live action are combined in the story. *"Our quest was to bring these characters alive beyond the cartoon series. We never treated online platforms as secondary content, it had to be conceived and realised by the same writers and animators. We chose quality over innovation."*

What Turner did was give every character its own channel online.

Rabbit Anais, the youngest of the fictional family, is a photographer: you can find her snapshots of the family online and giggle about the family's embarrassing moments. Rabbit Richard is the father, he is a devoted gamer. But he is also on Twitter where he often posts pictures, for instance of his new underwear.

Cat Nicole, the mother, has some mental issues so her therapist advised her to keep a weblog in which she tries to deal with her emotions. She has her own feed on Tumblr where she tells family stories. Gumball and his friend Darwin are the main focus of the stories. Both are active on Youtube where they leave their Jackass style home videos. Also, the writers couldn't resist giving the Banana Joe character a channel as well. What would a banana do if it was performing in front of a webcam? Sing karaoke and strip butt naked, naturellement. Carrie the ghost, a bit of an emo girl, uploads little jokes on Youtube, while 3D dino Tina subscribes to a dating site.

Then another quest presented itself, says Denton: *"Now we put out all the content but how can kids find it? It still needed to be marketed. We underestimated the need for interaction."* Perhaps the two huge fluffy puppets can play an interesting part in that.

The British produced series will air in the Netherlands on Cartoon Network this fall.

/CONCLUSIONS FIRST DAY

Goodchild: *"Early this afternoon, we were talking about what is going on in the brains of children, and how this is affecting different media from cinema to online games. Later in the afternoon we focused on the transmedia side, and tomorrow we're going to zoom in on how you can get finance for all of this. You can ask questions anytime during cocktail hour, and tomorrow we will see you all at 9 am!"*

Once researching for a short story, Christy Dena got fascinated by building avatars online. It helped her composing her short stories but hardly any information on this subject was available.

Dena is an Australian crossmedia specialist and director of Universe Creation 101, where she works as an experience designer and writer on transmedia projects. She wrote the first ever PhD on Transmedia and consults on the expansion of films, TV shows, games and performances to multiple platforms.

Dena starts by stating she doesn't care what term is used, multimedia or transmedia, as long as everybody is talking about the same thing: integrating different media for your story. That doesn't mean getting your story delivered through different distribution channels. Transmedia is about integrating all the elements of the story across different platforms. Elements of a story can be expanded online and provide a gaming or educational experience that cannot be delivered through traditional storytelling.

Dena marks out different types of clients she encounters when people want to use transmedia

1. Peripheral: transmedia as a buzzword for marketing departments. Using it without actually being interested. This is how most brands are operating. *"Let's do this latest cool thing"* – as long as it makes money.
2. Transmedia as promotional necessity, but with a deeper interest: they do want continuity and do care. This is where people want what is called a transmedia bible, with guidelines for creating a transmedia the project.
3. Interested: maybe the brand wants to internalize and get a contractor involved. If the result sucks, it means transmedia sucks; not the way the brand handled things.
4. Committed: people are involved, transmedia is a critical part of the project. Some people working in the process have experience in transmedia.
5. Engaged: it really worked, transmedia is one of the passions of the project instead of a gimmick.
6. Substantial: transmedia is embedded; people start thinking a lot more about how meaningful this project is.

How to take action?

Serious criticism is essential, Dena emphasizes. People need to contemplate about the form and the progression of the project. Curation, collaboration of writers and producers is necessary.

Retro-active or pro-active?

Retro-active transmedia refers to when you make a movie and after it's finished you want to bring transmedia into the project. The danger: maybe it just doesn't work. For example: a horror film called *"Babysitter wanted"* was interested in making a massive multiplayer online role playing game (MMORPG). But in this case, MMORPG wouldn't be the right choice. This film had just three characters: the villain, the babysitter and the baby. Moreover: the game was located in only one place. This makes it uninteresting for gamers because the gaming universe is too small and confined.

The disadvantage when being pro-active in making transmedia: you get involved with different platforms from the very beginning, but in reality you have to deal with funding problems: who is paying for all this? You'll have to develop and release projects on different platforms sequentially. Maybe start off with a TV show and then based on that acquire funding for future web projects.

Bible

What you need is a transmedia bible. This is not a pitch document. It is not a TV bible that wants to consolidate continuity. It is an ongoing process of describing processes and plans. It helps you with investments and continuity. These sorts of bibles can be both used for retro- or proactive transmedia. One of the tasks you would do, is think about what message your projects wants to send. Be very clear about what your message is. Who are the main characters in your stories? Are there any sub-stories to tell? What are the key locations? Do your characters use any specific technologies or devices? Apart from thinking about the market (who is your audience and what devices are they using?), you need to think: what's the appeal for fans? What media did you already use? What markets can you approach? What kinds of comments come from the community?

What do you want in the future? What locations can be of use? Think about the content: what hasn't been explored in your story that could be an addition online? Remember the theme: for instance, with the film *Pirates of the Caribbean*, the message is the fantasy of being a pirate. It can also be a resonant theme, for instance with the film *Titanic*, that says 'love is stronger than death'. The advantage of a transmedia bible is you can involve a lot more people in the project.

In a lot of co-production deals, many of the funders are based in different countries. For instance, the production of TV series is funded by one country, while web developing is funded by another, and the game is funded by a third.

Try to connect the dots by making a flow chart, combined with a time schedule that helps all your partners to see at what time each story is released through what medium.

Danger

One of the risks of expanding a narrative across different platforms is the narrative conflict. In the film "My super ex girlfriend", in which at one point the main character mentions a website. *"So I got home, looked up the site, and on it the main character complains about how he hates the girl. But in the actual film, they end up together."* This is a narrative conflict that should be avoided. Dena: *"You don't know how or when your audience enters the different platforms, so try to avoid these specific narratives."*



During the presentation of Danish former whiz kid Asta Wellejus it becomes clear that she is not particularly interested in money. She emphasizes there are more ways to get your projects funded: by working together, swapping resources or letting users participate.

Wellejus introduces herself as a girl nerd, active gamer and former online role player. She was headhunted from university at the age of 21 by the famous Danish film director Lars Von Trier, who hoped she could help him put together film, theatre and games. From 1999 until 2007 Wellejus went into business with Von Trier and developed mobile games, art exhibitions and online games under the brand name of Zentropa.

Game structures

In a slide show she gives some examples of her work, explaining how games can be developed. It is all about structure, she emphasizes: *“Look at Amazon.com: they have a great game structure. They tell you: you bought this book, but now this other user thinks you like this book as well. This is a game mechanism. Facebook is another example: their game structure is about collecting friends; the one with the most friends wins.”* Wellejus shows a collection of projects, for instance a Google-layer application that was introduced during the G8 summit in Copenhagen in 2009. It was viewed 7,5 million times on the first day.

Where to get the money

Who is going to pay for all this? Producers? Broadcasters? Game companies? The problem is that nobody has a business model for transmedia projects. You have to come up with different ways of funding: *“After all this time, I haven’t seen the ultimate funding model yet.”* Wellejus illustrates that on her current project she abandoned the beaten track by focusing (*“don’t try this at home!”*) on three different age groups.

Courage

There is a film being released about a WWII resistance group in Denmark. Also, it is meant become a new media universe, *“The Courage Generator”*. Wellejus wanted to make it an international project so people around the world could play the game. *“That’s why we decided not to make the game about a Danish resistance group, but about the broader theme: ‘courage’. Also, it is an attempt to change people’s behaviour and educate them on history.”*

The first focus group is 11-20 years old. They like to play games and test their courage. They’re also the most flexible demographic when it comes to behaviour changes. The second group is 20-50 years old. These are the people ‘who used to read newspapers’ and now like to read Facebook updates or political forums. They like to debate: what does it mean to be courageous?

The third group is grandparents. They know more of the digital devices than the second group, because they have time to explore them and they learn from their grandchildren. They would like to browse through all the archive material.

A lesson Wellejus learned: users don’t care where the content is, but where THEY are. Thanks to data mining she figured out when ‘tweeners’ are active online: *“We figured they would get online during lunch break or when commuting. But the peak hour turned out to be... at night after bedtime when the computer is supposed to be turned off.”*

Regional funding

Wellejus also illustrated the benefits of regional funding. Countries want to attract attention, she says: *“Let’s say I am Iceland: I have beautiful nature but little film production. I can give you a big amount of money. Then you spend it in my country again, on catering, carpenters, etcetera. Most producers invest seven times as much back into the country than what the country pays them.”*

Out of the box

It’s great that you have this great idea for a game on Facebook. But how many games have been released on Facebook in the past two weeks? Too many to keep track off. How is the audience going to find your game? Wellejus recommends on finding partners and think bigger: content, technology and distribution is key. Who wants the same thing as your story? She gives the example of an Italian filmmaker who made a documentary about refugees in Bhutan and made a game about it. His project ended up funded and distributed by an Italian newspaper.

Beyond money

Not just money but also sharing knowledge and experience can create a huge contribution to your project. For instance, web browser company Mozilla is involved in a lot of projects. The company doesn’t give money but shares technology and man power. Their interest is: make people use Mozilla. *“Go talk with them!”*, Wellejus urges. Content is key, Wellejus emphasizes. What’s your theme? Who do you want to attract? In the ‘courage’

project it works like a patchwork: the film institute takes care of the marketing, the broadcaster supplies the archive and the university finances research. Wellejus offered numerous examples of funds and countries.

Audience

And then there's crowdfunding: get the audience to invest. Or crowdsourcing: seek people who can help you with their expertise. They can help you fund it, produce it and market it. Basic things are covered on the site kickstarter.com and on many others. Either the brand, the cause, the theme or the name of the director will encourage people to engage.

In conclusion

When you look for a fund: analyse your project. Don't necessarily think money, think resources. Think of university and businesses to use as crowd sources. Think about your technology. Talk with experts. Focus on the content. Who else is interested in it? And start from there.

/PANEL DISCUSSION ON FINANCING

Richard Bradley, Hugh Welchman, Christy Dena and Asta Wellejus

Lisa Wade: We are going to talk about financing projects. Hugh, we didn't talk about money yesterday, but your Flying Machine project got 17 international partners involved. Can you explain how you got them all together?

Hugh Welchman: It started off when the Polish government approached me, saying they wanted a film to celebrate the music of Chopin, for his 200 year anniversary. My first thought was that it should be a French-Polish co-production, because most people in the world think he is French anyway and it is the place he lived the longest.

But the time scale for putting together funding is quite long in France. I also got money from Norway, which was 'guilt money' for my earlier film, Peter and the Wolf that got an Oscar. They probably felt guilty for not sponsoring it. But anyway, the co-production with Poland and France fell apart and I was left with a 40 percent hole in my budget. We had already chosen the famous Chinese pianist Lang Lang to play in the movie. So I realised we might have an opportunity in China. In six weeks we arranged meetings with major Chinese film companies. My aim was to make a sale, I ended up with a co-production; making my film the second Polish-Chinese co-production in history. At the end, 20 percent of the funding came from the Polish government, half of that from Polish TV - which is very unusual - 25 percent came from China, another 25 percent came from private investors and another 25 is from presale. The most demanding party was the Polish film institute. Every film producer in Poland needs to have two people on board just to deal with the demands of the film institute. There was no editorial influence, by the way.

Richard Bradley: there is a difference between co-productions that deal with tax benefits and those that are piecing together money of broadcasters and distributors. '*Thou shalt commit adultery*' is key. You need to be successfully deceitful. You need to make several people feel if they are the most special person in the world. For instance, we were filming an episode about Pompeii. We went to Discovery Channel and said, we want the spectacular erupting volcano and special effects: the works. Then we went to the BBC, but they said: we don't want any of these American effects, please just stick with the archaeological facts. So we came up with something in the middle. Another tip: never let your mistresses meet.

Christy Dena: when you deal with brands, partners really want to control everything. They want to sign off every step you take. What we did is, we let them sign off what they wanted, and after that we did what we wanted anyway. You need to report to them, but give them as little information as possible, because then they want to change everything.

Asta Wellejus: If you can't find anyone who is interested in your idea, face it: maybe it is a bad idea. It takes a lot of research to find funding partners. Our culture is idea driven, but maybe a funder changes your idea and you go with the funding. But that works for us because we also rely on them for resources, instead of money.

Moderator Lisa Wade: is it particularly difficult to get funding for a children's project?

Asta Wellejus: I can only speak for our northern European region, but I would say it is easy. Usually it is the

child that decides what the family's money is spent on, so it is even easier than adult's project.

Hugh Welchman: in Poland it is not so easy. The film industry revolves around hardcore historical art house, preferably with a lot of killing. It was very unusual to get such an amount of money for a children's project, but that's because the ministry of culture approached us, and wanted to convert children around the world to Chopin's music.

Richard Bradley: children's projects are usually dominated by animation. Live action is hard to sell, but there are ways.

Audience question: what was the total budget for The Flying Machine?

Hugh Welchman: it was 10 million euros.

Richard Bradley: Horrible Histories is also expensive, because of the costumes and script writing. A half hour episode costs 140.000 pounds, which is incredibly expensive for live action children's TV. The spin off, a quiz show, was 50.000 pounds for half an hour. Work out what budget fits your idea. You don't always have to build a Rolls Royce if you can build a beautiful banger.

Asta Wellejus: interactivity doesn't need to be very expensive. Think of good games for the audience, you don't have to go overboard with high budget for 3D-effects.

Hugh Welchman: that's right. We spent 9 million on the film and 1 million on 26 shorts and two games.

Richard Bradley: I sense that I spend 5 percent of my time to work out the idea, 85 percent to get funding and 10 percent to produce. I want to avoid that, I want to dream big and produce great ideas. It's hard to stick with your idea. I want to be flexible and compromise, but you have to be careful not to lose the central plan.

Asta Wellejus: on the other hand, funding partners can keep you sharp by asking questions like: why does your game need to be there?

Lisa Wade: do you have to find different ways of financing for every other type of medium? For instance, is crowdfunding more logical for new media, and broadcasters for old media?

Asta Wellejus: get resources instead of money funders. For instance, broadcasters don't think in moving content, they think in platforms. In general I would say: it depends on the project.

Marc Goodchild: Okay, we'll call it a day. I heard about adultery, I heard about multiple partners; it seems to me we should be polygamists to survive in this world. Thank you, panel!

/NEELA SAKARIA - UNLIKELY VISIONARIES: WHAT KIDS THINK THE FUTURE OF CHILDREN'S MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY SHOULD LOOK LIKE

Children are ready for our digital future, perhaps much more so than we as adults are. That was the upshot of Latitude's research on children's expectations of future media developments, which shows kids themselves imagining more seamless, intuitive technologies that can teach them something as well as entertain.

'What would you like your computer or the internet to do that it can't do right now?' That was the question more than 200 children ages 12 and under from 13 countries around the world got asked during Latitude's research on children's future requests for computers and the internet, part of their Kids Innovation and Discovery Series. Latitude's Neela Sakaria, assisted by her colleague Jessica Reinis, presented the results of this study at the Cinekid Conference.

The children were asked to draw their answer to the question, imagining for themselves rather than thinking about what the researcher would like to hear, one of the pitfalls of a traditional survey, Sakaria said. Why ask children this question? *"They are uninhibited, and they have native expectations of the technology. For these reasons, they can give us an intuitive insight into what might be around the corner in our own media lives."*

The drawings the children made were processed using a coding scheme, placing children in one of two categories ('player' or 'maker') or in a neutral position between the two by asking such questions as: What is the purpose of the concept that is depicted? What is the nature of the interface? Is there a social dimension? While on the whole the children's responses were quite similar, differentiating by region yielded some interesting results, Reinis explained: *"Western children are more interested in the experience of interacting with the technology, whereas in Africa and South-Asia they are more interested in tangible output and Latin American answers showed a predominance of social interactions with the machine."*

Three insights

The main results of the research, however, lay in the three general insight that Sakaria then set out, each illustrated by several drawings depicting technologies of media usages that brought home her points, being:

- kids are longing for more intuitive interactions – *"The drawings show a natural ability to control the experience they have with the technology."*
- the digital vs. physical divide is disappearing – *"We as adults see this happening, but the children very naturally intuit it."*
- technology can let us fly – *"Kids are hungry to learn; a third of the respondents designed technology that taught them something or enabled them to learn."*

Sakaria finished the talk with some ideas of where these insights might lead us. *"What we hope", she said, "is that having seen it through the eyes of the children themselves might spark some new ideas for you."*

- Create more seamless, interactive and human-like interfaces;
- Create games and entertainment with real-world outcomes;
- Enable or empower kids to create.



/MOBILE APPLICATIONS

Michael Levine, Chris Connell, Peter Nederlof

Three speakers shed their light on the rapidly expanding market of children's media production in a mobile environment in the panel 'Mobile Applications'. Michael Levine, Chris Connell and Peter Nederlof illuminated the issue from the viewpoint of an educator, a media producer, and a web designer, respectively.

Michael Levine

Michael Levine, Founding Director of the The Joan Ganz Cooney Center at Sesame Workshop, kicked off the panel. He started by giving a brief background of the Sesame Workshop, which has asked the question "How can emerging media help children learn?" since 1969, as well as his own Center, which applies this same question in the digital age. Levine: "A lot has changed, but what hasn't changed is that we need to respond to the needs of kids."

One of the key points in the Cooney Center's research is what Levine called 'bridging': *"Increasingly in the digital age we can make the connection between home, community and school. There's been a moat set up between what children are doing outside of school and what they're doing inside school, and we need to break those barriers down."*

Levine pointed out three "megatrends" that the center's research has made clear. The first is the increasing amount of multitasking that takes place in day-to-day media usage: *"Children are spending almost 11 hours per day using media, but doing it in a little more than 7½ hours."* The second is the increase in of trans-media migration: *"Given the fact that there are so many different media exposures for children today, trans-media has become the rage."* And the third is a new family ecology: *"In the digital age and the modern age, where mom and dad are more stressed and more often outside of the home, the demography has shifted. We need to rethink the family engagement process in the modern age."* This was reflected in the recent 'Families Matter' report by the center, which among others revealed that a third of parents of kids under 10 has learned something technical from their children.

A report that will be published in November will present a number of design principles to help in rebuilding this engagement process between parents and children. *"The principal is that we need to focus on extending learning across these different settings. Design for shorter playtimes and provide different kinds of goals and incentives. If we can build an intergenerational scaffold, where a child plays on its own but there's an intention that they check back with an adult, all the better."*

Closing off, Levine reminded the audience that Mrs. Cooney's original question is just as fresh today as it has ever been. *"The family has changed, democracy has changed, the economic circumstances have changed, education is not moving quickly enough. The only thing that's the same is that the children are counting on us."*

Chris Connell

Chris Connell, commercial director at the British digital production outfit Conjure, then gave a practical insight into the creative process behind an app, and the production of interactive e-books in particular. With over a billion apps downloaded from the Apple appstore every month and more than 500.000 apps in the appstore at the moment, the iPad has generated a huge new potential for media producers, Connell said. *"It's an opportunity to claw back attention from television."*

For Connell, the introduction of the iPad was a gamechanger. His company had created an e-book version of one of the teen-lit novels of Susie Cornfield to little succes before its introduction - *"There where hardly any downloads at all, really"*, Connell said. But it gave them a clear enough idea of what they did wrong (the technology wasn't compelling enough; they were aiming at the wrong target audience; and pricing is a precarious matter in an overcrowded marketplace) that when the iPad was introduced, it was *"love at first swipe"*. The second time around, the developers didn't attempt to rejig an existing property, but started buidling from the ground up: *"We offered a completely different experience to what you could get anywhere else and really took advantage of all the different features, because it was written specifically for the iPad."*

Connell specifically mentioned the device's larger screen size, the fact that it's a more social device than a smartphone and the fact that *"the perception has stuck that you can charge a bit more for your apps"* on an iPad as elements of this succes. But he didn't shy away from the problems, either: the enormity of the marketplace and the lack of quality control make it hard for parents to find appropriate content; the fact that most apps are

bought on impulse gives an advantage to known characters and brands; and Apple takes a “quite significant” cut of 30% off all sales. So while the market is growing, succes is still only reached on a trial and error basis. Connell advised producers to take great care of the interface they provided, and to build in levels to deal with shifting attention spans, especially when building apps for children. After all, he reminded the audience, “*The only way to keep your head above water is to make great apps.*”

Peter Nederlof

A first glance at a developing technology that may help producers do this was offered by Peter Nederlof, a web development specialist with the Dutch company Ex Machina Games, in his talk about HTML5. Not unwisely for this crowd with a very mixed technical background, he started with the basic question: “What is HTML5?” According to Wikipedia it is a programming language, but in practice, it is much more, Nederlof argued in his enthusiastic talk.

More than a programming language, Nederlof said, HTML5 is “*a collection of technologies to build the internet as we use it.*” The combined technologies eliminate the use of external plugins that were necessary because traditional HTML is not powerful enough to build the web we want. HTML5 incorporates elements such as audio, video and geo-location.

Moreover, the HTML5 standard is supported by all browsers, contrary to the situation of the recent past in which every browser supports different plugins, making web developing much more difficult. This universality extends to devices as well, Nederlof explained: “*every device that features a browser also supports HTML5 natively, so apps can travel between devices much more easily.*” A dream come true, it would seem, for the content producers in the audience, wanting to carry their stories across platforms.



/JULIEN SORET - THE LORAX

It's the moustache that did the trick. The mysterious character The Lorax that Dr. Seuss created in the sixties has no bones or any other trait that could inspire the animators says Paris based animator Julien Soret. How do you design a creature that doesn't resemble a human being at all?

Senior animator Soret shares his experience with animating *The Lorax*, the film adaptation of Dr Seuss' classic picture book. The film, premiering in The Netherlands in April 2012 is an ecologic tale about a fantasy forest creature that has to deal with protecting his world from a greedy industrialist. Previously Soret's team also made the 3D animated film *Despicable Me* that was a surprising success. With *The Lorax* he and his team faced the challenge of transforming a 40 pages children's book into a 90 minutes feature film. The character of the storyteller was another challenge: in the book, the Once-ler is only visible by two large, green hands. This was impossible to work with in the film, but visualizing the character proved to be extremely difficult. After many drawings the team decided it should be a human-like creature, for the storyteller is the one that finally ruins the wood the Lorax is living in.

For the design of the Lorax the animators were inspired by Danny DeVito, who lend his voice to the creature. *"DeVito looks a bit like the Lorax already: a bit nervous, with a short body and short arms, and thanks to the creature's big moustache we wouldn't have to deal with lip sync problems"*, Soret smiles. Because of the potato-like shape of the body, Soret decided to focus on the Lorax's eyes. After showing the trailer as a worldwide premiere Soret explains more about the technicalities of designing the 3D puppet. In a chock full diagram he points out that animation is just another link in the whole process, where the director has the key say in every shot. To create the puppets, Soret even made videos of himself, striking a pose, to finally draw the movements for the puppet. During production time, the videos are shown many times to different audiences to make sure they're funny or interesting enough.

The book's environmental message in the past made many readers think about deforestation and other threats to nature. During the animation process, Soret says, even some of the animators became aware of their own ecologic efforts and started riding bikes to work...

/MARLEEN SLOT - RINTJE

First he was a real dog. Then he became a 2D character in books and newspapers and now Dutch puppy dog Rintje is turned into a fictional 3D character: on screen and online.

The comic strip about the sweet and faithful fox terrier Rintje has been published weekly for years now on the children's page of Dutch quality newspaper NRC Handelsblad. The series is aimed at an audience of 3 to 6 year olds and stars Rintje and his two good friends, the shy dachshund Tobias and girly poodle Henriette. Together they live through small adventures that are appealing to toddlers. Storylines involve having a loose tooth or not wanting to go to sleep. A secure environment and family life - with Rintje's mum and grandma - are the main themes.

The pictures of creator and visual artist Sieb Posthuma are based on his own dog, an idea Posthuma came up with ten years ago. The author published several Rintje-books that were translated to many different languages and also turned into a live theatre show which all became a huge success in elementary schools and theatres.

Now production company Lemming wants to expand Rintje's media career and introduce him in a stop motion television series and an online universe. Producer Marleen Slot explains she is still looking for investors for the online world of Rintje and for the 3D stop motion animated series - preferably Irish or Scandinavian. The producer chose 3D animation because it gives a more cuddly effect to the dog than 2D would. Online, kids can listen to audio stories, play games, watch clips and explore new worlds. There are also plans for mobile applications. The online clips and stories are adjusted by season and arranged by theme, for example concerning Rintje's first day of school. In a playful way preschoolers can learn about different countries by following Rintje's adventures in New York or India. In the webshop there is even a line of merchandise available.

/CLOSING PANEL

Esther Lim, Christy Dena, Michael Levine, Asta Wellejus

Esther Lim, Chrsty Dena and Michael Levine took the stage for a closing panel, and were joined a little way in by Asta Wellejus. Marc Goodchild started the discussion by returning to the concept of a story's 'bible'. *"If we know what characters from known properties will do in any given situation"*, he asked, *"does that help us bring them to a transmedial platform?"* Dena answered by saying that the 'bible' is not just about what has happened, but can include what can happen as well, prompting Levine to jokingly refer to it as *"New Testament, as opposed to Old Testament."*

He went on to say that for the Sesame Street team, the 'bible' also has to do with who they associate themselves with: *"We're somewhat agnostic, but we have our strong principles."* Lim agreed with Goodchild that a strong 'bible' can help producers *"maintain the integrity of story world"* in a transmedial environment. As Dena reminded the audience that the 'bible' is not set in stone but is instead a breathing document.

Prompted by a question from the audience about which areas would have room for improvement, Lim reminded those present that they cannot rest on their laurels: *"If these kids don't get what they want, they'll go out and mash it themselves."* Wellejus concurred, raising a question that should be at the forefront of any children's media producers' mind: *"Which part of your creation do you let audiences in, and why?"*

Closing off, Goodchild challenged the four speakers to share one burning piece of advice with the audience. Lim impressed upon the audience the importance of having a clear vision of the experience you want to build. *"And community! Don't forget about it, it's your greatest asset."* Dena advised those producers dealing with existing projects to think about the pre-experience and the post-experience: *"How does the audience feel at the end, and what do they want to do next?"* Levine could not limit himself to a single piece of advice, and suggested one should *"try to cross boundaries; create bridges between generations and between formal and informal learning; and have a sustainable business model in mind from the start."* Wellejus theorized that as we're moving from an 'experience economy' to a 'transformation economy', the question becomes how a project changes the user's identity. Also, she urged producers to *"go from constructing the play to constructing the structure and letting the audience build the play."*

And with that, two full and fulfilling conference days came to an end. Before sending the professionals off to an evening of play in Cinekid's MediaLab, presenter Lisa Wade had one last piece of advice: *"Never grow up."*



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Cinekid 2011 has been made possible with the financial support of:

Amsterdam Fund for the Arts, BankGiro Lottery, City of Amsterdam, CulturalParticipation Fund, Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, The Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds, SNS Reaal Fund.

Cinekid for professionals 2011 is supported by :

The Dutch Film Fund and the MEDIA Programme of the European Union.

Cinekid for Professionals 2011 has been made possible by:

Dutch Cultural Media Fund, Eye International, Z@pp, Netherlands Institute for Animation Film, Nickelodeon, NPO Sales, Netherlands Film and Television Academy, DDG, NFC, VERS, Binger Filmlab, NBF, Netwerk Scenarioschrijvers, NVS, NVF, Esther Schmidt, Sabine Veenendaal.

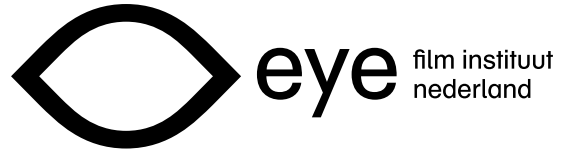
With special thanks to:

Lisa Wade, Marc Goodchild, Matteo Zacchetti, Jacqueline Harding, Rachel Burrell, Susan Newman-Beaudais, Xiaojuan Zhou, Richard Bradley, Esther Lim, Jan Willem Huisman, Hugh Welchman, Rebecca Denton, Yvette Hes (Media Tornado), Christy Dena, Asta Wellejus, Neela Sakaria, Jessica Reinis, Michael Levine, Birgitta van Loon - In'tent, Leontien Peeters - Bernard van Leer foundation, Chris Connell, Peter Nederlof, Julien Soret, Patty Watson (NBC Universal), Marleen Slot, Sieb Posthuma, Wendy Bernfeld and everyone who supported us with good ideas and suggestions.





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