eLearning & Distance Education

iDESIGN

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Transmedia

Learning across a multitude of platforms

The evolution of the internet is, in some cases, characterized less by entirely new communications mediums than it is by a *new confluence* of those mediums which we've now had for some time. In other words, people are generating work that is both video *and* essay, or video and essay with a little audio thrown in, and so on. The proliferation of the term "transmedia" in educational circles reflects our understanding that this isn't just a fad, but rather how people will be (re: *are*) communicating throughout the private and public sectors. We know we should be teaching them, but a lot of teachers aren't sure really what transmedia projects look like, nor do they know how low the barrier to entry is.

VIDEO ESSAYS EMBEDDED IN BLOGS

As the tools for making videos have become easier to use, the variety of assignments videos may be used to complete have grown. Additionally, tastes are shifting: Journal articles and manuals are referred to with decreasing frequency, while topical and instructional videos (often represented on sites like YouTube) become increasingly popular. Because it can be difficult/ungainly to integrate reference data within a video, these projects are often embedded within blogs or sites, allowing the creators to supplement with additional textual/pictoral/graphical/audiotory data, as well as links to sources. Above is a video essay which may be found embedded within the same student-group's creative-process blog.

They used: iMovie (or Windows Movie Maker), Tumblr (or Blogger, Wordpress, etc.), and students' own cameras on their mobile devices. All of these tools are free to use.

SLIDESHOW AND WEBSITE RESUMES

The essay has been foundational to academia because its basic form is a model for so many types of communications students have to make in the real world, resumes for instance. However, more and more resumes are becoming graphical, interactive, and entertaining, much to the success of the job applicants who develop them. Above is an application formatted as a playful slideshow, complete with background music and links out to various supplementary data such as the applicant's variagated web-presence, her references' contact information, and her former employers' websites. Her new employers were so impressed with the application that they posted it on their own website after they hired her.

She used: Sliderocket, a free and easy-to-use web app.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Teaching Tips are, themselves, examples of transmedia, as are the growing number of professional profiles that tomorrow's teachers are developing. To improve as well as remain competitive, teachers are developing online personal learning networks and contributing with transmedia projects of their own. Look for even more podcasting, vlogging, and graphical, interactive design on professional sites of our educators as these tools develop.

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