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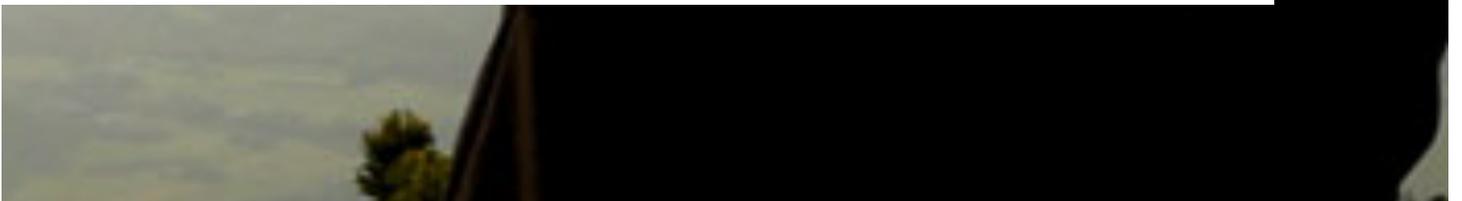




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Editorial - Interactive Narratives

Hudson Moura

Editor-in-Chief

Film and media practitioners and educators have been expanding the use of digital through new experiences with unusual and innovative technical and artistic “approaches.” Likewise, researchers and academics are questioning and analyzing these new practices that increasingly dominate global society, as seen in the past months with the advent of the worldwide pandemic.

How people and countries deal with the advent of new technologies reflects social problems and deepens the debate on our identity and state of the art conducted on a global scale. How are countries acting towards these new phenomena? For instance, does globalization standardize the use of new media?

In 2013, we created the IFM-Interactive Film and Media Conference to provide an inclusive educational space within the digital theory and interactive studies where researchers and practitioners could discuss and present their research and work in film and media. With this purpose, the IFM has partnered with universities worldwide and established a space for a global integration between academia and the audiovisual production community that aims to forge a valuable exchange between researchers, faculty, students, practitioners, and the community. The goal is to generate a broad debate, emphasizing the need to evaluate the increasing use of digital screens in contemporary society and how people respond artistically, socially, and politically to the challenges of the digital cultural space.

These conferences aspire to foster a dynamic and intellectually stimulating dialogue between film and media studies scholars and practitioners (filmmakers, new media developers and artists), encouraging the exchange and promoting the production of comparative analysis and joint projects related to ongoing debates in the audiovisual area

of research on the digital platform. In addition, it is an opportunity for exhibition and discussion from several theoretical perspectives on audiovisuals while being based on empirical evidence and critical or theoretical interventions.

How has the digital screen changed the narrative in (audio)visual arts? First, the evolution of narrative practices from text-based literature to the advent of the digital revolution as storytelling moves from literacy to so-called post-literacy. The prevalence of new interactive digital narratives in all areas from games, literature, films, and video art has resulted in new forms of storytelling and, accordingly, provoked new reading practices that transform readers/viewers into players/users in active collaborators. We explore practices and ideas of transmedia, intermediality, convergence, multimedia, virtual reality, immersion, social media, digital globalization, and new narratives in games and graphic novels. Also, the impact of the digital screen on streaming, art, and new exhibition practices.

Physical public space is increasingly being substituted or augmented by virtual space through digital screens (e.g. video, film, computer). What effect do these new developments have on social space, seen here as encompassing both physical public areas (streets, hotels, coffee shops) and virtual spaces (YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Zoom, etc.)? How do these novel practices of socialization affect previously clearly demarcated frontiers between the public and the private? Throughout the world, from Brazil to Turkey to New Zealand to Egypt to France to China to India to Canada, we witness the influence of social media on political participation. How have these new platforms engendered innovative forms of expression and social engagement?

The work of professors, researchers, and practitioners (artists, filmmakers, and videomakers) from various areas and several countries, including Italy, Brazil, England, Spain, Canada, New Zealand, Portugal, Scotland, Germany, and the United States, constitutes this special issue with selected articles and audiovisuals from the #IFM2014. The aim is to launch IFM Journal first issues while archiving our preliminary works.

In “From Ghosts of the Horseshoe to Ward One: Critical Interactives for Inviting Social Engagement with Instances of Historical Erasure (Columbia, South Carolina),” Heidi Rae Cooley and Duncan A. Buell presents critical interactive applications that elicit “empathic awareness” and, by extension, inspire a sense of responsibility for a past that remains unacknowledged. According to Mariana Ciancia, Francesca Piredda, and Simona Venditti discuss in “Shaping and Sharing Imagination: Designers and the Transformative Power of Stories,” it is necessary to adopt a disruptive approach to overcome the contemporary complexity, assuming storytelling activities, narrative practice and relationships among people as driving forces for innovation. In “Proposed Methodology for Transmedia New Story Analysis: A Comparative Study of The Float Project (2009/10), in Brazil and The Great British Property Scandal: Every Empty Counts (2012) in the UK,” Geane Alzamora and Lorena Tárzia examine possible applications of the transmedia concept to the news report. They propose an evolving analytical model as a methodology for understanding transmedia applied to news features.

Begoña González-Cuesta demonstrates in “I-Docs and New Narratives: Meaning Making in Highrise” how interactivity and participation change how a story is told and received, thus changing its nature as a narrative. In “Emerging Forms of Citizen Video Activism: Challenges in Documentary Storytelling & Sustainability,” Ben Lenzner examines the emerging video practices rooted in social activism in several global settings and how the assembling of technology and human practices merge to create distinctive and innovative new assemblages. Rafael Antunes assesses the project “Blue Pencil: Experiences in Transmedia,” focusing on its central theme, the censorship in Portugal during the Estado Novo. Finally, in “Alpenprojekt,” the video artist Marina Camargo interacts with the space by cutting the skyline in the alpine mountains evoking the European tradition from the 18th century to depict portraits with scissors and paper.

Toronto, November 22, 2021

Shaping and Sharing Imagination: designers and the transformative power of stories ²

Mariana Ciancia, Francesca Piredda, and Simona Venditti

Abstract: Changes in business and social environments have led society towards a complex landscape in which the relationship between mainstream media and participatory culture is completely changed, with a consequential blurring of boundaries between public and virtual space. As audience media habits are changing, a digital vision of reality is rising, and engagement practices are evolving. Consequently, there is the need for a new design methodology based on different skills working together. It is then necessary to adopt a disruptive approach to overcome the contemporary complexity, assuming storytelling activities, narrative practice and relationships among people as driving force for innovation. The paper describes the cases of *Imagine Milan* (2009-2012) and *Plug Social TV* (2013-ongoing), in which we tested listening and expressive tools and communication strategies to activate a dialogue among communities. On the one hand, there is the aim of experiencing audiovisual languages through different narrative formats. On the other hand, we explored the use of stories in a collaborative process, spreading the narrative worlds across different channels. The aim of this paper is to describe our design approach, merging together tools and skills from different areas: communication design strategies as participative methods are linked to codesign actions; branding strategies, coming from the advertising field, as tools for identity development; audiovisual language considered as a cultural interface for

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listening to reality; transmedia practice as a cultural paradigm able to involve the audience into meaning-making processes; ultimately, social media advocacy is used to build relationships between virtual and real communities.

Introduction

The contemporary *mediascape* (Appadurai, 1990) is witnessing the emergence of phenomena that foster the sharing of meaning-making processes between producers and audiences, shaping society and influencing media habits. Due to the evolution of social interconnections through digital technologies, with a consequential blurring of boundaries between public and virtual space, it is necessary to encourage processes of mutual understanding among widespread communities of interest and practice, in order “to spark the imagination of many” (RebootStories, 2014).

Nowadays, communicative environments surround us, and we can experience the breakage of the “fourth wall,” the metaphorical barrier between the audience and the action that unfolds on stage (or on screen), keeping reality separate from the fictional world. This dramatic convention allows the viewers to enjoy those narrative universes even though they don’t correspond to reality’s logic (*suspension of disbelief*). A disruption of the fourth wall used to allow the audience to develop metafiction reflections in the theatrical and cinematographic fields has become one of the key features of multichannel phenomena: cross-media and transmedia systems break the fourth wall to make the audience enter the stage and take an active role in the story.

Therefore, we have been witnessing a paradigm shift toward a *networked culture* (Jenkins, Ford and Green, 2013) in which media and languages that have broken their historical isolation allow more dynamic use of stories.

This context is making audiences more and more knowledgeable as well as eager for information, which is spread across several devices and channels. Thanks also to technological innovation, which has become an important feature for how we envisage our future, people are putting together different messages, which stem from everyday life, in order to shape the collective imagination.

In this scenario, people are dealing with an interconnected social sphere in which they are “no longer dependent upon the particular forms of dialogue to which we have grown accustomed, and new forms will have to be developed” (Burnett, 2011). More than ever, the audience now has become aware of its key role in the contemporary mediascape both as consumer and producer. Paul Saffo (2010, 25-26) refers to members of the audience as creators, “[...] ordinary, anonymous individuals with a new role in this economy.[...] an economic actor who in one and the same act both creates and consumes.” As a development in the communication field, the conveying of stories across multiple media and the spreading of engagement practices are leading to a scenario in which “consumption becomes production; reading becomes writing; spectator culture becomes participatory culture” (Jenkins, 2006a, 60).

These groups of people not only make use of static content but also take possession and transform information through the negotiation of meanings. The main consequence of this is the spread of new content and the activation of new knowledge: "Content does not remain in fixed borders, but rather it circulates in unpredicted and often unpredictable directions, not the product of top-down design but rather of a multitude of local decisions made by autonomous agents negotiating their way through diverse cultural spaces" (Jenkins, Li, Krauskopf, and Green, 2008, 42).

Within the design community (both researchers and practitioners), the topic of storytelling in the realm of social innovation represents a hot debate: the DESIS Philosophy Talks (www.desis-philosophytalks.org), an initiative aimed at enhancing the dialogue between practice and theory, between design and philosophy, is dedicating a series of seminars to this topic and a publication collecting those reflections is forthcoming. The main questions raised are about making the best use of storytelling within the context of design for social innovation: can storytelling lead to the construction of a higher quality public domain? How can we exclude a manipulative character in the way we make use of storytelling? How can we, as designers, tell the stories from the margins of the mainstream of society and help its potentialities to be fully expressed? Now more than ever, we believe that communication designers have a key role in leading the linking of actions and relationships, able to support the audiences in the creation of new content and knowledge and in the construction of meanings through

the practice of storytelling.

The transformative power of stories

Since the dawn of mankind, stories have allowed people to build and share the meaning of their common experiences, to communicate and to structure the surrounding reality. Nowadays, the way the audience can tell stories is changing thanks to developments in technology and media, so the transformative power of stories in shaping and sharing the imagination of many can be as powerful as possible.

Evolution and remediation (Bolter and Grusin, 1999) are creating new possibilities in media consumption, allowing the audience to experience new forms of storytelling and languages, modifying the relationship between mainstream media (top-down) and participatory culture (bottom-up or grassroots). The main consequence is the spread of communication environments characterized by story worlds in which the collaboration of producers and audience is leading to a “social construction of reality” (Berger and Luckman, 1966). In this reality, the circulation of stories and narratives through several channels and devices is engaging more people than ever, affecting the audience’s identity, aesthetics and behaviour (Ryan and Thon, 2014). In accordance with Ahmad and Thompson (2009, 1), we think of “storytelling as a means to sharing knowledge, building trust, and cultivating identity”: we believe in stories as agency for change.

According to Davenport,

Storytelling relies on the combined human strengths of memory, imagination, and communication. The forms and methodologies of storytelling allow us to sift through and make sense of happenings in our own lives and in the lives of others. Whether drawn from representations of reality or shaped as fantasy worlds, stories tap into and represent the collective psyche of our culture. For the human being, story-making and story-listening are both a pleasure and a privilege. (2005, 2)

Designers have a double role: as *storylisteners*, they collect potential stories from testimonials and repertoires; as *storytellers* they organize information into an experience by providing a point of view. Each designer, of course, has his particular background, works in a particular context and brings his particular culture. He should look at stories that are on the margins of the mainstream, bringing them to take part in the social discourse. Design is an intrinsically future-oriented practice (Koskinen, Zimmerman, Binder, Redström, Wensveen, 2011) as it has the role to move from the existing situation to a preferred one (Simon, 1969). Thanks to digital technologies that have enabled new ways of communicating and building relationships among people, memories and willingness, design could claim the role of a “futural epistemology” (Willis, 2013) based on innovative dynamics of storytelling: real-time versus past time versus future foresight. Stories through time have always unlocked the potential to create communities of shared interests, aggregate common beliefs, and explore contexts and places. Stories have allowed us to travel both back in time and in the future. By creating a story with all its components (actors, context, plot, script, etc.), we can envision how things are or the way things could be and allow others to take part in our own vision.

Designers take charge of the role of configuring forecasts, making them actually arguable and ready to be put into practice. To prefigure brand new facts, making them visible and highly imaginative at the same time, means to translate them into project proposals. To shape possible worlds is essential in order to manifest them and trigger imagination: it is a process of continuous interaction between images and their manifold interpretations that starts off a dialogue among stakeholders within the collaboration process. Only imagination can activate new knowledge. On the one hand, then, imagery as a catalogue and as a cultural and trans-cultural archive of themes, figures and common habits feeds scenarios and future insights; on the other hand, scenarios regenerate imagery, orient the design culture and configure its dynamic character and its transformative power (Piredda, 2008).

As tools that designers have to collaborate with communities and among peers to establish pathways of change, stories set a common ground for discussion, engage and move people. They allow people to make tangible the way they experience the world. The more designers represent ideas and proposals as rough and kaleidoscopic, the more they invite people to use their own imagination in order to position themselves and to plot their own way to action.

We have put into effect the idea of storytelling as a *social experience* (Bernardo, 2014) since 2009, involving young designers (students) of the School of Design (Politecnico di Milano) and citizens of the Milan city area.

Below we are presenting the cases of *Imagine Milan* (2009-2012) and *Plug Social TV* (2013-ongoing). The main idea is, on the one hand, to experiment with the power of audiovisual storytelling (languages, genres and formats) as tools for *shaping imagination*; on the other hand, to dive into the potentialities of transmedia systems, investigating the use of stories in a collaborative process, spreading the narrative worlds across different channels and *sharing imagination*. We have been designing “experiences that are socially inclusive and which have the power to bring people together through common interests and goals” (Bernardo, 2014, 116-17).

Shaping imagination: *Imagine Milan*

[[youtube.com/user/imagislab](https://www.youtube.com/user/imagislab), [facebook.com/imagislabpolimi](https://www.facebook.com/imagislabpolimi)]

Imagine Milan is an educational and research project started in 2009, which involves professors, researchers and students at the School of Design of Politecnico di Milano. The aim of this research is to experience audiovisual formats to promote dialogue and social innovation, focusing on the potentialities of audiovisual storytelling and its tools.

The experience so far conducted was located in different areas of the city of Milan, having ten groups of young designers exploring one neighbourhood each, meeting people and places. Over the years, we have been dealing with different topics (from sustainable mobility to social issues) and areas obtaining a kaleidoscopic portrait of the city as it is and envisioning how it could be if some good practices would become leaders of a sustainable transformation. *Imagine Milan* represents an experiment of the contribution that communication design can give to the dialogue about

possible worlds and sustainable innovation. In particular, audiovisual formats are proving to be complex artifacts both as expressive languages and, from the production processes point of view, as products, which can trigger networks of expertise and knowledge towards representation and mediation.

The first phase—*Listening*—has the aim of exploring the urban area. Young designers collected and documented case studies and best practices through video interviews with citizens, city users, associations, craftsmen and companies; through editing historical and contemporary iconographic repertoires, useful to reconstruct the memory and social imagery of the place. The output of this phase is the miniDOC: a brief audiovisual format (five minutes) able to tell the most important aspects emerging from the previous research and analysis work.

The second phase—*Envisioning*—provides an epistemological and aesthetic contribution to envisioning a sustainable future. Output is the Scenario that visualizes and enacts abstract concepts for activating negotiation tables and conversations among stakeholders. In fact, researchers, young designers and stakeholders were involved in public presentations and workshops at the Urban Center in Milan for discussing topics and pathways of collaboration towards possible solutions.

The third phase—*Promoting*—promotes a sustainable city life, its values and benefits through a typical advertising output: a short audiovisual format—advertising/commercials—(thirty seconds). The

promos were distributed on urban screens (outdoor, on metro and buses), online (YouTube), podcasting and broadcasting on local television channels.

The communicative effectiveness of the videos, designed and produced for *ImagineMilan*, works on the synergy among different formats and genres. Each of them is consistent with specific strategic goals.

By acquiring and recombining this catalogue of images, values and lifestyles, design is able to define expectations and needs and to orient the individual choices. Audiovisual genres, as realistic and fantastic registers of representation, refer to the “archaic universe of doubles” (Morin, 1982): they contribute to an accurate portrait of reality or to a fictional construction of the world, according to an epistemological model of sense-making, which has its own technical, aesthetic and linguistic tools for translating and making knowledge explicit.

We should, then, go beyond the use of video as a mirror of the community itself that provides testimonials: we should translate its imagery into a powerful and effective narrative world that comes from the local but claims to fit into a mainstream (White, 2003).

Sharing imagination: *Plug Social TV*
[www.facebook.com/plugsocialtv]

The project *Plug Social TV* started with the purpose of integrating audiovisual tools, practices and artifacts in a participatory communication system, using new media and narratives as parts of a transmedia strategy for identity building and community engagement, considering stories as the

driving force to support and amplify active communities' initiatives.

Plug Social TV is the result of a participatory design process in which citizens and students work collaboratively to tell different stories of the same neighbourhood, located in a suburban area of the city of Milan.

We considered the urban context as a general topic, focusing on people's needs in order to build more liveable neighbourhoods. The project's participants were students at the School of Design of Politecnico di Milano and groups of people of a local community, as well as citizens' associations and other local actors, which were involved in participatory activities and workshops. Considering the whole process, we worked with about fifty students and thirty members of the local community.

Nine teams of students and citizens worked on the definition of different story universes (plots, characters, locations, actions). These were conceived during the first phase of exploration of the local context and analysis of its inhabitants' perception; then, the narrative universes were further developed in workshops and collaborative in field activities, set up by the students themselves and amplified by the transmedial world (contests, games, events, exhibitions, etc.). Each story universe was then re-elaborated and rearranged in order to create episodes for a web series, which represents the centre of the expanded experience.

Using a transmedia system, we were able to integrate audiovisual storytelling with user engagement through Social Networks, including

partnerships with local actors and retailers, in order to create a story world, which is both product and creator of community identity.

In this context, Social Media have “the potential to transform the methods of dialoguing, decision-making, information sharing, and relationship building in the community building[process]” (Lachapelle, 2011, 2). This potentiality is bound to the effective participation of citizens in the discussion: “social media platforms enable organizations to connect with people, share intimate stories, create conversations [...] and build ever-expanding communities of people who share common interests” (Geneske, 2014). Therefore, the more people are effectively joined by common interests, the more they are actively participating in the discussion: we are dealing with a reiterative process in which technology does not create participation, but it is able to support and amplify what is already present.

As final artifacts of the design process, web series have their own plot, characters and genre (noir, reality, mystery, talk shows-we can consider them as formats), but they are all connected to the local identity: there are formats that have real people as main characters and tell stories that are directly connected to their personal experiences; other formats are more fictional, and it is necessary to have a deeper knowledge of the historical background of the local context, in order to get the connection between fiction and reality.

The nine-web series are collected on **FlgSocial TV**, a web TV based on a digital channel and social media, which uses Facebook as the main platform

for sharing and spreading audiovisual contents and that constitutes a place of dialogue and interaction between students, citizens and the community itself.

The use of social media, specifically Facebook as the main channel, gives users the possibility to interact not only with text-based information but also with visual information, audio and video content (Zaglia, 2013).

Through this kind of interaction, we are able to get qualitative information about the engagement, along with quantitative data coming from the insights: in their comments, users highlight the most meaningful matters, giving feedbacks about the social experience of seeing themselves as the main characters of a common story and sharing it with their personal audiences on social media.

Through the use of narratives, it is possible to highlight issues and opportunities of a community that recognizes itself in the story universe: students and citizens are both characters and producers, story listeners and storytellers, who work collaboratively to turn into fiction their own personal experiences. Social dialogue among different actors is then activated by self-recognition processes in which the audience becomes the character of a story which contributes to build a *mythology of everyday life*: a narrative world that reifies the values of the community and simultaneously sets them as universal.

A summary and a proposal

We are activating projects at a hyperlocal level, and we are collaborating with local communities with the aim of exploring the potentialities of transmedia systems beyond the entertainment industry and mainstream productions. This makes us able to speak directly to local stakeholders and evaluate the impact of transmedia practices in the medium- and long term. What kind of impact do these practices have from a social point of view? Does engagement bring changes in the community's perceptions and behaviours? Which stories and story-worlds work better to mirror local identity? How can stories lead to changes and transformations? How do narratives interact with the everyday life of individuals and communities?

Narrative practices, as collaborative actions between designers and communities, are based on the act of listening. Referring to *Imagine Milan* project, the audiovisual artifacts for the *Listening* phase represent the very basic and fundamental act that designers practice in order to collect stories, expectations and wishes from the community as tiny tales from everyday life. They are capable of stimulating social conversation and horizontal feedback loops within the community itself: a self-reflective discourse that is based on visual translation and envisioning.

The *Imagine Milan* project has started a process of exploration of tools and audiovisual expressive forms, able to integrate the cultural humus and the personal experiences into interpretation paths that are addressing restricted and close communities of users: "Even the most robust visual

language is useless without the ability to engage it in a living context” (Lupton and Cole Phillips, 2008, 10). Hence, communication design can provide an epistemological and aesthetic contribution to envision our future. We are seeking semi-finished artifacts and systemic formats for translating complex insights and tales towards “audiovisual design thinking.”

In the case of *Plug Social TV*, web series, as audiovisual products, are addressing the neighbourhood and city institutions as focus targets, but processes and practices that generated those stories can be considered as the most meaningful aspects for people outside the community.

As a cultural activator (Jenkins, 2006b), *Plug Social TV* is able to set up the conditions for people engaged in meaningful experiences; as a transmedia system, we can consider this project as a format made of practices and partnerships whose scalability at a higher level can put together social and economic values.

So, on the one hand, the use of local resources as partnerships, product placement, sponsorships, service providing, stakeholders’ engagement, crowdfunding and crowdsourcing initiatives can be considered as a model for managing activities and producing content. In fact, putting the project into practice requires a great productive effort that is possible to face thanks to the collaboration between design students and citizens. On the other hand, this collaboration could lead to a low-quality aesthetical standard of the final result: it is then necessary to support the audiovisual

product with the documentation of the process, which can communicate and value the social context in which the project takes place. This documentation is intended as a *meta-tale*, a story within a story, which is itself part of the transmedia system.

Furthermore, we should analyze the points of view through which the narrative world is developed and the perspectives through which people experience this world (Rampazzo Gambarato, 2012, 75). The way the community understands its role in the narrative world differs from the strategic positioning: how do people relate to that world and its representation? Which fictional and social role do people interpret?

The main consequence is that there are no single disciplines able to comprehend the complex nature of societies (Burnett, 2011): the contemporary mediascape needs new approaches capable of facing changes in media habits.

More than ever, the shift toward the multichannel paradigm is establishing itself in the intersection between digital technologies and new production and distribution processes. In this scenario, the concept of engagement has become the battlefield between mainstream media and participatory culture. Therefore, it is possible to recognize two opposing forces: the corporations that imagine participation as something they can control and the audience that claim the right to participate in the meaning-making processes of culture (Jenkins, 2006b, 169).

Contemporary society finds itself at a very important turning point. On the one hand, there are tools, digital technologies and networks that broaden audience participation; on the other hand, media companies restrain this widespread creativity because they don't know how to engage with this new type of audience (Jenkins, 2006b, 138).

Both the *Imagine Milan* and the *Plug Social TV* projects are facing developments related to the audience, technologies and engagement processes within a complex social sphere where “[...] the social and cultural conditions for the creation and communication of ideas, artifacts, knowledge and information have been transformed” (Burnett, 2011). For this reason, we adopt a disruptive approach, assuming storytelling activities, narrative practices and audience engagement as key elements, fudging the boundaries of four different fields: Branding and Communication Strategies, Audiovisual Storytelling, Transmedia Practice and Social Media Advocacy.

Both the research experiences were characterized by the use of **Brand and Communication Strategies**, coming from the advertising field, as tools for identity development. We take professional roles, skills, responsibilities and tools from marketing and advertising domains, and we use them to analyze the social environment with an action-research approach. We develop in field activities and ask the students to work in teams made of five key roles. The *Project manager* is in charge of the management of the design process, and the project leader has a general strategic overview of the entire project, according to the concept of *director-*

designer (Anceschi, 2001; Bollini, 2004). The *Creative director* and *content strategist* represent the contemporary creative duo in which the first is the leader of the visual design, and the second is a new kind of copywriter able to shape and deliver content through a multichannel environment. The *movie specialist* uses audio-visual language to create compelling stories and develops empathic relations with the audience.

Audiovisual language is considered as a cultural interface (Manovich, 2001) for listening to reality. Thanks to the *Imagine Milan* research project, we explored the use of formats and media, and we identified three audiovisual outputs that allow designers to observe and to listen to their surrounding reality, to envision new possible futures, and to promote stories by engaging with the audience in all the different steps of the design process.

Due to the rising number of multi-modal devices and the high number of messages conveyed across media channels, people are facing a lack of mutual understanding. This is why we understand that putting an audiovisual artifact online is not enough, and it is necessary to find forms of communication able to catch the attention of the audience by directly engaging with people. We identified **Transmedia Practice** (Dena, 2009) as a possible approachable to support the construction of a human landscape, allowing audiences to access content in a different way, and leading meaning-making towards becoming a collaborative and participatory process (Bakioğlu 2009, 319). Within *Plug Social TV* experience, transmedia

practice is used to construct narrative worlds, spread through different media channels (analogical and/or digital), and encourage citizens to take action and develop activities for their community (Jenkins *et al.*, 2013). In synthesis, working within the realm of transmedia allows us to concentrate on the three key features that structure this phenomenon: storytelling, new media structures and audience (social) engagement. In the end, **Social Media Advocacy** is able to build relationships between virtual and real communities: we set up a system made of different web channels and social media in order to reinforce the online community, giving people of the neighbourhood a digital place where they can have discussions and give feedback.

This complex system of communication artifacts, tools and practices is based on stories and venues, exactly the human-centred activities in which design can make a decisive difference, bridging the past and the future, triggering imagination, envisioning and re-framing values. In other words, designers apply for playing the role of *directors* of participation.

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