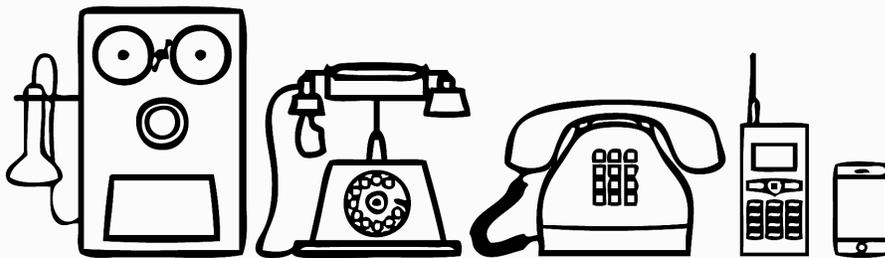


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# Crossing the Transmedia Frontier: the Growing Trend of a Transmedia Narrative in Music Festivals in the United States

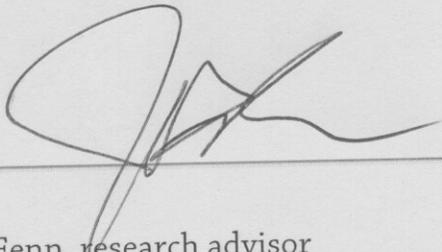
Alyssa Fisher | Spring 2011  
Research advisor: John Fenn



A Master's project presented to the Arts and Administration program of the University of Oregon in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master's of Science in Arts Management.

**Signature Page**

Approved:



John Fenn, research advisor  
Arts and Administration Program  
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Date:

5.31.11

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank my family for valuing arts as much as food. For instilling creativity as a way of breathing into my life.

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## Professional Statement

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### Music Festival Coordinator—<http://musicfest.uoregon.edu>

Cultural Forum, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR October 2009- Current

- Negotiates artist contracts, manages 4 performance stages, led successful proposal to the administration to return to a campus venue from off-site, writes sponsorship requests and grant applications, oversees marketing efforts.

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Ox-Bow School of Art and Artists Residency, Saugatuck, MI June - September 2010

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### Development Assistant—<http://sc4a.org>

Saugatuck Center for the Arts, Saugatuck, MI June -September 2010

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Cinema Pacific Film Festival, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR January - June 2010

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### Special Events Intern—<http://hollandmuseum.org>

The Holland Museum, Holland, MI, April - August 2009

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**Director of Campus Events**

Gordon College Campus Events Council, Wenham, MA, September 2006- May 2008

- Planned and publicized 20+ events each year, surveyed audience, managed and trained a staff of 12, managed budget, booked talent, reworked events.

**Professional Development**

**Volunteer:** 2010 Oregon Arts Summit, Oregon Folklife Network Fall Symposium 2010, 2011 Visual Culture Symposium, and 2011 Digital Media Learning Conference.

**Member:** Americans for the Arts: Emerging Leaders in the Arts Network.

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- Windows and Macintosh operating systems
- Fundraiser
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- Garage Band and Amadeus
- iMovie, some Final Cut Pro
- Social media platforms
- Filemaker Pro
- Microsoft Office Suite

## **Abstract**

This study documents and explores the emerging trend of music festivals that are incorporating transmedia narratives into their programming. Through a study of music festivals, the concept of transmedia, and the emergence of a transmedia aspect to music festivals, the reader will gain a background to the field. I will then expand with three case study festivals: Midpoint Music Festival in Cincinnati, Ohio, Treasure Island Music Festival, in San Francisco, California, and South by Southwest, a music, film and interactive media festival in Austin, Texas. Through attendance, observation, and interviews of those associated with the festivals, a few trends emerge. This study serves to document these trends, and the place of a transmedia festival in a wider culture of media-consumer interaction.

As media becomes more personal and interactive, it plays an increasingly constant role in our lives. A greater level of accessibility to multiple mediums has created a more technologically savvy world, where the general populous knows how to engage with and operate technology with ease and even an intrinsic ability. This allows for information to be shared on several levels, through a variety of mediums and at different points of depth. With this wider range of synonymous data, media producers have been able to supplement mainstream content, like film, with alternative content, such as viral Internet videos, websites with exclusive photograph and interview content, and products such as books, magazines, and director's notebooks. This change in

consumer culture is reflected in many areas of media consumption, including media festivals around the country.

The inclusion of what Henry Jenkins calls a 'transmedia narrative' into culture has been well documented, especially by Jenkins. On his blog, Jenkins regularly discusses the changing culture and transmedia's contribution to those changes, including effects on Hollywood, video games, education and music (<http://www.henryjenkins.org>). Transmedia centers around a larger narrative of the culture, event, or organization that is being represented through mediums. Transmedia specifically builds upon one medium- whether that be a music festival, a movie, or a comic book- and adds in any other form of media: video games, books, mobile phone applications, toys- products that will inspire the customer to engage with the narrative, and interact with the media. While transmedia was traditionally more of an engagement initiative among movies, video games, etc., it has become more widespread and widely defined as an everyday encounter between life, media, and branding.

This new media proliferation into consumers' lives allows for brands such as music festivals to expand their programming and their footprint. In this study, I explore how festivals are using transmedia to engage audiences, and ways in which they are able to financially support these new ventures. Some programming trends that arise include social media integration, digital documentation and sharing on the Internet, art installations, and interactive media elements during the festival. Financial support often comes from corporate sponsors looking to reach a new target audience, and larger

umbrella organizations who run the festivals. The study of these trends and the music festivals that are leading them reveals a new way to festival through transmedia integration and audience engagement.

### **Keywords**

My key search terms during this project are:

- Transmedia
- Music festival
- South by Southwest
- Treasure Island Music Festival
- MidPoint Music Festival
- Interactive media
- Multimedia

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## **Chapter One: Introduction**

### **Research Question:**

How and why are music festivals incorporating multiple mediums into their programming?

### **Sub-questions:**

- a. What mediums do they include?
- b. How does the industry and/or consumer interact with these transmedia narratives?
- c. Is the demand for these inclusions coming from the audience or the festival?
- d. Is a transmedia narrative being used mostly by corporate entities, or is it also being used by more underground industry professionals (and how)?

### **Conceptual Framework**

The widening arena of transmedia festivals requires a broad range of research. It is only with a history of festivals and transmedia storytelling that one can move towards an understanding of transmedia festivals, their growing popularity, and their function. As festivals expanded from traditional celebrations to include trade shows, the atmosphere of a festival became more about cultivating culture rather than reinforcing it. Technology and media have multiplied and broadened in scope, while information has moved in-between and along various media, and has recently become a purposeful narrative of content. In wider consumer culture, transmedia festivals are using multiple mediums to explore festival themes, to encourage industry interest, to educate and

excite attendees. All of this occurs through a highly managed, complicated, and almost elusive set of norms set by producers and consumers, as appropriate uses for media and messages is constantly shifting.

The trend towards transmedia storytelling is only made possible through the creation of multiple interactive, personal and public technologies, and the consumption of that technology. Since the 1980's, more personal technology has leapt into the forefront of consumer awareness, bringing everything from microwaves to TVs and security systems into our homes and daily lives (Hartley, 1992). As consumers have latched onto the incorporation of technology into their homes and social circles, manufacturers have created more media for audiences to interact with. A resulting cultural comfort with electronic life, increasingly affecting everything including the way we communicate, allows for shifts in the greater media world. This ripple effect therefore allows for more complicated narrative storytelling, and more interactive and expansive festival programming.

*Please see Appendix A for my visual conceptual framework.*

### **Problem Statement and Significance**

As media becomes more personal and interactive, it plays an increasingly constant role in our lives. A greater level of accessibility to multiple mediums has created a more technologically savvy world, where the “current generation...are accustomed and acclimated to being (inter)active with their media experiences” (Jenkins, 2010). This allows for information to be shared on several levels, through a

variety of mediums and at different points of depth. With this wider range of synchronistic data, media producers have been able to supplement mainstream content, like film, with alternative content, such as viral internet videos, websites with exclusive photograph and interview content, and products such as books, magazines, and director's notebooks. This change in consumer culture is reflected in many areas of media consumption, including media festivals around the country.

The inclusion of what Henry Jenkins calls a 'transmedia narrative' into culture has been well documented, especially by Jenkins (Jenkins, 2008). On his blog, Jenkins regularly discusses the changing culture and transmedia's contribution to those changes, including effects on Hollywood, video games, education and music (Jenkins, 2010).

As transmedia, social networking, and interactive technology- especially that of mobile media devices- gains momentum in widespread society, research is written to document this new use of media as social positioning (Coyne 2010). In light of research about transmedia narratives and consumer use of interactive media, and a growing social awareness of these trends, this research strives to document the collaboration of those themes in music festivals. Through case study, interviews, and document analysis, this project will document music festivals that are currently incorporating a transmedia narrative, which mediums they choose, and how it benefits their festivals' budgets, attendance, and vision.

## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

### **Media History**

Through the widespread growth of the media sphere, consumers have the world at their fingertips. Media brought sound traveled over great distances, moving pictures, an age of information, and simultaneously captured the past, present and future and placed it in the “cloud.” Media brings people together while they are apart, it is “always a mix of tradition and innovation, in which emerging and established systems interact, shift, and collide with one another” (Thorburn, 2003, p.x). While historically, media development is viewed over a timeline, that frame of understanding is increasingly becoming difficult, as inventions are paired in new ways to create new media. Similarly, “the shifting boundaries between analogue and digital, cinema and television, and broadcasting and the Internet, throw into question traditional critical oppositions between domestic and public media reception, active and passive scenarios of consumption, and authored and non-authored texts” (Boddy, p.191).

For example, in the mid-1950’s, the TV served as a “national looking glass and consciousness-maker” (Boddy, p.193). Its development changed the way Americans received news and entertainment to a visual, intimate, and immediate experience. It shifted the layout and purpose of the living room. Forty years later, the Digital Video Recorder (DVR), added time control to the television:

This new form of time-shifting is merely one sign of the ways in which digital technology, at least in the eyes of many current industry leaders and pundits, is

eroding the experience of simultaneity and liveness that has traditionally been seen both as part of television's essential nature and central to its relation to the nation. (Boddy, p.195)

However, this change is merely an addition to the medium, one that permits "people to use television the way Web surfers now use the Internet" (p.197). Without the television, the DVR would not be needed, but with a DVR, the television joins the new media age by making content personalized and controllable in a new way.

Traditionally, as new media has emerged, it is dichotomized against the old media, much like this quote from William Boddy:

Unlike the cultural positioning of cinema in the United States since the 1940's, increasingly associated with the possibilities for artistic status, personal expression, cosmopolitanism, and high cultural prestige, American television was generally construed in terms of its domesticity, liveness, and its role as an indispensable agent of national identity. (Boddy p.192)

But as convergence has become a major aspect of media invention, new media has created a conversation, rather than a gap, between inventions. As William Urrichio says, "Film's own history and developmental trajectory, and its assumed agency with regard to "derivative" media such as television, have been recast in the light of an array of precedent technologies, practices, and notions of mediation" (Urrichio, 2003, p. 12).

This conversation is more than between DVRs and Television sets, and it becomes more than the public having control over their time. It becomes a conversation between

individuals, culture, and machines. Micro-coordination, which is the “thinking of digital devices in this way– as a mechanism people use to synchronize their relationships and interactions, provides a way to discuss how digital devices impact people’s lives and the places they inhabit” (Coyne, 2010, p.xiii). It allows us to use our devices as a window to culture, as a mirror of how culture affects us, and also as a geographical positioning device in culture; “it is helpful to think of the agency of attunement as widely distributed, engaging sociability, conversation, the mass media, digital communications, and other means of cultural creation, preservation, and transmission...attunement also comes before any sense of time or space” (Coyne, 2010, p.xv).

This is the new approach to media, and media understanding: that consumers are traveling great distances, playing games where they brave the spatial frontier, connecting with people all over the world, without having to leave their homes, or without the big budget of world travel. Consumers are simultaneously broadening and minimizing our horizons, placing themselves within the culture and the medium while singling themselves out through individual interaction with a machine.

### **Transmedia**

As media engagement moved from community to individual experience, it now moves back to community-level engagement with media. New media allows audiences to be a participant in their community- such as at a seminar, while also connecting with a broader community- like Facebook. Individualized media like smartphones provide the opportunity to share communal experiences with a hand picked community of the

world through instant and portable media interaction. Henry Jenkins' book *Convergence Culture* explains the meaning of transmedia through a discussion of the "relationship between media convergence, participatory culture, [and] collective intelligence" (Jenkins, 2008, p.2). Jenkins' main point hinges on the idea that, contrary to what some say, new media does not replace old media, it simply creates the opportunity for convergence of the mediums. According to Jenkins, "convergence represents a cultural shift as consumers are encouraged to seek out new information and make connections among dispersed media content," which then allows for "the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behavior of media audiences who will go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they want" (Jenkins, 2008, p.2).

As managing media becomes a larger task, and information becomes widely accessible and available, Jenkins says that "convergence occurs within the brains of individual consumers and through their social interactions with others...None of us can know everything; each of us knows something; and we can put the pieces together if we pool our resources and combine our skills" (Jenkins, 2008, p.4). These conversations in turn allow consumers and producers to "interact with each other according to a new set of rules that none of us fully understands" (Jenkins, 2008, p.3). Jenkins elaborates on this convergence conversation idea, as well as his point that old media will not replace new media with the thought that "if the digital revolution paradigm presumed that new media would displace old media, the emerging convergence paradigm assumes that old

and new media will interact in ever more complex ways" (Jenkins, 2008, p. 6).

Transmedia centers around a larger narrative of the culture, event, or organization that is being represented through mediums. A large contributor to this idea of a greater narrative has been the fan fiction movement that is found in franchise-level stories like *Star Wars* and comic book heroes. Transmedia also serves as an easily identifiable way to explain the transmedia narrative, as "this new 'franchise' system actively encourages viewers to pursue their interests in media content across various transmission channels, to be alert to the potential for new experiences offered by these various tie-ins" (Jenkins, 2003, p.284). In fact, this engagement from viewers is what drives transmedia to expand, and is what producers rely upon when engaging a transmedia narrative, as Jenkins points out:

For this synergy-based strategy to be successful, media audiences must not simply buy an isolated product or experience, but rather, must buy into a prolonged relationship with a particular narrative universe, which is rich enough and complex enough to sustain their interest over time and thus motivate a succession of consumer choices. (Jenkins, 2003, p.284)

This extended interaction with a product requires consumers to be increasingly media savvy. In fact, "if media convergence is to become a viable corporate strategy, it will be because consumers have learned new ways to interact with media content" (Jenkins, 2003, p.286). Actually, this comfort with media from the audience has allowed the transmedia narrative to become popular without the audience taking much notice;

and “that technologies might go unremarked is a major aspect of pervasive and ubiquitous digital media...They are technologies of the gap that nudge users and consumers into new modes of practice without them noticing” (Coyne, 2010, p.73). The narrative-building acts as a reinforcement of the product, and allows fans to work within a story realm. But it does require a knowledge of the product, just as it requires knowledge of the mediums:

The products that are emerging within this new media culture, then, are more complex in their reliance on back story and foreshadowing, more dependent on the audience’s familiarity with character history, more open to serialization, genre-mixing, cross-overs between different fictional universes, and more playful in their reliance on in-joke reference or spoofing of other media content.

(Jenkins, 2003, p.291)

Transmedia specifically builds upon one medium- whether that be a music festival, a movie, or a comic book- and adds in any other form of media: video games, books, mobile phone applications, toys- products that will inspire the customer to engage with the narrative, and interact with the media. While transmedia was traditionally more of an engagement initiative among movies, video games, etc., it has become more widespread and widely defined as an everyday encounter between life, media, and branding. Print media, QR codes, and smartphones, music and movies, and video games and comic books as combinations all make sense to the consumer.

Building a transmedia narrative has grown in popularity, as “fans respond to this

situation of an increasingly privatized culture by applying the traditional practices of a folk culture to mass culture, treating film or television as if it offered them raw materials for telling their own stories and resources for forging their own communities” (Jenkins, 2003, p.288).

The idea of transmedia, though, begs a differentiation between transmedia production and a marketing campaign. That is where the unique content comes in. Populating a Twitter or Facebook feed with quotes from the movie is not the same as having a Twitter page where the author (whether fan or employee) embodies a character from a movie and interacts with others that way, creating unique dialogue through their conversations (Saito, 2010, IFC.com). In contrast to a marketing campaign, which will blast the same information across platforms, an integral part of the concept of transmedia is that the content is usually unique from medium to medium. As Richard Coyne says in his book *The Tuning of Place*:

Media are not incidental to the messages they transmit, nor are they interchangeable...Media do not immediately replace one another, or become obsolete, as if the world is on the way to a convergent, invisible, all-encompassing cyberspace matrix or pervasive media blur...Media such as books, paintings, televisions, films, computers, portable DVD players and cell phones interact and influence one another through a process Bolter describes as ‘re-mediation’. (Coyne, 2010, p.xxi, xxii)

Unique content across mediums also refers back to the idea that new media now builds upon older media rather than replacing it- there is no longer a dichotomy, but a conversation, where transmedia storytelling can take place.

### **Interactive**

An important factor in transmedia festivals is the integration of interactive media. This can range from an interactive art exhibit to projecting a Twitter stream. The Center for Future Civic Media (CFCM) in Massachusetts defines civic media as “any form of communication that strengthens the social bonds within a community or creates a strong sense of civic engagement among its residents” (<http://civic.mit.edu/about>, 2010). The CFCM focuses most of their research on the integration of personal media into the democratic political system, but on a larger level, it discusses the normalization of interactive media into larger society. This integration of interactive media is a major factor into why music festivals are adapting an interactive transmedia narrative for their programming- organizers recognize, and consumers demand this element as it has become naturalized into our environments.

In the same way, the Convergence Culture Consortium (C3), also in Massachusetts, “explores the ways the business landscape is changing in response to the growing integration of content and brands across media platforms and the increasingly prominent roles that consumers are playing in shaping the flow of media” (<http://www.convergenceculture.org/>, 2010). C3 works with companies such as the Royal Shakespeare company, the Entertainment Software Association, and the World

Economic Forum to “provide insights into new ways to relate to consumers, manage brands, and develop engaging experiences, strategies to cut through an increasingly cluttered media environment and benefit from emerging cultural and technological trends” (<http://www.convergenceculture.org/>, 2010). The consortium takes the concept of media integration and turns it into a consumer trend, which is what the music festivals that integrate such programming are doing as well: offering individualized, interactive consumer content as a part of a festival.

Festivals are integrating this transmedia programming because of the pervasive nature of interactive personal media devices such as smart phones and tablets. The use of these devices during festivals allows attendees and those at home to position themselves within the community of that festival:

Pervasive mass-media devices are clearly complicit in a kind of temporal tuning, abetted by schedules, whether coordinating activities to bring people to the same place at the same time, allowing people to report to each other on events at which not everyone is present, or even working out how to avoid certain people and events. (Coyne, 2010, p.83)

Just as tweeting about an event might act as digital documentation for the person who sent the tweet, someone reading that tweet now has a report of what is going on at the event. Both participants in that media become audience members of the festival, regardless of their physical attendance, because “devices do not regulate and coordinate, but coordination occurs through the subtle, sophisticated, and emerging tuning

practices by which people deploy various means to affirm their sociability” (Coyne, 2010, p.86). This use of interactive media at festivals engages the audience and expands the scope of experience for the festival.

## **Festival**

### **Music Festivals**

The beginnings of what we now think of as music festivals are often cited at 1969’s Woodstock, and the veritable explosion of more festivals around the country in the following thirty-two years, but music festivals have a long history in the United States (<http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/woodstock-music-festival-concludes>). Music festivals as we know them began in this country in the mid-19th century, with classical and jazz music featured, and grew steadily in the hundred years between the humble start of yearly a summer festival in Worcester, Massachusetts, and the thousands dancing to rock and roll just 200 miles and a hundred years away in New York (“Music Festivals,” Dictionary of American History, 2003; Woodstock music festival concludes, March 16, 2011).

Many music festivals originally began as a place for city symphonies to have a place to play music in the summer, such as The Berkshire Festival, which continues today as the Tanglewood Music Festival, and is the summer home of the Boston Symphony (“Berkshire Festival, The Columbia Encyclopedia, 2008; “The history of tanglewood,” Boston Symphony Orchestra, March 16, 2011). By the time Woodstock brought hundreds of thousands out to make music festival history, music festivals had a

place in history on their own. The growth in the number of festivals over the last thirty-two years is an extension of the institution of music festivals. It is notable that festivals, while expensive and time-consuming to put on, are generally quite steady in recurrences. This can be attributed to the “the importance of the festival as a source of community identity and community development” (Delamere, 2008, p.130). This community identity can be a created through a celebration of the established local culture, or can be a created community culture of the attendees:

Many festivals clearly exhibit both local and global facets. If initiated by local managers and entrepreneurs and if they are successful, they rapidly encounter the global as they search for sponsors among international corporations and for audiences and participants from throughout the world. If there is an attempt to create an `international event' from the outset, local pride and entrepreneurship rapidly become important elements in influencing the character of the festival and its achievements. The local and the global are more often than not closely linked. (Waterman, 1998, p. 69)

Whether it is on a local or global level, Waterman points out that a festival cultural will quickly gather the attention of brands looking to attract the festival’s audience.

While community investment is an important factor in local support of festivals, it is often corporate funding that allows a festival to continue to expand its programming and lifetime. Aspen music festival, in Colorado, and the Newport Jazz Festival, in Rhode Island, two of the older festivals in the United States, openly use

corporate sponsorship. Aspen Music Festival, founded in 1949, has an “official” wine, water, and piano company as sponsors of their festival, and offers a variety of sponsorship packages on their website (<http://www.aspenmusicfestival.com>, March 16, 2011). And “in the 1970s, the Newport Jazz Festival pioneered the involvement of corporate sponsorship with music festivals. Working with brands including Schlitz and KOOL cigarettes, the Newport Jazz Festival was presented under various names utilizing a title sponsorship in conjunction with the Newport Jazz Festival brand” (Gennari, (2006), p. 246).

This can be financially a great move for festivals, but often raises concerns in festival-goers, “for diehard music fans, the increasing corporate presence in live music has sparked fears that bands themselves are becoming branded” (Balakrishnan, 2006). This has caused a dichotomy in music festivals, where some fests have “rejected big-brand sponsorship and try to promote local businesses. Many see such events as the future of live music” (Balakrishnan, 2006). These festivals claim that corporate sponsorship is a fad, and will not necessarily allow festivals to stay in business.

Corporate sponsorship could become a long-term solution to funding concerns, because of its ability to benefit both the festival and the corporation. Corporations are using festival branding placement as a new marketing tool, in a world where their target audiences can fast forward through commercials. The brand exposure that they get from a sponsorship of a festival can be innumerable to a company- and become

synonymous with a culture, such as the Vans Warped tour has made Vans shoes synonymous with skating culture.

Festivals are traditionally location-based as well as music-based. But centering a festival community can mean placing it in a remote area that allows the audience to remove themselves from reality and focus on the music; or conversely it can mean placing a festival schedule within a bustling city with its own food and nightlife to offer and support festival activities. Noise Pop and MidPoint music festivals are examples of venue-based festivals that are set in cities that offer their own culture for communities to experience. Both festivals started out with just one or two venues, and have grown over time to now include over twenty venues throughout their respective cities of San Francisco and Cincinnati. This venue-based model allows festivals growing room- there are always more venues to be added. It also provides the food, drink, and cultural infrastructure of the festival, releasing that burden from the organizers, adding a tourism aspect to the festival for a draw from out of towners, and a sense of ownership for those who live within the city limits.

Destination festivals are those that place themselves outside of traditional concert venues, and normally last over a period of a weekend. The costs and planning of these festivals are significantly larger- organizers need to build stages, bring in vendors for food and drink, bathrooms, and places for people to stay if the location is very far away, such as Coachella, in Indio, California. These festivals also create their own

unique culture and communities that return every year, which establishes a greater event buzz around the event.

Festivals have grown out of a desire for music in the summer- and while the traditional festival season is still summertime, there are now festivals happening year round in the United States. The format and programming of music festivals varies from event to event, but the main idea continues to be to come together to listen to music.

### **Transmedia Festivals**

Festivals are increasingly adding transmedia components, whether it is to intentionally broaden dialogue across mediums, or to incorporate industry changes. As musical artist Conan Neutron says, “the best festivals around are the ones where the organizers are willing to go out on a limb and try something untested or a little risky” (McGuirk & Pruett, 2004, p.348).

Often, festivals will supplement their main medium with content from other mediums in order to expand upon a theme or focus for the festival:

In addition to offering opera performances and concerts of musical selections culled from both early and baroque periods, the Bloomington Early Music Festival has been known to show films about the kind of music featured during the weekend. In 2002, Henry Purcell's semi-opera *King Arthur* was staged and the award-winning film *Nine German Arias: An Urban Baroque Film* was shown.

(McGuirk & Pruett, 2004, p.39)

The Bloomington Early Music Festival shows films as an educational supplement to the music being played, because only so much can be gleaned from pre-show curtain speeches and program guides. The festival organizers appreciate the extended learning and knowledge a film can provide to their audience, no matter how much background they have in early music such as baroque.

Festivals have also begun to incorporate various media as a response to the changing way in which we all interact with media, and the way that a particular industry is now incorporating media into content. Some, like South by Southwest, are now just as well known for their new content as their former single media content. The twenty-five year old festival, based in Austin, Texas, added film and interactive media content in 1994, each of which now have their own conferences with individual audiences. Coachella music festival, held in Indio, California, added independent film screenings “in 2000 by way of the Coachella Independent Film Festival. The film festival, which celebrated its seventh year in 2007, attracts 20,000 concertgoers and showcases shorts, music videos, documentaries, animation, feature films, and concert and performance footage” (Smith, 2008, p. 111).

Other festivals were envisioned as multi-media from the start, and have become cultural celebrations through their many media venues. The Cinema Arts Houston festival, which began in 2009, was “conceived as a multimedia arts event, surrounding its films with live performances, installations, and outdoor projections” (Zimmerman, 2010). It was heralded as a modern success because of its ability to explore “the

interstices between the arts, commercial cinema, and public media cultures, the program was both eye-opening and heterogeneous, combining narrative, documentary, experimental, performance, and installation film” (Zimmerman, 2010). This extension of a narrative throughout a festival is exactly the reason why transmedia festivals are becoming so popular, and received so well.

Music festival favorite “Lollapalooza also succeeded in blurring cultural lines. Nonmusical acts that have performed or appeared at the festival include the Shaolin Monks, virtual reality games, [and] open-microphone or poetry readings” (Smith, 2008, p.227). Another long-running festival, “Bumbershoot is not strictly a music festival; it celebrates all aspects of artistic expression from dance to poetry to the visual arts...This is a great place to explore sculpture, film, books, and handcrafted clothing” (McGuirk & Pruett, 2004, p. 325). These two festivals, set in Chicago, Illinois, and Seattle, Washington, do not highlight their other mediums as brightly as other transmedia festivals, but the multi-media aspect contributes to the experience of the festival, aiding in the festival narrative throughout each day.

Media-focused festivals serve the function of thinking forward in the industry that they represent. As the industries and cultures that surround them begin to take part in the convergence conversation, the festivals follow suit. Becoming a transmedia festival takes resources and ingenuity, but it allows the festival to broaden its scope, audience, and meaning.

## **Chapter Three: Case Studies**

### **Introduction**

For the purposes of this research project, a specific study of music festivals who are employing transmedia programming was necessary. Case studies allowed the project to build upon the current research on the foundational elements of media, transmedia development, interactive media uses, music festivals and the emergences of transmedia festivals. With that foundation, case studies document current trends in the field of transmedia music festivals, and to connect with festival organizers to find out what is driving a move towards transmedia festivals. Three festivals were studied: MidPoint Music Festival in Cincinnati, Ohio, Treasure Island Music Festival in San Francisco, California, and South by Southwest in Austin, Texas. The case studies documented the histories of each festival, transmedia elements used in programming currently, how and why those elements emerged, and audience reaction and uses of the transmedia narrative of the festivals.

### **Midpoint Music Festival**

MidPoint Music Festival (MPMF) was started in 2002 as an independent music festival and industry conference. In addition to hundreds of local, national, and international bands that play at over twenty venues over four days, the festival also hosts several seminars for members of the music industry and related arts showcases such as poster shows and film screenings (<http://mpmf.com>).

From 2002-2007, the music festival was independently organized and run by local musicians Bill Donabedien and Sean Rhiney. Those six years saw a steady growth in the festival in audience attendance, band interest, and venue use. MidPoint was not only independently run, it also had a strict exclusion of bands already signed to a label, as Donabedien and Rhiney wanted the festival to be for emerging acts (<http://mpmf.com>).

In 2008, the festival was acquired by local alternative weekly newspaper *CityBeat*. The new organizer, Dan McCabe, set in motion a three year plan to expand the festival to a national level. In the first year under new ownership, the festival featured local label showcases for the first time. 2009 brought an extension of the festival as MidPoint started the MPMF Indie Summer Series, a free concert series featuring MidPoint bands (local and national) in the downtown Fountain Square every Friday from June through August. In 2009, the festival also featured Twitter integration for the first time. Tweets were live broadcast in several venues throughout the city, and in 2010, a live map of where tweets were coming from was added (<http://topicdesign.com/what/mpmf>). Also in 2010, the festival contracted with local bus agency Metro to provide a bus route through the downtown area, providing free or low-cost travel between most of the festival venues.

The music programming in 2010 ranged from new local talent to internationally known acts like Caribou, but the festival focused on bringing current sounds to the Cincinnati area. Integrated media like art and film are closely tied to this theme: also in

2010, the festival featured the MidPoint Poster Expo, which displayed contemporary concert posters from local design houses, a photo exhibition in the downtown library that showcased photography from local concerts, and, also at the library, four documentary screenings that focus on the Cincinnati music scene (<http://mpmf.com>). The integration of art and music continues in the venue choice: throughout the 2010 summer concert series, showcase concerts were performed at the Contemporary Art Center, which also served as a venue for the festival weekend.

Dan McCabe, the executive producer of MidPoint, took over programming duties for the festival in 2008. McCabe says that the 2010 festival was “a culmination of what I thought we could do three years ago with what it was... and this is it, this is the year that we've been slowly steering the ship towards,” which includes national and local acts and local support in the form of both increased audience attendance and sponsorship (Rhiney 2010).

The festival's transmedia programming is an ongoing effort. In addition to the music, McCabe has been trying to engage a film component:

I tried very hard to give someone ownership of a film component and I found the local film community very factioned and I could not hand it over and have someone run with it so we don't have a parallel component. It's something that interests me because I think there are a lot of parallels in people building their films and having them seen just like musicians want to be heard. (Rhiney 2010)

One effort that has been more successful is social media integration. McCabe admits that the social media is a result of MidPoint's partnership with creative design agency TopicDesign, who has been "advising me on all those social media fronts. I'm 45, they're holding my hand. They also developed our web site. That's a product of my friends being savvier than me, and me being savvy enough to listen to them" (Rhiney 2010).

In their work with MPMF, TopicDesign focuses on the community aspect that social media can bring to a multiple venue festival like MidPoint. For the 2009 festival, the agency added [live.mpmf.com](http://live.mpmf.com) in the week before the festival in an effort to build a community throughout the city-wide festival:

As a last minute effort to further integrate social media and leverage the blossoming MPMF community, Topic developed a real-time peer-to-peer communication platform that fused Tweets, texts and posts into one dedicated feed and presented them at <http://live.mpmf.com>. The site was produced, from idea to launch, inside of one week. (<http://topicdesign.com/what/mpmf>)

The extension of [live.mpmf.com](http://live.mpmf.com) to the actual venues of the festival, especially the aptly branded TopicDesign tent at Grammars, was an addition in 2010. The site itself, and the graphics at the venues, was expanded from text only to integrate location-based messaging that showed where in the city (and which venues), tweets and texts were coming from. This website and the venue integration allowed festival goers to establish

community with one another, as well as create a digital documentation of the festival, which is still available online.

TopicDesign also created an interactive schedule on the MPMF website for 2010, which allowed users to compile a personalized schedule for the weekend, and made choosing from over 200 bands and twenty venues less of a daunting task.

MPMF in 2010 also saw the new support of the Fine Arts Fund (FAF) in Cincinnati, who brought in “bands to play on all the Metro buses. We'll have MPMF performers unplugged on the back of buses for an event they have planned. I love the fact that they see an avenue with MidPoint and want to get involved. I think that's a hopeful tipping point” (Rhiney 2010). McCabe is very encouraged by the Fine Arts Funds support, because it defines “art as more than just a symphony and the ballet- that its local music scene could be considered precious and worth nurturing as are these other art forms” (Rhiney 2010). The FAF support also shows how sponsors can find ownership within an event, through support of a specific aspect of the festival.

FAF's mobile stage was an extension of the idea that the music of MidPoint had infiltrated the city of Cincinnati for the weekend, and that music was one aspect of an art-filled Cincinnati, as festival goers listened to music while travelling from a concert in a gallery to the poster art show at the public library, to the social-media infused TopicDesign tent in the backyard of a bar. For MidPoint, transmedia is about transporting community throughout the city as music, art and media happen throughout Cincinnati.

## **Treasure Island Music Festival**

The Treasure Island Music Festival (TIMF) was started in 2007 by Noise Pop Industries as an early fall festival to complement their early spring festival, Noise Pop (<http://www.treasureislandmusicfestival.com>). It is a two-day destination festival set on Treasure Island in the San Francisco Bay. In addition to music, TIMF also provides activities such as a carnival, a craft tent, food and art vendors, art installations, and a Ferris wheel. In four years, Treasure Island has, through meticulous planning, a continuous caravan of shuttle buses from the parking lots to the island, and a variety of music, proven itself to be a fan favorite.

Since its inception, each day of the festival has had its own style of music. Saturday tends towards DJs and dance-happy ravers; the 2010 festival featured Miike Snow, LCD Soundsystem, and DeadMau5. Sunday features more indie rock bands, such as this year's She & Him, The National, and Belle & Sebastian. This allows the festival to appeal to a wider music appreciation audience, and gives attendees the opportunity to choose between the days for around sixty dollars each, or buy a two-day pass for about one hundred dollars.

The Treasure Island Festival always offers some sort of alternative programming for listeners who need a break from the over twenty-five bands that play over the weekend. In 2010 it was a side-show carnival, a Ferris wheel, completed by “confessional” sessions where riders could share secrets to a camera crew while riding,

and craft and sponsor tents. Alternative to live music, local DJs spun beats all day in the Silent Disco area, sponsored by Vitamin Water.

On an interactive level, the audience can engage and document through using the hashtag (#timf) on Twitter, working on one of the many free crafts in the craft tent- this year featured pirate eye patches and beer koozies, checking out one of the Bloggie video cameras from the Sony tent, or contributing to a community graffiti wall.

Dawson Ludwig, the marketing director at Noise Pop, says that the festival's transmedia aspects are "designed to really captivate the audience" while they attend Treasure Island (D.Ludwig, personal communication, April 7, 2011). TIMF is located on the island, and, as Ludwig states:

We have people there for twelve hours, and unless they really love music, we understand that it's a little unheard of to listen to music for twelve hours straight- although we certainly can. So, it alleviates people...But there are a lot of things that just appeal to a broader audience. The idea is to approach things with a shotgun approach rather than a very specific genre or specific demographic. We can bring people in because they like Girl Talk, but then when they find out that they can ride a Ferris wheel while they listen to Girl Talk, that's a much better sell. (D.Ludwig, personal communication, April 7, 2011)

In this way, Treasure Island's transmedia approach is very similar to its music approach: to appeal to a wide audience. TIMF's destination status on the island is also a factor.

Because attendees cannot go in and out of the venue, the festival must provide ways for

the audience to engage in various ways while at the site. As Ludwig points out when talking about popular DJ Girl Talk, the festival desires to present a unique music experience: not only can attendees see and hear new and favorite bands, but they can do so while riding a Ferris wheel, or making a pirate eye patch.

In comparison, the organization's other festival, Noise Pop, uses transmedia to connect the festival. Noise Pop is an event-based festival that happens over several days at over 20 venues in the city of San Francisco in February. Noise Pop has a dedicated film component that is housed in a rented theater during the festival, but Ludwig points out that for Noise Pop, the addition of a film component in 2007 was not a "marketing ploy," but rather "a platform for us to experiment and try new things" that has been successful for the following four years (D.Ludwig, personal communication, April 7, 2011). This dedicated, or separated, film component is still only a component of a larger music festival, but it works to enhance the music that is presented over the weekend. For example, the 2011 Noise Pop festival featured documentaries on both bands and venues- from a documentary about the past bands of Noise Pop and their performances at the festivals, to a film chronicling the (now closed) famous McCarren pool venue in Brooklyn, NY (<http://2011.noisepop.com>). These films bring a new point of view to the bands and the venues that house them, as audiences see the music careers that started in the venues they've been in all weekend, or see the histories of venues they have only heard about or seen in concert footage on YouTube.

For TIMF, the inclusion of transmedia is an innovative and strong marketing point that is audience-driven. Ludwig points out that the target demographic for TIMF, ages eighteen to twenty-four, has “a pretty wide spectrum of interests. So art really is something that is a stimulus to the music as well. It acts to be an aesthetic...kids are not exclusively interested in music, they are interested in music, and film, and food, so we are trying to give them a well-rounded experience” (D.Ludwig, personal communication, April 7, 2011). But Ludwig also discussed the potential to overwhelm the audience with choices. In particular, he saw Coachella start big:

In their early years, 2000-2001, they had a lot of art installations, a lot of things that were arguably distracting to the music and I noticed in about 2007-2008 they started streamlining. They had less art installations, and less activities. They are definitely keeping a lot of components, but I think they are cutting back a little bit, which I think is wise, because you don't want to overwhelm people with too many options. (D.Ludwig, personal communication, April 7, 2011)

The interactive, social, transmedia at TIMF, Ludwig says, is slowly switching from a Facebook emphasis to one on Twitter. But regardless:

People are on their phones constantly checking Facebook personally, and if we can get in their stream... it helps keep things going, and people tend to appreciate it because it's a little reminder. It also gives fans a place to have a dialogue about their experience, which is incredibly important not only because it

makes them feel like they're part of something, but it gets them talking about the festival. (D.Ludwig, personal communication, April 7, 2011)

The 2010 Treasure Island Festival featured a couple of unique interactive transmedia events that were sponsored by large name-brand organizations. The Sony tent featured computers that had Internet access and a DJ hero demonstration, and festival attendees could also check out small video cameras called "bloggies," to document their personal experience at the festival. When the video cameras were returned, they were plugged into laptops and automatically uploaded to the Internet.

Vitamin Water sponsored the Silent Disco stage at the festival. Attendees entered a sectioned off piece of the festival footprint, and were given wireless headphones at the entrance. Local DJs played music from a traditional DJ booth, but only those wearing the headphones could hear the music. When asked about these brand-sponsored transmedia events, and whether the sponsorship was instigated by the festival or the corporations, Ludwig said:

With Vitamin Water, they came along with that idea to us, and it was just a perfect fit. It's something that I know they were doing in New York, and they kind of latched on to the idea and turned it into a mobile thing- they've done Vitamin Water Silent Disco other places, too. So it was a really great space for it, and just a really great fit...They're definitely looking to expand their brand- not only their demographic, as far as trying to reach our target audience, which is 18-24, but also it gets people talking about it, too. No one says "silent disco" when

they talk to us about it, they say the “Vitamin Water Silent Disco,” which means it was an incredibly effective campaign. (D.Ludwig, personal communication, April 7, 2011)

Brand sponsorship of transmedia programming has been an emerging trend in festival programming, and it seems that, just as the festivals know it appeals to and is demanded by audiences, brands favored by the festival target audiences, such as Vitamin Water, also recognize the need to integrate their brand into desired optional programming.

### **South by Southwest**

South by Southwest began in 1987, founded by Louis Black, Nick Barbaro, Roland Swenson and Louis Meyers (<http://sxsw.com>). The four friends were cinema students at the University of Texas, Austin, and ran the local media scene paper, *The Austin Chronicle*, which was well known for having a listing of the music events in town. Although they studied film, the students thought that music would have a better crowd for an event like a festival, and they wanted to put Austin on the map for music. Black, Barbaro and Swenson continue to run both the festival and the Chronicle, twenty-five years later.

The festival, meant to be a gathering place to celebrate the unique music scene of Austin, was immediately a hit, with 700 attendees in the first year (<http://sxsw.com/about>). In the immediately following years, SXSW garnered national and international interest “due to many Austin and American bands finding their first

success in Europe,” and the desire by labels to seek out other acts in Austin (<http://sxsw.com/about>). In the first, music-only years, the festival was a series of showcases of local bands, with parties so that bands and label representatives could network.

In 1994, South by Southwest added film and interactive components to the lineup. The focus of the film component is “on assisting the new independent filmmaker [to] learn the real ins and outs of the industry," and then giving the emerging filmmakers a platform at which to show their finished product (Shein, 2000, p. 31). Therefore, the new film element of South by Southwest, “included a film segment that featured both a festival to showcase films and a conference to incorporate panels and workshops about film-making" (Shein, 2000, p.20).

The interactive aspect of South by Southwest focuses on new media that is "designed to focus on the creative side of interactive media... [and] addresses a wide range of topics related to the high-tech industry” (Shein, 2000, p.20). This interactive track, as well as the film track, have taken on their own lives separately from the South by Southwest music festival, and “make sure that no aspect of the media is left untouched" (McGuirk & Pruett, 2004, p. 380).

The interactive conference mirrors the other two aspects, and acts as a conference within the larger festival. It features traditional new media conference aspects such as panels with industry experts, demo showcases of new products, keynote addresses, and a trade show. Alongside these aspects are more unique SXSW features

such as the Accelerator competition, sponsored by Microsoft BizMark, in which upcoming products in the new media world are showcased and judged by a panel and the audience. Also included in the interactive new media conference is ScreenBurn, a place for the video game industry to congregate. More than just video games, "ScreenBurn connects independent developers, publishers, consumers, digital media professionals, and Internet trend-setters and taste-makers from all around the world who attend SXSW" (<http://sxsw.com/screenburn>).

As the three sections of the festival have continued for the past fifteen years, they often have overlap. The film festival added a panel on digital film-making in 2000, "to address the current and possible future effects of digital technology on cinema" (Shein, 2000, p.35). This also had applicability to the interactive conference, because with the digitization of film, online sharing and editing of film has become readily available and popular. In 2011, SXSW added a few events that didn't relate directly to any of the three conferences to join the three varied segments and the broad audience of the festival together more cohesively. As festival co-founder Louis Black says:

The most amazing thing about this year is the symbiotic relationship between film, and new media, and music, which has been there since 1994, but it's really coming together...the symbiotic relationship between those groups has become incredible...Bringing the three of them together is inevitable, it's not even [just] our mission, it's what's happening. (Singer, 2010)

Black reflected on the fact that the overlapping events, which SXSW created intentionally, reflect a greater trend in mass culture.

SXSW added comedy shows, held throughout all three portions of the conference, that were open to any pass holders. The comedy aspect of SXSW features a variety of comedians in settings that “include live tapings of top comedy podcasts and special stand-up showcases in the heart of downtown Austin” (<http://sxsw.com/comedy>). Roland Swenson, one of the founders of SXSW, says that comedy represents the festival because “great comics are masters of live performance, the best story-tellers and pioneers in new media” (McCarthy, 2011). For South by Southwest, comedy is relevant enough to all aspects of the festival to be open to all badge holders, can be a great way to disengage from information overload, and network across the three components of SXSW.

To add an interactive experience for attendees and non-attendees alike, SXSW ranges from streaming sessions online to establishing SXSsocial, a social networking website for registered attendees. For those who couldn't attend the festival in 2011, there were several sponsored streaming options. The official South by Southwest YouTube channel was constantly updated with live video, and more has been added since the festival concluded (<http://www.youtube.com/sxsw>). Video content ranges from interviews with musicians, film makers, actors, and new media specialists, to compiled video from music showcases and film trailers. National Public Radio streamed the audio of several music performances every day, and PepsiCo streamed video of the

keynote talks from the Interactive conference

([http://sxsw.com/node/6932?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+SXSWnews+%28SXSW+News%29](http://sxsw.com/node/6932?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+SXSWnews+%28SXSW+News%29)). These streaming options allowed those who couldn't attend, or had conflicting sessions, to keep up with the content of SXSW.

For attendees, the SXSocial site offered the opportunity to sync to their LinkedIn and Facebook contacts to find other colleagues that would be attending, upload information for their access badges, and sign up for swag (<http://sxsocial.sxsw.com>). Leading up to the festival, SXSocial is used to find other attendees, book hotel accommodations through the housing desk, and plan an individualized schedule through the interactive schedule page. During the festival, SXSocial can be used to follow up with connections attendees make during sessions by searching for other badge holders, and users can link to other social networking sites so that connections can continue post-festival.

Many components of South by Southwest were provided by sponsors. The festival worked with iTunes and SHOUTcast to create a preview playlist of a few of the more than 2000 bands that played the music festival in 2011 (<http://www.shoutcast.com/radio/SXSW>). The iTunes playlist could be accessed through the SXSW website, and downloaded through the iTunes store to a home computer or other iTunes-equipped device. SHOUTcasts' playlists were available for streaming through their website, and acted as more of a streaming radio station than an

on-demand playlist. iTunes followed up the pre-festival playlist by selling singles of the live performances from featured artists during SXSW.

During the festival, the best way to keep up with scheduling changes was through the Event Updates SXSW blog, which updated about ten times a day during the 2011 conference ([http://sxsw.com/home/news/event\\_updates](http://sxsw.com/home/news/event_updates)). The SXSW GO mobile application also allowed attendees to stay up to date. The mobile application allowed users to create a personalized schedule, view the tradeshow layout, and see a map of all events (<http://sxsw.com/node/6469/?>).

The SXSW website highlighted specifically new aspects of the 2011 festival, with button navigation on each page for the YouTube channel, the iTunes live playlist, the mobile phone app, technology summit, comedy shows, StyleX, the hiring hub provided by Monster.com, and the ShoutCast streaming playlist. The Style X, pronounced “style by,” was presented in conjunction by Joah’s Ark FC+ and SXSW, and was “a new fashion event that celebrates the long-standing relationship between music and style. Style By: Emerging Fashion from Around the World [was] a two-day showcase of what's next in fashion” (<http://sxsw.com/stylex>).

The hiring hub, presented by monster.com “features unique job openings at organizations at SXSW 2011 as well as other uniquely situated companies” (<http://sxsw.com/hiringhub>). It is available to the public through sxsw.com, and allows organizations to post up to ten free open positions that are active for thirty days (<http://sxsw.com/hiringhub>).

Overall, the 2011 festival featured new events that presented more of a conference atmosphere where music, film and interactive minds could all meet together and learn about how to succeed in the future. Opportunities like the SxSaloon, festival-wide accelerator competitions and official SXSW music showcases that were open to all badge holders, allowed even outsiders to each industry to see what's next in music, film and interactive media (<http://sxsw.com/about>). Louis Black says that the central idea of the festival has always been “if an artist or a creator knows about the business or the law, and things like that, then they have the most control over their work,” the more knowledge emerging and current industry professionals have about any industry, the more successful they can be (Singer, 2010).

## **Chapter Five: Conclusion**

### **Summary**

Recent technological advances and the resulting influence on society and consumer behaviors allows leisure entertainment to incorporate interactive media into its programming. This interactive media can range from social networking engagement to participatory or exhibition visual art, and engages audiences beyond a model of observation-only events. The addition of media to traditionally non-mediated events creates new content that contributes to what Henry Jenkins calls a ‘transmedia narrative,’ where each new piece of mediated content contributes to “a prolonged relationship with a particular narrative universe, which is rich enough and complex enough to sustain [audience] interest over time” (Jenkins, 2003, p. 284). This transmedia narrative is especially intriguing when combined with music festivals, a leisure activity that, in the past, has been attractive because of the bands who perform, but is becoming increasingly popular for new additions to programming such as film, visual art, and new media.

Music festivals in their current model are often traced back to Woodstock in 1969, and the format did not change much for twenty-five years. The transmedia festival can be sourced to South by Southwest, which incorporated film and new media conferences into their music festival in 1994 (<http://sxsw.com/about>). In the next twenty-five years, more festivals, such as Treasure Island Music festival and MidPoint Music Festival, were started, and quickly incorporated transmedia elements into their

programming in an effort to broaden their scope, audience, and significance

(<http://www.treasureislandmusicfestival.com>; <http://mpmf.com>).

The practical application of a transmedia narrative can be difficult to grasp, and so it is through this study that the specific idea of a music festival's transmedia narrative is explored. In music festivals, the shift towards transmedia programming is largely consumer driven. Dawson Ludwig, the marketing director at Treasure Island Music Festival, says that the festival's target demographic, people aged eighteen to twenty-four, is very comfortable with using media, and "are not exclusively interested in music...so we are trying to give them a well-rounded experience" (D.Ludwig, personal communication, April 7, 2011). Ludwig also mentions that his audience expects to have other things to do besides music while at the festival, which is a two day destination festival on Treasure Island in the San Francisco Bay: "we have people there for twelve hours, and...we understand that it's a little unheard of to listen to music for twelve hours straight" (D.Ludwig, personal communication, April 7, 2011). While for Ludwig, the transmedia programming may be a way to keep customers happy, for corporate sponsors, a transmedia element may be the way to get audience attention.

In Cincinnati, Ohio, the MidPoint Music Festival happens for four days every September. The venue-based festival can be overwhelming: with over twenty venues and 200 bands, so Topic Design, a MidPoint sponsor and creative design agency, set up a tent in one of the outdoor venues that projected the live, map-based Twitter feed of the hashtag for the festival (#mpmf)

([http://mpmf.com/news/2011/02/15/still\\_breaking\\_ground\\_at\\_10](http://mpmf.com/news/2011/02/15/still_breaking_ground_at_10)). From this venue, festival attendees saw what others around them and around the city were tweeting about the festival. TopicDesign's sponsorship sets apart the venue as different from the other twenty, and the bands that play there as unique from the other 200.

At South by Southwest, the music, film, and interactive media festival in Austin, Texas, corporate brands sponsor multiple programs of the festival. Specifically, Microsoft BizMark sponsors the Accelerator competition, which features upcoming products across all film, new media, and music, and uses a jury and audience feedback to select the best new products for each media track

(<http://sxsw.com/interactive/accelerator>). This event, which is one of a growing number of events that is open to all badge holders, unites festival goers, and gives them something a little more interactive to attend than the normal showcases, panels, and keynotes.

## **Trends**

### **Corporate Sponsorship**

Treasure Island Music Festival was approached in 2010 by Vitamin Water, who wanted to host a Silent Disco. Festival goers could enter a separate area of the festival and put on provided headphones to listen to local DJs play music that was broadcast over radio waves to the headphones in the otherwise silent area. Dawson Ludwig applauded Vitamin Water's initiative, saying, "It was a really great space for it, and just a really great fit [for the festival]...No one says 'silent disco' when they talk to us about it,

they say the “Vitamin Water Silent Disco” (D. Ludwig, personal communication, April 7, 2011). Corporately sponsored events at music festivals allow the opportunity to host transmedia programming without putting out the expense, and allows the sponsoring organization to gain brand recognition through an unique experience provided to the audience.

### **Umbrella Organizations**

Just as corporate sponsorship gives festivals the financial opportunity to expand into transmedia programming, the ownership of an umbrella organization can afford festivals the chance to move beyond music. Treasure Island Music Festival (TIMF) is a part of Noise Pop Industries, and is jointly produced by Another Planet Entertainment. This addition in staffing to work the event, the ability to split the costs between two organizations, and a wider volunteer and general audience base allows for some insurance in success for the festival. MidPoint Music Festival (MPMF) is owned by *CityBeat*, a weekly paper in Cincinnati, and allows for essentially “free” publicity and again, a built-in audience base for the festival, and access to the many organizations that advertise with the newspaper as potential sponsors for the event. South by Southwest (SXSW) is a large enough organization to support itself- but it also has ties to a weekly newspaper, *The Austin Chronicle*, which is run by two of the co-founders and presidents of SXSW. The twenty-five year tradition of the festival also allows for sponsors who have been around for a few years to acknowledge the successful brand awareness created during the festival, and grow to a larger sponsor, potentially to fund

their own transmedia activity. These larger organizations support the music festival as a whole, and allow them to branch out to supplementary transmedia programming through the security they provide.

### **Social Media Integration**

Transmedia programming can extend beyond the time and place of the festival, and allow the organization to create an audience that is not physically there. All three case study festivals use social media integration to sustain community surrounding and throughout their events. South by Southwest created a social networking site, SXsocial to allow attendees to keep up to date on performances and other opportunities at the festival, interact with other ticket holders, and create an individualized schedule to share with other audience members (<http://sxsocial.sxsw.com>). Treasure Island Music Festival uses Facebook integration to announce line ups, receive audience feedback, and in the off-festival season, announce one-off shows produced by Noise Pop Industries. MidPoint also uses Facebook during the off season to announce one-off shows, and to build audience interest in the festival. In addition, Midpoint has an interactive schedule on their website so that attendees can work their way through the many venues and performances over the festival weekend.

During the festival, South by Southwest uses its blog, Event Updates, available through an RSS feed, and connected to the main website, [sxsw.com](http://sxsw.com), to keep attendees up to date on changes in scheduling, weather, and ticket sell-outs. Treasure Island and MidPoint use similar blogging platforms connected to their websites so that attendees

have a quick spot to check for news. The blogs, and links to other social media like Twitter, allow attendees to know what's going on before they arrive, or while they are at another venue. MPMF's twitter stream especially keeps ticket holders informed about other venues during the festival. These instantly available updates not only provide information, but can dispel *misinformation*, and prevent crowds from gathering and getting frustrated with delayed or sold out shows.

Post-festival, SXSW has a YouTube channel that collects music performances, interviews and film trailers, MPMF keeps a record of their tweets at [live.mpmf.com](http://live.mpmf.com), and TIMF uploads photos to their website (<http://youtube.com/sxsw>; <http://www.treasureislandmusicfestival.com>). These media integrations continue the community of the festival well beyond the life of the actual festival days, create a documentation of what happened, and build strength in the community that was formed during the events, creating repeat customers. The community aspect of social media integration into transmedia is a great tool for marketing, information, documentation, and dialogue amongst audiences. A study of these three festivals has confirmed the idea that music festivals have moved beyond the music. Whether it be art installations, film screenings or Twitter streams, the future of festivals is in an integrated format.

### **Future Trends**

Trends in transmedia music festivals emerged slowly over the last twenty years, and are now established as expected from audiences, as Dawson Ludwig said. In the

future, it can be anticipated that music festivals might follow the lead of South by Southwest, and become an all-around media festival, rather than branding themselves as music-only, when in reality they provide many types of programming. Another trend that will continue is the partnerships between outside organizational and corporate sponsorship of transmedia elements. Whether it is through the housing of a venue, such as the School for the Performing Arts in Cincinnati just announced it will be at 2011's MidPoint, or a continuation of product tie-in with brands like Vitamin Water and Sony, collaboration with outside entities will allow festivals to expand programming and audiences ([http://mpmf.com/news/2011/05/18/scpa\\_partners\\_with\\_mpmf\\_as\\_2011\\_venue\\_vitamin\\_water\\_returns\\_as\\_sponsor](http://mpmf.com/news/2011/05/18/scpa_partners_with_mpmf_as_2011_venue_vitamin_water_returns_as_sponsor)). Organizers and audiences alike can look for new ways to interact with festival programming that will reflect shifts in media usage in the wider culture overall. The ingenuity and creativity that a transmedia narrative allows for will see input from many: technology sectors, festival organizers, outside brands, and the festival attendees.

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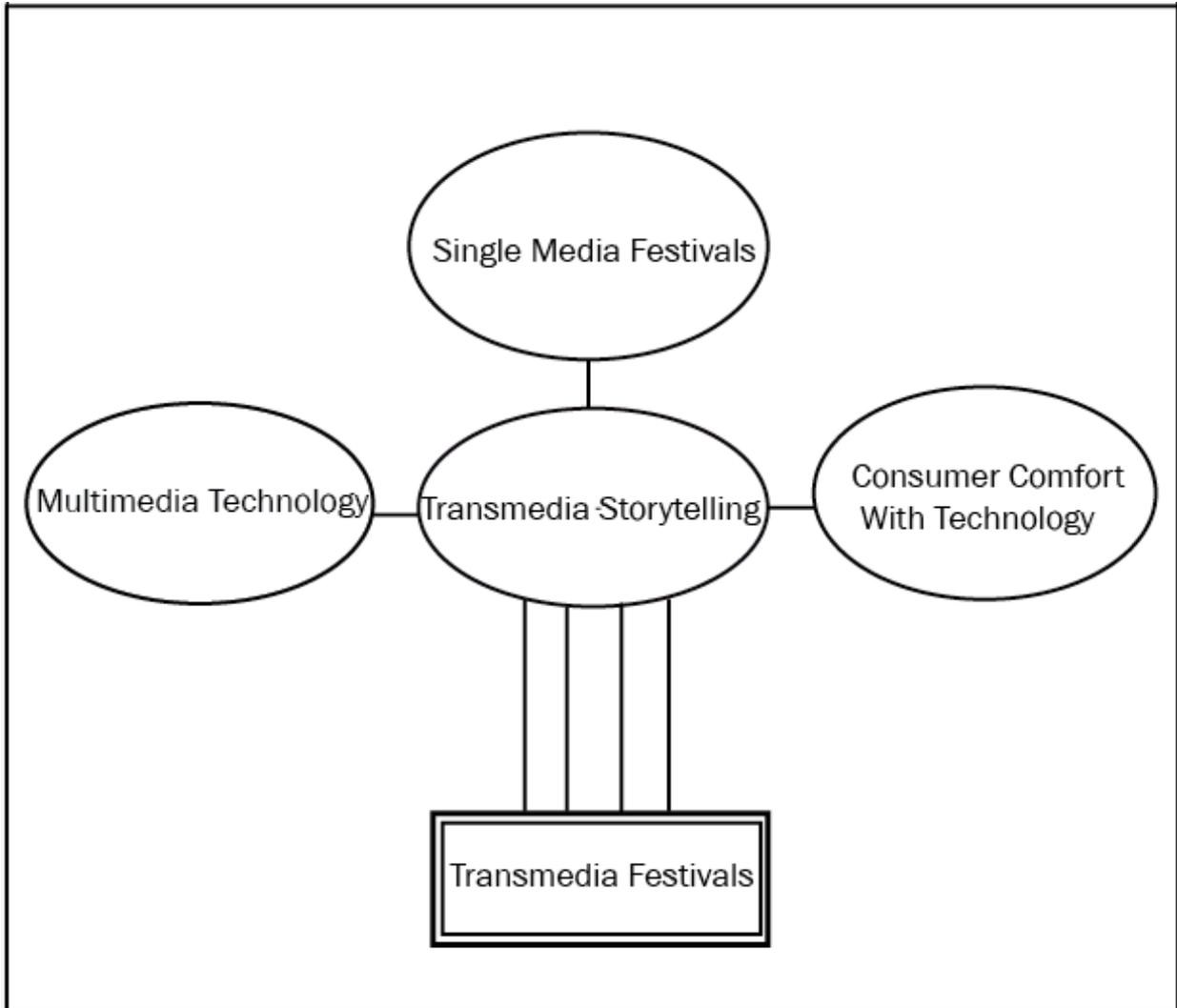
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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Visual Conceptual Framework



## **Appendix B: Sample Recruitment Scripts**

### “Transmedia Music Festivals” phone script (Alyssa Fisher)

Hello, my name is Alyssa Fisher, and I am a master’s student at the University of Oregon, based in the School of Architecture and Allied Arts, specifically in Arts Administration. For my master’s project, I am researching the emerging trend of the inclusion of multiple mediums in music festivals in the United States. I’d like to invite you to participate in the project by allowing me to interview you about your background and experience with transmedia programming.

The interview will take approximately one hour and with your permission will be audio-recorded. After the initial interview, it is possible I will contact you with follow-up questions, either over the phone or over email (according to your preference and availability). I will use this interview alongside those of other festival planners to document the trend of transmedia festivals. I may include information from this interview in lectures in an academic setting. It will also be included in academic publications, such as journal articles and potentially a book.

Participation in my project is entirely voluntary, and should you be willing to be part of the project I will send you the consent forms in the mail.

### “Transmedia Music Festivals” email invitation (Alyssa Fisher)

Hello, \_\_\_\_\_ - I am a master’s student at the University of Oregon, based in the School of Architecture and Allied Arts, specifically in Arts Administration. For my master’s project, I am researching the emerging trend of the inclusion of multiple mediums in music festivals in the United States. I’d like to invite you to participate in the project by allowing me to interview you (via phone, or in person) about your background and experience with transmedia programming.

The interview will take approximately one hour and with your permission will be audio-recorded. After the initial interview, it is possible I will contact you with follow-up questions, either over the phone or over email (according to your preference and availability). I will use this interview alongside those of other festival planners to document the trend of transmedia festivals. I may include information from this interview in lectures in an academic setting. It will also be included in academic publications, such as journal articles and potentially a book.

Participation in my project is entirely voluntary, and should you be willing to be part of the project I will send you the consent forms in the mail.

Thank you,

Alyssa Fisher

Masters Candidate, 2011

Arts Administration, University of Oregon

(407) 952-1631, anf@uoregon.edu

## **Appendix C: Sample Interview Script**

1. What is your background with music festivals?
2. Where do you currently work?
3. How have you noticed transmedia programming integrated into other music festivals? Is this a change from single-media programming? (specific examples)
4. What transmedia elements have you specifically included in the festivals you have planned?
5. Did this inclusion have a specific purpose, like to extend the reach/narrative of a specific band or theme of the year?
6. How have you seen customers/festival attendees interact with transmedia programming?
7. Do you consider transmedia programming to be a “given” in the current industry?
8. Do you think that transmedia use in everyday life is contributing to its inclusion in specialized events like music festivals?

## **Appendix D: Sample Consent Form**

### **CONSENT FORM**

**Title of Project:** Crossing the Transmedia Frontier: The growing trend of transmedia in music festivals in the United States.

**Investigator:** Alyssa Fisher is a master's student in the Arts and Administration program. She received her bachelors in communication arts in 2008 from Gordon College in Massachusetts. She has worked in event planning and music festival planning since 2006. She is the sole researcher on this project, which studies the inclusion of transmedia, or multiple mediums in music festivals in the United States. I can be reached via email at anf@uoregon.edu, via phone at (407) 952-1631, and via U.S. mail at 1480 High Street, Eugene, OR 97401.

**Invitation to Participate:** You are invited to participate in an interview about your background and experience with music festival planning and specifically your experience with programming multiple mediums to a single medium festival. The interview will take approximately one hour and with your permission will be audio-taped. I will use this interview alongside those of other festival planners to document the trend of transmedia festivals. I may include information from this interview in lectures in an academic setting. It will also be included in academic publications, such as journal articles and potentially a book. It is possible that I will contact you after the initial interview with follow-up questions, either over the phone or via email (according to your preference and schedule).

**I agree for this interview to be audio recorded** \_\_\_\_\_ **(initial)**

**Your words :** I may refer to something you say or include a direct quote in a publication I write on this topic. Please specify how you would prefer to be identified. I grant you permission to: (please check appropriate lines)

\_\_\_\_\_ use my real name as follows \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ use only my first name as follows \_\_\_\_\_

I will deposit my audio recordings in a personal archive after I have completed my research. Please indicate any and all restrictions you would like placed on audio recordings from my research in which you appear:

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I assure you that I will respect your requests, and that I will do everything possible to maintain your confidentiality as specified by you above.

**Participation is voluntary:** Participation in this research is voluntary. You may discontinue participation at any time and refuse to answer any questions that you feel are inappropriate or make you feel uncomfortable. You will not be asked to divulge any confidential information. If you participate in an interview and later change your mind about being included in lectures or publications, please inform me, and I will not use any data that I have collected from you. I will also destroy any recordings of the interview upon your request.

**Benefits:** Your participation will contribute to research in your industry field, synthesis of an emerging trend, and could produce innovative ideas for you regarding inclusion of transmedia aspects to the festival that you plan. It will also help to document this emerging trend in your industry field, and benefit the general populace through this information.

**Risks:** Questions regarding the your past planning experience could reproduce past

feelings of anxiety or stress, or produce new similar feelings because of the inherent stress and anxiety of planning such a large scale event. I will minimize the occurrence of these feelings by talking about larger general trends rather than the specific process of bringing a transmedia aspect to a festival. The interview will not incur any legal, social, economic, or physical risks to you. Should your participation make you feel excessively uncomfortable in any way, you may stop the interview, and discontinue participation in the research.

**Your Rights:** Before the interview, I will explain this form and ask you to sign it. By signing it, you grant me permission to use information gathered in academic presentations and publications. You will then be offered a copy of this document. If you have questions about your rights or feel that your rights as a participant in this research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact the University of Oregon Office for Protection of Human Subjects, Riverfront Research Park, 1600 Millrace Drive, Suite 105, 5237 University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403-5237, (541) 346-2510 (phone), (541) 346-6224 (fax)

Your signature indicates that you have read and understand the information provided above, that you willingly agree to participate, that you may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation at no risk to yourself, that you have received a copy of this form, and that you are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies.

**Participant's Name (please print)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Investigator's Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_