

# Welcome...



...to the Transmedia Branding Think & Do. Let's start with a question:

***What are the design and ethical principles that should shape branding in a trans-media environment?***

The goal of this Think & Do workshop is to come up with some answers. To facilitate that, we have organized a day full of discussion, play, and high-speed creativity. There will be presentations, but you will be giving them, on the fly, as you learn and create. But this won't be your standard conference or summit. Much of the day will be loosely structured and largely shaped by you, the group of experts we've invited to participate.

We've tried to bring together the perfect mix of participants to promote a stimulating experience around transmedia branding. Flip to the end of this document to see who you'll meet on October 26th.

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# Defining Transmedia



*There is no transmedia formula. Transmedia refers to a set of choices made about the best approach to tell a particular story to a particular audience in a particular context depending on the particular resources available to particular producers. The more we expand the definition, the richer the range of options available to us can be. It doesn't mean we expand transmedia to the point that anything and everything counts, but it means we need a definition sophisticated enough to deal with a range of very different examples. What I want to exclude from this definition is "business as usual" projects which are not exploring the expanded potential of transmedia, but are simply slapping a transmedia label on the same old franchising practices we've seen for decades.*

-Henry Jenkins, [Transmedia 202: Further Reflections](#)

## BRANDING IS NOT:

- A logo
- A company color
- Advertising
- Promotion
- “It is NOT just about getting people to choose your offering over the competition’s”
- Black Coffee Brand Expansions



## BRANDING IS:

- “A heartfelt connection” - Wiley Design Communications Inc.
- “Branding is the foundation of marketing and is inseparable from business strategy. It is therefore more than putting a label on a fancy product. Nowadays, a corporation, law firm, country, university, museum, hospital, celebrity, and even you in your career can be considered as a brand.” - Vincent Grimaldi de Puget, brand strategist at Griffin Partners
- “Branding is the experience marketers create to win consumers’ attention, a scarce resource.” - Jeffrey Harmon, Orabrush CMO
- “Branding is the sum-total of all the “experiences” your customers have with your business or products.” - Bryan Eisenberg, co-author of Wall Street Journal, Business Week, USA Today and New York Times bestselling books “Call to Action,” “Waiting For Your Cat to Bark?” and “Always Be Testing”
- “Branding is about shaping perception.” - Ashley Friedlein, CEO and Co-founder of Econsultancy
- “Branding is an ongoing process of looking at a company or product’s past and present to create a cohesive personality going forward.” – Lois Geller, Owner of Lois Geller Marketing Group & Columnist, ‘Marketing Matters More Than Ever!’ at Forbes.com

**“When people use your brand as a verb, that is remarkable.”**  
- Meg Whitman, CEO Hewlett-Packard



## So what do we mean by Transmedia Branding?

Packaging a brand into a narrative which is being communicated across mostly participatory channels, with the story and the media content morphing and developing as consumers and others enter the discussion.



# Spreadability

Spreadable media is media which travels across media platforms at least in part because the people take it into their own hands and share it with their social networks.

Two prime examples of spreadability can be found in the Kony 2012 campaign and the UC Davis pepper spray incident. The Kony 2012 campaign created a provocative and emotionally charged video was shared primarily via YouTube. The video received 41.3 million views by its fourth day online, March 8, 2012. To date, it has garnered over 93 million views. The UC Davis pepper spray incident occurred during an Occupy movement demonstration on November 18, 2011. The controversial nature of the incident and raw video footage were key to its spreadability. A Tumblr blog was created ([www.peppersprayingcop.tumblr.com](http://www.peppersprayingcop.tumblr.com)) to mock the incident.



*“If it doesn’t spread, it’s dead.”* – Henry Jenkins

## *The Transmedia Branding Research Group*

Recent advances in Internet and consumer technologies have not only changed the way people communicate with each other, but also how they interact with brands. Wide-spread adoption of social media paired with the ease of which media content can be produced, changed and distributed, have created a multi-directional web of conversations among stakeholders. This new engagement model has impacted all aspects of communication, including news consumption, political conversations, entertainment, and lastly, but not least, branding, leaving executives to ask:

- *What does the future of branding look like?*
- *Can these new engagement through media strategies increase its effectiveness?*

The Annenberg Innovation Lab is concerned with these issues as well. Led by Research Fellow, Prof. Burghardt Tenderich and working closely with industry, the newly founded transmedia branding research group explores how the principles of transmedia storytelling, and other kinds of transmedia motives (such as transmedia play or transmedia mobilization), can be applied to branding.

### **TRANSMEDIA STORYTELLING**

As a leading pioneer in media innovation, Prof. Henry Jenkins, Chief Advisor of the USC Annenberg Innovation Lab has developed the transmedia storytelling concept. Transmedia simply means across media. However coupled with storytelling, transmedia storytelling represents a process where integral elements of a story get dispersed systematically across multiple delivery channels for the purpose of creating a unified and coordinated experience. Ideally, each medium makes its own unique contribution to the unfolding of the story. Transmedia storytelling has been successful so far as a means of developing Hollywood entertainment franchises and most recently, new approaches to advertising.

### **TRANSMEDIA BRANDING**

USC Annenberg Innovation Lab's work on transmedia branding certainly draws upon the practices of transmedia storytelling, while also investigating other transmedia dimensions of branding through the lab's Think & Do ideation process.

## **The Transmedia Branding Research Group** *continued...*

From the storytelling perspective, transmedia innovation can enhance the effectiveness and reach of the brands in key ways such as:

- **Harnessing Collective Intelligence to Deepen and Evolve the Brand:** Transmedia storytelling techniques can use the collective intelligence of brand fans (and employees) working together to deepen, enrich, and even map the details of the brand's "storyworld" across media and from many different perspectives.
- **Promoting Participation as a Brand Value:** Transmedia storytelling's participatory focus can both help strengthen brand story engagement for consumers and employees and also promote meaningful participation (and the sense of brand loyalty that brings) as a core part of the brand's values.
- **Generating Spreadability:** One of Prof. Jenkins' latest concepts is that of spreadability, a more sophisticated alternative to the "viral" model of marketing and corporate communication. Transmedia collective intelligence and participatory techniques can greatly help the spreadability of brand messages.

### **PUSHING NEW MOTIVES FOR TRANSMEDIA**

The purpose of the newly founded transmedia branding research group is to explore how the principles of transmedia storytelling, and other kinds of transmedia motives, can be applied to branding. In working closely with industry and academia, the transmedia branding research group aims to define and propose initial frameworks and methodologies, based on real-world industry examples of innovative branding efforts.

The transmedia branding framework proposes that for an effective unified, coordinated corporate communication strategy today, collective intelligence and participatory audience techniques are crucial. These techniques embrace the role of active audiences to help collectively co-create, expand, and sustain communication in ways that can effectively capture and leverage the value of today's fragmented and ever-changing media landscape.

A goal of the research group for 2012-13 is to offer an innovative framework for better utilizing key technology and cultural convergence trends in the 21st century media industry landscape. There are increasing synergy potentials for major corporations as the variety of media channels and platforms continues to proliferate; while on the other side of that coin, the media consumer's attention seems ever more fragmented and difficult to engage across those different channels and platforms.



## What is a Think & Do?

The Annenberg Innovation Lab offers a Think & Do Process to foster an open space for people of varied disciplines and backgrounds to come together, effectively learn from each other, and create together.

The process starts with a focal question, a decision about the focus of the innovation: What are we trying to innovate? AIL in conjunction with a stakeholder in the final deliverable form a design team to guide the T&D process, synthesize participants' perspectives, and identify possible incubation projects.

Although each Think & Do workshop is unique, all are based on the same principles.

- **Thinkering** means to think about something by tinkering with objects relating to the innovation under consideration. It is unguided, exploratory and collaborative, and used to find solutions where none are obvious. In other words, it is an active form of thinking.
- **Multidisciplinary Participants** are critical. Key industry leaders, academics, customers, users and other stakeholders are invited. The participants are asked to come and be mentally present throughout the entire session, respecting the goal of the day and the resources allotted.
- **Curated Spaces and Provocative Questions** promote exploration. Think & Do workshops lead with a key question in order to spark dialogue with and proceed into creative activities to foster and explore broader themes embedded within the question. Other than this loose structure, each workshop is largely shaped by the group assembled and the materials at hand.
- **Play Matters.** As [John Dewey](#) says, "Knowledge is not a matter of having a set of facts; it is not a domain that stands apart from the world. Knowledge is the offspring of doing." Play is the most important work we perform at a Think & Do workshop. It is through play that we acquire basic knowledge and skills fundamental to our culture.
- **Place Matters.** It has an impact on how participants engage in the Think & Do experience and also in what is done going forward. Think & Do spaces have the flexibility to be transformed and foster a new culture of innovation, imagination and creativity. This physical space extends into the virtual with an additional suite of AIL tools.

**But, in the end**, the space is only as good as the people within it. Being part of a Think & Do workshop requires a willingness to be open and understand that change is a process. It not only requires expertise of many, but also a willingness to be humble and listen to others, to be ready for the unexpected and to challenge authority and the current standards of how things are and what they look like. We know, change doesn't happen by magic but by a community willing to think, play and participate.