



Press Release

Transmedia: Finding new ways to tell and deliver a story

Doha, Qatar; November 21, 2012: In a Doha Talks session entitled *Transmedia: Storytelling in the Digital Age* held as part of the fourth Doha Tribeca Film Festival (DTFF), panelists discussed the power of good storytelling to transcend multiple platforms, the role of location in multi-platform entertainment and the power of transmedia to create immersive, interactive and engaging content.

Mayhad Tousi, Co-Founder and CEO of Boomgem, said there are three drivers of change in the digital world - demographic shifts, a reshaped global power structure and disruptive innovation.

The session, moderated by Ayman Itamil, went on to discuss how, as technology develops, it affects the way we tell, understand and enjoy stories and how, from immersive games to interactive websites, multi-platform storytelling is becoming the new standard of audience engagement.

“Storytelling needs to be sustainable and it isn’t in its current form,” said Mayhad Tousi, Co-Founder and CEO of Boomgem. “Transmedia is about finding new ways of telling stories using more than just film or traditional media as a platform. It’s about using new ways of delivering our stories, it’s not about resisting a rapidly changing environment.”

Yasmin Elayat discussed the project 18daysofEgypt.com, which documented the revolution in Egypt in real time using mobile phones and social media. The project uses a crowd-sourced web-based documentary to collect stories and narratives to get closer to the source, making the source the storyteller.

“We built a platform to enable people to upload and share their content, providing tools to help them tell their stories. We made the community the filmmaker,” said Elayat.

New York-based transmedia producer Caitlin Burns from Starlight Runner Entertainment, discussed a recent project, which puts the audience in a physical place and extends the content on multiple platforms.

“When you are building a story you become an entrepreneur, your story is your business opportunity. You then appeal to a group of interested, tech savvy peers and give them the toolset to make something themselves. You are building a creative community and a project at the same time. It’s a phenomenal way to approach the creative process.”

She also stated that she works with a lot of projects that involve countries where there are no smart phones, internet access or even movie theatres. “You don’t have to go high tech or digital. You can reach people via pamphlets, putting on a live event or even by theatre or radio. It’s about considering how each experience can tell a story no matter what platform is available and using it creatively to its best strength.



Panelists also discussed the least expensive ways you can reach an audience if you are struggling to get a more traditional film or media project funded.

You need to look at the least expensive layers to reach an audience. In our case a graphic novel in the digital space which is interactive,” said Tousei of Ajax, an interactive graphic novel created in the digital space.

“We created an app which then reaches an audience and allows us to localise the content. That gives you a proven audience who might be willing to invest. And you build up these layers of storytelling to build up to perhaps making a film or a more expensive piece of content.”

Burns talked about the opportunities for short films in the transmedia world that didn’t exist before and that mean films can be distributed online and on mobile. She added that transmedia can also help find funding for non-fiction projects by partnering with non-profits, charitable groups, engaging tourist boards via online content etc.

Added Burns: “It’s the lower tier budget items in transmedia projects that give you a lot of data that can attract partners, investors, distributors. It’s about building the audience and building an engaged audience and once you’ve found that, it’s a good indicator a project will be successful.”

-ENDS-

[Images from the session are available here.](#) Just use the log in details below to access the file marked Transmedia-Storytelling in the Nov 19th file

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About Doha Film Institute:

Doha Film Institute (DFI) is an independent cultural organisation established in 2010 to incorporate Qatar’s film initiatives under one banner; organically supporting the growth of the local film community by enhancing industry knowledge, cultivating film appreciation and contributing to the development of sustainable creative industries in Qatar. DFI’s year-round platforms include funding and production of local, regional and international films, educational programmes, film screenings, and the annual Doha Tribeca Film Festival (DTFF).

With culture, community, education and entertainment at its foundation, DFI serves as an all-encompassing film hub in Doha, as well as a resource for the region and the rest of the world. DFI is committed to supporting Qatar’s 2030 vision for the development of a knowledge-based economy. DFI has established a number of strategic cultural partnerships with leading local and international organisations including Tribeca Enterprises, World Cinema Foundation, Maisha Film Lab, Katara Cultural Village and Giffoni Film Festival.

For more information, please contact:

Majid Wasi
Doha Film Institute
Tel: 00974 33247800
mwasi@dohafilminstitute.com

Ajay Teli
Doha Film Institute
Tel: 00974 55406634
ateli@dohafilminstitute.com

Kelly Home / Nivine William / Divya Khanna
ASDA'A Burson-Marsteller; +9714 4507 600
Kelly.home@bm.com / Nivine.william@bm.com / Divya.khanna@bm.com

