

EURO TRANS MEDIA

EUROPEAN TRANSMEDIA, AN OPPORTUNITY
FOR THE EUROPEAN MEDIA INDUSTRY
IN THE GLOBAL MARKET





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The EuroTransmedia project intends to:

- Integrate key problematic areas in the EU by uniting the research efforts to get rid of the remaining technological barriers that still hamper user creativity, user content editing interoperability, portability and new editorial strategies (which can be seen as the future of the media industry). It will tackle technological, scientific, organisational and economic challenges for research and innovation for the European media industry.
- Adapt a new value chain to the new economy, in which the user is both a consumer and a producer and practices are nomadic and ubiquitous.
- Defragment research: The development of a common trans-regional Strategic Research Agenda and of the associated Joint Action Plan integrating regional specifics based on the common knowledge acquired by six key European research-driven clusters.



One of the results of the project Eurotransmedia is the identification of challenges and bottlenecks that limits the development of the Transmedia approach in the European creative industries. All them summarized and detailed in the “Strategic Research Agenda” document to identify areas which need more research and innovation investment in order to reach the objectives described in the Vision Document.

The 24 identified challenges are deduced from an extensive SWOT analysis and the feedback from their stakeholders and the Advisory Board members. Those bottlenecks were organised around three axes: artistic (7 challenges), technological (8 challenges) and business (9 challenges)

This White Paper highlights actions to take advantage of the opportunities and overcome the current challenges towards the implementation of the transmedia approach and help to the development of the European creative industries.



**Eurotransmedia Strategic Research Agenda*



**Eurotransmedia Vision document*

*Supplementary documents available at Eurotransmedia website

Introduction

"Participating" in the production process

For thirty years, three phenomena have deeply shocked the media and cultural industries: the dematerialization of content, modification of consumption practices, and the advent of digital convergence. The deployment of the Internet and the liberalization of telecommunication networks have contributed to the proliferation of distribution channels, distribution and content access.



The audience since then became used to interact with the content in a deeper sense, we could say "participating" in the production process. The consumption of creative content is now possible in multiple formats, in particular in small screens and mobile scenarios, and is often inseparable from the notion of community through social networks, blogs, forums, community sites and sharing platforms.

We gradually move from a traditional top-down distribution system, an emerging model of circulation of content in which the public itself has an impact on their receipt and contributes to their virility. Users, producers, distributors and developers are now in the hearth of digital convergence. Therefore, the traditional audiovisual sector companies are now called upon to cover more and more interconnected areas. The success of transmedia content depends on the creative capacity to appropriate new technical, economic and artistic of the multi-screen changing environment. Current public want access to the content of their choice at any time, an audiovisual experience even more immersive and captivating. Through different tools, consumers will have more and more influence on the creation contents.

The development of IT and content management technologies are essential to stimulate innovation. The technologies could push the boundaries of the creative industry but at the same time the supporting business models.

In terms of business, transmedia content is a chance for the European Union to get rid of its old way of thinking. Even if protecting its local and cultural content remains an issue, transmedia means the creation of worldwide communities whose consumption does not depend on cultural barriers but is based more commonly on artistic universes. Therefore, Europe will have at least to partly switch from a local to a global perspective.

In this changing environment where traditional content producers are largely supported by the public authorities, the transmedia producers will increasingly rely on investment from the private sector. Thus, supporting the creation of innovative financing tools should be a key element for the development of the transmedia industry.

Current situation

Three new elements have been added and completed the "transmedia" concept

Initially was the "crossmedia" concept which correspond to content distributed through several media simultaneously or sequentially. Then, three new elements have been added and completed the "transmedia" concept: social networks, portable devices and the central role of the user. The audience no longer takes a backseat, but is rather part of an ongoing dialogue with creators and producers.

Today that digital newspapers, second screen applications for TV, Netflix, etc. are reaching billions of people every day and smartphones and tablets are invading our everyday lives, transmedia is no longer something "nice to have". Rather, it is quickly becoming something that we "need to have" for our media industry to survive. Internet is forcing traditional media to diversify their offer, to adapt the supports they deploy, and more generally to reinvent their ways to innovate in order to face a global competition.

In the US, where the TV supply is abundant and extraordinarily competitive with advertising market reaching saturation, transmedia franchises are growing especially around the series, leading to the profusion of marketing inventions, products and services dedicated to promotion. The contents are funded and created at the initiative of a brand, and transmedia universe that unfolds in several stories is thought from its products.



Public television in most European countries has been the initiator of various experiments and transmedia projects in an attempt to diversify and innovate their offerings. However, it has not yet fostered independent private activity. It has proven the difficult to break with the conventional logic of audio-visual production designed for the linear environment.



In South Korea, companies are renowned for its technological capabilities and the country itself for its culture of excellence in education. The intense use of mobile phones and high-speed Internet access stimulated the development of content generated by users.



In Japan, the main factor transmedia development comes from the manga culture. The proximity of cinematic art - including that of animation - with the world of the print edition and pre-publication, helped introduce Japan transmedia marketing model, the heart of which is the logic of serialization.

Opportunities

In the transmedia field it is not so much the technological limits that block creativity and the ability to seize new opportunities, but much more organizational brakes and lack of a true culture of innovation.

Most of the key skills needed to complete successful transmedia projects are largely present in neighbouring areas of the web, gaming or communication agencies. But collaborations with the media sector are unfortunately still far too limited.

Transmedia producers will increasingly rely on investment from the private sector and innovative financing tools such as crowdfunding platforms.

In terms of business, transmedia means the creation of worldwide communities whose consumption does not depend on cultural barriers but is based, rather on artistic universes. Thus it will switch from a local to a global perspective.



In this context, opportunities are created in both directions:

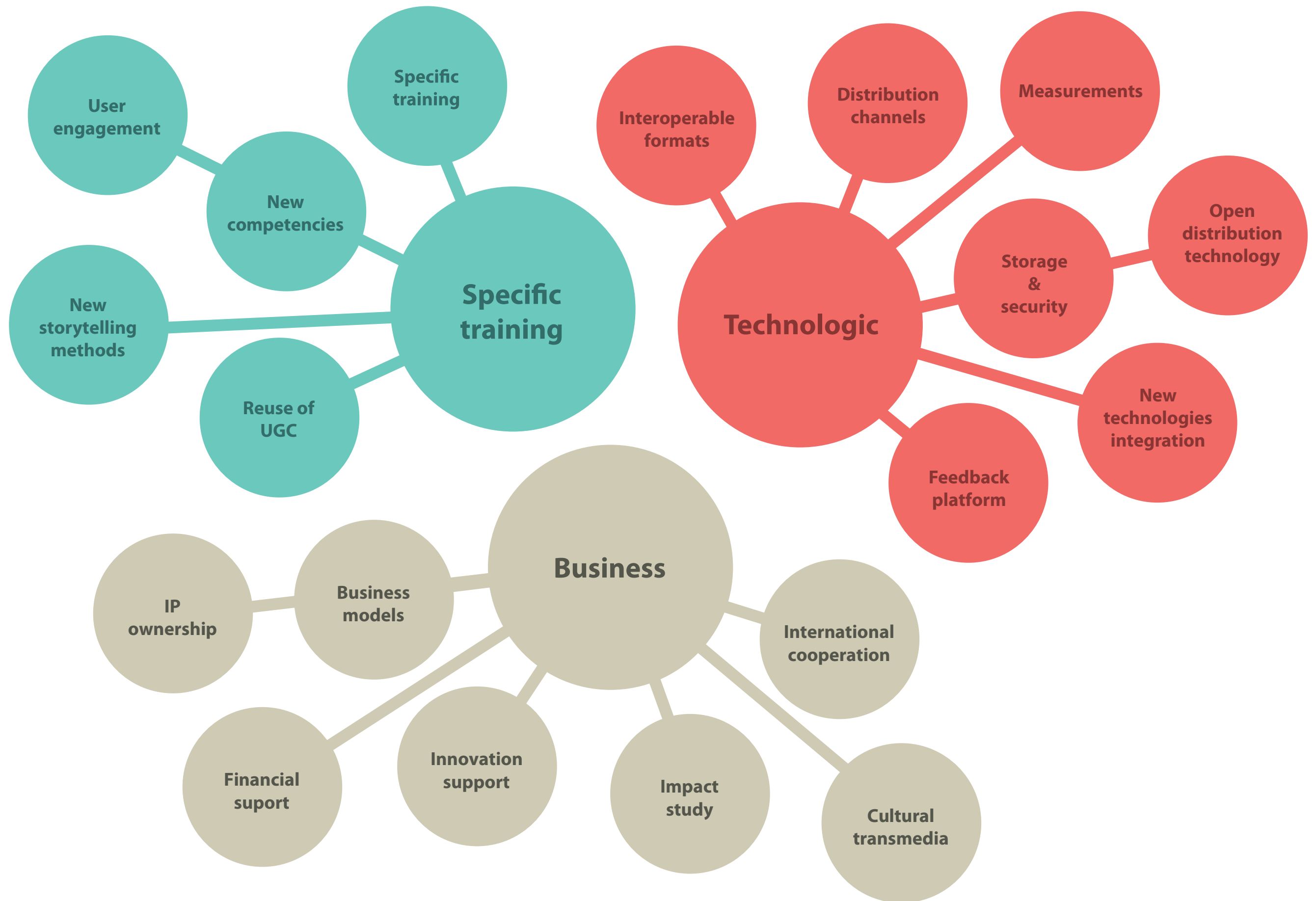
- In order to adapt to the digital market, and answer the audiences' expectations adequately, traditional media actors must think in terms of interactivity, multiple channels, transmedia, connected TV, and so on. They need new skills that they will find in Web start-ups such as Social media, user experience, gamification, recommendation, and community management are some of those skills that pure players will be able to monetize.
- Conversely, those pure players need to familiarise themselves with the concepts of storytelling, editorialization, and the more traditional workflows. They also need to satisfy the quality standards of the broadcasting industry.

CREATIVITY

Challenges

FIELD	CHALLENGE	DESCRIPTION
Artistic	Need for new competencies	lack of technological know-how in the creative process
	Targeting and reuse of user-generated content (UGC)	Need development of specific workflows for selection and reuse of best UGC
	Experience and user engagement	Need to increase the participation and involvement of audiences in the narrative and improve the overall user experience
Economic	Lack of viable economic models	Need to change business models and integrate digital economic models: media, gaming... Need for a holistic approach
	Support for innovation in creative industries	Lack of public policies for digital creation in creative industries
	Lack of audience measurement methodologies and interactivity standard for the entire transmedia sector	Need tools and audience measurement methodologies consistent and comparable with each other for advertising business models. Need to measure the audience of "first screen" and interactivity with others

FIELD	CHALLENGE	DESCRIPTION
Technologic	Interoperable formats	The standards of the compression and transmission of audio-visual signals are standardized. However, for the interaction and multi-platform distribution, only proprietary solutions exist. This hinders creativity and size of the accessible market.
	Failure of telecommunication structures: distribution channels, high-speed Internet	Failure of existing networks: Telecom coverage, broadband services, storage solutions and management in the cloud; Database search engines; automatic moderation tools, semi-automatic or human social networks management systems
	Lack of support and experimental structures	Incubators, fablabs, etc. missing. Need to create real ecosystems with research laboratories, incubators, private companies. Transmedia should be considered by all areas of digital creativity.
	Storage and Data Security	Storing and securing data and content
	Ethics and protection of privacy	Protecting private user data
Human resources	Little knowledge of technology by traditional content producers	Need a European program to support the production of transmedia content to increase the use of technology
	Lack of specific training and awareness of transmedia	Need hybrid profiles in artistic and technical fields. Few university courses dedicated.
	Flexible collective agreement for low cost productions	New processes, new workflows, more players, workflows crossing traditional media and digital world
Legal	Production and marketing management	
	European and international co-production agreements are not considering open to transmedia works due to the various types of .IP rights, including the management of the UGC	Who owns the content?



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Actions to take advantage of the opportunities



Actions related to audiences and empowerment of users

a. Centralize the user role

Transmedia has to encourage the commitment of the viewer, turning him into user-spectator-player-contributor. Through its interactive aspect, collaborative and participatory, the transmedia work encourages viewers-users to get involved and exercise their authority to act on issues that matter to them in their lives, their communities and society in general. The user is involved, talks, participates and becomes the new vector of information and communication. The viewer's engagement has become the cornerstone in the design of new content.

b. Design engagement strategies

Capture and hold the attention of users in order to capitalize on their engagement on social networks calls for a (re)invention of dialogue and creative communication with the audience. It is a challenge to encourage the participation of users, regardless of their age, their cognitive abilities and their level of access to technology. Three user-related actions:

- Offer new communication formats through multiple new communication channels in an attractive ways
- Empowerment should help increase transmedia users' attention spans and loyalty and build on their social media involvement to enlarge and retain audiences.
- Increase users' involvement in the creation and production process.

c. Accepting and promoting the new roles to the audience

There is a myriad of different interests in an audience and each one will allow and foster different interactions. New audience is reinventing media financing, creation, and distribution. The result is a truly open creative ecosystem in which creators, talent, and fans work together on the stories that they want to create and see. Producers need to develop a deeper understanding of fandom's own diversity, hierarchy, and aims. Today every narrative competes with all cultural production available on the internet, television, books, mobile devices, etc. The user's attention is becoming a scarce resource.

d. Understand current mechanisms of user engagement

The distribution of attention between cultural offers is very uneven, since a few products tend to get most of the attention. Thus:

- Successful products can give some visibility gifts to less prominent cross-subsidised productions.
- Content's "long tail" captures very little attention, and some part of it can generate significant business only if it covers a wide range of products.

e. Tackle the impact of networks

Transmedia works are strongly conditioned by network effects, it strengthens the market position of those who succeed and degrades the situation of those who do not pass and remain unknown. Cultural markets are markets where the winner takes all. The logic of social contagion suggests that transmedia must:

- Be the first to build a consumer base in a particular format, genre or fashion (pioneer advantage);
- Attract providers such as artists, authors and other celebrities of the star system to improve your competitive position;
- Raise expectations with promotional campaigns and influence all intermediaries such as media agencies and online distribution agents;
- Keep your customer base up-to-date by offering successive productions of cultural works of known authors or artists;
- Establish mutual confidence among producers, suppliers, intermediaries and consumers.
- Help manage social contagion by investing in institutions such as clubs, user groups, and public associations that promote social interaction and cohesion in culture.

f. The user empowerment that comes with digital technology has opened the door to new forms of collaboration and participation through networks and social media:

- Crowd creation: a collective creation process (DIY, Fablabs, hackathons, etc.)
- Crowd Funding: a process to obtain resources or patronage from a large user base.
- Crowd Wisdom: the idea that many fans can better respond to a question that only one expert,
- Crowd Voting: collective evaluation,
- Collaborative Consumption: combines new ways to exchange, share, and lease objects and services powered by social networks and other platforms

Actions related to technologies

a. Advance in the interoperability of data formats

Transmedia means that audio-visual content and user interaction are available on a broad spectrum of different platforms. It is necessary to overcome the "one device – one format" production and distribution approach. Any smartphone should offer its user a similar experience in terms of display, interactivity, and connectivity; any home user should be able to watch and interact with the story on a connected TV, laptop computer or tablet.

b. Develop and run on managed Open Platforms

Norms, standards, and good practice rules on how and for how long the features used in the production of a transmedia work should remain stable are required for transmedia content producers and software designers.

c. Be prepared to adapt to the available resources

It is almost impossible to design and provide excellent experiences without using global resources such as cloud storage and processing, data transmission in wireless or cable networks, etc. Access to and availability of these resources vary from one user to another, from one place to another and even from one moment to the next. It is vital to invest in infrastructure development.

d. Advancements in user tracking concerns

To follow a story and to advance in its understanding, the user has to be tracked by the storytelling components. Transmedia has a need for standardized, secure, and confident methods to store, transmit, access, manage, and update user tracking data.

e. Develop pervasive Interfaces

Transmedia requires more efficient solutions not only for audio-visual stream optimisation but also for interaction data. Audio-visual quality is not the only concern as lag time and transmission delays are very important when interaction comes into play.

Actions related to economy

Today, two economic models for transmedia seem to emerge. They will definitely inspire those of tomorrow:

- Productions centred on content and IP rights monetization. This is the model of traditional media looking to evolve and adapt to the highly competitive international environment.
- Promotion, marketing, and other awareness-raising campaigns for brands or events. This more flexible model is specific to new entrants.

It is worth to mention that this new world is marked by the arrival of foreign players so far in the media sphere, such as Internet service providers (ISPs), telecoms groups, the giants of the Net (the GAFA: Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon) or specialized firms (Netflix, LOVEFiLM Amazon, Spotify). All these platforms bring new innovative services and are considered sources of progress. Brands and IP owners will continue to play an important role. Publishers, aggregators and e-commerce leaders will also commit in the transmedia production.

a. Adapt to emerging economic models

Models will appear and evolve, leaning from the net and use of data. They will combine several sources of income and several economic models of a soft and flexible way and they will be based on contracts, agreements and very complex conditions of service use. They must also comply with the rules dictated by few giants, Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon (GAFA) constituting de facto the ecosystem of digital connected world, or looking for profitable niches in the shadow.

b. Look for adapted financing for transmedia products

Transmedia can benefit from traditional financing models: the structural funds and selective aid like Grants, Support programs, Projects, Tax breaks, Investments and Completion bonding. But new models must be studied and developed

- The modern financing model (p.e.Finnish way): The cooperation between academic research and applied research, but also private companies is facilitated by the implementation of technology-related programs, In general, companies, large groups and SMEs, collaborate more with universities and public research institutions.
- New funding models like crowdfunding: Crowdfunding connects entrepreneurs, creatives and all project promoters in need of cash with investors or donors whether individuals or professionals.

c. Be prepared for new payment systems and transaction methods

Payment solutions are and will be an important element of digital business models, but as the world evolves payments, new markets will certainly emerge.

d. Study IP and the legal framework

The use of multiple platforms and multiple distribution channels in an international context makes managing highly complex intellectual property rights. A harmonization of IP rights and related IP legislation is needed in the EU, not only in the fight against illegal activities but also to reconcile and simplify business models for all media.

e. Advance in audience engagement measurement and methodology

Given the abundance of data generated and processing methods, the need for transparency and comparability is strongly felt. In order to encourage customers to conduct other transmedia projects, audience measurement methodology is one of the most important parts of a holistic approach and needs to be addressed as a priority.

f. Learn how to take advantage from User generated content (UGC)

The value of UGC in transmedia creations depends on its type:

- User feedback and comments about the published content (many occurrences, low value);
- Supplementary content to be published along with the main content to increase public awareness, engagement, and loyalty (fewer occurrences but higher value);
- Completely new content to be included in the main content but that redefines the main storytelling (infrequent occurrences, possible high value).

Transmedia should learn from the modern aspects of user-driven innovation and design methods that are dominant in the start-up culture and design industry: putting the user in the centre and prototyping and testing ideas and products with selected users.

International Cooperation

Among the previous opportunities and actions there is a list of actions suitable to be co-developed among European parties and International ones:

a. Co-development or distribution of online accessible tools for audiovisual creation, production and distribution: platform that will provide a catalogue of open API and specific, or media-adapted, tools and special interfaces designed for the media workflow in order to manage all of the production workflow and the relationship with the audience.

b. Participation in transmedia challenges: bringing together a pool of transmedia SMEs/startups and a large corporation undergoing its digital transformation in order to find new solutions to meet

companies' needs in terms of innovation, process and business models thanks to transmedia.

c. Contribution in the Observatory on Transmedia Best Practices: Periodic meetings and an online communication tool for continuous point of contact and information gathering/distribution to confront ideas, meet transmedia mentors and hear about inspirational projects

d. Co-development and distribution of adapted to transmedia audience measurement methodologies. Measurement methodologies homogeneous across countries and economies to better understand the global consumption of content.

e. Implementation of a transmedia master at international level: New trainings, masters or even dedicated school, in close relationship with companies to feed the new creative way to give the creators of content the understanding of the right tools, and at the same time, creating new skilled IP managers.

f. Participate in the convergent fund to support transmedia creation: A new convergent fund will be created dedicated to SME developing works integrating content and technology innovation, and dealing with the broader issues of digital convergence.

g. Participate in coordinated research programs about innovative business models: to figure out which standards agreements that are put in use, to look and licensing agreements and to inves-

tigate opportunities for expansion of concurrent business models as well as the developments of publishing platforms, technological development and social networks terms of services

h. Work together towards adapted crowd-financing regulations for media industries: Un-harmonized national and international regulations about crowd-financing schemes, may become a major obstacle for the commercial viability of start-up companies.

i. Participation and promotion of Transmedia experiments: The marriage between digital sectors and other social, industrial or economic sectors should be the best new business opportunity for transmedia content and storytelling by far.

Conclusion



To complete a transmedia project successfully and make it more than an interesting concept, an effective business, there should be a strong production capacity with appropriate sources of financing and investors, tools to communicate it to markets and well equipped individuals and households to make this happen.

Transmedia content will require a design overcoming the challenges described previously in this document. Its authors should continue to innovate and improve the storytelling grammar to adapt it continuously to society's never-ending industrial, cultural, and economic evolution. At the same time, from the technological point of view Broadband access, cloud resources, and pricing policies needs to evolve in Europe for transmedia-facilitated flows on a large continental scale. The models for financing transmedia projects are currently unstable, per market and per initiative. PPP (Private & Public Partnership) financing models should remain an alternative to new financing models, involving increasingly the private sector and the final consumers through new financing tools to be developed.

Finally, despite initial signs of adoption, it is unclear whether European audience will be reluctant, socio-culturally, to embrace transmedia mechanics, principles, and writing: In any case the European creative industry aims are well beyond the European Countries. There are strong successes and a positive trend in the way some markets outside Europe are turning transmedia activities into a strategic business designed to be profitable. Transmedia has become an industry as such in Japan, South Korea, and the U.S., albeit expressed differently according to the region.

“The Transmedia approach must be embraced by European creative institutions and industries to maintain themselves competitive in the content creations and publishing global industry.”

*“Mastering transmedia
becomes key to the
future of creative
industries.”*



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