APPLICATION OF DIGITAL TRANSMEDIA STORYTELLING FOR THE
SMALL TOWN ART MUSEUM: RICHMOND ART MUSEUM

A CREATIVE PROJECT
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF
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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
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MASTER OF ARTS

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Introduction

The act of creating and distributing content as transmedia has been around since the mid 20th century. Marsha Kinder used a related term “transmedia intertextuality” to discuss the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle franchise, with its Saturday morning show, comics, games, etc. (Kerrigan & Velikovsky, 2015, p.3). The term, as it is often understood now, was first used by Henry Jenkins in an MIT Tech Review article discussing points of conversation at an Electronic Arts event hosting “top creatives from Hollywood and the games industry,” (Jenkins, 2003, para. 2). Jenkins described transmedia storytelling as:

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 its own unique contribution to the unfolding of the story. (para. 4, 2011)

Although Jenkins originally used the term to refer to fictional media, this method has been applied to non-fiction storytelling. The literature review in this paper discusses such projects. One of these nonfiction transmedia storytelling methods is seen with Airbnb’s Wall and Chain campaign and Ikea’s The Other Letter campaign (Gianatasio, 2014), which both market products using a transmedia storytelling approach. Transmedia storytelling has also been used for social advocacy and humanitarian efforts. Projects like Sandy Storyline, an interactive website featuring stories related to Hurricane Sandy, are great examples of this. Organizations whose primary goals are to educate and garner

2 https://www.sandystoryline.com/
interest have also used transmedia storytelling for their efforts. *The Living History of Fort Scratchley* (Kerrigan & Velikovsky, 2015), and *Highrise* (Flahive & Cizek, 2009) illustrate this. Both projects were supported by their governments and have a primary goal of educating — although the *Fort Scratchley Project* was also used heavily for promotion.

The benefit of using transmedia storytelling comes from the reach it can have with the intended audience. In her Tedx talk, Elaine Raybourn stated that transmedia is:

A technique in which you take a core experience or story and you expand it across multiple media with each medium making a contribution that can be experienced from diverse perspectives. Transmedia storytelling is not just about multiple media though. It is about connecting with someone personally and emotionally. Enough so that they will want to create content, share it, talk about it, and stay engaged. 

Not only can a successful transmedia project have a potentially great reach, it goes into more of a personal level than non-transmedia stories, as it has the ability to reach different audiences through its multiple channels.

With this understanding of transmedia storytelling in mind, I demonstrate through this creative project that museum goals and transmedia storytelling go hand-in-hand. This is achieved by the production of a digital transmedia storytelling campaign for the Richmond Art Museum (RAM), a small sized art museum located in Richmond, Indiana.

Museums are constantly changing and adapting; they are telling intricate stories, tend to be interactive, are visual spaces, and are educational. According to the International Council of Museums, a museum is classified as, “a nonprofit making, permanent

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3 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_j-2Ct9V9cQ
institution in the service of society and of its development, and open to the public, which
acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits, for purposes of study,
education and enjoyment, material evidence of humans and their environment.” ⁴ Some of
the points that the American Association of Museums uses to define a museum are,
“essentially educational in nature; present regularly scheduled programs and exhibits that
use and interpret objects for the public; have a formal and appropriate program of
presentation and maintenance of exhibits.” ⁵ The purpose of a museum, therefore, rests on
presenting history and stories for entertainment and education to its visitors. In the case of
the Richmond Art Museum (RAM), these visitors are primarily the people in its
community. Sections of the Articles of Agreement document, signed in 1914 between
RAM and Richmond Highschool, in which RAM is housed, state similar goals and values.
In it, they state they will conduct “Art Study classes in the Art Gallery.” They also vow to
assist “in every possible way for the advancement of Art in the schools and in the
community” (1914, Articles of Agreement). On the Richmond Art Museum website
“About” page it reads:

RAM is the oldest cultural institution in Wayne County and the second oldest art
museum in Indiana. More than an art museum – we offer year-round art
instruction, programs, events and exhibitions. The museum has a history of
providing exhibition opportunities to regional artists.⁶

From this, it is clear the Richmond Art Museum meets the specific museum standards and
goals as defined by the aforementioned associations.

⁵ https://www.si.edu/Content/opanda/docs/Rpts2001/01.10.ArtPublic.Final.pdf
⁶ https://richmondartmuseum.org/about/
In *Museums and Social Media: Modern Methods of Reaching a Wider Audience*,

Panteleimon Marakos writes:

> The opening of museums to society brought about radical changes in the museum practice, because their goal is not only the viewing of exhibits, but a meaningful contact and communication with the public. According to this view, museums are trying to approach a wider audience, providing them with the opportunity of personalized use of information and active creation of content in an entertaining and interactive way. (2014, p.1)

Transmedia storytelling is, therefore, an effective method for assisting the goals of many museums according to these councils and associations, because both transmedia storytelling and museums have goals of providing knowledge and entertainment to audiences in meaningful ways. The advantage of transmedia storytelling for this particular project comes from the principles Henry Jenkins discusses in two separate blog posts in 2009. In these, he delves into the seven principles of transmedia storytelling and their purposes. Although he discusses these principles based on fictional worlds, these still apply to non fiction stories and their audiences. They are a great base for a transmedia storytelling project as it discusses the goals of a transmedia project.

Without delving too deep into each of his seven principles, what they overall set out to achieve has to do with how the audience will consume and interact with the media product. The stand out points include: How embedded into the mind of the audience can a media product become? Is it able to be spread, and can one find more information on it? Is

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the creator providing more of the information? Can a viewer become immersed? After having interacted with the media product, are there things the viewer can take away that are more tangible and relevant to them? Is there an expansive “world” to be interacted with? Can the viewer add to the stories in place? Can the viewer see, interact with, and connect with certain aspects of the story/world? Would they want to? Is the story put out in a serial manner? Is the story subjective? Is there active interaction with the media piece from the audience? Are the producers providing it and responding to the interaction?

These questions inform what this project sets out to do. Attempting to address all these points will create great potential for interaction with the audience and visitors of RAM who are exposed to the media. These principles focus on creating a relationship with the audience and keeping the audience going back and interacting with the products. Since the products will be dealing with the promotion of the Richmond Art Museum through storytelling, the goal is to keep the museum in the minds of the viewers and visitors. As I will discuss in the ‘Interactive Social Media’ section of my literature review, keeping the museum relevant and active in the minds of the visitors can potentially create a stronger bond, and lead to more interaction with the physical museum and its events apart from the specific exhibit featured for this creative project.

As such, this creative project demonstrates the ability of transmedia storytelling to communicate the story of and promote the services of a traditional museum. The project will exhibit materials from the Richmond Art Museum (RAM), to create a digital transmedia storytelling campaign. This will be accomplished through three media products:
1) A 15-minute documentary on the 121st Annual Exhibit of Richmond and Area Artists.

2) An interactive website that will allow visitors to delve further into highlighted art and stories from the exhibit. It will feature written information, pictures, and short videos. It will also invite and showcase visitor participation.

3) A small scale social media campaign promoting the exhibit, the documentary, and RAM.

The objective of these three media is to figure out how a digital transmedia project could be implemented as a campaign to engage RAM visitors outside the museum, gain new viewers, and to entertain and enlighten. While the documentary will be informational, the focus on the story and visuals will be extremely important. The documentary will be presented in the form of a typical sit-down/b-roll documentary with graphics. While there will be interview footage, it is important to have most of it be relevant b-roll footage and entertaining graphics. For the website, I draw inspiration from Merritt McLaughlin’s 2018 multimedia project, “Diary of a Derby Mom,”\(^9\) which features entertaining interactive details, while telling a unique personal story, as well as the *Sandy Storyline* website\(^{10}\).

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\(^9\) https://merrittmclaughlin.atavist.com/diaryofaderbymom

\(^{10}\) https://www.sandystoryline.com/
Review of Literature

The products of this digital transmedia storytelling campaign are a documentary, a website, and a small scale social media campaign. Each of these products have been informed by previous projects and studies in their areas, and were chosen based on how well they fit into achieving the goals of this creative project. What follows is a review of the literature that informed this creative project’s products. The sections cover transmedia storytelling projects, interactive digital media and technologies, and interactive social media. Each of these sections were informed primarily by studies that explore how these areas interact with museums or similar cultural institutions. The section concludes with a description of how this creative project will fit into the literature that is already in place for the areas discussed in the literature review, and how transmedia storytelling is a useful approach to reach the goals of this creative project.

Transmedia Storytelling Projects. As discussed in the introduction, this creative project aims to demonstrate that transmedia storytelling can be an effective method for communicating the story and promoting the services of a traditional museum. I noted three different types of transmedia storytelling projects that were not primarily based on longform fictional narratives. These transmedia storytelling projects can be grouped as marketing, humanitarian, and/or educational.

IKEA’s Another Letter\textsuperscript{11} is a great example of the marketing approach to transmedia storytelling. For a Christmas-time media campaign, IKEA Spain produced two

\textsuperscript{11}https://www.adweek.com/creativity/ikeas-christmas-experiment-sweetly-shows-kids-want-so-much-more-toys-161949/
commercials. One was an “on camera experiment” asking children to write two Christmas letters, one for the three wise men, the other for their parents. The Three Wise Men letters were what one would expect: toys, gadgets, and treats. The main thing they asked their parents for was more quality time together. When asked if they could only send one of the letters, IKEA revealed that most of the children chose the letter to their parents. The second commercial was about two women who approached children that were playing with their new Christmas gifts. One little boy shows them his gift, a simple gingerbread cookie cutter. The woman looked surprised at such a simple gift. Then we see his experience with the cookie cutter, a touching Christmas day bake with his family (Gianatasio, 2014). Both commercials end with furniture-themed wordplay that connects to the theme of the commercials. In addition to these commercials, they also used a social media hashtag to garner more conversation on the topic. This gained virality and a lot of audience interaction. They also had a website where they continued to put out content relating to the campaign.

A great humanitarian based transmedia storytelling example is *Sandy Storyline*[^12]. This project was launched in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy and focuses on telling the stories of the people directly affected by the hurricane. When you visit the site, the first thing you see is “It has been X years since Sandy” (https://www.sandystoryline.com/). It then has a video telling you to “Make your Voice Heard.” It calls for the people affected by the hurricane to tell their story for the website. For many people the disaster did not end as soon as the hurricane did, they were left with a lot of years of work in order to

[^12]: https://www.sandystoryline.com/
rebuild. Therefore, the purpose of the site is to keep these stories coming during the rebuilding. The website lets viewers tell their story in three different ways: by calling in, by texting images, or by submitting a written piece. We are given the opportunity to hear, view, and read the stories of the people affected by Sandy.

The final approach that arose from this research was based on an educational approach to transmedia storytelling. Produced by the National Film Board of Canada, Highrise is a documentary project that took seven years to complete. It focuses on “the global human experience in the vertical suburbs.” (2011) They went on to produce five web documentaries, and “more than 20 off-shoots such as public art exhibits and live performances,” (Ravindran, 2015). Hancox writes that Highrise strives, “to facilitate the authentic self-representation of the groups involved,” and that it has, “documented the experiences and the hopes for the future of the participants.” (2017, p.57). This project is incredibly interactive in that from the start you choose which character you want to experience, and you can physically interact with different visual elements on screen. It is rare in its form and presentation, and it educates viewers on different groups of people that live in highrises around the world.

The three approaches to transmedia storytelling often blend in different ways. For example, the Airbnb campaign, although clearly made for marketing purposes, had a type of humanitarian element to it as well. This campaign was a finalist in the 7th annual shorty awards for the multi-platform campaign submissions. Its primary media piece was an animated short film featuring a true story of a former Berlin Wall border patrol whose

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13 https://www.nfb.ca/
daughter used Airbnb to rent an apartment of a Berlin wall border patrol from the other side. It was touching and personal, and it is a great example of transmedia storytelling. In addition to the animated short film, they released an economic impact study on the effect of Airbnb travelers in local Berlin communities. This was transferred onto a digital experience that walks the audience through the results of the study. Airbnb also released ten long form articles, social media content to gain awareness about the campaign, three behind the scenes videos featuring the real people behind the story and the creators of the campaign, and a launch party where they created an interactive experience at midnight that replicated the fall of the wall.

Another example of the blending of these approaches is exhibited through The Fort Scratchley campaign (Kerrigan & Velikovsky, 2015). This campaign was educational, as it informed the potential visitors of the impact the happenings at Fort Scratchley had. Additionally, it marketed and promoted Fort Scratchley as a tourist attraction in Newcastle, Australia. According to Susan Kerrigan and JT Veliovsky in The Living History of Fort Scratchley, the Newcastle City Council of Australia identified a need for various media products to be created in order to educate the community about the rich and layered history of the Fort. The NCC’s aim was to create media products that could be sold at the site, to provide tourist income to reinvest in the Fort’s upkeep and to retell the diverse histories of the Fort through multiple documentary media products (p.7, 2015)

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15 https://www.airbnb.com/berlin-economic-impact
The media products produced for this campaign were an interactive documentary (i-doc), a documentary DVD, an illustrated historical booklet, and the physical historical site itself. The documentary was primarily based on oral history and was created to retell the history of the site and “to explore the historical role the site has played in non-military community activities” (p.8, 2015). The DVD had 33 minutes of extras designed to be viewed before and after the museum visit. Kerrigan and Veliovsky use Jenkin’s seven criteria of good transmedia to “determine whether they [the different media components of the project] all comply with these transmedia characteristics” (p.9, 2015).

**Interactive Digital Media and Technology.** While many of the transmedia projects discussed in this paper tended to have analog products in addition to digital ones, this creative project will produce three digital products. Because of this, it is important to look at the use of digital technology in museums, as well as digital technology used for transmedia storytelling projects in order to gauge the effectiveness of this method. Museums all around the world have been using new digital technologies and media to attract, retain, and entertain their visitors. Mateos-Rusillo et al. write:

> To create good transmedia projects, museums have a great ally: digital media. As Amelia Wong states, the digital era ‘offers incentive to explore the creative potential of narrative for enriching museum experiences.’ Digital media are invaluable for storytelling as they facilitate ‘interactivity, media convergence, and audience experience’ (2018, p.311).
The main takeaway from this is the importance of facilitating interactive audience experiences by using digital media and technology. In *Digital technologies and the Museum Experience*, Kevin Walker notes a “societal shift in digital media from centralized control to user-generated content and personalized learning” (2008, p.112). This is associated with what Light et al. said about modern museums. They write, “The intention of museums has been to make collections more relevant and accessible, allowing visitors to feel more engaged and to have a greater sense of ownership, connection and participation” (Light, Bagnall, Crawford, & Gosling, 2016, p.1). While these two articles do not cover their topics through a transmedia storytelling lens, what they are saying is extremely similar to one of the goals of a transmedia story, which is to invite viewer participation and engagement. Walker continues to write, “deep, transformative learning occurs over the long term; therefore, people need reinforcing experiences” (2008, p.111).

Furthermore, Chung et al. write that the outcome of a media strategy that aims for comprehension from the audience may include outcomes that increase “visitor understanding of a museum’s purpose, which may lead to increased feelings of belonging and possible donations to the museum” (Chung, Marckett, & Fiore, 2014, p.21). While that paper specifically discusses interactive social media marketing, this conclusion might be able to be used in a broader sense as long as it is also referring to other interactive digital media. Walker’s study culminates by positing that interactive digital technologies in museums can help real learning “occur when visitors are actively engaged in constructing their own learning trails for reflection or sharing” (2008,p.120). This all goes back to the comprehension aspect. Digital media and technology can provide greater
comprehension of the subjects at hand. Relating this even more to transmedia, one of Jenkins’ seven principles of good transmedia is drillability. He says “drillability refers to the ability to dig deeper into something which interests us” (2010, para.15). This can really only be achieved if we are given the opportunities to drill deeper. This is what transmedia storytelling can provide for us, especially through digital means. Providing personalized audience experience aids this, as Walker mentioned.

Overall, this is important because it leads me to believe that this greater comprehension about the exhibit and RAM’s involvement in the community can be reached by using digital technologies and media, which can invite the museum visitors to return due to curiosity about other exhibits. It might also invite more interaction with the museum in general, online and offline. Additionally, as my project will be taking both a marketing and an educational approach to transmedia storytelling, using interactive digital media and technology may be able to help with visitors’ understanding of the story being told as well as to create a greater sense of curiosity on the subject.

Great examples of creative digital media and technology use in transmedia projects were explored in the “Transmedia Storytelling Projects” section of this paper. For example, Fort Scratchley, for example, produced not only a traditional DVD documentary, but also an i-doc (Kerrigan & Velikosvsky, 2015, p.7). Kerrigan and Velikosvsky described a transmedia documentary as something that “distributes a narrative across more than one platform, it can be participatory or not, can invite audience-generated content or not, tend to be open and evolving, though not always” (2015, p.2). They go on to write that “documentary transmedia content does more than present linear journalistic reports; it
allows for deeper discussion and public debate of complex issues and allows the audience to engage and participate in story universes to create their own narrative experiences” (2015, p.6). In their article, they referred to the overall creative strategy applied by the Newcastle Council as a documentary transmedia project.

The Tate Modern Museum featured short audience response videos on their www2 site “Modern Tate.” They either asked or were asked questions at particular exhibit pieces where they would record their responses which were then posted onto the site. It was a way for the visitors to become more involved during their visit, which goes back to the previous section of this paper. This is actually something that arose during my interactive digital media/technology research. There is more success with integrating effective digital media and technology in museums when the audience is guided or prompted (Noy, 2016; Bagnall et al., 2016). Many other museums and transmedia projects featured their full exhibits online (Noy, 2016). This allowed for people who could not physically visit the museums to still interact with the museum and everything it offered.

Other digital media and technology studies and projects implemented VR and Apps (Sakkopoulos et al., 2015; Walker & Loïc, 2008). The main argument for the use of these digital media was because, as Sakkopoulos et al. write, “Personalisation is widely considered as a critical element to contemporary electronic businesses” (2015, p.9). This also adds to the drillability aspect of transmedia, as an app is something that can be used outside of the museum as well as during a visit. One other form of great interactive media displayed in the “Transmedia Storytelling Projects” section of this paper that are also wide

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16 http://www2.tate.org.uk/aiweiwei/index.html
in their reach are social media campaigns. Nearly all transmedia storytelling projects discussed earlier in this literature review used some sort of social media in order to interact with their audience and help keep their audience more engaged.

**Interactive Social Media.** Social media shows up time and time again in projects and topics relating to transmedia storytelling. What better method of interactivity than to reach out directly to your audience for engagement? Zafiropoulos et al. write:

> As social media are two-way communication channels, they provide museums with a flexible, personalized and interactive way to connect their communities with their collections to collaborate and engage in dialogue with the public and an opportunity to become more social and participatory [...] use of social media transforms visitors from passive observers into active participators, content creators and museum's ambassadors. (Zafiropoulos et al., 2015, p.17).

Again, this article did not use transmedia storytelling as a basis for their study, but the study did show that effective social media can have similar outcomes as a good transmedia storytelling project.

It is not easy to create a successful social media campaign. It requires a lot of time, manpower, and an understanding of the technology (Chung et al., 2014). This article was the only literature I was able to come across that discussed art museums specifically. In their study, *Use of social networking services for marketing art museums*, they studied twelve art museums in the US midwest and their social media use. What they figured out was that these museums primarily used social media for: building awareness of their
services and activities, “engaging with the community,” and networking with other institutions and with artists. To help these uses, Chung et al. came up with three strategies that would help the museum reach their goals.

The first strategy is of awareness which is designed to keep the “museums at the forefront of existing visitors’ minds, but also to increase the volume and diversity of the audience” (p.19). These are what we normally see as promotional posts that don’t really take much thought and are time sensitive. The second strategy is of comprehension that is used to “enhance visitor understanding and knowledge of a museum’s purpose, collections, and facilities in order to strengthen existing museum-visitor relationships” (p.20). This can be achieved by providing versatile media that enrich the knowledge a visitor can get from the museum. This is an important strategy because it is based on the knowledge of the team about their product and can increase visitor “feelings of belonging and possible donations to the museum” (p.21). The third strategy is one of engagement. This is used to create a steady relationship between the museum’s and visitors, as well as among the visitors themselves. According to Chung et al., “The expected outcome of this strategy is the development of a sense of community, where visitors are motivated to share information within their personal network and to maintain interest in the museum website” (p.21). Some techniques proposed for this strategy are posting questions or creating a picture contest.

this social media platform is that it can easily end up being used as a one-way 
communication system where the museum is doing all the talking and explaining, while 
keeping the audience passive (Zafiropopulos et al., 2015). Flickr was also a social media 
site mentioned in a lot of the research, however, Instagram is a photo sharing site as well, 
and used by a lot more people (Chen, 2020).

In Using Transmedia Storytelling And Marketing To Increase Engagement With 
The David Owsley Museum Of Art (2018), Wang details her transmedia storytelling 
project which aimed to increase visitor engagement with the museum and its events. She 
specifically uses a marketing campaign that was aimed at increasing visitors to the David 
Owsley Museum in Indiana, United States. Social media was a big part of this campaign. 
Although her project is technically presented as a transmedia based campaign, most of the 
products of her creative project are unrelated to a greater story. She later mentions 
multi-platform storytelling instead of transmedia storytelling (p.36). However, she did 
include incredibly interactive elements for social media.

Conclusion. It appears that the museums and locations of my research do not specifically 
focus on transmedia storytelling as a way to help educate their visitors about the resources 
and entertainment they provide their communities. They also do not usually do this with 
only digital products. For example, the National Museum of American Jewish History’s 
aim was to create an interactive space using digital elements primarily on site. Noy writes, 
“while the new medium I explored is digital, immersive, user-friendly, enjoys many 
“moving parts,” and is aesthetically appealing— all new media characteristics, the
question of participation and the actual production of discourse in the public sphere remains open” (2016, p.321). His study did not specifically point out the purpose of the Jewish History museum’s digital usage as being a transmedia project—although it did have some transmedia elements. Mateos-Rusillo et al. write:

...transmedia storytelling is something that museums have been applying naturally for decades without giving it that name. Therefore, they have not followed the theoretical-practical approaches that have been developed in recent years around this way of generating and disseminating content. This natural application of transmedia storytelling can obviously lead to some mismatches, like the repetition of the same content in the different media and platforms used to expand the story or the absence of centralized creative control. However, the main weakness of the natural application of transmedia storytelling in museums, exemplified in this article with the study case, is that users are not encouraged to generate content. It would therefore be useful to look at other areas that do have consolidated experience in applying transmedia narratives. Their experience could serve as guidelines for generating a fandom phenomenon around museum exhibition, encouraging fans to produce content so that museum projects can go beyond the official canon. (2018, pp.310-311)

This creative project can show the effectiveness of telling a transmedia story, especially when combined with digital media products and an accompanying social media plan. As Mateos-Rusillo et al. highlighted, although transmedia methods are being used by museums and similar establishments, full transmedia storytelling campaigns are not being
executed. This denies museums the benefits of a true transmedia storytelling campaign, such as loyal and involved visitors or wider reach. I am particularly interested in the social media and digital media aspects of this transmedia storytelling campaign because, as the literature review examined, good use of both can aid in the effectiveness of a transmedia project.

Methodology

The primary approach taken to achieve the goals this project set out, was to create three digital media products with a transmedia storytelling foundation. These three digital media products were in the form of social media posts and videos whose main purpose was to promote, an interactive website whose main purpose was to educate and entertain, and a documentary whose main purpose was to document, educate, and promote. The strategy was to promote and educate about RAM by using the 121st Annual Exhibit of Richmond and area artists as a background to the full story. All video products presented on Facebook or YouTube were in 1080p. Any short videos or images for Instagram followed any Instagram uploading requirements. The website was created through Wix.

The documentary would therefore be focused on the exhibit and RAM as an institution. This documentary would be a good foundation and a good point of entry into the project and other media produced for this project. It can be accessed through multiple avenues, and as digital media goes, documentaries do a great job at documenting information in an entertaining way as well as educating the audience. The social media videos and the interactive website would give viewers and visitors a chance to delve
deeper into the story by seeing how other people were involved with and impacted by the 121st Annual Exhibit.

The website is interactive because it should be able to engage the audience in a more personalized way than a documentary or a social media post. The visitor will go through it like an exhibition, however the pieces of art are going to be the people involved in the exhibit & the history of the exhibit. In the exhibit, we got to experience it live. We saw the artists work & some of us got to interact with the artists. In the documentary, we were taken along on a journey that specifically told us what the exhibition was and the other resources and opportunities offered by the museum. The documentary was very focused on the impact it had on people and the opportunities this provided. The website allows us to see exactly how the museum and exhibition impacted people. What legacy is the museum creating? It also gives up a deeper story about the history of the exhibition & RAM. All these are related to the bigger story, but with themselves have their own trajectory and purposes. For example, Pam Newell’s interviews give us information about her work, the type of art she does, the Indiana art scene, and also gives aspiring artists some advice. Like RAM, she too is providing the viewer with new and useful opportunities and information.

The third product is a small-scale social media campaign revolved around promoting the work and encouraging audience participation through the hashtag #RAM121. This social media campaign promoted the exhibit before the opening, called out for help from visitors, and before the release of the documentary, set the stage for the purpose of the documentary and even more interaction through the website. These three
different sources of media should all be able to be stand-alone stories, but also work well as a whole story. As of the completion of this paper, I am still putting out the final social media posts promoting the premiere of the documentary. See appendix A for visuals on the posts that have been made and scheduled.

In order to produce these products— during the developmental portion of this project— I decided to take on the study of different types of documentary storytelling based on Nichol’s six modes model— making short documentaries based on some of the six different types. I also used this to get more practice with my personal sense of aesthetic and filming of b-roll footage. Some of these documentaries required hours of b-roll shoots for a final video of only three to five minutes. This also let me examine and get inspiration from different types of documentaries. The documentary type I chose for this project was an expository documentary. I thought it would be a good way to provide the information that the Richmond Art Museum is interested in letting others know, while still remaining entertaining. The Sundance 2020 documentary that I think has a similar core as the style of this project’s documentary is *Feels Good Man* (Jones, 2020). While *Feels Good Man* does have a lot more graphics and movement, the fundamentals are the same. People related to the story are telling you about it and we go between watching them tell us about it and seeing archival material, and video footage related to what they are saying.

I decided not to go with 4k footage because while 4k filmmaking and viewing is definitely on the rise exponentially— more than half of American homes now have 4k televisions— not a lot of people actually consume 4k media.\(^\text{17}\) I also had to consider the

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\(^{17}\) https://advanced-television.com/2019/05/08/study-just-half-of-4k-tv-owners-have-watched-4k-content/
audience that would be consuming the media of this project. It should mostly be people from the Richmond area, and possibly people that have an interest in the Richmond Art Museum to begin with. During my conversations and interviews with the director of RAM, it was clear that they wanted more community engagement. People that already have a connection to the museum or in the Richmond area, I figured, would be more interested in the content itself rather than the technical aspect of a 4k viewing experience. Another thing that I had to consider for whether or not I should shoot in 4k was where this would be put out and how it would be consumed. In America today, more than half of online interaction is mobile. 18 YouTube and Facebook are primarily used on mobile devices and videos on all web platforms are watched on mobile devices more than desktops. 19,20,21 While the experience of the interactive website will be better on a desktop or laptop, and we will recommend that it be experienced that way, it would be unwise to think that this project would not be mostly consumed on mobile devices. 4k resolution mobile devices are not quite as common as 4k resolution televisions. From the list of the most popular cell phones at the end of 2019, only the Samsung Galaxy S10 phone comes close, with a WQHD resolution. 22, 23, 24 Knowing this made the amount of space 4k would require, both during production and online, not worth it for me.
For the documentary, I chose to film with the Blackmagic Cinema Camera, Blackmagic Pocket Cinema Camera, and the Canon EOS 5D Mark. All interviews and most b-roll are filmed with the Blackmagic and Blackmagic Pocket as a ProRes 422. Some of the footage, due to limited availability of the camera at UMS at Ball State University. I had to learn how to match footage, and used Premiere Pro’s Lumetri Scopes to do so. The visual aesthetic I decided I wanted to go for was soft and elegant, but still personal and down to earth. I used a two camera set-up for the interviews and brought in just one camera for b-roll. I used a pocket dolly for sweeping shots, and for one of the interviews. This gave the shots more movement and allowed for the film to not feel static. Archival material is used in order to give the viewers more of an understanding of what the interviewees are talking about, as well as to connect with the people being referenced. The archival material I decided to use is important, because I think it provides a good juxtaposition to the modern exhibit and the artists being shown. The lenses used for the interviews were 20mm and 85mm— both Zeiss prime lenses. The lenses used for the b-roll ranged between 35mm, 85mm, 50mm, and 20mm— all Zeiss prime lenses. Lighting for this project consisted of Litepanels and Felix K301 light kits as well as diffusers and natural lighting. For audio, I used lavalier microphones, boom microphones, as well as an external tascam recorder for fill. I worked with two other people on this project for production: a second camera operator and a post audio mixer. The media on the website are filmed with a Canon t6i and a 35-50mm lens. I decided to use this set up, because the level of visual quality that I was expecting for the website could be achieved through this camera set up. I also only used the Fiilex kit and diffusion for these shoots.
I think one of the more unique aspects of this project is its digital nature. The similar transmedia projects discussed in the literature review mix both digital and non digital artifacts for the transmedia story. Fictional transmedia storytelling projects also tend to use a mix of both. While a mix is definitely a successful method to use for transmedia storytelling projects, as seen with Star Wars stories being presented digitally, in books, and through physical attractions, I think that for the purposes of this project it was important— and potentially enlightening— to use only digital media.

There were two specific notes brought up during my interviews and conversations about the project with the staff at RAM and other interview subjects that made me think a digital only method might be important. First, RAM wants to get more people in the community involved with the arts and the museum. They want their community members to visit and learn about the art history of their town. Second, it was that the Richmond Art Museum gets some traffic from people coming out of town to visit the historic museum. A way to reach both these audiences would be through the internet.

In America, there is an almost 90% internet penetration rate.25 Since the final products would be posted and promoted both on Facebook and YouTube, it was important to make sure both these avenues would get enough traffic based on the Richmond, IN population demographics. The most recent census and census estimates show that the population of Richmond, IN is mostly white, has a median household income of around 33 thousand a year, has a median age of 39, and around 82% of the population has a highschool degree or higher.26, 27 Research and statistics for internet usage and adoption

26 https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/richmondcityindiana
27 https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml?src=bkmk
shows that around 90% of American adults use the internet, 93% of Americans with an income between 30 and about 49 thousand use the internet, 92% of white Americans use the internet, and 84% of highschool graduates use the internet. The percentage goes up with education above that. 28, 29, 30 This shows that the media products for this project have the potential to reach the majority of the population in Richmond, Indiana. Additionally, artifacts on the internet, versus physical artifacts that could be found at the museum or in Richmond, have the potential to reach an audience not located solely in the Richmond area.

I chose Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram because of the penetration these sites have in the U.S. YouTube and Facebook are the most used social media sites among adults, with Instagram trailing in third. Among teens, Facebook is used less—only around 50% of teens use it—but percentage wise, YouTube is used more than among adults.31

Since this project will be producing digital videos, it was also important to choose a video sharing platform that had the most usage. YouTube is by far the top platform for this.32 Another important thing to consider was videos on Facebook. Videos uploaded directly to Facebook get a significantly larger amount of views than videos shared from different platforms.33 Based on this, while I will promote the YouTube channel containing all video products, the main documentary and any relevant shorter videos will also be uploaded.

31 https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/05/16/facts-about-americans-and-facebook/
32 http://www.ebizmba.com/articles/video-websites
33 https://www.socialbakers.com/blog/1452-facebook-videos-have-a-10x-higher-viral-reach-than-youtube-links
directly onto Facebook. It is also important to upload any promotional material in a way that is most effective for each social media site.

As stated in the introduction of this paper, this creative project aims to demonstrate the ability of transmedia storytelling to communicate the story of and promote the services of a traditional art museum. This was done through the framework of the 121st Annual Exhibit, however it promoted more than just that. Transmedia, as stated by Raybourn is “a technique where you take a core experience or story and you expand it across multiple media with each medium making a contribution that can be experienced from diverse perspectives. Transmedia storytelling is not just about multiple media though. It is about connecting with someone personally and emotionally. Enough so that they will want to create content, share it, talk about it, and stay engaged.” 34 Through the process of pre-production, and even during production, I started realizing that everyone I interviewed and talked to was extremely invested in the people that were involved in this exhibit, RAM, and the community. There was a sense of pride and camaraderie in the community built around the history of art in Richmond. This ended up matching perfectly with the purpose of transmedia and this project. This particular exhibit worked especially well for a transmedia project because it displayed multiple artists’ work. The story and goals of the 121st Annual Exhibit and the Richmond Art Museum in general, lend themselves well to a transmedia storytelling project because it is all about reaching out and interacting with the community and understanding diverse perspectives.

34 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_j-2Ct9V9cQ
**Discussion of the Project**

**Narrative Overview.** Transmedia storytelling relies heavily on narrative. Therefore, the narrative structure of the media products is pivotal to achieving the goals of this project. I decided the way the narrative would be structured for the interactive website should mimic the narrative of the documentary. While this may seem like deviating from one of the important tenets of transmedia— to not tell the same story, but on different platforms— I think that keeping a similar arch helped with connecting the pieces. The documentary has three parts to it. The history of the exhibit and goals of the Richmond Art Museum, the 121st Annual Exhibit, and the Impact of the Richmond Art Museum.

Likewise, the website features three main components: history, impact, legacy. History allows the visitor to learn about the history of RAM and where the 121st Annual Exhibit fits in there. The impact section lets the visitor see how the exhibit impacted the people viewing it. This section will also feature any visitor responses to the call for reactions and experiences concerning either the Annual Exhibit or RAM in general. This aspect of the project is similar to the visitor books discussed in *Transmedia Storytelling and Its Natural Application in Museums. The Case of the Bosch Project at the Museo Nacional del Prado*, but digital and more narrowed in topic. I have asked for a response covering the specific topic of “influence from RAM” so that it can be added to the story being told. The legacy section of the interactive website features two artists whose work hung in the 121st Annual Exhibit. There are four different short videos for each of them. They are all titled with the main topic discussed, so that the viewers can immediately choose what interests them the most. For example, if a visitor is just interested in the
pieces featured in the exhibit, the two artists have a video covering said pieces. However, if a viewer is someone who is more interested in style and the creation of the pieces, each of them have a video discussing how they create their art and the style of art they work with. One of the artists has a video giving advice to young or new artists. This creates the effect of personalization. In theory, every visitor to the site could have a completely different experience, tailored—to an extent—to their tastes and interests.

The social media posts have a slight narrative as well. Towards the beginning of the project, the narrative was hardly that. It was more promotion and asking for help with reactions. However, when promotion of the website and documentary release happen, the narrative will be more tangible. The narrative on social media follows the opening of the exhibit, the promotion of this project, the website, and the documentary.

While the narrative is the most important part of this project, it was also important to consider how to create and deliver the narrative as a digital media product. I’ve discussed this, in part, in the literature review and the methodology sections, but I would also like to discuss aesthetic and other choices made during the production and post production stages of this project. The music is something that stands out to me the most. I wanted to keep the music simple, reminiscent of what Indiana might be, inspiring, hopeful, and sentimental. I still wanted it to have a cinematic punch, however. I was in contact with different music producers as well as APM. One music producer offered to send me whatever files I needed for a donation of whatever I thought was a reasonable amount. I ended up trying out a select amount that I thought could match, while also
looking in the YouTube Audio Library. I was actually able to find all of the music for this project in the YouTube Audio Library.

**Final Technical Parameters and Delivery.** The final technical parameters for the videos were: Filmed in 1080p FHD. Filmed and exported as either ProRes 422 (documentary) or H.264 (all other videos). Final products include:

1) A 15 minute documentary.
   a) Edited and color corrected on Adobe Premiere Pro.
   b) Graphics created through Adobe Premiere Pro and After Effects.
   c) Audio mixed and edited on Adobe Audition.

2) A website created on Wix.
   a) Opens with a short trailer type video that invites you to explore the website.
   b) Has three options for you to start exploring. History, Impact, and Legacy.
      i) History is an interactive timeline about the exhibit and other relevant RAM occurrences.
      ii) Impact shows the reactions of visitors to the exhibit and how it impacts them.
      iii) Legacy features two artists featured in the exhibit.
          (1) When you click on each of them, you will be taken to a page that has short videos of them discussing different stories based on their featured work and their art.
c) Features an about page that will give visitors more information about this project.

d) Features a contact page that allows visitors to keep in contact with the project and tell us their stories that may pertain to RAM and the exhibit.

e) Attention was placed on the mobile presentation of the website, as it is expected that the website will be mostly interacted with through a mobile device.

3) A small scale social media campaign.

   a) This was executed primarily through Facebook and Instagram. YouTube was used, but more as a host for the videos and not as a social media platform.

      i) Posts promoting the opening of the exhibit. Through Instagram and Facebook.

      ii) Short video promoting the opening of the exhibit. Facebook

      iii) Posts encouraging a visit to the exhibit that would allow visitors to interact with the camera set up that would end up being used to film media for the website. Instagram and Facebook

      iv) A promo video for the documentary. Facebook

      v) Posts promoting the website. Facebook & Instagram

      vi) Posts encouraging viewers to give us their stories. Facebook

      vii) Live streamed premiere of documentary on Facebook.

See Appendix A for visuals of posts.
The problem space this project aimed to fill involved creating content that could reach the audience through multiple avenues and help a museum tell a story. Ultimately, this is up to the social media interactions and analytics, as well as how the museum director views the project. As of the writing of this paper, there has been minimal interpreting of any social media data, and I am yet to meet with the director to discuss how he views the project and how it fits with RAM’s goals. Once the project is out for consumption, there will be clearer numbers on the effectiveness of the project. Where it stands right now, however, I do think that this is a good example of what a digital transmedia project can be for a small museum, and a foundation on which others may be able to expand.
Conclusions and Recommendations

After completing this digital transmedia storytelling campaign, there are multiple things that I think should be considered for future similar projects as this one. The first is something that I knew I would have trouble with from the start of the project. As discussed in the literature review, any effective social media campaign requires an all-hands-on-deck approach. The Richmond Art Museum has a staff of four busy people. I had to make sure I was keeping everyone in the loop, and also needing to keep reminding and asking for certain things pertaining to this project. It did not help that I was an hour away. The project could have been more streamlined and effective if there was a dedicated team of two or more people at the ready for social media engagement at all events related to the project and also research for the project.

Another recommendation for any future project similar to this one, is to time everything correctly. I jumped in on this project a little over a month before the exhibit opened. Ideally, the website would have been out along with the exhibit, and the documentary sometime towards the end of the exhibit. With the museum busy that month before the exhibit, it was difficult to obtain much information or historical background unless I was physically at the museum. It would have been a great opportunity to be involved from the beginning planning stages of the exhibit. This would have given me a better understanding of the process, of when to be where and with what equipment, and of the history. This is not to say the museum staff was not helpful, but the amount of work they were doing unrelated to the exhibit and the distance made it difficult for effective transferring of information.
A larger production team, as well as any type of funding could have helped with the quickness of shoots and attention to detail on all parts of the production process. It could have also helped with procurement of specialized music, more and relevant archival material, premade graphics templates, and higher quality website development. Additionally, a larger team with at least one person with constant access to the museum focusing on social media for the project and the museum would have potentially helped with promoting this project and getting visitor participation.

Finally, towards the end of this project, much had to be changed based on the COVID-19 pandemic. It postponed a few things and made it harder to get specific items and archival material. This meant some of the social media posts as well as the release of the documentary had to be pushed back.

Although there were certainly things to overcome in the production of this project, I think it does reflect the culmination of my creative interests in digital storytelling. I was specifically interested in seeing if a transmedia storytelling campaign could be made for a small museum in order to entertain and promote. What stories could be focused on? How could these stories be used to promote the institution in a campaign type project? Would they be effective? While I think the first two questions were answered with a resounding yes, there is still more to learn about the effectiveness of transmedia storytelling campaigns— specifically digital transmedia storytelling— for small museums.
Bibliography


Appendix A

Social media posts Facebook
Announcement!

Tomorrow at 6pm, we’ll be live streaming the premiere of “The Richmond Art Museum: History, Impact, and Legacy: The Annual Exhibition of Richmond and Area Artists”. Keep an eye out for updates on the premiere. Grab some popcorn and join us as we watch the documentary (quarantine style) for the first time! #RAM121.

Thank you to all the people that helped make this happen! Shout out to Walt Bistline, Dan Woodson, Pamela C. Newell, and India Cruse-Griffin. Without the help of these artists, the documentary and accompanying website (ram121.com) couldn’t have been completed.

Are you curious about the Annual Exhibition documentary that has been in the works for more than half a year? Explore this accompanying interactive website to delve into the project. It also gives you a chance to re-experience the 121st Annual Exhibit! Explore it here: https://www.ram121.com/

The premiere of “The Richmond Art Museum: History, Impact, and Legacy: The Annual Exhibition of Richmond and Area Artists” is happening tonight at 6pm. In preparation, we’d like to ask you, "What is your favorite part of RAM?" Comment below with your answers! If you have any related pictures, don’t be afraid to comment those too! #RAM121
Social Posts Instagram

View Insights
Promote

Post Insights

Profile Visits
2

Profile Visits
2

Discovery
317

Accounts reached
9% weren't following you

Follows
0

Reach
317

Impressions
375

From Home
324

From Profile
2

From Other
49
View Insights

Promote

Liked by baileymschroeder and 28 others
richmond_art_museum Stop by the 121st Annual Exhibit tomorrow from 12-5p & tell us your thoughts at the pop up video station! #RAM121

December 18, 2019

Post Insights

29
0
0
1

2
319

Profile Visits
Reach

Interactions

2
Actions taken from this post

Profile Visits
2

Discovery

319
Accounts reached
6% weren't following you

Follows
0

Reach
319

Impressions
368

From Home
327

From Other
41
Appendix B

Interview Questions

Walt Bistline. Photography Professor at Earlham College
1) Who are you and what do you do/what is your title?
2) How are you involved in the Richmond community & with RAM?
3) What other cultural resources are found in Richmond?
4) How are you involved with the Annual Exhibit at Richmond & with the 121st Annual Exhibit?
5) Do you encourage your students to interact with the museum & how does that look?
6) As an artist & as a member of the community, how do you view the resources that RAM provides?

Shaun Dingwerth. Executive Director of RAM
1) Who are you?
2) What do you feel is the motto or goal of the Richmond Art Museum?
   a) Has it changed throughout the years?
   b) How is it living up to the motto or reaching those goals - in your opinion?
3) Who are some influential figures in the history of the museum?
4) Can you tell us about this exhibit?
5) What went into curating this exhibit?
6) Tell us about the art featured in the exhibit this year.
   a) Why do you think it was chosen?
   b) Any recurring artist?
   c) Any pieces you are particularly excited about?
7) How does this exhibit differ or compare to other exhibits this year and in the past?
   a) Are there similar ones?
   b) Is it very different?
8) Why is an exhibit like this important?
   a) Why has it been going for so long?
9) What do you hope will be the impact of this exhibit? What do you want it to be in the future?
10) What does this exhibit mean to you?
11) What makes RAM special?
12) What are you excited about in the near future for RAM? Longer term?
13) Explain the relationship between Richmond and art.
Dan Woodson. Impressionist Artist
1) Who are you & what do you do?
2) Tell me a little about how you’re involved with the Richmond Art Museum.
3) How were you involved with the resurgence of the new Richmond Group
4) Do you feel the impact of the museum here in Muncie?
5) What makes RAM unique?
6) Do you know any history about the museum?

Pamela Newell. Impressionist Artist
1) What is your name & what do you do?
2) How are you involved with RAM?
3) What comes to mind when you think of RAM?
4) Tell me about your work in the exhibit.
5) Tell me about your work in general.
6) What motivates your work?
7) What do you aim to say with your work?
8) Who/what is/are your biggest influences?
9) How do you feel about your community? Richmond?
10) What things in your work + life bring you a sense of pride?
11) Tell me about what we can look forward to with your work + other projects you might be working on?

India Cruse-Griffin. Mixed Media Artist
1) Name and what you do.
2) How are you involved with RAM?
3) What comes to mind when you think of RAM?
4) Tell me about your work in the exhibit and also in general.
5) What motivates your work?
6) What do you aim to say with your work?
7) Who are your biggest influences?
8) How do you feel about your community and Richmond?
9) What things in your work and life bring you a sense of pride?
10) Tell me a little about what we can look forward to with your work and other projects you might be working on.
Appendix C - B-roll List

1. Shaun + Bailey doing stuff
2. Shaun etc helping
3. Shaun working + just general shots of RAM (from opening event)
4. Shots of permanent collection room
5. Shots of contemporary art exhibit
6. Ella bond johnston
7. Ella bond johnston + travelling art group
8. More Ella bond johnston and old RAM images
9. Shots of old RAM building
10. Shots of permanent collection
11. Shots of permanent collection
12. Shots of permanent collection
13. Shots of old Richmond group
14. Shots of permanent collection
15. Shots of old Richmond group
16. Shots of old RAM
17. Shots of old RAM
18. Shots of old RAM
19. WMChase
20. TC Steele Work
21. Archival Material of old Richmond Event (Newspaper)
22. Shots of people looking at art during the opening
23. Art Association 1898 archival footage (get color pic of this)
24. Old High school
25. Archival Material of old RAM/ Shots of New RAM/Shots of High school
26. Footage/archival material of old Annual Exhibit
27. 121st Annual Exhibit shot
28. Newspaper clippings of annual exhibit
29. Shots of different type of media at 121 exhibit
30. Shot of homage to frost
31. Shots of exhibit + Walt Bistline @ opening
32. People @ opening
33. Purchase awards/people receiving awards
34. Homage to frost
35. People @ opening
36. Shots of a few people in new exhibitions
37. Shots of Walt Bistline/ other artists talking about art @ exhibit opening
38. Shots of opening and people receiving awards
39. Shots of 121 exhibit
40. Contemporary art
41. Printmaking
42. Photography
43. Landscape painting
44. Shots of permanent collection
45. Shots of 121 exhibit
46. Shots of the opening event, Shaun being friendly, etc.
47. Shots of opening event
48. Shots of awards
49. Drop off
50. Shots of general museum stuff that leads to shot of opening of permanent collection
51. Shots of 2 new exhibitions
52. Shots of them @ dropoff
53. Shots of outside RAM
54. Shots of old RAM + Art
55. Shots of old RAM + Art
56. Shots of opening + shots of drop off
57. Shots of Shaun @ dropoff
58. Shots of 121 exhibit
59. Shots of 121 exhibit
60. Shots of 121 exhibit
61. Shots of opening
62. Shots of old Richmond Group
63. Shots of permanent collection
64. Shots of opening/awards
65. Shots of RAM outside
66. Shots of local artists craft & work
    in the main lobby.