Transmedia Experience and Narrative Transportation

Maud Derbaix, Dominique Bourgeon-Renault, Elodie Jarrier, Christine Petr

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to better understand the impact of transmedia storytelling on consumers' experiences in the cultural field (e.g., at a museum or heritage site). Transmedia storytelling refers to the interaction among different forms of media leading to convergence (telling a single story across multiple platforms and forms, namely, using digital technologies). This article discusses whether this multidimensionality of platforms enables a greater appropriation of the story and improves consumers' experience with the cultural object and whether the transmedia experience can lead to a positive attitude toward transmedia platforms and the cultural object.

Keywords: transmedia storytelling, consumption experience, narrative transportation, immersion, appropriation, attitude

Résumé

L'objectif de cette recherche est de mieux comprendre l'influence que peut avoir le transmédia sur l'expérience vécue par les individus dans un contexte culturel (ex. musée, patrimoine). Qui dit « transmédia » dit convergence de discours (univers narratif) à travers de multiples plateformes médiatiques. En quoi cette multi dimensionnalité des dispositifs permet-elle une meilleure appropriation de l'univers narratif et améliore-t-elle l'expérience vécue ? En conséquence, en quoi cette expérience, vécue avec un dispositif transmédia, déclenche-t-elle une attitude favorable à l'égard du dispositif lui-même et de l'objet de la narration ?

Mots clés : transmédia, expérience de consommation, transport narratif, immersion, appropriation, intention attitudinale.

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Introduction

Arts and cultural organizations need to adapt to new technologies and appropriate digital tools. From a practical point of view, most of these organizations today are considering and supporting experiments regarding videography and artistic works adapted to digital and mobile environments. Professionals are also reviewing whether these digital developments might improve public responses and increase attendance.

Among these digital tools, transmedia storytelling expands a single universe through different content and stories across multiple media platforms with the aim of delivering more interactive and immersive experiences to users. Transmedia storytelling must be differentiated, on the one hand, from cross media, which produces an adaptation of the same story across different forms of media, and, on the other hand, from multimedia, which is the diffusion of different content through a single medium.

The film and video sector has provided a fertile ground for transmedia storytelling. For example, the *Star Wars* universe can be approached through several ways: not only movies but also mini-series, books, videogames, and so on. Recently several museums, heritage sites, and performing arts companies have used digital technologies and, more particularly, implemented transmedia experiences trying to improve relationships with their current audience but also to develop new relationships with new visitors and spectators. As an example, in France, the project on *Léon Vivien, Facebook 1914* probably has been one of the most successful transmedia experiences in the cultural sector. On the initiative of the Museum of the Great War in Meaux, the Facebook page told during over the course of one year the daily life of this soldier of the Great War. After his death, more than 60,000 people had "followed" and liked the page and, among them, 60% were under 35. Among other relevant examples of transmedia experiences are *Le Défi des bâtisseurs* (Strasbourg Cathedral) and *Le Théâtre sans animaux* (Théâtre du Rond-Point in Paris).

The main objective of this article is to better understand the influence of transmedia storytelling on consumer experiences in a cultural context (e.g., museums, heritage sites, etc.). *Transmedia* thus means convergence of discourse (on a single, unique universe) through multiple media platforms. So, in which way do transmedia platforms (and their multiplicity) facilitate immersion and narrative transportation into the experience? Does transmedia storytelling enable a better appropriation of the narrative universe and improve consumers' experiences? Therefore, which kinds of behavioral intentions toward the cultural object and transmedia platforms are activated by transmedia experiences? To answer these questions, this article first attempts to clarify the concept of transmedia and its characteristics through existing literature and expert interviews. In the second part, the results of an exploratory study are presented and discussed.

Theoretical background and experts' interviews

Our theoretical framework relies on the experiential approach (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982), consumer culture theory (CCT) (Arnould and Thompson 2005) as well as the concept of "co-creational marketing" (Gamble and Gilmore 2013) to better understand and also to assess the potential for artistic mediation of transmedia experiences. More precisely, we support the perspective of Ilhan, Kozinets, and Otnes (2013), who adapted the idea of transmedia storytelling by grounding it in consumer culture theory and initiated the study of the transmedia consumption experience (TCE). These authors especially explore how consumers engage with interrelated narratives across a set of media platforms and how they co-create the transmedia world.

The concept of transmedia was first suggested and defined by Jenkins (2006) 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".* According to Jenkins (2006, 2009), transmedia entails a paradigm shift – the convergence paradigm that does not see new media as replacing old media, but rather that the media will interact in more complex ways and reshape audience expectations about the entertainment experience. Thanks to convergence culture and new narratives, consumption moves from an individual and passive practice to a collective and active process through social interactions. Today cultural organizations reach toward the objective of participation and active commitment by their audience. Transmedia storytelling creates value for consumers by facilitating this participation and multiplying potential touchpoints where commitment can occur.

Building on Jenkins's pioneer work (2006) as well as on interviews with experts[1] – who work either as transmedia designers or advertisers – this article first tries to delineate the concept of transmedia storytelling and to identify its main components. The

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[1] Arnaud Hacquin (founder of Cluster Aquitain du Transmedia Storytelling), Candice Chenu (responsible for new technologies and mediation, Musée du Quai Branly), Méline Engerbeau (Once Upon, studio of transmedia architecture), Benjamin Hoguet (transmedia designer and writer), and Chloé Jarry (Camera Lucida, transmedia production company).

search for an accurate and consensual definition of transmedia storytelling has proved an enduring endeavor for professionals and researchers in this sector. Indeed transmedia storytelling is sometimes considered to be a *process,* other times a *strategy* or a *user experience.* More specifically there are different views with regard to transmedia's overall purpose: whereas transmedia designers assume that transmedia is part of the core product (e.g., transmedia narratives complete and improve the core product), marketers see transmedia more as part of the promotion strategy. However, everyone emphasizes the content and density of narratives scattered on multiple media platforms consistently and in a coordinated manner. Hoguet (2015) prefers the term *interactive narrative* and thus highlights the interactivity dimension of transmedia. Transmedia experts have brought to the forefront four major components of transmedia:

−   Narrative universe, stories, and characters
−   Platforms, interfaces, and *rabbit holes* (touchpoints that are chosen by the consumer to enter the universe)
−   Temporality
−   Audience participation and commitment

These components are explained in the following sections through experts' relevant quotes.

Narrative universe, stories, and characters

The key feature of transmedia is the narrative universe as well as the different stories created around this universe. *"Media platforms form a coherent transmedia storytelling when they allow a spectator or consumer or listener to stroll in the same universe, which could be a real story or a fictional story... There is no better way to tell a story today than transmedia storytelling, to make people use their imagination…"* (Méline Engerbeau). This narrative universe can be developed through different content or stories and can take a number of forms: movies, books, comics, exhibitions, theatre plays, and so on. The resulting transmedia experience does not *"tell a single story but several stories from the same universe"* (Benjamin Hoguet), each story, each content being distinct from other stories and content. Moreover, characters are essential story engines and are the driving forces of any story. According to Hoguet (2015), *"a character is not only about physical appearance or career; it is a collection of motivations, aspirations, and unique skills".* Empathy with characters would come from understanding their goals and motivations.

Platforms, interfaces, and rabbit holes

The narrative universe is disseminated through different media such as Internet, television,

smartphones, digital tablets, and so on. Arnaud Hacquin shares that different content *"will be spread through several media platforms; it can be a website, it can be a mobile phone, it can be real, live, street marketing, for example; it can be audiovisual media with a movie that will be broadcasted on TV ...".* To develop their universe and related stories, cultural institutions have to imagine several touchpoints in order to reach and attract the largest number of users. These touchpoints are called *rabbit holes.* Each bit of content can thus be approached independently and constitute a point of entry into the transmedia universe. The multiplicity of content as well as platforms will *"create an experience for the user who is richer as he consumes one, two, three, four of these platforms"* (Benjamin Hoguet).

Temporality

The temporality of a story is a notion that refers to the duration of the narrative as well as the moment of its consumption. Time in a story can stretch, slow down, stop; it can be eluded, reassembled, and then destructured: *"Some transmedia experiences create moments, others last in time; some transmedia experiences only propose very ephemeral things, others propose more durable ones ..."* (Benjamin Hoguet). Experts also point out the difficulty of sustaining a transmedia project over time.

Audience participation and commitment

Transmedia storytelling aims to involve consumers who are immersed in the heart of the narrative universe. The experience then becomes participative and immersive. Participation and immersion may enhance the content of the story through commitment and interactions among consumers. Benjamin Hoguet even defines transmedia through this perspective: *"Transmedia storytelling is a strategy involving content dissemination by users and users' commitment".* He also highlights the *"emotional power"* that transmedia storytelling might have over its audience. Méline Engerbeau talks about transmedia as *"a potential for involvement of the spectator".* According to Arnaud Hacquin, *"transmedia better applies to a universe in which people are strongly involved and active … if I caricatured, I would say loyal fans…".* According to experts, it seems that transmedia particularly adapts to an audience already acquired but can also be seen as a way to enhance participation and involve potential consumers in the cultural experience.

Because at the core of transmedia storytelling is a universe and stories or narratives, it seems relevant to focus on the concept of narrative transportation in order better understand the consumers' experience. Narrative transportation occurs

whenever the consumer experiences a feeling of entering a world evoked by the narrative because of empathy for the story's characters and results in the consumer's immersion into the imagination of the story plot (Batat and Wohlfeil 2009; Gerrig 1993; Green 2008; Green and Brock 2000; Van Laer et al. 2014). Deighton, Romer, and McQueen (1989, p. 335) were the first to investigate the construct of narrative transportation by arguing that a story invites receivers into the action it portrays and, as a result, makes them lose themselves in the story. Van Laer et al. (2014) identified in the literature three relevant features or stages in the narrative transportation process: (1) narrative transportation requires that consumers process stories – the acts of receiving and interpreting; (2) story receivers become transported through two main components: empathy – which implies that story receivers try to understand the experience of a story character, that is, to know and feel the world in the same way – and mental imagery – story receivers generate vivid images of the story plot so that they feel as though they are experiencing the events themselves; and (3) when transported, story receivers lose track of reality in a physiological sense. Narrative transportation thus occurs and is facilitated in the context of transmedia storytelling.

An exploratory study was conducted to better understand this phenomenon and to meet the research objectives (influence of transmedia on consumer experiences, on the appropriation of the narrative universe, as well as on commitment and intentions of the spectators or users).

Methodology

Thirty-six introspective reviews of students who experienced the transmedia project *"Le Défi des Bâtisseurs"* (Table 1) were collected. These students are at the master level in the areas of arts and culture, aged between 21 and 42 years, and thus familiar with the cultural field (Appendix A).

Appendix A: Informants' profiles

Initials	Gender	Study level	Age
A.C.	Woman	Master 1	20
A.C.	Woman	Master 1	21
A.D.	Man	Master 1	24
A.G.	Woman	Master 1	21
A.M.	Woman	Master 2	23
A.T.	Woman	Master 1	23
A.W.	Woman	Master 1	21
B.C.	Man	Master 2	26
D.L.	Woman	Master 1	22
E.N.	Woman	Master 1	21
E.P.	Woman	Master 1	21
F.D.	Man	Master 1	42
F.L.	Woman	Master 1	23
G.C.	Woman	Master 1	27
H.A.	Man	Master 1	22
H.R.	Woman	Master 1	23
J.B.	Woman	Master 1	25
J.C.	Woman	Master 1	27
J.S.	Man	Master 1	21
K.-S. C.	Woman	Master 1	26
L. G.-P.	Woman	Master 1	24
L.A.	Man	Master 1	24

Informants were free to experience the transmedia project in the computer room of the university or at home. A semi-directive interview guide was provided to informants (Appendix B).

L.M.	Woman	Master 1	23
M.A.	Man	Master 1	23
M.A.	Woman	Master 1	24
M.C.	Woman	Master 1	21
M.F.	Woman	Master 1	23
M.G.	Woman	Master 1	21
M.G.	Woman	Master 2	23
M.H.	Woman	Master 1	22
M.V.	Woman	Master 1	21
P.C.	Woman	Master 1	23
P.H.	Woman	Master 1	23
S.B.	Woman	Master 1	32
T.M.	Man	Master 1	23
V.B.	Woman	Master 2	25

We carried out two lexical analyses of the data: a vertical analysis and then a horizontal analysis. Our epistemological posture is based on hypothetic-deductive reasoning. A thematic analysis grid was developed based on the literature review and built on the following themes: experience and narrative transportation experienced with a transmedia project, losing track of reality and time, and intentions toward the cultural object, transmedia projects or platforms experienced in particular, and transmedia storytelling in general. In this phase of analysis, a horizontal approach to the corpus is favored to identify terms that are common from one interview to another. These recurring terms are grouped into sub-categories built on theoretical bases ensuring that saturation criteria are met (Vernette and Giannelloni 2015).

Table 1: Description of the transmedia project

	Le Défi des Bâtisseurs
Cultural category	Heritage site
Narrative universe	Strasbourg Cathedral
Context of the transmedia project	Obtaining funds
Themes and experiences	1. To monitor the individual steps during the building of a cathedral through five architects' point of views 2. To become a tower builder of this construction
Platforms and interfaces	- 3D movie - A web documentary with an interactive game - A mobile application

Findings
The first themes that emerged from introspective reviews were the dimensions of narrative transportation – mental imagery and empathy with story characters as well as losing track of reality and time. Some user characteristics and technical features of transmedia platforms that facilitate or hinder narrative transportation are also highlighted in this first part of the findings. Second, the influence of transmedia on behavior intentions – toward the cultural object or cultural category, a particular transmedia experience, and transmedia storytelling in general – is explored at various levels. Informants' quotes were used to provide vivid pictures of their experience while experimenting with the transmedia project *"Le Défi des Bâtisseurs"*.

Narrative transportation and its dimensions
Experts' interviews clarified the concept of transmedia storytelling and its characteristics as did a literature review on narrative transportation (Green 2008; Green and Brock 2000; Van Laer et al. 2014), which emphasized that transmedia storytelling facilitated consumer narrative transportation, defined as an experiential response to stimuli (universe, stories, characters, etc.). The lexical analysis of introspective reviews makes it possible to find the salient components of narrative transportation. Narrative transportation, at the core of the experience lived with transmedia platforms, requires a stimulation of the imagination of the individual who can then feel empathy for the characters. This process may enable the appropriation of the universe by the individual and his or her immersion or even lead him or her to lose the notion of reality.

Mental imagery and empathy
Beyond processing and interpreting information about the Strasbourg Cathedral, people who experience transmedia generate vivid and precise images of the story told: *"I imagined the builders of that time, difficulties they have encountered, the joy of seeing the cathedral emerge from the earth, anxiety when the construction was stopped"* (S.B., female, Master 1 student). The ability of transmedia storytelling to stimulate imagination can also lead to an identification of the individual with the character he or she is embodying, even to project into the narrative universe: *"I feel directly concerned and involved in this project… I see my office, my journey"* (M.G., female, Master 1 student). As a result, a feeling of belonging to the builders' team and community can develop, thus promoting the appropriation of the universe: "*We sit around a table with the boss ... me ... and two assistants…*

It is up to us to take up the torch" (G.C., female, Master 1 student), *"with really the desire to succeed this mission entrusted to us. Unintentionally, we would almost put pressure on ourselves to win the contract!* (A.C., female, Master 1 student).

However, some individuals report, with some regret, not having been transported by the story told, namely, because of some difficulty identifying with the character. *"Actually I did not get into the story… that's what I would have liked: to identify with this character and to go with him to discover new things"* (A.C., female, Master 1 student). The individual's lack of identification with the character seems to be an obstacle to developing the receiver's imagination and empathy, a necessary condition that leads to the loss of the notion of reality, another characteristic of narrative transportation.

Losing track of reality and time
According to Green (2008) and Van Laer et al. (2014), once transported into stories, the individual loses the notion of reality, temporally and physiologically. He or she participates actively and can be part of the story with the different protagonists. The narrative transportation that takes place then goes beyond the mere loss of the notion of time and can be manifested in physiological reactions: *"At times I shook my head during the meeting and I realized that, when at the beginning, I was with the boss, the modeler, and my assistant, I tried to behave properly as if I were really participating"* (J.C., female, Master 1 student).

Some consumers' introspective reviews also stress that the use of transmedia platforms may be a source of unpleasant sensations for a while, perhaps because of a temporary anxiety related to the loss of the notion of reality: *"This shift involving several levels of reality was not pleasant to me initially. Then the tendency to be 'sucked up through the screen as a reality of its own' then suppressed my anxiety, and I was surprised for a while by the immersion that took place"* (L.A., male, Master 1 student).

However, some individuals were only partially transported by the story and were aware of the fictional character of the narrative universe: *"Through the false mission presented at the end of the introduction, the boss gave us the task of doing some research on the cathedral in order to build a second tower"* (M.V., female, Master 1 student).

Perception of time passing and being active on platforms is prevalent in informants' discourses: *"The pedagogical content itself is quite well done, not too long, not too short, and goes to the point"* (V.B., female, Master 2 student). People may also feel cut off by the time that elapses: *"I spent a little*

less than two hours on the site to discover the different tabs, listen, click on the questions. Time did not seem too long"* (A.T., female, Master 1 student). The immersion in the narrative universe generated a loss of the notion of time related to the recreational elements of transmedia platforms: *"You can quickly be disoriented as time passes"* (V.B., female, Master 2 student), *"I stayed 1h30 to navigate through platforms without realizing it … I think it is because of the construction of the tower"* (M.A, male, Master 1 student).

Some individuals also expressed a desire to control time through transmedia platforms: *"Most videos cannot be stopped during play; you cannot watch a part of it if you want. This element disturbed me during the use of the site"* (A.W., female, Master 2 student). In addition, lexical analysis shows that other individuals sought to optimize the time spent on the experience lived through transmedia: *"I spent 45 minutes on the website. I did not watch all the videos. I did not want to waste my time"* (A.M., female, Master 2 student).

Facilitators and barriers to transmedia experience: users' characteristics and transmedia technical features
Individual characteristics of users and the technical features of transmedia platforms influence the perception of the transmedia experience. First, lexical analyses emphasize the importance of the propensity to adopt a technology on the part of the user in the appropriation of platforms. This stable individual characteristic results from facilitating factors (enthusiasm, control) or inhibitors (feelings of dependence and vulnerability) of the use of a technology. These contrasting feelings are expressed by users of the *"Défi des Bâtisseurs",* and they influence the mental and technical (through platforms) appropriation of the universe: *"Giving people the opportunity to experiment [with] such a project is essential in the world we live in today, where we are becoming more and more dependent on technology. It is through this kind of collaborative work that we can see the possibility for everyone to become master of these technological tools again, to think in turn and not to let all projects, whatever their nature, [remain] only in the hands of experts"* (J.S., male, Master 1 student).

Technical features (multi-language character of transmedia, high-definition images, ergonomic navigation) also influence the experience and narrative transportation felt by the individuals. The first two criteria are favorably perceived by the majority of users: *"The website can be used in several languages (French, English, German). The world can access it!"* (H.R., female, Master

1 student). Individual perceptions of the site's ergonomics seem varied according to the user's ease of adopting a new technology: *"The site has some ergonomic problems; it is not easy to pick up; it takes a few minutes before being able to navigate easily"* (T.M., male, Master 1 student); *"I discovered that to unblock all the contents of the cathedral's construction it was necessary to familiarize myself with the entire web documentary. An ingenious way. I found the mainframe and transitions very well constructed. The content is rich and the finishes were of a particular high quality"* (H.A., male, Master 1 student).

Videos, shot in a subjective view and aimed at generating identification with and empathy toward characters, did not always seem to have the desired effect: *"When you start the web documentary, you do not really know what to expect. The first scenes attempt to involve the user, filming in the first person. It did not really happen for me"* (M.A., male, Master 1 student). However, this feeling of confusion tended to fade as the user navigated through the platforms: *"Some elements became understandable during navigation through platforms. We understand that we are placed in the role of an architect who must first gather information about the cathedral of Strasbourg in order to realize the second tower"* (M.A., male, Master 1 student).

Finally, coherence between platforms and contents then contributed to the narrative transportation felt by the individual: *"A certain realism is created in the situation that has been presented to us: the quality of the image is good, the situation is credible through the initial situation in the architects' office, and this makes us discover a professional field that one does not know necessarily"* (M.H., female, Master 1 student) – or, if not coherent, can hinder consumers' transportation: *"The exchanges with colleagues did not always seem realistic, including messages that were totally unexpected. Apart from the gothic and neo-gothic styles, elements of construction proposed were incongruous"* (L.A., male, Master 1 student).

As a result, narrative transportation may occur when certain conditions (propensity to adopt new technologies, involvement, participation, transmedia platform ergonomics, high-quality images, coherence, etc.) are met. Weak transportation or absence of transportation – a negative experience – may be correlated with a lack of involvement by the individual in the narrative object, technical problems (*"I was somewhat intimidated by the multiplicity of possibilities of interactions"* (L.A., male, Master 1 student)), lack of propensity to adopt a technology (*"I know very little technology; I prefer the real"* (L.M.,

female, Master 1 student)), or lack of realism (*The game is not developed enough; it is still too fake"* (M.C., female, Master 1 student). However, even if the respondent has been only weakly transported into the narrative universe, he or she may express favorable intentions with regard to the cultural object or transmedia platform.

Impact of narrative transportation on the receiver's intentions

Informants reported few attitudinal intentions (their representations of the cultural object have barely changed), but some of them declare behavioral intentions (toward the cultural object). Their intentions either relate to the cultural object that was put in the spotlight (the Strasbourg Cathedral) or, at a more abstract level, to the culture category (cathedrals in general, monuments, architecture) and culture overall. Finally, the informants referred to immediate elements of their experience, namely, the transmedia project (*"Le Défi des Bâtisseurs"*) or to their intentions to look for other transmedia storytelling projects.

With regard of the subject of the narration (Strasbourg Cathedral), informants expressed two kinds of intentions: to get more information about it and to discover it. Concerning their intention to learn more, their experience of transmedia may have triggered a particular interest in Strasbourg Cathedral's past: *"We want to learn more about this cathedral, its architecture and its history"* (C.M., female, Master 1 student) but also in its future: *"The only thing this website has triggered is my curiosity. What will become of this cathedral?"* (M.A., female, Master 1 student). Some respondent stated their intention to visit the heritage site, which came from a desire to discover the reality of the site through a sensory experience. This transmedia experience did not actually result in a visit of the heritage site, but informants now would consider this option if the opportunity arises. This desire to visit the heritage site is motivated by the curiosity that this first experience has triggered: *"I now sincerely want to go and see this cathedral with my own eyes now that I know its history and the exceptional look of its arrow"* (H.A., male, Master 1 student). This desire to visit is also explained by the fact that respondents would like to see life size what they saw, discovered, and understood virtually: *"It will help me make a real [no longer virtual] opinion of the cathedral, its size, its forms ..."* (M.V., female, Master 1 student). The virtual experience, although realistic, is not considered as an experience of reality: *"The story told makes me want to see the Strasbourg Cathedral, to see what it looks like"* (M.G., female, Master 2 student). Overall, this

suggests that the transmedia experience makes the storytelling subject (or the narrative universe) interesting: *"With all of the information collected on the website, it is now more interesting to go to the cathedral"* (M.V., female, M1 student). For the most interested informants, this experience triggered a desire to devote time to visit the heritage site.

With regard to the cultural category (monuments and architecture), some informants expressed their desire to learn about the same kind of monuments (cathedrals) but also about other types of monuments: *"It made me want to learn more about cathedrals in general, but also about other impressive buildings constructed over the centuries, including the construction techniques. For example, how were the pyramids of Egypt built? How are they still standing up?"* (S.B., female, Master 1 student). This experience (the construction of the Strasbourg Cathedral arrow through transmedia platforms) sparked interest for the entire cultural category (monuments and heritage sites), of which the cathedral is a representative, and for the topic discussed and highlighted (construction or architecture). In resonance with their own concerns, some informants wondered about the potential of transmedia to support actions in favor of the cultural category, for example, mobilizing people for a renovation project: *"I think that it can inspire some people to invest in the refurbishment of a monument"* (M.A., female, Master 1 student).

With respect to the transmedia project *"Le Défi des Bâtisseurs",* when respondents declare intentions, they express behavioral intentions: to talk about this kind of project (word of mouth) and to recommend its test to other individuals (prescription). The prescription intention concerns people that informants judge potentially interested by transmedia platforms, its topic, or educational qualities. Thus, they declare having talked to or considered talking to people working in the education and childcare field: *"I'll talk about it to my mother because she is primary school teacher ... She teaches her pupils about the different styles of cathedrals, so she could be even more interested in this experience"* (P.H., female, Master 1 student) or to architecture fans. Informants may think it consistent to inform those persons because of their field of interests: *"In my family we all love history in all its dimensions"* (M.V., female, Master 1 student), because the project is designed for the well-informed public: *"This kind of transmedia project aims mainly at a limited or specialized audience"* (M.V., female, Master 1 student), or because those persons live or have lived in Strasbourg or nearby: *"I've talked to people around me: my family and a friend who lives in Colmar"* (C.J., female, Master 1 student). As

far as they are concerned, few informants want to continue their exploration of the transmedia *"Le Défi des Bâtisseurs"* because they think "they have seen it all": *"I don't want to extend the experience because I think that I know enough about the story told since the experience is complete"* (M.G., female, Master 1 student).

Finally, when informants have enjoyed their experience, they say they intend to look for other transmedia projects of this kind. This intention is correlated either to a curiosity toward this kind of presentation – *"This experience has made me curious to test new transmedia projects and platforms"* (M.V., female, Master 1 student); *"I'd like to experiment with other transmedia projects of that kind"* (M.G., female, Master 1 student) – or to a desire to use transmedia advantages and strengths that they have appreciated to discover other cultural objects – *"When you have information on monuments, the visit is much more enjoyable"* (M.V., female, Master 1 student).

Although not expressed explicitly, many comments refer implicitly to the suitability of this type of transmedia project to enhance the experience and make it more fun. Indeed, this presentation format can modify our representations of culture: *"This type of transmedia project can change the prejudices people might have, for example, about documentaries being boring"* (M.V., woman, Master 1 student). Conversely, when the experience of transmedia is unsatisfying, participants logically, clearly, and critically express their unwillingness to reuse such kinds of transmedia platforms: *"I was already skeptical about transmedia before; this experience reinforces my opinion. To me, this kind of tool only works well for very few projects, often for detective projects that require investigation and to solve a case, or for more abstract and non-linear projects"* (A.D., female, Master 1 student).

Discussion

This research was aimed at exploring the influence of an individual's use of transmedia on his or her cultural consumption experience, appropriation of the narrative universe, and development of favorable intentions (toward transmedia and the subject of the narration).

This research presents various theoretical contributions. First, it refines the definition of transmedia. The literature presents this concept as a process facilitating speech convergence through multiple media platforms. The results of the expert interviews enrich this definition and highlight four salient components of transmedia: narrative universe, story, and characters; platforms, interfaces, and points of entry; temporality; and

audience participation and commitment.

In addition, the analysis of the informants' introspective reviews shows that to be positive, the transmedia experience requires the individual to appropriate transmedia platforms. The transmedia experience is then characterized by the stimulation of the individual's imagination, his or her empathy (or even identification with the characters of the narrative), degree of control (or enthusiasm) over the technological features of transmedia, and perception that time passes quickly (or even a loss of the sense of time and reality from a physiological point of view).

Experts mentioned the "emotional power" of transmedia, which operates well when these elements are combined. Conversely, a negative transmedia experience may happen when the user does not become comfortable with the online platform. A negative transmedia experience may be caused by a sensory and cognitive over-stimulation, accompanied by feelings of frustration, annoyance, or boredom; loss of attention; a lower willingness to interact with the environment; and finally a desire to control the duration of the experience or even interrupt it. As a result, a negative experience (unpleasant sensations) and a low degree of narrative transportation of the individual (difficulty identifying with the character) can be correlated to individual characteristics (computer anxiety, low propensity to adopt a technology) or technical features (bad ergonomics, lack of realism).

Finally, favorable intentions can be triggered when the experience is positive and when the individual is transported into the narrative universe. Most often, these intentions are behavioral, with respect to transmedia (word-of-mouth, prescription) and to the cultural object (willingness to learn more about and to discover a life-size Strasbourg Cathedral or more broadly to consider heritage and culture in general, a desire to deepen knowledge of monuments).

On a managerial level, this research encourages professionals in the artistic and cultural sector (heritage sites, museums, live art, and so on) to use transmedia, which could then facilitate the co-creation of the experience through

−   A better understanding of the cultural object
−   Easy access to the cultural object through hedonic, playful, or aesthetic feelings triggered by narrative transportation (entry in the narrative universe, stimulation of the imagination)
−   Greater appropriation of platforms by users (via empathy or even identification with the characters of the narrative)
−   A commitment by the receiver with respect to the subject of the narration

These elements could spark interest for cultural consumption and, as a result, enable better access to the cultural object (theatres, museums, and so on).

This research work has certain limits because of its exploratory nature. Indeed, we have exploited only a few expert interviews, and introspective reviews have been collected from a convenience sample. These limits highlight future avenues of research. It seems necessary to continue the exploration of the influence of transmedia, taking into account the temporality of the experience desired by the transmedia designer and the platform used as the point of entry in the experience for the individual.

In addition, relationships among individual characteristics (age, familiarity with respect to the cultural object, propensity to adopt a technology), platform features (ergonomics), and the degree of narrative transportation felt by the transmedia users need to be studied further. Finally, a deeper analysis of the introspective reviews could help generate items to propose a French narrative transportation measurement scale in the future.

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Appendix B: Interview guide

After exploring, freely and without constraint of time, the website and the mobile application dedicated to the *"Le Défi des Bâtisseurs",* we invite you to transcribe your experience and to express yourselves about the two following themes:
Mention everything that you thought about, everything that you felt, everything that comes to your mind when recalling this experience. Thank you for your kind participation.

I.   EXPERIENCE OF THE TRANSMEDIA PROJECT *« LE DEFI DE BATISSEURS »*
1. Share your experience of the *"Le Défi des Bâtisseurs".*
2. How did it go? (How did you feel? What was your relation to your physical environment and to time?)
3. Describe your thoughts? What did the story tell you about?
4. During your experience, what were your positive or negative feelings?
5. Did you feel disturbed or distracted by some elements? If so, which elements bothered you? Why?
6. Overall, what stays in your mind after this experience? What did you most and least enjoy?

II.   WILLINGNESS TO EXTEND THE EXPERIENCE AND TO REVISIT TRANSMEDIA PLATFORMS
1. Did the test of these transmedia platforms and the story raise specific intentions?
2. Did you want to go deeper into the experience to learn more about the story being told? If so, how?
3. Will you talk to your friends about this experience?
4. Do you feel the desire to experiment with other transmedia platforms of this type?