

Transmedia Storytelling for Health: An Integrated Behavior Change Model

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WHY STORIES FOR CHANGE?

Stories can:

- Grab people's attention to get them to focus on our issues
- Make abstract concepts more concrete and relevant
- Shape people's understanding and interpretation of issues and events
- Provide vicarious experiences that prepare individuals for real-world situations
- Increase empathy for others
- Persuade people of the importance or benefits of taking action
- Create and reinforce social norms

TRANSMEDIA FOR GOOD NETWORK



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WHAT IS TRANSMEDIA STORYTELLING?

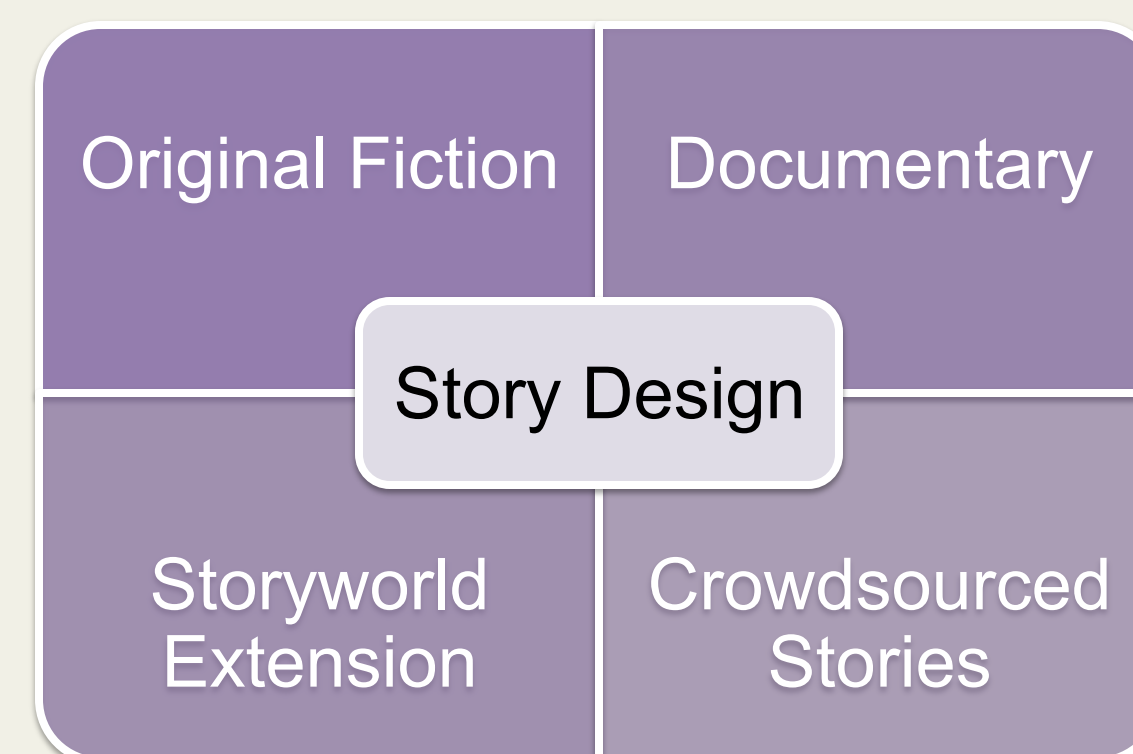
Immersive experiences in which participants feel like they are involved in a real situation have been shown to enhance learning, as well as influencing changes in attitudes and behaviors.

Transmedia storytelling is an immersive approach told on multiple media platforms, with different parts of the story appearing in different places. The audience/participants can get to know the characters and their world from many different angles, often in real time.

For example, a webseries might include characters who post updates in real time from their Twitter or Facebook accounts, share their backstory via a blog, send text messages to participants and appear at live events.

TRANSMEDIA STORY SOURCES

Transmedia stories can be based in many types of sources and genres.



ENTERTAINMENT EDUCATION + SOCIAL MARKETING

The entertainment education approach, grounded in the Sabido Method, utilizes extensive audience research to develop fictional stories (usually in a single medium) designed to bring about positive health and social change. Given the decades of global success of this method, the potential for immersive engagement when combined with the transmedia storytelling approach is promising.

Using the social marketing process to design the elements of the behavior change strategy for the story experience ensures that it goes beyond merely communication. This new integrated behavior change model can guide how best to bring these elements together.¹

IMMERSIVE ENGAGEMENT LEADING TO HEALTH BEHAVIOR CHANGE IS OPTIMIZED THROUGH THESE FACTORS



EXAMPLES OF TRANSMEDIA FOR HEALTH



T2X Teen Health Literacy Social Network + “Club” Transmedia Serial Story
with UCLA/Health Net/NIH



Miracle Mile Paradox
Alternate Reality Game
with Transmedia LA



“What’s in the Heart” Transmedia Campaign
with Watersong Productions

CONCLUSIONS

Two health-focused transmedia storytelling projects were implemented to explore the application of the model. One project involved a transmedia experience on a youth-focused social network that was an NIH-funded research project to increase teen healthcare literacy. The other project unfolded via popular social media sites as one storyline within a transmedia alternate reality game, following a character who was diagnosed with depression and sought treatment. Response to both projects was positive, and indicated that the priority audiences were interested in obtaining health information in this format.

Many organizations try to use storytelling in their behavior change programs. Including the key elements of this integrated model will increase their probability of success.

REFERENCES

1. Weinreich, Nedra (2011). “Change the World With Transmedia Storytelling.” <http://blog.social-marketing.com/2011/07/change-world-with-transmedia.html>