

**A Recipe for Audience Engagement:
An Examination of Cross Media Storytelling with Digital Media**

Maxine Lines

**Victoria University
November 2013**

**Fourth Year Honours Thesis,
College of Arts
Victoria University**

Disclaimer

I, Maxine Lines, hereby declare that, except where otherwise cited, and to the best of my knowledge, this work is my own, and has not been submitted to any other university or institution.

Maxine Lines

ABSTRACT

A Recipe for Audience Engagement and the accompanying creative piece, *The Shipwrecked Bakery*, were created in response to the question, 'How can digital media be used to enhance a story?' The exegesis focusses on a set of case studies, each an existing cross media work with digital media elements. The three case studies – webcomic *Questionable Content*, the online marketing campaign for *Monsters University*, and YouTube series *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* – are introduced and examined. Each investigation examines the real world structure of the project, the effect this structure has on the story, and the way this culminates in the project's overall presentation and reception. This same structure is applied to *The Shipwrecked Bakery*, as the results of these investigations directly informed the development of its structure and cross media elements. The exegesis concludes by answering the initial question. Digital media can be used to enhance a story by lending the story a greater sense of verisimilitude, situating the story in a world the audience is familiar with, and fleshing out characters and environments beyond what may be allowed by the story structure.

The Shipwrecked Bakery is a cross media story, presented as an online graphic novella with digital media accompaniments. The graphic novella tells the story of a young baker, Lida, who sets up shop in a refurbished shipwreck and is determined to prove herself. When she befriends Oxley, the ghost of the ship's baker, her plans to win the local baking competition are thrown a little off course.

The Shipwrecked Bakery can be found at www.theshipwreckedbakery.com, and the Spelt City Council website can be found at www.speltcitycouncil.com. Like many young people, Lida has a Twitter account, which can be found at www.twitter.com/LidaTheBaker.

INTRODUCTION	4
CASE STUDIES	6
QUESTIONABLE CONTENT	6
IN THE REAL WORLD	6
EFFECT ON THE STORY	7
THE CULMINATION	7
MONSTERS UNIVERSITY PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGN	9
IN THE REAL WORLD	9
EFFECT ON THE STORY	10
THE CULMINATION	10
THE LIZZIE BENNET DIARIES	11
IN THE REAL WORLD	11
EFFECT ON THE STORY	11
THE CULMINATION	12
OBSERVATIONS	14
THE SHIPWRECKED BAKERY	15
IN THE REAL WORLD	15
EFFECT ON THE STORY	15
THE CULMINATION AND THE GREATER CONTEXT	17
CONCLUSIONS	20
REFERENCES	22

INTRODUCTION

I cannot remember a time before the perpetual pile of novels beside my bed, as I have always been a reader. As I grew, my tastes and interests grew with me. A child of the early 90s, I grew along with the world of digital technology. I became interested in videogames, cinema, and animation. Despite the benefits available through digital technology, it was always the story that drew me in. I consumed stories and produced them, filling sketchbooks and notepads with my own fanciful attempts.

In my early high school years, I was reading vast amounts of online fiction. By the time I graduated from high school, I had dabbled in digital art and pored over webcomics and other forms of visual storytelling, both digital and traditional. I abandoned MySpace for Facebook and signed up for a Twitter account, to keep in contact with friends and fellow artists. I continued to consume stories, much of it in front of a digital screen. After purchasing an iPhone after the Australian launch, and later an iPad, this practice was augmented. The added comfort of reading on a couch, or tucked up in bed, only increased my consumption of digital stories.

This interest continued through to my academic studies, and the Honours format presented me with an opportunity to present my own story. *The Shipwrecked Bakery* is a story that I have wanted to tell for some time. As a digital artist, I decided that the best way to present the story would be as an online graphic novella, a form of digital storytelling I greatly enjoy. For my purposes, digital storytelling simply refers to stories told using one or more forms of digital media, often published online. Knut Lundby, editor of *Digital Storytelling, Mediatized Stories: Self-Representations in New Media*, defines digital storytelling as, "...transformations in the age-old practices of storytelling that have become possible with the new, digital media" (2008, p1).

Two common forms of digital storytelling are cross media storytelling and transmedia storytelling. Cross media storytelling is a single story told across a variety of media, requiring the audience to navigate from piece to piece.

According to Christy Dena's definitions, a cross-media work requires, "User activity to assemble the 'work'" (2004, p. 5). This user activity is commonly navigation and can be guided, providing users with straightforward hyperlinks between each element. It can also be unguided navigation, requiring the user to actively seek out additional elements, taking the role as a hunter and gatherer. Transmedia storytelling, a term made popular by Henry Jenkins, describes a series of interconnected stories across a variety of media. "A transmedia story unfolds across multiple media platforms, with each new text making a distinctive and valuable contribution to the whole" (Jenkins 2006, p. 97).

Digital media can be used to enrich the story experience for the audience by increasing the believability and authenticity of the story world and characters. Digital media, here, refers to digital images, text, video, and social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook and YouTube. By examining a sample of existing cross media works, I intend to provide case studies of this and establish a context for *The Shipwrecked Bakery*. These case studies include the webcomic *Questionable Content*, the promotional website and Twitter account for Disney•Pixar's *Monsters University*, and the YouTube video series *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*.

I would also like to briefly acknowledge the works that I found significantly inspiring during the development of art, story, and characters; webcomic *Cucumber Quest*, and Studio Ghibli's *Spirited Away* and *Kiki's Delivery Service*. *Cucumber Quest* is an example of appealing art direction, and a less-than-courageous main character; *Kiki's Delivery Service* and *Spirited Away* have strong-willed female protagonists; and *Spirited Away* deals with otherworldly characters, as both protagonist and antagonist. This investigation has informed the development and execution of *The Shipwrecked Bakery*, from the stylistic decisions to the way in which the story is delivered across a variety of online platforms, and seeks to answer the question: How can digital media be used to enhance a story?

CASE STUDIES

Each work examined herein makes use of digital media in some novel way, and has directly influenced my approach to the development of *The Shipwrecked Bakery*. The three works, webcomic *Questionable Content*, the promotional campaign for *Monsters University*, and YouTube series *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, are examined for their real world characteristics, the effects of these on the story, and the resulting outcomes.

Questionable Content

In the Real World

Questionable Content, written and illustrated by Jeph Jacques, is a quirky slice-of-life webcomic about a group of twenty-somethings and the occasional sentient robot, or 'AnthroPC' (Jacques 2013a). The webcomic is humorous, touching, and full of pop culture references. However, it is Jacques' use of Twitter that is primary in the context of this examination. Jacques uses the character Twitter accounts as an interesting method of, '...adding information and fleshing out parts of the world so that the whole becomes more convincing and more comprehensible' (Jenkins 2006, p. 118). Many of the large cast of characters have Twitter accounts, and routinely interact with each other. The characters do not respond to anyone outside of the *Questionable Content* universe, and tweets from real-world Twitter users are simply ignored. Occasionally the tweets will line up with events in the latest story arc, but more often than not they are just quirky conversations. The tweets are considered part of the official canon of *Questionable Content*, '...unless they contradict something in the comic itself, in which case the comic takes precedence' (Jacques 2011). The character tweets are not integrated into the main website for the comic, and interested fans must follow a link from the site navigation structure. While it is apparent the characters are fictional, the *Questionable Content* Twitter accounts serve as an interesting additional tool for character development. Despite the canonicity of the tweets, they do not serve a direct narrative purpose. However, they are still an additional valuable source of information for the fans who wish to explore the *Questionable Content* universe in greater detail.

Effect on the Story

The in-character tweets give greater insight into a character than is possible in the structure of the daily comic. Jacques has the characters react to real-world events and makes pop culture references that could appear out of place in the comic format. The characters will react to things they are interested in. While the specifics are unnecessary to the continuation of the story, their choices in entertainment and their conversational styles reveal more about the characters than the audience receives solely from the comic. Marten, a musician, will tweet about what he is currently listening to, and avid gamer Marigold will go into detail about her play-through of a popular game. For the purpose of the story, it is enough to know that Marten likes indie rock music and Marigold plays Nintendo DS games.

Additionally, Jacques uses the Twitter accounts to keep readers interested in a character that may not have appeared in the comic recently, or may not be heavily involved in the current story arc. With such a large cast - 38 characters in total, 14 on Twitter (Jacques 2013b) - even some of the main characters occasionally drop out of the spotlight. Jacques uses Twitter to flesh the characters out, giving them quirks and interests that do not contribute to the greater story, but create more relatable characters.

The Culmination

Jacques' use of Twitter provides his characters with anecdotal material that does not affect the story, but that makes them seem more fleshed out and authentic, rather than two-dimensional narrative tools. Jacques must also be aware that many of the readers are disinterested in Twitter, as none of the information presented via the *Questionable Content* Twitter accounts contains important plot or characterisation details. The main site receives an estimated 1.16 million page views each day (Quantcast 2013), while each Twitter account has somewhere between 35,000 and 5,000 followers (Jacques 2013b). As such, Jacques makes appropriate creative decisions such that the audience receives all of the necessary story information from the main comics, and not the cross media avenues. The *Questionable Content* Twitter accounts do not reveal

important story information, and the humorous but often mundane material relayed via tweet serves only to make his characters seem more believable. This is quite effective, despite the suspension of disbelief required to invest in a story containing sentient artificial intelligences and a local superhero called Pizza Girl. The careful management of the Twitter accounts enables interested fans to explore the characters and relationships of the *Questionable Content* universe in greater detail, while ensuring that the entire audience is always able to follow the main narrative.

Monsters University Promotional Campaign

In the Real World

There is an immediate suspension of disbelief required for an audience to invest in the *Monsters University* universe. Populated by characters rife with fur, tentacles, and extra eyeballs, *Monsters University* is the sequel to Disney•Pixar's highly successful *Monsters Inc.* Disney•Pixar have done something different with their undoubtedly astronomical marketing budget, and have created an expansive, ongoing (at time of writing) social media promotional campaign that began long before the film was released. It is this campaign, rather than the film, that is relevant to my project. Of course, there are the usual advertising channels – a series of trailers, posters at the cinema, billboards, and merchandising. Along with this, however, the marketing team has created an extensive institutional website (Disney•Pixar 2013b) and Twitter account (Disney•Pixar 2013c) for the fictional Monsters University. With this marketing strategy, they are increasing the believability of the *Monsters University* universe, and blurring the lines dividing reality and fiction (Alexander & Levine 2008). It is an interesting choice, considering the inherent implausibility of the entire *Monsters Inc.* and *Monsters University* concept. There are interactive elements that allow users to test their skills or create their own monsters. It also encourages the subsequent sharing of these across a number of social networks, thereby increasing the reach of the campaign.

The marketing campaign is structured such that Monsters University appears, for all intents and purposes, to exist. Both the website and Twitter account are set up to portray Monsters University as a real institution. The website offers information for prospective students, campus maps, upcoming events, and faculty listings. The Twitter account congratulates recent graduates (Disney•Pixar 2013), offers scholarship information, and advertises campus movie nights. All of this adds to the illusion that there is a world parallel to our own, on the other side of our wardrobe doors. Users are encouraged to explore and test the boundaries of the illusion. Exploration of the Monsters University website will eventually lead to an online store selling university merchandise, where real world purchases can be made. This online shopping portal, and any

marketing material, such as links to trailers via tweet, damages the illusion somewhat, but serves the project's true marketing purpose.

Effect on the Story

How is a multi-million dollar marketing campaign relevant to my creative project? The *Monsters University* marketing team has created an illusion, making the characters and premise more believable. The detail of the world building that has gone into *Monsters University* is extensive, and there are many prop elements, characters, and settings featured in the campaign that will only be allocated minimal screen time in the film. However, it is these mundane background elements that enhance and enrich the *Monsters University* world, and the audience experience. All of the additional information and background visual elements serve to engage the audience, giving the world an exhaustive level of detail that becomes convincing and believable (Jenkins 2006).

The Culmination

The marketing team for *Monsters University* has enhanced and expanded the world of the film, seriously augmenting its illusion of realism. By creating social media profiles for the fictional institution, they have made the entire story world seem more credible and believable. The threshold for the suspension of disbelief has been reduced somewhat, allowing the audience to embrace the concept more fully. Both the content made available via social media and the very fact that the characters or, in this case, the university has access to social media within the story world adds to this illusion. The entire campaign asks the audience to consider this: if Monsters University has a website and a Twitter profile, why couldn't it also have a physical location and actual students? The illusion of this other world, whether it is a university for the monsters in our closets, or a bathhouse for the spirit world (as in *Spirited Away*), is what draws us into the story in the first place. Social media can strengthen this illusion, and thus our attraction to the story world.

The Lizzie Bennet Diaries

In the Real World

The Lizzie Bennet Diaries is a strong example of the use of social media as tools for both storytelling and character development. Adapted from *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen (Green & Su 2012), *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* is a YouTube web series. The web series is set in America in 2012, rather than the England of 1813 of the source material. Lizzie Bennet is a 24-year old communications student, working on her graduate project and offering commentary on her sisters' love lives. As part of her graduate project, Lizzie films video blogs (vlogs) about her life. These vlogs are filmed with Lizzie and any number of the other characters sitting directly in front of the camera, as per the webcam format. Like real-world video bloggers, Lizzie's YouTube channel was updated with a new video twice a week, for roughly a year. Along with the 100 short YouTube videos on Lizzie's account, the series also contains several other YouTube channels, Twitter accounts for most of the on-screen characters, Tumblr blogs, and even a Lookbook for Jane. None of these cross media elements are essential to an understanding of the plot, but they provide the audience with an enormous degree of depth and detail. This additional information would have been impractical to present in the short format of the main videos, and in some cases, impossible in terms of the story. For example, Twitter conversations between characters like Darcy and his sister Gigi would have been impossible for Lizzie to capture on film in the vlogging format.

Effect on the Story

In 2006 Jenkins wrote, 'we are seeing the emergence of new story structures, which create complexity by expanding the range of narrative possibility rather than pursuing a single path with a beginning, middle, and end' (p. 121). This is certainly true of *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, just a few years later. Along with the social media elements, Lizzie's youngest sister, Lydia, has her own series of videos. These videos detail the period in her life leading up to her potential transgression with the infamous George Wickham. While the elements that make up the main storyline are part of a larger cross media story, Lydia's videos are better classified as transmedia. This story runs in parallel to the main

narrative in Lizzie's videos, and the series offers each member of the audience a choice in how they will approach the narrative. One user may choose to view only the videos posted on Lizzie's channel and disregard everything else. Another may religiously follow each possible pathway, hunting down Lydia's videos and the relevant social media elements for each point in the story. For the viewers in the former group, Lizzie's shock at discovering the outcome of Lydia's relationship with Wickham will mirror their own shock. The latter members of the audience will watch Lydia begin the ill-fated relationship just as Lizzie declares a policy of 'non-interference', knowing that Lizzie could have prevented it all by reconnecting with her family.

The Culmination

The success of *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* demonstrates that social media can be used to increase the complexity and strength of character development, as well as developing and conveying storylines parallel to the main narrative. By situating the world in one similar to ours – one of constant access to social media and the Internet – the characters seem more real and relatable. Truly invested members of the audience will seek the background information, testing the boundaries and the limits of the world the story exists in. '... if you give people enough stuff to explore, they will explore. The people who do explore and take advantage of the whole world will forever be your fans' (Sanchez in Jenkins 2006, p. 105). It is the most invested members of the audience that will follow the characters on Twitter and Facebook, seeking out any and all cross media story elements. Jenkins described this in 1992, before the rise of the digital media that made *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* possible.

'Fans seemingly blur the boundaries between fact and fiction, speaking of characters as if they had an existence apart from their textual manifestations, entering into the realm of fiction as if it were a tangible place they can inhabit and explore' (Jenkins 1992, p.18).

The Lizzie Bennet Diaries invites the audience into this realm with the common social media tools and the structure of the webcam format familiar to much of the intended audience.

OBSERVATIONS

These case studies exemplify several different and successful uses of digital media to enhance a story experience. Each project has a unique structure of cross media platforms, devised to best suit the creators' intentions. For instance, *Questionable Content*, the online marketing campaign for *Monsters University*, and *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, each use Twitter for different purposes.

The *Questionable Content* Twitter accounts are used as a tool for expanding on the character development already present in the main comic strip. No additional narrative information is presented to the reader, only minor elements that enhance the fans' existing knowledge of the *Questionable Content* universe.

Similarly, the *Monsters University* online marketing team uses Twitter to generate and maintain a sense of verisimilitude for the fictional university and the world it is situated in. As the majority of the *Monsters University* online action occurred before the film was released, the tweets are very carefully worded to avoid revealing too much information about the plot or characters in the film. Instead, the Twitter account was used as a form of world-building, peppering the *Monsters University* world with mundane elements that greatly contribute to its sense of authenticity.

Different once again, the Twitter accounts associated with *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* are used for both character and plot development. While the nature of the webcam format has Lizzie recounting all salient plot points to her viewers, there is still a great deal of information delivered solely via Twitter, encouraging the audience to explore and engage. These three projects make use of digital media in a variety of ways, but all have been well received by their audiences. In undertaking an examination of each case study, I have endeavoured to construct a suitable digital media structure for *The Shipwrecked Bakery* that draws upon the successes of these existing works.

THE SHIPWRECKED BAKERY

In the Real World

The Shipwrecked Bakery is a cross media digital story. The main narrative takes the structure of an online graphic novella, and tells the story of Lida and Oxley, the residents of the titular shipwreck. Set in the coastal town of Spelt, Lida is a determined young woman who opens her bakery in the wreck of the ship that Oxley served on, a century before her time. After some initial uncertainty, their mutual love of bread and baking draws them together. Oxley helps Lida prepare for the local bread baking competition, which she must win to prove herself to the locals and to her family. The discovery of some of Oxley's old baking tins and a visit from her main baking rival shakes things up. In conjunction with the graphic novella, the story of *The Shipwrecked Bakery* will be told via Lida's Twitter account, Oxley's historical journals, and the local council newsletter.

Effect on the Story

The positive reception of *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* serves as a successful precedent for *The Shipwrecked Bakery*, and is one of the existing works that I have drawn inspiration from. The fan reaction was certainly encouraging, Lizzie's YouTube channel has approximately 40 million accumulated views, and her Twitter account has some 44,000 followers (Green & Su 2013). This enthusiasm from the audience makes evident that interested audiences are willing to follow a story across multiple platforms. Indeed, 'if people have to work for something, they devote more time to it. And they give it more emotional value' (Sanchez in Jenkins 2006, p105). If the effort required to navigate between the elements of *The Shipwrecked Bakery* is enough to turn some members of the audience away, then it should also be enough to create an emotional engagement for those who do invest the time.

The ease of user navigation can play a large role in capturing and retaining user interest. It is my intention that *The Shipwrecked Bakery* will be appealing enough that the audience invests the time almost unwittingly. The navigation on the main website for *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* allows users to do

this with ease. The website is structured such that users do not have to seek out the relevant tweets, Tumblr posts, or Lookbook pages for themselves and are provided with either a direct link, or an embedded copy of the tweets. This ease of navigation contributed to the audience engagement with the cross media elements of *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* and will be emulated with *The Shipwrecked Bakery*.

Increasing the level of audience engagement is one of my key aims for *The Shipwrecked Bakery*. Jacques' use of Twitter for the *Questionable Content* characters was a great influence for *The Shipwrecked Bakery*. Lida is a modern young woman familiar with the online environment. She was always going to have a Twitter account, but I was not always certain how it would fit into the structure of the story. It would be unrealistic to expect the entire audience to follow the story from the main website to Twitter and back, particularly for readers who are not familiar with social media. Jacques has obviously encountered this dilemma, and manages his characters' tweets accordingly. Similarly, Lida's Twitter account will not be a source of any vital story information, as I cannot expect the entire audience of *The Shipwrecked Bakery* to access it.

The cross media elements that make up *The Shipwrecked Bakery* have been carefully developed in order to emulate the level of authenticity achieved by the marketing campaign for *Monsters University*. The information on the Spelt town council website will contain local news, as well as historical information about the shipwreck and its sailors. None of this material will be essential to understanding and enjoying the core story, but will instead add a smattering of detail and background information for the interested reader. There are many details about Lida's and Oxley's lives that are relevant to their characterisation in *The Shipwrecked Bakery*, but that will not be directly recounted in the main narrative. Oxley's recovered journals, discovered by a local historian and displayed on the town website for interested tourists, are a prime example. For the purpose of the story, it is enough for the audience to know that he is the ghost of a baker who died when his ship sank. Written in the moments before the

storm overcame the ship, Oxley's journals will help the audience understand why he is so anxious. It is my hope that the details will prompt readers to assign a greater emotional quality to the moment when he overcomes his fears. Lida's Twitter account will serve a similar purpose, providing the audience with a deeper understanding of the reasoning behind her move to Spelt, as well as more mundane elements of her character development. As with the *Monsters University* campaign, it is important that a consistent tone and worldview is maintained throughout the cross media aspects of *The Shipwrecked Bakery*. As the sole creator, I have worked to ensure that the elements that make up *The Shipwrecked Bakery* work together cohesively, presenting a unified world, as exemplified by the online promotion for *Monsters University*.

The Culmination and the Greater Context

The three aforementioned works – *Questionable Content*, the promotional campaign for *Monsters University*, and *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* – have had a significant influence over the development of the format, structure and layout of *The Shipwrecked Bakery*. Each of these existing works has contributed elements to *The Shipwrecked Bakery*, most significantly by providing a context for the project to exist within. At an initial glance, *Questionable Content* seems the most similar to *The Shipwrecked Bakery*, as both projects are digitally illustrated and utilise more traditional forms of storytelling media. Both projects use Twitter as a tool predominantly for character development, although *The Shipwrecked Bakery* will have a broader array of cross media elements. *The Shipwrecked Bakery* also has much in common with *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, in that many of the characters have outlets to express themselves and cement their characterisation that would have been otherwise impossible due to the constraints of the main narrative. Like Lizzie, Lida's Twitter account will be an avenue of expression for the protagonist beyond the main story. Oxley's journals, while written long before the main events of the narrative, will give the audience insight into his backstory and how it affects his current motivations.

The layering of additional and background information is present in both the promotional campaign for *Monsters University* and *The Shipwrecked Bakery*.

The mundane details, such as the *Monsters University* campus maps or excerpts from the Spelt Town Council newsletter, add to the verisimilitude of each project. These illusions make both projects seem more convincing and provide the audience with a greater range of contextual information through which to understand the story.

The Shipwrecked Bakery exists within a context of preceding works, and many different channels have influenced the development of its content and structure. In drawing from these existing works, it is my hope that the story, structure and cross media elements that make up *The Shipwrecked Bakery* come together as the best possible way to present this particular story.

‘Stories are basic to all human culture, the primary means by which we structure, share, and make sense of our common experiences’ (Jenkins 2006, p.120). Even in the handful of years since Jenkins’ quotation, many aspects of our common experiences have been greatly changed. It follows, then, that our modes of storytelling will change to suit our new common experiences – the experiences of a world driven by technology, multi-tasking, and constant connectedness. Using cross media storytelling and digital media allows creators to bring their stories into this world. Digital media can be used in myriad ways to enhance online stories, and thus far, audiences are responding positively. Using digital media, a storyteller can create a greater depth of experience for an audience, giving them more to discover and invest in. Digital media can be used in this way to enhance the story experience for the audience, allowing us to make sense of our new common experiences.

While generating a cohesive cross media format has been of the utmost importance during this development process, the content of *The Shipwrecked Bakery* is what will be most appealing to the audience. Although she is writing about e-readers and e-learning, librarian Annette Lamb sums this up neatly: ‘...despite all the new formats and ways to interact with them, the content is still the part of the [learning] experience that provides value’ (Lamb 2011, p.17).

As with any writer or illustrator, my content and the way that I convey my story has been inspired and influenced by the works of others. While I have many general influences, there are several that have specifically influenced how I conceptualised and executed *The Shipwrecked Bakery*. A brief examination of these existing works will provide a greater understanding of the company that *The Shipwrecked Bakery* is in. In particular, these include the webcomic *Cucumber Quest* (DG 2013), and Studio Ghibli's classic animated films, *Spirited Away* (2001) and *Kiki's Delivery Service* (1989). These existing works have influenced the development of my visual artistic style, an appreciation of graphic design, and the way I write and develop my characters.

In particular, *Spirited Away* and *Kiki's Delivery Service* reinforced my development of Lida as a strong-willed female protagonist. *Spirited Away* was also a great inspiration for writing supernatural characters without making them frightening or gruesome. This had a direct impact on Oxley's characterisation and development, as did Gigi DG's handling of the titular and somewhat wimpy protagonist in *Cucumber Quest*. Like Cucumber, Oxley is unsure of himself and a little nervous. Ong writes, '...in the place of the hero, one eventually encounters the antihero, who, instead of facing up to the foe, constantly turns tail and runs away' (1982, p. 70). Oxley is ashamed of his behaviour during the storm that sank his ship, and has been unable to 'move on' because of this. Instead, he loiters in the wreck of the ship he once served on, drifting for almost a century and avoiding confrontation in any form. He is successful in this, until Lida sets up her bakery in his shipwreck and changes everything.

Chihiro from *Spirited Away* and Kiki from *Kiki's Delivery Service* are opinionated and spirited young women. These two characters, protagonists of their respective films, have always resonated strongly with me. As a female writer, it was important to me that Lida was strong and spirited, without coming across as terse or arrogant. Both Chihiro and Kiki experience moments of insecurity and indecision, and I took this into account when writing and developing Lida's character.

CONCLUSIONS

In all of the aforementioned examples, social media is used to achieve verisimilitude for the fictional world and its inhabitants. The cross media elements of *The Shipwrecked Bakery* will flesh out the universe that Lida and Oxley exist within, encouraging the audience to invest in it. During the development process for *The Shipwrecked Bakery*, many people commented on the title. The most common questions I was asked were, 'What happened to the ship?' and, 'Why does Lida set up her bakery in a shipwreck?' The answers to these questions are irrelevant to an understanding of the story, but as the author, I have them. If people are interested in this information when introduced to a title and a rough story outline, I can assume this interest will increase when they are presented with the final product.

Digital media and the cross media format will provide me with an avenue to publish much of the additional world-building material that I have developed. The audience will be able to seek out the answers to these questions and many others. Lida will explain to her Twitter followers why she left her parents and their large-scale bread business behind, and why she signed the lease on a run-down shipwreck. Oxley's journals will help the audience understand why he hasn't moved on to the afterlife and what happened to the ship on that fateful night. Their characters will be fleshed out and enhanced by digital media, becoming more real and more present. The Spelt town council website will offer local news and historical information, adding to the illusion that this coastal town and its famous shipwreck might exist somewhere just down the road.

Digital media can be utilised to enhance a story in many different ways and to many different ends. While developing the rough story and characters for *The Shipwrecked Bakery*, I took some time to examine my inspirations and influences, paying particular attention to if, and how, the creators used social media to enhance their projects. Further reading and research, along with the things I have learned while working on *The Shipwrecked Bakery*, has lead me to these conclusions. Digital media can be used to enhance a story by creating an illusion of reality and lowering the threshold for the suspension of disbelief,

fleshing out and enhancing character development, and situating the story world in an environment familiar to the audience. To this end, these are the key elements that make up the cross media strategy for *The Shipwrecked Bakery*.

REFERENCES

Alexander, B, & Levine, A 2008, 'Web 2.0 Storytelling: Emergence of a New Genre', *EDUCAUSE Review*, vol. 43, no. 6, viewed 18 June 2013, pp. 1 – 8
< <http://www.educause.edu/ero/article/web-20-storytelling-emergence-new-genre> >.

Dena, C 2004, 'Current State of Cross Media Storytelling: Preliminary Observations for Future Design', paper presented at 'Cross Media Communication in the Dynamic Knowledge Society' networking session at European Information Society Technologies (IST) Event 2004: Participate in your future, The Netherlands.

DG, G 2013a, Cucumber Quest, viewed 25 June 2013,
<<http://cucumber.gigidigi.com>>.

Disney•Pixar 2013a, Create-A-Monster, viewed 18 June 2013,
<<http://disney.go.com/monsters-university/create-a-monster/>>.

Disney•Pixar 2013b, Monsters University, viewed 18 June 2013
<<http://monstersuniversity.com/edu/>>.

Disney•Pixar 2013c, Monsters University (MonstersU) on Twitter, viewed 18 June 2013, <<https://twitter.com/MonstersU>>.

Disney•Pixar 2013d, Twitter/ MonstersU: Congratulations to the #MonstersU...., viewed 18 June 2013,
<<https://twitter.com/MonstersU/status/337005332305940480>>.

Green, H & Su, B 2012, The Lizzie Bennet Diaries, viewed 20 June 2013,
<<http://www.lizziebennet.com>>.

Green, H & Su, B 2013, Lizzie Bennet (TheLizzieBennet) on Twitter, viewed 20 June 2013, <<https://twitter.com/TheLizzieBennet>>.

Jacques, J 2011, QA Dump #06, viewed 13 June 2013,
<<http://jephjacques.com/post/10973725252/qa-dump-06>>.

Jacques, J 2013a, Questionable Content, viewed 13 June 2013,
<<http://www.questionablecontent.net>>.

Jacques, J 2013b, The QC Cast on Twitter, viewed 13 June 2013,
<<https://twitter.com/jephjacques/qccast/members>>.

Jenkins, H 1992, *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture*,
Routledge, New York, New York.

Jenkins, H 2006, *Convergence Culture – Where Old and New Media Collide*, New
York University Press, New York, New York.

Kiki's Delivery Service, 1989, animated motion picture, Studio Ghibli, distributed
by Madman Entertainment, Australia.

Lamb, A 2011, 'Reading Redefined for a Transmedia Universe', *Learning &
Leading with Technology*, vol. 39, no. 3, viewed 26 June 2013, pp. 12 – 17.

Lundby, K (ed.) 2008, *Digital Storytelling, Mediatized Stories: Self-
Representations in New Media*, Peter Lang Publishing, New York, New York.

Ong, W 1982, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*, Routledge,
London.

Pemberley Digital 2013, *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries DVD...and More!*, viewed 13
June 2013, <<http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/pemberleydigital/the-lizzie-bennet-diaries-dvdand-more>>.

Quantcast, 2013, Questionablecontent.net Traffic and Demographic Statistics by
Quantcast, viewed 9 October 2013,
<https://www.quantcast.com/questionablecontent.net?qcLocale=en_US >.

Spirited Away, 2001, animated motion picture, Studio Ghibli, distributed by
Madman Entertainment, Australia.