Film Websites: A Transmedia Archaeology

Kim Louise Walden

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Abstract

Websites have become a familiar feature of contemporary cinema and they contribute to the overall audience experience. Yet as a hybrid of storytelling and marketing, they have often been seen as little more than promotional ephemera, and they have rarely been critically examined. Film websites are fragile, and their presence as artefacts to study is threatened by a range of commercial and cultural factors. Consequently, film websites have not been well preserved, and many disappear before they have been appraised. Through the development of a transmedia archaeological approach, this thesis establishes that film websites are worthy of consideration as a form of entertainment and as cultural artefacts in their own right. This thesis critically evaluates the film website and its cultural conditions from several perspectives.

As a form of transmedia - a term, an academic concept and a production practice that has evolved since the early twentieth century and this thesis sets out a way to understand the development of this important concept and draws on recent scholarship in the field to critically evaluate key ideas.

Through media archaeology, which is an emergent historiographical perspective. Some media archaeological propositions are developed into practical tools for the analysis of film websites. Whilst those propositions tend to draw on a tradition of materialist and technological viewpoints, in this thesis they are extended to include approaches that examine the audience experience.

As film website design has developed, formats have standardised and one convention to emerge is the in-movie story world website. A particular narrative trope (or, in media archaeological terms, *topoi)* is the ‘evil corporation’, which is common in science-fiction, western, and social commentary films, but takes on specific significance when the film website enables ludic and interactive forms of what has been described as ‘extended cinema’ (Atkinson, 2014a:16). Using ideas gleaned from world-building the ‘evil corporation’ topoi is analysed in some detail.

In archival settings where film websites are preserved, partially held, or lost. Through case studies where archival presence yields insight into the development of the film website form. Online awards provide a case in point as they valorise website design, and through their archives of annual winners, can be understood as a ‘shaper’ of practices, defining what film websites are, and may be in the future.

Importantly, it is found that archives don’t simply preserve artefacts. Embedded in film website fan bulletin boards are ‘traces’ of audience encounters with promotional campaigns. Qualitative analysis techniques are used to 'scrape' these locations and interpret the 'conversations' in an analytic manner to examine audience experiences of nostalgia for the future.

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Introduction

Over the last three decades, a considerable body of research has emerged about transmedia and much of it has focused on its novelty and innovative features. Scholarship has considered how *new* strategies for transmedia branding have shaped children's television; how transmedia storytelling has provided *new* forms of entertainment; how transmedia practices have required *new* modes of production; and how transmedia has generated *new* forms of marketing and promotion.

More recently there has been a move towards historicizing transmedia, as it is argued that transmedia may have been misunderstood to be the consequence of contemporary economic and technological circumstances when, in fact, it predates them and may represent continuity more than disruption (Pearson in Scolari, Bertetti and Freeman, 2014: vii). Historical studies have drawn parallels between contemporary transmedia practices and similar strategies seen at the start of the 20th century, like Ballyhoo film marketing, or the work of individuals like L. Frank Baum with his world of Oz (Scolari et al., 2014; Freeman, 2014a; Freeman, 2014b; Freeman, 2015; Freeman, 2016; Lyczba, 2012). While such parallels demonstrate that transmedia is not indeed a new phenomenon and provides a welcome corrective to the preoccupation with the new, these histories are not the only ones that need to be told.

This thesis is interested in a form of transmedia that emerged with the advent of the Internet- film websites, web-born cultural artefacts that have been developing unique ways of telling stories and have become an integral feature of the 21st century film experience. To date, film websites have been regarded as promotional ephemera or, as a hybrid of storytelling and marketing, with the result that they do not fit neatly fit into any one category. So, this is the issue: because film websites are regarded as ephemeral, they have scarcely been considered or critically examined within film studies to date. It is here that this research project's interests lie. This thesis aims to chart the development of the film website and considers three key research questions: firstly, where can historical websites be found? Secondly, what forms do film websites take? And finally, how do audiences engage with, and experience film websites?

The earliest film websites emerged around 1994, during a period when there were marked changes taking place in the industrial media landscape in response to the shifting economic and technical circumstances resulting from mergers, conglomeration and digitisation. These changes have been characterised by commentators and scholars as 'media convergence' which Meikle and Young define as 'the coming together of things that were previously separate' (2012:2). But in *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media*

Collide, Henry Jenkins warns that the problem with this concept is that much of the discussion circulating around it is preoccupied with technical convergence (Jenkins, 2006:15). He describes this as the 'black box fallacy' as it imagines a future, where all media content will be accessed through a single unit, when this is not the case, as different media continue to be produced and consumed as separate and distinct media platforms (Ibid.). Jenkins and others argue that it would be more accurate to say that media convergence has changed the relationships between different media platforms and the way content for these platforms is designed (Jenkins, 2006:15-16; Meikle and Young, 2012:81). Clearly convergent media technologies have amplified the scope and the scale of transmedia possibilities, which has led to new forms of entertainment. Specifically, Meikle and Young suggest that transmedia has tended to bring together content and marketing - 'the blurring of content types... into part of a *more complex presence*.' (2012:96) My italics.

It is in this '*more complex presence*' – content designed for marketing, and marketing that takes the form of content, where this thesis's interests reside. This research enquiry is concerned with a specific manifestation of transmedia – the film website that is designed to undertake both storytelling and marketing. Whilst other transmedia components like novelisations or games predate contemporary transmedia as we know it today, the website is a digital-born hybrid of content and promotion, storytelling and audience participation, and so exemplifies it. While it may seem counter-intuitive to elect to examine one component separately from the rest of the inter-related matrix of a transmedia set of artefacts, I propose that there is merit in taking this approach. In the face of convergence, media continue to exist as largely specific sets of media practices and indeed continue to be experienced by their audience likewise. Although, on the one hand to focus on film websites risks stripping them of their full meaning, on the other hand it enables closer scrutiny of this new artefact's aesthetics, styles and narrative forms. It enables the development of its features to be discerned over time, and lastly, it allows the researcher to identify specifically what the web platform contributes to transmedia artefacts. In this sense, the study aligns with the approach advocated by transmedia scholar, Matthew Freeman in the introduction to *The Routledge Companion to Transmedia Studies* (2018). To paraphrase Freeman, this approach is based on a belief that to understand the affordances of a comparatively new platform, we need to understand what it can *do* (Freeman et al. 2018, 6).

This enquiry arose out of a long-held fascination with film websites which can be traced back to my first encounter with the site for Richard Kelly's *Donnie Darko* (2001). Subsequently I presented a conference paper about this ground-breaking site titled, 'Have you seen the film? No, but I've been to the website' at the Cinema and Technology conference at the University of Lancashire in 2005, where I predicted that what we were seeing here was the beginnings of what I regarded as a 'new media ecology' (Walden, 2005). In the event, these ideas did not take root until several years later, when I decided

to research the history of film websites for my PhD, with the intention of mapping the emergence of the new form's aesthetics, styles and narrative techniques.

However, this research turned out to be more of a challenge than I had at first imagined. Initial searches online revealed that most campaigns for major studio releases simply vanished from the web once their job was done, although a few independent film websites could be located when the film they promoted had run through its release windows in cinema theatres and home viewing formats. Consequently, the focus of the research shifted at this point from an examination of website aesthetics to questions about <u>how</u> to undertake a historical study of these ephemeral digital artefacts. So, in addition to the main research questions about film websites, additional research questions emerged about which methodologies could be adopted to undertake what was becoming more akin to internet archaeology.

At first secondary sources like *Variety* and *The Hollywood Reporter*, together with marketing and promotion trade magazines such as *Advertising Age, Brand Week Campaign, ClickZ,* and *iMedia Connection* seem to provide an obvious starting point for the enquiry. All have online archives providing commentary on trends and developments in film marketing and promotion and could be used to piece together an understanding of the development of film websites. But reliance on secondary sources distanced the research from the artefacts themselves. As Michael Goddard succinctly puts it, my research interest lies in 'the things themselves rather than their cultural mediations, representations and interpretations' (2015:1772). In short, I wanted to examine these digital artefacts first-hand.

To begin the investigation, I needed to clearly define the object under consideration and undertake a review of literature in the field. Film websites contain a combination of promotion and narrative content, and, for the most part, they refer to the films they promote, so they can be regarded as a form of transmedia. So, Chapter 1 traces the development of the concept of transmedia and tracks its uses in academic literature. A media archaeological excavation of the term 'transmedia' using Google's NGram indicates the trajectory of the concept's uses and application over the last two decades. What this research revealed was that the word is rarely used on its own, and it is more often appended to a secondary term which indicates the way it is understood at different times and in different contexts with different practices. A key finding of this review was that the development of the concept is indicated by these appended terms. They include transmedia *intertextuality*; transmedia *storytelling*; transmedia *practices*; transmedia *audiences*; transmedia *memory*; transmedia *marketing and promotion*; transmedia *paratextuality*, and transmedia *history and archaeology*. These appended terms are used as a framework for the literature review and this history of the concept of transmedia is the thesis's first original contribution to knowledge.

By the end of this review, it becomes evident that the process of historicising transmedia has begun. However, while the focus of this historicisation to date has been to draw parallels between contemporary and early 20th-century transmedia practices, there has been less consideration of more recent transmedia history at the start of the digital age. This is the gap in historical accounts of transmedia and this is where my research can be located.

The first challenge of this enquiry was how to undertake research into web-based artefacts that are no longer available to view. So, methodological questions had to be addressed first, before the main research questions of the thesis could be answered. In Chapter 2, the thesis begins with a consideration of a collection of theoretical writings by media scholars who have, in recent years, been yoked together under the umbrella title of media archaeology. Together these writings provide the methodological principles that underpin the practical approaches developed to undertake the research in subsequent chapters. One of the key outcomes of this research project is a series of practical tools that have been honed to investigate web-born artefacts like film websites. Media archaeological writings have been adopted to guide to the enquiry and these theoretical writings have been adapted to undertake examinations. When no existing research techniques were available, tools had to be invented.

More specifically, theoretical writings about digital archives and internet memory have been adopted to guide the enquiry into where extant web sites may be preserved and the nature of their preservation. The concept of the topoi has been adopted to examine emerging formats and conventions for film websites. To establish and confirm that an aesthetic convention has emerged, a tool was invented to identify what is in the zeitgeist in the shape of a survey of listicles which produced a corpus for examination. A theoretical typology of imaginary world creation is adapted for use in a transmedia context and a model is proposed to facilitate transmedia analysis of film franchises.

The last methodological contribution to knowledge from the research emerged in response to the comparative lack of consideration given by existing media archaeological scholarship, as to how media are experienced by their audiences. So, this research project adapted a qualitative analysis technique to scrutinise what audiences wrote about their experiences online. My contention is that audiences leave ‘traces’ of their responses to media experiences on social media platforms and these sites constitute a new kind of archive that can be investigated. By so doing, I propose a cognitive form of media archaeology can be conceived. In sum then, this research project has developed a series of methodological tools that may have cross disciplinary application for undertaking historical research on the Internet and are offered up here as a contribution to knowledge.

The chapter considers where the research is positioned in relation to existing fields and disciplines. It deliberates the nature of the research’s disciplinarity and specifically the

relationship between transmedia studies and media archaeology to investigate the development of film websites from three viewpoints: what the two fields have in common; what's distinctive about the collision between transmedia scholarship and media archaeology; and why this combination of approaches was suited to the enquiry rather than relying on existing film studies approaches. The chapter recognises existing models of transmedia archaeology but asserts that this thesis develops a distinct approach of its own informed by media archaeological scholarship that facilitates new ways of thinking about transmedia artefacts like film websites.

Chapter 3 addresses the first research question: where are film websites collected, recorded and archived? It opens with a consideration of how archives and archivisation have been conceptualised by some of the key theorists on the field and this provides the conceptual underpinnings for the investigation of digital archives. What distinguishes web archives from analogue archives is considered, together with an account of how technical developments with the internet have shaped the development of web archives. In the light of these conceptual and technical underpinnings, a selection of archival settings are identified where film websites or records of film websites can be found. These include the *Internet Archive* which regards itself as a digital equivalent of a global library; *Digitalcraft.org* which is an online extension of a building-based craft museum in Frankfurt, Germany; *The Webby Awards* archive of its winners and nominees; and a new kind of archive made possible by Web 2.0 technologies – the *Movie Marketing Madness* blog that illustrates how archiving has become an everyday practice.

Each archive imparts new knowledge about the artefacts under consideration and as well as insight into their development. These findings form the core of this research project's original contribution to knowledge. Key findings are that the life span of film web sites – site 'biographies' if you will, can be calculated using the *Internet Archive's Wayback Machine* calendar; The German archival initiative, *Digitalcraft.org* demonstrates that digital artefacts are archived for different reasons and in different ways. For example, film websites are regarded not only as a form of transmedia, as it is in this thesis, but as digital craft too; the development of the film website from EPKs (Electronic Press Kits) to fully integrated transmedia sites; and lastly how the evolving web technologies have shaped engagement between producers and audiences through these sites.

As well as gaining new knowledge and understanding about film websites, it becomes evident that there is as much to learn from the research process, as from the artefact researched. The chapter concludes with a reflection on the implications of the web's facility to archive for the cultural memory at large, and points to the way research with a specific focus on film websites can have implications for understanding wider cultural issues. This research project brought into question about the web's capacity to record, preserve and conserve its own indigenous forms and it was discovered that archives are ephemeral too. Clearly the definition of what an archive is, or what function an archive can fulfil has to be

reconceptualised in an online context. The perils of ephemerality are situated amidst broader concerns about what has been referred to as the threat of a 'digital dark age' (Koehl in Walden, 2017:89).

Once the research has located archival settings where historical film websites can be found, Chapter 4 turns its attention to the second research question: what forms do film websites take? Now, film websites have become an integral feature of the film experience, their formats have become standardised and the most effective strategies have become conventions within digital film marketing. One feature which clearly illustrates this point is websites designed as story worlds for the films they promote. To address the second research question, this chapter examines the development of this genre of film websites.

Preliminary observations found one stylistic convention was websites designed as story worlds for the films they promote in the shape of in-fiction corporation websites. However, at this stage in the research, it was not clear whether this was just my own subjective observation or whether indeed this style had become a convention. To establish if this was the case, a methodological approach was developed which harnessed one of the web's most popular indigenous forms of writing – the listicle – a list–like form of journalism. A metadata search for listicles of filmic evil corporation fictional sites was undertaken and an aggregation of these listicles produced a corpus of 100 examples. This exercise confirmed that the evil corporation website story world has become a recognisable topos in film marketing and storytelling. This 'listicle strategy' is proposed as an original contribution to knowledge that may have cross-disciplinary application in Digital Humanities research.

From this corpus, a longitudinal study demonstrated the evolution of this new fictional form of transmedia web site. However, the tools available to undertake this analysis were only effective up to a point and were not able to model transmedia narrative, so a graphic tool was developed to represent how components like website story worlds relate to other aspects of the contemporary transmedia film experience and enables audiences to make sense of the transmedia story world of a film series or franchise. This model is a further outcome of the research project and may enable scholars interested in transmedia analysis. Here it is offered up as a contribution to knowledge from the project.

The few critical writings about film websites, to date tend to focus on how the online platform can be used to promote films and the aesthetic and narrational strategies developed to do this. But little consideration is given to audience experiences of these new forms, which prompts the third and final research question in this thesis: how do audiences engage with, and experience film websites? Media archaeological writings provide the underpinning to this research enquiry and proved fruitful. However, media archaeology has less to say about the human experience of media. Moreover, this conceptual oversight becomes problematic in a web 2.0 culture in which audiences

participate in shaping and engaging in the circulation of media. To address this shortcoming the final chapter of the thesis gives consideration to audience experiences and modes of engagement and proposes the development of a cognitive transmedia archaeology.

Chapter 5 considers *Tron*'s enduring place in the cultural imagination and explores how nostalgia provides the basis for the promotional campaign for the film's sequel, 30 years later. The chapter analyses the web-based promotional campaign as well as its manifestations in ARG (Alternative Reality Game) events, scavenger hunts and on social media too. What is particularly interesting about the campaign is the way it invited people to engage with it through the medium of the site's online discussion board where fans were able to participate in 'conversations' about their shared interest and it was these discussion boards that promised to provide a rich site for learning about audience experiences.

In this thesis I propose that discussion boards like this provide a new form of archive not in the conventional sense of a store of historical objects, but of audience utterances. I contend that on the site audiences leave 'traces' of themselves in the posts they write on discussion boards, which can be analysed for what they can tell us about their experiences, long after the film has left the cinema screens (Mathieu et al., 2016:295). From a transmedia archaeological perspective, this thesis suggests that these 'traces' are the material residue of audience experiences and engagements and form raw archaeological data for examination. In the event, more than 500 posts from the site's discussion boards were downloaded, tabulated and scrutinised, using qualitative analysis techniques to comprehend the audience experience of the promotional campaign. The application of qualitative analytical techniques to social media platforms in this case study may have value not only to media audience studies, but it may have cross-disciplinary application in any research setting where the analysis of online group communications is the goal.

These research findings provide a map of the experience of the promotional campaign over the weeks and months leading up to the theatrical release of the film and demonstrate how participants coalesced around the discussion boards and became an audience community. Over time their activities shift from predominantly interpretive discussions to undertaking textual performances themselves. One of the key findings was that the film website's social media platform, ostensibly designated for members of the public to write on, was also populated by individuals actively cultivating both nostalgia, and anticipation for the forthcoming film.

The marketing campaign was not able to generate these sentiments on its own and its cultivation of nostalgia needs to be understood in the wider context of games culture and the shifting regard for games in the intervening 30 years, as games moved from the alternative cultural margins to mainstream culture today. The reason for this nostalgia is

rooted in the fact that the campaign celebrates the foresight of a film that dared to imagine cyberspace, before it had been invented, as well as the prescience of the film's audience in championing both gaming and the film. This sentiment is the engine that drives the campaign and demonstrates the critical roles that film websites and their audiences can play in the ecology of franchise film marketing campaigns. It also serves as a model of transmedia archaeology in practice.

To summarise, the thesis proposes to examine the development of film websites over the early decades of the Internet. By so doing the thesis hopes to generate a contribution to knowledge in two ways: first, by creating an understanding of the development of film websites; and secondly, by developing a series of practical methodological tools and techniques to undertaking transmedia archaeology of web-born artefacts. At the end of the thesis, the conclusion summarises the research's empirical findings, as well as its theoretical implications. It goes on to consider the methodological implications of this work and makes recommendations for further study in this area. While this thesis can only begin the task of historicising the development of film websites, it does argue that film's online transmediations have grown to be a significant new dimension of the 21stcentury film experience. So, having provided a brief overview of how the thesis proceeds, the next task of this study is to explore what has already be written about transmedia to see how the literature in the field may bring the nature of the film website as a storytelling medium into clearer focus.

Chapter 1: A Review of Literature

1.1 In search of 'Transmedia'

This thesis is concerned with a new cultural artefact - the film website and the configurations it has taken over the last two decades. While it is now standard for most films to have a website for promotional purposes, the specific tendency I am interested in here is film websites that extend beyond promotion and contribute to the experience of film. When film websites contain 'content', they are regarded as a component of transmedia – which, in essence, is a strategy for the delivery of an entertaining experience via multiple platforms and formats. So, this thesis will begin by surveying how transmedia artefacts have been conceptualised and investigate what light these perspectives can bring to the understanding of an emerging artefact like the film website.
Tracing a concept back to its origins is a challenge, as neologisms like transmedia inevitably always come from somewhere else, and those concepts likewise derive from elsewhere too, until the scholar find themselves disappearing down an etymological rabbit hole. So, the first research question in this review of literature is, where to begin? This review sets out, as most searches do today, with a Google search engine. Not with its conventional search engine however, but with Google Ngram. NGram Viewer is an offshoot of the Google books programme that digitises books from university libraries. It enables a word or phrase to be searched for and creates a graph of usage in published sources from 1800-2010, so Ngram promises to provide a starting point for looking at some of the ways in which the term has been understood. (See Figure 1)

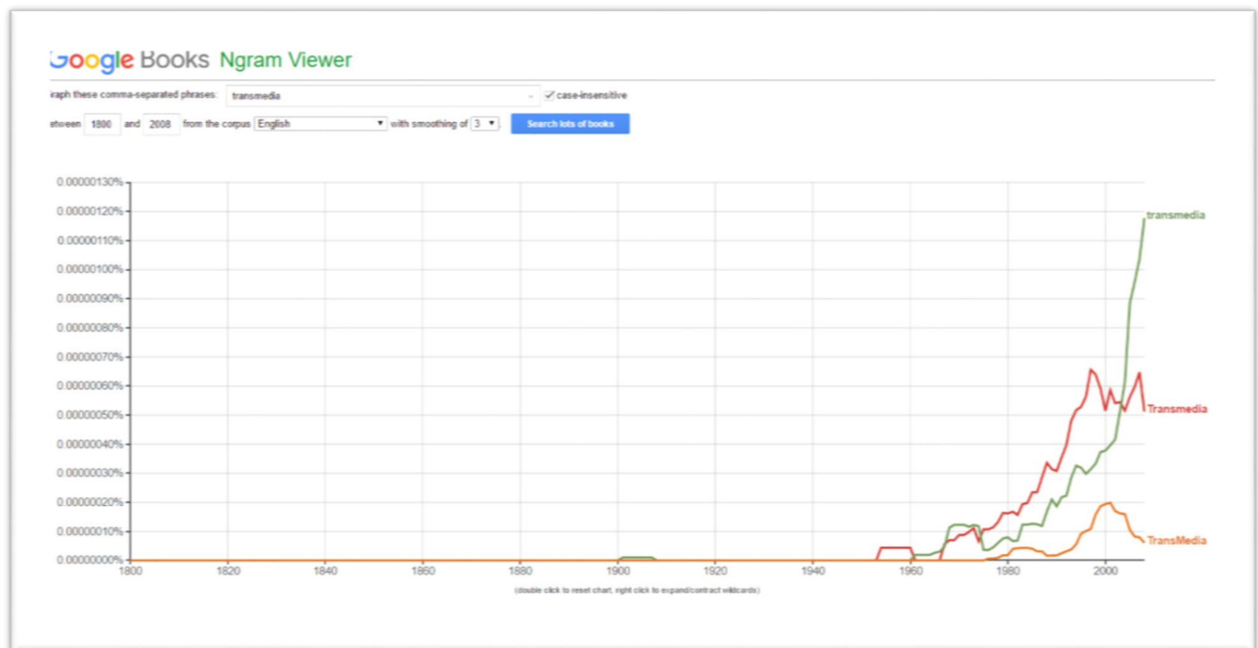

Figure 1. Google Books Ngram Viewer's charts appearances of the word 'transmedia' in publications. © Google, 2017.

NGram does not claim to be able to trace the etymological origins of the term, but it does show that the term, Transmedia can be traced back to 1900. Usage became more significant when, with a capital 'T' the term was employed as a trading name for media companies such as *Transmedia* Network Inc in 1943; *Transmedia* Marketing Corporation in 1972; and *Transmedia* Ltd – a film and video distribution company, set up in association with newsagent W.H. Smith in 1974, among others. However, when the parameters of the search are changed to 'transmedia', with a case insensitive 't', it shows how the word began to be used in the sense recognised by this thesis. In the 1970s the term can be found in *The Celluloid Curriculum: How to use Movies in the Classroom* referring to the adaptation of material from book to film (Maynard, 1971). That is to say, a text rewritten in a way that is appropriate to both production and reception in a different media form. In it, Maynard writes, 'Harper Lee's book is so popular in high school and reads so well that using the film is not really necessary. Even in a *transmedia* study the film is such an exact interpretation of the book that I would use it only for students with severe reading or motivational problems' (Maynard, 1971:94) (My italics).

Similarly, the term is used in *The Japanese Film: Art & Industry* by Joseph L. Anderson to refer to the way that adaptation across multiple media led to the formation of 'transmedia mega genres' (1982). Noel Carroll discusses the 'transmedia' nature of the horror genre in *The Philosophy of Horror, or Paradoxes of the Heart* (1990), whilst in a study about the TV courtroom drama *Perry Mason* titled *The Defence Never Rests: A Transmedia Poetics Approach* by James Dennis Bounds, the author describes how Perry Mason is adapted for different media including novels, film, TV, radio and comic strips (1994). This use of 'trans' in the media industry sense of cross media 'adaptation' refers to the migration of material across different platforms. However, while adaptation is evidently a form of transmedia, it is not the central concern of this thesis, so the examination of the search returns continues.

The Ngram Viewer illustrates how use of the term rose steadily during the 1990s and, by so doing, how the meaning of the word shifts. In *High Anxiety: Catastrophe, Scandal, Age and Comedy*, Patricia Mellencamp refers to 'transmedia oligopolies' to describe the conglomeration of media companies forming multi-media global corporations such as Time-Warner and Sony-Columbia-CBS in the 1980s and 1990s, and the impact of these structural changes in the industry in creating a 'franchise culture' characterised by product placement, licensing practices, branding, tie-ins, spin-offs, cross-overs and ancillary markets (1992:50). In *Playing with Power in Movies, Television and Video Games*, Marsha Kinder examines the consequences of the de-regulation of children's television at this time (1991). In the United States, the lifting of a ban on product-centred children's television programming saw toy manufacturers collaborate to create tie-in magazines, comics and TV programmes which function as extended commercials for brands like *My Little Pony*, *Care-Bears* and *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* (1991:40). Kinder argues that branded TV and their commodity tie-ins effectively blur the distinction between promotion and content.

She describes how this creates a 'commercial supersystem of transmedia intertextuality' conveying the idea of the fluid and dynamic movement of brands across different media from comics books, to games, to television, to movies (Kinder,1991:3; Kinder in Jenkins, 2015:261).

Like any tool, inevitably NGram has its limitations. For example, its search returns can indicate what has been published, but not how much impact any publication has (Zhang, 2015). But two points become apparent from reading the search returns from NGram of the earliest iterations of the term transmedia: firstly, once the word ceases to be used as a *title*, and begins to be used as a *word* in the 1990s, it is adopted to articulate the consequences of media convergence; secondly, the term transmedia is rarely used on its own, but is often qualified by a second term that describes what it applies to. This can be seen in Mellencamp's term 'transmedia oligopolies' which describes the restructuring of the media industries in the 1990s and specifically the mergers of media corporations, while Kinder uses the term 'transmedia intertextuality' to refer to branded television and its tie-in commodities.

It is not until 2003 that Henry Jenkins first uses the term 'transmedia storytelling' in an article in the MIT Review which rehearses the concept that he develops a few years later in *Convergence Culture: When Old and New Media Collide* (2006). In the literature review, we shall see the development of the terms 'transmedia storytelling' 'transmedia practices', 'transmedia audiences', 'transmedia marketing', 'transmedia paratextuality' and 'transmedia archaeology' too. As the word transmedia gained traction, not just within scholarship, but within the entertainment industries, it became a catchphrase for all trans, cross and multimedia forms. So, this literature review will trace the development of the concept of transmedia by tracking how its meaning changed as different terms are appended to it. What each of these conceptualisations of transmedia tells us, and what insight they may provide to the understanding of film websites, will be examined.

1.2 Transmedia Intertextuality

The term 'intertextuality' was conceived by the literary scholar, Julia Kristeva to explain how the meaning of any text was derived, in part, from its associative 'dialogue' with other texts (Alfaro, 1996:268). Media scholar John Fiske co-opted the term to explain how relations between these media texts within television culture work *(*1987). Fiske drew a distinction between intertextual relations along two vectors: 'horizontal' forms of intertextuality which exist among primary texts such as films or television programmes, usually associated with genre, character, or content (Fiske: 1987:109-110), while 'vertical' forms of intertextuality including promotion, journalism and criticism operate as 'secondary texts' (Fiske, 1987:110). Fiske observed a further 'tertiary' layer of textuality generated by audiences including everything from conversations to fan creations that together form the 'intertextual relations' of a television text (1987:110). For Fiske then,

intertextual relations infer that media texts can only be fully understood in relation to other related texts (1987:109). It is this model of intertextual relations that Kinder draws on to explain how children's branded TV and its tie-in comics and magazines function to create a commercial system which she terms 'transmedia intertextuality' (1991:1).

Different conceptualisations emerge from different quarters in response to the same conditions, and this is evident in the writings of film scholar Barbara Klinger published around the same time. Klinger suggests that once film is defined as a commodity, this invites consideration of film's 'commercial life support system' (1989:5). Klinger describes how the film text is 'raided for features that can extend or expand the commercial life of a film, creating multiple avenues of access to it' (1989:10). She goes on to discuss film marketing materials such as print advertisements, posters, advertisements and trailers as well as media coverage of the making of the film, its director and stars (Ibid.). Klinger adopts Stephen Heath's term 'epiphenomena' to explain the ways secondary texts congregate around a primary text to create what she calls an 'intertextual network' (Heath in Klinger, 1989:5), although for Klinger, the promotional materials she describes are of little interest in themselves. She regards them as having little contribution to the film text, except to break it down and 'extend' it for the purposes of commoditisation and consumption (1989:8).

The dynamics of these 'intertextual networks' described by Kinder and Klinger are colloquially referred to as 'hype' in Thomas Austin's *Hollywood, Hype and Audiences: Selling and watching Popular Film in the 1990s*, where he considers the promotional campaigns of Hollywood 'event' films from the 1990s (2002). He conceives of the film text as the central 'hub' from which dispersing elements emanate via centrifugal expansion (2002:30). Whilst he describes how satellite texts create a centripetal force which refers the consumer back from the text, to the film, as well as directing audiences to an onward journey in the form of consumption of spin-off merchandise and experiences (Ibid.). So, like Klinger, Austin observes how the dynamics of the film ecology are shifting (2002:28-9). By the end of the decade, marketing and promotion account for around a third of a film's budget in the domestic market for the Hollywood major studios (Gerbrandt, 2010). So, inevitably these changes have implications for the ontology of the film transforming it into what Austin describes as a 'dispersible text' (2002:29).

Whilst the word, 'hype' is often used in a pejorative way to describe intense and extravagant kinds of promotion, Thomas Austin reclaims it here to draw attention to the increasing significance of marketing and promotion within the film ecology (2002:65). This observation concurs with Henry Jenkins' definition of transmedia artefacts conceived around this time too, that there is no core 'UR-text' - that is to say, no original text to which other iterations refer (2003). Jenkins argues that each text makes its own unique contribution to the transmedia production, providing a point of entry to the transmedia whole (Jenkins, 2003; Jenkins, 2006:98). Here there is a discernible shift from Fiske's

hierarchy of primary, secondary and tertiary media texts, to Heath's epiphenomenal model with its centre and periphery, to Jenkins' democratising matrices of texts in which all texts are equivalent (Fiske, 1987:109-110; Heath in Klinger, 1989:5; Jenkins, 2006:98) In view of this, Austin concludes that as promotion commands increasingly large budgets and becomes more significant, potentially, 'some such texts and forms may be consumed, in their own right, their ancillary experiences enjoyed as more or less autonomous from the film' (2002:30).

From a commercial perspective, P. David Marshall observes how the concentration of media ownership had led to the 'intensification' of cross-referencing within the media industries (Marshall in ed. Harries, 2002:69). He observes how:

> 'film, music, video and computer games, websites, television documentaries, books and product licensing are elaborately cross-referenced in the contemporary entertainment industry through the usual suspects of magazines, newspapers, entertainment news programmes, industry-related consumer and trade magazines and electronic journals. The audience 'learns' about a product through its associations in other cultural forms' (Ibid.)

As a result, Marshall concludes that big budget blockbuster films are best understood as part of an 'intertextual matrix' of commodities (in ed. Harries, 2002:69). Indeed, Marshall suggests that within this model, film functions as a promotional engine for a portfolio of linked media commodities, and, by this definition, each iteration within the portfolio acts as an advertisement for others within the matrix (Marshall in ed. Harries, 2002:76). Moreover, like Klinger, he observes that one of the consequences of this is the blurring of boundaries between product and promotion (Marshall in ed. Harries, 2002:71). Marshall notes that 'without being the cultural product, the promotional form simulates the cultural product's presence' – taking the shape of regular narrative content (Ibid.). Moreover, he observes 'new media forms' like the internet, are developing new ways for audiences to engage with films, and identifies film websites for the first time, describing how they can provide a 'mainframe' for the film events (Marshall in ed. Harries, 2002:76).

1.3 Transmedia Storytelling

The first scholarship about film websites takes the form of individual case studies such as Will Brooker's article about the web site accompanying the TV series *Dawson's Creek* (2001), James Beck's article about *Requiem for a Dream* (.com) and *Donnie Darko* (.com) (2004) and Jay Telotte's examination of *The Blair Witch Project* website (2001). What these articles share is an interest in how the new digital medium is being co-opted by film and TV, not only for the purposes of promotion of the more established medium, but to be incorporated into the media's narrative architecture too. But it is Henry Jenkins who adopts the term transmedia to describe changes he observes in the media industries and

he appends transmedia to storytelling in an article published in MIT's *Technology Review* (2003). Since then, Jenkins has written extensively about transmedia storytelling, and has become the scholar most closely associated with the concept. Jenkins' approach to transmedia differs from Kinder's and is best understood in the context of the work he had recently completed at this time. This was just a year after his seminal work *Textual Poachers* was published, in which Jenkins broke new ground, by investigating the practices of fandom (1992). Here Jenkins conceives the concept of 'participatory culture' to describe the social interaction and production practices of fan audiences (1992:76). In the light of this, in the *Technology Review* article, Jenkins considers the audience, who as children had cut their teeth on the commodities described by Kinder a decade before (2003:1). While Kinder's study focuses on developmental psychology and how branded TV teaches children to be transmedially literate, Jenkins regards them as media-savvy young people who see themselves as active, creative agents whose own agendas are served by media franchises (Ibid.; Kinder in Jenkins, 2015:262).

Jenkins' concept of participatory culture is clearly related to the work of John Fiske. In 'The Cultural Economy of Fandom' Fiske describes fans themselves as producers, whose productions may range from passing conversations about meanings and pleasures experienced from the products of the media, to more considered forms of textual production of their own such as fan vids or even full-length novels (1992:39). Fiske argued that audiences actively participate in making meaning out of media texts and he outlines three forms this may take: semiotic, enunciative and textual productivity (Fiske, 1992:37). Semiotic productivity refers to the way in which all audiences draw on the semiotic resources of the media artefacts they consume, to make meaning of their social identities and experiences which Fiske regards as a largely individual undertaking (Ibid.). The second form is enunciative productivity that describes how these meanings are often shared in social spaces, taking all manner of shapes from talk to tattoos within fan communities (Fiske, 1992:37-8). The third form of audience production is textual productivity whereby audiences, and particularly fans, produce and circulate their own textual productions within their own (mostly unmonetised) economies (Fiske, 1992:39). Henry Jenkin's acknowledges how this tri-partite conception of audience productivity influenced his subsequent conception of participatory culture (Jenkins in Fiske (2011): xxiii). In other words, Jenkins approaches the concept of transmedia from the perspective of the active agency of the 'fan' and sees both media producers and consumers as participants who actively shape the culture they inhabit, albeit in different ways (2006:3).

Jenkins develops this concept of transmedia storytelling in *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (2006). In the *Review* article and this book, he argues that transmedia storytelling is the cultural consequence of the industrial and technological changes of the last decade (Jenkins, 2006:11). Jenkins is interested in early experiments in transmedia narrative in film and television, but frank in his evaluation of the shortcomings of the industry's forays into transmedia storytelling (2003; 2006:99). Media

conglomeration did not automatically lead to commercial synergies as different parts of the business competed, rather than collaborated, with one another. For example, filmmakers limited what games could be developed with their properties (Jenkins, 2003:2). Similarly, the licensing system controls the use of characters by third party companies, so duplication is rife and while licensed characters are replicated on cereal packets and t-shirts, no development of those characters is permissible (Ibid.). Jenkins outlines how franchises are 'riddled with sloppy contradictions' resulting in poor quality spin-off products and 'second rate novelisations (Ibid.). He illustrates his critique with an examination of the Wachowski Brothers *Matrix* franchise but concludes that while *The Matrix* franchise is 'a flawed experiment', this should not detract from its significance as a model for the <u>potential</u> of transmedia (Jenkins, 2006:99).

It is in *Convergence Culture* that Jenkins defines how transmedia storytelling

> '…unfolds across multiple media platforms*, with each new text making a distinctive and valuable contribution to the whole*. In the ideal form of transmedia storytelling, each medium does what it does best – so that a story might be introduced by a film, expanded through television, novels, and comics; its world might be explored through game play or experienced as an amusement park attraction. Each franchise entry needs to be self-contained, so you do not need to have seen the film to enjoy the game, and vice versa. Any given product is a point of entry into the franchise' (2006:98) (My italics).

The key feature of Jenkins' definition of transmedia is the levelling of all media within the ecology, so that each contributes equally to the transmedia story in its own specific way (Ibid.). The inference of this is that the content of one media platform can be a means of promotion for other media platforms, so distinctions between promotion and content diminish. As Ed Sanchez of Haxan Films explains about the campaign for *The Blair Witch Project*, 'what started off as marketing became an integral part of the experience' (Sanchez in Jenkins, 2006:105).

Jenkins' interest in transmedia is not confined to academic publication. Under his direction, the MIT Convergence Culture Consortium was established, and, in 2006, a conference brought together academics and media industry professions to consider the changing dynamics of the media and their audiences. The *Futures of Entertainment* or 'C3' series of conferences explored a wide range of issues through panel discussions, as well as showcasing examples of emerging practices and publishing 'white papers' and 'research memos' to advance a 'conversation' about transmedia futures (Convergence Culture, 2008). The conferences had currency for both academia and the media industries because they mutually informed each other about developments, which would, in time, produce both cultural and economic value in what has been described as an unusual model of 'an industry-academic collaboration' (Kompare, 2009:116).

From a theoretical point of view, this conference series confirms Jenkins' proposition that convergence should not be regarded principally as a technological process (2006:3). Rather, he argues that convergence describes a cultural shift in the way consumers participate in these new media cultures as well (Ibid.). In other words, for Jenkins, convergence is experienced by audiences through the ways in which they engage with media. A reading of conference programmes over the period from 2006 to 2011, and then the *Futures of Entertainment* conference from 2012 - 2015 indicate industry concerns about the need to develop new legal frameworks for these media synergies (Futures of Entertainment, 2006 - 2011; 2012 - 2015). Media industry apprehension about intellectual property and copyright that prevailed in the last years of the 1990s gives way here to more practical considerations about models of transmedia production and changing conception of audience (Ibid.). At the C3 conferences over the last decade, panels considered a range of transmedia-related issues including world building design, user-generation, and fan labour, transmedia for social change and production (Ibid.). Moreover, this event has been joined by other conferences including *Story world, Power to the Pixel*, *TedX Transmedia* and the *i-Docs* bi-annual conference indicating a growing interest in the field. The question frequently asked about transmedia artefacts is, where does the value of a transmedia artefact lie? (Futures of Entertainment, 2008, 2009, 2011); and particularly from the perspective of this research enquiry, how is this emerging artefact valued, if it is not bought and sold in conventional terms?

Critically Jenkins illustrates how most, if not all, transmedia practices, can be understood as an extension of prior cultural forms, rather than entirely new ones. But while Jenkins claims that he is not preoccupied with the 'newness' of transmedia, the focus of his work does tend to be concerned with what is innovative and what is current. At the annual C3 conferences, new media and new practices make the conference current with the media industries, whether it is social media, web TV or alternative reality games, and much emphasis is placed on models emerging in this period of experimentation and innovation. Given that attendees of these conferences are drawn from the industry, this may not be so surprising. But my concern is that this preoccupation with what is new at the C3 conferences does not provide much sense of the longer-term significance of any of these innovations, and neither can the conferences gauge whether these practices become widespread or are just a fleeting fad.

1.4 Transmedia Storytelling: Principles and Logics

Jenkin's interest in these new kinds of storytelling takes form of a series of posts on his blog, *Confessions of an Aca Fan* where he develops his conception of transmedia storytelling in a post titled 'Transmedia Storytelling 101' in 2007 and then elevates them into a series of 'principles' two years later, incorporating the observations of fellow scholars and media designers and producers' (2009). These storytelling principles differ from the conventional textual components of narrative, plot character, genre and so forth

and focus more on the affordances that enable audiences to engage with these new kinds of fiction. Jenkin's principles of transmedia are spreadability versus drillability; continuity versus multiplicity; immersion versus extractability; world building; seriality; and subjectivity and performance that are worth outlining in detail here (2009).

'Spreadability' refers to ways in which social media networks enable media audiences to actively participate in the circulation of content, and, by so doing, expand both its 'economic value' and its 'cultural worth' (Jenkins, 2009). Jenkins sets this in opposition to Jason Mittell's notion of 'drillability' which points to another kind of audience participation that he describes as 'forensic fandom', whereby audiences enjoy 'drilling' deeper into the story world for more detail. It is not clear why Jenkins' first three principles are discussed in terms of opposing features, using the term 'versus', but Mittell suggests this 'opposition' may be a reference to the differing directions of these two 'vectors of cultural engagement' (Mittell in Jenkins, 2009b). 'Continuity' refers to the way different components cohere seamlessly together in a 'plausible' way (Ibid.). Alongside is the principle of 'multiplicity' whereby different character perspectives could be elaborated enabling audiences to see the story from different points of view. Moreover, the logic of 'multiplicity' could be extended to fan productions and other kinds of audience expression too (Ibid.).

'Immersion' refers to the qualities of the transmedia storytelling that enable consumers to enter the fictional world (Jenkins, 2009c.), while 'extractability' enables audiences to take aspects of a story such as toy figures from franchises and use them as resources in their own everyday lives (Ibid.). Extractability has now been built into the architectures of social media today too, as film websites are built on platforms like Tumblr, to enable site assets to be 'reblogged' by audiences into their own Tumblr sites. Jenkins recognises 'world building' as the fourth principle, suggesting that it is one of the main ways in which audiences could engage with the scenarios depicted in narrative (Ibid.). This kind of transmedia storytelling addresses audiences' interest in learning more about the narrative worlds, and even interacting with them as they would with real world spaces and places (Ibid.).

'Seriality' refers to the way in which a narrative may be delivered in component parts over time, or across discreet media platforms (Ibid.). Jenkins observes here how his earlier definition suggested that potentially any franchise components could act as an entryway into the franchise, and therefore transmedia entertainment might be consumed in any order (Ibid.). However, a few years later, he reflects that chronology is more tenacious convention than he had originally supposed, and storytellers place a deal of emphasis upon it, as can be seen in the use of timelines and other devices in film websites to temporally order the narrative experience (Jenkins, 2011). The sixth principle is 'subjectivity' in which transmedia narratives expand upon aspects of the fictional world, introducing perspectives and subjectivities of secondary characters (Jenkins, 2009c). And

the last principle is 'performance' (Ibid.). Jenkins observes how, increasingly, producers consider how audiences might to contribute, either through invited performances in the shape of competitions or participating in public discussions on social media (Ibid.).

Jenkins is mindful to point out that this list is neither definitive, nor set in stone, but that he simply offers it up as a 'work-in-progress' and a contribution to the understanding of emerging transmedial aesthetic formations (Ibid.) However it is worth noting that whilst storytelling is the defining component of Jenkin's definition of transmedia, he does go on to note in his set of principles that transmedia can be constituted into other kinds of 'experiences' than story, such as games, spectacles and performances (Ibid.). This expansion of what transmedia can be has been consistent feature in discussion about transmedia, and a decade later has been writ large with the publication of the *Routledge Companion to Transmedia* which illustrates the wide range of applications of the concept today: from charity events like the BBC's Red Nose Day to transmedia heritage and museums; as well as transmedia activism, transmedia psychology and its uses within institutional settings of religious faith systems (Freeman et al.,2018).

Jenkin's outline of principles gains considerable traction as can be seen in the number of both practitioners and scholars who reference or enter critical dialogues with his work. - for example, in a special issue of *Cultural Studies* titled 'Rethinking Convergence /Culture', where the editors, James Hay and Nick Couldry recognise the value of Jenkins' contribution to theorising the cultural media citizenship, media institutions and power (Hay and Couldry, 2011:481). However, they also critique Jenkins' approach as it:

> 'tend{s} to emphasise the virtue of 'inactivity' and to cast the non-professionalism of DIY media, and the 'grassroots' of media mobilisation, in terms of a generalised, universalist understanding of democracy, rather than in terms of the messy contradictions and contingencies of democratic citizenship in the historical and geographical production of convergence/cultures, as we might add, in wider politics' (Ibid.).

In short, Hay and Couldry's concern is that in his enthusiasm about fan productivity, Jenkins tends to ascribe more significance to audience activities than is, perhaps, warranted, particularly in view of the realities of audience agency within the wider spectrum of politics and the production of culture.

Subsequently Jenkins consolidates this series of 'principles' into a set of 'logics' which he has defined as 'the goals a transmedia production is intended to serve, and the assumption made about the deserved relationships among transmedia consumers, producers and texts' (Jenkins in Derhy Kurtz et al.2016). The shift from 'principles' to 'logics is an indicator of his aim to steer the application of the term beyond academic typologies. However, as Jenkins himself as observed, the term transmedia has become fashionable

(Jenkins in Derhy Kurtz et al.2016:220). As a result, it has been deployed to describe such a diversity of practices that perhaps it has lost its focus and replaced other generic terms like 'interactive, 'digital' or 'multimedia' to describe whatever is deemed to be new or cool (Ibid). Indeed, if the definition of transmedia is stretched to the nth degree to accommodate different practices, one of the consequences of this expanding remit is a creeping genericisation. The term comes to serve as a descriptor for all new forms of digital media artefact and merchandising activities and this dilute its meaning. Jenkins defends the concept of transmedia from this charge by advising that 'this does not mean that transmedia now stands for everything and nothing. Rather we need to be more nuanced in describing the transmedia logics apply to any given media project' (Jenkins in Derhy Kurtz et al., 2016:222). But in this thesis, I am not able to subscribe solely to Jenkins' definition and must move on to consider other ways in which transmedia is conceptualised.

1.5 Transmedia Practices

The concept of transmedia is considered by media studies scholars from different perspectives. In an essay about the 1989 film *Batman* (Tim Burton), titled '"Holy Commodity Fetish, Batman!": The Political Economy of a Commercial Intertext', Eileen Meehan uses the phrase 'commercial intertext' to describe the strategies used by corporate owners to capitalise on synergies within their group and develop opportunities for a brand across computer games, music, print, merchandising and children's toys (Meehan in Pearson and Uricchio, 1991:49). Thomas Schatz uses the concept of the 'UR-text' to describe the relationship between a foundational media text and other texts that are produced from it (1997:75). Marie-Laure Ryan writes about 'transmedial narratology' (1991;2004 and 2014); Jill Walker observes how 'distributed narratives' spread themselves across time and space, both online and in the real world (2004); Geoffrey Long examines 'story world building' in Jim Henson films (2007); While John Caldwell's study of the media production industries describes how the distinctions between marketing and entertainment are blurred in DVD 'bonus tracks' creating what he describes as 'second shift viewing experiences' (2003:302); David Buckingham and Julian Sefton-Green's study of the Pokémon franchise refers to 'cross-media enterprise' (in Tobin, 2004:19) and Marc Ruppel considers the archival challenges of what he refers to as 'cross-sited narratives' (2009:283). As can be seen here then, transmedia practices are considered in ever finer-grained examinations and the nomenclature used to describe transmedia practices provides a barometer of development in the field.

To map how transmedia practices have developed within the United States, Andrea Phillips makes a geographical distinction between what is termed 'West Coast transmedia' and 'East Coast transmedia' (2012:13). She characterises West Coast transmedia as the practices that have developed in and around the Hollywood film industry including 'big pieces of media' such as feature films, video games and other iterations of high-end

commercial franchise film (Ibid.) While East Coast transmedia is more focused around the web and interactivity and tends to be associated more with independent film, as well as theatre and art (Phillips, 2012:14). Typically the projects she describes are more event-orientated, running for limited time periods (Ibid.) Whereas West coast transmedia are only loosely connected and so are designed to be experienced independently, East Coast transmedia are more closely integrated and so, in order to understand, audiences need to engage with the whole piece to comprehend the narrative such as Lance Weiler's *Pandemic* (2011) which took place during the Sundance Film Festival and included twitter feeds, films, comics and a live scavenger hunt (Ibid).

Geography determines terminology too. 'Cross-media' tends to have more traction in Europe than 'transmedia'. When Christy Dena presents a paper at the European Information Systems Technologies event at The Hague in the Netherlands in 2004, she referred to 'cross-media' although later adopts transmedia in her doctoral thesis (2004). The Italian transmedia producer and scholar Max Giovagnoli claims to have written the first book in Europe on 'cross-media' in 2005. Although when Giovagnoli published his second book, it was titled *Transmedia Storytelling: Imagery, Shapes and Techniques*, indicating a recognition of the currency of the term within global media industries (2011). The Estonian scholar, Indrek Ibrus and the Spanish scholar Carlos A. Scolari have both sought to broaden the discussion of transmedia beyond the US entertainment industry. In *Cross-media: Innovations: Texts, Markets Institutions*, consideration is given to European case studies from Spain, Norway, Estonia, Finland, Austria, the UK, as well as Australia, illustrating the growth of transmedia practices (2012).

For Ibrus and Scolari 'cross-media' is their preferred term (2012:8). They define cross-media as 'an intellectual property, service, story or experience that is distributed across multimedia platforms using a variety of media forms' which they regard as a commercial strategy of diversification, enabling producers to adapt properties for different media platforms, or for the purposes of cross-promotion (2012:7). In this sense, they conclude that transmedia is better regarded as a form of 'cross-media' (2012:8). Scolari fears this diversity of nomenclature is indicative of 'conceptual chaos' but I would suggest that while the theoretical terrain is crowded, there is considerable consensus around these practices, even as they emerge, and that this process of labelling is indicative of the increasing relevance of this concept in different quarters (2009:586). It is only when the Producer's Guild of America (PGA) gives recognition to the contribution of transmedia practices with the new credit 'Transmedia producer' in 2010 that we begin to see the term 'transmedia' gain traction, over other 'candidate' terms (Giovagnoli, 2011:12-13). The PGA defines transmedia practices in the following way:

> 'A transmedia narrative project or franchise must consist of three (or more) narrative storylines existing within the same fictional universe on any of the following platforms: Film, Television, short film, broadband, publishing, comics,

animation, mobile, special venues, DVD/Blu-ray/CD-ROM, *Narrative Commercial and marketing rollouts*, and other technologies that may or may not currently exist' (Producers Guild, 2017) (My italics).

Aside from nomenclature, what is also interesting about this definition is that it makes no distinction between conventional storytelling practices in film, TV and 'narrative commercial and marketing rollouts' giving credence to the creative contributions of narrative promotional materials which are the focus of this research.

The most comprehensive account of transmedia practice at this time is Christy Dena's PhD thesis titled *Transmedia practice: Theorising the Practice of Expressing a Fictional World across Distinct media and Environments,* which was the first doctorate to be awarded in the field in 2009. While Jenkins sought to map the core *principles* of transmedia practices, Dena seeks to develop a more medium-agnostic vocabulary to articulate how transmedia *practices* work (2009:20). Specifically, Dena finds that not all transmedia practices take the shape of storytelling either but may assume a variety of formats across distinct environments: from Peter Greenaway VJ-ing and remixing his *Tulse Luper Suitcases* in 2005 (2009:150) to ARGs (Alterative Reality Games) like *I Love Bees,* designed to promote the computer game, *Halo 2* in 2004 (2009:106). In the light of these diverse practices she concludes that *transmedia practices* encompass the breadth of activities more accurately than *transmedia storytelling* which focuses solely on narrative (Dena, 2009:16).

Dena makes a distinction between two different forms of transmedia practice: 'intercompositional' transmedia works designed around the relation between works by different authors on different platforms such as David Lynch's *Twin Peaks* which consisted of two television series, a feature film and three books (Ibid.), and 'intracompositional' transmedia works designed transmedially from the start such as the promotional campaign, *Flynn Lives* for *Tron: Legacy* (Kosinski, 2010) that incorporates different media, live events, the web and social media (2009:97). Dena adopts the term 'composition' to describe works, regardless of the configuration they take, whether a website, live event, game, book or film, as a transmedia artefact may be expressed across all these platforms (2009:103). Her definition of transmedia derives from narrative theorist, Werner Wolf's typology of intermediality which is framed in terms of 'intra' and 'extra' composition (in Dena, 2009:103-4). Dena transposes these narrative concepts to describe transmedia projects, modifying 'extra' to 'inter' along the way to infer that different media as well as different creators can be involved (2009:104). Dena's typology bears close relation to Fiske's earlier conceptions of intertextuality, in so far as intracompositional transmedia artefacts are works in themselves, dependent on each other, like Fiske's 'vertical' forms of textuality (1987:110), while intercompositional transmedia artefacts are characterised by relations between works, akin to Fiske's 'horizontal' forms of intertextuality (Fiske, 1987:109-110). However, Dena's conceptions of transmedia relations diverge from

Jenkins' and Fiske's theories here, because she concludes that these relations are limited to defining transmedia artefacts by what she calls 'structural relations' and 'end-product traits' (2009:107).Whereas she observes that what distinguishes many intracompositional transmedia projects, is how different kinds of practitioners play a role in developing these works and she conceives her practice-orientated approach to understand these kinds of transmedia (2009:99).

Dena's thesis goes onto observe some of the new roles that have developed in transmedia media productions to maintain continuity, creative vision and reduce inconsistencies that are variously referred to as a 'transmedia czar' (Alexander in Dena, 2009:129), or 'universe steward' (Gomez in Dena, 2009) and as we have already seen, 'transmedia producer' (Producers' Guild, 2017). Dena points out that within transmedia design practice 'world guides' or 'universe bibles' play a central role in ensuring continuity when projects are designed across different media platforms (2009:141). While new professional roles like 'Games Master' have emerged to manage social media engagement (2009:228). In sum, Dena argues that design is not just a 'pragmatic' facilitator but plays a part in 'authoring' the meaning of transmedia experiences through a form of analysis which is 'practice-orientated' rather than 'interpreter-orientated', (Dena, 2009:9-10). That is to say, Dena suggests that the processes of production shape the meaning of a transmedia artefact as much as the audience's understanding of the end-product.

1.6 Transmedia Audiences

The primary aim of social media is to invite audience participation. Jenkins et al. argue that features of Web 2.0 technologies like *YouTube* 'embed' codes, *Facebook*'s 'open graph' and *Tumblr*'s 'reblog' button reconfigure media relations with audiences by inviting their active engagement (2013:12). So, the next iteration of the concept of transmedia in this literature review is appended to its audiences – transmedia audiences. In the past the broadcast model of one-to-many meant that the movement of media content was, for the most part, controlled by its producers, and was predominantly distributive (Ibid.). But with Web 2.0 affordances this model has been superseded by a more circulatory model of many-to-many participation in which audience choices, investments, agendas and actions play a greater role in what is circulated, as well as determining what is valued in media culture (Ibid.). This shift is epitomised by the concept of co-creation. In *Convergence Culture*, Jenkins defines co-creation as the collaboration of different media producers (2006:107). However, by 2013, when Jenkins publishes *Spreadable Media*, in collaboration with Ford and Green, co-creation is used to refer to collaboration between producers and audiences (Jenkins et al., 2013:182).

One of the consequences of this gravitation towards a more participatory culture is that audiences can no longer be regarded as the anonymous, undifferentiated end-point to the production process, but instead, as active agents who participate in their media experiences

using 'content' in their own ways, for their own ends (Jenkins et al., 2013:49). By this definition then, audiences' interests and agendas become the engine that underpins the transmedia economy. The rationale being that, by so doing, audiences may serve as advocates for a brand or franchise, aligning themselves with the interests of the producers and thereby serving what Jenkins et al. call the 'logic of the marketplace' (2013:7). In this way audiences can form temporary alliances with content creators, coalescing around a franchise, even though they are neither employed by, nor regulated by those content producers. Indeed Jenkins et al. suggest that the 'producer', the 'advertiser' and the 'audience' may not only collaborate but, at times, the distinctions between them become distinctly blurred (Ibid.).

Fan scholars like Matt Hills are less enthralled by the proposition that the affordances of Web 2.0 have prompted a radical shift in audience behaviours and cautions against this technologically determinist tendency to reconceptualise audiences as it overlooks the long history of pre-internet fan practices and productions such as clubs and fanzines (Hills, 2013:131-3). Instead Hills argues that the kinds of reception practices previously attributed to fan audiences have now become everyday practices for all audiences (Ibid.). Hills suggests that fans participate for their own reasons and questions the assumption that audience practices can be 'read' from the technology, advocating looking at what audiences actually *do* instead (2013:150). He is sceptical of 'narratives of Web 2.0 democratisation' that typically conflate audience practices into one oh-be-joyful category of 'participation' and fail to recognise distinctions among fan practices that fans themselves understand (Ibid). Here, Hills is in accord with Jenkins in concluding that different kinds of economies operate within fandom. He suggests that these may be based on notions of community, appraisal and such like, but he acknowledges that through these economies that the tensions between so-called media 'democratisation' and fan practice distinctions are managed (Ibid.: Jenkins et al., 2013:92-3).

While Hills' conception of transmedia audiences is informed by his work on fandom and framed in Fiskian terms of audience 'productivity', Derek Johnson argues that notions of co-creation are somewhat idealistic (2013:199). This is a view shared by Emanuelle Wessels. In an essay in the new media technologies research journal, *Convergence,* she describes an instance where Paramount Pictures invite participants to enter a competition to make their own 'trailers' for *Cloverfield*, but by so doing, participants cede intellectual property rights for their productions to the studio (Wessels, 2011:78). Wessels explains this by drawing on the Italian Marxist, Maurizio Lazzarato's definition of 'immaterial labour', whereby audience activities produce the 'cultural content' of a commodity but their 'work' is not recognised as such within a digital economy (2011:70-1). As a result, she concludes that this 'unpaid labour' is the underbelly of a participatory culture, (Wessels, 2011:70). She acknowledges that audiences are aware of these constructions and engage in these forms of labour of their own free will (Wessels, 2011:81). But for her, the fact of the matter is that participants 'work' to raise the profile

of the film without remuneration and this is an inauspicious consequence of media convergence, and, for the purposes of this thesis, a distinctive feature of transmedia audience hood (2011:82).

The framing of audience activity as a form of 'labour' has been taken up by other scholars including Andrejevic (2009); Fuchs, (2012); Hesmondhalgh, (2010) and Johnson who goes so far as to consider this notion of audience labour within media franchises as a kind of 'industrial occupation' (2013b:198-199). He argues this 'industrial occupation' takes two forms: firstly, audiences participate without remuneration within, and for the benefit of the media industries; and secondly, those industries increasingly occupy spaces ostensibly designed for audiences in the online media environments (2013b:199). In sum, Johnson is concerned with what it means to be an 'enfranchised' audience and puts into question the political contradictions involved in audience participation in a networked cultural production (2013b:199-201).

While these different discussions circulate about audiences in a general sense, fan studies tend not to be discussed in terms of labour (Stanfill and Condis, 2014:2). It is acknowledged that, viewed from the perspective of a monetary economy, online fans are open to the kinds of exploitation by the industry identified by the previous writers (Stanfill and Condis ,2014:3). But for Stanfill and Condis the more productive way of thinking about fandom is to focus on the alternative 'economies' that come into operation to understand the motivation to participate (2014:5). Like Jenkins and Hills, they agree that value may take other forms such as the pleasure of participation, or a sense of community, and that fan work is at its most powerful in producing and maintaining ties within a fan culture (Ibid.).

Within fan studies, productivity may be understood to be the 'giving and receiving' of objects such as fan fiction, fan vids or fan art works, conceived within the notion of a 'gift economy' (Turk, 2014:1). However, Turk suggests that much fan 'labour' does not entail the production of art works, but in practice takes the shape of more mundane but nevertheless valuable kinds of behind-the-scenes labour including reviewing and running awards, curating wikis, writing recommendations and populating databases (2014:3). I would add to this list contributing posts to social media settings which may not be recognised as productivity at all (2014:2). Turk asserts that 'each donation is an act of social faith' within a fan community, and she acknowledges that not all kinds of audience labour are equally appreciated, or even recognised, and therefore such activities have not been the focus of much academic attention (2014:3).

1.7 Transmedia Memory

This focus on transmedia audiences is brought into even sharper focus in the work of Colin Harvey who proposes that considering transmedia from the perspective of audience

memory may provide insight into the nature of relations at play with transmedia producers (2015:35). Irrespective of scale, composition or geographical location, he suggests what characterises all transmedia artefacts is the relation of their constituent parts to one another (2015:30). While most of the conceptual approaches to transmedia, considered so far, have been concerned with the different forms transmedia artefacts take, Harvey proposes that it may be more productive to consider what transmedia artefacts have in common (2015:33). In taking this approach, he returns to Fiske's earlier notion of intertextuality whereby transmedia artefacts are first and foremost defined by the relations between component parts (2015:34). For Harvey, central to the operation of any transmedia artefact is the role that remembering plays in enabling audiences to make these connections (Ibid.). He argues that for different elements to be considered as part of the same story world, characters, plots, settings, mythologies and themes must be recalled from platform to platform and this is critical to its effect from the audience's perspective (Ibid.). In short, Harvey argues 'transmedia storytelling is all about memory' (2015:38). Moreover, he points out with digital technologies, and the proliferation of platforms and new tools for participation, the audience's role in making sense of how components relate to one another becomes even more critical to the effective operation of transmedia artefacts and that, in turn, this creates what Andrew Hoskins refers to as a 'new memory ecology' (Hoskins in Harvey, 2015:37).

In *Fantastic Transmedia*, Harvey focuses on the science fiction and fantasy genres and investigates the role memory plays in their operation (2015). Once again echoing Fiske's schema for intertextual media relations, Harvey proposes that memory too operates along temporal vectors, vertically back into the past, and horizontally in the present (2015:93). In the case of adaptations, Harvey describes how narrative memory operates vertically recalling how past versions have been transformed into present iterations (Ibid.). Harvey goes on to explain how this is achieved through textual strategies of reference, allusion, or homage kinds of 'vertical' memory (2015:99). This concurs with Eileen Meehan's earlier discussion about the 1989 *Batman* film that she describes 'ricochets back in cultural memory to Bob Kane's original version… [and] all the intervening Bat-texts.' (Meehan in Hardy, 2010:72). With transmedia storytelling, however, memory operates horizontally too enabling connections to be drawn between elements of a transmedia artefact (2015:93).

From the audience's point of view then, if relations can be determined by memories, however, these 'soft' kinds of connection are supervised by 'hard' kinds of connection that take the shape of legal frameworks such as intellectual property, copyright and licensing arrangements (2015:33). For Harvey, these frameworks contain regulatory mechanisms that can even determine what can be remembered and what can be forgotten, and that it is these relations that define connections between elements of a transmedia artefact and, in turn relationships with audiences (Ibid.). In view of this Harvey proposes that there are four distinctive forms transmedia artefacts may take: *Directed transmedia* storytelling in which the intellectual property right holder exercises strict control over what can and

cannot be remembered; *Devolved transmedia* storytelling in which the relationship is more relaxed about which materials may be produced with permissions, but without contribution from the core text producers; *Detached storytelling* which exists beyond legally proscribed relationships; and *Directed User-generated content* in which the intellectual property holder elicits material from audiences for the holder's own purposes (Harvey, 2015:187-9). What becomes clear from Harvey's typology of transmedia forms is that while they may rely on audience memory, relations are defined and proscribed by legal parameters (Harvey, 2015:190).

1.8 Post-Transmedia?

In *Beyond the Screen*: *Emerging Cinema and Engaging Audiences* Atkinson suggests that while the 'prevailing discourse' from which to understand developments in cinema in recent years is transmedia, new media interfaces are starting to change this frame of reference (2014a:6). She observes how the smart phone and tablet reduce media platforms and media specificity to mere 'iconic difference' as different media are brought together on one screen interface (Ibid.). In the light of this shift, Atkinson asserts that the launch of Apple's iPad in 2010 marks a transitional moment for the concept of transmedia (2014a: xii). She goes on to suggest that we are moving away from 'mono-specific forms' with 'media-specific boundaries' and that if these boundaries dissolve, it would seem that we are entering a 'post-transmedia, post-platform-specific and platform-agnostic age' (Atkinson, 2014a:6).

This assertion is a natural conclusion to draw from a semiotic reading of the iPad interface, but, for me it raises questions about how we understand media technologies. Drawing on the work of the media historian, Lisa Gitelman, Henry Jenkins suggests that media are best understood on two separate, but parallel, levels (2006:13). First, a medium can be regarded as a technology that enables communication, but secondly, a medium can be understood as a set of 'protocols' and cultural practices that have developed around this technology (2006:13-14). In other words, there is a distinction between media as delivery system technologies, and media as cultural systems (Ibid.). Jenkins argues that while media delivery systems may change, cultural understanding of media is remarkably persistent - 'once a medium establishes itself as satisfying some human demand, it continues to function within the larger system of communication options' (2006:14). He further postulates that much contemporary discourse about convergence starts and ends with what he terms the 'black box fallacy', whereby the expectation of convergence is that all media content will flow through a single 'black box' into our homes/mobile phones (Ibid.). But the fact is that media are still produced and experienced as distinct media platforms (Jenkins, 2006:15). The 'fallacy' of this proposition is therefore that media change cannot be reduced to technological change as this perspective overlooks the 'cultural' level of media experience (Ibid.).

Similarly, tablet computers and smart phones like the iPad and iPhone can be understood as an iteration of Jenkins' 'black box', but I would argue that it is debatable whether this is 'post-transmedia'. Like Turing's 'universal machine', the iPad can ape diverse media technologies, as well as their aesthetics, and that makes the iPad a multiple media device, but not a merged media device. Different media interfaces still function distinctly from one another and the protocols of engagement are still distinct and so transmediality is still very much in evidence. So, perhaps, rather than being post-transmedia, it might be more accurate to suggest that transmedia is moving into its next phase, in which consideration may be given to audience contribution to transmedia.

From this perspective, Atkinson's work is invaluable because it examines the ways in which cinema is developing and engaging audiences beyond the traditional parameters of screen (to paraphrase the book's title). More specifically for the purposes of this thesis, she examines film websites, under her own rubric of 'extended cinema', and suggests that while cinema has always used other media to market itself, today digital technologies and their social practices have evolved into 'integrated narrative extensions' (2014a:15). Atkinson considers a selection of pioneering web-based film promotion campaigns from Darren Aronofsky's *Requiem for a Dream* (2000) to Ridley Scott's *Prometheus* (2012). Through this examination she identifies some of the extraordinary strategies by which promotional websites extend films narrative from alternative reality games (ARGS) to the in-world faux corporate website of the television series, *The Office* that closely emulates official organisational websites, yet gives minimal indication of the site's fictional status (2014a:2021) What is evident is that the scope and scale of these sites has developed to such an extent that what were once regarded as ancillary media have become an integral part of the media experience and therefore, I argue, worthy of scholarly consideration.

While some writers make a distinction between transmedia practices and marketing practices (Jenkins, 2006; Mittell, 2012-13, Dinehart, 2010; Phillips, 2011). For the purposes of this study on the emergence of film websites, what is interesting in the work of more recent scholars such as Ibrus and Scolari (2012), Atkinson (2014) and Harvey (2015), is that they do not make distinctions between *bona fide* transmedia narrative content (and therefore worthy of consideration) and forms of transmedia developed for promotional purposes, (and therefore, by inference, not worthy of consideration) (2012; 2014). For Harvey, film websites are an element of the transmedia artefact, if they contribute to the narrative, whereas elements like advertising, licensed characters and toys which do not themselves tell stories are regarded as 'affordances' which still play a part, if configured in such a way to give access to the story world in question (Harvey, 2015:186). Indeed, Atkinson points to the fact that promotion and advertising have always been at the forefront in terms of driving new cinematic forms, aesthetics and audience engagement (2014a). To illustrate this fact, she points to notable promotional initiatives such as *The Random Adventures of Brandon Generator* (2012), an interactive story created to showcase the capabilities of the emergent HTML5 and Microsoft Explorer 7, as well as *The*

Inside Trilogy (2012-3) advertising campaign created by Intel and Toshiba as evidence (2014a:4).

From the perspective of these theorists, marketing and promotion can be regarded as a kind of transmedia and film websites are a hybrid of storytelling and marketing. So, it is to the field of film marketing that this literature review now turns to consider how its scholarship may inform this study of the development of the film website.

1.9 Transmedia Marketing and Promotion

The next iteration of the concept of transmedia is appended to marketing and promotion and emerges from a quarter of film studies that has conventionally been regarded as a peripheral commercial practice, and adjunct to the central focus of academic interest. As a result, scholarship in the field was relatively sparse until the publication of *Coming Attractions: Reading American Movie Trailers* by Lisa Kernan in 2004 that charts the history of film trailers. Kernan describes their function as threefold: delineating a film's genre; celebrating its stars; and providing as sense of its fictional world and she makes the case for more scholarly consideration of marketing and promotion. Kernan argues that promotional trailers should not just be dismissed as commercial materials because they provide some of the first ideas, meanings and pleasures of a film for their audiences, and that the relations between film and its marketing and promotion are often blurred which she describes as 'cinematic promotions of narrative and narrativisations of promotion' (2004:2). This elision of film and its marketing noted by Kernan, where content is created for the purposes of marketing, expands the definition of what constitutes the film experience and therefore the scope of film studies research extends beyond the film itself.

Finola Kerrigan investigates film marketing practices from the perspective of the creative industries, taking the American Marketing Association's (AMA) definition of marketing as the starting point for her study: 'Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large' (AMA in Kerrrigan, 2010:4). What is interesting about Kerrigan's definition is that it aligns with Colin Harvey's definition of transmedia artefacts, describing film marketing as a relational set of practices, that begin with the conception of the film and continue through various iterations of consumption from theatrical cinema release to home viewing formats (Ibid.). Like Kernan, Kerrigan describes film marketing in relation with film, which has been framed in this thesis as transmedia relations, designed to generate value for producers and consumers. By this definition then, Kerrigan, too, contends that marketing is more than just promotion and merits closer consideration. (2010:5)

What is odd about both these, otherwise valuable, studies of film marketing, is how little consideration is given to online film marketing. While Kernan's study does not

acknowledge the online environment in her work on trailers at all, in Kerrigan's book, online marketing is considered in a separate chapter titled 'New Technology' at the end of the publication, which is surprising given that online marketing practices had been in operation for more than 15 years by the time of publication (Kernan, 2004; Kerrigan, 2010). That said, Kerrigan does recognise how some web-based film marketing has evolved from purely informational sites to narrative-based campaigns today and considers the *Cloverfield* campaign as a case study to illustrate the increasingly blurred lines between production and consumption (2010:201-202). The book concludes by acknowledging how developments are producing 'a resurgence of creativity' in film marketing and points towards the specific area of interest in this thesis (Kerrigan, 2010:209).

It is in the work of Keith Johnston that closer consideration is given to web-based film marketing. In 'The Coolest Way to Watch Movie Trailers in the World: Trailers in the Digital Age', Johnston suggests that film marketing has always been adaptable to different contexts from TV trailers for forthcoming theatrical releases, to home video formats and DVDs, and in the last decade, trailers have been available to view on mobile phones, tablet devices and online too (2008:145). He describes how the migration to different platforms prompted the adaptation of the cinema trailer styles, aesthetics and forms of engagement for its audiences (Johnson, 2008:146). By the 1990s, trailers were designed for viewing online (Ibid.). To adapt to this new context, Johnston observes how trailers assumed different shapes such as pop-up windows for desk-top viewing and behind-the-scenes trailers pioneered by the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy (Peter Jackson, 1999, 2002, 2005) (2008:151). Moreover, as trailers were now no longer only scheduled as previews of forthcoming films in theatrical settings, they could be viewed at any time, viewed repeatedly and subjected to the same scrutiny as the film they promoted (2008:152).

In a monograph published the following year, Johnson reiterates the observation made by Lisa Kernan about the dearth of scholarly attention to film marketing (2009:3). He goes on to note that the challenge for scholars is that trailers have simply not been highly regarded by the industry, and so there was little appetite to preserve them (Johnston, 2008:2). He concludes that marketing materials have mostly been regarded as functional, justified by box office results, without creative attribution, and with no direct economic value, so the consequence for trailers has been ephemerality (Ibid.).

This is a concern which is in evidence repeatedly across literature about transmedia marketing and promotion. In *Promotional Screen Industries*, Grainge and Johnston regard the neglect of film marketing and promotion as a chronic prejudice which has haunted scholarship in the field of film studies regarding distinctions made between 'commercial' and 'creative' content, which are dismissive of the former, and laud the latter (2015:4). They suggest that the 'aesthetic and affective pleasures' for audiences of the promotion intermediaries from trailers to logos, idents to websites really should be factored into the discussion of what cinema is today (Ibid.).

For the purposes of this thesis, what is important about *Promotional Screen Industries* is that the book moves from a traditional film studies text-based approach to the study of marketing and promotion materials, to an industry-centred approach to orchestrating transmedia marketing campaigns (Grainge and Johnston, 2015:151). Their case study of *The Hunger Games* campaign gives a valuable illustration of the international network of agencies coordinated by Lionsgate to market the franchise (2015:161-173). However, while the case study provides an insight into the network of relations within global film marketing, it gives less consideration to the design studios that incubate the content of this marketing campaign. Watson Design Group (WDG) who created *Capitolcouture.pn*, the franchise's award-winning website is not even mentioned in this chapter. This bears out what has been noticed elsewhere in the literature – that the study of <u>how</u> transmedia is produced continues to remain under-represented in the field (Caldwell in ed. Grainge, 2011: 175; Britton in eds. Ibrus and Scolari, 2012: 221; Gray, 2010: 220). In *Show Sold Separately*, Jonathan Gray calls for further research on how paratexts are produced and 'production ethnographies' to illuminate how industry's paratext creators work with viewer creators (Ibid.). As sub-contractors, design agencies do not own the content and cede intellectual property rights to the studios. As a result, their creative contribution to a film project is effectively effaced. So, this thesis is concerned with the development of the first generation of film websites and the task of bringing this paratextual artefact out of the shadows for consideration.

To this end, Ian London's doctoral thesis titled *Hollywood Online: Movie Marketing Practices in the Dial Up and Broadband Eras of the Internet 1994-2009* provides the first historical account of online film marketing, to my knowledge (2012). The narrative of the thesis is structured into two periods spanning from 1994 to 2009 that are defined by the technologies which underpin the internet: dial-up from 1994-2001; and broadband from 2001-2009 although there is no recognition of the significant changes wrought by Web 2.0 from 2005/6 onwards (London, 2012:14). That said, the study provides insight into how internet technologies are harnessed for the marketing of film by the major American film studios. The thesis charts how electronic press kits migrate onto the web, and shows the introduction of expandable banners, entertainment portals and film websites all offer new ways to promote new releases to audiences (London, 2012). However, whilst this study's focus is the development of online film marketing techniques, it is less concerned with the development of film web site aesthetics, narrative approaches and styles. But in the final sentence of the thesis, London does predict 'the movie website itself may come to represent a new form of collector's item' (London, 2012:321). This allusion to collection indicates a change in both the way websites are valued and meaning of film websites as an artefact which is evocative of Walter Benjamin's remarks in his essay 'Unpacking my Library' where he observes that once something is collected, its meaning changes from its functional utilitarian value to something which is studied and held in esteem (Benjamin,1999:62).This is one of the central aims of this thesis.

1.10 Transmedia Paratextuality

Increases in marketing budgets have brought commensurate expansions of film marketing and promotion. Several academic studies in the field have noted what has been reported in the industry press over recent years (McClintock, 2014; Rainey, 2016: Londesbrough, 2018). In *Show Sold Separately,* Jonathan Gray observes how film marketing budgets had risen to between 1/3 and 2/3 of production budgets by 2008 and how this proportion becomes exponentially greater for franchise movies. (2010:7-8). In *Film Marketing into the Twenty first Century*, Mingant, Tirtaine and Augros, report that in 2012 the marketing costs for *Skyfall* (Sam Mendes) matched its production costs, and still relied heavily on external tie-in publicity (2015:7). In the light of this, Gray argues, if marketing constitutes such an important part of a film's budget, it should be taken more seriously by the academy (2010:71). Moreover, if film marketing and promotion provide an 'entryway' to the film experience for audiences, it begs the question, not only what function do these materials fulfil? but what meanings do they create?

To address these questions both Lisa Kernan in her book on trailers, and later Jonathan Gray in his consideration of transmedia artefacts, draw on the work of the literary scholar Gerard Genette who uses the term 'paratext' to describe the variety of elements which surround books (Kernan, 2004: 235: Gray, 2010:6). In *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* Genette exhaustively defines the different forms, features and functions of literary paratexts and proposes that paratexts exist to both 'present' -that is to say announce the text's existence, whilst at the same time serving to make a text 'present' in the world and therefore, by definition, they are transmedial (1997:1). By so doing Genette focuses on components of the literary text that have often been overlooked in literary studies including the material features of a book's format, front cover design, type settings, dedications, prefaces, as well as textual features such as dedications, prefaces and epigraphs among others. He argues that these components are integral to the book and condition the reader's experience by providing 'an airlock that helps the reader pass without too much respiratory difficulty from one [fictional] world to another (Genette, 1997:408). In other words, Genette asserts that paratexts are worthy of examination because they shape the readers experience of the text. Moreover, in the book's concluding remarks, he points to the possibility of extending paratextual investigation beyond literature to other art forms such as film (Genette, 1997:407).

Gray adopts the concept of the paratext as a critical 'lens' through which to investigate media marketing and promotion (2010:25). He proposes that the primary feature of the 'paratextual surround', in all its different forms from posters and trailers to tie-in toys and websites, is that they enable audiences to begin the process of making sense of a film and notes how these components connect with each other and create a 'flow' of meanings that circulate around the media text (2010:41). Observations that accord with earlier definitions of transmedia as proposed by Kinder (1991) and Klinger (1989), about the way

that meaning is created through the transmedia linking of one text to another and how therefore paratextuality is fundamentally intertextual (2010:31). Gray too, suggests that paratextuality can be regarded as a 'subset of intertextuality' (2010: 117). He makes distinctions between the kinds of paratexts that make up the 'paratextual surround' including entryway marketing texts encountered before viewing, in-media-res paratexts encountered during the course of interactions with a media text, as well as post-viewing paratexts such as social media-based 'interpretive communities' for retrospective consideration of the experience. The result, he argues, is that the media viewing is almost always mediated by paratextual media (2010:35; 2010:139). Indeed, he suggests that paratexts may by default even become the text, if an audience never sees a film, and the only experience they have of a film is its paratext (2010:46). In short, Gray's argument is that paratexts can indicate how a text is meaningful for its audiences and the wider culture (2010:26).

Gray goes onto observe how these paratexts increasingly undertake narrative functions by providing anticipatory clues of future texts, narrative continuity with previous texts, as well as contributing supplementary material about film narrative universes (2010:43). Adopting Genette's argument, Gray asserts that similarly film paratexts provide the 'thresholds' that enable audiences to make sense of the experience (2010:26). Moreover, his examination of media paratexts is not confined to the spheres of marketing and promotion. In the final chapter of his book, he considers viewer/audience created paratexts and points to the way audience-created paratexts may indicate different ways in which a film is enjoyed, and to reiterate Jenkins et. al, how audiences have become active participants in the construction and circulation of textural meaning (2010:145). Indeed, Gray suggests that audience paratexts may have the power to influence the ways in which a film is comprehended too (ibid.).

So, the concept of paratextuality adds an important dimension to the discussion of film websites. Marketing and promotional paratexts circulate in the space between audiences, industry and film, shaping interactions between them. But paratextual facility to shape audience experiences is often assumed, rather than investigated first -hand. Gray concludes that this new field of media analysis seeking to understand the plethora of paratexts that scaffold the contemporary film experience may even occupy a discreet field called 'off screen studies' and expand the definition of what 'counts' as screen culture (Gray, 2010:4; Grainge, 2012:10).

By the time Sarah Atkinson publishes *Beyond the Screen: Emerging Cinema & Engaging Audiences* four years later, it is interesting to note how, for her, distinctions between paratexts and texts have dissolved as she regards film websites as 'extending' forms of cinema (2014:15). Atkinson suggests that traditional kinds of paratext are reconfiguring into transmedia artefacts that seamlessly integrate into the film experience as a whole (2014:15). What were regarded primarily as commercial texts have transformed into

'integrated' narrative extensions which pervade and affect the psychic spaces of the audience' and Atkinson refers to these kinds of transmedia paratextuality as 'off screen studies' too (2014:15). She uses a textual analysis approach in her consideration of film websites considering a selection of notables campaigns which together form the beginnings of a 'genealogy' of film paratexts: from the 'companion websites' that accompanied Darren Aronofsky's *Requiem for a Dream* (2000) to the real world ARG campaigns for Christopher Nolan's *The Dark Knight* (2008) (2014:23; 2014:33) Through this textual survey, she develops a grammar of narrative styles and techniques to map their different narrative functions and the diversity of their stylistic features, representations and thematic characters as dramatic; expositional; diegetic characteristics; and diegetic functions (2014:26). Through undertaking close textual study and deploying literary and filmic terminology, Atkinson accords this new artefact legitimacy as an art form, worthy of academic attention.

Like Gray, Atkinson is an advocate of extended cinema's paratexts as 'legitimate objects of study'. (Atkinson, 2014:17). Although this advocacy is accompanied by an acknowledgement that these objects bring with them considerable practical challenges for the researcher. Specifically Atkinson notes three key threats to the study of transmedia paratextuality: firstly, that paratextual artefacts by nature are subordinate to the main event of the film release, and therefore within the industry are regarded in purely pragmatic terms of little intrinsic value in their own right; secondly, paratexts are also 'time-based, time dependent and predicated on real-time synchronic activities' which often results in ephemerality and that in the future these forms will not be retrievable to analyse; and thirdly, by definition transmedia paratexts are dispersed across media platforms with the implication that audience experiences and engagement is also dispersed and multiple interpretive communities challenge any coherent audience study. Yet Atkinson still concludes that these new filmic objects really are an 'unparalleled cultural form' (2014a:17).

1.11 Transmedia Histories & Archaeologies

This literature review has demonstrated how the first wave of scholarship in the field of transmedia is primarily concerned with what was new and distinctive about transmedia, summed up in the title of a blog post by Henry Jenkins titled, 'I have seen the futures of Entertainment and it works!' (2008). Jenkins describes transmedia storytelling as a 'new aesthetic' and he is not the only scholar to focus on what is novel about transmedia artefacts (2006:20-1). Likewise, Carlos Scolari asserts that 'transmedia storytelling proposes a new narrative model' (2009:586), while 'How to' manuals refer to transmedia as 'the hot new thing' (Phillips, 2012:5; Giovagnoli, 2011:16). However today there is a growing recognition of the need to situate the concept of transmedia in relation to the past as well. So, in a chapter titled 'The Reign of the 'Mothership': Transmedia's Past, Present and Possible Futures' Jenkins commences this process by outlining a genealogy of

transmedia across the twentieth century from L. Frank Baum and his *Wizard of Oz* to The Wachowski Brother's *Matrix* project (2014:244-268).

More recently Jenkins has reflected on his earlier writings that his preoccupation with what was new about transmedia did not mean he advocates a 'total break with the past' and points to the continuity of transmedia storytelling with similar practices in the past (2017). However, while transmediation is widely regarded as the consequence of recent economic and technological change. Roberta Pearson warns of the dangers of this:

> 'Conceiving of transmedia storytelling as arising solely from present conditions of media, industrial and technological convergence risks misunderstanding the phenomenon as being fully dependent on those conditions, rather than pre-existing them.' (Pearson in Scolari, Bertetti and Freeman, 2014: vii)

For other scholars, historicising the concept of transmedia has been undertaken with reference to past conceptions for further insight. Transmedia Designer, Stephen Dinehart revisits Wagner's 1895 vision of the Gesamtkunstwerk – a 'total artwork' - in an endeavour to comprehend the aspirations of 360-degree transmedia entertainment today (2010). Christy Dena draws on the writings of one of the founders of the 1960s Fluxus movement, Dick Higgins, on what he refers to as 'intermedia', to understand the challenges that transmedia productions have integrating different platforms into a single work, when some platforms are perceived as art and others are not (2010).

The most frequently used approach to a historical perspective is the drawing of analogies with past art forms, to understand the present. Angela Ndalianis likens contemporary transmedia aesthetics to 17thcentury aesthetics (2005:5). Despite different social and historical conditions, she asserts that there are notable similarities between 17th-century Baroque art and 21st-century entertainment which she terms 'neo baroque' (Ibid.). Through a reading of George Lucas's *Star Wars* (1977), she demonstrates how its narrative seriality and expanding stories draw its audience in 'multiple directions to different media'. She goes to assert that the film series' capacity for spectacle can be understood as a baroque sensibility too (2005:25). Like Harvey's work on Science Fiction and Fantasy transmedia artefacts, Ndalianis argues that neo-baroque styling is dependent on audience memory for its affect. As the film series progresses, meaning relies on an audience capable of making sense of films riddled with intertextual references and allusions (2005:26). In sum, Ndalianis concludes that historic parallels provide insight to understanding the significance of these cultural objects in the present (2005:6).

Consideration of transmedia's predecessors has the benefit of situating these practices within the broader historical context. Fabrice Lyczba's work on marketing and exhibition practices in Hollywood in the 1920s is interesting in this regard (2012). What became known as 'Ballyhoo' consisted of marketing stunts and staged events designed to extend

the film's diegetic space into the audiences' world, and recruit audiences for upcoming film releases in the cinema (2012). Lyczba argues that this playful mode of spectatorship which he calls a 'cinema of interactions', after Gunning's notion of the 'cinema of attractions', is at once coherent with the film's story world, but not content-based at the same time, and this is a form of engagement that can be seen once again, in transmedia film websites today (Lyczba, 2012).

In 'A History of Transmedia Entertainment' in Jenkins et al.'s online extended version of *Spreadable Media*, Derek Johnson observes that transmedia entertainment does not suggest that industrial models of cultural production are coming to an end (Johnson, 2013a). Quite to the contrary. He observes that 'spreadable media extend, reorient, and reimagine existing historical trajectories in the industrial production and consumption of culture' (Ibid.). Johnson's historical account may begin with potters in Ancient Greece and transmediations of the bible through painting and icons, but it also recognises their industrial production in film versions of the ten commandments (Ibid.). He describes how the industrialisation of transmedia practices imposed legal frameworks of ownership on these artefacts, and this has led to specific kinds of historical studies emerging (Ibid.). Recent research studies have been undertaken on transmedia characters such as Avi Santo's examination of *The Green Hornet* and *The Lone Ranger* (2006, 2015), Fast and Örnebring's study of development of *The Shadow* detective which began as a radio voice over and was promoted to his own comics, novels, TV adaptations and films (2015), as well as Michael Kackman's work on *Hopalong Cassidy* (2008) which is subject to trademark laws and licensing agreements as the character traverses media platform's institutional boundaries (Johnson,2013a). Later Johnson argues that characters like Batman developed as a result of the media conglomerations of the 1980s and 90s, with their synergistic production cultures, as well as through emerging digital technologies (Ibid.). Johnson concludes that examples like this demonstrate how transmedia characters evolve within a network of legal, economic and technological determinants and concurs with Ndalianis' view that the value of historicising transmedia is that it enables a better understanding of transmedia in the present (Ibid).

The most extensive research into the history of transmedia practices, to date, can be found in the work of Matthew Freeman. In a co-authored book with Carlos Scolari and Paolo Bertetti, Freeman proposes that transmedia practices today bear many of the hallmarks of the work of earlier 20th-century figures such as L. Frank Baum and Walt Disney (Freeman 2014a, 2014b, Scolari, Bertetti and Freeman, 2014). Freeman observes how pulp magazines, comics strips, radio of the 1930s and 40s which make up the Superman transmedia story world, take remarkably similar forms to current events, serialisation and participatory kinds of audience engagement (2014:41). From this research he concludes that the assumption that transmedia storytelling derives from technological and industrial convergence is not the whole story. But rather that the narrative strategies of transmedia storytelling are contingent upon the 'alignment' of multiple fields of media production at

particular moments in time, which predates digital convergence (2014:40). Freeman's thesis is developed further in a series of interviews, journal articles, as well as his monograph, *Historicising Transmedia* (2016). Rather than looking for analogies between the current model of transmedia and cultural configurations in the past, as other scholars have done, in his work Freeman advocates investigation of the industrial-cultural circumstances at specific times during the 20th century (2014a; 2014b; 2015; 2016).

Freeman demonstrates how the development of early 20th-century forms of advertising gave rise to industrial transmedia storytelling (Freeman, 2014:2362). Through an examination of L. Frank Baum's, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900), Freeman describes how Baum was interested in the possibilities of 'visual advertising' and had written about the art of department store window dressing (2014:2365). He noted that the value of visual advertising was that it could turn the processes of consumption into a form of entertainment, and thereby blur distinctions between content and promotion (Freeman, 2014:2364). For Baum, shop window dressing, in effect, turned window 'shoppers' into 'audiences' and shopping into a form of entertainment (Freeman, 2014:2367). Freeman suggests this was one of the foundational consumer practices upon which industrial transmedia was based (2014:2366). Baum went onto develop a complex transmedial scheme to advertise the novel's sequel, *The Marvellous Land of Oz* in 1904 (Freeman, 2014:2369). He created mock newspapers and comic strips that formed a narrative bridge between the novels, filling in the gaps between one version and its sequel which Freeman describes as 'narrative-fronted promotional content' that bears close similarity to the role of film websites (Freeman, 2014:2371). From Mickey Mouse in the 1920s, and Tarzan in the 1930s, to Superman in the 1940s, Freeman argues we can see the precursors of contemporary transmedia film marketing campaigns (Freeman, 2014:2378). Moreover, through an exploration of these examples of precursors, it becomes clear that the industrial strategies of transmedia storytelling today are, indeed, not new, but, in Johnson's words, 'reorientations within these practices' (2013a)

What distinguishes this contribution to the critical examination of the concept of transmedia is evident in the title of Scolari et al.'s *Transmedia Archaeology* which signals a shift from 'historical' to 'archaeological' ways of examining the past (2014). Freeman develops this methodological approach in his recently published *Historicising Transmedia*, advocating that by 'revisiting old media, a richer understanding of new media's complex contradictory roles in contemporary culture may be achieved' (2017:9). Clearly the approach taken by these authors is media archaeological in that their investigations move back into the past from the present, in search of what they describe as 'textual fossils' to reconstruct - both how such transmedia properties were produced, and indeed consumed by their audiences (2014:6). Moreover, this approach is implicitly informed by what Thomas Elsaesser terms 'new film history' which seeks to avoid narratives of causality, and identify continuities with the past, rather than treating the present as a break with what preceded it (2004:75). It is in this vein, that this thesis seeks to contribute to knowledge, by

continuing to investigate what new knowledge and understandings a media archaeological approach to the history of transmedia may yield.

1.12 Taking Stock: Reviewing the Literature Review

As this review comes to an end, it is important to reflect on this body of writing and identify commonalities, disparities and lacunae in the existing literature. The research project began by taking its cue from an etymological excavation of the term transmedia using Google's Ngram tool. As was illustrated here, nomenclature provides a clear indicator of the way the literature has conceptualised transmedia: from transmedia intertextuality to transmedia storytelling; from transmedia practices to transmedia audiences and transmedia memory; then transmedia marketing and promotion and transmedia paratextuality. As the word transmedia gained purchase, not just within academic scholarship but within the entertainment industries too, it became a catchphrase for all trans, cross or multi-media forms. However, while scholarly writings debate the different inferences of prefixes, a consensus emerges, when the concept of transmedia is adopted by institutional bodies like the BBC in the UK, and industrial organisations like the PGA (Producer's Guild of America) in the US, and the term becomes established. What is significant for the thesis's interests in the development of film websites, is that the PGA's definition of transmedia practices includes 'narrative commercial and marketing rollouts' which effectively elides distinctions between content and promotion in transmedia. The result is that marketing and promotional texts are now part of the 'story' and, to fully understand the contemporary film experience, must be examined.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, one of the common denominators in the literature is an awareness that recent transformations in the industries have had an impact on the nature of the film experience. For Kinder, Klinger, Jenkins and others, globalisation, conglomeration as well as the processes of digitisation in the media industries in the 1990s are manifest in the changing relationships between media platforms. Symptomatic of this is that much of the early writing on transmedia is intent on mapping new relations in the field. This cartographic sensibility often deploys graphic schemas to represent the dynamics of relations between media platforms across dimensions, or through vectors, on different levels and within matrices. The direction of informational flow between media platforms is represented as horizontal or vertical movement, from centres to peripheries, and through circles traversed by centrifugal and centripetal forces to model how relations operate. But while writers conceive of the dynamics of transmedia relations in different ways, what they all agree is that this has resulted in a blurring of the distinction between content and promotion which supports the assertion in this thesis that promotional film websites are indeed worthy of scholarly attention.

What has also become clear from reading this body of literature is that transmedia scholarship tends to focus on 'end-product traits'- the products, rather than the processes of their making (Dena, 2009:107). The result is that much of the literature reviewed here about transmedia artefacts has been concerned with bringing the contours of its multiple media iterations into focus. However, as Dena argues, the changes wrought by industrial and technological shifts are evident in transmedia practices too (2009: 99). Media production practices have had to evolve to facilitate transmediation including new forms of project management, new roles, new tools and techniques too. Clearly, in order to better understand transmedia, design and production processes need to be examined as well as end-products and Dena is not alone in noticing this tendency (Caldwell in ed. Grainge, 2011: 175; Britton in eds. Ibrus and Scolari, 2012: 221; Gray, 2010: 220). However, while there have been some developments in the field, scholars agree that consideration of how transmedia artefacts are produced continues to remain largely absent from the literature. (Britton in eds. Ibrus and Scolari, 2012:221). Indeed, the whole production culture of film marketing and promotion is largely effaced by its operation which is designed to sell films, not draw attention to itself.

Some advancements have been made in this area. Grainge and Johnson's study of the Lionsgate's campaign for *The Hunger Games* films in *Promotional Screen Industries* was notable, although their focus was on the distribution company's global marketing network and the contribution of Watson Design Group who created the award-winning campaign for *The Hunger Games* remains unacknowledged in the account. However recently, Jeff Gomez's transmedia development company, Starlight Runner that coordinated Walt Disney's transmedia campaigns, provided a corrective to this when he gave an insightful account about his company's working practices on the *Pirates of the Caribbean* although by his own admission, such processes continue to remain 'rarely described' (Gomez in Freeman et al.,2018:207). It appears that whilst there is no shortage of how-to manuals on transmedia production, it would still be true to say that production practices, processes and the wider production cultures of film marketing and promotion remain poorly represented in the literature.

With the advent of second-generation digital environments, and the evolution of what is described as 'participatory culture', there has been a discernible shift in conceptions of what it means to be an audience. For commentators who come from a fan studies perspective like Matt Hills, participation brings enhanced agency for audience and this agency has furnished audiences with opportunities for collaboration and creativity, behaviours he argues were previously confined to fan sub-cultures. Whereas other scholars like Johnson and Wessells are more sceptical. From a Marxist-informed perspective that views media industry relations with audiences in terms of economic relations, they recognise audiences may be willing participants, but regard these relations as little more than new forms of exploitation as media producers commandeer online audiences' community spaces for their

own profitable ends and audiences, *de facto*, provide their labour for free. The most productive audience-led transmedia studies can be found in the work of Colin Harvey. Taking his cue from Web 2.0, he inverts earlier mappings of transmedia dynamics, by situating the audience at the centre of transmedia projects, effectively connecting platforms together through the experiential memory of its audience. In other words, for him, transmedia can <u>only</u> be actualised through its audiences' experiences of them.

Conventionally film marketing and promotional materials have been regarded as only having utilitarian value and, from an industry perspective, the means to justify the ends in the form of cinema box office returns. Film marketing and promotion has been examined by scholars from the disciplines of Business and Film, and so is inherently multidisciplinary. However, a growing body of scholarship has begun to change this. Many recent studies of film trailers, film marketing and their online counterparts conclude that marketing and promotional artefacts do more than just provide publicity and merit closer consideration. Moreover, as consideration of this area gathers momentum, we see the first PhD awarded in online film marketing, and growing scholastic attention by Grainge, Johnson, Gray and others not only indicates interest in the area but is defining it as a new field of study.

Gray makes the case for the study of paratexts because he argues film marketing and promotional materials not only inform audiences about films, they shape their experience and enable them to make sense of films. Gray's book on the subject titled *Show Sold Separately* is significant in two ways: firstly, he demonstrates that paratextual artefacts from trailers and toys to tie-in publications are inherently transmedial; and secondly, by drawing on literary theory and analysing these artefacts as 'texts', he accords them the status of cultural objects worthy of study. Indeed, he asserts that paratexts might be regarded as 'off screen studies' (2010:4). This changing attitude towards transmedia marketing and promotion is confirmed a few years later when Atkinson writes *Beyond the Screen* and makes the case for extending the definition of the contemporary cinema experience (2014). She regards narrative film web sites as integral part of what she describes as 'extended cinema' (2014a:17). The accumulation of scholarly voices here confirms the value of examining the development of the film website in this thesis.

The most recent development within transmedia studies is the move to historicise what had been predominantly regarded as a new phenomenon until recently. Various approaches to the historicisation of transmedia have been adopted but the methodological premise which has gained most traction is what is called transmedia archaeology. This has proved productive in drawing parallels between early 20th century promotional practices and contemporary transmedia. The archaeological approach to transmedia history developed by Freeman, Scolari and Bertetti bears the hallmark of Marshall McLuhan's famous aphorism of a 'rear view mirror' whereby he asserts that we look at the present through a rear-view mirror – 'We march backwards into the future' by glancing at what's behind from time to time to orient ourselves so we understand where we come from in the

past (1967:74-5). Moreover, as McLuhan commentator, Robert Logan attests, in this way the past is regarded, not as a series of events but more as a ‘dynamic process with a discernible pattern that repeats itself from culture to culture and from technology to technology’ (2010:359). This concurs with Freeman’s proposition that transmediation is consequence of the alignment of cultural and industrial interests at a particular time (2014a, 2014b, 2015, 2016).

However, while this archaeological strategy of drawing of parallels between early twentieth century practices and contemporary transmedia has proved enlightening, the ‘rear view mirror’ approach to understanding history has its limitations. As McLuhan and Parker point out, there is nothing wrong with this approach, but the past cannot serve as a navigational guide to the new because it doesn’t account for what is different in the present (1968: xxiii). Audience experiences of, and encounters with the transmedia worlds of Oz are understood as a consequence of the mode of reception defined by producers and the account of them in these archaeologies is confined to a few published reader’s letters (Freeman, 2014c:46-47). Today, however, the participatory nature of social media constitutes a radical departure from the models of transmedia from the start of the twentieth century, as they contain an abundance of audience participatory utterances and practices that will have to be taken into consideration in any history of transmedia since the advent of the web.

The transmedia media archaeologist Bertetti outlined three approaches to the historicising of transmedia that have emerged in recent years: firstly, a narratological approach that focuses on textural, and sometimes semiotic analysis, narrational continuity and shared story worlds; secondly, a focus on fictional characters which explores how they are built and spread across media, as well as the economic, legal and productive mechanisms that fostered their development; and the third approach is consideration of audiences, their experiences and contributions to transmedia productions (2018:267). However, Bertetti devotes only a short paragraph to this last approach to the historicising of transmedia history. Apart from Carlos Scolari’s study of the comic fable, *El Eternauta* as a transmedia icon of popular resistance against military dictatorships in 1950s Argentina, to date, few studies have dealt with historical forms of participatory culture’ (Freeman et al., 2018: 267). So, it can be concluded that, for the most part until now, transmedia archaeological studies tend to focus on the textural features of transmedia and the cultural infrastructures that made them possible, while research on transmedia audience experiences remains limited.

In this review of literature on the concept of transmedia I have had to approach this enquiry through a number of different perspectives from the algorithmic processes of Google’s NGram to survey the currency of the term, to texts about the economics of the creative industries and media convergence. I have drawn on writings from television

studies, media studies, film studies, marketing and audience studies, the new field of off-screen studies and the emerging field of transmedia archaeology, in order to make sense of the different ways in which the term has been deployed at different stages by different scholarly perspectives. This survey of the term's antecedents and various iterations has clearly entailed a transdisciplinary approach and so a methodology to examine a transmedia artefact will need to be sufficiently flexible to investigate the historical circumstances in which transmedia artefacts exist. To this end the next chapter the thesis embarks on a consideration of media archaeology.

Chapter 2: Approaches to Media Archaeology

2.1 Introduction

This research project seeks to investigate an aspect of the contemporary film experience which is both ubiquitous and invisible at the same time. Today film websites have become so commonplace, they are, for the most part, taken for granted. Indeed, we would find it odd if a film did not have a website, and yet this ubiquity brings with it a cloak of invisibility too. Film websites are regarded as marketing and promotion and invariably overlooked by film scholarship, journalism and criticism, and therefore rendered invisible.

To illustrate, it is interesting to note that *The Grand Budapest Hotel: Akademie Zubrowka* site, designed by the digital marketing agency WatsonDG, in collaboration with Wes Anderson, won the 2015 *Webby* award for best website in the movie and film category. Yet a survey of critical commentary using the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF) database shows that writings on Anderson's work cover every aspect of the film's production, but barely any consideration has been given to the website at all. *The Grand Budapest Hotel* 's site is wonderfully inventive. Designed as an in-world companion to the film, it depicts the fictional alpine republic of Zubrowka at the start of the 20th century, complete with a world war one-style syllabus of lessons about the history and culture of this make-believe country (Watson DG, 2017). In keeping with its fictional time, the site is viewed via a simulated microfiche machine, viewing lens loader and navigational wheel to move through the digital 'slides' (Ibid). What this example demonstrates is how Wes Anderson has developed a story world for the plot, providing additional detail which could not be incorporated into the film, yet this component of his film remains largely unacknowledged. In a paper for the *Futures of Entertainment* conferences hosted by the MIT Convergence Culture Consortium titled 'How to Ride a Lion: A Call for a Higher Transmedia Criticism', Henry Jenkins' former postgraduate student, Geoffrey Long made the case for the development of a critical language for transmedia, akin to that for cinema (2011a). He calls for 'transmedia reviews', like film reviews to broaden audience awareness of this kind of multiplatform experience, as well as 'transmedia criticism' to nurture a better critical understanding of transmedia practices by academics and professionals (2011a).

This thesis concurs with Geoffrey Long's clarion call for the critical appraisal of these transmedia artefacts as they appear to be at risk of becoming part of what has been described as the 'vanishing present'[1] (2011a, b, c). Once film websites have fulfilled their function as marketing materials for forthcoming theatrical releases, they have no further

[1] This phrase was adopted from the *Society for Historical Archaeology conference in* 2008 titled 'The Archaeology of ten Minutes Ago: Material Histories of the Burgeoning Past and Vanishing Present' that advocated that by historicising the present, consideration may be given to the question of what becomes remembered and what becomes forgotten (eds. Holtorf & Piccini, 2011:9-10).

use, no value and become redundant. Subsequently they are often taken down from the web to make space for the marketing of new forthcoming theatrical releases, while the films they promote may remain available to view on different home viewing formats, as well as internet streaming options. My concern is that while websites are designed in conjunction with films and other transmedia components of a production, they are discarded, even before they have been appraised for their contribution to the 21st century film viewing experience.

So, the overarching aim of this thesis is to investigate the development of film websites since the advent of the commercial web in 1994. However, embarking on this research into defunct film websites generated its own set of challenges. At the start of this research project, the intention was to explore the development of film websites addressing the research questions outlined in the introduction, but before the research could be undertaken, methodological strategies had to be established.

2.2 Media Archaeology

Media archaeology is a relatively new field but should not be confused with the discipline of archaeology (eds. Huhtamo and Parikka, 2011:3). Unlike archaeology which excavates sites for evidence of the way people lived in the past, media archaeology excavates archives and collections in search of what has been termed 'discursive and material manifestations of culture' (Ibid.).

Two key publications define the emerging field of media archaeology. They are *Media Archaeology: Approaches, Applications and Implications* (eds. Huhtamo and Parikka, 2011) and its companion volume, *What is Media Archaeology*? (Parikka, 2012). Both were written and edited by the digital media scholar, Jussi Parikka who currently holds a Professorial chair in Technological Culture & Aesthetics at Winchester School of Art. Parikka claims that the 2011 anthology is the first collection of writings to be published in the field of media archaeology (Parikka in eds. Huhtamo and Parikka, 2011:2). Since then, he has published three further books: *Insect media: An Archaeology of Animals and Technology* (2010); *The Geology of Media* (2015); and *Digital Contagions: A Media Archaeology of Computer Viruses* (2016) which he describes as an exemplar of how to 'do' media archaeology (2016:255).

In the companion volumes, Parikka brings together a collection of writings under the umbrella title of media archaeology, although he is at pains to acknowledge that the authors themselves do not necessarily regard their work, first and foremost, as media archaeology (eds. Huhtamo and Parikka, 2011:2). Many of the field's antecedents, including Walter Benjamin, Aby Warburg, Erwin Panofsky, Ernst Robert Curtius and Marshall McLuhan, discussed in the introduction to the collection, sit within other disciplines, and even transdisciplinary contexts (Goddard, 2015:1763). However, Parikka suggests that

these collective writings represent the range of philosophical perspectives in this emerging area of academic enquiry and proposes media archaeology as a fresh approach to media history:

> 'Media archaeology is not a school of thought or a specific technique but is an emerging attitude and cluster of techniques in contemporary media theory that is characterised by a desire to uncover and circulate repressed or neglected media approaches and technologies' (Hertz, 2010).

Huhtamo and Parikka's anthology includes scholarship that has a media archaeological sensibility and has taken a media archaeological approach to its studies of the past including the work of Michel Foucault, Friedrich Kittler, Walter Benjamin, Siegfried Zielinski, Wolfgang Ernst, Wendy Hui Kyong Chun and Erkki Huhtamo among others (2011). What these writers share, Parikka explains, is an interest in how histories are written, as well as constructing 'alternate histories of suppressed, neglected, and forgotten media' which have been side-lined by the conventional teleological narratives of media histories from the past which end with 'the present media-cultural condition as their 'perfection' (eds. Huhtamo and Parikka, 2011:3). It is these sentiments which seem to be particularly promising to a research project aiming to undertake a historical examination of the hybrid form of content and promotion found in film websites (Ibid.). So, it is from this loose affiliation of critical writings known as media archaeology that this thesis draws its methodological foundations. Parikka points out that practical models of how to undertake media archaeology cannot straightforwardly be derived from these writings but suggests that these writings *afford* ways of theorising media history (Hertz, 2010). Through a consideration of selected writings, methodological tools are developed so I can address the questions posed at the start of each of the chapters that follow.

To begin, this chapter sets out to establish the nature of media archaeology. On careful reading of these collected writings it becomes apparent that a media archaeological approach does not derive from the work of a single authoritative source. Neither is there any clearly defined school, discipline or journal that could be seen as central to media archaeology, although there is a Facebook group site managed by Parikka and Hertz that boasts a membership of around 7000 members (eds. Huhtamo and Parikka, 2011:2). As the co-editors of this anthology state:

> 'Although this term does designate an academic discipline (there are no public institutions, journals, or conferences dedicated to it), it has appeared in an increasing number of studies, and university courses and lectures have also been given under this heading. As their highly divergent syllabi and reading lists testify, there is no general agreement about either the principles or terminology of media archaeology. Yet the term has inspired historically tuned research and is beginning

to encourage scholars to define their principles and to reflect on their theoretical and philosophical implications'(Ibid.)

Indeed, Parikka points out that media archaeology is not confined to one discipline and should be regarded as a 'travelling discipline' (Ibid.). In an interview with Garnet Hertz, published in the academic journal, *CTheory*, Parikka offers up a refinement of his definition of this emerging field, 'Media archaeology exists somewhere between materialist media theories and the insistence on the value of the obsolete and forgotten through new cultural histories that have emerged since the 1980s' (Hertz, 2010).

It is this contention which provides a clearer sense of direction for the methodological underpinnings for this research. Whilst Parikka's collections of writings respond to the challenge of interpreting the past in different ways, at its core, media archaeology is shaped by two European figures, Michel Foucault, and Friedrich Kittler, who between them represent the spectrum of ways of thinking that characterise the field (eds. Huhtamo and Parikka, 2011:8). Given their influence on much of the writing and practice in the area, it may be useful to consider the writings of these scholars first to establish how each, in turn, conceives their media archaeological principles.

2.3 Foucault and Discourse Principle

Michel Foucault's approach to history and historiography finds its clearest articulation in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* first published in 1969. He begins with an observation that it is common to reference historical time frames by temporal 'unities' (2002:4). However, Foucault suggests that commonly used unities such as 'periods' or 'centuries' are principally designed to cultivate narrational coherence rather than consider the 'actualities of the past' (Ibid.). He goes on to critique history's preoccupation with origins, traditions and what he refers to as 'the discourse of the continuous' that he regards as a 'plastic continuity' – all of which are often accepted without question (2002:13;167). Foucault is sceptical about chronological accounts of the past which he describes as a 'crude calendar' too (2002:184). Moreover, he advises that we should be suspicious of accounts of the past that include these 'readymade syntheses', as they transform all encounters with the past into chronological, predominantly linear narratives and are preoccupied with these discursive imperatives rather than seeking to understand the underlying drivers that construct events and attitudes (Foucault: 2002:24).

Whilst Foucault does not discuss the media *per se* in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, he does discuss how a subject is constituted by all the statements that are said about it at a given time which he terms 'discourse' principle, so by inference, Foucault considers the means of communication (Hertz, 2010; Foucault 2002:34). He develops this principle further arguing that discourse does not just describe, but constructs what we know about a subject, thereby defining and producing the object of knowledge (2002:36). Indeed

discourse, he argues, determines the way a topic can be meaningfully talked about, and, in turn, this influences how ideas are put into practice (Ibid.) Foucault argues that the clearest illustration of the operation of discourse can be seen in a diachronic analysis of what constitutes the knowledge about an object, and how it changes over time (2002:35-36).

Foucault continues his critique of the conventions of historiography maintaining they elide any awareness of the construction and contingency of how we know, what we know about the past (Foucault, 2002:45). This is a concern reiterated by Parikka with regards to media histories when he writes:

> 'The past has been visited for facts that can be exciting in themselves, or revealing for media culture at large, but the nature of these 'facts' has often been taken as a given and their relationship to the observer and the temporal and ideological platforms he or she occupies left unproblematised' (2011:1-2).

To counter this problem Foucault proposes an 'archaeological' approach to historical enquiry (2002:155). From the perspective of this discussion about media archaeology, Foucault's conception of archaeology is conceptual rather than material. It is not so concerned with examining the physical artefact, but in uncovering the discursive formations which frame and condition our understanding of the past.

So, Foucault's proposition is that knowledge is knowable, in effect, by what is 'said' about it (Foucault, 2002:54). In the most basic sense this applies to the names things are given. If we look at the multitude of names by which film websites are described including 'transmedia' (Jenkins 2006:20), 'crossmedia' (eds. Ibrus and Scolari 2012:7), 'cross-media promotion' (Hardy, 2010), 'transvergent' (Transvergence Summit, 2013), 'ephemera' (Grainge in ed. Grainge, 2011:2), 'paratexts' (Gray, 2010:6) and 'viral marketing' (Ndalianis, 2012:129), we immediately get a clear sense of some of the features of the cultural artefact under consideration in this thesis. Prefixes like 'cross', 'trans' and 'multi' indicate that what we are looking at is not medium-specific but operates between and across other media forms. However, Foucault's proposition is not confined to words because evidently what is being 'said', in the discursive sense, extends beyond nomenclature (2002:54).

To illustrate, in the UK's BBC 2007 'multiplatform strategy', we have an example of media institutions developing policies around, and formalising transmedia extensions of television programmes (Grainge, 2011:107-8). Meanwhile in the United States, the Producers' Guild of America (PGA) instituted a new credit for 'transmedia producer' in 2010 that formally recognised these new practices (Producers' Guild of America, 2010). A survey of nomenclature seems particularly helpful as a strategy for tracking the development of the concept of transmedia and clarifying how film websites are understood, as was evident in the literature review's examination of the term transmedia

in the previous chapter, the term can be mapped over a period to illustrate how 'statements' about transmedia have evolved (Foucault, 2002:90).

Foucault's approach provides a way of considering discursive media objects like film websites, not on their own but in relation to one another within a field, as well as the wider context of institutions like the BBC and industry bodies like the PGA (2002:46). Foucault goes on to say that names may give us clues about the ontology of the object, but it is relations which govern and determine who speaks, from which perspective, and from whence they acquire their legitimacy to speak, (2002:49-50). Although having established these parameters, Foucault cautions that we can never know the past in its totality. But what this approach to historical research can offer is an understanding of 'regions'- specific sites excavated by the research. (Foucault, 2002:148).

Foucault's adoption of archaeological idiom is in some ways paradoxical, as his approach does not extend to a consideration of the material artefact which we conventionally associate with the discipline. However, these limitations are compensated for by the second theoretical principle underpinning media archaeology derived from the work of the German scholar Friedrich Kittler and others collectively known as German media theory.

2.4 Kittler and the Materiality of the Media Principle

Kittler's principle is succinctly summed up in the opening sentence of the preface to *Discourse Networks 1800/1900*, that 'media determine our situation which - despite or because of it- deserves a description' (Kittler 1999:1). Building on the concept of 'discursive formation', Kittler shares an interest with Foucault in excavating the conditions in which knowledge arises but, rather than excavating the discursive, he is interested specifically in the technological conditions of communication media. Kittler's concern is that historically both literary and media studies tend to overlook the fact that all acts of expression are embedded in material practices (Kittler, 1999:18). It had been observed that whilst Foucault is interested in how libraries and archives shape what we know, in fact his interest does not extend to the consequences of storage and recording technologies deployed in these settings on the discursive formations of knowledge (Winthrop-Young, 2011:59). Kittler's critique of Foucault is that his work only refers to written archival sources and there is no acknowledgement that writing is but one medium among others and has already been superseded by media communications at the time when Foucault was writing *The Archaeology of Knowledge* in 1969. Interestingly Foucault died in 1984 just before the digital revolution began and Kittler notes:

> 'Even writing itself, before it ends up in libraries, is a communication medium, the technology of which the archaeologist [Foucault] simply forgot. It is for this reason that all his analyses end up immediately before that point in time at which other

> media penetrated the library stacks. Discourse analysis cannot be applied to sound archives or towers of film rolls' (Kittler, 1999:5).

Kittler's argument is that Foucault's methodology needed to be updated, as not all cultural expression takes the form of print. So how does he do this? His archaeological approach to media history is set out in the *Discourse Network* series where he traces the implications of the shift from the predominantly symbolic systems and significations of writing and print to the mechanical processes of analogue media which process the physical effects of the real (1992). Kittler later reflects on this shift and writes, 'Science is for the first time in possession of a machine that records noises regardless of so-called meaning' (Kittler, 1999:85). It is at this point he asserts that 'art gives way to media' and consideration of aesthetics should be superseded by a consideration of technical characteristics (Winthrop-Young, 2011:60). So, Kittler's media archaeology focuses pre-dominantly on nonhuman, non-visual elements such as software and hardware as well as storage, distribution and processing.

Kittler's work critiques the long-standing technological naïveté in media studies by insisting on a consideration of materiality of media. He examines the material conditions of media technologies in the wide range of media texts from Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) to the lyrics of 'Brain Damage' from Pink Floyd's *Dark Side of the Moon* (1973) (Kittler, 1999:86 and 36-7). He also observes that increasingly media operate independently of humans, and are neither reducible to content, nor their social or cultural condition (Parikka, 2012:68). In other words, media are not just stories, or visual representations of the world, but machines whose technical affordances shape the audience experience too (Ibid.). The wider implication of Kittler's brand of media archaeology is that it builds on the Lacanian premise that we do not speak language, it speaks us (Winthrop-Young, 2011, 34). From this perspective, the language of media technologies cannot just be regarded as language, but rather 'regimes' which we must accommodate ourselves to, in order to be functioning subjects in society (Parikka, 2012:70). It follows therefore that when we subject ourselves to these regimes, these technological regimes do not just provide agency, but also power (Ibid.) As Parikka notes, Foucauldian concepts of power have been transferred from 19th-century institutions like clinics and prisons to the hardware, software, protocols and circuits of digital media systems of today (Ibid.).

Taken together, the perspectives outlined here by Michel Foucault and Friedrich Kittler respectively mark out the spectrum of fundamental concerns that characterise what has become known as media archaeology. In the next section, a selection of media archaeological writings that are pertinent to the concerns of this investigation of the development of the film website will be identified for consideration. The chapter will then go onto outline how these epistemological principles inform the methodological approach taken in each of the subsequent three chapters of the thesis.

2.5 The Materiality Principle

The long-standing dearth of attention to materiality in the Humanities is noted by literary scholar, N. Katherine Hayles too:

> 'Within the Humanities and especially in literary studies, there has traditionally been a sharp line between representation and the technologies producing them. Whereas art history has long been attentive to the material production of the art object, literary studies has generally been content to treat fictional and narrative worlds as if they were entirely products of the imagination' (2002:19).

Moreover, media scholar Michael Goddard points out that this deficiency persists. He observes that the 'geological strata that underlie technical media systems and networks are frequently ignored by conventional media studies' (2015:1761). In response to this shortcoming, Parikka asserts that media archaeology can open new ways of thinking about materiality (Parikka, 2016: xxxii). He proposes that media archaeology may enable media studies to break away from 'the hegemony of representation analysis' which has been the main concern of the discipline (Parikka, 2016: xxxi). Moreover, he argues 'critical analysis of reality should methodically focus, not merely on reflections or representations of reality, but also regard reality itself as *under construction*' (Ibid). (My italics).

As film websites are grounded in technically mediated materiality and computational processes, there is a need to address these issues. These shortcomings in media studies are the focus of interest for a group of scholars who have become known as the 'Berlin group', the best known of whom is, perhaps, Wolfgang Ernst. Ernst founded the *Media Archaeological Fundus* at Berlin's Humboldt University, where he made a collection of 'dead media' such as telegraphy apparatus, electric telephones, early computers and mid-20th century TV sets (Owens, 2013)[2]. On examining these old, often obsolete machines, first hand, rather than generating a sense of nostalgia for 'dead media', Ernst advocates using these old machines as tools for media archaeology to analyse aspects of the media in ways that would otherwise escape the discourse of media history (2011:240).

He describes this machine analysis as a hands-on 'kind of epistemological reverse engineering' (Ernst 2013:55). By closely examining technical media as they work, he draws the conclusion that materially speaking, 'the cultural life of a media artefact is not the

[2] This was a concern shared by the Science Fiction writer Bruce Sterling, at the beginning of the digital era. In his proposal for a 'Dead Media' project, Sterling called for a 'deeper palaeontological perspective' right in the midst of the digital revolution – an architectural perspective on media history that would examine what Sterling referred to as our 'Net heritage' (1995).

same as its operational life span' and that material persistence of their forms undo 'historical distance simply by being present...even though their outside world has vanished' (Ernst in Huhtamo and Parikka, 2011:240). He gives the example of a radio built in 1930 during the National Socialist Regime in Germany still operational today until analogue is completely replaced by digitised transmission of signals (Ernst in Huhtamo and Parikka, 2011:240). From a media archaeological point of view, Ernst argues this provides an opportunity for reflection on the gap between these two otherwise separate times, and insight can be gained by examining the material processuality of obsolete media technologies (2013:57). In much the same way, it is my contention that film websites persist in their operations after the films they promote have left their circuits of distribution, and maybe examined in a similar way.

Ernst trained as a classicist and historian, and so has a long-held interest in historical archives (Parikka, 2011:53). In the introduction to *Digital Memory and Archive*, Parikka writes that one of the conclusions Ernst draws from his research is that history often overlooks media platforms, and how they condition what we know about the past (Parikka in Ernst, 2013:6). Clearly Ernst's approach is informed by Foucault's consideration of the archive (2013:69). Moreover, as Ernst is writing at the time of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of Germany in 1989, he is also sensitive to the role of the archive in the East Germany's Stasi which came to light at the time (Parikka, 2011:1). So, he proposes regarding archives as 'active agents in participating in 'media event's in the way they store, process, and transmit signals and act as a necessary condition of knowledge', rather than just storage for the preservation of media content (Ernst in Parikka, 2013:15). In other words, by engaging with media as technologies, rather than just as texts, Ernst asserts that media can be regarded as subjects that 'author' what they communicate in their own singular technical way (Ernst in Huhtamo and Parikka, 2011:241)[3]. Ernst describes the expressions of machines as a form of writing which he terms 'archaeography', and he concludes that 'mining' technical regimes of media may be insightful (Parikka, 2011:55).

To answer the first question in this research project, regarding where film websites may be collected, recorded and archived, the obvious place to embark on a search for historical film websites is through digital archives, museums, and other sites concerned with the preservation of media history. So, Ernst's media archaeological deliberations on the digital archive will provide a guiding light in this research enquiry. As he explains, it is in the 'machine' that the past becomes archived, and so attention must be given to the archival 'machines' as well as to their contents (2013:7). Ernst concludes this is a way to neutralise

[3] In a paper about Wolfgang Ernst and his approach to media history, Parikka drew attention to the way that Ernst's consideration of technology bore similarity to approaches developing in America (2011a:53) These included Software Studies and Platform Studies documented in Matthew Fuller's edited collection, *Software Studies: \ a lexicon* (2008); Noah Wardrip-Fruin's chapter in Huhtamo and Parikka's edited collection of Media Archaeological writings titled 'Digital Media Archaeology: Interpreting Computational Processes' (2009); as well as Platform Studies such as *Racing the Beam: The Atari Video Computer System* by N. Montfort and I. Bogost (2011:54).

the subjectivities of the historian as a storyteller, and to 'let an objective pastness of the past reappear' (Ernst 2013:45)

2.6 The Archival Principle

Kittler cautions that all media 'produce what it allegedly only reproduces' (Kittler, 1999:145) and by this definition media archives are not just concerned with selection, collection, preservation, conservation and storage, but through these processes, questions of how historical knowledge is constituted need to be addressed. For Ernst these considerations become increasingly pertinent as culture and its archives are increasingly stored in digital form, and indeed, the consequent changes in the way culture remembers that are shifting from official institutions to everyday media environments as computers with their storage capacity enable archiving to become an everyday activity (2013:16).

In *Digital Memory and Archive*, Wolfgang Ernst considers the implications for archives of the paradigmatic shift of the material form from analogue to digital, as it brings with it a materialist awareness and sensitivity to his examination of digital archives (2013:57). In online digital collections he argues, archives are no longer spaces but (http) addresses (2013:120). Consequently, Ernst suggests that digital archives can no longer simply be regarded as storage space for artefacts in the conventional understanding of the term (Ibid.). The technical operations of digital media reveal that the term has become something of a misnomer, as digital archives are not so much repositories, as 'cybernetic systems' (Ernst 2013:99). For Ernst, digital archives are better understood as systems of technological protocols, at best, 'a latent archive', as any software-generated media objects are only manifest through algorithmic processing (Ernst 2013:82). That is to say, digital artefacts, like the film websites under consideration in this thesis are not 'fixed data blocks' and therefore what is archived is not the object, but the source code from which the object can be regenerated (Ibid.)

So, Ernst suggests that as archives change, the way we understand them must change too (2013:77). For him 'time criticality' is the defining feature of digital archives, in the sense of the decisiveness of a temporal event in the digital process (2011:58-9). Ernst argues that it is more accurate to regard digital archives as 'time-based media' with their micro temporalities of processing and to acknowledge that things realised through these mechanisms cannot be archived in the conventional sense of the word (2013:99). Ernst is not alone in making this argument. Indeed, web historian, Richard Rogers is concerned about web archiving practise that privileges websites over other components because that is where 'content' resides in the conventional understanding of the term. Rather than other features of the web such as search engine results, advertising or embedded video, linked to by other content providers which could tell the researcher much about the core artefact (Rogers, 2013:63). In short Rogers argues the archived website, separated from its

commercial support system, third-part material as well as social media, is an incomplete artefact (Rogers,2013:64).

2.7 The Digital Memory Principle

In Parikka's collection of media archaeological writings, Wendy Hui Kyong Chun makes the argument that digital memory is a contradiction in terms and delivers a warning to the would-be researcher (2011). In 'The Enduring Ephemeral, or The Future is a Memory' Chun cautions that the presumption underpinning digital media is that they are always 'on', always 'there' and their primary characteristic is memory (Chun in eds. Huhtamo and Parikka, 2011:188). She describes how memory is digital media's unique selling proposition (USP), and implicit in the way digital media are conventionally sold to us as can be seen in the generic names of everyday digital artefacts like the 'CD-ROM' (Read Only Memory), 'RAM' (Random Access Memory) and the ubiquitous USB external flash drive, popularly known as a 'memory stick' (Ibid.). First impressions suggest digital media seem to promise longevity and the presumption follows is that if the internet is a memory archive, then surely it would enable the researcher to locate any film website from the past. However, Chun warns that this is not actually the case. She draws the conclusion that the 'conflation of memory with storage' that underpins digital media's 'archival promise', is an illusion. (Chun in eds. Huhtamo and Parikka, 2011:184)

Chun goes on to argue that in many ways, digital sources are no more permanent than their predecessor media. Digital sources degenerate when links break and sources are easily erased, and this has implications for digital archives (Chun in eds. Huhtamo and Parikka, 2011:192). Critical to the archaeological perspective, then, is an understanding of the material nature of the digital. Chun demonstrates that digital archives are not storage facilities at all, in the conventional sense of the word, but should be understood for what they really are, which is cybernetic systems that recreate/regenerate artefacts and any impression of permanence is a misconception (Chun in eds. Huhtamo and Parikka, 2011:197).

In sum then, Chun asserts that whilst the internet in many ways is about memory, it has no memory and Chun has characterised this seeming paradox in the phrase - the 'enduring ephemeral' (Chun in eds. Huhtamo and Parikka, 2011:197-8). She warns the intrepid researcher that archaeological expeditions into digital archives may provide more than just a time-travelling experience. Like Ernst's 'reverse engineering' of obsolete technologies, Chun suggests that encounters with the materiality of the archive raise issues about the preservation of the digital artefact, the conditions of its existence and, by implication, the ontology of digital memory (Ibid).

2.8 Temporality Principle

The adoption of an archaeological approach by some media historians was prompted by a fundamental dissatisfaction with what Parikka refers to as the 'myth of linear progress' (Kittler, 1999; Manovich 2001:8; Ernst, 2013:15; Chun in eds. Huhtamo and Parikka, 2011:191; Elsaesser, 2004:80). That is to say, a conception of history that regards the past as building blocks upon which the present is built and views the present as the epitome of progress (Parikka 2012:11). In view of this, each of these authors in Parikka's anthology of media archaeological writings endeavours to develop conceptual approaches to historical investigation that 'rewire time' and review history from fresh perspectives (Hertz, 2010). In her keynote lecture at a recent conference at Central St. Martins, University of the Arts, London, one of the contributors to the anthology, Wanda Strauven suggested media archaeology can be used in three radical ways: to 'hack' established media histories; as a 'conceptual laboratory'; and as a 'method to rethink temporality' (2018).

Ernst writes about the micro temporalities of machine time which he calls 'Eigenzeit', literally translated from the German as 'in their own time' (Ernst, 2013:58). This focus on the 'agency' of the machine necessitates a fundamental rethinking of the temporalities of the archive (Ernst, 2013:45). Rather than regarding the archive as a permanent repository in which artefacts are held for posterity, he suggests that digital archives encourage a review of the way we think about time (Ernst, 2013:12). He sees archives as essentially repetitive, rather than linear and progressive, as digital artefacts are generated and regenerated as required (Ernst, 2013:15). So, he argues, we need to revise our 'general cultural understanding of temporality' (Ibid). Chun too argues that repetition provides a way to measure and scale in an otherwise unfathomably large communication network like the internet. (Chun in eds. Huhtamo and Parikka, 2011:200). This notion of repetition finds other articulations in media archaeological research of a more discursive kind too, as becomes evident in the next section.

2.9 The Topos Principle

Errki Huhtamo examines the passage of time by tracing the repetition of the topos which he defines as 'a stereotypical formula evoked repeatedly in different guises for varying purposes' in different cultural contexts (eds. Huhtamo and Parikka, 2011:28). Huhtamo explains that the concept of the topos is not a new one (eds. Huhtamo and Parikka, 2011:29). Topos study was developed during the 1930s by a German scholar, Ernst Robert Curtius although his writings were not widely known outside Germany until two decades later, when his opus, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* was translated into English in 1953 (Ibid.). In turn Curtius's conception of the topos can be traced back to classical antiquity, where, with the emergence of democracy in the Greek city states around 460 BC, public speaking became an important communication skill for ordinary citizens as much as politicians. According to the Roman teacher Quintilian in his *Institutio Oratoria* (95ce), topoi are formulations of speech used in public speaking (Ibid.). These

formulations of speech are prized as effective ways of communicating ideas and regarded by Quintilian as '*argumentorum sedes*' meaning 'storehouses of trains of thought' (Ibid.). In the context of public oratory, the speaker was expected to memorise these topoic formulations of words and use them as 'aids in argumentation' (Gelley, 966:586). From the audience's point of view, the oratorical topos provides a recognisable point of reference by which audiences can orientate themselves, much like the repetition of a chorus in the bardic form (Ibid). However, with the decline of oratory in public life, the significance of topoi declines too, although it persists in education and literary cultures (eds. Huhtamo and Parikka, 2011:29). In this context the topos is effectively downgraded as a form of communication to where it becomes regarded as a cliché (Ibid.).

The Greek noun *topos* meaning commonplace or formulaic theme is essentially different from the term, trope that refers to the Greek verb *trepein* meaning 'to turn, to alter, to direct or to alter. However today the terms have much in common, but trope is more popularly used to refer to rhetorical or figurative devices, motifs or clichés (Cuddon and Habib, 2014:741). Topoi also have something in common with the concept of the meme proposed by Richard Dawkins in *The Selfish Gene* (2006), in that memes embody cultural knowledge that may be passed on to others. However, whilst the meme is the piece of cultural knowledge, a topoi is more like a metaphor or an allegory, which stands in for an idea the speaker wishes to convey but is not necessarily the idea itself. To illustrate how topoi emerge, Huhtamo cites the example of the phrase 'I saw it with my own eyes' and explains that the verbal expression becomes a frequently-used trope in correspondence home by travellers making grand tours around Europe in the 19th century (Huhtamo in eds. Huhtamo and Parikka, 2011:30). Huhtamo argues that whilst these intrepid travellers no doubt visited the sights they wrote about in letters home, very often the way they described what they saw, aped the authoritative guidebooks they took with them and he argues these travel writing tropes evolve into a topoic system over time (Huhtamo in eds. Huhtamo and Parikka, 2011:30).

For Huhtamo, topoi are 'the building blocks of cultural traditions' and they 'manifest both continuities and transformations in the transmission of ideas' (2013:16). Huhtamo proposes that tracing a topoi may provide a means for making sense of media culture over time, although Parikka observes Huhtamo's topos is, in some ways closer to media genealogy than media archaeology (Parikka, 2011:54). Huhtamo explains that it is important to be mindful that when we are in the presence of a topos, we are not looking at a natural phenomenon, but a representation (1997). Clearly, like Ernst, Huhtamo's conception is informed by Foucault as he uses Foucault's term when he refers to topoic representations as 'discursive meaning processors' that express meanings, perspectives, beliefs and ways of understanding the world (Huhtamo in eds. Huhtamo and Parikka, 2011:28). Furthermore, Huhtamo regards their generation, transmission, and their modification as historically contingent, and regards the topos as a context specific discursive phenomenon (Huhtamo in eds. Huhtamo and Parikka, 2011:34). While Curtius

confines his study to literary sources, Huhtamo takes a more ecumenical approach to topoi study because, in his view topoi can migrate and manifest across different media contexts (Ibid.). It is this, he maintains, that may provide a fuller picture of the lifespan of a topos (Ibid.).

For Huhtamo, the topos is best understood as 'a temporary manifestation of a persisting cultural tradition, linked by numerous threads with other cultural phenomena both from the past and from the cultural context within which the topos has made its appearance' (Huhtamo in eds. Huhtamo and Parikka, 2011:41). Moreover, understanding how topoi are co-opted by the media industries, Huhtamo argues, is a task for media archaeology (Ibid.). For the purposes of this research, topos study may provide a way to draw attention to, and analyse, promotional paratexts which fall outside the usual areas scrutinised in the discipline of film studies. Huhtamo asserts that topoic investigation is a way to 'penetrate accepted narratives, uncover gaps, omissions and silences' in media studies - what he refers to as scholarly 'lacunae' (Ibid).

Huhtamo concludes that topoi may serve many roles: as connectors to other cultural spheres; as commentaries and elaborations of media cultural forms, themes and fantasies; or even as formula deliberately used for ideological indoctrination (Ibid.). Moreover, recurrent topoi may point to broader cultural concerns and illuminate cultural patterns (Ibid.). For him, the 'discursive artefact' demonstrates how material things are transfigured into cultural phenomenon (Huhtamo, 2013:17). He describes topoi as 'shells' or 'vessels derived from the memory banks of tradition' with the implication that they are vehicles or carriers of certain meanings (Huhtamo in eds. Huhtamo and Parikka, 2011:28). However, while this topos may at first glance seem to be just an innocuous commonplace and, as such, a cliché, Huhtamo warns that topoi can be mistaken for facts, and it is their banality that we should be alert to, as it renders them invisible and belies their significance (eds. Huhtamo and Parikka, 2011:30).

2.10 The Limitations of Media Archaeology

As is evident then, media archaeological scholarship demonstrates an interest in the discursivity and materiality of media, but what is less forthcoming from these writings is consideration of how media are experienced by their audiences. The diminution of the human dimension of media is discernible in the writings of the key figures whose work underpins the approach outlined so far in this chapter. Foucault's work is critical of a form of history that makes 'human consciousness the original subject of all historical development' as he argues, it fails to grasp the underlying structures which constitute the discursive condition of their historical appearance (2002:13). Evidently Foucault's conception of discourse is more concerned with the factors that shape experience rather than people's experiences *per se*. This is clear in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* when Foucault summarises his approach to understanding the past as the examination of the

histories of droughts and irrigation, rather than experience of famines (2002:4). So, while Foucault's writings are instrumental to developing an understanding of cultural formations in the general sense, for him individual encounters are of less concern. For Foucault, archaeology is always a consideration of the 'plural' rather than the particular experience (2002:174).

At the other end of the spectrum, but with similar consequences, Friedrich Kittler's writings tend to focus on media hardware, which he regards as the core component of media apparatus, but he downplays the human dimension of media (Winthrop-Young, 2013:65). Describing Kittler's approach to media history, Winthrop-Young writes, 'Humans are at best the nodes and operators, necessary to keep the process going until the time arrives at which media are able to interact and evolve without any human go-between'(Ibid.).

Kittler's work is influential on Ernst and this technicist tendency is discernible in his writings about digital archives as well. Ernst argues for an approach to media history that is grounded in technically mediated materiality and computational processes which, he asserts, have been largely ignored by media studies in the past, in favour of a preoccupation with meaning and culture (2013:7-8). In his work on media apparatus, he concludes that it is at the level of mechanical operation that we need to understand media and non-human forms of machinic inscription (Ernst, 2013:9). In the light of this approach, Ernst asserts that machines may make 'better media archaeologists of culture, better than any human' (Ernst in eds. Huhtamo and Parikka, 2011:145).

Adopting the frequently-used idiom in media studies of 'the gaze', Ernst argues that 'the media archaeological gaze…is immanent to the machine (Ernst in eds. Huhtamo and Parikka, 2011:251). 'The Gaze' is a term used to describe the act of looking that sits at the heart of contemporary media studies. Various scholars adopt the term to explain relations between those who look, and those who are looked at. For example, Foucault refers to a form of looking he describes as the 'medical gaze' in his book *The Birth of the Clinic*: *An Archaeology of Medical Perception* to explain the dynamics of the relationship between the doctor and the patient (1963:9). Whilst in his later book *Discipline and Punish*: *The Birth of the Prison* (1975) Foucault gives an account of how the act of looking becomes inscribed into the prison regime of surveillance via the panopticon (1995:202-3). But perhaps the best-known use of the term in film studies is by Laura Mulvey in her polemic essay, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' in which she gives a feminist analysis of the gendered gaze to illustrate power relations between men and women on screen (1975).

Since then the term has been widely adopted by media scholars to interrogate power relations in different contexts, but it is in the work of Ernst that we see the concept attributed to a non-human entity. Ernst observes that the human input to digital media is

marginal as digital processes operate, ‘below the sensual thresholds of sight and sound - a level that is not directly even accessible to human senses because of its sheer electronic and calculating speed’ (Ernst, 2013:60). This is evident in the *Internet Archive*’s deployment of servers and automated programs known as ‘web crawlers’ or ‘bots’ that copy most web pages, so that to date the archive collection numbers 330 billion web pages (*Internet Archive*, 2019). Ernst concludes by proposing ‘Let us employ media archaeology to suspend our subject-centred interpretations for a moment’ (Ernst in eds. Huhtamo and Parikka, 2011:253), and thereby confirms that the human experience of media is not central to his concerns.

In sum then, media archaeologists are caricatured as ‘hard-ware, maniac assembler-devoted and anti-interface ascetics, fixed to a (military) history of media without regard to the present media culture’ (Lovink, 2003). And whilst that may be rather overblown criticism, media archaeology does seem to be less interested in the receiver in the communication process and is criticised as being ‘blind to both the content of media and *user practices*’ (Chun in Chun and Keenan, 2006:4).(My emphasis) For the purposes of this study into the development of film websites, and particularly with the advent of the social web which significantly reconfigures relations between media producers and media audiences, these limitations in the media archaeological approach become more conspicuous. In Jenkins’ ‘participatory model of culture’, audiences are not just consumers of media but engage with, shape and circulate media content in new ways (Jenkins, Ford and Green, 2013:2). Therefore, my concern is that to undertake a media archaeological investigation that ignores audience engagement would be to overlook a fundamental element of the media production (Ibid.)

2.11 A Cognitive Media Archaeology?

With this in mind, the next section of this chapter addresses the question of whether media archaeology can excavate audience’s past experiences, to undertake a ‘cognitive’ media archaeology, if you like, that endeavours to reinstate human agency into the enquiry.

While most critical writing about film websites to date focusses on aesthetics, design, and narration, Colin Harvey’s book on *Fantastic Transmedia* draws on an earlier definition of transmedia as a form of intertextuality from the perspective of the audience when he observes:

> ‘What intertextuality is describing is a process of <u>remembering</u>, and indeed the role of memory can be understood as central to transmedia storytelling, in which the invocation of ideas, characters, plots points or audio-visual imagery between elements of a franchise are central to that projects success’ (Harvey, 2015:34).

So, Harvey's definition of transmedia places audiences and the operation of memory at the centre of the media experience and this seems to provide a promising way forward for this proposal for a cognitive transmedia archaeology. Harvey suggests that memory may provide a useful means of understanding the network of relations at play in transmedia works and by so doing, he postulates that the 'emotional and cultural value' of popular media forms may be more clearly understood (Garde-Hansen in Harvey, 2015:35).

The internet promises to provide rich terrain for cognitive media archaeology because audiences often inscribe their responses on social media (Mathieu et al., 2016:295). Through *Tumblr* 'reblogs', and *Facebook* 'likes', 'comments' and 'shares', and 'posts' on web community forums and discussion boards, audiences participate in the on-going online conversation around a film (Ibid.). Through their posts they leave traces of themselves that remain after the experience is over (Ibid). For the purposes of this research, the 'traces' left by audiences in their written posts on the film website's social media settings seem to be fundamentally archaeological in nature. Indeed, it can be argued that these 'traces' constitute the material remains of audience experiences and engagement and website discussion boards can be regarded as a kind of archive and subjected to analysis to gain insight into the subjectivities of their participants.

2.12 From Principles to Tools

So, it is from this collection of critical writings that have become known as media archaeology that this thesis derives its methodological foundations. Parikka maintains that media archaeology is first and foremost a practical activity and that it should be undertaken, rather than narrated, and the experience scrutinised for what it can tell us (2010). However, he does caution that practical strategies to undertake media archaeology cannot straightforwardly be derived from these writings and suggests these writings can only *afford* ways of theorising media history (Hertz, 2010). In order to develop these writings outlining media archaeological principles into practical research tools, it is helpful to refer to a model conceived by Jan Jonker and Barteld Jan Willem Pennink to navigate through the process (2010:23).

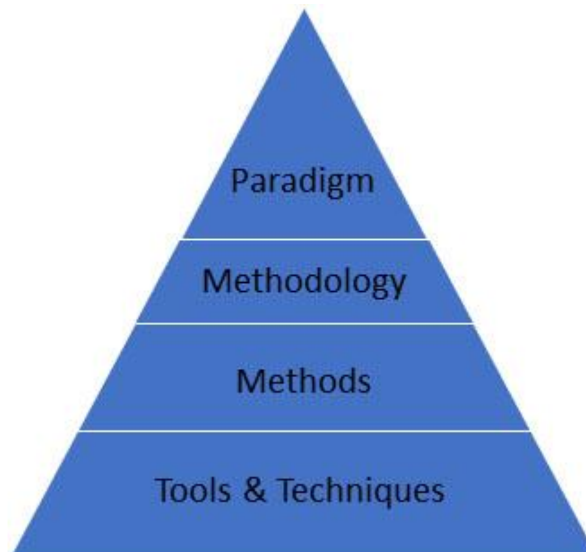

Figure 2. The Research Pyramid ©Jonker and Pennink, 2010.

This research pyramid outlines four tiers of activity to be undertaken in any research project (2010:25). At the apex of the triangle, a research paradigm articulates the premise or object of interest and the conceptual framework through which it is understood, as well as the research questions it prompts (2010:26). In the case of this project, this is the film website that has been theorised through the critical lens of transmedia in the review of literature and this has provoked a series of research questions outlined in the thesis's introduction.

The second tier is the methodology that provides cues, or to use Parikka's preferred term, affordances, on how to approach the research, but stops short of providing specific instructions as to what exactly to do. In other words, the media archaeological principles outlined in this chapter provide the thesis with a conceptual map, but not the directions on how to get there (Jonker and Pennink, 2010: 31). In sum then, the methodology 'functions as a compass, a beacon, a set of principles and global instructions' (Jonker and Pennink,2010:33), but they cannot determine what should be done in a specific situation.

This requires the researcher to move to the next tier which encompasses methods and techniques. This is where methodological principles inform the particular steps or phases needed to answer the research question. To continue the cartographic metaphor, Jonker and Pennink propose regarding the method as a railway timetable with arrival and departure times for all the stations in the research process to describe the order in which actions (stations) will be visited (Ibid.) However the cartographic metaphor must be discarded at this stage, as research methodologies must be flexible and responsive to the situations they find, and so are rarely as rigid as a train timetable must be.

It is at this stage that research techniques or tools must be devised to achieve the final goal of answering the research question. In other words, the research tools must create

concrete instructions for action, based on the methodological principles, and these may take the form of either: ‘action’ techniques or ‘thinking’ techniques’ (Jonker and Pennink,2010:34). ‘Action’ techniques set out to achieve a specific goal achieved by means of their actions (Ibid.). While ‘thinking’ techniques determine how to think about a certain subject as well as obtaining insight into the meaning of a subject (Jonker and Pennink,2010:34-5). It is often the case that action and thinking techniques are used in combination determined by the criteria of the research question, norms of the discipline, context and personal preferences of the researcher among others (Jonker and Pennink, 2009: 38). So, these research techniques are the tools that shape and guide the way data is generated, established, classified and analysed to address the needs of the research project’s questions (Jonker and Pennink,2010: 38).

The last point to make about research techniques and tools is that while media archaeological writings provide a springboard for the design of this research project, informing approaches to answering each of the research questions. It should not be forgotten that much of the analysis is conducted on the computer screen, and visual and textual analysis techniques based on semiological principles conventionally derived from film, TV and media, collectively known more commonly now as screen studies, provide the foundational analytical tools in this thesis. However, at several key points in the thesis where there are no strategies available to answer the research questions, new research strategies had to be devised, new tools developed, and new interdisciplinary approaches harnessed to undertake the research. Each of these newly conceived research tools form a contribution to knowledge in the Digital Humanities, and it is hoped they may be of value to other researchers in the field, as well as have cross -disciplinary potential in other fields.

2.13 Disciplinarity

It has been argued that the nature of a research project is determined by the questions the project asks (Lattuca ,2001:118). In this thesis the research questions posed all pertain to film websites and what has been dubbed ‘off-screen studies’, a sub-domain of film/media studies (Gray, 2010:4). However, as I suggested the methodological tools and techniques drawn upon to answer these questions extend well beyond these disciplinary fields. Moti Nissani explains that ‘complex or practical problems can only be understood by pulling together insights and methodologies from a variety of disciplines’ and so this research is best characterised as interdisciplinary (1997:209). In a typology of different kinds of interdisciplinary scholarship created by Lattuca, the approach taken in this thesis would be described as the ‘interaction of different disciplines’ (2001:78). In short, this thesis is variously informed by a concatenation of media archaeology, media studies, archival studies, cultural studies, literary studies, visual textual analysis, film studies, social psychology and games studies.

Having identified this research as interdisciplinary, a further qualification needs to be made about the extent of the interdisciplinarity in the thesis. In *The Oxford Handbook of Interdisciplinarity*, one of the editors, Julie Thompson Klein suggests there are degrees of interaction in an interdisciplinary research project and these have been mapped by Elaine Simon and Judith Goode (1989:220-21). They propose there are four main degrees of interaction: from the least, which may entail little more than the supply of contextual or background information; to the highest degree where approaches are integrated to the extent that they fundamentally redefine each other because of the research (Ibid.). In the light of this, over the course of the research project, various kinds of interdisciplinarity are entered into, from what is known as 'methodological interdisciplinarity' where social psychological qualitative analysis techniques are used to analyse audience social media experiences (Klein,2010:24), to the 'theoretical interdisciplinarity' in which media archaeology is used to examine the history of transmedia and how, by doing so, media archaeology is critiqued and a cognitive approach to media archaeology is developed which proposes a new approach within the discipline (Klein,2010:28). Then, research tools and techniques are devised that have cross-disciplinary potential for researchers working in Digital Humanities.

To situate research in the chapters that follow within a disciplinary context, this chapter considers what is distinctive about the bringing together of transmedia scholarship discussed in the literature review in chapter one with the media archaeological principles outlined in chapter two.

What transmedia and media archaeology have in common is that both are relatively new fields. Furthermore, both are concerned with the emergence of cultural phenomena - the new configurations in the media landscape. Transmedia is concerned with the new, whilst media archaeology is interested in the practice of looking at phenomena anew. Although neither field comes at this from a historically grounded or culturally situated position or tradition. This leads to the third commonality between the two fields which is that they are both essentially 'gleaning' disciplines that take a pragmatic approach to scholarship, drawing on the conceptual approaches they need, rather than being determined by conventional discipline boundaries. So, rather than relying on existing approaches of film studies and fan studies to examine transmedia artefacts, I have used media archaeology to piece together an understanding of the development of this emerging phenomenon. This is necessary because firstly as we move into a digital media landscape, the world under scrutiny is, indeed new with digital-born artefacts like film websites that have not existed in the analogue world in this form. While secondly, and relatedly, is that fact that in this digital environment, older disciplinary approaches may no longer be adequate. For example, film studies approaches seem insufficient to account for transmedia artefacts like film web sites which are co-created with participating audiences. While similarly traditional archival studies may not adequately account for their digital counterparts online.

This said, the relationship of this research to film studies is a complicated one. What was established in the previous chapter was that this research contributes to the field of what Gray calls 'off-screen studies' or, more precisely what Atkinson terms 'extended cinema' and is best described in these ways at the present time. But off-screen studies and extended cinema are expanding what film studies is, and can be, in terms of the conventional terrain of the discipline. So, in this way the research project contributes to film studies by extending and expanding what is traditionally regarded as the disciplinary field. The other way in which it relates to film studies is that the discipline is one of the conceptual underpinnings for transmedia studies in its recourse to the history of film, as well as textual analysis techniques. However, while film studies inform transmedia scholarship, it does not do so exclusively. Other disciplinary fields inform this transmedia research project. For example, archival studies will be required to answer the research question in chapter 3 – where are film web sites collected, recorded and archived? Likewise, to understand the way awards, honours and prizes shape the meaning of the transmedia artefacts under consideration, the project draws on scholarship from the field of cultural studies. Finally, it is important to acknowledge that film studies itself is changing, because the nature of the film experience is changing. As a greater interest is taken in transmedia and the paratextual, the discipline of film studies expands to incorporate off-screen studies or extended cinema, this research project will be enveloped within this larger understanding of film scholarship and my work sits within this domain of development.

2.14 Transmedia Archaeology

So, the last question of disciplinarity to answer is this: is there a transmedia archaeology? Clearly the term is already in use, so evidently the answer is yes. Described in chapter one's review of literature, Scolari, Bertetti and Freeman's form of transmedia archaeology seeks to understand contemporary iterations of transmedia by drawing parallels with early to mid-20th century instances of transmedia, and by so doing, establish continuities between the transmedia that is emerging now, with past times, rather than seeing what is happening in the present as a break with what went before. This approach accords with Thomas Elsaesser's 'new film history' approach that recognises digital technologies have an impact on the way film history can be understood and is motivated by a desire to overcome the perceived rupture between 'old' and 'new' media (2004). At the same time, implicit within Freeman et al's. conception of transmedia archaeology is a rejection of history's tacit assumption of chronological, teleological linear trajectory that regards the present as the epitome of progress and all that preceded it as leading to this moment.

However, the transmedia archaeology I have developed in this thesis is distinct from Scolari, Bertetti and Freeman's approach in two ways. Firstly, it is concerned with the recent past – that is to say, the first two decades of the internet when online cultures are configuring, and new artefacts are emerging and disappearing at such a pace that the

transmedia archaeology proposed by Scolari et al. will not even be possible in the future. Secondly, my approach to media archaeology undertakes a broader discussion that responds to media archaeological writings. The transmedia archaeology developed over the next few chapters is informed by Foucauldian modes of thinking that see change as the consequence of the forces in operation. However, it probably would be true to say that the collection of media archaeological writings discussed here have been written a decade further into the age of digitisation and are readier to attribute change to the digital turn. Through close examination of digital media, Chun declares that despite promises to the contrary, the internet has no memory, and this has implications for how a digital culture remembers. Ernst looks at how digitalisation has fundamentally changed the concept of the archive and how the digital turn has created gaps and shifts in the record. The transmedia archaeology advanced in the chapters of this thesis examines how the digital past is different to what preceded it for these reasons. It explores how the emergence of digital-born artefacts like film websites have been shaped by mistakes and failures, as well as successes and how as archaeologists we can learn as much from what went wrong as from what went right. While writings like those by Errki Huhtamo on the topos illuminate unexpected genealogies that provide fresh perspectives on media histories to emerge. So, taken together these writings afford new ways of thinking about transmedia artefacts like film websites, as well as ways to historicise the new and to develop appropriate tools to scrutinise what is found.

2.15 Conclusions

Following Chapter 1's review of literature, Chapter 2 lays the foundations for the thesis in two ways: first, by selecting and defining a group of epistemological principles which are pertinent to the research questions and yoking them together under the umbrella title of media archaeology. Then secondly, by providing an account of these theoretical writings and looking forward to the ways the principles inherent in these writings can be translated into methodological tools to 'open up the past in new ways' (Parikka, 2015a:13). For the sake of clarity, I describe each set of theoretical writings separately first by author, in the form of a consideration of the contributions of both Foucault and Kittler whose work represents the spectrum of epistemological approaches to media archaeology, and then by theme, looking at the materiality of the form, digital archives, digital memory and temporality and the topoi. Then, in the absence of guidance from the media archaeology writings, in the final section, I outline a proposition for a cognitive media archaeology. Having said all this though, the aim of this thesis is not for these epistemological approaches to remain distinct and separate, but for them to be regarded as methodological threads informing each of the chapters which make up the warp and weft of this historical examination of film websites. By so doing, it is hoped that the facility to think <u>trans</u>media archaeologically will become possible (eds. Huhtamo and Parikka

2011:2). So, this thesis now moves on to Chapter 3 to explore and consider the first research question: where are film websites collected, recorded and archived?

Chapter 3: 404 File not found: where are film websites collected, recorded and archived?

3.1 Introduction

The internet is now an important site for film marketing and the film website has become the location for trailer releases, the publication of key art, curated media coverage as well as 'making of…' features (Walden, 2017:80). Film websites contribute to film storytelling, have their own media-specific aesthetics, narrative techniques, and forms of audience engagement (Grainge and Johnson in Walden, 2017:80). Websites now routinely bridge the narrative interstices between films in franchises; providing story world settings and anticipatory clues to whet audience appetites for forthcoming films (Gray, 2010:48). Indeed, today there can be a considerable blurring of the boundaries between the film content and film marketing (Grainge and Johnson, 2015:4). Clearly, then, film websites are contributing to the contemporary film 'experience'(Ibid.). Yet in film studies, scholarly distinctions between commercial and creative content remain stubbornly fixed, where 'marketing' content is regarded as a commercial activity, and 'creative' content is lauded as art (Grainge and Johnson, 2015:5). Likewise, film journalism and criticism focus attention on films, and completely overlook the role that paratexts like film websites play in the creation of meaning around a film.

One reason for this oversight might be that paratextual materials have a short shelf life. Once a film has journeyed through its release windows in the cinema, theatre, onto DVD and Blu-ray formats, video-on-demand and television, the fate of the film website becomes precarious. Independent film makers may leave websites online to continue to provide a film with an online presence, but the Hollywood studios more often 'lock' discussion boards, so that no further contributions can be made. Websites may be taken down and disappear from the public domain, as studio marketing divisions seek to refocus attention on new forthcoming film releases. The result is that film websites are ephemeral.

My contention is that this ephemerality jeopardises the possibility of critical appraisal or evaluation of their contribution to the film experience. Over the last two decades or so, as the first generation of film websites have come and gone, many are no longer available to view. As a result, their role remains largely unacknowledged, their development uncharted, and their history untold. It is this absence which is the concern of this thesis. In setting out to develop a better knowledge and understanding of these unsung artefacts, this chapter will start by addressing the first of the research questions: where are film websites collected, recorded and archived?

3.2 Conceptions of Archives

To address this question, the chapter begins with a consideration of how archives and archivisation has been conceptualised by some of the key theorists in the field, to see what insight these writings may provide. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge,* Michel Foucault asserts that our understanding of the past is shaped by the 'present state of knowledge' (2002:5). To illustrate, he points to the way knowledge is organised according to subject disciplines, and how their methodologies determine what lies within and what lies outside the concerns of the discipline (Foucault, 2002:14). Foucault uses the term 'archive' to explain what is known about a subject, which he refers to as a 'system of discursivity' with all its accompanying enunciative possibilities and prohibitions (2002:145). So, Foucault's discursive archive is conceptual rather than physical and may be understood as 'the first law of what can be said' on a specific subject (Ibid.). In the light of these observations, it is interesting to reflect on the academic status of film websites that are regarded as commercial materials that are of little intrinsic value and, for the most part, are currently located outside film studies' definition of what is worth of scholarly attention (Grainge and Johnson, 2015:4). Over the last two decades film websites have, by and large, been overlooked or ignored and there has been little critical evaluation of what they contribute to the film experience. Here is an instance where the current state of knowledge in film scholarship plays a major role in determining what the future can know about the subject, and so questions of preservation are joined by questions about how historical knowledge is constituted. In view of this, Foucault's assertion that the archive is much more than a physical repository and can also be understood in conceptual terms as a system of discursivity, is borne out (2002:145). Archives may determine what is known about a subject, what is venerated, what is ignored and, indeed, what can be said about it, and it is this, as much as the physical artefact that determines an understanding of the past.

Jacques Derrida regards archives as a 'material supplement to human memory' (1995:14). Based on a lecture presented at a colloquium in 1994, Derrida's *Archive Fever* regards the motivation to preserve the past in psychoanalytic terms, as the antidote to Freud's concept of the 'death drive' and the possibilities of forgetting (1995:19). Derrida suggests that while archives may be concerned with the preservation of the past in the immediate sense, in effect, they constitute a kind of 'open letter' to the future (Derrida, 1995:40). In this he agrees with Foucault, and the inference of Derrida's argument is that whatever is archived in the present, in a sense, conditions what is remembered in the future. He notes that 'the question of the archive is not ... a question of the past. It is a question of the future. The question of response, of a promise and of a responsibility for tomorrow' (Derrida, 1995:36). In the context of this thesis then, the contemporary experience of film is not confined to what we watch between the opening titles and the closing credits on screen, and while film websites may be integral to the contemporary film experience, they are in danger of being ignored. So, the archival preservation of film websites is a critical precursor to any form of evaluation.

Derrida traces the term 'archive' back to its Greek antecedent, the *arkhe*, and the *archon* who was the person accorded with the authority to be an archivist (1995:2). He identifies the three main principles that define archival practices as *commandment, consignment*, and *commencement* (Derrida, 1995:1). To explain, *commandment* is the point at which the archive maker is recognised for this undertaking, and receives authorisation to undertake the task (Derrida, 1995:2). Therefore, the archival process is socially sanctioned, culturally validated and, by implication, whatever resides in this archive becomes validated as a legitimate representation of the past (Ibid.). The process of *consignment* is when decisions about what will be selected for preservation in the archive are made, along with decisions about the processes of identification, collection, ordering, and classification of artefacts (Derrida, 1995:3). The third process of *commencement* recognises that one of the basic motivations of the archive is to establish the authority of provenance (Derrida, 1995:2). That is to say, archival authority is predicated on its knowledge of the biography of an artefact from its point of its origin to its inclusion in the archive (Ibid.).

Critically for Derrida, like Foucault before him, the archival processes outlined here impact on the artefact being archived (1995:18). At the most basic level, the archival process transfers the artefact into a new (physical) space and assigns it a different identity and value from its original function. A film website created as part of a marketing campaign may be selected for inclusion in an archive based on its web design, or because of its approach to transmedia storytelling. In this way layers of meanings are superimposed onto the artefact through the archival process. For Derrida, like Foucault, archives have the effect of 'establishing' the value of the artefact, as well as its value as a 'historical truth' (1995:59). Derrida concludes that this has consequences for what we know about the past and he argues 'archivisation produces as much as it records' (1995:17). It is interesting to note that Derrida's work was published in 1995, right at the beginning of the period under consideration in this thesis, at a time when the internet entered the public domain, so he refers predominantly to physical archives. However, Derrida does acknowledge that the technologies of the archive play a role in determining what can be known about an artefact too (Ibid.).

By contrast with the previous two theorists, Friedrich Kittler is more interested in the material conditions under which media operate, and in his writings, he refers to media as a 'machine' rather than 'text' to make this point (Kittler, 1990:233). With digitisation, he concludes that the characteristics of different media will just become 'surface effects' to provide an interface for human interaction, but the real meaning of digital media will be its facility for storage (Kittler, 1999:1). Kittler refers to Foucault as the 'first archaeologist' acknowledging his contribution, and shares with him an interest in 'excavating' the conditions in which knowledge arises (Kittler, 1990:5). He suggests that storage media do not just provide a vessel in which to keep records, but are discursive too, playing a role in determining what we can know (Ibid.).To recite Kittler's key argument from the previous chapter - media 'produce what it allegedly only reproduces' (Kittler, 1999:145). The

principle to take from this is that any examination of archives must scrutinise not only its artefacts, but also its technology, design and architecture. In short, its materiality for what it can tell us about the past.

Like Kittler, Lev Manovich asserts that while digital media objects are not always experienced explicitly as storage, it is storage capacity which is their basic attribute (2001:220). In *The Language of New Media*, Manovich explains how, in essence, all digital media are first and foremost a collection of data files and are best understood as databases (2001:218). He goes on to say that while the database format predates the internet, where it has really flourished, is online, where every website is a collection of files with links (Manovich, 2001:225). Manovich notes that it was in the mid-1990s when the storage facility of the 'universal media machine' became available and the move to archive began (Manovich, 2001:224). Referring to the journal, *Mediamatic* that devoted a whole issue to 'the storage media' in 1994, at the start of the period under consideration, Manovich observes 'A growing number of organisations are embarking on ambitious projects. Everything is being collected: cultural asteroids, DNA patterns, credit records, telephone conversations, it does not matter' (2001:224).

Manovich concludes that with digital media and the internet, the underlying architecture of the database where information/files are stored in systematic fashion, readily lends itself to archival practices of one kind or another (Ibid.). Indeed, Manovich goes on to hypothesise that data indexing will become a cultural pastime, or even profession (2001:225). Today this observation has been borne out, as can be seen with the proliferation of archival architectures on the internet including *Instagram*, *Flickr*, *Tumblr* and *Facebook*. The inference of these developments is the de-institutionalisation of the archive. Now an archive can be created independently, rather than formally 'commenced' in the Derridean sense of the word, and *archonic* power assumed, even though its value may be personal, as well as, or rather than, culturally or institutionally recognised. In turn, this challenges assumptions of which cultural forms should be regarded as culturally significant.

3.3 The Conceptual Underpinnings of Archival Investigations

The conclusion that can be drawn from these writings is that archives are determined by processes of storage, system and selection. Besides the physical <u>storage</u> of the data/artefacts collected and preserved for the record, all archives, whether digital or analogue are driven by intention or rationale, and therefore archival collection processes are inherently <u>systematic</u>. Following on from this, any collection will always be <u>selective</u> – in so far as it will be based on a set of beliefs about what will be (and, implicitly, what will not be) important in the future. But, by the same token, collections are subject to boundary restrictions, and selection infers curation and value conferred upon the object through this process as well as the creation of a place in which to locate the collection.

As an archive fulfils these processes of storage, systematic collection and selection, the principles and purposes that define the nature of the archive and determine its future usage become apparent. Moreover, these principles and purposes do not just operate on the level of practical organisation, as implicitly archiving is also understood as a historiographical process – the process of writing history through the production of an archive. Just as the process of writing history shapes our understanding of it, the process of archiving similarly shapes our understanding of the artefacts within it. In view of this, when embarking on an investigation of archives, the study will need to be mindful that, just as a library is not just a collection of books but a system by which books can be found, archives are defined by their systems and processes as much as their contents, and these processes are part of the meaning of an archive (Russell, 2012:4).

Archival principles and purposes are always based on a view of the world, and an understanding of their future uses and values, and in this way, they are discursive in the Foucauldian sense. In the creation of archives, there is always going to be an evaluation of the balance between effort and worth. In the past, few archives have been interested in ephemera because ephemera were not regarded as having any value. However, this ephemerality within a film culture is complicated by transmedia productions because some components of a production are available, while others, like a film's website, may disappear because transmedia paratexts have not been regarded as valuable or worth preserving until recently. Thus, rendering the transmedia production only partially available for future scholarship.

Building on what Manovich said about how, in a sense, all digital files are forms of archive, it may perhaps be useful to make a further distinction about how archives are made - between deliberate collections and inadvertent collections. A deliberate collection seeks to collect a specific thing, and selection criteria determine what is collected. An inadvertent collection system on the other hand, has a broad remit to collect material, or where another activity coincidentally creates an archive-type collection, or even has no remit and may inadvertently collect the artefact under consideration. And finally, deliberate collections may be subdivided into two further categories: the universal and the particular: universal in the sense that all published sites are collected, and particular, in the sense that selection is determined by the criteria for collection.

Having established some principles and parameters of archivisation, these features can form a framework to appraise and evaluate the conceptual underpinnings of the archives selected for closer consideration. However, before the chapter embarks on its search for archives where film websites may be found, I need to define more specifically what are considered web archives, as well as consider how digital archives might differ from their analogue counterparts.

3.4 The Technical Underpinnings of Archival Investigations

The JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee) report ‘Researcher Engagement with Web Archives State of the Art’ defines the digital archive as a digital collection with a level of verification (Dougherty et al., 2010:7). The report goes on to provide a set of descriptors developed out of the collective responses of interviewees given during its survey of digital archival practices (Ibid.). To summarise, a web archive is understood to be a collection of born-digital artefacts of interest (Ibid.). Archives may take the form of collections representing material of interest to the nation; an entire domain collection; a collection based on a specialist subject; or a record of a management system for commercial or legal purposes (Ibid.). A collection may be created manually, or with automation tools, and be stored either on or offline (Ibid.). An archive should be accessible and have an interface that allows users to see objects in the archive (Ibid.). In short, a collection is designed to provide valuable content to researchers (Ibid.).

What is evident from these descriptors is that web archives share many of the aims of analogue archives – that is to say, all archives are collections created with specific intentions and purposes, aiming to preserve, create a record and make this record accessible for its users. However, given the nature of what is physically collected in a web archive and the materiality of the archive itself, the technological nature of digital collection inevitably differs from its analogue counterpart in significant ways that need to be comprehended more clearly in order to understand what the implication of these differences might be for both their contents and archive users.

Whilst a comprehensive account of web archiving is beyond the scope of this study, it is helpful to outline how technological developments have shaped what web archives can do (Ben-David, 2013; Brugger 2011; Rogers, 2013). According to Web historian, Richard Rogers, in the early years of the internet, the first form of web archive was the link list or ‘index’, which took the form of lists of web addresses (2013:61). Indexes were compiled by internet portals like Yahoo.com and requests for inclusion in its directories were curated by editors who browsed and sorted sites by content into categories for listing, although the sites themselves resided elsewhere (Rogers, 2013:62).

Following link lists, the next kind of archives that emerged were collections, created for specific research projects, which became feasible once tools for the retrieval of archived web content became available from around 2000 onwards (Ben-David, 2013:11). Social Science researchers began using the web as an archival resource for studying social and political phenomena (Ibid). Collections of web pages focussed around a theme or an event provided the foundations for studies such as Christine Hine’s ‘virtual’ ethnographical examination of the Louise Woodward case (2000); and perhaps the best-known archive research based on a collection was undertaken by Foot and Schneider tracing online articulations of bereavement following the 9/11 attacks in New York (2005).

According to Anat Ben-David, initiatives to create national-scale web archives began early in the web's development, with Sweden and Australia setting up national web archiving projects in 1996 (2013:12). Over the following decade, other national level organisations followed suit developing the infrastructure for collection, preservation and to a lesser extent, access. National digital cultural heritage policies were established, accompanied by legal frameworks to enact them, which Ben-David termed the 'national turn' in the development of web archiving (Ibid.). The US Library of Congress began archiving what it termed 'born-digital web content' in 2000 (Library of Congress, 2018). In the UK the British Library developed a policy in 2004 to 'collect, make accessible and preserve web resources of scholarly and cultural importance from the UK domain via the Open UK Web Archive' (British Library, 2016). This policy was underpinned by legal deposit legislation whereby it became a legal requirement to deposit any national publication with the archive to enable the creation of a comprehensive collection, an authoritative bibliographic record and ease of access (Ibid.). Indeed, under the terms of digital legal deposit legislation updated again in 2013, in partnership with its fellow legal deposit libraries in the UK, the British Library aims to archive the whole UK web domain (Ibid.).[4] It has, however, been pointed out that, ironically, the British Library and Cambridge University digital deposit libraries currently only allow access to the collection in their physical building based reading rooms (Gardner, 2018).

Ben-David's survey of web archive-based research indicates that one of the most popular forms of research across the disciplines is the use of web data collections for longitudinal studies, drawing either on data extracted from existing institutional archives, or self-created archives. Developed from 1997 onwards, Ben-David terms this form of web archive 'temporal web collections' because it is generated by periodic sampling over time to facilitate a diachronic perspective (2013:22).

The last type of web archive identified by Ben-David is made possible by what she terms the 'paradigm shift' resulting from the advent of Web 2.0 technologies, social media platforms and applications (2013:6). William Uricchio observes that conventional conceptions of the archive changed with the advent of Web 2.0, blurring distinctions between production, consumption and its actors (2009:144). The traditional model of the archivist as an 'agent' undertaking the selection of artefacts for preservation, collection and the cultural record, contrasts with the new archival practices of today afforded by storage capacity and digital communication technologies. As a result, he argues, the practice of archiving has been fundamentally redefined from 'the practice of a social agent' to a 'social practice' (Ibid). Anyone with access to the web can be an archivist in the age of social media. Archiving has become an everyday practice made possible by the architectures and affordances of participatory media like wikis, blogs and social media

[4] In addition to the British Library, the five legal digital deposit libraries in the UK and Ireland are the Bodleian Library, Oxford; Cambridge University Copyright Library Web Collection; Trinity College, Dublin; and the National Libraries of Scotland and Wales.

platforms such as *Facebook*, *Tumblr* and *Instagram*. It is this technological 'paradigm shift' which has generated new archival practices and new kinds of archives (Ben- David, 2013:6). Moreover, it is these developments in archival technologies, as Derrida argues, that will shape what we can know in the future and will have bearing on the answer to the first research question in this chapter (Derrida, 1995:17).

3.5 Methodology

When this research project began in 2011, the question of where film web sites are archived presented challenges that confront any researcher embarking on a search of the internet: where to begin looking in a space that is so incomparably vast? However, writings on digital archives by Brugger, Rogers, Uricchio and Ben-David's history of web archiving, provided valuable navigation aids in this regard. In the course of the search, I found that the archives I encountered aligned quite clearly with Ben-David's periodisation and her historical framework enabled me to reflect on my encounters with web archives in terms of their technical parameters as well as their conceptual rationales.

Following this initial stage of the enquiry, I devised a methodological strategy to utilise Ben-David's framework, and identified one example archive from each of the four periods she maps to create a collection of four different archives in total: The first example is an index archive and is perhaps the best known to date. The *Internet Archive* and its search engine, the *Wayback Machine* began operation in 1996 with the ambition to create 'a library of the internet' (*Internet Archive,* 2016). The second example is an initiative to implement a digital cultural heritage policy by the Museum of Applied Art in Frankfurt in Germany with the development of a collection of digital-born artefacts, including film websites, in recognition of the craft entailed in their making, known *DigitalCraft.org* (Digital Craft, 2003). The third example archive is the *Webby Awards* that have been celebrating digital creativity and specifically for my purposes, film/movie websites since 1997 (*The Webby Awards*, 2017). The fourth example archive is a Web 2.0-enabled archive taking the form of a blog. The *Movie Marketing Madness* blog creates an archive that results from a combination of individual enthusiasm by its author and the technical wherewithal of software that has been in operation since 2003 (Thilk, 2016).

Having created a collection that represents the diversity of archives, the next task was to evaluate their processes, practices and approaches to archivisation based on the parameters identified from the writings of selected archive theorists. In the next section of this chapter, each of these four archives will be examined in turn and evaluated for their facility to collect, record and archive film websites.

3.6 Example Archive 1: Web Index Archives – *Internet Archive*

Established as a non-profit organisation by the computer scientist and internet entrepreneur, Brewster Kahle, the *Internet Archive* is widely regarded as the most complete archive of the internet to date (Internet Archive, 2016; Dougherty et al., 2010:7). Kahle aims to create a record of the entire internet, and with search engine technology named 'Alexa', parallels are evidently sought with the great library of Alexandria in ancient Egypt and the scale of this ambition is clear (*Internet Archive*, 2018).

The *Internet Archive* was established to preserve historical collections in digital formats, but its largest collection is its web archive (Brugger, 2011:30; *Internet Archive*, 2016). It began with event-based collections of websites such as the 1996 US presidential campaigns, but the archive did not confine itself to documenting American politics (Brugger, 2011:30-31). In keeping with the spirit of 1990s, when the Internet was colloquially known as 'cyberspace' with an emphasis on 'placelessness', the *Internet Archive* aimed to be transnational, even global resource (Brugger, 2011:31; Rogers, 2013:33) Indeed as a member of the Board of Directors of the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF), founded by John Perry Barlow from the rock band, The Grateful Dead, Kahle evidently belongs to the first generation of internet idealists with his aim to create 'universal access to all knowledge'(Kahle, 2007:23).

The archive is compiled by automated domain archiving, using software tools that periodically download all publicly accessible websites, and present 'snapshots' of these sites as an archival record (*Internet Archive*, 2017). So, the *Internet Archive* is not selective, but it is systematic. However, in Kittlerian terms, it only becomes a true archive when it is searchable by its users and data can be retrieved. The *Internet Archive*'s search engine, known as the *Wayback Machine* was not developed until 2001*,* when it began to provide access to archived versions of past web pages (Rogers, 2013:65). Unlike Google with its text-based search facility, the *Wayback Machine* search engine is confined to searching by web address, as indicated by the 'http' prompt in its search box (Rogers, 2013:65). Without knowing the URL address for a website, searching can be challenging and this limited index information suggests the archive is set up primarily for collection, and access was an after-thought. So, the *Internet Archive* is an inadvertent archive, rather than a deliberate archive and the *Wayback Machine* search engine was an afterthought in the design of the *Internet Archive* and remains challenging to use. Indeed, on the *Internet Archive* website, a statement reads, 'we hope to implement a full text search engine at some point in the future, but it has not been done this to date' (*Internet Archive*, 2018).

Since 2010 *Wayback Machine* search returns have been presented in the form of a calendar (Rogers, 2013:65). (See Figure 3) Along the top of the screen, there is a bar chart from 1996 to the present day, and the number of 'snapshots' made by the *Internet Archive* during that year are identified in a bar chart. Moving the cursor over a specific year, brings up a year's calendar with the days illuminated with small blue circles indicating when the site was recorded. Moving the cursor over a blue circle brings up a record of how many

times the site had been captured on the day, although as the *Wayback Machine*'s instructions point out, not the number of times the site has been updated (*Internet Archive*, 2016).

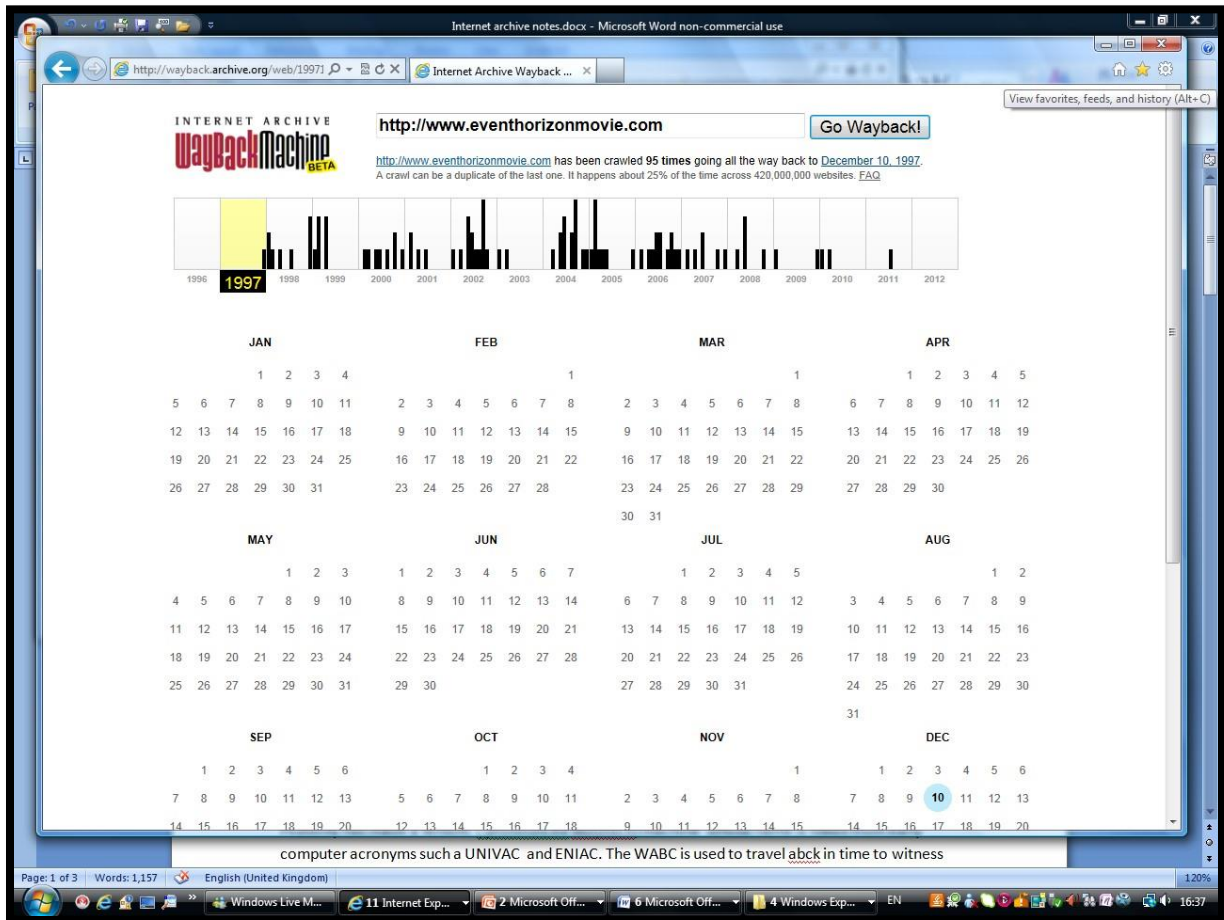

Figure 3. *Wayback Machine* search returns delivered in calendar format. © *Internet Archive*, 2013

The automated archiving process is set up to capture HTML, and therefore can create a record of dynamic elements, as well as static elements of a website. However, the limitations of its archival parameters become clear when a page contains linked-to assets that reside elsewhere. In such instances, links may or may not be in place, depending on the status of the originating host at the time of collection.

In the event of not being able to establish links with the data elements outside the archived site, the *Internet Archive* seeks connection to the 'live' version of the archived site which often results in the creation of a-temporal links (Rogers, 2013:66). Rogers explains how the strategy for searching by web address is indicative of the principle of 'flow' built into the architecture of the software, which was designed to furnish the user with the sense of 'surfing' from page to page (2013:65). The *Wayback Machine's* search engine retains the experience of 'surfing the web' - a 1990s metaphor, emphasising click-through continuity

that Rogers describes as being akin to creating 'jump cuts' through time (2013:66). In other words, the software privileges spatial navigation over temporal navigation and this has a radical effect on the archived websites that become connected with versions of themselves across time as a result (Ibid.).

An exploratory search for the website for *Event Horizon* (Paul Anderson, 1997) via the *Wayback Machine* yielded an interesting example of an early film site. (See Figures 4-6)

Figures 4-6. *Event Horizon*'s website. © Golar Productions, 2018

The sites' landing page advises visitors about its downloadable plug-in software for different types of computer operating systems. (See Figure 4) But the site addresses two audiences: the press and the public through its mix of Electronic Press Kit (EPK)-style

information including pages of production notes, and narrative material for the film audience, in the shape of exposition, where the site visitor is invited to enter the film's in-movie world online for a 'mission briefing'. Press coverage of the film's premiere is reproduced here with an extended essay on the scientific phenomenon of black holes in space (See Figure 5). Moreover, whilst on the one hand the site contains a full set of credits, on the other hand site viewers are instructed to get their helmets on and 'be ready for anything!' before being invited into the ship's cock pit for a 'briefing' (See Figure 6). These parallel registers point to the dual purpose of these early sites addressing both the press and public audiences at the same time and the preservation of sites like this offers the possibility of encountering early design formats for in-movie worlds, first-hand and emerging web social protocols.

Clicking on the site's 'cockpit' link however brings the whole experience to an abrupt halt because it does not work (Ibid.). The link to this part of the website is broken as the assets are located elsewhere. When the link destination changes or is deleted, the connection between one page of a website and another ceases to exist, or defaults to a present studio site. Following this initial exploration with the *Internet Archive*, I repeated the search with several other film sites from the same year including *Men in Black* (1997), *Titanic* (1997) and *Alien Resurrection* (1997), and this problem is evident in them all. The *Wayback Machine* had archived the core site but was unable to archive all its assets. So, while they have not disappeared, these sites hardly constitute a complete or even stable object for the researcher. Moreover, this exercise brings into question the conventional understanding of an archived document.

While Kahle's ambition is for the *Internet Archive* to become a 'universal' collection in practice it is a collection of fragments (Kahle, 2007:23). The archive has storage capacity, but the nature of the object it seeks to preserve eludes comprehensive collection and preservation, demonstrating Kittler's point that the materiality of technology needs to be scrutinised to understand its facility as an archive. (Kittler, 1999:145). By contrast however, the Internet Historian, Richard Rogers counsels that if the researcher follows the *Internet Archive*'s modus operandi, despite its limitations, it can be an insightful tool and retain its 'archonic' authority (2013:68). In the end the main outcome produced by this archive is a mode of historiographical information charting the lifecycle of the website over time. So, in effect, the *Internet Archive* and the *Wayback Machine* have organised the history of the web into a collection of website biographies (Ibid.). And by so doing demonstrate Derrida's third archival process of *commencement* that establishes the provenance of the artefact by charting its lifespan (Derrida, 1995:2).

3.7 Example Archive 2: Digital Cultural Heritage Policy – *Digitalcraft.org*

When initiatives to set up web archives to preserve web culture at a national level began in the mid-1990s (Brugger, 2011:31; Ben-David, 2013:12), national libraries started to

establish infrastructure to preserve web-born artefacts and be faced with the challenge of addressing of questions of archival scale and selection, copyright, as well as legal deposit law (Ben-David, 2013:13). In her account of the development of web archiving, Ben-David describes how national libraries and museums began developing digital cultural heritage policies that would determine the development of web archives and my second archive example is an illustration of this (2013:14).

In 1999 *Digital Craft.org* was established in the Museum für Angewandte Kunst (Museum of Applied Art) in Frankfurt, Germany whose remit is to conserve and preserve applied arts and craft. (Institute of Network Cultures, 2014). The museum was concerned that despite the impact that digital technology was having on all sectors of society, there had been little recognition of this form of media production as a craft (Ibid). So, it set up this pioneering initiative and made the claim that the Museum of Applied Arts in Frankfurt was 'one of the first museum projects worldwide, to take up the challenge of archiving born-digital artefacts' (Digital Craft, 2003a). Franziska Nori was appointed to set up *DigitalCraft.org* as 'an experimental project in long-term data storage' and to develop a collection of online communities, games and emulators and websites (Ibid.).

Illustrating Kittler's material perspective that media should be regarded as storage machines, before they are understood as texts, this archive set about tackling the numerous technical and logistical challenges including platform obsolescence and format changes as software was updated (Institute of Network Cultures, 2014). Nori concluded that the only way to create a permanent collection of web design work and ensure its full functionality, was to make offline versions of the sites (Ibid.). Domain owner permissions and copyright holder clearance was sought, as well as permission to use their HTML indexes, image, text files and *Flash* files (Ibid.). The project encountered legal challenges too as copyright law was not designed for digital artefacts (Ibid.). The exhibition could be licensed for display in the museum, but not on the web, because copyright concerns not only the artefact, but the commissioning partner, as well as the designer. Moreover, some websites incorporated tools which were licensed under copyright too (Ibid.). Locating the collection online turned out to be prohibited too, as web distribution was too broad to be covered by a licence agreement and so, ironically, this collection of web-based artefacts was confined to a building-based exhibition in the Frankfurt museum (*Digital Craft*, 2003b). Like other web collections including the British Library and Cambridge University Library web collections discussed previously, this arrangement seems to be inherently contradictory, when in the post-geographical context of the internet, web material can only be viewed 'on site' in a fixed location.

Unlike the *Internet Archive*'s automated collection system that harvests everything, for *DigitalCraft.org*, the question of what to include in the collection was deliberate, and a set of criteria was drawn up based on perception of digital design (Institute of Network Cultures, 2014). The selection criteria included the originality and uniqueness of concept;

the quality of visual representation; usability; content and context; technical innovation and inventiveness in navigation. This illustrates how the archive's selection criteria are shaped by the remit of its host institution and provides an example of Derrida's concept of 'consignment' where decisions about what is selected for preservation are taken according to specific initiatives and the nominated institution's agenda (Derrida, 1995:3).

A further challenge was to ensure an archiving system that accorded with international museum description standards advised by the International Council of Museums (CIMI), Dublin Core and Art Museum Image Consortium (AMICO) (Digital Craft, 2003a). The team invented description formats for inventorising these digital artefacts, with particular attention to the new features of digital artefacts (Ibid.). So, *Digital Craft* catalogue entries included details about programming languages, and plug-in software required to view the site (*Digital Craft*, 2003c). Another critical distinction between this collection and the *Internet Archive* was that the catalogue information contained not only factual data, but critical appraisal too, outlining what was distinctive about each artefact. By cultivating public awareness about this unsung form of digital design, the archive not only sought to preserve websites, but became an advocate for their value to the cultural memory too (Institute of Network Cultures, 2014).

The archive consisted of two collections: a building-based collection of 50 websites, including a selection of film websites, housed on the project's servers, with all the required applications fully active (Institute of Network Cultures, 2014). The second collection was an online database consisting of thumbnail images of 100 websites from different fields (Ibid). Catalogued by their metadata, the entries consisted of provenantial information about the site's designer, copyright holder, country of origin, date of entry into the collection, programming language, as well as notes of plug-ins to view the site's full operation and a link to the live web version (Digital Craft, 2003c). The catalogue also provided a description of the 'experience' of the site and outlined how the site operated in relation to the film (Ibid.). In this way, the collection fulfilled the first of Derrida's archival processes - *consignment* when selection and systems for storage were created, together with processes of identification, ordering and classification (Derrida, 1995:3). Moreover, further catalogue notes about what distinguished the site as a piece of web design demonstrated how processes of selection implicitly infer appraisal and conferred value upon the object.

This archival collection was not inadvertent, it was deliberate. Although film websites were not the sole focus of the collection, within the database, there were 8 film websites including the sites for Darren Aronofsky's *Requiem for a Dream* (2000) and Christopher Nolan's *Memento* (2000) both designed by Hi-Res! (Ibid.). There were also four examples from the Kasander Film Company, in collaboration with Peter Greenaway, providing exemplary case studies of web design at the time, but all the sites were all gleaned from just a two-year period from 2000 to 2002 (Ibid.).

While the *Digitcraft.org* archive set out to address the challenge of preserving digital artefacts, the initiative had limited success. To be stored in the collection, sites had to be stripped of components deemed unsuitable for server storage such as databases, downloads, competitions and, critically, chat functions (Institute of Network Cultures, 2014). This approach was indicative of the pre-Web 2.0 mindset of the project that regarded websites predominantly as stand-alone objects. The project was further limited by the fact that sites were archived without other components like trailers, posters and TV spots, or the film they were designed to promote. By archiving the site like this, websites were, in effect, embalmed, with the result that the meaning of the artefact was narrowed down to that conceived by the institutional agenda. In *Digitalcraft.org*, film websites were regarded as digital craft, but not as forms of marketing or expanded forms of storytelling. This illustrates Kittler's assertion that storage media are not just physical repositories but discursive artefacts too, and points to the way archives play a role in determining what we know (Kittler, 1999:145).

Just three years after this pioneering project began, a newly appointed incoming Museum Director reversed the policy decision to maintain this collection, closed the department and dismantled the building-based collection (Nori, 2012). *Digitalcraft.org* was forced to become an independent archive and, *de facto*, now, all that remains of the collection is the online catalogue hosted by the City of Frankfurt administration website to maintain public access to the catalogue (Ibid.). The collection has not grown since then. As was encountered with the *Internet Archive*, links deteriorate, and whilst the database remains online, for most of the archived film web sites, the hyperlinks no longer connect with the original sites. Whilst the project's Director still maintains a *Digitalcraft.org* email address, the fate of the project illustrates that archives can be 'ephemeral' too (Ibid).

To all intents and purposes, then, this archive lost its 'archonic' authority when funding was withdrawn and the museum's ties with the collection were severed, and so this archive could be regarded as a failed experiment. However, for the purposes of this research project, the archive had value, as much can be learnt about the challenges of archiving of film websites. What was clear was that the process of archival selection was based on a set of 'archonic' beliefs, and conjecture about what will be important in the future. So, consequently the archival process revealed itself to be ideological as it was shaped by institutional agendas and politics that determine what people in the future may know about the past.

3.8 Example Archive 3: Temporal Web Collections - *Webby Awards*

The third example archive represents is a form of web archiving that Ben-David terms 'temporal web collections' – that is say collections or archives, generated, either from existing archives or a bespoke collection, by periodic sampling over time (2013:22). One kind of temporal collection where film websites can be found is web-based awards that

have proliferated over the last 20 years, with their cycles of nominations, adjudications and accolades, and records of past winners and nominees creating temporal archives.

Awards, honours and prizes have become a pre-eminent mechanism for the expression of cultural value in contemporary culture (English, 2005:26). Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's concept of cultural economics, James English suggests that relations between culture and the economy are transacted via awards, honours and prizes that function as cultural capital, rather than financial capital, in an economy of 'prestige' (2005:4). Following this lead, a preliminary survey was undertaken of web design awards (See Appendix 1). To qualify for inclusion in the survey, awards had to meet three criteria: first, they had to be conducted in English; secondly, the award had to include a film/movie category; and lastly, the award had to hold a publicly available archival record of winners. Although the collection gleaned from this survey cannot claim to be definitive, the survey indicates that a considerable number of web-based awards, honours and prizes have sprung up during the period under consideration in this thesis illustrating the growing significance of the form.

Awards honouring film websites can be seen in a range of settings from the Austrian-based Prix Ars Electronica festival that regards film websites as forms of Net Art, to the Tribeca Film Festival's *Storyscapes* which celebrate the storytelling role of film websites within transmedia film projects (Walden, 2017:81). In addition to this there are sponsored awards such as the *Macromedia Flash* Animation Software Film Festival which celebrate uses of *Flash* software in film websites (Ibid.), while different sectors of the film industry have also developed awards. There are film marketing and distribution awards such as *The Hollywood Reporter Key Art Awards*, *Screen Marketing and Distribution Awards*, and *Themed Entertainment Awards* (TEA) (Ibid.). While the wider marketing and promotion industries recognise film websites under the auspices of the *Cannes Lions Awards*, the *Daveys*, *Horizon Interactive Awards*, *AWWWards* and the *Favourite Website Awards* (FWA) (Ibid.). The web design industry has awards for film websites such as the *Web Marketing Association Awards* and the *Interactive Media Awards* (IMAs). Moreover, some awards have categories for 'People's Choice', where awards are based on popular votes, and there are also fan-based awards such as the *Movie Viral Awards* for film promotion campaigns (Ibid.). And finally following the model of the Academy of Film Arts and Sciences, an academy has been established to champion digital media (Walden, 2017:83). The International Academy of Digital Arts and Sciences was founded to help drive the creative, technical and professional development of the internet with the *Webby Awards* and, more recently, the Real Time Academy of Short-form Arts and Sciences' *Shorty Awards* has similarly been established in the field of social media (Ibid.).

While each of these awards emanates from different starting points, what they share is an interest in celebrating the emerging cultural form of the film website (Ibid.). Moreover, I would suggest that through these awards, each organisation seeks to define what film

websites are from their own perspective (Walden, 2017:81-2). In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Michel Foucault asserts that 'monuments' (like awards, I would argue) are discursive entities that tell us less about the past, and more about the factors that gave rise to their appearance (2002:155). In this sense, awards can be understood as sets of statements which have the effect of conditioning/ shaping the emergence of films websites. Awards can be seen as discursive practices - particularly in the absence of any other critical discourse such as journalism or academic commentary as has been noted by Long (2011). As a result, awards may not only validate existing film website designs, but act as an instrument shaping the future forms film websites will take.

From the survey, it became apparent that awards often hold a 'hall of fame' memorialising the winners. And for the purposes of this research project investigating the development of this new form, such collections can be regarded as archival records of what has been highly regarded within the field. Although this is not their primary function, such archives are an inadvertent consequence of a deliberate collection process. By so doing, some of these awards have systemically created a record of these ephemeral artefacts, so that they qualify as a 'temporal web collection' and can be used as the basis of a longitudinal study to examine the development of film websites (Ben-David, 2013:22).

The *Webby Awards*' collection was established in 1996 so this is the longest running award in the survey, and its archive has been described as 'a capsule of internet history' (Baio, 2012*). The Webby Awards* closely emulate the academy awards for film. Like the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, the *Webby Awards* are hosted by the International Academy of Digital Arts and Sciences (IADAS). However, unlike the Academy Awards the *Webby Awards* were sold to a commercial producer of award shows in 2005 and their entry fees has sharply escalated since then and become increasingly prohibitive to smaller scale campaigns and low budget projects (Ibid.). That said, claiming to be 'honoring the best of the internet', *The Webbys* Archive and Gallery hosts a searchable database, organised by year and category, with winners, nominees and honourees commemorated with a screen capture and a link to the winning site (Walden, 2017:84). The archive contains the record of winners, whilst the gallery displays a screen capture and link to the website. An examination of the annual winners and nominees provides, what in archaeological terms may be described as a 'stratigraphic excavation sample', on the basis that the first layer was created by the winner in the first year in 1996, followed by the next year's winner and a succession of layers making up a chronological record from the first to the most recent winners to 2017 (Renfrew and Bahn, 2008:122-3).

The *Webby Awards* archive is an inadvertent archive, insofar as it is a by-product of the annual competition, but its processes of appraisal and judgements by expert panels and popular votes are both selective and systematically adjudicated. By adopting the term 'archive' to describe its collection, the *Webby Awards* has become a self-appointed

custodian of web design history and the collection assumes the Derridean authority of a record (Walden, 2017:84).

The *Webby Awards'* category for 'movie and film' covers what the award describes as 'sites dedicated to promotion, celebration and presentation of films, movies and film culture' and an examination of the table of award winners and nominees in Appendix 2, provides further insight into the development of the form (Webby Awards*,* 2016). A close reading of this table reveals that from 1994 to 2004, winners and nominees were known only by the title of the film they promoted, rather than as cultural artefacts in their own right. By 2005 there was a shift in the mode of address, and some websites were attributed to design agencies (albeit in small print with no hyperlinks) and explanatory notes on the design process became an additional feature of the listing. It was not until 2012 however that the *Webby Awards* gave full credit to designers in their lists of winners and nominees. By the end of the period under consideration, most major design agencies archive their own work and provide links to their agency sites, where their work was showcased with extended commentary on key features and functionality.

During my examination of the *Webby Awards* archive, I observed four types of film websites: film culture's online institutions; film information sites; narrative film sites and, what I term, 'Zeitgeist' film sites. The early years saw the establishment of what have become film cultures' online institutions: *Internet Movie Database* (IMDB), *Rotten Tomatoes* and *Yahoo! Movies*. These online institutions originate from a range of backgrounds: *IMDB* is an independent organisation but *Film.com* is an offshoot of an established media company - MTV Networks. What is interesting here is that institutional 'authority' in real world settings does not automatically transfer into the online context, it must be won (in the Bourdieusian sense of the word). For example, the American Film Institute's (AFI) *Cinemedia.com* was a *Webby Award* honouree in 1997, and claimed to be the largest online Film and Media Directory, but it was the newcomer *Internet Movie Database* (IMDB) set up in 1990 which won the *Webby Award*, not just once, but for the next three consecutive years and in the fourth year won the *Webby Award for People's Voice* too.

The next group of award-winning sites observed in the archive are film information sites - directories, databases, news sites, and guides such as *Films.com*, *Indiewire.com* and *Metacritic.com.* There are industry-centred information sites and even national film industry sites such as the *iftn.ie* (The Irish Film and TV Network). The archive illustrates the evolution of the form as they transform from 'magazine' to 'channel' format. For example*,* Sundance Online Film Festival site, *Sundance.org* was nominated for the 2004 award and Sundance Institute online's festival site won awards in 2006. However, by the time Sundance won the award in 2009, it had become a fully-fledged cable and satellite TV network channel. This stratigraphic sample from the *Webbys* illustrates the development

of Sundance's online presence from a stand-alone website destination site to web-based TV network during the period under consideration.

The third category in the *Webbys* archive is narrative film sites. I observed how over the period of the archive's existence, film websites shift from providing post-release narratives - as can be seen with award winning sites for *Donnie Darko* (2001), and *Requiem for a Dream* (2002), to websites becoming part of a fully integrated transmedia events such as the sites for *The Hunger Games* (2012-15), or *The Grand Budapest Hotel'*s site, *Akademie Zubrowka* in 2015. Moreover, film website conventions begin to emerge such as web-based counter narratives (in which the film's narratives are told from different perspectives) for films with strong character-driven such as *The Simpsons* (2007), and *District 9* (2009); and in-movie world experiences for sci-fi/fantasy genre films such as *Prometheus* (2012*)* and *Tron: Legacy* (2010).

The *Webbys* Archive and Gallery claims, 'if you want to see the past, look in here', but as I have argued, the *Webbys* do not always give a full account of significant sites and there are some notable gaps and absences in the archive (Webbys in Walden, 2017:84). According to reports in *Variety* magazine, in 1999 *The Blair Witch Project* site made such an impact on film audiences that it prompted a shift in industry attitudes towards the internet as a site for film marketing and promotion, yet the site is completely absent from the *Webbys* archive (Hayes and Graser 2000). Similarly, *The Beast* was widely regarded as the first ARG (Alternative Reality Game) designed to promote Steven Spielberg's *AI Artificial Intelligence* (2001), yet it does not figure in the *Webbys* 'Hall of Fame' either (Walden, 2017:84). Such archival absences remind us that, contrary to its claim, this archive cannot enable the visitor to 'see the past' after all (Ibid.).

The fourth category is 'Zeitgeist' film sites as it is evident that one of the main drivers of the *Webbys* is to celebrate what is new, boundary pushing or experimental. An illustration of this type of site is the http://cargocollective.com/InternetCowboy/#Many-Colors-One-Voice for the film *For Coloured Girls: Many Colours: One Voice* (2011). The site was designed to create a visualisation of the internet's emotions. An application searches the internet for 'emotional' phrases and tags them with colours to create visualisations and by so doing this site typifies the *Webby Awards* emphasis on the discourse of the 'new'. However, while the *Webby Awards* are keen to prove their state-of-the-art credentials, in practice such awards are always, in fact awarded retrospectively. A distinction has been drawn between accolades which are bestowed before the event and accolades like the *Webbys* which are retrospective and confer awards on concrete outcomes (Morley in Swiatek, 2014:74-75). But the consequence is that what happened in the past is brought into a formative relationship with the present and is regarded as an operational reality of what constitutes current examples of excellence, as well as a model for future practice.

As previously touched upon, since 2005 when the *Webbys* were purchased by a commercial awards business, the number of its award categories has grown exponentially, while their entry fee charges have risen sharply. As a result, the *Webbys* have been widely criticised as the awards exclude 'worthy candidates' and leave them dominated by well-resourced film studio marketing divisions (Baio, 2012). Whilst this is evidently the case, nevertheless, I would contend that close reading of cultural processes like these awards can still yield insight into how organisations set up to generate prestige, end up shaping the development of film websites. Awards proclaim their winners as models of excellence and create an archive of models of best practice for adoption or adaptation. *Webby Award* winners, nominees and honourees implicitly valorise certain ways of doing things. For example, the awards legitimate innovative practices, which subsequently concretise into conventions such as in-movie corporate or institutional websites like the award-winning site for *Requiem for a Dream*, *Tappy Tibbons.com* in 2001, *Openspaces.org* for *I Heart Huckabees* in 2004, and *Irobotnow.com* for *I,Robot* in 2004, *Multi-National United.com* in 2009 for the film, *District 9*, *The Institute of Human Continuity* for *2012* in 2010 and the *Project Prometheus* site for *Prometheus* in 2012 to name just a few.

In the absence of other forms of critique or appraisal, archives like the *Webby Awards* become instruments, not only for consecrating the past, but shaping the future. As a result, I would hypothesise that awards archives may influence the emerging canon of the form. Of course, this hypothesis may only really be substantiated by interviews with practitioners in the field which is a task that lies beyond the scope of this current enquiry, but it would seem to be the case that awards like the *Webbys* make claims about the value of things in the present, and through their Archive and Gallery, this way of looking at the present shapes how the present is seen in the past. The archive therefore is a filtered past, reflecting the present in the past.

3. 9 Example Archive 4: Web 2.0 Archives –*Movie Marketing Madness* Blog

Anat Ben-David suggests that it is only by taking a diachronic perspective of web archiving that the development in web archives come into focus (2013:6) The fourth example archive represents a significant development in archiving practices resulting from the technological changes brought by Web 2.0 (Ben-David 2013:6). Moreover, it illustrates Manovich's prediction that data collection will become a popular recreational pursuit (2001:225).

The *Movie Marketing Madness* blog began in 2003 at a time when blogging was the new state-of-the-art form of web publishing (Walden, 2017:85). The term 'blog' (a conflation of web and log) describes the online services and applications that enable individuals to compose and share a log of content via the web (Rettberg-Walker, 2008:17). While blog templates vary, the central component of a blog is the 'post' (a piece of written commentary, image or video) linked to other sources of information (Rettberg-Walker,

2008:21). As blogs may be created by individuals, they are often characterised by personal writing styles and opinions but are fundamentally social as they invite response from readers (Ibid.). In essence, blog posts are stored collections of writings published in reverse chronological order, with the most recent posts published at the top of the blog's home page and by scrolling down the reader can delve into past posts in the blog's archives (Rettberg-Walker 2008:8). Structurally speaking, then the blog's archive is an index to previous posts, organised by date, category and lists of links (similar to the first kinds of web archives) (Ibid.).

Movie Marketing Madness is authored by Chris Thilk, a freelance writer and content strategist (Chris Thilk, 2018). In 2003, when he began posting, Thilk had no set approach to writing about film marketing campaigns. But by the end of the year he had defined an editorial policy for his blog (Thilk, 2005a). His modus operandi was to focus predominantly on film marketing campaigns for large scale Hollywood movies and he would select campaigns and give an account of all their components, taking into consideration trailers, posters, online and social advertising, cross-promotions, media and publicity (Ibid.).

At an early stage *Movie Marketing Madness* garnered attention from the studios which monitored his blog, and begun to consult him (Chris Thilk, 2005c). In this way the blogger became an 'influencer', attaining what Derrida refers to as *commandment,* whereby the archivist is recognised for their undertaking and receive a kind of 'authorisation' from the industry *post hoc*[5]. At the time of writing (June 2017) the blog consisted of 783 posts. So, over the period from 2003 to 2017, on average approximately 70 posts were written each year, which was more than one per week and, to date, the blog has received a little over 600 visitors, and 1,000-page views each week too (Chris Thilk, 2017). The blog is an inadvertent, rather than deliberate archive, insofar as Thilk set out to write a blog, not create an archive, but I would argue the longevity of the blog means that it now constitutes a unique record of film marketing.

The blog provides an archive of commentary, rather than direct access to film websites and indeed links often suffer the same fate seen in other online archives. However, the value of this archive lies in the temporal nature of the commentary which provides an insight into some of the ways in which film marketing sites have developed over the period. The blog illustrates how websites evolved from EPK (electronic press kits) formats to more integrated film marketing experiences today. Blog posts chart changing forms of engagement between producers and audiences as 'official' film websites link to 'fan' sites, and other social networking sites from *Friendster* to *Facebook*. The blog also illustrates how film websites formats have evolved, sensitive to different Internet access speeds, and software requirements as well as the incorporation of changing plug-ins and applications such as Flash, QuickTime, Google maps, and later to social media and mobile and apps

[5] Thilk currently writes a column in *The Hollywood Reporter online* on film marketing.

(Chris Thilk, 2004b; Chris Thilk, 2005b). Clearly this arc of development illustrates Kittler's assertion that 'media produce what they allegedly only reproduce' with the shift from what are known as stand-alone 'destination' websites to socially integrated multi-media entertainment sites actively seeking to generate audience communities through technical affordances (Kittler, 1999:145).

Many film websites function as hubs or home sites for marketing campaigns (Chris Thilk, 2008). Indeed, some marketing agencies build film websites on the *Tumblr* social media platform to facilitate participatory activity such as liking, sharing or reblogging (Chris Thilk, 2015). While most sites link to *Facebook* pages and *Twitter* profiles that act as news channels to generate communities of interest, with trailer release countdowns, campaign updates and 'red carpet' coverage, as well as audience reactions in posts, tweets and re-tweets. What these developments demonstrate is how digital marketing enables a 'conversation' to develop around forthcoming film releases and illustrates what Jenkins terms 'spreadability' – the ways in which Web 2.0 and social media affordances enable audiences to actively participate in the circulation of content, and thereby expand both its economic and cultural value (Jenkins, 2009b).

Perhaps the most interesting blog posts are those that illustrate emerging conventions and genres. Horror films have sites containing elements designed to startle and surprise (Thilk, 2004a; Thilk, 2007). While marketing for science and fantasy films tended to be accompanied by in-movie fictional worlds on film websites as can be seen in the 'Paranormal Studies lab' website for *Ghostbusters* (2016) or, the in-world site for *Independence Day-Resurgence*, *The War of 1996* (2016) which revisits events from the original film and undertakes narrative work filling in the gaps in the story in the 20 intervening years between the two films. Instances like these illustrate how online film marketing has expanded its role to the extent that, at times, it fulfils one of the key functions of Jenkin's definition of transmedia storytelling – world building (Jenkins, 2009b).

This blog provides a unique opportunity to track how websites have changed over time. However, inevitably, an archive created by one individual has limitations. For example, coverage is confined to English speaking, mostly American films, and sites for 'foreign language' films or indeed films from other parts of the world barely figure in the blog at all. This means that in practice campaigns under consideration tend to spring from a limited number of Hollywood studios and marketing agencies, while there is little coverage of websites for the film sites of directors like Peter Greenaway who is an active creator of web-based extensions to his films.

That said, the value of the blog as an archive lies in the fact that it provides a contemporaneous commentary on film marketing campaigns over a period of 14 years (Walden, 2017:85). Moreover, the blog redefines conventional understanding of who undertakes archival practices and assumes the authority of Derrida's archon in a manner

that is more akin to the tradition of 19th century independent archivists. When individuals like Lt-General Augustus Pitt Rivers, founder of the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford, simply assumed archonic authority to set up an archive of artefacts related to his fields of interest (Ibid.). As Manovich observes, if archiving becomes de-institutionalised and an everyday practice because of the social affordances of the web, then what gets archived will change too, according to individual interests and enthusiasms (2001:225). From the perspective of this research concerned with film websites, such initiatives change what can be known in the future, about the past. The *Movie Marketing Madness* blog encompasses aspects of film culture that have historically been located outside the academic interests of film studies and, so, provides a rich archival resource for this thesis. Moreover, this example clearly illustrates how web platforms provide the facilities for new kinds of archival initiatives and how cultural memory archives are no longer solely under the control of institutions but are subject to what Urrichio describes as 'distributed logic' of a new generation of web-based archives (2009:142).

So, having established where film websites may be collected, recorded and archived, and who has been undertaking these archival practices, as well as getting a sense of how each of these archives shapes the preservation of film websites, and what we may know about film websites, in the last section I undertake a transmedia archaeological survey examining some of these archival sites to explore their capacity for collection, recoding and archive of film websites.

3.10 Transmedia Archaeology in Practice: Searching for *District 9*'s Website

The *D-9.com* web campaign for Neill Blomkamp's *District 9* (2009) was selected as a case study for this archaeological investigation as it is an award-winning site and regarded as a notable example of transmedia digital film marketing. Evidence of this can be seen in the fact that the *D-9.com* campaign attracted attention both on and offline with Trigger's Creative Director, Jason Yim invited to talk about the campaign at the American Film Institute's *Digifest* (AFI in Walden, 2017:83). The site went onto win accolades at *The Hollywood Reporter's Key Arts Awards*, the *Webby Awards* and the *Movie Viral* awards, as well as garnering critical attention when the transmedia scholar Henry Jenkins wrote about the campaign on his blog (Ibid.).

Neill Blomkamp's *District 9* is a science fiction film set in Johannesburg, South Africa where a spaceship full of alien creatures has landed and are being contained in refugee-style camps in a slum district on the fringes of the city. Designed by Trigger- a digital agency based in Los Angeles, *District 9*'s transmedia promotional campaign consisted of websites, *YouTube* films, a telephone answering service, billboards and a 'guerrilla advertising' campaign of signs affixed to park benches in America's biggest cities proclaiming, 'Bus

bench for humans only’. While all the main characters had *Facebook* pages and *Twitter* accounts too.

Deploying a similar approach to the *Blair Witch Project* site, *D-9.com* invokes the *District 9’s* story world as an ‘as-if-real’ extension of the film. Providing an entry point to the film’s story world was a corporate website for the company Multi-National United (MNU) featured in the film. The site was designed to be interactive, engaging audiences with job vacancies to apply for, online training programmes to complete, and featured a community watch site to monitor alien activity. (See Figure 7) This illustrates what Jenkins identifies as one of the key principles of transmedia storytelling, allowing audiences to learn more about the film’s story world and interact with the story world as if it is real (2009c). What made this site particularly engaging though, was that there were two versions of the site: one for humans and one for aliens. (See Figure 8)

Figure 7. MNU Community Watch site. *District 9* Viral, © Sony Pictures, 2017.

Figure 8. Two entrances to MNU's site: one for humans and one for aliens. *District 9* Viral © Sony Pictures, 2017.

On *YouTube*, a fictional corporate video and public information-style film on how to deal with encounters with aliens expanded the story world still further. Then an additional component was added to the transmedia campaign - a website called *MNU Spreads Lies* that reported events from the alien's perspective and created a 'counter-reading' to the narrative of the film (Jenkins in Walden, 2017:83). (See Figure 9) This illustrates a further transmedia storytelling principle – subjectivity, whereby audiences can see the story world through the perspective of an alien character, Christopher (Jenkins, 2009c). This alternative view contradicted the film, and other on-line material, and, by so doing, opened up space for ambiguity about how reliable the information on the 'official site' (and indeed the film) might be (Jenkins in Walden, 2017:83). All told, this transmedia campaign elaborated the film's narrative through story world building, as well as articulating character subjectivities and, as a result, extended the pleasures of the story across media platforms.

Figure 9. MNU Spreads Lies. *District 9* Viral, © Sony Pictures, 2017.

However, examination of the site was interrupted when in May 2013, the site was taken down from the Sony Picture's site leaving only the film's theatrical trailer in its wake and was replaced with an online 'shop window' displaying DVD and Blu-ray formats for sale (Ibid.). This brought the research to an abrupt halt and illustrated the perils of researching ephemeral media artefacts like film websites. Looking further afield, it became clear that the studio's digital housekeeping had not entirely erased *D-9.com* from the web (Ibid.). The in-world videos were still available to view on *YouTube*, and the fan blog *Movieviral.com* had created compilations of short films to view for their *YouTube* site (Ibid.). The film's *Facebook* site (https://www.facebook.com/District9/) was still 'live', containing clips of deleted scenes and 'making of' features from the time of the film's release, although, since then, the site has become populated with advertisements for forthcoming films of a similar generic disposition, and subsequently was repurposed to promote Blomkamp's next film, *Elysium* (2013) (Ibid.). That said, the *Facebook* pages for the main characters Wikus Van der Merwe and the alien, Christopher were still in place, although they contained little more than a few pictures (Ibid.).

The search for *D-9.com* continued at the *Webby Awards* site as it was the recipient of an award in 2009 (*Webby Awards*, 2009). That said, in practice the archive does not contain the winning film websites themselves, only screen captures and links to represent the sites (Ibid.). So, while the *Webby Awards* promise visitors to its Gallery that they will be able to 'see 19 years of the web's best', in practice, it cannot deliver on this promise because these artefacts do not reside in this archive (*Webby Awards* 2016). In practice, the archive can only provide links to these sites, and these may be moved, reorganised, or deleted, and so linked-to sites are vulnerable to 'rot' or worse still being taken down (Walden, 2017:84). As the *Webby Awards* does not hold the copyright of these film websites, and these assets remain the property of the film producers, they cannot host the sites. So, it becomes evident that this digital archive is little more than a list (Ibid.).

The next archive that promised the possibility of providing access to the *D-9.com* website was the *Movie Marketing Madness* Blog. However, in the event, this archive proved to be a disappointment too, as it turned out that the blog's author, Chris Thilk did not choose to cover the marketing campaign for *District 9* in August 2009 (Walden, 2017:85). Given the blogger's previously stated editorial policy, there were several possible reasons why *District 9*'s campaign was not covered (Ibid.) First, its theatrical release coincided with the release of Quentin Tarantino's *Inglourious Basterds* (2009) and this was Thilk's preference as it was simply a bigger film industry event (Ibid.). But more broadly speaking, with the advent of *Twitter*, the online landscape was changing. Thilk had observed that visitor traffic to the site had declined, as RSS web feed use had increased. Subscribers were updated about new posts via email, without having to visit the Movie Marketing Madness site for themselves (Thilk, 2009). In other words, ways of accessing websites were changing from audiences visiting 'destination' sites, to the delivery of blog updates to readers' email in-boxes, and this resulted in a slowdown in the blog's traffic and Thilk's posting activity for a time (Ibid.).

It was this omission that revealed the limitations of this form of archiving and raised questions about the role of subjectivity in archives (Walden, 2017:86). The blog archive was dependent on the efforts of a single individual and whilst the blog was produced in a systematic way with a clear editorial strategy, what we saw over the years was that, with the pressures of work and private life – Thilk married, became a father and changed jobs – so his blogging activity ebbed and flowed according to the time he had available (Ibid.). At one point, he simply ran out of enthusiasm and this, together with the fact that the blog's host was hit by a security breach infecting the blog with malware, resulted in him deciding to close *Movie Marketing Madness* from 2012 until 2015, when he started writing again (Ibid.). Moreover, the blog suffered from the same 'link rot' we saw in the award archives and, in practice, this archive was a series of commentaries without a collection.

The last port of call in this search for *D-9.com* was the *Internet Archive* (Ibid.) As I discovered, the ability to travel back in web history promised by the *Internet Archive*'s *Wayback Machine* did not prove as easy as its name might suggest (Ibid.). The *Wayback Machine* searched by web address (URLs) rather than search term (Rogers in Walden, 2017:87). So, while some sites shared their film's title and were easy to locate, the website for *District 9* was named *D-9.com* which made it more challenging to find (Walden, 2017:87). However, once the film website's address was established as http://www.d-9.com, it became possible for the *Wayback Machine* to create a calendar of its documentation of the site.

According to one of the founders of Trigger, Perry Wang, the *D-9.com* site was launched in July 2008, but it was not logged by the *Internet Archive* until 27 August 2008 (Wang in Walden, 2017:87). The first archive 'snapshot' of the site showed an empty black page featuring just the MNU logo and a still 'live' link to a free downloadable Adobe Flash player

plug-in (Ibid.). But it was in the 'snapshot' taken a year later on July 25th, 2009, that I finally I found what I was looking for (Ibid.). Following the trailer, hidden from view, was *D.9.com* (Ibid.). In the event, the archived site had been stripped down to its core (Ibid.). The *MNU Alert Game*, *MNU Training Simulation*, as well as the *MNU Spreads Lies site* and the *Maths from Outer Space* site were all gone (Ibid.). But the main site was archived, accessible and, for the most part, operational (Ibid.). While the *Internet Archive* may have had its limitations, it had archived the site and *Wayback Machine* search engine provided access to it (Ibid). Moreover, through the calendar presentation of archived snapshots, the lifespan of this artefact could be measured. By tracking the site on the *Wayback Machine*, I could trace it through to 17th March 2013 which meant that the site's lifespan was more than 5 years in total, vastly exceeding the conventional 6-week long campaigns of its analogue predecessors. The site was taken down on approximately 4th May 2013 (Walden, 2017:87).

Once its promotional role was fulfilled, this hybrid form of content and marketing which evidently contributed to the film experience, and had been celebrated for doing so, was unceremoniously taken down from the web. And while the archives examined in this chapter clearly valued this new kind of artefact, in practice they were unable to preserve it, and the only archive able to provide any kind of access to the website was the *Internet Archive*, and then only in a fragmented form.

3.11 Reflections

Media archaeologist Jussi Parikka observes that software-based culture is littered with archival metaphors offering up the promise of digital repositories, storage and hosting, (Parikka in Walden, 2017:88). Moreover it is claimed that digital archives will provide the panacea to all material challenges that media archives have encountered in the past such as flammable nitrate-based celluloid, chemical deterioration of photographs, stretched video tape and the premise underpinning digital archives is 'promise' of perpetuity (Chun in eds. Huhtamo and Parikka, 2011:184). Yet despite the archival 'promise' of digital media, clearly for the most part, *D-9.com* is no longer publicly available, or, at least, not in its entirety (Walden, 2017:89). So, this search bears out Chun's observation that the promise of permanence is a misconception of the capacity of digital archives, as well as Ernst's assertion that digital archives cannot store artefacts in the conventional understanding of the term.

What this research does demonstrate, however, is some of the ways in which digital archives differ from their real-world counterparts, as well as some of the consequences for the digital artefacts in them (Ibid.). Materially speaking, archive content exists only as binary data with algorithmic instructions for how to build the site, in response to machine-event or user action (Peacock in Walden, 2017:88). The website's assets are not embedded in the page. They exist separately and are called for algorithmically when the page is

constructed in the browser which has implications for the way digital archives can be understood (Ibid.). If software-generated media objects are only manifest in the algorithmic process, they cannot be archived, only documented and consulted and it is this that makes digital archives dynamic entities (Ernst in Walden, 2017:88). Over the course of the life of an artefact like *D-9.com*, cookies, data profiles and personal browsing histories allow the site to appear in different forms for different people. But links degrade and disappear because assets are moved or removed, different browsers are used, and software and operating systems are updated. For digital archives, this raises questions about where digital artefacts begin and where they end, as well as questions of cultural value and the meaning of an object that changes over time (Ibid.).

So, digital archives are best understood as a network of information in which links are activated and reactivated as required, rather than as repositories of material objects in the conventional understanding of the archive (Ibid.). The consequence is that digital artefacts may be documented in various ways but cannot be archived *per se* (Ernst in Walden, 2017:89). Moreover, whilst conventional archives are concerned with evidence, information and systems of ordering and classification, in digital archives – like the ones encountered in this search- it is the metadata describing the object that is archived, rather than the material object itself (Walden, 2017:89). *De facto*, this means that the first generation of film websites is disappearing. My concern is that the ephemerality of this new media cultural artefact means they are gone before they have been appraised as new forms of storytelling and the numerous other roles, they fulfil in the contemporary film experience (Ibid.).

Furthermore, while my interest is in film websites and transmedia marketing, of course the issue of the digital cultural memory is not confined to this field. This instance prompts concerns about how other aspects of culture are remembered and indeed what culture remembers (Ibid.). Clearly not everything can be archived and indeed, wherever there are archives, collections are <u>always</u> pre-conditioned by selection processes (Ibid.). It is also true that all archives have their agendas which inevitably lead to lacunae in the record (Ibid.). However, in the case of emerging cultural artefacts like film websites, we have an instance of concern, concomitant with the position articulated in an article in *Wired* magazine titled 'We need to act to prevent a digital dark age' (Koehl in Walden, 2017:89). The term 'digital dark age' derives from the title of a presentation by Terry Kuny at the 63rd IFLA *(International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions) Council and General Conference* in 1997 and refers to the time between the widespread adoption of digital technologies and the production of digital-born artefacts, and the development of infrastructure and the wherewithal to preserve those artefacts (Stuart, 2012:554). What was evident in the archives consulted in the search in this chapter, comprehensive 'wherewithal' remains out of reach. Moreover, the implications may not be confined to the world of archives (Walden, 2017:89).

Casting further afield, the point is borne out by other instances such as the disappearance of *Geocities* (Walden, 2017:89). Originally established in 1995, *GeoCities* was a free web hosting service on which the first generation of digital pioneers set up homesteads in the form of do-it-yourself homepages made of hand-coded profile pages, gifs and guest book pages (Gyford, 2009). *GeoCities* was regarded as a significant manifestation of early web culture but a few years after it was acquired by *Yahoo!*, it was shut down in 2009 and almost lost to history (Lialina and Espenschied in Walden, 2017:90). In the event, a collective of volunteers known as *The Archive Team* dedicated to the preservation of digital heritage rescued a proportion of *GeoCities* homes pages which are now preserved in a vast downloadable Torrent file that formed the focus of an exhibition at The Photographer's Gallery in London in 2013 titled *One Terabyte of Kilobyte Age* by Olia Lialina and Dragan Espenschied. Clearly, the challenges encountered in the archive are not confined to questions of how to preserve the past but raise questions about the need to archive the present too. As I have already stated, the web is now more than two decades old, so it can no longer be regarded as a 'new' media (Walden, 2017:90). In this transmedia archaeological excavation of the recent digital past to search for *D-9.com*, what I encountered was not the artefacts themselves which, materially speaking, have disappeared, but an imprint of where the artefact had once been. As Ernst reminds us, in media archaeology we need to be mindful of the silences, gaps and the disappearances, as much as the presences (Ernst, 2013:194).

3.12 Conclusions

This chapter began with a consideration of key writings in the field of archiving, and specifically web archiving, and from this, a series of archival principles, processes and rationales was distilled. These writings provided the research project with an understanding of the conceptual and technical underpinnings of web archives which subsequently enabled case studies to be appraised and evaluated for their facility to collect, record and archive film websites, and for what they could tell us about this emerging cultural artefact. The *Internet Archive* proved the most valuable for providing direct access to the artefacts, although in practice the preservation was often partial, at best. However, in the absence of alternatives, it provided a unique and important record as well as access to sites that were not otherwise accessible at all. What the *Internet Archive* was also able to do was provide a mechanism to chart the life span of a website with its calendar of snapshot captures, so the researcher was able to calculate the biography of sites and digital film marketing campaigns. The second case study archive*, Digitalcraft.org* was an example of how established memory institutions have endeavoured to respond to the digitisation of culture and preserve web-born artefacts. Whilst this collection was tiny by comparison with the *Internet Archive*, its value lay in what it could tell us about the technical and conceptual challenges of archiving these artefacts. Moreover, even though the archive initiative was ultimately abandoned, and the project closed, the point is not its failure but what can be learnt from this failed initiative. Specifically, how archivisation

policy both conditions and determines what will be preserved from the digital past, and what can be known in the future.

Although the third case study of the *Webby Awards* is an inadvertent archive, rather than an archive that set out to deliberately record film websites, it provided the longest record of film websites dating back to 1996 and this facilitated a valuable longitudinal study. This study revealed the different kinds of film-related sites that have emerged and seemed to fall into four main categories: film culture's online institutions; information sites; narrative sites and 'zeitgeist' sites. Moreover, the *Webby Awards* framework illustrated the rising significance of the artefact itself from the late 1990s. Awards archives like the *Webby Awards* proved critical, particularly in the absence of other kinds of third-party appraisal or evaluation.

An unexpected outcome of this research project's examination of film website awards, honours and prizes is that it illustrates how cultural awards have become an increasingly significant mechanism for the brokering of value in an 'economy of prestige' (2005:4). In *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature,* Pierre Bourdieu suggests that a work is not made once, but by everybody who is interested in it and this would seem to be the case with awards, honours and prizes (1993:111). For a developing cultural form like film websites, these mechanisms of prestige not only generate critical attention for the artefacts, but also play a role in shaping their emergence by defining what makes a good film website. While this hypothesis would need further investigation to see whether this is the case, and how this works in film website design, the survey of awards here provides a capsule case study of how a new 'cultural field' is defined.

The last archival case study is a new generation archive developed by an individual enthusiast and underpinned by second generation web technologies – the Movie Marketing Madness Blog. Longevity has enabled this blog to assume the status of an archive with its record of commentary on film websites and through a consideration of a period of nearly 15 years, a picture emerges of the numerous different roles film websites now play. Since the 1990s they have functioned as online shop windows as well as electronic press kits (EPK); Then as 'Official' film sites they incorporated the functions previously undertaken by the DVD with 'making of 'featurettes and interviews with cast and crew. Today film websites have now become online hubs or homes to film franchises as well as the place where trailers were launched. Film websites provide a locus for fan communities and a place where fans could coalesce around their shared interest; film websites undertake narrative functions such as world building and provide narrative continuity between films in a series. All told then, the film website now plays a significant role in the contemporary film experience.

In the final analysis my study of these four archival settings illustrates how film websites have been collected, recorded and archived and how archival content is shaped by the

interests of the institutions and individuals concerned, as well as a set of beliefs about what will be (and by implication will not be), of significance in the future. By placing them alongside one another in this chapter, this thesis has a greater understanding of the development of film websites. So, having now addressed the questions posed at the start of the chapter, the next chapter turns its attention to the artefacts themselves.

Chapter 4: Don't be Evil: An archaeology of film's online fictional worlds

4.1 Introduction

In the last chapter, the focus of the enquiry was locating where historical film websites have been collected, and how they have been recorded and archived online and the investigation lead to encounters with the first generation of online archives. Having completed that stage in the enquiry, the thesis moves on to investigate the second research question posed at the start of this thesis: what forms do film websites take? And more specifically, what film website styles, aesthetics and narrative forms have emerged? Over the last two decades, film websites have become a familiar feature of the contemporary film experience to the extent that formats have standardised, and conventions have crystallised. Typically, today official theatrical sites host the film's trailer, as well as plot summaries, behind-the-scene features, a gallery of images, clips and links out to the film's social media platforms. One convention became conspicuous during this time that sought, not just to promote, but to make a transmedia contribution to the film's narrative. This was the emergence of websites depicting fictional worlds in television with *Lost's* Dharma Initiative and the Hanso Foundation, *The Office's* Dunder Mifflin Paper Company Inc., as well as film franchises like *The Terminator's* Cyberdyne Systems or *Robocop's* Omni Consumer Products. In setting out to address the second research question in this thesis, this chapter will focus its attention on this form to develop an understanding of this phenomenon, the chapter will start with a general consideration of fictional worlds.

4.2 Fictional Worlds

All fiction creates worlds in which stories are set and this convention can be traced back through the 20th century along two genealogical lines of descent. Firstly, through theories of play. In *Homo Ludens* the Dutch historian Johan Huizinga outlined a set of principles about play where he proposed that play operates according to a set of ritualistic rules of engagement within a space he described as a 'magic circle' (1938: 10). For Huizinga, during play, the laws of the real world are suspended and replaced with rules governing the game in a 'magic circle' (Ibid). He goes on to explain how in play, fictional worlds can be superimposed on real world places, irrespective of whether the game takes place at a card table, on a stage, or a tennis court, and that once designated for the purpose, these special rules prevail (ibid.). By this definition, fictional worlds are 'temporary' spaces designated for the performance of a certain prescribed activities and behaviours, within the 'ordinary' world (ibid.) Two decades later Huizinga's ideas about play were taken up by the French sociologist, Roger Caillois who devised a taxonomy of play in *Man, Play Games* (1958).

Among his six conditions of play, Caillois suggested that make-believe requires an awareness of a 'dissimulation of reality and the substitution of a second reality' (Caillois, 1958: 22) and, since then, these ideas about play have been foundational in the theorization of computer games by scholars including Mark. J.P. Wolf (2003), Jesper Juul (2005), Katie Salen and Eric Zimmerman (1999) and others.

The second genealogical line of descent can be found in the work of the English writer and academic, J.R.R. Tolkien, author of *The Hobbit* (1937), *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy (1954-5), and the creator of Middle Earth where these fantasy tales take place. In a lecture titled 'On Fairy Stories' delivered in 1939 at the University of St Andrews in Scotland, Tolkien made a distinction between the 'primary' world in which we live and the fantasy world of his fiction that he called 'the secondary world' (1939: 132). These were terms Tolkien adopted, in turn from the poet, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who used them to describe different kinds of imagination (Wolf in Jenkins, 2013).

Since then, the concept of fictional worlds has been taken up by other literary scholars. Umberto Eco adopted the concept to describe the connections made between the author and the reader in conjuring a fictional world by the text he referred to as 'a machine for producing possible worlds' (1984:246). In *Fictional Worlds*, Thomas Pavel asserted that these worlds are what makes fiction so compelling for its readers is that they must submit themselves to its ontological perspective in order to fully engage with a story (1986:73). He goes on to say that its power lies in the distance between the fictional world which he terms the 'secondary universe' and the primary universe which he calls 'the really real world' (1986: 57). While in *Heterocosmica: Fiction and Possible Worlds*, Lubomir Doležel suggested that fictional worlds provide the 'macro structural conditions of story generation' (1998:31) So, evidently within the literature there is a growing sense of the critical significance of fictional world and in an anthology of essays titled *Storyworlds across Media*, Marie-Laure Ryan and Jan-Noel Thin call on literary scholars to develop a more 'media conscious narratology' because today fictional worlds can be found not only in fiction but across diverse settings from computer games to transmedia worlds (2014:2). It is these ideas that formed the foundations for a more recent scholarly work by Mark J.P. Wolf titled *Building Imaginary Worlds: The Theory and History of Subcreation* (2012) which will be considered in more detail in the next section.

The emergence of digital media prompted a new wave of interest in the field. In *Hamlet on the Holodeck*, Janet Murray predicted how digitisation will impact on fictional worlds (1999). She looks forward to a future in which audiences will not just read about fictional worlds, or view them on a screen, but be bodily be transported into a 'universal fantasy machine' in which fictional worlds are brought to life by computers and the internet (1999:15). To envisage this, she co-opts the concept of the holodeck from the TV series,

Star Trek: The Next Generation (1987) as a metaphor to imagine the potential of digital media for the creation of fictional worlds in the future (Ibid.). Murray describes:

> 'The holodeck consists of an empty black cube covered in white grid lines upon which a computer can project elaborate simulations by combining holography with magnetic 'force fields' and energy-to-matter conversions' (Ibid.).

She goes on to imagine how it may become possible to physically enter the holodeck and experience an 'illusory world' (Ibid.). Writing during the early years of the internet, Murray credits such possibilities to computational power and the encyclopaedic capacity of the internet which she predicts will make the web a compelling medium for narrative art (1999:87). She describes:

> 'the web-like structures of cyberspace allow for endless expansion possibilities within the fictional world, but in the context of the world wide web of information these intersecting stories can twine around and through the non-fictional documents of real life and make the borders of the fictional universe seem limitless' (Ibid.).

Murray predicts that web-based fictional environments will be full of story world artefacts (1999:254). Specifically, 'contextualising devices' to enable audiences to engage in ever more densely drawn fictional worlds and navigate their way through them with 'colour-coded paths, timelines, family trees, maps, clocks, calendars and so on' (1999:53-58). In sum, Murray foresees that digital media may become 'potent properties' for narrative and be used to support vivid and compelling fictional worlds in the future (1999:284).

Now, while the holodeck remains the terrain of science fiction, today transmedia provides a more tangible route to the development of fictional worlds. On a more pragmatic level, Henry Jenkins suggests that world-making has developed for the simple reason that the strategy embodies the commercial logic of convergence. Film franchises and TV series have the potential to spawn spin offs, licensed goods and product lines (2006:11). Jenkins points to the commercial logic of media producers who have moved away from single narratives, in favour of fictional worlds with the capacity to host a greater and more complex range of stories, games and other forms of engagement (2009b). Moreover, although evidently fictional worlds pre-date convergence technologies, Jenkins maintains that digital technologies have enabled the expansion of transmedia storytelling and greater audience participation in the process of world-making (2006:170). He writes:

> 'more and more storytelling has become the art of world building as artists create compelling environments that cannot be fully explored or exhausted within a single work, or even a single medium. The world is bigger than the film, bigger even than

> the franchise – since fan speculations and elaborations also expand the world in a variety of directions' (2006:116).

4.3 Mark Wolf's Building Imaginary Worlds and Subcreation

It is in the work of Mark J.P. Wolf that the most extensive consideration of world building across the media can be found. *Building Imaginary Worlds: The Theory and History of Subcreation* (2012) provides an historical account of imaginary worlds surveying three millennia and referencing more than '1400 worlds' which is a prodigious work of scholarship (Wolf, 2012). But Wolf's argument is simple. He believes that imaginary worlds have been largely neglected by academic research and that they do not just provide a background to plot but are compelling artefacts, in their own right (Wolf, 2012:2).

For Wolf, an imaginary world can take the form of a place in the geographical sense of the word, like Tolkien's Middle Earth, or can be a space, in the experiential sense of the word (2012:25). Furthermore, secondary worlds tend to have distinctive features which make them manifestly different from the primary world (Ibid). For Wolf, what makes imaginary worlds so compelling is the combination of similarities and differences between the primary and secondary worlds which he suggests provide a mechanism for reflection (Wolf in Jenkins, 2013b). In an interview with Jenkins, Wolf states:

'imaginary worlds can comment on the primary world through their differences, they can embody other ideas and philosophies, and convey meaning in a variety of ways beyond the traditional ways found in stories set in the primary world' (Ibid.).

This view of imaginary world creation accords with Tolkien's views when he explains that in fairy stories, 'the point of the story lies, not in thinking frogs' possible mates, but in the necessity of keeping promises (even those with intolerable consequences)' (1939:152). According to Wolf, and Tolkien before him, the facility for reflection afforded by such stories is their principal purpose.

As well as providing a rationale for imaginary world creation, the main reason for using Wolf's writings is that, unlike other scholars writing about fictional worlds, Wolf outlines a theoretical framework for their construction which provides a promising methodological tool for the examination of film website fictional worlds in this thesis (2012). He suggests that all imaginary worlds contain what he calls 'primary world defaults' across four different realms or domains (2012:35). First, the nominal realm in which new names are given to existing things, and this may include new languages, possibly even new alphabets or written forms; Secondly, the cultural realm that includes all man-made artefacts, customs and behaviours, ideas and institutions; Thirdly, the natural realm includes geographical features as well as species; and, lastly, the ontological realm that determines

the specific nature of the world's existence (Wolf 2012:35-6). Of particular interest to this chapter are Wolf's observations of the prevalence of what he terms 'evil subcreators' which he defines as 'institutions in which a world is not made for its own good, but rather as a tool used to dominate others or for its maker's own ends' (2012:241-242).

Wolf notes that secondary world features in science fiction and fantasy genres such as a spaceship travelling faster than the speed of light, have been so successful that they become a kind of secondary world 'truth' through their frequent use (2012:37). However, for fiction set in more familiar worldly settings, the secondary world needs to retain some similarity to the primary world (Ibid). For example, the logic of cause and effect between events, emotional realism in character relations, and moral frameworks of good and evil that audiences can relate to and believe in (Ibid.). Wolf argues that the success of a secondary world depends upon the maintenance of such features to make the world have what Tolkien describes as 'the inner consistency of reality' (1939:138). Indeed, Wolf acknowledges that their credibility depends on the 'illusion of completeness' to make their world believable (2012:39). This idea that only a small part of the world can be seen on screen, but with the implication is that the world continues beyond the frame has been described by other scholars too as 'hyperdiegetic' in (Hills, 2013:143; Johnson, 2009:37). But for a secondary world to be effective, Wolf suggests the audience must be able to vicariously enter it (2012:48).

In many ways, world creation depends on audiences as much as authors (Dudley Andrews in Jenkins, 2013a). Wolf acknowledges that 'without this continuous active participation on the reader's part, there would be no literary work at all' (Wolf, 2012:51). Wolf outlines how audiences are recruited into fictional worlds through a series of cognitive processes including 'gestalten', 'ellipsis', 'logic' and 'extrapolation' and 'catalysts for speculation' (Wolf, 2012:51-62).To explain, the concept of gestalt describes how human perception comprehends imaginary worlds by automatically making connections and filling in any gaps with inferences, even when the data is not actually present (2012:51). A 'narrative gestalt' as can be seen when a character sets off on a journey in one scene, then arrives at their destination in the next scene (Ibid.). The audience infers from this ellipsis that the character has made a journey, even though they did not witness it for themselves (Ibid.). In the context of world creation, Wolf suggests, world gestalten can imply the existence of other aspects of the world that are not present but can be taken as 'read' by the audience (2012:52). Moreover, he suggests that given sufficient detail and duration, a 'world logic' arises that establishes the secondary world's ontology (Wolf, 2012:53). Then, this secondary world could provide the foundations upon which audiences feel able to extrapolate or speculate, and thereby contribute to the illusion of a secondary world too.

Extrapolation can take various forms: the completion of narrative gestalts; gap filling using primary world defaults; and gap filling using secondary world defaults (Wolf,2012:57). It is this last form of extrapolation that explains how audiences experience a sense of

accommodation in a secondary world's ontology. The more the audience learn, the more they become familiar with the world's logic (Ibid.). Once the premise is established, then details such as customs, designs and even languages can be presented, without further explanation as part of the 'narrative fabric' of the world and are accepted as part of the world by audiences (2012:57). It is in this sense, Jenkins argues, that secondary worlds are 'performative', and these processes of audience engagement demonstrate how worlds are, in a sense, made by their audiences, as well as their authors (2013a). Wolf points to the way audiences may contribute to the creation of imaginary worlds themselves through the making of artefacts such as fan fic(tion), vids, or machinima productions which add components to imaginary worlds, and potentially shape the design of future productions (2012:279). While writing about television series *Doctor Who*, fan scholar Matt Hills argues that fans often seek to cohere any inconsistencies in fictional worlds but described this as 'world projection' rather than world building (2017:354).

Having established the foundations of world construction, Wolf outlines strategies used to develop secondary world infrastructure such as maps for orientation (2012:155). Ever since Thomas More's *Utopia* was published in 1516, fictional world maps have provided audiences with, not only a sense of context, but also a sense of place and scale, a sense of the relation between locations, a grasp of where the boundaries lie, as well a sense that the imaginary world was larger than the story (2012:156-7). In a similar manner temporal dimensions are rendered with timelines, calendars or genealogies through which 'the presence of history' can be suggested (Wolf, 2012:166). These temporal devices need not be confined to chronological narratives but may involve techniques such as 'interlacing' whereby events overlap, creating a sense of simultaneity (2012:167). In sum then, for Wolf, the infrastructural dimensions of time and space are fundamental to achieving the verisimilitude of the imaginary world (2012:171). And while the tendency is to provide encyclopaedic quantities of detail as both Murray and Jenkins before him have observed, the narrative value of these materials is that they are able to provide audiences with 'catalysts for speculation' (Ibid.).

The 'natural' characteristics of a secondary world such as flora, fauna and ecological features can provide a clear signal of difference to the primary world, particularly in the science fiction and fantasy genres (Wolf, 2012:172). Invented species are often characterised by biological defaults to denote difference while at the same time, these species often share human emotions and motivations, so audiences can empathise with them (Wolf, 2012:174). Similarly, invented languages are a barrier to empathy, so translation facilities are often used to overcome this (Wolf, 2012:187). In other words, differences tend to take place in the nominal and cultural realms, but audiences speak the same language and have the same emotions, so they can understand secondary world characters. This illustrates how similarities between the primary and secondary worlds are

as important to their affect, as differences, and how they operate in tension with one another to create fictional worlds.

Wolf suggests that the most common form of organisation in an imaginary world is narrative (2012:198). But that in some ways fictional worlds liberate narrative from the strictures of cause and effect, chronology, and other linear time-based conventions (2012:201). World based stories can assume different forms. They can take the form of 'world histories' 'or 'back stories' or 'nested stories'- that is to say, stories situated within stories which typically do not so much advance storylines as add ballast to the story world's verisimilitude (Ibid.). Relations between narratives take many forms within imaginary worlds, including narratives told in different media that share the same imaginary world. Some of these narrative forms entail temporal sequencing in different directions. For Wolf, they include the *sequel* (building on the preceding narrative) and the *prequel* (building on a future narrative) (Wolf, 2012:205-7). But there are *interquels* too that take place in the gaps within a single narrative, and *intraquels* that fill in the gaps within a single work of intervening events (Ibid.). There are *transquels* which set stories in wider contexts, and *paraquels* in which events in the story are regarded from different points of view (Wolf, 2012:209-210). Whilst each of these prefixes indicate the direction of the narrative trajectory, and the relationship between narratives, what they all seek to create is the possibility of viewing events taking place in the world, from different perspectives.

For the purposes of this investigation, Wolf's world building typology becomes particularly pertinent for its consideration of narrative forms that cross-media, and this is where Wolf's typology shares common ground with Jenkins' concept of transmedia storytelling. Wolf and Jenkins agree that a transmedial imaginary world is experienced through multiple forms of mediation and each of the different media function as an access point, bringing with them their own specific properties and peculiarities that contribute to the world (Jenkins, 2006:98; Wolf, 2012:248). For Wolf, the very notion of transmedia storytelling lends verisimilitude to a narrative, as it implies that the experience lies beyond any single media source (Wolf, 2012:247). This provides what Wolf calls 'ontological weight' as it brings imaginary world experiences into closer alignment with the way we experience the primary world today, predominantly mediated through a multitude of screens (Ibid.).

The last way in which Wolf considers imaginary worlds is by examining the authorial implications of transmedial world creation (2012:269). He proposes that the use of multiple media platforms, together with the expanded scope and scale of the worlds, means that the authorship may have to become 'transauthorial' too (Ibid.). Wolf explains that world creation may require specialist work in different media, but that some kinds of authorship may be acknowledged, and some may not be and be elided under the originator's name that operates like a brand (Ibid.). Creative contributions are made by

employees such as subcontracted groups like web designers (Wolf, 2012:276). But other forms of production like licensing, merchandising, and ancillary or even derivative products all constitute forms of transmedial production too (Wolf, 2012:278). It is here that Wolf's position diverges from Jenkins' as Wolf would argue that components such as merchandising can change the ways in which a world and its 'assets' are experienced by their audiences (Wolf, 2012:278). Whereas in Jenkins' 'logics' of transmedia, he makes a distinction between commercial branding practices and transmedia storytelling which contribute to the fiction (2009).

Wolf's theory of imaginary world creation and his typology of secondary world characteristics and features may serve as a useful lens through which to examine film website story worlds later in the chapter. However, while this set of ideas provides a way of examining the architecture of film website story worlds, it seems to stop short of addressing the question of why story worlds take some forms and not others. Specifically, why the fictional evil corporation website has become a recurring and persistent fictional world trope in transmedia websites. Wolf recognises that some imaginary worlds become conventions, even clichés as we see in his discussion of evil subcreators, but his work doesn't give any consideration as to why some imaginary world clichés persist.

So, in the light of this, therefore, it becomes necessary to draw on other tools to continue this investigation. To this end, I invoke the concept of the topos, first introduced in chapter 2, to complement Wolf's theory and further this investigation. In the next part of the chapter, I examine the ways in which the commercial (and frequently evil) corporation has become a recurrent and persistent feature in fiction and film during the 20th century.

4.4 The (Evil) Corporation Topos

The fictional corporation topos has been the subject of some academic interest over recent years with a series of studies examining its place in contemporary culture (Byers in Kuhn, 1990; Ribstein, 2005; Bennett, 2011; Giannini, 2013-4; Clare, 2014; Decker, 2016). Although various explanations have been put forward to explain interest amongst scholars, one of the most cogent reasons is articulated by Ralph Clare. In *Fictions Inc: The Corporation in Fiction, Film and Popular Culture,* Clare asserts that in 20th-century American culture, the reason that the corporation is seen as such an important idea is that it is commonly thought that there is nothing outside of capitalism (Clare, 2014:16). In other words, capitalism is regarded as the way the world is (Ibid.).

Clare charts the history of corporations from their origins in the 15th century through to the early 19th century when companies like the British and Dutch East India Company operate, not only as a commercial organisation, but as a manifestation of imperial political power (2014:8). In the light of this Clare proposes that the corporation in 20th-century literature and film provides a potent metaphor for not only illustrating, but potentially

critiquing capitalism (2014:3). Through scrutiny of a selection of popular films and novels from Frank Norris's *The Octopus* (1901); and Don DeLillo's *White Noise* (1985); to *Ghostbusters* (Paul Feig, 1984); and George Clooney's film *Michael Clayton* (2007), Clare establishes the argument that in American popular culture, while capitalism is regarded as the only economic system available, fictional corporations have become a focal point for the expression of anxieties and criticisms about the economy in the post-industrial age (Ibid.).

Clare's study establishes that one of its key features is the way the corporation becomes embodied as a person, often the figure at the head of the corporation (2014:13). Clare traces the way the corporation becomes a topoic character back in the 1886 Supreme Court Santa Clara county versus Southern Pacific railway ruling which suggests that a corporation is regarded as a 'person' with full constitutional rights under the 14th Amendment in US law (2014:9). This idea is reiterated again in the 2010 'Citizen United' landmark constitutional decision in the United States that grants corporations the right to free speech and allows them to make unlimited donations to political parties by law (Clare, 2014:10). Then again two years later during Mitt Romney's unsuccessful 2012 presidential campaign when, in response to a heckler in the crowd, he asserts that 'corporations are people too' (Ibid.). Clare concludes that the idea of corporate personhood may be a legal construction, but its operation as a representation of capitalism in popular fiction is a persistent one (2014:15).

A further shared feature by the fictional corporations under Clare's consideration can be seen in the ways these fictional corporations represent themselves through the media. In Thomas Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49* (1966) the fictional corporation, Yoyodyne, communicates its corporate power through the language of marketing and promotion in logos, advertising slogans and the like (Clare, 2014:39). Similarly, writing about the fictional institutions of Dharma Initiative, the Hanso Foundation, the Widmore Corporation and Mittelos Bioscience corporations of the television series *Lost*, Derek Johnson describes how this strategy creates an impression of ubiquity embedded in the visuals of the mise-en-scène. (Johnson in Pearson, 2009:36) Indeed, as Clare observes, for many of us, our experience of corporations is, for the most part, invariably mediated through commercial representations, promotions, and advertising and he describes the corporate logo as the 'esperanto' of our time – a visual form of communication that transcends language but is widely understood (2014:121). Clare's survey demonstrates that the fictional corporation had become increasingly prevalent over the course of the 20th century but he argues that this is illustrative of an inability to imagine any alternative:

> 'The economic base becomes the given mise-en-scène of a fictional world, like the way that corporate capitalism has calmly proceeded to dominate the world today. Yet with this dominance of the corporation comes its visibility and thus a kind of

> temporary refinement and crystallisation of the unseen 'spirit of capitalism' (2014:48-9).

Capitalism, then, is commonly portrayed in film and other media as the natural order of things and this idea is pervasive in the cultural imagination (Clare, 2014:33). In the light of Clare's study, what I am suggesting is that this 'spirit of capitalism' has now manifest again but migrated online, taking shape as fictional corporate websites for films.

In a similar vein, in *Industrial Society and the Science Fiction Blockbuster: Social Critique in the films of Lucas, Scott and Cameron*, Mark Decker takes an interest in the representation of what he terms 'industrial society' (2016:11). Specifically, through a consideration of the influence of one philosopher's work on three of the most prolific Hollywood film makers, George Lucas, Ridley Scott and James Cameron (Ibid.). The philosopher in question is Herbert Marcuse and his critique of industrial society. Marcuse's most influential articulation of the ways in which industrial society impacts on the individual can be found in *One Dimensional Man*: *Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (1964) and to a lesser extent, *Eros and Civilisation* (1962) which Decker argues earned him the status of a 'public radical' in America (2016:41).

Decker explains that Marcuse's critique is focused on three main areas: firstly, how industrial society and capitalism grooms its citizens to accept the status quo, keeping them compliant by 'soft repression' in the form of 'a world of ease, gadgets, enjoyment and surplus in which increasing numbers of people participate' (Decker, 2016:18); secondly, Marcuse redefines Freud's concepts of Eros (life instincts) and Thanos (death instincts) to express the human creative drive and its negotiated response to an industrial society (Decker, 2016:21). He argues that contemporary consumer society limits the ability to be truly creative and engage in life, thereby limiting our instinctual drive (Eros) towards the true needs of self-fulfilment and altruism, in favour of the subjugation to labour and destruction of human spirit under capitalism (Thanos) (Ibid.); and thirdly Marcuse's view that advanced industrial societies, both in communist Soviet Union and western capitalism, are both equally oppressive and alienating, but in different ways (Decker, 2016:17).

According to Decker, Marcuse's critique of industrial society found 'broad acceptance' in American culture (2016:17). Indeed, he asserts that Marcuse's critique is so pervasive in the 1960s and 70s that it enters the wider culture (2016:11). In the light of this, he proposes that Marcuse's ideas influence three young film makers - George Lucas, Ridley Scott and James Cameron (Ibid.). Through a reading of their films, Decker illustrates how Marcuse's ideas about the oppressive nature of industrial society are manifest in the representation of (apparently) evil fictional corporations like Weyland-Yutani in the *Alien* series, Cyberdyne Systems in the *Terminator* series and Resources Development Administration (RDA) in *Avatar* (Decker, 2016:24). Although interestingly, Decker uses the

term ‘apparently’ when referring to evil corporations as he notes that in their films, the depiction of the corporate leaders becomes increasingly nuanced and depicts the shift away from regarding the individuals and even the corporation itself, towards laying the responsibility for corporate evil at the door of the ‘repressive system’ in which corporations and individuals must operate (2016:74). Historically the evil nature of corporations has often ascribed to a single individual CEO, or other corrupt or monomaniacal figure. But Decker demonstrates how in Scott’s *Blade Runner* (1982) and *Prometheus* (2012) while the corporation itself was engages in a noble enterprise for the advancement of science such as space exploration, or wealth creation such as mining, its enterprise is tragically corrupted by the repressive system of capitalism that forces corporations to relentlessly pursue profitability (Ibid.).

Decker asserts that these films helped to transform the critique, which would otherwise be limited to the narrow confines of academia, into tropes that enter the wider popular culture (2016:11). In sum, Marcuse’s propositions could be regarded as ‘narratives’, much like topoi, that are incorporated by these film makers into their films, and I would argue, these ‘narratives’ feed into and underpin the topoi of the evil corporation (Decker, 2016:169). What is particularly pertinent to the interests of this thesis is Decker’s analysis of Ridley Scott’s *Prometheus* (2012) as its depiction of industrial society extends beyond the diegesis of film into the film’s website (2016:104). Whilst Decker dismisses the website’s ‘marketing efforts’, his analysis contradicts this description and he treats the website as part of the film, demonstrating that the website fulfils a more substantial role in the film experience (2016:103). The film’s story world is rendered through the medium of this (evil) corporation website.

Mark Decker acknowledges the methodological challenge presented by endeavouring to pin down the influence of Marcuse’s theoretical critique as it is transformed into a thematic device in film, as well as claiming that those thematic devices have been widely circulated in the broader culture. ‘It’s hard’, he said, ‘to look for *specific instances of ubiquity*’ in this kind of cultural research (my italics) and this challenge is one I encountered in my own research (2016:171). To establish whether the evil corporation film story world had become a stylistic convention of film websites, I had to find a method of survey that extended beyond my own encounters in the research. Indeed, one of the biggest challenges of topoi studies is the question of how can we identify a topos in the first place? Or, to put it another way, how do you know a topos when you see one? To find out how pervasive the evil corporation topos had become in film websites, I had to prove its ubiquity in the online zeitgeist. So, in the next section of the chapter I develop a strategy to do this employing a phenomenon which has become popular on the web - the list, or to give it its full name, the listicle.

4.5 The List (icle) as a methodological approach

The rationale for developing this methodology is two-fold. Firstly, at its core, media archaeology is not a discipline with principles set in stone. Indeed, Parikka has stated on more than one occasion that he does not think a definitive ontological definition that nails down media archaeology is productive. Rather he suggests that media archaeology is concerned with ‘theoretical and methodological potentials, of paths not taken and potentials for development, of necessary cross-fertilization and being aware of blind spots’ (2018). In other words, media archaeology invites the would-be researcher to be inventive. My second reason for developing this approach was that, as was noted in the previous chapter, digital cultural historian, Richard Rogers maintains that the most productive way to undertake historical web research is attune the approach to the circumstances in which the research takes place. Specifically, in an online setting, he advises the deployment of the web’s own indigenous resources may be most effective to explore it’s past. (2013:68).

Rogers claims that the first form of web archive was the list, and lists seemed to offer a clue as to how to approach surveying film websites. The list or ‘listicle’ has become widely used in online journalism (Rogers, 2013:61; Poole, 2013). Lists are descriptions of things that take the form of sequentially numbered items such as ‘10 reasons to go to Stockholm’, ‘50 things to do before you die’ or ‘10 ways to cook a turnip’. Lists are distinguishable from collections as lists are short pieces of data, arranged with a single item on each line to make things easy to read, whereas a collection is a group of objects accumulated in a location for a specific purpose. Now, the list is not a new literary form. Lists feature in the story about the Protestant heretic Martin Luther who nailed his *95 Theses* to the church door in Wittenberg in Germany in 1517, William Empson’s *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (1930), as well as operating as a poetic device in Wallace Steven’s *Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird* (1979).

Today, listicles can be found online and have been described as the ‘lingua franca of new media journalism’ (Edidin, 2014). The listicle functions like a table of contents, or a kind of curation that is particularly valuable in enabling people to make sense of the vast array of information available on the web (Ibid.). Indeed, I would argue, that they may provide the researcher with a mechanism for identifying topoi, creating a barometer of topoic activity as well as indicating the currency of topoi in the contemporary cultural imagination.

This listicle approach draws on what is now regarded as ‘crowd-sourced knowledge’ as distinct from academic scholarship. At a time when the web is vast and growing exponentially, a comprehensive knowledge of this cultural phenomena is impossible to either achieve or verify. So, using the mechanism of the listicle may make the unquantifiable, knowable and the infinite, manageable; and the selection of artefacts to examine may be derived from an edited collation of lists arrived at through a consensus of sorts, of the incomprehensively vast

In methodological terms, to research film's web-based fictional worlds, I had to make choices about what to study. There is the ever-present risk of bias in that a researcher will have limited personal experience and may select examples to confirm their hypothesis. So, the challenge was to find a way to move beyond subjective selection and a solution to this methodological challenge lay with the listicle. Lists provide a way to identify a corpus of evil corps story world websites and crucially, allow the collection of what is to be examined to be made by a broader constituency than just the researcher.

To get a sense of the currency of this topos, I searched for 'evil corporations in film' using the Google search engine. In total, 10 pages of search returns were trawled to compile a collection of lists and the search was halted once no more evil corporation lists appeared in the search returns. A total of 41 sites were listed over the 10 pages of search returns. Of these, 22 lists were dedicated exclusively to fictional film, and a further 19 lists included documentaries, and other media such as literature, games and television. There were also lists of real world companies that 'behave' like evil corporations, films and terrorist organisations that were regarded as evil corporations, as well as lists of other kinds of fictitious film corporations, however these have been excluded from the corpus to create a clearer focus on evil corporations in film. Similarly, associated sub-genres such as 'fictional evil governments' or 'evil terrorist organisations' were set aside and the *Empire* magazine archive link to its list was not working, so this list had to be discounted from the corpus too. Lists had been compiled by a wide range of organisations including IMDB (*Internet Movie Database*), the BFI (*British Film Institute*) and BBC (*British Broadcasting Corporation*). These lists were aggregated into a single master list of nearly 100 examples which is presented in a table in Appendix 3 and this will form a corpus for consideration. In the next section, I will give consider what the listicles approach revealed.

4.6 The List of Evil Corporation Website Listicles

In Appendix 3, fictional corporations are listed with their host films, director's names, release dates, and genre categorisation, based on IMDB (*Internet Movie Database*) film genre categorisations. To calculate their currency in the Zeitgeist, the fictional corporations are ranked by the frequency with which they occur in the listicles, with Weyland-Utani Corporation in the *Alien* series ranking top with the highest number of appearances. While numerous fictional film corporations only appear once, and cluster at the bottom of the list. Three categories emerge and are colour-coded in the table. Films listed in white feature an evil corporation within the film's narrative but predate the period under consideration in this thesis. Films listed in yellow fall within the period and contain an evil corporation within the film's narrative but have no accompanying website. Films listed in green fall within the period and have a corporation website. The 'white' sites illustrate that corporation fictional worlds are a feature of filmic mise-en-scène which evidently predate the digital era. However, with the advent of the web, fictional worlds are developed transmedially in websites as well as featuring in films. Some have become so

popular that they have moved into the wider culture such as *The Terminator* film's Cyberdyne Systems that feature on T-shirts[6], iPhone cases[7] and Omni Consumer Products, a real-life trading company that takes its name from the in-movie corporation in the *Robocop* films and makes real-life products of items which appear in fictional films (Omni Consumer Products, 2017)**.** As Derek Johnson explains about similar branded merchandise that emerge from ABC Network's long-running TV series *Lost* around its fictional Hanso Foundation and Dharma Initiative*,* such products 'perpetuate the illusion of the institution's reality and maintain its presence in the spaces of everyday life' (Johnson in Pearson, 2009:45).

The top ten ranked films include works by two of the directors discussed in Decker's book, Ridley Scott and James Cameron, which seems to support his argument. With one exception, the first 10 films are all generically described as science fiction by the *Internet Movie Database* (IMDB). This may be because this genre often seeks to establish a fictional secondary world that is distinctive from, but at the same time recognisably like the primary world (Wolf, 2012:96-111). Of the remaining entries in the table, around half (49/98) are described as either 'action', or' adventure', or 'action/adventure' which suggests a narrative mode which focuses on plot, and indicates, perhaps, how increasingly fictional corporation websites have come to undertake an expository role in these kinds of genre films.

The exception is *District 9* directed by Neill Blomkamp, but the film was produced by Peter Jackson, creator of the *Lord of the Rings*, and appears to have benefitted from the kind of marketing budget usually reserved for franchises by Sony Pictures. The most frequently listed evil corporation is Weyland-Utani from the *Alien* series (1979-2012) with 16 listings, followed by the Umbrella Corporation in the *Resident Evil* series, Omni Consumer Products in the *Robocop series*, and Cyberdyne Systems in the *Terminator* films with 13 listings and lastly the *Jurassic Park* series is accompanied with a corporation site for Ingen (International Genetic Technologies). *Avatar* is the first film in a series scheduled to continue to 2023 and appears to be set up with an online fictional world site for the series. The most obvious reason for these elaborate fictional world corporation sites is that franchise films command commensurately high marketing budgets. This bears out Jonathan Hardy's observation in *Cross-Media Promotion* that

> 'there is a correlation between levels of investment in promotions and popularity, measured by consumer spending, so that the greatest promotional effort is expended on event films and major brand franchises' (2010:66).

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[6] Cyberdyne System T-shirts. Available at: https://www.amazon.co.uk/Cyberdyne-Systems-Inspired-Terminator-T-Shirt/dp/B00PIRWT0O [accessed 15th May 2018]

[7] A selection of mobile phone cases sporting the Cyberdyne System company name were available for sale for the iPhone 4. Available at: https://www.amazon.co.uk/Cyberdyne-Systems-Computer-Terminator-Antiscratch/dp/B00LBVDJTG [accessed 15th May 2018]

While further down the list, films with more modest marketing budgets have scaled down versions of the fictional corporation worlds that often take the shape of in-movie corporate advertisements on *YouTube*. Similarly, sites may be built on *Tumblr* to reduce development costs which again illustrates how the scale of the fictional corporations is determined by the film's promotional budget (Thilk, 2015).

During the research, I encountered sites that did not appear on any of the lists and this indicates that such lists are not comprehensive and inevitably contain gaps, and so, can never be definitive. Evidently there are a range of factors at play in list curation which are challenging to definitively explain. The irony is that whilst the listicle survey serves it media archaeological purpose in bringing to light the emergence of a stylistic convention of a previously unsung artefact in the zeitgeist, the survey strategy is not immune to discursive forces either. Indeed, the survey depends on the logic of the Google search engine for its results. Google operates according to the 'Pagerank' system that counts the number of links to a website, as well as determining the quality of those links, to ascertain the significance of the website and rate into search rankings returned accordingly. In sum, then, the search engine algorithm is making choices about what to include in its search returns based on its own criteria. This has meant that search returns are predominantly English-speaking, often US based and, for the most part concern mainstream Hollywood fare as opposed to films by independent makers. So, whilst on the one hand the listicle approach proved fruitful in revealing a previously unacknowledged source of transmedia websites, on the other hand it exemplifies the discursivity, Foucault critiques, and prompts further questions about the use of internet search engines in research and how we know what we know.

However, having said this, answering such questions is not my main concern here. My rationale for this approach is to establish what is persistent in the cultural imagination – a topos. This survey of listicles does not claim to be either exhaustive or definitive. But what it can do, is produce an indicative corpus of examples which confirms that this is a topos of ideological significance. Furthermore, what makes these lists worthy of discussion is that they are compiled, debated and contended on the web and I would suggest that anything which is contended has both cultural meaning and resonance, and thereby provides a snapshot of popular culture, and a valid way to identify an active topos from a baseline of cultural agreement, while also minimising any researcher bias.

As an addendum to the table in Appendix 3, a supplementary list of other notable sites encountered during the research is included to demonstrate this point. The reasons for their absence from the collective imagination of these listicles is not possible to establish for certain, but some observations can be made. Half of the sites in the additional list are examples of the first generation of story world sites that date from the mid-2000s, before the advent of Web 2.0, but with the exception of *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*

(Gondry, 2004) and its corporate site, *Lacuna Inc*., none of these sites appear on the evil corps lists. The earliest example located was from 2000, when Darren Aronofsky commissioned High Res! design agency to create *Tappy Tibbons.com* for *Requiem for a Dream* (2000).

What is distinctive about this early prototype for Aronofsky's film is that the site was created after the film's production and makes little sense unless the viewer has seen the film. There is no indication of the promotion of home viewing formats either, so this indicates that the site is best understood as a creative component of the film. This proposition is substantiated by the design agency's subsequent treatment of the website. The site features in a large format book publication about the design agency titled *Amantes Sunt Amentes* (2007). Moreover, it became the focus of a presentation at the Online Flash Film Festival (OFFF) in Valencia (2004) where the Agency's founders Florian Schmitt and Alexandra Jugovic gave a presentation that posed the question, 'Is it Art yet?'. By so doing, they too drew attention to the way in which creativity deployed in commercial contexts continues to be distinguished from Art (Pixel Surgeon, 2005).

By 2004, typically, film websites were 'stand-alone experiences' that could be visited as online destinations (Relth, 2011). But with no on-going mechanisms for audience engagement, such sites did not always prove effective as promotion. As part of the promotional campaign for *Godsend* (Nick Hamm, 2004), the Godsend Institute website was conceived. The Institute was an 'as-if-real' fictional human cloning facility with a .org address that existed quite separately from the film online. On its landing page, the site declared 'Death does not have to be an ending. At the Godsend Institute, we have the ability to make a fresh start...A new beginning!' (2004). Whilst site visitors could reach the fictional institute from the film's official promotional site, the marketing division at Lionsgate had also purchased 'cloning' as a 'sponsored link' for the Godsend Institute (Philipkoski, 2004). So, search returns using the word directed visitors to the site, independently of the film's campaign (Miramontes, 2012). The site gave no indication of the relationship between the Godsend Institute and the film, so it was possible for visitors to mistakenly assume that the Institute was, in fact, real (Ibid.).

This film website was problematic in two ways: first, it did not work as film marketing because it failed to direct site visitors to the film; and secondly, and much worse, it generated negative publicity for the film, instead of promoting it (Ibid.). In Wolfian terms, the distinction between the primary world and the secondary fictional world was both unclear and insufficient, resulting in their elision and the potential confusion for the visitor. In other circumstances, such a hoax may have been regarded as a joke, but in the context of bereavement, it raised questions about the ethics of such marketing strategies (Philipkoski, 2004). The result was negative publicity and the site was awarded the title 'Unethical Website of the Month' in May 2004 (Ethics Scoreboard, 2012). However, whilst

this film website could be regarded as a failure in marketing terms, media archaeologists, Huhtamo and Parikka counsel that as much can be learn from failures as successes:

> 'On the basis of their discoveries, media archaeologists have begun to construct alternate histories of suppressed, neglected and forgotten media that do not point teleologically to the present media-cultural condition as their "perfection". Dead ends, losers and inventions that never made it into a material product have important stories to tell' (eds. Huhtamo and Parikka, 2011:3).

Clearly this example of an early fictional corporation website points to the potential of this form for verisimilitude and can be understood as part of a media trope that can be traced back to Orson Well's famous 1938 radio adaptation of H.G. Well's '*The War of the Worlds* (1930). When the radio play was presented the story in the form of an as-if real radio broadcast bulletin and infamously convinced some of its listeners that a Martian invasion was underway. However, in design terms this example indicates a lack of comprehension about online architectures and evident naivety about user behaviour during the first decade of the internet.

As well as failures, there are conspicuous absences from the table in Appendix 3 including well-regarded examples of in-movie corporation websites. For example, the award-winning campaign for *Tron: Legacy* (2010) includes a website for the Encom Corporation that features as part of the film's marketing campaign. This omission may have been because the fictional corporate site does not exist as a stand-alone site because it is incorporated within a large serial campaign that rolled out episodically over a period. Similarly, *Cloverfield* (Matt Reeves, 2008) had a highly successful promotional 'experience' which has garnered academic interest (Wessels, 2011, Atkinson, 2014). In *Beyond the Screen: Emerging Cinema and Engaging Audiences,* Sarah Atkinson provides a detailed account of the role played in the film's viral promotion campaign by its in-movie corporations - Slusho! - a Japanese soft drink company, (http://www.slusho.jp/) and Tagruato – a Japanese deep-sea drilling company, (http://www.tagruato.jp/index2.php) (2014). Atkinson reports that numerous fan-created sites were set up to track the film's viral campaign and monitor the activities of these in-movie corporation sites, with one fan site, *Cloverfield Clues* reporting 70,000 site visits daily, prior to the film's release (Adage in Atkinson, 2014). This campaign too has been completely overlooked in the listicles of evil corporations in film yet was clearly worthy of inclusion in the corpus.

4.7 Case Study Analysis

Having completed this stage, the research project now had a corpus of film websites to examine. From this corpus, three 'evil corporation' sites were identified for closer analysis, to gain a closer understanding of their features, and the ways in which they have developed as narrative expansions of films. The case studies selected were *Lacuna Inc.* for

Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind (Michel Gondry, 2004); *MNU.com* for *District 9* (Neill Blomkamp, 2009) and *Weyland Industries* for *Prometheus* (Ridley Scott, 2012). The rationale for their selection was that each of these websites were notable examples of their kind. Firstly, each of the websites had garnered some academic attention (Atkinson, 2014a; Jenkins, 2009c; Jess-Cooke, 2009; Miramontes, 2004; Walden,2012). Indeed one of the sites had also gained notoriety in the case of *Godsend*'s Lacuna Inc (Philipkoski, 2004; Ethics Scoreboard, 2004); Secondly, two of the sites had received industry recognition as examples of excellence with accolades for *District 9*'s *MNU.com* at the American Film Institute's 2009 *Digifest*, and awards at *The Hollywood Reporter*'s *Key Arts* Awards, the *Webby Awards* and *Movie Viral* Awards). While for *Prometheus*'s *Weyland Industries* site there had been awards from *Cannes Cyberlions*, *FWA* (Film Website Awards), *CSS* awards and the *Gold Key Art* Awards.

Before embarking on the analysis, consideration was given to how websites can be approached as an object of study and what makes them distinct from other media. Web Historian, Neils Brugger's work was relevant in this regard. Brugger advises that there are three areas which need to be taken into consideration when undertaking website analysis: firstly, the media platform on which the web site is accessed, the computer hardware as well as the software operating systems it uses (Brugger, 2010:15-16). The second area for analysis is the textual environment including all elements of the graphical user interface, desk top web browser and ancillary software like *QuickTime*, *Flash* and *Adobe Acrobat* (2010:16-17). In sum, all the technical and physical features of what in communication theory are referred to as the 'medium' that convert content into a form transmitted through the internet 'channel' (Fiske, 1990:18). The last area is the text environment which includes all the elements on the screen including still and moving images as well as sound. All these elements can be analysed on the level of semantics (meaning), by the relationships between elements, the forms of expression that frame the elements and their performative qualities, in the sense of actions performed by the viewer including scrolling, clicking and so forth to navigate their way around the website (2010:18-19).

Brugger advises that forms of textuality made possible by the mediacy of the internet deserve particular consideration – specifically four features which he terms 'transverse themes' (2010:26). These are visibility, hyperlinks, linearity and multimediality (ibid). Visibility relates to textual elements that are not immediately visible, or even known about, either because these elements exceed screen dimensions or are contained within the site but not visible (in much the same way that the end of the film is not visible in the opening credits)(Brugger,2010:26-7). Hyperlinks operate formally, semantically, and require physical performance by the viewer to access them and therefore must be recognised on all three levels (Brugger,2010:27-8). Linearity refers to the experience of narrativity (Brugger, 2010:28-30); and lastly, multimediality refers to the fact that web sites can incorporate different kinds of media expression and critically, may simulate other media too (Brugger, 2010: 30-31). So, as well as a consideration of aspects of textual

environment and the text on the screen, these four transverse themes can be used to consider the way in which the architecture of websites shape the presentation of the website storyworlds.

Brugger advises the 'mediacy of the internet' becomes most clearly apparent through a diachronic examination of websites, and the analytical approach most frequently mentioned in his work is a comparison of websites over time, so this is the strategy I will be taking in this analysis (2010:14, 18). The three selected sites provide examples from 2004, 2010 and 2012 which will enable the development of the artefact over the first two decades of the Internet to be gauged. A further observation Brugger makes of website analysis, that is relevant to the design of this study, is that the textual analysis of websites doesn't necessarily require new modes of analysis and that standard forms of media analysis used in the consideration of other visual media can be readily used to discuss many textual elements of websites perfectly well (Brugger, 2010: 24). So, in this study semiological analysis will provide a foundational approach to the investigation of these websites too.

Brugger's website analysis techniques will be referred to in the analysis of these film websites. However he makes clear that his scheme need not be always used in its entirety and is best tailored to the goals of the analysis (Brugger,2010:34) Given the chapter's interest here is in the topoic storyworlds, in the consideration that follows, for the most part, I will focus on elements of the worlds created on screen and reference other aspects of mediacy as they impact on these fictional worlds. I will also use Wolf's typology for imaginary world creation to examine how these site's fictional worlds meet his conditions of world building and Henry Jenkin's principles of transmedia too. Then, in the light of Errki Huhtamo's discussion of the topos, the topoic qualities of the sites will be evaluated and appraised. So, in the next section I turn to the first case study, *Lacuna Inc.* – the in-movie site for Gondry's *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (2004)

4.8 Lacunainc.com

Brugger observes that a prerequisite for website analysis is a stable object that will remain unchanging and accessible during the process of analysis. So, as the first selected case study was no longer available on the web, it had to be accessed via the *Internet Archive*. The *Wayback Machine* calendar record shows that the site was 'captured' 219 times between February 2004 and 28th July 2018. However, on closer examination, this record is not entirely accurate and, in practice, the last time the site was captured was April 12th, 2010. By November that year the *Lacuna Inc*. site had been removed and replaced by a generic Universal Studios Entertainment site advertising the film for sale on home viewing formats. By 28th July the calendar record links to an Arabic language site http://www.al3abat and no longer records captures related to the film. So, given the

condition of the media environment, I opted to undertake this website analysis using the first 'capture' of the site on 11th February 2004.

The fictional world of the Michel Gondry's film *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (2004) is transmedially iterated online as a website in the form of an 'as if real' commercial website titled *Lacuna Inc.com* for the eponymous company featured in the film and the film's theatrical trailer (Jess-Cooke, 2009:76). The home page is made up of a combination of written and pictorial elements on a yellow background, but the page has an empty white strip across the top of the site's home page. In the banner strip the text reads 'Click to enable Adobe Flash player' and requires a performative action by the viewer to bring the banner into operation. By clicking on this a *Flash*-enabled section the site is brought to life. The banner assumes a deep yellow tiled pattern on which a series of phrases appear and then disappear in quick succession including 'A New Life Awaits you', 'Feel Love Again', Regain your self-confidence' all directly addressing the viewer like an advertisement. The textual elements are followed by images of a female patient, first sad, then jubilant in one tiled section, then the founder of *Lacuna Inc*. Dr Mierzwiak (Tom Wilkinson) appears and disappears on this banner together with third-party testimonials about the efficacy of the memory erasing procedure to animate the site.

The banner presentation is accompanied by a fast-paced soundtrack theme and begins automatically every time a fresh page is opened, although (mercifully) has an audio on/ off button to mute it. This 13 1/2 second musical theme plays on a loop - a feature which Lev Manovich first identifies in digital players like QuickTime and VLC (2001:315). Manovich draws parallels between these looping practices and early cinema technologies like the zoetrope and Kinetoscope, and notes how, while originally used to minimise file size, the looped mode of presentation was common in early digital artefacts too (2001: 320). Moreover, even though the memory constraint is gone, the 'temporal aesthetic' of looping persists in more recent software applications like Vine and gifs and has been claimed as a feature of 'post-cinematic film too (Poulaki, 2015:95).

On a textual level the representation of the film's fictional world as a commercial website provides a narrative framing device that connects the secondary fictional world of the film and its website (Wolf, 2012:83). The site's landing page bears all the hallmarks of a primary world company site with a standard menu of options at the top of the page, with six sub-sections labelled 'About', 'Promotions', 'The Process', 'Free Evaluation', 'Testimonials' and 'Contact Us'. These six sub sections titles elements also function as hyperlinks to the further web pages described in the option heading. At the bottom of the page, where these hyperlinks are repeated, this menu is accompanied by the copyright logo, and an 'all rights reserved' statement, date and company name that adds to its verisimilitude to primary world counterparts (Wolf, 2012:33).

This verisimilitude is further consolidated by features like the visitor count and a choice of viewing formats and operating systems, as was usual in 2004 but, by so doing, this site creates the illusion of a consistent and credible secondary world. In what Wolf describes as the nominal realm, the company's name *Lacuna Inc.* is a playful use of a primary world meaning of the word as 'missing' or 'unfilled', advertising its services erasing memories (2012:35). He goes onto say that secondary worlds often have a defining fictional premise, so they can quickly establish themselves, and what distinguishes them from the primary world (2012:182). So, this play on words works as a nominal indicator of the secondary world's fictiveness (Ibid). (See Figure 10)

Figure 10. *Lacuna Inc.*'s promise 'Remember with Lacuna, you can forget'. *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* Viral, © Focus Features,2017.

Wolf explains that stories set in secondary worlds often require more extensive back stories than those set in the primary world, as primary world history is already familiar, or at least accessible to an audience (2012:202). He makes a distinction between back stories told in 'high resolution' and back stories told in 'low resolution' which tend to rely on summary and synopsis (Ibid.). *Lacuna Inc.*'s back story is what Wolf would describe as 'low resolution' (Ibid). In the site's 'About' section, there is just a scant two-paragraph summary of the company's history from 'mere idea to full blown medical service.' But that said, the world does function transmedially providing an explanation of the memory erasure procedure in a detail that could not be accommodated in the film and so expands the narrative experience (Wolf, 2012:245).

The playful occupation of the liminal space between the primary world and the secondary world can best be seen in *Lacuna Inc.*'s short commercial (Lacuna Inc., 2018). It cycles

through a series of hackneyed selling techniques, like a joke shared with the audience. Having removed his glasses to speak directly to the camera, Dr Mierzwiak (Tom Wilkinson) addresses the viewer. In a clinical white setting, wearing white coat and stethoscope, he mimics the authoritative tone of a medical professional giving healthcare advice. The website uses a multitude of media including text, images, moving images and sound to depict the fictional world but as Brugger's points out, and as Manovich had done before him , one of the ways in which digital artefacts like websites differ from other media is that it is also able to simulates other media too, including a CT scan photographs and a TV-style commercial (Brugger, 2010:30: Manovich, 2001:45). Here we see the topoic operation of the film website, not just in terms of thematic recurrence, but ideological intent too. The site operates on two levels simultaneously: first, by announcing its secondary world fictiveness; and secondly, the playful intertextuality of this secondary world mocks the tropes of medical infomercials and health-related websites, making an ideological critique of the primary world from the secondary world.

Site visitors are invited to engage with the fictional world from different perspectives. Wolf describes how a series of linked, or what he terms 'nested stories' are a common world-making device (Wolf, 2012:204). 'Nested stories' are evident here in the banner animations that appear at the top of the page, with quotations from satisfied customers making claims that the 'painless non-surgical procedure' is 'safe' for the whole family. 'Nested stories' also take the form of 'testimonials' from satisfied customers and fictional publications such as 'The New Science Magazine' and 'Science International' providing the appearance of third-party validation. The cumulative effect of these little 'nested stories' from different perspectives is to create a credible fictional world (Wolf, 2012:205).

Another feature of nested stories is that they provide opportunities for audiences to 'forage' for narrative material for themselves which was identified as 'drillability' by transmedia scholar, Jason Mittell (in Jenkins, 2009b). Site visitors are also invited to send e-postcards to their own contacts, illustrating what Jenkins referred to earlier as the potential 'spreadability' of transmedial extensions, whereby audience's social impulses are commandeered to promote the film (Jenkins, Ford and Green, 2013:12). However, while the *Lacuna Inc.* website functions transmedially in relation to the film by contributing to the fabric of the fictional world, it is confined to an expository role, and stops short of advancing the narrative. To look at an example of a site which does this, I turn to the next case study, the Multi National United corporation site (*MNU.com*) for *District 9* (N. Blomkamp, 2009), designed by the marketing agency, Campfire, who had produced the campaign for *The Blair Witch Project* (E. Sánchez and D. Myrick, 1999) ten years earlier.

4.9 MNU.com

The *District 9* film's opening scene takes place in the Department of Alien Affairs in the headquarters of *Multi-National United* (*MNU*) in Johannesburg, South Africa. At first glance

the company's offices appear not dissimilar to their primary world counterparts, with a bland corporate colour scheme, fluorescent strip lighting, desk furniture, planters and vertical window blinds. The film's website continues this corporate theme and opens with the automatic playing of a welcome address by an employee, direct to camera, against a blue screen background.

The world of MNU is not immediately visible at the site's landing page. But, the nature of the secondary world is inscribed into the architecture of the site's entrance. With two points of entry: one for humans and one for aliens, the defining feature of this secondary world is established which distinguishes it from the primary world (Wolf, 2012:182). The alien side of the *MNU* site is presented in an incomprehensible 'alien' language and the human side is presented in English. Wolf notes how some fictional worlds use 'a posteriori' language based on existing natural languages, while others fabricate 'a priori' languages that are sketched out only to the degree needed to distinguish it from primary world languages (2012:184). However, as English is the lingua franca for all interspecies communication in this secondary world, the 'alien' language is subtitled in the film, and on the website the viewer must undertake the performative function of clicking on a button to translate from 'alien' to human language which maintains consistency with the film (Brugger,2010: 28).

Within the film's diegesis, this alien language makes the aliens vulnerable as they cannot make themselves understood and the alien subjugation is demonstrated through the cultural realm on the website. Throughout the site's mise-en-scène, rules and regulations stipulate that aliens must wear identification tags, public safety advisory advertisements and alien 'Wanted' posters create a sense of the story world. Through these transmedial encounters with both the film and the website, each platform's existence validates the other and the audience is inducted into this fictional world through this common mise-en-scène. Wolf explains how this is achieved: 'Transmediality implies a kind of independence for its object; the more media windows we experience a world through, the less reliant that world is on the peculiarities of any one medium for its existence (Wolf, 2012:247). The campaign spills over into the primary world too as billboard posters and even park benches are marked up with notices playfully transgressing the boundaries between primary and secondary worlds to promote the film (Jenkins,2009a) (See Figures 11-13). Although neither Brugger's scheme of website analysis, nor a semiological reading of the mise-en-scène as a text can account for this traversal of the narrative into the real world.

Figures 11-13. The campaign playfully transgresses the boundaries between primary and secondary worlds to promote the film. *District 9* Viral, © Sony Pictures 2017.

One of the ways in which the interrelationship between the film and the website is maintained is using the corporate name and corporate acronym badged up on the film's website (Wolf, 2012:53). Like *Lacuna Inc*., the *MNU* website closely mimics the conventions of corporate websites in the primary world. But where it differs is in the level of detail that has notably increased illustrating the 'encyclopaedic impulse' predicted by Murray in *Hamlet on the Holodeck* (1999:84); and observed by Jenkins in *Convergence Culture* (2006:118) and noted again, by Wolf in *Building Imaginary Worlds* (2012:30). On the *MNU* website, the temporal infrastructure of the secondary world is established by clicking through to a detailed history of the corporation from its humble beginnings as a small textiles company, to becoming one of the largest corporations in the world with interests in 'medicine, healthcare, education, agriculture, mining, chemicals, nanotechnology, city planning, privatised security and law enforcement' according to the website (MNU, 2009). This timeline provides a back story for the corporation, but its scope and level of detail exceed the requirements of the film's narrative.

Like the previous example, the in-movie corporate site provides a framing device that aligns the secondary world with the primary world and its infrastructure is established on the *MNU* site through a map to orientate the site visitor (Wolf, 2012:83). (See Figure 10) The *MNU* Community Watch page re-introduces geography into the story world by

depicting the fictional location of District 9 on a satellite-style map. Specifically locating the story in a fictional district of Johannesburg provides a link between the primary and the secondary world and illustrates how secondary worlds are, to a greater or lesser extent, variations of the primary world. In this way, the fictional world of *District 9* is imbricated into the primary world location and here we have an instance of digital media capacity to be multimedial (Brugger, 2010:6). The MNU community watch page map is presented as an 'as-if-real' satellite picture and its verisimilitude is consolidated further with navigation aids in the shape of a compass, map legend and magnification facility. The satellite image evokes what Wolf refers to as the 'illusion of completeness', as it appears to be a satellite image, but, on closer examination, the image is far from clear. What the satellite-style map provides is a sense of typicality rather than an actual map of the location (2012:39). So, in the final analysis I would suggest the location is performed rather than realised.

The *MNU* Community Watch satellite map is interactive too as it contains concealed hyperlinked hotspots brought into operation by the performative action of the viewer. By scrolling the cursor over on the map, the viewer is alerted to the presence of 'nested' 'MNU News Alerts' that light up and clicking on them brings up reports about alien-related incidents such as car bombings, robberies and suspected kidnappings, as well as vox pop interview with 'people' on the city's streets. These short films are not new narrative material, but excerpts from the film and its trailer, relocated to play on the website. What is achieved by this transmedia narrative overlap is that the different media elements are sutured together adding credibility to this fictional world (Wolf, 2012:245).

In the world of MNU, time is rendered through synchronic as well as the diachronic dimensions of time. Events unfold in different quarters simultaneously giving the site a sense of liveness. Wolf describes this imbrication of time as 'narrative interlace technique,' whereby the perception of events unfolding around us in the present is created (2012:167). Unlike the linearity of the film's narrative, I would argue that the website's secondary world is more indifferent to cause and effect and creates the impression of the randomness of the world. There are other ways in which the website narrative experience differs from the film's narrative experience too. While from the viewers' perspective, the path they take through the site is a predominantly linear experience much like any other time-based media experience , the possibility of taking a non-linear approach, and in no particular order is there, and the duration of the story world experience is determined by the viewer.

The scenario is not confined to the film's plot either. Its community watch map links to an interactive map of the United States, monitoring reports of alien sightings across this country too. Here again a sense of 'liveness' is created by streaming news feeds along the bottom of the screen and the audience is invited to participate by calling a telephone number to report alien sightings. In Wolf's terms, the secondary world creates

opportunities for 'extrapolation', and the map of the United States provides material for, speculation (2012:61). The narrative inference is that the policy of containment in South Africa is not working and aliens are escaping District 9 and dispersing to other continents. This is a narrative strategy that Wolf terms 'world gestalten', whereby the audience come to their own conclusions and infer what's happening (2012:53).

Following this reading the fictional world of *MNU* using Wolf's framework, it is also interesting to consider how this fictional world operates as a topoi. What is distinctive about the corporate world of *District 9* from a topoic perspective is illuminated by the *MNU Spreads Lies* site, which takes the form of a blog 'authored' by Christopher (Jason Cope), where he tells the story from the alien perspective. The MNU Tell Lies site presents an oppositional reading to the *MNU* site. Through a series of postings written in alien script, which, of course, must be translated to be read, the alien, Christopher presents a view of *MNU* as an evil corporation involved in corrupt practices. He calls for a boycott of *MNU* products, industries and services and audiences are not just invited to explore the secondary world but participate in it too. Christopher invites readers to develop their own narrative and bloggers role- play characters from the story world. One blogger assumes the identity of a miner, another blogger posts as a member of the resistance group, another as an 'outlander'. Bloggers perform extra-diegetic stories of their own manufacture, illustrating how audiences may begin to co-create the fiction, blurring the distinction between author and audience (Wolf, 2012:281).

Wolf terms this kind of inter-narrative a 'paraquel', as it has the capacity to alter audience's frame of reference (2012:210). From the perspective of this oppositional site, the *MNU* corporation becomes an evil corporation. This website sets up a tension between two perspectives, inviting speculation and thickening the 'narrative fabric' of the imaginary world (Wolf 2012:200). For the audience, foraging for story details, comparisons between the alien site and the *MNU* site become possible because of this film website, fuelling perception of *MNU* as a topoic evil corporation.

The *District 9* fictional world is manifest across multiple platforms illustrating the breadth of transmedia storytelling within this promotional campaign. The film's trailer provides the backstory about the landing of an alien spaceship in South Africa (and again reiterated in the introduction to the film). On *YouTube*, there are short films from the *District 9* world including a corporate 'Welcome to MNU' film and a 'Level 5 Alert' information film about non-humans escaping from the district, as well as a fictional world presence on social media platforms with character pages for both Vikus and Christopher on *Facebook*. Taken together these transmedial iterations have the effect of blurring boundaries between the primary world and the secondary world and generating what Wolf describes as the 'fourth realm' adding 'ontological' weight to the fictional world (2012:36).

4.10 Weyland Industries.com

The third case study is the multi-award-winning website for *Prometheus* (2012). *Weylandindustries.com* was designed by Ignition Interactive and again, the film's secondary world is depicted in the words of the Creative Director, Chris Eyerman, as a 'fully-realised company website' (Behance, 2013). The site's landing page proclaims the company to be 'The largest company on the planet' and substantiates this claim with an elaborate story world that unfolds over the four-month period of the campaign (Ignition Interactive, 2017). The fictional world of *Weyland Industries* is made up of three main sections: Products; The Company; and Project Prometheus. But the full extent of the site is far from evident from the home page. Each section contains between 6-7 further sub sections including videos, participatory activities sites like the Employee ID card creator, the HTML 5-driven Training Centre and the ''Discover New Worlds' section that enables the viewer to explore Weyland colonies and star systems detailing the year of their colonisation, the date of their 'terraforming', population and key resources to illustrate the dimensions of the corporate entity. What is immediately evident from a comparison across the time period of the three film websites is that clearly the scale of story world detail, as well as the modes of viewer engagement have increased substantially

Specifically, the vast reservoir of corporate story world in this website is illustrated in the section named 'Investor Information ' mimicking its primary world counterparts, that takes the form of annual company report-style data with a battery of tables, graphs, bar charts, pie charts and key statistics, all dressed in copious acronyms, and badged up with corporate logos and copyright statements to create what is described as 'the veneer of corporate logics and aesthetic officialdom' (Atkinson, 2014a:44). Indeed, what characterises the experience of looking through the site is that its dimensions often exceed a single screen and so require the performative action of extensive scrolling to explore the content in its entirety adds to the sense that the fictional world extending beyond the screen.

Wolf asserts that 'timelines and chronologies connect events together temporally, unifying them into a history' (2012:165).Here, the secondary world's temporal infrastructure is underpinned by a timeline mapping a period of more than 80 years, from the birth of the corporate's CEO, Sir Peter Weyland in 1990 to 2073, when the film begins, providing the back story to events that are taken up in the film. The timeline narrates a detailed corporate biography, from the granting of a certificate of incorporation (which constitutes a kind of corporate 'birth' for Weyland Industries), through key points in the 'life' of the company including market valuations, venture capital investment, buyouts, patent registrations, the manufacture of prototypes and even recall product notices - all in a prodigious quantity of detail that would far exceed the duration of the average site visit, which, according to an article in *Time* magazine, is on average just 15 seconds (Haile, 2014). So, clearly what we see here is the fulfilment of Murray's prediction about the web's encyclopaedic capacity as a storytelling medium (1999:87).

The corporate timeline illustrates an expanded role for the story world website as an online hub for the whole *Alien* series. Weyland Industries chronologically predates the Weyland-Utani company that featured in previous *Alien* films, but the timeline serves to create narrative continuity across the film cycle by looking forward to the forthcoming theatrical release of *Prometheus*, as well as referring back to previous iterations of the *Alien* film series (Wolf, 2012:53). For example, one point on the timeline previews the med pod –the automated diagnosis and surgical station in which Dr Elizabeth Shaw (Noomi Rapace) performs an abortion on herself in the film. While reference is made to the invention of hypersleep and Yutani corporation mineral mining featured in previous films in the series. I would argue both examples illustrate the narrative 'work' undertaken by the website to incorporate *Prometheus* into the *Alien* universe. Furthermore, there are other points on the timeline referring to androids and 'terraforming' which have become familiar features, not only of the *Alien* universe, but the science fiction genre as a whole. However, these transmedial references lie outside the scope of existing website or film text analysis techniques and it becomes evident that media specific analytical tools are unable to fully describe the transmedial nature of this site

Imaginary worlds like *Weyland Industries* incorporate multiple narrative threads from films in the series, and effectively braid them together to create the 'narrative fabric' of the *Alien* world (Wolf, 2012:200). In effect, the website operates as a 'transquel', setting the films into a broader context (Wolf, 2012:209). This is particularly apposite to a film series like *Alien* where the order of films' production does not correlate with the chronology of the narrative. For while *Prometheus* may be the latest film in the series, narratively speaking it precedes all its predecessors, and so must be consistent with the narrative future of the *Alien* canon.

At first Wolf's concept of 'nested narratives' seem to offer a way to model the storytelling framework in *Weyland Industries*. However, in practice it has its limitations as it only refers to narratives that sit inside a single artefact and lacks the dimensions to explain how different transmedia elements relate to one another. To understand the relations <u>between</u> the transmedia components in this case study film website, I had to develop a way to represent narrative features that exist across a media cycle, across a genre, across media platforms and articulate their relation to the real world too. In *Prometheus* there are six 'nested stories' that make up the story world: the film's plot; the scenario of Project Prometheus; the *Weyland Industries* corporate website; the *Alien* film series; the science fiction genre; and finally, the primary world. To articulate their relationship, I propose the model below (see Figure 14). The model represents the way narratives are transmedially referenced as stories nesting like Russian dolls, one inside the other. Moreover, for the viewer these layers of narrative are remembered along what Colin Harvey refers to as 'horizontal' and 'vertical' vectors of memory, to cohere the transmedia experience and these vectors are represented in the diagram through the arrows in both directions. I would argue that engaging with these layers of fictiveness is what enables audiences to

make sense of the transmedia story world of *Alien* (2015:93). Furthermore, it becomes evident that by so doing Jenkins' transmedia principle of 'immersion', is no longer sufficient to explain the transmedia story world experience. Wolf's more fluid metaphor of 'absorption' better articulates the experience of encountering these nested transmedia fictions. As absorption is a two-way process; the viewer's attention is absorbed as they proceed further into a story world, while the audience absorbs the imaginary world (2012:49).

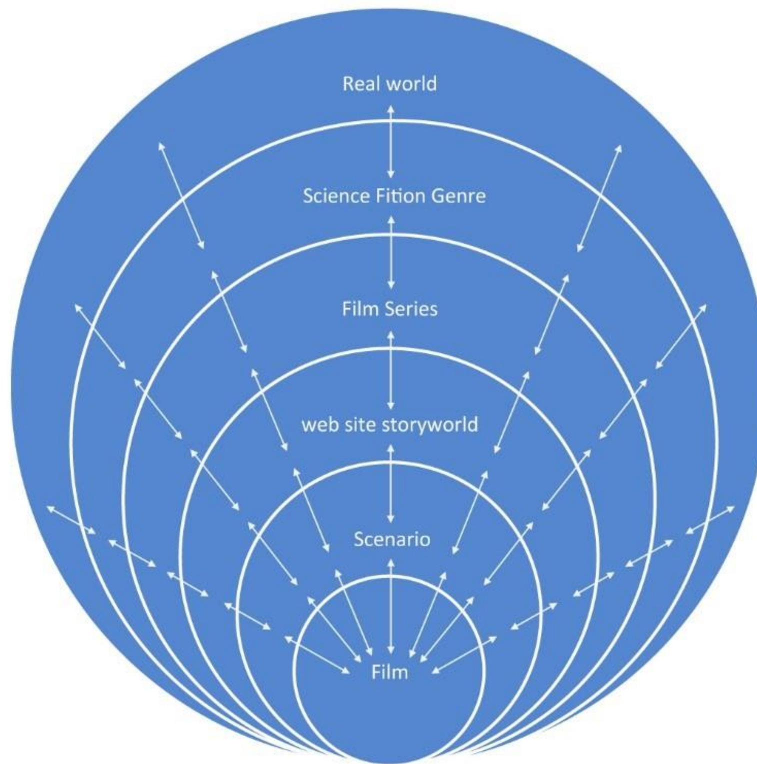

Figure 14. A model of the transmedia 'nested narratives' in the *Weyland Industries* website. © Walden, 2019

Like the D-9 park benches in the previous case study, what is distinctive about the *Weyland Industries* site is its transmedia manifestations during the film's promotional campaign to narratively interlace the primary and secondary worlds (Wolf, 2012:167). At the 2012 annual WonderCon event in Anaheim, California, the film's trailer was premiered and Weyland business cards were distributed to attendees featuring the company's website address and phone number (Billington, 2012). Calling the number on the card met with a 'caller busy' message, but, by return, a text was received containing a link to the 'unboxing' video of Weyland's latest product - the David 8 android - a format which has found considerable popularity online, in which a recording is made of the process of unwrapping a new product from its packaging and posted on *YouTube* (Ibid.). In this instance, the unboxing video provided a small film-related story-based reward for the caller's interest in the forthcoming film (Ibid.).

As the campaign rolls out over four months, those who sign up to the site are addressed as 'investors' or 'crew members' and the principle in operation is that the more site visitors explore, that is to say, 'invest' their time, the more they were rewarded with additional information about Prometheus story world. Even the web-based professional network LinkedIn is incorporated into the campaign to target key 'influencers' – that is to say, individuals who influence the opinions of others on the web (Ignition Interactive, 2017). By harvesting information from user profiles, personalised emails are sent to influencers inviting them to apply for positions on the *Prometheus* Project (Ibid.; Dustin Curtis, 2012; Humphrey, 2012). The harnessing of the fictional secondary world premise to primary world networks paid off in promotional terms, as subsequently journalists like the writer for the business magazine site *Forbes.com* allowed himself to be commandeered into the film's promotional campaign as he wrote about his experience in the publication (Humphrey, 2012).

During the campaign, the three main characters in the film are introduced in advance of the film's release too. Sir Peter Weyland (Guy Pearce) introduces himself in a TED-style talk set in the year 2023 launched at the primary world event TED2012 (Behance, 2013). (See Figures 15 & 16) The David 8 android (Michael Fassbender) is introduced via a product commercial which debut on Mashable and Verizon FIOS services (Ibid). And the third introduction is to Dr Elizabeth Shaw (Noomi Rapace) in a video call-style film to Weyland Corporation. The rationale in operation here is that each of these short films introduces a new character from the secondary world of the film so that by the film's theatrical release, the audience will already be familiar with the main characters, again bringing the secondary world and the primary world in alignment.

Figures 15 & 16. Peter Weyland (Guy Pearce) introduces himself in a *TED*-style talk set in the year 2023. *Prometheus* Viral © Twentieth Century Fox, 2019.

It is in the third case study of *Weylandindustries.com* that we see how this film promotion campaign assumes the dimensions of what Mark Decker refers to as a 'specific instance of

ubiquity' (2016:171). The corporation topos is manifest, not just within one single 'destination' website but multiplies across well-known web locations including the TED platform, *LinkedIn*, *YouTube*, as well as business cards in the real world. In this way audiences engage with the secondary universe ontology of the sites as the technologies used are familiar to those in their own lives in the primary world (Atkinson, 2014a:43-44). Moreover, the multimediality here is not just simulations of other media formats, but the situating of story elements on other media platforms and where story elements are branded (and by association incorporated) by those sites (Tedblog 2012). In this way, the campaign capitalises on emergent web literacies (Atkinson, 2014a:43-44). Furthermore, the very notion of transmedia suggests that the audience experiences something which lies beyond and, indeed, is independent of media screens (Wolf, 2012:247). Therefore, it can be argued that transmediations contribute weight to the secondary world providing a sense of completeness and consistency to what Wolf describes as its fourth 'ontological realm' (2012:36). Indeed, the experience of this secondary world bears a resemblance to our contemporary experiences of the primary world which are so often mediated through screens today.

4.11 Conclusions

In this chapter the research project set out to investigate the second research question in this thesis: what forms do film web sites take? And specifically, what film website styles, aesthetics and narrative forms have developed? Preliminary observations indicated that one form which seemed to have gained traction over time was the design of websites in the style of a corporate website for the fictional companies featured in the film and so this chapter set out to find out whether this was the case.

Fictional worlds are not a new phenomenon. They have been the focus of much attention in philosophical, literary as well as media and digital media scholarship. But to establish whether in-fiction websites were, in fact, an emerging convention of film web sites, I had to locate a collection of examples for closer scrutiny. To do this I devised a methodological approach specifically for the task, which I call the listicle approach. A search for fictional evil corporations was undertaken using Google's search engine, with its PageRank system. In the event, this 'crowd sourcing' approach yielded more than 40 listicles, and nearly 100 example fictional corporations which became the research corpus for the chapter. This survey confirmed that evil corporation websites have become a frequently used convention in this new form. Moreover, on surveying scholarship on literature and film during the 20th century, it became evident that the evil corporation is not just what Wolf describes as a cliché, but, I propose, may be more fruitfully regarded as a topos (Wolf, 2012:37). A discursive artefact that directs us to see the world from a perspective and implicitly carries a critique of the primary world within it.

The literature demonstrated that the evil corporation web sites are the latest iteration of a recurring topos that has manifested periodically over time. Throughout 20th century literature and film the evil corporation appears to have evolved into a metaphor expressing fears about the economy in times of change: from the coming of the railroads to the tyrannies of one-company towns, and digital technologies and their impact on the future of work, conglomeration, and the rise of faceless global corporations. Moreover, today these ideas continue to resonate and the fictional evil corporation topos appears to be an ideological chameleon around which hopes, and fears are articulated at any given point in time.

Interestingly in his writings Huhtamo is dismissive of topoi found in commercial settings as commercial mimicry and does not seem to acknowledge that ideology may be implicit in these settings just as much as any other (2011:39). But that said, by situating the evil corporation websites within the trajectory established by this study, it becomes apparent that the evil corporation website is more than just as standardised marketing technique. Reasons for the current pervasiveness of the evil fictional corporation topos are open to speculation. It could be conjectured that they represent a cultural short-hand descriptor for the impact of digital convergence on the economy, just as the concept of the 'dot com boom' described the growth of internet-based companies on stock markets around the world at the end of the 1990s. However, such questions lie beyond the scope of this chapter and must be set aside for others to answer. From this thesis's perspective, what is clear is that this topoi is a metaphor, and carries with it a critique about monopoly, corporate power and the corruption of the individual and it seems to have become a conventional design for promotional film websites.

To examine in closer detail how this form has developed over the last two decades, three notable case studies were selected from the corpus for closer investigation. In the second half of the chapter a detailed analysis of these case studies was undertaken using a combination of Wolf's framework for world building, with Jenkin's concept of transmedia and Huhtamo's topoi underpinned by web site analysis and film studies textual analysis techniques. The analysis revealed richly drawn fictional worlds and over the period these sites had clearly developed in scale, dimension and modes of engagement with their audiences. So, this chapter illustrates how some film websites are now designed as forms of transmedia storytelling, as well as marketing, and have become part of the transmedia film experience.

It was at this final stage in the analysis that the tools employed to analyse these film web sites seemed to be inadequate to the task of explaining how film web sites operate transmedially in relation to their films, the franchise or series, the genre and the world at large. Wolf's concept of 'nested stories' seemed to offer a way forward but was designed to explain how narratives sit within a single text. In order to understand how 'nested

stories' operate transmedially, I developed Wolf's concept of nested stories into a diagrammatic tool that enables the researcher to discern the dynamic interleaving of transmedia texts. This diagram enables the researcher to chart the way in which worlds are imagined across media, across a film series and across genres and this methodological tool is offered up here as a further original contribution to knowledge from this research.

Chapter 5: An Archaeology of Nostalgia: Audience Experiences of film websites

5.1. Introduction

Media archaeological scholarship has proved to be fruitful in guiding this research project looking at the development of film websites. In response to the question of where film websites are collected, recorded and archived, Chapter 3 went in search of film websites in digital archives under the guidance of Wolfgang Ernst, Wendy Hui Kyong Chun and others. In answer to the question of what form film websites take? Chapter 4 set its sights on the evil corporation trope commonly used in science fiction and fantasy film websites and traced its genealogy through 20th-century literature and film in becoming what Errki Huhtamo refers to as a topos. So, now as this thesis enters its final chapter, the last research question for consideration is, how do audiences engage with, and experience these forms of film marketing? On the question of audience's experiences, media archaeological writings are less forthcoming. In fact, it would be fair to say that media archaeological writings tend to be more concerned with the discursivity and materiality of media, than the reception end of the experience. However, I would argue that with the advent of Web 2.0, social media provide access to contemporaneous audience responses that wasn't possible before by creating a new kind of archive, the project is now able to investigate audience experiences. This chapter investigates how audiences engage with film websites through an examination of the award-winning online promotional campaign for *Tron: Legacy* (Kosinski, 2010) and it begins with a consideration of the *Tron* phenomenon and the persistence of the memory culture surrounding the film.

5.2 The *Tron* Phenomenon

On its theatrical release in 1982, *Tron* was regarded as a flawed film. Reviews in *Variety*, *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* all point to problems with the narrative in terms of plot, continuity and a general lack of dramatic engagement (Variety, 1981; Maslin, 1982; Arnold, 1982). One film reviewer wrote, 'its technological wizardry is not accompanied by any of the old-fashioned virtues – plot, drama, clarity and emotion – for which other Disney movies or other films of any kind, are best remembered' (Maslin, 1982). However, over time, *Tron* has transcended the views of these film critics, and become a highly successful transmedia franchise. There have been numerous spin-offs providing testimony to its enduring popularity. Among them have been a novelisation for adults (Daley, 1982), a children's novel (Alfonsi, 2010), a graphic novel (Tong, 2010), comics (Slave Labor Graphics, 2005; Marvel Comics, 2010) and a choose-your-own-ending book (Jablonski, 2010). There has been an animated science fiction television series (Disney, 2012-13), a theme park attraction in Disneyland (Disney 1982-1995), video games (Midway Games, 1982-1983), console games (1982; 2010) and computer games such as *Tron 2.0* for PCs (2003) and *Tron 2.0 Killer App* for Xbox (2004). As well as these

adaptations, there have been publications about the making of the film (Springer, 2010; Kallay, 2011), while the film itself has been re-released and reissued in every format from Betamax to Blu-ray with special event releases such as the *Tron- 20th Anniversary Collector's Edition* (2002).

As there was no sequel to *Tron* for thirty years, speculations and imaginings of 'what would have happened *if*' and 'what happened *next*' prevailed as part of the informal amateur paratextuality (Walden, 2016:96). In the past, this may have taken place in personal conversations and private journals, but today it can be visible online through blogs, fan sites and discussion boards, and over time *Tron* assumed the status of a cult film. As Umberto Eco points out, a film may be considered 'cult' if it is 'ramshackle, rickety, unhinged in itself' and that lack of coherence critically means it is open to speculation (Eco, 1987b:198). So, one of the unforeseen by-products of continuity problems with the plot is the potential for the kind of hypothesising that turns films into cult viewing.

What the film's sequel, *Tron: Legacy* set out to do through its promotional campaign, was to start to address that speculation and effectively fill in the incomplete text by explaining what happened when *Tron* ends (Walden, 2016:96). Vinzenz Hediger explains this idea in psychoanalytic terms as compensating for the 'lack' of knowledge about the future of the narrative (Ibid.). While Lisa Kernan explains that it can also be understood through Raymond William's idea about the false conversion of audience experiences (narrative speculations) into 'finished products' (narrative resolutions) (2004:16). By converting narrative speculation into a definitive version of the future, open-endedness is transformed into a fixed ending and speculations are answered by *Tron: Legacy*'s promotional campaign (Ibid.). The cultish nature of the film is even evident in the sequel's reprise of *Tron*'s hero, Kevin Flynn as a messianic figure, intent on creating the perfect computer system, thereby answering the questions generated by the cult and providing closure to the speculation.

Commentary circulating around the film since its release indicates three reasons for its enduring popularity. First, *Tron* was one of the earliest films to include a sustained sequence of computer-generated imagery. The film depicted three-dimensional CGI 'light cycles' competing in a high-speed race on the vector line grid of the master control program for a total of nearly seventeen minutes (Bukatman, 1994:216; Kerlow, I.V., 2004:19; Aldred, 2006:155; Darley, 2000:17). Secondly, before the advent of the internet, it was a Disney film, ostensibly for children, that presented one of the first cinematic visualisations of cyberspace, most notably with the use of light to produce the glowing lines of vector graphs signifying the electronic space inside the computer, and by association the idea of computer culture itself (Bukatman, 1994:215; Sobchack, 1993:257-8). And lastly, and perhaps most pertinent to the interests of this chapter, the film lauded the nascent game culture emerging at the time (Brooker, 2009; Jenkins, 2010).

In an interview with Jenkins, the film's director Steven Lisberger suggests that a further reason why the film attained cult status was because it captured the sense of utopianism surrounding digital technology in the early 1980s (2010). He goes on to say that, perhaps not surprisingly, the audience that the Disney film seemed to have had the greatest impact on were children at the time of its first release (Ibid.). This observation is borne out by the strong memory culture surrounding the film, over the last three decades, as this audience grows into adulthood (Ibid.). Characteristically, memories take the form of the audience recollections of the impact of *Tron* on their young selves. In an article on 1980s game fandom, the scholar and games fan Will Brooker remembers how *Tron*:

> 'offered gamers the flattering reassurance that they were not merely teenage hobbyists but trainee warriors, learning skills that could be transferred to a galactic war, or godlike, all-controlling 'users' revered by the champions of an electronic world' (2009).

Author of the Cyberpunk novel, *Neuromancer*, William Gibson tweets, '*Tron* nostalgia: When I was writing *Neuromancer*, that was *the* bleeding-edge digital aesthetic. Those sparse green lines! Pong meet Case' (1982). While the following account is typical of sentiments articulated on discussion boards, blogs and wikis across the web:

> 'It was *Tron* that made me look at those machines in a completely different way... Perhaps it's nostalgia. Perhaps it's the fact that I would enjoy watching 2 ½ hours of Jeff Bridges reading the phone book. Whatever it is, I don't care. I just know that I love this movie deeply' (Diaz, 2012).

In the light of such an enduring memory culture surrounding the film, evidently *Tron* has developed into a cult phenomenon. So, the next section gives an account of how the campaign for the forthcoming sequel capitalised on these sentiments to promote the film.

5.3 *Tron: Legacy*'s Promotional Campaign, *Flynn Lives*

Produced by the award-winning digital film marketing company *42 Entertainment, Tron: Legacy*'s promotional campaign, *Flynn Lives* took the form of a 'protest movement' under the banner title *Flynn Lives*. Its premise was that the film's hero Kevin Flynn disappeared in mysterious circumstances some years after the film in 1989, and the *Flynn Lives* site was dedicated to finding him, like a counter topos to the evil corporation discussed in the last chapter. Through this narrative premise, the marketing campaign set out to chart the time from the release of the first film in 1982 over the next thirty years to the release of the sequel in 2010. *42 Entertainment* describes how the site was intended to bridge the gap between the two films with 'twenty-eight years of connective mythology, games and interactivity' and the campaign garnered several awards for its innovative approach to film marketing (2010). These accolades include a *Themed Entertainment Award* (TEA) and a

Webby Awards nomination. The campaign was also finalist at the Cannes *Cyber Lions* awards and won several *Movie Virals* awards (Walden, 2016:106).

Film marketing and promotion has changed significantly since *Tron*'s theatrical release in 1982. Before the internet, a film's promotional campaign would typically last for about six weeks, but today the web has enabled this schedule to expand substantially. Elan Lee and Jordan Weisman conceived an ARG (Alternate Reality Game) called *The Beast* to promote Steven Spielberg's *A.I. Artificial Intelligence* (2001) which rolled out over twelve weeks prior to the theatrical release of the film. Lee and Weisman went on to form the digital marketing agency, *42 Entertainment* and conceived the *Why So Serious?* campaign for *Dark Knight* (Christopher Nolan) in 2008 and then the *Flynn Lives* campaign in 2010 for *Tron: Legacy* which both ran for over a year. So, evidently film marketing and promotion has expanded exponentially in both scope and scale.

While promotion campaigns can now stretch out over weeks and months to generate awareness and anticipation for a forthcoming release, online campaigns tend to be delivered in short form. The reason for this is the need for brevity in a context where the superabundance of online media means audiences have less attention to expend on any given component (ed. Grainge, 2011:12). The *Flynn Lives* campaign was published online in instalments and these daily and weekly episodes took only a few minutes to view or play. Over the duration of the campaign, this mode of transmission generated an experience of 'intense seriality' more familiar in TV's long running series and soap operas and audience engagement was cultivated over time (Ndalianis, 2012:175).

The promotional campaign remained available online long after the film had disappeared from cinema programmes too. For the film's audience, it created an invented past for *Tron: Legacy* that could be (re)accessed and (re)consumed at any time. The 'always on' nature of the online environment ensured that the marketing campaign enjoyed a far longer lease of life than conventional promotional materials. This kind of paratextual promotion appropriates modes conventionally associated with its media predecessors: the brevity of advertising; the duration of long-running TV series and soap operas; the episodic 'seriality' of broadcast TV; as well as the permanence of an archive. In short, the online environment created the conditions to change what promotional media might look like. Here was a 12-month-long campaign for a 2-hour film. There were 32 episodes in the online campaign of around 3 minutes duration on average, as well as the discussion boards and the activities generated by the web campaign which ranged from scavenger hunts to playing *Space Paranoids* online. So, the audience experience and the length of audience engagement with the promotional campaign for *Tron: Legacy* seemed to exceed the film it promoted and pointed to the growing significance of promotion in an overcrowded media culture to win audience's attention. So, the film's promotion capitalised on the web's opportunities for audience engagement. But alert to the fact that transmedia storytelling depends on remembering to enable audiences to make these connections, the campaign

drew on that strong and persistent memory culture of nostalgia that had developed around the film too (Harvey, 2015:38).

5.4 The Anatomy of Nostalgia

There are different theories about nostalgia, but, in essence, it can be understood as a sense of regret that the past is gone, but that one can take solace from the possibility that, on some level, it can be recovered and experienced again (Walden, 2016:98). In *The Future of Nostalgia* Svetlana Boym develops a useful framework for the consideration of this concept. She asserts that there are predominantly two ways in which a longing for the past is articulated (2001:41). First, she suggests nostalgia may assume a 'restorative' form focussing on the *nostos* part of the word, meaning 'return home', and derived from the French word 'restauré' meaning re-establishment (2001:49). Boym goes on to suggest that 'restorative' nostalgia is built on a desire to create a sense of continuity with the past and places emphasis on reconstructing the thing that is longed for (2001:41). Boym suggests the second nostalgic tendency derives from the *algia* part of the word, meaning 'longing' and is more reflective (2001: xiii). While looking to the past, reflective nostalgia implicitly acknowledges it is irrecoverable, but with this realisation comes a critical distance, and an ability to discern the difference between past and the present (2001:49). 'Reflective' nostalgia recognises that the past no longer exists but meditates on the passing of time and the changes it brings with it to the meaning of things (Ibid.). In the light of this typological framework, the chapter can go on to explore the ways in which different kinds of nostalgia are cultivated in the promotional campaign for *Tron*'s sequel, *Tron Legacy*.

The *Flynn Lives* campaign was launched at the San Diego Comic Convention in 2009. At the promotional campaign's inaugural event, delegates were invited to visit a mock-up of the 'Flynn's Arcade' setting from the original film (Walden, 2016:99). Then on the website, *QuickTime* videos of the event show excited fans marvelling at their first-hand encounters with a life-sized light cycle, as well as an enjoying an opportunity to play old arcade game machines (Ibid.). We hear one man exclaim excitedly, 'I have been waiting to play that game since I was twelve and I was in there!' which sets the tone for the campaign to follow (42 Entertainment, 2010).

Here, memories of the past were brought back to life by the recreation of Flynn's Arcade, generating a restorative form of nostalgic response in its visitors (Ibid.). Thirty years later, of course not all the objects on display were 'real', in the sense of being original (Ibid.). Some were props created for this event, while others, like the 1980s-era arcade game machines, brought an aura of timely authenticity to the event (Ibid.). In this mix of fact and fiction, the film prop became as authentically 'real' as the actual arcade game machines, and willing acceptance of the veracity of the one, seeped into all the rest (Ibid.). In *Recycled Culture in Contemporary Art and Film: Uses of Nostalgia*, Vera Dika suggests this superimposition of the past over the present creates a 'shifting double exposure' as the

viewer experiences similarities and differences between the two simultaneously in a kind of textual imbrication and together these different forms of encounter make the experience of the viewing present richer (2003:14). Encounters with the past and present are aggregated by the promotional campaign, generating a sense of 'the past in the present', and creating the conditions for the construction of an 'invented tradition' (Boym, 2001:42).

What was unusual about the *Tron* film series was the time that elapsed between the first film in 1982 and its sequel in 2010, which amounted to a period of nearly thirty years (Walden, 2016:99). As the marketing company, *42 Entertainment*'s press statement indicates, one of the main tasks of the promotional campaign was to establish a connection between the two films to imply continuity through the intervening years (42 Entertainment, 2010).

As I have shown elsewhere, this was achieved through the narrative of the campaign in several ways (Walden, 2016:99). First, the fictional corporation Encom's website featured a timeline of the company's history over the intervening period (Ibid.). Secondly, the Encom website contained a collection of ersatz newspaper articles about Flynn (Ibid.). One 'newspaper' article headline poses the question, 'Who is the most brilliant computer visionary ever?' featuring the character of Flynn alongside real-world figures such as *Microsoft* founder, Bill Gates and *Apple*'s Steve Jobs (Ibid.). Here, we saw, what was referred to in the previous chapter as the 'secondary' world, being sutured into the 'primary' world (Tolkien in Wolf, 2012:24). By posing this question and inviting appraisal, the campaign cultivated reflective nostalgia. The campaign integrated the story of *Tron* into a history of real-world digital culture by, as it were, 'Forrest-Gumping' recent history, and inserting this fiction into that history (Walden, 2016:99). The third way in which continuity was created between the two films was through the reprisal of characters from the original film, with actors once again taking up their roles to promote the forthcoming film *Tron: Legacy* (Walden, 2016:99-100). The role of Kevin Flynn was reprised by the actor, Jeff Bridges, and Bruce Boxleitner once again played the part of Alan Bradley, albeit both 30 years older (Ibid.). So, what we saw here, in the repeated use of both characters and actors to promote the forthcoming film, was another instance of restorative nostalgia and a stitching together of the real and the fictive.

As noted earlier in the chapter, restorative nostalgia promotes the reconstruction of the thing that is longed for and remains true to the aspirations of its 'legacy' audience who cherish memories of the original (Walden, 2016:100). But the *Flynn Lives* campaign also set about reconditioning *Tron* for a new audience encountering the story for the first time (Ibid.). Some of the adaptive strategies used in film and television were deployed here (Ibid.). Substitution has become a standard device to refresh long-running TV programmes like the BBC's *Dr Who,* whereby the actors who play the Doctor are periodically replaced, or the 007 films where the figure of James Bond has been played by a series of actors over

the fifty years of the franchise (Walden, 2016:100). Likewise, in the paratextual promotional campaign *Flynn Lives* we see this role transfer process undertaken, with the aging Kevin Flynn (Jeff Bridges) of the original film substituted in the sequel by his 'son', Sam Flynn (Garrett Hedlund) (Ibid.). Over weeks and months, episodes of the campaign enable audiences to get to know the new character, Sam, and, by so doing, the paratext conditions him for heroic status in the forthcoming film (Ibid.).

The campaign also used the adaptive strategy of 'equivalences' to recondition *Tron* for the digital age (Hutcheon in Walden, 2016:100). In collaboration with *Disney Interactive*, *42 Entertainment* produced a playable online version of the original film's arcade game *Space Paranoids* (Walden, 2016:100*)*. However, instead of pushing coins into an arcade machine, the game was recast for the online environment as www.spaceparanoidsonline.com - a first-person shooter-style game that rendered the analogue past present once again in a further iteration of restorative nostalgia (Ibid.). Taken together, the adaptation strategies of both substitutions and equivalences served to regenerate the story and set up the conditions for the next instalment of the franchise (Ibid.). To do this, however, the promotional campaign did not just recycle elements from the film, it undertook narrative 'work' bringing new elements into the story world of *Tron* (Ibid.) A connection with the original *Tron* was established, erasing any signs of aging or decay, and reinvigorating the *Tron* franchise (Ibid.). For audiences new to *Tron*, the promotional campaign was a first - time encounter, but for audiences familiar with the original *Tron*, these substitutions and equivalences were experienced as the overlaying of the new version on top of the original film (Ibid.).

5.5 The *Flynn Lives* Promotional Campaign

The campaign's inaugural event at Comic Con started in a re-creation of 'Flynn's Arcade' from the original film but then attendees were funnelled through to *Tron: Legacy*'s own signature location - the 'End of the Line' night club, giving attendees a foretaste of the new film and enabling audiences to literally 'step into the new fiction' (42 Entertainment, 2010). Later, an ARG (Alternative Reality Game) event was staged in San Francisco to celebrate the creation of an online version of *Space Paranoids* (Walden, 2016:101*)*. An alternative reality game is a story that 'plays out in real time, using real communications media to make it seem as though the story were really happening, and here an open-air 'press conference' was attended by hundreds of fans (Phillips, 2012:19). The Alan Bradley character (Bruce Boxleitner) took to the podium microphone to address the audience and the ARG was filmed and reported as a news event on the film's website (Walden, 2016:101). Unlike conventional film promotion trailers and posters that propose the sequel as a future event to anticipate, events like this ARG role play codify time in a more complex way: first, by bringing to life the film's past; secondly, by generating a sense of 'event-ness' in the present; and thirdly, by setting up anticipation for the film in the future (Ibid.).

Fans were not just invited to spectate in these events; they were also invited to participate by becoming 'actors' doing (unpaid) promotional 'work' in the *Tron: Legacy* campaign (Ibid.). At an early evening briefing meeting, fans were primed to take the role of 'protesters' and hijack the open-air press conference event that took place later that evening (Ibid.) Sporting placards and T-shirts emblazoned with the slogan 'Flynn Lives', participants were encouraged to protest about Encom's theft of Kevin Flynn's intellectual property and the company's supposed failure to properly investigate Flynn's mysterious 'disappearance' (Ibid.). By taking up this invitation, audiences were urged to break with the traditional convention of screen-based storytelling, in which the fictional world is separated from the real world (Ibid.). They were beckoned through the 'fourth wall' into fictional diegesis of *Tron*, which in a way can be understood as a repetition of the *Tron* conceit of traversing the screen into the machine. Participating fans were referred to as 'Flynn's foot soldiers' or 'field operatives' and those who were unable to attend in person were dubbed 'online warriors' to encourage a sense of involvement, even at a distance from the live event itself (Ibid.). These staged events were then recorded and became news items in the online campaign (Ibid.). The tropes of factual reportage, including handheld camerawork and talking to camera, were layered onto fictional foundations, and in this way, these events were aggregated into the *Tron* mythology (Ibid.). Therefore, nostalgia provided what Jonathan Gray termed 'interpretive frame' through which audiences, encountering the story for the first time, approached this new franchise instalment (2010:10).

The campaign extended its activities through social media to galvanise audiences into participation, by setting up its *Facebook* site as an information hub where fans could find out about events taking place in their locality and documenting their activities (Walden, 2016:102). Scavenger hunts (much like treasure hunts) were held in cities across America and Europe where participants searched for hidden clues, pooled their findings, and were rewarded for their efforts with *Tron* merchandise (Ibid.). Participants engaged in different ways, and to different degrees (Montola, Stenros and Waern, 2009:121; Dena, 2009:239). One participant blogged about their experience of taking part in the Paris scavenger hunt and linked her blog post to the film's *Facebook* site. The post entitled, *A la recherche de Kevin Flynn où comment je me suis retrouvée á participer au jeu de pistes de Tron: Legacy (Or How I became the Tron: Legacy field operative in Paris)* and was accompanied by photographs documenting the experience from first learning about the scavenger hunt online, following the clues across venues in the city, to finding the 'treasure' in the real world, to reporting her findings on the *Flynn Lives* website. (See Figure 17.)

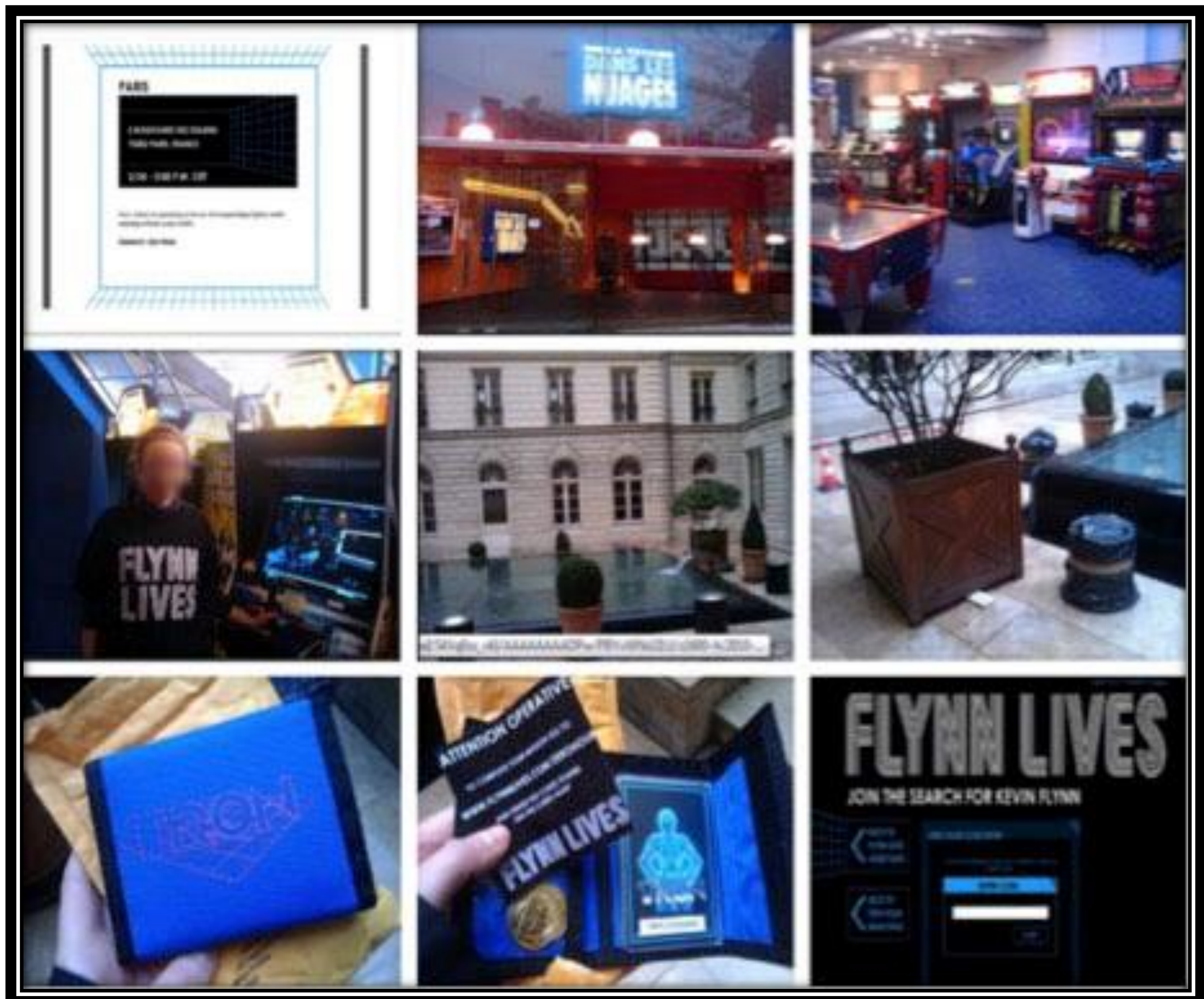

Figure 17. Paris' *Tron: Legacy* Scavenger Hunt, (Face blurred in image to protect identity) © Aurore Leblanc, 2013.

In turn, this post garnered comments and congratulations from online 'watchers' and *Facebook's* 'like' icon also provided online audiences with an opportunity for vicarious participation (Walden, 2016:102-3). When the 'like' icon was clicked, a visual representation of the 'liked' object appeared on the recipient's *Facebook* profile. So, here we can see *Tron: Legacy's* paratexts migrating along chains of social connectivity and how what has been dubbed the 'like economy' is promulgated by the logic of recommendations (Helmond and Gerlitz in Walden, 2016:103). Social media promotion has its own distinct temporal rhythms, as the *past* activities of one *Facebook* user are presented to the people on their contacts list as suggestions for possible *future* activities for them, creating a situation in which the users' contacts are encouraged to view recommended films, rather than any others (Ibid.). So, it turns out that nostalgia was not just concerned with looking back into the past, but it also looked to the future, and through social media the currency of nostalgia may be capitalised upon by the promotional campaign too (Ibid.). Restorative forms of nostalgia marshalled by this promotional campaign sought to capitalise on these sentiments by making things available that were thought to be gone

(Ibid.). Over the days, weeks and months of the campaign through repeated encounters with *Tron*'s tropes, and themes, both through live events and online, the film's canonisation was cultivated (Ibid.). The cumulative effect of these encounters was that a connection was drawn between the original film and the forthcoming film which brought into being a paradox: the manufacturing of nostalgic sensibilities for a film which we have not seen yet, that has been characterised as 'nostalgia for the future' (Kernan, 2004:16).

5.6 Researching Online Audiences

Having established how *Tron: Legacy's* promotional campaign capitalised on the memory culture surrounding *Tron*, and cultivated nostalgia for the forthcoming film, the thesis can now turn its attention to the third key research question in this thesis. Building on my previously published work, the next section considers how audiences engage with and experience the promotional campaign online. Researching promotional campaign audiences posed considerable challenges as it is impractical to trace historical audiences, let alone survey them. Moreover, these audience's utterances are scattered across innumerable sites which would be difficult to map definitively. However, it has been observed that the 'revolutionary' potential for online audience research' lies in the possibility of examining the 'traces' audiences leave of themselves after the experience is finished (Mathieu et al., 2016:295). It is my contention that these 'traces' constitute the material remains of audience experiences, and that such 'traces' are fundamentally archaeological in nature. It follows then that, by this definition, community forums, discussion boards and similar sites where people gather online to talk about their shared interests can be regarded as a form of 'archive' and audience posts are the 'traces' that constitute the raw archaeological data of this enquiry investigating film websites. In a fast-moving and fluid online environment where audience utterances and opinions are ephemeral, this approach has the potential to locate, and 'still' an audience for examination.

To prepare the ground for this investigation, the first task was to find out how online audiences have been researched, to look at which methodologies have been deployed to study them and, to find out what these studies have discovered about online audiences. In media audience research, this shift to participatory engagement has often been framed in terms of John Fiske's model outlined in 'The Cultural Economy of Fandom' (1992:37; Hills, 2013b:132); and (Bolin in eds. Ibrus and Scolari 2012:153). Fiske proposes there are three distinct ways audiences engage with media texts which he terms as semiotic, enunciative, and textual productivity (1992:37). The first category – 'semiotic' refers to how audiences understand the meaning of a media text; the second category is 'enunciative' referring to the sharing of meanings within an audience community; and thirdly 'textual productivity' refers to the way in which audiences actively engage with the object of their fandom through the production and circulation of their own media texts (Fiske, 1992:37-39). Applying this model to the online context, it becomes clear that it is in the last two

categories that the differences between analogue audiences and online audiences are most evident in a digital environment. Moreover, it is argued that practices previously associated with fan audiences have become conventional forms of audience conduct online (Busse and Gray, 2011:430). As the authors observe:

> 'Most notably, recent years have witnessed an expansion of fannish activities into more mainstream audiences and a concurrent industry focus on viral marketing and the immense profitability of encouraging and exploiting fannish behaviours' (Ibid.).

In online audience studies these 'fannish' audience behaviours are conceptualised in various ways. They are regarded as forms of 'participation' (Carpentier, 2011:198). They are discussed through neologisms like 'produsage' and 'co-creators' to describe collaboration between producers and consumers (Bruns and Jacobs, 2006:7; Jenkins, 2006:105; Banks and Humphreys in Jenkins, 2013:49). 'Fannish' audience behaviours are understood in economic terms as 'collaborationists' in the production of content or helping to promote a franchise (Jenkins, 2006:138). When these behaviours are exploited for economic gain, audiences' endeavours are understood as 'fan labour' (Wessels, 2011:70). And lastly, 'fannish' audiences are conceptualised as 'communities' and 'communities of practice' (Baym, 2000:114; Wenger in Hills, 2015:60). Whilst a definitive survey of how online audiences have been conceptualised is beyond of the capacity of this chapter, taken together, what these studies implicitly recognise is that audiences are often manifest as 'texts' of one kind or another. Moreover, as 'texts' audience behaviours are amenable to forms of qualitative analysis which examine language to understand people's thoughts and ways of communicating.

In the light of this, the next step in the research was to look in more detail at existing studies of online audiences to examine how other researchers met the methodological challenges of this kind of research. Three studies were reviewed, and the next section will consider both their methodologies and their research findings. Specifically, this section will look at how the audience studies identified participant audiences; their means of analysing these audiences; their means of presenting their findings and how these studies may inform my approach to the film campaign's online audiences.

The earliest study is Nancy K. Baym's *Tune in, Log on: Soaps, Fandom, and Online Community,* based on three year's participation and observation of TV soap opera UseNet-based discussion groups in the 1990s, that Baym characterises as an online 'ethnography' (2000:24). As well as participating in the group, Baym scrutinises participant's posts using a form of qualitative analysis called Discourse Analysis (Baym, 2000:25). The study reveals how participants develop interpretive practices to contribute to the discussion groups including personalisation, drawing connections between programme themes and personal experiences; using knowledge of the narrative's past to interpret its present state;

speculating about future stories; and the use of extra-textual knowledge gleaned from other sources and shared with the group (Baym, 2000:71-90). Baym also observes how codified and ritualised modes of communication develop group-specific practices of friendship as well as the emergence of individualised identities within the group (Baym, 2000:119-143). Her empirical study confirms observations by Jenkins that online audiences seem to be as motivated by the social nature of the environment as much as by their shared interest (Jenkins in Baym, 2000:16).

As this study takes place at an early stage in the development of the web, it provides one of the first examinations of online communications within audience communities. Baym explores how site architecture structures audience engagement and participation; how communication works when it is confined to linguistic cues, as well as questions of anonymity in the online environment (2000). Within these parameters, Baym suggests that online audience groups can be understood as 'interpretive' communities' (2000:93). Her research demonstrates how audiences develop habitual and patterned ways of 'acting' within these textual environments (2000:197). Baym concludes that 'each online community was an ongoing creation and while groups shared patterns and dynamics, they were all unique' (2000:201).

The findings of the second online audience research study concur with Baym's observations. In a study entitled 'Please help me; All I want to know is: is it real or not? How recipients view the reality status of *The Blair Witch Project*', Margrit Schreier examines a newsgroup discussion over the period of a year to consider audience anticipation of the forthcoming film (2004). What she discovers is that the film's prospective audience are consumed by questions about the film's ontological status and whether it is fiction or fact (2004:321). Schreier employs another kind of qualitative analysis known as Content Analysis to scrutinise poster's texts, as well as the frequency of occurrence (Schreier, 2004:322). The survey demonstrates that 27.3% of posts concern the film's reality status (Schreier, 2004:324). Moreover, results show that the closer the proximity to the theatrical release of the film, the more concerns are expressed about the ontology of the film and the more spontaneous and vivid audience expression becomes (Ibid.). Content Analysis provides not only a systematic approach to understanding what audiences say but it moves beyond individual subjectivity and emphasises 'inter-subjectivity' (Schreier, 2004:322). The study demonstrates that participant's responses are not just the utterances of isolated individuals, but through a comparison of texts to topics the extent to which the coders agree that Schreier terms this 'coefficient intercoder agreement' (Ibid.). In sum, the survey demonstrates that many respondents are interested in the same questions and that within these interpretive online communities, audiences' views are shaped by this social interaction (Schreier, 2004:323).

Social interaction within online audience communities is also the concern of a more recent study by Sarah Atkinson in 'The Performative Functions of Dramatic Communities:

Conceptualising Audience Engagement in Transmedia Fiction' (2014b). This study examines the experiences of participants during an 11-day advertainment event called *The Inside* (Caruso, 2011) sponsored by Intel and Toshiba which took place over the summer months in 2011 (Atkinson, 2014b:2204). The event was billed by its sponsors as a 'social film' in which online audiences did not just react to, but were invited to take part in a dramatic scenario to 'save' a woman called Christina who was trapped in a room, in an unknown location with just an Intel laptop and wi-fi to connect her to the outside world (Ibid.)

The event generated reaction across numerous social media platforms. However, Atkinson recognised that comprehensively mapping all audience responses would be impractical, not just in terms of the enormity of the task, but because social media sites such as *Facebook* pages are subject to 'random interjections, statements, and contributions from temporary and fleeting audience members' which lack focus and dilute such a study (Atkinson, 2014b:2208). So, she elects to undertake a detailed examination of a single site – a *Facebook* group which emerges in response to the dramatic events as they unfold (Ibid.). Atkinson observes how previous research about participatory fandoms frequently deploys metaphors of 'collective intelligence', but she argues that such terms are too general, and sets out to empirically explore the roles individuals may assume within the 'dramatic community' (Atkinson, 2014b:2206). She employs another variety of qualitative analysis, known as Grounded Theory, that entails the development of a theory out of the analysis of the data, together with the use of coding software to identify forms of behaviour. By so doing, Atkinson proposes specific performative functions within the group can be identified, as well as modes of audience communication (Atkinson, 2014b:2207).

Atkinson's research demonstrates that performative roles are adopted to cohere and maintain this community of 'actors'. She goes on to look at the frequency of contribution which indicates that 70% of all activity is of a performative or social dimension which, as Baum's study had done, confirms the fundamentally social nature of audience activities (Atkinson, 2014b:2213). Through a process of what she refers to as 'suture', borrowing the term from Stephen Heath, Atkinson observes how audience members actively worked to cohere the group, maintaining the narrative consistency, as well as the suspension of disbelief, through their discussions (Heath in Atkinson, 2014b:2215-6). She finds that audience members take on roles as narrators, characters, editors and, at times, even directors, shaping the development of the social film and that this participation in the event is critical to the successful operation of this advertainment (Atkinson, 2014b:2217).

From this survey of previous research, evidently there are several productive ways to approach the study of online audiences. The first point to make is that these audience studies are made possible by the inadvertent archiving and collection of audience responses to media experiences via the mechanisms of discussion groups and social media

settings. Baym takes an ethnographic approach to the analysis of her fellow participants in a Usenet discussion group, as the conversations took place. Although clearly this is not feasible for my research study as the *Tron: Legacy* promotional campaign discussion boards are now locked and have since been removed from the web, and so my research will examine a historical audience. Discourse analysis, Content analysis and Grounded theory are all qualitative analysis tools for analysing and reporting patterns or themes within a set of data (Barker, Pistrang and Elliott, 2016b:84). However, I conclude that I cannot use Content analysis as its data may be qualitative, but the outcomes are quantitative, and findings are presented in frequency counts – that is to say, in numerical terms. The research question for my audience study does not readily lend itself to this kind of quantification (Barker, Pistrang and Elliott, 2016b:85). By contrast, Grounded theory belongs to a group of qualitative analysis approaches known as 'framework' approaches that advocate a structural approach to the thematic analysis, whereby the researcher devises a detailed coding framework before the study is undertaken, based on a theory, or hypothesis, or previous research (Ibid.). However, this approach is not appropriate to my proposed study either, as Grounded theory starts with a theory or hypothesis, and sets out to find evidence to prove it, whereas I seek to find a way to let the evidence speak for itself, without presupposition about what I am going to find.

There are several different forms of qualitative analysis each of which has its different emphases and perspectives. From that range I selected an approach known as Thematic analysis. The value of Thematic analysis is that it formalises an analytical approach which is widely used and intrinsic to different forms of qualitative analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006:4). Whilst this approach is often implicit in qualitative analysis, it is often not regarded as a distinct form of analysis, although the exponents of this approach assert that it should be regarded as a method in its own right (Braun and Clarke, 2006:4). What makes Thematic analysis appropriate for this research is that it provides a systematic method of qualitative analysis but does not set out with a predetermined question. Instead, it 'listens' to the data. This approach is clearly related to the consideration of the topos undertaken in the last chapter too, although here the challenge is not to identify the topos (data set), but to undertake analysis of a specific data set. So, having identified a method of examining the discussion boards on the *Tron: Legacy* campaign website, the project is in a position to turn to the analysis of the boards themselves.

5.7 The *Flynn Lives* Discussion Boards

Writing about fandom, Busse and Gray make a distinction between 'traditional' and 'industry-led' fans (2011:431), They assert that the former is an authentic social experience, born of specific social formations and histories, while industry-led fandoms are heavily curated and controlled, allowing audiences to do little more than 'colouring within the lines' (Ibid). As a result, the authors caution that studies that consider industry-sanctioned fans too closely may lose their 'critical edge' (2011:439). In the light of recent

studies of industry-led audiences however, I would suggest that this need not necessarily be the case. Atkinson's empirical study of *The Inside* event (2014b), and others such as Hills' study of *Dr Who* fans (2015) demonstrate that this dichotomy may be too simplistic. For Hills, the fact that *Dr Who*'s lead showrunners, Russell T. Davies and Steven Moffat, were themselves fans, before they became the show's producers, complicates this distinction (2015:366-7). Whilst in Atkinson's study, it is clear from the outset that although *The Inside* advertainment was an industry driven promotional event, through qualitative examination of audience experiences, she demonstrates the personal investment made by participants, as well as a not inconsiderable time commitment (2014b:2216). Taken together, these examples suggest that the commercial imperative of the media event may not preclude it from providing rich and engaging experiences for their audiences (Ibid.). Moreover, both these studies suggest there is insight to be gained from empirical examination of online audiences to explore how the relationship between media producers and their audiences is brokered, and what is to be gained from such encounters.

Film website discussion boards, forums and communities have become a conventional feature of online film promotion and clearly the discussion boards for *Tron: Legacy* fall within the definition of what Busse and Gray define as 'industry-led fandom' (2011:431). To participate in the *Flynn Lives* discussion boards, participants were required to 'sign up', by providing personal data about themselves in the form of an email address, age and gender. In exchange for this data, the board member was granted the right to create a username, tagline and post on the discussion boards, subject to a set of published terms and conditions, which provided the legal premise of this proprietary site.

The board's terms and conditions stated that member's submissions to the board became the property of the *Flynn Lives* organisation, who had ownership and control thereafter over both the appearance and deletion of posts. Submissions could take the form of messages, stories, ideas, characterisations, person's names, usernames, profiles and their posts and could be 'solicited' or 'unsolicited'. As a result, authorial control was relinquished to the extent that download of material from the boards was only allowed for 'personal use' - and then just for <u>one</u> copy only, which clearly illustrated that the primary objective of the board was promotion and potentially gleaning material or ideas from fans. However, in narrative terms, by signing up the participant crossed the threshold into the story world of *Tron*. The in-world diegetic premise overlay this legal transaction and the participants became members of an organisation seeking to solve the mystery of the disappearance of *Tron*'s hero, Flynn.

The *Flynn Lives* campaign site and its discussion boards have since been taken down from the web but can be accessed via the *Internet Archive* (2010). During the months leading up to the film's theatrical release in 19th December 2010, the site was 'captured', that is to say, recorded and archived, a total of 10 times on January 5th, 7th and 29th, February 22nd,

March 5th, 13th and 28th, then on July 9th, 22nd November, and lastly on 26th December 2010. The 'snapshot' taken on 26th December 2010 aggregates all the activity on the discussion board over the course of the year and it is this 'capture' that forms the data set for this chapter.

The *Flynn Lives* discussion boards hosted 56 separate discussion threads which were active between 18th November 2008 and 15th December 2010 when the campaign ended a few days before the film's theatrical release. The discussion threads were made up of a total of 528 posts. Threads varied in length from the longest thread with 28 posts to the shortest thread with just a single post, but on average threads ran to around 9 posts. To prepare the data for analysis, these discussion threads were tabulated, and the results are available to view in Appendix 4. A list of participants' discussion board names is available in Appendix 5 too, as each participant is assigned a number for the purposes of the analysis. There were only 18 posters active on the boards during this time, and clearly the list of participants constituted an infinitesimal fraction of the film's global audience indicated by box office figures. However the small number of posters was consistent with Atkinson's observation that the demographic of online audience communities follows the 90/9/1 convention, originating from a report by the media audience research company Nielsen, which suggests that it is often the case that online communities are made up of 90% lurkers, 9% occasional participants and just 1% who actively and regularly post (Nielsen in Atkinson, 2014b:2206).

Having prepared the data set, the next stage was to begin the analytical process following Braun and Clarke's instructions which required the researcher to: first, familiarise themselves with the data; then, 'code' (interpret) features of the data at both semantic and interpretive levels; sort the codes into thematic groups; map these relations visually to chart the relations between them; and finally, having checked the themes, reflect on the dataset, define and then name the theme and analyse what the data revealed about audiences' engagement and experiences of the web campaign (Braun and Clarke, 2006:1623). To manage the analysis of this large data set, the discussion threads were divided into six distinct phases that broadly speaking correlated with stages of the *Flynn Lives* campaign from Phase 1, when the discussion boards were opened, to Phase 6 when the last thread concluded before the film went on theatrical release. Below is an example Discussion Thread table, headed with the topic and the date it began. The number of the poster listed on the left-hand side of the table and posts are recorded chronologically in the middle column. (See Figure 18)

Poster	Discussion Thread 17: THIS IS BIG, PEOPLE!! 28th March 2010	Coded For
4	Just heard from a friend - that Encom event is bigger than we thought.	

6	So? Are we still on?	
4	Definitely, but we should tread lightly - Alan Bradley deserves our respect.	
5	OK, so we wait until he's done and then GET LOUD	
1	Something like that - we'll iron out the details before the big event	
5	Right on. Totally tubular. I'm speaking to you from the Eighties, in honor of Kevin Flynn. Grody to the max, fer shur...	
1	Thankfully, the '80's sounded nothing like that. Listen - I just don't want to freak out the keynote. We want him to know we're on his side - he's one of us...	
7	Well, he still works for Encom, but I get your point.	
5	Whatevs...	
2	I'm fine with that.	
1	I'm going to work on a meet up plan, and I'll get back to everyone with the deets.	
2	Rockin' - thanks, Z-dog.	

Figure 18. Discussion Thread 17, 2018.

During the analysis, features of the data that appeared to be interesting or pertinent to the research questions were identified as 'codes' in the column of the right-hand side (Braun and Clarke, 2006:18). These coded features could be identified on a *semantic* level, relating to the linguistic characteristics of posts, or at an *interpretive* level indicating underlying conceptualisation, assumptions and ideologies that shaped the sematic content of the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006:13). Formal presentation of language in terms of punctuation, and letter case was noted too. (See Figure 19)

Poster	**Discussion Thread 17: THIS IS BIG, PEOPLE!! 28th March 2010**	**Coded For**
4	Just heard from a friend - that Encom event is bigger than we thought.	'Hearsay' construction to introduce new information. Big event planned

6	So? Are we still on?	Impatience, excitement and anticipation Question marks.
4	Definitely, but we should tread lightly - Alan Bradley deserves our respect.	Manages group role play in ARG
5	OK, so we wait until he's done and then GET LOUD	Rehearse future actions Uppercase letters
1	Something like that - we'll iron out the details before the big event	Repetition of 'big'
5	Right on. Totally tubular. I'm speaking to you from the Eighties, in honor of Kevin Flynn. Grody to the max, fer shur...	Retro 1980s-style language play
1	Thankfully, the '80's sounded nothing like that. Listen - I just don't want to freak out the keynote. We want him to know we're on his side - he's one of us...	Different generations of Tron audiences. Manage group role play in ARG
7	Well, he still works for Encom, but I get your point.	Encom – good or bad? Alan Bradley – hero or villain?
5	Whatevs...	Group behaviour
2	I'm fine with that.	Group behaviour
1	I'm going to work on a meet up plan, and I'll get back to everyone with the deets.	Games master makes plans
2	Rockin' - thanks, Z-dog.	Excitement and anticipation. Nicknames

Figure 19. Discussion Thread 17 with thematic coding notes, 2018.

Threads were then scrutinised, and codes generated without judgement of what to include, or exclude from the data set at this stage (Braun and Clarke, 2006:19). Once this coding process was complete for each phase, a list of 'candidate' themes was developed (Braun and Clarke, 2006:20). (See Figure 20)

List of 'candidate' themes

- Strategies to introduce new information
- Plans for 'big' events

- Impatience
- Anticipation - question marks
- Excitement - UPPER CASE LETTERS
- Retro language play
- Different generations of *Tron* fans
- Management of group role play behaviour in ARG
- Narrative ambiguity 1: Alan Bradley character – good or bad?
- Narrative ambiguity 2: Encom corporation – good or bad?
- Group behaviours & dynamics
- Games master plans a meet up
- Poster nicknames

Figure 20. List of ‘candidate’ themes, 2018.

The candidate themes and their relation to one another were represented in a diagram to start to make sense of the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006:19). Below is the interpretive sketch from Phase 3 which includes Discussion Threads 17 – 26. (see Appendix 7) It should be noted that these interpretive sketches were not intended to be final diagrams, but rather should be understood as tools to think with. What became apparent in undertaking this process was that some themes were more significant than others, either by prevalence or repetition (Braun and Clarke, 2006:20). (See Figure 21) There were central themes and peripheral themes, main themes and sub themes (Ibid.). Some codes fit into multiple themes, and there were themes which did not seem to fit within emerging patterns of themes at all and were recorded as miscellaneous (Ibid.).

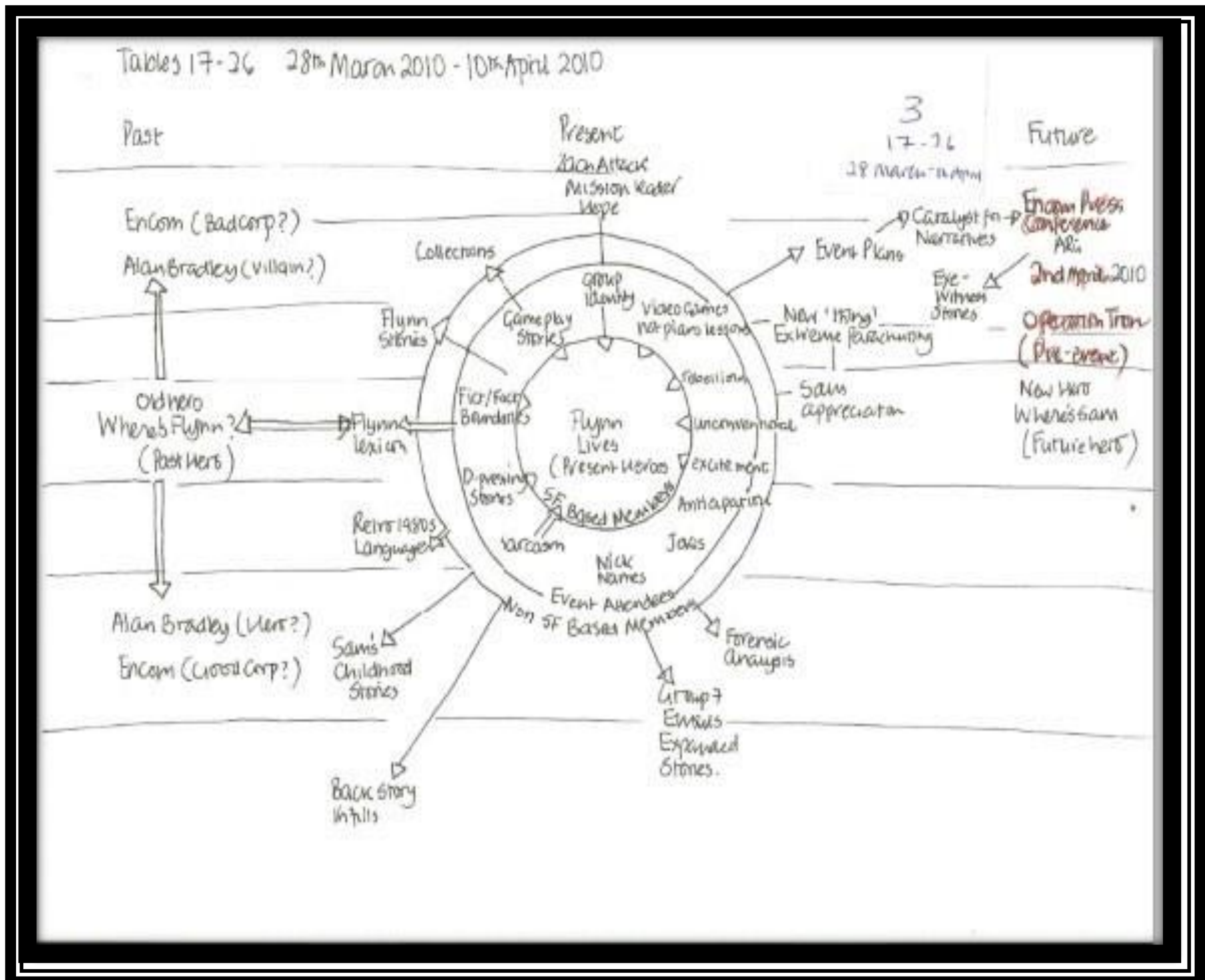

Figure 21. An interpretive sketch of phase 3: Threads 17-26 - 28th March - 10th April 2010, 2018.

As the threads were generated over a period of months on the site's discussion boards, and grouped together into time periods, it made sense to create a series of maps to represent each phase over the months before the film's theatrical release. (see Appendix 7) The interpretive sketches were then reviewed to ensure they fully represented the data, as well as exploring different possible configurations for the sketches. The final stage in the analytical process was to identify the essence of the themes and decide which aspect of the data each theme captured. Having named the themes and mapped them visually as interpretive sketches, a narrative account of the contents of the interpretive sketches was given. (see Appendix 6) And finally, an analysis of the data could be undertaken.

5.8 Research Findings

One of the aims of this web-based promotional campaign was to establish a connection between the original film *Tron* in 1982, and its sequel *Tron: Legacy* in 2010 across a period

of three decades. What is immediately apparent in the thematic maps of all six phases of the campaign is how posts are defined in temporal terms to this chronology, either in relation to the past, present or future. The campaign begins with the commemoration to mark 20 years since the disappearance of *Tron*'s hero, Flynn in 1989. In temporal terms, this anniversary can be seen as a restorative form of nostalgia as it creates continuity with the past by narratively bringing the past into the present. Over the course of the campaign a series of events, puzzles and challenges take place and the prevailing expression of posters is anticipation and excitement at the prospect of activities as they are announced- 'totally faced' (14), 'I can't wait' (3), 'sounds like it is going to be epic' (5), 'See that all over the room? That's my mind being blown' (14), 'I'm so there. Just brought my ticket.' (7), Ooh, I like what I hear' (2), 'So excited – seeing spots' (6) and 'can I just say how psyched I am?' (14), and 'we've got the world's attention after all this time – people are ready to DO something' (4). This prevailing sense of anticipation and excitement is conveyed not only with words, but also through frequent use of exclamation marks and upper-case letters and taken together, it all generates a teleological momentum towards the forthcoming theatrical release of *Tron's* sequel.

What is conspicuous by its absence, however, is any discussion about either of the films. In fact, *Tron* is only mentioned in the discussion board threads <u>once</u> during its ten-month operation. The reason for this may be because it is assumed that the board sits inside the story world of *Tron,* and so it doesn't need naming explicitly. Indeed, if restorative nostalgia is defined as a longing for home, then, it can be argued that the *Tron: Legacy* website is a fictional 'home' of sorts and there is no need to name it as it is implicit and assumed. When members sign up to the boards, de facto, they enter the story world. As the site declares, 'By signing up, you are committing to help our organisation, Flynn Lives, track down all leads relating to the mysterious disappearance of Kevin Flynn, digital pioneer and former CEO of Encom' (42 Entertainment, 2010) So once site visitors are inside the world of *Tron*, the world, in a sense, becomes a given.

On the discussion boards, posters seek to establish themselves within this audience community through what Baym terms interpersonal practices (2000:209). These include humorous performance to entertain readers (Baym, 2000:113). Some messages have a jokey tone, for example 'wanna see a picture of my cat wearing sunglasses? Just kidding' (3,) and 'You've only read it 12 times? Slacker!' (12). But, also through sarcasm too, such as 'I love your energy, but it might be time to step away from the keyboard and hydrate.' (3) and 'Ha (that quip didn't deserve two ha's) (4). By Phase 3 posters are increasingly using nicknames for one another, indicating a growing sense of familiarity between them. Personal stories are shared in threads where members discuss why they joined *Flynn Lives* and when they began playing games. Individual identities emerge through what they say about themselves through their by-lines and incidental biography which enable posters to relate to each other within the community. Moreover, these incidental biographies are infused with reflective nostalgia about gaming experiences.

> 'I used to go to this rad arcade every day after school. My mom worked weird hours, so she wanted me to stay at the library until she could pick me up. Guess how well that plan went over…' (13)
>
> 'Probably as well as my "piano lessons" (which I was supposed to be taking the whole summer of '05 but instead I was at the rec centre spending my allowance on video games…until my folks found out what was going on and I stopped getting an allowance, of course') (5)

The group are hospitable to newcomers to the boards, 'Great to have you guys aboard' (3) and each other's posts, 'Nicely said', CG (7). The interestingly over the course of the campaign as posters become increasingly engaged in the 'Boards', and they begin to account for the times when they are <u>not</u> posting on the discussion boards. For example, in phase 3 'Sorry I was in class' (14) and 'We're off to Napa. I'll be out of touch for the rest of the day.' (3). During the last phase a palpable sense of investment is evident in posts such as, 'I kinda love everyone here.' (2)'; 'the feeling is more than mutual, girl.' (3); 'Who's up for a virtual hug?' (4); and 'Had a great time with everyone here.' (5). These posts indicate how over the months, posters begin to cohere into a kind of community.

Both the interpretive and informative practices that Baym characterises as indicative of an online audience community are evident on the discussion boards. One of the most commonly used interpretive practices is personalisation as posters articulate how the story is personally significant for them (Baym, 2000:71). For example, 'Sorry to bring everyone down, but I've been thinking about how much Sam lost in his young life. He must be lonely especially with the holidays approaching.' (2) Character interpretation is evident too (Baym, 2000:72). Central to numerous discussion threads are restorative nostalgic posts expressing what the character Kevin Flynn meant to them. For example, in Discussion Thread 10 'Shout Out to Flynn', Poster 15 describes Flynn as 'someone who thought there was a higher purpose to technology and a human-scaled interaction with infinity' and Poster 10 describes how 'Kevin Flynn changed a generation and that generation is changing the world'. However, the appearance of the Alan Bradley character at the ARG Encom Press Conference event, triggers discussion about his role in the forthcoming film - 'Are you starting a thread to complain about Alan Bradley?' (4); 'I was wondering about him too. That speech in San Francisco confused me' (12). 'That's where Alan Bradley should be. Right by Sam's side looking for Kevin Flynn, not sucking up kudos from the suits at Encom and posing for pictures…I'm just saying' (8). Typically, such character interpretation is based on knowledge from *Tron* which provides a reservoir of narrative information to draw upon for both restorative and reflective nostalgia (Baym, 2000:78). However, for posters who do not have this resource to draw on, however, <u>retrospective</u> commentary is replaced by <u>speculative</u> commentary about the forthcoming film (Baym, 2000:81).

Discussions threads about the hero of the forthcoming film imagine his past ‘He was just a kid when his dad went missing. You have to understand he’d just lost his mother.’ (3) and his present ‘Let’s imagine all of the cool things Sam might be doing right now’. (3) To fuel speculation, participants share knowledge and information. Periodically extra-textual information is pitched in discussion threads for the group to consider such as screen grabs from Encom’s intranet (Thread 24), and a ‘new tech’ magazine cover from 1985 (Thread 3) that gives posters an opportunity to express restorative nostalgia, as well as use their fan expertise (Baym, 2000:92). Extra-textual knowledge and information is extemporised too - ‘Little known fact: Jordan (Sam’s mother) also designed a building near the Embracadero (the site of our awesome protest to disrupt the Encom press conference last April) (7)’ and there are interjections in the narrative which alter the audience group’s perspective. For example, when one poster encourages restorative nostalgia by assuming the role of one of Flynn’s contemporaries– ‘I guess it’s a good enough time as any for me to make a kind of confession. I used to work at Encom with Kevin Flynn’ (8). All these different forms of restorative nostalgia cultivate speculation and the group undertake narrative ‘work’ to incorporate these new story details into the story’s diegesis.

In this last instance it becomes clear that discussion board participants begin to move beyond interpretive discussions to take up more performative roles. In her online audience study, Atkinson observes that in a social media space an audience community can evolve from an interpretive or social community into a ‘dramatic community’ which she defines as ‘a group of people who take on a range of different performance identities within the social media spaces of an online fictional area’ (2014b:2202). By so doing, Atkinson evokes Jenkins’ last principle of transmedia storytelling which observes how audiences actively participate through performance (Jenkins, 2009c). This definition clearly describes the activities on the *Flynn Lives* discussion board. Moreover, Atkinson goes on to suggest that performative roles can be productively understood in terms of Vladimir Propp’s dramatis personae scheme for the character functions in Russian folk tales which include the hero, the villain and the hero-helper among others (2014:2202).

This proposition provides a springboard for comprehending how posters frame discussion about characters. In the original film, *Tron* (1982) the Proppian hero function is undertaken by Flynn and this is where the campaign begins. Poster 8 extolls Flynn describing him as an ‘artist’, ‘designer’, ‘philosopher’, ‘author’ ‘visionary’ and an ‘inspiration’ throughout the campaign. This reverential tone is taken up by other posters too with comments like ‘Kevin Flynn was like a father to an entire generation of thinkers, dreamers, artists and techies’ (2) and ‘Kevin Flynn pretty much invented the best games around’. (5) However, Flynn’s disappearance, de facto, suspends him from this hero function in the narrative of the campaign. So, the *Flynn Lives* group participants become the focus of the campaign’s narrative and the ‘heroes’ of the campaign’s quest to find Flynn. Moreover, an opposition

is established between the evil corporation of Encom as villains (them) and the members of the *Flynn Lives* board as hero/helpers (us) which is maintained through all six phases.

During the campaign, a new hero, Flynn's son, Sam, is introduced to the *Tron* diegesis. This is a character who will feature in the forthcoming *Tron: Legacy* and stories about Sam's childhood are extemporised by posters enabling readers to get to know the character so that by the time the film opens, Sam will be as familiar as his father. Moreover, Sam's spectacular entry into the Encom Press conference ARG event in San Francisco by parachute creates the conditions for the invention of a new hero for the forthcoming film. Parallels between the old hero and the young new hero are reiterated when Sam too disappears, and, in narrative terms, the 'Where's Flynn?' quest becomes a 'Where's Sam?' quest within the diegesis of the campaign.

What becomes apparent over the course of the six phases of the campaign is how the discussion boards shift from operating as an interpretive audience community to becoming a dramatic community working to cultivate a sense of anticipation about the forthcoming film. Within the campaign, posters assume different roles. Poster 1 is the games master/group leader who provides resources for the campaign's narrative, first by rallying the group using words and phrases such as 'momentum', 'ready for action' and 'be ready for anything'. He encourages a sense of belonging to a group with the repeated use of terms like 'our losses and gains', 'our organisation' our allegiance', our strength' and 'How much we've accomplished'. During the campaign the games master/group leader (Poster 1) introduces games and challenges, orchestrates ARG event participation and surprises, as well as providing material rewards in the form of T-shirts and badges (pins) as recompense for poster's participation in the discussion boards. Poster 8 performs as a contemporary of Flynn on the discussion boards, persistently drawing attention to the past with restorative nostalgic narratives such as 'I used to work at Encom with Kevin Flynn' and 'I can picture it. He had his quiet moments…. when he was really concentrating on something – he wouldn't come out of his office for the whole day…' and creating a sense of narrative enigma with phrases like 'He seemed so worried in those last days' and referring to his 'secret projects' – all designed to cultivate speculation amongst board readers.

On the discussion boards, participants become narrators themselves, providing eyewitness accounts of campaign events – 'This is a posting for all you Flynn Livers who aren't here. Here's what happened' (7). Posters also generate stories about imaginary events such as the instance when Poster 5 explains how he used his fake Encom badge to get into the Encom campus and is asked to describe 'what it's like inside the evil empire?'. With increasing frequency, board members don't just comment, but make up stories of their own. In a thread about the whereabouts of Sam, a game of 'Let's just imagine' (3) takes place and the composition of threads shifts into storytelling mode as posts take on additional adjectives to embellish their narrative performances. For example, a skyscraper

is described as ‘massive’ (10) and a holiday resort is ‘crazy expensive’ (13), while Sam’s biography, detailed with musings about his childhood and stories about his mother, is introduced into the narrative. Poster 8 relays stories about taking a trip down memory lane to visit sites where Flynn ‘visited’ and starts by writing, ‘*Let’s give it a spin*. Back when I worked with Flynn….’ (my emphasis). What is apparent here is the way in which posters increasingly participate in shaping the fiction through their own post-based performances, drawing connections between the original film and the sequel during the course of the promotional campaign.

Over the course of the months in which the discussion boards are in operation, the rich diversity of ways in which posters ‘perform’ becomes evident. Posts *narrate* campaign events. Posters *role play* stories about fictive experiences. Poster *hypothesise* about a character’s whereabouts and poster *create* biographies for new characters. At other times participants *perform as characters* in the film’s narrative diegesis and eulogise the virtues and significance of *Tron*’s hero, Flynn. There are even posts that playfully traverse the boundaries between fact and fiction. In a thread about the US mid-term elections, one poster muses how Flynn might vote in the mid-term elections and how ‘Maybe when Flynn comes back from…. wherever, he’ll be an international hero, run for public office and then we can really vote for him.’ (11) In sum, posts composed in the conversational threads on the campaign’s discussion boards appear to take the form of extemporised performance.

The work of the oral poetry scholars Milman Parry and Albert Lord provides insight into the nature of this extemporised performance. In the 1930s, Parry and his student, Albert Lord made a study of Serbo-Croatian oral poetry singers (Edwards, 1983:152). They were specifically interested in the processes through which performances were created (Ibid.). Parry and Lod concluded that these epic oral poems were constructed through improvisation *during* performances, but that these performances are not entirely extemporaneous, as they were built around formulaic strategies (Edwards, 1983:159). For example, the subject and the structure of a poem are known in advance, and so key elements of the performance are fixed, providing a framework in which extemporising can take place (Duffy, 2014:127-8). Poetic performances are composed using both formulaic techniques and stock elements drawn from ‘a rich storehouse of ready-made building blocks’ to build the elements of their performances (Hirsch, 2014). Moreover, a further feature of these extemporised performances identified by Parry and Lord is the idea of ‘thrift’ in which a defined but limited lexicon that falls within the parameters of the poem’s custom and tradition, is used to express a ‘given essential idea’ in the poem (Edwards, 1983:161).

I would venture that the formulaic strategies deployed in Parry and Lord’s conception of ‘composition in performance’ provide some insight into the way posters compose for the online discussion boards. Since its publication, Parry and Lord’s theory about ‘composition during performance’ has been applied to a range of cultural forms from jazz improvisation

(Gillespie, 1991) to doctors' accounts of patients' medical case histories, (Ratzan, 1992) to professional wrestling (Duffy, 2014) to explain how 'composition in performance' is achieved (Edwards, 1983:152).

Within the framework of Parry and Lord's 'composition in performance', the story world of *Tron* is the 'given essential idea' in which all posters operate (Ibid.) However, the story world is not explicitly named as such, as the presumption is that all board participants inhabit this narrative world and respond to narrative events from within its fictional world. Secondly, the campaign that preceded the forthcoming film release provides a defined duration for the boards. And thirdly there is a sense in which <u>all</u> participants are 'performing 'on the discussion boards. This is evident in the concerted use of Flynn-style vocabulary by Posters on the board including words like 'cool'(3, 5, 6, 10), 'dude'(5, 7, 11), 'rad'(5), 'man'(1, 7, 5), 'slacker'(12), 'crazy'(1, 3,7, 12), and 'guys'(3,4, 17) together with references to the grid (7, 8), 'recognisers' (13), 'Dumont.'(8). It is also evident in the deployment of linguistic puns based on the film - 'The deed is done. I am a <u>Bit</u> tired' (1) referring to a component in a computer programme which carries information in the film. Another illustration of linguistic punning can be seen in the post, 'it's not just me being <u>paranoid</u>' (1) referring to the game invented by Flynn, Space Paranoids. Terms like this function as in-jokes on the discussion boards – that is to say, jokes for those readers who can spot the film reference and this kind of oblique word play is aimed at those familiar with the world of *Tron*. In the case of the audience of the film's online discussion boards, the work of Parry and Lord seems to provide insight into some of performative strategies in use. Moreover, its central tenet regarding the formulaic use of language resonates with the topos, which has been one of the guiding propositions in this transmedia archaeological approach to the examination of film websites.

Discussion boards have provided a forum for audiences since the advent of the world wide web. But examination of this online forum indicates that this discussion board has been created as a proprietary environment for the promotion of the film. It is clear that some of these posters are not just members of an audience community, but 'actors' who play specific roles on the boards. This observation can be triangulated by comments on the *Movie Marketing Madness* blog about 'fake' message boards on sites earlier for films like *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (3 June 2004) and *Wicker Park* (2 September 2004). Since then such marketing interventions have been replaced by more sophisticated ways of co-opting audiences into the promotional effort. So, then this observation raises a whole raft of further questions: Who were these posters? Were they paid actors? Or, were they dedicated fans? Further clues are provided in a short paratextual film titled *Tron: The Next Day* released on *YouTube* to promote the release of home viewing formats a year after the film's theatrical release. Here poster 8 is 'revealed' to be the Alan Bradley character from the films, although the poster is not necessarily the actor taking the role. Here narratives are imbricated with one another in this on-going paratextual promotion. What is interesting about this paratext is that it focuses on the *Flynn Lives* organisation

from the promotional campaign. So, in this way, the *Flynn Lives* group are incorporated into the story world of *Tron*, illustrating the increasing blurring of the boundaries between promotion and content, as well as setting up foundations for a further sequel.

Of course, we cannot know for certain who the posters are precisely through this method of analysis but that is not the point. For the purposes of this enquiry, what is significant is that Thematic Analysis reveals evidence to suggest that views, opinions and perspectives are being cultivated to inculcate events of the past in the present, and to introduce characters in the service of the film's promotion. In answer to the research question posed at the start of the chapter, during the campaign these posters cultivate a sense of nostalgia about the past, as well as anticipation for the future on the discussion boards. On reflection then, Busse and Gray's assertion about the authenticity of 'traditional' fans as distinct from the manufactured nature of 'industry-led' fandom assumes an authenticity in the former, but not in the latter, which does not necessarily exist (2011:431). Participants post on discussion boards in the full knowledge that people are reading what they write, so the posters are performing themselves or fictive personas they have invented, so distinctions based on the notion of authenticity collapse. The value of using Thematic Analysis lies in the fact that it reveals how this nostalgia has been cultivated for a film that is yet to be seen.

5.9 Games Memory Culture

In the final section of the chapter the focus pulls out from detailed scrutiny of the promotional campaign and the *Flynn Lives* discussion boards to consider *Tron* in the wider cultural context. It begins with the observation that not only has *Tron* has become emblematic of, and almost cultural shorthand for, the beginnings of the digital age, it has also become a focal point of nostalgia for gaming culture, because it represents the time when games first entered the cultural zeitgeist (Walden, 2016:103). Video games historian Sean Fenty observes that the potency of this cultural memory has grown over the years as it is not just gamers from the 1980s who experience a sense of nostalgia about the game playing of their youth today (Fenty in Walden, 2016:103). Indeed, Fenty suggests that nostalgia has become a widely felt sentiment for successive generations of gamers (Ibid.). Gaming technologies change all the time, and so all those who play games may feel nostalgia as iterations of games are updated and older games and their platforms are consigned to obsolescence (Ibid.). Games archives, museums and emulators fuel an appetite for what is described as, 'a perfect past that can be replayed, a past within which players can participate, and a past in which players can move and explore' (Fenty in Walden, 2016:103). Games historians agree that one of the consequences of this is the burgeoning restorative nostalgic culture of games online (Ibid.; Herz, 1997:65; Newman, 2004:165-6; Suominen, 2008; Wolf, 2007).

So, the production of the *Tron: Legacy* promotional campaign is not entirely in the hands of the film industry and its intermediaries. In *Television, Memory, Nostalgia*, Amy Holdsworth suggests that memory cultures do not simply repeat the past, but actively edit the past by positioning it within new frames and contexts (Holdsworth in Walden, 2016:103) This observation is borne out by historical accounts of games culture. In one of the first published histories of games, *Joystick Nation*, the author J.C. Herz observes how the memory cultures of gamers of the early 1980s tend to erase from collective memory recollection of the many poor games which flooded the market at the time (Herz in Walden, 2016:104). Instead gamers prefer to focus on their favourite games which are played and replayed and survive to be ported onto the next platform (Ibid.). Herz argues these games which have come to stand in for, and represent, the whole of 1980s arcade gaming culture in popular memory (Ibid.). Similarly, it appears that cultural memory erases the shortcomings of the original film, *Tron*, and celebrate its prescience in championing this new media (Ibid.). Over time these forms of remembering and misremembering have the effect of creating an edited, idealised version of the early days of the game's arcades, and, more broadly, of our cultural past (Ibid.).

Alongside this process of editing the past, the cultural memory sees a dramatic shift in the barometer of attitudes towards games (Ibid.). Herz documents how in the late 1970s and early 1980s games were held in low cultural esteem and she recalls how 'in the public perception, arcades smacked of moral turpitude' and were generally regarded as sites of delinquency (Ibid.). The childhood recollections of the editor of a video game culture fanzine *1-Up*, Raina Lee, bears this out, as she recollects 'They (her parents) did not really let me go alone to arcades, because they were regarded as bad places with bad teenage boys...' (Ibid.) Herz concurs with this recollection, remembering that arcades were regarded as 'teenage hangouts' in bus stations and dingy dark corners of shopping malls where young people wasted their time (Ibid.). Since then, however, attitudes towards games and games culture have undergone a transformation as the games community and wider culture come to regard arcade games less as the locus of youthful delinquency but more as the unlikely location of the first green shoots of a nascent digital culture (Ibid.).

5.10 From the Margins to the Mainstream

Having examined how both restorative and reflective nostalgia are cultivated during the promotional campaign, this final section in the chapter considers the shift in the cultural position of games from the margins to the mainstream, and how this shift leads to a reappraisal of the Disney film, *Tron*. Lastly, consideration is given to how the campaign's impact derives from its facility to harness the sentiment driving this cultural change.

Since then, the games historian Mark J.P. Wolf has suggested that games are no longer marginal, but have become part of the mainstream and to evidence this he points to the fact

that games have outstripped film, and grown to be one of the largest entertainment industries (Wolf in Walden, 2016:104) In *The Video Game Explosion*, Wolf describes how by the late 1990s, the generation who had grown up with games, not only enjoyed playing games, but have begun to write about them too. Games have become the focus of academic journals, anthologies and conferences, and a growing number of universities now offer degree programmes in Games Studies and Game Design (Ibid.) Games have also become the focus of exhibitions in major art galleries such as *Game On* at London's Barbican in 2002 and *The Art of Video Games* at the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington D.C. in 2012, confirming their status as a cultural form in their own right (Ibid.).

On reflection, it has been proposed that video arcade games depicted in *Tron* were, in fact, the first computers encountered by the (young) public and their significance lies in the fact that they illustrated how computers might be used, not just for utilitarian purposes, but for play too (Wolf in Walden, 2016:105). In the light of these changing attitudes towards games, I would assert that the marketing campaign for *Tron: Legacy* became the focus for expressions of vindication and the exoneration of games culture, and this shift in cultural attitudes is part of the reason why the promotional campaign resonated with its audience (Ibid.). As the Alan Bradley character (Bruce Boxleitner) exclaims to the audience at the *Encom* Press Conference ARG event, 'who could have known that those games would evolve into the indispensable programs that guide our daily lives?' (Ibid.).

It is here that the *Flynn Lives* campaign evokes, what in Boym's typology is clearly recognisable as the second, more reflective form of nostalgia, and this nostalgic tendency takes a different perspective on the past to restorative nostalgia (Ibid.). As suggested earlier in the chapter, reflective nostalgia contains an implicit awareness that a return to the past is neither possible, nor indeed desirable. It is therefore less concerned to preserve and fetishize remnants from bygone days, than to 'linger on ruins, the patina of time and history, in the dreams of another place and another time' (Boym, 2001:41). In other words, reflective nostalgia, like that expressed by the Alan Bradley character quoted here, reflects on how far we have come in time to this point in the present (Walden, 2016:105).

The reflective nostalgia evident in Alan Bradley's speech demonstrates an acute awareness of the passage of time since the dawn of the digital age in the 1980s (Ibid.). But it brings with it a sense of critical distance on the difference between the past, present and, indeed, the future (Ibid.). This reflective nostalgia contains an implicit awareness that the past no longer exists, and that *Tron* is best regarded as a period piece, but that is not all (Ibid.). A more reflective nostalgia celebrates the foresight of the film, *Tron* and the fact that fondness for the film is not an isolated experience, but is shared by many, and so can be regarded as an illustration of the relationship between the personal and the collective memory (Boym, 2001: xvi).

Indeed, by the end of the campaign it becomes evident that *Flynn Lives* is not about *Tron,* so much as it is about *Tron*'s audiences, as it both validates and vindicates *Tron* fandom (Walden, 2016:105). By engaging with the film's promotional campaign, the audience rewrites its own history and validates its own game-playing by willingly participating in a rewriting of history in which the events of the original *Tron* actually happened and because of that the world is a different place (Ibid.). In the words of the campaign, 'YOU ARE FLYNN LIVES!' and the nostalgia articulated here is for themselves and their fandom, rather than for a film they have not seen yet. That nostalgia, like all nostalgia, perhaps, is not for the past as it was, or even the past as it is remembered, but for a past as they would wish it to have been (Ibid). So, for *Tron*'s audiences, the reason why this campaign resonates with them is because it enables the past to be recast, and because of this, they can look forward to a different future, one that has come from that past (Ibid.).

5.11 Conclusions

This chapter set out to undertake a transmedia archaeology of audience engagement and experiences with online film marketing campaigns. Through a detailed textual analysis of the campaign, the thesis demonstrates the expanded dimensions of Hollywood online film marketing campaigns today, which in terms of duration and entertainment value , equal, if not exceed, the film it promotes and point to the growing importance of promotion in overcrowded media culture to attract audience attention.

While the entire site has since been 'locked down' and removed from the web, the Internet Archive provided continued access. On examination it became evident that social media sites like the discussion boards in this case study provide a point of entry for the researcher into understanding audiences' experience. Indeed, this thesis argues that sites like these can be regarded as a new kind of archive holding the 'traces' or remains of past audience engagement and their preservation allows them to be investigated for what they can tell us.

Qualitative research methods drawn from social psychology were modified for the online environment and applied to the website's discussion boards. The value of the thematic analysis approach was that it demonstrated how posters coalesced into an audience community and how audience exchanges were characterised by a combination of retrospection and speculation about the forthcoming theatrical release. This analysis went onto reveal how this audience community's interpretive activities evolved into a dramatic activity as posters engaged in extemporised 'written' performances. The last finding of this analysis was that not all contributors to the discussion boards are audiences. Some posters were clearly 'actors' guiding the experience and cultivating both nostalgia and anticipation in the service of the film's promotion.

However, the promotional campaign was not able to cultivate nostalgia by its own efforts alone, however. A consideration of the wider context of games culture indicated that a broader impetus was at work here, where *Tron* has come to be the focal point for nostalgia and lauded for signalling the dawn of the digital age.

In the course of the chapter a combination of approaches was used to undertake a transmedia archaeology including media textual analysis, thematic analysis and games history to answer the research question posed at the start of the chapter. Thematic analysis ‘listens’ to the data on a semantic, as well as, an interpretive level. One of its strengths is that it enables the data to speak for itself. It is in this regard that thematic analysis shares a common interest with transmedia archaeology, as they both seek to examine what they find, not presume what is there. What this chapter has established, through its use of this qualitative analysis tool is that in this promotional film campaign, the past has been (re)constructed and nostalgia has been cultivated for a forthcoming film release.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

This thesis set out to investigate the development of a new feature of the contemporary film experience - the film website. As film websites are rarely found alone but refer to the films they promote, they are regarded as a form of transmedia within this project. The research began by surveying usage of the term transmedia in the history of published sources since 1800 using Google Ngram. This search indicated that the concept could be charted from the 1970s and its evolution traced through the terms to which the word was affiliated: from transmedia intertextuality and transmedia storytelling; transmedia practices and transmedia audiences; transmedia marketing and paratextuality; to transmedia histories and transmedia archaeologies. These appended terms provided a framework through which to investigate the evolution of the concept in the literature. Moreover, as a review of this kind has not been undertaken before, to my knowledge, the literature review's account of the development of the concept of transmedia became the thesis's first contribution to knowledge.

In the review of literature, the cartographic nature of early transmedia writings was evident in the way scholars shared an interest in mapping the flow of data between transmedia elements, mapping relations between transmedia components and mapping dynamics between the different media platforms. Two observations can be made at this stage. The first observation is that distinctions between promotion and content are diminishing, and, at times, dissolve as film websites become part of the contemporary film experience. The second observation is that, as a result, these hybrids of content and promotion can no longer just be regarded as promotional ephemera but are worthy of critical attention.

By tracking of the concept of transmedia, several developments can be discerned that have implications for a study of film websites. For example, because of a move towards an increasingly 'participatory culture', there is a shift from a predominantly text-based approach to transmedia studies, towards scholarship focused on audiences, and recent writings on transmedia placing the audience at the centre of the film experience. The next development is the shift from marketing and promotion being the concern of box office, business and industry, to being regarded as part of the film experience, part of what Atkinson describes as 'extended cinema' and what Gray dubbed 'off screen studies' (Atkinson 2014a:16; Gray, 2010:4). The last shift in the literature is from a focus on what's new about transmedia, to an interest in historizing of transmedia which is most clearly discernible in the development of transmedia archaeology.

What is also apparent from the literature review is that researching web-born artefacts like film websites presents a number of challenges. There is the challenge of low status. While this thesis argues that film websites are new forms of storytelling, they are still widely regarded as ancillary promotional artefacts, and considered only in relation to film as a

central text. Consequently, little consideration has been given to their preservation and film websites have suffered the same fate as other cinematic ephemera like posters and trailers, disappearing without trace, once their work is done. The next challenge is ephemerality. The lifespan, longevity and very existence of these websites is determined by their relation to film as a form of promotion. However, whilst films are transferred to DVD and Blu-ray when their theatrical window is over and continue to generate profit for their producers. When their task is done, film websites are often taken down from the web in the spirit of good digital housekeeping by film studios, as attention moves onto the promotion of the next release.

The third challenge is a material one. Web-born artefacts are vulnerable to several threats relating to their ontological condition. Their digital materiality makes them vulnerable to the perils of platform obsolescence, link rot and partial preservation. Moreover, in simple terms of navigation, there is no map of the Internet, so even if they do still exist on the web, the question is, where past web sites may be found? The final challenge concerns authorship. Since the advent of Web 2.0, transmedia experiences designed around websites are no longer solely authored by their producers. Co-creation with audiences brings with it questions about how such cultural forms can be studied. When such experiences are time sensitive, operating through and around social networks and real-time events, audience analysis becomes increasingly challenging.

These challenges indicated that conventional approaches to media history would not be productive so a fresh perspective on researching the past was required. Media archaeological writings with their interest the disregarded, the overlooked, the gaps in the record as well as failures seemed promising. Figures like Foucault, Kittler, Ernst, Chun and Huhtamo among others focused on what creates the conditions in which media exist, with a particular interest in digital media and these writings suggested a way forward. So, Chapter 2's consideration of a selection of media archaeological writings provided the foundations for the development of a transmedia archaeology to investigate the development of film websites. But while media archaeological principles provided the critical foundations for this study, they could not be used to undertake research directly, and so they had to be developed into practical tools. Using Jonker and Pennink's research pyramid model, this chapter hones a strategy for turning theoretical writings into tools to work within the field. Then in each of the chapters that followed, media archaeological tools were either adopted, adapted or, where necessary, invented to answer the thesis's research questions, and this is a further area where the thesis makes an original contribution to knowledge.

Having established the methodological approach taken in this thesis, chapter 2 concludes with a consideration on questions of fields and disciplinarity. The nature of the research

project is defined by the questions it seeks to find answers to. So, disciplinarily speaking, this thesis is best located within the domain of 'off screen studies' which is a branch of what is conventionally understood to be film, TV, or screen studies. However, whilst it relies on the existing methodologies of visual analysis and film history to undertake analysis of its artefacts, the research does not confine itself to the concerns of this subject area. It draws on other disciplinary approaches where required, including cultural studies, games studies and social psychology. In sum then, the research project is interdisciplinary, to a greater or lesser extent, at different points over the course of the thesis. What is distinctive about this thesis is that it takes a new approach, bringing together transmedia and media archaeology, to examine the development of film websites. The rationale for this lies in the fact that film websites are a new phenomenon which have emerged since the advent of the web and require new approaches, alongside established ones, to comprehend what makes them different from their predecessors. That said, from another perspective, off screen studies extends the definition of film studies to incorporate the paratexts which surround film. So, just as this study expands what is defined as film studies, it draws on archival studies and cultural studies to investigate awards, honours and prizes as well. In the final analysis it should be recognised that as the contemporary experience of film changes over time, then its academic study will reflect these changes and the discipline will respond to these developments by changing too. So, I propose my research is at the forefront of this development.

The last conclusion to draw about the thesis's disciplinary interests concerns the proposition of transmedia archaeology. Whilst the term has already been productively used to describe the historicising of contemporary transmedia and draw parallels between the present day and the early twentieth century, my model of transmedia archaeology takes a different approach. For a start it responds to media archaeological writings on the history of the media to historicise more recent transmedia. Then secondly, it focuses on the recent past - first two decades of the internet - a period of experiment, innovation and fast-paced change where the speed of development has meant that emerging practices have not always been recognised as new or valued for what they contribute. Over the chapters that followed, this research project set out to redress this and historicise the new.

The thesis addresses on three key questions: firstly, where are film websites collected, recorded and archived? Secondly, what form do film websites take? That is to say, which styles, aesthetics and narrative forms have developed during this time? And finally, how do audiences engage with, and experience film websites? To answer the first research question the investigation began with a survey of writings by key authors in the field, and based on these writings, drew up a schema of the conceptual and technical underpinnings

of web archives, as well as the archivisation process and the development of web archival practices and set out to explore archives with an interest in film web sites.

When this research project began, there were no archives dedicated to the preservation of film websites. However, over time several locations are identified where film web sites are archived in one form or another. Each of these archival sites provides insight into the development of the artefact under consideration in different ways. Despite its shortcomings, the *Internet Archive* is the only archive that can provide first -hand encounter with extant film websites, albeit in fragmentary and frequently incomplete form. This facility enables the researcher to access and analyse promotional film websites for film releases that had long since disappeared from cinema screens revealing over time the emergence of site styles, formats, operational protocols. The archive also reveals how the artefacts are shaped by technical determinants too, and constitute what Ernst describes as an 'archive of cultural engineering by its very material fabrication – a kind of frozen media knowledge that- in a (trans) media archaeological sense is waiting to be unfrozen, liquified' (Ernst in Huhtamo and Parikka, 2011:243). Further insight into the nature of film web sites is revealed by the architecture of the *Internet Archive* which enables the biography of film websites to be charted. One of the main findings of this investigation is that the life span of online film marketing campaigns has exponentially increased in duration since analogue campaigns were typically 6 weeks in duration to upwards of 18 months to two years for major 'event' films today.

The archive under consideration was Digital Craft.org. Whilst the *Digital Craft.org* collection itself is very small by comparison with the *Internet Archive*, what it does is illuminate the challenges web-born artefacts present to archivisation: from the legal frameworks of copyright to the need to expand the conventions of curation; from the challenges of storing web-born artefacts to the inherent contradictions in building-based access in the post-geographical context of the Internet. Moreover, whilst as an archive *Digital Craft.org* must be regarded as a failed experiment as its host institution closed it down and its ceased operation, what it does is provides a potent example of the ephemerality of archives, as well as their contents.

One of the most unexpected findings of this project was how web archives can be found in increasingly diverse locations, as can be seen in the last two archival settings under consideration. The *Webby Awards* hold the longest running continuous record of the award-winning film websites, spanning over two decades. This provided opportunity for diachronic study of well -regarded examples of film web sites, albeit within the constraints of geographical location, language and the commercial imperatives of a cultural mechanism like an award. The project concludes that four basic kinds of film websites can be seen emerge over the years in this archive. These include film cultures' online institutions like IMDB, as well as sites that become the web's key sources of film news and information. As well as online film culture infrastructure, another type of website that emerges are sites

styled to expand the film experience through narrative and other forms of entertainment; while the final category of film websites reflects the agenda of the awards with its emphasis on celebrating what is new or innovative.

An unanticipated finding of this project was to learn how cultural practices like the *Webbys* serve to valorise and legitimate some practices over others. In the absence of other forms of critique or appraisal, awards create canons of best practice that may have an influence on future design. Cultural awards and prizes are a relatively academic new field which have only recently attracted scholarly interest in media and film studies. This study has uncovered new knowledge about online digital film marketing awards and contributed to this burgeoning field of scholarship. Moreover, awards like the *Webbys* not only celebrate the emerging artefact but play a role in defining what film websites are and can be in the future. In effect, therefore, awards can be understood as discursive practices in the Foucauldian sense of the term, shaping and conditioning an emerging form. Awards confer prestige and proclaim their winners as models of excellence. In effect then by lauding some examples of practice over others, some forms are legitimised and concretised as conventions.

A transmedia archaeological 'dig' was subsequently undertaken to probe more closely into the capacity of each of these archives to preserve one film website – *District 9's D-9.com*. What the exercise discovered was that the only archive that could provide access to the site itself was the *Internet Archive*, and even so, the site was stripped of many of its features and hardly constituted a complete object for research scrutiny. In the light of this, this thesis concludes that film websites are indeed disappearing from the public record, before they have even been appraised as a new web-born artefact. Situating this case study in the wider context, this research drew attention to the loss to the cultural memory of these kinds of media incunabula that are suffering a similar fate to that of early film and early 'live' TV broadcasts.

Ernst asserts that 'archive is central to any cultural or media archaeology' (2011:113). But that this becomes even more so with Foucault's development of the concept of archive from a traditional understanding as a collection of historical artefacts to a discursive entity that shapes understanding of an artefact at a given time. (Ibid.). With the advent of the web, a new generation of archives are motivated by the same impetus to collect, preserve, record and store as their predecessors but, as this project demonstrates, the processes of archivisation are fundamentally altered by the nature of the artefacts they aim to preserve. Archiving film web sites requires not only a reconsideration of the materiality of the media, but also the imperatives of cultural memory institutions, the dynamics of social media platforms and the 'distributed' logic of the web-born archival practices. As a result, this research cannot conclude with a totalising narrative of the emergence of film websites. This is just not possible. As Foucault observes, archaeology can only excavate specific regions

and describe some of its constitutive parts (1972: 148). But having said that, media archaeology is not so concerned with chronology and 'plastic continuities' and may be more open to considering what can be learnt from the discontinuities, ruptures and gaps as well. The conclusions drawn about film websites, digital archives and the web's capacity to archive for the cultural memory, may have relevance, not only for scholars of media but also scholars with an interest in history from other disciplines as well.

Chapter 4 set out to investigate what forms film websites take? Websites have become a familiar feature of the film experience, and over the last two decades formats have standardised and conventions have emerged. This chapter focused on one film websites form that not only promotes its film but contributes to the film's narrative fabric by rendering the film's storyworlds in the shape of a fictional corporate website. To do this the project had to consider epistemological questions raised by this investigation. For example, when a researcher observes a reoccurring trope or persistent theme, how can they confirm it to be so, beyond their own subjective experience? How can the researcher be certain when a phenomenon becomes part of the zeitgeist?

My hypothesis was that the web and Google's search engine with its crowd-validated principles could provide an adept tool for answering questions like these. In the event I conceived the listicle survey tool. Its premise is that listicles are a widely used style of online journalism and this kind of coverage could indicate topics which were current in the zeitgeist. Surveying online listicles yielded a substantial number of listicles of evil corporations in film and a corpus of nigh on 100 examples were identified. It provided an effective mechanism for locating relevant data from the vast reservoir of data on the web. Whilst the limitations of the listicle survey tool were reflected upon in the chapter, it did provide a means of identifying topoi and circumventing the limitations of researcher subjectivity and personal experience.

Four observations can be made from an evaluation of this corpus: firstly, science fiction and fantasy genre films are most likely to have an evil corporation film website; secondly, and relatedly, these film websites are often part of a transmedia franchise; thirdly these promotional film websites do not confine themselves to marketing but expand the narrative too; And finally, this survey can confirm that the evil corporation website is a contemporary topos. A further review of literature confirmed that the evil corporation is indeed a long- established topos with history of iterations not just in film, but TV and literature too and websites can clearly be regarded as its most recent iteration. But while clearly the topos is an expression of economic anxieties, the reasons for its persistence through the 20th century and into the start of the 21st century remain open to speculation and this is beyond the capacity of this thesis and must be left for others to answer.

To chart how the evil corporation website topos has developed, three case studies were selected from the corpus and examined through the framework of Wolf's typology for

imaginary world creation, in conjunction with Jenkins' principles of transmedia storytelling and Huhtamo's concept of the topos and underpinned by film studies and web studies methods of textual analysis. What could be discerned from this examination was how the form has matured. Sites were not confined to providing story world backdrops to plot. Instead, as the form developed, they played an increasingly active role in shaping the narrative and brought with them new approaches to storytelling including 'showing rather than telling' whereby visitors must forage for story details, website extensions that allowed the narrative to be told from different points of view; and perhaps most interestingly sites where visitors were invited to contribute to the story in different ways. So, clearly the (evil) corporation had become a conventional format of this emerging form.

It was in the analysis of the case study film websites that it became evident that the tools deployed could not adequately explain the transmedia aspects of the site. Fictional website storyworlds relate not just to one film but often an entire film series and exist trans narratively across platforms. To address this shortcoming, Wolf's concept of 'nested stories', designed to explain stories within a single artefact, was developed into a diagrammatic tool to facilitate *transmedia* analysis. It is offered here as a further original contribution to knowledge which may be of potential use to other scholars seeking to undertake transmedial analysis.

So, this research strategy was able to provide an answer to the question posed at the start of the chapter. It firstly identified and then examined one stylistic approach to film website design, with its own unique forms of storytelling and ways of engaging audiences. Moreover, through a comparison of the case studies over time, it became evident that evil corporation websites had significantly expanded in both scale and narrative function from single 'destination' story worlds to transmedia storyworlds. Clearly film sites have developed well beyond their original promotional brief and become part of the integrated transmedia 21st-century film experience.

The last chapter in the thesis reflected on the media archaeological writings that had guided the enquiry up to this point and observed that while these theoretical writings had much to recommend them, like all approaches, they have their limitations. Media archaeology's preoccupation with discourse and materiality meant that people's actual media experiences had often been side-lined in its writings. Moreover, for a project concerned with the development of film websites during the emergence of what has been described as a 'participatory' media culture, in which audiences play an increasingly active role, a new approach was needed to address the final research question: How do audiences engage with, and experience these forms of marketing and promotion?

A detailed textual analysis of the film promotion campaign for *Tron Legacy* (2010) was undertaken, and it was concluded that the campaign's strategy was to cultivate a sense of nostalgia around this film sequel thirty years after the release of the original film. Indeed,

its scale and duration meant that in many ways the campaign was as entertaining as the film it sought to promote. Yet while this textual analysis indicated the intentions of the campaign, it didn't, however, yield much insight into the audience's experience of it. To investigate further the research project needed to examine what fans wrote about their experiences on the film website's discussion boards.

The *Internet Archive* had preserved this component of the site and my contention was that social media sites like these can be regarded as a new form of archive as they contain the 'traces' of audiences utterances and their engagement with the campaign long after the experience is over. To find out specifically what insight they may provide a qualitative research approach from the discipline of social psychology was adapted for use in an online social media setting to analyse these audiences' discussion board inscriptions.

The research provided a fascinating insight into audience experiences and engagement with the site over the course of 18 months and its three key finding are summarised here: firstly, examination of these discussion boards provided an example of the formation of an online audience community. Secondly, tracking the community's conversations revealed how their participation shifted from interpretation to the dramatic presentation of extemporised 'textual' performances. And finally, it became apparent that not all participants were fans. Some posters were clearly 'actors' steering the discussion, orchestrating activities and cultivating a sense of both nostalgia and anticipation simultaneously, to promote the film. And whilst this qualitative research was not able to identify who these actors were, this was not the aim of the project. For the purposes of this project, it was enough to establish that nostalgia was actively cultivated during the campaign.

So, in conclusion the last chapter of this thesis presents a model of transmedia archaeology in practice drawing on conventional film studies textual analysis, as well as games history, and qualitative research methodologies from social psychology to scrutinise what people wrote on the film website discussion boards and what these writings tell us. Whilst I would concur with Ernst that the archive is central to media archaeological approaches to media history, archives are not just storing for artefacts. Embedded in these new digital archives are audience memories, experiences and subjectivities too (Parikka, 2012:160). In so doing, this transmedia archaeology enables us to 'open up the past in new ways'(Parikka,2015a:13).

So, as this thesis draws to a close, I would assert that each chapter has generated new and original knowledge about this emerging form, the film website. Furthermore, as well as championing the contribution of film websites to the contemporary film experience, I have had to develop new research methods to fit the conditions and circumstances in which this archival research has taken place – namely the internet - which this thesis offers up as a methodological contribution to knowledge in the field of media archaeology. However,

there is still a great deal more to be done. As Couldry has argued, the generality of terms like convergence culture tends to obscure local specificity, and scholarship needs to investigate convergence cultures in the plural (2011:495). Outside the United States of America, an understanding of transmedia remains patchy and I would join fellow scholars in suggesting that more work needs to be done to investigate the development of transmedia and specifically, from my point of view, film websites in different film cultures.

By the same token, transmedia needs to be more thoroughly understood within its diverse industrial and institutional contexts (Hills, 2012:414). While some consideration has been given to promotional screen industries to date, little is known about the design studios which incubate these new forms of content. As has been pointed out by several scholars, the study of how transmedia is produced continues to remain under-represented in the literature (Gray, 2010: 220; Britton in Ibrus and Scolari, 2012:221). Design agencies do not own the content they produce, as copyright resides with the film studios. As a result, their creative contribution to a film project is rendered invisible. So, research needs to be undertaken here to investigate film website design practices. Whether film websites are created by in-house marketing divisions, or independent web design studios, the fact of the matter is that when so much is invested in film marketing, this 'content' can make an increasingly significant contribution to the overall film experience and so warrants closer examination.

The area of this work which, I believe, has greatest potential for further research is the field of awards and prizes. The proliferation of awards, honours and prizes as a cultural phenomenon is often the focus of journalistic attention for what it celebrates, but less recognition has been given to awards themselves as a cultural mechanism. In the absence of other forms of critical evaluation enjoyed by film, awards have played an important role in the valuation of cultural artefacts like film websites.

On reflection, this study has its limitations too. The nature of the media archaeological approach is that it makes detailed investigation into small areas of the field that yield fragmentary insights, which may be regarded by some as frustratingly narrow in scope when contrasted to the reassurance of a totalising account of a narrative approach to history. But as Foucault reminds us, we can never know the past in its entirety, and all any historical research can do is enable to the understanding of specific sites of interest (2002:148) In Chapter 3, a selection of archives was considered but other archives remain unappraised. For example, since this project began, it has become customary for marketing and design agencies to create their own online archives of work and these archival initiatives warrant examination too. In Chapter 4 one aesthetic trope that has emerged, as a standard form in digital film marketing, is the fictional corporate website, but there are others worthy of investigation. In Chapter 5, audience responses to a single campaign were scrutinised and but other examples should be examined to triangulate this

thesis's findings. In short, there is much to be done in this area and in many ways this project to unearth the history of film web sites has just begun.

Another shortcoming in this thesis was that research has tended to gravitate towards large scale Hollywood film industry productions, rather than smaller independent film. Clearly there are good reasons for this in that larger marketing budgets yield more developed promotional attention. However, web design industry awards, honours and prizes indicate that independent film makers have commissioned innovative websites to accompany their films that have been worthy of critical attention too. Notable examples in this thesis were the sites for Darren Aronofsky's *Requiem for a Dream* (2000) and Richard Kelly's *Donnie Darko* (2001) designed by Hi Res! marketing agency which won prizes at the Ars Electronica festival in Austria. While independent film directors like Kevin Smith, Wes Anderson, Peter Greenaway and Terrence Malick have each developed distinctive models for film websites within their work that are worthy of more concerted consideration too.

However, in the final analysis, to my mind these limitations should not be regarded as a shortcoming of the work, but, rather, form the basis for my recommendations for future research in this field. To date, most of the research published in this field emanates from the US, and to an extent the UK, as if the rest of the world was not engaged with ideas about transmedia. Evidently this is not the case. In Jenkins' recent blog post in which he interviews Matthew Freeman, examples of transmedia under consideration come from Colombia, France, Canada and Estonia. With the inaugural conference of the Global Transmedia Network which took place at the EAFIT University in Medellin, Colombia in the autumn, 2017 featuring speakers from 17 different countries this autumn, clearly scholarly initiatives are under way to redress this imbalance.

So, as this study concludes it remains to reiterate that its significance is two-fold: first, by developing a greater knowledge and understanding of a feature of film culture that has emerged over the last two decades - the film website and all its paratextual expansions. By so doing my intention has been to demonstrate how these artefacts increasingly blur the distinction between content and marketing, and therefore should be regarded as a significant component of the 21st-century film experience. The second way in which this study is worthwhile is through its application of the principles of media archaeology to the development of sometimes, by necessity, novel ways to uncover media history.

Conventionally, film websites have been regarded as marketing materials, of little intrinsic value of their own. However, this thesis contends that this is not the case. Increasingly over the last two decades we have seen film websites, and indeed other paratextual forms bring additional value to the film experience, by generating story worlds for film plots, exploring character subjectivities, providing connecting narratives between films within a franchise or film series, and a locus for audience communities. Testimony to this can be seen, not only in the growth of academic interest in the field of digital film marketing, but

in the recent establishment of *Hollywood in Pixels* by Hollywood digital marketing veterans Bettina Sherick, Ira Rubenstein and Gordon Paddison (HIP, 2015). *Hollywood in Pixels* is an organisation dedicated to the celebration of digital marketing campaigns and its aims are to recover and preserve seminal digital film campaigns, as well as working to ensure the recognition of digital marketing campaigns in the future through its annual Silver Pixel awards (Ibid.). Through its plans to collaborate with the Los Angeles Museum of Moving Image, the process of conservation and archiving can now begin to gather pace (Hollywood in Pixels, 2018).

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Film Website Awards

A survey of film website design awards was undertaken. To qualify for inclusion in the survey, awards had to fulfil three criteria: the awards had to be conducted in English; the awards had to include a movie/film category, and they had to hold a publicly available archival record of winners. In this Appendix, a bar chart graph illustrates how awards have developed rapidly in number from 1994 to 2014. Blocks shaded in red represent an award in operation in the field during this period.

Appendix 1: Film Website Awards

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Prix Ars Electronica (started 1987)	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Flash Film Festival (started 1990)	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■					
Themed Entertainment Awards	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Webbys			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Cyber Lions (Cannes 1954)					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Favourite Website Awards (FWA)											■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Horizon Interactive									■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Web Marketing Awards										■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Movie.com											■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Daveys												■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Interactive Media Awards (IMA)												■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Shortys													■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
WWW Awards													■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
SXSW Web Awards														■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Movie Virals																■	■	■			
CSS Design Awards																	■	■	■	■	■
Screen Awards																	■	■	■	■	■
Key Arts (started 1941)																		■	■	■	■
Tribeca Film Festival																				■	■

Appendix 2 Webby Award Winners 1997-2017, in the 'Movie and Film' category

This appendix illustrates award winners and nominees in the Movie and Film category from 1997, when the award was instituted, to the present day. The awards begin a few years after the date surveyed in this thesis, and end a few years after the end date for this survey, so they do not exactly map onto the time-period under consideration in this thesis. However, like the thesis, the awards table illustrates award winners over a twenty-year period and represents developments of the same number of years as are explored in Section 3.8 in Chapter 3.

Appendix 2: The Webby Awards Winners 1997-2017 in the Movie and Film Category

Year	Webby Winner	Designer	People's Voice	Designer	Honorees	Designer
2017	StarWars.com	LucasFilm	StarWars.com	LucasFilm	Vanity Fair's HWD	Vanity Fair
					Sully: The 208 Seconds Experience	This is Tommy Ltd
					Playing Lynch	Square Space
					Independence Day: My Street	Jam3
					Confirmation	HBO
					AMC Theatres Website	Huge
					Design Disruptors by Invision	InVision
2016	Date Night Movies	Media Hound	Date Night Movies	Media Hound	Sony Pictures Museum	Sony Pictures/LJG Partners
					Independent Lens	ITVS
					IFC Films	Big Spaceship
					Imax	Imax
					Reel Scary	Reel Scary
					100 Science Fiction Movies	EA Media
					The A.V. Club	Onion Inc.
					Popcorn Garage	Romain Zitouni & Priska
					Variety.Com	Variety
2015	The Grand Budapest Hotel:	Watson DG	Big Hero 6	Watson DG	The Hunger Games: Mockingjay- Part1:	Watson DG
	Akademie Zubrowka				Capitol.PN	
					Birdman	Watson DG
					Jurassic World Website	Trailer Park Inc.
					The Awesome Alliance	Konstellation & Republica
					Interstellar in Partnership with GooglePlay	Big Spaceship
					The Boxtrolls	Wieden + Kennedy
					The Normal Heart	HBO
					Art of the Title	Art of the Title
					Days of Light	B'z Shorts
2014	Capitol Couture: A Socially	Watson DG	Catching Fire-Citizen	Lionsgate	Anchorman 2 Official Movie Site	Paramount Pictures
	Driven Tumblr Site		Control Center		The Wolf of Wall Street Official Movie Site	Paramount Pictures
					X-Men: The Bent Bullet	20th Century Fox

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					A Journey Through Middle-Earth	Google & Warner Bros
					King of Summer Tumbr Site with EPK	Watson DG
					Integration	
					This is the End	SPE WorldWide Digital Marketing
					Frozen	Disney Interactive
					Nebraska Movie Tumbr	Paramount Pictures International
					Learn the Address	WETA
					Pixar Theory	97 Floor
					The Dissolve	Pitchfork
					Monsters University	Disney Interactive
2013	Hunger Games:Capitol Tour	Ignition Interactive	Wreck it Ralph	Disney Interactive	Paranorman	Wieden + Kennedy
					Frankenweenie	Disney Interactive
					Beasts of the Southern Wild: Welcome to the	Watson DG
					Bathtub	
					Looper - Official Movie Site	Sony Pictures Interactive
					Screencrush	Townsquaremedia
					GE FocusForward -Shortfilms, Big Ideas	Cinelan
					The Carp and the Seagull	Nexus Productions
					Disney/Pixar Brave	Disney Interactive
					Prometheus: Project Prometheus	Ignition Interactive
					Training Center	
					Cabin in the Woods EPK Site	Watson DG
					Lincoln Theatrical Website	Watson DG
2012	Indiewire website	Snagfilms	The Muppets Mahna	Walt Disney Studio	The Art of Flight	Archrival/Dachis Group
			Mahna	Motion Picture	Turner Classic Movies' 31 Days of Oscar 2011	1 Trick Pony
					The Tree of Life: Two Ways Through Life	Watson DG
					Bar Code	National Film Board of Canada
					Independent Lens	ITVS
					The Smurfs-Official Movie Website	ImageWorks Interactive
					Snag Films	Perfect Sense Digital, LLC

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					Star Wars	Big Spaceship
					IFC.com	IFC
					Yahoo Movies!	Yahoo!
					Crackle	42 West
					Captain America Theatrical Site	Watson DG
					Martha, Marcy May Marlene:	Watson DG
					I am a Teacher and a Leader	
2011	The Warden Sixteen	TBVA Vancouver	Toy Story Official	Disney Interactive	127 Defining Moments	Ignition Interactive
			Web Site	Media Group	For Coloured Girls: Many Colors: One Voice	Ignition Interactive
					Disney.Com's 'Tron:Legacy'	Disney Online
					Shrek IV Integrated Campaign	Stuck Axiom
					Scott Pilgrim vs. The World	Project C
					Moviefone	AOL
					IFC.com	IFC
					Kick-Ass	Ignition Interactive
					The Test Tube with David Suzuki	The National Film Board of Canada
					Mubi	Mubi
2010	Mubi	Mubi			District 9	Trigger LLC
					IFC.com	IFC.com
					The Institute for Human Continuity	Big Spaceship
					Waterlife.NFB.CA	National Film Board of Canada
					Land of the Lost -Official Movie Website	65 Media
					Reel 13	WNET.org
					Jinni	Jinni
					Yahoo! Movies, Your Online Guide to the Big	
					Screen	Yahoo! Inc
					Tribeca Film	Tribeca Enterprises
					Star Trek	Project C
					Sundance Channel	Sundance Channel
					Forget the Film, Watch the Titles!	SubmarineChannel

Appendix 2: The Webby Awards Winners 1997-2017 in the Movie and Film Category

					The Onion A.V.Club	The Onion
					Rotten Tomatoes	IGN Entertainment
					Sony Pictures Entertainment Museum	LJG Partners/Sony Pictures Ent.
2009	Sundance Channel	Sundance Channel	IFC (Independent		Coraline Website	Wieden + Kennedy
			Film channel)		P.O.V/American Documentary, Inc.	P.O.V/American Documentary, Inc.
					Pangea Day	The TED Prize
					Wall-E	Ignition Interactive
					Darlow Smithson	IMG Digital Media
					'Flash of Genius'	Backward Heroes
					The Spiderwick Chronicles Official Site	Ted Perez and Associates
					Tropic Thunder Official Website	Jetset Studios
					Imax	Sarkissian Mason
					The Onion A.V.Club	The Onion
					Hancock	Trigger LLC
					Carrie's Macbook	New Media Maze
					Wanted	Project. Net
					The Curious Case of Benjamin Button	Project. Net
					Iron Man	Project. Net
					Valkyrie	Project. Net
					Space Chimps	Threshold Interactive
2008	Simpsons Movie	65 Media	Simpsons Movie	65 Media	Get On Board	Real Pie Media
					Atom Films	Atom Films/MTV Networks
					Grindhouse	Big Spaceship
					P.O.V/ PBS	P.O.V/American Documentary, Inc.
					Star Wars: Official Site	Lucas Online
					Film Street	First Light Movies
					Fracture Movie Website	Backward Heroes
					Moviefone	AOL
					Variety.Com	Variety
					11th Hour	Crew Creative

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					Transformers	Project. Net
					The Bourne Ultimatum	Project. Net
					The WGBH Lab	WGBH Education Foundation
					Mr Magorium's Toy Creator	Soap Creative
					Fandango website	Sapient Interactive
					30 Days of Night	Big Spaceship
					IFC.com	IFC
2007	Pan's Labyrinth	Picturehouse	Pan's Labyrinth	Picturehouse	Shortbus Official Movie Site and Salon	Crew Creative
		/DeepFocus		/DeepFocus	A Scanner Darkly	Warner Brothers Online
					Atom Films	Atom Films/MTV Networks
					The Show: Pirates of the Caribbean 2	DHAP Digital, Inc.
					The Science of Sleep	Warner Brothers Online
					Moviefone.com	AOL
					I'm a Cyborg, But That's OK	Does Interactive
					The Da Vinci Code Official Website	Columbia TriStar / Sony Pictures
					Casino Royale Official Website	Columbia TriStar /Sony Pictures
					Dead Man's Tale	42 Entertainment LLC
					Stranger Than Fiction	Big Spaceship
					NYTimes.com Movies	NYTimes .com
					Withoutabox, Inc	Withoutabox, Inc
					World Trade Center- Official Site	Paramount Pictures
					Underworld:Evolution Official Movie	Columbia TriStar /Sony Pictures
					Website	
					Mission Impossible III- Official Site	Paramount Pictures
2006	Sundance Film Festival	Sundance Institute	Sundance Film Festival	Sundance Institute	Metacritic.com	Metacritic
		Online		Online	A Bitter Sweet Life	Does interactive
					Capote	Mixed Media Workshop
					Tideland	Jam
					Fandango	Fandango
					The Aristocrats	Mammouth Advertising

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					British Film Institute Archive Interactive	BT and Tate
					Barbie Pegasus	Studiocom
					Aeon Flux - Official Site	Paramount Pictures
					Bambi Special Edition - The Official	Buena Vista Home Entertainment
					Website	
					The Incredibles-The Official DVD Website	Buena Vista Home Entertainment
					The Hitchiker's Guide to the Galaxy -	Buena Vista Home Entertainment
					The Official DVD Website	
					Night Watch Nochnoi Dozor	Real Pie Media
					Star Wars - The Official Website	Lucas Online
					Imax's Magnificent Desolation: Walking	Ted Perez + Associates
					on the Moon 3D	
					The Hitchiker's Guide to the Galaxy -	Buena Vista Pictures Marketing
					Theatrical Site	
					Chicken Little Theatrical Sites	Buena Vista Pictures Marketing
					Lilo & Stitch 2 : The Official DVD Website	Buena Vista Home Entertainment
					Crash	Big Spaceship
					War of the Worlds	Big Spaceship
					The Wizard of Oz DVD	Green Apple Media
2005	The Univited	Post Visual.com	Garden State Movie	Real Pie Media	Aardman	Aardman
			Website and Blog		I, Robot Now	Ted Perez + Associates
					Turner Classic Movies: The Essentials	Turner Classic Movies
					Irish Film and Television Network	Irish Film and Television Network
					AVP Official Site	Hybrid Studio
					Alfie- Official Movie Website	Big Spaceship
					Trudell The Movie - Promotional Website	Oliver Russell
					Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban	Warner Brothers Online
					Sundance Channel	Sundance Channel
					Kubrick 2001:The Space Odyssey Explained	New Media Giants
					Starsky & Hutch - Official Movie Website	Big Spaceship

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					Supersize Me	The Interactive Consortium
					The Day After Tomorrow	Ted Perez + Associates
					Yahoo! Movies	Yahoo!
					Two Brothers	Ted Perez + Associates
					AtomFilms	AtomShockwave Corp
					NYTimes.Com/Movies	New York Times Digital
					Rotten Tomatoes	IGN Entertainment
					2005 Sundance Online Film Festival (SOFF)	Sundance Institute
					MovieFone.com	America Online
					Meet the Fockers	Ted Perez + Associates
					I Heart Huckabees	Ted Perez + Associates
					Layer Cake Official Film Website	Sony Pictures Digital
					Spider-Man 2 Official Film Website	Sony Pictures Digital
2004					Dogville	
					Fog of War	
					SpellBound	
					Sundance Online Film Festival	
					The Dreamers	
2003	Indiewire		Rotten Tomatoes		Bright Lights Film Journal	
					Metacritic	
					Spongi	
2002	Donnie Darko		Ifilm		Metacritic	
					Waking Life	
					Without a Box	
2001	Requiem For A Dream				Eveo	
					IndieWire	
					Psycho Studio	
					The New Venue	
2000	Atom Films		Internet Movie Database		Drew's Scripts-O-Rama	
					Ifilm	

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					Proteintv	
1999	Internet Movie Database		Internet Movie Database		Coming Attractions	
					Dark Horizons	
					Film.Com	
					Ireland Film and Television Net	
1998	Internet Movie Database				43	
					E!Online	
					Mr ShowBiz	
					Rough	
1997	Internet Movie Database				Cinemedia	
					E!Online	
					Film.com	
					Mr ShowBiz	

Appendix 3: Evil Corporations in Film 1994-2014

Corporation	Film	Director	Date	List entries	Genre
Weyland-Utani Corporation	Alien	Scott/Cameron/Fincher/Jeun	1979-2017	16	Horror/SF
Umbrella Corporation	Resident Evil Series	Anderson/Witt/Mulcahy	2002-2016	16	Action/Horror/SF
Omni Consumer Products (OCP)	Robocop	Verhoeven/Kershner/Dekker	1987-2014	14	Action/crime/SF
Tyrell Corporation	Bladerunner	Ridley Scott	1982	14	SF/Thriller
Soylent Corporation	Soylent Green	Richard Fleischer	1973	14	Crime/Mystery/SF
Cyberdyne Systems	Terminator Series	Cameron/Mostow/McG	1984-2015	13	Action/SF
International Genetic Technologies (InGen)	Jurassic Park series	Spielberg/JohnstonTevorrow	1993-2015	8	Adventure /SF/Thriller
Multi-National United (MNU)	District 9	Neill Blomkamp	2009	7	SF/Thriller
Rekall (in-movie corp ad 1990)	Total Recall	Verhoeven/Wiseman	1990/2012	6	Action/SF/Thriller
Initech	Office Space	Mike Judge	1999	6	comedy
BiffCo Enterprises	Back to the Future Part II	Robert Zemeckis	1985-1990	5	Adventure/Comedy/SF
Resources Development Administration(RD	Avatar	James Cameron	2009	5	Action/Adventure/Fantasy
Lunar Industries (in-movie corp ad)	Moon	Duncan Jones	2009	5	Drama/Mystery/SF
Virtucon Industries	Austin Powers (Mystery)	Jay Roach	1997-2002	5	Adventure/Comedy
ICS Network	The Running Man	Paul Michael Glaser	1987	4	Action/SF/Thriller
Spectre	Spectre (James Bond series	Sam Mendes	2015	4	Action/Adventure/Thriller
Zorg Industries	The Fifth Element	Luc Besson	1997	3	Action/Adventure/SF
Oscorp Industries	The Amazing Spiderman	Marc Webb	2012	3	Action/Adventure
Buy n'Large	Wall-E	Andrew Stanton	2008	3	Animation/Adventure/Family
Lacuna Inc.	Eternal Sunshine/Spotless M	Michel Gondry	2004	3	Drama/Romance/SF
The Parallax Corporation	The Parallax View	Alan J. Pakula	1974	3	Drama/Thriller
Lex Corp	Batman v Superman (Dawn	Spencer Gordon Bennet, Sho	1948-2016	3	Action/Adventure/SF
U-North (in-movie corp ad)	Michael Clayton	Tony Gilroy	2007	2	Crime/Drama/Mystery
Replacement Technologies	The 6th Day	Roger Spottiswoode	2000	2	Action/Mystery/SF
Merrick Biotech (in-movie corp ad)	The Island	Michael Bay	2005	2	Action/Adventure/Romance
The Union	Repo Men	Miguel Sapochnik	2010	2	Action/Crime/SF
Octan Corporation	The Lego Movie	P.Lord/C.Miller	2014	2	Animation/Action/Adventure
Nakatomi Plaza	Die Hard	John McTiernan	1988	2	Action/Thriller
Monsters Inc	Monsters Inc.	Docter/Unkrich/Silverman	2001	2	Animation/Adventure/Comedy

Appendix 3: Evil Corporations in Film 1994-2014

Monsters University	Monsters University	Dan Scanlon	2013		Animation/Adventure/Comedy
Wayne Enterprises	Batman	Hillyer, Spencer Gordon Benn	1943-2017	2	Action/Adventure/SF
Ghostbusters	Ghostbusters	Ivan Reitman/Paul Feig	1984-2016	2	Action/Adventure/Comedy
The Paper Street Soap Company	Fight Club	David Fincher	1999	2	Drama
Silver Shamrock Novelties	Halloween 3: (Witch)	Tommy Lee Wallace	1982	2	Horror/Mystery/SF
Daily Bugle	Spiderman	Swackhamer/Satlof/Raimi/W	1977-2017	1	Action/Adventure
The Daily Planet	Superman	Spencer Gordon Bennet, Sho	1948-2016	1	Action/Adventure/SF
Armadyne Corporation	Elysium	Neill Blomkamp	2013	1	Action/Drama/SF
Trask Industries	X-Men	Singer/Ratner/Hood/Vaughn,	2000-2016	1	Action/Adventure/SF
Jefferson Institute	Coma	Michael Crichton	1978	1	Drama/Horror/Mystery
Bromley Marks	Daybreakers	Peter Spierig & Michael Spier	2009	1	Action/Horror/SF
a major corp'	Brain Twisters	Jerry Sangiuliano	1991	1	SF/Thriller
LecterCorp	Pootie Tang	Louis C.K.	2001	1	Comedy/Action/Adventure
Energy Corporation	Rollerball	Norman Jewison	1975	1	Action/SF/Sport
Live Corporations	Cloudy (Meatballs)	P.Lord/C.Miller	2009	1	Animation/Comedy/Adventure
Izon	Cube	Vincenzo Natali	1997	1	Mystery/SF/Drama
PG & E	Pacific Rim	Guillermo del Toro	2013	1	Action/Adventure/SF
Potter Bank	It's a Wonderful Life	Frank Capra	1946	1	Drama/Family/Fantasy
The Really Big Corporation of America	The Meaning of Life	Terry Jones & Terry Gilliam	1983	1	Comedy/Musical
The Hexx Corporation	Hardwired	Ernie Barbarash	2009	1	Action/SF
New Path	A Scanner Darkly	Richard Linklater	2006	1	Animation/Drama/Crime
Life Extension	Open Your Eyes	Alejandro Amenábar	1997	1	Drama/Mystery/Romance
Life Extension	Vanilla Sky	Cameron Crowe	2001	1	Fantasy/Mystery/Romance
Brand New-U	Identicals	Simon Pummell	2015	1	SF
Mr Fusion	Back to the Future Part II	Robert Zemeckis	1989	1	Adventure/Comedy/SF
Death Records	Phantom of the Paradise	Brian de Palma	1974	1	Comedy/Drama/Fantasy
The Company	Seconds	John Frankenheimer	1966	1	SF/Thriller
Lendl Globals	The Other Guys	Adam McKay	2010	1	Action/Comedy/Crime
Spectacular Optical	Videodrome	David Cronenberrg	1983	1	Horror/Thriller/SF
Facebook	The Social Network	David Fincher	2010	1	Biography/Drama

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Brown & Williamson	The Insider	Michael Mann	1999	1	Biography/Drama/Thriller
UBS	Network	Sidney Lumet	1976	1	Drama
Taco Bell	Demolition Man	Marco Brambilla	1993	1	Action/Crime/SF
Yoyodyne Propulsion Systems	Adventures of Buckaroo	W.D.Richter	1984	1	Adventure/Comedy/Romance
Thorn Industries	The Omen series	Donner, Taylor, Baker,Monte	1976-2006	1	Horror
Gene Co	Repo! The Genetic Opera	Darren Lynn Bousman	2008	1	Horror/Musical/SF
Delos Corporation	Futureworld	Richard T. Heffron	1976	1	SF/Thriller
Bendim, Lambert & Locke	The Firm	Sydney Pollack	1993	1	Drama/Mystery/Thriller
Jackson Steinem & Co	Wall Street	Oliver Stone	1987	1	Crime/Drama
Engulf and Devour	Silent Movie	Mel Brooks	1976	1	Comedy
Papa Song	Cloud Atlas	Tykwer/Wachowskis	2012	1	Drama/Action/Mystery
Veidt Industries	Watchmen	Zack Schnyder	2009	1	Action/Drama/Mystery
Global Crosspower Solutions	Promised Land	Gus Van Sant	2012	1	Drama
Brawdo	Idiocracy	Mike Judge	2006	1	Adventure/comedy/SF
Mitch and Murray	Glengarry Glen Ross	James Foley	1992	1	Crime/Drama/Mystery
Crimson Permanent Assurance	The Meaning of Life	Terry Jones & Terry Gilliam	1983	1	Comedy/Musical
Megadodo Publications	The Hitchhiker's Guide to th	Garth Jennings	2005	1	Adventure/Comedy/SF
Pierce & Pierce	The Bonfire of the Vanities	Brian de Palma	1990	1	Comedy/Drama/Romance
Pierce & Pierce	American Psycho	Mary Harron	2000	1	Crime/Drama
Adventure Land	Adventure Land	Greg Mottola	2009	1	Comedy/Drama/Romance
Duke & Duke	Trading Places	John Landis	1983	1	Comedy
Career Transitions Corporation	Up in the Air	Jason Reitman	2009	1	Drama/Romance
Acme Corporation	Who Framed Roger Rabbit?	Robert Zemeckis	1988	1	Animation/Adventure/Comedy
McDowells	Coming to America	John Landis	1988	1	Comedy Romance
Kiki's Delivery Service	Kiki's Delivery Service	Hayao Miyazaki	1989	1	Animation/Adventure/Drama
Quick Stop	Clerks	Kevin Smith	1994/2006	1	Comedy
Prestige Worldwide	Stepbrothers	Adam Mckay	2008	1	Comedy
Rare Exports	Rare Exports:A Christmas T	Jalmari Helander	2010	1	Adventure/Fantasy/Horror
Bushwood Country Club	Caddyshack	Harold Ramis	1980/1988	1	Comedy /Sport
Consumer Recreation Services	The Game	David Fincher	1997	1	Drama/Mystery/Thriller

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The Hudsucker Industries	The Hudsucker Proxy	Joel Cohen & Ethan Cohen	1994	1	Comedy/Drama/Fantasy
Weasley's Wizard Wheezes	Harry Potter series	Yates, Columbus, Cuaron, Ne	2001-2011	1	Adventure/Family/Fantasy
Roxxon Energy Corporation	Iron Man Series	Jon Favreau / Shane Black	2008-2013	1	Action/Adventure/SF
Stark Industries	Iron Man	Jon Favreau	2008	1	Action/Adventure/SF
Macmillan Toys	Big	Penny Marshall	1988	1	Comedy/Drama/Family
Wonka's Chocolate factory	Charlie and the Chocolate F	Tim Burton	2005	1	Adventure/Comedy/Family
Fictional corporate web site worlds not included in the lists					
Tappy Tibbons.com	Requiem for a Dream	Darren Aronofsky	2000		Drama
Godsend Institute	Godsend	Nick Hamm	2004		Action/Drama/Fantasy
Irobotnow.com	I, Robot	Alex Proyas	2004		Action/Crime/Drama
Openspaces.org	I Heart Huckabees	David O. Russell	2004		Comedy
Manchurian Global	The Manchurian Candidate	Jonathan Demme	2004		Drama/Mystery/SF
Tagruato, Slusho	Cloverfield	Matt Reeves	2008		Action/Horror/SF
Killwithme.com	Untraceable	Gregory Hoblit	2008		Mystery/Crime/Thriller
Encom International	Tron: Legacy	Joseph Kosinski	2010		Action/Adventure/SF
Blue Book	Ex Machina	Alex Garland	2014		Drama/Mystery/SF

Appendix 4 Discussion Board Thread Tables

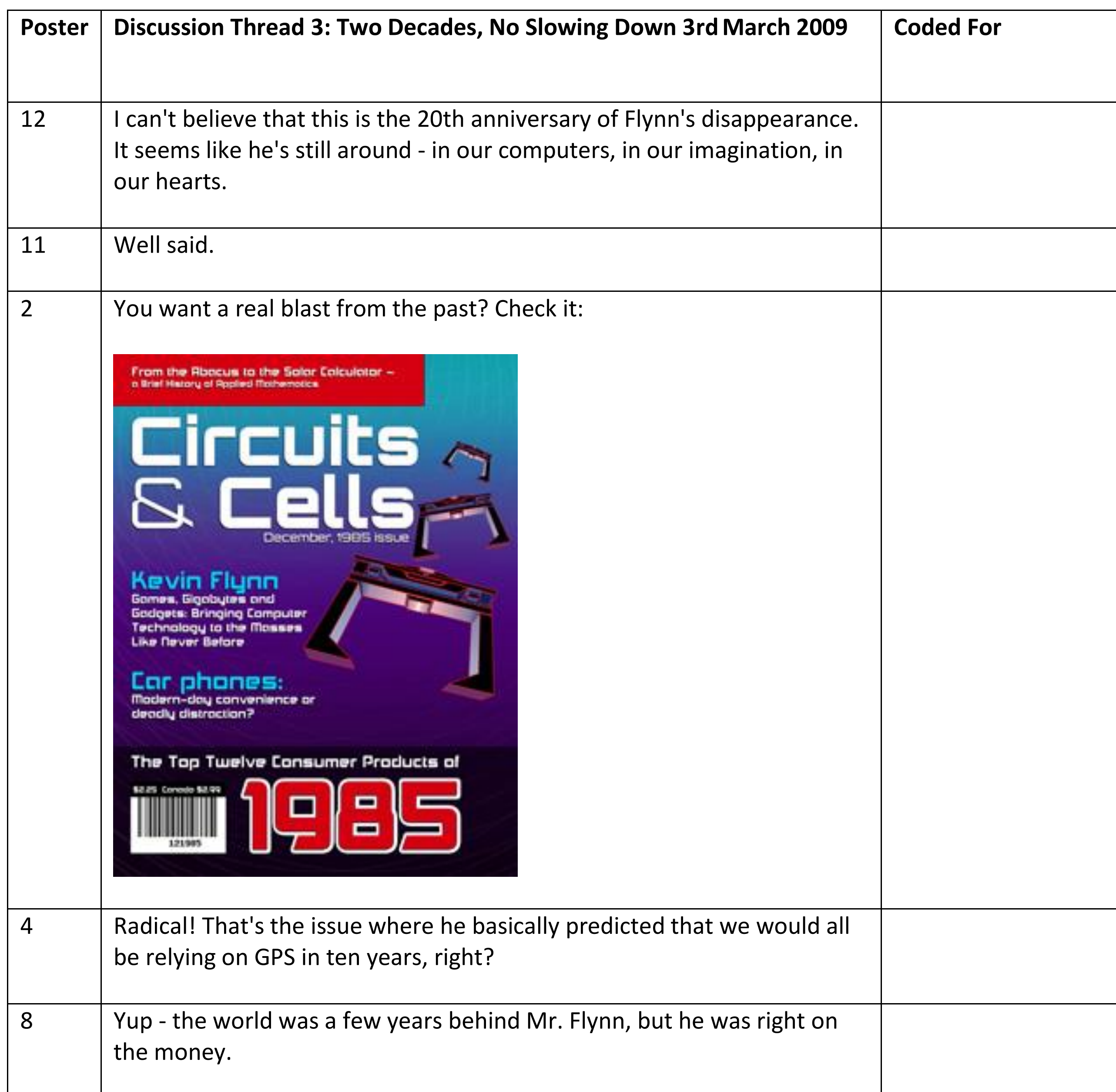
This appendix contains the *Flynn Lives* discussion board threads which have been tabulated to facilitate analysis. There are 56 discussion thread tables in total, containing 528 posts written by the participants listed in Appendix 5. Each table is numbered, with the topic of the thread, and the date the thread commenced. Please note some posts contain additional artefacts, links and images related to the posts.

To manage the analysis of a large data set, the discussion threads were divided into six distinct phases, which, broadly speaking, correlate with stages of the *Flynn Lives* campaign from Phase 1, when the discussion boards are established, to Phase 6 when the last thread concludes just before the film goes on theatrical release.

1. Phase 1: Threads 1 - 7 18th November 2008 - 3rd August 2009
2. Phase 2: Threads 8 - 17 12th February 2010 - 24th March 2010
3. Phase 3: Threads 18 - 27 28th March - 10th April 2010
4. Phase 4: Threads 28 - 38 14th April - 13th May 2010
5. Phase 5: Threads 39 - 46 18th October - 13th November 2010
6. Phase 6: Threads 47 - 56 17th November - 15th December 2010

Poster	Discussion Thread 1: Hitting the Reset Button 18th November 2008	Coded For
16	OK, so up until now, our forums were a mess - I admit it. So, here's a fresh take on the boards. Tell me how much you hate them.	
5	Hate them? These are killer!	
2	I agree, Admin - thanks!	
16	Admin's not my real name, but you're welcome.	
7	Awesome - no junky threads to sift through!	
16	Yeah, they were kinda getting out of hand. Let's just not pollute this new system with a bunch of randomness, OK?	
3	That reminds me - wanna see a picture of my cat wearing sunglasses? Just kidding!	
10	The new boards are great!	

Poster	Discussion Thread 2: Is someone messing with me? 22nd January 2009	Coded For
1	Remember those scripts I set up to scan for Flynn stuff? Because I found something pretty weird the other day.	
5	You mean the ones you implemented like five years ago?	
1	It's been longer than that, but yeah... Judge for yourself: http://qm6k3pshu8rr302kv6xej8p72s.net/default.htm	
10	Whoa! What is that?	
1	Looks like a lightcycle to me.	
3	And what's up with that funky URL? I'm putting my codebreaker hat on, but I'm not seeing a pattern emerge	
1	There is none - believe me. I grew a full beard and lost ten pounds sitting here trying to find one. It doesn't exist	
2	So, why would all this stuff be showing up now?	
4	It's a real mind-warper.	
7	I don't buy it - total fraud.	
1	That's why I want to know where these images came from. It wasn't one of you guys playing a prank?	
3	You're giving us a lot of credit, there. These look like Flynn's designs to me.	
4	To reiterate: it's a real mind-warper.	



Poster	Discussion Thread 3: Two Decades, No Slowing Down 3rd March 2009	Coded For
12	I can't believe that this is the 20th anniversary of Flynn's disappearance. It seems like he's still around - in our computers, in our imagination, in our hearts.	
11	Well said.	
2	You want a real blast from the past? Check it:	
4	Radical! That's the issue where he basically predicted that we would all be relying on GPS in ten years, right?	
8	Yup - the world was a few years behind Mr. Flynn, but he was right on the money.	

Poster	Discussion Thread 4: OK, It's No Coincidence, They're Lightcycles 26th March 2009	Coded For
16	Zack, I found one, too - look at this: http://n8xd93f2rk077px1n6wdq839m0.net	
1	Man, I don't know whether to be freaked out or encouraged.	
3	Let's go with encouraged. We've been searching for this kind of confirmation for years, right?	
1	But, this might be another dead-end. And the last thing we need is more disappointment.	
12	I don't know how you can put "lightcycles from the beyond" and "disappointment" in the same thread. We're on to something, folks!	
10	I'm with you, Junior - I read "Digital Frontier" (about 12 times) and Flynn described how lightcycles would move in the real world. This is straight out of his book.	
12	You only read it 12 times? Slacker.	

Poster	Discussion Thread 5: Game On! 12th July 2009	Coded For
1	OK, call me crazy (most people do), but I was thinking that we should hold an event to honor Kevin Flynn and remind everyone of his accomplishments - he's out there, I can feel it in my guts.	
4	Definitely, something's up - those lightcycle sites just keep messing with my head.	
18	We've got to spread the word about these finds. Let's get something together. When?	
1	Should be something to commemorate the 20-year anniversary of Flynn's disappearance.	
18	Isn't that coming right up?	
1	Yup - we better get crackin'. I'm already working on a little something special to show off at the event.	
3	We'd better get ready to sign up a new crop of members...	

Poster	Discussion Thread 6: Flynn's Arcade Rocked in a Major Way 28th July 2009	Coded For
10	I can't believe I got to visit Flynn's Arcade. And I got some sick pictures, too!	
3	Yeah, it was quite a turnout - good to see y'all there.	
5	That invisible ink blew my mind - never seen anything like it before.	
4	You've never seen a blacklight?	
5	Just on TV - y'know that show where they investigate crime scenes? I forget the title.	
1	I can't believe you guys are talking about TV and blacklight posters - there's a bigger picture here. We obviously have momentum on our side - the numbers at the arcade event spoke for themselves. We can't just let this energy dissipate. Our new members are ready for action.	
14	Yeah, I joined up the minute I got home from the arcade.	
6	Me, too!	
3	Great to have you guys aboard. So, what's the next step, Zack?	
1	Still formulating a plan. Just be ready for anything.	

Poster	Discussion Thread 7: I Look Gooooooood 3rd August 2009	Coded For
5	All must bow to the king of style (me)	
3	Cool shirt - I've got one just like it.	
5	We got so much in common, babe.	
3	Uh, the name's Megan.	
5	Well, "Megan," wanna date?	
3	Gee thanks, but I'm taken... and not interested.	
5	Worth a try. Any other girlz on here?	
2	Nope.	

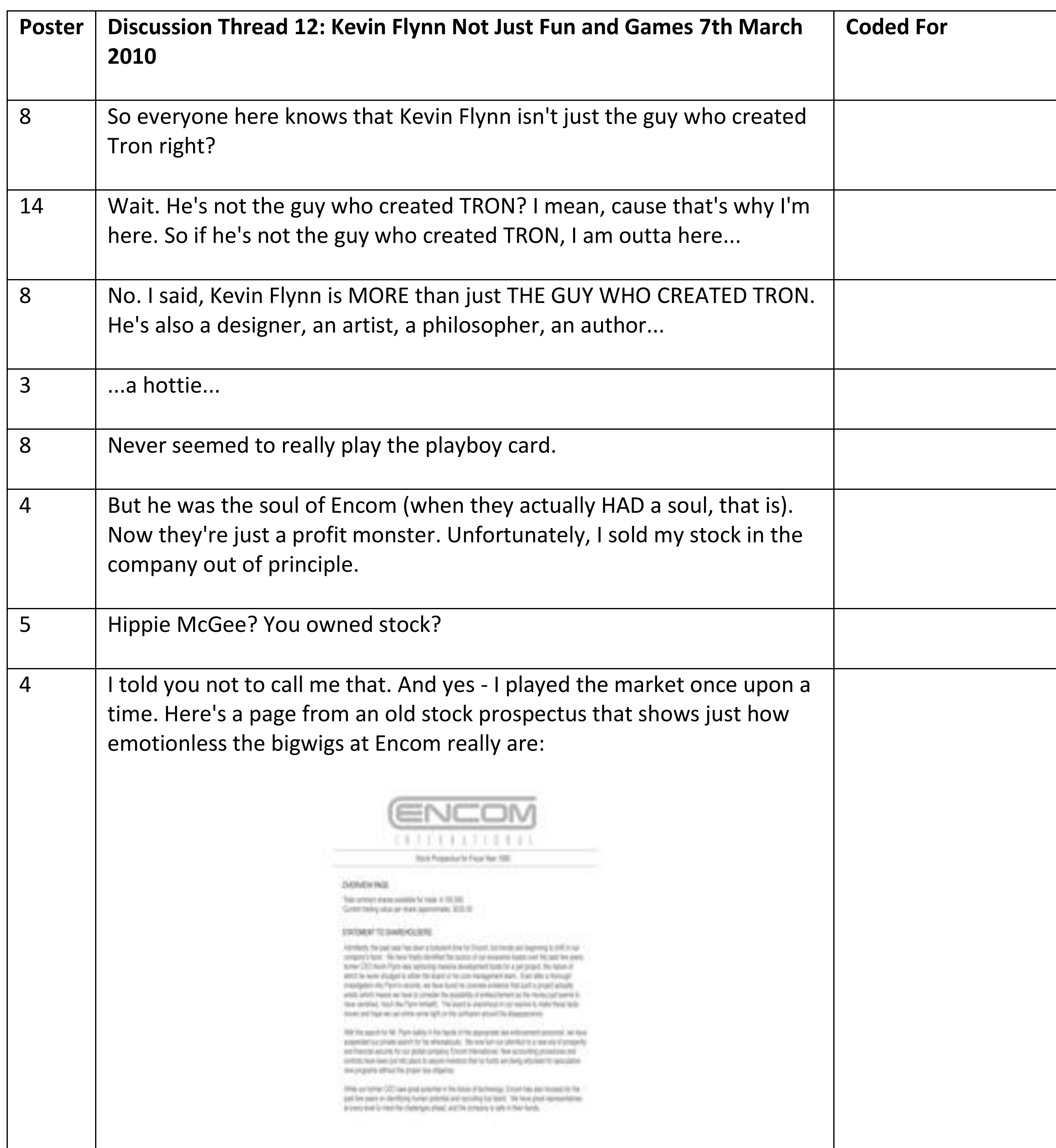
Poster	Discussion Thread 8: Check This Out 12th February 2010	Coded For
16	Here's a link y'all might like	
12	Wow - thanks for sharing that!	
6	Ditto!	
7	I can't wait to send these out.	

Poster	Discussion Thread 9: Encom International: What's Their Deal ? 23rd February 2010	Coded For
5	Sure, they make cool games, but they also spend all this time developing, like, math programs, networking solutions, "synergy" and other stuff I don't care about. Borrrrring. Zzzzzzzz (that's me snoring because they put me to sleep).	
13	But, the Encom of the 80's was a whole different story. Real innovation, a connection with the audience - in short, it was Kevin Flynn's Encom.	
4	Then he was gone and Encom became one of the world's biggest polluters - 4.2 million tons of toxic waste per year, to be exact. Luckily, Alan Bradley stepped in and reduced their carbon footprint.	
3	Too bad Encom had already pushed Bradley aside as their CEO - he might have been able to prevent them from becoming the soulless, money-grubbing mega-conglomerate that it is today.	
4	True, but we can't rely on the scant few activists like Alan Bradley to do things for us; we need to rally in the streets, stand up and raise our voices.	
5	Last word!	
4	Your maturity is overwhelming. If you actually want to educate yourself on this subject, Skate rat, here's an article you might like: No Article	

Poster	Discussion Thread 10: Shout Out to Flynn 25th February 2010	Coded For
15	Just want to give a shout for KF. His books got me through grad school. Someone who thought there was a higher purpose to technology and a human-scaled interaction with infinity... KEVIN FLYNN, WHEREVER YOU ARE, WE WILL FIND YOU!!	
13	HE IS OUT THERE!!	
3	Okay, that's my tagline. I love your energy, but it might be time to step away from the keyboard and hydrate.	
4	NO!! I mean, yes to hydration, but no to letting up on the energy. Now that FL is stronger than ever, I think it's time we try to track down Flynn. We've got the world's attention after all this time - people are ready to DO something...	
6	They sure are. It's good to know we've got peeps like Avatrix and Miss-Selector on the ground.	
8	But let's not forget, Kevin Flynn also deserves some major kudos. He inspired us and we're following his lead.	
10	It just shows you how Kevin Flynn changed a generation and that generation is changing the world. I got these from some friends in Los Angeles.	
18	FLYNN LIVES!! They got our mission statement - good call printing those out, Meg.	
3	No prob - here are some pics from a guy I used to know in Chicago. We used to have deep-dish eating contests and once I got sick in my purse... Why am I telling you this? Just look at the pictures	
10	Looks like the word is out. So why hasn't Encom weighed in?	
5	You know why...follow the money!	
4	Exactly. Stock price is up - business is booming, Encom wants no mention of Flynn in the press... or in the minds of their precious consumers. It's up to us, folks.	
6	Hey, my buddy in NYC just sent these - check 'em out	
12	Cool, but if I had my druthers, I would have been in Portland (looks warmer there)	
5	Oh, man - I gotta go.	
4	What's the rush?	

5	My gym teacher is telling me to get off my PDA and play crab soccer. Yeah, like that's a useful skill.	
3	Good luck!	

Poster	Discussion Thread 11: Are You Worthy? 1st March 2010	Coded For
1	Check this out.	
4	THIS IS ALL OVER THE PLACE AND SOOOO RANDOM, I LOVE IT!!!!!!!!!!	
14	As my screen name suggests, this is kinda what I live for. Getting ready to dig into it now - thanks, Zack!	

Poster	**Discussion Thread 12: Kevin Flynn Not Just Fun and Games 7th March 2010**	**Coded For**
8	So everyone here knows that Kevin Flynn isn't just the guy who created Tron right?	
14	Wait. He's not the guy who created TRON? I mean, cause that's why I'm here. So if he's not the guy who created TRON, I am outta here...	
8	No. I said, Kevin Flynn is MORE than just THE GUY WHO CREATED TRON. He's also a designer, an artist, a philosopher, an author...	
3	...a hottie...	
8	Never seemed to really play the playboy card.	
4	But he was the soul of Encom (when they actually HAD a soul, that is). Now they're just a profit monster. Unfortunately, I sold my stock in the company out of principle.	
5	Hippie McGee? You owned stock?	
4	I told you not to call me that. And yes - I played the market once upon a time. Here's a page from an old stock prospectus that shows just how emotionless the bigwigs at Encom really are:  ENCOM	

Poster	Discussion Thread 13: Just Call Me "The Badger" 15th March 2010	Coded For
1	You wouldn't believe how many badges we've sent out. We've got supporters all over the globe.	
10	Badges? Why do we need any stinking badges?	
1	All will be explained in good time. Until then, check out what else I've been working on: http://www.arcadeaid.com/cheatcode/	
1	BTW - I've protected your Flynn Lives passwords, so you don't have to worry about Encom tracing things back to you guys.	

Poster	Discussion Thread: 14 Why did U Join FL? 12th March 2010	Coded For
18	Just curious.	
4	I've been here from the get-go. I joined out of respect for Kevin Flynn and I stayed out of spite for what Encom International has become (a faceless, money-grubbing pile of pollutants and mediocrity)	
5	Geez, tell us what you really think.	
2	Leave him alone, Skate.	
11	What about you, Cindy? When did you join?	
2	I joined after my dad left home. I was 8. Everyone here was so supportive. They understood the loss I endured (on some level, at least). Kevin Flynn was like a father to an entire generation of thinkers, dreamers, artists and techies. When he disappeared, we all felt a little more alone than normal.	
4	Amen to that.	
14	Wow - even though I joined pretty recently, I feel like you guys really care about each other.	
3	First of all, we're not all guys. And secondly, it doesn't matter how long you've been a member - we're here for each other.	
5	Man, this is getting sappy.	
10	Sorry, Skate - why did you join?	
5	I just like messing with the establishment.	
15	Really? That's the only reason?	
5	Yeah - you don't need some big tragedy in your life to make you want to feel like you belong. I mean, I don't get along with my parents all the time, but my life isn't so bad. I just think it could be way better - that's why I play video games all the time, and I like other people who play. That's how I first got involved with Flynn Lives - we all know that Kevin Flynn pretty much invented the best games around, so why not shout his name from the rooftops and see what happens?	
10	Very cool - let's start shouting.	
5	YYYYYYYAAAAAAAAAAARRRRRRRRGHHHH	

10	It was a metaphor	
5	Yeah, I don't get those	
10	Just a reminder - stay in school, Skate.	

Poster	Discussion Thread 15: IGN, Starring Alan Bradley 24th March 2010	Coded For
6	Very cool interview with A-Brad on IGN.	
5	He's, like, the only rad grown-up I know of.	
4	Ahem!	
5	No offense - but Alan Bradley is kinda the jam.	
1	So, I guess Encom still has a shred of soul – good to know. But, I've got a plan to spice up their little press conference.	
7	Jump over to the other thread, dude – we're on it!	

Poster	Discussion Thread 16: Encom Press Conference – Are You There? 24th March 2010	Coded For
8	Have you seen the junk on their intranet?	
3	Yeah - what are we thinking on that "press conference" front?	
4	I'm sure it's just a ploy to boost their stock.	
7	Could be - but the reporter in me thinks there's real news afoot.	
5	You talk like you're on daytime television.	
7	Just the facts, man.	
4	Encom could only have two possible types of news to announce: 1) that they intend to flood the market with some new product that everyone just MUST buy, or 2) that they deny all blame for some faulty software they already released. Either way, I won't trust a thing they have to say.	
7	Who said anything about trust? I just want to be two steps ahead of this story.	
1	Y'know what? This is exactly what they want.	
3	Not following you, Zack.	
1	They want everyone to ponder what big plans they have so they can drive up interest in their products. Let's remember what Encom is all about: the almighty dollar.	
3	Which brings us to the million-dollar question: are y'all going to attend their press conference? We've got the badges we need to gain entry.	
7	I'm so there. Just bought my ticket.	
3	We're driving up the coast, taking our time	
2	Booking tomorrow. Using miles. I should pack sweaters, right? It's kinda cold there, right?	
5	I'm bringing my board - I'm going to shred those hills	
2	Oh yeah, it's hilly, too. No heels. Packing the mukluks and flip-flops. I only wear two syllable shoes.	
7	Whatever you wear, just make sure you're comfortable. We're all marching over to the Encom event.	
2	Ooh, I like what I hear.	

7	It's the perfect moment for us to not so subtly refocus attention on the search for Kevin Flynn. They're making some big presentation on April 2nd... And we're gonna cut in on the action.	
1	Let's really make them really sit up and take notice. They'll have plenty of press on hand - let's use it!	
4	We should pull a sixties maneuver - stage a sit in.	
2	Perfect time to pull out the fringe vest and headband.	
3	A protest? I could get into that!	
1	More of an awareness campaign. Encom acts like they never heard the name Kevin Flynn, but they still cash their checks and get fat off of his innovations. We're going to make them pay attention to him... and to us.	

Poster	Discussion Thread 17: THIS IS BIG, PEOPLE!! 28th March 2010	Coded For
4	Just heard from a friend - that Encom event is bigger than we thought.	
6	So? Are we still on?	
4	Definitely, but we should tread lightly - Alan Bradley deserves our respect.	
5	OK, so we wait until he's done and then GET LOUD	
1	Something like that - we'll iron out the details before the big event	
5	Right on. Totally tubular. I'm speaking to you from the Eighties, in honor of Kevin Flynn. Grody to the max, fer shur...	
1	Thankfully, the '80's sounded nothing like that. Listen - I just don't want to freak out the keynote. We want him to know we're on his side - he's one of us...	
7	Well, he still works for Encom, but I get your point.	
5	Whatevs...	
2	I'm fine with that.	
1	I'm going to work on a meet up plan, and I'll get back to everyone with the deets.	
2	Rockin' - thanks, Z-dog.	

Poster	**Discussion Thread 18: Sweet Badge! 29th March 2010**	**Coded For**
5	Dudes! (and lady dudes) - I used my fake badge to get onto the Encom campus. It works!	
1	Guess it's not so fake, then - you're welcome!	
4	So, Skate, what was it like inside the evil empire?	
5	Wasn't there long enough to get much of a vibe - some mindless robot noticed that I didn't exactly fit the profile and he threw me out.	
8	"Evil Empire?" "Mindless robot?" There are some actual humans who work at Encom, too - did you know that?	
10	Too bad for them.	
8	Too bad? Too bad that they're trying to work and feed their families during these tough economic times? Too bad that they're trying to create software that could help people drive safely or breathe deeply or harvest crops?	
4	Oh, you mean those massive government-subsidized farms that are ruining the planet?	
4	Thinker? Sorry if I offended you - subject closed.	

Poster	Discussion Thread 19: Meet Up, In Effect 30th March 2010	Coded For
1	OK, you've all seen the press release - Encom press conference, San Francisco, Justin Herman Plaza, April 2nd, 8pm. But, we're going to meet up a bit earlier. An old friend of mine hooked us up with a meeting spot right next to the event. We've got the Grand Ballroom at the Hyatt Regency from 6:15 - 7:45. Bring your Encom badges if you have them - if not - come anyway. We need as many people as we can get to help!	
12	I haven't seen the press release.	
1	Give my regards to the rock you've been living under. Here it is: Press Release	
11	Something wrong, dude? You seem more sarcastic than usual.	
1	I'm sorry. Just trying to make this happen - too much to do.	
12	How can we help? Does everyone need an Encom Badge?	
1	I think that there will be a VIP section for Encom employees (so badges needed for that), but the event is open to the general public. We just need to get some of our members closer to the stage, ready for action.	
3	I'll be there... no matter how sarcastic y'all are.	
5	Me, too - bringin' the attitude.	
4	Oh, great. I'll be in attendance despite Skate's ominous promise.	
13	Count me in!	
11	So what's the plan?	
1	We're going to interrupt their press announcement - smack dab in the middle of it all - and get their attention big time. Spread the word to all the new Flynn Lives recruits and see who can come. We need all the help we can get.	
5	Sounds like this is going to be epic!	
1	It is. I'm even bringing a truck load of Flynn Lives shirts and posters for everyone who helps.	
4	Did you get a chance to make those custom achievement codes to give out?	
1	Got that covered too!	
3	I can't wait!	

1	I'm counting on you guys.	

Poster	Discussion Thread 20: A Jumping Off Point 2nd April 2010	Coded For
7	This is a posting for all you Flynn Livers who aren't here. You will hear about some craziness that just jumped off (literally) here in San Francisco. And it's all true.	
5	WOOOOOOOO --- HOOOOOOO!!!	
7	Here's what happened - we met, we attended the Encom event, we heard Alan Bradley give total props to Kevin Flynn the way things should be, then before he could fully talk about Space Paranoids to be released online anyway, before the event was finished - we flipped their screen to a big FLYNN LIVES logo...	
3	For somebody who claims to want Just The Facts, you should get to the point! TEN MINUTES AGO, SOMEBODY just took a flying leap from an Encom helicopter and within seconds, flung a parachute in the air, then sailed over us, landed on the street and took off!!	
5	THIS IS MY NEW THING. I've seen them on video, but I've never been right up under an extreme parachuter. Dude flew right over my head.	
3	Threw everything into a crazy frenzy, perfect time in the confusion for us to start our rally - then security yanked our guy off the mic and they tried to calm everyone down, but it was so over!	
14	Totally faced!	
14	All I know is the entire event was taken over, with "Flynn Lives" filling the screen. Good work people. Time to paaaartyyyy!!	

Poster	Discussion Thread 21: It's Been A While 2nd April 2010	Coded For
17	You guys like movies? Here's one that might interest you...	
5	No way - is that really you, Sam?!?	
1	Yeah, that's him - I recognize his screen name. Hey, Sam!	
3	Cool video. We hear you Sam. Do what you've got to do.	
5	Sick Jump. Stay crazy. 89.	
2	89. Where'd you get that stylin' chopper?	
8	He's the major shareholder at Encom - inherited that title from his dad. I'm guessing it wasn't too difficult for Sam to "borrow" their bird on the sly.	
7	89. Stay safe, Sam. We are with you	
4	89.	
1	Wait a second? Now is definitely not the time to check out!! Stuff is coming to the surface now more than ever! We're close, Sam...	
8	Sam's already gone. He rarely checks in here - I know... I remember when he used to post daily. If we want to catch up with Sam, we're gonna have to go off the grid.	
3	On that note, we're off to Napa. We'll be out of touch for the rest of the night. Have fun everybody.	

Poster	Discussion Thread 22: This Wasn't Sam's First Crazy Stunt 4th April 2010	Coded For
4	Y'know that design on Sam's parachute? It sounds suspiciously close to what they describe in this old newspaper article I found in my attic - I scanned it for y'all (aren't you glad I'm a packrat?)	
5	Yeah, I took a screen shot of Sam's user icon when he posted on the boards last Friday night - here's a closer look	
3	Well, he's definitely made the number 89 his own.	
2	So sad when you realize that's the year that his dad disappeared - it's a constant reminder of how alone Sam is.	
5	Man, this convo is getting capital D-pressing. I gotta skate - LaterTown!	
10	Cool - and I'll keep eating cheese fries.	
12	Branching out from donuts, are we?	
10	Don't judge me.	

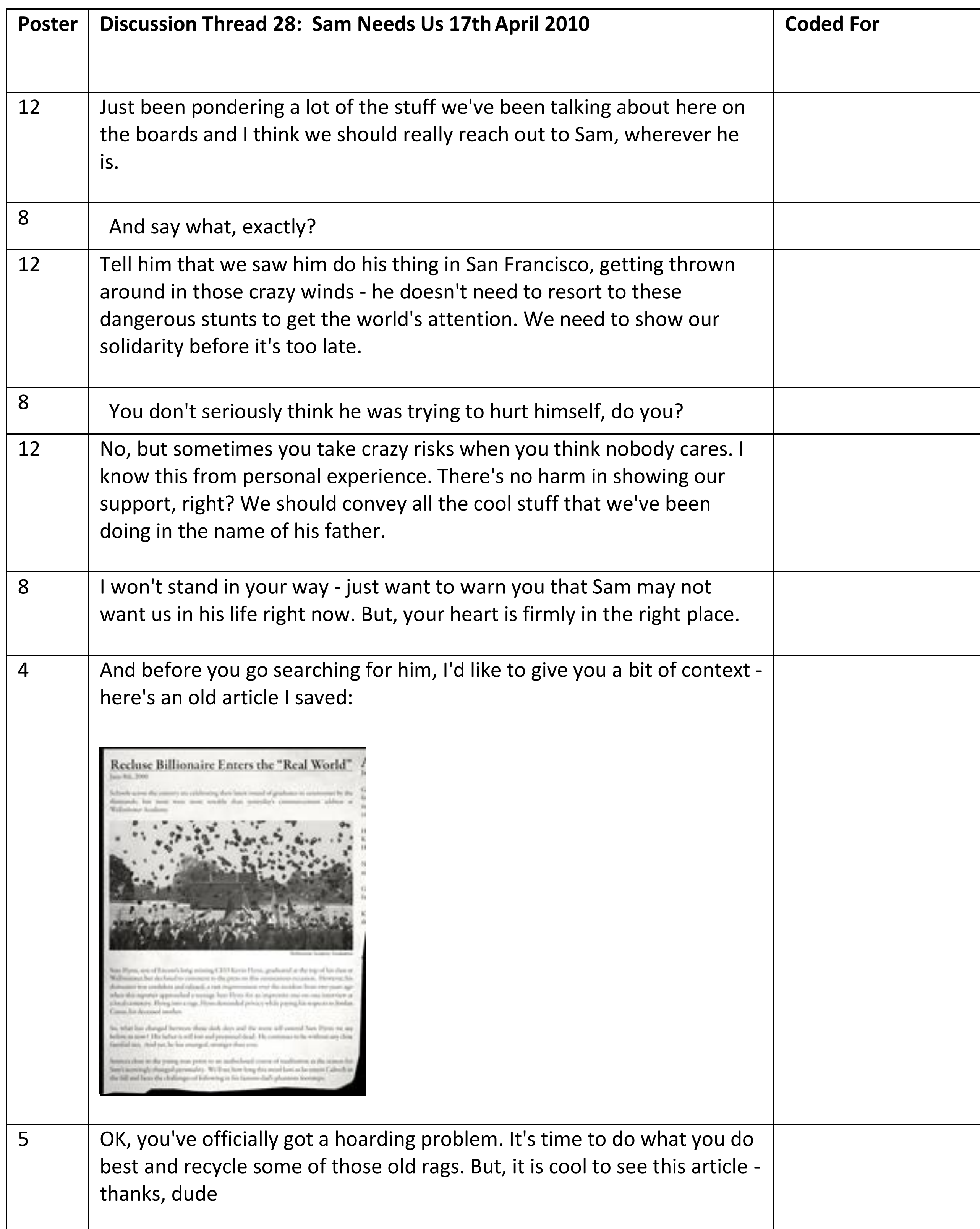
Poster	Discussion Thread 23: The Bad Ol' Days 5th April 2010	Coded For
4	Crashing that Encom event was a blast, but it really got me to thinking about some pretty dark times.	
5	You talking about when you ran out of patchouli?	
4	Ha (that quip didn't deserve two "ha's"). No, I meant the time right around when Kevin Flynn disappeared - Encom wanted nothing to do with him. They even went so far as to smear his name in the press.	
1	Yeah - some gratitude, huh?	
4	You remember it too, Zack?	
1	You callin' me old?	
4	Hey, we're in the same boat, pops.	
8	Don't worry - Encom will get their comeuppance	
1	Nice. Their failure always makes me happy - Talk about schadenfreude	
5	Watch the language - there are kids on these boards (like me)	
1	It's not a swear it's... y'know what? Never mind.	
4	Hey, I found another newspaper article about the "mystery" base-jumper	
5	Wow, you really are a packrat.	

Poster	Discussion Thread 24 Groups 1 & 3, We Hardly Knew 7th April 2010	Coded For
6	Hmm, anyone notice that the Encom intranet is on lock down?	
3	Yup. My Group 7 password still works, but the lower (by which I mean "higher" - some system they've got there) access levels are shut out.	
1	They had to catch on sometime. Luckily, I archived the past few updates for those who haven't had a chance to see them: www.flynnlives.com/encomintranetarchive	
5	ZackAttack, comin thru again!	
3	You kinda rule in a major way, Zack.	
6	It's unanimous!	

Poster	Discussion Thread 25: Hey, Sam - You There? 8th April 2010	Coded For
12	He posted on the boards just last week. Is he coming back? Anyone heard from him?	
4	Don't count on it. He doesn't spend much time here anymore.	
12	Any idea why? I mean, we're the jam!	
4	Jam or no jam, we represent hope - the hope that Kevin Flynn will return, unharmed... the hope that everything will be OK. Maybe hope is painful sometimes, especially for someone like Sam.	
12	"Someone like Sam?"	
3	He was just a kid when his dad went missing. You have to understand - he'd just lost his mother. The world was pretty ugly for little Sam Flynn (Encom accusing his father of embezzling? That didn't help). He needed us, but he was too young to really get involved. When he was older, he took a more active role in our movement - just wish we had made more progress.	
4	But no matter how dedicated we are to this mission of finding Kevin Flynn, we were just a way for Sam to bury his head in the sand and pretend that everything was gumdrops and sunshine. Maybe he's outgrown us...	
12	Thanks for the download, Recycle and Megs.	

Poster	Discussion Thread 26: Space Paranoids, Circa When? 10th April 2010	Coded For
14	I can't believe Encom is dragging their feet with this new release - I've only been waiting, like, 25 years to play SP online!	
4	How old are you, exactly?	
14	26, but that's not the point.	
13	I'm with you, G4L - bring on the Recognizers now!	
3	When did y'all start playing?	
13	I used to go to this rad arcade every day after school. My mom worked weird hours, so she wanted me to stay at the library until she could pick me up. Guess how well that plan went over...	
5	Probably as well as my "piano lessons" (which I was supposed to be taking the whole summer of ‘05, but instead I was at the rec center spending my allowance on video games... until my folks found out what was going on and I stopped getting an allowance, of course).	
10	Piano lessons? Do people still take those?	
5	Uh, you're obviously asking the way wrong person	
14	OK, now that I've had time to sleep on it, I still want some answers. When will Encom pony up the goods and give us some Paranoids?	
13	Maybe if we start a chant, they'll have to kowtow to our demands. PAR-A-NOIDS! PAR-A-NOIDS! PAR-A-NOIDS!	
13	Hmm, that went nowhere fast	
14	Sorry, I was in class. I missed the chance to rage... PAR-A-NOIDS!	
13	Thanks, but I think it's a non-starter.	

Poster	Discussion Thread 27: They're Teasing Us 14th April 2010	Coded For
2	Guess the brass over at Encom heard your chant, guys - they released a teaser trailer for SP Online, just to whet our appetites: http://www.encominternational.com/spaceparanoidsteaser	
5	Kevin Flynn, back on top!	
6	Who else could have made this gem? Check out the sweet lines on this baby!	

Poster	Discussion Thread 28: Sam Needs Us 17th April 2010	Coded For
12	Just been pondering a lot of the stuff we've been talking about here on the boards and I think we should really reach out to Sam, wherever he is.	
8	And say what, exactly?	
12	Tell him that we saw him do his thing in San Francisco, getting thrown around in those crazy winds - he doesn't need to resort to these dangerous stunts to get the world's attention. We need to show our solidarity before it's too late.	
8	You don't seriously think he was trying to hurt himself, do you?	
12	No, but sometimes you take crazy risks when you think nobody cares. I know this from personal experience. There's no harm in showing our support, right? We should convey all the cool stuff that we've been doing in the name of his father.	
8	I won't stand in your way - just want to warn you that Sam may not want us in his life right now. But, your heart is firmly in the right place.	
4	And before you go searching for him, I'd like to give you a bit of context - here's an old article I saved:  Recluse Billionaire Enters the "Real World"	
5	OK, you've officially got a hoarding problem. It's time to do what you do best and recycle some of those old rags. But, it is cool to see this article - thanks, dude	

Poster	Discussion Thread 29: **The elephant in the room: SPACE PARANOIDS 18th April 2010**	Coded For
14	Why no mention of SP, after Encom unveiled that shiny new trailer last week?	
3	Finalizing a major program like that is very work intensive. There are a lot of i's to dot and t's to cross and... other letters in the alphabet, too.	
14	Yeah, like "grrrrrr" - I want progress! I mean, their intranet mentions how many people visited their main site, but they failed to say why... It's because people wanted to see the trailer for a little game that rhymes with "Face Flaranoids!"	

Poster	Discussion Thread 30: OK, Then - Let's Find Sam! 28th April 2010	Coded For
1	It's going to take some sleuthing and cooperation to track him down. We can't share all of our secrets here on the boards, so I've put up this form where we can communicate on the DL: Sam Tracker	
2	Very cool – so, we can submit any intel we find and you'll email us? For once, I'm actually looking forward to getting a message from you.	
1	That's the nicest thing you've ever said to me.	
10	Would you two stop flirting? We've got a Flynn to locate!	

Poster	Discussion Thread 31: What's the Deal w/ AB? 30th April 2010	Coded For
10	Has anybody heard any more from Alan Bradley lately?	
8	Nope, just heard stuff about him (20 years w/ Dumont, blah, blah). Seems like Flynn was the real environmentalist; Bradley just takes the credit.	
4	He's keeping Encom from consuming and polluting in the name of entertainment and technology!! Are you guys starting a thread to complain about Alan Bradley?	
12	I was wondering about him, too. That speech in San Francisco confused me. He sounded like he was Kevin Flynn's best buddy, but then it was like: "But he's gone and here's what's next...!!' I mean, either you're looking for the dude or you're not, right?	
11	Alan took care of Sam and tried to keep it together. I mean, look at Sam - he seems like a pretty cool dude - smart, Caltech and all and still on fire to help find his dad. I mean, Alan did the best thing - help Sam grow up semi-sane and let him take up the cause.	
13	And where's Sam now that he left the capoeira school? Did we scare him off?	
8	Give Sam a break. This is his Dad we're talking about. As dedicated as we are to the cause, Sam must be a million times more invested. And he gave us the heads-up on the Space Paranoids countdown, right? Ain't nothin' wrong with that!	
13	He's proud of his dad's work. I get it, but all the more reason to fight, right? I'm with him when he does the jumps and yanks Encom's chain. But now there's even more happening - I mean, we're here for you, Sam!!!	
8	Right. That's where Alan Bradley should be. Right by Sam's side looking for Kevin Flynn, not sucking up kudos from the suits at Encom and posing for pictures... I'm just saying.	

Poster	Discussion Thread 32: The Badger Is Going Underground 3rd May 2010	Coded For
1	OK, I've mailed enough Encom badges to outfit a small army, but things are getting hectic over here. Going to shut down the assembly line soon before Encom shuts it down for me.	
3	You OK, Zack?	
1	Fine, I just wanted to spread the word - put in your last minute requests now so I can fill every order before my hiatus.	
5	I pulled my hiatus when I tried lifting my neighbor's car off my foot (long story).	
1	Nice Skate. Also, if you're going to create a badge, make sure that your submission meets the acceptable criteria. There might not be enough time to resubmit your picture if it gets rejected this time.	

Poster	Discussion Thread 33: Let's Get Crackin' 6th May 2010	Coded For
8	Testing, testing - anybody awake?	
5	Whoa - someone's up early.	
8	That makes two of us - what gives?	
5	I racked up so much detention over the course of this semester, I gotta go in an hour early every day for the rest of the schoolyear to make good. I'll spare you the gory details (pet snake, principal's car - you do the math).	
1	Nice. What's up with you, Thinker?	
8	I guess it's a good enough time as any for me to make a kind of confession. I used to work at Encom with Kevin Flynn	
1	The Lurker is one of THEM?!!	
8	I used to be. Until I made too much noise about the lack of interest in my former boss' disappearance.	
2	And you never sold your story to the tabloids?! You are a true believer. You're sitting on a gold mine.	
8	I'm sitting on more than that. This newsflash is definitely for this group only, but when I knew my time was short at Encom, I managed to sneak out with one of KF's old work servers.	
3	it's so low tech it actually worked? They let you do that? So many questions...	
8	I was the 'go to' guy for repairs, and for a lot of things... and they kept Kevin Flynn's office just like it was for the longest time before they crafted the entire whisper campaign about the money and his 'secret' projects.	
7	Which brings us back to the server and WHAT IS ON IT?!	
8	That's the problem. I can only gain access to the basic entryway of the thing, but all of the files are passcode protected. Now that we've got a big enough group of people who aren't going to listen to the propaganda, we can see what's been hiding on this thing for so many years. We believe that Kevin Flynn is actually worth looking for, so I'm posting this for us - for Flynn Lives. Take your best shot, people. I can't crack it alone. Here	
2	We're on it. I'm still in shock that you haven't sold all this out after so long..	

8	Finding my friend - our friend - is worth more to me than that.	
2	I know, but it's not like he would blame you, right? I mean what would be wrong with you being rich when he finally shows back up from whatever tropical island he's hanging out on?	
3	That's where you think he is?!!!	
2	Yes. There, I said it. Kevin Flynn is just waiting to see who can find him.	
5	I never said it before, but that's what I think too...	
12	He wouldn't leave Sam. He wouldn't leave his boy behind.	
5	Maybe he made some mistakes. I mean, I know we're all fans, but what if it's just true that he moved some money around and lost track of it. Maybe he didn't want Sam to think the worst. Maybe....	
4	He wouldn't miss out on the Digital Revolution... It's his life...	
2	I guess we might never know...	
8	That's what Encom wants you to think. I've heard twenty years of these theories and none of them lead anywhere. Let's try to look at some facts, pay attention to some real clues and move this thing forward.	
1	We're in...	
5	The. Coolest. Thing. Ever.	
3	!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!	

Poster	Discussion Thread 34: S.P. Rox 6th May 2010	Coded For
14	Man, are y'all playing the new Space Paranoids? Killer!	
4	I love this game almost as much as I hate Encom - so many conflicting emotions.	
8	Please don't use the "hate" word.	
4	Sorry, Thinker - still getting over the bombshell news you dropped on us this a.m.	
2	Can't talk... playing S.P.	

Poster	Discussion Thread 35: Enter The Server 7th May 2010	Coded For
3	It's like being inside the mind of Flynn... I can't stop staring at his amazing artwork.	
1	Did you see the white lightcycle (or, as I call it, "the whitecycle")? I can't even picture it!!!	
7	Um, he pictured it for you - organic shapes merged with the digital, rectilinear landscape. Putting human dimensions inside the grid, but as if they grew there somehow.	
5	I mean, can you picture Kevin Flynn out somewhere with a sketch pad or in a figure drawing workshop? He doesn't seem like he could stay still for that long!!!	
8	I can picture it. He had his quiet moments... when he was really concentrating on something - he wouldn't come out of his office for the whole day...	
14	Like me. I haven't moved since I got into this server... I'd hate to run into one of those Recognizers in a dark alley. See that all over the room? That's my mind being blown...	
8	Thanks to everyone who worked on making this happen. I always wanted to know what Flynn was focused on before he...I still don't know how to say it - before he wasn't around anymore.	
7	Nothing subversive. Just being an artist and a thinker.	
10	They're always the first people who get shut out when the big guys want their share...	
8	That's what's so strange. None of this looks like he had anything to hide. Nothing that Encom would have gotten their feathers ruffled about. But he seemed so worried in those last days.	

Poster	Discussion Thread 36: The Underground is Beckoning 12th May 2010	Coded For
1	It's hard to believe how much we've accomplished in the past few weeks - our organization is alive again! But, maybe it's time to take a step back and assess our gains and losses.	
10	Whatd'ya mean? It's all good!	
1	But, the key to our organization is maximum impact. We riled up Encom, we showed our allegiance to Kevin Flynn, we even made contact with Sam (kinda) - now it's time to go underground and reserve our strength for the next burst.	
2	I just wish we could thank Sam for everything and apologize for getting up in his grill.	
3	But, wouldn't contacting him to apologize kind of get in the way of not "getting up in his grill?"	
8	I'm not sure what exactly constitutes a grill invasion, but I think I'm on Megan's side. Sam deserves his privacy - I'm sure he can find us here when the time is right.	
16	Agreed. Until then, we should cool it on our board activities. When the action starts revving up again, I'll contact everyone to let them know. But for the next few weeks, be safe and be ready.	
1	I've got one last item of business - I'm mailing out the last of the badges today, but I can't take any more submissions. I think they're onto me...	

Poster	Discussion Thread 37: See What I mean? 13th May 2010	Coded For
1	It's not just me being paranoid - Encom shut us out of their intranet. Luckily, I took some screen grabs and archived them before they locked it down for good. Check it.	
3	Who the heck is "Z. Takk?"	
1	That's my alias - I used it on my Encom badge so they wouldn't know my real name.	
3	Yeah... you really do need a break, Zack— er, I mean, "Mr. Takk."	

Poster	Discussion Thread 38: Powerin' Up the Boards Again 18th October 2010	Coded For
16	Testing, testing.	
4	Oh, hey... Does this mean it's safe to talk?	
5	Woo-hoo! I've got a whole lot of blabbering to do - been saving it up for weeks!	
16	@Megan - yes, it's safe to talk... @Skate - but, maybe not for you.	
1	If you think Skate is dangerous, wait'll you see what I've got up my sleeve.	
3	ZACK!	
5	Welcome back, Zack (Attack)	
1	Well, it all depends on my friend Mako	
4	Oh, how's he doing? Haven't heard from him in a while.	
1	I'm trying to get him back on the boards - just sent him a message a couple of days ago.	
9	Did someone say my name?	
9	Hello? Oh, I forgot about the time difference - I'm sure you're all sound asleep	
1	You calling us lazy?	
9	Just you, Zack-man	
1	How are you, old buddy?	
9	Couldn't be better!	
1	I see you've finally stopped ignoring my entreaties to join us here on the boards	
9	Well, I've been kinda busy.	
1	Yeah, I'm well aware.	
9	Gotta go, but I'll be back soon. Just wanted to drop in. More to come...	

Poster	Discussion Thread 39: BTW, That ZIP Transmission Freaked Me Out! 20th October 2010	Coded For
2	So glad we're back on the boards – I've been wanting to talk about that ZIP dealio ever since it glitched its way onto our radar. So weird, but soooooo cooooooool (dang, I need to fix the "o" key on my computer - keeps sticking).	
11	How did you finally decipher it?	
2	Trial and error (and a smidge of know-how). I kept highlighting the text to see if there was anything hidden within, but the file was so big that I decided to shrink it down.	
14	And then, boo-ya! Bit gave you a little surprise.	
2	More like dozens of surprises. The little guy was telling us a story and I followed it all the way to TRON night!	
14	Which sounds like it's going to rock the casbah. Can I just say how psyched I am?	
8	You can (and did).	
14	Can't wait to see everyone there!	

Poster	Discussion Thread 40: Addressed To Kill 22nd October 2010	Coded For
1	OK, maybe "kill" is a strong word - perhaps "thrill" is more like it. In any event, I need to make sure that we have our members' current mailing addresses. Can y'all get the word out?	
5	Ooh, looks like Zack has something a-brewin'. Are you concocting a new game?	
1	I can neither confirm nor deny such an allegation - just want to make sure that we have everyone's contact info up-to-date.	
4	I'll tell everyone I know.	
5	Y'mean, BOTH of them?	
4	So glad to reconnect with you, Skate (sarcasm overload!)	

Poster	Discussion Thread 41: Alright, Already - It's Challenging! 24th October 2010	Coded For
10	OK, the new ArcadeAid game is ribonkulers.	
1	Um... thanks?	
10	Ribonkulers - that's my trademark hybrid of the words "ridiculous" and "bonkers."	
1	Nice. Wonder how long it'll take to become a household catchphrase.	
10	I'm sure that will happen long before I solve the Challenging Stage, V2. Zack, you're killing me over here!	
13	Really? I solved it within a few hours. Great game, BTW.	
5	A few hours? Dude, that's straight-up ribonkulers.	

Poster	Discussion Thread 42: The Suspense - I Can't Stand It! 28th October 2010	Coded For
6	Seriously, guys - what's the big secret you're working on?	
	Zack? Mako? Anyone? Byoooolerrrrr?	
9	Patience, patience.	
6	Hmm, I'm not familiar with that "P" word you just used (twice).	
9	I'm making progress every day, but it's kinda difficult to stay under the radar here at Encom.	
3	Whoa, whoa, whoa - you work at Encom, too?!? First ISOlatedThinker and now Mako?	
8	Hey, it never hurts to have a man on the inside.	
9	You make me sound so intriguing - guilty as charged!	
1	You've earned your badge of coolness, Mako. After all, you gave us Circuit Cycles.	
15	You did CC?!? Do tell!	
9	Hey, now - back it up like a dump truck. I can't take all the credit. I was honored to work from Kevin Flynn's original code. Encom had this particular Flynn gem up its sleeve for years and I just fleshed it out. Voila! Behold Circuit Cycles.	
2	Man, I didn't want to give Encom props for CC, and now I don't have to. Thanks, Mako (and, of course, Kevin Flynn). But, the question still remains: what are you working on now?	
3	Yeah, big shot - spill the beans.	
9	Well, I've been playing around with a few audio elements, but my project isn't quite ready for prime time.	
3	But, you could show us a rough draft, right?	
9	Stay tuned... I'll be rolling it out soon enough.	
3	But... but... Oh, fine (pout).	

Poster	**Discussion Thread 43: Last Night... 29th October 2010**	**Coded For**
12	No words to describe last night... still reeling... can't form complete sentences.	
7	Get a hold of yourself, man!	
12	Thanks, JTF - I needed that. Sorry for cluttering up the boards, Admin.	
16	No prob - I've seen worse.	
16	PS - would everyone please stop using the word "ribonkulers" in the discussion forums? It bothers me, as an English major and a human.	

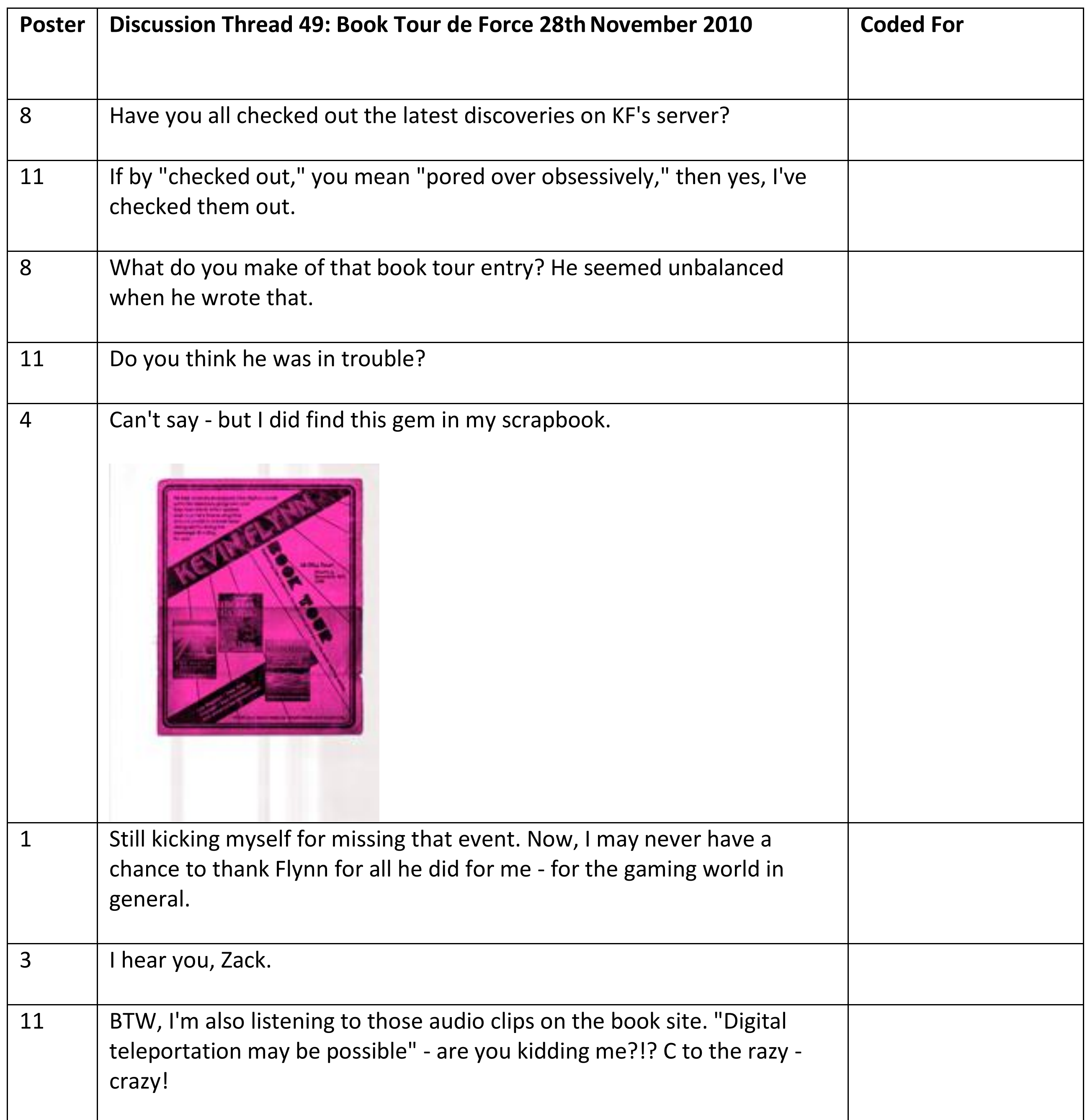
Poster	Discussion Thread 44: Too Bad We Can't Vote for Flynn 2nd November 2010	Coded For
4	He just might have been the last public figure I could actually trust.	
11	Maybe when Flynn comes back from... wherever, he'll be an international hero, run for public office and then we really can vote for him.	
4	One can hope.	
12	Oh snap! I forgot to vote!	
4	Snap, indeed. There's still time to get to the polls.	
11	Wonder what candidate Flynn would do to eliminate gerrymandering.	
5	Dude, I saw an infomercial about gerrymandering last night. That machine can dice 40 onions in 10 seconds!	
4	Hmm, looks like the voices in Skate's head have finally taken over.	
11	Did he even put up a fight?	

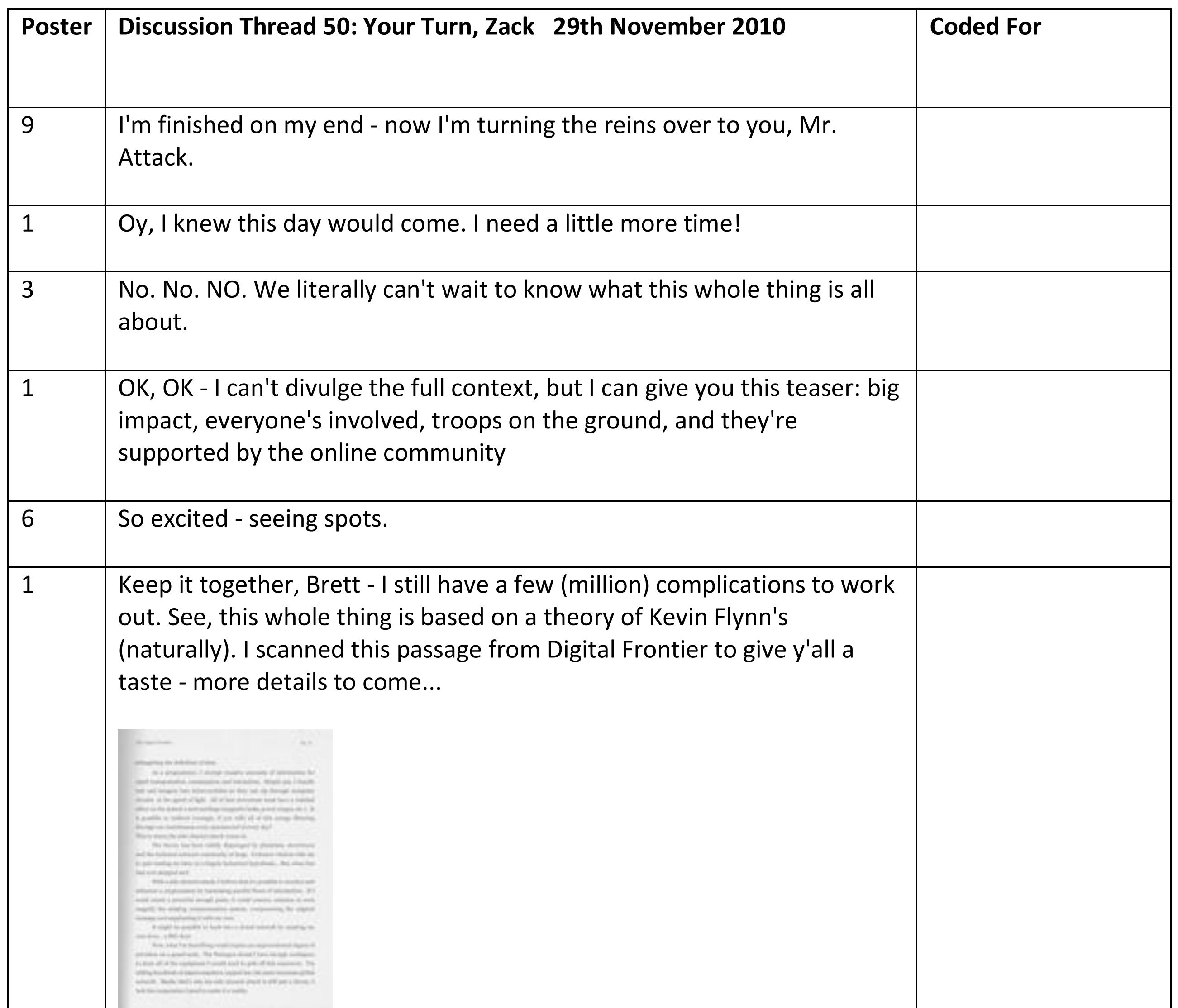
Poster	Discussion Thread 45: Mucho Thanks, Zach! 11th November 2010	Coded For
10	You really came through, pal! Check out my bling: No image available	
6	Whoa, you got different designs than me.	
10	Do tell (and show) - pics please!	
6	Ask and ye shall receive sweet photos of my blingage	
13	I was so excited to find stuff in my mailbox this morning, I tripped on the sprinkler and nearly squashed the dog.	
1	Stuff? What stuff?	
14	Oh, c'mon Zack.	
1	Who's Zack?	
10	You're really not good at playing dumb (your brain keeps getting in the way).	
15	What gives? I haven't gotten any pins yet and I totally finished the game in record time!	
1	Fear not - they're en route!!!	
3	Does that apply to my impending pin shipment, too?	
1	Oh, it applies to you and thousands more - pins away!	
15	Which ones am I going to get?	
1	It's all up to the hands of fate (more specifically, my hands - I'm grabbing two of the four designs at random and shipping them out as fast as I can).	

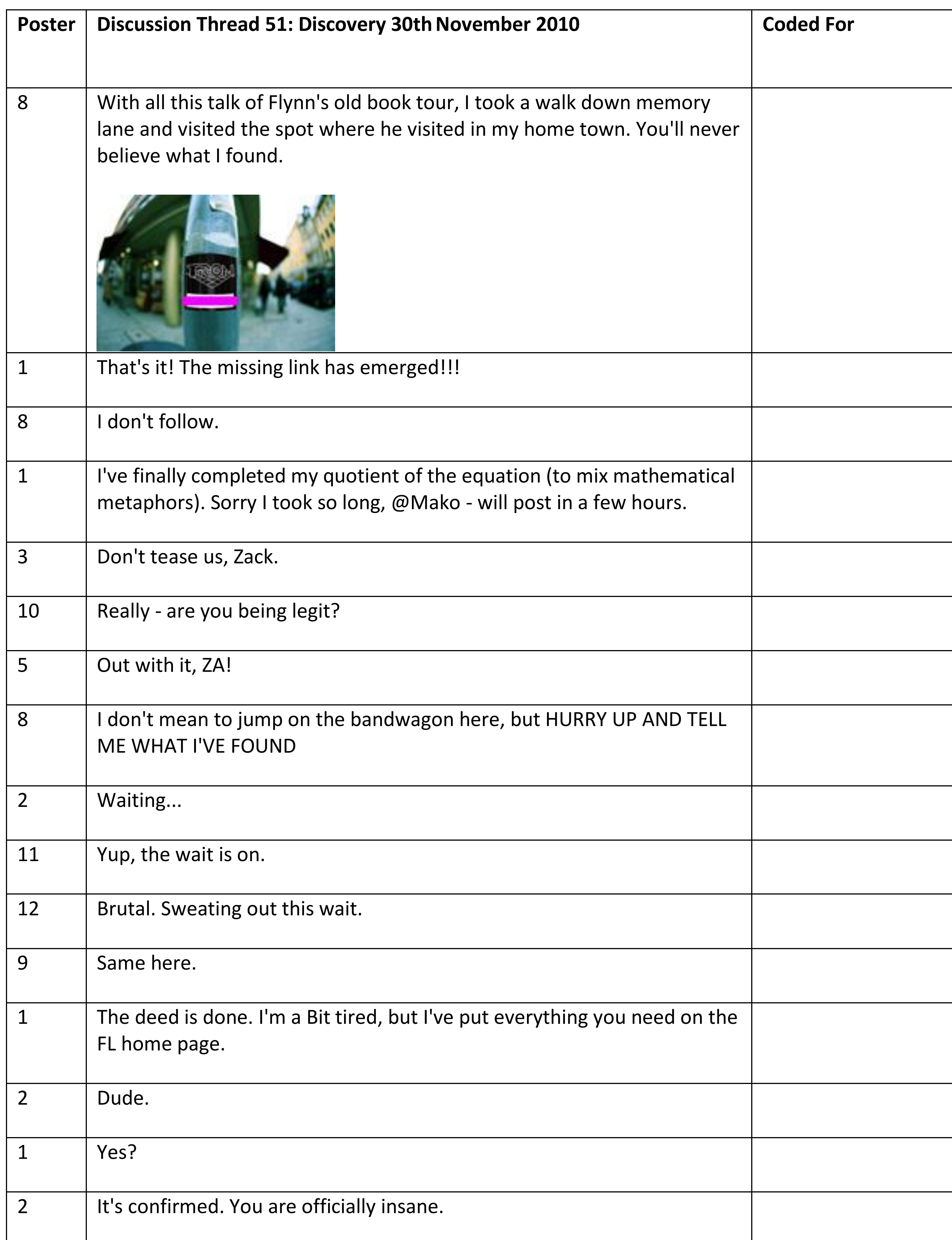
Poster	Discussion Thread 46: Woo-Hoo! 13th November 2010	Coded For
3	Sorry I ever doubted you, Zack - I just got my pins and poster. Marry me?	
1	Gosh, this is so sudden, but... OK.	
3	Oh - these are great, don't get me wrong, but it was kind of a joke.	
12	Um, Awkward Town!	

Poster	Discussion Thread 47: How's Sam Holding Up? 17th November 2010	Coded For
2	Sorry to bring everyone down, but I've been thinking about how much Sam has lost in his young life. He must be lonely, especially with the holidays approaching.	
13	It's a tough time of year, for sure.	
2	OK, I've decided NOT to make this a totally depressing thread - let's just imagine all of the cool things Sam might be doing right now.	
10	I'm game! Wait, I need to think of a good one.	
6	OK, I'll start. I think Sam is base-jumping off of a massive skyscraper and freaking out the pedestrians below.	
13	No, he's probably in some crazy expensive resort we've never even heard of, living it up royally.	
10	I'll bet he's scuba diving near a tropical island with a supermodel, eating cheese puffs.	
7	Who's eating the cheese puffs? The supermodel or Sam? And how can you eat cheese puffs while scuba diving? The physics don't add up.	
2	Let it go, JTF - sometimes a cheese puff is just a cheese puff.	

Poster	Discussion Thread 48: Action-Packed Architecture! 27th November 2010	Coded For
5	Dude, I never put two and two together before (math isn't my strong suit), but I just realized... Sam Flynn has been jumping off of buildings that were designed by his mom!!! Hydecker Designs	
7	Yes - the Lodgement Superstructure and Hedera Helix thus far. Little known fact: Jordan also designed a building near the Embarcadero (the site of our awesome protest to disrupt the Encom press conference last April). He's three for three.	
5	This is major - why do you think he does it?	
12	As a fellow thrill seeker, I like to honor a structure by pulling off a daredevil stunt near it.	
5	Oh, you mean like how I did an ollie off of my gym teacher's car?	
12	Kind of, but I'm talking about really connecting with your surroundings. For instance, I rode my mountain bike down a 40-degree incline on my last trip to Joshua Tree. It brought me closer to nature, and stuff.	
5	So, Sam is trying to get closer to architecture?	
2	He misses his mom, but he can continue to draw attention to her art by visiting these buildings, ascending to the heavens and grasping the spotlight - she will live on through her work... and through her son.	
7	Nicely said, CG.	

Poster	Discussion Thread 49: Book Tour de Force 28th November 2010	Coded For
8	Have you all checked out the latest discoveries on KF's server?	
11	If by "checked out," you mean "pored over obsessively," then yes, I've checked them out.	
8	What do you make of that book tour entry? He seemed unbalanced when he wrote that.	
11	Do you think he was in trouble?	
4	Can't say - but I did find this gem in my scrapbook. 	
1	Still kicking myself for missing that event. Now, I may never have a chance to thank Flynn for all he did for me - for the gaming world in general.	
3	I hear you, Zack.	
11	BTW, I'm also listening to those audio clips on the book site. "Digital teleportation may be possible" - are you kidding me?!? C to the razy - crazy!	

Poster	Discussion Thread 50: Your Turn, Zack 29th November 2010	Coded For
9	I'm finished on my end - now I'm turning the reins over to you, Mr. Attack.	
1	Oy, I knew this day would come. I need a little more time!	
3	No. No. NO. We literally can't wait to know what this whole thing is all about.	
1	OK, OK - I can't divulge the full context, but I can give you this teaser: big impact, everyone's involved, troops on the ground, and they're supported by the online community	
6	So excited - seeing spots.	
1	Keep it together, Brett - I still have a few (million) complications to work out. See, this whole thing is based on a theory of Kevin Flynn's (naturally). I scanned this passage from Digital Frontier to give y'all a taste - more details to come... 	

Poster	Discussion Thread 51: Discovery 30th November 2010	Coded For
8	With all this talk of Flynn's old book tour, I took a walk down memory lane and visited the spot where he visited in my home town. You'll never believe what I found. 	
1	That's it! The missing link has emerged!!!	
8	I don't follow.	
1	I've finally completed my quotient of the equation (to mix mathematical metaphors). Sorry I took so long, @Mako - will post in a few hours.	
3	Don't tease us, Zack.	
10	Really - are you being legit?	
5	Out with it, ZA!	
8	I don't mean to jump on the bandwagon here, but HURRY UP AND TELL ME WHAT I'VE FOUND	
2	Waiting...	
11	Yup, the wait is on.	
12	Brutal. Sweating out this wait.	
9	Same here.	
1	The deed is done. I'm a Bit tired, but I've put everything you need on the FL home page.	
2	Dude.	
1	Yes?	
2	It's confirmed. You are officially insane.	

Poster	Discussion Thread 52: Side Channel A-What? 2nd December 2010	Coded For
10	Not really getting the theory behind this side channel attack whatchamawhoozit.	
7	Hey now, cool it with the technical lingo	
10	But honestly, does anyone understand this stuff?	
1	I do.	
5	As my history teacher always says (when that brainwad Dakota raises her hand for the millionth time), "Would anyone ELSE care to hazard an answer?"	
8	Let me give it a spin. Back when I worked with Flynn, he had several far-flung workspaces. In any one of them at any given time, he might have been testing out a bold new computing technique (hell, he might have even built his own proto-internet in one of those cramped offices). Point is, there was a lot of activity going on in a finite area.	
10	I'm with you... I think.	
8	Just imagine the sheer wattage blipping through that system – the electrical meter would have been spinning so fast, it probably looked like a chopper taking off. But, what if you examined the output more critically?	
7	You might have been able to map Flynn's activities.	
8	Bingo! The side channel attack is all about quantifying data, information, and programs by measuring the electrical pull of a station.	
3	So... we're going to become meter readers?	
1	Nope – we're going to become meter outlaws. In advanced side channel "whatchamawhoozit" (to quote my esteemed colleague DonutLuvver), you not only monitor the pulses of a system, you manipulate them. But, it's going to take all of us to create the desired supersurge.	
7	And we're sending it to Flynn?	
1	Ideally. It'll be like getting a collect call from all of us.	
7	Let's just hope he accepts the charges.	

Poster	Discussion Thread 53: This Mission Feels... Different 6th December 2010	Coded For
4	Back when I played ultimate Frisbee, I hurt my knee pretty bad – ever since then, I can tell when it's about to rain (my tendons get all frazzled). Well, that's kinda how I feel about this next FL mission. I think we're really on to something – my nerves are buzzing.	
5	Maybe you're dying.	
3	Whoa – out of bounds, Skate!	
5	Well, that's what happened to my dog when he got old. He sensed that the end was near, so he took off into the woods. We found him a couple of days later, all curled up and peaceful.	
4	As much as I enjoy being compared to a terminal pooch, I'm not dying.	
5	But, you're also not a doctor, so you can't be so sure.	
3	Enough!	
5	OK, OK – good luck with the mission, everyone. @Recycle – sorry for all the death junk I said.	
4	Was that an actual apology, Skate?	
5	I'm as shocked as you are.	
4	Things really are changing around here. We can't fail!	

Poster	Discussion Group 54: 3, 2, 1... Contact? 8th December 2010	Coded For
1	No more excuses – it's time to jam.	

Poster	Discussion Thread 55: Phone Phrenzy 9th December 2010	Coded For
9	Hey, Zack - thanks for mispronouncing my name during the phone blitz event.	
1	I was all pumped full of adrenaline. I had no idea what I was saying	
9	Don't sweat it "Mack."	
1	Touché.	
2	Dudes, you're missing the point by about a billion megahertz. We succeeded... right?	
10	All that digital sweetness, overlapping with a thunderous beat - sure feels like a success. In fact, it feels like a major... I dunno - wow!	
5	I think the word you're looking for is "rocked harder than the Grand Canyon."	
4	That's more than one word, Skate.	
1	So, what does everyone think that uber-glitch was all about? The pager, and stuff?	
8	Really, who sports a pager anymore?	
3	Wait a minute - Zack, you weren't behind that whole thing?	
1	No. It was all unexpected.	
9	can vouch for him. We just engineered the phone contraption and got out of the way.	
10	I'm feeling a bit creeped out right about now. Need to get under my blanket and hide from the electric boogeyman	

Poster	Discussion Board Thread 56: Truckload of Thanks 15th December 2010	Coded For
1	I can't say it enough - Flynn Lives is like family to me	
2	Don't want to get all mushy, but I kinda love everyone here	
3	And the feeling is more than mutual, Girl.	
4	Who's up for a virtual group hug?	
5	Uh-oh. Flower power in the hizzy.	
2	There's nothing you can say to bring me down, Skate - I even love you. Deal with it	
5	Sheesh - I guess I accept. Had a great time with everyone here	
1	Well, it's not like it's over. Our spirit - our drive - is just taking a different form. Ever aware, ever resilient	
6	And ever impressed by that slammin' display of WHATEVER it was we unlocked with our phone hack.	
7	Wonder what Kevin Flynn would have to say about this whole crazy experience	
8	Actually, I think I do know what he would say: "I told you so, man."	

Appendix 5 *Flynn Lives* Discussion Board Poster Names and Taglines

Poster No.	Board Name	Tagline
1	ZackAttack	Stay Vigilant
2	CindyGirl	I'm Down
3	MeganRules	He's out there
4	RecycleorDie	Every day is Earth Day
5	SkateItOut	Middle name: Trouble
6	BrettPro	Let's do this Thing!
7	JustTheFacts	Journalist, truth seeker, Flynn Fan
8	ISOlated Thinker	Technology is our destiny
9	Mako	Like a Shark but pronounced correctly
10	Donutluvver	Flynn=the Coolest
11	KingSeth	Won't stop believing
12	JuniorG	We don't need proof, we have proof
13	JuanStar	Backing down is not an option
14	Gamer4Life	They've never improved on Tron
15	DesignDoc	Take two game tokens and call me in the morning
16	Admin	Somebody's gotta be a grown up
17	EightyNine4ever	Performs as Sam Flynn
18	AnonymousPete	I'm with Flynn

Appendix 6: A description of the discussion of the Flynn Lives Boards

This Appendix provides a narrative description of the discussion during each of the six phases of the discussion board, making close reference to the posts. The aim is to give an overview of the interests and concerns of Posters in the discussion threads. This document should be read while viewing the interpretive sketches of the six phases of the discussion board in Appendix 7.

Phase 1: 18th November 2008 - 3rd August 2009

The first phase began with the *Flynn Lives* discussion board participants establishing themselves on the 'boards' (16) with the use of humour and fan expertise. Language is peppered with a lexicon drawn from the speech of the character of Flynn in the original film using terms like 'cool' (3), 'man' and 'dude' (7) which persist through all the phases. The discussion board's Games Master, Poster 1, set the agenda for the first phase, by highlighting the fact that it was the 20th anniversary of Flynn's disappearance in 1989, and outlining the plan to mark this anniversary with an event in the form of a re-creation of Flynn's Arcade at San Francisco Comic Con that kick-starts the campaign. Discussion on the board reflected excitement and anticipation at the prospect of future events. Poster 1 galvanised the group into action with words like 'momentum', 'energy', 'ready for action', which, in turn, garnered expectations by board members of a 'new crop of members' (3). The participants make efforts to be hospitable with posts welcoming new joiners, and posts like 'great to have you guys aboard' (3). The newly formed group coalesced around their shared reverence for the character of Flynn who disappeared without trace in 1989 according to reports on the campaign site, and who was eulogised as being 'in our computers, in our imagination, in our hearts' (12).

Phase 2: **12th February 2010 – 24th March 2010**

In this phase board participants became more familiar with one another through a discussion thread that posed the question: 'Why did you join *Flynn Lives*?'. This thread occasioned the sharing of stories, which may be spun or real: for example, 'I joined after my dad left home. I was 8' (2) and 'You don't need some big tragedy in your life to make you want to feel like you belong' (5). As well as incidental biography such as 'My gym teacher is telling me to get off my PDA and play crab soccer. Yeah, like that's a useful skill' (5). Or, 'we used to have deep-dish eating contests and once I got sick in my purse…why am I telling you this?' (3).

In this phase, the fictional company featured in *Tron*, called Encom is identified as an evil corporation in the sense described in Chapter 4, with terms like 'money-grubbing' (4) and is referred to as a 'profit monster' (4). The company is scornfully referred to as a 'megacorp',

managed by ‘bigwigs’ (8) that are ‘faceless’ and ‘soulless’ (3), and ‘I won’t trust a thing they have to say’ (4). In sum, the villainous ‘them’ in opposition to the discussion board’s heroic ‘us’. ‘The discussion board group regarded themselves as ‘outsiders’ (to the evil corporation) and enthused about becoming activists with the use of terms like ‘mission’ (18), ‘rally’ (4) ‘stand up and raise our voices’ (4) and ‘DO something’ (4) to illustrate this. The focus of their discussion was Flynn, who was narratively re-situated in the present by Posters bestowing accolades upon him as the ‘soul of Encomia’ who was ‘like a father to an entire generation of thinkers, dreamers, artists and techies’ (2) as well as providing ‘recollections’ of working with him. The starting point for the narrative of the campaign was the ‘Where’s Flynn?’ mystery. The sense of excitement and anticipation continued in this phase with a thread about the forthcoming Encom Press Conference ARG (Alternative Reality Game) event and discussion about preparations: tickets, bookings, journeys, ‘using (air) miles’ (2), ‘packing’ (2) and ‘I should pack sweaters, right?’ (2) for the event.

Phase 3: **28th March – 10th April 2010**

The *Flynn Lives* discussion board group became more familiar with one another, as evidenced through the increasing use of nicknames, the sharing of personal stories about their interest in games, as well as the incorporation of further incidental biographical details. Group members identified themselves as <u>future</u>-looking individuals interested in ‘video games’, rather than <u>past</u>-looking people taking ‘piano lessons’ (5), and as ‘rebellious’ rather than conventional (13).

The discussion in this phase was defined by references to the past, present and future, and the opposition between the villains in the evil corporation of Encom and the heroes of the *Flynn Lives* group. A parallel was drawn between the stories of the two heroes: Where’s Flynn? (the old hero) and Where’s Sam? (the young hero). The past was brought into the present on the discussion boards in a series of ways: ‘recollections’ of Flynn in the past; musings about Sam’s childhood; memories of gameplay; and even an attempt at retro 1980s slang as one Poster remarked ‘Totally tubular – I’m speaking to you from the eighties, in honor of Kevin Flynn’. (5)

The Encom press conference ARG event took place during this phase and the new hero – Sam, made his debut appearance by parachute drop from a helicopter at the event to take his father’s place as the hero of the future in the forthcoming film sequel. *Flynn Lives* members were at the centre of events taking place, participating in different ways. There are San Francisco-based discussion board members, ARG event volunteers, non-San Francisco based members and ‘foot soldiers’ in the scavenger hunts taking place at locations worldwide. Following the events, *Flynn Lives* members became the focus of the discussion, providing eye witness accounts of the ARG. In exchange, boards members were granted access to additional story information in the form of Encom’s ‘Intranet’ and newspaper articles. These activities generated further expressions of anticipation and excitement among *Flynn Lives* board members.

Phase 4: 14th April – 13th May 2010

In this phase, the ‘them’ and ‘us’ opposition between *Flynn Lives* members and the evil corporation, Encom, was brought into sharper focus. Encom continued to be disparaged as ‘the Brass’ (2), ‘the big guys’ (10) and ‘the suits’ (8). However, this dichotomy was complicated by the fact that Encom were not just an evil corporation, charged with stealing Flynn’s intellectual property, but are also the publishers of the eagerly anticipated online version of Space Paranoids that Posters enjoyed playing – ‘Can’t talk…. playing S.P.’ (2), ‘I love this game almost as much as I hate Encom.’ (4) and ‘Man, are y’all playing the new Space Paranoids? Killer!’ (14). Similar ambivalence was expressed towards the Encom CEO, Alan Bradley who addressed the Encom Press conference event - Is he a hero (one of ‘us’) or a villain (one of ‘them’)?

The main focus in this phase for the group was to take up the narrative function of the heroes to solve the mystery of the disappearance of Flynn, which was framed in terms such as ‘mission’, ‘covert operation’, ‘cooperation’, ‘DL communication’, ‘intel’ and the rallying cry, – ‘we’ve got a Flynn to locate!’ (10). The investigation shifted gear with the revelation that Poster 8 was a former colleague of Flynn’s at Encom who claimed to have possession of one of Flynn’s computer servers which might throw some light on the mystery of his disappearance. In response to this revelation, posts were couched in terms of ‘theories’ (8), ‘maybes’ (5) and ‘what ifs’ (5) about Flynn’s disappearance to engender curiosity. ‘Recollections’ of Flynn lauded him as a hero, ‘artist’ (7), ‘thinker’ (7) and ‘he seemed so worried in those last days.’ (8) Through these ‘recollections’, the figure of Flynn did not remain in the past, but continued to be represented in the present, even if he was not actually ‘present’. At the same time the group started to express their support for the new action hero, Sam – ‘we’re here for you, Sam’ (13) and ‘I think we should really reach out to Sam, wherever he is.’ (12) and parallels were inevitably drawn between the hero of the past and the hero of the future (forthcoming film).

Phase 5: 18th October – 13th November 2010

After a period of ‘hiatus’ over the summer, the boards were ‘open’ in October, just eight weeks before the release of *Tron: Legacy*. Board communications took up familiar patterns including the use of the ‘Flynn’ lexicon, nicknames, jokes, incidental biographical details and expressions of affirmation regarding the group. Poster 1 referred to ‘old buddy’, and ‘my friend’ and other Posters voiced enthusiasm that the boards had resumed. ‘<u>So</u> glad we’re back on the boards’ (2) and ’Woo-hoo! I’ve got a whole lot of blabbering to do – been saving it up for weeks!’ (5) Once again, the Game Master, Poster 1 set the tone – ‘wait till you see what I’ve got up my sleeve’ and Poster 9 ‘Gotta go, but I’ll be back soon.’ S/he was joined by Poster 14 generating a level of excitement and anticipation about the forthcoming *Tron* night with ‘Can I just say how psyched I am?’ (14) and ‘Can’t wait to see everyone there’ (14) which was a persistent theme through the phases, whilst at the same time distributing free badges (pins) to discussion board members which are referred to as ‘blingage’ (6).

As this phase took place at the time of US mid-term elections, discussion about Flynn took a topical turn. Here the boundaries between fact and fiction were playfully traversed as Posters mused about voting for Flynn and hypothesised what Flynn would do, as well as expressing a wistful desire for fictional heroes in the absence of real world heroes. Posters maintained Flynn's profile and on the discussion board, he was the 'default' hero in both real world and fictional situations. There was a further revelation that another Poster was also a contemporary of Flynn, and an employee of Encom and, to justify the revelation, a discussion ensued about the virtues of having a 'man on the inside' (8). A distinction was drawn between Encom, which stole Flynn's intellectual property, and Poster 9 who acknowledges Flynn as the designer of Circuit Cycles, to reassure members of the discussion board that s/he is one of 'them'. This Poster also contributed to the sense of anticipation, 'Stay tuned.... I'll be rolling it out soon enough' (9).

Phase 6: **17th November – 15th December 2010**

In the days running up to the Thanksgiving holiday in November, the campaign entered its final phase. On the discussion boards the focus was on Sam Flynn, whose hero status was confirmed by the 'daredevil stunt' (12) of parachuting into the ARG Encom Press event. Discussion about Sam took the form of expressions of empathy for this character (who, remember, was yet to be seen in the forthcoming film release). They included 'Let's imagine' (3) story games that focussed on the new hero, Sam, in the 'Where's Sam?' format mirroring the earlier question surrounding his father– 'Where's Flynn?'. Posters expanded the biography for the new hero, storying his childhood and imagining what he was doing.

Plans for the final challenge known as Side Channel (but which was called various names on the board including 'side channel attack' and in a discussion thread 'phone phrenzy' but also 'supersurge' (1), and 'phone blitz' (9) and 'whatchamawhoozit' (10) were made to send a collective 'message' from the board to Flynn. Plans for this last stunt generated a sense of both anticipation and excitement, framed by the repetition of the word 'wait' as used by different members of the group as well as 'waiting' (2), 'the wait is on' (11) and 'sweating out this wait' (12) and 'No, no. NO. We literally can't wait' (3) to the extent that one Poster wrote 'so excited, seeing spots' (6) providing an excited crescendo of expectation at the end of the campaign.

Whilst the general thrust of discussion was forward into the future, threads in this phase insisted on Flynn's role in all this. Poster 1 attributed the last stunt to the old hero. 'This whole thing is based on a theory of Kevin Flynn's (naturally)' the Poster referring to a book written by Flynn as his source – even providing a scan of a page from the book, like a citation. Poster 8, who performed as a contemporary of Flynn, described taking a walk down memory lane to visit a place Flynn once visited and finding a clue which Poster 1 affirmed was the missing clue. This Poster interjected with stories from the past: 'Let me give it a spin. Back when I worked with Flynn…' and aggrandised Flynn still further by suggesting he may have built his own 'proto-type internet in one of those cramped offices'. In an audio

clip containing an extract from Flynn's *Digital Frontier* on the book site, Flynn made predictions about the future, from the past that seem implausible now to some Posters: 'Digital teleportation' – are you kidding me?' (11).

The final phase of the website campaign ended two days before the release of the film on 15th December 2010, and Posters expressed affection for the group in the final thread titled 'A Truckload of Thanks'. There was a sense of achievement from this shared experience, and an enduring sense of anticipation for the future in the campaign. The group themselves were the focus of the discussion board now - 'I kinda love everyone here' (2),'And the feeling is more than mutual, Girl' (3), 'Who's up for a virtual group hug' (4), and 'Had a great time with everyone here' (5). Poster 1 commended the group for 'our spirit and our drive' ascribing heroic characteristics not only to the characters from the film but to the discussion board contributors as well. The discussion board concluded with a quotation from Flynn by Poster 8 – 'I think I know what he would say: 'I told you so, man'.

Appendix 7: Thematic Analysis Interpretive Sketches 1-6

This appendix contains interpretive sketches – diagrammatic mappings of discussion threads over the course of the campaign. There are six interpretive sketches in total, providing a visual representation of the interests and dynamics within each of the six phases.

Phase 1: Threads 1-7 18th November 2008 - 3rd August 2009

Phase 2: Threads 8-16 12th February 2010 – 24th March 2010

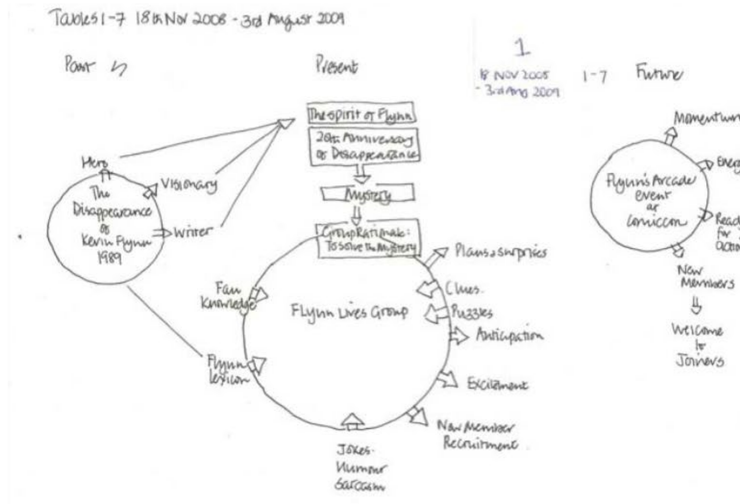
Phase 3: Threads 17-26 28th March – 10th April 2010

Phase 4: Threads 27-37 14th April – 13th May 2010

Phase 5: Threads 38-46 18th October – 13th November 2010

Phase 6: Threads 47-56 17th November – 15th December 2010

Phase 1



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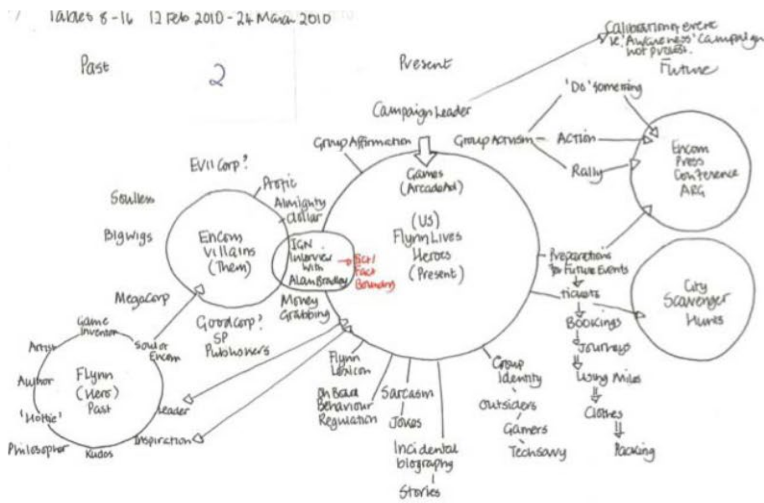

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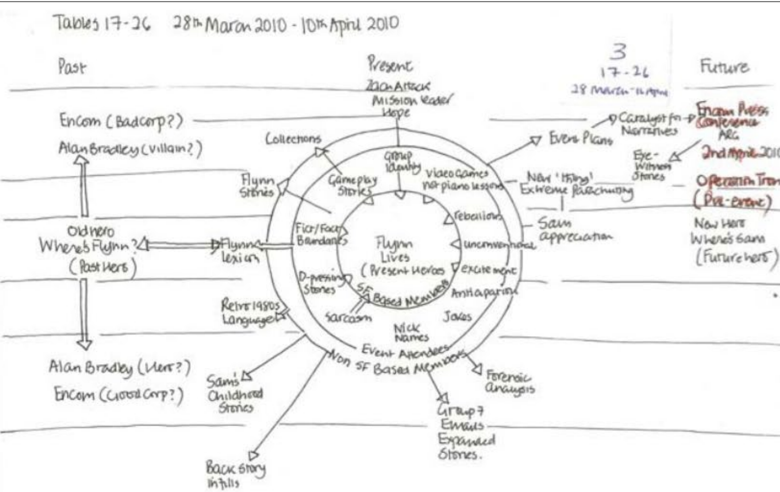

Phase 4

Phase 5

Phase 6