Interactive Design As The Future Of Documentary Media

In today’s media world, some basic design knowledge is becoming important for documentarians to present their work on social media. Most documentarians use photographs, videos, vocal recording and films in order to present their documentary project to the public on media. In 21st-century life, social media is becoming important and all around us. Traditionally, people visit galleries or attending a theater for viewing a documentary project. However, it is becoming increasingly popular for documentarians to post their projects online using media platforms. Currently, most research projects can be found both in physical papers and online. On another hand, the online platforms could offer more interactive between the viewers and project. For example, by clicking the navigation to pick the viewing order of a documentary project, audiences are viewing what is interesting to them the most, which is keeping their interest of the website. The following essay will explore how the interactive documentary is becoming an important field in future documentary media production.

New media technologies and practices are extending the documentary project in a number of different directions. Interactive Documentary is a new genre of creating a documentary work, it contains multimedia capability through the internet other than the traditional linear productions. The conventional documentary is normally only presented in a single media format, for example when viewing a documentary film in a theater, audiences only have one option of viewing. Current documentary media format includes statement, photography, audio or film, all could be consumed at the same time. As an interactive documentary example, the Localore project[footnoteRef:1] is having a graphic map as navigation on their homepage for viewers to interactive with. By moving the muse to each block inside the map, a preview of the documentary pieces will be showing on screen. Sometimes the viewers do not have enough knowledge of the project, but in interactive documentary, the audiences can only choose to view what is interesting to them. This also saves their time by not viewing the stuff that they are not interested in. In this case, it required the documentarian artist to do research on how to show a work that would be helpful for the viewers to get information faster and more direct. [1: http://localore.net]

Since it is an interactive work, the narrative advances through the actions taken by the users through a public interface. The user or viewer is able to modify their journey through the documentary project based on their responses. Since the viewer has acquires the control of navigation, in a way that they become the author or creator of their own personalized documentary. Compared to the traditional linear narrative where the destination of the story is already determined by the artist, an interactive documentary provides users with the experience of moving through the story via clusters of information. Therefore, the interactive documentary provides the users to explore the components of the story that interest them the most. An example of the interactive documentary is the ….

Interactive Design

Interactive design can be simply defined as the design of interaction between users and products. The study of interactive design contained the studies of graphic, sound, web design, software coding, 3D design and business practices etc. However, interactive design is the

process of communication through media between people and technology, and it is been used as a user-oriented way of presenting or selling a product. A successful interactive design normally reaches the goal of a simple and clearly defined software design app or a website, that could give a best user's experience with a product. A famous designer team had said that, "Feedback is the heart of interaction. If user interaction is a conversation between your user and the product, then your product better participate in a friendly, interesting and helpful manner." A big part of interactive design is to help the user find what they need and experience a product in a best way. A good designer must be the bridge of the product and the user, which the process of research user's need and experiences is basically the first step of interactive design. Interactive design is the dialogue between people and things, in documentary it should be the dialogue between audiences and the documentary works. The most important thing is to keep the audience's interest and understanding of the work. In documentary studies, the most important thing for artists is to pass a social issue or message to other people and to create a deeper reflection of the society. Since empathy is playing a really important part in documentary, it is having the same goal with the interactive design -- therefore, to give an emotional experience to people.

Future of Interactive design…

Job opptunities of interactive designer could work as

Working without interactive designer, no user's benefits

Interactive designers think in the viewer's standpoint of experiencing a work, which will make benefits of both the work producer and the viewer.

Interactive in Documentary

Pa Aufderheide had mentioned that "All arts at some level is interactive"[footnoteRef:2], but the term of "interactive" has become a multimedia-based term that mostly shows on screens. Therefore, when an artwork been showed to the public, it is interacting with their viewers at the time they are being inspired. In order to make your work the best way to show on the media and the best experiences for viewers to simply understand the work, the interactive design has to be involved. Interactive design itself is a way of research while the viewers are interacting with the work. By having navigations as user's choices, the artist is researching the area that the viewers might be more interest of viewing and give the feedback right away right after the viewer's selection. Viewers can only choose the work or images they had the most interest to view in the first place. However, when the documentarian had decided how the work will be presented to the public, we are interactive in a way with the viewers already. The engagement had been adding in the interactive documentary is bring in the viewers feeling closer to the project they are experiencing. The interactive documentary is a pretty new media format in the industry. The first interactive form documentary work started around the year of 2000, it been steady growing within the media world. By creating an interactive documentary project on media; it could help the documentary project in order to reach a wider group of people, such us the people who stayed at home and loves to browse online or whose career relied on internet. Other than the traditional documentary work that only offers the individual's effort of purchasing or attending for viewing a documentary work. Kate Nash mentioned, "the web documentary positions itself as documentary re-mediated for the internet age."[footnoteRef:3] Which had

clearly identified that the new version of documentary on media world now days is appearing because it is a transform from the traditional documentary into a brand-new form. [2: Aufderheide, Pat. “Interactive Documentaries: Navigation and DesignAuthor(s)”] [3: Nash, Kate. “Modes of Interactivity: Analysing the Webdoc.” Media, Culture & Society 34, no. 2 (March 2012): 195–210. doi:10.1177/0163443711430758.]

Difference between Design & Documentarian

The term of interactive design was brought up by Bill Moggridge and Bill Verplank in the 1980s[footnoteRef:4]. Many universities are offering the interactive design program as a four years bachelor’s degree right now. However, in order to study another professional education in design field as a documentarian is too much for producing a documentary project only. As a documentarian now days, probably had graduated from a media, photography or film programs already in order to become a researcher. At this point, it should not be necessary to study over again of a whole new education in design. In order to present a great project at the end after many years of research, documentarians must have basic design knowledge stored. On another hand, designers normally will be hired for bigger design needs for a project. However, some basic design knowledge would be helpful for communication purposes while working with a team as an artist. For example, normally it is artist’s job of how their work will be showing, but designer’s job would be to successfully pass the messages to the viewers clearly and in an interactive way. Interactive design also encourages the designer to have enough research of making simple and clear vision of a project other than various of different types of designs. Therefore, it is important to have background knowledge of design in order to decide how the photograph or short documentary film will be presented on media. As a documentary projects in art forms, the way of showing it will affect the experience of viewing it. On the other hand, by having an education in design program will be a west of time as a documentarian standpoint since it will contain studies in other fields as well. [4: Cooper, Alan; Reimann, Kaye; Keezer, Leiben. “About Face 3: The Essentials of Interaction Design.” Indianapolis, Indiana: Wiley. ISBN 978-0-470-08411-3. Retrieved 18 July 2011.]

Documentary Media to Interactive Documentary today

As the several types of interactive design ideas are growing in the presenting of documentaries, mostly documentarians are taking a lot of benefits in showing their work. Nevertheless, there are also some different voices about the growth in media. As a documentarian, the responsibilities of telling a truth to the public is always there. “It is often stated that a distinctive feature of documentaries is that they make claims, propose perspectives and evoke feelings in support of a particular view of the world”[footnoteRef:5]. However, in an interactive documentary project, viewers could bring up different voices by leaving message on the site or even communicate with others. Social media world been given people more freedoms of different points of views and interactive designs could bring it into documentaries. [5: Nichols, B. “Introduction to Documentary,” 2nd edn. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 2010.]

A new term in interactive design called VR, the virtual reality is a technology based simulated experience that can be similar to the real world. The users are experiencing the work other than the traditional way of just viewing it.

VR as a new

Munro had noticed that, “the VR as the medium which has over the last few years sucked up most of the funding and interest in the interactive or expanded documentary world.”[footnoteRef:6] [6: Kim, Munro. “Studies in Documentary Film.” i-Docs as Contagions of Hope, 2018, vol 12, 163-171.]

VR isn’t a single technology, it describes forms of 360-degree video as well as computer generated environments.[footnoteRef:7] [7: Nash, Kate. “Virtually real: exploring VR documentary”. Studies in Documentary Film. 2018, 12(2), 97-100.]

The experience of presence, of ‘being in an environment’[footnoteRef:8] is a largely taken for granted daily reality. However, as Steuer points out, our experience of media technologies, from letters and phone calls to film and now VR involves to varying degrees the experience of mediated presence. For many documentary makers, this represents one possibility for realising a long-standing ambition, the feeling of ‘being there’[footnoteRef:9] [8: Steuer, Johnathan. “Defining Virtual Reality: Dimensions Determining Telepresence. Journal of Communication”. v.42 (4) , p.73, 1992.] [9: Leacock, Richard. 1997 “A search for the Feeling of being there.” Accessed May 11, 2018.]

Conclusion

There is a clear growing future in interactive documentary, such as navigation and VR designs. Subsequently of combining different media format together, it created a more user-friendly experiences of viewing and acknowledge a documentary project better than ever.

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