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Introduction

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Jan-Noël Thon

Introduction. Media Convergence and Transmedial Worlds (Part 3)

In the past few decades, technical innovations, the increasing mediatization of everyday life, and the economic interests of global media conglomerates have led to a highly interconnected media landscape where intellectual property is often spread across a variety of media platforms. One of the effects of this technological, economic, and cultural media convergence appears to be the increasing visibility and presence of transmedial entertainment franchises which represent—usually, but not necessarily: fictional—stories, characters, and worlds across the borders of conventionally distinct media.

In light of the socio-cultural relevance and the commercial success of transmedial entertainment franchises in contemporary media culture, it will come as no surprise that media studies have started to focus on transmedial phenomena as well, with terms such as ›transmedia(l) storytelling‹ or ›transmedial worlds‹ enjoying ever broader popularity. However, the astonishing heterogeneity of forms that can be observed with regard to transmedial phenomena is usually not quite as present in the discourses of media studies. It is this heterogeneity of forms that will be further examined by the present special issue of *IMAGE*, which is the final installment of a three-part series.

A substantial part of the essays collected in the present as well as the two previously published special issues of *IMAGE* is based on papers presented during the Winter School »Transmedial Worlds in Convergent Media Culture«, which took place from February 24 to February 28, 2014 at the Graduate Academy of the University of Tübingen and was supported by the Institutional Strategy of the University of Tübingen (German Research Foundation, ZUK 63).