

# **last fan STANDING**

## **Last Fan Standing: The Future of Fan Interaction in the Age of Netflix**

Has the wide-spread adoption of technology influenced and increased fan-participation and engagement in the age of television?

## In the Beginning There Were Five



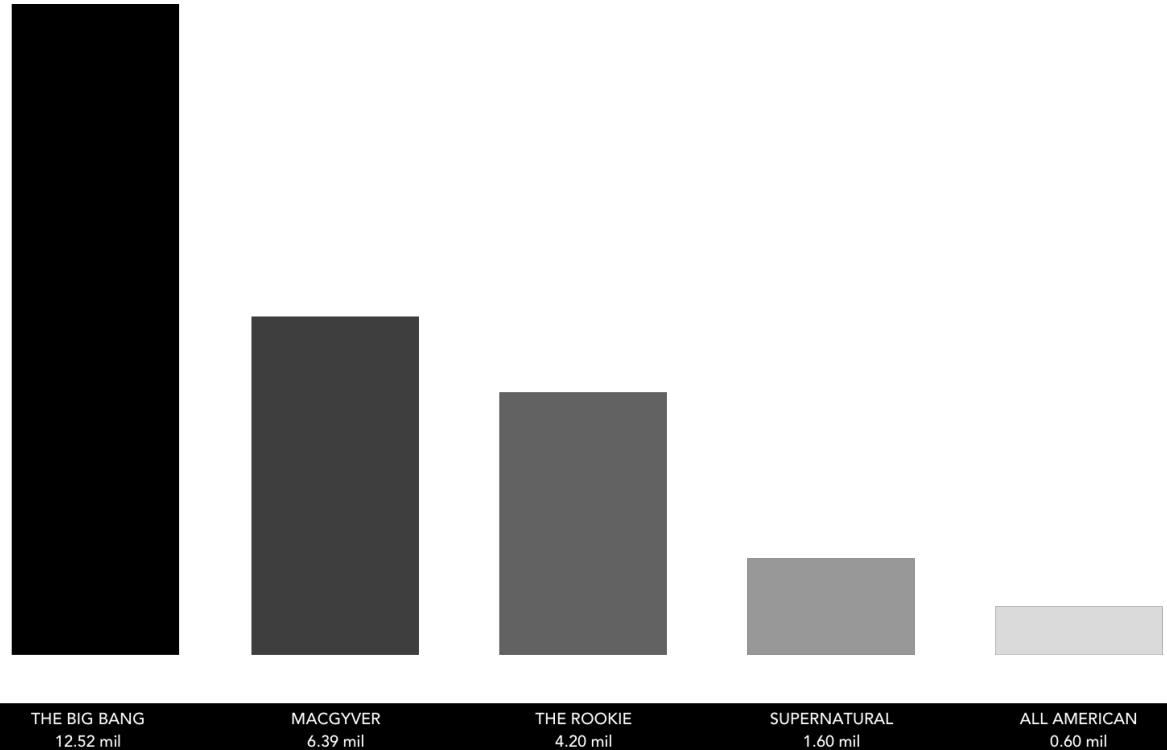
With the **Oxford English Dictionary** adding the phrases 'binge-watch' and 'spoiler alert' to its repertoire in June 2018, it's clear that the television landscape is transforming.

To understand exactly how, we have to go back to the very basics. Since its inception, Television has existed with one simple goal in mind - to sell people products. The first television commercial aired on June 1st, 1941 for the **Bulova Watch Co.** The 10-second commercial reportedly cost \$9 at the time, which is around \$500 adjusted for inflation; this is a bargain by today's standards. In recent years, some companies have paid upwards of \$5 million for advertisements during the annual US Super Bowl sporting event - paying for the privilege of promoting their product to an audience of around 100 million.

Television is still mostly consumed on a linear basis. Linear programming (the idea of watching a show live, as it airs) in the United States is consumed on one of the 'main-five' networks: ABC, CBS, The CW, NBC and Fox. They each have regularly scheduled 'seasons' of shows that viewers watch live, generally in 20 or 45-minute blocks with regular ad breaks. The popularity of these shows is measured by the Nielsen Research Group.

They track viewers using physical boxes in homes. Nielsen gives boxes out very selectively ensuring limited bias and diverse viewing habits. Nielsen then generate a metric referred to as 'ratings' which are broken down by age groups. For ad sales, the most important metric is the 18-49 age group.

For example, a recent episode of the **Big Bang Theory** drew a 2.1 rating (12.52 million live-individual viewers) whilst a recent episode of **Supernatural** averaged a 0.5 rating (1.53 million), making Ad buys/product placement much more lucrative for the “Big Bang Theory.”



As the industry evolved, the concept and favoured status of linear programming began to decline. Viewers wanted flexibility, and the introduction of the home Digital Video Recorder-- or DVR gave it to them. They were suddenly able to record their favourite content and watch it on their schedule.

However, with the advent of streaming or Video on Demand, true nonlinear programming has been born. Viewers suddenly have access to huge libraries of content available instantly with a click of a mouse or a tap on a screen. They can watch from their couch, bed or on the bus. No longer are they limited by just five broadcast networks, or expensive cable packages--suddenly they have a wealth of original content from an array of streaming services.

A study published by **AwesomenessTV** (an American production company creating content for teens and preteens) found that 28% of teenagers are spending their free time watching content on Netflix; this compares to only 14% watching live-TV. Increasingly live-TV seems to be outpaced and outmatched by the growth and consumption of streaming services like Netflix and Amazon.

Millennials (adults aged 18-31) are another group that are quickly gaining a reputation for ditching live-TV, with an increasing number becoming 'cord cutters' (people who cut their traditional cable package in favour of streaming services). 20% of 18 to 31-year-olds opt to watch traditional live-TV through services like **Hulu** or **YouTube TV** over traditional networking. In 2018, there will be 22.2 million cord cutters ages 18 and older.



It's no wonder, then, that almost every month a new streaming service is reported on or launched. Recent additions include the likes of the recently launched **DC Universe**, the long rumoured **Apple TV** and the upcoming **Disney Plus**.

This essay aims to explore the connection between technology and television's shift towards interactive content. Whether you're watching on a television, your iPad or your phone - is the age of 'Transmedia Storytelling' finally here?

## Transmedia, In a Galaxy Not so Far Away



Transmedia storytelling is the idea of telling a single narrative story across a range of platforms, expanding or adding to the original media. This isn't necessarily a new or exclusively 'technological' idea; rather, it predates the internet considerably.

Simon Pont notes in his book 'Digital State: How the internet is changing everything', that transmedia experiences allow for a much richer narrative story; it allows writers to work with parallel and non-linear timelines (**Logan**, for example) arguing that back-story has become more-story.

One of the most notable examples of an expansive transmedia experience is that of **Star Wars**.

In April 1977, a group of executives from Fox Pictures gathered together to watch a screening of an upcoming film, "Star Wars" from director George Lucas. The reaction was apparently muted; several Fox directors believing that the concept would not catch-on with mainstream audiences, as Dave Pollock noted in his biographical book *The Life and Films of George Lucas*.

Star Wars is often cited by academics, including Sean Guynes, as one of the most popular examples of a Transmedia experience. The original 1977 film paved the way for the rise (and later fall) of the Star Wars Expanded Universe, a series of canonical books and comic tie-ins that greatly expanded and built on the 1977 film.

One of the best examples of that is the now-defunct **Star Wars Collectible Card Game** (or CCG.) The game was produced from December 1995 until December 2001.

It was a best-seller in the late 90's - rivalling the likes of **Magic the Gathering** according to InQuest magazine. However, come 2001, the game was cancelled due to a licensing dispute. Devastated fans undeterred banded together and revived the game - illegally.



These fans were known as the Players' Committee. They continue to this day, distributing new self-designed content for the game and organising events. Jonathan Rey Lee notes as part of the Star Wars and the History of Transmedia Storytelling book, that *\*digital\** was an essential part of the game's longevity, allowing a management structure for the game.

A more recent example would be the ABC television series **Castle**. The show featured author-turned-crimefighter Richard Castle. ABC built upon this, publishing a series of non-canonical crime-fiction books 'written' by Richard Castle, often the same books the character spoke about in the television series. Despite Castle's 2016 cancellation, Richard Castle (or rather ghost writer Tom Straw) continues to publish books that top the New York Times Bestsellers list on release.

During the show's run, the actor Nathan Fillion would frequently attend book signings, in character as Richard Castle. The producers also set up a Twitter account for the fictional character, having him share his 'opinion' on real-world events

and share tidbits from the 'office.' It was just another way they continued to expand on the show's narrative, creating a transmedia experience that was entirely consuming for fans of the show. The immersion was enjoyable to the point that the audience were not even fully aware of its extent.

Ultimately, this experience existed with the intent to fully immerse a viewer into the universe, so they would be more inclined to buy merchandise and continue viewing the show. Whilst it was a blatant marketing ploy, it was also a stroke of genius and elevated the show and its world into something living and breathing.

Another way of creating a transmedia experience is to expand your narrative or universe onto social media, much like how Castle created a fake Twitter profile for the titular character. Norwegian show, **SKAM**, took this concept and kicked it up a gear.

Skam features a unique narrative structure, episodes are released in 5-15 minute clips in real time; if a clip features a character having breakfast, it would be released at breakfast time for many Norwegians.

All of the characters in the teen-situational-drama have social media profiles; these profiles don't just compliment the show narrative - but expand on it. Unique text message

conversations and Instagram content that wasn't featured in the show provide a true Transmedia narrative expansion.

# SKAM

As the **New Statesmen** put it, Skam might just be "the most popular programme you've never heard of." In fact, Håkon Sørensen, a Norwegian television analyst, found in a survey that 98% of Norwegian Youth (15-19) were aware of the shows existence - rivalling the likes of international series like **Game of Thrones** and **House of Cards**.

Since the show was released in Norwegian, with no official subtitles or translations, international fans were left with only one option - turning to the rapidly growing Skam fanbase. Dedicated Norwegian fans worked diligently to translate the clips into a multitude of languages and release them on services like Tumblr and Vimeo.

Since the show was so contingent on speculation and discussion, viewing Skam could never truly be a solo or a passive viewing experience. Fans were desperate to know what happened next to these characters, trying to decipher Instagram or Text Messages for clues. With the language barrier, it only increased fan engagement. Some international fans even went as far as learning Norwegian according to the New Statesmen.

## THESE CHARACTERS "FEEL LIKE FRIENDS"

As one fan put it, these characters "feel like friends" which is largely due to the 24-7 nature of following and viewing the show. You see them experience events from beginning to end and the various repercussions and drama that followed.

These examples are illustrative of how key Transmedia is to keeping an engaged network of fans - even long after your content's expiration date. For a show like Castle, the spin-off book series has almost transcended the show in popularity and became a best-selling stand-alone entity.

Transmedia may ultimately exist to sell more merchandise or to hook and reel viewers in but it also exists on a wholesome note, providing fans with more of their favourite universes and enhancing their escapism to new levels.

## Save Our Shows: Journey into the 'fandom'

# LUCIFER

Many television shows have active fan-bases now. These dedicated fans gather together every week on Twitter, Tumblr and Reddit to discuss their favourite show. They share GIFs, memes and quotes. They debate and argue over character choices and plot decisions.

This vocal shift, from passive viewer to engaged fan, hasn't passed advertisers by either. Marketing firm **Troika** has noted that increasingly clients are asking to target television 'fans' directly rather than 'viewers.' According to Troika, 'fans' buy more, engage more, participate more and share more.

Furthermore, In research conducted by Troika last September, 85% of those surveyed reported being 'fans' of a series – 97% in the 18-24 age range.

When these fans come together, they form something known as a 'fandom' - a group of fans gathering online to share content and discuss their favourite show, film or band.

Fandoms often spur creative content, with groups creating memes, parodies or even fan-fiction (taking existing works and building on them with new, original stories.)

In November 2018 a seemingly typical teen romance trailer was released on Twitter for upcoming film *After* - however, as the New Statesmen noted the film is based on internet fan-fiction about Harry Styles, of **One Direction** fame.

Over the course of a year, the original fan-fiction series grew to have over 10 parts and 450 million reads, which lead to it being quickly snatched up and published by Simon & Schuster, who shortly after optioned the movie rights.



This creative outlet for fans can also be used to identify and attempt to repair certain issues with some works, fans unhappy with the LGBT representation of **Harry Potter**, for example, have penned thousands of works with LGBT focussed plots.

Howard Sklar, an Icelandic writer argued in his essay *On the Nature of Emotional Responses to Fictional Characters* that the way audiences respond and connect with characters over time, growing to know and become intimately familiar with them is not so different from that of a friendship with a real-life person, delivering some of the same emotional responses.

**Vox** and **Mashable** both found that fan-fiction and 'fandoms' were increasingly safe-spaces for teens, women, and, essentially, any underrepresented group to write and share content. As Elizabeth Minkel explained in a New Statesmen article, fan-fiction allows marginalised groups the chance to subvert the mainstream or popular perspective, creating their own, idealised worlds to escape into.

The fact is 'fandom' and the real-world have an inherent disconnect. Tumblr's **Fandometrics** illustrates this clearly. If you look at the most popular show according to the Nielsen Research Group, you would see that it's **This is Us**, an NBC show. Metacritic says Netflix's **Making a Murderer**, Rotten Tomatoes says Hulu's **Homecoming**.

These shows don't feature at all in Tumblr's top 10 discussed shows of 2018 list, nor do they feature in the top 50. Whilst these other shows enjoy mainstream success and numerous accolades, they don't generate the kind of following that amasses audiences - or 'fandoms.' According to Tumblr, the most popular shows are CW's **Riverdale** and BBC's **Doctor Who**.



This lack of fandom is largely due to the demographic tuning in - **This is Us** has a median audience age of 53. **Riverdale** has a median age of 33, which is the lowest on network television.

So what happens when all of a sudden the content for these 'fans' stops coming? Every year, dozens of shows airing on US networks get the axe. These fans aren't ready to give up or roll over. They start tweeting, organising and asking--loudly--for their show back.

In May 2018, Fox cancelled both **Lucifer** and **Brooklyn 99**. Both shows were largely successful and had avid online-followings; neither were expected to be cancelled. After an outpouring of fan pressure and behind-the-scenes negotiations, both shows returned on different networks.

Brooklyn 99 was cancelled and revived 48 hours later by NBC. The outpouring of thousands of fans - and celebrities, like Mark Hamill, the Backstreet Boys and Guillermo del Toro were all sure to play into the decision. For a network like NBC, the decision to renew a show with a fan-base 'I-made-earlier' was simple. It would buy them goodwill and was relatively cheap for them to do so since their in-house studio NBC Universal already made the show (Fox was just the distributor.)

Another cancelled show was Lucifer. Lucifer fans tweeted, emailed and posted over 3 million times - with the hashtag **#SaveLucifer** trending for several weeks in a row. Eventually, Netflix stepped in and announced they were saving the show for a third season.

As Christina Savage explained in her thesis, the idea was simple for these fans: demonstrate to both the network and the advertisers that there was both an audience for the show and for the advertising.

This isn't anything new and predates the internet considerably. One of the earliest and most successful campaigns came in the form of the original **STAR TREK**. The show premiered in Fall 1966 to only modest ratings, and by the end of its second season, it was axed by NBC. A small, but organised and dedicated, group of fans were determined to change NBC's mind. The network received more than 110,000 postcards and letters. Considering the lack of internet and how dispersed and disconnected these fans were, it's even more impressive. Eventually, NBC ordered a third and final season.

This isn't necessarily a new phenomenon, but the internet and social media have amplified these fans, giving them a voice when previously they were isolated. Now groups from all over the world can come together and rally behind their cause. This level of fan-participation and engagement is a perfect example of how technology and fan-mentality combined can create high-levels of participation and engagement.

## Interactive Storytelling: Try to Sneak Around? (Turn to Page 17)



In April 1953, CBS began airing a new television series for children, **Winky Dink and You**. The new show was hosted by Jack Barry, a popular television anchor at the time, and sidekicks - Winky Dink and his dog Woofer. What made the show stand out compared to other attempts at programming for children were the interactive elements. The simpler elements involved Jack asking questions directly to his young audience at home, or instructing them to shout out words to "teleport them to a magical land"

However, the true groundbreaking interactivity came with the aid of a "Magic Window". Barry instructed children to draw on their television screens (or ideally on the Magic Window) using crayons and follow lines that were traced by Barry.

Barry had children drawing along with the episode, adding flowers onto Uncle Slim's jacket, or giving him a new nose - prompting a sneeze from the actor. All-and-all the experience was something unique and memorable for many kids in the 1950s.

The show's host Barry frequently told kids to convince their parents to send away for the Magic Window and Crayon kit - which was actually a cheap, thin sheet of plastic that adhered to the television screen by static electricity.

SEND YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS, ALONG WITH 50 CENTS, TO WINKY DINK, BOX 5, NEW YORK, 19,  
NEW YORK!

"Send your name and address, along with 50 cents, to Winky Dink, Box 5, New York, 19, New York! The constant repetition of this phrase, which was surely ingrained deeply in the heads of many parents across America in the 50s, led to Barry and his titular sidekick Winky Dink selling over 2 million of the Magic Screen units.

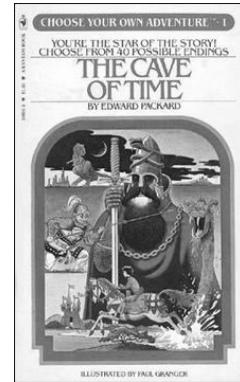
As **CNN** explained, a strong case can be made that the Winky Dink show played a pivotal role in ushering in the age of interactivity in television; it paved the way for future visionaries to iterate and build on their success.

Bill Gates would even go on to mention and show the Winky Dink kit at an early keynote for Microsoft TV in the 1990s.

When we think about interactivity, it's easy to think about the immediate and now. We're surrounded by devices that all boast several forms of interactions from touch with **Apple's iPhone** to sound with **Amazon Echo**. Even though this is the case, the idea of interactive media has existed for decades and the hybridisation of interaction and television is nothing new, either.

As Jared Sandberg noted in a **Wall Street Journal** article, media companies have spent millions trying in vain to find a reason for "couch potatoes to engage with the tube and control programming."

Another attempt is adding the element of choice into programming. The late 1970s and early 1980s saw the rise of a fairly novel concept, **Choose-Your-Own-Adventure books**. Kids were presented with a series of options and then instructed to turn to a specific page to see how their choice played out.



In the era of "Golden TV" in the 1980s and with both British and American broadcasters looking for the "next big thing" in television programming,

it was only a matter of time before one of them took this choice-based narrative concept and applied it to television.

In 1988, the BBC launched **What's Your Story?** It first aired in 1988 as a series of daily episodes between Monday to Friday over two weeks. Aimed exclusively towards children, it featured a group of kids being whisked away on a whimsical adventure by a mysterious figure.

The unique element? At the end of every episode, children were invited to phone up and say what should happen next. This element became so popular that it crashed BT's phone lines at one point, with 500,000 calls during the first broadcast.

To accommodate this narrative the show was written, produced and edited 24 hours before airing. Work on the next episode started after several hours had passed and the phone lines had closed and carried on throughout the night.

This choice-based narrative was enjoyed by children, with many describing the show as "full of surprises" and "great fun" according to Gary Westfahl's book, *Coming of Age: Children's Literature and Popular Culture*.

Unsurprisingly, this format wasn't sustainable for the BBC and they halted production after two seasons. Phone-in-voting was a rather popular format of interaction at the time,

with companies like **DC Comics** holding a 1988 phone-in campaign to decide the fate of one of their most popular characters, Jason Todd.



In the decades that followed, other attempts at a fusion between interactivity and live-action would be attempted. Perhaps some of the more successful have been 'FMV' titles - or full motion video. They use live-action pre-recorded video segments and combines these with typical video game controls. When consoles and PCs started to use CDs instead of cartridges as games, this led to a slew of FMV titles (they required a large amount of storage due to the high-amount of uncompressed video) such as *Night Trap* (1992), *The 7th Guest* (1993), *Voyeur* (1993) and *Phantasmagoria* (1995).

As technology has developed, television producers have once again started looking at how they can increase viewer engagement with interactive elements or choice-based-storytelling.

As Alan Kirby argued in his book *Digimodernism*, interactive content likely spelt the death for those aforementioned Choose-Your-Own-Adventure books. In addition, the invention of hypertext and the world-wide-web creating far more creative narratives and engaging interactions than the books could manage.

These books were replaced with interactive digital experiences. An example would be HBO's **Mosaic** - a choose-your-own-adventure murder mystery by Steven Soderbergh. Viewers watched the show through an iOS/Android app that let them watch and then make a decision about what to do next, viewers then could reach multiple endings. Steven Soderbergh was adamant during production that his story should have integrity and depth and not just be used to "prop up technology."

Netflix is reportedly working on a choose your own adventure episode of **Black Mirror**, after releasing a number of children's television shows in the format including an interactive **Puss in Boots** special aimed at young children. Games like **Life is Strange**, Telltale's **Walking Dead** and **Heavy Rain** have all successfully implemented choice-based narratives into their games, it only makes sense that media companies like Netflix and HBO start exploring the future potential for television.

Interactive Storytelling is surely the most engaged a fan could be with content - they get to control their favourite character's decisions and actions, so they're naturally more invested from the offset. Just like transmedia sinks a user deeper into the fictional world of their favourite television character, interactivity pulls you in and intertwines your experience with that of the character on screen.

## In Conclusion: Everyone's Waiting

# BRITFLIX

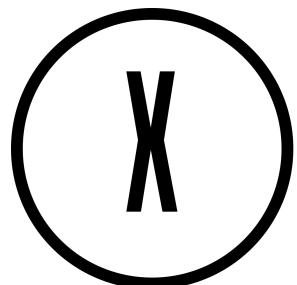
The television landscape has shifted. Gone are the days of crowding around the television and watching a show together as a family aside from the occasional 'event' broadcast like BBC's **The Bodyguard** or a national sporting event. Young people are watching television on individual devices - their phones, tablets or laptops. They might not even be watching live, with all the 'cord-cutters' opting to watch from various streaming video services, like **Netflix** or **Hulu**.

This shift in viewing patterns has left the industry scrambling to keep up - **Ofcom**, the British regulatory body for media recently encouraged British broadcasters to work together to form a Netflix rival - **Britflix**, anyone? Ofcom seems convinced that people will flock to a 'single destination' for content.

The examples mentioned previously are just some of the methods and strategies producers have been working within an attempt to keep viewers engaged, keep them coming back for more and keep them from getting distracted by the endless stream of original content these days.

In just two decades, the number of households in the U.S. with at least one TV set rose from less than a million to 44 million. That number today is 115 million. The issue isn't that the audience isn't there - it's how to engage and captivate an audience enough to gather together and watch something as a collective.

The one seemingly obvious answer is to harness the power of the 'fandom' with shows like **The X-Files** and **Supernatural** using this in recent years. In Season 10 of The X-Files, the end-credits featured various fan handles from social media. Supernatural had several episodes dedicated to the fandom, including a musical.



Another method to increase viewership is to hook a viewer in with interactivity, but even today this is limited by technology's general clunkiness. We've never quite moved on from the problems faced by **Mr Winky Dink and Woofer**, with kids drawing directly on screens. People generally don't like learning new technologies or trying things outside of their comfort zone.

Transmedia and ever-growing expanded universes will continue to exist and be successful, but sometimes struggle when they get too large.

One example of this is Marvel's Cinematic Universe recently reaching a stumbling block when faced with the surprise cancellation of Netflix's **Luke Cage**, **Iron Fist** and **Daredevil**.

So what then is the solution? I would hazard a guess that it's a combination of all three. I don't think one solution will fit all for any audience. Much like the 1950s era of television development, it's going to increasingly be a period of trial and error, with bold producers trying novel new concepts and hoping they don't crash and burn.

In the end, television will become increasingly personalised. Being presented with deep-learning powered suggestions for content I want to watch combined with ads that I want to see, that's the future that we're heading towards. It's time for broadcast television to catch up with Netflix - whether that's through a rival like 'Britflix' or something new altogether, television is here to stay.

**FIN.**

# Critical Bibliography

## **Barnett, K, 2017. It's Only Teenage Wasteland: The Home Media Revival of Freaks and Geeks. Cult Media.**

This is an article from the academic journal 'Cult Media.' It deals extensively with the fan campaign surrounding the cancellation of the show 'Freaks and Geeks' and how it went from an obscure 'teen TV show' to a home-media hit. This will definitely be something worth exploring in my section on 'save our shows' since the show was only produced on DVD after a commitment from fans to purchase it in large volumes, this is yet another example of media companies acknowledging fans wishes and so is a useful illustration of my point.

Whether or not I tackle a Freaks and Geeks section in detail, this article has some informative statistics and quotes that make for interesting research.

## **Crawford, C., 2012. Chris Crawford on Interactive Storytelling. New Riders.**

Chris Crawford, originally a game designer, creating the game 'Eastern Front (1941)' for the Atari console. In 1982, he retired from game designing full time to develop solutions for 'next-generation storytelling' this decade's long research concluded in his 2012 self-titled 'Chris Crawford on Interactive Storytelling.'

The book deals extensively with various aspects of interactive storytelling, including the many challenges that developers face with creating such platforms like "the challenge between user agency and authorial control."

This book tackles many aspects of my essay into really fascinating sections and many pros & cons, including the conclusion that true interactive storytelling may not come to pass for many more decades.

**Guynes, S., 2018. Star Wars and the History of Transmedia Storytelling. 1st ed. Amsterdam University Press.**

This book by Sean Guynes is a collection of essays from various academic professionals looking at Star Wars' various transmedia attempts - including the original Expanded Universe and the more recent new Star Wars canon. This book provides a gluttony of quotes and interesting facts that will greatly benefit my discussion of a transmedia narrative as a general concept. Star Wars obviously isn't television - but it is still a serialised narrative and its status as a cultural behemoth makes it ripe for exploration in this section of my essay.

Another interesting section the book covers is the idea of 'Fandom Edits' - groups of fans coming together to 're-edit' a released film or television series to make it more to their liking, like the 'Phantom Cut', all 3 Star Wars prequels edited into one standalone film with considerably less Jar Jar.

**McErlean, K., 2018. Interactive Narratives and Transmedia Storytelling. 1st ed. Routledge.**

This book, by Northern Irish author Kathy McErlean, discusses the new 'storytelling paradigm' of Interactive Narratives that can be explored and manipulated by the user. She goes on to discuss the likes of Steven Soderbergh's Mosaic and how despite it being released in two forms - one an interactive app experience and one a 'typical' TV narrative, Soderbergh insisted that the app experience is the only way it should be viewed.

In her conclusion, she talks about the future and how she thinks VR and AR will play a role, but we're not there yet. In the meantime, interactive storytelling experiences will continue to increase in significance, especially as big players like Netflix and HBO wade into the waters.

I believe her book will be a great utility for my essay, particularly my Transmedia section and my Interactive Narrative section, her well-informed case studies and array of statistical data is great for referencing and her book,

in general, is informative and interesting and my reading of it so far has given me several new perspectives on my own ideas on the subject.

**ProjectGate. 2017. From 'secret' online teen drama to the international cult phenomenon: The global expansion of SKAM. Available at: <https://bit.ly/2CeTJv4>**

This research paper examines the growth and success of SKAM - A hit Norwegian show - and how it went from a small local television project - with no advertising budget, to a huge international success.

It also takes a deep dive into how technology and Skam's unique transmedia real-time narrative played a key role in this success.

This paper will prove useful for my Transmedia section since Skam will be a large case study for me. The discussion around how it was the growing collection of fans - largely on Twitter and Tumblr and how they were the ones who made it accessible globally - the Norwegian channel NRK did not release the show with international subtitles - these were entirely fan created. This is next level fan engagement and is a perfect example of how this is constantly evolving with our times.

**Jill Walker Rettberg. (2017). A Narrative Analysis of the Use of Social Media in SKAM. [Online Video]. Available from: <https://bit.ly/2QX8IS9>**

This is a complimentary piece for me again, about Skam - however, this is a deep dive into the use of social media to expand on the narrative - like the 'Happy Birthday Isak' video 'created' by the character of Even in the season 4 finale. This video has received over 1 million views - the same episode of SKAM on NRK received only 531,000 viewers.

The narrative expansion with characters posting Instagram posts during the show's hiatus - of them at school or at a party, it allowed the show to continue

living despite not being on air - fans were still engaged and still actively discussing and theorising the show.

**Vox. 2017. How Star Trek fans helped change TV forever - Vox.  
Available at: <https://bit.ly/2xRpBE5>.**

This article discusses how Star Trek's untimely cancellation in 1968 led to the show being catapulted into relevancy - driven entirely by a small collectable of fan's passion and excitement.

Star Trek is one of the earliest (and arguably most successful of the period ) examples of a grassroots 'save our show' campaigns - this pre-dated the internet, so fans wrote to each other in the mail, taking out advertisements in newspapers and starting local meet-ups - all with the intention to bring Star Trek back for a season 3. They sent over 110,000 letters to NBC - who eventually reversed their cancellation decision

This is a fascinating read of fan engagement pre-dating social networking and the internet considerably. What's interesting is how this has evolved and continued to evolve - now TV fans 'tweet' at TV networks, which is I suppose the modern version of writing them mail.

**Pont, S., 2013. Digital State: How the internet is changing everything. 1st ed. UK: Kogan Page.**

Simon Pont's book is packed full with useful anecdotes and facts about the influence of internet on most mediums, including television. The chapters on interactivity and television, teletext and transmedia were all particularly useful for my essay and accompanying website.

**Gizmodo. 2018. America's First Interactive TV Show Encouraged Kids to Draw on the Screen. Available at: <https://bit.ly/2MeCy2R>.**

This 2018 Gizmodo piece brought Winky Dink to my attention - this landmark television series from the late 1950's was one of the pioneers of interactive television and was something I wanted to frame that section of my essay around.

**New Statesmen. 2018. Internet fanfiction is becoming mainstream – but not necessarily more representative. Available at: <https://bit.ly/2PxBtQC>.**

The New Statesmen explored internet fanfiction, charting the course through the endless pages of user-generated content. The article helped me identify some of the key elements and takeaways from this phenomenon and apply it to my essay.

**Savage, C. (2014). Chuck versus the ratings: Savvy fans and "Save Our Show" campaigns. Transformative Works and Cultures.**

Christina Savage's thesis paper on the cancellation of television series Chuck and the proceeding "Save our Show" campaign was informative. It provided a range of quotes and ideas about these campaigns that I would draw from in my essay.

**Sklar, H, 2009. Believable Fictions: On the Nature of Emotional Responses to Fictional Characters. Electronic Journal of the Department of English**

Howard Sklar wrote this essay for a Finnish research journal. It was a deep look at the psychology behind fictional characters as a concept, though I particularly found his ideas and work regarding fictional characters on long-running television shows useful and informative.

**Westfahl, G., 2000. Science Fiction, Children's Literature, and Popular Culture: Coming of Age. 1st ed. Greenwood Press.**

This was another book that I found useful in regards to both Choose Your Own Adventure books and the Winky Dink story.

**Kirby, A., 2009. Digimodernism: How New Technologies Dismantle the Postmodern and Reconfigure Our Culture. 1st ed. Continuum.**

This was another book that I found useful in regards to both Choose Your Own Adventure books, Alan Kirby spoke about how these books were particularly short lived due to the internet spawning much more engaging and immersive interactive narratives, like 2D games.

**Wall Street Journal. 2000. After 50 Years of Effort, Interactive TV Arrives. Available at: <https://on.wsj.com/2S5qGPB>**

This almost two-decade old Wall Street Journal article dives into detail about the various attempts at interactive programming and the companies behind the efforts, showing how many have failed and explaining why.

**CNN. 2013. Winky Dink and ... Bill Gates? Available at: <https://cnn.it/2R2atxH>**

This CNN piece tells an anecdotal story about Bill Gates presenting a Winky Dink kit at an early 1990s press conference.

**Tumblr. 2018. Fandometrics. Available at: <https://bit.ly/2UK37xP>**

Tumblr's Fandometrics site is filled with useful data about fandom interaction with the platform.

## **COLOPHON:**

### **THE MEDIUM:**

This essay webpage is based largely on the World System Teletext format developed in 1976. Teletext is developed by the BBC and the UK Independent Broadcasting Authority for retrieving and displaying updating content on television screens.

This included news, sports scores and movie reviews. More about Teletext and the BBC service, CEEFAX, can be found here: <https://bbc.in/2EwsePx>

### **IMAGERY:**

The imagery on the site was generated using Pixelator. This software for Mac and PC was created to generate realistic 8-bit graphics using a variety of post-processing methods.

### **TYPOGRAPHY:**

The site logo was created using Teletekst, a font created for the Netherland's Teletext service.

The body text is set in ModeSeven, which is a replication of the original BBC System Seven typeface which BBC CEEFAX used. ModeSeven was created by Andrew Bulhak. His website can be found here: <http://dev.null.org/fonts/>