



“NOOB”, AN EXAMPLE OF FRENCH TRANSMEDIA

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Introduction

The term **Transmedia Storytelling** was first used in 2003 by Henry Jenkins in an article for the MIT Technology Review Magazine¹. In France, a great example of a constantly evolving transmedia licence would be **Noob**. Indeed, evolving around more than seven different media and platforms, the universe is followed by a lot of fans, achieving more than a 100 million views on the videos alone.

Created and maintained by a team of volunteer, Noob is often considered the starting point and an inspiration for a new generation of French audio-visual creators.

¹ Jenkins, Henry, "Transmedia Storytelling", MIT Technology Review, January 15, 2003
<http://www.technologyreview.com/news/401760/transmedia-storytelling/>

1) Origin of the licence

1. Noob, from an insult to a French web series

Noob (plural noobs)

1. (Internet slang, pejorative) A newb or newbie; refers to the idea that someone is new to a game, concept, or idea; implying a lack of experience. Also, in some areas the word noob mean someone is obsessed with things.

- You just got pwned, **noob**.
- I'll teach you **noobs** how to play.
- You suck, you **noob**.

Wiktionary – “noob”

Fabien Fournier is an author and made his debut as a director for his *Final Quest* trilogy² in 2000. Following the trilogy, he then started a web series in 2002 called *Lost Levels*³. This is the first web series having the theme of MMORPG whether on the internet or on TV. Lost Levels ended in 2007 with a total of 16 episodes and is showing a constant evolution for the realisation, the scenario and the post-production. In September 2008, he started writing and shooting the first season of an ameliorated version of Lost Levels, **Noob**. Diffused on the French TV channel “Nolife”⁴ the 26th of December 2008, Noob increased his popularity greatly during the season to achieve in 2009 the first place in the French Web Series Box Office in term of views.

Today, the licence represents 262 000 fans on Facebook and 58 000 followers on Twitter. The website has around **600 000** visits per month. The web series alone achieve more than a **100 million views** for more than a 100 episodes, totalling around 15 hours of content. In September 2014, Noob was awarded a **Streamy Award** for the Best International Web Series in Los Angeles⁵.

2. Development over multiple platform

The web series is composed of five seasons produced between 2008 and 2013. Some soundtracks albums were also produced. At the end of the first Season, Fabien Fournier wanted to

² Final Quest is a parody of video games and Japanimation characters. <http://noob-tv.com/video.php?id=249>

³ Lost Levels on the Noob website <http://www.noob-tv.com/videos.php?id=6&sid=26>

⁴ Nolife is a French TV channel also having a name related to video games. Nolife helped numerous web series and programs to find an audience and create fans around their licences. <http://www.nolife-tv.com/>

⁵ 4th Streamy Awards Winners: <http://www.streamys.org/nominees-winners/4th-annual-nominees-winners/>

expand the universe he had started in the web series. To do so, he wrote a book⁶, numbered “1.5”, which is supposed to make the link between the first and second seasons. Since then, **between each season**, a new book is written to increase the background of the universe.

In 2010, following the success of the licence and of the books, Fabien Fournier partnered with Philippe Cardona and Florence Torta to produce the first comic strip. As of today, there are 10 issues for the comic strip and two special editions⁷.

In 2013, Fabien Fournier made a statement explaining that the artistic direction of Noob was going in a direction which required more resources for the shooting and post-production. Therefore, he began a **crowdfunding campaign** to gather enough funds for a movie, which would be considered the 6th season. (See on page 5 for more information about the crowdfunding). Following the crowdfunding, Fabien Fournier announced that he would be producing a trilogy. (The 6th, 7th and 8th seasons). The first movie has been released January 10th 2015 during a preview at **Le Grand Rex**⁸.

Scheduled for release late 2016, the featured film **Neogicia**, is the first spin-off of Noob focused on one of the three factions of the game. The movie has been initiated by the release of the eponym book⁹ in April 2014.

Also scheduled for release late 2016, a spin-off following one of the characters of the series will be produced as a French manga.

During an interview¹⁰, Fabien Fournier stated that since the beginning of the web series, he wanted to use transmedia to share his universe, as it allows to break the limits of traditional media. Reading the books and comics strips, we can see some links between each platform. For example, the book “1.5” narrative is about a stone which helps the characters understand the background of the universe. During the second season of the web series, one of the characters makes a reference about their adventure during a quest.

Each media adds a new story, but enhance the background of the universe of the licence. Therefore Fabien Fournier announced that he will publish an **Encyclopaedia**¹¹ referencing the background of the world (**Olydri**) in great details.

⁶ NOOB – La Pierre des Âges (saison 1.5). Published in November 2009, recounts the time between the first and second season. <http://noob-tv.com/page.php?id=1>

⁷ List of the comic strips issues [https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noob_\(s%C3%A9rie\)#Bande_dessin.C3.A9e](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noob_(s%C3%A9rie)#Bande_dessin.C3.A9e)

⁸ Gathering of fans at Le Grand Rex for the preview:

https://twitter.com/olydri_noob/status/557301129307242496

⁹ Neogicia – Second Eveil. Published in April 2014, the book follow Saly Asigar, an **NPC** giving up her magical capacities to gain super human ones and becoming a “Neogician”. <http://noob-tv.com/page.php?id=2>

¹⁰ Animasia 2015 – Interview de Fabien Fournier des Noob. Cooldown <http://cooldown.fr/news/animasia-2015-interview-de-fabien-fournier-des-noob/>

¹¹ Picture of Fabien Fournier working on an entry of the encyclopaedia <https://www.facebook.com/WebSerieNoob/posts/171669309579184>

One of the key objectives for Fabien Fournier was to create enough **entry-points** into the licence to enable anyone to start engaging with the content. Therefore, one can start immersing into the licence by:

- Watching the first season
- Reading the first book
- Reading the first comic strip
- Reading the Neogicia book
- Watching the first movie of the trilogy (Indeed, the 6th season is explicit enough to understand the majority of the story without watching the other seasons)

2) Implication of the community

1. Festivals and conventions

Since the first season of the web series, the team of actors have often travelled around France to meet with their fans at festivals and conventions. A non-exhaustive list would be: [Japan Expo Paris](#), [Comic Con Paris](#), [Art To Play Nantes](#), [Toulouse Game Show](#), etc.

They use the festivals and conventions to either promote a new season or preview an episode with **exclusivity**, therefore increasing the need for fans to come at these events.

They also promote the brand by selling merchandising during these events with the possibility to have a signing of their favourite actors. In connection with the interactive portal, actors wear QR codes allowing people to gain points to climb the rank ladder.

The exclusivity of preview episodes, the signing of merchandising and the QR code system allows Noob to be one of the most appreciated booth at any conventions, therefore being the most crowded.

2. An interactive portal

In 2011, during the 4th season, Fabien Fournier revealed an iOS and Android App called **Noob'live**¹² allowing fans to receive news about the licence directly to their smartphones.

In 2012, Fabien Fournier revealed an internet platform, **Noob-Online**¹³ for the community to interact and play casual games based on the licence. The portal has a forum, a ranking system based on small challenges and a news system. The forum is often a way for the audience to discuss at length with Fabien Fournier or any actors. The portal has around 50 000 registered accounts.

¹² Noob'live iOS version <http://apps4iphone.com/Android-App-Noob-live-for-iPhone.html>

¹³ Noob-Online <http://www.noob-online.com/>

3. Direct implications

Fabien Fournier often uses social media and the interactive portal to gather the community to help the production. For example, during the festival **Geek Faeries 2012**, more than 300 fans gathered in armor and costumes to shoot one of the epic battle scenes of the 5th season¹⁴.

Another example would be the call from Fabien Fournier to enable the community to make the illustrations of the **Encyclopaedia of Olydri**. Indeed, following a post on Noob-Online¹⁵, anybody had the possibility to send illustrations about any subject in the Encyclopaedia.

But the most important aspect of the direct implications of the audience in the licence would be the crowdfunding.

The 4th of May 2013, Fabien Fournier explained his need for funds to produce a film which would be the 6th season of the web series. He then launched a **crowdfunding campaign** on **Ulule**¹⁶. Initially, Fabien Fournier was asking for 35 000€ (around 24 500£) which was considered a risky amount of money for an independent fantasy fiction in France. However, the needed amount has been obtained **in only fifteen hours**. Then, offering multiple levels of rewards and quality for the future film, the counter exploded to 66 000€ in 24 hours, 80 000€ in one week-end, 200 000€ in two weeks, 400 000€ in 39 days (breaking the European record for a crowdfunding¹⁷) and finally 682 161€ (around 478 000£) in 70 days, representing 1945% of the initial need. Therefore, it was announced that there would not be a movie, but a trilogy (6th, 7th and 8th seasons) and a spin-off (Neogicia). The fans then became the “prosumers” (producer-consumer) of the trilogy.

3) Management of a Transmedia licence

1. Different branches working for the same licence

To be able to create content over different platforms and media, Fabien Fournier organized the licence around five structures.

- **Olydri Studio**, creating the video content whether it be the web series, sketches or the movies.
- **Olydri Editions**, publishing the different books of the licence, but also the physicals editions of the web series (DVD, Blu-ray).

¹⁴ Facebook event for the shoot at the Geek Faeries 2012

<https://www.facebook.com/events/310234149058268/permalink/314081168673566/>

¹⁵ The post offering to send illustrations for the Encyclopaedia <http://www.noob-online.com/news.php?id=112>

¹⁶ Page for the project of Noob, Le Film <http://fr.ulule.com/noob-le-film/>

¹⁷ Article about the record on Le Parisien <http://www.leparisien.fr/cinema/actualite-cinema/une-web-serie-francaise-explose-le-record-d-europe-de-financement-participatif-03-07-2013-2950765.php>

- **Olydri Dev**, responsible for the interactivity with the fans. This branch manages the portal and the development of the casual games featured on the portal.
- **Olydri Com**, responsible for all the communication either with the fans or with the external suppliers. They also manage the brand.
- **PGM Stuff**, manages the merchandising part of the licence. They have an online store¹⁸, but are also present on the festivals. PGM Stuff also partners with other licence to sell theirs (The Guild, Naheulbeuk, Benzai ...)

2. Building the Universe database

Since the web series started in 2008, the background of the world of **Olydri** increased quickly. Therefore, fans started an unofficial Wiki¹⁹ to gather all the information around the universe in 2010. However, the wiki did not achieve sufficient success over the fans to be able to have a consequent database.

Then, on the 29th of December 2013, **Olydri Dev**, created the official wiki²⁰ for the licence, with a lot of information written by **Fabien Fournier** to have enough data to encourage fans to help with the database. As of today, the official wiki has around 1000 content pages with around 1 900 000 views²¹.

Conclusion

Since its beginning in 2008, **Noob** has been able to create content over multiple platforms while having a strong fan base. With the European record of crowdfunding, Noob proved that consumers are willing to follow the path of transmedia, therefore making it a viable way to create content in a sometime too closed traditional industry.

¹⁸ PGM Stuff – online store <http://pgm-stuff.com/>

¹⁹ Unofficial wiki - http://fr.noob.wikia.com/wiki/Wiki_Noob

²⁰ Official wiki - <http://wiki.olydri.com/>

²¹ Statistics of the official wiki - <http://wiki.olydri.com/index.php?title=Sp%C3%A9cial:Statistiques>

ANNEXE A – SYNOPSIS

Horizon 1.0 is the Massive Multiplayer Online Role Playing Game (MMORPG) to have and play. Every day, millions of players are exploring the virtual world of Olydri, experiencing epic adventures without leaving home.

Among them, **Artheon** warrior is the leader of the worst guild of the game: the **Noob** guild. Every giving day he is struggling to push his fellowship to the ultimate reward: level 100. In this painful journey, he is going with **Gaea** summoner manipulative and greedy, assassin **Omega Zell** sexist and self-centered, and last but not least **Sparadrap** priest, naïve and not really bright.

In this game, players' teamwork is vital, so they must assist and, more important, stand each other to complete quests, explore dungeons, survive the wilds and fight deadly monsters to level up and fill up their inventory.

