

Appealing to Niche Markets: A Typology of Transmedia Storytelling for Digital Television

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Abstract

- Traditional television networks have a limited broadcast time, so programming decisions attempt to minimize risks by maximizing potential reach.
- Digital television services' potential broadcast time is solely limited by server space and regulations on broadband data transference, so their technological infrastructure affords less risk in appealing to smaller markets with individual television shows.
- This paper proposes a typology of transmedia stories produced by digital television services like Netflix and Hulu to appeal to niche markets as a way of growing their subscriber base.

Types of Transmedia Storytelling for Digital Television



Serialized Continuation

- Finishes a story, world, and character arc previously cut short.
- Requires high amount of previous knowledge.
- Heavy reliance on niche markets.



Cross Platform Personalities

- Familiar characters, new world and story.
- Appeals to previous fans of the personality.
- Low to medium reliance on niche markets.



Augmented Continuation

- Creates new narratives within familiar worlds and characters.
- Requires high previous knowledge and draws on nostalgia.
- Heavy reliance on niche markets.



Adaptations

- Reimagines a previous text through the story, world, and characters.
- Rewards audience of previous text. No knowledge required.
- Low reliance on niche markets.



World Building Universes

- Familiar world, new characters and stories.
- Appeals to fans of other programs in the cinematic universe.
- Medium reliance on niche markets.

Discussion

- As the amount of reliance on niche markets for a show's success increases, digital television services' ability to market the show to a specific audience also increases.
- The services aim to bring the niche customer in through one show and retain the customer by showing them similar programs in their content library.
- To fully understand the relationship between digital television services, transmedia storytelling, and the growth of business, researchers would have to access the companies' analytics. However, digital TV services safeguard their analytics, making data-driven insights into the company difficult.