Entertainment Architecture: Constructing a framework for the creation of an emerging transmedia form

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Abstract

The topic of this research is a novel entertainment form currently emerging from the youngest human communication technology, the Internet. This form, products based on it, and the conceptual framework describing it are all referred to as Entertainment Architecture (‘entarch,’ for short). Entarch is classified as Internet-native transmedia entertainment — it fully utilises the unique communicative characteristics of the Internet and is not based on just one medium. A number of entarch examples are explored through ‘immersive’ textual analysis — a new mode of textual analysis required for research into this kind of entertainment. As a secondary priority, entarch is related to the movie — which is chosen as an exemplary existing entertainment form finding itself in a radically uncertain formal, business, and industrial environment, and accordingly is struggling financially. Throughout, formal, business, and industrial consequences of the emergence of Entertainment Architecture are explored.

This research is an example of applied cultural science, as it treats culture as a source of innovation and a complex dynamic system with technological as well as human characteristics. It analyses the dynamics of cultural change in the context of business development, consumer experience, and economic evolution — with an intrinsically transdisciplinary methodology.

1. Introduction

Entertainment Architecture is my proposition for a comprehensive conceptual framework for the creation of and research into a certain form of Internet-native transmedia entertainment — entertainment that fully utilises the unique communicative characteristics of the Internet and is not based on just one medium — that is currently emerging. This framework is a result of research that brought together interviews, a survey, what I call ‘immersive’ textual analysis, and a number of disciplines. Entertainment Architecture is characterised by combining four elements: story, play, ‘dance,’ and ‘glue.’ Each of these four elements is later explained in greater detail.
Until the vernacular chooses a name for this emerging form, Entertainment Architecture (‗entarch,’ for short) is proposed to refer to the conceptual framework, to the form itself, and to any entertainment product based on it. An Entertainment Architect (‗EA,’ for short) is a new kind of creator required for the creation of entarch.

This research is primarily about a novel emerging entertainment form — Entertainment Architecture. Only as a secondary priority does it relate entarch to one existing exemplary form — the movie, which, despite continuing to be highly popular, is more and more difficult to monetise for the existing movie industry. The logic behind that relation goes as follows. Current business models of the movie industry are under a lot of stress due to the emergence of the Internet. At the same time but in a different back yard, the Internet is proving fertile ground for a novel entertainment form — Entertainment Architecture — which, in turn, offers novel business models to movies. It is not entarch that is disrupting movie business practice, but the Internet — entarch may simply offer a way out.

Despite this certain emphasis on movies, however, the general framework of Entertainment Architecture is just as relevant and applicable to other existing entertainment forms — only the detailed exploration of their relation with entarch is a task for future research.

Since entarch does not inherently affect movies, it may not come as a surprise that it is not the current movie industry that pushes the development of Entertainment Architecture, but a constantly growing eclectic group of creators (including some moviemakers). These creators are responding to novel human communicative patterns and conventions that are emerging from the Internet. They — the Entertainment Architects — are striving to offer entertainment experiences that align well with the communicative customs of Internet natives. The development of Entertainment Architecture is therefore treated as a consumer not producer-driven phenomenon. Entertainment Architects are not immediately concerned with the viability of entarch in the context of existing entertainment industries, but with reaching audiences. They do pay special attention to their creative and business relations with existing entertainment, but always within the context of creating products that reach Internet-native audiences on their communicative ground.

The primary focus of my research is therefore not on the survival of Entertainment Architecture within the contemporary Hollywood complex or any other existing entertainment industry. It is also not on the issues that existing entertainment industries may or may not be facing, or whether entarch offers solutions. This makes the research approach rather exceptional, as typically the focus is on the issues that existing entertainment industries are facing and how to solve them.1 And these issues are important. The long cultural history and sheer size of the entertainment industries — in monetary terms USD 1.3 trillion (PricewaterhouseCoopers 2010, p. 28) — simply command attention. To try to find ways to fix existing entertainment industries really is to be human — we tend to focus on the preservation of the existing, as nobody can guarantee the new will put food on the table (Schumpeter 1942; Beinhocker 2006). Let me therefore emphasise that there is nothing wrong with such an approach — it is just fundamentally different from what you see in front of you right now.

1 (Reiss 2010; Gray 2010; Caldwell 2008; Tryon 2009), or see the Media Industries Project, Carsey-Wolf Center, UCSB at http://www.carseywolf.ucsb.edu/mip. Of course, my approach is not unique, just infrequent — Jean Burgess and Joshua Green, for example, investigate a novel moving picture breeding ground along with its own novel rules, i.e. motion pictures on YouTube (Burgess and Green 2009a).
I set out to identify, and analyse ‘on the fly,’ an emergent phenomenon (Sawyer 2005; Runciman 2009): a novel entertainment form that does not have its seeds in existing industries but in novel dynamic circumstances that have come into being as a consequence of the newest human communication technology, the Internet. The focus, therefore, is on the creative and business potential of a novel entertainment form and novel ‘entarch industry’ — which follows from novel consumer expectations of entertainment. In this context, the current state of existing forms is not directly relevant to Entertainment Architecture. It only becomes relevant in connection with the secondary priority of the research: to analyse whether or not there is potential for creative and business cross-fertilisation with movies as the chosen exemplary existing entertainment form, and with moviemakers as the chosen exemplary existing profession. But this analysis does not happen on the ground of the existing movie industry, but on that of the novel entarch industry. Let me present you with a simple example of what I mean by that.

This research has shown that Entertainment Architects — the people who conceive and create entarch — represent a novel profession that neither stems from one specific entertainment industry nor gels well with any current entertainment industry. EAs cooperate with all entertainment industries — but they are who they are and do what they do because they are not directly constrained by any of them.

The research approach therefore goes — in short summary — like this. The Internet is a required technology for Entertainment Architecture to emerge. But entarch is not a settled form yet and is still evolving. Various kinds of developments follow from this evolution — technological, cultural, business, etc. — and present various kinds of new opportunities. Entrepreneurs are persons, and by extension firms, that seize these opportunities and develop viable businesses based on them. These entrepreneurs and the challenges they are facing are what this research is about — with a certain emphasis on entrepreneurs working at the intersection of Entertainment Architecture and movies.

The research is therefore about form and how it leads to businesses. In a broader sense, it investigates how it is possible to make progress in uncertainty, how forms can be developed, businesses established, and livelihoods secured in a world that is changing — it explores how people cope with change that follows from the emergence of the novel. And it does this by focusing on the ways in which moviemakers can deal with a novel emerging entertainment form.

2. Research Design

The goal is to conceptualise a space where businesses built on an emerging Internet-native transmedia entertainment form can prosper. But before such businesses can be conceptualised, the form they are built on needs to be understood. Therefore, before entrepreneurial and business questions can be explored, the emerging form must be analysed. Once a promising space has been conceptualised, the focus shifts to entrepreneurial and business aspects of it. In the following step, this comprehensive conceptualisation allows to investigate the relevance of Internet-native transmedia entertainment forms to movies.

However, research into an emerging Internet-native transmedia entertainment form is challenging as it is steeped in three levels of radical uncertainty:
• **Entrepreneurial** — This form has no history that creators can learn from and use as guidance while creating their own products. Turning to current entertainment creators can therefore hardly lead to future success (Stark 2009, p. 83). There is no proven business model yet. Experimentation is the only option for creators to get their products off the ground (Dopfer and Potts 2008) and is consequently intrinsic to the required entrepreneurial approach.

• **Experiential/Formal** — Consumers do not know what to expect from this new entertainment form. Products based on it may have to explain what it is they offer; nonetheless, they often stay misunderstood. Producers do not yet fully understand the form either. Additionally, advertising has entered the playing field and begun to blur the distinction between itself and entertainment.

• **Disciplinary** — Certain disciplines have been affected by the emergence of this form but have not yet been able to develop appropriate approaches to researching it. Other disciplines have an interest in uncertainty, but have not yet been applied to this form.

These three levels of uncertainty translate into the first three steps of the research process. The entrepreneurial level is explored through interviews and a survey. The experiential or formal level is explored through immersive textual analysis. And the disciplinary level is explored through extensive consultation of literature, leading to some innovations proposed by and pursued in the research.

The fourth step, then, constitutes the synthesis of the previous three steps and consists of constructing the Entertainment Architecture conceptual framework.

### 2.1 Step One — Interviews and Survey

Even though the focus of this research is on an emerging form, this form is evolving too fast and changing too often to be a stable-enough research object. The strongest driver behind its evolution was therefore identified and investigated in the first step: the creators of Internet-native transmedia entertainment. They are the agents who actively shape the form. But this does not mean consumers are reduced to passivity. Quite the contrary: consumer empowerment, user generated content, and the democratisation of media (Hartley 1999, 2009b) in the widest sense are developments that are embraced enthusiastically. But a focus on entertainment means these developments have to be seen in relation to commercial products (Collis, McKee and Hamley 2010, p. 921). And in this context, consumers are indeed encouraged to contribute content and influence these commercial products — but always within the (subliminal) boundaries imposed by creators. Often these products fail, not least because of poorly set boundaries. Creators then modify their products and present them to consumers once more. Creators, therefore, are the ones who mould this emerging form and consumers are the ones who either accept and breathe life into it or not. Creators are the ones to shape it first and in a direct manner, consumers shape in a subsequent step and indirectly. This research focuses on the first step of shaping, on the creators. To put the matter more formally: it researches agency in order to arrive at an understanding of form, which leads to an understanding of business.

Two rounds of semi-structured open-ended face-to-face interviews were conducted. The first round largely focused on moviemakers, was conducted in Sydney, Australia, and each interview was between 30 and 60 minutes long.
The second round was with five of the world’s leading creators of Internet-native transmedia entertainment and each interview was between 70 and 170 minutes long: Christopher Sandberg of The company P was interviewed in Stockholm, Sweden; Adrian Hon of Six to Start in London, UK; Jeff Gomez of Starlight Runner Entertainment in New York City, USA; Sean Stewart of Fourth Wall Studios in San Francisco, USA; and Nathan Mayfield of Hoodlum in Brisbane, Australia.

To verify the results of the second round of interviews, a concurrent online survey was conducted and generated 40 responses.

2.2 Step Two — Immersive Textual Analysis

Step one yielded many insights about the creation and shaping of this emerging entertainment form, but how do consumers experience it? This is what ‘immersive’ textual analysis focuses on, a novel mode of textual analysis that I developed for this dissertation — with substantial support from John Hartley. Although it has been developed specifically for this research, this novel method builds upon the long history of textual analysis and its interest in how imaginative worlds are constructed using verbal means (Lockyer 2008; Grondin 1994; Gadamer 1976; Freeman 2008). And textual analysis continues to evolve with the objects it analyses. With ‘the text’ not solely referring to the written word anymore, but just as much to “films, television programmes, magazines, advertisements, clothes, graffiti, and so on” (McKee 2003, p. 1), it cannot be seen just as literary analysis anymore, but has long been complemented by the analysis of production and consumption context, and of both producer and consumer agency (Barthes 1972 [1957]; Eco 2005 [1972]; Hawkes 1973; Williams 2003 [1974]).

Internet-native transmedia entertainment, now, requires textual analysis to evolve yet again. This new textual form is not a settled object anymore, and therefore unlike a novel or movie. It really is only created collectively the moment consumers engage with it. Additionally, this engagement is spread across components, media, and time: a mere description of all components can be a major undertaking. To understand this new textual form, therefore, transmediality (Rajewsky 2005, esp. p. 46; see also Rajewsky 2002), ludic interaction (Huizinga 1955; Montola, Stenros and Waern 2009; McGonigal 2006), and producer-audience-dialogue (Bruns 2008; Burgess and Green 2009b; Hartley and McWilliam 2009; Jenkins et al. 2009; Müller 2009) need to be analysed in addition to its textuality, context, and agency. This means expertise as a consumer is required to explain and account for this emerging form — it has to be played and not seen as a play since the process of experiencing it is an essential part of researching it. In other words, the researcher has to critically immerse themself in this form in order to research it — hence immersive textual analysis.

Immersive textual analysis was performed on many Internet-native transmedia entertainment products in order to conceptualise an emerging form. The result of this analysis is my conclusion that all products based on this emerging form have four characteristic elements in common: story, play, ‘dance,’ and ‘glue.’ The combination of all four in one product presents the beginning of a new Internet-native transmedia entertainment form. This form is not representative of all Internet-native transmedia entertainment, but it is a form that is emerging and has been chosen as the focus of this research.
This research touches upon several topics: the form of film, movies, and Internet-native transmedia entertainment; business aspects of all three; industrial aspects of all three; convergence; producer-audience relationship; and how all these topics are caught in an evolutionary surge that intertwines them in new ways. It cannot proceed without addressing all these topics, which requires the bringing together of a number of disciplines.

Thankfully, many aspects of Internet-native transmedia entertainment as well as of the evolution of movies have already been successfully investigated from numerous angles, and this research builds on these foundations. Henry Jenkins’ ongoing work approaches the topic from a fan studies perspective (Jenkins 1992, 2006a, 2006b, 2006 – ongoing). Jonathan Gray approaches it from a television angle (Gray 2006, 2008, 2010). Jean Burgess and Joshua Green offer insights about online participatory culture and creativity (Burgess and Green 2009b, 2009a; Burgess 2006). Axel Bruns researches the changing producer-consumer relationship (Bruns 2008). Lawrence Lessig investigates this changing culture from a law perspective (Lessig 2008). Kristin Thompson shows how Hollywood is slowly being transformed through market forces (Thompson 2007). Chuck Tryon illustrates how innovation in movies often happens on the fringes (Tryon 2009). Jon Reiss writes about his experiences as an independent filmmaker today (Reiss 2010). Markus Montola et al describe the change from ‘classic’ games to ‘pervasive’ games — or ‘ubiquitous’ games, as other scholars call them — and how this often entails transmedia phenomena (Montola, Stenros and Waern 2009). And Frank Rose gives an overview of the sheer diversity of this emerging entertainment form (Rose 2011). The form’s economic and business aspects have not yet been researched explicitly, but knowledge from both disciplines can be applied to Entertainment Architecture in the same way this has been done in regards to other entertainment products and industries (De Vany 2004; Caves 2000; Sedgwick and Pokorny 2005).

In a slightly wider context, this third step strives to combine the textuality and deep movie knowledge of film studies and theory (Eisenstein 1949; Deleuze 1986; Kracauer 1960; Bazin 1967; Ellis 1992; Bordwell and Thompson 2008; Braudy and Cohen 2008; Monaco 2009; Caldwell 2003; Ryan and Hearn 2010; Harris 2007; Ross 2008; Luckman and de Roeper 2008; Kaufman and Mohan 2008; Connolly 2008), the social relationship between producers and consumers of media studies (Fiske and Hartley 1978; Hartley 2009b; Caldwell 2008; Dyer 2002), the business strategy of marketing and business (Drucker 2007; Porter 1998; Bennis and Nanus 1997; Kaplan and Norton 1992; Kotler and Armstrong 2010; Belch and Belch 2009; Starkey, Barnatt and Tempest 2000; Eliashberg, Elberse and Leenders 2006), the dynamics of change of evolutionary and complexity theories (Darwin 2008 [1859]; Arthur 2009; Maynard Smith 1993; Dawkins 2006), traditional economics (Smith 1776; Marshall 1890; Keynes 1936; Coase 1937; Samuelson and Nordhaus 2010; Williamson 1975; Schumpeter 1954; Varian 1992; Mankiw 2011; Throsby 2003; Towse 2003; Waterman 2005) as well as its evolutionary and complex variety (Veblen 1898; Schumpeter 1934; Nelson and Winter 1982; Hayek 1988; Kirzner 1997; Metcalfe 1998;

2 Convergence itself touches upon various topics as it “is a word that manages to describe technological, industrial, cultural, and social changes depending on who’s speaking and what they think they are talking about” (Jenkins 2006a, pp. 2-3).
Beinhocker 2006; Salzano and Colander 2007; Dopfer and Potts 2008; Cowen 2009; Herrmann-Pillath 2010; Hodgson and Knudsen 2010; Potts 2011), and historical knowledge (Bordwell, Staiger and Thompson 1985; Balio 1985; Harpole 1990–2000; Maltby 2003; Miller et al. 2005; Sedgwick and Pokorny 2005) to understand the potential of a novel Internet-native transmedia entertainment form that is emerging from changing technologies and social relations.

2.4 Step Four — Conceptual Framework

Interviews and survey reduce the uncertainty surrounding Internet-native transmedia entertainment practice. Immersive textual analysis reduces the uncertainty surrounding its form. The identified combination of disciplines and literature reduces the uncertainty surrounding its research. The final step builds on these foundations and constructs a conceptual framework around this emerging form of Internet-native transmedia entertainment and calls it Entertainment Architecture (‘entarch,’ for short).

Entertainment Architecture is not just a description of form — it is also a tool for the creation of and research into it. It enables creators and researchers to better understand the opportunities that are emerging in the evolving space of this form.

Creators are provided with a coherent and comprehensive perspective on it: Entertainment Architecture turns the predominating implicitness of Internet-native transmedia entertainment into a graspable concept. They can use this knowledge to devise products based on this form — to become Entertainment Architects.

Researchers, on the other hand, can use the same knowledge to analyse Entertainment Architecture conceived by creators. Most of the thesis is an example of this kind of research.

The strength of this conceptual framework is that it has solid foundations in both the practical experiences of successful Entertainment Architects and thorough scholarly research. It therefore presents a strong synthesis of entrepreneurial praxis and academic theory.

2.5 Technological Evolution

In this research, the entertainment forms ‘movie’ and ‘Entertainment Architecture’ are understood as evolving social technologies — ‘form’ and ‘technology’ are therefore exchangeable terms differing only in the disciplinary context they are used in. Furthermore, all entertainment technologies are understood to be based on specific evolving communication technologies, of which there have been only five in human history: speech, writing, print, broadcast, and the Internet.  

3 John Hartley speaks of five ‘knowledge technologies’ (Hartley 2009a). In this research, however, the focus is on the more fundamental layer of communication, not knowledge. Also, these five communication technologies are understood as bundles: broadcast, for example, includes film, radio, television, and all incremental refinements of these.
<table>
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<th>Dialogue / Monologue</th>
<th>One / Many Senders</th>
<th>Egalitarian / Hierarchy</th>
<th>Potential Reach per Communication</th>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Dialogue</td>
<td>Many</td>
<td>Egalitarian</td>
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**Figure 1:** Comparison of communication technologies.

Figure 1 shows that with every novel communication technology, the fundamental characteristics of human communication changed. And every such change affected us in many ways: print, for instance, not only led to newspapers (Weber 2006, p. 391), magazines (Carlson 1938), serialised fiction (Altick 1957; Sutherland 1976), comics (Sabin 1996, p. 11), graphic novels (Holston 2010, p. 10), and many more forms of storytelling, but also marked the beginning of the period of modernity (McLuhan 1962; Eisenstein 1979; Febvre and Martin 2000; Man 2002).

Now, concepts and worldviews suiting one communication technology do not necessarily suit the other ones. Scriptoria — copy shops in ancient monasteries and libraries (Diringer 1982, pp. 205-208) — suffered in importance after the introduction of print — as did their scribes, whose job it was to copy books by hand (Martin 1994). But many other people found new jobs in the novel print industry. The Internet, being a novel communication technology, can therefore be expected to simultaneously invalidate some existing ways of thinking and to allow for entirely new ones. In the context of this research, this means it has triggered the emergence of novel entertainment technologies: of Internet-native entertainment. My focus, however, is not on all Internet-native entertainment, but on the intersection of it with transmedia entertainment, on entertainment that exists on more than one medium: the focus is on Internet-native transmedia entertainment.

![Internet-native transmedia entertainment](image)

**Figure 2:** Internet-native transmedia entertainment.
Transmedia entertainment has been around at least since Homer took oral stories and wrote them down in his Iliad and Odyssey nearly three thousand years ago (Boyd 2009, esp. p. 215-320). But Internet-native transmedia entertainment has only become possible with the Internet — and is an extraordinarily dynamic space allowing for fundamentally new ways of thinking.

3. Entertainment architecture (Entarch)

Entertainment Architecture is such a new way of thinking. The concept encompasses all Internet-native transmedia entertainment that combines the four elements story, play, ‘dance,’ and ‘glue,’ which are described in detail below. It is important to understand that these elements do not automatically combine well. Whether or not just story and play can be successfully combined is a topic of intense debate between narratologists and ludologists (Aarseth 1997; Murray 1997; Frasca 1999; Costikyan 2000; Juul 2001; Jenkins 2004; Crawford 2005) — add ‘dance’ and ‘glue’ to the mix and what results may be an unsorted, ill-created blend. This is why architecting such entertainment becomes important: it has to be made sure the four elements add up to a coherent product.

3.1 Four elements

Story, of course, refers to the fact that Entertainment Architecture always tells a story — something we humans have been doing for a very long time and that has become entirely enmeshed in our daily lives and actions (Boyd 2009).

Play means a consumer has to interact with entarch in order to fully experience it — and this interaction happens in the playful way that is so intrinsic to human culture (Huizinga 1955).

‘Dance,’ a term inspired by interview partner Sean Stewart of Fourth Wall Studios, refers to the sociality and collectiveness of Entertainment Architecture — and being used figuratively it always appears in quotation marks. Stewart says that in his projects he holds out his hand and hopes an audience will join him for a ‘dance.’ This idea is developed further in the thesis: as with real dance, somebody has to lead — that is the task of the Entertainment Architect (‘EA,’ for short). If further compared to real dance, then entarch is less like Salsa — two people dancing intimately — and more akin to a rave or a concert — a large crowd dancing to the music of a DJ or band. The Entertainment Architect therefore ‘dances’ not with just one but with many audience members, and these members ‘dance’ not just with the Architect but with each other as well.

‘Glue’ describes the interconnectivity of Entertainment Architecture — and being used figuratively, it also always appears in quotation marks. The term was inspired by interview partner Sean Stewart’s colleague Elan Lee who originally used it to refer to a set of websites that collectively told a story over time, and through doing so were originally meant to hold together the movie A.I. Artificial Intelligence (2001) and several video games (Kim et al. 2009; Elefante 2010). The project evolved very differently from its original conception and these websites, now fairly unrelated to other products, came to be known as the very first

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4 For a more detailed overview of literature on this topic see (Cavallaro 2010, pp. 7-32).
alternate reality game (ARG) that was unofficially named The Beast (2001). Lee’s ‘glue,’ however, really refers to two aspects of The Beast: its story and how that story was spread across many websites but still was perceived as one story and not many. I separate out the story aspect into an element in itself (see above), and use ‘glue’ to solely refer to the way Entertainment Architecture is spread across media and time but still constitutes one whole: ‘glue’ is the means that turns many separate entertainment experiences into one. It can be a hyperlink, an augmented reality smartphone application that recognises real-life objects and triggers the next entarch component, an actor sitting on a bench in a park passing on hints to participants, an announcement at the end of a TV show advertising the graphic novel to the show, and much more. With generating revenues from easily reproducible digital content becoming increasingly difficult, ‘glue’ may be a key to monetisation: even if a consumer has free access to all content, not knowing how to put the pieces together lowers their entertainment experience significantly. ‘Glue’ is that design aspect of entarch which enables consumers to move across media without getting lost, which turns seemingly disparate products into one coherent whole, and which therefore creates continuity. But it is specifically not the design of the products themselves, but of the links connecting them. ‘Glue’ can assure a coherent experience — a service consumers may be willing to pay for.

If these four elements come together in one Internet-native transmedia entertainment product, that product is Entertainment Architecture. From a different perspective, entarch is a subset of Internet-native transmedia entertainment — and is well approximated as a subset of the intersection of transmedia storytelling (Jenkins 2006a) and pervasive/ubiquitous games (Montola, Stenros and Waern 2009; McGonigal 2006).

![Figure 3: Entertainment Architecture in relation to other concepts.](image)

### 3.2 Entarch elements and components

I distinguish between entarch elements and entarch components. There are only four entarch elements: story, play, ‘dance,’ and ‘glue.’ They are conceptual terms that describe the...
fundamental formal aspects of Entertainment Architecture as opposed to concrete products. Entarch component, on the other hand, refers to a concrete product that is a building block for experiencing the overarching Entertainment Architecture. It can be a book, movie, music concert, 3-day scavenger hunt, or any other entertainment experience that might have traditionally been sold as a stand-alone product, but now furthers entertainment beyond this product. Furthermore, an entarch component can itself consist of components — it is a recursive concept (Arthur 2009, p. 38): an alternate reality game can have a scavenger hunt component, which can have book or movie components.

Both entarch elements and entarch components must be architected. The architecture of entarch elements is a rather conceptual task, while the architecture of entarch components is a very practical one — both of which can be facilitated by an ‘entarch bible.’

3.3 Entarch bible

Entertainment Architecture necessitates an approach to creation and research that deals well with complexity, addresses all four elements and all components as well as their reciprocal relationships, and allows for a coordination of the entire process from inception to performance. Many Entertainment Architects are currently developing diverse kinds of tools supporting them in these tasks.\(^5\) Approaches from various such tools are brought together in this research to form an ‘entarch bible.’ So-called ‘bibles’ have been around for a long time\(^6\) and all build on the same idea of constructing one central (top secret) document that includes information for all involved co-creators of an entertainment product so that consistency can be achieved in the final result. From discussions with practitioners and from examining a large number of entarch examples, however, it becomes clear that the distributed and interconnected nature of Entertainment Architecture necessitates a new form of bible: an *entarch bible.*

The major aspects of an entarch bible appear to currently be:

- A description of the intended entertainment experience — of the relationship and weighting of the four elements story, play, ‘dance,’ and ‘glue.’

- A description of the entertainment world — not of the specific story that will be told, but of the fictional universe in which story, play, ‘dance,’ and ‘glue’ will play out.

- A description of the entertainment process — of the order in which entarch components will become relevant during consumption.

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\(^5\) Seventy per cent of survey respondents indicate they use some form of bible.

\(^6\) In the Golden Age of Hollywood, encyclopaedic movie bibles were compiled for the production of big budget movies (Custen 1999, esp. pp. 136-137). Television producers create show bibles to keep track of characters and their interconnections in TV series or more general technical and design information in the case of TV format sale (Moran and Malbon 2006, pp. 23, 60-65; Chwen-Chwen 2007, pp. 186-187). Being the paid author of a “bible for any television serial or prime-time miniseries of at least four (4) hours” (Writers Guild of America 2009, Section 4.d) is one way to become a member of the Writers Guild of America, West (WGAW). And the video game industry uses game bibles that allow for all areas of game development to collaborate more effectively (Rouse 2004, pp. 311-313, 315-316; Adams 2010, p. 58; Schell 2008, p. 385).

\(^7\) Gary Hayes calls this kind of bible a "Transmedia Production Bible," and offers a different take on its creation which, nonetheless, somewhat overlaps with the here presented concept (Hayes 2011).
• A description of the concrete tasks awaiting the creators of Entertainment Architecture for the entertainment experience to become possible and, if the entarch bible is to serve as the technological backbone of that experience, the provision of software that facilitates the cocreation of that experience with consumers after it has been prepared.

• A linking of all aspects of the Entertainment Architecture with affected business processes — costs, income, personnel requirements, technological requirements, etc.

Such an entarch bible can effectively assist authors in creating Entertainment Architecture. However, every entarch has specific requirements regarding its bible — it will therefore be interesting to see how far entarch bibles will become standardised, if at all.

3.4 The Entertainment Architect (EA)

Entertainment Architecture is emerging from an environment that is deeply affected by the changing roles of producers and consumers and the seemingly unclear distinction between the two. Still, all examined entarch has identifiable creators and has not been conceived by, for instance, self-organised consumers. Creators may convey a sense of authorship and agency to the audience, but still are the ones to make the entire project possible through instigating and preparing it — consumers join in later and co-create or participate within predetermined boundaries. Telling a story or entertaining more generally continues to be a gift, a talent, that some people have more of and some less. But it is indisputable that the role of the creator is shifting from entertaining directly to bringing into being an infrastructure that, if consumers engage with it, allows for collectively co-created entertainment to emerge. It is therefore quite clear that a new breed of artists is emerging.

These artists are trying to find a name for themselves and for what they do. Here is but a selection of names I have come across: transmedia producer, showrunner, genesseur, designer, writer, flux producer, flow of platforms producer, experience designer, transmedia creator, transmedia writer, transmedia designer, integrated media producer, orchestrator, game designer, producer, developer, executive team, or simply curator. Until the vernacular decides on a name, I propose to refer to the highest-ranking person behind entarch — typically at the intersection of artistic and business tasks — as an Entertainment Architect (‘EA,’ for short).

Entertainment Architecture is still very much evolving and rather crude, which is to be expected from a novel technology (Arthur 2009, p. 131). But with time it will become more polished and functional. The entarch framework therefore stays as open as possible to future adjustments within the limitations that story, play, ‘dance,’ and ‘glue’ set and does not prescribe a specific relationship among them — that is a task for the respective EA.

4. Entarch examples

Now that entarch is conceptualised, the following examples illustrate the variety that currently exists in this space. All the while I ask the reader to keep in mind that these examples present first steps, not fully-fledged Entertainment Architecture. Some of them do not even combine all four entarch elements in one product, and are therefore technically not
The reason they are included anyway is they constitute innovative steps towards Entertainment Architecture.

But before getting into actual examples, let me explain alternate reality games (ARG) and their relation to entarch. Unexpectedly invented in 2001 — when interview partner Sean Stewart and his colleagues conceived The Beast — ARGs seemed like a well-understood idea directly afterwards, but have evolved into so many directions since that a definitional odyssey followed and continues to this day (see, for example, Jenkins 2006a; McConigal 2006; Örnebring 2007; Kim et al. 2009; Dena 2009; Hon 2007; Phillips 2009, 2010; Martin and Chatfield 2006). In this paper, all ARGs are treated as a subform of Entertainment Architecture.

The first example I turn to now had an ARG component, and shall therefore serve to illustrate the genre.

*The Truth About Marika* (2007) paired a TV drama series with an alternate reality game. The five-episode TV series revolved around the disappearance of a young woman by the name of Marika. However, real life events that were happening at the same time as the TV series was broadcast pointed towards the possibility that the TV series was based on a true story. This supposedly true story was about a woman called Adrianna who was looking for her supposedly real friend Marika. As a result, Adrianna’s search started to become more and more prominent in the media. A Sweden-wide movement emerged trying to help her find her friend. All around the country people contacted Adrianna after they thought they had spotted Marika. Adrianna travelled across Sweden for 8 months while her supporters found out more and more about an evil security company that seemed to be involved in Marika’s disappearance. In the end, it turned out that Adrianna was an actor who had spent the entire time in character travelling and following leads from the audience, who invested a lot of time and effort in supporting Adrianna’s cause — despite both TV series and ARG being fictional, and having been promoted as such from the very beginning.

Overall, *The Truth About Marika* was ‘dance’-driven but included an elaborate story and many play elements — story and play enriched the ‘dance.’

The next example, *Head Trauma Remix* (2007), was an extended version of the movie *Head Trauma* (2006). The experience began when all public phones in the vicinity of the cinema showing the movie started ringing. Additionally, an actor was playing a street preacher “preaching fire and brimstone” (Margolis 2010) and handing out small religious comics not far from the cinema. If a consumer examined that comic closely or answered one of the public phones, they found clues related to the story that was going to unfold during the movie. There was no soundtrack to the movie and instead musicians and DJs scored it live. Actors emerged from the audience at scary moments to play characters from the movie. The audience itself was able to interact with the movie via their mobile phones. Back at home, if an audience member accessed a website that was mentioned in the comic book, their phone would ring and the nemesis of the movie would start talking to and scaring them, all the while serving them content on the website that reacted to what the audience member told the

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8 The content description of *The Truth About Marika* is based on (Denward and Waern 2008, pp. 250-252; Waern and Denward 2009).
nemesis on the phone. Parts of what the audience member said were recorded and played back to them via their own computer speakers. And finally, at the end of this part of the experience, the caller was added to a conference call with all the other callers who were experiencing the same thing at the same time (Weiler n.d.).

Overall, *Head Trauma Remix* was story-driven but included play and ‘dance’ elements — play and ‘dance’ enriched the story.

*PacManhattan* (2004), an adaptation of the video game *Pac-Man* (1980), consists of

five players in the street (Pac Man + 4 ghosts) and five players in a control room. Each Player on the street is teamed with a Controller, both of whom are in constant contact via cellphone for the duration of the game. The role of the Controller is to update the position of their Player as he or she runs through the streets (*PacManhattan* 2004).

The physical playground of the game is the area around Washington Square in New York City, where the urban grid resembles the maze in the original *Pac-Man* game. Every player in the street updates their Controller by phone every time they reach an intersection, and the Controller updates the player’s position on an online map that is shared among all Controllers. Pac-Man’s Controller sees everything, while the ghosts’ Controllers only see the ghosts and the remaining “‘dots,’ the virtual objects that Pac-Man automatically consumes for points as he travels” (Lantz 2009, p. 132).

*Eagle Eye: Free Fall* (2008) advertises the movie *Eagle Eye* (2008), a science-fiction thriller about an artificial intelligence of the US government gone rogue trying to manipulate and force regular citizens to kill the US President. The entertainment experience begins with a website$^9$ asking for the consumer’s first name and phone number. Once that information is entered, the consumer begins to interact with the website (the play element), which starts telling a story by showing film clips, animations, and other content. After a few moments the consumer’s phone rings and the website cuts to a ‘live’ close up of a scared man driving a car. On the phone a slightly awkward female voice — after watching the movie one learns that this is the artificial intelligence — commands the consumer to talk the man into doing something. The consumer has to strike up a conversation with the man but ultimately fails to convince him. This prompts the artificial intelligence to manipulate the car into malfunctioning, which leads to an accident in which the driver is killed. The voice addresses the consumer again and the website shows a database being searched. The search results in several hits, among them the two main characters of the movie. A few more things happen, but in total the entertainment experience is only 10 minutes long.

The ‘glue’ of *Eagle Eye: Free Fall* is outstanding: the limited timespan of the experience and the website being the central hub of the experience, mean that the flow of story and play are well-controlled. Only the phone call needs to be ‘glued in,’ and that is done very well via good timing and voice recognition. Since *Eagle Eye: Free Fall* does not feature any ‘dance’ components, it is not really Entertainment Architecture — but consumers have somewhat taken things into their own hands and discussed the experience via YouTube and other websites.

$^9$ See [www.eagleeyefreefall.com](http://www.eagleeyefreefall.com), launched before the movie was released.
The Man Your Man Could Smell Like (2010), maybe better known as Old Spice Guy, was an advertising campaign created by Wieden+Kennedy for Old Spice grooming products that managed to ‘dance’ with a gigantic number of consumers while bringing across the feeling that every single one of them could potentially be addressed personally. The campaign started off with a television and YouTube advertisement introducing the Old Spice Guy (Old Spice 2010b). A few months later, a second advertisement followed and ended with the invitation “So ladies, should your man smell like an Old Spice man? You tell me!” (Old Spice 2010a). And two weeks after that, Old Spice Guy started responding via YouTube to what people had told him — or simply to what they had said about him anywhere on the Internet. He responded, for example, to a blog post of Internet celebrity Perez Hilton (Old Spice 2010f) as well as to an imageboard post of the secretive Anonymous community (and survived!) (Old Spice 2010e). A conversation with the audience began (play and ‘dance’ in one) and went on for three days. He flirted with several women and by the end of the three days was in a ‘longterm committed relationship’ with TV actress and Twitter celebrity Alyssa Milano.  

The fascinating part was that he did not respond to (or ‘dance’ with) just celebrities, but to seemingly anybody — he did, for example, propose to a woman in the name of her tweeting boyfriend (Old Spice 2010d). And everything happened in real time: 183 video responses were conceived, written, shot, edited, and uploaded to YouTube in just three days. The (slightly tongue-in-cheek) story element was simple: “Be amused by our over-the-top gentleman and specimen of a perfect male, and maybe go buy our body wash.” The play element consisted of people writing to Old Spice Guy and sharing his responses. The inclusion of virtually all social media (which are available on any Internet-enabled device) meant the campaign had good ‘glue.’

Believe (2007) was part of the promotion for the video game Halo 3 (2007). However, it was unlike the rest of the campaign — which largely consisted of good but traditional advertising — because it honoured Master Chief (the game’s main character) as a hero in the same way a real hero would be honoured. A fictional Museum of Humanity commemorating the battle between mankind and its alien enemy was created, with the John 117 Monument, a gigantic real-world war diorama, as its centrepiece. The diorama was filmed for television and cinema, an interactive fly-through of it was provided online (part of the play element), a 4-minute documentary about its making was created, and finally it went on a world tour. Fictitious war heroes were filming their recollections of the war. A fictional war photography exhibit was organised online and in a number of cities (play again), as well as street murals and commemorative plaques. Every part of that campaign repeated the central message — the story — ‘Believe!’ (twofifteenmccann n.d.; Xbox.com 2007; Creativity 2008)

Those Halo 3 trailers that were not part of the Believe campaign were very successful in their own rights. Every single one of them told a tiny bit of the Halo backstory and was anticipated feverishly all around the world. But they were all more or less self-sustained. What set the Believe campaign apart was that it did not feel like separate trailers, photo exhibitions, and a diorama simply telling stories set in the same entertainment world and therefore somehow related to one another, but it felt like all of them were constitutional bits that together told one coherent story. Every component of the campaign led to other components. The Believe campaign had good ‘glue.’

10 Watch the evolution of their relationship at (Old Spice 2010c).
On the other hand, the sold Halo products do not have good ‘glue.’ Story, play, and ‘dance’ do not flow into one another across Halo products, but only within each of them. The products are not aligned well. Instead of having one red thread across products, the Halo media franchise has many of them that are in sight of, but not touching each other. Therefore it makes sense to call Halo’s Believe campaign Entertainment Architecture, but not the entire ‘media franchise’11 that is Halo.

But not all Entertainment Architecture is free, as illustrated by the following example of a media franchise that is not Entertainment Architecture yet, but slowly morphing into one (even though the ‘glue’ is not quite there yet). Most Tron products launched since 2009, which all continue the experience of the original Tron (1982) movie, were sold. In July 2009, Flynn Lives launched, an ARG telling the backstory of the new movie TRON: Legacy (2010) — as with all ARGs, this presents part of the play element as well as part of the ‘dance’ element at the same time. It explained what had happened between the first and the second movie. 10 days before the release of TRON: Legacy, then, TRON: Evolution (2010) was published, a video game that told another part of the new movie’s backstory — and was part of the play element. That movie referenced both video game and alternate reality game, so the entertainment experience was heightened for those consumers who had engaged with the two before watching the movie. For children aged 4-8 and 9-12, four novels were released that all told additional bits of TRON’s backstory (all 2010). An animated children’s TV mini-series is set to be released in 2012 — TRON: Uprising. For slightly older children, the regular dance party ElecTRONica (2010) was held at Disney California Adventure, one of Disney’s theme parks (Hust Rivera 2010).

5. From movies to Entarch?

Tron leads back to the secondary focus of this research: entarch in relation to movies. Have movies been affected by the emergence of Entertainment Architecture so far? Barely at all. Of course, a few first experiments have been conducted over the past decade or so — but all with mixed success and none feeding back into the movie form. When part of the story of the movie The Matrix Reloaded (2003) was told in the video game Enter The Matrix (2003), many critics and consumers felt this did not enrich the experience, but simply left a plot hole in the movie (Jenkins 2006a, pp. 103-104). In the case of the movie Tron: Legacy (2010), the various commercial and promotional products surrounding it indeed added to the entertainment experience, but the form of the movie, again, did not change significantly — those consumers who had engaged with the other products before watching the movie would simply catch a few references that other consumers would not. A little more changed in Star Wars Uncut (2010), where one fan cut up Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope (1977) into 473 15-second clips which were then reshot by other fans and finally put back together and published online for free. The latest example, and maybe the one representing the largest shifts in form so far, was not really a movie, but more like an evolved documentary: Life in a Day (2011). On 06.07.2010 directors Ridley Scott and Kevin Macdonald, YouTube, the Sundance Film Festival, and LG Electronics called on the entire world to record anything they wanted on 24.07.2010 to upload to YouTube. More than 80,000 videos were submitted from 197 countries totalling over 4,500 hours (Weinstein 2010; Life in a Day 2011), which were then edited down to one just under 95-minute long movie under Macdonald’s direction. The result does not really tell a story — and most definitely not one following the

11 A term widely used by media scholars and the popular media, but not by business, economics, and law scholars, who research franchising in its original meaning.
movie-typical three-act structure — but gives a snapshot — or rather many snapshots — of one day in the life of humans all over the world on a specific day in the year 2010.

But why should movies be affected by Entertainment Architecture? Because, if they become an entarch component instead of a stand-alone product, they may benefit from novel viable business models. Which, of course, is only an argument aimed at those creators not yet convinced by the sheer creative freedom entarch offers.

This research explores the options of moviemakers in this changed (and still changing) environment and spreads them out on a spectrum with two extreme ends: on the one hand, moviemakers can decide to ignore Entertainment Architecture entirely, or on the other hand, they can decide to fully embrace it and let movies completely dissolve into it. The future reality will probably lie somewhere in between — of course under the assumption that Entertainment Architecture becomes a successful entertainment form or even “the dominant art form of the twenty-first century”, which is what Sean Stewart is convinced of.

The vast majority of moviemakers worldwide currently choose the first option and follow the ‘proven’ way of filmmaking: make a movie, find a distributor, let them advertise and put it through the distribution windows, and hope to make your money back and then some. This is a perfectly valid approach as entertainment forms rarely disappear — however, their cultural and industrial importance may be diminished (Vogel 2011, pp. 527-528). In fact, even if Entertainment Architecture does not become dominant, movies may already be en route towards becoming a niche entertainment form (Gabler 2007) — a specialised technology in evolutionary terms (Arthur 2009, p. 141) — or, from a different perspective, high art. But if entarch does become widely popular, it may assist in this shift.

The other end of the spectrum represents movies dissolving into Entertainment Architecture entirely. Assuming entarch becomes a successful entertainment form, this would mean movies remain (or become again) the ‘art of the middle’ (Gabler 2007) — but probably in a dramatically changed form. Beginnings of this may have been seen in Believe (2007), Halo 3’s promotional entarch, whose various successively released promotional short films had no first or third, but just second acts. They only made sense for an audience that had some knowledge about the Halo universe, and preferably also about the Believe campaign. Whether movies develop in similar or entirely different directions — some formal change is to be expected.

- If a movie is to be the opening component of Entertainment Architecture, it may only have a first act. Perhaps, all such a movie will do will be to introduce characters, settings, and a plot that may be so vast that 90 minutes are needed to just give an overview.
- If a movie is to serve as a mid-way component, it may explore a side story following a three-act structure, or it may offer neither introductions nor an ending, but follow the example of the Believe films and explore one specific event like an epic battle that would profit from being watched on the big screen.
- If a movie is to be the final and climactic component of Entertainment Architecture, an Entertainment Architect can expect the audience to know the characters and backstory and not offer any introductions — the entire movie may focus on the resolution.

The heritage of movies may therefore not be the feature film, but the filmic language. The traditional three-act structure of movies may disappear or be adapted. Movies may become much shorter, longer, or episodic instead of being 90-minute stand-alone narratives to be watched in a large dark room filled with strangers. But it is also not unlikely that, instead, a new dominant and
widely understood motion picture form will emerge, become known under its own name, and coexist next to movies as we know them today.

Clearly, if movies cease to be stand-alone experiences, revenue streams must be rearranged and business models may be turned upside down — Christopher Sandberg, Jeff Gomez, Sean Stewart, and Nathan Mayfield even think it may become viable to offer movies in cinemas for free if other sources of income can be accessed successfully. If, for example, Entertainment Architecture can be financed via millions of subscribers over several years, a climactic movie may be offered as included in the subscription. Maybe movies will even promote Entertainment Architecture in the future, and therefore be entirely free for everybody. Such a movie may whet consumers’ appetites for the overarching Entertainment Architecture and entice them to pay for a subscription or component. Currently, the Hollywood majors spend on average USD 32 million per movie on promotion (Gerbrandt 2010), and for blockbusters up to USD 150 million (Eller 2008). If entarch budgets grow enough to have similar amounts available for promotion, and Entertainment Architects choose to go down this road, then free promotional movies could become reality.

Whatever the form in which movies become part of entarch, friction between movie directors and Entertainment Architects is likely to come up on the way towards figuring out an appropriate hierarchy of creators. One way for directors to avoid losing creative control is to become EAs themselves, but it remains to be seen if they are even suitable for that position. They would have to stop thinking in deeply engrained medium-based patterns and their job would be to coordinate entarch components — a task potentially far removed from actual movie creation. This may not be what they want to do or are even good at. Maybe, instead, a new generation of creators will have to grow up — a generation that has never experienced a world without the Internet, that expects entertainment to utilise its full potential, and to whom ‘glue’ is a fundamental aspect of their approach instead of an afterthought.

On the other hand, for those moviemakers lower in the hierarchy, not much needs to change. There will still be plenty of space and opportunities for directors of photography, actors, cameramen, gaffers, and most other movie professions. Their skills will be needed no matter if it is a movie or some new motion picture form that is being created.

As emphasised throughout, these two extremes are just hypothetical boundaries of a spectrum of options that has opened up in front of all moviemakers. Both extremes are unlikely and every moviemaker can act in between not evolving at all and giving up their independence. Whether they become Entertainment Architects themselves, suppliers of other EAs, or stay much closer to traditional movies, every moviemaker can temporarily assume the function of a Schumpeterian entrepreneur (Schumpeter 1934) and bring about creative destruction (Schumpeter 1942, p. 83) if they innovate with Entertainment Architecture.

At some point, this co-evolution of movies and Entertainment Architecture will slow down and stabilise, and a “span of comparative quiet” (Schumpeter 1942, p. 83) will set in. Then, moviemakers will lose their entrepreneurial function — with the exception of some Kirznerian entrepreneurs (Kirzner 1997) — to conduct (an evolved form of) ‘business as usual.’

The spectrum of options has opened up before every single moviemaker. But looking at the collective of them, moviemakers have already moved away from utter ignorance: Hollywood is finding ever-newer ways of using Entertainment Architecture for promotional purposes, and independent moviemakers are discovering entarch as a means to work on their awareness problem. The simple fact, however, that most of these efforts merely promote movies but do not influence their form or business model in significant ways, shows that moviemakers do not really embrace Entertainment Architecture yet. These promotional components are not believed to be financially viable entertainment products in themselves, and they are virtually never allowed to feed back into the movies in any significant way. The result is that the form of movies stays largely unchanged,
and all additional activities are very limited in their perceived importance, both from a producer and a consumer perspective.

Whichever approach individual moviemakers may decide upon, the fundamental changes that are happening in movie form, creators, and business models must lead to substantial changes in the movie industry — which has, after all, spent more than a century developing structures supporting a very specific movie form, very specialised moviemakers, and very specific income streams. Depending on whether the moviemakers, most prominently the Hollywood majors, turn into Entertainment Architects, suppliers for EAs, or become niche artists, these changes will differ:

- If they hope to dominate the entarch industry, they will face strong competition from many other industries (e.g. TV or video games) and the already organically growing novel entarch industry. Hollywood, of course, has the advantage of substantial financial means and brand awareness. The downside is they cannot simply abandon existing business models and income streams.
- If moviemakers become suppliers of the entarch industry, they will lose their dominance and creative control, but will be able to focus on the creation of formally evolved movies, which they may be good at.
- If they continue to make movies as we know them, they will go through a painful process of downsizing and layoffs, but will stand the chance to continue making movies for a long time to come.

6. Finding and conclusions

A novel Internet-native transmedia entertainment form is emerging. Until the vernacular decides on a name, I call that form — as well as products based on it and the conceptual framework describing it — Entertainment Architecture (‘entarch,’ for short). The unique characteristic of entarch is that it combines story, play, ‘dance,’ and ‘glue’ in one product: Entertainment Architecture tells a story, offers playful interaction, invites to social interaction between producers and consumers, as well as amongst consumers (‘dance’), and all components of it can be spread across many media, but are nonetheless perceived as one product instead of many because they are highly interconnected and mutually dependent (‘glue’). The difference between entarch and what is often called a ‘media franchise’ is that the former is perceived as one product despite being spread across many media (e.g. the Halo-promotion Believe (2007)), while the latter is perceived as many products spread across many media (e.g. Halo (2001 – ongoing) or Star Wars (1977 – ongoing)). ‘Glue,’ the element that makes this coherence possible, gains particular importance as a key to monetisation: it empowers creators to offer and sell (difficult to ‘pirate’) services that enable entertainment experiences instead of (easy to ‘pirate’) content.

This research explores the environment from which Entertainment Architecture is emerging, the form of entarch, potential business models based on that form, and the novel industry that has started to grow from it. Following its secondary priority — to relate entarch to one existing entertainment form — it explores the potential for creative and financial cross-fertilisation between entarch and movies.

The research is therefore not about movies, and decidedly not from a film studies perspective. It is first and foremost about how entertainment is changing from a consumer-perspective — with the emergence of entarch being a symptom of this change — and only secondarily about how this is affecting existing entertainment forms — exemplified by movies. I do not imply
in any way that entarch is the reason why movies and other existing forms are currently struggling — the reason is the Internet. Entarch may simply offer a way out.

The outcome of the main research priority is the Entertainment Architecture conceptual framework, which is then applied to the secondary research priority: to find out what entarch means for movie entrepreneurs. In the context of the secondary priority, a spectrum of options has been identified between moviemakers ignoring Entertainment Architecture and them letting movies completely dissolve into it. If dissolution is the choice, then a moviemaker must decide whether they want to become an Entertainment Architect (‘EA,’ for short) themself and maybe stop making movies, or continue to make movies and be ‘demoted’ to a supplier to a higher-ranking EA. Every single moviemaker has to make this decision themself and may indeed choose one of these extreme approaches, but on the level of the entire movie industry and on the even more general level of the movie form, the future reality will probably lie in between — as the present already does.

I do not imply moviemakers and the movie industry should strive to create Entertainment Architecture, but considering the state and prospects of many existing entertainment industries they might want to at least consider it. As emphasised throughout, entarch is in no way better than other entertainment forms — it is simply different and, which is important from an entrepreneurial perspective, it makes novel business models possible that may prove to be viable. But if an existing entertainment form continues to find an audience and access to finance, and this is not expected to change, then there is no reason to stop creating that form and turn to Entertainment Architecture — except maybe curiosity.

With Entertainment Architecture, the article offers a comprehensive conceptual framework that is not only an innovative contribution to entertainment scholarship, but also one that entertainment creators can use to better understand a novel entertainment form, to better delimit the potential for cross-pollination with their preferred form, and to adjust their worldview accordingly to become Entertainment Architects.

The framework empowers creators to utilise the unique characteristics of the Internet to create entertainment that embraces the communicative behaviour of Internet-native consumers instead of forcing them to desist from it, that harnesses the strengths of various media while avoiding some of their weaknesses, and that can be a product sustaining viable businesses.

Researchers, on the other hand, are empowered to investigate the very elusive developments in entertainment in a structured way, as a wide range of research approaches to this topic are taxonomised and subdivided into three categories: transmedia entertainment, Internet-native entertainment, and Internet-native transmedia entertainment. Entertainment Architecture is discovered to be one currently emerging form of Internet-native transmedia entertainment whose unique characteristic is that it combines story, play, ‘dance,’ and ‘glue’ in one product. Another eminently handy tool for researchers is immersive textual analysis, a new mode of textual analysis allowing to investigate Internet-native transmedia entertainment in a way that does justice to its unique particularities.

In other words, the Entertainment Architecture conceptual framework enables both scholars and artists to handle this emerging entertainment form despite its evolving and dynamic nature. The thesis not only develops the framework but is also to be understood as an example of how it can be applied by scholars.
Unfortunately, Entertainment Architecture is often created simply because of its newness — Christopher Sandberg believes this is due to our neophile culture — but all interview partners and survey respondents emphasise their projects are not about using the always-newest technology. Rather, it is about harnessing the strengths and the uniqueness of the Internet to create something that is, in Sandberg’s words, “beautiful and rich and entertaining and meaningful.” Painter Paul Klee reached a similar insight in his diary entry from 1909:

And now an altogether revolutionary discovery: to adapt oneself to the contents of the paintbox is more important than nature and its study. I must some day be able to improvise freely on the chromatic keyboard of the rows of watercolor cups (Klee 1964, p. 244).

Entertainment Architecture offers a new ‘paintbox,’ and it is up to moviemakers to choose whether or not they want to ‘adapt themselves to it’ so they can some day ‘improvise freely on its keyboard.’ If they decide their interests and talents lie with movies, that they have not run out of compatible stories, and that they can secure the required financing, they can perfectly well continue to create movies as we know them for a long time to come.

It will be highly interesting to further observe and research the relationship between moviemakers and Entertainment Architecture. But to do so, researchers must also understand this new ‘paintbox’ — and the conceptual framework of Entertainment Architecture enables them to do so.

In the future, a massive number of entertainment products may be Internet-native and transmedial (Dinehart 2010). This does not, however, mean they will become Entertainment Architecture. Artists working transmedially may become ubiquitous, but Entertainment Architects will remain a specialised sub-group of them — and it will be interesting to watch this sub-group develop.

7. Directions for further research

Quite a few promising research directions follow from the presented entarch framework — always from a point of view that acknowledges the still evolving nature of Entertainment Architecture, and in doing so, understands that every description can only be a snapshot of a longer process.

First off, form and business of entarch need to be examined more closely. From a formal angle, what dramatic structure do entarch writers employ and to what effect? What visual look is characteristic of Entertainment Architecture: will it stay on the level of security camera footage, webcams, blogs, and social media profiles? Which media complement each other well, and which ones do not? Are subforms of entarch emerging (e.g. ARGs), and if so, what are their characteristics?

And from a business angle, what are the various target groups of (the various potential subforms of) entarch? What are the typical up-front costs and revenue expectations? How can cash flow be shaped, milestones and measures of success developed, and break-even points kept track of? Are there any contractual guidelines for the relationships among entarch creators as well as among entarch-creating companies? And, very importantly, business models have to be analysed further — interestingly, the free/libre/open-source software
FLOSS and Creative Commons movements may prove to be more inspirational for Entertainment Architects than the copyright-based entertainment industries (Montgomery and Fitzgerald 2006, p. 415).

In any such exploration, ‘dance’ and ‘glue’ require special attention. I have only, really, been able to introduce and illustrate them with examples — but this is not enough for practitioners to use as guidance, or for researchers to really understand their roles. Regarding ‘dance,’ how can many simultaneous senders and receivers be coordinated in order to arrive at a successful entertainment product? This is not an entarch-unique phenomenon and challenge — rather, it is something that has been introduced into human culture (Crowley and Heyer 2011) and relationships (Baym 2010) with the emergence of the Internet, and needs to be researched further in that context. And ‘glue’ absolutely must be investigated a lot more thoroughly, as it is the key to an immersive entertainment experience as well as to the monetisation of entarch.

Moving away from Entertainment Architecture itself and on to its environment, it will be interesting to find out who will prove to be the best Entertainment Architects: movie directors, authors, (video) game designers, or different creators entirely? Or do we have to wait for a generation of ‘native’ Entertainment Architects who grew up with the Internet and Entertainment Architecture?

With entarch and existing entertainment forms impacting each other, research into all of them must be reconceptualised, as researching them separately may not make sense anymore. The same goes for storytelling and play in a wider sense — what happens if they cannot be researched separately anymore?

With some entarch taking entertainment into real life — think LARPS (live-action role playing), pervasive/ubiquitous games, phone calls, etc. — the relationship between entertainment and leisure goes through profound change (White 2007) that has not yet prompted thorough scholarly research. Also, marketing leisure may differ from marketing entertainment (Svahn and Lange 2009) — something creators need to understand better.

Novel forms and products require novel markets, which unfortunately are not driven by consumer demand (as consumers cannot yet know they exist), but need to be pushed by producers (Christensen 1997, p. 226; Schumpeter 1939, p. 243; Casson 2003, p. 84). In this context, it will be interesting to observe if the entarch industry becomes aware of its need of marketing, and whether that marketing assists in building up a ‘reading public’ (Hartley 1992, pp. 161-163; 2004, p. 133) of entarch consumers or not. On the other hand, it will be fascinating to observe if Entertainment Architecture achieves the status of genuine entertainment (or leisure) and moves beyond its promotional roots — a truly pivotal issue for the future development of both form and industry.

A topic that is not investigated at all in this research — as it does not agree with the focus on commercial entertainment, entrepreneurs, and industries — is that of Entertainment Architecture in non-commercial contexts, which could become a next research focus for scholars interested in user generated content (Cha et al. 2007; Burgess and Green 2009b) or digital storytelling (Hartley and McWilliam 2009; Lambert 2009).

The last — and by far the most important — topic I would like to call to the reader’s attention is the significance of ‘net neutrality,’ which refers to an Internet that does not favor one application (say, the world wide web), over others (say, email) (Wu 2003, p. 145).
A very simple concept in itself, its repercussions are felt in many areas, which has prompted a large number of scholars to discuss the benefits and damages that follow from its enforcement by governments (Yoo 2005; Hahn and Wallsten 2006; Kocsis and de Bijl 2007; Schewick 2007; Zittrain 2008; Economides and Hermalin 2010; Schuetz 2010). As with any big topic, the question whether net neutrality is ultimately beneficial for human culture or not has many facets and no straightforward answer.

In any case, the copyright-based industries are very vocal opponents of net neutrality — not because they are against it per se, but because they feel their business models are threatened by an open Internet and therefore strive to strengthen copyright (TERA Consultants 2010; Mundell 2010; Willis 2011; Ferrer 2011). The technical side of their attempts at curbing piracy involves geo-blocking, traffic shaping, traffic charges, gatekeepers, and many more — with the side effect that net neutrality suffers. The relationship between copyright, net neutrality and Entertainment Architecture is therefore a topic well worth investigating.

But I cannot stress enough that the importance of net neutrality and the Internet goes beyond mere entertainment, as becomes very clear in the context of the Arab Spring (Salem and Mourtada 2011; Ali 2011) or the latest riots in the UK (BBC 2011b, 2011a, 2011c). And it is not just threatened actively — as in the case of the copyright-based industries — but sometimes without any direct intentions — as in the case of Internet personalisation technologies (Pariser 2011).

The bottom line is that communication technologies, like any other technology, constantly evolve (Arthur 2009), and we as a culture need to pay close attention to the evolution of the latest one — the Internet — as it has pervaded our interpersonal communication, and thus affects the way we as humans communicate with, relate to, live with, and treat each other. If its fundamental characteristics change — and net neutrality is one of them — then not only Entertainment Architecture will need to be reconceptualised, but so will everything else impacted by the Internet — and that includes the very way you and I live today.

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