

*Master of Arts (Communication endorsement)
Resolved Research Project Synopsis*

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1. Brief description of final outcomes of practical project

I have produced a suite of interlinked transmedia stories focused on one specific block of the main street in Hastings (the East 200 block). The objective of this communications output is two-fold: engage audience in the stories of that place and build local pride among those who work and play in that community. The outputs are a number of serialised mobisodes in documentary style (6 in number, 5 minutes each in duration), interactive codes on posters attached to buildings to enable audience participation in augmented reality (these are QR codes), a suite of zines (6) that supports the stories in the mobisodes, and an online presence (facebook and instagram) to provide another entry point for participants and a feedback loop.

2. Project description and general area of research enquiry

East 200 is a relatively down trodden part of Hastings but in the last three years a number of independent, 'edgy' retailers have moved in and the area has begun to become a desirable place to work, shop and play.

I have examined how meso storytelling (as identified by Yong-Chan Kim Sandra Ball-Rokeach in their theory of Communication Infrastructure (2006)) can work to give identity and promote an area without 'mainstreaming' it through the use of more traditional, conservative communication methods and mechanisms.

This project examines meso storytelling in a hyper-local context (a term first used in 1991 by broadcaster John Hillis to describe television news content) as I narrowed my communication outputs to focus on the people, businesses and aspirations of one specific block in Hastings CBD.

As part of this work I examined Bill Nichols' modes of documentary making and which conventions are best suited for this use. I looked at how modes have evolved through the work of Judith Aston and Sandra Gaudenzi, and Toni de Bromhead. I also looked at how meso storytelling is used in the context of pervasive and interactive media, through the work of Lev Manovich, Henry Jenkins and Jon Dovey.

3. Field of practice

My project fits within the communication field with a specific focus on documentary making as an output, but also strategy, post-industrial communications production and dissemination.

My first degree was in Communication Studies (AUT) majoring in television. I worked as a television promotions producer for six years, this gives me the skill and experience to shoot and edit moving image with the desired outcome of promoting, marketing or selling. In 2002 I moved into public relations and worked in the private (Sweeney Vesty Ltd, Band Ltd) and public sectors (Metropolitan Police Service, Hastings District Council). This gives me a solid foundation of communication strategy with experience in both community needs and economic ones. I have a particular interest in using creative output to build community and boost small business economic outcomes. I currently handle media and marketing for a small number of private clients (an art gallery, a school and an opera company, as well as a contemporary craft store and a bar located in the East 200 block). My experience in community events management (I have project managed pecha kucha in Hawke's Bay and I co-run Fruit Bowl Craft Jam (fruitbowlcraftjam.com.nz)) means I have an existing passion and experience for engaging local energy and buy-in to projects and communications endeavours. I also write feature-length stories for Hawke's Bay's leading current affairs magazine (baybuss.co.nz) which gives me a solid understanding of the challenges and successes of my geographic area as well as the experience to undertake a considerable body of work pinned to an exacting deadline!

I have made examples of meso storytelling for local council, local businesses and a local polytech, all three of these have required elements of documentary making.

4. Areas of theory/discourse relating to project

I examined indie documentary conventions through close reading of a number of short-form documentaries and documentary-based interactive projects. I analysed documentary practice related to which particular documentary modes to use to make the mobisodes which form the primary carrier of the meso storytelling. I considered the six modes of documentary film-making as described by Bill Nichols in 1991, and analysed decisions around which mode is best suited to this project. I examined documentary modes after Nichols including the work of de Bromhead, and Aston and Gaudenzi.

I examined Jon Dovey's Pervasive Media as a form of storytelling that is sensitive to individual audience, and digital storytelling's place in this context. I also looked at the work of Henry Jenkins in terms of theory and practice around convergence culture and participatory culture. From an industry point of view I looked to the thinking of Ingrid Kopp of the Tribeca Film Institute.

5. Extension of previous work in this field and possible research question

This project represents a coming together of a number of streams in my communication practice built up over twenty years. This includes promotion through moving image, strategic communication planning and communication for community development outcomes, as well as investigation into transmedia storytelling and augmented reality: the bringing together of story strands to create a seamless participant experience. It is also a synthesizing as it brings all these practical, theory and strategic communication skills into a very narrow place and time. It is a tightly disciplined storytelling output that centres on accessibility and ease of use to encourage use and ownership by those locals who centre their lives at the East 200 block.

My domain of inquiry:

Hyperlocal meso storytelling through a transmedia lens.

My research questions:

- 1. What are the mechanisms used to capture and distribute meso storytelling?**
- 2. How can meso storytelling be used in a transmedia context?**
- 3. How can transmedia exchange be used as a co-created documentary with audience as collaborator?**

6. Initial bibliography related to project and dissertation

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What Lifts You: The Intersection of Street Art and Social Media Mashable July 9, 2009 <http://mashable.com/2014/07/09/street-art-social-media-kelsey-monague/>

Why Transmedia is catching on (Part 1) Tribeca Film blog post October 19, 2011 <https://tribecafilm.com/stories/516c8f4422b1529f70000001-why-transmedia-is-catchin>

TRANSMEDIA PROJECTS INCLUDED MY THESIS

Everyday Africa

DiCampo, P. and Merrill, A. *Everyday Africa* <http://everydayafrica.tumblr.com/>

Hyperlocal

Boyden, J., Bull, M., Ferguson, W., Moore, L., O'Neill, H. and Toews, M. with CBC Books - Canada Writes and National Film board of Canada *Hyperlocal* <http://hyperlocal.nfb.ca/#/hyperlocal>

Te Ngira

Buxton, M. with Imersia Group *Te Ngira* <http://un-fiction.blogspot.co.nz/2014/07/the-papakura-marae-e-learning-project.html>

Walking the Edit

Fischer, U. *Walking the Edit* <http://walking-the-edit.net/en/>

What Lifts You

Montague, K. *What Lifts You* <https://twitter.com/hashtag/whatliftsyou>

Yellow Arrow

Counts, M., Allen, C., House, B. and Shapins, J. with Counts Media *Yellow Arrow*
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/yellowarrow>

7. Ethical and copyright considerations

I secured talent release and location release from all participants in the mobisodes, as well as approval to use images and interviews in the associated zines.