

**GAME-CENTRIC TRANSMEDIA AUDIENCE
EXPERIENCES: CASE OF QUANTUM BREAK AND
DEFIANCE**

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Transmedia research has in the past been mainly interested in defining transmedia and examining transmedia franchises that have their starting point in movies and TV-series. However, there are multiple transmedia constellations that have a game as their starting point, or as a core. In this thesis, I suggest that there is a need for a game-centric transmedia research.

The survey data from two examples of game-centric transmedia, *Defiance* (Trion Worlds, 2013) and *Quantum Break* (Remedy Entertainment, 2016), were analyzed by using grounded theory-informed approach. This was done in order to find out what motivates an audience to consume or avoid game-centric transmedia and what kind of experiences does the integrated transmedia style of *Quantum Break* offer compared to the separate transmedia style of *Defiance*.

The results of this study show that if the developers of game-centric transmedia are aiming for an accessible and cinematic experience, integrated transmedia might be the better choice. The motivations to consume game-centric transmedia had a strong focus on narrative aspects and there were several mentions of immersion and identifying with the characters in the data. The results differ from earlier transmedia audience studies and suggest the need for more game-centric transmedia audience studies, where the core text is a game instead of a television show.

Keywords: Transmedia, Game-centric transmedia, Games, Defiance, Quantum Break

Preface

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1.INTRODUCTION

Transmedial storytelling has been defined by Henry Jenkins (2007) as a process where parts of the same storyworld are told through different media. Ideally, every medium contributes meaningfully to the whole. Other scholars have developed the term further and for example, the role of adaptations and fan fiction as transmedia have been debated. *Transmedia* and transmedial storytelling as concepts are still in the state of flux, constantly being redefined.

Usually, *transmedial constellations* have one starting point from where the expansion starts. It can be a movie, a TV-series, a book, a comic book or a game. These starting points are called *motherships* or *core texts*. Text in this context does not mean only textual material but a medium that presents the storyworld to the audience. The two cases examined here represent transmedia storytelling, where two different media are both core-texts or *co-core* texts.

Defiance (Trion Worlds 2013) is a massively multiplayer online action shooter game and a TV-series, that were developed at the same time by Trion Worlds and TV-channel Syfy. It was marketed as transmedia because both the game and the show had transmedial content during the first and the second season of the show. For example, during episode missions, the player character could meet the characters from the show and help them to achieve certain goals. Competitions allowed one player to appear on the show in a wanted-poster and another got their player character added to the show for a few episodes. As the TV series and the game are available separately, I will refer to the style of *Defiance's* transmedia as *separate transmedia*.

Quantum Break (Remedy Entertainment 2016) is an action adventure game from Remedy Entertainment published in 2016. During the so-called junction points, the player can control the actions of the main antagonist and make a choice between two different outcomes. *Quantum Break* was marketed as transmedia because after this choice is made, a 20-minute episode of digital series

is played where the story revolves around the other antagonists of the game. The choices made in the junction points affect both the episodes shown and the game played after the episodes. As the digital series is part of the *Quantum Break* game, that type of transmedia is referred here as *integrated transmedia*. In addition to the series, *Quantum Break* has a novel called *Quantum Break: Zero State*. That part of the *Quantum Break* transmedia constellation is treated as separate transmedia.

These two games have a very different take on their respective transmedial properties. *Defiance* relies on separate content: TV-series was broadcasted by an American TV-channel Syfy and the game was available to purchase through several retailers. *Quantum Break*, however, has combined the game content and TV-content in such a way that they can be consumed seamlessly. The episode pack can be downloaded into the players' console/computer or the player can choose to watch the episodes streamed from Remedy's servers. After the junction point choice has been made, the episode starts right away. These two different ways to provide transmedial content have their own advantages and disadvantages. The aim of this thesis is to uncover some of the differing experiences between those two from the perspective of the player as well as motivations related to game-centric transmedia. My research questions are:

1. what kind of experiences does integrated transmedia offer compared to separate transmedia?
2. what motivates respondents to consume or avoid game-centric transmedia?

The motivation for this study comes from the fact that studies that have a game as their core text or focus on audience reception seem yet to be in the minority. I think that games as the starting point of a transmedia constellation are an interesting and fruitful area of study that has a lot of available material. The focus of transmedia research has mainly been on either defining transmedia or media constellations that have either a movie or a TV-series as the core. Related to that, I will present my own definition of game-centric transmedia, in the hopes that the naming of a phenomenon will bring more attention to it.

In addition, the results of my research can reveal useful info to game developers interested in making transmedia constellations of their own. Right now, Remedy is the only developer that has tried its hand at integrated transmedia, but for example game developer Hideo Kojima has hinted that his future projects might combine movies and games into one form of entertainment (Byrne 2017). Several game series have expanded their storyworld into comics and novels.

These examples show that game developers are interested in experimenting with transmedial content and it is an important new area to study. But in the end, it is the players and the viewers are the ones that will decide if these experiments will be commercially successful. That is why I am concentrating on the perspective of the player and watcher.

These aspects in the field of transmedia inspired me to take *Defiance* as the object of my Bachelor's thesis, where I studied the negative and positive aspects of its transmedia and the motivations to consume game-centric transmedia. The material received from the survey was so rich, that it encouraged me to continue with the topic but from a slightly different perspective. The data gathering method regarding *Quantum Break* was also a web survey and analyzing method is informed by grounded theory.

As I mentioned earlier, the definitions of transmedia have been of great interest amongst transmedia scholars. In the next chapter, I will introduce some of those and delve into the transmedia research related to games.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter takes a closer look at the definitions of transmedia, provides my own definition of game-centric transmedia and presents examples of transmedia research. Section 2.1 discusses the various definitions of transmedia, including my own definition of game-centric transmedia. Section 2.2 examines transmedia research that has a game or games as an extension and section 2.3 reviews transmedia research that has a game as the starting point of the transmedia constellation.

2.1 The definitions of transmedia

The definitions of transmedia have been a point of contention in the academia. The definition of transmedia storytelling by Henry Jenkins is as follows:

“Transmedia storytelling represents a process where integral elements of a fiction get dispersed systematically across multiple delivery channels for the purpose of creating a unified and coordinated entertainment experience. Ideally, each medium makes its own unique contribution to the unfolding of the story.” (Jenkins 2007)

The definition was first introduced as a bit more longer version Jenkins’ book ”Convergence Culture” (2006, pp.95-96) where he used “the Matrix” franchise as his example. It started as a single science fiction movie but transformed into a transmedia experience between the end of the first movie and the start of the second one. To understand the whole storyworld, viewers had to play the games, read the comic books and watch the animated short films, but on the other hand, they could just watch the movies and be done with that. (Jenkins 2006, pp.101-102.)

Later on, Jenkins updated his theory in his blog, first in 2007 and later in 2011. In his blog post “Transmedia Storytelling 101” he explains several key points related to the concept and I will touch upon a few of those next. As stated by him, transmedia storytelling is more about telling stories about the specific fictional world than characters. It can offer several entry points that cater to the various audience and it can result as gaps in the story that can be mended for example by fan fiction. What is more, transmedial extensions can be used in various different ways. The extensions can, for example, sustain the interest of an audience between breaks, offer information about characters and their motivations, flesh out the world, add realism and fill in the blanks in the timeline of the fictional world. (Jenkins 2007.)

In his blog post “Transmedia 202”, Jenkins wants to clear some misconceptions and debates surrounding transmedia as a concept. One of these debates is related to how it is used. Transmedia is not just branding, franchising or licensing. According to Jenkins true transmedia storytelling emphasizes co-creation and collaboration. Another debate has been about the position of adaptation as transmedia. Earlier Jenkins has talked about the distinctions between adaptation and extension: adaptation tells one particular story again in another medium and thus it can’t be seen as transmedia. Extension, on the other hand, adds something to the story as it is moved from one medium to another. Critique of this stark distinction made Jenkins clarify his position. In reality, the differences are not that stark as adaptation can be very true to the original text or be very different from it. Jenkin states that adaptation and extension could be seen as two points of a continuum and between those two points is where the action happens. The key ingredient of transmedia is *additive comprehension*, a term that Jenkins has adopted from game designer Neil Young. Each new text should add to the audience’s understanding of the story as a whole. For example, most transmedia content can offer backstory, map the world, offer other characters’ perspectives or deepen the audience engagement. (Jenkins 2011.)

One of the most heatedly debated topics according to Jenkins has been about alternate reality games (ARGs) and their position as transmedia or something else (Jenkins 2011). ARG's usually revolve around some mystery that needs a massive amount of people to solve it. The clues are dispersed between different media such as websites, videos and sound clips. In addition, the game can have events in the real world with paid actors. ARG's can be commercial endeavors aimed at promoting a game, a TV-show or a movie or independent artistic experiences.

While Hollywood based transmedia is about telling a story or several stories related to the same universe in different media, alternate reality games use different media to contribute to a "single entertainment experience". ARGs are both complete texts and part of larger franchises at the same time. Jenkins does not take a clear stance on whether alternative reality games could be defined as transmedia or not. He just states that the matter needs more research, but he is not invested in delving into it. (Jenkins 2011.)

The same kind of ambivalence is not evident in Colin B. Harvey's book "Fantastic Transmedia – Narrative, play and memory across science fiction and fantasy storyworlds" (2015). It has a whole chapter on four independent transmedia projects that are essentially alternate reality games and Harvey talks about them as transmedia. Although that debate has clearly no relevance in his work, adaptations are discussed. According to Harvey, adaptations usually tend to forget that an earlier version was ever made and try to claim that theirs is the first instance. When and if an adaptation stops doing that, it is becoming a transmedia story. (Harvey 2015, p. 91.)

In his book, Harvey has collected his many transmedia case studies together and has formed a taxonomy of transmedial relationships. Those relationships describe who is in charge of the transmedia project: holder of the intellectual property rights, users or some other interested parties. In addition to that, the taxonomy also describes the strength of the relationships: strict, distant or unsolicited. For example, directed transmedia storytelling is a strict and controlling relationship between the holder of the IP rights and the transmedia project. (Harvey 2015, pp.185-190.)

Harvey is not the only one who has mapped out the connections between different kinds of transmedia. Jens Eder sees that there are three overlapping areas of transmedial constellations: transmedial advertisement campaigns, transmedial core multi texts and transmedial follow-up communication such as fan fiction and merchandise. Eder has also identified four strategies for the design of transmedia that describe the different kinds of transmedia and what kind of functions they serve. For example, participation strategy includes user-generated content, treasure hunts, and other live events. (Eder 2015, pp.73-78.) These examples show that transmedia is not a simple term and it can mean several different types of relationships and strategies. Until recently, transmedia research has concentrated mostly on defining the term and exploring the different ways transmedia practices can be utilized. Scolari and Ibrus (2014, pp. 2193-2194) called for more varied, multidisciplinary and multinational transmedia research in “Transmedia critical – special section in International Journal of Communication.” One answer to the call came from The World Hobbit Project. It is an international reception study of Peter Jackson’s Hobbit movie trilogy and it is a massive undertaking with over 145 researchers in 46 countries and 37 000 responses to the audience survey (The World Hobbit Project Canada). The Finnish sub-project of the study is called Uses of Fantasy and one of its themes is transmedia (The World Hobbit Project Finland). Even though the Uses of Fantasy might not be motivated by Scolari and Ibrus’ call, it does expand the field of transmedia research.

However, most of the transmedia research still seems to concentrate on media constellations that have either a movie or a TV show as their core text. Research on games as the transmedia core seems to be in the minority, except studies concentrating on alternate reality games.

However, there is a number of transmedia constellations that have a game as their core text, for example *Mass Effect* (BioWare 2007), *Dragon Age* (BioWare 2009), *Halo* (Bungie & 343 Industries 2001), *World of Warcraft* (Blizzard Entertainment 2004) and *Assassin's Creed* (Ubisoft Montreal 2007) to name only few.

2.1.1 Game-centric transmedia

In order to talk about and to research a phenomenon, it must first be named. The definition of game-centric transmedia makes visible the fact that games are an important aspect of transmedia storytelling and not only extensions to movies and television -shows.

My definition of game-centric transmedia is as follows:

A mode of transmedia storytelling, where a game is either a core text or a co-core text of a media constellation.

Transmedia can, for example, include toys, educational content and user-generated content. But from a research point of view, I am interested in canonical transmedia storytelling, where the transmedial extensions of the media constellation expand the overall narrative or directly affect the core text and each other. That can include user-generated content if it has an impact on the canonical narrative of the transmedia experience. For that reason, my definition includes the term “transmedia storytelling”, as it refers to the definition developed by Jenkins (2007.)

Identifying a core text from a transmedia constellation is important from multiple perspectives. I mention here a few that are not only relevant to the makers and consumers of transmedia but to the transmedia researchers as well.

Commercial and promotional aspects

If an IP has developed into a transmedia constellation over time, the extensions offer a way to promote the core text to a new audience as well as provide more content to the existing fans.

Canon

“Idea of canon, that certain things are ”true” for an imaginary world (that characters, locations, and objects exist, and that events have happened within that world), demonstrates the desire for authenticity from the point of view of the audience, who are often concerned with demarcating what is “official” for a world of franchise” (Wolf 2013, pp. 270-271)

As a core text is the starting point of a media constellation, it is necessarily canon. The transmedial extensions, however, have a more ambivalent relationship with canonicity. Sometimes the extensions can lose their position as canon, as was the case with the extended universe of Star Wars or the comic book version of The X-Files season 10 (Proctor 2018). Other times the creators of transmedia need to navigate between their version of the main narrative and the player’s version. For example, in the case of *Dragon Age: Origins* (BioWare 2009), the main narrative is affected by the choices made by the players. In order to be able to make transmedial extensions to the game, the developers had to choose one of those possibilities and make that their canonical version of the world.

Diegetic time of the narrative

Transmedial extensions can be sequels, prequels, interquels, combinations of those or parallel stories (Harvey 2015, pp.90). In order to keep the coherence of the narrative intact, the developers need to keep track of the timeline and it is easier if there is a common point of reference, like a core text.

Why co-core text?

In Jenkins' definition (2007), the ideal is that every medium makes a contribution to the story. According to Harvey, a meaningful contribution is rare when it comes to the transmedia extensions. He uses the concept of *memory* to refer to the important information and narrative pieces of a transmedia story. According to him, it is common, that the memories travel only from core text to the extension and not back and forth. For example, in Marvel Cinematic Universe the events of the movies are referenced in the TV -series Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D but not vice versa. (Harvey 2015, p.91.)

The case examples in my thesis, *Defiance* and *Quantum Break*, really strive for Jenkin's ideal. *Defiance* TV-series and an action MMO were released at the same time. The game had episode missions that featured characters from the series and the consequences of some of those missions were felt in the series. The players were also able to compete for a chance to have their face in a wanted poster and their player character as a minor character in the series. In *Quantum Break*, the tv-like content is embedded in the game and it explores the actions of the antagonists of the game. The player's choices affect the content of the series and the events of the series are felt in the game. Because of the temporal and spatial closeness of the different parts of *Defiance* and *Quantum Break*, it is impossible to say what medium acts as the core text of the media constellation. Thus the special nature of these examples should be taken into account in the definition and co-core text is my attempt to do just that.

Limits

This definition excludes games that are not the core text of a transmedia constellation, so it should not be used when talking about games that are extensions to movies, tv-series, books or comic books. As the definition emphasizes the storytelling in transmedia, it also excludes fact-based educational transmedia projects. The inclusion of alternate reality games to the definition might be problematic because, in the case of ARG's, it is difficult to distinguish what is the core and what is an extension. ARGs are ambivalent in nature, as they aim to blur the lines between reality and fiction. The special nature of ARGs raises several questions related to my definition:

If an ARG is promoting, for example, a digital game and is released before the game, is it then a core text or co-core text? If an ARG is specifically tied to a certain installment of a game series (for example *I Love Bees* ARG [42 Entertainment 2004] and *Halo 2* game [Bungie 2004]), is it a transmedial expansion of the first game or a co-core text of the second? What about permanent ARGs such as *The Black Watchmen* (Alice & Smith 2015)? Is there enough difference between a digital game and an ARG to call their relationship transmedial or is it just *radical intertextuality*, “movement across texts or across textual structures within the same medium” as Jenkins (2011) puts it? The answers to these questions lie heavily in the nature of individual ARGs and their relationship with the other parts of the media constellation. It places a lot of pressure on the interpretation of a researcher and for that reason, guidelines should be created. That is however outside the scope of this thesis.

2.2 Games as transmedia extensions

The three studies presented here focus on TV series that have several different transmedial extensions, games being one type of those. First of the examples is “Audience Reception of Cross- and Transmedia TV Drama in the Age of Convergence” by Nele Simons from the University of Antwerp. She concentrates on the audience reception of transmedia aspects of different TV dramas. The sample of her study is focused on engaged TV drama viewers of Flanders, the Dutch-speaking area of

Belgium. According to Simons, engaged TV drama viewers are so-called heavy users: they discuss their viewing habits, consume related media tied to the shows they watch, produce related content themselves as well as personalize their viewing experience by deciding what technology is used as well as how they consume the content of their choosing. (Simons 2014, p. 2225.)

The research uses a model for the expanded television text, outlined by Ivan Askwith in his Master's thesis "Television 2.0: Reconceptualizing TV as an Engagement Medium" (2007, pp. 55-98). Simons has abridged this framework into a table and in addition, classified the types of expansions into cross-media or transmedia. Simons defines cross-media and transmedia by quoting different sources, Elizabeth Evans and Henry Jenkins among those. Cross-media is defined as activities that promote the core TV text in various ways, provide information, market the show via merchandise, produce user-generated content, provide communication between viewers as well as between viewers and celebrities and provide themed activities such as board games. Transmedia is defined as narrative extensions such as books and webisodes, diegetic extensions such as products and personas from the show's world as well as communication between viewers and fictional people. Experiential activities, such as video games and interactivity that provides a way for the viewers to interact with the show and make meaningful contributions, are defined as both cross-media and transmedia (Simons 2014, pp. 2223-2224.)

A web survey was used to find these intense viewers and from those who answered 61 participants was selected to a second part of the process. The participants were asked to keep an online journal of their viewing habits for a month. The journal had open questions related to different themes. After the month was over, an in-depth interview was conducted with each of the participants. In addition to these participants, 8 focus groups were interviewed. The interviews and diaries were analyzed using qualitative data analysis software called Nvivo 9. An additional quantitative analysis of the interviews and diaries was done as well by counting and cataloging the data into the Aswith's (2007) model. (Simons 2014, pp. 2225-2227.)

Although the participants seemed to engage the different material in multifaceted ways, most of the interactions were with cross-media, such as informational or promotional material. The transmedia engagements that were listed were: webisode watching, playing a game, listening to a radio show, checking and interacting with different fictional websites and social media, voting for a favorite plotline and participating in a murder quest. Cross-and transmedia extensions were not actively searched and were engaged mostly out of boredom, to spend the periods between commercial breaks or seasons, curiosity or habit. Most of the participants didn't feel that those extensions added value to the TV drama and were not interested in the extensions. Some of the participants mentioned deeper immersion, insider knowledge and stronger involvement as reasons to consume extensions, but they were in the minority. According to Simons, the general feeling was that those who fully immerse themselves into fictional worlds were looked down upon the participants. (Simons 2014, pp. 2228-2231.)

Many participants of the focus groups were not even aware of these extensions. Those who watched American TV dramas stated the distance and time lapse between the original and Flemish broadcasts as a reason extensions get lost. For example, characters' and actors' tweets are out of date by the time non-American viewers watch the episodes. Only a small minority of participants produced fan-generated content. Some considered viewer influence on storylines impossible in practice and that viewer involvement would affect immersion negatively. Majority of the participants considered episodes as the most important element of the TV drama and the differences of media were seen as very deep. The motivations stated by the participants to watch TV drama contained entertainment, relaxation, and fun. Only after some probing, they identified immersion and habit as secondary motivations. Immersion was related to watching the episodes and only a few participants mentioned trans- and cross-media elements when thinking about immersion. Thus, Simons concludes, interactive TV drama engagement is not as common as the industry hopes or assumes. (Simons 2014, pp. 2230-2235.)

The second example is Elizabeth Evan's study "Character, audience agency and transmedia drama" that focuses on audience agency. Her audience study is about the fans of a British television series "Spooks" and their experiences with the two sets of computer games related to the series. The research consists of an initial survey, viewing diaries and three focus groups. Instead of focusing on transmedia theories, Evans refers to different theories of interactivity by several researchers and an engagement theory by Murray Smith. (Evans 2008, pp. 198-205.)

The television series Spooks is about a group of secret agents working for the British Intelligence Agency MI5. The official website of Spooks and BBC's interactive channel have had several different games set in the same world during the airing of the series. Two particular sets of games were familiar with the focus groups, so Evans' study concentrates on those. The first set of games consisted of a series of different tasks, such as defusing a bomb or breaking through a firewall of a computer, that were familiar from the show. The tasks were narratively framed as part of the player's MI5 training and they were available through the website of the show. The only character from the show making an appearance is the agents' superior Harry that guides and berates the player. Thus the player herself becomes the main character of the game. The second set of games was divided into training and mission parts that tested memory, observation, puzzle solving and decision making. It was playable through the interactive channel BBCi and had multiple choice questions that were answered using a remote control. (Evans 2008, pp. 198-199, 208.)

Evans found out that characters were an important reason to follow the series. Characters with positive traits were held in high regard as well as strived to be like and a disappointment was felt when the character development was seen as failing. However, assuming the characters' identity or roles themselves in the Spooks games were seen as undesirable by the players. They would have liked to see the familiar characters from the show, to engage characters other than themselves and possibly correct the character developments gone wrong by choosing another destiny for the characters. (Evans 2008, pp. 207-210.)

The third example is “The Game of Thrones. George R.R. Martin’s *A Song of Ice and Fire* and Its Video Game Adaptations” by Felix Schröter. He investigates the relationship between transmedial storyworlds and games by inspecting the world of George R.R. Martin's book series “*A Song of Ice and Fire*” and comparing it to three different video games set in the same world. Using transmedial narratology, film studies and game studies as his starting point, Schröter posits that a narrative can be said to be game-like if “its underlying logic that organizes settings, characters and events can be described in terms of rules, outcomes, goals, and conflict, rather than character psychology, realism or narrative continuity.” (Schröter 2015, pp.65-69.)

While analyzing the games, he uses Klastrup's and Tosca's three features that define successful transmedia world: mythos, topos, and ethos. Mythos is the backstory of the world including myths, heroes and gods. Topos is the geography and the history of the world and ethos means the moral code of behavior for characters. The moral code can include the whole storyworld or just a group of characters inhabiting that world. (Klastrup & Tosca 2014, p. 297.) Schröter declares that it is the ethos of the storyworld that tends to usually include the game-like aspects. This is the case because ethos “provides basic rules that define the inner workings of the world.” (Schröter 2015, p.71.)

“The *Song of Ice and Fire*” -book series (and its TV-series adaptation *Game of Thrones*) is a fantasy saga set in a kingdom of Westeros. The plot of the saga contains politics, warfare and complex relationships between characters. Three different digital games adapting the world of the saga are in the center of Schröter's comparative study. The games are a real-time strategy game *A Game of Thrones: Genesis* (Cyanide 2011), an action role-playing game *Game of Thrones* (Cyanide 2012) and a browser game *Game of Thrones Ascent* (Distructor Beam 2013). According to Schröter's analysis, all three of the case examples both succeed and fail to incorporate the game logic of the original work into their narrative or game mechanics. Out of all three case examples *Game of Thrones: Genesis* manages to incorporate the game logic of the original saga most successfully. This is because the developers of the game have transformed the rules of warfare, diplomacy, social dynamics, and covert

politics into game mechanics. However, all three games have succeeded to please neither critics nor fans. How they have failed makes them interesting test cases for transmedial narratology, Schröter concludes. (Schröter 2016, 71-81.)

2.3 Game-centric transmedia

In this section, the spotlight is on three transmedia research articles that have a game as the starting point of a transmedia constellation. The first one of the three is “Assassin’s Creed and Transmedia Storytelling” by Connie Veugen. She has analyzed the Desmond Saga of *Assassin’s Creed* storyworld that did not start as a transmedia storytelling project but developed later on as such. Her methods are close reading and textual analysis and her aim is to find out if games can be an essential part of a transmedia narrative. The transmedia scholars cited are mainly Henry Jenkins and Christy Dena. (Veugen 2016, pp.1-5.)

The Saga gets its name from the modern-day protagonist Desmond, who is forced to relive the memories of his assassin ancestors by a company called Abstergo. The memories are relived via a device called Animus. The narrative of the saga is dispersed through the main games, handheld games, books, films, comics, and graphic novels, but only some of those are transmedial. Each of the main games - *Assassin’s Creed* (Ubisoft Montreal 2007), *Assassin’s Creed II* (Ubisoft Montreal 2009), *Assassin’s Creed: Brotherhood* (Ubisoft Montreal 2010), *Assassin’s Creed: Revelations* (Ubisoft Montreal 2011) and *Assassin’s Creed III* (Ubisoft Montreal 2012) are surrounded by media texts that revolve around the story of the game in question but also add new characters and events to the saga. The main games, as well as handheld games, drive the narrative and plot forward, but as handheld games are the same medium, they present a case of radical intertextuality as the term is used by Jenkins (2011), not transmedia (Veugen 2016, p. 5-11).

The graphic novels and books are a curious mix. First of the graphic novels is short and can be seen as an introductory paratext and it was only released as part of the limited edition of *Assassin’s Creed*.

The first proper graphic novel “Assassin’s Creed 1: Desmond” is considered partly non-canonical, because the modern-day part is different than in the games. The other parts, however, are canonical and introduce new characters. The second graphic novel, “Assassin’s Creed 2: Aquilus” is canonical and the third one, “Assassin’s Creed 3: Accipiter” is once again only partly canonical because of the modern day part. Two out of four books just retell the same story as the game it relates to, so they are crossmedial adaptations. But two books are partly transmedial: although they also retell the events depicted in their respected games, they also provide a lot of information not available anywhere else. Although the Desmond Saga does have some short films and graphic novels that are purely transmedial, part of the extensions can’t be described as transmedia (Veugen 2016, pp. 6-11).

After doing this close reading analysis of the Desmond Saga, Veugen wanted to find out about the consumption experiences of it. She was able to use the raw data from a survey made by a Master’s student Samantha Schäfer. Most of the respondents were male, twenty to thirty years of old and European or North American. 471 respondents had consumed at least one media text related to the Desmond Saga. The results showed that 70 % of respondents had played all the main games, 15 % had watched all three films, 11 % had read all the books, 11 % had read both of the comics and 7% had read all three graphic novels. Seven respondents had only read the books and not played the games. According to Veugen, the numbers are sobering and demonstrate that the respondents are not that interested in the transmedia part of the saga. The survey also revealed that everyone did not play the games in the order those were released. Veugen finds this interesting, as it illustrates that the games are self-contained and that it is different from transmedia that has film as their core where the order of the films do matter. (Veugen 2016, pp 12 -17.)

Assassin’s Creed’s story is first seen and expanded in the games. Then it is fleshed out in books, graphic novels, and films. Veugen claims that it can be seen nearly as a reversal to Jenkin’s definition of transmedia storytelling. Unlike other transmedia storytelling, the games are the most important medium and the other media supports the games. She wonders why other transmedia constellations

use games merely as playable instances of the storyworld and not “true narrative contributions” to the story. (Veugen 2016, pp. 12, 14.)

Not all game-centric transmedia is as extensive as the narrative world of Assassin’s Creed. My second example is Jason Mittell’s article “Playing for Plot in the Lost and Portal Franchises”. The two games, *Portal* (Valve Corporation 2007) and *Portal 2* (Valve Corporation 2011), are puzzle games where the silent main character Chell is trying to solve the puzzles found in Aperture Labs by using a portal gun. Although the main focus of the game is the puzzle element, it slowly introduces an interesting story which is expanded and explored more in *Portal 2*. The webcomic “Portal: Lab Rat” fills a space in between *Portal* and *Portal 2* as well as introduces a character who has left messages all over the Aperture labs that the player can find. In addition, it features a couple of aspects that are explored further in *Portal 2*. According to Mittell, it is typical transmedial paratext because it presents only “secondary storyworld depth”. (Mittell 2012, 9-10.)

What he finds more interesting are the “forensic fans” who explore the mythos of the *Portal* narrative in internet forums. They are creating a “rich site of alternative gameplay” according to him. He sees the narrative of the *Portal* series, as fun as it may be for the forensic fans, as ultimately inconsequential to the gameplay. The incomplete mysteries might be frustrating and disappointing for players that expect the narrative puzzles to be as solvable as the other puzzles in the game. According to Mittell, the *Portal* series is a game where playfulness is an important part of understanding the story. It illustrates how far fans go to while exploring transmedia narratives and how expectations of a clear plot can be left unfulfilled if the storytelling and mechanics don’t merge well together. Finally, Mittell states that narrative and gameplay can function together to inspire fan engagement and it implies that those two parts are interlaced rather than at odds with each other. (Mittell 2012, pp.10-11.)

My third example, also a specimen of game-centric transmedia that is not a sprawling franchise, is Michael Fuchs' article "My name is Alan Wake. I'm a writer: Crafting Narrative Complexity in the Age of Transmedia Storytelling." Fuchs examines the narrative of the game from the point of view of literary theory, film theory, game research, and transmedia research. (Fuchs 2013.)

Alan Wake (Remedy Entertainment 2010) is a thriller action game where the hero Alan fights the Dark Presence that has taken over a small town of Bright Falls. According to Fuchs *Alan Wake* has a narrative that is very complex with a plethora of allusions and it goes beyond the medium it represents. The narrative complexity of the game is discussed at length, but transmedia is touched upon as well. The main transmedial extension of the game is a six-part web series "Bright Falls". It was released a bit earlier than the game and it is a live-action prequel to *Alan Wake*. Several characters and locations are introduced in the series, including Alan who is first seen as a cardboard cut-out as well as in a YouTube interview and finally arriving in Bright Falls in the final episode. (Fuchs 2013, pp. 144-153.)

In addition to the characters and locations the series connects to the game by drawing comparisons between the main character Jake Fischer and Alan, highlighting the process of writing and by using spatial and temporal confusion as part of the narrative. In conjunction with the game, the series deepens the characters and elaborates the mythology of Bright Falls. The world of *Alan Wake* also has an intra-diegetic transmedial storyworld of its own, Night Springs. Night Springs board games and video games have been scattered here and there in addition to a television series that can be watched via the television sets found during the adventure. Fuchs states that Night Springs reveals that *Alan Wake* is also interested in "exploring how stories are told across media", as Gonzales (2010) puts it. (Fuchs 2013, pp. 151-153.)

Fuchs argues that in relation to *Alan Wake*, the gamers play for the narrative and with the potential meanings the narrative provides. He concludes that narrative makes a transmedia storyworld and that a new contract between a player and a game includes also storytelling. (Fuchs 2013, p. 154.)

Now that we have an understanding of transmedia storytelling and what kind of research can be done related to it, we can move on to my case examples.

3. DEFIANCE AND QUANTUM BREAK

This chapter introduces *Defiance* and *Quantum Break*. Section 3.1 outlines the basic information about the *Defiance* TV -show and the game, the section 3.1.1 presents the transmedial properties of *Defiance*. Section 3.2 introduces *Quantum Break* game and the accompanied digital series, section 3.2.1 displays the transmedial properties of *Quantum Break*.

3.1 Defiance

The Defiance television show was created by Kevin Murphy, Rockne S. O'Bannon and Michael Taylor for the American TV-channel Syfy. The *Defiance* game was created simultaneously by Trion Worlds as a multiplatform game (TV By The Numbers 2012). The TV-show ran for 3 seasons in 2013-2015 but it was cancelled after that. The game is still ongoing and it has changed from a retailer game to a free-to-play game during its course. In other words, the game itself is free but it has micro-transactions inside the game. In 2018 Trion Worlds released *Defiance 2050*, an improved version of the game for PlayStation 4, Xbox One and PC (trionworlds.com/defiance 2018). This chapter, the survey and my thesis however focus solely on the older version of the game.



Figure 1. The television show takes place mostly in the town of Defiance.

The events of the game and show take place in the year 2046, in an Earth that has been forever changed. Roughly 30 years prior an alien coalition called the Votan appeared to Earth seeking refuge. It caused widespread panic and led to a war. Now humans and aliens have lived in relative peace for many years, but during the chaos the terraforming technology got loose and changed the flora and fauna. The deteriorating spaceships of Votans still orbit the earth, dropping pieces from time to time to different areas. These areas are called Arkfalls and those birthed a new profession: ark hunter. Ark hunters seek out Arkfalls and try to obtain pieces of valuable alien technology to sell. The TV-show focuses on a small town called Defiance, formed on the ruins of old St. Louis in North America. The show has an ensemble cast, but the main focus of the series is on lawkeeper Joshua Nolan and his adopted alien daughter Irisa. The episodes of the show revolve around relationships, politics and the co-existence of humans and several alien races.



Figure 2. The game is much more action-oriented than the series.

The setting of the game is the San Francisco Bay area and the player is an ark hunter. She is free to roam the big map and do different missions in a game space shared with other people. The world offers different types of missions that can be completed alone, with other players or against another people. As the genre of the game is a shooter, it is action based and contains a great deal of combat and shooting. Gangs and criminals roam the streets, resources are scarce and animals deadly.

3.1.1 Transmedial properties of Defiance

Defiance as a transmedia project strives to achieve the transmedial storytelling ideal of Jenkins (2007). Both the TV show and the game makes their own unique contribution: the focus of the television show is drama, the game concentrates on action. Both offer their own entry point to different audience segments while enhancing the overall experience and still remaining self-contained.

Episode missions



Figure 3. The game character is joined by Nolan and Irisa in the first episode mission.

During the first and the second season of the show, the game had seven special missions called episode missions. The first one was available from the start, the rest of the missions appeared to the game between certain TV episodes and were available only limited time. Later the episode missions were added to the game permanently. During these missions, the player character met characters from the show and performed certain tasks for them. These tasks were related to the storylines of the TV episodes and the actions of the player were framed in a way that gave the impression they had an impact to the events of the show.

Competitions



Figure 4. The winner of the “Most Wanted” competition

Two bigger competitions were executed during the first and the second season of the show. First one of these competitions was called “Most Wanted” and it was divided into two parts: “Most Wanted: Rogues Gallery” and “Most Wanted: Competitor”. The first part required the players to kill different enemies in the game and the second part was a team-based challenge between players. Both parts also included a weekly “contract”, a mission that could only be fulfilled if the player character was on a certain level. These tasks earned their player in-game currency called Ark Salvage. The player earning the most Ark Salvage per hour during the two-week period of the contest would be the winner (Trionworlds.com/defiance 2013a.) The winner Zachary P. got his likeness rendered into a wanted-poster (Trionworlds.com/defiance 2013b) that was seen for a couple of seconds at the beginning of the final episode of season one, “Everything is Broken”.

The second competition was called “Play the game, join the show”. The players were required to complete as many major Arkfall Events as possible in three weeks. Arkfall events are areas of the map that have pieces of the alien arks just fallen from the sky and swarming with enemies. The writers of the show wrote backstories for the player characters of top ten players and fans could vote their favorite character in Facebook. The winner was selected from the five most voted characters by the Defiance Executive Producer Kevin Murphy. (Fowler 2013.) The winner’s character Alethea (Syfy.com 2013) was in three episodes of the second season: “Bottom of the World”, “Doll Parts” and “I Almost Prayed”. She was mostly seen in the background but in “Doll Parts” she had a couple of lines in an alien language. Her backstory was never explored in the show.

Promotional codes

Promotional Arkfall codes were hidden into several videos and pictures during the first and the second season of the show. During season three every episode broadcasted had EGO codes. These codes could be redeemed in the game and they offered in-game rewards such as money, vehicles and reputation. (Defiance Data.)

Minisodes



Figure 5. A scene from the motion comic Ark Hunter Chronicles.

Three instances of supplementation material can be grouped under the headline of minisodes. “The World of Defiance” combines voice over, animation and pre-rendered game footage into a two-minute trailer and it outlines the history of the human/Votan conflict and resolution, as well as introduces the ark hunters. “Ark Hunter Chronicles” is a motion comic that was first released in separate episodes and later as a director’s cut, totaling 8 minutes and 40 seconds (Lefebvre 2013). It tells the story of two ark hunters that are recruited by a mysterious female fighter. The motion comic fleshes out the world, the atmosphere and the action of the *Defiance* game.

“Defiance: The Lost Ones” is a five-part series of mini webisodes that take place between the first and the second season. The series is acted and it concentrates on the efforts of Nolan while trying to find his foster daughter Irisa. (Trionworlds.com/defiance 2014.)

3.2 Quantum Break



Figure 6. Time has been frozen around Jack in the game and he has taken away the guns from Liam and Beth.

Quantum Break is a single player action adventure game, developed by Remedy Entertainment and released in 2016. In contrast to *Defiance*, *Quantum Break* takes place in contemporary Earth. The player character Jack Joyce is invited to see an experiment by his old friend, Paul Serene. The experiment is a time machine and as it is turned on, time breaks. The catastrophe exposes both men to chronon particles that give them time-based superhuman abilities. Jack wants to mend the breach and save the world, but Paul is convinced that nothing can stop the end of time. Paul and his company Monarch Solutions have plans of their own and he and Jack become mortal enemies.

The narrative of the digital series mainly revolves around three employees of Monarch Solutions, Fiona Miller, Charlie Wincott and Liam Burke. They get mixed up to the events that Jack causes and set out to uncover what is going on. Some of the characters start out as an antagonist to Jack, but later turn to his side depending on the choices the player makes. Other characters from the game make an appearance as well, such as the main villain Paul Serene and his henchman Martin Hatch.

3.2.1 Transmedial properties of Quantum Break

The transmedia of *Quantum Break* is more like the transmedia of alternate reality games: it uses different media to tell one story. But on the other hand, it also strives to follow the ideal of Jenkins: the game is all about the main character and his actions, the digital series is used to deepen the supporting characters and shed light on their situation and motivations.

Junction points

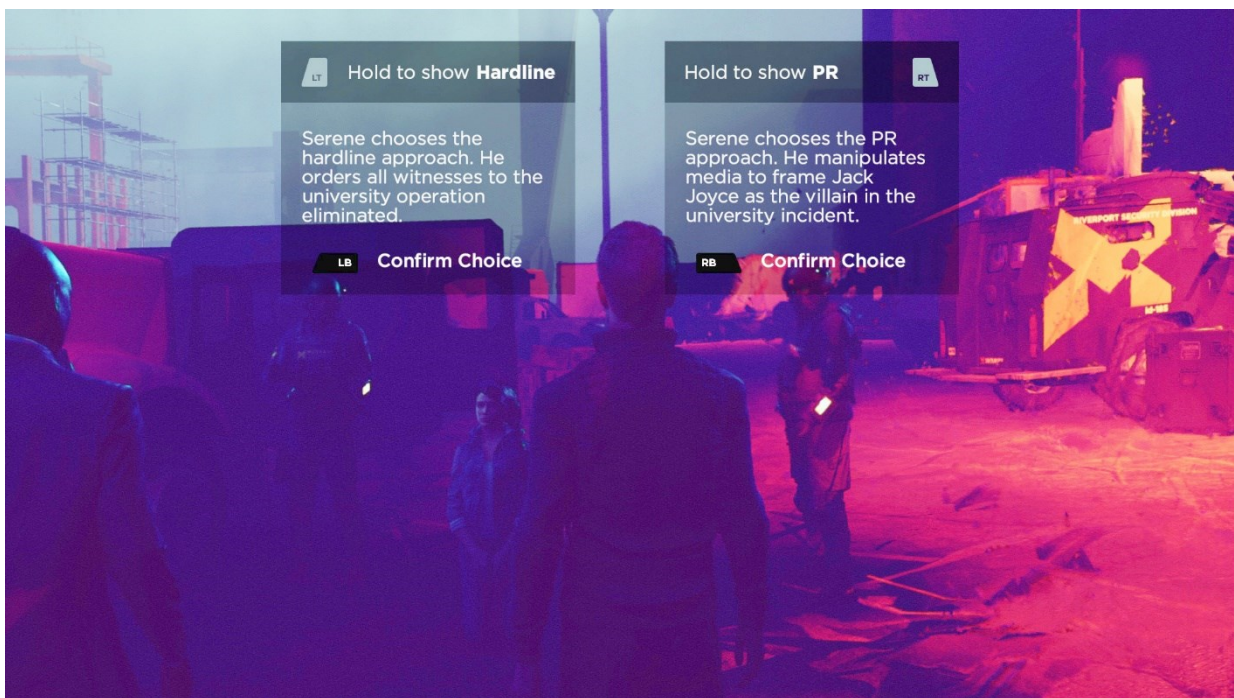


Figure 7. The first junction point

The game has a total of four junction points. For a brief moment, the player controls the main antagonist, Paul Serene. Paul has been affected by the time travel and he can see premonitions, different outcomes to different choices. Two choices are presented with a glimpse of the consequences and the player gets to choose which one happens. The player can for example choose if Paul will talk to the captured Jack himself or let his subordinate take care of it.

Episodes



Figure 8. Liam and Beth from the digital series, moments before Jack takes their guns.

After each junction point, a 20-minute episode of the digital series is shown. The player's choice in the junction point affects the episode and a different version is shown, depending on the choice. The events of the episodes affect the game in several ways. For example, if one side character gets killed in the episode, another will accompany Jack on his quest. In addition, collectibles are changed: emails and radio shows reflect the events of the episode.

Quantum ripples

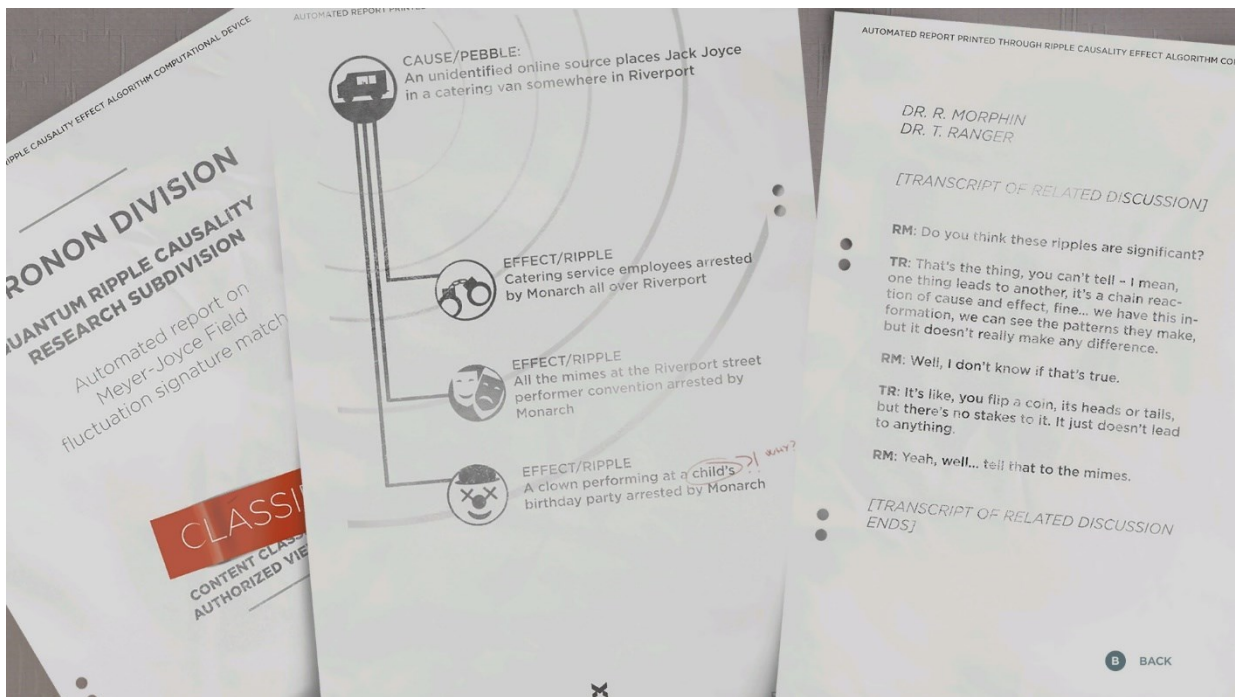


Figure 9: Quantum ripple reports can be read from the game menu

Throughout the game the player can discover hotspots and interact with them. Those are called quantum ripples. The ripples affect the episodes of digital series, adding a short scene to the episode. For example, interacting with a cardboard T-Rex in the game makes it disappear and it is seen in the following digital series episode, sparking some bewildered comments from the characters that encounter it.

Quantum Break: Zero State

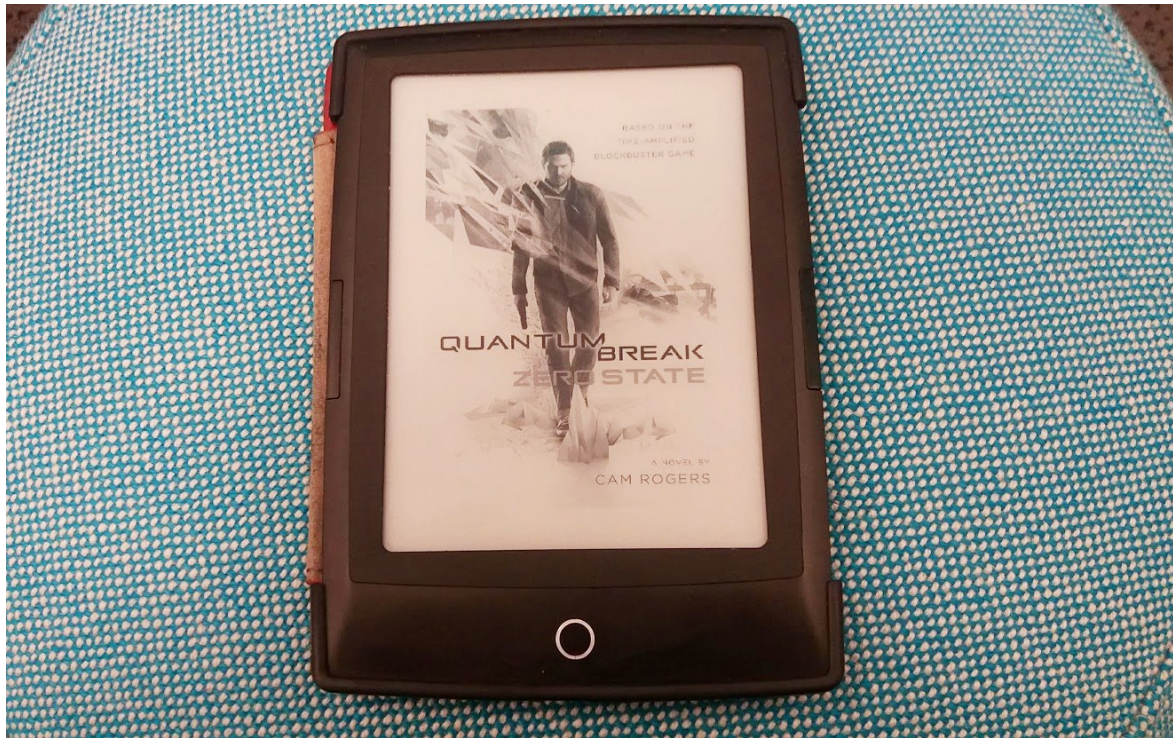


Figure 10. Cover of the Quantum Break: Zero State e-book.

Quantum Break: Zero State is a novel written by Cam Rogers. In the foreword, Remedy's Sam Lake says that he did not see any point of doing a straight novelization of the game. Rogers suggested that he could use the different events and ideas in the novel that didn't end up in the game for one reason or another and Lake liked the idea. (Rogers 2016, p.8.) The novel has the same basic idea of the game, the same big events and the same characters. But it has new scenes in new places that the player has not encountered before, it has new characters and new dialogue between familiar characters. Backstories and the personalities of the characters as well as Monarch Solutions are also slightly different.

4. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the data gathering process as well as provides information about the methodology and details the coding process of my data. Section 4.1 introduces my data gathering method, ie. web survey, section 4.2 present my methodology that is grounded theory-informed approach and section 4.2.1 goes over the stages of the coding and provide examples from my own process.

4.1 Data Gathering: a survey

An online survey was selected as a data gathering method for several reasons. As the player communities are international, I wanted to reach players from as many countries as possible and online survey is a good tool for that. An online survey is easy to distribute and promote via different websites and social media, it is easy and quick to fill out and send. It does not require paper, envelopes or postage.

I also wanted to get an abundance of answers, so a survey was selected instead of interviews. Interviews would be a good way to supplement the survey data, but that was outside of the scope of this thesis. Both surveys had multiple choice questions and open questions to fill out. The multiple choice answers were designed to provide data that contextualizes the answers of the open questions, for example background info and information about the consumption habits of the respondents.

The *Defiance* survey was made using Google forms, it was open from 4.4.2016 to 3.5.2016 and the total number of answers was 89. The link to the survey was posted to Defiance discussion forum, role playing forum, subreddit in reddit.com, Twitter and to the Finnish Facebook discussion groups Nörttinaisten peliryhmä, Pelinaiset, Geeks Unite (Finland) and Akateemiset Pelaajat. The tweet was retweeted by the official *Defiance* game twitter account.

The survey was divided into four parts: watching and playing, crossover content, other transmedia and background info. “Watching and playing” included questions about the watching and playing habits of *Defiance*, “crossover content” covered the transmedia aspects of *Defiance*, “other transmedia” had questions about attitudes and consumption of other transmedia products and “background info” asked the respondents’ gender, country, year of birth as well as scaled questions about being a fan and a gamer.

If a question had several options, the order of the options was randomized and none of the questions were mandatory. The form was designed in a way that respondents did not see questions unrelated to their previous answers. For example, if the respondents answered that she had not watched the *Defiance* television show, she was not asked further questions about the show. In order to discourage ambivalent and lazy answering styles, a response option “I don’t know” was offered only once. The questions were formulated in an iterative fashion and were modified according to test users’ comments and information received from the massive open online course called “Questionnaire Design for Social Surveys” by the University of Michigan.

The Quantum Break survey was also made using Google forms, it was open from 18.12.2017 to 18.2.2018 and the total number of responses was 65. The link to the survey was posted to Remedy discussion forums, Poets of the Fall fan forum, Quantum Break subreddit in reddit.com, Quantum Break discussion board in steamcommunity.com, Twitter, Facebook and to the Finnish Facebook groups Geeks Unite (Finland) and Nörttinaisten peliryhmä.

The survey had questions about playing and watching, reading and playing, other transmedia and background info. “Playing and watching” included questions about the playing and watching *Quantum Break* and the digital series as well as questions related to the transmedial properties of the game and the series. “Reading and playing” had questions about the *Quantum Break: Zero State* novel and its relationship to the game, other transmedia included questions about attitudes and consumption of other transmedia products and background info asked gender, year of birth and country of the respondents.

The questions were modified based on the comments of test users and unlike the *Defiance* survey, all of the questions were mandatory and the response options were not randomized. The questionnaire was designed in a way that it could be answered by people who had experienced only one transmedia aspect of *Quantum Break* (game, digital series or book), all aspects or none at all. The respondents did not see questions that were unrelated to their previous answers.

It is important to note that the places where the links of these two surveys were distributed, were mostly discussion venues dedicated to the games in question. Thus the respondents were more likely to be more interested in these games than an average gamer might be.

4.2 Methodology: grounded theory-informed approach

The reason I chose grounded theory-informed approach as my methodology is related to the nature of my research. Transmedia studies have in the past mainly focused on the definitions and a more varied approach has been called for. Grounded theory is considered a good method when there is not a lot of previous research on the topic and that is the case here. And as Hook (2015), Salisbury & Cole (2016) are shown later in this chapter to declare, grounded theory approaches suit very well to the realm of game research.

Choosing a qualitative method instead of a quantitative also gives more voice to the audience of game-related transmedia and hopefully sheds some light on how they perceive it. Although it is the researcher's task to conceptualize and restructure the answers, the qualitative coding of open answers puts more emphasis on the free expression of respondents than multiple choice questions do.

Nathan Hook's article presents grounded theory as one possible method in game studies, in a book "Game Research Methods", edited by Petri Lankoski and Staffan Björk. Grounded theory was developed by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss in 1967. The main features of grounded theory are that it is led by data and continuously refers back to it, data is analyzed already while it is being gathered and it creates a new theory. Later on both Glaser and Strauss went to different directions and developed the theory further on their own. Glaserian version is close to the original version and uses both qualitative and quantitative data. Straussian version emphasizes qualitative data and is more systematized. (Hook 2015, pp. 309, 312.)

Glaser and Strauss are not the only ones that have been developing grounded theory onwards. Charmaz has adjusted grounded theory strategies to her own uses and sees grounded theory methods as "a set of principles and practices, not prescriptions or packages" that complement the other approaches of qualitative data analysis. (Charmaz 2006, p.9.)

Salisbury and Cole address three different types of grounded theory: Glaserian, Straussian and Constructivist grounded theory outlined by Charmaz. They feel that all these three types of approaches are beneficial and applicable to a new field such as game research. In relation to game research, grounded theory is valuable in tackling individual researcher's research questions, as a framework to structure projects during their whole lifespan and creating new categories and concepts in respect to a new field. Salisbury and Cole also state that as the grounded theory has been modified and developed further during several decades and by multiple people, it is important that the researchers using grounded theory would clearly inform the reader which version of the grounded

theory they are using. In addition, it is important to note, that the different approaches have differences in how the results are presented. Glaserian grounded theory is concerned with finding a single category that explains a certain phenomenon. The resulting theory is a hypothesis concerning that one category. Straussian grounded theory attempts to form a model on how several variables interact with each other. Constructivist grounded theory creates a theoretical output that takes into account the context, hidden narratives and relationships of the participants, arranged around “constructed categories or concepts”. (Salisbury & Cole 2016, pp. 2-8.)

Hook feels that grounded theory is a good tool for investigating new areas and for forming new predictive theories. According to him, it is appropriate for topics that have only a little previous academic literature or for unseasoned researchers that are not overly familiar with the literature. Glaserian and Straussian versions of grounded theory are both suitable for game research, but especially Glaserian since it uses different kinds of media as data. That makes it possible to use game reviews, articles and games themselves. (Hook 2015, pp. 313, 319.)

Hook also noted a couple of points of criticism towards grounded theory. First one states that it is not clear if grounded theory analyses the world or the interpretations of the world. The second point of criticism pertains to the prior experience. In grounded theory the literature review is often the final stage of the research and a researcher is supposed to approach the data without any preconceptions. As an experienced researcher might have already familiarized herself with the literature related to the topic, that might not be possible (Hook 2015, pp. 310, 314.)

However, both Strauss and Charmaz tackle this point and understand that a researcher might very well have a previous grasp of the literature and it is not a problem. Strauss and Corbin stress that it is important to acknowledge the fact and that literature can be used for example to stimulate questions and direct theoretical sampling. As long as the researcher does not continuously pour over the literature while coding. (Strauss & Corbin 1990, pp. 50-53.)

Charmaz states that while a researcher might need to write something about previous literature to various proposals, a proper literature review can be delayed until the coding process is finished (Charmaz 2006, p.166).

4.2.1 Coding process in my thesis

As I am following Charmaz's way of doing grounded theory but complementing it with Saldaña's pragmatic style, I am calling my methodology grounded theory-informed approach. Saldaña's "The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers" is not loyal to any particular research genre or methodology and promotes pragmatist paradigm (Patton 2002, 72) that acknowledges that the keyword for methodology is appropriateness instead of a certain dogma. Some of the coding methods can be used in conjunction with each other, if the researcher does not go overboard by using too many or the ones that are not compatible with each other. (Saldaña 2009, pp. 2, 45-47.) Saldaña encourages to use pen and paper as tools for first-time coders, because trying to learn to code and to use analysis program at the same time can be overwhelming. Strips of paper can permit to see the smaller aspects of the whole and using highlight pens can bring new perspectives. (Saldaña 2009, p. 22) I opted for something in between as the coding was done by using Microsoft Excel and a project management program called Kanbanize. The latter permitted me to form categories and move codes between the categories very easily.

One of the first stages in the coding process is to conceptualize the data. This is done by dissecting and taking apart a piece of text like a paragraph or a sentence and giving it a name that represents a phenomenon. Each name is then compared to others and similar phenomena are given the same name. (Strauss & Corbin 1990, p. 63). These names are labels that categorize, summarize and account for pieces of the data. This is called coding and it functions as the supporting structure of the analysis. (Charmaz 2006, pp. 43, 45.) Coding is cyclical and iterative, it can contain many cycles in an effort to condense the data into categories and concepts (Saldaña 2009, p.8).

In grounded theory there are at least two phases: initial coding and focused coding. During the initial coding the researcher names the pieces of data and during the focused coding uses the most important or most recurrent codes to organize the data. Codes emerge from the data while the researcher inspects it over and over again. This may lead to new research questions and new areas. The codes arise from the language and perspectives of the participants as well as the researcher and are constructed by the active naming of the data. (Charmaz 2006, pp 46-47.)

In vivo coding

I started the coding process by using in vivo codes to the data. In this coding method the researcher finds words or phrases from the data that in their opinion seem to need highlighting and marks those words beside the text by using quotation marks. It is suitable for all qualitative studies and especially for those who are just learning to code. (Saldaña 2009, pp. 74-77.) In vivo codes can aid in retaining the meaning of respondents’ deeds and opinions as well as help find utterances that ”condense and crystallize meanings”. (Charmaz 2006, pp.55-57).

Using in vivo coding allowed me to get an overview of the data and find remarks that felt important from the point of view of my research questions.

Table 1. In Vivo example.

Did you feel the series added something to the game experience? Please elaborate.	In vivo
Mostly some nice background info and a couple of storyline gaps filled or misconceptions straightened. Didn't watch all of it, so maybe there was something more.	"background info, gaps filled"

Table 1 shows an example from the *Quantum Break* dataset. The question is about the digital series of *Quantum Break* and under it is a complete answer from one of the participants. The in vivo codes identified from the answer were “background info” and “gaps filled”.

Descriptive coding and evaluation coding

In vivo codes can be the only coding style during initial coding, but that can restrict the way the researcher sees the data. She should be willing to use other coding styles in conjunction to in vivo and not depend too much on in vivo style as it can prevent the analysis from reaching a more theoretical level. (Saldaña 2009, pp. 76-77). For that reason, the in vivo codes were coded again using other first cycle coding methods. The dataset of *Defiance* was coded by using descriptive coding. In descriptive coding the basic topic of a text fragment is condensed to a word or a short phrase and it is especially suitable for beginners who are learning to code. (Saldaña 2009, 70).

Table 2. An example of descriptive coding.

Why you are interested in them? Please elaborate.	In vivo coding	Descriptive coding
They allow the player to interact with the game's universe in many different ways.	"interact the game's universe in many different ways."	Varied interaction

Table 2 shows an example from the *Defiance* dataset. The question shown in the picture is a follow up to the question “Are you interested in other games that combine different media with the game?” Right next to it are the in vivo code and the descriptive code derived from the answer.

For *Quantum Break* dataset I opted a bit more detailed coding style called evaluation coding.

Evaluation coding can arise from the comments of the respondents or the evaluative viewpoint of the researcher. The example provided by Saldaña was an amalgam that had aspects from magnitude coding (to indicate if the respondent made a positive (+) or a negative (-) comment), descriptive coding (to mark down the topic) and in vivo coding (to mark down the evaluative comment).

In addition a recommendation coding tag (REC) was added. (Saldaña 2009, pp.97-100.) This kind of amalgam approach felt suitable for my data as the survey asks the respondents to provide opinions on several aspects of the game in question and the responses had a lot of evaluative remarks.

I had done the descriptive coding of the *Defiance* answers as part of my Bachelor's thesis a couple of years earlier. Because of that I decided to recode those using the evaluation coding method, so it would be easier to compare the codes to each other.

Table 3. An example of evaluation coding.

Did you feel the series added something to the game experience? Please elaborate.	In vivo	Evaluation coding
Mostly some nice background info and a couple of storyline gaps filled or misconceptions straightened. Didn't watch all of it, so maybe there was something more.	"background info, gaps filled"	+information: nice background info + story: gaps filled, misconceptions straightened

Table 3 shows the same example from table 1, but with an added column for evaluation coding. The two evaluation codes from that question are +information: nice background info and +story: gaps filled, misconceptions straightened.

Focused coding and analytical memos

After the second round of first cycle coding I felt comfortable to move onto the second cycle coding methods, namely focused coding. In focused coding the researcher uses the most important or recurrent codes from the initial coding phase to categorize the data. Moving to it is not a straightforward procedure though and it can trigger the researcher to study the earlier data once more. (Charmaz 2006, pp. 57-58.) A category can have only one coded excerpt or multiple, depending on the data in question. In Saldaña’s example similarly coded data is grouped together and reviewed to create preliminary category names. So for example, the category “Maintaining friendships” includes earlier codes such as “hanging out with everyone”, “recalling friendships”, “best friends with everybody”, “friends with certain people” and “friends with since forever”. (Saldaña 2006, p. 156.

Table 4: An example of focused coding.

Exploring the story and the lore [18 / 0]	Gameworld expansion [12 / 0]	Media specific reasons [8 / 0]
<p>460 None</p> <p>+stories: tell different stories N</p> <p>81d</p> <p>New subtask...</p>	<p>470 None</p> <p>+content: more N</p> <p>81d</p> <p>New subtask...</p>	<p>491 None</p> <p>+combination: loved the combination in quantum break N</p> <p>81d</p> <p>New subtask...</p>
<p>463 None</p> <p>+optional storytelling: makes the world feel tangible without overwhelming players N</p> <p>81d</p> <p>New subtask...</p>	<p>474 None</p> <p>+expansion: expanding the gameworld N</p> <p>81d</p> <p>New subtask...</p>	<p>465 None</p> <p>+artistic: like the idea of create media with mix of others N</p> <p>81d</p> <p>New subtask...</p>
<p>462 None</p> <p>+worldbuilding: only so much information that can be packed into a game N</p> <p>81d</p> <p>New subtask...</p>	<p>503 None</p> <p>+expansion: allows expansion of a world without obscene investment N</p> <p>81d</p> <p>New subtask...</p>	<p>512 None</p> <p>REC: novel happening between two titles in a series N</p> <p>81d</p> <p>New subtask...</p>
	<p>513 None</p>	

Table 4 shows an example of my focused coding. This data is from the *Quantum Break* set and from a follow up “why” to the question “Are you interested in games that have transmedia extensions (books, graphic novels, animation, tv-series, etc.)”. The picture excerpt shows three emerged categories: “Exploring the story and lore”, “Gameworld expansion” and “Media specific reasons”. Each of the categories have been formed by grouping similar descriptive codes together and naming the categories. For example, the category “Exploring the story and lore” includes 18 descriptive codes.

Analytic memo writing is an important part of this phase (and throughout the whole coding process) as it keeps the researcher “involved in the analysis” and helps to “increase the level of abstraction” (Charmaz 2006, p.72). Memo writing can be seen as a method that generates codes and it makes visible the researcher’s reflections (Saldaña 2006, p. 157).

Below is an excerpt of my memo regarding the category that was “Exploring the story and the lore”. Later on it was renamed as “Exploring the storyworld”.

For me it made sense to have stories and information as separate categories, although they are very similar. The story is all about the plot, main storylines, sidequests and stories related to characters. Information is about the lore, the backstory of the universe where the game takes place, worldbuilding, the backstory of the characters. But on the other hand, those are very much related to each other, so maybe the category should be for example exploring the story and the backstory? Or exploring the story and the lore? Some codes from the expansion category were also moved to this new combined category, as they were in essence about the story and the worldbuilding.

Axial coding

According to Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 97), the fractured data from earlier coding is assembled in a new way by connecting categories and subcategories. Charmaz had not used axial coding as formally as Strauss and Corbin, but she has formed subcategories and showed the links between a category and subcategories. According to her, those who favor “simple and flexible guidelines”, don’t need axial coding. (Charmaz 2006, p. 61.) I used the forming of subcategories as a way to identify different aspects of the categories, but only in a couple of cases. It helped me to make sense of a couple of cluttered categories, for example a category that I named “Media related reasons”.

Theoretical sampling and saturation

After tentative categories have been formed, theoretical sampling is needed to expand and fine-tune the categories. This is done by gathering more data related to the categories and their properties for the purpose of achieving saturation. When gathering new data doesn’t produce new properties or theoretical observations anymore, saturation has been achieved (Charmaz 2006, pp. 96, 113.) I argue, that the *Quantum Break* dataset can be seen as theoretical sampling. The *Defiance* dataset was gathered and analyzed earlier as part of my Bachelor’s thesis. That provided seven categories that described the motivations to consume game-centric transmedia material. I wanted to explore these motivations some more, so a question related to those was included in the *Quantum Break* survey and the motivation factors are part of my research questions. The *Quantum Break* survey however was much broader than questions related to the refining of motivational categories, so I can’t claim that the survey is purely theoretical sampling. However, for the scope of this thesis it is enough.

5. RESULTS

In this chapter I will go over the results. Section 5.1 presents the statistics that concern general info, watching, playing and reading habits as well as habits related to other transmedia. Section 5.2 displays the results related to the integrated versus separate transmedia and section 5.3 introduces the results related to motivations to consume or avoid game-centric transmedia.

5.1 Statistics

This section covers the results of multiple choice questions and the background information of the respondents. 5.1.1 delves into the general info that includes gender, country and age of the respondents. 5.1.2 covers the watching and playing habits related to *Defiance* and *Quantum Break*, 5.1.3 describes the reading habits related to *Quantum Break* and 5.1.4 presents the consumption habit related to other transmedia.

5.1.1 General info

Defiance

A clear majority of the respondents were male, while women made up 15 % of the respondents and options “other” and “rather not say” each were 5 %. Four of the biggest countries of the respondents were the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia. The United States alone made up over half of the responses. However, fifteen other countries were mentioned as well, including surprises like South Korea, Uruguay and Benin.

Age of the respondents varied greatly, the youngest being 15 and the oldest 67. Majority of the respondents were in their twenties, followed by persons in their forties and thirties.

Quantum Break

Most of the respondents were male, while women made up 12 % of the respondents and “rather not say” option was chosen by 3 %. The option “other” was not selected at all. The respondents came from 22 different countries and the biggest countries were the United States, Finland, Canada and the United Kingdom.

The youngest respondent was 16 and the oldest 46 years old. Majority of the respondents were in their twenties (46 %), followed by persons in their thirties (37%).

5.1.2 Watching and playing

Defiance

Most of the respondents were fans of either the show or the game, while 33 % of respondents were fans of both. A majority of 90 % had both watched the show and played the game. Most of the respondents had also seen all of the three seasons (72 %), played over a hundred hours of the game (71 %) and considered themselves gamers (66 %). Half of the respondents had seen at least some of the minisodes, “The Lost Ones” minisodes being the most popular.

Quantum Break

The majority (87%) of the respondents had completed *Quantum Break* either once, twice or several times. The rest had not finished the game or played it at all. Most of the respondents (88%) had also watched and finished the digital series once or multiple times, while the rest had seen only some of it or not at all. The stated reasons for not watching the series were that the plot was not interesting and that the respondents wanted to play, not watch.

5.1.3 Reading

The majority of respondents had not read the *Quantum Break: Zero State* novel and the most cited reason was that they had not been aware the book existed. A small minority selected a second reason besides the unawareness: they were either not interested in game-related books or reading in general. In addition to that, two respondents told that they were just not interested in game-related books.

Three people had started the book but not finished and only 10 respondents had read the whole book. Most of the readers felt that the book added something to the game experience. That something seemed to be character depth. Some also felt that the book added to the overall story and helped them to connect to the story of the game better. Regarding the canonicity of the book, most of those that had read the book saw the events as partly canon and taking place in alternative reality. It was interesting that two of those that saw it as purely canon, cited the official status of the book as a reason for it to be canon.

5.1.4 Other transmedia

Defiance:

A majority (69%) were interested in other games that combine different media with the game and a slight majority (57%) had consumed other entertainment that combines different media. A question regarding the titles of those media included lots of television and movie core texts, but 15 games or game series were mentioned, including *Quantum Break*, *Resident Evil* and *Dead Space*. *Halo* was one of the most frequently mentioned.

Quantum Break:

A majority (78%) of respondents were interested in other games with transmedia extensions and a clear majority of those that had played Quantum Break (87%) would like to play more games that have digital series as part of the game.

Most of the respondents (72%) had also consumed transmedia extensions of other games they had played. When asked from what games those extensions were, 39 individual games or game series were mentioned. *Mass Effect*, *Halo*, *Defiance* and *Alan Wake* were the four games mentioned the most. Upon closer examination of the titles, it became evident that the concept of transmedia extension of a game was not always clear. In addition to the 39 games, titles like *Star Wars*, *Star Trek*, *Witcher* (CD Project Red 2007), *Metro* (4A Games 2010) and *Walking Dead* (Telltale Games 2012) were mentioned. Those are not extensions of games but instead games that are extensions to movies, books and comics.

5.2 Integrated versus separate transmedia

Breaks from the gaming

“Giving the player some time to sit back between each Act and see how both Jack's pre-defined actions and the player's own decisions at Junctions has affected the story/world can do a lot in helping immerse the player in the story.” (Female, age 24, Quantum Break survey)

The digital series provides mandatory breaks to the gaming and forces the player to put down their controller. Most of the respondents that brought up the breaks found them a positive respite to the gaming and a pause from the action. One respondent quoted above felt that the breaks ultimately aided in achieving immersion.

However, some of the respondents felt that the breaks interrupted the game flow and took time out of gameplay. On the other hand, some people were very aware that the game had been criticized because of the breaks and stated that they themselves did not mind it or did not feel the flow was interrupted.

As a more or less middle ground between the positive and negative comments, few people would have liked shorter versions of the episodes, for example eleven minutes instead of the twenty. One of the reasons for this was stated that cutting the length of the episode would mean the player would not have to commit so much time to watch it.

Novelty

“It is something rather new, and the gaming Industry desperately needs something new.” (Male, age 26, Quantum Break survey)

Even though several game companies have expressed their interest in combining TV-like content to games, Remedy’s *Quantum Break* was the first and so far the only game to do that. There was one respondent in the *Defiance* survey that stated it was a new way to experience content, but when comparing the responses to the *Quantum Break* survey, the latter had several more mentions of qualities that can be grouped under the novelty category.

Respondents of the *Quantum Break* survey found the combination of a game and digital series refreshing and intriguing. According to them it is a break from the standard storytelling, something new and different that the game industry needs. For them it was a unique experience, very original and a different take on games. They also felt that this kind of combination has untapped potential and it added a new dimension to playing.

Different kind of cutscenes

“I was glad that I was forewarned about it or I probably would have been a bit surprised at a 20 min cutscene.” (Male, thirties, Quantum Break survey)

As an interesting contrast to the novelty aspect, some respondents compared the digital series to cutscenes in other games, although *Quantum Break* does have “traditional” cutscenes amidst the game as well. The respondents saw the series as just a different spin on the familiar tradition usually made with a game engine, only in a bit longer form. The episodes were described for example as very long cutscenes, a stand-in for cutscenes and unique twists to cutscenes.

Some felt that this was a positive aspect and liked it better, others would have preferred the old way of doing it or at least shorter episodes. One person commented that even though he prefers the digital series over normal cutscenes, he wouldn't want every game to replace cutscenes with live actors.

Access

“The main appeal for these being already part of the game is access. Access to Internet or external sources in many countries is limited, so this eases the troubles. I also like not needing to seek info high and low, so one place for it is good.” (Male, age 24, Quantum Break survey)

Integrated transmedia offers better access for consumers in many respects. According to the responses, it alleviates the problems related to access to the internet or external sources people might have.

Only minority of respondents of the *Defiance* survey took part in the competitions that were a major way how the game impacted the series. The reason for this was a lack of knowledge of the competitions or restrictions on time and skills. Lack of knowledge was also the most cited reason on why respondents hadn't read *Quantum Break: Zero State* novel. Compared to separate transmedia, integrated transmedia content is not limited by different broadcasting schedules, different time zones, temporal and skill requirements or a place of residence. It is also impossible to miss.

With integrated transmedia, there is no need to particularly search for content elsewhere, as not all consumers of transmedia want to be hunter-gatherers, as Jenkins (2007) puts it. With separate content, be it books or competitions, a lot of possibly interested consumers are left in the dark if they do not even know they should search the content elsewhere.

Cinematic experience

“The live action sections made me feel less that I was playing a video game and more that I was moving through a television show.” (Female, age 25, Quantum Break survey)

Integrated transmedia where a digital series is a part can transform the whole gameplay experience more cinematic in nature. The respondents felt like they were playing an interactive movie and that they were moving through a television show instead of just playing a game. On the other hand, the different visual styles of a live-action series and a game engine can put off some players.

One person felt the story was more streamlined because of editing of the episodes and information provided in the episodes instead of game levels. She felt that the boundary between the game and reality was almost blurred. Some also enjoyed the Hollywood cast, the fact that their decisions were reflected in the actions of real actors and the multiple storylines that are typical in TV and cinema.

Impact on playing and watching habits

“I thought it was a great incentive to explore the environment. I usually do that anyways but hearing characters discussing something that I had done during the live-action scenes was great.” (Male, age 35, Quantum Break survey, quantum ripples)

According to the answers transmedia properties in integrated transmedia can encourage exploring the different areas in the game more thoroughly and inspire replaying the game. The players wanted to see how the different choices made in the junction points would alter the series and bring different perspectives to the story. The quantum ripples that added short scenes to the episodes encouraged some players to pay more attention to the environment and seek out the ripples.

According to the respondents the inclusion of a digital series can also attract players who see traditional TV as passive and are interested in a more active relationship between a game and a series or who would not normally buy the game without the series. Contrarily, the game might feel like a chore for those who are only interested in the series.

“The competitions got both players interested in the show and watchers interested in the game, thus better synthesizing the two fan bases.” (Male, age 19, Defiance survey)

According to the respondents, separate transmedia properties can encourage active engagement on different platforms, attract a new audience from one medium to the next and unify different fan bases. Elements like promotional codes for the game in the show and competitions resulting the game to influence the series were seen as a clever way to get more viewers and players.

The responses also showed that separate transmedia can help pass the time during the breaks between different seasons of a TV show, reinforce the player connection to the characters and the story in the form of a novel and result to collecting items in the game that were seen in the show.

Similarities

In addition to these differences, integrated and separate transmedia have several similarities. According to the respondents, both types of transmedia extensions added character depth, fleshed out the storyworld, added player/watcher influence on the storyworld, connected the different parts of the transmedia constellation to each other and added immersion. Both types of transmedia also received strong critiques for the lack of aforementioned elements. In the case of *Defiance* some respondents blamed the developer Trion Worlds for the shortcomings of the transmedia elements, but on the other hand, certain respondent understood the limitations and difficulties of a joint production such as this. The critique of *Defiance*'s crossover content also included some comments about the inconsistencies between the game and the show.

Mittel (2012, pp.10-11) talked about the discrepancy between the *Portal* gameplay and the story elements in it. There is an underlying narrative to the game that is explored more in a transmedial webcomic, but it is not really important to the gameplay or completing the game. Mittell however states that storytelling and gameplay can support each other and that those can be seen as features in a transmedia constellation that can be coordinated. (Mittell 2012, p.11.)

Although he talks about more about the narrative and gameplay discrepancy within the game than between the game and the transmedial extension, the same kind of disparity can be evident in game-centric transmedia and some respondents remarked on that related to *Defiance*.

“I’ve only watched very little of the show. The show and the story seemed irrelevant to the game play experience.” (Male, age 34, Defiance survey)

“The missions seemed more aimed at making events in the show tie together rather than having anything to do with the actual game.” (Male, age 40, Defiance survey)

“I really wished the show had more action and depth, but it felt confined to developing character drama. The best thing that happened was showing us the Omec's were out there, the history got interesting again, and the action picked up, and there was suspense and----- over. The show didn't show us more than a glimpse of the spectrum of aliens we see in the game. Out of the 7 or 8 'Votan' races, we only really get to know Castithan, Irathient, and what, ONE Indogene? So few Sensoth and Liberata that I forgot they were in the show.

Omecs were beginning to be a great development, but almost no mention in the game (until some gear was released in the game to coincide with the show's event) Volge mentioned in the show, and I vaguely remember one episode showing some CGI volge but I can't recall. Gulanee never mentioned in show? Dark Matter could've been, but that too I can't be sure of.” (Male, age 27, Defiance survey)

These comments speak of the dissonance between the gameplay of the game and the narrative of the show. They also make evident that at least some of the players notice the inconsistencies and do not appreciate those. On the other hand, some other respondents felt that the game and the show were very in sync.

The similarities between the separate and integrated transmedia and the polarization of the answers related to those aspects seem to indicate that both transmedia types have a possibility to these affordances. How those affordances are utilized is dependent on the developers and available resources. In addition, the reception to the transmedia elements seems to vary: some of the respondents are happy with a lighter connection between the different parts in a transmedia constellation, others really yearn a strong connection and the possibility to actually influence the storyworld. The study of these differences in reception could lead to mapping out the different types of transmedia consumers.

Discussion

I think the most important difference between the integrated and separate transmedia content is access. In Simons' (2014, p. 2230) study some respondents mentioned the time difference and how the in-character tweets were already out of date by the time they had access to the episodes. The respondents of the *Defiance* survey had similar complaints regarding the competitions and codes that offered in-game rewards. The time and skill requirements for participating in the competitions were too much for several players, some also said that their country was not eligible. In regards to the promotional codes, one person stated that the only way to get the codes outside of United States, was to have someone from there to tell them the codes.

Simons' (2014, pp.2229-2230) study also mentions that some of the respondents were not even aware of the transmedia extensions. The results regarding *Defiance* competitions and codes as well as the *Quantum Break* novel echo this. Even though the respondents would have been interested in participating in the competitions or reading the book, most were unaware of their existence or found out about the competitions too late. This might also be a possible reason for the lack of *Assassin's Creed* readers in Veugen's (2016, pp. 13-14) study.

If the players do not actually know about the books and comics or those are not easily available in their area, it is difficult to be involved with that part of the story. One possibility might be to advertise the transmedia extensions in the loading screens of the game as for example *Mirror's Edge Catalyst* (EA DICE 2016) does with its comic book prequel.

The third related aspect of access is the availability of transmedia materials. Are the books or comics sold in other countries or available in libraries? Is the series only broadcasted in certain countries? Are the competitions and codes only for residents of certain countries? Are the transmedia materials released and available only within a small timeframe? Do players with family and jobs have equal opportunities to attend? It is interesting to note that the minisodes related to *Defiance* were fairly well known, as around half of the respondents had seen at least one of those. The World of Defiance and the motion comic are currently available on Youtube, "Lost ones" webisodes were available at the *Defiance* website at the time when the series was broadcasting along with the World of Defiance and the motion comic. It seems that for the respondents the information related to the minisodes as well the actual content was more accessible than the *Defiance* competitions and *Quantum Break* novel.

These three aspects of access are important things to consider, if a transmedia project truly wants to be global and available for all that are interested. Do the transmedia extensions have temporal requirements that shut some of the audience out? Are the transmedia extensions marketed in places where the info reaches the audience, even around the world? Are the transmedia extensions available to everyone, even around the world? Of course, these are complex matters that are dependent on money and legal matters as well. Nevertheless, these are important aspects to consider if the developers want to maximize their user base. These aspects are also equally important to take into consideration while researching the subject.

Another important point that emerged from the differences between integrated and separate transmedia, is how the respondents perceived the digital series. Although it is natural to frame a new experience by describing it using familiar language and concepts, it was surprising how many respondents talked about it as just slightly different cutscenes. Cutscenes are so widely used as a vehicle to advance the story that a digital series needs to distinguish itself strongly from that tradition. The fact that the *Quantum Break*'s digital series concentrated on the antagonist and the employees of Monarch was a good twist, but it clearly was not enough.

5.3 Motivations related to game-centric media

Motivations to consume game-centric transmedia:

Influencing the storyworld

“Because it makes you feel like you're a part of the crossover.” (Male, age 45, Defiance survey)

Game-centric transmedia gives players and watchers opportunities to influence the storyworld. According to the respondents, it can provide a feeling that the players have helped the characters, that they are part of the storyworld and that they have opportunities to feel involved.

In addition, it gives the opportunity to play as or with the characters the consumers have fallen in love while watching the show and gives options to mould the story to one's liking. Some respondents also felt it was important to get to engage and interact with the storyworlds they like.

Exploring the storyworld

“If a game, for example, doesn't give all the answers to all the questions that it brought up, a tv-series about the same game (before or after the events of the game) could be one way of answering them.” (Rather not say, age 16, Quantum Break survey)

According to the respondents, game-centric transmedia provides an opportunity for the player to explore different storylines and plots, the world where these stories take place and the lore of the world. They can learn more about the world and characters, dig deeper into aspects they are interested in and find out what happened before, after or during the main story from another perspective.

In addition, respondents felt that game-centric transmedia can answer questions left open in the game, provide alternative stories and character background, help to understand the characters and the world better, flesh out the lore and delve into things that are only mentioned in the game.

Storyworld expansion

“More interaction, more story, more lore. When a universe is opened up, it leaves more stories to be had.” (Male, age 39, Defiance survey)

This category is related to the previous, but merits its own entry. Game-centric transmedia expands the storyworld that the gamers love. According to the respondents, there is much more content to consume and a broader world means more stories. The respondents like that there is more content available, the world is ever expanding and they can continue their journey that has started in another medium.

According to them using other media is fun and engaging way to expand the universe, there is an opportunity to inflate the scale of the universe, diversify the stories and it adds dimension to the world.

Media related reasons

“There's only so much information that can be packed directly into a game in cutscenes or conversations, everything has to be relevant to what is happening right then. Things like books or graphic novels is a nice way to provide optional storytelling which makes the world feel more tangible without overwhelming players.” (Female, age 23, Quantum Break survey)

Several respondents understood the limitations of games as a medium. According to them, in transmedia extensions the story is not limited by game mechanics and players are not overwhelmed by exposition. The expansion of the world can be done with lower costs, the audience does not get bored because of the repetitiveness of one medium and the things that cannot be included in the game for various reasons can be explored elsewhere.

In addition to the limitations of a particular medium, this category includes a love of a certain medium or media mix. Some of the respondents just love novels or graphic novels and would like to see the world of the game in one of those forms. A few people appreciated seeing the world they love in other media and saw the media mix as an art form of its own.

Previous experiences

*“Because I've enjoyed the Defiance stuff enough to want to try others”
(Female, age 31, Defiance survey)*

As the experience with *Defiance* or *Quantum Break* was positive, some respondents wanted to try out other similar transmedia constellations. One person loved the combination of a game and a digital series in *Quantum Break*, another liked what *QB* did and was interested in seeing how it could be done in others ways, third one would rather see a *QB* sequel than some other developer's game-centric transmedia because it might not work as well as Remedy's approach.

In regards to *Defiance*, one respondent liked the content of enough to try out other game-centric transmedia, another thought that *Defiance* was a step in the right direction but others could do better.

Quality of the product

“If I have assurance beforehand that the extensions are canonical and they will enhance my enjoyment of the game through characterization or world building consistent with the presentation in the game.” (Female, age 30, Quantum Break survey)

Several respondents felt that transmedia extensions affect positively to the quality of the product. According to them the extensions add depth and ownership to the games, reinforce the depth of the lore and provide a richer story as well as more elaborate plots and lore.

On the other hand, quality was not seen as an automatic aspect of transmedia. Some of the respondents stated interest of transmedia products only if those were well made. The extensions should be canonical, have well thought out cross-references or have consistent presentation across different media. One person stated that the extensions should be done carefully and responsibly. A bad example used in the response was how Disney discarded the Star Wars expanded universe and a good example was *Halo*'s tie-in books.

Variety and novelty of transmedia

“They give you options in how you want to experience that story - hands on (video game) or sit back and chill with the show” (Male, age 19, Defiance survey)

According to the responses, game-centric transmedia provides alternatives to gameplay and different ways to participate in the experience. It also allows players to experience the story in various ways as well as permits them to interact and engage with the world in diverse means.

In addition to variety, the novelty of game-centric transmedia was an aspect that attracted the respondents. They stated that it is something new and different, a unique experience and a new way to experience content.

Immersion

“It allows for further immersion in the game world.” (Male, age 28, Defiance survey)

Some respondents felt that combination of media helps them to be immersed in the gameworld. Immersion was seen as fun, exciting and easily available aspect of game-centric transmedia that the respondents liked.

However, the respondents did not always explain what they meant when talking about immersion. Only couple responses touched upon the meaning of immersion for the respondents. One person said that that the feeling of being part of the world was total immersion, another stated that other media helps him to feel more immersed in a game through the eyes of other characters and helps him to roleplay his character better.

Connection between the different parts

“Always interesting to observe connections, allusions and other links between different mediums and how those mediums affect each other.” (Male, age 41, Defiance survey)

Some respondents were fascinated with the connections between media and how they affect each other. One person was excited to see how the examination of one medium can lead to finding secrets in another, other person liked how in expanding world the storylines are conjoined and interlinked, the third one felt that game-centric transmedia could lead to interesting changes in the game.

Genre and franchise preferences

“The genre is a huge part, ie. let’s say there was a RPG-tv cross-over set in Downton Abbey show, I wouldn’t play that... or watch it. It wouldn’t interest me. But things like a GoT RPG probably would.” (Male, age 30, Defiance survey)

For some, it was very important that the transmedia was related to the genre or franchise they liked. The quoted commenter seems to be interested in more fantastical genres and for example, a period drama would be undesirable. Another respondent would be interested if the game-centric transmedia in question would be related to a franchise he enjoys.

Motivations to avoid game-centric transmedia:

Lack of quality

“Unless they get the crossover right which in the case of Defiance, they were close, but not close enough, there doesn’t seem to be much point.” (Male, age 44, Defiance survey)

Some respondents had doubts about the quality of transmedia projects. They thought that the different parts could get each other’s way, the crossover might be executed badly and there would too many compromises in the development.

Previous experiences

“Because usually they are bad... Assassin’s Creed, Defiance and Halo for example.” (Male, age 27, Quantum Break survey)

Some respondents felt that transmedia projects are usually a disappointment, do not deliver the kind of connection between the different parts they promise and are just optional stories to consume that do not add to the whole experience. One person stated that he is only familiar with bad movie/game examples, another felt that Trion Worlds ruined game-centric transmedia for him.

Lack of opportunities

“Since I am not a US citizen I think other cross contents would lack the “same time” experience, for example seeing shows maybe one year after the game started in EU.” (Male, age 47, Defiance survey)

Some felt that not every consumer would have the same opportunities to enjoy the transmedia content. Everyone does not have the equipment needed or time to invest in the game-centric transmedia. What is more, temporal requirements shut out everyone not in the same time zone, if the transmedia project requires engagement during certain times.

Lack of interest

“Never really had a game that was that great that made me want to.” (Male, age 17, Quantum Break survey)

Some of the respondents were not interested in game-centric transmedia as they, for example, spent little time gaming, did not play at all or wanted to concentrate on one game at a time. A few respondents favoured games over television, preferred to consume the story in the form of gameplay or desired an interactive world.

In addition to these gameplay related preferences, the responses showed that some felt game-centric transmedia is just not that interesting or their cup of tea.

Dependency on other media

“Story, told in the game, should be full and understandable from playing the game only.” (Male, age 28, Quantum Break survey)

Some of the respondents did not feel comfortable being dependent on other media. According to the respondents, the story told in one medium needs to be understandable on its own and they do not want to depend on another media to get the whole story.

One person felt that makers of transmedia force the consumers to buy several pieces of media and spreading different pieces of the same story over different platforms makes the experience watered down. Others stated that having a crossover beyond small nods makes the world smaller or that they prefer games to be games and shows to be shows, instead of relying on each other.

Discussion

These results are in stark contrast with Simons' (2014) results. As her results showed lacklustre reactions related to cross- and transmedia, she analyzed the motivation to watch TV drama. The main motivations of her respondents were entertainment and relaxation. Only minority of respondents mentioned immersion, involvement or insider knowledge and the overall attitude towards deep immersion was negative. Most of the respondents did not see TV drama as a storyworld that could be interactive, were not interested in contributing to the story and were not looking for deep immersion. (Simons 2014, pp. 2233-2235.) However, the majority of the respondents of my surveys were interested in game-centric transmedia and had actually consumed several transmedia extensions related to games besides the ones linked to *Defiance* and *Quantum Break*. Motivations to consume game-centric transmedia related very strongly to contributing and interacting with the storyworld, as well as being immersed in it. All in all, the motivations of my respondents were more varied than Simons' respondents.

This might be because of the different focus Simons' (2014) study. Her focus was on the television drama and the heavy users of it. The focus of *Defiance* and *Quantum Break* surveys was on game-centric transmedia and the respondents were mainly gamers. Games demand different kind of activity than watching television and gamers might be more open to experiences of immersion and a particular kind of interaction with media, the kind that demands effort.

Another difference in the focus was, of course, the fact that my respondents were people that had already played and watched these transmedia experiences, while Simons studied the media use habits as those were unfolding in the form of TV diaries.

The results of *Defiance* and *Quantum Break* surveys also diverge a bit from the result Evans (2008, pp. 209-210) got on her study regarding the viewers of *The Spooks* and *The Spooks* related games. She found out that although the viewers wanted to meet the characters they knew from the series and affect their stories, they wanted at the same time separate themselves from the characters in the game. According to Evans, they don't want to become part of the series but to have control over the characters. She positioned the players in Murray Smith's second version of engagement with characters: "*We as the audience imagine what another person must feel like in their situation, without a moment confusing ourselves with that other person*" (Smith 1995, p. 80).

Some of the answers to the *Defiance* and *Quantum Break* survey suggest that might not be the case with game-centric transmedia. Under the "Influencing the storyworld" category there were two answers from the *Defiance* survey that related to the relationship between the player and characters:

"It explores the lore and makes it more interesting. Also fun to play as characters that you like" (Male, *Defiance* survey)

"Interest to have a universe where you can enjoy watching idealistic heroes thrive and be as well able to play with those or as a equal into the same universe" (Male, age 23, *Defiance* survey)

These were the answers to the question of why they would be interested in other games that combine different media with the game. TV-series component is strong in these answers and those infer that the respondents would first form an attachment to the characters watching a show and then would like to play as them or side by side with them in a game.

“Immersion” category also had one response about seeing the world with different eyes and roleplaying a character:

“If there are other media that explain/tie-in the lore with the game, it makes me feel more immersed in the game through the eyes of other characters and allows me to better role-play my character in that world lore.” (Male, age 28, Defiance survey)

Roleplaying is also brought up in the *Quantum Break* survey but in another context. When asked if the respondent was happy the way junction points affected the episodes, a couple of answers talked about roleplaying and being the character:

“They felt interesting. However making decisions on behalf of the antagonist was also a bit weird... Only worked, in my opinion, if you role-played the decision.” (Male, age 33, Quantum Break survey)

“I love getting to be Paul and get in his head a little bit.” (Male, age 22, Quantum Break survey)

Playing as or with characters they like, immersion through the eyes of a character, roleplaying and *being* a character all speak of a deeper connection with the transmedia characters. These respondents do not keep themselves separate from the characters and welcome the idea of “confusing themselves with the other person” as Smith (1995, p. 80) puts it. One possible explanation for these different yearnings compared to Evans’ research might be the different groups the questions were aimed. Evans’ study concentrated the fans of Spooks television series and my surveys targeted mainly gamers.

My respondents were very interested in game-centric transmedia, had consumed it even beyond those transmedia constellations that were the subject of my surveys, were motivated to consume those because of various reasons, including immersion and influencing the storyworld, and did not necessarily want to keep a distinction between themselves and the characters.

These actions differ from earlier transmedia audience studies such as Simons' and Evans' and suggest the need for more game-centric transmedia audience studies, where the core text is a game instead of a television show. It might also be fruitful to study transmedia where the core text is a TV-show from the point of view of the gamer if the particular transmedia offers content in the form of games.

What is more, the motivations to consume game-centric transmedia appear to be heavily concentrated on narrative. Character backstories, plots, overarching main story, the lore of the world, different perspectives and choices are all very important to players. Schröter (2015, p. 65) claims that as video games have started to influence the conventions of other media, game-like narratives and storyworlds have become more popular. He sees that the transmedial storyworlds that employ game logic are especially fitting to have a game as its transmedia extension.

According to Schröter (2015, p. 80), a storyworld follows game logic "if the algorithm that organizes the settings, characters and events can be described in terms of rules, outcomes, goals and conflicts instead of narrative persistence, realism or character psychology." He also states that transmedial storyworlds are "especially prone" to have game-like characteristics (Schröter 2015, p. 70).

But if this is actually the case, the consumers of game-centric transmedia will probably not be very pleased with transmedial storyworlds that employ game logic. Based on the answers to my surveys, in the case where a game is a core or a co-core of the transmedial storyworld, the players and viewers seem to be very interested in the character psychology and narrative persistence.

“The series can give different perspectives to the story. Just like in Quantum Break, I learned to like Paul Serene more because of the series. While I was watching it I understood why Serene was the person he was.” (Rather not say, age 16, Quantum Break)

If we take another look at the experiences *Defiance* and *Quantum Break* provided, we can find more comments related to characters.

“It was a great way to tell the bad guys side off the story. It helped me understand the consequences but also to understand the bad guys, and care for them as well. I saved Charlie for example because the show made me care about him, and in the end I didn't want to kill Paul because I could understand him too.” (Female, age 41, Quantum Break survey)

“One thing I did always find to be at odds was Nolan's attitude in the game versus in the show. In the game, Nolan is very self-centered, looking out for himself and Irisa at the expense of any/everyone else. In the show, once he is introduced to the town, he seems to truly care about the fact that its inhabitants are about to be wiped out by the Volge, and can't bring himself to just leave (where the Nolan in the game probably would).” (Male, age 35, Defiance survey)

In the responses related to episode mission and overall crossover content of *Defiance*, some commented that the episode missions were just glorified fetch quests, boring and repetitive and the player character was just a faceless ark hunter. The episode missions seem to represent game logic, as the missions are very goal oriented, repetitive and features a character that is also goal oriented. These aspects, however, are seen as negative by some of the respondents. Negatively perceived aspects along with the fascination on character psychology and narrative featured in the responses to my surveys seem to suggest that game logic, as Schröter (2015, 80) presents it, is not desirable trait in game-centric transmedia among the respondents.

Fuchs (2013, 154) posits that narrative makes a transmedial world and a new contract between a player and a game includes also storytelling. The results of my study point to that same direction. The respondents of my surveys were heavily invested in the narrative side of game-centric transmedia and felt that other media supported the game by providing an additional narrative dimension to the experience.

One interesting finding relating to the narrative was the differing views on the canonical and the non-canonical material. One respondent was only interested in game-centric transmedia if there would be a guarantee it is canonical and consistent with the game. However, out of the thirteen people who had either read or started to read the *Quantum Break: Zero State* -novel, nine people saw it as only partly canon or as an alternative timeline. Out of those who defined the world of the novel as an alternative universe, one described it as non-canon and another said that she saw both the book and game as canon but just in different universes. Two respondents who described the novel as canon cited the official status of the book as the reason.

“I consider it to be an alternative path to Quantum Break, like a parallel world. It's a different take to the story, for instance Monarch is more militarised and Serene is more like a general. There are some scenes which were originally going to be in the game (expanded in The Secret History of Time Travel book) but didn't make the cut but led to chapters in the book; for instance the scene at the Joyce farm.” (Female, age 23, Quantum Break survey)

In spite of this ambivalent state regarding canon, most of those that had read or started reading the novel felt that it added more story, added character depth or added player connection to the characters and the story.

“It made me feel more connected with the characters and I felt as though I understood them more.” (Female, age 23, Quantum Break survey)

These answers reveal that the transmedial content can be partly non-canonical and still contribute positively to the storyworld. That being said, not all transmedia consumers will appreciate that as canonicity is an important motivation to consume game-centric transmedia for some.

The motivations to avoid transmedia did not include any surprises, but it is important to note that if the developers pay more attention to the accessibility and to the strong connections between the different parts of the transmedia constellation, they might attract more consumers.

6. CONCLUSION

This chapter summarizes the results, states the limitations and takes a look at the future avenues of game-centric transmedia research.

My first research question was “What kind of experiences does integrated transmedia offer compared to separate transmedia?” Six categories illustrating these differences emerged from the data that are listed in the table below.

Table 5. Integrated versus separate transmedia

Integrated versus separate transmedia extensions
Breaks from the gaming
Novelty
Different kind of cut scenes
Access
Cinematic experience
Impact on playing and watching habits

In addition to these differences, both types of transmedia extensions added character depth, fleshed out the storyworld, added player/watcher influence on the storyworld, connected the different parts of the transmedia constellation to each other and added immersion. Every one of these categories representing similarities received both praise and critique, leading to the conclusion that both types of game-centric transmedia have these similar affordances that are realized well or poorly depending on the developers, resources and the expectations and preferences of the consumers.

All in all these six categories give some insight on how the consumers of game-centric transmedia view the different approaches to game-centric transmedia. If the developers of game-centric transmedia are aiming for an accessible and cinematic experience, integrated transmedia might be the better choice. However, it is important to note that the mandatory breaks might interrupt the flow and/or immersion of some players and that a digital series in between the gameplay may appear as just longer than usual cutscenes. Both of the approaches have positive impacts on playing and watching habits but if the developers are going with separate transmedia extensions, those need to be clearly marketed to the gamers, perhaps by using the loading screens or by other visible means.

My results related to the category of access seem to be in line with earlier research. Simons' (2014) respondents talked about not being aware of transmedial extensions or that those might be out of date for fans that are not residents of United States. My respondents had similar comments. The trouble with access could also explain the lack of *Assassin's Creed* novel readers in Veugens (2016) study. In addition to access related findings, some responses suggested that the players want gameplay and narrative aspects to be well balanced, as Mittell (2012) states as well.

My second research question was “What motivates respondents to consume or avoid game-centric transmedia?” Ten categories related to motivations to consume and five categories related to motivations to avoid game-centric transmedia emerged from the data.

Table 6. Motivations to consume and to avoid game-centric transmedia

Motivations to consume	Motivations to avoid
Influencing the storyworld	Lack of quality
Exploring the storyworld	Lack of opportunities
Storyworld expansion	Lack of interest
Media related reasons	Previous experiences
Previous experiences	Dependency on other media
Quality of the product	
Variety and novelty of transmedia	
Immersion	
Connection between the different parts	
Genre and franchise preferences	

The motivations to consume had a strong focus on narrative aspects and there were several mentions of immersion and identifying with the characters in the data. These results are in stark contrast with previous research by Simons (2014) and Evans (2008) and suggest that the consumers of game-centric transmedia may have distinct differences in motivations compared to those who are heavy users of TV drama or fans of a particular TV series. The respondents that answered my survey were interested in game-centric transmedia, had consumed varied game-centric transmedia constellations, were motivated to consume those because of various reasons including immersion and influencing the storyworld, and did not necessarily want to keep a distinction between themselves and the characters. These actions differ from earlier transmedia audience studies such as Simons’ (2014) and Evans’ (2008) and suggest the need for more game-centric transmedia audience studies, where the core text is a game instead of a television show. Other interesting findings were that the game logic as defined

by Schröter (2015) might not be appealing to the consumers of game-centric transmedia and that even only partially canonical transmedial extensions can affect the whole experience positively.

All in all these fifteen categories can give some insight on what the consumers feel like they are getting from game-centric transmedia and what they are not. These categories can provide an important glimpse of the preferences of consumers to the developers, who are interested in trying their hand in game-centric transmedia.

Limitations and future research

As my surveys were framed in a context of *Defiance* and *Quantum Break*, the answers related to other transmedia might have been influenced by this. Thus it would be interesting to see if a motivation to influence the storyworld comes up in relation to game-centric transmedia constellations that have only books and graphic novels as extensions.

Because the surveys were mainly aimed at those who were gamers by formulating the questions in certain way and spreading the link in game-related forums, the survey may not have reached casual viewers, gamers and transmedia users. Furthermore, women and other gender identities were in the minority amongst respondents in both surveys.

As the results showed differing preferences for example in the strength of the connection between the different parts in transmedia constellation and inclusion of non-canonical transmedial extensions, the future research could map out different consumer profiles or types of game-centric transmedia. Other avenues for research would be to outline what types of alternative reality games could be grouped under the game-centric transmedia and to continue to chart the motivations.

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Figures:

Figure 1: Screenshot from the Defiance season 1 episode "Pilot".

Figure 2: Screenshot from Defiance.

Figure 3: Screenshot from the Defiance episode mission 1.

Figure 4: Screenshot from the Defiance season 1 episode "Everything is Broken".

Figure 5: Screenshot from "Ark Hunter Chronicles: Director's Cut". Defiance Universe Youtube channel. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cvP3xX1NFMU&t=6s>

Figure 6: Screenshot from Quantum Break.

Figure 7: Screenshot from Quantum Break.

Figure 8: Screenshot from the episode 1 of the Quantum Break digital series.

Figure 9: Screenshot from Quantum Break.

Figure 10: The cover of Quantum Break: Zero State.

APPENDIX A: Defiance Survey

1. Have you watched the show?

(options: yes, no)

1.1 How many *full* seasons have you watched:

(none, one, two, three)

1.2 Do you wish the show had continued?

(yes, no, no preference)

1.3 Why /why not?

2. Have you seen any minisodes listed here?

(Lost ones, World of Defiance, Arkhunter Chronicles, No I haven't)

3. Have you played the game?

3.1 How many hours have you played?

(1-30, 31-60, 61-100, 100+)

4. Have you played any episode missions (Episode missions are crossover missions that tie-in with the show: http://en.defiance-wiki.com/wiki/Episode_Mission_list)

(options: yes, no)

4.1 How many full episode missions have you played? (You can check the missions here: http://en.defiance-wiki.com/wiki/Episode_Mission_list)

(none to 7)

4.2 In your opinion, did the episode missions connect the events of the game to the show well or poorly? Please elaborate.

If no:

4.3 Why haven't you played any episode missions?

4.4 Have you seen any cutscenes from the episode missions?
(yes, no)

4.5 In your opinion, did the episode missions connect the events of the game to the show well or poorly? Please elaborate.

5. In your opinion, were the characters and groups portrayed similarly or dissimilarly in the game and in the show? Elaborate.

6. In your opinion, were there any differences in the portrayal of the lore between the game and the show? (Lore means the info about the world, different species, traditions etc)

7. Where have you learned the most about the lore of the Defiance world?
(Lore means the info about the world, different species, traditions etc)

(options: the game, the show, internet, other [specify])

8. Have the storylines from the show continued in the game after the cancellation of the show?
(options: yes, no, I don't know)

8.1 How?

8.2 Do you wish they would continue in the game?

9. Have you participated in the competitions that offered the chance to be part of the show?

(yes, no)

9.1 Why?

9.2 Why not?

10. Do you think the competitions were a good way or a bad way to connect gamers to the show? Please elaborate.

11. Are you satisfied with the content that combined the show and game?

(options: yes, no, somewhat)

11.1 Why?

11.2 Why not?

12. Have you consumed other entertainment that combine different media?

(For example tv-series/comics, games/comics, games/books, games/tv-series, tv-series/movies etc)

(yes, no)

12.1 What were those? (Specific titles, if you can remember)

13. Are you interested in other games that combine different media with the game?

(options: yes, no)

13.1 Why?

13.2 Why not?

Background:

- Year of birth
- Gender (woman, man, other, rather not say)
- Nationality

Do you agree or disagree with these statements?

I am a fan of the show
(1-5 disagree-agree)

I am a fan of the game
(1-5 disagree-agree)

I am a gamer
(1-5 disagree-agree)

Here you can write additional comments about Defiance or the survey in general:

APPENDIX B: Quantum Break Survey

Have you completed Quantum Break (the game)?

(once, twice, several times, started it but haven't finished, I have not played Quantum Break)

Have you watched and finished the digital series?

The digital series consists of four episodes that are in between the playable content.

(yes, yes multiple times, only some of it, no)

Why haven't you watched the digital series?

(I was not interested in the plot, I wanted to play not watch, I had technical difficulties, other)

[Only visible if the answer to the previous question was no]

Were you satisfied with the way quantum ripples affected the episodes? Please elaborate.

Quantum ripples are objects you find and interact with in different parts of the game that add a short scene into the series. For example a cardboard standee at a workshop, that vanishes and is found in the forest during one of the episodes of the digital series.

Were you happy with the way junction points affected the episodes? Please elaborate.

Junction points are the choices you make as the antagonist Paul Serene. For example you have to choose if the company Monarch Solutions will take the hardline approach (kill all the witnesses) or the PR approach (manipulate the media).

Did you feel the series added something to the game experience? Please elaborate.

Have you read the Quantum Break: Zero State -novel?

(Yes, no, started it but haven't finished)

Why haven't you read Quantum Break: Zero State?

(I am not interested in game related books, I didn't know there was a book, I haven't had the chance to read it yet, I am not interested in reading, other)

[Only visible if answer to the previous question was no]

What are your thoughts about the Quantum Break: Zero State?

Did the novel make you want to play the game or watch the digital series?

(Yes to play the game, yes to watch the series, no)

Why / Why not?

[Only visible if the respondent had not played Quantum Break but had read the book]

Do you consider Quantum Break: Zero State as canon?

(Yes, no, partly, other)

Why / why not?

Did you feel the novel added something to the game experience? Please elaborate.

Are you interested in games that have transmedia extensions (books, graphic novels, animation, tv-series, etc.)

(Yes, no)

Why/ Why not?

Have you consumed transmedia extensions of other games you have played?

(yes, no)

What were they? For example Defiance (game + tv-series), Mass Effect (game + comics) etc.

Gender

(Woman, man, other, rather not say)

Year of birth

Country

Here you may write additional comments about Quantum Break or the survey in general: