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Plugin Narratives: Challenges and opportunities for collaborative design and development of community-based multimodal narratives

Kate Howland (Department of Informatics, University of Sussex)

Antoni Roig (Information and Communication Science Department, Universitat Oberta de Catalunya)

Seed Project Report

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1. Executive summary

Plugin Narratives is a research initiative by the University of Sussex (Brighton, UK) and the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (Barcelona, Spain), focused on the study of the roles and practices of participants in a co-created fictional experience, with particular emphasis on creative communities, participatory processes, experience design, narrative co-development, literacies, playfulness, engagement and new forms of collaborative and multimodal digital storytelling.

The ultimate goal of Plugin Narratives as a research project is to foster reflection and action towards a socially meaningful subject through co-created storytelling and world-building, with particular attention paid to strategies of engagement around a participatory social experience. At the seed project stage, reported here, Plugin Narratives focussed on developing the design for such an experience, by seeking input from a range of different researchers and practitioners with expertise in the area. Through two expert workshops, a literature review, and examination of existing project work, initial ideas were developed, and challenges and opportunities identified.

We determined that a fictional premise would present an alternate reality scenario, closely connected to the everyday life of the community and related to significant issues for the community as a whole, thus connecting the past, the present and the imagined futures. The activity would involve different levels of engagement and multiple forms of participation, shaping an evolving, rather than predefined narrative, through the contributions of the participants (thus the plugin metaphor). This multi-layered narrative experience would provide a pervasive environment open to all kinds of individual and collective forms of expression, be it sound, video, illustration, photography, text, live performance, digital and physical art, social media interaction, physical/ live events, games, etc.

Plugin Narratives aims to be a tool for community self-reflection through creativity, thus connecting tradition, heritage and memory with current social issues and imaginaries of the future, at the same time linked to community policies and social engagement through participation. We synthesised findings from the literature review and the two expert events, and produced a set of guidelines consisting of questions and suggestions for the development of participatory narrative experience which aim at community engagement.

2. Aims and objectives of the seed project

For this seed project stage, the Plugin Narratives project has been focused on the following aims:

- To explore the potential of playful and engagement-based community experiences for collective reflection on possible futures through literature review, case analysis and experts' discussion.
- To outline the main focus, location, challenges, needs and potential stakeholders for a future pilot project.
- To extrapolate some key findings for similar kinds of participatory community-based experiences in the form of preliminary guidelines.

The seed project focussed on developing the research context and mid-to-long term objectives, and identifying a team with appropriate backgrounds and interests to put together a larger proposal for the pilot project and beyond.

The work involved the development of a fictional background that could eventually shape the actual pilot project and first approaches to possible stakeholders in order to identify viable communities and themes.

The seed project has been oriented mainly around two key events:

- A kickoff event in Barcelona (in November 2014). This focused on the discussion of participatory creative experiences and engagement in transmedia-related projects with an inter-disciplinary approach.
- A closing event in Brighton (in February 2015). This focused on the needs, focus and challenges of a potential pilot project in the Sussex area related to environmental issues.

3. Timeline of Seed Project

Stage 1: Research Design – 01/10/2014 to 01/12/2014

Objectives:

- Contextualise and elaborate on the project's aims, hypotheses, research questions and methodology.
- Identify and plan potentially critical issues.
- Share and discuss conceptual and methodological questions.
- Discuss related previous experiences.

Milestone 1.1: identification of key methodological, technological and conceptual issues.

Milestone 1.2: literature review on participatory creative processes and methodologies.

Milestone 1.3: literature review on experiences of cultural creation for social engagement.

Deliverable 1.1: kickoff workshop, 20-21/11/2014: "Co-creating fiction, imagining futures: key challenges for collaborative design and development of multimodal narratives"

Stage 2: Developing Project Framework – 01/12/2014 to 01/02/2015

Objectives:

- To refine the research goals and connections to broader social, technological and cultural issues.
- To discuss and define the overall framework of the full research project.
- To define the overall structure, technical issues and timeline of the empirical research.

Milestone 2.1: review of collaborative narrative and worldbuilding experiences and projects.

Milestone 2.2: literature review of user engagement in multimodal narrative experiences.

Milestone 2.3: literature review of methodologies for fostering heterogeneous collective participation.

Milestone 2.4: discussion of technology related issues regarding participation, publishing and data gathering.

Milestone 2.5: discussion on critical components for a participatory co-evolving narrative experiment

Deliverable 2.1: guidelines for participatory narrative experiences

Stage 3: Design of pilot experience – 01/02/2015 to 28/02/2015

Objectives:

- Selection and development of a pilot narrative experience.
- Identification of suitable conditions and location for the pilot.
- Elaboration of promotional content as a pre-experience for the pilot.

Milestone 3.1: identification of potential storylines connected to the aims of the research project.

Milestone 3.2: development of narrative premise from selected pilot storyline.

Milestone 3.3: selection of suitable locations for the pilot, including public and private stakeholders, sponsors and target collectives.

Deliverable 3.1: pilot project blueprints

Deliverable 3.2: closing symposium, 26/02/2015: "Plugin narratives: bringing narrative worlds to life through collaboration".

4. Literature review

At the beginning of our the project we identified a series of key elements that informed our literature review and served as a starting point for discussion in both events. These elements are of course interrelated and point to critical challenges and focus points for planning and development of the PlugIn project as an action-research endeavour.

Future(s)

A fundamental aim of Plugin Narratives is to foster collective reflection on possible futures, to use play and creativity to deploy projections of the future. Imaginary futures come either from fiction and other forms of speculation connected to the allegedly factual (news, documentaries, non-fiction works, governmental or NGOs campaigns, etc.). Plugin Narratives should serve as a space for expression of the kinds of futures envisaged by a more or less bounded and defined community.

As in narrative, the notion of future is carried by our own sense of uncertainty, as an unknown land (Lanzeni & Ardèvol, 2014). In academia, studying the future takes, according to Lanzeni & Ardèvol (2014), at least four different forms:

- Through *forecasting* methods based on data analysis: future as an analytical goal.
- As *anticipation* practices associated with technological development. Thus, imaginary future would be images that act upon the present to prefigure the future.
- As *speculation*, a set of probable conjectures worth the risk of investing time, money and effort to conduct experimentation.
- As a set of strategies to *confront uncertainty*.

The imaginary futures of Plugin Narratives will fall in the latest category, as our starting point for the narrative experiment lies on a specific kind of uncertainty, particularly connected to energy, sustainability and the environment. However, as a methodology, Plugin Narratives could be used also at least for the second category, that is, through exploration of current imaginaries that can condition decisions on policy or social action and, therefore, contribute to the shaping of the future.

As stated by Lanzeni et al. (2014), “future design is projected as a methodology for technological innovation and social transformation, in the sense that it is designed “for” the future “with” people; ie the “user” become involved in the design process,

participating in different ways, as communities or according to social and cultural heterogeneity. [...] visions of the future [...] are also part of the ways of producing culture and socialize ourselves.” (ibid:2)

Plugin Narratives wants to contribute to the study of how individuals and citizens are called to participate in their future and how co-creation processes facilitate or integrate social innovation and “guide us towards a more inclusive, innovative and reflective citizenship” (Lanzeni et al., 2014: 3).

Alternate Realities

Alternate reality experiences layer fictional narratives over the real world, blurring the boundaries of fiction and reality. Immersion in fictional worlds often involves some level of disconnection with reality, but alternate reality experiences can conversely draw attention to selected activities and entities in the real-world. Alternate reality games incorporate these characteristics in a playful, problem-solving context, where narrative paths are uncovered and new paths are forged through interaction with resources located online and in real-world locations (Kim et al., 2009). These characteristics mean that such games are often designed with aims that go beyond entertainment and include marketing (McGonigal, 2008), health (Macvean, 2012) or educational goals (Connolly et al., 2011). An area which is currently little explored is the potential for such games to aid reflection and engagement in local communities, the focus of the Plugin Narratives project.

The extent to which players actively participate in alternate reality experiences varies. O-Hara et al. (2008) describe how a core player group engage in collective participation which produces and progresses narrative in an alternate reality game, whilst many players engage in a more passive spectatorship which they still find valuable. The most active player group assume collective responsibility for important elements such as maintaining a suspension of disbelief and delegating and reporting back on real-world elements such as live events and game related-items sent through the post.

Many alternate reality games are based on centrally controlled narratives, with minimal opportunity for active storytelling by participants. Coulton et al. (2010) discuss the benefits of encouraging creative contribution from participants in location-based alternate reality games, and demonstrate how tasks such as creating character artwork can be integrated into the design and running of location-based games aimed at families.

Participation

The notion of participation in regard to the so-called 'participatory culture' has been the object of intense controversy, as it tends to be applied as an empty signifier meaning not much more than 'feel part of something'. This over-simplification obliterates a broader conceptualization coming from political-democratic theory, emphasizing processes of decision-making, mutual recognition of participants as active agents and transparency, which is opposed to overblown celebratory discourses of empowerment and unique experiences in tightly controlled environments (Jenkins and Carpentier, 2013; Deuze, 2008). As a creative experience, one of the challenges of Plugin Narratives is to reflect on how to bring participatory processes into the fore. In the seed project, we are examining different strategies for establishing a continuous dialogue with a diversity of community stakeholders and participants (thus identifying meaningful social issues and the best ways to foster participation); finding a balance between play, engagement or surprise with transparency; dealing with different motivations, identities and levels of participation and expertise; responsiveness to contributions and opinions through the adoption of technology solutions aimed at providing effective and inclusive options for creative participation and decision-making; the design of open, self-reflective, everyday yet engaging narrative structures; encouragement of collaboration among participants and the outlining of a thorough documenting process for academic discussion and as a guide for further future experiences.

Participatory media production

Many of the projects that considered as references for Plugin Narratives (see Appendix A.1) share the need to engage their audiences as participants before an actual product is released. This participation can take many shapes and fall in a continuum from minimum to maximum degrees of participation (Carpentier 2011; Jenkins & Carpentier 2013). We consider that this is done mainly in three ways:

- Participants are asked to contribute and support the project as 'backers', 'fans', 'supporters', 'enthusiasts' or 'followers' from early stages of development. This means spreading the word by expressing support, showing interest through funding activities or contributing in symbolic areas of development (i.e. participating in a consultative vote processes). In any case, participants are considered as part of the target audience and sometimes even marketed as a sign of the demand for the actual product, also known as pre-sold audiences (Deuze, 2008). In these cases a final product is made with the support of a collective. This is the case of *The Age of Stupid* (2008), a documentary film

project on sustainability, which was made possible through a successful and pioneering crowdfunding campaign.

- Participants actively engage to a significant extent in specific processes, contributing to the vision of the creative core but at the same time becoming co-creators, according to Banks & Potts (2010). This means decentering authorship in one way or another, allowing for some - even if limited - decision-making: for example, as creative talent through problem-solving crowdsourcing calls, helping to shape some defining or pre-production stages or following strict rulesets (see Dena, 2010, Roig, Sánchez-Navarro & Leibovitz 2012; Roig, 2013; Atkinson 2014a). In these cases a final product is produced with the help of a collective, to the extent that there wouldn't be a final product without their contribution and, ultimately, labour. Still, participants are part of the target audience and will eventually become evangelizers through co-option techniques. Some relevant examples that we have identified are *Life in a day* (2010), a documentary film made exclusively from contributions from users from around the world (initiated and then selected and edited by a professional creative team including renowned filmmakers Ridley Scott and Kevin McDonald) or *The entertainment experience* (2012), a Dutch fiction experiment where users actively shaped a script from the initial idea and also different 'demo' filming sections before a professional team led by Dutch star film director Paul Verhoeven shot a final version.
- The process becomes the real *raison-d'être* of the initiative. An ongoing playful interaction is established between project facilitators and participants, which contribute to the experience as a whole and shape its direction through time. Here, the participants become the actual audience and there is not a clear 'problem-solving approach', even if the project wouldn't make sense without active and sustained participation (Cruickshank, Coupe & Hennessy, 2014). Furthermore, there is no clear bounded, closed definitive product or object, as it evolves and updates itself through its lifetime. Such experiences are closer to games than traditional media products, even if, once the project ends - be it according to planning or due to fading interest-, media content recalling the experience might be produced. One important exponent here is *Futurecoast* (2013), a collective creation game experience where users were asked to record imaginary "voicemails from the future" recalling mainly environmental issues and gathered for the global project. Furthermore, *Beyond the Castle* (2013-2014) stands out as an ambitious local co-design project set in Lancaster in order to engage citizens in an outdoors city remodeling project. Also worth mentioning

here, *Lost Zombies* (2010-2013) offers an interesting take on the fake documentary in inviting users to shoot and share 'evidence' of the ongoing zombie apocalypse.

Additionally, we are also taking into account other kind of experiences where participants act as players and performers of a social-related game or transmedia experience. Contrary to the previous examples, in here, the development process becomes a sort of black box in hands of the creative core. In fact, secrecy surrounding the story is essential to ensure surprise and engagement (Ben-Shaul, 2012), building an interactive but barely participatory experience. The playful experience is either tightly directed towards pre-established goals or offering just a limited set of options. Two distinctions can still be made inside this category:

- Experiences based on individual exploration: gameplay does not have a collaborative element and, consequently, does not influence others' gameplay. It's mainly an individual experience. This is the case of the complex and inspiring transmedia project *Collapsus* (2010), where users are asked to examine evidence of the world resource crisis through an animated fictional webseries (following a global conspiracy), real interviews with experts and a game interface where players have to take decisions on different alternative energy sources and face the consequences. Another relevant example is *My sky is falling* (2013-2014) a game where players face, through a layer of fiction, similar challenges and decisions that children entering and leaving the child foster care system in the US.
- Collaborative experiences (Atkinson, 2014a; 2014b): there is a social dimension in gameplay, so the collective can share information and skills to explore the game, find evidences and solve the challenge. This is the case of *The inside* (2011), a branded entertainment experience where players collaborate to find clues to help a captive to escape from her seclusion, having only a connected Intel computer as a contact with the outside world.

Technologies for Community Engagement

Carroll and Rosson (2013) identified a number of opportunities and challenges for the use of technology to enhance community. Over many years of community informatics projects they highlighted the way in which technology can reinforce identity, enrich opportunities for community awareness and participation, and in some cases strengthen the underlying social support networks. For example, virtual representations of a town

and dedicated message boards allowed citizens to build on and develop their knowledge of local places, and improved community engagement.

Among the case examples analysed, it is worth noting the aforementioned examples of *Futurecoast*, which aimed at engagement with climate change issues (although it was targeted at the global community), the experience *Cosmic Voyage Enterprises*, where higher education students were immersed in decision-making processes through a pervasive game environment, and *Reinvention stories*, an open initiative providing an environment to promote personal storytelling about the reinvention of a former industrialized area, that of Dayton (USA).

Novel technologies designed for use in local communities often focus on specific communication goals, such as supporting discussion around democratic decision making (Van Der Merwe and Meehan, 2010) or providing a way of sharing information about local events (Hoffman et al., 2012). There has also been considerable research on the use of existing platforms for community communication and engagement purposes. For example, the TRACE project found that social networking sites such as Facebook can provide older users with opportunities for maintaining their connections with family, friends and members of the local community, as well as in some cases interacting with strangers and developing new friendships. There are also media projects in our case examples which used existing technology platforms to build communities. In *The Inside*, the community was formed through *Facebook*, and on the fan movie project *Star Wars Uncut*, through Vimeo or, in the case of the documentary *Life in a Day*, Youtube.

In some cases, lower-tech solutions can provide better support for community engagement. In the Beyond the Castle case study Cruickshank et al. demonstrate how co-design techniques can be used to support community discussion and reflection (Cruickshank et al., 2013). Here they made extensive use of paper and pen and

5. Kickoff workshop: Barcelona, 20th and 21st November, 2014

Overview

From the very beginning we devised the idea of holding two events, with different aims and a different scope and structure: a Kickoff workshop to be organized early on in Barcelona, just after the first round of literature review, and a closing meeting in Brighton at the end of the research period.

The main aim of the Kickoff workshop was to serve as a way to share and discuss some preliminary ideas with a wider public, formed particularly by researchers and practitioners from different fields. The underlying topic that was to be addressed through the workshop was what the implications could be in the process of conceptualizing, designing and implementing a participatory and playful media creation project. With this goal in mind, we targeted mainly researchers and professionals from the media and digital storytelling fields. But we were also deeply interested in having contributions from experts from other fields like social policy, activism, technology, intergenerational communication and ICT use, which we considered to be key issues in the process of outlining the blueprint of an actual viable pilot project.

We took advantage of the interdisciplinary nature of the UOC's Research Institute, the IN3, as well as of its connections to the nearby UPF's Communication Campus (where collaboration between media studies and multimedia technologies are fostered in a regular basis) and we issued two different calls for two different meetings:

- An experts' session on the 20th of November (via personal invitation), more focused on discussing key issues related to participatory creative projects.
- An open workshop the following day (via open call through the IN3 website and personal networking), more focused on the actual project and sharing conclusions from the experts' discussion from the previous day.

The overall event was presented in the following terms:

The aim of this event is, on the one side, to publicly present the project Plugin Narratives, and on the other side, to open a transdisciplinary discussion process on the main challenges, potentialities, methodologies and case examples. That is, to reflect on what it means to co-create storytelling experiences. Attending the broad scope and potentialities behind the Plugin Narratives project, we welcome

scholarship from different fields, ranging from cultural and media studies, advertising, design, education, sociology, anthropology, business and organizations, computer studies, music, games, political science and entertainment.

Experts' Session (See Appendix 1 for a more complete summary)

The experts' session was planned as a way to engage in an active discussion with a relatively small interdisciplinary group around some key broad topics. Consequently, the project was left more in the background as we wanted to identify key challenges, resistances and opportunities for any kind of creative project based on the active engagement of a collective through time. The response to our call was very enthusiastic, and we managed to gather a group of eighteen experts, with scholars coming from fields such as media production, anthropology, sociology, design, arts, multimedia, political science or interaction design, as well as professionals from documentary and fiction filmmaking, transmedia production and social engagement initiatives for private companies. Whenever possible, we tried to have the available experts also for the open workshop. Additionally, a few experts who could not attend this meeting attended the following day, so we had also their input for the second session.

During the experts' session, we deliberately kept the description of the project to a minimum, as we didn't want the discussion to focus on Plugin Narratives as a whole, as this was the planned objective of the second day. It is important to note that most of the participants were already aware of Plugin Narratives through the invitation letter, as well as through a warm-up presentation made at the UPF a week before the Workshop. So we expressed our interest in the development of an action-research project aimed at experimenting with co-creation practices with local communities around shared social concerns connected to possible futures. The key issues we wanted to address were the following:

- Participants' engagement
- The notion of community
- Intergenerational communication
- Expertise, inclusion and entry barriers
- The project as a multimodal narrative experience
- Connection of the future and the past

From there, the discussion took different directions, table 1 summarises the most relevant topics:

Purpose and planning	<p>What's the goal? Defining outputs and expected outcomes Target participants interests of the different stakeholders Expectations raised - how can they be met? Focus</p>
Engagement	<p>Different levels of engagement Fostering interrelations among participants From engaging idea to meaningful collectivity Negotiation process with participants Make contributions feel relevant Find a common language for different kinds of participants Barriers: make all contributions feel relevant Visualizing contributions (tagging content, make known what's 'trending') Empowerment and capacity for decision-making Clear goals and rules Be recognized as 'part' of the community, not imposing something from the outside</p>
Implementation	<p>Scaling the project Not thinking that your 'audience' will be just there. Nurturing your community takes a lot of time and effort Interfaces and platforms</p>
Narrative experience	<p>Narrative as conversation Main story and sub-stories Responsiveness Playfulness Narrative and meta-narrative elements</p>

Public workshop: Co-creating fiction, imagining futures: challenges for collaborative design and development of multimodal narratives

The open public workshop was aimed at presenting and discussing the project, as well as sharing the preliminary conclusions from the experts' sessions. Almost forty people participated in the workshop and this was the session planning:

- a. Presentation of the session: Dr. Kate Howland (University of Sussex) and Dr. Antoni Roig (UOC/ IN3). (10-10:15)
- b. Public presentation of the project Plugin Narratives (Dr. Kate Howland and Dr. Antoni Roig). (10:15- 10:45)
- c. Co-creating narrative experiences: a showcase of examples. (10:45-11:15)
- d. Coffee Break. (11:15-11:30)
- e. Group discussion (11:30-12:45)
- f. Informal playful lunch with The Thing From the Future. (12:45-14:00)

After sessions B and C, which focused on outlining the project itself and its referents, we opened the floor for small group discussion. We formed three multi-language groups (with at least an expert from the previous session in each group so they could act as facilitators and sharing some of the preliminary conclusions from the previous session). After an hour of discussion, each group presented a summary of the conversation through a spokesperson.

Purpose and planning	Concrete aim State of the art of currently existing technologies and methodologies
Engagement	Connection to the local community Transmit to the participants the idea that they will be getting something back: visualising results. Outcomes from participation Value of physical output Perception of social change Community to be given a fair amount of control Identifying your audience(s) Defining mechanisms for different levels of participation

	and different kinds of efforts Searching for other communities with assimilable problems and willing to talk and share them.
Narrative experience	Creative control over the narrative Different levels: grand story, narrative as personally experienced, endless stories Identifying different contexts for different narrative modes, be it fictional or non-fictional Narrative flow and facilitating shifting from one media to another. Enjoyable experience Detect and exploit collateral issues, problems, needs... Main narrative and secondary narratives.
Implementation	Timing Linking the tension of the narrative to real and everyday life events. Measure effectiveness, thinking in replication, impact.
Physical vs. Virtual	Blending the physical and the digital
Topic	How to engage people in a playful narrative about something emotionally serious

As it can be seen from this schematic summary, discussions focused on the different challenges of building a participatory collective narrative project from a more abstract point of view, which is coherent with the backgrounds of the attendees and the preliminary stage of the research project. Considerations more connected to specific communities or relevant subjects to be tackled through social engagement were more in the background in these discussions, although they did have some presence. As it can be observed, some of the concerns raised in the experts' session re-appear in the open workshop, as well as new considerations appearing.

Community engagement appears as a key issue in both sessions: first, the implications and potential issues derived of the different conceptualizations of the term 'community'. Once we have identified a probable - or potential- community as a target for a participatory narrative experience, it is made clear through the discussion the need to know and understand it well before making further decision on the design of the experience. Thus, establishing a continuous relationship with the community in different stages is considered essential, which at the same time is connected to different kinds

of interventions so as to 'build', 'nurture', 'manage', 'negotiate', 'empower', 'recognize', 'engage', 'understand' or 'be responsive'.

Community is understood as a convention and formed by members with heterogeneous interests and interrelations inside and outside the community: thus, we have to consider different levels of engagement and, additionally, different entries to the experience in order to facilitate involvement from different groups. Furthermore, the target community can establish connections with adjacent communities that might feel identified and share identical concerns, thus expanding the reach of the experience.

Establishing trust is also key through a clear outlining of the goals, objectives and expected outcomes, connecting it to the locality (through recognized stakeholders) and the everyday (through connection to local events), highlighting relevance, facilitating ways to become more involved in decision-making. As one of the participants stated, it is important to start with an engaging idea when searching to build a meaningful collectivity.

In a similar vein, visualisation of contributions and social 'tagging' may help to increase perception of relevance and interrelations among participants, which may find people with similar interests, feel more empowered through social relations and engaged through the emergence of different topics of interest that may have an overall impact on the project.

Possible barriers for individual participation are also important to consider: calls to action must be clear, appealing to different kinds of skills, levels of expertise and degrees of commitment and keeping the coherence with the 'bigger picture'. Content and interaction must be properly visualized to make participants feel part of the project regardless of quality or effort. That also means to promote events in the physical everyday world, from promotional activities or content public showcase to workshops on different forms of creativity to feed the story or to share views about the underlying social issues behind the project.

Needless to say the design and implementation of the actual participatory playful experience must be shaped by the burning need to reach the widest impact in the community through time in terms of engagement. Timing is then also a critical issue, in terms of the timespan of the experience but also its connections to local events, which could help to enhance the connections between the experience and the everyday. The design process must find the balance between different entry points, the virtual and the

physical, the outlining of the contributions in a meaningful way, fiction and non-fiction and, ultimately, the balance between a sense of playfulness and a sense of purpose.

The Plugin experience is intended to revolve around a nuclear story, a narrative premise that branches out and evolves through time and drawing from the moods and content coming from the contributions of the participants. This is tied to a sense of responsiveness, the need to include, recognise, visualise and attend to ramifications, to parallel or secondary narratives that may find an echo among the participants and that could lead the project to new and unexpected territories. The distributed nature of the narrative demands fostering the visualisation and tagging of content, keeping the conversation flowing, while taking care the narrative coherence of the experience as a whole.

Finally, it has been stated that it is very important to include in the design process the adequate methods for obtaining a comprehensive recording of quantitative and qualitative data from the experience and its participants, for research purposes and also in order to measure impact and help planning future actions that may allow for comparative analysis.

6. Closing workshop, 26th February 2015

Overview

Whilst the kick-off workshop was expansive and focussed on building discussions and spreading word out the project to a large number of people, the closing workshop aimed to build closer links with a key group of individuals working in highly-related areas. With our final workshop, we were looking to build connections for the next stage of the project, the pilot experience. Having gained extensive input from researchers and practitioners from media and digital storytelling fields at the kick-off workshop, we were particularly keen to seek contributions from those working in community informatics, public engagement and intergenerational communication at this second event. We also chose to invite participants to give short talks at this event, to open out the discussion beyond Plugin Narratives. We gave an initial introductory talk about the project, in which we outlined the work completed so far, and highlighted six key questions from those we had identified through the literature review and the initial workshop. We then invited participants to present on their own work, and allowed time for questions and discussion. In the final section of the day we facilitated a roundtable discussion, during which we returned to the key questions posed, and sought insight from the participants in relation to their own experiences.

Session Plan

- a. Welcome and coffee (10:00-10:15)
- b. Introduction to the workshop: Dr. Kate Howland, University of Sussex and Dr. Antoni Roig, UOC/ IN3). (10:15-10:40)
- c. Dr. Christopher Shaw, University of Oxford - The role of narrative in building public engagement with climate policy (10:40-11:10)
- d. Nick Gant, University of Brighton - Young digital citizenship (11:10-11:50)
- e. John Gower, Environment Agency - Coastal Communities 2150 (12:00-12:30)
- f. Lunch (12:30-13:15)
- g. Dr. Frauke Behrendt, University of Brighton - Community engagement through art (13:15-13:35)
- h. Dr. Dave Harley, University of Brighton - intergenerational connections (13:35-13:55)
- i. Coffee Break. (13:55-14:00)
- j. Group roundtable discussion (14:00-15:00)

Talk Summaries

Dr. Christopher Shaw, University of Oxford - The role of narrative in building public engagement with climate policy (10:40-11:10)

Chris talked about the challenge of getting citizens engagement in climate change decisions making, and noted that this rarely happens. On questions such as the level of acceptable climate risk, the general public are not asked, but told. The '2 degrees' warming figure is accepted and adopted by politicians as though it were black and white fact, but it is somewhat arbitrary.

Chris argues that citizen participation offers the potential to build better climate policy, but highlights that issues of power relations and power dynamics can be obstacles. Chris is interested in how narratives can offer the means of creating an open and accessible debate. Visions of the future can be one context for this. Personal and individual stories that really affect individuals are the most likely thing to engage people. Chris mentioned some interesting recent research from University of Cardiff on [public perceptions of climate change after the floods](#).

Nick Gant, University of Brighton - Young digital citizenship (11:10-11:50)

Nick spoke about his work on community engagement through digital platforms. He developed an online platform, [Community21](#), which can be used to create neighbourhood and development plans. Some of this work has involved localised agendas around climate change, such as a water conservation project in Barcombe. One of the approaches C21 uses is to make things meaningful for communities through visualisations on social media, such as imagining the impact of a future reservoir. The resources created on the site can be viewed by services providers, and can help people to make decisions on a local level. This can help with resilience.

The C21 team have used a number of techniques for getting different groups to engage with decisions. Reflecting on possible futures is an activity they have found to be very helpful, and they have asked children in particular to think about their future village and future school, through structured work with the support of technology. In order to avoid the 'skatepark syndrome', where young people engaging in planning discussions focus only on what would be of immediate interest to them, Nick and his team have a number of ways of encouraging empathy with and consideration of other members of the community. For example, they use an app which ages photos and a simple animation

app to allow young people to create characters which are older versions of them, and to record their future selves talking about what's important to them in the community. This helps take them out of their current personal circumstances, and allows them to realise that other types of services and facilities are needed to support all citizens of a town or village.

Nick and his team have also made use of Minecraft as a way of getting young people involved in planning discussions in an active and constructive way. Another useful approach has been looking at special objects, places and spaces within the community. Sometimes these are traditionally important features such as churches or public memorials, but there is also importance in places like supermarkets where meaningful interactions that make people feel part of the community can take place.

John Gower, Environment Agency - Coastal Communities 2150 (12:00-12:30)

John works for the Environment Agency on long-term climate change and coastal management, and spoke about a recently completed project, funded under the InterReg programme – Coastal Communities 2150. The key aims of this project were to work with communities to improve understanding of coastal change risk (and opportunities), and to help communities to develop their own long term coastal visions. The project was completed in partnership with Belgium and The Netherlands, with Calais as an observing partner.

One of the challenges of the project is the communicating scientific ideas to the general public, and encouraging engagement with long-term planning, not just the short term decisions for which people find it easier to think about and envisage the outcomes. John and his team have found that face to face interactions are important in reaching people, and have assembled a local committee of community representatives, and have also worked with local schools. They were interested to find that young people are not scared of the long term impacts, and see it as a challenge.

Within the project the hope is to encourage people to see the need to adapt to water in the future. This pragmatic and positive interpretation is necessary if the public are to be engaged and encouraged to consider solutions.

Like Nick, John has found visualisations to be very helpful in reaching out to people and making an impact. John and his team commissioned a [sea-level rise visualisation tool](#), which allows people to interact with a digital representation of the Sussex coastline and see the effects of sea level rises, as well as interventions. A fly through video mode has also been very useful for communicating the effect over the region. Importantly, individual properties are not shown, to avoid the most sensitive issues around future

loss of private property. John sees much potential in extending this sort of simulation to a game environment, where decisions can be played out, and the consequences explored. He expressed an interest in the use of Minecraft as described by Nick. Less high-tech visualisations, in the form of postcards showing imagined future versions of various coastal resorts, have also proved effective on the CC2150 project.

Dr. Frauke Behrendt, University of Brighton - Community engagement through art (13:15-13:35)

Frauke spoke about a number of relevant projects she has worked on in recent years, including a Smart E-bikes project, which focussed on understanding how consumers engage with electrically assisted cycling. Frauke echoed comments from both Nick and Chris that individuals need to see the personal benefit or implications for them with new initiatives. The things people commented positively on about their use of the bikes were mainly individual benefits, such as improved commute times, or saving money, rather than environmental benefits.

Audio interfaces are an area in which Frauke has a particular interest. In the bike project audio afforded a helpful mode of interaction which did not interfere with riders' rhythms. A current project on mobile sound (art), where sounds take centre stage was explained in detail. With placed sounds artists curate a distribution of sounds in outdoor spaces, whilst participants create and remix versions by the trajectories they take. Frauke gave a number of examples of projects of this sort, including [Streetstories](#), [Craving](#), [Core Sample](#), [National Mall](#) and [Tactical Soundgarden](#).

Frauke discussed a number of interesting factors which are relevant with this kind of experience, including spatial perception, immersion, situated experience, walking as remixing, time, exclusion, augmented reality, economy of attention and code/spaces. These elements are all considered in Frauke's project, NetPark, funded by the Digital R&D Fund for the Arts, and run in collaboration with Metal in Southend-on-sea and Calvium in Bristol. In this project Frauke and the team are exploring the process of hosting work digitally in public spaces and understanding how audiences respond. They will be compiling a NetPark toolkit. The project involves reviewing existing toolkits, conducting stakeholder and audience interviews, observation and analytics on data from the app and the Wi-Fi gateway.

Dr. Dave Harley, University of Brighton - intergenerational connections (13:35-13:55)

Dave spoke about his work on digital technologies and intergenerational connections. In an ageing society, intergenerational communication is increasingly important in defining

how our communities develop and how we live our lives. Opportunities to discuss these things across generations can be limited, both within and beyond families.

The Trajectories to Community Engagement project looked at the underlying motivations for online and offline community engagement. Dave reported on an interesting finding relating to the generational differences in social networking site engagement. Older people were less likely to engage with such sites, and when they did it was commonly to be able to keep up with what family members were doing. The role taken was often one of benevolent surveillance, with little interaction, but much observing. Many participants in this project found facebook exchanges to be trivial and lacking in privacy, and had concerns about how younger family members were using the sites. The older people who did use social networking sites more widely in this study tended to use them for games and playful interactions with peers, sharing lighthearted exchanges and establishing common ground through online games such as scrabble and bingo.

Dave also spoke about work on intergenerational communication beyond the family. In the online space he has studied the interactions of a YouTube member, Geriatric 1927, who has engaged in life review, cultural exchange and reciprocal learning exchanges with young people on Youtube. In face to face setting Dave has investigated the generational practice of mobile phone use in public spaces, with adolescents using their phones to facilitate a seamless social network, young adults using the phone as a companion, middle aged people using their phone to make efficient use of time whilst between destinations, and older adults engaging in discreet use with the phone often turned off after a call.

Notes on Roundtable Discussion

Discussion points relating to key questions

1. What are the challenges for intergenerational collaboration on such projects?
 - a. Older people can find social media interactions trivial, but can also find playful activities such as games to be a non-threatening introduction to new forms of technology.
 - b. This may be linked to whether or not the interactions are perceived as taking place in a public space – concerns about looking silly which could translate over to real-world public space interactions.

- c. Some technologies are inherently positioned as more playful, e.g. iPad. They are less formal, and the technology is less overtly visible (no keyboard or separate screen).
 - d. Ways of using mobile phones in public space differs greatly between generations, could result in challenge for a project which relies on mobile interactions.
 - e. Public spaces are the places where intergenerational communication can happen, but the younger generation may find it hard to break away from the virtual world accessed through their phones and engage in the face to face environment.
 - f. Family context may be the easiest place to start with intergenerational communication.
 - g. Looking back to look forward can work well for uniting generational knowledge and focus.
 - h. Older generation tend to have a much lower carbon footprint - assumptions about who has the knowledge, and who gets to teach whom.
 - i. Different generation bring different things to the problem solving process. Younger generations are more likely to be interested in new things that have never been done before.
2. What are the entry points for engagement? How do we balance between face to face/ physical and digital interactions?
- a. Physical objects can bring people together, e.g. Parish/ park noticeboards, tapestry, pubs. Important to find a way of placing media within a real world space.
 - b. Digital interactions can be linked more closely with the physical through technologies such as augmented reality, which keep the focus on the real world – the Lewes tapestry starts talking. A filter on the real world, rather than being taken away from it.
 - c. Digital activities, such as construction in Minecraft could be accompanying by physical manifestations using digital printing
 - d. Link to more traditional interactions in public spaces - having a chat. Banality of chatting as the simplest way of interaction in public spaces.
3. What sort of outputs are important for projects of this sort? What will participants and stakeholders get back?
- a. A community sculpture or another piece of art could be a way of capturing the outcomes of the project in a long-term way. E.g. projects where people buy a brick with their name on it to help raised funds.
 - b. Local issues are part of your culture, and will affect your future. An output in the case of Community21 were the neighbourhood plans.

- c. An important output could simply be better connections within the community.
 - d. Brief must be written by the community - that way the output is targeted, agreed, and achievable.
4. How can we create a mechanism for participation which allows for a range of levels of effort and engagement?
- a. Related to the invisible nature of how communities perpetuate themselves and maintain cohesion.
 - b. Power relations are important - technology can level, but there is also an exclusivity with technology. Some people don't feel able to access it, or have made a conscious choice not to.
 - c. Different entry points. Granular, self-contained, contributions could be made in the form of, e.g. postcards from the future.
 - d. Stall in significant public space (e.g. quayside) could be a great way of collecting inputs.
 - e. Tying in with schools would be important for seeking input from younger generations – activities that could be run as part of a lesson.
 - f. Potential links with Green Party support, or regular gatherings such as Sunday assemblies where there is an interest in building community.
5. How can we use structure to keep narrative coherence whilst allowing freedom to contribute meaningfully?
- a. Interesting notion of 'remixing' stories – audio snippets can be navigated in order of choice to allow narrative to unfold.
 - b. Stand-alone contributions such as postcards could be fed into the overall narrative to a greater or lesser degree.
 - c. Need to balance fictional and factual - where does the creative, inventive possible future and playfulness come in?
 - d. Possible realities take away the pressure of hard factual depictions.
 - e. Interlinking what you think about your future will be, vs. what you would like it to be.
 - f. Having 'rules' for the game, which are the core, and asking people to play along. Perhaps changing rules as time passes?
 - g. How do behaviours, or reported behaviours change the future in the game?
 - h. Time travel narrative could allow for specific decisions and actions to have their consequences played out in a concrete way.
6. What platforms could support this type of experience, including visualisation of contributions and data?

- a. Important not to overlook the audio mode – the visual is not the only way of representing and communicating ideas.
- b. Need to be inclusive - it's about what people want to bring to the table, what they want to record. They story that they tell - whether they want to write something, take a picture, or interview someone else.
- c. With tech, you will never do the whole thing. Need for some unmediated interaction.
- d. Non-verbal communication - how much is lost in the digital? Technology is important, but doesn't negate the need for unmediated communication.
- e. What is the interface, how does it mediate. Mediation could be digital, but it can feel physical - a communal activity that people want to engage with.
- f. Physical signage and wall paintings can be layered through defacement or other ways of adding to what's already there.
- g. Does using high tech solutions constrain the possibilities of this project? Does it say the future will always be high-tech, and higher tech than today?

Future steps

- Short term – small-scale bid for pilot project.
- Newhaven is promising location for pilot – lots of connections and ongoing projects there relating to the Coastal Communities 2150 work, and the ongoing meeting of the Coastal Futures community group.
- Other towns in the area such as Hastings could also be interesting locations. University of Brighton has campuses there, and they have done some interesting work on planning for climate change.
- Looking to future European bid plans - European partners, some interesting Irish and Netherlands contacts working in coastal issues/ community planning.

7. Conclusions: “Plugin Narratives: co-creating fiction, imagining futures, engaging communities”

Project Summary

The Plugin Narratives seed project has developed the premise of a co-created fictional narrative experience based around a specific local community issue, aiming to encourage reflection and community discussion of values. We have examined the opportunities and challenges for this project premise through a literature review and looking at case studies of existing projects, and with expert input from researchers and practitioners through two interactive events.

We have synthesised the input from these multiple channels and drawn the key elements together to produce a set of guidelines which provide questions and suggestions for anyone taking on a project of this sort.

Impact

- Project presented at the New Research Roundtable at the Pompeu Fabra University (Barcelona, November 2014)
- Project selected for presentation at the HERA Workshop (Tallin, Jan 2015)
- Invited to present project at Coastal Futures community group (local government and community representatives) in Newhaven at upcoming meeting.

Future developments

Funding applications

- In the short term we are planning a small-medium bid for funding to run the pilot project. We have identified Newhaven as a promising location for the pilot. We have developed connections and ongoing projects there relating to the Coastal Communities 2150 work, and the ongoing meeting of the Coastal Futures community group.
- In the longer term we are planning a European bid. We have built strong connections with interested collaborators through the project events, and are in discussions about how to take the shared interests identified further. Extended connections include potential European partners from three UK universities and a

governmental agency, as well as universities in Spain, the Netherlands and Ireland.

Dissemination

- Publication of guidelines for designing a community-based playful narrative experiences, including key literature review elements and expert input from events (in communication/ media journal).
- Comparative analysis of participatory media production or environmental-related social engagement cases connected to our project's conclusions and guidelines (in communication/ media journal).
- Upcoming presentation of project ideas at Coastal Futures community group.

Guidelines: Key elements and challenges for designing a community-based playful narrative experiences

These guidelines were developed based on the specific needs of our project, and provide a concise summary of the key findings from our literature review and events. However, they will also have broader relevance to anyone undertaking a playful narrative project aimed at community engagement.

a. Before starting: what's your plan?

- Defining your aims
 - Broadly, what do you hope to achieve with the project. Is the focus on outcomes for the community, the creation of media, research findings, or a combination of these?
- Identifying a community
 - Important to find a community with a reasonably well-defined identity, and with some existing issues of concern to local citizens and government.
- Approaching the community and defining shared concern related to the future of the community.
 - Identifying and refining issues which narrative experience will be built around. Must be done in collaboration with local representatives. It is important to take into account that different interests, expectations or positions might, at some point enter in contradiction with the general aims of the project or even between stakeholders.
- The stakeholders
 - Make contact with stakeholder within the community. Local committees, community centres and special interest groups are good connections to build on.
- Outlining a premise

- Working with stakeholders develop initial narrative premise to be presented to community.
- Defining goals and desired outcomes
 - Goals and outcomes should be considered both for the organising team and the participants.
- Why so serious? Playful elements in social issues
 - When considering social issues there may be concerns about whether the subject matter is too sensitive for a playful approach to be used. However, games and play can reduce tension, and a fictional context can be used to address real issues without discussed specific issues which may cause concern.
- Environmental issues as a case-example
 - Environmental issues such as climate change, or energy crisis can be a fertile ground for such experiences, as we have found on our analysis of case examples. There are specific local issues to be considered, and fictional futures defined by changes in factors related to environmental issues are accessible to everyone.

b. Shaping a methodology for engagement and participation.

- Timing and pace (when and for how long)
 - Important considerations are balancing the need for interest to gain through word of mouth and losing momentum. Intensity with time for growing engagement is the ideal.
- Layers of participation
 - From 'lurkers' and observers to the most committed participants, there should be a number of engagement pathways that allow for different levels of interest and time commitments. In alternate reality games, many players engage in a passive spectatorship which they still find valuable.
- Coordination with stakeholders
 - Stakeholders should be heavily involved during this stage in defining the key groups who should be targeted for engagement, as well as contributing expert knowledge on local groups and places that will be helpful for gaining participation.
- Raising awareness and expectations
 - Marketing and advertising must be considered carefully. These must not over promise, but should pique interest and effectively communicate the outputs and benefits of participation.
- Individuals, collectives, communities.... knowing your participants

- In a local context, existing groups and organisations such as schools, community centres, local interest groups, and local government bodies must be identified and contacted – these can act as key gateways to participants,
- Think in Intergenerational terms: tools, skills, what's the use...
 - Some technologies and tools are more familiar to young people, but more importantly, can be used in very different ways. Mobile phones tend to be used seamlessly by young people to keep connections with virtual communities, whilst older generations would only use such devices sporadically.
- Think in everyday life: virtual vs. Face-to-face, tech and non-tech
 - Face-to-face connections are very important, and even virtual elements can be better situated in everyday life through the digital augmentation of physical objects.
- Develop the grand story, attend to emerging stories.
 - An overall narrative plan can be important to achieve coherence, but new stories must be allowed to emerge, led by participants contributions.
- Connecting the past, the present and the future(s)
 - Looking to the past can be a way of engaging older generations and harnessing their expertise and knowledge, as well as reminding everyone how much can change in a given time period – e.g. look 100 years in the past to help you think about 100 years in the future.
- Consider fiction and non-fiction
 - Non-fiction elements can be powerful for a local community – tying events to real places, and involving real events from the past can add personal interest and relevance, whilst fictional elements from the future are necessary to promote reflection and encourage a playful approach which leaves room for reflection.
- Think about different project outputs and outcomes: what's in it for me, what's in return for participants.
 - What will participants get in return for their contribution of time and ideas? Is it only the satisfaction of working collaboratively on a fictional account of a local space, or will there be permanent changes in policy, plans or in the local environment?

c. Implementation

- Platform choice

- Consider existing well-used technologies first. Expecting participants to sign up for new platforms could limit the number of participants, and makes it harder for people to take small steps towards engaging.
- Recruiting participants
 - Ensure a mix of digital and non-digital advertising, and highlight the key outcomes for participants in materials. Harness the relationships with stakeholder groups developed at earlier stages to arrange in person events to encourage participation.
- Entry points
 - Ensure that there are multiple entry points, including the physical and the digital. Calls to action must be clear, appealing to different kinds of skills, levels of expertise and degrees of commitment.
- Provide support for narrative and community management
 - Consider employing a community manager to foster interrelations among participants and keep track of emerging narratives contributed by participations.
- Giving visibility to contributions
 - The developing narrative should be made visible to participants and observers, including the work contributed by others. This may be in an online format, but there should also be an effort to reflect some of the content in physical displays in the local community.
- Endings - what is different afterwards?
 - Consider how to leave a lasting legacy for the project. Where the project has been designed to match a community need such as decisions process, this may be partially in the form of policy of planning changes. There may be a digital legacy in the form of a collection of contributions and a representation of the narrative, but it is also important to consider physical real-world representations of the project outcomes.

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Appendix 1: Case Examples

In this section we briefly present some cases that we consider to be showing relevant features for the Plugin Narratives project, many of them connected to our literature review process.

Collaborative and playful fictions and games on possible futures.

<p>Futurecoast</p> <p><i>An online game-like collaborative storytelling experience aimed at the reflection on possible climate-changed futures. The call asks participants to record a voicemail 'from the future', sharing fictional but realistic stories on possible futures. Thus, imaginaries, projections, concerns and knowledge about environmental issues and how they could affect us are shared through the project. Futurecoast received a lot of media exposure but it ultimately failed to engage its audience.</i></p>	 <p>Futurecoast is a very direct reference as it is aimed at playing with our perception and concerns about the future through collective storytelling, even in a different way. There is a lot of common ground there, and issues of entry points and skills are also considered. At the same time, it is important to learn some lessons on engagement and the differences between media exposure and public interest.</p>
<p>http://futurecoast.org</p>	

<p>Cosmic Voyage Enterprises</p> <p>A educational pervasive game for Florida Council on Economic Education, providing students a personal understanding on ethics and financial responsibility. The story revolves around</p>	
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a fictional space cargo company, Cosmic Voyage Enterprises: after one of their ships crashes in a small town in Florida, students have to manage the unfolding economic and environmental disaster. Various stakeholders are represented on social media (artists, unions, activists, families, local authorities, environmental agencies, etc.) and offer different perspectives on the event, so different options, versions and opinions are presented. Drawing from this complexity, participants face the need to take critical decisions.

Cosmic Voyage Enterprises is a game-like narrative experience aimed at a local community (and a very specific target, high education students) around a realistic situation where different perspectives and possibilities are offered, pointing at complexity and decision-making influencing on future events. All the narrative structure is connected to social media platforms, that is, the channels used by participants, allowing for further integration between fiction and real life.

<http://www.conducttr.com/success-stories/cosmic-voyage-enterprises/>

Collaborative and playful fictions and games (general)

The inside

A fiction-based social cinematic experience where the main character is trapped in a room in an unknown location with an Intel laptop and an unreliable Wifi connection as her only means of communication with the outside world. The Inside connects this character with the players through Facebook, being moved to action in order to find clues in order to find her location and help her to escape (Atkinson 2014a).




The most interesting of The Inside, from the perspective of our project is how an entertainment collective experience is built through collective play in a social media environment (Facebook), and at the same time through the production of linear content with a cinematic approach. The Inside is considered a success story spanning through further experiences, and therefore provides us with important evidence to be taken into account.

<http://insidefilms.com>

Media projects based on co-creation and crowdsourcing

<p>The Wake up initiative</p> <p><i>Self-defined as a the first ‘open world wide web series’, Wake Up is a collaborative fiction that, from a ruleset related to some fictional characters ask participants to create stories related to a dystopian future, with the aim to stress the need for society to take action of the world’s most urgent problems. Thus the metaphor of ‘waking up’ from our collective sleep. Even if the project started in 2013 and it’s still active, it has failed to attract a wide array of participants and the content made for the project is scarce.</i></p>	 <p>The starting point, a premise and a ruleset for creation is very close to some of our initial goals. In this case, as in Futurecoast, the activity is centralized in the project’s website and it is aimed at a global audience (the website is has Spanish, English and French versions). Again it is of interest to us to attend to the reasons why the project is not quite well known and hasn’t been successful in terms of participation.</p>
<p>www.thewakeupinitiative.com/</p>	

<p>Lost Zombies</p> <p><i>Self-defined as either as a social network devoted to zombies or a community-generated zombie documentary, Lost zombies offers a catchy starting point for the fans: the zombie apocalypse has begun and visual proof is needed. Thus, a call is issue so that witnesses shoot ‘documentary’ evidence of the coming of zombies in order to edit the first zombie documentary. Thus, through the</i></p>	 <p>A successful attempt to collaboratively build a crowdsourced movie with the participation of a highly engaged community under a common interest, the</p>
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aesthetics of the false documentary a participatory and playful initiative is created with a minimum ruleset, as every participant is aware of the basic rules regarding the zombie fictional universe, depicted mainly in popular cinema.

zombie fictional mythology and, more in general, horror movies. Rules are well known and skills are not essential through the idea of building a false documentary. Here, the community is gathered through a strong common interest.

www.lostzombies.com

The Entertainment experience

A Dutch collaborative experiment in fictional story-developing and filming in the form of a contest. Participants were given the first pages of a story to be continued through user-generated contributions in a weekly basis. Each week, the best new follow up to the previous story was voted by the community, so the story would develop in undetermined ways through the input of the participants. Furthermore, each week different versions of the previous week's story were filmed and voted, so in the end, a complete version of the user-created script and a collection of user-created filmed adaptations were put together as a result of the voting process. Finally, famous film director Paul Verhoeven would shoot with a professional team his own version of the movie, based on the collective script and shots. The entertainment experience won an International Emmy award in 2013 and was conceived as a potential franchisable concept, even if there has been no follow up so far. Paul Verhoeven distanced himself from the project considering the



The Entertainment experience (TEE) is one of the most ambitious attempts at building collectively a feature film through the combination of amateur talent, collaboration and a voting process and the work of a professional team. The Entertainment experience worked from a very simple and at the same very effective premise (starting a story and let the players follow it up week by week, in a serialized fashion), and added another layer, that of actually shooting the most voted versions and submit them also to vote. All in all, it all connects to our goals of building and developing a narrative collectively. It is also worth noting that TEE's first (and up to now only) edition was focused on Dutch audiences, that is, a more or less bounded community, with the idea of exporting the format to different countries. Anyway, the actual success of the project it is not very clear, and the celebrity involved in the project,

fact that the collective input had not enough quality

Paul Verhoeven, expressed his own reservations on it. So again it is necessary to take into account its shortcomings in order to learn from it.

<http://www.entertainmentexperience.nl> [original Dutch site, currently unavailable]
<http://www.entertainmentexperience.com>

Life in a day

A crowdsourced documentary coming out from a collaboration between Youtube and ScottFree (Ridley Scott's production company) with the goal of depicting one day in the life of the whole world in July 2010. A call was submitted through a viral Youtube video, asking people to get involved in creating a short clip of their lives in the same date, upload it to Youtube. In the project page, all contribution would be present and could be voted. Producers would then select some of them according through different criteria (popularity, diversity, originality,...) and be selected for the final cut, all put together by an editing team led by award-winning director Kevin McDonald. The success of Life in a Day sprang two spin offs, Japan in a Day (connected to the Fukushima nuclear plant accident) and Britain in a Day.



First of all, this is a clear story of success in terms of participation, media exposure and online audiences. It is important to emphasize that besides the edited feature film, there is a project YouTube page with most of the contributions, some of them very popular. The collaborative rhetoric, the collective call to show the everyday through video, and therefore, to produce a narrative of the self for a bigger goal, managing expectations and visualizing contributions (selected or not for the final cut) can become major points to be considered in order to build and nurture a dispersed community. Its nature of event (all the material was filmed in the very same day) and ritual is also essential in order to understand how the project entangles with the everyday.

<https://www.youtube.com/user/lifeinaday>

Highrise

Highrise is an ambitious project aimed at exploring living in a 'vertical world' in cities around the world. Directed by Katerina Cizek and produced by the National Film Board of Canada, Highrise has spanned many different projects, from interactive documentaries, live events, installations and films. All of them have a participatory element based on contributions by people telling their own life stories. Thus, Highrise evolves in different directions through participation, with an underlying social goal, that of contributing to re-imagine living in urban spaces in the 21st century.



Highrise is another global-scale call to participation with a very specific vision and aimed at self-expression through everyday stories and personal concerns. Even if the participatory framework is very limited and curated more than visualized, it offers interesting insights on how to connect artistic expression, media and everyday narratives.

<http://highrise.nfb.ca>

Participatory Media projects related to climate change and the future

Collapsus

Collapsus is multimodal experience designed by Tommy Pallotta comprising a fictional conspiracy story through animation and fake news stories to

support the narrative, a game and a proper documentary examining the global energy crisis, tackling subjects like emerging economies and global warming.



Collapsus showcases the possibilities to engage in a playful multimodal experience related to environmental issues and climate change, even if its scope is very different and it doesn't rely on co-creation or collective experience.

www.collapsus.com

The age of stupid

A documentary with elements of fiction where a character from a dystopian future examines archive footage from the past (our present) to try to understand why we were so stupid not to stop the upcoming environmental disaster coming from over-exploitation of natural resources. The documentary is considered a pioneering case of crowdfunding through the project website and it was screened globally, with different events happening around the world simultaneously..



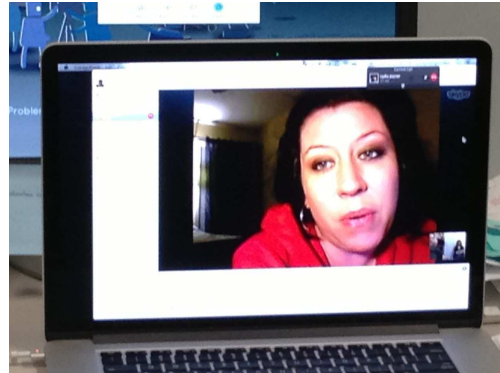
The Age of Stupid is relevant for the subject, for its combination of fiction and non-fiction, the call for collaboration through crowdfunding and its strategy of building an audience through the notion of event.

<http://www.spannerfilms.net/films/ageofstupid>

Purposeful storytelling, blending fiction and non-fiction

My sky is falling

My Sky Is Falling is an immersive storyworld that aims to raise awareness about the challenges American foster children face before they age out of the foster care system. Through a fiction framework, the participant is faced with similar challenges that those in the foster care system. Developed by Reboot Stories, it is self-defined as a purposeful storytelling open design released under a Creative Commons sharealike, non-commercial license,



A notable exponent of what is labelled as purposeful storytelling with two entangled layers, the engaging fictional layer connected to the 'reality-based' layer so the player can at the same time feel immersed in a fictional story and at the same time understand how this challenges are showing real-life problems. This connection between fiction and non-fiction with a social purpose is very relevant for our needs.

<http://www.myskyisfalling.com/>

Reinvention stories

Reinvention stories is a narrative experiment showcasing local personal stories set in Dayton Ohio, through an interactive structure. The underlying theme is how people are reinventing themselves in new economic times



Reinvention Stories is a very good example of community-based participatory storytelling environment, showcasing citizen concerns with the goal of portraying the everyday struggle and hopes of a local community.

<http://blog.reinventionstories.org/about>

Playful and participatory co-design processes

Beyond the castle.

The Beyond the Castle project is a co-design project aimed at engaging the citizens of Lancaster in remodelling one of the oldest and most popular parts of the city, the surroundings of Lancaster Castle.

The first step invites everyone to imagine and design the possibilities. 'Beyond the Castle' is asking people of all ages to share their thoughts and big ideas in a series of fun events over the summer and autumn. Together with a team of designers and volunteers, people will have the chance to develop the first plans, with the aim of revitalising this space. There'll be a whole series of activity days to get people thinking about how they use the site at the moment and what they'd like to see there in the future.

As these plans are developed, any options that are considered will need to fit in with this historically important area of the city.



Beyond the Castle is the fruit of a collaboration between local authorities and the Lancaster University in order to engage citizens in a collective and participatory process of co-designing of the area surrounding Lancaster castle, one of the main landmarks of this UK city. An emphasis is made on intergenerational communication on the one side and adopting different strategies in order to maximize implication. This implies combining different kind of activities linked by the idea of meritocracy, of allowing for different degrees of involvement, adopting different strategies depending on age groups and become present in the everyday of the community.

Even if there is not a storytelling-driven event, there are lots of key elements regarding engagement in a common enterprise that are a reference for our own.

http://imagination.lancs.ac.uk/activities/Beyond_Castle

Appendix 2: Plugin Narrative Kickoff Event - full notes

Expert Meeting Session (20th November)

Invited participants: Nico Alcalá, Elisenda Ardèvol, Sarah Atkinson (via Skype), Quelic Berga, Quim Colàs, Mireia Fernández-Ardèvol, Sergi Frias, Arnau Gifreu, Raquel Herrera, Kate Howland, Pedro Jacometty, Debora Lanzeni, Talia Leibovitz, Montecarlo, Fernanda Pires, Antoni Roig, Gemma San Cornelio, Jacobo Sucary.

All the contributions by project leaders are highlighted in dark blue colour.

Welcome and introduction to the session (Kate Howland and Antoni Roig)

- Background plug in project: co-creation with communities about sustainability and local communities. Its about engagement by the community with the storytelling, participation and narratives. Main issues:

1. Participant's engagement
 2. Community
 3. Intergenerational communication
 4. Expertise
- Connection of the future and the past

- The idea in future is to make a pilot. Its about social engagement including different age generations and their interactions and different creativity logic and motivation. It's a participatory project. The transgenerational component is central

First comments were addressed to the specific outputs of the project, be it technological development, contents (and of which kind) or a participatory methodology.

Purposes, objectives, who we are addressing to, project outputs

*I would like to ask you how you imagine it, **how do you think it will be possible to do something like that...** Do you imagine it doing workshops, working together, or more platform oriented, or through a documentary with an active presence of participants, for instance, through the collaboration in the script.... I find it hard to imagine that... I find hard to imagine the **different participatory dynamics...***

[Elisenda Ardevol]

We want the details of the exact outputs to come out from the process of collective discussion with the community... But during a reasonable period of time... There should be a combination of storytelling forms, texts and activities like workshops, installations... along time... Local spaces are important [Kate Howland]

*In a project of this kind we must be **careful with the kind of expectations** we are raising among our audience. Furthermore, we must think about **the kind of outputs** coming out from the project: a platform, a documentary, a participatory script, a different kind of content contribution, a methodology? And in thinking about different outputs, we can't forget **which is the main focus** (going back to expectations).*

*Going deeper in the **methodological issues**, it is essential in order to facilitate engagement and also for scientific analysis.*

*We must have a clear answer to two key questions: **for whom and for what purpose are we doing this?** Are we in it for the common good, for commercial reasons, for public engagement, to test a methodology, as a creative experiment, to solve a problem, to work with a specific collectivity, for the benefit of the community.... [Elisenda Ardèvol]*

There will be different outputs, which should all made available for the community. [Kate Howland]

Possible approaches and methodologies

From our preliminary work, we have identified two possible approaches to the narrative design:

- 1) To design a general, seemingly 'universal' narrative premise who could potentially empathise with the concerns of a wider population in different countries. Thus, we could test the same premise developing different experiences in different places with the same initial settings, rules and premises.
- 2) To define a co-design process with the specific community stakeholders, so that the premise reflects local issues that can become a collaborative narrative experience. This way, there is a much stronger emphasis in the co-design stage in order to achieve a premise much closer to the everyday of our target audiences, thus facilitating engagement. As a con, it becomes a much longer and complex process, additionally

limiting opportunities for comparative analysis if different experiences are to be developed in different environments.

In both cases, there are at least three different layers of 'methodology':

- *Methodology for co-design with participants: focused on thematic engagement and ultimately, making the project relevant for participants. It includes identifying community issues, identifying stakeholders, fostering partnerships, make people feel an active part of the definition of the project, adapt the overall structure to actual needs and expectations, making the project known and integrated in the community...*
- *Methodology for participatory creation: focused on making the actual experience engaging and playful, considering timing, decision-making, technologies for collaboration, surprise, flow, fun, response, agency, empowerment, diversity, visibility, platforms....*
- *Methodology for overall structure and analysis ('meta' dimension as a research project): ensure the proper documentation of the process, data collection, key elements for analysis, techniques, etc.*

[Toni Roig]

Communities, narratives and technologies

A narrative is a very powerful way to let people reflect about their own history.

From a creator's point of view, it is important to take into account what a transmedia or multimedia approach can add to the narrative.

[Jacobo Sucary]

From my experience, the most interesting thing in collective projects is opening the content, thus allowing people to keep creating things after yours.

The Cosmonaut was an example of this, as it is also the Remix Manifesto. I don't believe much in collective creation, it is usually a mess. I believe more in remixing and opening your own creative output to people.

Keeping people engaged is painful, either in the narrative side or the technological side of what you are trying to do. *The Cosmonaut had different ways to become part of the 'community'. Crowdfunding was one of them and it is a great way to build awareness, but it's not the only way.*

Keep things as easy as possible... For example, to create a new platform would be a mistake in my opinion... Why not moving your content to the platforms people are using, like Facebook or Twitter... ***It is important that people can focus on the narrative, not on the technology.*** Thus, technology must be in some way 'invisible'. If we focus too much on platforms, we can't focus on the story.

[Nico Alcalá]

You can't think of content and technology as something separated. Technology should be thought as part of the content. An interesting project related to this relationship is The Ministry of Ideas project. [Debora Lanzeni]

The platform is very important, as they shape the way the projects are developed, how participants interact...

You need to standardize things to avoid dispersion. [Quelic Berga]

You need to reach your audience, it's a common mistake to think that the audience will simply go to you project, to your platform
You need to know audience's motivations and what could interest them to conform a community around a project and a platform.

The interface used should help to understand what the other people are creating in the same narrative space, so they can create something that copes with the global narrative with not much human intervention organizing or prioritizing 'relevant' content... The platform is not strictly content, but it is an important mediator.
[Quim Colàs]

There must be a vision... *The cosmonaut was a fruit of the director's vision. But as the material is open and available for different uses there are as much outputs as people's visions. This was an indirect collaborative process.*
[Nico Alcalá]

You must think of what do you want from your community [Jacobo Sucary]

We must indeed acknowledge that there will be different levels of participation [Kate Howland]

You must consider all the different actors involved.

The importance of the interface as the interaction mediator between people. The platforms are part of the content but they have an important role as mediators. A platform should help to visualized elements connected to the activity of participants, thus allowing for visibility. Rendering other's activity visible... In a project about ideas for

future and how people relate to those possible imaginaries for that future, more than narratives I think that you are talking about meta-narratives, in a way this opens up possibilities... I would suggest that independently of the platform used, you could put some effort in finding ways of visualising the activity... For example people could be given instructions to use different hashtags that could relate to the main topic, but also to other related topics that could make easier for an IT team to visualize stories under different hashtags, so we could know the more popular stories of the week, what is 'trendy' so to speak... This way you could visualize activity in meaningful ways... This way, maybe people would not feel lost and closer to give up, they could find people with similar interests or shift their work to the more popular topics.

The community is one of the end products, not a priori asset. Formerly, you only have a group of people messing around... Don't think only in 'quantities' regarding interactions or number of users, it is too superficial. [Pedro Jacobetty]

The main thing about a collaborative narrative is creating a conversation and to create a sense of collectivity around the collaboration. It is important to keep the project flow conversational... [Nico Alcalà]

Yes, but it is not only about creating a conversation. You have to find an **engaging idea** as a reference and to create from there a **meaningful collectivity**. People will think: "Am I wasting my time? Or am I in an international group, a part of something bigger?" [Pedro Jacobetty]

The **challenge is how to foster interrelations among participants**. It is not only a matter to know and understand what the others are doing, but also to understand who what they are doing is related to what the others are doing (in terms of plot, time...). That's the biggest challenge. There must be a structure, cause-effect relationships, otherwise you only have a bunch of information. In this way, coherence is important even if sometimes, lack of coherence and inconsistencies can also be an opportunity to be creative. [Quim Colàs]

The new audiences want more than one narrative. They don't only relate to the main storyline [Nico Alcalá]

There are different kind of engagement (including lurkers). Importance of establishing clearly some goals about people engagement. [Fernanda Pires]

We have to support the engagement and different levels of engagement... [Kate Howland]

My sky is falling is a very good example of a transmedia project where people engage with a contemporary issue through fiction through a science-fiction story. Another one is FutureCoast project... This is important regarding the problem of actually getting to engage with your audience... We got a lot of exposure for the project, it was very widespread through social media but nobody went to find it... It is important to understand and study audiences... And also establishing a **common language** that people can understand so more audiences can feel engaged to. That's why I think a lot of projects fall down, they can't find a common language that they can use and translate into everyday.

[Sarah Atkinson]

This is a very important point regarding barriers to engagement and people thinking "Oh, this must not be for me, but for someone else!" This is a reason why it is important to tie to local community issues, with topics being currently debated. There are so many ways in which you could miss to communicate that.... [Kate Howland]

From my experience in participatory action research activities in ICTs it is very important to think about engagement barriers... What is this for and how much we can decide about the goals of the whole activity... It is important to clearly define the objectives and the expectations around it. This must not be made but someone coming from the outside... The other thing is the scale of the project you are thinking about... From my experience with older people, they want to have the chance to decide, in projects related to their own memories and past there is a lot of negotiation about they want information (i.e. family pictures) they want to display or not... If you want to work on the intergenerational dimension, you have to think in using inclusive tools, you have to avoid the perception that the tool is a barrier... Negotiation can include what kind of tools do we use.

[Mireia Fernández-Ardèvol]

One of the things we are trying to do here is finding a common language. We come from different backgrounds and use different languages, which is a good thing. We need to know how to reach our audiences and to study our audiences if we want to go a step beyond. This project could be a good opportunity to work in this direction. We have also to take into account notions like representation, navigation (simply going from one place to the other) or interaction (transform the system) in this kind of

projects. This is why we need to define a common language... What do we expect to do and which kind of platforms we want to use... We live in a world where we find more and more a crossover between fiction and non-fiction. The mixture is very enriching for us. [Arnau Gifreu]

The **main issue is about the existence -or not- of a community. Is there a pre-existing community or is it one of the aims of the project to build one around it?** If you have identified the community the main challenge is how to enter in this community and being recognized as one of them, as part of the community. The other problem is how to create a community from scratch. The rest of the problems come later, which tools, which content, which immersive levels... It's not so important then to have a goal: communities, most of the time, communities work like a non-ending story... We want to enjoy each other's company...

Open narratives are very close to games, more than stories. There is a **thin line between games and narratives**. People loves rules: It is not necessary to know them beforehand, they can learn them by doing, but there should be **clear rules** so people can interact and enjoy the experiences. If you change the rules, or rules are not very clear or are very complex, it's disturbing and you feel distanced from the experience. [Montercarlo]

There are three things that motivate people to engage in communities: the **sense of belonging, leadership**, the feeling of being unique in front of your peers, and the last, maybe the less used is **feeling part of the history**. In this last case people are aware of the **historical relevance of the experience**. [Nico Alcalá]

Public Workshop Session (21st November)

Participants: Fernanda Adan, Nicolás Alcalá, Quelic Berga, Santi Fort, Sergi Frías, Manuel Garín, Kate Howland, Teresa Iribarren Donadeu, Talia Leibovitz, Federica Mancini, Montecarlo, Victor Pablo, Fernanda Pires, Antoni Roig, Luis Roman, Carlos Scolari, Jacobo Sucari, Alan Tapscott, Andrea Valverde.

Summary of group discussion

Table 1 (Spokesperson: Kate Howland)

We discussed the challenges of community decision making, and looked at some different examples of projects that were successful in engaging audiences.

Meridian: successful **engagement with the local community**, seeking out opinion leaders, having for example physical timelines with the history for the community.

The importance, the value of **having a physical output** from this kind of engagement is recurrent across many examples. Building a library without windows so films could be projected at night for the community.

Highrise in Canada: project from the national film board on highrises in Toronto. Using radio shows, exhibitions, events on the underground - an aim to change the neighbourhood. **Pressing need to say that community participants will be getting something back, that there will be a change, something that will come out from your participation**, taking seriously that people are putting time and energy into something, that they would like to see something changed coming out from their participation.

There are other nice examples where **community is given control**, for example a filmmaker making a documentary in Calcutta and giving cameras to kids, and developing a relation based on trust (he was told they would run off with the cameras to sell them) and getting a wonderful result in terms of self-documentary.

Mixing the physical and the digital, with the digital being seen as ephemeral for many people... Some nice combinations of using digital and physical together, some location-based games and alternative reality games that use mobile devices to take people to physical locations to advance the story...

We talked about the flooding idea as a potential theme, a very serious issue for a particular town being told that they will have to accept that they will be losing parts of their town to water... **whether it is possible or not to engage people in a playful narrative experience about something that is so emotionally real and serious** for the people. We have been discussing examples with even more serious, more challenging issues that have been tackled by projects. Like the use of theatre and drama with children to explore reactions to massacres in Columbia and Africa.

Creative control over the narrative and to what extent it is acquired. We've been thinking in **different levels**, the level of the story, the level of the narrative as experienced by the individual (which don't necessarily have to be the same thing), and endless stories, that is, the possibility of seeing **narratives that not necessarily have to come to a conclusion**. Here we were pointed to Mandy Rose's work on ongoing stories.

We were also advised to look at 'Sherlock: The Network' a location-aware mobile phone game. The narrative is embedded in different locations, which should be of interest to us.

A final point to consider was the idea that there are two levels of stories of this sort - the level of the composed narrative, and the level of the first person, real time, experience.

Table 2 (Spokesperson: Arnau Gifreu)

Participants:

Focus on a topic, how we can **build audiences** in transmedia and interactive media, more than in audiovisual projects. This is a key issue. Questions about **immersion** and **engagement** are very important here. For instance, we talked about the importance of **taking audiences that already exist**, like that of fantasy, and to **take them to other realms** like the realm or non-fiction. Andrea Valverde recalled some experiences from the Catalan Television broadcasting company in the creation of children's communities; with [Joan Sánchez] we talked about the need to **map all this territories, trying to draw up the distinctions between games, interactive cinema, interactive documentary, and identify different contexts**, [Francesca] thinks that audiences have to be **co-creative**, to help to generate the project. Examples in fiction and also *Highrise*, a huge project where they try to improve living conditions in Canada through digital technologies, but also in other ways, like for example organizing programming workshops for women. Another example is *Hollow*, an interactive documentary on rural West Virginia communities. "*Blackmails*" is another project that sprung up during our conversation. The key issue is that we have tried to separate fiction and non-fiction because we think that interactive non-fiction, like interactive documentary is gaining weight in all the different events around the world like Cross-Video Days, Sheffield or Power To The Pixel, while interactive fictional cinema is not gaining this weight, and that **the inherent objective of non-fiction could be more suitable to stop this flow so the user can shift from one element to another, which is far more risky in fiction**. Three last thoughts: for us it is important to define a **common language**, to define **what it means to be interactive and to be reactive** in a project: being reactive could be like

the extra features of a DVD while interactive means **leaving your mark or trace in a project, to transform it, to change it in some way**, change the way we are dealing with this project. **Representation** and **navigation** are also categories that we should include in this kind of mapping. It's not only about the technology, even if it's important, but also the storytelling part. The importance of the topic, having an attractive theme, and also the issue of **coherence**, in this sense, is very important. And, lastly, we discussed about designing a **two way direction in projects, a more linear system and a non-linear, more interactive system**. This is what the people behind Alma documentary or A short history of the Highrise did. You can play the documentary **seamlessly**, but you can add **layers of interaction that enrich and complicate the user experience**.

Table 3 (Spokesperson: Fernanda Pires)

Participants: xxxxx

We discussed similar things about interaction but first we discussed about having a **concrete aim**, if this aim is finding solutions for this community or creating a sort of awareness in a creative way, which is very important as the **members of the community must enjoy participating in the project to be committed**. Also we discussed about the **timing**: at the beginning is easy to keep people engaged but as time passes, it can change. One idea could be to **link the tension of the narrative to be based in real happenings or daily life events**, for example relate it to Christmas...

Importance to **undertake a state of the art**, for sighting methodologies that already exist and that can help to shape the creation process.

Another topic is how to create a **mechanism for participation in different levels**, not only in levels of media but also in **types of efforts** as not everybody will be engaged in the same level, for example tools for people to write or to design, and also to do workshops to teach people particular expertise and get more engagement,

Also, to **search for other communities** that pass through similar problems and which might be **willing to talk and share their problems** with the community.

Also, you can have a main issue or premise, and from this "big one", others could derive, other **collateral issues, problems, needs, fields**.... Unify these other problems can be hard, but also it can be good in a way as it allow for the creation of **different narratives, like the main narrative and other secondary narratives**.

Another discussion was about to create metrics to **measure the effectiveness of these projects**, the creation of these transmedia narratives, if it's valid in order to **replicate the strategy** in the next one, and also **measure its impact** (or success) in terms of following, expectations and motivation. In terms of motivation, **if they see the results, they have the feeling that they are part of something.**

Appendix 3: Plugin Narrative Closing Event - full notes

Attendees:

Antoni Roig Telo (UOC), Kate Howland (University of Sussex), Christopher Shaw (University of Oxford), Nick Gant (University of Brighton), John Gower (Environment Agency), Frauke Behrendt (University of Brighton), David Harley (University of Brighton), Kelly Duggan (University of Brighton), Dan Chalmers (University of Sussex).

10:15 Overview from Kate and Toni ([slides](#))

Kate and Toni gave an overview of the Plugin Narratives Project, and introduced the day.

We spoke about the key elements that drive the project: Futures, community, participation, location-based storytelling, playful narrative experiences and experience design. We highlighted the scope of the seed project - primarily a project aimed at developing ideas for a future pilot. Key aspects are the discussions which took place at the Barcelona workshop in November, and which we hope to take place at this event.

We highlighted a number of related projects, which have been useful in developing our ideas. When talking about related project, Future Coast, Frauke pointed out that there was very little engagement with the project. This will be one of the key challenges for us, but we have a different focus by picking a specific local community rather than attempting to draw people in from across the world.

10:40 Chris Shaw, University of Oxford - The role of narrative in building public engagement with climate policy ([slides](#))

Chris talked about the challenge of getting citizens engagement in climate change decisions making, and noted that this rarely happens. On questions such as the level of acceptable climate risk, the general public are not asked, but told. The '2 degrees' warming figure is accepted and adopted by politicians as though it were black and white fact, but it is somewhat arbitrary.

Chris argues that citizen participation offers the potential to build better climate policy, but highlights that issues of power relations and power dynamics can be obstacles. Chris is interested in how narratives can offer the means of creating an open and accessible debate. Visions of the future can be one context for this. Personal and individual stories that really affect individuals are the most likely thing to engage people.

Chris mentioned some interesting recent research from University of Cardiff on [public perceptions of climate change after the floods](#).

11:10 Nick Gant, University of Brighton - Young digital citizenship

Nick spoke about his work on community engagement through digital platforms. He developed an online platform, [Community21](#), which can be used to create neighbourhood and development plans. Some of the work he has done has involved localised agendas around climate change, such as a water conservation project in Barcombe. One of the approaches C21 uses is to make things meaningful for communities through visualisations on social media, such as imagining the impact of a future reservoir. The resources created on the site can be viewed by services providers, and can help people to make decisions on a local level. This can help with resilience.

The C21 team have used a number of techniques for getting different groups to engage with decisions. Reflecting on possible futures is an activity they have found to be very helpful, and they have asked children in particular to think about their future village and future school, through structured work with the support of technology.

In order to avoid the 'skatepark syndrome', where young people engaging in planning discussions focus only on what would be of immediate interest to them, Nick and his team have a number of ways of encouraging empathy with and consideration of other members of the community. For example, they use an app which ages photos and a simple animation app to allow young people to create characters which are older versions of them, and to record their future selves talking about what's important to them in the community. This helps take them out of their current personal circumstances, and allows them to realise that other types of services and facilities are needed to support all citizens of a town or village.

Nick and his team have also made use of Minecraft as a way of getting young people involved in planning discussions in an active and constructive way.

Another useful approach has been looking at special objects, places and spaces within the community. Sometimes these are traditionally important features such as churches or public memorials, but there is also importance in places like supermarkets where meaningful interactions that make people feel part of the community can take place.

11:50 John Gower, Environment Agency - Coastal Communities 2150 ([slides](#))

John works for the Environment Agency on long-term climate change and coastal management, and spoke about a recently completed project, funded under the InterReg programme - Coastal Communities 2150. The key aims of this project were to

work with communities to improve understanding of coastal change risk (and opportunities), and to help communities to develop their own long term coastal visions. The project was completed in partnership with Belgium and The Netherlands, with Calais as an observing partner.

One of the challenges of the project is the communicating scientific ideas to the general public, and encouraging engagement with long-term planning, not just the short term decisions that people find it easier to think about and envisage the outcomes of.

In their work in Newhaven, John and his team have found that the Sussex public are more accepting of the inevitability of climate change than other areas. They found that face to face interactions are important in reaching people, and have assembled a local committee of community representatives, and have also worked with local schools. They were interested to find that young people are not scared of the long term impacts, and see it as a challenge.

Within the project the hope is to encourage people to see the need to adapt to water in the future - not to view it as a necessarily negative development (as 'Lost to Water' may imply'). This pragmatic and positive interpretation is necessary if the public are to be engaged and encouraged to consider solutions.

Like Nick, John has found visualisations to be very helpful in reaching out to people and making an impact. John and his team commissioned a [sea-level rise visualisation tool](#), which allows people to interact with a digital representation of the Sussex coastline and see the effects of sea level rises, as well as interventions. A fly through video mode has also been very useful for communicating the effect over the region. Importantly, individual properties are not shown, to avoid the most sensitive issues around future loss of private property.

John sees much potential in extending this sort of simulation to a game environment, where decisions can be played out, and the consequences explored. He expressed an interest in the use of Minecraft as described by Nick. Less high-tech visualisations, in the form of postcards showing imagined future versions of various coastal resorts, have also proved effective on the CC2150 project.

12:30 Lunch

13:15 Frauke Behrendt, University of Brighton - Community engagement through art ([slides](#))

Frauke spoke about a number of relevant projects she has worked on in recent years.

The first project discussed was Smart E-bikes, which focussed on understanding how consumers engage with electrically assisted cycling. Frauke echoed comments from both Nick and Chris that individuals need to see the personal benefit or implications for them with new initiatives. The things people commented positively on about their use of the bikes were mainly individual benefits, such as improved commute times, or saving money, rather than environmental benefits.

Frauke also spoke about the importance of audio interfaces. In the bike project this afforded a helpful mode of interaction which did not interfere with riders' rhythms.

Frauke went on to talk about mobile sound (art), where sounds take centre stage, and are used in a variety of way. With placed sounds artists curate a distribution of sounds in outdoor spaces, whilst participants create and remix versions by the trajectories they take. Frauke gave a number of examples of projects of this sort, including [Streetstories](#), [Craving](#), [Core Sample](#), [National Mall](#) and [Tactical Soundgarden](#).

Frauke discussed a number of interesting factors which are relevant with this kind of experience, including spatial perception, immersion, situated experience, walking as remixing, time, exclusion, augmented reality, economy of attention and code/spaces. These elements are all considered in Frauke's project, NetPark, funded by the Digital R&D Fund for the Arts, and run in collaboration with Metal in Southend-on-sea and Calvium in Bristol. In this project Frauke and the team are exploring the process of hosting work digitally in public spaces and understanding how audiences respond. They will be compiling a NetPark toolkit. The project involves reviewing existing toolkits, conducting stakeholder and audience interviews, observation and analytics on data from the app and the wifi gateway.

13:35 Dave Harley, University of Brighton - intergenerational connections ([slides](#))

Dave spoke about his work on digital technologies and intergenerational connections. In an ageing society, intergenerational communication is increasingly important in defining how our communities develop and how we live our lives. Opportunities to discuss these things across generations can be limited, both within and beyond families.

The Trajectories to Community Engagement project looked at the underlying motivations for community engagement. Dave reported on an interesting finding relating to the generational difference in social networking site engagement. Older people were less likely to engage with such sites, and when they did it was commonly to be able to keep up with what family members were doing. The role taken was often one of benevolent surveillance, with little interaction, but much observing. Many participants in

this project found facebook exchanges to be trivial and lacking in privacy, and had concerns about how younger family members were using the sites.

The older people that did use social networking sites more widely in this study tended to use them for games and playful interactions with peers, sharing lighthearted exchanges and establishing common ground through online games such as scrabble and bingo.

Dave also spoke about work on intergenerational communication beyond the family. In the online space he has studied the interactions of a YouTube member, Geriatric 1927, who has engaged in life review, cultural exchange and reciprocal learning exchanges with young people on Youtube. In face to face setting Dave has investigated the generational practice of mobile phone use in public spaces, with adolescents using their phones to facilitate a seamless social network, young adults using the phone as a companion, middle aged people using their phone to make efficient use of time whilst between destinations, and older adults engaging in discreet use with the phone often turned off after a call.

13:55 Tea/ coffee

2:00 pm Roundtable

Kate [K]

Dave [D]

John [J]

Nick [N]

Christopher [C]

Frauke [F]

Toni [T]

K (to D)	Comments on the idea of Facebook as being 'trivial' among older generations - contrasted with the potential for playful technologies to be helpful. Is there a tension here? How do we get the positive side of playfulness without being seen as trivial?
D	I think it's because the Facebook interactions are perceived as taking place in a in a public space. That's why the triviality of interactions are questioned. I guess that would be the same issue if you were trying to do some public interactivity How do you get people to engage with something and not look silly? What would that mean?
C	Thought it was interesting what you were saying about the playfulness thing - swerves the issue that they may be seen as not conversant in the technology,

	or capable of using it. The game almost takes it away from that.
D	It helps...definitely. And some technologies are framed in that way, so the iPad is framed in a more playful way, so older people who first encounter it take to it easier than other technologies with a keyboard and a screen, that feels more formal.
K	And maybe is reminiscent of a previous work environment? We had some responses like that, didn't we - in the TRACE project.
D	Yeah. But I suppose it's also that if the technology is visible, then that's an issue - they know they're interacting with technology. They might be worried that they're not doing the right thing, and think that they'll leave it to the kids who know what they're doing.
K	I was slightly worried when you were talking about your pilot work looking at intergenerational communication and use of mobile phones in public spaces. We are running the risk - with saying it's going to be a location aware experience - probably imagining a lot of the interactions will happen on mobile phones. We're running headlong into a potential issue there.
D	Potentially...
C	The generational divide that would emerge if you used that route?
K	Yes, the exact opposite of what we want to achieve!
N	Physical things tend to drive people together - like the parish noticeboard, or other things that have a communal element - that's why we used the tapestry for the Lewes project. Inviting people to have those all importance face to face interactions that both John and dave were talking about. Also important to find ways of placing media within a space.
F	Big chunk of net park funding goes to information boards in the park, because you really need the physical signage, which is often forgotten
N	What's been useful about Aurasma as an augmented interface (relevant to Frauke's hand disappearing point) is that it plays with the media within the space. So the tapestry starts talking - the media is on the tapestry. Sense that interaction takes place within the space rather than on the device. A filter on the real world, rather than being taken away from it.

C	<p>Technology articulates and limits other possible imaginaries, shaping the kind of stories emerging...Does using high tech solutions constrain the possibilities? Does it say the future will always be high-tech, and higher tech than today?</p>
N	<p>Funding dictated the technology, for Community 21. At first we thought we would be making an app, for Kelly's project. But we ended up finding that pre-existent tools could be put to good use, Minecraft is a good example. It can be applied in many situations - it's so flexible, you don't need programming expertise to build things in it. You just get on with it.</p>
C	<p>Power relations are important - technology can level, but there is also an exclusivity with technology. Some people don't feel able to access that.</p>
D	<p>Not always that they can't access, but that they don't want to. Some people deliberately opt out from technology, particularly the older generation. For those people participation has to be made completely everyday - the technology needs to be made invisible. Their contributions can still be fed into a narrative, but 'harvesting' people's views shouldn't be delimited by the technology.</p>
K (to F)	<p>Could making better use of the audio channel potentially be a way of making the technology more invisible?</p>
F	<p>It depends whether you want it to be invisible. It's about clustering some of those assumptions. A lot of the narratives earlier were photo narratives. Thinking about inclusiveness - it's about what people want to bring to the table, what they want to record. They story that they tell - whether they want to write something, take a picture, or interview someone else. There may be some assumptions about what you want.</p>
K	<p>Some kind of textual narrative is probably an assumption of ours - not necessarily written, maybe audio. It may be an area that we've deliberately left fuzzy at the moment, but we need to make choices, and understand the implications of those.</p>
C	<p>Link to more traditional interactions in public spaces - having a chat. Banality of chatting as the simplest way of interaction in public spaces. Even if you don't say very much, you still have an interaction.</p>
D	<p>With tech, you will never do the whole thing. Need for some unmediated interaction. Those are the places where intergenerational communication can happen, but the younger generation may find it hard to break away from the virtual world</p>

	<p>accessed through their phones and engage in the face to face environment.</p>
F	<p>Interesting student project where they are asked to turn off their phones for 24 hours and write about the experience. Some were terrified to ask someone for the time (they relied on their phone instead of a watch). Might need different approaches for different generations.</p>
N	
K	<p>Interesting work - contrasting the trivial perception of online communications with conversations over the fence or in the street. the same triviality, but implied importance of the technology and the need to use it properly, as well as the 'public' nature.</p>
C	<p>Audience - broadcasting to the world seems to imply a self-importance to some people. You don't know who you are speaking to, and that feels worrying and strange to some. Hard to envisage the audience on facebook.</p>
D	<p>Non verbal communication - how much is lost in the digital? Technology is important, but doesn't negate the need for unmediated communication.</p>
K	<p>Framing where the narratives come from - appealing to someone on their phone to talk to the person next to them? Is there anyone else around?</p>
N	<p>Some alternate reality games do try to provoke that kind of interaction with people not playing, but not sure whether they have had much success.</p>
F	<p>Facebook group - is the Mill Flooded? Used as a signal to the community. Quick sharing of information.</p>
K	<p>Do you want the intergenerational communication to happen out of the family context. Isn't the family context the easiest place to start?</p>
	<p>Family is certainly a good place to start, and then extending out to friends of the grandchildren, or friends of the grandparents. Traditional community grows out of extended family.</p> <p>Interesting what John said about looking back into the past - looking back to look forward.</p>
J	<p>Yes - that was very useful. Tide Mills was a good example - pointing to what the situation was 100 years ago, before asking about how things will be in 100 years. People can accept what happened historically, including properties having to be abandoned, but they find it very hard to accept that this might happen to their own property, and would say - "you have to stop it". So looking back to look forwards can be very useful.</p>

C	Some would say we could solve all our problems if we went back to 1945. All sustainability issues started after World War II. A tendency would be 'go back to 1945', but you can start with the past to think about the future.
N	This is where we got the cafe for indigenous food. Speaking to older generations people found that they would eat more things like rabbit and pigeon - things that were around. Now a posh restaurant up the road might serve pigeon, but the kids had never thought about eating anything like that. What people eat (reflection), local vs. 'distant', 'packed' again it's 'past vs. future.
C	McDonald's and KFC marketing is very sophisticated. Very powerful psychological cues. Kids would not choose to eat squirrel over KFC.
F	Older generation have a much lower carbon footprint - assumptions about who has the knowledge, and who gets to teach whom.
N	Heathfield had grown up around chicken farming. So working with kids and adults there about what they ate was very interesting - asked them to think about what would be needed to grow the food locally. How can the town be profitable? They were able to look at what land would be required to map how to provide for the chicken kormas etc. that they wanted to eat. Not that 'the old days are the good days', but thinking about the link is important.
K	Interesting that kids were not frightened by prospect of big changes due to climate change. Is that maybe because they can't imagine things really changing, or they don't believe it? Whereas older people have seen major changes and can really believe that it will happen.
J	No - think it's more a general reaction from the kids. We were warned it might be a problem, but it wasn't. They just wanted information, they wanted to expand their knowledge and work with problems. Tendency to think people should not be frightened and, consequently, that some information must be 'contained', has proved to be wrong. Older people were not really frightened, either. The message was that the facts shouldn't be held back. There are a number of case studies that suggest that opening up can be really helpful.
D	Different generation bring different things to the problem solving process. Younger generations are more likely to be interested in new things that have never been done before.
J	Yes, but older people bring experience - "you think that's new, but we tried that!"

C	Young people want to be able to take risks. Different attitudes to the future, and different narratives.
D	The older generation have known adversity, too.
C	Kids today have a lot more than their parents did. Interesting to think about how that will link to a future of less.
K	Looking to our key questions - we've discussed many of them. Thinking about the interface...
N	Very interesting in relation to Valley Gardens project. What is the interface, how does it mediate. Mediation could be digital, but it can feel physical - a communal activity that people want to engage with. The assumptions that we are all living in a digital world - it's all a bit wobbly. Need to look at things that are more robust, and just work, without needing internet access. Going to rural areas brings that home - suddenly your link's gone. Independence from Internet access. Objects to interact - storytelling boards, parish notice boards - can become something more sophisticated. Taking images and putting them on a public wall in physical space - they can be reanimated through technology, but interesting that image exists in a public space. Related to posters and signage, certain messages implied. Could be an interesting interface in schools.
F	Signage in the park is similar. People add to it - layering already there, e.g. defacing 'no ball games' signs. Bringing objects into space, like for example memory boxes from the past...
N	Yeah, one of my students did a memory box for Alzheimer's. Artifacts that bring out sounds - relatively simple technology.
D	Locations such as bus stops, doctors surgeries, and the quayside in Newhaven can be very important community locations. Place to meet and have daily interactions.
N	Climate change is interesting, because weather related events have a power. Everyone says hello when it snows!
K	Breaking our 'automatic pilot' everyday (disruption).
C	Flooding can have the same effect - everyone comes out afterwards to look.
C	Are these moments to capture, as well? As well as the fictional narrative.

	Not an easy topic, it polarises.
D	English bubble - people don't talk.
F	Unless it's about the weather!
N	Marks left by floods - plug sockets raised in pubs indicate height water reached. Become part of the folklore.
C	Use of unusual objects can be significant.
J	Flooding markers (showing height of previous floods) are common. There are lots around Lewes.
K	What about outputs for the community? This was flagged as very important to think about in the Barcelona workshop. Policy changes, new resources?
T	Barcelona attendees had more of a media background, so they envisaged a different kind of output. Social change, but also content - feeling like contribution is useful. Conversations and objects can also be outputs. Perhaps outputs will be much more related to interactions? Engaging in different kinds of conversations, and being involved in subplots.
N	Culture of sustainability - tangible, visceral events can break through. Nature as the 'other'. Local issues are part of your culture, and will affect your future. An output in the case of Community21 were the neighbourhood plans. But the output in other cases can just be better connections - as with the den building project involving older and younger generations. Way of tackling intergenerational disputes around allotments. Brief must be written by the community - that way the output is guaranteed.
D	John - does that fit what you would want to get out of it?
J	Questions about - how do you adapt? New ways of asking those questions. Minecraft idea seemed promising - particularly with 3D printed outputs. Seeing what their ideas actually look like. Another idea would be to look at a community art project as a possible output. Something that could be a constant point for reference - a bit like buying a brick with your name on it to help raise funds.
D	Some of what we're talking about is the invisible nature of how communities perpetuate themselves and maintain cohesion. There is an angle about how you get people who might be thinking about climate change to share those thoughts?

C	Most people don't care, or have other things to think about. No clear outcome for them - it's not going to magically assure their children's future.
K	No, but it is a chance to have a say.
J	Yes, to have views taken into account.
C	Burgeoning Green Party support is interesting. Who are these new supported? Young, and better educated, probably, but does their support and interest extend beyond paying membership fees? Death cafes are interesting - you don't get an output from getting together to talk about death.
F	Sunday assemblies could also be interesting (non-religious gatherings).
D	What would you want people to gain from it?
N	Yes, is it climate change solutions, or something else?
K	More reflecting on the difficult decisions, and bringing about discussions that wouldn't otherwise happen.
N	Is Newhaven definitely the location?
K	We're moving in that direction. Ties in well with a number of factors.
N	A quick way to get started could be to look at the Minecraft/ Blockbuilders activities, that are likely to be happening in Newhaven soon.
F	An interesting idea would be using real lego-style pieces, rather than just virtual blocks. Real watering can... etc.
N	Been using Occulus Rift, and high definition projector to bring about immersion. 3D printing would be very interesting - something we've just started doing.
K	Could be very interesting for an immediate quick start project. Small scale pilot project is next planned stage - 5-50,000 GBP (i.e. Sussex internal funding) to put ideas into practice and see what works, and developing larger project. With medium term plan for larger Euro bid.
T	Augmented reality could be worth exploring.
N	AR is interesting in relation to merging of the two worlds. Minecraft is a good

	<p>tool to work in virtual and even physical environments. In the case of AR, one must think about who has the device. Can be problematic, unless you are giving people iPads.</p>
C	<p>Have to go - but let's keep the conversation going.</p>
J	<p>There's a lot going on in Newhaven - lots of connections and ongoing projects. Would like to invite you to a meeting of the Coastal Futures group. Also, colleague Lindsay Frost who used to be planning director at Lewes Council - now retired but on the CF group, and very interested.</p>
F	<p>Hastings would also be a good choice (a University of Brighton Campus there.) Fertile ground there.</p>
J	<p>Yes, they have done some interesting work on planning for climate change. Easy to get things off the ground in Newhaven, too - good partnerships in the region.</p>
N	<p>Plans to meet again? Regarding European partners, also have some interesting Irish partners in coastal issues.</p>
J	<p>I also have a contact at the University of Nijmegen (Netherlands): project on big interactive screen system for community planning - used when consulting on widening a river. Could be great for neighbourhood plans, too.</p>
K	<p>Interesting how there are different dynamics with interactive touch screens on walls or on table - more 'democratic' when device is on table.</p>
N	<p>Project: placing objects on an iPad and triggering some content using conductive ink. Will send link.</p>
T	<p>One question not discussed so far - how to balance fictional and factual? Older generation may be more keen on factual? Where does the creative, inventive possible future and playfulness come in?</p>
J	<p>There could be some benefit in asking people to think about what the future might be like. Thinking forward in an unconstrained way, interlinking what you think about your future will be, vs. what you would like it to be. Helpful when thinking about flooding - making it fictional can take away from the threat of real losses in the near future. Removing the worry which comes with the details. Asking older people to think to the past, and the younger generation to think forward - interesting interplay? Fictional could open minds.</p>
D	<p>Fictional can be a helpful way of playing with ideas - can be a good way of</p>

	getting responses. Possible realities take away the pressure from hard factual depictions.
T	Considering the idea of having 'rules' for the game, which are the core, and asking people to play along. Perhaps changing rules as time passes?
D	Can behaviours, or reported behaviours change the future in the game? Influence climate change?
T	Reminiscent of Collapsus , and future consequences. This was not participatory, but it was touching - the consequences were clearly shown.
K	Simulations are a slightly different approach, but could be interesting. We could also play around with time travel idea - going back, make a change, go forward - is "this" what you wanted? Be open through fictional frameworks. Long term.
T	Tradition of linking past, present and future through fiction with time travel (Spanish case of the current TV series "The Ministry of Time"). Interesting to show visual different projections of the future.
K	An initial stage could be presenting a fictional vision of the future, with the follow on stage asking people what they would like to be different - what changes would they make?
T	Could be a bleak picture to provoke.
J	Back to the Future day, October 2015! Could be a nice idea to tie in with this. Good publicity and community buy in!
D	Different ways to represent people's futures - a more tangible expression of it? Audio sounds nice.
J	If the Minecraft idea is happening anyway, it could be a great thing to tie in with. Minecraft model of a certain future.
T	Important related documentaries and ARG experiences about environmental issues, climate change and the future: Collapsus , The Age of Stupid , Merchants of Doubt .
K	Postcard as a way to prompt stories and ideas - "Postcards from the future" a simple physical representation of narrative ideas that could be shared easily? Low tech, but interesting.

D	Stall on the quayside could be a great way of collecting inputs
J	Yes, also tying in with schools - part of a lesson.
D	Postcards from the future.
T	Tie in with Future Coast - voicemails from the future.
D	Could the postcards tie in with the game? Directly feeding into what is happening. Also might be worth contacting famous urban sculptor in Newhaven - Guy Funnel?
J	Yes. Could talk to the council about leaving something for the town - a new artform that would act as a lasting capture of the work.
T	Very different focus to Barcelona workshop - there were lots of practitioners there who would be advising on building communities, i.e. for film projects,

End

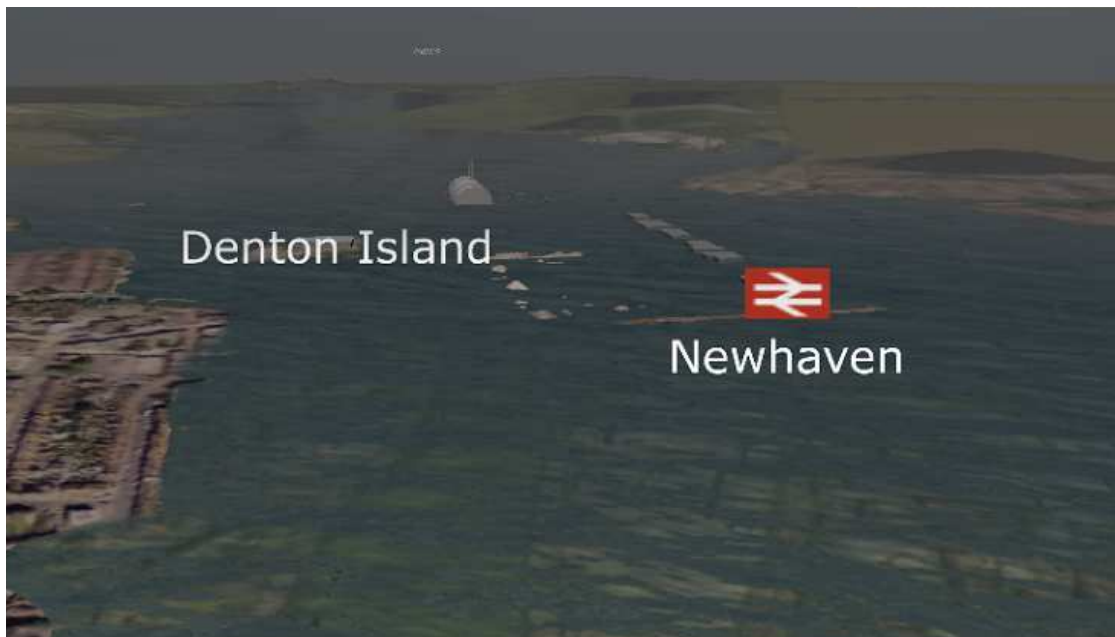
Appendix 4: Pilot Project Blueprints - Holding Back the Tides

Overview

These high-level plans describe a project intended to be implemented in Newhaven in 2015/16. Newhaven is a small coastal town in the South East of England. The area has suffered from flooding in recent years, and this is expected to increase as a result of ongoing climate change. Newhaven and the surrounding area were chosen as a pilot community for a recent InterReg IV project, Coastal Communities 2150, which aimed to help coastal communities better understand the risks of climate change and encourage them to contribute to the decision making process around coastal management. This project has now finished, but the environment agency, and the local community group formed for this project, are keen to find new ways to engage with citizens in the local area on these issues.

Future Scenario: Newhaven 2150 – Water’s Edge

“A radical plan was put in place in 2020 to no longer hold back the water, and to let nature take its course. Rising sea levels and a lack of consensus on how to deal with this, combined with ever-shrinking budgets to leave no other option. The tides began to encroach upon the town, and the activity was accelerated in 2028 when the sea wall began to collapse.”



Newhaven 2150? Visualisation from Coastal Communities 2150 project

<http://www.fusiongfx.com/EA/sussexouse/>

Participants will be transported to a future version of the town through various calls to creative action and online activities, with some 'physical world' objects acting as a hook, a reminder and as an entry point to the narrative, located in different places in Newhaven. Different events would connect the unfolding of the narrative with everyday life and particular local events and holidays, thus facilitating interconnections between the everyday and the fictional future story. Different possible options regarding sea walls and further environmental problems would be proposed and be turned into calls for action, discussion and potential narrative twists and turns (i.e. tsunami alerts, salinization of rivers, dangerous cliffs adding danger of shipwrecks or introducing mysteries regarding clandestine pirate economy). As the project progresses, participants will be transported back to the past, and offered the opportunity to change the future through their contributions and suggestions on what could have been done differently. There will also be an opportunity for participants to vote on which approach to take, and to be returned to 2150 to see the impact of their decisions.

The physical links will include objects reminiscent of future scenarios left by the tides (with QR codes embedded linking to stories connecting past, present and futures), urban objects from the future (i.e. signals and warning poles reminding level rises and safety zones), street art on environmental issues, future news pieces recalling how the city has suffered from changes in its landscape, economy and everyday life, future tour-guides taking tourists and experts into a trip through memory lane in a time before the tides, stories about the new channel economy (life in boats, floating markets, sports...), re-imagining public transport, collective mapping of the area in different future moments.

Engagement activities

Face to face activities

- Workshops in local schools, including writing postcards from the future
- Interactive events in public spaces, e.g. harbour, market
- Installations and information in community centres
- Performative activities and events.
- Future design and 'hackathon style' workshops to work on the design of objects and to teach how to create simulations and other kind of digital content regarding the project (through Minecraft or other user-friendly tools that could also foster intergenerational communication having children or teens as teachers).

Online activities

- Transmedia/ ARG activities through social media.
- Development of simulations and other digital storytelling activities through social media.

Promotional activities

Promotional content to be produced to be disseminated through different media, prior to the official launch of the experience. This should serve as a warm up but also as a way to begin the conversation with the community.

The different promotional activities should be carefully planned and include either online media, public spaces and also urban spaces. As far as time and budget allows, part of this promotional content should be connected to a 'kickoff' story (i.e. a webseries, with a limited print run) that could be used to set the tone, to introduce the premise, to present some potential narratives and characters and to raise expectation. It is important that any promotional content needs to keep possibilities open and maintain a coherence.

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Tumblr accounts should be opened beforehand with similar aims. Tagging digital promotional content is also important as tagging will eventually become necessary for giving visibility to user-generated content.

Data collection

A plan for different kinds of data collection for research purposes must be designed, in order to make sure quantitative data collection coming from social media activity, as well as content analysis, online activity accounts through digital ethnography, information flow networks analysis and to facilitate observation and participants' accounts through in depth interviews.

Outputs

Different objects designed by participants, media content related to narrative activities (fiction, false documentaries, factual pieces connected to current and past situations, transmedia experiences), illustration, simulations, collective artworks, etc., would be produced and could become part an exhibition on the futures of Newhaven.

A collective gathering of the voices of Newhaven, together with selected outputs could be turned into a documentary on environmental concerns in the area.

A guideline for policy actions in the near future should be informed by the concerns and positions expressed through creativity in the context of the project.

A conference on environmental change/ futures and engagement social experiences could be held in Newhaven after the pilot has been conducted.