The Velvet Light Trap #91: Digital Storytelling

Announcement published by The Velvet Light Trap on Wednesday, November 10, 2021
Type:
Call for Papers
Date:
January 31, 2022
Subject Fields:
Cultural History / Studies, Digital Humanities, Popular Culture Studies, Women's & Gender History / Studies, Communication

Call for Papers

The Velvet Light Trap #91

Digital Storytelling

Digital environments have quickly become major catalysts in our shifting conversations about the ways narratives and stories are told across the media ecology. While scholarship on legacy media storytelling has traditionally been shaped by frameworks of text, audience, and industry, discourses of digital media storytelling show signs of growth and expansion as production and distribution of digital stories continue to rise in the 2020s. Notably, technology companies such as Facebook and Apple as well as those satellite corporate stakeholders which have investments in the digital technologies and storytelling strategies employed within the new media ecology have become significantly powerful players within this digital revolution. As technology companies blend and converge with the media industries, distinctions between story and medium have become harder to identify. Additionally, the evolving nature of storytelling throughout the new media ecology has and continues to influence the ways audiences engage with digital content.

Although topics related to digital storytelling have pushed many scholars to discuss streaming media technologies and culture, *The Velvet Light Trap* attempts to map out a broader and more comprehensive snapshot of digital storytelling. This issue welcomes submissions that connect concerns within the technology industries to the texts produced and distributed within the parameters of digital storytelling in the 21st century. The integration of technology and text can open up new discussions of contemporary storytelling while also recontextualizing older bifurcated studies with a more comprehensive lens. Traditional forms of media storytelling have been largely controlled by institutionalized major media companies who own the means to produce and distribute media. In television's case, linear transmission, scheduling, and the advertising model have led to formulaic storytelling models that have shaped the ways various genres and forms of television storytelling are produced with audiences in mind. However, the digital era has seen these types of institutional barriers broken down, expanding the ways in which stories can be told and diversifying who tells them. While certain limitations within the developments of technology and digital media have received scholarly criticism, this issue wishes to explore the expanding field of digital storytelling as

an articulation of the democratizing effect of the digital revolution as well as a site for critical engagement in issues focused on algorithms, surveillance, platform capitalism, and other digitally-forward concerns.

The Velvet Light Trap #91 seeks a variety of topics and approaches which include but are not limited to media industries, production culture, participatory culture, textual analysis, paratextual analysis, authorship studies, transmedia storytelling, media convergences, and contextual culture in analyzing storytelling within its respective digital environment. We welcome submissions that explore the shifting or newly emerging trends in storytelling in the broader media ecology, especially those that push the boundaries of formulaic legacy media storytelling and contextualize the changing modes of narratives within the new media environment, as well as any submissions that explore any of the following themes:

- Histories of digital storytelling, particularly on precedents of today's digital media ecology and practices
- Algorithm-based storytelling
- Binge-watching and its effects on episodic structures, seasonal structures, and seriality
- Storytelling in social media spaces such as Facebook and Instagram or in digital content spaces such as YouTube and TikTok
- Shifts and evolutions in transmedia storytelling
- Convergent gaming spaces, such as Fortnite
- Cyberspace, virtual reality, metaverse, and other emergent forms of digital storytelling
- Regulation in relation to digital storytelling, including digital copyright, creative commons, and intellectual property law
- Advancement in production technology, particularly in mobile media production, including GoPro, camera drones, and iPhones
- Analysis of short form and newer/alternative genres within the digital media environment
- Textual or genre analysis of particular programming or content within the digital media environment
- Industry strategies in relation to audience enticement and retention, including subscriptions to streaming content platforms, such as HBO Max, and specialty content services, such as OnlyFans
- Digital and social media marketing, including branded content in social media spaces
- Influences of participatory culture in online spaces on new modes of storytelling as well as its reverse effect on legacy media
- Influences of media convergence in legacy media and social media spaces on cultural storytelling
- Shifts in financing in relation to production shifts, particularly from legacy media to streaming and technology-based platforms
- Audience and fan studies in relation to the convergence of theater, television, gaming, and other cultural and media forms
- Changes and/or continuities in relation to computer graphics, animation, virtual effects, and other digital effects and the advancement of realistic or aesthetic expression

Submission Guidelines

Submissions should be between 6,000 and 7,500 words, formatted in Chicago Style. Please submit an electronic copy of the paper, along with a separate one-page abstract, both saved as Microsoft Word files. Remove any identifying information so that the submission is suitable for anonymous review. Quotations not in English should be accompanied by translations. Send electronic manuscripts and/or any questions to vltcfp@gmail.com by January 31, 2022.

About the Journal

TVLT is a scholarly, peer-reviewed journal of film, television, and new media. The journal draws on a variety of theoretical and historiographical approaches from the humanities and social sciences and welcomes any effort that will help foster the ongoing processes of evaluation and negotiation in media history and criticism. While *TVLT* maintains its traditional commitment to the study of American film, it also expands its scope to television and other media, to adjacent institutions, and to other nations' media. The journal encourages both approaches and objects of study that have been neglected or excluded in past scholarship.

Graduate students at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the University of Texas at Austin coordinate issues in alternation, and each issue is devoted to a particular theme. *TVLT*'s Editorial Advisory Board includes such notable scholars as Lauren S. Berliner, Dolores Inés Casillas, Aymar Jean Christian, Lisa Dombrowski, Racquel Gates, Daniel Herbert, Aniko Imre, Deborah Jaramillo, Lori Morimoto, Meenasarani (Linde) Murugan, Safiya Noble, Debra Ramsey, Bob Rehak, Bonnie "Bo" Ruberg, Avi Santo, Samantha Noelle Sheppard, Dan Streible, Neil Verma, and Alyx Vesey. *TVLT*'s graduate student editors are assisted by their local faculty advisors: Mary Beltrán, Ben Brewster, Jonathan Gray, Lea Jacobs, Derek Johnson, Shanti Kumar, Charles Ramírez Berg, Thomas Schatz (emeritus), and Janet Staiger (emeritus).

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