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The Art Of Immersion: How The Digital Generation Is Remaking Hollywood, Madison Avenue, And The Way We Tell Stories



Synopsis

"A broad and deep look at how electronic media are changing storytelling" — Completely fascinating." — Booklist, starred review
Not long ago we were spectators, passive consumers of mass media. Now, on YouTube and blogs and Facebook and Twitter, we are media. No longer content in our traditional role as couch potatoes, we approach television shows, movies, even advertising as invitations to participate — as experiences to immerse ourselves in at will. Frank Rose introduces us to the people who are reshaping media for a two-way world, changing how we play, how we communicate, and how we think.

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Customer Reviews

Love it. Comprehensive, insightful, packed full of historical information, case studies and first hand interviews with ground breakers that put transmedia in perspective. It's not evangelical and throughout the book the author considers the extent to which different digital media can truly converge - video games, feature films, television, advertising, social media. I've bought it as a gift

for colleagues in the traditional media business transitioning to transmedia/multiplatform.

It is a very interesting book, where the author explores the different paths of creating stories in the new media environment. I found very enlightening the description on how the "participatory" audience co-creates the story using the planned non-linearity and fragments, therefore ending with one story playing differently on different media platforms. Highly recommended.

I would recommend this to anyone studying media -particularly if the focus is on new media. This was an extremely helpful read in preparation for my thesis.

Some stories have way too much detail on how a media project was conceived and executed. otherwise, a great read.

Frank explains the new world of possible physical = digital = immersion. He is an interpreter writ large. Worth the read.

How is pop culture changing ? Our world is blending so much with fiction. This book examines how the levels of immersions are changing

Rose's new book, *The Art of Immersion*, provides an interesting behind-the-scenes look into the conception, creation, and promotion of many products of popular media from Christopher Nolan's film *The Dark Knight* to Xbox's *Halo*; from George Lucas' *Star Wars* suite to the Nine Inch Nails' album *Year Zero*; from ABC's *Lost* to Evan Williams' sites *Blogger* and *Twitter*. Yet for all of its contemporary pop culture references and social media anecdotes, *The Art of Immersion* feels quite dated. His thesis ("A new type of narrative is emerging--one that's sold through many media at once in a way that's non-linear, that's participatory and often gamelike, and that's designed above all to be immersive.") is obvious to even the most technologically un-savvy reader. Nearly everyone, from Topeka, Kansas to Tokyo, Japan has understood that intuitively (if not explicitly) for 10 years. I enjoyed reading the first few chapters in which Rose discusses the transformation of media and the creation of increasingly immersive worlds through the advancement of the technology, content and delivery method of newer forms of media. Rose outlines a rough sketch from the invention of the printing press and moveable type to the advent of the motion picture to the seductive glow of the living room television to the immersive and participatory "deep media" of the Internet. Yet as I

continued to read, I kept waiting for the book to "start". Each new chapter felt like a slight regurgitation of the one before it; each felt like an introduction to the theme, yet the book never fully developed the theme. True to his subtitle, Rose answered *How the Digital Generation Is Remaking Hollywood, Madison Avenue, and the Way we Tell Stories*. But each chapter begs the questions: WHY? What effect does this have on our culture? Are there any positive or negative consequences? What can we expect for the future of media? Etc. Rose's point that media has changed to be more immersive is obvious and could have been articulated clearly in an introduction. I hoped he would go deeper. *The Art of Immersion* is interesting at points and offers its readers great tidbits about their favorite television shows, films, music, and websites. But it left this reader wanting more.

Remember the more simple times when you would lay down and close your eyes for bed as your guardian would act out the lines of a book like a play. Your imagination would grow with each special adjective the author carefully selected in order to keep you entranced in the spell-binding events that were unfolding. As a child it was so easy to let your mind drift away and place yourself among the characters in the novel. It was these moments that allowed you to win the World Series or solve the mystery of the missing vase, all while you stayed in the comfort of your own bed. This type of immersion is what Frank Rose describes in his book, *The Art of Immersion*. Rose talks about how readers strive for this immersion, how readers love to be fully captured and enter into the book, movie, story, or article. He mentions that the best part of all is that this is becoming fully possible. Day in and day out the Internet is becoming more and more advanced, gaining users from all over the planet. This is creating a platform to tell all these narratives that have been around for years, but are just finding their home now. W.W. Norton described this immersion in a beautiful way by saying, "they are distinct in that they invite their readers into a virtual world, providing a door into fantasy rather than merely a window" (Lobo). Showing the full capability of what these narratives are doing. Throughout this novel Rose discusses the quake that has arisen in advertising and many forms of entertainment due to the boom in technology and what has followed, but is this a strong stance on new media? Rose first points out an idea of "deep media" early on in the book. Saying that it is "stories that are not just entertaining, but immersive, taking you deeper than an hour-long TV drama or a two-hour movie or a 30-second spot will permit" (Rose 13). This shows the change in media; how it went from an audience just watching to an audience that is involved. This is the soul of his main argument. This bond that media has created with its audience opens up a portal for a whole new

form of advertising. There are many examples of this like, *The Dark Knight* [being] preceded by *Why So Serious?*, an "alternate reality game" that played out over a 14-month period and engaged some 10 million people worldwide. (Rose 13). Or *Doctor Who*, which was followed by a four-episode video game. However, the biggest of all is the merchandise. Take a minute to think about all the profit that media has made off of shirts, posters, memorabilia, etc. In fact, the profit is so large that the companies that produce the media have adapted a style of not addressing many copyrights, because what it is doing is advertising for them and spreading their brand. Rose actually states this, when talking about Japan, by saying, "Yet commercial publishers show no inclination to send out their copyright attorneys and shut the markets down. Instead they've learned to look the other way, because they know that the fervor these fan-created manga generate can only lead to increased sales for everyone." (Rose 31). Although more sales can never be a bad outcome, can a company go too far with this? Rose dives into the idea of going too far with immersion through many examples. One of them being *Mr. Payback*. In this movie the audience was able to make choices based on popular vote. To say the least it failed miserably, and was made into a joke. A big misconception with new media is that it is making us, as people, stupid. Rose addresses this idea when talking about Carr's statement that new media "Swiss-cheeses our brains" by saying, "hyperlinks, and electronic media in general, do change the way we read and the way we think." (Rose 63). He agrees that it may in fact change the way we think. However, that is all it does. He concludes this argument by revisiting the times when people were scared that books would make us stupid by mentioning, "This is why, when books threatened to make us stupid 2,400 years ago, we responded not by abandoning books but by redefining "stupid." I suspect we'll do the same with Google." (Rose 63). All of this goes to show Rose's stance on deep media. He believes it is a very powerful tool but can be taken too far, but is he correct in assuming this? Personally, I believe the ideas in this book were very exciting and engaging, and would recommend this book to all. Rose's ability to immerse the reader while talking about an audience being immersed was executed flawlessly. He creates a firm stance and provides a plethora of reasons and evidence to back up his arguments. Nonetheless, this does not mean his arguments cannot be taken with a grain of salt. Let us first dissect his first point that the deep media involves an audience to a vast extent, which creates a whole new form of advertising. I firmly believe that this argument is developed without a blemish. I believe this because I have lived

it. I have bought shirts, poster, memorabilia of my favorite movies and TV shows, which turn me into a walking billboard promoting my interest. And at the source of this all is the Internet. Hearing about shows through the Internet, then streaming the shows online, only to purchase inventory through an online retailer. There is no avoiding the idea that the Internet is media's perfect home. However, he does mention a few points in time where deep media has gone too far. To this I would say that these companies would never know if they did not try. How are they supposed to establish barriers of what and will not work without experimenting in society. His second argument which states that new media does not make people stupid is harder to dissect. He makes a very genuine point that it changes the way people think which can hardly be argued. Personally, I feel like Carr's idea is ridiculous and I think that is how Rose saw it as well. He does a fantastic job of brining up the counter argument that Carr makes, but sort of puts it off. This style of writing stresses unimportance, which I feel was a perfect way to shut down the aforementioned argument. I firmly believe that Rose did an utterly outstanding job with this piece of work. He brings attention to a subject that is widely used but not widely thought about. He discusses how the deep media and Internet combined forces to create a new, very powerful, advertising tool. He also discusses how this can be taken too far, but forgets to mention that we would not know what too far is without someone breaking these barriers. Finally, he addresses the fact that the new media is not making us stupid, and is just a more powerful second coming of books.

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