



**GEMINIS**

[DOSSIÊ - TRANSMÍDIA: ESTRATÉGIAS E PROCESSOS DE CONSTRUÇÃO DE MUNDOS]

# LOST IN A TRANSMEDIA UNIVERSE

## **AARON MICHAEL SMITH**

*Interactive Media Planner at Wieden+Kennedy, where he works on both ABC Entertainment and Disney XD accounts. Smith helps coordinate digital, social, and mobile media initiatives to enhance television tune-in campaigns. He maintains strong ties to the academic world, speaking at conferences at MIT, USC, and Penn State University. Before W+K, Smith worked as a research consultant for Microsoft's Entertainment Platforms Division and as a Multimedia Specialist for Penn State University. He is a graduate of Middlebury College, USA and a recipient of the International Radio and Television Society Fellowship.*

*E-mail: [aaron.smith50@gmail.com](mailto:aaron.smith50@gmail.com)*

## RESUMO

Este artigo (previamente publicado como um capítulo de minha tese) analisa os mecanismos transmidiáticos de storytelling por trás da narrativa do seriado *Lost*, da ABC. Por ter sua narrativa sustentada em uma complexa mitologia, *Lost* faz um grande esforço para suplementar a narrativa de seu programa de TV através de valiosas e distintas extensões narrativas. Em um primeiro momento, eu examino como as técnicas de construção de mundo em *Lost* encorajam os fãs mais ávidos a “jogar” com o espaço narrativo. Eu então faço avaliações sobre as extensões que *Lost* oferece como opcionais, através de experiências convincentes em seus textos expandido. Ao ser muito bem-sucedida ao balancear seus fãs mais ávidos com os casuais espectadores, *Lost* representa o futuro de muitos programas de televisão que se propõem a colocar os fãs em situações imersivas, usando um vasto universo transmídia, ao mesmo tempo prometendo um programa de televisão coerente em seu interior.

**Palavras-Chave:** *Lost*, transmídia, construção de mundo, convergência, televisão.

---

## ABSTRACT

This article (previously published as a chapter of a thesis) analyzes the transmedia storytelling behind ABC's *Lost*. Because its narrative hinges on a complex mythology, *Lost* struggles to supplement a stand-alone television show with distinct and valuable narrative extensions. First, I examine how *Lost*'s worldbuilding techniques encourage hard-core fans to “play” within its narrative space. I then evaluate the extent to which *Lost* offers an optional, yet compelling experience through its expanded text. However successful at balancing casual and hard-core fans though, *Lost* represents the future of many television shows in that it strives to immerse fans within a vast transmedia universe while also promising an internally coherent television program.

**Keywords:** *Lost*, transmedia, world building, convergence, television.

## 1. Introduction<sup>1</sup>

**A**BC's *Lost* has been hailed as one of the most innovative and thrilling shows on television. In many ways, *Lost* represents entertainment in the "convergence era," embracing new technologies as tools for discovery rather than threats to intellectual property. In 2005, Disney set a new precedent by offering *Lost* on iTunes and streaming episodes from ABC.com. Within a year, *Lost* sold more than six million dollars worth of downloads.<sup>2</sup> William Brooker observes how these delivery formats encourage close scrutiny and analysis.<sup>3</sup> Just as VCRs helped hard-core fans unravel the *Twin Peaks* mythology, DVDs, DVRs, and file downloads make it possible to re-watch episodes, freeze-frame 'Easter Eggs', and easily investigate hidden clues with other fans. Brooker predicts that a television show's "overflow," or supplementary textual material, will soon play an integral role in the overall experience.<sup>4</sup> But what should that role be? *Lost*'s bold experimentations in the transmedia space, though not always successful, provide valuable insights into how television producers might expand the scope of their story and venture into the multiplatform environment.

When *Lost* first premiered, viewers expected the premise to be quite simple: a plane crash on a remote island causes 48 survivors to fight for survival. Yet after a rampant smoke monster, a polar bear running through the jungle, a sequence of numbers causing unimaginable bad luck, and a secretive group called the Others populating the island, no one knew exactly what *Lost* was going to do next. Nearly every episode focuses on a single character and reveals their back-story through flashbacks nested within the events on the island. Over and over again, *Lost* resists a conventional

---

1 This article is an excerpt of a undergraduate thesis "Transmedia Storytelling in Television 2.0: Strategies for Developing Television Narratives Across Multiple Platforms" submitted May 8th 2009 to Film and Media Culture Department of Middlebury College, advised by Jason Mittel. A complete and a discussable version of the thesis can be found at <http://blogs.middlebury.edu/mediacp/>.

2 Lowry, Tom. "Network finds marketing paradise with *Lost*." *BusinessWeek*. 24 July 2006. <[http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/06\\_30/b3994072.htm](http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/06_30/b3994072.htm)>

3 Brooker, Will. "Television Out of Time: Watching Cult Shows on Download." *Reading Lost: Perspectives on a Hit Television Show*. Ed. Roberta Pearson. London: IB Tauris, 2009.

4 Ibid.

formula, toying with seriality, shifting perspectives, and utilizing frequent time jumps.

There are many appealing aspects to the show: an international cast, compelling performances, exciting action sequences, clever dialogue, romance dramas, and of course, plenty of puzzles and mysteries. With its lengthy narrative arcs and multiple character storylines, both Steven Johnson and Jason Mittell have observed that *Lost* satisfies viewers' hunger for complex, intellectual, and "quality" entertainment.<sup>5</sup> Due to its complexity, however, *Lost* faced serious challenges as the writers' strike loomed and the hiatus between seasons grew longer. How could the show maintain its "buzz" and momentum in the off-season?

Damon Lindelof and Carlton Cuse, the showrunners on *Lost*, decided they would offer hard-core fans more insights into *Lost's* mythology through alternate reality games, mobisodes, novels, and a videogame. Ideally, this transmedia content would amplify the voice of *Lost's* evangelists and keep the show's mysteries fresh. As Damon Lindelof puts it:

Let's say I go to a Bruce Springsteen show, and he plays for four hours instead of two hours. Why? What is he getting out of it? Your ticket price is exactly the same. But what happens is, you go to work the next morning, and you say, I just saw the greatest fucking show of my life."<sup>6</sup>

By dispersing *Lost's* narrative across media platforms, Damon Lindelof and Carlton Cuse hoped hard-core fans would not only gain a greater appreciation for *Lost*, but they would also hype up the show and encourage non-fans to catch up. (which would not be too difficult given that every episode is still available on ABC.com) As Carlton Cuse told EW.com though, the *Lost* producers have learned from the pitfalls of previous mythology-driven shows:

What worries us about X-Files as a model...is that the show ran for nine years. Sustaining the mythology of that show ultimately led to it being frustrating for the fans.... [*Lost's*] mythology has to be accessible enough to casual fans, but also involving enough so loyal viewers feel like they're being fed.<sup>7</sup>

*The X-Files*, as discussed in Chapter 1, attempted to balance casual and hard-core viewers by combining episodic tendencies (with a monster of the week format) and

5 Rauch, Peter. "Is Popular Culture Good for You?" 6 October 2005. <[http://web.mit.edu/comm-forum/forums/popular\\_culture.htm](http://web.mit.edu/comm-forum/forums/popular_culture.htm)>

6 Poniewozik, James. "Why the Future of Television is *Lost*" *Time Magazine*. 24 September 2006. <<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1538635-3,00.html>>

7 Jensen, Jeff. "What to do? Lessons from Cult TV Shows." *Entertainment Weekly*. 11 April 2005. <<http://www.ew.com/ew/article/0,,1046376,00.html>>

serial threads (with an over-arching conspiracy). *Lost* attempts a much more ambitious strategy. Rather than trying to alter the narrative structure to please everyone, the producers aim to satisfy casual fans with a coherent television show while “feeding” hard-core fans deeper insights through ancillary content.<sup>8</sup> This chapter will evaluate the extent to which *Lost* achieves this balance. By examining the development of *Lost*'s transmedia universe, I will build on my proposed model in Chapter 3 and offer more specific strategies for applying transmedia storytelling to television.

## 2. The World of *Lost*

Though one could imagine *Lost* as a fictional version of *Survivor*, the producers went a step further by incorporating worldbuilding strategies. For one, *Lost* gradually and masterfully expands its hyperdiegesis. After much of the show's action was limited to the Losties<sup>9</sup> on the beach and in the caves, viewers were shocked when Sayid, an ex-Iraqi communications officer, stumbles into a trap set by Rousseau, a woman living on the island for sixteen years. This revelation – that the Losties were not the only humans on the island – introduced a larger mythology to the show. Rousseau reveals that she lives in isolation to avoid the dangerous “Others,” thereby expanding the world of forty-eight survivors to become a world complete with scientific expeditions and native, “hostile” people. Later in season 1, Rousseau discovers a British trading ship located inland on the island, introducing a history dating back to nineteenth century. And yet, *Lost*'s world continues to build. When Locke blows open the hatch in season 2, he also opens *Lost*'s world to encompass the underground scientific bunker of the Dharma Initiative. The man who lives there, Desmond, has been pushing a button every 108 minutes for 3 years in order to “save the world.” Finally, at that moment, *Lost*'s world was more than the events on the island—it was about all of mankind.

This “**gradual world progression**” has the powerful effect of stimulating viewers' imaginations. *Lost* begins with a small, contained hyperdiegesis and slowly expands outward to create a sense that the island has an extensive geographical, environmental, cultural, and chronological history. A useful analogy might be a role-playing computer game like *Baldur's Gate* or *Diablo*, where players can only see the immediate terrain in front of them amidst an abyss of darkness; that is, until the player moves forward, and slightly more of the spatial environment is revealed. Crucially though, *Lost* does not expand its world with definitive answers. It would have been

---

<sup>8</sup> The producers say the only true canon is the show itself. In Jensen, Jeff. “Lost: Mind-Blowing Scoop From Its Producers.” *Entertainment Weekly*. 20 February 2008. <[http://www.ew.com/ew/article/0,,20179125\\_5,00.html](http://www.ew.com/ew/article/0,,20179125_5,00.html)>

<sup>9</sup> A term for the 48 passengers of Flight 815.

very easy for Rousseau to know exactly who the Others were and why they were on the island. Instead, much of the *Lost* universe remains unseen and unknown, promoting the audience to do much of the world-building in their imagination.

The technique does more than open up a myriad of possibilities for narrative extensions as discussed with Geoffrey Long's notion of migratory cues (see 3.2) - it creates a "safe space" that is connected to the show, but not crucial to it. For example, *Lost* frequently references off-island institutions, such as Widmore Industries, the Dharma Initiative, Oceanic Airlines, and even a candy brand named Apollo. When Hurley, the comic-relief character, finds an abandoned Volkswagen van in the jungle, he notices that it's filled with beer cans marked by the mysterious octagonal Dharma Initiative symbol. Derek Johnson notes that this fictional institution enables a type of "reverse product placement" - whereby a fictional brand is promoted in the real world.<sup>10</sup> While this may represent a new branding model, I've argued that institutions lend themselves to transmedia extensions, especially alternate reality games, because they enable hard-core fans to participate in a space without interfering directly with the show's characters or events. In essence, once the Dharma Initiative carries over into various narrative extensions (such as "The Lost Experience"), the audience's activities take place in the hyperdiegetic world of *Lost*, rather than primary television narrative.

*Lost* also invites exploration by mirroring the conventions of videogames, a media form known for its worldbuilding strengths. Geography and topography play a huge role on the island. There are multiple 'levels' below and above ground, in bunkers, and on top of mountains. Man-made structures, statues, and stations are scattered throughout the spatial dimensions and temporal dimensions of the island. All of this encourages viewers to map out and navigate the space. One blogger even created extensive iconographical maps of events and structures on the island.<sup>11</sup> But whereas casual fans might be satisfied without knowing where the Black Rock wreckage is located in relation to the beach, hard-core fans crave more narrative information that would help them analyze the island's domain.

In his book *The Meaning of Video Games*, Steven Jones argues that *Lost*'s on-island narrative structure resembles a video game in the way characters embark on quests to 'unlock' new action and plot developments.<sup>12</sup> Jeff Pinkner notes on the special features of the season 1 DVD: "the island would be a dramatic version of a videogame...you could find the hatch but it could take you several weeks before you had the proper tools to open the hatch."<sup>13</sup> Indeed, Locke, a paraplegic before crashing on the island who is

10 Johnson, Derek. "The Fictional Institutions of *Lost*." *Reading Lost*.

11 ADKINS, Jonah. "The World of *Lost*." *Mapping Lost*. 27 January 2009. <<http://mappinglost.blogspot.com/>>

12 JONES, Steven E. *The Meaning of Video Games: Gaming and Textual Strategies*. New York: Routledge, 2008.

13 Quoted in JONES, Steven E. *The Meaning of Video Games: Gaming and Textual Strategies*.

miraculously healed after the crash, obsesses over opening the hatch in season 1. Then in “Deus Ex Machina,” Locke kneels over the hatch and expresses a similar frustration as many gamers who can’t seem to find a way to get to the next stage of the game: “I’ve done everything you’ve asked me to do! Whyyyyy?” Turns out, just like a video game, Locke and the Losties must go on a journey to find “the key.” They salvage dynamite from the Black Rock and blow open the hatch, moving on to the next level.

Throughout *Lost*, rarely do major events of one season happen in the same place or time period as another season. The characters are constantly traveling to a new location, often with a new goal in mind. Whether the Losties are moving to the caves, following Rousseau to the Black Rock, tracking the Others, getting back to the island, or planting a hydrogen bomb to change the future, they always seem to be navigating the narrative space in order to complete a mission.

Thus, *Lost* masterfully employs gradual world progression and borrows structural conventions of video games to create an environment that encourages exploration. This environment propels hard-core fans to seek out more information, draw connections, and gain a better understanding of the fictional world. If the Losties could discover new information by exploring new territories, fans could glean new insights by scouring the realms of transmedia extensions.

### 3. The Hierarchy of Mystery

As discussed in Chapter 3, narrative gaps leave room for transmedia expansion. But fans are often skeptical of endlessly deferred narratives. In his article, “Do you even know where this is going?” Ivan Askwith discusses one of the major debates surrounding *Lost* –whether or not the writers know where the show is going.<sup>14</sup> Ex-writer David Fury, in an interview with *Rolling Stone*, confirmed *Lost* fans’ worst fears when he insisted that *Lost* had no “master plan.”<sup>15</sup> In response, *Lost* writer Javier Grillo-Marxauch explained that television narratives are an ongoing, complex process:

The truth about all television shows – arc-dependent or otherwise, is that they are slightly amorphous living beings. They develop over time and things that work or don’t work are used or discarded accordingly... We allow ourselves the freedom to incorporate new ideas that improve and enhance our story.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> ASKWITH, Ivan. “Do you even know where this is going?” *Reading Lost*.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> This excerpt is from an interview with Grillo-Marxauch, who responded vehemently to David Fury’s claims that is no master plan to *Lost*. <http://www.digitalspy.co.uk/forums/showpost.php?p=23814082&postcount=45>

Grillo-Marxauch points out that the *Lost* writers plan a road map of the series from the very beginning, but leave many unanswered questions to be addressed later. For example, while the writers knew who the Others were early in the first season (Grillo-Marxauch claimed this was the case), they did not know who would be their leader until Michael Emerson delivered an impressive performance as Ben Linus.<sup>17</sup> Unlike films and novels, television is not the product of a single creative vision and thus certain elements must be left open for future development. Nevertheless, after *Twin Peaks* and *The X-Files*, fans worried that they were being duped and misled into following the show's mysteries without any set resolutions.

*Lost*, fundamentally, is a show about mystery. Cuse describes *Lost*'s uniqueness in its ability to maintain the power of the question in the age of the Internet where answers are often readily available:

What we've been able to do, which I think is different than most network shows, is leave certain things ambiguous and open to interpretation. And that allows people to get on the boards and theorize about what's meant by a given story or scene, or move in the show's direction. It allows people to feel participatory about the process.<sup>18</sup>

Askwith points out that unlike *Twin Peaks*, *Lost* provides adequate satisfaction by resolving some of the many mysteries, thereby assuring viewers that there are answers to the larger mythology.<sup>19</sup> The promise that 'everything happens for a reason' propels casual viewers to tune in each week and assures hard-core fans that it is, in fact, possible to figure everything out. It is a promise based on the logic that not all questions have equal narrative weight. *Lost* carefully plays with a hierarchy of mysteries made up of four types: **endlessly deferred, lingering, implied, and hidden**. Some mysteries are meant for all TV viewers, while others can only be detected by "forensic fandom".<sup>20</sup> I'm not suggesting that all mysteries can be applied to this hierarchy. Some fans may be more interested in the Others than the secrets of time travel. Though it is impossible to explain what types of mysteries appeal to a particular audience, these categories are useful when deciding how to present the narrative-pay off for a transmedia extension. Before examining this further, I must first provide a description of each type of mystery. It is worth noting that mysteries can move from one category to another—as

17 THOMAS, Rachel. "An Interview with Michael Emerson (Ben Linus/Fake Henry Gale, *Lost*)" *About.com*. <<http://tvdramas.about.com/od/lost/a/mikeemersonint.htm>>

18 HOEY, Matt. "All who wander are not *Lost*." *Written By: The Magazine of Writer's Guild of America, West*. September 2006. <<http://www.wga.org/writtenby/writtenbysub.aspx?id=2195>>

19 TV 2.0: *Reconceptualizing Television as an Engagement Medium*

20 Jason Mittell uses this term to describe the way that *Lost* encourages a 'hyper-attentive mode of spectatorship,' where hard-core fans become detectives, seeking out clues and assembling evidence. In Mittell, Jason. "Lost in a Great Story." *Reading Lost*.



the television show's narrative changes, some mysteries are emphasized, while others take a back seat.

The most important and tantalizing questions, as discussed in Chapter 3, are endlessly deferred mysteries, the essential mysteries of a show that are prolonged across seasons. What is the smoke monster and why is it terrorizing the island? What is the Island and why is it important? Who are the Others? Whereas *Twin Peaks* was tied down by one large-scale mystery, *Lost* incorporates multiple. Thus, in contrast to *Twin Peaks*, which collapsed after resolving its endlessly deferred narrative, *Lost* can afford to answer one or two major enigmas without hurting the show's appeal.

Lingering mysteries are mysteries that are important and memorable for casual viewers, but do not carry the same narrative weight as endlessly deferred mysteries. Crucially, casual viewers cannot use their imagination to satisfactorily fill in the gaps of lingering mysteries. Traditional television viewers may be distracted by new mysteries and plot lines, but they still expect answers to such questions as, What are the whispers in the jungle? Why do the Others refer to Walt as "special?" Who are Adam and Eve, the two corpses in the cave who had a small bag containing a black and white stone? The producers of *Lost* have admitted that some lingering mysteries will be left dangling, such as why Libby, Hurley's romantic interest, was in the same mental institution as him before they met on the island. Carlton Cuse told *Lostpedia*:

Everything is graded in terms of importance for us, and, as we are doing the last season of the show, it's not going to be sort of a didactic, you know, here's a list of a thousand questions that we're going to answer. That would not make for a very entertaining show...We are focusing on what we consider to be the main questions of the show and the main narrative. It's impossible to tie up every loose end...Libby's story is incredibly tangential to the principle action on the show.<sup>21</sup>

Indeed, not all lingering mysteries can be answered in the television show. But transmedia storytelling can explore tangential stories and provide answers to those fans who really want them. Of course, as I will discuss in 4.3, explicitly answering a lingering mystery in a transmedia extension is risky because casual fans expect such major questions to be addressed solely on the core television show. But because Libby's mystery is relatively trivial compared to the wealth of other enigmas, one could imagine her back-story presented in at least a web series.

Implied mysteries are less detectable to casual viewers. They are passing references to external people, places, or events, similar to Long's use of potential

---

21 Interview with The Ama1. *Lostpedia*. 17 April 2009. <[http://lostpedia.wikia.com/wiki/The\\_Lostpedia\\_Interview:Carlton\\_Cuse\\_%26\\_Damon\\_Lindelof](http://lostpedia.wikia.com/wiki/The_Lostpedia_Interview:Carlton_Cuse_%26_Damon_Lindelof)>

migratory cues.<sup>22</sup> The casual viewer often does not think to ask these questions or they can fill in the gaps with their own imagination. Yet hard-core fans of *Lost* have an interest in these questions. Where did Jack get his tattoos? What do the various elements of the mural in the hatch mean? What do the hieroglyphics represent? Who were the other people on the Flight 815? The latter question exploded on the show midway through season 3. The producers decided to introduce new faces to the Losties crew by introducing the back-story of Nikki and Paulo, two characters on Flight 815 who were not seen in the previous two seasons. As Damon Lindelof put it:

For Nikki and Paulo, we kept hearing fans saying, “What’s going on with the other 30 people on the island? Why don’t they go on any adventures?” And we were like, “That’s a good and legitimate gripe, and let’s see if we can figure out a way to get some of those guys into the show.”<sup>23</sup>

Fans were not receptive to these new, unlikable characters. They complained that Nikki and Paulo jarringly appeared with speaking roles and that they were forced into the show in order to waste time. The producers were dissatisfied with the characters as well, and decided to literally bury Nikki and Paulo alive in “Exposé.”<sup>24</sup> Indeed, sometimes implied mysteries are best left up to the imagination—or, better yet, to transmedia extensions. One might imagine the story of Nikki and Paulo in a videogame or series of mobisodes. That way, Nikki and Paulo’s back-story and island story could have been explored without upsetting the flow of the show. And with the validation effect, fans could have felt rewarded by Nikki and Paulo’s brief appearance, rather than appalled by it.

Finally, hidden mysteries are only noticeable to the hard-core fan who rewinds, re-watches, and freeze frames parts of an episode. These “Easter Egg mysteries” are thus only available through DVDs, DVRs, or the Internet. Often times, they act as clues to larger mysteries, but are mysteries nonetheless in and of themselves. For example, Why does the shark have a Dharma Initiative symbol on it? Why is Henry Gale’s balloon sponsored by Widmore, Mr. Cluck’s Chicken, and Nozz-A-La-Cola? Why does Eko, an ex-drug smuggler from Nigeria, see flashes of his life within the smoke monster before he dies? One of the most notable series of hidden mysteries occurred in “Lockdown.” In the episode, Locke is trapped under the blast door of the hatch when the black lights

<sup>22</sup> *Transmedia Storytelling: Business, Aesthetics, and Production at the Jim Henson Company.*

<sup>23</sup> MURRAY, Noel. “*Lost*’s Damon Lindelof and Carlton Cuse.” *A.V. Club*. 22 April 2008. <<http://www.avclub.com/articles/losts-damon-lindelof-and-carlton-cuse,14231/>>

<sup>24</sup> JENSEN, Jeff. “*Lost* in Transition.” *Entertainment Weekly*. 13 April 2007. <<http://www.ew.com/ew/article/0,,20034817,00.html>>

suddenly come on, revealing an ultra violet map. The contents of the map were illegible to the naked eye, since much of it was scribbled in Latin. But before any television viewer could begin to look at the writings, the lights came back on and the map was gone. Within hours, hard-core *Lost* fans freeze framed the image and translated the map in its entirety on Lostpedia, revealing the names of the six hatches on the island and their various descriptions.<sup>25</sup> But there were also new mysteries introduced by the map: Why are some of the writings crossed out? Why are many of the statements and locations on the map speculative? What does the station marked “unknown” do?<sup>26</sup> At the time of this writing, these questions have yet to be answered.

Sometimes fans interpret hidden mysteries even when they are not there. For instance, in “The Economist,” Sayid finds a metal bracelet on Naomi’s body. Many fans speculated that there was a connection between Naomi’s bracelet and the bracelet worn by a woman Sayid killed. The producers stepped in however, and announced that there was no connection: “sometimes a bracelet is just a bracelet.”<sup>27</sup>

This hierarchy of mystery allows different viewers to find an appropriate ‘level of difficulty’ in viewing the show. As Carlton Cuse explains:

I also think that it’s rewarding for the audience to not always be frustrated and behind. We have certain mysteries on the show that we hope the audience figures out on their own, and can have the satisfaction of saying “Aha! I knew that! I knew that the guy on the boat was going to be Michael!”...We intentionally mix up the degree of difficulty in solving the puzzle.<sup>28</sup>

By incorporating a hierarchy of mystery, *Lost* ensures that viewers can determine how deep they want to travel ‘down the rabbit hole.’ It is important, then, that transmedia extensions match the level of difficulty for their intended audience. In general, I would argue that transmedia extensions should primarily address implied and hidden mysteries, since television viewers are not as concerned with these. But transmedia extensions can also provide hints into endlessly deferred or lingering mysteries, allowing fans to construct their own theories and test them when *Lost* airs. In 4.3, I discuss how *Lost*’s transmedia extensions should address specific kinds of mysteries.

<sup>25</sup> Lostpedia is an online, collaborative encyclopedia for all things *Lost*.

<sup>26</sup> All these questions were discovered on Lostpedia. <[http://lostpedia.wikia.com/wiki/Blast\\_door\\_map](http://lostpedia.wikia.com/wiki/Blast_door_map)>

<sup>27</sup> JENSEN, Jeff. “Lost: Mind-Blowing Scoop From Its Producers.”

<sup>28</sup> MURRAY, Noel. “Lost’s Damon Lindelof and Carlton Cuse.”

## 4. Expanding the *Lost* Universe

*Lost*'s expanded universe includes new episode, diegetic artifact, and alternate reality extensions. Each extension attempts to balance contributing narrative information to the overall mythology while also standing alone as an individual experience. In this section, I will evaluate each type of transmedia extension based on how well they achieve this goal.

### 4.1. Licensed Novelizations

Tie-in novels are often the easiest way to cash in on a successful franchise. *Lost* experimented with three novels framed as new episode extensions, and one novel as a character artifact.

*Lost*'s first transmedia extensions came in the form of spin-off novels. Each of the three novels published during the show's first season focused on the history of a new character that had not appeared in the television program. The books were commercial and creative disasters, causing Damon Lindelof to say quite bluntly after reading one: "this is terrible."<sup>29</sup> The fans agreed. One reader commented:

This book is one of the worst books I have ever read, the author has no idea what's going on in LOST, and the portrayal of the characters is so off the mark that's it laughable. I was so disappointed in this book that I actually threw it out in the rubbish bin. If you like LOST and need something to do in-between seasons or episodes bang you head against the wall – it would be a far better use of your time.<sup>30</sup>

Indeed, the books offered no new insights on the greater mythology of the show, focusing instead on the back-story and experiences of off-screen characters. While this premise would be acceptable in theory, without the direction of the producers, the novels did not answer or provoke any of the island's mysteries and they often conflicted with details of the show. Thus, the tie-in novels frustrated, rather than answered the implied mystery of 'Who are the other passengers of Flight 815?'

In contrast to the spin-off novels, the *Lost* producers seemed to think that they could increase the value of a transmedia extension by placing a diegetic artifact within the mise-en-scene of the show. In the episode "Two for the Road," Sawyer sits on the beach reading a manuscript called *Bad Twin*. When the other survivors confront Sawyer to give back some stolen guns, Sawyer remains interested in the manuscript,

<sup>29</sup> TV 2.0: *Reconceptualizing Television as an Engagement Medium*

<sup>30</sup> Post by R. Bryant. *Amazon.com*. 17 June 2006. <<http://www.amazon.com/Lost-Signs-Life-Book-3/product-reviews/0786890924>>

saying, “I’m about to be the first and only guy to find out who done it. I think I’ve gotten it figured out!” Unfortunately, before Sawyer could reach the end, Jack tosses the manuscript into a fire and points a gun at a Sawyer, demanding that he return the stolen guns. To casual fans, there is nothing significant about the manuscript or its title *Bad Twin*. In fact, most television viewers are probably more interested in the conflict between Jack and Sawyer, a recurring theme throughout the first two seasons. But Gary Troup<sup>31</sup>, the credited author of *Bad Twin*, is actually a fictional character on board Oceanic 815 who died in the crash.<sup>32</sup> After “Two for the Road,” Troup’s book was released in bookstores and Amazon.com, offering fans the opportunity to figure out “who done it” themselves. The book jacket claims that Troup delivered a copy of his manuscript to a publishing company before his death:

Bad Twin is the highly anticipated new novel by acclaimed mystery writer Gary Troup. Bad Twin was delivered to Hyperion just days before Troup boarded Oceanic Flight 815, which was lost in flight from Sydney, Australia to Los Angeles in September 2004. He remains missing and is presumed dead.<sup>33</sup>

The positioning of *Bad Twin* within the *Lost* television show was successful in generating buzz and sales. Hard-core fans saw the manuscript as a “paratextual portal,” hoping it would unlock new levels of meanings and insights.<sup>34</sup> On May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2006, *Bad Twin* even reached #14 on *The New York Times* bestseller list.<sup>35</sup>

Yet despite the book’s successful integration into the *Lost* world, the story offered little explicit insights into *Lost*’s larger mythology.<sup>36</sup> According to *Variety*, Laurence Shames, the real author behind *Bad Twin*, ignored many of the *Lost* producers’ suggestions and wrote the novel according to his own ‘vision.’<sup>37</sup> This artistic incongruence illustrates the difficulties in collaboration across media divisions.

Though the story of *Bad Twin* revolves around the separated twins from the Widmore family (an institution in *Lost*), the book neither explicitly answers mysteries relevant to *Lost*’s mythology, nor does it allow fans to experience the core narrative in

31 Gary Troup is an anagram for “purgatory,” possibly a reference to the popular fan theory that the survivors were trapped there.

32 The producers claim he was the unfortunate man who was sucked into the engine during the opening sequence of “The Pilot Part 1.”

33 TROUP, Gary. *Bad Twin*. New York: Hyperion, 2006.

34 JONES, Steven E. *The Meaning of Video Games: Gaming and Textual Strategies*, 41.

35 LEE, Felicia R. “‘Bad Twin,’ a Novel Inspired by ‘Lost,’ Makes the Best-Seller Lists.” *The New York Times*. 27 May 2006. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/05/27/books/27lost.html>>

36 ASKWITH, Ivan. *Reconceptualizing Television as an Engagement Medium*.

37 ZEITCHIK, Steven. “Inside Move: It’s a Shames.” *Variety*. 18 June 2006. <<http://www.variety.com/article/VR1117945504.html?categoryId=14&cs=1>>

a different way.<sup>38</sup> Thus, *Bad Twin* was successfully integrated within *Lost*'s world, but it did not satisfactorily answer implied/hidden mysteries or provide new evidence for speculating about lingering/endlessly-deferred mysteries.

Nevertheless, Steven Jones argues that *Bad Twin* had a much different pleasure than simply searching for narrative clues.<sup>39</sup> Jones notes that blurring the textual and the outside worlds through "threshold crossing" results in new kinds of entertainment:

[The pleasure] comes from seeing the media crossings of fictional creations take place in real time and physical space—watching Sawyer read a manuscript on the show (on the island as it were) and at that moment, watching TV with a laptop in front of you, being able to find the material, hardcover book and traces of its author in the real world, at Amazon.com—but also the next day in a brick-and-mortar retail store; and then seeing that semi-real novel's fictions referred to in newspaper ads as if they were real.<sup>40</sup>

Jones' comments suggest that perhaps *Bad Twin*'s greatest accomplishment was expanding *Lost*'s universe into everyday life, allowing fans to take pleasure in crossing the threshold between worlds. In 4.3.3, I discuss the Lost Experience, which takes this threshold crossing to another level, enabling participants the opportunity not just to inhabit another world, but also to interact with it.

## 4.2. Videogames/Mobisodes

*Lost* also incorporated two highly anticipated 'new episode' extensions made for the screen. *Lost: Missing Pieces* consisted of 13 two-to-five minute "mobisodes" (mini-episodes made for mobile devices) occurring somewhere in the timeline of the first three seasons. Then, in 2008, Ubisoft released *Lost: Via Domus*, a video game incorporating many of the characters and locations from the first three seasons of *Lost*. Both extensions contributed narrative information in very different ways.

First, some of the *Missing Pieces* mobisodes were well-received. The mobisode "So it Begins" takes place before the very first scene of *Lost*, showing Christian Shepherd, Jack's father who was presumably dead, telling Vincent to wake up Jack immediately after the plane crash because he has "work to do." This suggests a host of questions: Is Christian dead? Was he responsible for bringing Jack to the island? Why does he have Vincent? The mobisode sparked massive speculation about Christian's role in the overall *Lost* mythology. Another mobisode assured viewers that the producers had not

<sup>38</sup> It should be noted however, that the significance of *Bad Twin* could be validated in season 6 of *Lost*.

<sup>39</sup> JONES, Steven E. *The Meaning of Video Games: Gaming and Textual Strategies*.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

forgotten about lingering mysteries. For example, in “Room 23” Juliet confronts Ben about Walt being “special.” We learn that Walt was in the brainwashing room named Room 23 and that his ‘gift’ had caused problems amongst the Others (i.e. killing birds).

Yet as a whole, the significance of the vignettes from *Missing Pieces* was unclear. The mobisodes avoided explicitly answering any mysteries introduced in the show and some scenes seemed completely irrelevant. In “The Adventures of Hurley and Frogurt,” viewers learn that Neil “Frogurt,” a minor character in the show, had an interest in Libby and threatened to take her away if Hurley didn’t “close the deal.” This rather trivial scene avoided vital narrative information, which frustrated many fans like blogger Jon Lachonis:

Mobisodes were a highly anticipated chunk of hiatus relief for island heads. Well, fooled you. The Mobisodes so far have most fans kvetching about the irrelevancy and down right LOST-lessness of the tidbits that are meant to traverse gaps in the story.<sup>41</sup>

Because they did not form a coherent story all their own, the fan community essentially understood the mobisodes as deleted scenes rather than transmedia extensions.<sup>42</sup> This made many fans feel like the producers were just tossing out useless scenes left on the cutting room floor. In contrast, consider the original idea for the *Lost* mobisodes series in which Hurley finds a Dharma camcorder, documents life on the beach, and discovers a new Dharma orientation film previously recorded.<sup>43</sup> This idea seems like a much more satisfying transmedia extension than *Missing Pieces*, which essentially filled in gaps that didn’t need filling. To truly get *Lost* fans buzzing, the show’s producers needed an experience, not a random group of trivial scenes.

The videogame *Lost: Via Domus* featured Elliot Maslow, a photojournalist from Flight 815, who conveniently loses his memory after the crash. Elliot explores the island and even interacts with familiar characters from the show. The *Lost* producers did not consider the videogame to be canon except for aspects of the environmental and spatial design.<sup>44</sup> Though it featured spectacular graphics, many players thought the game tried to be too much like a *Lost* episode with a gimmicky flashback structure and a short narrative length (for a game):<sup>45</sup>

41 LACHONIS, Jon. “Lost Mobisodes Unraveled.” *Ugo.com*. <<http://www.ugo.com/ugo/html/article/?id=18038>>

42 The mobisode “The Envelope” was, in fact, a deleted scene from season 3, only ‘canonized’ as part of the mobisodes.

43 LACHONIS, Jon. “Lost Mobisodes Unraveled.” *Ugo.com*.

44 JENSEN, Jeff. “Mind Blowing Scoop from Producers.” *Entertainment Weekly*. 20 February 2008. <[http://www.ew.com/ew/article/0,,20179125\\_5,00.html](http://www.ew.com/ew/article/0,,20179125_5,00.html)>

45 *Metacritic.com* 26 February 2008. <<http://www.metacritic.com/games/platforms/ps3/lost>>

The story was okay, but the game play was really bad. I did not feel like I was in the TV show at all. It felt more like a 24-esque game that just happened to exist in the *Lost* universe. If there is a next game, it needs to be more about exploring on your own, discovering things, almost like an *Oblivion*.<sup>46</sup>

*Via Domus* received an average reception from most critics; it didn't work as a gratifying game nor as a means to shed light on *Lost*'s secrets. Fans felt *Via Domus* forced them from point A to B, without any freedom to survey new territories. The game's value, from those who liked it, was from exploring pre-existing island locations and increasing their ability to conceptualize the island's spatial design. Thus, *Via Domus* did not specifically answer mysteries from the show, rather it functioned as a tool for *Lost* fans to speculate about mysteries, offering them the chance to re-examine the blast door map and hatches.

*Lost: Missing Pieces* and *Lost: Via Domus* both struggled to offer a stand-alone experience with a valuable narrative pay-off, as both extensions seemed to focus on preserving the core mysteries of the show. In their effort to make these narrative extensions non-essential, *Lost* sacrificed their narrative value. Yet one must wonder if the response to these narrative extensions would have been different if they were validated by the show in some way. What if Elliot was referenced in the show? What if the significance of "The Watch"<sup>47</sup> was explained? Perhaps *Missing Pieces* and *Via Domus* would have more perceived value if they were acknowledged by the show in some way.

### 4.3. Alternate Reality Games

*Lost* experimented with alternate reality games in between seasons, offering participants the chance to gain further insights on *Lost*'s mythology. The first alternate reality game for *Lost* was also the most ambitious. ABC launched a five-month interactive marketing campaign called The Lost Experience (TLE) that simultaneously allowed the *Lost* producers to present parts of the mythology unaddressed by the television show.<sup>48</sup> As Darlton (fan name for Carlton Cuse and Damon Lindelof) explained:

We sort of felt like the Internet Experience was a way for us to get out mythologies that we would never get to in the show. I mean, because

<sup>46</sup> Post by EkoIRC. *Lostpedia*. 22 July 2008. <<http://forum.lostpedia.com/did-you-like-game-t17119.html>>

<sup>47</sup> In the mobisode, "The Watch" Christian hands Jack a gold watch that belonged to Christian's father. Jack handed this watch to Hurley in season 1 to time a pregnant women's contractions, but the watch has not appeared since.

<sup>48</sup> Carlton Cuse explained that "there were certain stories that [we] were interested in telling that don't exactly fit into the television show." In Miller, Lia. "To Counter the Doldrums During Summer Reruns, 'Lost' Fans Can Get Lost in a Game Online." *The New York Times*.



this is mythology that doesn't have an effect on the character's lives or existence on the island. We created it for purposes of understanding the world of the show but it was something that was always going to be sort of below the water, sort of the iceberg metaphor, and the Internet Experience sort of gave us a chance to reveal it.<sup>49</sup>

Uncovering the clues and piecing together the narrative would take the talents of a collectively intelligent community, a challenge participants were more than willing to accept. Participants assisted Rachel Blake, a hacker/blogger, as she investigated the Hanso Foundation, the corporation financing the Dharma Initiative, and their crimes against humanity. The first stage involved exploring the Hanso Website and following hidden clues embedded by Blake. Blake then launched a video blog where she introduced her mission to stop the Hanso foundation and its top mastermind Thomas Mittelwork.

Soon after, Blake informed players that she had obtained incriminating evidence of Mittelwork's crimes when she filmed him at a Hanso meeting in Sri Lanka. To hide the evidence, she had dispersed pieces of the video across the Internet and asked players to uncover each fragment by gathering hieroglyphic symbols or 'glyphs' located online and in physical locations. These were planted everywhere from *Lostpedia* to *Lost Magazine* to Damon Lindelof's Comic Con bracelet.<sup>50</sup> When the glyph hunt was complete, players could finally see the full Sri Lankan video where major narrative revelations were revealed.

The Lost Experience consistently blended the real world with the fictional world. On *Jimmy Kimmel Live*, Hugh McIntyre, the communications director for Hanso, claimed "the writers and producers of *Lost* have decided to attach themselves to our foundation."<sup>51</sup> Jimmy Kimmel treated McIntyre as a "real" guest, allowing him to denounce the *Lost* TV Show and *Bad Twin* for misrepresenting the Hanso Foundation. Furthermore, at Comic Con, while Damon Lindelof and Carlton Cuse responded to questions, Rachel Blake suddenly accused the producers of fictionalizing the Dharma-Hanso agenda and not revealing "the truth." Both live events brought theatrical drama to a real life space, claiming that *Lost* was portraying real characters and organizations.

The Lost Experience featured a new set of characters; yet this time, the characters were not passengers on Flight 815. As I mentioned in 3.3.2, it is likely that

49 LACHONIS, Jon. "BuddyTV Interviews LOST's Damon Lindelof and Carlton Cuse - and gets Answers!" *BuddyTV.com*. 7 March 2007. <<http://www.buddytv.com/articles/lost/buddytv-interviews-losts-damon-4766.aspx>>

50 "The Lost Experience." *Lostpedia*. <[http://lostpedia.wikia.com/wiki/The\\_Lost\\_Experience](http://lostpedia.wikia.com/wiki/The_Lost_Experience)>

51 "The Lost Experience Clues: Clue #42 - Jimmy Kimmel Interview with Hugh McIntyre." *Lost Experience Clues Blog*. 25 May 2006. <<http://thelostexperienceclues.blogspot.com/2006/05/clue-42-jimmy-kimmel-interview-with.html>>

participants felt more comfortable interacting with a storyline that was not within the same narrative space as the *Losties*. As Derek Johnson notes:

It would nearly be impossible for The Lost Experience to construct any kind of meaningful interactive narrative in which all participants could be friends with Jack, Sawyer, and Kate without sacrificing the agency of those participants in the story world. By shifting the focus away from characters and towards institutions, the ARG sidestepped these obstacles, generating larger infrastructures that could be effectively shared by a wider range of participants.<sup>52</sup>

Johnson rightly points out the importance of institutions in TLE. Viewer-players can suspend their disbelief when they are positioned in the same universe as *Lost* (which in this case blends into everyday life), but in a uniquely separate narrative space of that universe.

As a reward for their efforts, participants of TLE were given answers to endlessly deferred mysteries—such as the significance of the numbers 4 8 15 16 23 42 and the original intentions of the Dharma Initiative on the island.<sup>53</sup> In doing so, TLE effectively became a requirement for fully understanding *Lost*. Television viewers who wondered about the recurring mysterious numerical sequence might expect to have an answer in the television show, though as of now, the answer remains unique to The Lost Experience. At the same time, *Lost* essentially treated endlessly deferred mysteries as if they were implied ones. That is, TLE made it seem like the answers to the numbers and the Dharma Initiative were a trivial side story, not crucial parts of the *Lost* mythology, upsetting hard-core fans who expected the new learned narrative information to be validated. At the time of this writing, *Lost* has failed to address the answers from TLE, though the producers have stated that the significance of the numbers and Dharma are in fact canon.<sup>54</sup>

Nevertheless, many *Lost* fans have indicated that participating in a community and tackling the challenges of TLE were far more rewarding than the narrative pay-off. As one fan put it:

Working on the TLE was one the most satisfying experiences of my entire life, as well as the most consuming. Over the course of the five-month span, an amazing community came together, most which still stands strong today. While the actual game play components were great, it was definitely the fan base and community that made the

52 “The Fictional Institutions of *Lost*.” *Reading Lost*.

53 Blake’s video revealed that the mysterious recurring number sequence was a series of variables in the Valenzetti Equation, an equation that calculated the time remaining until the human race destroys itself. The purpose of the Dharma Initiative was to somehow change one of those variables and save the world from destruction.

54 *Lostpedia*. <<http://lostpedia.wikia.com/wiki/Canon>>

event. Most of all, I loved leading a community based around one of my passions and making many, many, new friends that I still keep close contact today.”<sup>55</sup>

Difficult yet solvable challenges brought together a community and allowed fans to form social connections with one another. In *Deconstructing the Lost Experience*, Askwith suggests that ARGs should “build communities, not audiences,” highlighting how TLE provided the foundation for a community to collaborate, combine talents, and form friendships.<sup>56</sup> According to Askwith, “To get the greatest possible value of ARGs, [an ARG creator should] design challenges and game mechanics that acknowledge these communities, and give them compelling reasons to work together.”<sup>57</sup> Indeed, it is the power of social connections from an alternate reality game that outlast any possible narrative revelation.

As popular as TLE was amongst *Lost* fans, ARG players unfamiliar with the show were less impressed. Jason Mittell points out that ARGs are not traditionally tied to a pre-existing narrative, nor are they supposed to generate mainstream buzz and press.<sup>58</sup> Loyal *Lost* fans expected insights into the show and ARG fans expected a traditional ARG experience. This suggests that transmedia storytelling is not at a point where non-fans can enter a transmedia narrative from any extension, as Jenkins’ definition for transmedia storytelling might suggest. Instead, extensions like TLE are best suited for enhancing the television show for hard-core fans and enriching their viewing experience. TLE may have accomplished its goal of strengthening a community, but as Mittell points out, the narrative capabilities of ARGs and serial television shows are often too incongruent with one another.<sup>59</sup>

After *The Lost Experience*, *Lost* launched Find 815 in the months leading up to season 4. The game involved alternate reality elements and presumably served as a means to get people talking about the show again. Find 815’s story line revolved around a technician named Sam Thomas, who embarks on journey to find Sonya, the love of his life and a flight attendant on Oceanic 815. Unlike TLE, Find 815’s goal was not to answer endlessly deferred mysteries, but to foreshadow the mysteries of season 4. The ARG’s conclusion showed a salvage ship known as the ‘Christiane 1’ discovering the wreckage of Oceanic 815 in the Sunda Trench of the Indian Ocean. How could the plane be at the bottom of the ocean if it crashed on the island?

---

55 JOHNSTON, Amy and LACHONIS, Jon. *Lost Ate My Life: The Inside Story of a Fandom Like No Other*. Toronto: ECW Press, 2008.

56 ASKWITH, Ivan. *Deconstructing the Lost Experience*. Cambridge, MA: Convergence Culture Consortium, 2006.

57 Ibid., 24.

58 MITTELL, Jason. “Lost in an Alternate Reality.” *Flow TV* 4.7 (2006) <<http://flowtv.org/?p=165>>

59 Ibid.

Rather than handing fans a packaged answer to a large scale mystery like TLE, the ending to Find 815 gave fans enough clues to discover the answer to a lingering mystery on their own, albeit in theory form. In other words, the game did not explicitly say that the reason for the wreckage in the ocean was because Widmore faked the plane crash, but fans were able to deduct such a hypothesis from the clues of the game and previous episodes. One blogger posted his/her train of thought in arriving at this conclusion:

First, from an earlier stage, we learned that The Maxwell Group is a subsidiary of Widmore Industries. Second, we know that whatever ship Naomi came from is not Penny's boat. Also, Naomi was in possession of the picture of Desmond and Penny. *Using these pieces of evidence, I am capable of coming to only one conclusion.* Charles Widmore, the only other person in the world other than Penny or Desmond capable of possessing that photo, staged the fake plane in the bottom of the ocean for the purpose of ending Sam Thomas' and any other concerned party's search for Oceanic 815...There is only one Oceanic 815. This is all just a result of a conspiracy. That seems plainly evident to me, thanks to the knowledge that Sam was practically forced to go to those coordinates by The Maxwell Group.<sup>60</sup> (my emphasis)

It is unclear whether the game designers intended for fans to discover the Widmore conspiracy on their own. But many fans were able to use their collective intelligence to solve this lingering question from season 3. Specifically, fans who played Find 815 could hypothesize why Naomi, a woman who landed on the island from the outside world, knew that the 815 plane wreckage and passenger bodies were already found. The answer—that Widmore faked the plane crash—was not explained on the television show until well into season 4. Yet Find 815 players were not surprised by this twist.

In addition to raising speculation about lingering mysteries, Flight 815 directly addressed future implied mysteries. The first scene of season 4 picked up where Find 815 left off as viewers saw the *Christiane 1* hover over the wreckage of Oceanic Flight 815. Many implied mysteries were raised in this scene: What was the ship doing in this area? Where and how did they find the wreckage? Why didn't the *Christiane 1* try to recover the bodies? All of these mysteries, though probably not a major concern to casual fans, were answered over the course of Find 815's campaign. Furthermore, a news story explicitly mentions the *Christiane 1* on television. Fans seemed to be happy with the validation:

---

<sup>60</sup> Post by HipsterDoofus. *Dark UFO*. 31 January 2008. <<http://find815.blogspot.com/>>

I don't know about anyone else, but I thought it was really cool having played this whole game, hearing them mention the *Christiane I* in tonight's episode, and then seeing these clues pop up in the show. It really makes the whole thing worth it, even if it was a little tangential.<sup>61</sup>

This suggests that even an unsatisfactory extension can be deemed valuable if it is validated in some way. Fans want to feel like their actions matter, not like their being duped into a marketing scheme. This was important because *Find 815* had serious game play problems. Many of *Find 815*'s clues were too easy and involved simple tasks. As one fan posted on *Unfiction.com*:

So far there hasn't been anything more complicated than a pictorial scavenger hunt with a flashlight- I'm kind of thinking we're due though. The last TLE game involved ASCII decryptions and stenography and all kinds of cool code breaking challenges- I'm looking for something more complex in the billboards as well and even if the phone message turns out to be nothing, I sure hope the organizers didn't "dumb down" the game since the last TLE experiment!!!<sup>62</sup>

Unfortunately, after the precedent set by TLE, many fans were dissatisfied with *Find 815*'s linear game play and underwhelming challenges. Rather than piecing together videos through activities like 'the glyph hunt,' much of *Find 815* involved clicking on random objects to unlock additional videos. In addition, *Find 815* used far less threshold crossing than *The Lost Experience*. One fan posted at *Unfiction.com*:

There is no "alternate" in this reality - at no point in the game is the player made to wonder whether any of this is real, or caused to suspend his disbelief. Much to the contrary - a player is able to check his progress in the game. Sam either stays on the boat or doesn't based on the player's completing a flash puzzle. That does not happen in real life, and there is nothing "alternate" about it...You click, get a green square in the progress bar, and are notified as to how many hours are left until the next clue release.<sup>63</sup>

For many fans, the game play of *Find 815* felt too linear and constricted. Yet I would argue the major lesson to take away from *Find 815* is how it framed its narrative pay-off. The game gave hard-core fans the necessary information to construct the theory that Widmore faked the plane crash. This caused massive debate, as fans attempted to weigh the evidence in support of or against this theory. Facilitating 'informed guesses' in a transmedia extension effectively does two things. First, it enables hard-core fans

61 Post by Clue Hunt. *Dark UFO*. 8 February 2008. <<http://find815.blogspot.com/>>

62 Post by Nelbot. *Unfiction*. 3 January 2008. <<http://forums.unfiction.com/forums/viewtopic.php?t=22925&start=315>>

63 Post by yanka. *Unfiction*. 9 January 2008. <<http://forums.unfiction.com/forums/viewtopic.php?p=455936#455936>>

to use their collective intelligence not just to find the answers, but also to theorize and debate the answers. This engages a community and adds a game-like quality to seeing who was right and who was wrong when the television show airs. Also, because the conspiracy theory was still a theory, hard-core fans could not spoil the information to casual fans with any merit. Thus, the revelation from Find 815 was essentially an ‘unconfirmed spoiler.’

There may be an additional pleasure for hard-core fans in discovering a narrative pay-off without knowing exactly how it relates to the core narrative, and then watching the show to see how it is validated. Validations call attention to the process of narration, as they deliberately bring the transmedia story’s constructedness to the forefront. It is what Jason Mittell calls the “operational aesthetic” in which viewers take pleasure in the question “How did the writer’s do that?” in addition to “What will happen next?”<sup>64</sup> If a transmedia extension is canon (and that is a big ‘if’), then hard-core fans can wonder not whether or not the narrative pay-off will be validated, but *how* it will be validated. They can enjoy observing how the transmedia “machine” operates, how the producers tie together plot lines from a range of media and form a unified whole, all while casual fans focus solely on the television show’s core narrative. In this way, validations have potential to be admired as an innovative technique that allow producers to quietly embrace hard-core fans.

In the most recent ARG, between season 4 and 5 of *Lost*, an unknown source attempted to re-launch the Dharma Initiative in what was simply known as “The Project. The game began with a commercial advertisement for “Octagon Global Recruiting,” a volunteer recruiting organization for the Dharma Initiative. Participants logged into the website and took a series of tests. At the conclusion of the game, players were given a job from the Dharma Initiative based on their score.

The Project combined poor game play and little narrative pay-off. In one of the few implied mysteries addressed, a video at Comic Con revealed that Pierre Chang, the Dharma scientist who hosts ‘Orientation films,’ was “a professor of theoretical astrophysics” and that he was brought to the island to study the Kerr Metric solutions to Einstein’s Field Equations.<sup>65</sup> In the video, Chang explains that he is speaking 30 years in the past and that the Dharma initiative must continue its work in the present time. This mystery was never fleshed out however. After the financial crisis, an e-mail explained that the Dharma Initiative had been sold to *Lost*. One fan vented on Lostpedia’s forum:

---

64 MITTELL, Jason. “Narrative Complexity in Contemporary American Television.” *The Velvet Light Trap*. 58 (2006): 29-39

65 “Pierre Chang.” *Lostpedia*. <<http://lostpedia.wikia.com/wiki/Chang>>

If it is the end of the ARG, and I think it is, that email was just a huge slap in the face to all of us...we spent the whole summer pouring over everything for nothing, nothing was revealed, we didn't get any new knowledge from the ARG about LOST, and we've all just pretty much wasted our time for it to be ended in an email so uncharacteristic of the rest of the game. It's a bunch of bullpoo!<sup>66</sup>

This lack of narrative pay-off was only one of the problems plaguing the Project. Fans complained there were technical issues, uninteresting game play, and a lack of a storyline:<sup>67</sup>

The 'no storyline' is the biggest problem, I mean, I haven't the slightest idea about what I could have learned about Lost or the [Dharma Initiative.] (the only thing I've learned so far is how to solve a tangram very quickly and I don't think that's the intention of this ARG).<sup>68</sup>

Whereas *The Lost Experience* offered a compelling, community building experience, and *Find 815* successfully provided a valuable yet non-required narrative pay-off, *The Dharma Project* achieved neither. Ultimately, the game seemed to be more like something-to-do for casual fans who went on the Internet rather than a distinct addition to the *Lost* universe. Damon Lindelof told *Lostpedia*:

Essentially the whole idea was to...strongly imply that our characters were going to appear in Dharma times. So that would be something that would be sort of set up in the Internet experience...These events are sort of partially canon but more promotional than they are canon. Giving the audience a sneak peak as to what the season is about.<sup>69</sup>

The Project had similar goals as *Find 815*—to foreshadow future events in the show—but because the game ended early, it is impossible to evaluate as a complete transmedia extension. Nevertheless, after *The Lost Experience* provided answers to crucial mysteries, it seemed the producers were hesitant to provide any significant narrative information that might upset traditional television viewers.<sup>70</sup> Their solution, like most of television, was to frame all narrative content outside the television show as non-canonical. Yet I have argued that a better solution to balancing hard-core and

66 Post by YouAreEverybody21. *Lostpedia Forums*. 19 November 2008. <<http://forum.lostpedia.com/so-arg-nothing-t20486p2.html?t=20486&page=2>>

67 Ibid.

68 Post by Ms. O's. *Dark UFO*. 9 October 2008. <<http://lostoctagonglobalrecruiting.blogspot.com/2008/10/whats-biggest-problem-you-have-with-arg.html#comments>>

69 Interview with TheAma1. *Lostpedia*. 17 April 2009.

<[http://lostpedia.wikia.com/wiki/The\\_Lostpedia\\_Interview:Carlton\\_Cuse\\_%26\\_Damon\\_Lindelof](http://lostpedia.wikia.com/wiki/The_Lostpedia_Interview:Carlton_Cuse_%26_Damon_Lindelof)>

70 ASKWITH, Ivan. *TV 2.0: Reconceptualizing Television*.

casual fans is not to write off transmedia extensions as promotional, but to focus on how they can be original and optional at the same time.

## Bibliography

ABBOT, Stacey. "How Lost found its audience: The Making of a Cult Blockbuster." **Reading Lost: Perspectives on a Hit Television Show.** Ed. Roberta Pearson. London: IB Tauris, 2009.

ADKINS, Jonah. "The World of Lost." **Mapping Lost.** <<http://mappinglost.blogspot.com/>> 27 January 2009.

"Advertising the Digital Age." **Team Digital Company Blog.** <<http://promotions2.com/2009/new-rules-of-advertising-in-the-digital-age/>> 13 March 2009.

AHRENS, Frank. "Final 'Star Wars' Caps Moneymaking Empire." **The Washington Post.** 14 May 2005 <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wpdyn/content/article/2005/05/13/AR2005051301512.html>>

ARANGO, Tim. "Broadcast TV Faces Struggle to Stay Viable." **The New York Times.** <[http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/28/business/media/28network.html?\\_r=3](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/28/business/media/28network.html?_r=3)> 27 February 2009.

ASKWITH, Ivan. **Deconstructing the Lost Experience.** Cambridge, MA: Convergence Culture Consortium, 2006.

\_\_\_\_\_. **This Is Not (Just) An Advertisement: Understanding Alternate Reality Games.** Cambridge, MA: Convergence Culture Consortium, 2006.

\_\_\_\_\_. **Television 2.0: Reconceptualizing TV as an Engagement Medium.** Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Master's Thesis, 2007.

AUSTIN, Alec. **Expectations Across Entertainment Media.** Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Master's Thesis, 2007.

BORLAND, John. "The TV Is Dead. Long Live the TV." **Wired.** <[http://www.wired.com/entertainment/hollywood/news/2007/04/tvhistory\\_0406](http://www.wired.com/entertainment/hollywood/news/2007/04/tvhistory_0406)> 6 April, 2007.

**Boxofficemojo.com.** <<http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=blairwitchproject.htm>>

BROOKER, Will. "Television Out of Time: Watching Cult Shows on Download."



**Reading Lost:** Perspectives on a Hit Television Show. Ed. Roberta Pearson. London: IB Tauris, 2009

CALDWELL, John. "Convergence Television: Aggregating Form and Repurposing Content in the Culture of Conglomeration." **Television After TV: Essays on a Medium in Transition**. Eds. Lynn Spigel and Jan Olsson. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004. 41-75.

CARTER, Bill. "The Media Business: 'Twin Peaks' May Provide A Ratings Edge for ABC." **The New York Times**. 16 April 1990. <<http://www.nytimes.com/1990/04/16/business/the-media-business-twin-peaks-may-provide-a-ratings-edge-for-abc.html?sec=&spon=>>

CERASINI, Marc and Alfonsi, Alice. **The House Special Subcommittee's Findings at CTU**. New York: Harper Collins, 2003.

**Dark UFO**. <<http://darkufo.blogspot.com/>>

DAWSON, Max. "Little Players, Big Shows: Format, Narration, and Style on Television's New Smaller Screens." **Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Technologies** 13.3 (2007): 230-250.

DENA, Christy. "How the Internet is Holding the Centre of Conjured Universes." Paper presented at **Internet Research 7.0: Internet Convergences**, Association of Internet Researchers. Brisbane, Queensland, 27-30 September 2006.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Patterns in Cross-Media Interaction Design: It's Much More than a URL... (Part 1)" **UniverseCreation101.com**. March 10, 2007. <http://www.universecreation101.com/category/arg/page/6/>

\_\_\_\_\_. "Techniques for Segmenting Content Across Media." **Christydena.com**. <<http://www.christydena.com/2008/09/techniques-for-segmenting-content-across-media/>> September 4Th 2008

DOVEY, Jon and Kennedy, Helen W. **Game Cultures: Computer Games as New Media**. New York: Open University Press, 2006.

EVANS, Elizabeth Jane. "Character, Audience Agency and Transmedia Drama." **Media Culture & Society**. 30, 2 (2008): 197-213

FISHER, Ken. "NBC Universal chief calls for 'Net-savvy TV pitches'" **Ars Technica**. 13 March 2006. <<http://arstechnica.com/old/content/2006/03/6369.ars>>

FISKE, John. **Television Culture**. New York: Routledge, 1987.

FORD, Sam. "Futures of Entertainment: Transmedia Properties." *Convergence Culture Consortium Weblog*. <[http://www.convergenceculture.org/weblog/2006/11/foe\\_transmedia\\_properties.php#more](http://www.convergenceculture.org/weblog/2006/11/foe_transmedia_properties.php#more)> 17 November 2006.

GERSTMANN, Jeff. "Enter the Matrix Review." **Gamespot.com**. 20 May 2003.

<<http://www.gamespot.com/pc/action/enterthematrix/review.html?page=2>>

GOLDMAN, Eric. "Battlestar Galactica Producer Talks Strike." **Ign.com**. 7 November 2007. <<http://tv.ign.com/articles/833/833633p1.html>>

GRAY, Jonathan and MITTELL, Jason. "Speculation on Spoilers: Lost Fandom, Narrative Consumption and Rethinking Textuality." **Particip@tions**. 4.1, 2007 <[http://www.participations.org/Volume%204/Issue%201/4\\_01\\_graymittell.htm](http://www.participations.org/Volume%204/Issue%201/4_01_graymittell.htm)>

GREENBERG, Andy. "Star Wars' Galactic Dollars." **Forbes.com**. <[http://www.forbes.com/2007/05/24/star-wars-revenues-tech-cx\\_ag\\_0524money.html](http://www.forbes.com/2007/05/24/star-wars-revenues-tech-cx_ag_0524money.html)> 24 May 2007.

GWENLLIAN-JONES, Sara and PEARSON, Roberta. **Cult Television**. Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 2004.

HAYWARD, Jennifer. **Consuming pleasures: active audiences and serial fictions from Dickens to soap opera**. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1997.

HELM, Burt. "Why TV Will Never Be the Same." **Business Week**. 23 November 2004. <[http://www.businessweek.com/technology/content/nov2004/tc20041123\\_3292\\_tc184.htm](http://www.businessweek.com/technology/content/nov2004/tc20041123_3292_tc184.htm)>

HILL, Matt. **Fan Cultures**. New York: Routledge, 2002.

HOEY, Matt. "All Who Wander Are Not Lost." Written By: **The Magazine of the Writer's Guild of America**, West. September 2006. <<http://www.wga.org/writtenby/writtenbysub.aspx?id=2195>>

JENKINS, Henry. **Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide**. New York: New York University Press, 2008.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Convergence? I Diverge." **MIT Technology Review**. June 2001. <<http://www.technologyreview.com/business/12434/>>

\_\_\_\_\_, Ravi Purushotma, Katherine Clinton, Margaret Weigel, and Alice Robison. **"Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture: Media Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century."** White Paper for MacArthur Foundation, 2006.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Do You Enjoy Making The Rest of Us Feel Stupid?": alt.tv.twinpeaks, the

Trickster Author, and Viewer Mastery." **Full of Secrets: Critical Approaches to Twin Peaks**. Ed. David Lavery. Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1995. 51-69.

\_\_\_\_\_. **Fans, Bloggers, and Gamers: Exploring Participatory Culture**. New York: New York University Press, 2006.

\_\_\_\_\_. Jenkins, Henry. "Game Design as Narrative Architecture." **First Person: New Media as Story, Performance, and Game**. Eds. Noah Wardrip-Fruin and Pat Harrigan. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2004. 118-120.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Getting Lost." **Henryjenkins.org**. 25 August 2006. <[http://www.henryjenkins.org/2006/08/getting\\_lost.html](http://www.henryjenkins.org/2006/08/getting_lost.html)>

\_\_\_\_\_. "Inviting Our Participation: An Interview with Sharon Marie Ross (Part One)." **Henryjenkins.org**. 8 October 2008. <[http://henryjenkins.org/2008/10/an\\_interview\\_with\\_sharon\\_marie.html](http://henryjenkins.org/2008/10/an_interview_with_sharon_marie.html)>

\_\_\_\_\_. Jenkins, Henry. "Producing the CSI:NY/Second Life Crossover: An Interview with Electric Sheep's Taylor and Krueger (1 of 2)." **Henryjenkins.org**. 24 October 2007. <[http://www.henryjenkins.org/2007/10/producing\\_the\\_csinysecond\\_life.html](http://www.henryjenkins.org/2007/10/producing_the_csinysecond_life.html)>

\_\_\_\_\_. "Talking Transmedia: An Interview With Starlight Runner's Jeff Gomez (part one)." 28 May 2008. **Henryjenkins.org** <[http://henryjenkins.org/2008/05/an\\_interview\\_with\\_starlight\\_ru.html](http://henryjenkins.org/2008/05/an_interview_with_starlight_ru.html)>

\_\_\_\_\_. **Textual Poachers: Television Fans & Participatory Culture**. New York: Routledge, 1992.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Transmedia Storytelling." **MIT Technology Review**. 15 January 2003. <<http://www.technologyreview.com/biomedicine/13052/page3/>>

JENSEN, Jeff. "Lost in Transition." **Entertainment Weekly**. <<http://www.ew.com/ew/article/0,,20034817,00.html>> 13 April 2007.

\_\_\_\_\_. "'Lost': Mind-Blowing Scoop From Its Producers." **Entertainment Weekly**. <[http://www.ew.com/ew/article/0,,20179125\\_5,00.html](http://www.ew.com/ew/article/0,,20179125_5,00.html)> 20 February 2008.

\_\_\_\_\_. "What to do? Lessons from Cult TV Shows." **Entertainment Weekly**. 11 April 2005. <<http://www.ew.com/ew/article/0,,1046376,00.html>>

JOHNSON, Derek . "Inviting Audiences In: The spatial reorganization of production and consumption in 'TVIII'." **New Review of Film and Television Studies**. 5, 1, 2007: 61-80.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Fictional Institutions of *Lost*: World Building, Reality, and the Economic Possibilities of Narrative Divergence." **Reading Lost: Perspectives on a Hit Television Show**. Ed. Roberta Pearson. London: IB Tauris, 2009.

JOHNSTON, Amy and LACHONIS, Jon. **Lost Ate My Life: The Inside Story of a Fandom Like No Other**. Toronto: ECW Press, 2008.

JONES, Steven E. "**Dickens on Lost: Text, Paratext, Fan Based Media.**" Loyola University, Chicago. <[www.rc.umd.edu/reference/wcircle/sejones.pdf](http://www.rc.umd.edu/reference/wcircle/sejones.pdf)> 22 May 2007.

\_\_\_\_\_. **The Meaning of Video Games: Gaming and Textual Strategies**. New York: Routledge, 2008.

JUUL, Jesper. "The Open and the Closed. Games of Emergence and Games of Progression." **Computer Games and Digital Cultures Conference Proceedings**. Ed. Frans Mäyrä. Tampere: Tampere University Press, 2002. 323-329.

KINDER, Marsha. **Playing with Power in Movies, Television and Video Games: From Muppet Babies to Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles**. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.

KIRKPATRICK, David. "AOL Is Planning a Fast-Forward Answer to TiVo." **The New York Times**. 10 March 2003. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/03/10/business/aol-is-planning-a-fast-forward-answer-to-tivo.html?sec=&spon=&pagewanted=1>>

KUSHNER, David. "Rebel Alliance." **FastCompany.com**. 11 April 2008. <<http://www.fastcompany.com/node/798975/print>>

LACHONIS, Jon. "BuddyTV Interviews *LOST*'s Damon Lindelof and Carlton Cuse - and gets Answers!" **BuddyTV.com**. 7 March 2007. <<http://www.buddytv.com/articles/lost/buddytv-interviews-losts-damon-4766.aspx>>

\_\_\_\_\_. "Lost Mobisodes Unraveled." *Ugo.com*. <<http://www.ugo.com/ugo/html/article/?id=18038>>

LANCASTER, Kurt. **Interacting with Babylon 5**. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001.

LEE, Felicia R. "'Bad Twin,' a Novel Inspired by 'Lost,' Makes the Best-Seller Lists." **The New York Times**. 27 May 2006. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/05/27/books/27lost.html>>

LONG, Geoffrey. **Transmedia Storytelling: Business, Aesthetics, and Production at**

the Jim Henson Company. Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Master's Thesis, 2007.

"The Lost Experience Clues: Clue #42 – Jimmy Kimmel Interview with Hugh McIntyre." **Lost Experience Clues Blog**. 25 May 2006. <<http://thelostexperienceclues.blogspot.com/2006/05/clue-42-jimmy-kimmel-interview-with.html>>

**Lostpedia.com** <[http://lostpedia.wikia.com/wiki/Main\\_Page](http://lostpedia.wikia.com/wiki/Main_Page)>

LOTZ, Amanda. **The Television Will Be Revolutionized**. NY: New York University Press, 2007.

LOWRY, Tom. "Network finds marketing paradise with Lost." **Business Week**. 24 July 2006. [http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/06\\_30/b3994072.htm](http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/06_30/b3994072.htm)

MCCHESENEY, Robert. **Rich Media, Poor Democracy: Communication Politics in Dubious Times**. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1999.

MILLER, Lia. "To Counter the Doldrums During Summer Reruns, 'Lost' Fans Can Get Lost in a Game Online." **The New York Times**. 24 April 2006. <[http://www.nytimes.com/2006/04/24/business/media/24lost.html?\\_r=1&oref=slogin&pagewanted=print](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/04/24/business/media/24lost.html?_r=1&oref=slogin&pagewanted=print)>

MITTELL, Jason. "Lost in a Great Story." **Reading Lost: Perspectives on a Hit Television Show**. Ed. Roberta Pearson. London: IB Tauris, 2009

\_\_\_\_\_. "Lost in an Alternate Reality." **Flow TV** 4.7, 2006. <<http://flowtv.org/?p=165>>

\_\_\_\_\_. "Narrative Complexity in Contemporary American Television." **The Velvet Light Trap**. 58, 2006: 29-39

\_\_\_\_\_. "Serial Narratives and Tie-In Games: Problems, Possibilities and Pleasures." Unpublished paper presented at **Society for Cinema and Media Studies Conference**, Vancouver, Canada, March 2006.

\_\_\_\_\_. "To Spread or to drill?" **Just TV**. <<http://justtv.wordpress.com/2009/02/25/to-spread-or-to-drill/>> 25 February 2009.

MORRIS, Chris. "Requiem For The Hardcore." **Forbes.com**. <[http://www.forbes.com/2008/09/29/hardcore-casual-gamer-tech-personal-cx\\_cm\\_0930hardcore.html](http://www.forbes.com/2008/09/29/hardcore-casual-gamer-tech-personal-cx_cm_0930hardcore.html)> 9 September 2008.

MURPHY, Priscilla Coit. "Books are Dead, Long Live Books." **Rethinking Media Change: The Aesthetics of Transition**. Eds. David Thorburn and Henry Jenkins. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2003. 81-95.

MURRAY, Janet H. **Hamlet on the Holodeck: The Future of Narrative in Cyberspace.** New York: The Free Press, 1997.

MURRAY, Noel. "Lost's Damon Lindelof and Carlton Cuse." **A.V. Club.** 22 April 2008. <<http://www.avclub.com/articles/losts-damon-lindelof-and-carlton-cuse,14231/>>

ÖRNEBRING, Henrik. "Alternate reality gaming and convergence culture: The case of Alias." **International Journal of Cultural Studies.** 10.4 (2007): 445-462.

PARKS, Lisa. "Flexible Microcasting: Gender, Generation, and Television-Internet Convergence." **Television After TV: Essays on a Medium in Transition.** Eds. Lynn Spigel and Jan Olsson. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004. 133-163

PARKIN, Lance. "Truths Universally Acknowledged. How the Rules of Doctor Who Affect the Writing." **Third Person: Authoring and Exploring Vast Narratives.** Eds. Noah Wardrip-Fruin and Pat Harrigan. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009. 13-25.

PERRYMAN Neil. "Doctor Who and the Convergence of Media: A Case Study in Transmedia Storytelling." **Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies.** 20.1, 2008: 21-39.

PONIEWOZIK, James. "Why the Future of Television is *Lost*" **Time Magazine.** 24 September 2006. <<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1538635-3,00.html>>

PORTER, Patrick. "Buffy vs. Dracula. Intertextuality, Carnival, and Cult." **Refractory Journal of Entertainment Media.** 9 (2006). <<http://blogs.arts.unimelb.edu.au/refractory/2006/07/04/buffy-vs-dracula%E2%80%9Dintertextuality-carnival-and-cult-patrick-j-porter/>>

RAUCH, Peter. "Is Popular Culture Good for You?" 6 October 2005. <[http://web.mit.edu/comm-forum/forums/popular\\_culture.htm](http://web.mit.edu/comm-forum/forums/popular_culture.htm)>

REEVES, Jimmie. "Postmodernism and Television: Speaking of Twin Peaks." **Full of Secrets: Critical Approaches to Twin Peaks.** Ed. David Lavery. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1995. 177.

RITCHELL, Matt. "What Convergence? TV's Hesitant March to the Net." **The New York Times.** 15 February 2009. <[http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/16/technology/internet/16chip.html?\\_r=2](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/16/technology/internet/16chip.html?_r=2)>

ROSS, Sharon Marie. **Beyond the Box: Television and the Internet.** Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing, 2008.

SALEN, Katie and ZIMMERMAN, Eric. **Rules of Play: Game Design Fundamentals**. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004.

SCHNEIDER, Michael. "'Lost' found on many platforms." **Variety**. 10 April 2008. <<http://www.variety.com/article/VR1117983862.html?categoryid=2868&cs=1>>

TAPPER, Jake. "Behind the Secrets of 'Lost.'" **ABC News**. 17 October 2006. <<http://abcnews.go.com/Nightline/Story?id=2553741&page=1>>

TAYLOR, Alice. "Hollywood & Games: An Interview with Jesse Alexander." **Wonderland Blog**. <<http://www.wonderlandblog.com/wonderland/2007/06/hollywood-games.html>>

THOMAS, Rachel. "An Interview with Michael Emerson (Ben Linus/Fake Henry Gale, Lost)" **About.com**. <<http://tvdramas.about.com/od/lost/a/mikeemersonint.htm>>

TROUP, Gary. **Bad Twin**. New York: Hyperion, 2006.

**Unfiction.com**. <<http://www.unfiction.com/>>

VINEYARD, Jennifer. "Joss Whedon Sends Buffy Back To The Future In New Season-Eight Comic." **VH1.com** 2 July 2008. <<http://www.vh1.com/movies/news/articles/1590279/20080701/story.jhtml>>

\_\_\_\_\_. "Re-Buffered: New Comic Book Series Resurrects Vampire Slayer." **MTV.com**. 1 February 2007. <<http://www.mtv.com/news/articles/1551286/20070131/index.jhtml>>

WOLK, Josh. "'Homicide' welcomes its website cast to the show -- a first step in NBC's plans to nab TV defectors." **Entertainment Weekly**. 5 February 1999. <<http://www.ew.com/ew/article/0,,84131,00.html>>

WYATT, Justin. **High Concept**. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994.

ZEITCHIK, Steven. "Inside Move: It's a Shames." **Variety**. 18 June 2006. <<http://www.variety.com/article/VR1117945504.html?categoryId=14&cs=1>>