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TRANSMEDIA STORYTELLING IN DIGITAL GAMES EXPANDING THE UNIVERSE OF *WARCRAFT*

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ABSTRACT. The paper *Transmedia storytelling in digital games*[2] is an analysis on how multiple media work in tandem to tell a story. The story analyzed is the vast universe of *Warcraft,* developed by *Blizzard Entertainment* over the last 20 years and is composed of digital games, novels, comics and manga and other products.

Looking at the evolution of the game and other media products, we can observe that *Blizzard Entertainment* has managed to turn what initially was a trilogy of Real Time Strategy games into a story that is consumed by millions of users that play the Massively Multiplayer online role-playing game *World of Warcraft*, read the *Warcraft* novels and the *Warcraft* manga and comic books and will in 2016 watch the *Warcraft* feature movie.

The present paper brings insight for game developers and media scholars on how the quality of a digital game's story is affected when it is transformed into a transmedia storytelling product due to multiple issues that might arise. Among the issues, there is attracting new audiences as the product ages and the narrative evolves, avoiding narrative conflicts between media and managing the ideal use of storytelling techniques specific to each medium.

Key terms: *Transmedia storytelling, digital games, World of Warcraft, media convergence*

Introduction

Digital games have entered in public attention's eye soon after the first games were released in the 70's, due to their fast growing popularity between young audiences. Studies involving digital games have been

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conducted in multiple domains such as education (Barnett, 2012), psychology (Gentile, 2014), communication (Jenkins, 2010) (Manovich, 2001) (Gambarato, 2013) or even epidemiology (Balicer, 2007). Digital games (also referred to as computer games, video games or electronic games, depending on a few minor variables) can be defined as games that are being played on electronic platforms such as personal computers, tablets, mobile phones, arcade games, consoles that are linked to TV sets, and other devices powered electrically and have a graphical display (Prundaru, 2013).

However, the present study will approach digital games from a new angle: the way digital games are being developed through the help of transmedia storytelling in order to offer audiences the possibility of engaging into an interactive storytelling process and how transmedia storytelling is affecting the story and the audience. The process offers the audience the possibility of further immersion in the narrative universe by consuming additional media. We can see that digital games become storytelling platforms in which the audience is an actor through the avatar they control. This narration in digital games is created in order to allow the audience to transcendence into a virtual world in which completing the tasks given will award satisfaction under multiple forms, including advances in the narrative universe (Prundaru, 2013).

The *Warcraft* universe developed by *Blizzard Entertainment* over the last 20 years was originally composed of three Real Time Strategy (RTS) digital games called *Warcraft* 1, 2 and 3. The story presented in the RTS games was then expanded to other media such as: novels, comics, manga and another game genre, the massively multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG) called *World of Warcraft.* The *Warcraft* universe became one of the most successful game franchises in the world selling over 24 million game copies of the MMORPG and the RTS games while the MMORPG peaked at 12 million subscribers that not only bought the game but also played a monthly subscription in order to be able to play it. (Statista, 2014) (Statistic Brain, 2013).

Due to the success of transmedia storytelling in digital games, we decided to conduct the research on this topic and discover how transmedia storytelling affects the narrative in the case of digital games. In order to do this, the present paper uses two research methods that serve to complement each other.

The first research method used is both qualitative and quantitative representing a content analysis of novels, comic books, manga and digital games from the *Warcraft* narrative universe. The second research method is a quantitative method, representing a survey that established the demographic of the audience and the impact transmedia storytelling has over the consumer's experience.

The present paper brings forward a new dimension to the topic by focusing on how narratives that originated in digital games have developed and expanded through the use of transmedia storytelling. Moreover, the research studies the impact that transmedia storytelling has on the narrative development and how the audience consumes and perceives the new media. The study is relevant due to the fact that transmedia storytelling is becoming more popular among digital game designers and producers.

Definition of concepts

During the last 50 years, digital games have evolved from simple rule centered software (hit the ball with the paddle, shoot the alien ships) that were installed on big expensive computers to complex interactive narratives that can run on pocket size devices. Despite facing a few setbacks in the early 1980's and 1990's, the industry saw one of the fastest growths of the 20th and 21st century with forecasts for sales increases until 2020.

Storytelling has also evolved to fit the new interactive medium; players are being able to influence the storytelling process in genres like *Adventure* and *RPG* through their in-game actions and decisions. As the storage and processing power of computers increased, producers took advantage and increased both the visual and storytelling complexity of digital games launched in the recent years, competing on a market that demands better looking games and better developed timelines.

Jenkins (2006) talks about transmedia storytelling as a response to media convergence and named it the art of world making. He used *The Matrix* franchise in order to argument how a product can be present on multiple media platforms, but relate to one element. Jenkins discusses how *Matrix* fans would need to watch the movies, play the video games, and download web content in order to give a full meaning to the product named *The Matrix*.

Media producers are converging media in order to create narratives that complement each other in the process of story and world building. Media franchises like *The Matrix* converged media such as comic books, literature, movies and digital games in order to create immersion, drillability, world building and other core concepts of transmedia.

Transmedia storytelling in digital games became popular in the industry in order to allow digital games to expand the narrative in ways that would not be possible to the original medium (using writing techniques, drawings or cinema). This allowed the use of different points of view for the audience to experience storytelling (non-interactive, interactive, first person, third person, etc.) based purely on the medium used.

Warcraft is the most developed of the three narrative universes (*Warcraft, Diablo, StarCraft)* created by *Blizzard Entertainment* and has become the subject to multiple cultural references of the 21th century (Wong, 2014) (Whitbrook, 2014). The *Warcraft* universe is a wide project involving multiple video games, books, comic books, short clips and other type of media. The core story of the game cannot be identified as the universe revolves around multiple events happening in the fictional worlds of *Azeroth* and *Draenor (Outland)* where the factions known as The Horde and The Alliance fight against themselves but also defend the world against common evils. (Blizzard Entertainment, 2015).

World of Warcraft is a continuation of the initial *Warcraft* RTS trilogy and it tells a story in the aftermath of the initial three games. Players start in the center of the action as soldiers of one of the two factions (*Horde/Alliance*) and progress through the main storyline of the game accompanied by other players (Blizzard Entertainment, 2015).

Literature Review

In 2007, Israeli epidemiologist, Ran D. Balicer published an article in the Journal of Epidemiology that described how SARS and influenza outbreaks spread similarly to a virtual plague. For the study, Balicer used a glitch from *World of Warcraft's* design (later referred to as *Corrupted Blood incident)* that appeared in 2005 and accidentally spread a virtual disease between player's avatars that were at the time in the game. The virtual plague made players leave major cities to avoid infections (Balicer, 2007) (Orland, 2008).

Charles Blair deputy director of the *Center for Terrorism and Intelligence Studies* compared spreading the virtual disease to the way of terrorist cells behaved (Thier, 2008). While the *Corrupted Blood* incident was researched by multiple scholars and experts, it was also looked upon with skepticism due to the fact that the consequences of such events are mild compared to those of a real life event, as in *World of Warcraft* death is not final as players can be *resurrected* with ease (Thier, 2008) (Orland, 2008).

In the visual communication field and game design, multiple studies have been conducted. Sean Target, Victoria Verlysdonk, Howard J. Hamilton and Daryl Hepting studied the effect of player and community modified user interfaces (*UI Modding*) on the community and on the game. The authors suggest that the basic interface of *World of Warcraft* (and other games that allow *UI Modding*) have been developed in concert with its player base via *UI* modifications. This relationship happened as the users would modify their interfaces to both personalize their game experience and better satisfy their needs. The research also presents a survey in which the results show that over 95% *of World of Warcraft* players customize their User Interface (Targett, Verlysdonk, Hamilton, & Hepting, 2012).

Using *World of Warcraft's* raiding environment, where people group up in order to combat challenges in the form of *boss fights* (fights with strong non playable enemies that require multiple players to defeat), Christopher A. Paul discusses the emergence of a practice called *theorycrafting*. In *theorycrafting*, players use game data for statistical analysis and mathematical modeling in order to seek out the best way to play *World of Warcraft*. *Theorycrafters* try to determine which are the most efficient equipment and best abilities to use for every class during boss fights depending on different factors (Paul, 2011).

Faltin Karlsen approaches the subject of *quests* in digital games, including *World of Warcraft*. In the paper, Karlsen states that quests are a structural entity, intimately connected to the games, being a substructure within the larger game area. The paper describes quests in *World of Warcraft* as a temporary and easily accessible occupation while advancing toward the maximum level (where raiding become the main activity), while in other games, such as the *Discworld*, quests are hidden from the environment and employ syntax or actions that are unique to each *quest* (Karlsen, 2008).

Kristine Jørgensen (2008) discusses how sounds in *World of Warcraft* are interpreted contextually by players as their role is not only ornamental and mood-enhancing, but they play a supporting role in the gameplay. Jørgensen states that visual information works together with auditory information to create understanding to every situation. In order to understand the meaning of specific sounds, players must first become familiar with the game through repeated experience.

Scholars have also performed studies that measured the effects digital games have on player' lives such as stress level, satisfaction, happiness or violent behavior. Jeffery Snodgrass's papers focused on the positive and negative effects of game immersion noted that while *losing yourself* in the game

has positive effects being deeply relaxing, stimulating and acting as a stress reliever, it can however backfire in a game addiction if the player does not control the time spent in the game (Snodgrass J. G., 2011).

Studies on the cognitive effects of video-games showed improvements after playing digital games. Most of the studies showed improvements in fields such as task solving skills (Anderson, Culp McMillan, Lewis, Brunner, Diamond, & Martin, 2009), improvements in patients suffering of neurological dysfunctions (Ilg, Schatton, Schicks, Giese , Schöls, & Synofzik, 2012) and improvements in laparoscopic surgical skills (Rosser, Lynch, Cuddihy , Gentile, Klonsky , & Merrel).

Research Questions

The main hypotheses for the present paper are:

1. *Warcraft's* process of transmedia storytelling is used to enhance the audience's understanding of the narrative universe.
2. The initial medium of the narrative universe does not remain canonical after multiple media appear.
3. Each medium uses specific storytelling techniques that are not present in other media.
4. The novels and comics are targeted at older audience while the games are having a younger audience.

Methodology

The transmedia project chosen to be analyzed is *Blizzard Entertainment's Warcraft* universe which is present on multiple media platforms such as: digital games, novels, comic books and manga. The present thesis uses two research methodologies, one applied to the product and another applied to the consumer.

The first research method used is qualitative and quantitative, a content analysis of novels, comic books, manga and digital games representing the same narrative universe. The second research method is a quantitative method, representing a survey that established the demographic of the audience and the impact of transmedia storytelling over the consumer's experience. The narrative universe selected for the research is the universe of *Warcraft* developed by *Blizzard Entertainment.*

Using the storyline of three major characters in the *Warcraft* universe, the paper will be comparing how the narrative is being developed through multiple media and how the authors have used specific storytelling techniques available to each of the medium. The reason that characters are being used for the comparison is that the narrative universe of *Warcraft* is too broad and complex for it to be analyzed as a whole. The following character timelines will be analyzed based on information taken from the RTS and MMORPG games and the novels, manga and comics that can be found in Annex IV and Annex V:

Arthas Menethil: the Prince and heir to the great kingdom of Lordaeron led by King Terenas Menethil II and was introduced in the RTS *Warcraft III* 2002 while his *Arthas's* first appearance in the storyline was in the novel *Arthas: Rise of the Lich King* by Christie Golden released in 2009. *Arthas Menethil* is important in the narrative universe as his betrayal and patricide led to the fall of the kingdom of *Lordaeron,* the creation of an evil force known as *The Scourge* and his transformation into the evil *The Lich King. Arthas Menethil* has been an important character in digital games, one novel and one manga.

Jaina Proudmore is the daughter of a *Grand Admiral* and was introduced in the RTS *Warcraft III* 2002. Chronologically, her first appearance in the storyline is in the novel *Arthas: Rise of the Lich King* by Christie Golden released in 2009. *Jaina Proudmore* is important in the narrative universe as she is one of the strongest wizards in the world and has led diplomatic missions between the two main opposing factions existing in the game while being an important figure in the faction known as The Alliance. *Jaina Proudmore* has been an important character in digital games, six novels and two series of manga and comics.

Thrall is an orc born under the name *Go'el* and is the son of clan leaders from the planet of *Draenor*. He was introduced in the RTS *Warcraft III* 2002. *Thrall's* first appearance in the storyline was in the novel *Lord of the Clans* by Christie Golden released in October 2001. *Thrall* is important in the narrative universe as he is one of the most powerful living shamans, has aided to defending the world against multiple threats, and is the founder of the faction known as *The Horde*. *Thrall* has been an important character in both digital games, nine novels and three series of manga and comics.

The second research method used is an online survey that ran between 21 and 23 April 2015 and had a target group composed of *Warcraft fans* with the purpose of establishing the audience's experience of the

Warcraft narrative universe and establishes what type of media the audience most often consumes in order to receive information about the game's story. A total of 1018 valid responses were gathered.

Data Analysis

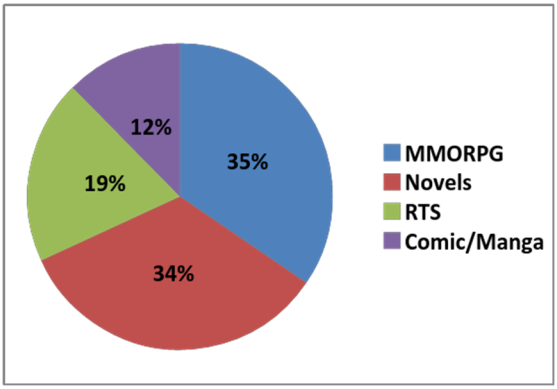

Chart I – Distribution of narrative moments throughout all media in the Warcraft universe)

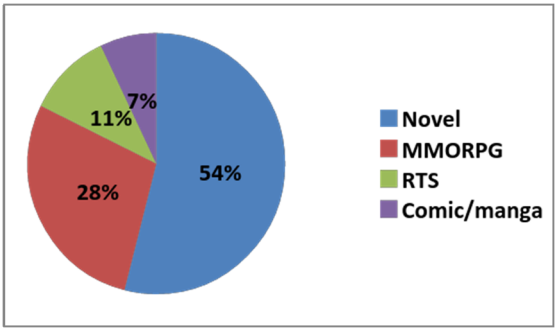

Chart II – Canonical medium distribution in the Warcraft universe

Of the 113 narrative moments analyzed (Annexes IV, V, VI), we can notice an almost equal distribution of around 30% between two characters (Jaina & Arthas), while Thrall has a higher representation rate of about 40%. In regards to the medium used to represent the analyzed narrative moments, almost equal distribution of around 35% can be observed between two categories (MMORPG and novels) followed by RTS (19%) and manga/comics (12%) (Chart I).

Out of 113 narrative moments analyzed (Annex IV, V, VI) a few over half (51.3%) were represented only in one medium, while 30.1% had dual medium representation, and 18.6% could be found in 3 media simultaneously. In total, if counting moments with multiple representations only once, 82 (72%) unique moments existed.

While most of the novels were released prior to the RTS and MMORPG, the analysis shows that in 54% of the moments analyzed the novels are considered canonical with the MMORPG being second at 28.3%, the RTS third with 10.6% and lastly the manga/comics with 7.1%. The figures reveal that the creators of the narrative universe are transferring the official storyline from the games to the novels (Chart II).

Heading towards the use of specific storytelling techniques by each medium we can easily spot out differences from one medium to another. Descriptions are being used in 51% of the narrative moments analyzed with a 97% usage in novels and 90% in manga/comics, but only 15% in MMORPG and 9% in the case of *RTS*. **The figures show that the two games do not rely on actively describing narrative moments** as the virtual world allows the audience to freely view events, environments and other elements that would otherwise require description.

Static images were used only in manga and comics. As cinematic footage are bound to the digital media, it is evident that there were none being used in manga/comics or novels. The digital games however used cinematic footage in 59% of the moments analyzed, being more prevalent in RTS than in MMORPG's. In the MMORPG we found cinematic footage present in 51.3% the moments analyzed while the RTS had 72.2% usage. **The increased use of cinematic footage in RTS can be attributed to the single-player nature of the RTS**. Most cinematic footage can be skipped by users, but in MMORPG not skipping cinematics might lead to slowing down the pace of the action for other members of the group.

Looking forward at how the characters communicate within the media analyzed, we discovered that **text-based dialogue and interior monologue is the most predominant when looking at all the analyzed moments** (38.1%) with voice-overs coming second at 26.5%, and voice-overs combined with extra text-based dialogue at 17.7%. Subtitles for voiced dialogue were not counted as text-based dialogue.

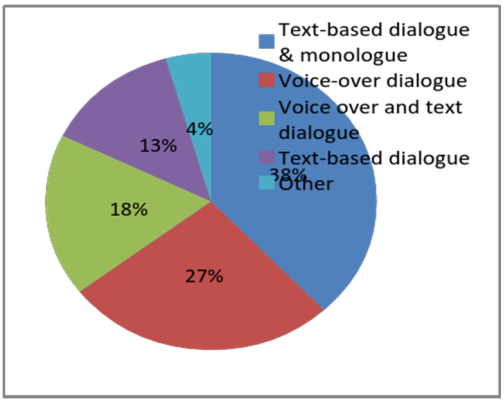

Chart III – Distribution of communication techniques in the Warcraft universe over all media

Overall, text only dialogue ranked fourth, being used in 13.3% of the time. The remaining 4.4% moments used interior monologue mixed with different type of other storytelling techniques (Chart III).

We could observe that voice - overs were used predominantly in RTS (90%) and, MMORPG (79% when also counting narrative moments that also contained text-based dialogue). The novels and manga/ comics used mostly dialogue and

interior monologue (86% for novels and 64% for manga/comics), followed by text-based dialogue (7.8% for novels and 35.7% for manga/comics).

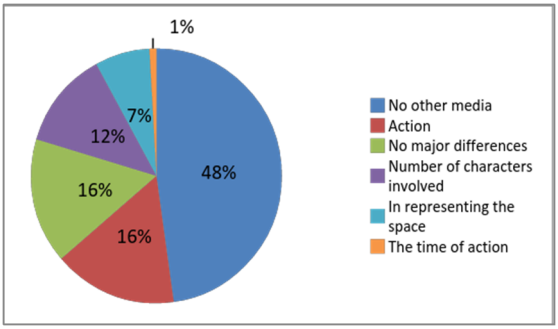

Chart IV – Conflicting details in construction of the narration between all media analyzed in the Warcraft universe.

MMORPG had a higher percentage use of text-based dialogue then novels (17.9%) and overall used a wider range of communication techniques. Looking at interactivity between the medium and audience, by analyzing the novels and comics/manga used in this research, we concluded that the non-digital media does not have an interaction mechanism with the readers. The games however proved to have a high rate of interaction with the audience (87% in MMORPG and 81.8% in RTS).

While in 30.5% of the cases there were no major differences in the way narrative moments were represented from one medium to another, in 30.5% of the analyzed moments there were differences in how the action was constructed (ex: The weather was described harsher in the novels than it was represented in the game). In 23.7% of the moments there were discrepancies in the number of characters involved in the narrative moment (ex: In the *MMORPG* the army being represented smaller than it was described in the novels), while in 13.6% of the moments the space in which the narrative moment was placed presented differences from one medium to another (ex: while the novels described a fight taking place inside a castle, the game representation set the moment happening in front of the gates). In 1.7% of the cases we found differences with one narrative moment being placed in two or more different timeframes (usually happened when depicting alternative timelines) (Chart IV).

The figures gathered within the survey show the presence of a young audience, mainly consisting of teenagers and young adults (19-30 years old) with a small presence of 31-40 and above audience. The *Warcraft* community (as most digital games) is composed mostly of male users (90.3%). The education factor shows that the biggest part of the audience is enrolled in either an upper secondary education system or an undergraduate bachelor one.

A total of 99.7% of the respondents said that they have played *World of Warcraft* while 71% reported having played the *Warcraft* RTS games at least once, 54% reported reading at least one novel from the *Warcraft* series (Chart V).

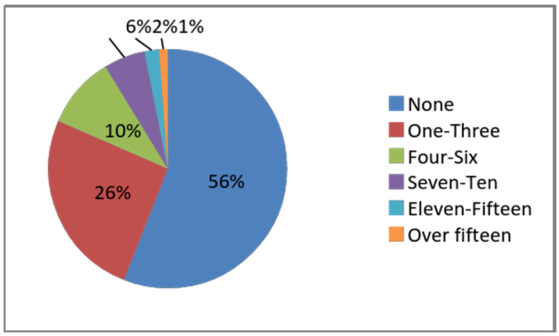

Chart V – Number of Warcraft novels read by the audience

The audience reported consuming manga/comics at least once in a smaller percentage than novels (26%). A total of 83.4% of the respondents claimed to have consumed *Warcraft* through more than one medium.

The most popular medium actively consumed by the audience in order to improve their knowledge of the narrative universe is the MMORPG *World of Warcraft* (69.6%), followed by the RTS games (37.3%), the *Warcraft* novels (33%), and the *Warcraft* manga/comics (11.6%).

When looking at how the audience first came in contact with the *Warcraft* universe, we can see that the initial medium, the RTS games are predominant (49%), followed by the MMORPG *World of Warcraft* (40%) and *Youtube* videos (5%). The *Warcraft* novels were reported as being the first medium only by 2% of the respondents, while the manga and comics only by 0.2%.

Younger audience from the 13-18 age groups and the older audience from the 41 and older age groups are more avid readers of the *Warcraft* novels then audience aged between 19 and 40. A total of 59% of the older audience (41 years or older) have reported reading at least one of the W*arcraft* novels, followed by the young (13-18) audience with half of them reporting to having read at least one of the novels. The ranking continues with the group aged 31-40 (46%), 19-21 (43%) and lastly the group consuming the least amount of novels is the one aged 22-30, with 42% of them having read at least one novel.

Looking at the link between the level of education of the audience and the content consumed, we can see that the RTS game has been consumed at least once, mostly by those enrolled in higher education. Those enrolled in doctoral level studies have reported having played the RTS in 80% of the cases,

the same percentage as those having a master's degree level of education, followed by people with lower secondary education (78%), bachelor's degree (73%), and upper secondary education (68%).

The reason the audience is using multiple media was the following: 71.8% of the respondents said they want to receive extra information on the narrative universe in general, 62.4% want to receive in-depth information about certain characters present in the narrative, and 60% want to find out more about certain events that have happened or are happening in the narrative.

When looking at how the audience perceives the necessity of consuming multiple media in order to understand the narrative universe we can see the following: for 13.7% of those asked, the novels are considered mandatory in order to understand the narrative universe, while 36.1% think the novels are not required to be consumed; 50.2% of the respondents said that the novels are only partially mandatory for those that want to understand the narrative universe. The manga and comics are seen mandatory only for 2.9% of those that have answered, while 72% do not see them mandatory for understanding the narrative universe; 24.8% stated that the manga and comics are only partially mandatory.

In regards to the two digital media, the consumption of the MMORPG is considered mandatory by 37.2% of the respondents, while 29.5% consider it is not mandatory, and 33.3% said it is only partially mandatory. The necessity of the RTS games has similar percentages with that of the MMORPG: 35.1% saying it is mandatory, 28.5% saying it is not and 36.4% answering that the consumption is only partially required for those wanting to understand the narrative.

Looking at how transmedia storytelling affects the audience in terms of consumption, we asked about the existence of discrepancies in the storytelling caused by the process of transmedia storytelling. The 83,4% of those saying they use multiple media answered as such: 21.7% said they found discrepancies between media, 28.8% reported no such discrepancies while 49.5 said they found partial discrepancies existing between multiple media.

Conclusions

The objective of the present paper was analyzing the effect of transmedia storytelling in digital games and establishing what relations are created between different media. The analysis of 114 narrative moments

and a survey applied to 1018 users revealed how the media used for the storytelling process are complementing each other, while also maintaining certain autonomy in terms of consumption.

The present study shows how transmedia storytelling can be applied to digital games and how the media work together complementary in order tell a story. Moreover, the study analyses how the audience is affected by the process of transmedia and what type of media is consumed based on the audience's demographic markers. Through the use of two research methodologies, content analysis and an audience survey, the paper presents several conclusions.

We could see that the media producers have divided the storytelling in equal shares between digital and non-digital media. The content analysis showed that even though the digital media have a higher consumption rate than the non-digital novels, the novels remain canonical to the story most of the time when a narrative moment is present in multiple media. The audience, however, perceives the MMORPG and the RTS canonical in higher percentages than they perceive the novels. The difference can be explained by the higher popularity of the digital media in case of the MMORPG, and by an existing emotional attachment between the audience and the *RPG* which was reported being the first medium they first came in contact with in the *Warcraft* universe by half of the respondents.

Regarding storytelling we could see that *Blizzard Entertainment* used a mix of active storytelling techniques for the digital media and passive ones for the non-digital media. The active storytelling techniques were used mostly to place the audience inside the virtually rendered world as a character (ex: the avatar can be controlled to fight in a battle) while the passive techniques are used to offer in-depth details regarding events, character development and other descriptions for an audience that is now a spectator from outside the story (ex: the audience reads details about a battle in which other heroes fight) instead of an actor inside of it.

The first hypothesis showed that in the case of digital games, transmedia storytelling can be used successfully to enhance the audience's understanding of the narrative universe. Digital games, as any other media has its own limitations in using storytelling techniques, crippling itself in expanding the narrative. The process of transmedia storytelling offers the possibility of launching new products which can render and enlarge the narrative universe in ways digital games cannot.

The second and third hypothesis is relevant for games and stories that were not initially planned to become transmedia stories but aim for multiple media narrative. *Blizzard Entertainment's* work showed that it is possible in time for the canonical medium to be changed from the initial medium to another. This allows producers to give each medium niche attributions. For example, games can be designed to focus around game play and aesthetics while novels, comics and movies are used to develop the story.

The fourth and final hypothesis gives insight on how older generation games can make use of transmedia storytelling to target new, young, audiences who might not be attracted by the outdated graphical and mechanical design of the old games. The possibility of rehashing old content into new media comes with the risk of having narrative conflicts where one medium is described in a way while the game rendition might appear different (for example, a city might be described to host millions of people, while the game rendition is big enough to host a few thousands). Game designers need to calculate which inconsistencies they can afford to have in the story in order to maintain the quality of the product.

Other data gathered show that the majority of digital game audience uses more than one medium in order to enhance their knowledge of the story. Moreover, a high number of those interested in the story of a game use wiki websites and fan made video resources that synthesize information into what can be called *lore videos*. Fan made content such as fan fiction, while not considered canonical, is also part of the transmedia storytelling process and must also be taken into consideration by producers as it is part of the product's community.

Transmedia storytelling has proved to be a successful method of expanding media products from one medium to multiple media. As game designers started developing storytelling in their games, some limitations were met in developing the narrative due to not being able to use certain storytelling techniques at their full potential such as interior monologue or description.

Game designers and media producers interested in storytelling can use the findings of this research in order to create and develop a transmedia storytelling product by following the findings regarding audience targeting based on medium, creating canonical media and using storytelling techniques specific to each medium.

The present research has its limitations, although the proposed objectives have been successfully reached. The first limitation of the study regards the use of only one transmedia storytelling product, the narrative

universe of *Warcraft*. Other digital games have become successful transmedia storytelling products (*Assassin's Creed, Diablo, Resident Evil, Mortal Kombat etc.)* and would be valid subjects for a research. However, even when analyzing the vast narrative universe of *Warcraft* the use of only 3 main characters proved sufficient to gather quality data. The limitation is present due to the vast narrative universes existing in the case of most transmediated digital games, however, the present paper managed to accomplish its purpose by using a narrative universe that due to its popularity has become a popular cultural reference. Another limitation of the research might relate to the sample of survey respondents and their attachment to the narrative universe and the data provided. Due to the fact that the survey was applied online, it had to be promoted throughout existing *Warcraft* communities; this could lead to the sample being composed of players that dedicate more time to playing the games and the narrative universe. However, in order to try and capture a wider spectrum of *Warcraft* consumers, the survey was promoted continuously for 48 hours and in multiple forums, thus reaching a broader range of consumers.

We also propose that future researches analyze how user generated content, such as fan-fiction, affected the narrative universe and influenced content creators in using certain storytelling techniques to deliver the narrative. For instance, fan-made comic strips could lead content producers to expand the universe into producing official comic books that are part of the canonical universe. Another important user generated product that should be taken into consideration for further studies are wiki-pages and online libraries that document, synthesize and disseminate information existent in the narrative universe.

In conclusion, the present paper achieved its purpose in discovering the impact of transmedia storytelling on the narration and audience in the case of digital games.

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Annexes available upon request:

Annex I – Content analysis grid

Annex II – Audience survey

Annex III – Warcraft and World of Warcraft novels in publication order

Annex IV – Warcraft and World of Warcraft novels in which Jaina Proudmore, Thrall or Arthas Menethil are present as main characters in publication order

Annex V – Warcraft and World of Warcraft comics and manga in which Jaina Proudmore, Thrall or Arthas Menethil are present as main characters in publication order

Annex VI – Digital games developed by Blizzard Entertainment