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Should I Care?

A Linear Journey Through The Digital Buzz Word Jungle – Cross-Media, Non-Linear Storytelling, Transmedia, Apps, Gamification...

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GEORG TSCHURTSCHENTHALER The idea and the goal of this project was to bring Wagner to people who are not familiar with him. So this is for younger audiences and this is especially also distributed in schools. And you will not get far with [Hans-Jürgen] Syberberg and the old stuff. This is for Wagner lovers. And we developed a format called 'Culture Files'. We made a film about Pasolini, about Beethoven as well. Now we're working on a film about Van Gogh. There's a huge gap in education about our cultural heritage with people below thirty. They simply don't know. It has to do with the Internet and many other things.

AUDIENCE This is about teenagers at school?

TSCHURTSCHENTHALER It's also directed to them. It's for an audience that's not necessarily familiar with Wagner. It was also shown in Bayreuth. It should open and bring the music to an audience not familiar with him, but also please Wagner lovers. It's the question of the storytelling. It's a criminal case. The aesthetics. It's all designed for television and for a young audience.

AUDIENCE Then why did you use these fictional elements? Do you think this informs more about Wagner? Do you think young people and users will be interested in the private life of Wagner and Cosima?

TSCHURTSCHENTHALER This is not about the layer of the fiction elements. It's more about having an emotional relationship to the character, which is quite difficult because he's quite an asshole, Richard Wagner, especially his perception as well, his anti-semitism and all this kind of stuff. His character is very difficult to approach. The idea to go with the fictional scenes was to make him a little bit more accessible than this person you usually perceive of him. The actors are quite famous in Germany. Of course there's also the idea of reaching a larger audience. The main character playing Richard Wagner is a Bulgarian Jew, so it was quite radical to cast him. He doesn't really look like Richard Wagner. We wanted to make it into a kind of masquerade. It was a kind of artistic approach to make it accessible for us.

AUDIENCE Which TV channel commissioned this film?

TSCHURTSCHENTHALER Arte. And we had around ten other broadcasters involved: Norwegian TV, German TV. Within Arte, cultural programs really go into the night shift. We no longer have cultural programs at 8:15 p.m. This is special programming, and a million people in France and Germany saw this film. That's twice what they normally have at prime time. It's really the idea of spreading it. You can like it or not. It's a much-discussed film.

AUDIENCE A few days ago I saw a film about Richard Strauss on Arte. It was a classical 52-minute documentary film, which is directed toward people who know Richard Strauss and people who don't know Richard Strauss. It's a compromise. But here [in *The Wagner File*] it's another kind of film.

TSCHURTSCHENTHALER Arte was extremely nervous about the broadcast. They kept asking: Can you do it like this? But they were really, really happy afterwards. It's really designed for television, and we were surprised that it did well at film festivals. It went to at least five or eight other film festivals. We didn't even expect it to be accepted because of course the narration is very much television based. The 90-minute version has more music and more air. What is also to be considered: the whole soundtrack of the film consists of Wagner's music, which is not so typical and not so easy to work on different layers. So a lot of work went into the music. When you've seen the film, you have a basic understanding of what he did and what his music sounds like. But the general idea behind this is to find new ways to bring culture to a new and broader audience. That's why there's a series following the same approach. That's also why there's this app I'm going to show you now.

But before I start, just two words about myself and about the company I work for because I think it's important for you to know a little about the background of the project. I studied economics and worked as a business consultant. Then I went into film producing twelve years ago. I did some fiction and production management at the beginning, and then I moved into creative producing. And I've been working for the 'Beetz Brothers' for five years now. 'Beetz Brothers' is a documentary production company that has made around 120 films over the past ten years, and started to make interactive projects in 2009. So we are a filmmaking company. I'm a filmmaker myself, and am making a documentary at the moment.

We started quite early to observe what's happening outside our film and television world. I don't work for a digital agency. I'm a film lover, I like going to the theater, I don't play games in my spare time. But I'm very much interested in and sometimes even a little bit excited about what's happening in the interactive world right now in terms of creativity and storytelling. So that's the angle I'm talking to you from.

One of the projects we did you just saw – the short version of the film. For us, the whole project has a strong educational aspect. We decided to take the animation part you saw in the film and put it into a graphic novel that's sold through bookstores. And you can use an app, an interactive graphic novel, for these kinds of devices, for smart phones, for tablet computers. [starts to play music from app] When you open the app, this is the start screen. Down here on the left side you can watch the trailer and you can also buy the film. So the idea of the project was also to use this 200-year anniversary [of Wagner's birth] to have different platforms, different projects but to link them. So we can go directly to iTunes now, and you should be able to buy the film there. Yes, it's there! Okay. It's the same with the book, the graphic novel. You can order it right here.

One important reason why we did this is that it's become so much more difficult to get attention with your projects, with your films. Nowadays with the Internet there are moving images everywhere. This thing is an e-book basically. You have different options here; you can set the language and turn the music on or off. And basically it's a quite simple idea. It follows the same concept the book does: you can read it as a graphic novel and move it around. This is important for graphic novel lovers, because they like to see the whole page. So the simplest of the four ways of using this app is the graphic novel view. We made what we call an animation mode. [narration voice from the app starts talking] *When I heard the music of Richard Wagner for the first time I was twelve years old. So by swiping back and forth you can read the app. It was October the 20th 1842, the premiere of 'Rienzi' in Dresden. Something happened to me that day.* In the film we were focusing on the relationship between Richard and Cosima Wagner, his second wife. In the app we focused more on his biography. The story is told from the perspective of Hans von Bülow, one of his closest collaborators, his friend and personal conductor. Of course it's a true story. I'll just let you watch the first few minutes. [plays the app again] *Something happened to me that day. I succumbed body and soul to the music. And at the same time to the man responsible for creating it.*

When you see the blue spot in the frame there's something to discover. Here he's talking about *Rienzi*, when he first heard Wagner's music in 1842. And then we have some additional documentary content to explore. So every five or six images there's something you can see: moving images, photos or even music. [Continues app] *But of course I didn't have the slightest inkling of just how much our lives would become intertwined at a later point. Wagner was appointed director of music in Dresden. This meant I was able to experience the premiere of 'Tannhäuser' and many of his concerts. At the same time I worked hard, expanding my own musical capabilities. At the age of sixteen, I was lucky enough to meet Wagner personally. The concert master Karol Lipiński was a family friend. When he introduced me to the master himself, it was like having an audience with the pope. 'My dear Hans von Bülow, if a genuine and pure passion for art glimmers within you, it will most certainly have you aflame one day.'*, he wrote in my family register.

So you can navigate through the whole story down here. In total there are something like forty-two pages. So it's a reading experience basically. The story that starts so innocently with Hans von Bülow being inspired by Wagner, with him becoming his closest collaborator, ends quite drastically. *On Wagner's recommendation I was appointed royal concert master. I moved to Munich with Cosima and the children in the autumn. Ludwig turned out to be the heaven-sent patron and art lover that Wagner had always wished for. At last he was able to realize his visions appropriately. Wagner asked me to conduct the long awaited premiere of 'Tristan', undoubtedly the most important cultural event of the century. He recommended me to King Ludwig as the only man who could complete his work ... [skips ahead] I immersed myself in the preparatory work. This time the master must be spared a Vienna-style fiasco. Cosima supported him, assuming the role of secretary. She was pregnant again. Cosima gave birth to a girl on the first day of the orchestral rehearsals. It only seemed right to call her 'Isolde'. Deep down inside, I suspected that something was wrong, but I said nothing. What was I supposed to do? 'Tristan' needed me. He needed me. And I gave him everything!* So basically Isolde was Wagner's daughter. Hans von Bülow and Cosima divorced later on and Cosima became Wagner's second wife. The book and the e-book tell the story of Hans von Bülow covering the whole biography of Wagner.

As I told you, there are different ways of exploring the whole thing. What you saw just now was the audiobook version. Of course you can also read the text boxes. You decide how you want to experience the whole thing. For the rest we decided to keep the interactive part rather small. You can have the whole book read out loud to you on auto-play mode in different languages. You can choose your own speed, but we didn't want to create too many distractions because the idea was to create an immersive environment using Wagner's music, but not having the focus only on the music. Around this story, this book with music and text and so on, we have created a whole Wagner environment in order to give the user the possibility to explore more if he wants to learn more.

So up here on the right-hand side you have his biography illustrated as a map. In the book we are now already quite late in his life, in 1864. That was around the time he lived in Munich. So you can read his biography and look at the most important places where he lived. When you move this slider down here you can scroll through his biography and learn more about his life. So it's an interactive way of reading his biography. In addition to this kind of book, we have created a huge library with hundreds of images of Richard Wagner, with music and additional information. The idea was to address different target groups: People who are interested in graphic novels but not necessarily in Wagner, people who are huge Wagner fans, and so on. We tried to make it interesting for all of them.

Up here, for instance, you have more than sixty images of Wagner. We have all kinds of documents, letters to the king for example that you can read in their original form. And with a simple trick, the old/new-button, you can make it readable. This, for instance, is a letter to King

Ludwig. It's extremely funny and interesting how the two of them communicated. So this section gives you access to hundreds of pages of letters. We also have the pamphlet, the anti-Semitic pamphlet in here. You can read the original if you want and really see what he published and what he was writing. So this is for Wagner lovers again: You can see how he treated discourse, how he took notes, and so on. This is for everybody who wants to know more, and of course there are a lot more photos and images up there.

We created another part where we collected old recordings of Wagner's music, from the early 1920s for instance. [Starts to play music from app] We put together interviews, you saw some of them in the film, to give additional information. [starts playing an interview] *Es ist die Wucht der Musik, die auch körperlich ist. Wir können bei anderen Werken im Konzertsaal still sitzen und zuhören, das kann man bei Wagner nicht. Man ist entweder innerlich affiziert und angesprochen oder aber man merkt, dass er zu sehr eindringt und lehnt ihn ab. Auch die Leute kenne ich, die sagen ich...* [stops interview: English translation: *The music's power is also physical. With other works, we can sit still in the concert hall and listen. But not with Wagner. You're either moved inside and feel how the music speaks to you, or it feels too intrusive and you reject it. I also know people who ...*]

We also wanted to give a bit of a pop culture feeling to Wagner, so we collaborated with an American composer and programmer called Stephen Malinowski, a very interesting character. He basically visualizes music with animation. He created a code to program the visualization. [starts to play music from app] This is the intro of *The Flying Dutchman*. You can choose a piece of music and watch the animation to get an idea of the complexity and what Wagner's music would look like. It's to have a playful approach to music. Malinowski has his own Youtube channel, and what he does is basically visualize mostly classical music pieces. And he has more than 100 million clicks on his clips! So this is also quite cool what he's doing. He collaborated with Björk on her *Biophilia* app as well, which was a groundbreaking development for the combination of apps and music. So what we wanted to add to this Wagner project was a kind of modern and interesting way to deal with his music.

The app is only sold through the app Store. We set the price at something like €5.69, which is extremely expensive for the app Store. Everybody says everything that costs more than a euro is far too expensive. Nevertheless we decided to go up with the price. First of all because the book is sold for €20 and this app is so much more: You have the music and all the additional content. And it worked! Of course our target group is international. There are Wagner lovers everywhere. We also collaborate closely with the Bayreuth Festival and other partners. The app was launched a year ago, and has been downloaded around 50,000 times in total. And quite a substantial number of paid downloads as well. We also went down with the price. It's now around €2.59, and we're experimenting a little with the distribution. But to be honest, it hasn't recovered the production costs. We had a budget of around €150,000 for the technical platform. Considering that we could use the animation and that most of the content is free of rights, it's still a quite expensive project. We financed a large part of it with international funding.

The interesting thing is, it's still selling on the App Store. We're a self-publisher, which is great on the one hand, because you decide when you want to put it online, how much money you want to ask for it and you can also do the advertising. On the other hand, you can't blame anybody at the broadcaster for having done a bad campaigning job or getting a bad slot. You are really responsible for the whole thing, which puts more pressure on you. Usually we are used to delivering the tape to television or the film to the distributor, who brings it to the theaters. But this way you're responsible for your own stuff.

What I really liked, and what we were interested in when we started working on the project, were these devices. I think they're extremely interesting for storytelling in the future. You can combine moving images with photos, music, sound, all kinds of content in a quite unique way. And the moment you start touching the screen things really get interesting. I think this will be important in the next couple of years. And there are a number of very interesting apps coming out that are very different from some of the web projects, for instance. When you have a web project usually it's much more difficult to keep the viewer's attention because there are e-mails coming in and going out all the time. And if I look at how I work with a computer, you know, I close a website within a second if I don't immediately know what to do. On television you only have a few seconds before the people zap away. On the web it's sometimes less than a second. But it's different here: The moment you open the app you have a more immersive environment, and that's very interesting for watching stuff. Linear stuff like films as well as interactive stuff.

Are there any questions you'd like to ask about the project?

AUDIENCE Obviously there's an educational side of the project. So I would be interested if you can quantify it already.

TSCHURTSCHENTHALER Well, the 30-minute version of the film is getting shown in schools and it's doing extremely well there. We got a number of letters from teachers who told us how much easier it is to introduce Wagner to the children through watching the film. Then the children think: Oh, that was a crazy guy! And they understand his music a little better. It's much easier for the teachers to get into detail then. So that's what we know. But it's different with the app. I don't think that a lot of young people bought it. First of all, because they don't have the money, and secondly because they're not interested in Wagner. This is for people who are really into Wagner. What we also know from some responses is that parents would pass it to their children. And that would work. Most of the books are presents, for Christmas for instance. The publisher said that around 70% of the books are bought as presents. And they told us that it's mostly parents giving it to their kids because they want them to learn something. That's pretty typical. So we know that it works with the book, and I'm pretty sure it works with the iPad as well. That the parents have the app on there and pass it on to their kids, and they might like it.

AUDIENCE But from the cross-platform point of view isn't that a bit too small of a demographic to separate?

TSCHURTSCHENTHALER Well we call it a cross-media. I honestly don't really know what the difference between multi-platform storytelling and trans-media and all this kind of stuff is. But there is a difference between a cross-platform project, which *The Wagner Files* is, where each element works for itself and is linked to the others, and a trans-media project, where the elements are linked much closer. Usually a trans-media project that forces you to use the app and the television at the same time, loses its audience on the way through the story because it's too focused on a specific target group. Our project clearly addresses different target groups. And then we try to guide the viewers from one target group to the other platforms: from the app to the film, from the film to the app to the book.... Of course there's a huge advertisement for the app in the book. So essentially our goal is to bring the audience from one platform to another. Yes, it's a cross-media project.

AUDIENCE How many people go from the book to the app to the movie, especially from the movie to see the app?

TSCHURTSCHENTHALER We don't know much. We know that there is a link between the app and the film because that's what you can track. You can see there are downloads from iTunes coming from the app. That's what we know. And for the rest we simply don't know. What helped us

a lot is that we got a lot of media attention with the project. Everybody was writing: Oh, there's the film but there's this and that as well. So we got a lot of coverage. And because we had almost no marketing budget, we did most of the marketing campaign based on partnerships. We collaborated with the Richard Wagner Society, with the Bayreuth Festival, and a number of other institutions. So that's a crucial decision – how you want to bring the whole thing out. Because it's very difficult to sell through the app Store. That's what we know.

AUDIENCE Just to get a feeling: How much was the budget for the entire production?

TSCHURTSCHENTHALER The film was around € 320,000, I think, which was very low. I mean if you look at the two actors in there and that everything is shot on location... So we, you know, with documentaries we're used to being flexible. And we produced it together with four other episodes in this series so we could reuse the sets for the other ones. We had some synergies with the other stuff, so that's how we managed. But the budget was really low. It's culture, it's very difficult to finance and to make. But we will continue with this approach. We'll use the technical platform for an app on Beethoven we're working on now. The good thing is once you created this technical platform you can do the next app with a lot less money. And also in general it was quite a good experience. Of course, many things went wrong, but some things worked and now we can use the experience and the technical stuff to go on with Beethoven.

AUDIENCE And the graphic novel, how expensive was the production??

TSCHURTSCHENTHALER We collaborated with a publisher and the deal was that they would pay the writer and the comic artist and we would get the rights to use excerpts in the app and the film. But we were shocked when we learned that they got less than € 10,000 for their work, the two of them. The graphic novel market in Germany is a niche market, it's very small. It's different in France, Belgium, Switzerland and many other countries. So the salaries are even worse than we're used to in the film industry. Of course, we had a lot of production synergies putting together to whole thing. It wouldn't make any sense to only make the app.

Okay, so let's jump into the session. We called it 'Should I Care? — A Linear Journey Through the Buzzword Jungle' because I think as film people we should care and we have to care about what is going on in this interactive world, or whatever you call it. There are a lot of things going on, and these things are dramatically changing the world. They influence every aspect of our lives: How we meet our partners (with online dating), how we order our presents (through Amazon), how we organize our social life with the networks. And simply the fact that it has such an influence on our lives requires us to know these fields. We are storytellers, filmmakers and this is a very important part of the world that we should not ignore. And it's also dramatically changing the way our industry is structured. Has anyone of you worked on an interactive project or is working on one? [audience member raises hand]

AUDIENCE MEMBER Yes.

TSCHURTSCHENTHALER Okay. Do you know some game projects, or is there anybody here who is a big gamer or a game freak or something? [audience member raises hand] Okay, which games do you like or play or know?

AUDIENCE MEMBER Pretty much anything on the Xbox.

TSCHURTSCHENTHALER Okay, okay. That's good news for me because then it's easier for me to be very smart and professional. But has one of you heard of a company like 'Rockstar North'? [audience member(s) raise(s) hand(s)] Okay, good. 'Rockstar North' is a Scottish game developer.

One or two years ago they launched a game called *Grand Theft Auto V*. Does anyone know the game?

SEVERAL AUDIENCE MEMBERS Yeah.

TSCHURTSCHENTHALER Heard of? Played as well?

AUDIENCE MEMBER Not the fifth one but all the ones before it.

TSCHURTSCHENTHALER Okay. This is the most successful game in game history. It earned revenues of \$1 billion within four days. And the production budget was \$265 million. There's another game: *Heavy Rain*. Some of you heard of it. I'll just show you the trailer. This game had a budget of \$40 million. It's a French production and I think you can't even call it a game. It's considered to be a real mix between film and game. Some people say it's an interactive game. So I'll just show you a short trailer so you can see what it's about.

[trailer starts playing] *The Body of Jeremy Bowles was found this morning on a patch of wasteland in the East End at about 6:30 a.m. – five days after he was reported missing. An autopsy will be conducted tomorrow to determine the exact cause of death, but going from first indications it would seem that he drowned. The state in which the body was found suggests the methodology of the 'Origami Killer'.* [music continues]

TSCHURTSCHENTHALER So this is extremely interesting. It's a real cinematic experience when you play it. You decide which story line you want to follow. The point of view is extremely interesting. So this had a budget of \$40 million and earned \$100 million. And within these billions of films there are a number of independent games, smaller games that are more commercial, less commercial, more interesting or less interesting. It's a huge world. Some sales estimates say that the global game industry today earns ten times more than Hollywood. It's not the global film industry, we know that games earn more than the global film industry too, but it's ten times as big as Hollywood so far. This is the reality we have to face and know. If we then start playing it and making games or whatever that's a different thing. But this is the reality out there.

So this is one thing. And if you have a look at the audiences today, we know that the average age for television and public broadcasting audiences in Germany is around 60. I think that's true for most western countries. There are all these complaints that television has to get younger. I think what's more interesting is that the audience for private television is around 50 years old on average. So it's only ten years younger. Television is a medium that has a quite old audience. The average theatre goer is around 34, 35 years old in Germany, with a huge number of people between 10 and 20 who go for the action films, the children's movies and an increasing number of people 50+ going for these kinds of films. The average age is rising. And when you have a look at the arthouse film market, you see that the people sitting here, the people between 20 and 40, 45 don't really go to the theatres; they go to film festivals. They watch arthouse films there, but are less and less interested in going to the theatres. So this is a change that explains partly why a lot of arthouse films these days have only a very small audience.

How old do you think the average gamer is? What would you guess?

SEVERAL AUDIENCE MEMBERS 25. 30. 35.

TSCHURTSCHENTHALER Yeah, in the UK it's 35. That's the average. And when you talk about the Internet you often hear that it's for young people. But that's not true anymore. Everybody is on the web, everybody is on Facebook. Of course, there are differences in how people use the new medium, but everybody's online and doing these kinds of things. I'm exaggerating a bit, but

basically that's where we are now. And this is the world we live in. As filmmakers, we're competing against games and the web and fighting over every minute of spare time people have. And I think we have to be aware of that and also reflect on what we're doing. What's more interesting when we talk about these things is the wave of creative possibilities that arises. Of course, there's a large number of people who just watch trash or porn or videos of cats on the Internet, but it's the same with television. It's like that with many things in life. But there's an increasing number of very interesting projects that are getting released. And I think this is very interesting in terms of creativity and storytelling.

I'll now show you different examples of different types of projects. Most of them are quite new, some of them are a little bit older. Just to give you some idea of what's going on and what's interesting for a filmmaker. I'll start with a project called *Life in a Day*, which most of you have probably heard about. It was produced by Ridley Scott.

AUDIENCE MEMBER Crowd sourcing.

TSCHURTSCHENTHALER Yes, exactly. I'll play the trailer and show you what it is. [plays trailer]

So I think in total, the numbers are down here, there are some 85,000 people that have uploaded content of that very day. It was edited together and brought to the theatres. This is only the trailer, the whole film is ninety-four minutes long and was seen by more than nine million people on YouTube. This was a YouTube project.

So what's happening, you can as a director still have creative control of the whole thing. You call it crowd sourcing or participatory storytelling, which is where you invite a number of people from the audience to participate in a creative project.

Another project that worked in that way is the Johnny Cash project; maybe some of you know it? I'm still fascinated by the numbers, more than 561,000 people took part.

[plays clip from Johnny Cash project]

TSCHURTSCHENTHALER I think you've got it. So here Johnny Cash fans invited other Johnny Cash fans to finish the video for his last song. And 560,000 people sat down and started to draw paintings and upload them. I think it's fantastic that so many people could in a way be part of a creative project. Of course this only works for projects where you have some kind of very strong emotional connection to something, but it's still great.

Another project that many of you might know is also what Timo Vuorensola (the Finnish director) did with *Iron Sky*; I'll just play it for you. Because while the other projects were documentary projects, this one was a fiction project, and I think it's very interesting how your audience or your crowd can work together.

[plays clip from interview with Timo Vuorensola talking about *Iron Sky*]: Hi, my name's Timo. I'm from Finland, and I'm working on a feature film called *Iron Sky*, which tells the story about Nazis on the dark side of the moon. The preface for *Iron Sky* is that in 1945 the Nazis went to the moon. And in 2018, they are coming back. We knew that we didn't have the resources available. I mean, Finland is not the biggest country in film. We knew that we needed external help from the very beginning. Basically we started to work on *Iron Sky* in 2006. We had just finished a feature film called *Star Wreck*, which was a zero-budget film. It was very heavily made with the Internet community. Basically we were able to prove quite easily that five guys from Tampere, Finland that nobody had heard anything about ever were able to make a feature film with Hollywood-quality

special fx. We wanted to take that into the community and make a bigger film with that. Since 2006, we've been outsourcing production to the community, and they've been helping us financially. They've been helping us artistically, and joining us as actors and extras and helping with this and that.

So far from the community we've raised about €600,000. And we aim to reach about €1 million. It already is a success in a way. The good thing about *Iron Sky* is it's not just the film. It's also the way of making the film. It has kind of already proven that this is a good way to make a film.

TSCHURTSCHENTHALER So these are three examples that are quite well known. It's not true for every film or project, but for some themes to which a community is attached, you can change the way the creative process is organised, bringing your audience or crowd into the project from very early on. This makes them part of it and can help you finance it in part. This is true for fiction and documentary, but this is also presented or sold as the solution for all of our problems. It's not, because it's really hard work to bring them together and it only works for some projects. Michael [Seeber], you did a crowd financing project for *Golden Girls* didn't you?

MICHAEL SEEBER Yes, we made it for *Golden Girls*, it hasn't been produced yet, but I think we received €50,000 within six weeks or so. What I have to say is that it's a lot of work; you have to work a lot to create money from the bank.

TSCHURTSCHENTHALER Absolutely, it's hard work and you have to invest a few thousand euros in the campaign. But what happens if you put up a successful crowdfunding campaign is that it will be easier to get other potential partners to join your project because it's already proven that there is an audience and a number of people involved in the project.

MICHAEL SEEBER This was a test for us to find out how much potential it had and to get some money in the bank. If you take it seriously and you've got the right project I think it's possible to collect a lot of money, but first you have to invest of course, and you need a lot of people to work very hard.

TSCHURTSCHENTHALER Yes. And what we know is that 60-70% of crowdfunding projects on the big platforms such as Indiegogo, etc. fail. So sometimes, or very often, a failed crowdfunding campaign kills the project because there are people involved that invest a lot of energy and hope in it, and if it goes wrong it's an emotional downer. Many projects fail because they ask for too much money; there are some rules and workshops on how to do it. Very often it has proven effective to have smaller amounts of money because you get attention from other people and you might have broadcasters joining you because they see that there's a lot of attention around it. So this is difficult but interesting.

AUDIENCE I think it's really dangerous to go out with crowdfunding as a given thing. I was at the political week in Almedalen in Sweden last year, and all the politicians in Sweden think it's a great thing to do crowdfunding. They don't realise how much work is involved, and now they think they don't have to give us any more funds. They're like, "Oh, you can crowd fund it!" So it's very dangerous for the film community to go out and say, "Well, this is a good thing" because the politicians get on it right way.

TSCHURTSCHENTHALER Well it's the question of how deep you get in. I know it's the same reaction from broadcasters and funders and politicians as well, but this is a different discussion I think. It's important we talk about what's there and why it's important.

AUDIENCE It's so much work! I tried to do a crowdfunding project and it was so much work...

TSCHURTSCHENTHALER I know. But that's what I'm saying: It's not a solution for our problems. If you have the right theme for the community and you're doing it in the right way, you can help make a project that might go somewhere. What I wouldn't underestimate is if you can involve people in a creative process that was not possible before, and if you want to do it in a way, for example bring 500,000 people together in one project to do creative work, I think it's fascinating and interesting.

And the role of the director also changes. You're getting much more of a creator than a director. You don't have to do it, but in some cases, in a certain context it makes sense. But I think I'm more interested in crowd sourcing than crowdfunding, quite honestly. When you see how people are now making short films, if you see how many thousands of videos have been made for Pharell Williams' song *Happy*, you can say it's stupid, but still people are doing something creative. It can be trashy, but there's a lot of interesting stuff where people are becoming creators and doing stuff by themselves, which I think is a good thing. As a director or filmmaker you can, if you want, go in there and do something with a more or less different environment. That's why I was presenting it less for the crowdfunding thing.

Okay, we've now seen some examples of collaborative storytelling. I will now show you very briefly some web projects. I'm going back to a quite famous project that was funded by the National Film Board of Canada. They are kind of the worldwide leaders in this area, because for a couple of years they've been massively investing in interactive works, and are putting aside film funding for this. So that's why there are a number of projects from Canada coming out in an interesting way. I like this project *Highrise* by Katerina Cizek, a Canadian filmmaker, because she's been working on these themes for years, and has created a number of projects that build on the same topic. Basically this topic is that most people in the world live in towers, concrete towers. And she wanted to explore this world of towers so she made a number of projects that are connected to this. The one I like the most is *Out My Window*, which won the Digital Emmy and is already a classic in interactive storytelling.

[Plays clip from *Out My Window*]

TSCHURTSCHENTHALER So in here she has collected a number of stories from all over the world. Of course there's a map.... A lot of web projects use maps for navigation, but you can also go directly to the stories. What I like here is the way they combined sound, graphics and photos. There are no moving images here. By drag and drop you can now see the apartment of this family in Cuba, and you can click on the characters to hear their story.

[Plays clip of a character from *Out My Window*.]

TSCHURTSCHENTHALER So this guy is Canadian, sorry, not Cuban. And here as you can see, the image out of this window. This is what his daily view looks like. You can go to any other place in the world. For example this is South Africa. And what I like is that they did something that is rather a new trend with web projects. It's what they call 'low web'. It's trying to create an environment that's immersive with photographs and music and to give a different perspective and environment to web projects. This is the view out the window. Here's another...

[Plays another clip of a character from *Out My Window*]

TSCHURTSCHENTHALER So it's a very beautiful story, very well made... It's still a pleasure watching it, I think. And as I said, she's been working on this for a long time. The last part of the project was a collaboration with the *New York Times*, where she's still working on this theme and expanding the story.

This is something that is coming out of the games world, but also the interactive world. We as filmmakers or film people are used to starting from scratch with projects. We write scripts, research and shoot, then we throw everything away and start a new project from zero. If you shoot documentaries sometimes you have more than 120, 150 or 200 hours of material. We use 90 minutes and that's it. And here, this area that Katerina is doing and what is true for the games world, is that they talk about story worlds. So they talk about themes, different stories and characters that you have in your story world.

Sometimes a story you tell continues for five, then, twenty years because you keep expanding the story. That's what Marvel comics has been doing with Superman for almost a hundred years now: To have characters, expand their story world, find new stories and new characters, and to continue the story. This is something we should also think about. We do so much work to make one story; we're experts in one theme. Maybe it would be wise to expand the story to other elements or story worlds if it's the same moment. If it's linear, one after the other, that's a different story. But use the knowledge you have.

This is a project from a very interesting artist named Jonathan Harris. He's American and has great creative output in the things he's doing. He has made a fascinating project, the average time that people watch it is between three and four hours. So when people say you have a three-minute attention span on the web, these rules are absolutely not true. It really depends how you set up your story, how you build your storyline and this is interesting in many ways.

I love this work. It's a project about female porn stars, and Jonathan has been shooting with them every five minutes for ten seconds. There are 2200 ten-second clips, a total of six hours of footage in the project, and he's stewarding it. Every day ten people can watch this project. You have to register here and pay \$10, so the way he's distributing it is also interesting. I'll just play the trailer. It's interesting because it creates... actually I don't know why it works so well... from the moment you go there, of course the theme is quite speculative. It's female porn stars. But it's ten-second pieces, cut one after another...

[Plays clip from *Porn Stars*]

TSCHURTSCHENTHALER It's difficult to understand because they're only ten-second films. But the storytelling is interesting because they're so short, which has a strange effect because people sit there for hours watching them. He's won many awards with it. So this is what the interface looks like. You can jump around and see stuff. I've not paid \$5 but you can see down here the names of the characters and the days and you can flick through them. I don't know why it works. Of course, the theme is appropriate, but you have ten-second clips that create an immersive environment and it's extremely addictive, so don't do it!

AUDIENCE The idea of short videos is rising, with the viral Internet stuff and *Vine*... It's interesting, this idea of storytelling in just a couple of seconds...

TSCHURTSCHENTHALER Yes, you're absolutely right, this is something totally new. This is why I showed it to you, because you can tell stories using a combination of short clips that add up to a narrative that will keep people watching for many hours. I think this is the most extreme example, but you're absolutely right there are a number of projects....

You mentioned *Vine*. That's an interesting app where people have started making their own films, and I think these kinds of short film are becoming a genre.

Another project that was also produced by the National Film Board is a project called *Bear 71*.

What's interesting here is that there's a time frame – the experience is twenty minutes long. So you cannot decide to go shorter or longer. In this case, the director decided to say this is twenty minutes.

[plays clip of *Bear 71*]

Female narrator's voice: That snare had a breaking strength of two tons. The dart was full of something called Telazol, brought to you by Pfizer – the same people who make Zoloft and Viagra. The next thing I know I'm wearing a VHF collar and I have my own radio frequency. They also gave me a number: Bear 71.

TSCHURTSCHENTHALER So this is where the interactivity starts... this is *Bear 71*...

[continues playing clip]

Female narrator's voice: Banff National Park in the heart of the Canadian Rockies. Bears and humans here live closer together than any other place on earth. That explains the radio collar constantly beeping my location to some ranger playing God. There are fifteen remote sensing cameras in my home range, plus infrared counters, and barbed wire snags to collect my hair. I call it 'The Grid'. I live around a town called Canmore in the Bow River Valley. Now Canmore has doubled in size over the past decade, and it gets five million tourists a year. It's not like I can tiptoe around it at all. I need 500 square kilometres just to find enough food to raise my cubs. Think of us as refugees ...

TSCHURTSCHENTHALER So this is live... Basically it's twenty minutes long. I think it's interesting that there are now many web projects offering a limited experience. In the beginning, there were many projects and they were all so cool you could sit there for hours and everyone was happy about it. Now it's not true. The average time frame people spend on these kinds of projects is 3 - 5 minutes, not more. They do it during their lunch break or somewhere in between, so time is very precious, and that's why projects are now getting smaller and more concentrated. *Bear 71* is interesting because it's from the point of view of the bear and gives you an idea of surveillance. You decide on what you see on the screen and you can move through this kind of grid, move to different content and see a linear story of twenty minutes. But after twenty minutes the project is finished. I think this limitation is interesting.

AUDIENCE: So that's the interactive part, you get to choose the pictures?

TSCHURTSCHENTHALER Yes, you decide what you see. Because the whole project is about cameras in the national park and about surveillance of animals, there's also a part where they register when people have webcams. You're watching the whole thing with your webcam turned on and you can click on one of the screens and see yourself, which is quite shocking. It's an interesting moment when you discover that you're watching and being watched as well in the same moment.

AUDIENCE Have you seen the video with *Arcade Fire*?

TSCHURTSCHENTHALER Yes.

AUDIENCE That's a really interesting movie.

TSCHURTSCHENTHALER Yes I thought of showing it as well, but it's too complicated with all the moving around. But yes, check it out it's called *Just a Reflector*. It's a new form of video where you dance in front of, and are part of, a creative video display.

So the line between video-makers and their audience varies for many of these projects. The big question for all these projects is the degree of interactivity. For some, mostly the game projects, it's a very interactive process. You're constantly there and constantly reacting. Other projects are much more laid back and designed for immersive periods, especially the apps, but for other projects as well. So that's why you have people called 'experience designers' who decide whether the audience will be constantly involved by watching and doing, or if you want to have a more relaxed, laid back effect.

What's interesting about all the projects coming from National Film Board of Canada is that they always use music in a very intelligent way in order to create an environment where you focus on the story and follow it. I think they're the best at this kind of creative environment. I would like to show you two or three apps that were recently launched that are also going in the same direction, moving away from extremely complicated interactive storytelling and moving much more towards something that's called the 'slow web' projects, which are sometimes twenty minutes, fifteen minutes or ten minutes long, but in this relatively short time you tell a story. And these projects reach out to audiences; they sometimes have quite impressive numbers.

One project I would like to show is the *Alma* project. This was done by a French company, led by Alexandre Brachet, which is one of the leaders in this area, together with Arte again, who are doing a lot of these things. This is what I've found interesting about this project: It could also have been a film and it's almost a film, but only almost and I'll show you why. This is the story of Alma. So the only possibility for interaction for me is moving up and down and getting some additional content, but I cannot influence the storytelling....

[Plays clip from *Alma*]

TSCHURTSCHENTHALER So basically this is the story of Alma. It's a talking heads film that was shown on Arte for 52 minutes, and it was part of a web project. I think the web project is thirty minutes long, and the only way of interacting is that I can move into some archives if I want. And, of course, there is a lot of additional content to see and interact with surrounding this project. What fascinated me about this project when I saw it is that it really reduces the whole thing and gives you so many possibilities to click and do stuff. But the directors decided to just focus on the strongest part, which is her story. And it had quite a strong response. The film I think was okay, but it reached out to a Hispanic audience worldwide.

AUDIENCE A friend of mine was the editor actually, he had a lot of problems with that film, apparently it was a failure and received very bad reviews. My friend told me that, but I haven't seen it so I don't know.

TSCHURTSCHENTHALER That's interesting. I haven't seen the film either, but I've used the app, which is free. It's also a web project you can see on Arte for free. It did very well in terms of audience. It reached a lot of the Hispanic community, especially in North America. They had, I think, 300,000-400,000 clicks within a couple of weeks. But, of course, now you can discuss it, you know, it's talking heads ...

AUDIENCE In fact, there's a story and the theme, maybe the theme is part of the problem?

TSCHURTSCHENTHALER Maybe one reason could be because they started as a web project and the film was the add-on. Most of the time you start with a film and then do something for the web, but they started with the web project. Maybe this was the reason why the film didn't work. But yeah, what I like is how powerful it is just having her there talking and reaching out. But again, this is all about having an extremely strong character and a story, and the interactivity is not wasting it. Many

projects, or projects that I worked on, we thought: "Oh, it's so cool you can click and do stuff," but no, it's really about what you want to do and what you want to tell, and reduction is sometimes the really creative process.

Another project, again coming from Canada. What I like about this one is that it's immersive and it's basically a reading experience. Some of the most interesting projects are now going back to photography, to audio, and not necessarily to moving images.

[Plays clip from biography of grandfather project *The Last Hunt*]

TSCHURTSCHENTHALER So this is a biography of his grandfather, a biopic basically. There are some little animations in this story, very simple ones. And just swiping back and forward you read the story and see some additional material. It's absolutely no fun doing this on the web with the mouse, but it's fun to have this when you're lying in your bed or on the sofa [with a tablet], and you have your earplugs in and you can read about this man. A quite interesting biography. It uses photos and little animations, you learn some stuff about killing animals.

[Audience laughs]

You go back in history. He was told he should go to the army, and he jumped off and started his life in the forest. Again this is less than twenty minutes, and it's a way of telling a story in a very simple way. They use music extremely well. There are a number of apps that work in a similar way.

Just to finish the app part, there is also a project that is very, very successful these days, which is about typography. It's a game called *Typewriter*, and it combines very simple game mechanics on an iPad with knowledge about typography and types.

[Demonstrates *Typewriter* app]

TSCHURTSCHENTHALER So the main characters of the game are these two little dots, and you have to play with them and put them through a parcours. And if you make it to the end... Ah, it's not working, don't ask me why, but look at it afterwards. It's for free on the web, but it costs something as an app. This uses technology in a very intelligent way. You have to move back and forth with the whole thing, and you can unlock letters and stuff. So it's essentially using gameification elements to tell a story about typography, and commercially it has been one of the most extremely successful apps of the past six months.

So again, an immersive environment, and very smart use of gameification elements. Sorry I can't show it to you, but please look at it afterwards. It's worth doing because it will help you understand one of the buzz words you hear very often these days, which is 'gameification'. How can you use puzzles to tell stories and to involve the audience? This is, in my opinion, one of the best examples of that. And it has passed information about typology onto a lot of people.

So, back to what these devices are offering for storytelling. I think it's very interesting, and I'll be curious to see where all this will be in 5 - 10 years. I'm sure there will be many genres, from commercial to artistic projects. But apart from that, it will be a major place where people will watch linear films because despite the fact that we're talking about all this interactivity, it's absolutely not true that linear films are dead. Everybody was talking about this two or three years ago, about how long films should be. But we're not selling television sets; we're selling films. I personally don't care if someone is watching it on a television or on his computer. People are watching linear films for fifty to ninety minutes if the narration is fine. If the film is good, there are films that have ten million views. There are also artistically relevant films. Don't let anyone tell you that linearity is dead. It's

not true at all; it really depends on the story and how you tell it.

Now the next group of projects: There are a number that are coming out of the interactive world that reflect in a way what's happening in the interactive world. For instance, this is a project on Facebook called *Faces of Facebook*, and we can see the number... these are all the Facebook users. It's almost 1.3 billion people.

[Demonstrates *Faces of Facebook* website]

TSCHURTSCHENTHALER This is a very simple project. This is basically Facebook. I can click here and have the user 509,400,456. His name is Eric Cole, and I can see what his Facebook profile looks like and I can check out who this person is. All these little dots are one user, and this is user number ... oh, I'm not getting her.. This was the 900th person of four million people on the web. So this is how it looks. It's chronologically oriented so we can go directly to his profile and see who this person is. And now I'm going to connect with my Facebook. So now you see the white dots? These are all my Facebook friends. You can see, for instance, here it says this is Sylvano, the 5,890,598th person. He's of my Facebook friends, the first one who was on Facebook. So you can see we have all my friends who are digitally innovative over there, and we have some that are not. They're down here. I can see. Yes, I'm not surprised that this one joined quite late.

[Audience laughs]

What I think is fascinating about this project is that it uses legal data available for everybody, and you can understand almost everything about everyone. You can see relations between people, you can jump in there. I think it's quite a great story just to have this on one screen because it tells you a story. As I said, most of my friends joined early on. This is me. I'm the 66,157,418th person that was on Facebook. This is all done with legal data, so while everybody is asking "What information should we put on Facebook?", this is the world of Facebook on one screen. Maybe you're only there for one minute, but it tells you a story. It tells a story of the complexity of the present and of our world.

There are more and more projects coming out reflecting new media, reflecting data, and there's a huge movement of 'data journalism', where you tell complex stories in animated graphics. And there are a number of new professions arising, for example a combination between a journalist and a coder. These kinds of people are extremely interesting because they know what's going on, they know what the NSA's doing and they're able to transmit their knowledge into stories. I'll just show you one example, it's called *Out of Sight, Out of Mind*. This is a short story about drones, told using data..

[Demonstrates *Out of Sight, Out of Mind*]

I think it's very creative, you have 50 high-profile victims, 1.6%. And you have more than 3000 other victims, all told in 25-30 seconds. It's a very complicated story. Everyone's talking about drones, but what does it mean? This kind of project can provide insight and help us understand the world. Data journalism and these kinds of projects are definitely among the most interesting fields today. There's more coming in from the side of journalism, and being used by filmmakers to tell complicated stories.

Before the conclusion, we're coming to the last type of project. Does anyone know this project, *Take this Lollipop?* This is a project that I showed to my sixteen-year-old niece when I tried to tell her that she should be aware of what she's putting on Facebook and what she's using. Of course, she didn't listen to me, she was thinking "Who's going to do something wrong to me?" Then I

showed her this project. I'm just logging in with my Facebook account again. I'll just wait until the whole thing has loaded. Again, this project works by taking my data out of Facebook, which is why it's loading slowly, so we have to be patient.

[Plays clip from *Take this Lollipop*]

TSCHURTSCHENTHALER So this is one of my Facebook friends. He's supposed to 'be next'. This was an extremely successful project. I think it had more than 20 million shares on Facebook, and millions of people watched it. Again, a project that is working with legal data and tells you a story in two and a half minutes of what is possible on the web.

Now the last category, I'm trying to get back to what you're doing, which is feature films and films for theatres. I think there's an interesting range of projects which are providing new ways of 'live experience' of film, combining them with interactive projects that can change stuff. I'll show you a trailer of the first interactive film or feature film that was shown in 1967 at the Expo in Montréal, so what we're talking about is nothing new. This is a Czech project called *Kino Automat*.

[Plays clip from *Kino Automat*]

TSCHURTSCHENTHALER So basically what happens is that the audience in the theatre or cinema has two buttons, one is red and one is green. The audience decides if he lets the female character into the room or not, and then the story unfolds. So we've learnt how you can interact with the television, and in 1967 they experimented with live interaction in theatres. Of course, the majority of the audience decides what happens, so it's still a statistical thing. And it's very funny for ten to fifteen minutes, but it gets a bit boring afterwards because I think the audience still like to go to the theatres to see a well-told story, not tell a story by themselves. I think there are a number of films and projects that will combine a live experience with interactivity, and this will be something that's changing.

Now this is a project that I've not seen myself. It was just launched last week at the Sheffield Film festival. It's called *Door into the Dark*. It's about a live experience in a real environment where the audience gets into the dark side of the mind. I'll just play a short trailer, I'd really love to do this, I think it would be a fascinating experience.

[Plays clip from *Door into the Dark*]

TSCHURTSCHENTHALER So in this project, the line between art, film and interactivity blurs again; you're led by a rope by yourself to a dark place and have all kinds of sensory experiences. I think that live momentum is something that's crucial for cinema and theatres. What's the difference between watching a film at home on your computer or going to a place and paying eight Euros, maybe on a rainy Sunday evening? Why do you go there when so much is available just one click away? It has to do with an experience, with something unique. And I think understanding all these kinds of projects and movements and things that are coming up is essential and will help us to imagine what theatres and the cinema experience will look like in 5 - 10 years. Things will dramatically change. Of course, there will be film and there will be theatres, but what will be happening there? I think many things have a big influence on it. And just to give you an idea of what an interactive experience in the theatre could look like, I'm going to show you a short trailer on how to interact with an audience in the cinema.

[Plays clip]

TSCHURTSCHENTHALER So that was something on how to interact with your audience in

theatres. I'm waiting for the first interactive theatre film that uses this kind of thing. So now I'll do a very short résumé as we're at the end of the session.

We asked at the beginning: "Should I care?" I think we should care, because it has such a tremendous impact on our daily lives and on our professional lives, that we should all know what is going on in all these fields [in gaming and the web]. The question of whether you should do it as well is a totally different one. It depends on many questions. You don't have to, it's not necessary. There will be films and things produced for eternity. I'm sure about that. But we have to be aware what the world looks like outside of this. Still, one of the references that we talk about as filmmakers is Cannes. Well, what is Cannes? Cannes is (to be a bit silly about it), old men showing their work. It's not of real relevance for a large part of people out there that we think are watching our stuff. There's so much creativity coming out in different ways. I think we should get to know that and to deal with it because we can tell stories about it and can also have a strong influence on what we're doing.

Thank you for your attention.

[applause]