Chapter 6
Potential Applications of Transmedia Storytelling for Fostering SDG Awareness and Action

Jamie Neil Coles
ESCI-UPF, Spain

ABSTRACT

Transmedia storytelling is a method of reaching fandoms and communities by telling interconnected stories across different platforms and mediums, offering audiences a multitude of touchpoints through which to enter the story for a unique experience of how a narrative unfolds. This method of storytelling has been successfully employed by entertainment franchises such as Marvel, Star Wars, and Game of Thrones, but has also proven beneficial as marketing and even educational approaches. In this chapter, the author will discuss the foundations of transmedia storytelling and how such an approach could be used to better understanding and attitudes towards SDGs.

1. INTRODUCTION

"The medium is the message. This is merely to say that the personal and social consequences of any medium - that is, of any extension of ourselves - result from the new scale that is introduced into our affairs by each extension of ourselves, or by any new technology" (McLuhan, 1964, p. 7).

Within the dynamic landscape of global transition, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—a courageous and forward-thinking blueprint for a better tomorrow—hold a prominent position. Conceived in 2015, these seventeen intertwined ambitions bravely confront the planet's most acute trials: poverty, inequality, climate change, and environmental degradation, with a deadline set for 2030. As we collectively steer through the difficulties and challenges of this century, the call to activate these goals intensifies. Yet, imparting information about the SDGs to the connected masses, and fostering engagement with these crucial goals, poses considerable challenges. To cultivate a deeper comprehension and

global ownership, we need to employ inventive, creative and engaging communication strategies, such as transmedia storytelling—a technique that spins tales across multiple platforms, stimulates audience involvement in a participatory way, and nurtures a dynamic habitat for mutual learning and exploration.

Transmedia storytelling is not an alien concept in the domains of entertainment and marketing. For years, it has provided a potent approach to captivate audiences, immersing them in riveting narratives that span diverse media channels, in traditional media, new media on and offline. By exploiting the distinctive advantages of each platform, transmedia storytelling has the capacity to craft a unified and mesmerizing experience that resonates with people from all life paths. In the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals' landscape, such storytelling could ignite collective curiosity, inspire action, and ultimately, catalyze profound transformation.

This chapter delves into the intellectual infrastructure of transmedia storytelling and explores and discusses its potential to champion the SDGs. It examines the core principles of this storytelling approach, informed by thought leaders in media and transmedia theory, such as Henry Jenkins and Marsha Kinder. It also scrutinizes unique challenges and opportunities the SDGs introduce, exploring how transmedia storytelling can tackle the intricacy and interconnectedness of these global objectives.

Case studies will demonstrate successful instances where transmedia storytelling has been employed and how lessons from those cases could be used to promote the SDGs, pinpointing areas requiring enhancement and further innovation. The role of transmedia storytelling in fostering empathy and comprehension, stimulating individuals to act within their spheres of influence, is explored. Additionally, the potential of this storytelling form to cultivate a global community rallying around the SDGs, powered by social media platforms and digital technologies, is discussed.

The efficacy of transmedia storytelling in advancing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals hinges on a strategic and thoughtful application of its principles. The chapter discusses the significance of collaboration and audience-centric design in learning from producers, marketers and franchises to develop transmedia campaigns for the SDGs, exploring how storytelling can be fine-tuned to meet the distinct needs and preferences of diverse audiences, fostering increased engagement and impact. Moreover, it deliberates ethical considerations of transmedia storytelling in the context of the SDGs, addressing pertinent issues like representation, cultural sensitivity, and authenticity.

Ultimately, this chapter seeks to augment the expanding body of research around transmedia storytelling and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. By combining insights from theory and practice, it offers a holistic and nuanced launchpad for transmedia storytelling to function as a formidable instrument for communication, engagement, and social transformation.

2. THE CHALLENGES OF LINEAR STORYTELLING?

Navigating the labyrinth of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—a tangled network of 17 goals aiming to confront global adversities and cultivate a sustainable future—is no mean feat. The task of effectively conveying the essence of the SDGs becomes an uphill battle, and the traditional storytelling methods reveal their limitations more starkly when grappling with the complexities embedded in these goals. The stumbling blocks traditional storytelling encounters spring from a plethora of sources, including the varied interests and apprehensions of audiences, the wide spectrum of familiarity with the SDGs, and the uphill task of making abstract notions tangible and relatable.

17 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:
www.igi-global.com/chapter/potential-applications-of-transmedia-storytelling-for-fostering-sdg-awareness-and-action/333938

Related Content

Foreign Direct Investments, Corporate Social Responsibility, and Economic Development: Exploring the Relationship and Mitigating the Expectation Gaps
James O. Odia (2019). *Corporate Social Responsibility: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications (pp. 250-273).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/foreign-direct-investments-corporate-social-responsibility-and-economic-development/206960

The Role of Governance Attributes in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Practices Evidence From Jordan
Hamzeh Adel Al Amosh (2022). *Research Anthology on Developing Socially Responsible Businesses (pp. 1229-1253).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/the-role-of-governance-attributes-in-corporate-social-responsibility-csr-practices-evidence-from-jordan/302321

The Social Role of Human Resources Teachers: Human Resource Management
Agustin Galan Garciaand Roberto Fernandez Villarino (2019). *Corporate Social Responsibility: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications (pp. 1433-1443).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/the-social-role-of-human-resources-teachers/207024

Audiovisual Storytelling Approaches in the Marketing of Luxury Clothing Brands
Álvaro Jiménez Sánchezand María Rosa Frontera Sánchez (2020). *Management and Inter/Intra Organizational Relationships in the Textile and Apparel Industry (pp. 263-283).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/audiovisual-storytelling-approaches-in-the-marketing-of-luxury-clothing-brands/245140

Corporate Social Responsibility: The Comparison of Scientific Production in Web of Science and in Scopus Over the Last Three Decades (1988-2018)
Luciana Aparecida Barbieri da Rosa, Maria Carolina Martins-Rodrigues, Tais Pentiado Godoy, Waleska Yone Yamakawa Zavatti Campos, Clandia Maffini Gomesand Larissa Cristina Barbieri (2020). *Conceptual and Theoretical Approaches to Corporate Social Responsibility, Entrepreneurial Orientation, and Financial Performance (pp. 49-75).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/corporate-social-responsibility/249952