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### **Transmedia Storytelling and the Challenge of Knowledge Transfer in Contemporary Digital Journalism. A Look at the Interactive Documentary HOLLOW (2012– )**

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Laura Schlichting

**Transmedia Storytelling and the  
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**Abstract**

This article explores transmedia storytelling in the context of web-aware journalism, drawing on the documentary *Hollow* (2012– ) to discuss what it means to fruitfully combine different types of media in a journalistic context. The following analysis is thus informed by journalism as well as by literary and cultural studies, particularly focusing on (trans-)media studies, narratology, and digital communication. It starts from two premises: First, the article recognizes the problem of knowledge transfer, which has become a serious challenge in the digital age. Since the Internet has become the superior way to create and distribute news, the status of newspapers has taken a beating. Second, the article points to a research gap in the analysis of transmediality in nonfiction stories—in this case, in interactive journalistic documentaries or reportages. It proposes, therefore, that the use of transmediality in digital documentary journalism not only affects the way stories are narrated today but, as print journalism declines in popularity, also leads to changes and processes of rethinking in the journalistic field—on the sides of both producers and recipients. Based on this, the objective of this article is to show that the application of Henry Jenkins' concept of transmediality to web-aware journalism can encourage knowledge transfer as well as usher in a new future of long-form journalism in an age of digital overload.

## 1. Introduction. Transmediality in Digital Journalistic Documentaries

Even if the average time spent on the Internet has been steadily increasing,<sup>1</sup> only a fraction of this time is occupied with reading about major (world) events or serious (inter-)national affairs. As Heike E. Jüngst puts it, »[k]nowledge transfer [...] is one of the most pressing problems in our society« (JÜNGST 2010: 1, translation L.S.). The question, then, becomes how this presumed disinterest in »niche topics« may be overcome, while still ensuring knowledge transfer and that substantial content is once again made tempting for a broader audience.

In December 2012, the *New York Times* was the first newspaper that began to break new ground with their opulent, interactive, and ultimately Pulitzer-Prize-winning coverage of *Snow Fall. The Avalanche at Tunnel Creek*. The piece relied on intermedial and transmedial elements<sup>2</sup> to narrate the dramatic story of an avalanche disaster which had happened in the USA in early 2012. Since then, the relationship between transmediality and journalism has become only more symbiotic, even if this has mostly occurred in the Anglophone press.

The digital revolution has changed how we perceive our world. For many decades, newspapers were the primary medium through which news was accessed.<sup>3</sup> This is why the first hypothesis here is based on the observation that, although the Internet has allowed for a new freedom of expression as well as for a new freedom of information, this change in the media landscape requires, first, a new way of telling stories and, second, a new perspective on journalistic narration as such. There have never been so many sources for people to draw from in order to form their own opinions about local, national, or international events, mostly accessible in real time and often free of charge. Now, it is possible for a reader to access a variety of news sources, either via traditional news websites, blogs, or television—as long as s/he does wish to read and not only surf, watch, play, or purchase items on the Internet. Since the rise of »Web 2.0« (DINUCCI 1999: 32), nearly every person with access to the World Wide Web can produce news and distribute them with a single »click«. According to the American media theorist Clay Shirky, the problem of disinterest is not caused by »information overload«,

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<sup>1</sup> According to the survey »Mass Communication in 2010« by the German public TV channels ARD/ZDF, 14 to 29-year-olds dedicate, on average, just ten minutes a day to reading the newspaper. Their parents spent three times as long (cf. BEST/BREUNIG 2011: 18f.). Although these statistics are specific to Germany, the numbers represent a more general and far-reaching trend.

<sup>2</sup> In this article, »intermediality« is defined as »a variety of phenomena that transcend medial boundaries and involve at least two conventionally distinct media« (THON 2014: 335); in contrast, »transmediality« is understood here as all those »medially unspecified phenomena that are not connected to a specific medium or its mediality and [...] can be realized using the means of a large number of different media« (THON 2014: 335).

<sup>3</sup> This paper does not define »news« as the more colloquial, fragmented pieces of news, but rather as the so-called »long reads« with political, socio-cultural, or critical themes, which are not written about on a daily basis and require background information to be well-researched as well as more time in the reception process.

but is rather due to what he terms »filter failure« (SHIRKY 2010: n.pag.)—the user's supposed inability to extract from the Internet the information which is most relevant for him/her.

As the editors of *Journalismus in der digitalen Moderne* observe, the effect of the rise in digitalization leads to a socio-cultural modernization of contemporary societies (cf. KRAMP et al. 2013: 8). This means that, in the medium term, recipients will mainly receive journalistic contents in digital form via electronic devices such as tablets, iPads, and smart phones (cf. NOVY 2013: 27). Indeed, millions of citizens already willingly share their private lives with others on the Internet—mostly via social media. However, it is surprising that their interest in public affairs, socio-cultural events, politics, or economy is kept at a minimum. Consequently, the new media can be seen as holding enormous potential for the strengthening of general interest and engagement in public events. In order to investigate this intersection of information, distribution, digital technology, and journalism, innovative systems and interdisciplinary methods are required. Originating in media studies, the concept of transmediality allows us to focus on the ways in which information is attended to. Looking at the well-known definition by Henry Jenkins, one might agree that

[t]ransmedia 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 it[s] own unique contribution to the unfolding of the story. (JENKINS 2007: n.pag.)

Applying transmedia storytelling to digital journalism involves telling stories on multiple platforms and with different formats. A definition by Ford suggests that

[t]he purpose of a transmedia news story is to inform the readers in the best way possible, and using a combination of media forms to do so makes sense in a world where such partnerships across content platforms is becoming more plausible and where Internet publishing provides the means by which one can put together a package of text, audio, video, and pictures into an overarching coverage package. (FORD 2007: n.pag.)

But even with this definition in mind, the concept remains rather abstract and is mostly connected to fictional worlds and contexts. However, as the narratologist Marie-Laure Ryan argues, »[t]here is no reason why transmedia storytelling should be limited to the kind of fantastic worlds. Nor is there any reason why it should be limited to fiction« (RYAN 2013: 10). When transferred to nonfictional contexts—e.g., information studies—the third hypothesis here follows: transmediality will eventually lead to a revitalization of the journalistic branch requiring new reading competencies as the source material is spread across different media and platforms.

From a narratological perspective, one can argue that when the term »storytelling« is mentioned in digital journalism, it is often surrounding issues of representation, staying firmly on the side of the discourse. It is not usually about changes in narration, narrativity, plot structure, or narrative intentions, but rather about questions like »How can one make complex realities through

multimedia representations more understandable?« or »How can one get the readers' attention?«. At its best, web-aware journalism makes use of the concept of transmediality to tell stories vividly, perhaps to cover niche themes and thus to reach a broader readership. According to Hickethier, the utilization of different media is an essential feature of the cultural self-understanding of society because media changes can develop in every direction. They are versatile and multidimensional (cf. HICKETHIER 2013: 22).

After this attempt to define transmediality in a nonfictional context, however, the question remains as to when the label »transmedia journalism« should be applied. I would argue that journalism often becomes transmedial when the concept of realism is not as rigid as in other genres, allowing some room for authorial creativity and for the text to take on some of the characteristics of fiction. This may either be the case when personal stories which include a subjective-emotional touch are told (as in the case of *Hollow*) or when topics which need to be narrated and focalized by as many voices as possible are chosen in order to provide the readership with profound background knowledge. Looking at recent transmedial documentaries, this often seems to be the case with controversial issues about environmental or political matters, as with *NSA Files. Decoded* (2013) or *Geheimer Krieg* (2013).<sup>4</sup>

Even if many textual and pictorial contributions enrich the content with additional perspectives, an increasing range of digital information also requires more contextualization, classification, and background information (cf. NOVY 2013: 26). The question that remains is how one can prove the trustworthiness and reliability of these sources. This, indeed, is a difficult question to answer. On the one hand, if one includes many voices, a more well-rounded perspective on the issue is presented and the reader may be allowed to reach his/her own opinion. On the other hand, it is helpful to look at the reporters and organizations and their aims in pursuing particular digital journalistic projects; for journalists, the code of ethics should generally be regarded as the foundation of their job and taken for granted.

Consequently, transmedia journalists can afford to put more emphasis on (multi-)cultural codes, ethics, and the project's quality instead of quantity in the investigation process because transmedia journalists do the same thing they have always done—namely, tell stories, albeit now »more« multimodally and multimedially. Since a common way of financing articles is through crowdfunding or other social payment services, many journalists work independently because they are not as constrained by time, market guidelines, and other formulas as other permanently hired journalists may be. Thus, they are not as afraid of breaking with some journalistic norms as their colleagues, because they are mostly working independently of publishing houses and can, as a result, tell their stories truthfully, ethically, responsibly, and accurately (cf. WESTBROOK 2009). According to Novy, director of the Institute for Development and Research (IWM) in Vienna, who wrote an article on

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<sup>4</sup> DETEL 2014 discusses this project in more detail.

normativity and the crisis of journalism today, it is due to the new possibilities offered by the Internet that journalism is probably better and more independent than ever before, even taking into account its century-long history (cf. NOVY 2013: 26).

Apart from increasing competition among publishing houses connected to economic crisis in general, journalism also suffers from the readers' unwillingness to invest money in high-quality journalistic documentaries and reportages requiring expensive research. All of these factors contribute to the necessity of making changes within the journalistic sector. Regarding the challenge of knowledge transfer, the question arises of what one can do to support web-aware journalism and nonfictional storytelling, while at the same time not losing target audiences and getting more people interested in the latest (world) events. My suggestion is twofold: First, involve the people, and second, combine old media with new media in a way that enriches both.

The most dynamic feature of web-aware journalism is likely the dialogue between the user and producer of content, which plays such an extraordinary role (cf. KRAMP 2013: 54). Mark Deuze, a Dutch media sociologist, uses the term »liquid journalism« (DEUZE 2008: 848), by which he means the ability of people to choose the news that seem most interesting and, in this process, journalists becoming an even more active part of society, stimulating civic engagement (cf. DEUZE 2008: 859). There is a wide range of terms for web-aware journalism circulating among media scholars, which, at least at first glance, is causing confusion rather than clarifying the concept (cf. BRUNS 2005: 5). Although the terms vary in their meanings, what they hold in common is that the wishes, desires, and concerns of citizens are perceived and taken seriously. A term often used in this context is »convergence culture«. It is not by chance that the term originates in political studies. In this context, it is an allusion to democracy and applies to nonfictional web-aware journalism with its aim of fostering participatory and democratic culture. It creates platforms for people to discuss issues and become informed about what is happening, while it simultaneously seeks to produce journalistic projects of high quality. Even if it is a promising new area to test and explore, there are not yet many transmedia projects in journalism. This is, perhaps, not due to a lack of qualified or creative people willing to engage in such projects, but rather a question of money for substantial research, financing through advertisements, and fulfilling market shares.

At this point, it must be emphasized that traditional media such as radio, television, and the newspaper are not dead and the Internet does not signify their end. Jenkins argues that »journalists [should] learn to respect the new kinds of civic connections which are felt by young people« (JENKINS 2006: n.pag.). Bearing this in mind, one may deduce a second proposition: combine old media with new media in a way that enriches both. The Internet provides journalists with freedom to display creativity. Transmedia journalists should thus always ask themselves: »Via which channels can I tell my story best? Does it make sense to start a blog? Do I need graphic material to support my

argument? Do I wish to include social networks and to what purpose?». During the working process, one should question whether there might be a better visual way of telling the story. The Internet, in combination with transmedia storytelling, is a bold and exciting new area for expression, creativity, and innovation.

## **2. *Hollow* as an Example of a New Direction Within Documentary Journalism**

These and many other questions had to be taken into account while creating *Hollow*. *Hollow* is created, or, rather, digitally ›curated‹ by Elaine McMillion Sheldon, an American documentary storyteller, filmmaker, and photographer. With many different detailed storylines, the project describes the history of the ›fallen region‹ of McDowell County. The county is a dying community in West Virginia which flourished in the 1940s and 1950s due to coal mining, but the money has never come back. This area has little desire for a new road, new infrastructure, or a new water system, and because of the lack of these, the young people of McDowell are leaving the area. During the past years, for these various reasons, this region has become associated with a number of negative stereotypes in the media, if it was granted any media coverage at all. McMillion Sheldon wanted to overcome these stereotypes by trying to give McDowell's citizens a chance to tell their stories from their perspectives and to make people understand the other side of McDowell. This is another reason McMillion Sheldon cites for showing that there are also so many similarities with other states, like Vermont or the ›Ruin Porn-City‹ of Detroit (Michigan). In short, *Hollow* describes a region that is a poster child for all that has gone wrong in America and which is now ignored by the government— »economic stagnation, dwindling population, high teenage pregnancy rate, [...] obesity and drug addiction« (COSTA 2013: n.pag.).

At the beginning, when entering the website, recipients are asked to use headphones. They are invited to scroll through a timeline plotting McDowell County's population boom and subsequent decline. Unlike a traditional documentary in which viewers turn the lights down, sit back, and wait for a story to unfold, participants ›watching‹ *Hollow* can scroll-and-point through various narrative arcs, stopping along the way to unlock content and watch video interviews. The more you scroll, the more these stories unfold and become close to cinematic life (cf. LINKINS 2013: n.pag.). Utilizing parallax scrolling, a special scrolling technique in computer graphics, background images are made to move slower than foreground images, creating an illusion of depth in a 2D project. Although one has to access the website on the Internet, the borders between this medium's features and TV become blurred.



Fig. 1:

A typical web-surface of Hollow consists of a collage of photographs and different buttons describing what applications can be found behind each chapter.

<http://hollerhome.hollowdocumentary.com/holler-home/> [accessed January 11, 2013]

The *Hollow* website itself is very video-heavy, and offers more than three hours of video content. This is not unusual, as a typical feature of transmedia storytelling is the choice of including many audio (or audiovisual) tapes. In the case of *Hollow*, this may be due to the high illiteracy rate of the people living there, with the large amounts of video perhaps representing the good will of the creators in allowing it to be accessed and understood by everyone living in McDowell. Presenting the piece in this manner is very expensive and it is a challenge to finance the server costs in order to keep them running every month. Because McMillon Sheldon and her team cannot continue to record the citizens and events of McDowell indefinitely, they have trained the community to film their own lives, report on their progress, and post on a blog on the website. That is how the residents participate in the project and how a voice is given to topics they would like to see receive public attention.

A feature quite common to transmedia digital journalism is the use of multiperspectivity to provide different perspectives and authenticity. Thus, *Hollow* includes interactive, analytical, and quantitative elements. One can see, for example, a photograph of a flower on the website. Some moments later, in a video, the same photo can be seen again while it is being taken by McDowell's citizen Alan Johnston. This points to the original intention of McMillon Sheldon to create a way in which to give McDowell's people a voice. Another example typical of this format is the insertion of interactive elements with which to 'play', which also include statistics. Just one of many interac-



tive elements in *Hollow* allows the visitor of the website to participate in a data survey about small-town exodus. The user types in his/her home town and is immediately presented with a world map with the number of how many young people have already left their home town and moved to another. Another transmedial element of *Hollow* is the possibility the user has to post entries about public occasions and private lives, or simply become informed about the latest news, storms, etc. (see fig. 2). To some extent, it is reminiscent of an online newspaper or a hyperlocal blog as discussed by Prothmann (cf. PROTHMANN 2013: 125). According to him, hyperlocal blogs replace local newspapers where local news offices are shut down in provincial areas. Sometimes this medium fosters interest in social, cultural, historical, and political debates by encouraging writing about local issues.

In *Hollow*, which is very similar to a multimedia reportage (and maybe one cannot even clearly separate the two<sup>5</sup>), pictures and photographs become movable and there are always background sounds which, to some extent, determine the rhythm of reading. That this strategy has proven successful is not only due to the quality of the sound engineering and the entire »coverage package« (FORD 2007: n.pag.) of different modes and media, which inevitably cause the recipient to sympathize with the community. Rather, that the active role of the reader/player/watcher becomes important is also connected to many other multimodal features, like links to *Hollow*'s website from Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. It is not far-fetched to assume that the idea behind the use of all of these new media is to convey the feeling of belonging to »the« McDowell-community.

Against this background, it becomes clear that the recipient's role in the process of reading changes. The reader is no longer merely a reader, but may also be initiator, consumer, user, author, journalist, blogger, photographer, or activist. Oswald uses the term »prosumer« (OSWALD 2013: 64) to describe this new role(s). In the context of web-based comics, Thierry Groensteen uses the term »readeragent« (GROENSTEEN 2013: 74), a moniker I would also like to adopt here. It fits in well with the case presented here, because reading and interacting become two different modes of attention. According to Groensteen, »[t]he reader no longer asks ›What happens next‹ or ›How is this story going to end‹, but ›What new actions will I be asked to perform?‹« (GROENSTEEN 2013: 75).

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<sup>5</sup> »The difference between transmediality and multimodality is not always clear, but a reliable criterion is the autonomy of the different types of information [... ]n multimodality they are given as a package, because they cannot be separated« (RYAN 2013: 11).



Fig. 2:

Hollerhome—a local news website similar to a hyperlocal blog.

<http://hollerhome.hollowdocumentary.com/holler-home/> [accessed January 11, 2013]

### 3. Purposes, Impacts, and Possible Dangers of Nonfictional Transmedial Storytelling in Digital Journalism

Using the example of *Hollow*, one can deduce several purposes and results of nonfictional transmedia storytelling. If journalists choose to use several different platforms, they intend to send a serious message because such a novel media use increases the urgency and presence among a country's citizens. Mostly, online journalists try to draw attention to «niche issues» that are overlooked by mainstream newspapers or even ignored by society and politics.

To narrate transmedially means to spread certain contents of a story across various channels in order to create unique and daring entertainment (cf. EICK 2014: 179). But this does not mean that the entertaining aspects should predominate over educational aspects when applying transmediality to web-aware journalism. If consuming news is fun, it can also be entertaining enough that the educational value sometimes takes a backseat. Additionally, it is the power of the entertaining and technologically novel elements

that makes it easier for recipients to ›play with‹ and check out new ways of storytelling, to apply and to develop new ways of digital technology and communication, to support teamwork and interdisciplinary working processes, and, in the process, to draw attention to subjects and attract new recipients.

Concerning the impact of transmediality on journalistic reportage, one can differentiate between the side of the producer and the side of the recipient. As far as the recipient is concerned, there is no longer a given rule for how to read the transmedial ›text‹ because the readeragent can determine the course of the story himself/herself: »Facing multiple points of access, no two consumers are likely to encounter story information in the same order« (BORDWELL 2011: n.pag.). This is also due to the fact that meaning is no longer only generated by the story that is verbally narrated, but also generated through other media like photographs, social media, and audio or video tapes. Thus, transmedia storytellers attempt to exploit the features specific to each medium as well as possible. Along the way, many different perspectives and voices can be adopted, which add various new layers of meaning to the decoding process. Concerning the formal structure of an online transmedia project, the question arises whether there is a break in linearity. How can one watch or read the online article without spoiling the facts or without interrupting the narrative arc, even if there may be various strategies for reading and interacting? In other words, readeragents can take unique, nonlinear, and nonchronological paths through content.

However, the critical challenge in this form of storytelling is that the narrative arc of the story is not predetermined by the journalists. Instead, the user's interaction with the content determines the story that emerges: »The interface is the narrative. The narrative happens when you set up those relationships between the data, and even allow users to add to that« (Dana Coester, quoted in CURRIE SIVEK 2012: n.pag.). Consequently, the readeragents feel like they are on a journey while interacting with the project. In the case of *Hollow*, it was important to McMillion Sheldon that the

audience not only stay[s] engaged in the project for more than the »five-minute attention span« of online explorers, but also that site visitors relate to the »characters« and engage in the sociological and anthropological aspects of the project. (COSTA 2013: n.pag.)

On the producer's side, the most noticeable effect of applying transmedial concepts is that journalistic work changes from a product-oriented to a process-oriented structure (cf. KRAMP 2013: 54). In other words, the focus is not put on the end-product—or any medial part of the project—any longer, but rather on the process of creating it. According to Oswald, an article is ideally not a finished product, but the starting point for a constructive debate with user participation, leading to new posts and articles (cf. KRAMP 2013: 72). However, this does not only hold true for written texts, but for any kind of medial contribution. To some extent, it also implies that the notion of endings in journalistic pieces is *passé*. In consequence, this influences the story that is

told. On the one hand, the end of some stories perhaps will simply never come. On the other hand, leaving stories open seems closer to how they operate in real life, in which not all events have a definite ending (cf. OSWALD 2013: 72). But if the story is endless, who decides to restrict the accumulated information to an appropriate size for digital uploading? This question is even more complicated with regard to hypertexts, particularly when considering limitations on amounts of data or digital storage capacity.

In addition to the transmedial advantages offered by new media with regard to the revitalization of online journalism, there are dangers of which one ought to be aware. First of all, this massively impacts the profession of journalism. Although scholarly opinions vary in this respect, one can agree with Westbrook that

[t]he journalist of the future is a reporter, a video journalist, a photo-journalist, audio journalist and interactive designer, all-in-one. They shoot and edit films, audio slideshows, podcasts, vodcasts, blogs, and longer articles. They may have one specialism out of those, but can go somewhere and cover a story in a multitude of platforms. (WESTBROOK 2009: n.pag.)

One might even argue that the journalism of the future will be a collective experience. Certainly, the workload and working time of journalists will change noticeably. In Meyer's opinion, they will become akin to »non-stop-services« (MEYER 2013: 142) such as firefighters or locksmiths and perhaps will never be off-duty. This would have a huge impact, as transmedia projects cannot be realized by a single person, but rather must be composed by a group of specialists. At the same time, journalists are at risk of losing their status as experts, as anybody can now start a blog online and write. Content exists infinitely, whereas our attention is limited (cf. EICK 2014: 33). Today, people no longer perceive news and events one-dimensionally and read about them from one media source, but, rather, they perceive them multi-dimensionally and in a more fragmented fashion (cf. EICK 2014: 32). Additionally, there will no longer be any such thing as one audience, which means that the communication model of »one-to-many« has become outdated. The »many-to-many« communication model becomes more applicable in this context. Additionally, journalists are now required to think in more economic terms. This already starts at the level of the university, with teaching journalism students computer science, product design, product marketing, etc. (cf. CURRIE SIVEK 2012: n.pag.).

#### **4. Conclusion. Digitalization and Transmediality Lead to Changes in Reception and Production**

Human minds do not exclusively operate with facts and thus create their own stories to make sense of otherwise discrete or isolated events and issues. For this reason, great stories and articles win hearts and minds. Why, then, turn

to multi-media? Telling stories across multiple media formats is a trend in digital journalism because no single medium remains capable of satisfying the curiosity and lifestyle of 21st century citizens now that we are surrounded by an unprecedented world of content, products, and leisure opportunities.

The people transmedia journalists tell their stories to have the technology to decide whether they want to inform themselves further or not. According to Eick, this kind of digitalization shifts our social milieu and thus changes reception behavior as well (cf. EICK 2014: 24). As a result, the former ›reader‹ or ›user‹ changes from a passive recipient into an active and sometimes even creative participant who, in this paper, is referred to as a reader-agent—a term borrowed from Thierry Groensteen's work in comics studies.

Moreover, applying transmediality to web-aware journalism does not lead to a ›just-so-reading‹, as these articles focus on digital long-format journalistic projects—so-called ›long reads‹. These texts require extensive research and are not classifiable as ›en passant‹ reading. In that, they differ from the daily news in print journalism: »When you look at loyal readers of paper newspapers, they tend to read the news during their leisure time; during breakfast, over the lunch hour, or in the evening. By contrast, online news is accessed throughout the day« (VARIAN 2013: n.pag.).

Moreover, this paper has shown that the use of transmedia in digital documentary journalism not only affects the way stories are narrated but also leads to changes and rethinking within the journalistic field itself. By examining *Hollow*, this paper has illustrated that the concept of transmediality is a useful and fruitful tool to exploit. The argument presented here is that digital journalism changes with transmediality from a product to a process-oriented practice, which affects the recipients as well as the producers. It is, therefore, inevitable that journalism as a career will change in the future, but this may also present new opportunities.

However, the question remains whether transmedial storytelling can foster higher-quality journalism, especially with regard to digital journalism, particularly because transmedia projects are able to respond so rapidly to technological progress and the aesthetic needs of recipients. Improvements in technology also lead, however, to the culling of human resources, eventually limiting time available for high-quality research.

Another crucial point to consider when dealing with digital projects is the access the elderly and underprivileged have or, rather, do not have to web-aware transmedia journalism. In other words, how might the digital divide with regard to age and financial situation be overcome? The Internet, as a medium of globalization, also intensifies the exclusion of the less privileged from society. But, to some extent, one has to come to terms with some kind of discrimination, as not all people can afford digital devices.

The Internet offers nearly unlimited opportunities for testing and developing new (trans-)medial formats. Of course, not every journalist must become a photographer, editor, and marketing expert. Even if journalists learn to think multimedially, multimedia storytelling and transmediality in

digital journalism will be produced in teams. According to Kayser-Bril, it will no longer only be journalists who are responsible for ›good‹ journalism (cf. KAYSER-BRIL 2013: 136). Since knowledge is the essential component of journalism, a big challenge—but also an opportunity—could lie in using the knowledge of the collective for adding, re-editing, and correcting information.

To conclude, it has never been more exciting and challenging to be a journalist, even if many of the new possibilities have to be further explored and tested before they may become ›mainstream-compatible‹. Transmediality has the potential both to fight apathy and to decrease the gap in successful knowledge transfer. Transmediality in web-aware journalism will make digital journalism much more innovative and interesting for ›Generation Y‹ and beyond. As such, it is a highly promising trend both with regard to producers and recipients of 21st century news.

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