## SECTION A

### Group Details

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| NAME: TALITHA GRAVESANDE  PROJECT TITLE: KILLER SERIES  GROUP: 4 | GROUP MEMBERS:  MICHAEL HEWINS  ASHLEY ARMSTRONG |

## SECTION B

### Brief Outline of the Project

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| Sat in an interrogation room, the killer ultimately re-lives a string of unforgivable events that transpired between six friends. The emotional build-up serves as a catalyst to the ruthless murder of Tammy Rodgers, a teenage girl who is at the centre of all the dark secrets and incidents within the friendship group. Her murder leaves the remainder of the group with justified motives and in due course, prime suspects in her murder investigation. The killer’s fixation on revenge and obsession with the group, results in the macabre and lurid murder of anyone who tries to uncover the dark truth or unmask the ‘Killer’. With the group and the rest of the town being in apparent danger, the five friends continuously attempt to expose the anonymities of the killer in order to exempt themselves from murder charges by finally unveiling the killer.  The series will be an innovative transmedia project created to convey and portray a dramatic horror story. Due to our desired demographic of 16 to 24 year olds, we believe this specific series will benefit from a contemporary style, showcased throughout several platforms of social media and other cross-media interactive components. Our main deliverables will be our pilot episode, mobile app, and a web app/site; permitting us to deliver our consumers with updated storytelling. Episodes will be aired online, via the website [<https://killerseries.co.uk>] and/or our mobile application. Additional elements consist of QR codes, bots, social media, interactive posters, flyers, a digitally based game and trailer. Moreover, a live element will be introduced to our audience, also exhibited through the website and app, allowing the audience to connect and interrogate the antagonist. The stream will grant the audience an opportunity to express their opinions, questions and thoughts through a Twitter status update section located below the stream, engaging users with the hashtag #KillerSeries. Consumers would also be able to participate and input through YouTube itself, via the video-sharing website's live chat.  A predominant factor to establish a feasible outcome for this project has been distributing our additional roles fairly and efficiently managing our time, within reason of the allocated workload. Continual assessment of the team’s creative skills throughout the production process of ‘Killer’ will enable the project to flourish throughout the series. |

## SECTION C

### Key Influences / Market Research

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| Transmedia storytelling depicts a world that spreads systematically over numerous platforms, and is a direct result of media convergence – the construction of a large narrative that assimilates several texts and cannot be limited to a solitary medium (Jenkins 2006). Media convergence is a key influence in our transmedia project; we chose to tell the narrative of our story through the web series, game, social media, mobile app and website. The intention of transmedia storytelling is to initiate a synchronised and amalgamated entertaining experience for an audience (Jenkins 2007). With this in mind, we agreed to develop an ideal practice of transmedia production – generating new texts that would be distinctive and would make a valued contribution to our franchise (Jenkins 2006), this includes the techniques we anticipate to use when expanding our story. The self-contained entries planned as part of the franchise are games and the initial web series. This means our audience does not have to have watched the series to be able to enjoy the game; each artefact can be a point of entry to our media franchise (Jenkins 2006); an example of this is *The Matrix*. *The Matrix* is a transmedia franchise that distribute a story-world seen in the movie but can be better understood through intertexuality by consumers who read the comic books, play the games (Shepherd 2015), and through collective intelligence which has enabled interactivity (such as conversing on forums) between homophilic fans. We intend to conclude with a comparable result, allowing our viewers to use all components of our project in order to ameliorate their perception of our storyworld. This will be accomplished through a diverse range of information, including characters backstories located on the website and mobile app, and exclusive hidden content dependant on the platform. A media franchise can often be refreshed when presenting multimodal platforms that offer insight and knowledge (Jenkins 2006). *The Matrix,* a proficient transmedia franchise, exploited diverse mediums, altering their content to attract multiple communities and demographics (Jenkins 2006). This approach has been taken in our project when comparing the web app, mobile app and the game. Each platform differentiates from the other, but shares a similar theme for the targeted consumer. |

### Originality:

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| Horror is such a large genre that encompasses numerous subgenres empowering people to identify what exclusive features suit their individual predilections within horror. By selecting the slasher subgenre, we distinguished that we would appeal to a younger target audience; due to slasher horrors being such a well-liked genre in the 1970s-1990s (Hantke 2010) and recently making a comeback with TV shows like MTV’s Scream, FOX’s Scream Queens and more resulting in the shows being so popular amongst our specific age demographic. We decided to combine two popular genres among 16-24 year olds to form a new sub-genre – dramatic-slasher. By merging the entertaining drama elements of structured reality TV shows such as *The Only Way is Essex* and the components of slasher films and horror series such as *Halloween* and *The Walking Dead*, we have created a web-series targeted at the 16-24 demographic.  Other than hybridising genres to supply new constituents to each genre, we have added transmedia factors such as a game, interactive posters, and QR codes. Adding a game is not the newest element added to the genre, *The Walking Dead* added games to their media franchise in 2012 (Klepek 2012).  In the 2014 Mobile Usage survey by Salesforce, 46% of both mobile and tablet users scanned QR codes (Salesforce 2014: 14) therefore we are including them in this project. The Web-Series *Mr Robot* has included QR codes. We would be adding this interactive element to the genre. |

### Audience Research User Centered Design.

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| [See Appendix D]  All audio-visual transmitted material, user generated content and other forms of professionally constructed media are heavily influenced by audience engagement via the substantial impact of the internet (Evans 2011). With shows like *The Walking Dead*, it sets the standard for other shows to follow and portrays the need and desire for more horror series similar to it. This is evident when analysing *The Walking Dead*’s viewer ratings: Season 1 – Episode 6 – 5.97 million viewers in the US (Anon. 2016) displaying some interest; but their latest season premiere (season 7) had a ‘ratings high of 17 million viewers’ (Fitzpatrick 2016). This demonstrates how successful the series is; it also displays the increasing need for another horror show. In order to gain a different perspective the team watched the series to better understand the target audience; using these experiences enables the team to analyse the series’ targeted audience.  In terms of our own viewers ‘user stories’ were created (Ambler 2014) to fit our audience personas that reflected our primary research for the genre [<https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-NMLDNLPN/>]. Some examples of our user stories include:   * *‘As a viewer of the Killer series, I want to see amazingly gory deaths and jump scares so that it suits the slasher genre narrative’*. * *‘As a user of the Killer series mobile app, I want to see exclusive content so I can experience what it is really like behind the scenes’*. * *‘As a viewer of the Killer series and user of the mobile app, I want to see character development and a well-planned narrative so there are no plot holes and I can connect with the characters more when reading their backstory on the app*’ (Cohn n.d.).   In future projects, it may be necessary to create another survey targeted to a particular aspect of the project i.e. the mobile app, as this would enable the team to understand what the audience could expect. Research may be improved through audience analysis from other web series and genres appropriate to the target demographic. |

### Group Work Processes

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| With the absence of a team member assigned the Web Application, it put a lot of pressure on the rest of the team, in terms of the structure and quantity of work. For this reason, we had to ultimately cut back many jobs, as it was not going to be possible to complete all the core and additional transmedia artefacts in time. As a team, Michael and I have been able to produce various pieces of work to a high standard so far through exceptional communication skills (via Slack); managing time and projects well (via Production plan, Scrum board, and Trello); and uploading and keeping a record of changes to our work (via GitHub). Effectively committing to work as a team was successful due to using industry standard programmes and processes. Slack is our main source of communication, and acts as an instant messenger enabling us to improve the team dynamics of the way we work (Augustine 2014) [see Appendix A]; we are perpetually informing one another on our current workflow and utilising the in-app call feature to converse due to its easy use (Diederichs 2015). Putting forth realistic and feasible ideas is a trait we both possess; we are often on the same page and have a high-drive for workflow. The ideation process is typically put across to each other via face-to-face meetings; working this way allows our notions to bounce off each other (Jarrow 2012), initiating many mind-maps [see Appendix A] and allowing us to sketch out our concepts if necessary [Appendix A]. When proposals do not meet the project’s requirements (time wise or other complications), the team contribute constructive feedback in order to alter the initial idea. Trello acts as a scrum board and a magnificent production breakdown plan for my assigned and additional deliverables (Cohn n.d.). This enables us to see what tasks we need to complete and contribute to the project, the deadline for our deliverables and the progress we have made (using the coloured labels) [See Appendix A]. |

### Personal Contribution (Assigned Project Role) and Learning

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| [See Appendix C]  My allocated role is the Mobile Application Lead Developer, denoting that I need to provide a functioning mobile app that requires users to sign-in in order to access content, log-out, and reset their password if needs be. Choosing to sketch out the design of the app before coding the application permitted the team to supply input and feedback. Later linking them together in Experience Design to feel how the app would function. My personal goal is to design, and produce a simple and easy-to-use mobile application (Even 2016) that, in addition to the essential .sql, .php and .html code [see Appendix B], includes a social sign-in button, side-menu, the live element video code to broadcast, and the pilot episode of KILLER. Building a mobile app is a lot more convoluted than the initial thought process, producing the assets for the app can be time consuming. These assets include the app icon, the photographs, the design of buttons, and input forms. One of the most problematic challenges tackled so far is attempting to comprehend the framework of ionic. The ionic framework does not authorise the manual changes of a .css stylesheet, forcing the use of in-line styling in the .html code, and creating a .css stylesheet at the beginning of the document. |

### Personal Contribution (Transmedia Artefact)

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| [See Appendix C]  The creation of assets or deliverables cannot begin without a mass amount of completed research in order to generate the most accurate results we intend to obtain. When executing primary and secondary research, we had to consider: demographics; genre; design; money, and timing before reaching any decisions; this comprises all the supplementary transmedia artefacts we construct. The interactive features in our project are fashioned in order to generate a better multimodal online presence; many successful films, and series such as The Walking Dead and The Matrix developed a media franchise this way (Bain et al. n.d.). Both use convergence culture to portray their story across countless medium channels; an example of this is The Walking Dead’s comic books, TV series, multiple video games, fan fiction, fan art, spin-off TV series, social media and a theme park attraction. Whilst prying into well-established prosperous programmes, we were seeking alternative methods on how we, as a start-up web series, could potentially imitate and surpass the multiplatform storytelling relics that were already circulating in the media.  Other transmedia roles are to create and assure that the branding on our social media is similar – YouTube channel art, Facebook cover photo, and Twitter header. Social media is an important platform for any cross-media seriality; it presents distributers with the audiences’ opinion. Twitter seems to play a substantial role in the engagement of audiences online; hence my idea to write the python script for a twitter bot to favourite all tweets mentioning our hashtag #KillerSeries, in addition to automatically tweeting once a day.  Creating the profiles/personas for the characters and our target audience proves as an essential part of the project that we need to know in order to complete any job in the group. The most difficult thing about constructing these personas was generating what we wanted the characters to portray and what best suits our audience. In order to achieve this, we had to understand what our audience expected from us and from a horror series. Putting a survey together and analysing the responses caused us to base our ideas and our future deliverables around the collected results. An overcome obstacle, in terms of the primary research, was thinking of necessary and relevant questions. In terms of the secondary research, I researched many slasher and drama shows (Scream, Scream Queens, The Walking Dead, The Vampire Diaries, The Only Way is Essex, Geordie Shore, Real Housewives of Atlanta) to see what people like about them and what specific attributes do their audiences share.  The TV and Film industry have the greatest varied audience, especially in comparison to the comics and games industry; they have the narrowest (Jenkins 2006). Opting to invent a game in Processing, so we could target a niche demographic, besides our wider viewers from the web series and mobile app. The game was intended to be a hidden feature in the app, but is unfortunately not able to be, so it will now stand-alone as an additional transmedia artefact. |

### Revenue Stream and/or Social Value

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| Transmedia marketing controls many transmedia franchises revenue streams; the impact of transmedia marketing ‘focuses on providing a branded entertainment’ market ‘in which the content is co/created with the users’ of various interfaces in mind (Yang and Zisiadis 2014). This type of financial marketing impacts the brand of a transmedia project by extending its shelf/brand life(Yang and Zisiadis 2014). Evidently, adding more points of entry to a franchise generates more value and redefines ‘concepts such as return of investment’ (Yang and Zisiadis 2014). Incorporating transmedia revenue strategies into our Killer storyworld will prove effective in terms of advertising.  Google AdWords is a form of advertising is if somebody clicks to visit your website (Anon. n.d.). This transmedia marketing strategy may well for our web app, and the mobile app, if it were available in mobile app stores. Other substantial ways of advertising include product placement, and corporate sponsorship. These may be somewhat difficult considering our artefacts are a TV show, web app and a mobile app; nevertheless, these are things to consider for the future, especially for our transmedia relics such as the game. Another way of advertising our project as a whole is to use social media.  Using social media around a web series one example of this is *Twin Peaks*. *Twin Peaks* is one on the most successful examples to look at, as they were able to use forums to advertise their show by discussing the show and viewers communicating their theories on whom the killer of the show was (Jenkins 2006). Using the same method as Twin Peaks, we will generate awareness on social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Generating all this revenue through transmedia marketing is how we will be able to continue our show in order to keep expanding our storyworld. |

### “Someday Maybe” Features, Future Plans.

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| Our future plans for the series continued past the pilot – including the transmedia work.  Beacon locations for codes were swapped to QR codes on flyers and posters due to the university not having any and not enough time to order them in, 360 vr videos,  Had the series been able to continue past the pilot, we would have incorporated innovative transmedia functions that no other media franchise has yet used to promote a television or web series. Our initial plan for this project was to use beacon locations and plaster them around the university. Using social media (such as Twitter) to give clues as where they could find the beacons to reveal the exclusive information on the series. Unfortunately, we were unable to complete this idea due to the university not having enough time to order them in; instead, we swapped the beacons for QR codes on flyers and our interactive posters. Another ideas of ours was to develop a 360° video that displayed facts and information surrounding our series and incorporate it into the mobile app. We also wanted to add the game I designed and developed into the mobile app, but due to the ionic framework, it does not permit us to add the game’s java script into the code. In regards to the mobile application itself, I would have liked to experiment with trying to add a forum section so users can share their own thoughts, theories and fan fiction. |

### Conclusion

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| Convergences of transmedia storytelling play a key role in the projects of media franchises, including our own. Our dramatic-slasher project uses various platforms as a point of entry (such as a mobile app, website, web series, and a game) to portray digital convergence through intertextuality. Originality was defined through the invention of a new sub-genre, as well as our transmedia artefacts: QR codes, interactive posters, flyers, a game, social media, and a Twitter bot. Research into audience was collected using surveys, personas, and user stories, as well as watching other horror series to gather techniques on appealing to targeted demographics. Effectively working as a team was achieved through the use of industry-standard programmes and software to communicate and manage our production schedules, i.e. Slack. Personal contribution of work is evident when analysing the artefacts, assets and the individual assigned role. Revenue stream is a future factor for continuing the series, it involves the many transmedia marketing and advertising strategies our project could use to generate income. If the revenue stream process is successful, future plans need to be thought out in order to refresh the brand by distributing new points of entry to the franchise. |

## APPENDICIES

APPENDIX MATERIAL TO BE APPENDED AFTER THIS PAGE AND LABLED AND REFERED TO AS APPENDIX A, APPENDIX B, APPENDIX C ETC

APPENDIX A:

Evidence of communication through industry software

<https://github.com/gravesat/KILLERSeries/tree/master/Team%20Appendix>

APPENDIX B:

Essential mobile application code

<https://github.com/gravesat/KILLERSeries/tree/master/TalithaContribution/Mobile%20App>

APPENDIX C:

All personally contributed work by Talitha

<https://github.com/gravesat/KILLERSeries/tree/master/TalithaContribution>

APPENDIX D:

Early prototype files

<https://github.com/gravesat/KILLERSeries/tree/master/Team%20Appendix/Prototypes>

## REFERENCES

At Coventry University, the citation format used for documenting the sources students use in academic assignments is Coventry Hazard. This is a simple system which is used internationally by scholars and researchers. The lecturing team at the Centre for Academic Writing (CAW) have customised the various versions of this referencing style into one user-friendly guide for use by students and staff at Coventry. The guide also contains a **glossary of key terms used in referencing**.

<http://www.coventry.ac.uk/study-at-coventry/student-support/academic-support/centre-for-academic-writing/support-for-students/academic-writing-resources/cu-harvard-reference-style-guide/>

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