Transmedia Television

Audiences, New Media and Daily Life

Elizabeth Evans

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In memory of my Dad, Peter Havard Evans

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Introduction

> I definitely think that TV programmes are no longer just things acted out by people; I think TV programmes are becoming more of an experience.
>
> (Neil, 17 years old, student, focus group 3)

To say that television is changing is becoming a common rhetoric within both television studies and the television industry. Of course television technology has never been stable, with the development of pre-recorded content, colour, the remote control, the VCR, satellites and cable shifting production, distribution and reception practices. But the most recent cycle, involving technologies such as the internet and mobile phone, has seen an explosion of changes within both the television industry and the daily lives of viewers. Digital television has opened up a greater number of channels to a wider number of homes and the potential for delivering new forms of content to television sets. The internet has become a key site for engagement with audio-visual media of all kinds, from broadcast material to professionally produced 'webisodes' to user generated content. The mobile phone has evolved to include internet connections and integrated media players. The technologies, content and spaces of television are more numerous than they were at the end of the twentieth century. Increasingly over the last decade a number of phrases and models have emerged that attempt to grasp what, precisely, these changes are. Terms such as 'convergence', 'synergy', 'multiplatform', '360 degree commissioning' (Thompson, 2006; Strange, 2007), 'second shift aesthetics' (Caldwell, 2003), 'overflow' (Brooker, 2004) and 'media matrix' (Curtin, 2009) all point to the exploitation by the television industry of technologies other than the television set. Perhaps the most pervasive is Henry Jenkins' concept of 'transmedia storytelling' (Jenkins, 2003, 2006), but to a certain extent each of these theories are discussing the same industrial development: television is now bigger than the TV.

This book will take the concept of 'transmediality' evident in Jenkins' model as a starting point for understanding the expansion of television experience onto the internet and mobile phone in the opening years of the twenty-first century and, in particular, audiences' responses to this expansion. In essence, the term 'transmediality' describes the increasingly popular industrial practice of using multiple media technologies to present information concerning a single fictional world through a range of textual forms. However, this simple description does not help interrogate or

determine what is actually meant by the term. It may relate to practices such as franchising, merchandising, adaptations, spin-offs, sequels and marketing. This book will focus on two examples of transmedia practice: transmedia storytelling and transmedia distribution/engagement. The former is that identified by Jenkins as 'integrating multiple texts to create a narrative so large that it cannot be contained within a single medium' (2006: 95) and will be explored through an examination of online and digital television gaming, and series created for mobile phones. The latter considers changes in distribution and reception practices as content is made available simultaneously or near-simultaneously on multiple platforms, and will be explored through the emergence of online television downloading services. As well as offering spaces for the expansion of televisual narratives, the internet and mobile phone are increasingly being used as alternative spaces for broadcast content.

In 2004 William Boddy wrote that, '[d]espite a decade of both apocalyptic and utopian predictions about life in the "post-television era", the effects of technological and industrial realignments upon actual viewing practices and the advertising and programme forms of American television are still quite uncertain' (136). Over the next six years a growing amount of research began to explore this 'post-television era' (see, for example, Olsson and Spigel, 2004; Jenkins, 2006; Lotz, 2007; Ross, 2008; Turner and Tay, 2009). Much of this research has tended to focus on textual and industrial changes within the United States; little has focused on the impact of changes on the daily lives of audiences or industries outside of the United States[1]. As Sonia Livingstone has argued, new media research 'is an empirical as well as a theoretical question, demanding continued investigation into the production, circulation and interpretation of texts in context—and so in the activities of audiences' (2004: 3). Whereas it is possible to observe how the television industry offers increasingly varied forms of engagement, it is also necessary to ascertain the extent to which viewers are embracing these changes. This book will consider the industrial changes that have occurred within British television culture since the emergence of the internet and mobile phone as audio-visual platforms and the ways in which those changes are being understood by audiences. It will use empirical data, gathered via questionnaires, diaries, focus groups and interviews, in order to consider the extent to which these changes are being embraced by a particular group of early adopters and integrated into their daily lives.

Transmediality raises a number of issues for television studies about the very meaning of television and how it is shifting within an ever-changing media landscape. Recognisable but non-'televisual' formats such as games have become part of the business of television companies; new, non-broadcast services such as downloading have become available; new platforms such as the internet and mobile phone have been adapted to send and receive audio-visual content. Such moments of change require a pause in which the nature of the object being studied is considered and, if necessary,

re-evaluated. As Livingstone has argued elsewhere, the study of new media not only comments on the new media technologies themselves, but also older media forms such as television:

> [R]esearch on new media will also constitute an assessment of the impact of television. For example, to ask whether the audience is fragmenting is simultaneously to imply that the mass audience was what was significant about television, just as asking whether the Internet user is more active and participatory than the television viewer not only opens up questions regarding Internet use but also implies a particular account of television viewing. (Livingstone, 1999: online)

Emerging moments of transmediality, which exploit an increasing range of technologies as platforms for televisual content, highlight the continued importance of re-evaluating our understanding of 'television'. William Uricchio argues that '[t]elevision . . . has been through a series of definitional crises over its long history' (2009: 31). The emergence of digital technologies has led to another such crisis, as Uricchio also argues: 'the digital turn has accelerated the challenges to the ontological distinctions amongst established media, offering both new definitional conceits and new media forms with wide-ranging implications for traditional media' (25). If the object of 'television' is undergoing such rapid changes that the previously held theoretical constructs associated with it are requiring re-definition, then what is the position of the audience? What are their opinions of such dramatic changes in a previously familiar experience? If television is changing, then surely watching television is changing too? How do audiences now conceptualise 'television' as a medium?

However, the very term 'medium' is problematic, requiring definition where definition often goes unsaid. Within this book, at the most basic level, the term 'medium' is used to describe a way for imparting fictional or factual information. What then defines the 'medium' of television? Is it content? Is it the more basic constitutional components of television programming, in other words moving images and sounds? Is it the technology that sends analogue (or digital) signals through the atmosphere or along a cable to an object, or objects, capable of displaying them as moving images and sounds? Is it ultimately some kind of combination of text, technology and industry? This book will consider how audience responses to dramatic, and in many ways fundamental, changes within the television industry may indicate a way towards exploring how the 'medium of television' is understood in the early years of the twenty-first century. The following chapters will illustrate how a particular group of viewers understands 'television' and what they expect and desire from engagement with it. They will, in turn, explore how the integration of the internet and mobile phone into the television industry challenges previously held assumptions about television as a 'medium' and how the responses of these research participants

may indicate ways towards a theoretical re-conceptualisation of 'television'. However, before it is possible to raise these questions it is necessary to consider current models of 'television' as a medium.

WHAT IS TELEVISION? TECHNOLOGY AND TEXT

Questions concerning the ontology of 'television' are both complex and unresolved. Simon Frith argues that 'the medium is studied (and written about) from a variety of different disciplinary perspectives, each of which produces "television" as a different kind of object' (2000: 34). Jostein Gripsrud and Noël Carroll offer two very different approaches to understanding television as a medium. Grisprud provides a relatively rigid definition of television as audio-visual material placed within a continual stream of moving images and sounds that is sent from a central organisation to multiple domestic television sets, bringing the outside world into the home, with reception occurring simultaneously with transmission (1998). Carroll argues for the opposite, writing, 'I do not deny that there are differences between TV of a certain vintage and level of technological development, and comparable films, but I do deny that these historical differences amount to ontological or essential distinctions' (2003: 266). For Carroll, television is merely a stage in the 'evolution of the moving image' and as such has no unique identifying features.

These two opposing arguments indicate the complexities of understanding television as a medium. Gripsrud's approach uses technological definitions around broadcasting (the reaching out over distance to many people, the continuous flow of images). Carroll denies the importance of technology, something that he positions as historically specific and changeable, focusing instead on the nature of television content as moving images and sounds. Key theories that have dominated understandings of television, such as Raymond Williams's theory of 'flow' (1974), John Ellis's 'segment' (1992 (1982)), Nick Browne's 'suptertext' (1984, quoted in Brunsdson, 1998), and Newcomb and Hirsch's 'viewing strip' (2000 (1976)) sit between these two positions. Although they are concerned with the consequences of television being a broadcast medium, they are all concerned with the effect that status has on the *content* of television.

This distinction between content and technology is most explicitly examined in Roger Silverstone's 'double articulation' model. For Silverstone, the television is not just a form of media or a 'window on the world' (1994: 79); it is also a physical object: 'the cultural value of such a machine as the television lies both in its meaning as an object . . . and in its content' (123; see also Silverstone, Hirsch and Morley, 1992). Although Silverstone's 'double articulation' model suggests a balance between defining the medium of 'television' as both technology and content, television studies and audience studies have tended to be divided between these two conceptualisations.

This is particularly evident in considerations of how audiences engage with and make use of television. Audiences are predominantly positioned as viewers of content or users of technology.

As Justin Lewis has argued, audience '[s]tudies have focused on two broad areas: the domestic and family context of viewing, and the subcultural uses of television programs by specific groups' (1990: 50). The latter can be seen throughout work in fan studies that is concerned with fans' relationship to *programmes* (see, for example, Hobson, 1982; Ang, 1985; Jenkins, 1992; Fiske, 1992; Tulloch and Jenkins, 1995; Reeves et al. 1996; Abercrombie and Longhurst, 1998; Hills, 2002). Even studies that focus on the impact of technology on fandom still construct the object of television as content, focusing on what such technology allows fans to do with texts, whether it is distribute fan fiction more easily (Gwenllian Jones, 2002), facilitate faster discussions (Baym, 2000; Pullen, 2004; Hills, 2002), or become fans of texts before they are released (Chin and Gray, 2001). Camille Bacon-Smith's consideration of the VCR and *Star Trek* fandom offers the closest integration of text and technology, in her exploration of how the text itself can be altered through technological intervention. She argues that the VCR offers 'a viewing experience counter to traditional episodic patterns, one that connects each episode of a series in a causal relation to every other' (1992: 126) and 'episodes with a degree of ambiguity in their plots seem to present a new experience upon repeated viewing' (128). In Bacon-Smiths's account, television texts and television technology become enmeshed to a far greater extent than is generally seen within fan studies, but the text remains the focal point for an individual's relationship to the medium. Television fans are fans of programmes, not TV sets or video recorders.

In contrast, writers who are primarily interested in what Lewis calls 'the domestic and family context of viewing' have focused on questions that relate to its technological function. This evolves from Silverstone's argument that '[a]s an object [the television set] is bought and incorporated into the culture of the household for its aesthetic and functional characteristics, and it is displayed (or hidden) in the public or private spaces of the household, and collectively and individually used' (1994: 83). As Thomas Berker, Maren Hartmann, Yves Punie and Katie J. Ward discuss in relation to this 'domestication' strand of research that emerged from Silverstone's work,

> [D]omestication offered to research media and technology use in context, defining daily life routines, social embeddedness and similar issues as relevant for the media consumption process. The idea of the active user of technologies is similar to the idea of the active (television) viewer. Both are turned into an active (media) consumer as an attempt to move away from television audience studies towards a wider view on media use in general; to move from the *text* to the *context*. (Berker et al., 2006: 5, original emphasis)

This research has explored the social contexts of television's use, including how it impacts on time and space in the home (see, for example, Gauntlett and Hill, 1999). Work on the home computer and internet has continued this tradition, focusing on how these technologies have been integrated into domestic spaces and impacted on family dynamics (Lally, 2002: 169–190 and 157–168), its provision of a space for identity exploration and marginalised voices (Morley, 2000; Atton, 2002; Cheung, 2004 (2000); Armstrong, 2004 (2000); Balderston, 2004 (2000)), or its convergence with other media technologies into a single box and determining whether such a box would be successful (Murray 2000 (1997): 27; Deery, 2003: 161) or not (Owen, 1993: 37; Goldhammer, 2006: 35).

This division has shaped the development of television and audience studies over the past two decades. As Maren Hartman argues,

> The binary opposition that haunts this text . . . is the assumed opposition between text and context and the attempt to combine the two. This is an opposition that has haunted especially television research from some time and that has—as yet—not been resolved satisfactorily. (2006: 81)

Such a division proves problematic when considering transmediality and the movement of related or identical content across technologies. The implications of that movement on audiences' experience come from *both* the content and the technology. Audiences are not engaging with technology without content. But, if multiple types of content are available through the same source (the television set) and traditional televisual content is available elsewhere, then the technological factors of 'television' as a medium, and the role they play in audiences' understandings of 'television' must be recognised. In particular, the often uncontested link between 'television' and 'broadcasting' needs to be interrogated when 'television' appears on platforms that offer non-broadcast forms of distribution.

There is, however, a small but growing area of research that seeks to break down the division between television as text and television as technology, and this book sits as a continuation of that work. Whereas all three of the case studies discussed in this book (online and digital gaming, mobile television and downloading) feature technological convergence, with the television set becoming a gaming machine, or the mobile phone and computer becoming television sets, there are more complex processes going on both industrially and in the daily lives of viewers. Henry Jenkins offers a more subtle model of convergence that accounts for the mulitple cites of convergence, including economics, social, cultural and global alongside the technological. He argues for a model of convergence which includes

> the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behavior of

> media audiences who will go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they want. (2006: 2)

This approach does not dismiss the relevance of technological convergence, but instead positions it within a matrix of processes, with, for Jenkins, the audience at the centre: 'Convergence does not occur through media appliances, however sophisticated they may become. Convergence occurs within the brains of individual consumers and through their social interactions with others' (3).

There is now a need to extend this approach to the ways in which such convergence functions within audiences' daily lives. As Helen Wood argues, 'It is possible to begin to research the relationship of viewers with television as *both* text and technology, as engagements which are not separated out in the lived realities of the social use of television' (2007: 493, original emphasis). Maren Hartmann suggests a possible solution to the binary of television as text versus television as technology in 'a return to, and reapplication of, the original double articulation and a possible extension to a triple articulation' (2006: 81). In adition to examining 'the television set, the radio, the computer as material objects and in their role as consumer objects' (87) she argues for a consideration of *both* 'the ritual, overall idea of participation . . . [and] the individual communicative instance, the individual programme, the individual website, the text message etc.' (96). For Hartmann, then, not only must the context of a technology be equal to the text in understanding the relationship between media and audiences, but this 'context' must also be understood to encompass both the technolgy as a physical and material object and the technology as a social and cultural artefact.

More recent discussions of the impact of digital technologies on US television have begun to open up the complexities of what 'television' as a medium now means. William Boddy explores the development of product placement as a response to technologies such as the PVR that allow viewers to avoid advert breaks (2004: 14, 143–149). Although primarily focusing on the technologies of US television production, distribution and exhibtion in the digital era, Amanda D. Lotz also briefly examines the texts such transformation produces. She argues that programmes such as *Sex and the City* and *Survivor* can only exist because of the changes the industrial and technological changes television has undergone: 'None of these series could have existed on the network-era television; each not only illustrates changes in the production process, but also how these changes have created opportunities for stories much different from those of the network era' (2007: 216). Sharon Marie Ross' *Beyond the Box: Television and the Internet* (2008) offers the clearest precedence for the work in this book. Ross uses empirical audience research to examine the relationship between television and the internet through the concept of 'tele-participation' and resulting shifts in power relations (real or imaginary) between viewers, producers and broadcasters.

Ross' research demonstrates how the internet is being brought into television texts and viewing patterns through examples such as cult fan communities, *American Idol*'s voting system and *Lost*'s use of narrative puzzles that viewers solve in online communities. The internet as a technology is shown to shape not only fans' relationship to a text, but also the way the industry interacts with fans and the kinds of texts they create. This has led, Ross argues, to 'storytelling that emphasizes shared ownerships among *literally social* audiences that increasingly include the voices of creative professionals, critics and industry executives in tandem with the voices of viewers' (2008: 257, original emphasis). The ability for the internet to function as a social medium separate from television content, Ross demonstrates, has led to changes in the way television content is constructed and the relationship between producer and viewer. This book examines industrial developments related to those Ross explores. It does not focus specifically on how 'fan' audiences act or on issues of fandom, although many participants did self-identify as fans and at times the issues under discussion directly related to'fannish' activities. Instead, its focus is on the technologies of the internet and mobile phone and the impact they are having on the ways in which audiences can engage with television. It is less about how technology allows audiences (primarily fans) to be invited into the narrative-making process. It is instead concerned with how the internet and mobile phone are offering multiple ways of engaging with 'television', in terms of both texts and technologies, and the impact such a move has on audience perceptions of what 'television' means.

To use Livingstone's terminology, the research in this book is explicitly concerned with moments when the use of a certain technology meets the reception of television drama texts (2004: 10). On the one hand, it is important to understand how the different textual forms of a transmedia text work collectively to form a coherent narrative and stylistic whole. On the other, it is important to consider the individual technologies and the kinds of engagement they offer. Although I do not want to follow a technological determinist model, different technologies do have different capabilities which will lead to different assumptions about the kind of texts broadcasters produce for them. In addition, audiences will have slightly different expectations of each technology that will affect their engagement with the different parts of a transmedia text. Television must be fully recognised as a 'medium', not just as a technology or as a form and style of content, and what is meant by the 'medium' of television within an increasingly cross-platform landscape requires further consideration and exploration.

A SNAPSHOT OF EMERGENT TRANSMEDIA QUALITY DRAMA

There is a particular focus in the following research, however, on instances of *emergent* transmedia *drama*, something that, to a certain extent, was determined by the time in which the research was conducted. The

questionnaires, focus groups and interviews that make up this book were conducted between October 2005 and February 2007, when the developments under discussion in this book were in their early, emergent stages. Geoffrey B. Pingree and Lisa Gitelman describe how '[t]here is a moment, before the material means and the conceptual modes of new media have become fixed, when such media are not yet accepted as natural, when their own meanings are in flux' (2003: xii). The research in this book is focused on such a moment, before the internet and mobile phone's role in the production, distribution and reception of televisual texts had stabilised into daily life. As Pingree and Gitelman go on to argue, '[t]he "crisis" of new media will be resolved when the perceptions of the medium, as well as its practical uses, are somehow adapted to existing categories of public understanding about what that medium does for whom and why' (xii). The following chapters offer a glimpse of how audiences respond to this process.

Mobile television, the focus of Chapter 5, did not become commercially available until after the first focus groups had been run. The most prominent form of transmedia engagement, online downloading, was only available via limited or illegal means until around the time of the final focus groups. There were few examples of such processes to choose from, and many of those examples were the result of one-off experimentation during special events[2], rather than sustained policy. One exception to this was a particular subgenre of reality television that calls deliberately on what Sharon Ross terms 'tele-participation' (2008: 3), as in *Big Brother* (Channel 4, 2000–2010) or *The X-Factor* (ITV, 2004–). Such programmes had developed a history of incorporating processes of transmediality, utilising the internet and telecommunication devices to allow the audience direct input in the construction of the programme. Estella Tincknell and Parvati Raghuram, in their discussions of *Big Brother*, for example, argue that, 'rather than being confined to a single television show, the programme itself offered multiple sites for the production of meaning' (2004: 261). The viewer could watch on television, or via the website, and then participate in deciding who should leave the programme via their mobile or landline phone. Su Holmes meanwhile argues, in reference to Channel 4's *The Salon* (2003), that the use of multiple media technologies 'enables the relationship between viewer, internet and televisual entertainment to form a visible nexus at the *centre* of the series' (2004: 216). In both of these examples the use of new media technology alongside the television has formed a central part of the engagement with this particular style of reality programming.

The focus here, however, is on drama which, along with the aforementioned examples of reality television, was a popular choice for early developments in transmediality. The two specific textual case studies examined here, *Spooks* (BBC, 2002–) and *24* (Fox, 2001–2010), were at the cutting edge of developments in transmediality within the United Kingdom specifically, despite the latter being a US production. *Spooks* was the first British

series to develop transmedia online gaming texts alongside the television episodes, whereas *24* was spun-off into *24: Conspiracy*, the first attempt by a major US studio to create original content for mobile phones. *24: Conspiracy* was a co-production with UK mobile network provider Vodafone and the United Kingdom was its primary target; it was released alongside the UK airing of the fourth season and only made available to UK Vodafone subscribers[3]. During the period of research, drama was also the most frequently downloaded content (see BBC, 2005a), a result of downloading being illegal at the time and primarily used to access US content, including *24*, months before it aired internationally. However, it must be acknowledged that the issues raised by this research are shaped by this focus. If the focus had been on another kind of programming, then the responses of research participants would conceivably have been different.

Transmediality, especially transmedia storytelling, functions to a specific end within drama programming. Although there have been examples of audience participation in television drama, most recently episodes of *Family Affairs* (tx. 24/05/2004, Five), *Casualty @ Holby City* (tx. 27/08/2005, BBC One) and *Two Pints of Lager and a Packet of Crisps* (tx. 10/05/2009, BBC Two) in which the audience determined the conclusions of particular storylines, they are rare. Rather than facilitating audience participation, transmedia storytelling has been more commonly used in drama to expand the fictional world of a series away from the television episodes. This concept of a 'fictional world' (Eco, 1998 (1986)) is the key textual feature of drama, as Jeffrey Sconce has argued:

> U.S. television has devoted increased attention in the past two decades to crafting and maintaining ever more complex narrative universes, a form of 'world building' that has allowed for a wholly new mode of narration and that suggests new forms of audience engagement. Television, it might be said, has discovered that the cultivation of its story worlds (diegesis) is as crucial an element in its success as is storytelling. What television lacks in spectacle and narrative constraints, it makes up for in depth and duration of character relations, diegetic expansion, and audience investment. A commercial series that succeeds in the U.S. systems ends up generating hundreds of hours of programming, allowing for an often quite sophisticated and complex elaboration of character and story world. (2004: 95)

A television drama series constructs a narrative world in which potentially hundreds of episodes can be situated, the locations and characters that inhabit this world binding the events of individual episodes together. Drama invites a particular form of engagement from its audience, one that is based on their interaction with a fictional world. John Caughie's theory of the 'dramatic look' describes drama as using 'a process of mediation so conventionalized as to become invisible' that 'inscribes the drama into

experience' (2000: 111). The dramatic camera works to bring the audience into that world in a way that seems natural. As the following chapters will explore, this kind of engagement, best described through theories of immersion, was particularly important to how the participants in this research engaged transmedia drama.

Transmediality plays with this central construct of a fictional world in terms of what Matt Hills has called a 'hyper-diegesis', or 'the creation of a vast and detailed narrative space, *only a fraction of which is ever directly seen or encountered within the text*' (2002: 137, my emphasis). With moments of transmedia storytelling new media platforms such as the internet or mobile phone are used to provide access to the parts of the text that are not available through the television episodes. Transmedia storytelling makes particular use of fictional worlds, exploiting the fact that the viewer only sees part of that world and will be encouraged to subsequently seek out information on those hidden parts via the extensions onto multiple platforms. Transmedia engagement, meanwhile, offers viewers greater opportunities to gain access to that fictional world by placing the same content on multiple platforms, with drama series being the most popular downloaded programmes during the period of this research (BBC News, 2005a). The key points for considering audience engagement with these transmedia fictional worlds are the extent to which the separate technologies work together to create a coherent diegesis that offers multiple points of access and multiple forms of engagement and the kinds of engagement encouraged and expected from these worlds.

However, it must be acknowledged that even within the loose category of 'drama', *Spooks* and *24* hold a particular status, as 'quality', that informs both their positions as emergent transmedia texts and the attitudes of audience members towards them. Quality dramas are somehow 'different' to other drama forms; as Robert J. Thompson describes, 'Quality TV is best defined by what it is not' (1997 (1996): 13). This difference is traditionally explained by tropes such as a complex narrative structure, typified in Robin Nelson's theory of the multi-straded 'flexi-narrative' (1997: 24), or an overt visual style (Caldwell, 1995). The consequence of these differences is that quality drama is seen as eliciting a specific set of viewing practices and forms of engagement, a position that is consistent throughout writing on the subject. As Mark Jancovich and James Lyons point out,

> [C]ontemporary television has witnessed the emergence of 'must see TV', shows that are not simply part of a habitual flow of television programming but, either through design or audience response, have become 'essential viewing'. These programmes have also been referred to as 'date' or 'appointment' television, and they are distinguished by the compulsive viewing practices of dedicated audiences who organise their schedules around these shows. (2003: 2)

Increasingly then, 'quality' television dramas have been conceived of in different terms from other televisual forms and genres. They are 'more literate, more stylistically complex, and more psychologically "deep" than ordinary TV fare' (Feuer, 1984b: 56). They are not seen as part of the seamless flow of televisual images that Raymond Williams discusses (1974). As Martin McLoone argues, 'There is an attempt, in other words, to lift [the programme] out of the flow and confer a special status on it' (1996: 92).

Both *Spooks* and *24* have been clearly aligned with concepts of 'quality' drama. Shawn Shimpach describes *24* as a 'quality stunt' (2010: 24), and although not using the term explicitly, both Jacqueline Furby and Deborah Jermyn allude to notions of quality when discussing the series. Furby argues that because of its narrative construction as 'real-time', 'The audience cannot view casually, but instead enters into a contract of intense involvement that endures over twenty-four weeks if viewed as originally broadcast, or for eighteen hours of viewing episodes on DVD or video' (2007: 59). Jermyn meanwhile focuses on the programme's visual style:

> One might argue that far from inviting us to merely glance at the screen or watch in a distracted fashion, in *24* the split-screen does quite the reverse. Instead, it invites the viewer to embrace the act of editing for themselves, mobilising them to actively engage with the screen and its drama by demanding they move between planes of action simultaneously. (2007: 51)

For Furby and Jermyn, *24* is elevated above other televisual forms in terms of audience engagement. Their descriptions are couched in a discussion of things the viewer *cannot* do. They cannot 'view casually'; they cannot 'watch in a distracted manner'. Daniel Chamberlain and Scott Ruston in fact go so far as to label *24* as a 'new' kind of quality drama, arguing that the videographic style (Caldwell, 1995) of split screens, 'challenges and extends the space of the term "quality television" itself' (Chamberlain and Ruston, 2007: 24). Their position is that *24* creates a specifically televisual form of quality drama, one that 'shatter[s] the deference to cinema and the consequences of all things televisual being potential markers of quality' (24). Although there has been little scholarly work on *Spooks* it is easy to identify it in a similar category of 'quality' drama to that demonstrated by *24*. Robin Nelson includes in it his examination of 'high-end' drama, labelling it as 'quality popular' amongst 'programmes that make a claim to distinction or have such a claim made about them' (2007: 2). He echoes Feuer's assertion of quality television as psychologically deep when he argues that the series' 'edginess of content' (20) invites the viewer to engage critically with global politics: 'Despite narrative closure, the ideological debate is left open for viewers to take up should they wish' (147)[4]. Both *24* and *Spooks* are identifiable as 'different'; although in this case they are not only

different from other forms of drama such as soap operas, they are different from other forms of 'quality' drama.

Not only can processes of transmediality be seen as having a particular function in terms of drama's central construction of a fictional world, it can also be seen as having a specific relationship to the kind of drama found in *Spooks* and *24*. The choice of these programmes as early experiments in transmediality is strongly linked to their status as 'quality' drama. The presence and importance of a fictional world offers the space for transmedia storytelling to be explored; the committed viewing patterns encouraged by a complex narrative and visual style encourages transmedia engagement and the possibility of ensuring access to the full text that the increased agency of services such as downloading offers. The sense of distinction, of being 'better' than regular television fare, associated with such series allows transmedia services to emerge with a built in reputation. Their connection to such 'tentpole' (Ellis, 2000: 137) programmes not only brings an established audience base to such services but also imprints them with the quality found with the television episodes. At the same time such examples of transmediality raise a number of questions that are specific to this status. What do audiences particularly value about 'quality' drama, and to what extent are these values transferred onto new media platforms? How do audiences respond to the literal expansion of fictional worlds onto multiple platforms? To what extent does transmedia engagement alter how they watch traditional televisual content? The questions this book will explore in the following chapters are therefore shaped by the specific characteristics of *Spooks* and *24* as not only television *drama* but also *quality* television drama. They are also shaped by the fact that these were early examples of transmediality. Further examples of transmedia dramas have been produced since 2007, when the final focus groups were run. The following research serves as a snapshot of a particular kind of content at a particular moment, one that is now past but that offers insight into how audiences integrate new televisual technology into their daily engagement with television drama.

TRANSMEDIA TELEVISION: AUDIENCES, NEW MEDIA AND DAILY LIFE

The concept of transmediality consists of a number of interrelated industrial and reception practices that position television alongside other technologies capable of transmitting and receiving audio-visual signals. However, the definition of transmediality, and the various practices that contribute to it, is far from clear cut. Everett M. Rogers argues that '[a]n important conceptual and methodological issue is how to determine the boundaries around a technological innovation' (2003: 14). These boundaries are not necessarily fixed; as Everett goes on to write, '[a]n adopter's experience with

one innovation obviously influences that individual's perception of the next innovation to diffuse through the individual's system. In reality, the innovations diffusing at about the same time in a system are interdependent' (15). Part one of this book works towards answering this issue and provides a definition of transmedia storytelling and transmedia engagement that explores their boundaries with related concepts and transmedia practices. In particular the historical context of these changes will be explored in order to position the research in the second half of the book within its particular timeframe.

Chapter 1 considers the concept of 'transmedia storytelling' and the kinds of multi-platform media texts that have emerged from the television industry since the turn of the twenty-first century. It positions it in relation to historical uses of the term and to other cross-platform practices such as adaptation, marketing, spin-offs and sequels, and argues that contemporary forms of transmedia storytelling share an integration defined through narrative, authorship and temporality. Chapter 2 considers how transmedia engagement, the ability to watch broadcast episodes on a variety of platforms, is facilitated through the industrial practice of transmedia distribution. It will explore the various interfaces that audiences now have with television content and the way these interfaces, including broadcasters, licensed third parties and unauthorised 'guerrilla' networks, are blurring the boundaries of the television industry. Chapter 3 explores who the audiences for emergent transmedia dramas are and considers the specific methodological implications of studying their attitudes and behaviour at moments of intense technological and cultural change. It explains the methodological approach of the research that forms Part II whilst also examining the consequences of studying emergent technologies and services that have not yet settled into a stable pattern of use. This chapter focuses on the nature of this research as a 'snapshot' of a specific moment of time in order to acknowledge change whilst simultaneously examining it.

Part II presents empirical audience research conducted during the emergent stage of transmediality with a particular emphasis on audience attitudes and opinions, rather than patterns of behaviour or use. This is a result of the extreme novelty of the transmedia texts being discussed and the consequences of emergence explored in Chapter 3. Mobile television launched as the first focus groups were run and television-downloading services remained illegal in the United Kingdom until the very late stages of the research. In both cases these factors limited the available audience for any study of these services actually being used; such a project would require these services to be more firmly established and widespread. However, by focusing on the *attitudes* and *opinions* of audience members towards the changes that were occurring within the television industry, there is the potential to examine these changes during their *emergent* stage. Participants did not have to have engaged with mobile television or have used downloading to be aware of them or have an opinion on

them, although many of them had. These opinions offer insight into how the audience is making sense of a moment of dramatic change within the experience of 'television'.

Chapter 4 focuses on the games produced by the BBC in connection with *Spooks* and made available via the internet and digital television. It considers how the different kinds of agency offered to a television drama viewer and a computer game player may impact on the kind of immersive experience they can have with transmedia dramatic content. In particular the importance of character and narrative complexity to audience engagement with drama will be explored. Chapter 5 examines the development of the mobile phone as an audio-visual platform through the case study of *24: Conspiracy* (Fox/Vodafone). It explores whether the immersive potential of television drama texts can align with the small size and constant, immediate but public access of mobile phone technology. The case study approach of these two chapters means that they do not seek to make claims about other examples of transmediality. However, the issues raised by them illuminate our understanding of broader social and cultural audience practices. Chapter 6 shifts to considering transmedia engagement and how the internet is being exploited as an *alternative* to the television set. Rather than focusing on a specific case study, particularly as downloading was predominantly illegal at the time of the research, this chapter will consider broader issues of reception. This chapter again draws on the key forms of engagement with drama discussed in Chapters 4 and 5 to focus on issues surrounding the agency offered by downloading services, the temporalities of national and transnational television broadcasting, audiences relationship to broadcasters and the construction of a 'television audience'. All three chapters in Part II consider how audiences respond when 'television' content is taken away from the television set to ultimately explore how the emergence of transmediality within the television industry during the early twenty-first century requires a re-evaluation of 'television' as a medium.

Darin Barney observes that '[d]igital technologies, at least in the affluent societies of the economically advantaged world, increasingly form the necessary infrastructure of everyday life' (2004: 178). The constant, domestic presence of television firmly places it within the realm of the everyday. It is not a special occasion to watch television like it is to go out to the cinema, or the theatre; it is part of daily life. This book will explore how the digital technologies of the internet and mobile phone are shaping television's role in daily life. It will consider this as both a technological question (how do the internet and mobile phone shape the time and space of television engagement?) and a textual question (how do they shape the forms of engagement that audiences experience with television drama?). It is undeniable that the television landscape in Britain has changed dramatically over recent years and that changes on a local scale demonstrated in this research are indicative of more global changes. At the centre of this change is the audience. The ways in which technological change impacts on their daily lives and

engagement with television dramas are complex; they both shape and are shaped by industrial initiatives. As the following research will demonstrate, audience responses to emerging transmedia texts are not uniform. Some aspects are more welcomed than others and mapping such patterns of opinion provides a valuable way of exploring a particularly changeable moment in time. In attempting to understand how new media is functioning within the broader media landscape, it is crucial that the audience is not forgotten and that empirical work on their attitudes, values and opinions acts alongside analysis of the industry and the texts it produces. These attitudes and opinions offer a perspective on how television is being engaged with and how new media developments are affecting this engagement. In turn they offer an insight into whether our previous understandings of 'television drama' need to be re-evaluated in the current media climate. The following research offers an initial glimpse into early audience responses to the many changes being undertaken within the television industry, and these responses offer a way towards understanding the impact of the development of transmedia drama texts.

Part I

Understanding Transmediality

1 Transmedia Texts
Defining Transmedia Storytelling

Transmedia storytelling is the most well-known component of transmediality and has gained significant academic currency during the opening years of the twenty-first century. Most explicitly theorised by Henry Jenkins (2003, 2006), transmedia storytelling expands on the contemporary traditions of television narrative described by Jeffrey Sconce as the 'crafting and maintaining [of] ever more complex narrative universes' (2004: 95) to place those narrative universes on more than one media platform. As a concept, it has become central to the understanding of how emerging new media technologies are leading to the creation of new forms of narrative content and audience engagement. However, despite the usefulness and pervasiveness of the term, there remains scope for further refinement. To a certain extent the phrase 'transmedia storytelling' is a misnomer. All of the practices that could be considered 'transmedia' involve the telling of stories over multiple platforms. As Jonathan Gray argues, calling on the work of Gerard Genette (1997), narrative is shaped and constructed as much through the texts that appear *around* a film, television or book as through those core texts themselves. For Grey, such paratexts 'create texts, they manage them, and they fill them with many of the meanings that we associate with them' (2010: 6). Marketing material, sequels, merchandising and branding can all help shape the viewer's experience of a single 'text'. Defining what specifically constitutes moments of transmedia storytelling, and their relationship to other theoretical or industrial processes, is vital.

At the same time, the historical precedence of these developments must also be recognised. Whereas the narrative patterns and forms of engagement that emerged from the television industry from 2004 onwards may offer a significant departure from those that had come before them, they were not radical to the point of revolution. Roberta Pearson has raised these crucial questions concerning the boundaries and history of transmedia storytelling by suggesting that biblical stories can be understood in these terms (2009b; see also Bordwell, 2010: online). By representing these stories, Pearson argues, through written word, drama and visual art, the narrative of Jesus Christ is multi-platform, with audiences experiencing it through various forms of engagement. Following this argument, the history of storytelling, including the development of myths such as King Arthur and Robin Hood, is littered with examples of transmedia storytelling. Arthur's story is

told via a history of literary sources such as Welsh and Breton poetry, Monmoth's *History of the Kings of Britain* and Malory's *La Morte Darthur*, oral storytelling, pictures, drama, poems, real-world locations such as Tintagel and more recently film (*The Sword in the Stone*, dir. Wolfgang Reitherman, 1963; *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*, dir. Terry Gilliam, 1975; *King Arthur*, Antoine Fuqua, 2004 to name a few) and television (*Merlin*, BBC One 2008–). This echoes work that examines how individual media characters such as James Bond (Bennett and Wollacott, 1987) or Batman (Pearson and Uricchio, 1991; Brooker, 2000) are constructed across a range of media (novels and films or comic books, television series and films, respectively), merchandising and within wider cultural discourses. J. Dennis Bounds uses the terms 'transmedia poetics' to explore consistency in the construction of Perry Mason across books and television (1996).

However, as Geoffrey Long indicates, the term 'transmedia storytelling' has taken on a specific meaning relating to the creation of a wider, coherent fictional *world* that is delivered to the audience in multiple formats (2007: 48). It is essential to map out the differences between contemporary and historical uses of the term. This makes it possible to determine how current developments within the television and film industries are offering new forms of engagement for their audiences whilst refraining from positioning these developments as unique and radical. This chapter will examine the development of transmedia storytelling and its relationship to other narrative and industrial processes in order to offer a model that delineates and identifies what makes the incorporation of new media platforms into the traditional media industries a different experience for audiences. This can specifically be identified through three key components: narrative, authorship and temporality. Whereas not appearing equally in every case of transmedia storytelling, these characteristics offer a way of both recognising the history that this mode of storytelling has developed from, and how it has taken cross-platform narrative a step further. This model will be examined through the case study of the BBC series *Doctor Who* (1963–) which, having been in production on and off for nearly fifty years, spans a significant portion of British television history and has adapted to the changing media landscape around it. At various points in the programme's production, its ability to function as 'transmedia' has had particular significance and these moments, along with its current incarnation, indicate how the term has evolved into its current form. As *Doctor Who* demonstrates, transmedia texts have become less about promoting a central television programme or film, and more about creating a coherent, deliberately cross-platform narrative experience.

TRANSMEDIA STORYTELLING: ADAPTATIONS, SPIN-OFFS, MARKETING AND MERCHANDISING

The first use of the term 'transmedia' was as a primarily promotional practice involving merchandising, adaptations, sequels and franchising, and can

be found in the arguments of Marsha Kinder and Mary Celeste Kearney. Both writers specifically use the term to describe processes of cross-platform adaptation and marketing, and subsequently couch it in discourses of commercialism. Kinder uses the term to describe the relationship between films, television, games and toys within the children's media market. She associates 'transmedia' with the creation of 'supersystems', described as 'a network of intertextuality constructed around a figure or group of figures from pop culture who are either fictional . . . or "real"' (1991: 122). She goes on to specify that one of the criteria of a 'supersystem' is that 'the network must cut across several modes of image production' (123). Kinder recognises the construction of a single cultural object (be that a text, character or set of characters) across multiple media formats; however, the motivation behind this is connected with the economic systems of Hollywood. Throughout Kinder's argument, these transmedia supersystems are associated with the process by which children are taught to become consumers and in turn attempt to ensure the commercial success of the product. In order for transmedia content to become a supersystem, it 'must undergo a sudden increase in commodification, the success of which reflexively becomes a "media event" that dramatically accelerates the growth curve of the system's commercial success' (123). Toys, for example, are produced that allow viewers to imaginatively explore the fictional world of a televisual or cinematic supersystem, but at the same time they teach children how to be consumers, to desire material objects. Transmedia storytelling, for Kinder, becomes about merchandising and marketing.

A similar approach is evident in Kearney's use of the term to describe the expansion of US radio plays *A Date with Judy* (1941) and *Meet Corliss Archer* (1943–1956) into short stories, films, television programmes and comic books. Kearney goes on to link industrial upheaval within Hollywood to the transmedia developments of these stories and suggests a possible historical origin for the practice that would evolve into the transmedia text. She writes,

> In light of the difficult working conditions and poor pay of screenwriters in the early1940s, it is not surprising that writers working for the film studios would seek out work in other industries, particularly those that produced serialized properties and therefore steady income. (Kearney, 2004: 280–281)

As writers moved into different media industries, they took the narratives they had created with them, expanding these fictional worlds away from their original source. Kearney goes onto articulate this cross-platform development as 'transmedia exploitation', consisting of 'the repeated *adaptation* of an established entertainment text into different media forms' and 'the *promotion* of a text's reputation as a successful entertainment property when marketing later versions produced in different formats' (2004: 281, original emphasis). For Kearney the origins of 'transmedia' production are

in practices of adaptation and marketing. It is subsequently made to seem less than artistically honourable, the term 'transmedia exploitation' conjuring associations of commercialism over integrity, and equated to a set of industrial processes motivated both by the movement of manpower and the desire for a low-risk entertainment product. Whereas Kearney's model is still evident in the entertainment industry's ongoing desire to produce content based on already successful properties through literary adaptations, sequels, spin offs and franchises, modern multi-platform practices have taken on a different edge with the emergence of digital technologies and the various modes of engagement they allow for.

Even examinations that explore the relationship between television and new media platforms maintain this association between the creation of transmedia texts and marketing and commercialism. Both Will Brooker's model of 'overflow' (2004) and John T. Caldwell's theory of 'second-shift aesthetics' (2003) examine the role television websites have in relation to audience behaviour and, although they do not use the term 'transmedia', they echo the transmedia model. Brooker's argument, one of the few studies to be based on empirical audience research, maintains the commercial outlook of Kearney's, with the development of new media technologies being tied to the marketing of texts on more established media platforms such as the television: '[T]he *Dawson's Creek* fan may still find her key pleasures in the developing television narrative, but the tv show is clearly being marketed within a far wider multimedia context' (2004: 572). For Brooker, the television episodes become the jumping-off point that initiate a collection of additional moments of engagement, primarily through a connected website. After watching the source programme, the audience is then encouraged to move onto these additional platforms where they can not only learn more about the show but also purchase *Dawson's Creek* related merchandise (572). This kind of movement is identified by Caldwell as part of his model of 'second-shift aesthetics', an argument that is based on appropriating models from television studies in order to understand new media. Caldwell writes,

> Instead of the linear textual compositing model inherent in supertext/flow theory, TV/dot-com synergies now must learn to master *textual dispersals* and user navigations that can and will inevitably *migrate* across brand boundaries. In essence, programming strategies have shifted from notions of network *program* 'flows' to tactics of *audience/user* 'flows'. (2003: 136)

Again the emphasis in Caldwell's theory is on how audiences move across different media outlets whilst still engaging with the same core text. As with Brooker's model, viewers are enticed to 'flow' from the television episodes to the website, and then from the website to merchandising sites.

Even though there are differences in the technologies employed in Brooker's and Caldwell's models compared to the earlier examples discussed by

Kearney and Kinder, each theory creates the same kind of relationship between the different media forms. The television programme, or film, is consistently the primary point of engagement, with non-television-based texts, be they digital or not, functioning superfluously to it, merely promoting the primary series or opening up new revenue streams via merchandise.

This situation is apparent when looking at the change that the transmedia text of *Doctor Who* has undergone. Since the series was launched in 1963 a range of additional material has been made available in connection to the television episodes (see Perryman, 2008). Novelisations of storylines from the programme (see Chapman, 2006: 26) offered an adaptation of the source material in a different medium. Spin-off texts, including films (*Doctor Who and the Daleks* (dir. Gordon Flemyng, 1965) and *Daleks' Invasion Earth: 2150 A.D.* (dir Gordon Flemyng, 1966)), numerous original novels and a series of BBC radio plays offered new stories from the universe of *Doctor Who*, sharing characters and generic traits, through different media. Merchandise such as board games and action figures offered a form of engagement with the universe of the series in non-audio-visual formats as they allowed viewers to create their own stories through play.

These earlier adaptations, spin-offs and merchandise function as transmedia to a certain extent by expanding the world of *Doctor Who* into non-televisual forms. However, as the following comparison with the more contemporary *Doctor Who* demonstrates, there has been a shift in transmedia practice. In addition, the primary role of many of these texts was as a promotional network for the television series. As James Chapman describes, the BBC used such transmedia elements to sustain interest in the series when it was initially cancelled in 1989:

> Undeterred by the relative failure of the 1996 TV movie, BBC Worldwide pushed ahead with an expanding range of *Doctor Who* spin-offs including more continuation novels, computer games, and a series of licensed audio dramas . . . The spin-offs ensured that the 'brand' was kept alive in the public's imagination whilst allowing cultural producers to gauge the response of fans towards the prospect of new films or television series. (2006: 186)

Non-television-based elements are seen by Chapman as serving a primary function of promoting the brand, of ensuring that the audience remembers that *Doctor Who* exists even though it was not appearing on television screens. Similarly, in the four years preceding the re-launch of the series in 2005 the BBC broadcast animated 'webcasts' (Chapman, 2006: 186) to generate interest in the series within the increasingly popular online environment. Although these radio plays, novels and animations may offer an expansion of the fictional world that was first presented in the television series, they remain not only separate but also ancillary and secondary to it; there is no integration between the television programme and the

other elements of the transmedia text. As Alan McKee argues in his study of *Doctor Who* fans in the late 1990s, '[T]here was a lack of agreement on what constitutes a canonical—real, authentic—part of *Doctor Who*' (2004: 179). They serve as a way to keep interest amongst an already interested community alive, whilst the show is off-air. They act as a substitute for the missing source text. However, by the time the television series began broadcasting again, its relationship to new media platforms had changed, and with that the application of the term 'transmedia'.

THE REGENERATED TRANSMEDIA *DOCTOR WHO*

When the new series of *Doctor Who*, overseen during its initial five years by Russell T. Davies, began in April 2005 the television series appeared within a far more coherent matrix of texts distributed on a range of media technologies, which functioned collectively to provide an intentionally multi-platform experience for the audience. In addition to new novels and toys, the BBC also produced games, mobile content and narrative-rich websites, expanding the universe of *Doctor Who* away from the television set more coherently than in its earlier incarnation. As will be demonstrated, these non-television narrative components tied closely to the BBC's development of the internet and mobile phone as platforms for audio-visual entertainment more generally and so fit into the Corporation's broader, multi-platform intentions. Whilst not denying the promotional potential of these transmedia components, they offer a more complex picture of transmediality and the use of new media platforms by the television industry.

The first element of the transmedia *Doctor Who* was the use of the internet in one of its most basic functions, as a platform for text, images and short videos. Websites have long been a part of the broader marketing strategies for television programming (see, for example, Deery, 2003) and *Doctor Who* was no exception. As Neil Perryman discusses, the programme was a part of the BBC's online identity before the television series itself was re-launched, featuring as a key component of the 'Cult Television' section of their website (Perryman, 2008: 25). This earlier site only included basic programme information, but with the premiere of the new series a different use of online space emerged. The BBC created a fictitious website, http://www.whoisdoctorwho.co.uk/, which appears in the first episode of the 2005 season, 'Rose' (1.01)[5] as an in-narrative site aiming to collect information on the mysterious Doctor (Christopher Ecclestone)[6]. During the course of the season the website is taken over by Mickey (Noel Clarke), former boyfriend of the Doctor's companion Rose (Billie Piper), and was expanded from the pages seen in the episode, detailing previous sightings of the Doctor, to hints about potential threats that would ultimately appear in the television narrative. In-text press material would then be re-posted on the site, such as a news report from the episode 'Aliens of London' (1.03), featuring the then BBC News political editor Andrew Marr, a video that was 'collected' and archived. The

website functioned to bleed the narrative world of *Doctor Who* into the 'real' world of the internet, and the pleasure it offers reflects this. The viewer can investigate characters and events from the television series as if they were 'real' people and events. In this respect the website resembles alternate reality games[7] in which, as Jason Mittell argues, 'the goal is to obscure the boundaries between an emerging storyline and real life in a paranoid mist' (2006: online). Mittell goes on to ask, 'How can we buy into an alternate reality that we have already conceptualized as fictional?' (ibid). However, the potential pleasure offered in such moments is precisely the ambiguous merging of reality and fiction as the audience immerses themselves in that 'paranoid mist', allowing their engagement with the story world to spread away from the television.

The creation of an expanded fictional world for *Doctor Who*, and the mixing of this fictional world with the real world of the viewer's lived experience, is demonstrated more fully in the series' second transmedia component: the various online and digital television games created during the programme's second season. The *Doctor Who* games fall into two interrelated but distinct categories, both of which took advantage of the two-way communication facilitated by digital television and the internet. After the 2005 Christmas special episode, which introduced the tenth Doctor (David Tennant), audiences were invited to join the Doctor in an interactive episode through the red button on their digital television remote. This button, normally used to provide a digital version of the BBC's Ceefax service or alternative viewing preferences during sporting events such as Wimbledon, has been appropriated for the creation of episodes of drama series with a distinctive game quality. One of the first examples of this was the spy drama *Spooks*, which will be explored in more detail in Chapter 4, with the format being replicated for the *Doctor Who* episode 'The Christmas Invasion'.

At the end of the episode, over the credits, digital viewers were invited to 'fly the TARDIS and help save the world' by pressing the red button and initiating the broadcast of an interactive episode, 'Attack of the Graske'[8], that takes many steps in recreating the narrative and visual style of the television episodes. After a set of credits that are identical to those used in the series, the Doctor welcomes the viewer to the TARDIS, informing them that Rose is at an ABBA concert in 1979. With her character diegetically removed from the episode the viewer is then asked to take her place, and the Doctor 'connects' their remote control to his sonic screwdriver, one of the key generic and visual elements of the series. A combination of observation and mental reasoning games, in which the viewer is asked to answer questions via their remote control, and 'cut scenes' take the player through a hunt for a rogue alien. At the game's conclusion, they are asked to make an ethical choice, similar to the kind faced regularly by the Doctor in the television series, concerning the release of the alien's prisoners. Aspects such as a re-creation of the visual look of the television series, consisting of a combination of filmed and computer generated segments, are combined

with a different kind of engagement for the viewer based on mechanical interactivity and play.

The second format of games were a series of 'Flash'[9] games that were made available via the internet throughout the second season. In April 2006 the 'Who is Doctor Who' site began to feature video clips from Mickey, who would inform the visitor of a particular threat and guide them to a second fake website where they would uncover an animated game related to the narrative of the most recent episode[10]. For example, following the episode 'School Reunion' (2.03), in which aliens use school children to create a code to destroy mankind, Mickey directs the player to the school's website where they can find a series of puzzles that allow them to destroy the code featured in the programme. The two-part episodes 'Rise of the Cybermen' (2.05) and 'Age of Steel' (2.06) featured an alternate reality game in which the player begins an internet chat conversation with an anonymous informant. This informant directs them to a number of fake websites connected to the sinister Cybus Corporation from the episode. After following a number of clues, the player ultimately uncovers a code which is then sent to Mickey, who thanks them for helping to save the world in a final video message.

The final element in the transmedia text of *Doctor Who* is content made available for a mobile phone[11]. Again alongside the broadcast of the programme's second season in 2006, the BBC offered short clips for download, dubbed 'Tardisodes'. These Tardisodes acted as a prologue to each new episode, either introducing a new world that is visited or the main threat for that episode. The opening episode of the 2006 season, 'New Earth' (2.01), which features a futuristic hospital where any disease, no matter how terminal, can be cured, was accompanied by a one minute 'advert' for the facility. The viewer is introduced to the feline 'Sisters' and shown a demonstration of their healing abilities before the screen goes black and a woman is heard screaming 'Help Me'. For the second episode, 'Tooth and Claw' (2.02), which features a centuries-old werewolf-like alien who moves between human hosts, the prequel Tardisode shows the alien crash landing and taking over the nearest human. Similar short videos were released for each of the episodes, and short trailers shown throughout the week on BBC television encouraged viewers to access them. They did not, however, prove overly successful, something Neil Perryman attributes to a combination of most handsets not being able to receive them and the cost involved if a handset could (2008: 32–33)[12], and whereas various online and gaming texts have been produced since the second season, audio-visual mobile content has not been replicated.

EMERGENT TRANSMEDIA STORYTELLING: INTEGRATING THE WORLD

How, then, do these various multimedia elements function to become a *trans*media text, and how is this transmedia text different from the models

of marketing and promotion discussed previously? On a basic level the text exists on multiple platforms[13] and so fit the earlier models of transmedia texts. However, there is more to this concept than material merely being accessible in more than one format. The new incarnation of *Doctor Who* continued a long history of non-television-based production (further books, audiobooks, toys and board games have also been released since 2005) whilst at the same time developing that history into a more integrated, multi-platform narrative text. In one respect these transmedia components demonstrate the move observed by John T. Caldwell when he writes that '"secondary" and "tertiary" television texts persistently migrate or travel toward "primary" textual status' (2006: 102). Here Caldwell calls on the model originated by John Fiske (1987) and developed by Jostein Gripsrud (1995) that identifies 'primary' texts as television programmes, 'secondary' texts as publicity and popular criticism and 'tertiary' texts as those created by viewers (see Fiske, 1987: 117; Gripsrud, 1995: 130). The texts described previously are clearly not created by viewers but they do not quite fit the category of 'secondary' texts either. They are clearly not a form of criticism, and whereas they may serve a promotional purpose they are integrated into the text of *Doctor Who* on a more equal status with traditional television content than trailers and posters might be.

At the same time they are not quite a 'primary text' in the way that the series' spin-offs *Torchwood* (2006–) and *The Sarah Jane Adventures* (2007–) are. Whereas both of these programmes exist within the same narrative universe as *Doctor Who*, are based around the Doctor's former companions Captain Jack Harkness (John Barrowman) and Sarah Jane Smith (Elisabeth Sladen) and occasionally contain overlapping narrative material[14], they are each given a distinct identity from the original series; it is possible to watch them without watching *Doctor Who*. They each construct their own mini-verse within the larger universe hinted at in the original series and have, in fact, led to their own transmedia elements.[15]

Similarly, the issue at hand here is not one of adaptation. Although Robert Stam's notion of how texts automatically change according to the medium they are presented in (Stam, 2005: 3–4) is relevant to the idea of individual transmedia components making use of their specific platform, the similarities required for adaptation are not present. Transmedia elements do not involve the telling of the same events on different platforms; they involve the telling of *new* events from the *same* storyworld. As Geoffrey Long observes, 'Retelling a story in a different media type is *adaptation*, while using multiple media types to craft a single story is *transmediation*' (2007: 22, original emphasis). The transmedia elements of *Doctor Who* are not quite primary text, but are equally not quite secondary texts, reinforcing the argument Caldwell goes on to make that 'the very notion of what comprises a program text has become problematic—and it has become problematic in ways that go beyond postmodern accounts of "intertextuality"' (2006, 104).

It is necessary to explore the model of transmedia storytelling more closely and further interrogate the relationships formed between each individual element, both in terms of the theoretical model and its practical manifestation within the television industry. What is particularly noticeable about these developments in transmedia storytelling practices is a stronger sense of integration and coherence amongst the individual elements. This sense of integration is evident via three characteristics of the transmedia *Doctor Who* (and many other transmedia texts) that distinguish the websites, games and Tardisodes from the other paratextual and promotional practices seen in the television industry and that require further consideration: narrative, authorship and temporality. These three characteristics may appear to varying degrees in different transmedia texts but their combined presence offers the key ways in which texts become transmedia, rather than function as marketing, spin-offs or adaptations.

Narrative

One of the key defining features of transmedia storytelling identified by Henry Jenkins is the act of 'integrating multiple texts to create a narrative so large that it cannot be contained within a single medium' (2006: 95). In this approach the non-televisual (or filmic) elements of the text are not produced as secondary to a primary source; they are instead part of a synergistic whole, with each contributing to the experience of the viewer in different ways. Narrative is key to the construction of a transmedia text; it is because a narrative world becomes so large that it is necessary to make use of additional platforms. In this respect, then, transmedia storytelling offers an expansion of both Sconce's model of contemporary storytelling and Hill's theory of the hyperdiegesis. In the former, Sconce argues that

> the cultivation of [television's] story worlds (diegesis) is as crucial an element in its success as is storytelling. What television lacks in spectacle and narrative constraints, it makes up for in depth and duration of character relations, diegetic expansion, and audience investment. A commercial series that succeeds in the U.S. systems ends up generating hundreds of hours of programming, allowing for an often quite sophisticated and complex elaboration of character and story world. (2004: 95)

In the latter, Hills calls on Umberto Eco's work on defining cult texts to argue for 'the creation of a vast and detailed narrative space, only a fraction of which is ever directly seen or encountered on screen' (2002: 137). In both of these models of storytelling it is not individual characters or events that become important, but the creation of a universe that is 'complex' and 'vast'. Transmedia storytelling makes particular use of such vast narrative

universes; the moments that are missing from the source text become manifest via an alternative platform as the narrative world stretches across a range of media platforms.

This stretching involves a simultaneous sense of difference and continuity. One of the key aspects of Jenkins's model is the specificity of each of the individual technologies involved and the tailoring of texts to that specificity. He argues,

> In the ideal form of transmedia storytelling, each medium does what it does best—so that a story might be introduced in a film, expanded through television, novels, and comics, and its world might be explored and experienced through game play. (2006: 96)

For Jenkins, then, a transmedia text must utilise the unique characteristics of its component parts. Further stories can be told in formats that lend themselves to longer narratives; a game can be used to allow the viewer to virtually enter the fictional space of the text and explore and interact with it and its inhabitants. In some respects his argument echoes Tony Bennett and Janet Wollacott's earlier discussion of the cultural construction of James Bond. Whereas Bennett and Wollacott do not use the term transmedia, and indeed are looking at how a character is culturally constructed rather than the cross-platform construction of a fictional world, in many ways their argument acts as a precursor to the idea behind transmedia texts. They write that,

> it is important to recognise that the novel is only one of the source materials for the film, that the film works over an ideological terrain beyond the novel and that there are, in any case, distinct differences between the formal techniques of writing and film-making and the associated processes whereby ideologies are worked into fictions. (1987: 8)

In both Bennett and Wollacott's quote and Jenkins's model there is a recognition of the ontological specificities of different media with each component, or element, of a transmedia text taking advantage of those specificities. Unlike Bennett and Wollacott's model, however, 'transmedia storytelling' does not involve the straight adaptation of content in one format (a book) into another format (a film). In Jenkins's model the distinct elements function with a kind of 'similar difference' by exploiting their own unique properties whilst working together to enhance each other, fill in gaps of information or widen out the audience's views on a particular diegesis.

There are two ways in which this sense of narrative coherence features across the variety of platform capabilities at play with a transmedia text. The first is that the narrative universe is shared, the same narrative codes featuring across the various platforms on which it appears. The second is

that different components should contribute different facts to the narrative, ensuring that together they build to a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. In the case of *Doctor Who*, the principal way in which the first of these appears is through characters, such as the Doctor and Mickey, appearing throughout each different transmedia element. In doing so they provide a recognisable figure that the audience can relate to and act as a form of narrative branding. Such narrative codes are shared at the level of the series; David Tennant dressed in a brown pinstripe suit and embodying the tenth Doctor is a key narrative (and promotional) code of the three seasons of the series he features in, but does not necessarily relate to any specific episode. These elements are made to fit more generally into the hyperdiegesis of the series, visually connecting to those moments that are seen through the source, television text.

In addition, there are also close narrative links made between each separate part of a transmedia *episode* that work to create coherence across the various platforms it appears on. The transmedia text of 'School Reunion', for example, features a shared situation (aliens posing as teachers in a school and using children to break a code that could unravel reality) and characters (most notably guest star Anthony Stewart Head as the headmaster Mr Finch) that feature in the Tardisode, website and game. The Tardisode features Mickey reading about mysterious happenings at the school and calling Rose (explaining the Doctor and Rose's presence at the school in the episodes); the alternate reality website includes a site of the fictional school from the episode, Deffrey Vale; the 'Defeat the Head' game involved the player cracking the code themselves and then choosing whether to 'destroy reality' or not, egged on all the while by Mr Finch. In each case the individual component fits the narrative of the episode whilst also being tailored to the specific platform or form, consisting of a short narrative 'bite' for the mobile content and the mechanical interactivity and pleasures of problem solving and achievement associated with gaming (see Caillois, 2001 (1953)).

It is the importance of the episode narrative in particular that proves useful in distinguishing transmedia storytelling from practices such as marketing and merchandising, and from other narrative forms such as novels, audiobooks or radio plays in that the relationship to the narrative of the television episodes is different. The website, games and Tardisodes do not offer adaptations of the same story as the television episodes, as with novelisations, or different stories within the broader universe of the programme, as with cinematic spin-offs or original novels. Instead, they offer new perspectives on the story seen in the episodes, providing more narrative information and allowing the viewer to explore its diegesis. They not only contribute to the universe of *Doctor Who* as a whole; they also contribute to the specific narrative of individual episodes. Certain elements cannot, necessarily, be understood or enjoyed without the presence of others, something that Jenkins identifies as a problem with the *Matrix* trilogy in terms

of its appeal to a broader audience (2006: 93–94). Although the 'Defeat the Head' flash game could be played and enjoyed on its own merits, the Tardisode makes little sense outside of the broader context of the episode. Equally, although the episode is understandable on its own, the Tardisode provides missing information (how Mickey discovered what was going on at the school) that is not shown in the episode. The individual components of a transmedia episode rely on each other, to varying degrees, in order to make sense and be pleasurable for the audience.

Authorship

The second way in which contemporary transmedia stories differ from earlier uses of the phrase is in a coherence that emerges from the point of production; more specifically, transmedia texts have a unified 'author'. Henry Jenkins argues that the key difference between the contemporary model of transmedia storytelling and models based on licensing and merchandise such as Kinder's, Brooker's and Caldwell's is in the processes of production. He argues, 'Under licensing, the central media company—most often the film producers—sells the rights to manufacture products using its assets to an often unaffiliated third party'. However, in this new model of transmedia storytelling, 'companies collaborate from the beginning to create content they know plays well in their sectors' (Jenkins, 2006: 105). In these emergent transmedia texts each platform takes a more equal role; they are conceived as a whole from the beginning. This point is illustrated in James Bennett's discussion of the BBC's coverage of the anniversary of D-Day in 2004. On this occasion the project was initiated by the BBC's New Media department, and key decisions about what would be produced for, and broadcast on, television were made after the new media elements of the text had been designed (Bennett, 2007). Bennett's example is a reversal of the earlier forms of transmedia texts described above that are 'spun-off' from a text produced for a more established platform such as the television. It highlights the shift that is currently occurring within the television industry away from viewing new media technologies as quirky ways to promote more traditional content, and towards platforms that can be integrated with older media forms to create a potentially full transmedia experience for the viewer.

In addition to contributing to the same overall narrative world, the transmedia texts that emerged in the early years of the twenty-first century also shared a strong sense of having come from the same source, be that at the level of broadcaster, production company or individual personnel. Matt Hills argues for the importance of 'an auteur' to the creation of an integrated narrative in his discussion of cult texts: '[I]t is the auteur which acts as a point of coherence and continuity in relation to the world of the media cult' (2002: 132). It is the sense of coherence that the author brings to a cultural object that provides both the value and complexity of

understanding 'authorship' in relation to transmedia texts. Some recent examples of transmedia storytelling privilege the idea of the 'author' as a specific individual. In particular, the appearance of the *same* authorial figures across platforms becomes a key indicator of legitimacy for many recent texts. In the case of *Lost* (ABC, 2004–2010), for example, each episode of mobile series *Lost: Missing Pieces* features a set of credits similar to those seen in each episode that includes many of the same personnel. However, for many examples of transmedia storytelling the situation is more complex, with the position of 'author' attributed at an institutional, rather than personal, level.

Robert J. Thompson and Gary Burns indicate the difficulties of 'television authorship' when they write, '[T]he identity of the [television] author had never been clear in the first place' (1990: ix). The key issue with transmedia storytelling that makes this notion of a single, individual author even more problematic than its application to a single cultural industry is the movement between individual industrial structures. Jon Kraszewski has argued that the notion of who the author is 'changes when we cross media' (2004: 9). He explores this through a comparison between film and television, writing,

> Film and television industries operate under very different divisions of labor, which influence who functions as an author in each medium . . . a director is the key person to design the visual look of a film. In television, however, a director might direct a few episodes per season and have to fulfil the visual style of a particular program already designed by creators and producer. (8)

The consequence of this medium-specific model of authorship is that when texts are created across multiple media platforms, then the question of who the author is becomes even more complex. The development of games, for example, will involve the cooperation of programmers as well as designers and writers. If each individual medium within a transmedia text has a different relationship between personnel and different individuals involved, who acts to ensure the narrative coherence discussed above?

A solution to understanding the complexities of transmedia authorship, and the second indication of how contemporary transmedia texts differ from earlier examples, is to consider not only 'authorship' as a contributory factor to the increased integration evident in transmedia narrative such as *Doctor Who*, but also the role of the institution as that author. Matt Hills complicates the assumption of the auteur as a single figure when he writes, '[W]here no obvious candidate for the role of *auteur* is apparent, then the functions of authorial discourse can, as *Doctor Who* illustrates, be split across personnel (the typical triumvirate would be producer-director-star)' (2002: 133). One section of Thompson and Burns' book proclaims the possibility of 'The Studio as Auteur', indicating the

potential for authorship operating at institutional level. In many transmedia television texts a sense of authorship is not necessarily attributed to an individual but instead to the larger production and broadcast institutions behind those individuals. Branding and industrial policy combine to create an authorial figure that provides both a marketable coherence and an integrated production process. This is certainly the case with *Doctor Who*. The text appears across the BBC's television channels, radio station, website and merchandising, and the branding of the BBC is prominently displayed across all. Even in the case of websites that were designed to appear as if they are part of the 'real world', BBC authorship was still present; when visitors clicked through the 'About Us' link (a common feature on corporate websites) they would be told that the site was fictional and created by the BBC. Similarly, the graphic style and music of the programme is replicated, with the programme's logo appearing in truncated credit sequences in each of the different media elements[16]. In fact the non-televisual transmedia elements of *Doctor Who* display no visible evidence of any individual author, no person is credited with writing, directing or producing the content despite someone clearly having done so[17]. This lack only further positions the BBC as the author; they are the visible source of *Doctor Who* content and that source remains constant across the platforms of the transmedia narrative.

This authorial coherence manifests not only through the branding of each transmedia text but also through broader shifts both within public service broadcasting in the United Kingdom more generally and the BBC more specifically. New media elements are no longer added on to support or promote a more recognisable form; the balance between the different elements of a transmedia text has become more equal. In some respects the exploitation and promotion of new technologies has always been a part of the BBC's public service remit, and so such developments can be seen as part of the natural evolution of the corporation. Andrew Crisell, for example, describes

> the BBC's dual policy of using [BBC Two] with its relatively low audiences, as a test-bed for new technology, and using a new technology which would eventually become a beneficial and standard feature of television to lure more viewers to the network. (1997: 116)

Asa Brigg's history of the BBC similarly includes detailed outlines of the Corporation's role in the development of technology ranging from new forms of recording content (1995: 832–839) to colour television (848–863). However, even with this history of technological innovation and promoting technological literacy, the current shifts within the television industry with regards to the creation of transmedia texts is something new. The emergence of new media platforms has led to a self-re-conceptualisation by the BBC of the kind of content they should provide.

The emergence of digital technologies has led to a reshaping of a number of European public service broadcasters. Hallvard Moe, for example, explains how Norwegian broadcaster Norsk Rikskringkasting does 'not think of itself as a broadcaster of radio and television but rather as a content provider for all platforms that served the users' needs' (2008: 223). This change is also evident within the UK television industry. In its response to a review by the Department of Media Culture and Sports into its online services, the BBC proclaimed,

> Uniquely among European public broadcasters the BBC has become a genuinely tri-media organisation, with television, radio and online services all complementing and enhancing each other, enabling far greater delivery of value to licence payers than was ever possible in the age of linear media. (2003: 4)

What is particularly telling about this quote is the phrase 'in the age of linear media'. This is positioned as the past, with the current media landscape as somehow 'non-linear'; it has changed and the key way in which it has changed is the emergence of platforms such as the internet. The focus here is clearly on a collection of different services that 'enhance' each other, suggesting that web content can be used to provide additional engagement in relation to texts originally found on television[18]. This approach has since become part of the BBC's official role. In its 2006 Charter, the BBC was tasked with 'helping to deliver to the public the benefit of emerging communications technologies and services' (DCMS, 2006: 3). Mark Thompson, Director General of the BBC, responded to this task in his introduction to the corporation's programme policies for 2006/2007:

> For the first time this year we have a new public purpose: to help build digital Britain. Without exception every BBC service now provides some digital interactivity—whether podcasts or a website—designed to encourage and include everyone, and to expose us all to the benefits of the future. (BBC, 2006: 3)[19]

Digital media technologies, including the internet and mobile phone, were explicitly placed under the remit of the BBC, with the role of public service broadcasting changing to account for developments in both technology and audience behaviour.

The BBC solidified the importance of 'transmedia' production strategies in its policy of '360 Degree Commissioning'. Mark Thompson outlined this philosophy in a speech to BBC staff when he said, '[W]e also need to find ways to develop content across platforms—what we're calling 360 degree commissioning and production' (2006: online). In this approach to programme production, content is envisioned from the start, at the point of commissioning, to appear on multiple platforms, not just the Corporation's

established outputs of television and radio. Thompson envisions this in practical terms in a re-structuring of the Corporation:

> 360 degree content creation, delivering for our linear television channels but also for all the new on-demand and web-based platforms needs to become practical reality rather than just rhetoric and this new grouping will enable us to do that.
>
> It will bring together three existing divisions—Drama, Entertainment and Children's, Factual & Learning, and Television, and three central activities for the BBC—audio-visual commissioning, services, and production. (2006: online)

The BBC has established 360 degree commissioning, a practical application of transmediality, not only as a philosophy for commissioners but also as part of the Corporation's move to secure its identity. As Nikki Strange has argued, the BBC has become less about making 'programmes' and more about making 'bundled projects' (2007) that may involve televisual material, interactive gaming texts, mobile texts or other media platforms.

This industrial integration has subsequently filtered through into the practical processes of television development. In an interview, Victoria Jaye, Head of Fiction and Entertainment Multiplatform Commissioning for BBC Vision, described how the way in which the corporation designs and develops such content has become specifically focused on creating more integrated texts:

> [W]e've moved multiplatform commissioning to sit within linear commissioning. So we're trying to move towards being a 'content provider', but we've quite a long way to go with that; we're still very much a TV business but multiplatform commissioning sits within each of the genres. (personal interview, September 2009)

Indeed, Jaye identifies the BBC as moving to being a 'content provider' and a greater collaboration between those departments at the BBC responsible for content and those responsible for technological innovation:

> We need to involve our colleagues in Future Media to ensure that the technology roadmap marries up, or is aligned to what we're looking to commission editorially for BBC Online. So our working with Future Media and Technology is really, really important and collaborative.

Jaye continued to say that this represents a significant shift from institutional policy only a few years ago:

> In previous days, Future Media self-commissioned all content, all technology irrespective of channel strategy, irrespective of genre strategy, irrespective of talent strategy . . . It was not integrated with or aligned

to the BBC's audience facing strategy. Decisions about these issues were made within TV Channels or Genre Commissioning.

By restructuring the process of commissioning to position non-televisual-based content alongside its televisual source, and forming closer relationships between content and technology developers, the BBC emphasises the development of these narratives as specifically and consciously transmedia. Although speaking long after the release of the transmedia *Doctor Who* episodes being discussed here, Jaye's comment solidifies a sense of coherence that is evident in embryonic form in the way the episodes were constructed and released. There is no sense of multi-platform, transmedia content being an add-on to the everyday business of television commissioning and production. Instead, it is positioned within that everyday business, a natural part of television production. Not only are the narratives themselves integrated to create a coherent whole; behind-the-scenes industrial practices are similarly coherent.

Temporalities

The third and final way in which contemporary transmedia television texts differ both from previous uses of the term and from related industrial practices is concerned with the temporalities at play with television engagement. In earlier examples of multi-platform narrative, in particular the creation of tie-in novels, there is no correlation between when individual components are made available. The *Doctor Who* novels were released months if not years after episodes featuring the relevant Doctor aired. Spring 2010 saw the release of several novels and audiobooks featuring the tenth Doctor (David Tennant) despite the fact that audiences had already seen him regenerate into his successor (Matt Smith). There is little sense of the stories on non-televisual platforms 'fitting' with the television narratives up to that particular point. The viewer is not encouraged to engage with these various narratives in a particular order. *Code of the Krillitanes* by Justin Richards features the aliens from the Season 2 episode 'School Reunion' but was not published until 4 March 2010, nearly four years after the episode aired. This is a natural result of the production process for television and novels, something that Nancy Holder writes can also interfere with a tie-in novel's ability to take account of narrative events in the television series (2010: 193–194) and so limit the novels ability to fill the narrative criteria discussed above. The different production processes associated with different media platforms can interfere with the potential creation of coherent, integrated transmedia texts.

Within specific moments of transmedia storytelling, the various production schedules are aligned to ensure a coherent temporality across the various platforms involved. Television is a temporal medium. Episodes have fixed

lifespans in which they are released and exist as the 'current' segment of narrative before being replaced by the next episode. With broadcasting this kind of temporality is one of peaks and troughs; an episode is released at a set time on a set date; a certain number of minutes later it is then over and becomes inaccessible. A certain period of time later the next episode is aired. With new media technologies, however, it becomes possible to extend that timeframe. Victoria Jaye described the need to recognise a shift in the temporalities of television broadcasting: 'I think we've been very hung up on the network window and transmission window which is, of course, valuable, but there's also a long tail window' (personal interview, September 2009). Transmedia storytelling functions within this 'long tail window'. The notion of transmedia elements 'fitting together' in a temporal framework has also been recognised by figures within the US television industry. Danny Bilson, executive Vice President of Core Games, described the timings involved in production as one of the difficulties of integrating television and non-television content, particularly videogames, into a transmedia story:

> TV has a schedule that delivers new content every week, let's say twenty two weeks a year. Game production, or the other transmedia pieces have to line up with that delivery schedule . . . You have to look at the fiction that's leading and how fast it's delivering and sometimes you have to line up with that. So the example would be that a television show and a big game that probably takes two or three years to make are going to have a really hard time lining up. So we look for the transmedia pieces that can deliver in sync with the television if you have a serialised show that's moving through content. (2010: online)

The emergence of transmedia television texts is precisely about utilising the temporal windows inherent in the television schedule. Transmedia narratives involve the release of elements within a specific timeframe that, although not simultaneous, remains limited and related to the core text. The importance of such temporality is evident when considering the problems encountered when transmedia narratives become part of the global flow of television products. Alessandro Catania has described how the transmedia nature of programmes such as *Lost* and *Heroes* breaks down in a European market. The delays in broadcast transmission of the television episodes, he argues, means European viewers cannot fully engage with non-television based transmedia content as they have not seen the corresponding television episodes (2010).

A sense of temporal coherence is evident in how the transmedia elements of *Doctor Who* were released. The Tardisode, containing material that occurs prior to the start of the television episode's narrative, was released first, shortly after the broadcast of the previous episode. The game, which allowed viewers to play within the fictional world established in the episode, was then made available when the episode had aired. Any alternate reality

website content created for the episode was also made available through the episode webpage after its initial broadcast. There is a clear progression that the viewer is encouraged to take (Tardisode–Episode–Website–Game) that reflects the way in which the narrative itself is constructed and the order in which events should play out. The temporalities of transmedia television narratives are fixed and closely associated with the broadcast schedule of the domestic broadcaster. Whereas, on the one hand, this means expanding the time in which each episode can be engaged with beyond the thirty, forty-five or sixty minutes of its broadcast, it also, on the other, means making specific use of the gap between episodes. The temporality of transmedia storytelling necessarily ties closely with the notions of narrative and authorship that have already been discussed. An authorial coherence and creation of such texts from the point of commissioning is necessary in order for a transmedia element to appear within the appropriate moment of an episode's lifespan. Similarly, that window is defined by the progression of the narrative within each element. The three characteristics of contemporary transmedia storytelling are intertwined, relying on each to create the internal coherence that separates out this emergent industrial practice from the marketing, merchandising and adaptation practices that have come before. Whereas one characteristic may figure more prominently than the others in various examples, all three are present.

ENGAGING WITH TRANSMEDIA STORYTELLING

Unlike earlier multi-platform expansions of television texts via merchandise, adaptations and spin-offs, transmedia storytelling is defined by a combination of narrative, author and temporal coherence. They are developed, constructed and released intentionally as a whole narrative unit. Whereas it is possible to engage with just the television episodes and be content with that level of experience in the diegetic world of *Doctor Who*, it is also possible to widen engagement with that diegesis to include the Tardisode, episode and game. The text of *Doctor Who* has the potential to exist as much more than the forty-five-minute-long episodes broadcast on BBC One on a Saturday evening. This is not to say that these older practices are no longer part of television strategies or mutually exclusive of transmedia storytelling. Each of the transmedia elements of *Doctor Who* additionally serves to promote the television series despite potentially providing engagement in and of itself. But they do *more* than merely promote the series. They are equally not adaptations of one story, translated onto another medium; they tell *different* stories, or different parts of a larger story. A transmedia television episode can ultimately be seen as a story that is engaged with across a range of audio-visual platforms, during a limited timeframe and defined by shared episode-specific narrative codes and either personal or corporate authorship. Such transmedia episodes can then build to collectively construct a

transmedia narrative world that may in turn be enhanced through related practices of adaptation, novelisations, spin-offs and merchandising. The elements that combine to present *Doctor Who* as an example of transmedia storytelling are not the only ways in which *Doctor Who* appears and functions on multiple platforms. But the combination of narrative, authorial and temporal characteristics, as described in this chapter, distinguishes them as a particular form of cultural production.

It is then necessary to consider the kinds of engagement such a coherent, multi-platform narrative encourages in its audience. A recurrent theme that will run through each of the case studies in Part II is that of immersion. A fictional world is an imaginative space that the viewers can lose themselves in. A transmedia fictional world is one in which the viewers can lose themselves in a range of different contexts and in which a variety of values and conflicts concerning the relationship between text, viewer and technology come into play. For Jenkins the transmedia fictional worlds of contemporary texts *require* engagement with all its elements across multiple media platforms:

> To fully experience any fictional world consumers must assume the role of hunters and gatherers, chasing down bits of the story across media channels, comparing notes with each other via online discussion groups, and collaborating to ensure that everyone who invests time and effort will come away with a richer entertainment experience. (2006: 21)

Jenkins's argument is that the television programme (or film) offers only a small window into the wider fictional world of contemporary drama. He sees it as now impossible to fully engage with a text such as *Doctor Who*, *Spooks*, *24* or his own example of *The Matrix* by only watching the film or television programme. There is, however, a need to test the extent to which this is the case. How do *audiences* themselves perceive the relationship between different elements of a transmedia drama text? Are some privileged over others? There is therefore a need for further research into how new media technologies are truly functioning as transmedia extensions of television drama in the eyes of the audience, and the second half of this book, in particular Chapters 4 and 5, begin to answer to this.

2 The Transmedia Industry
Distribution and Engagement

The kinds of multi-platform narrative worlds found with transmedia storytelling are only part of the picture when it comes to the shifting contemporary media landscape. In considering the perspective of the audience, the limitation of this single-focused model of transmediality becomes apparent. The question of how audiences are engaging with extensions of a television text (the games, websites and mobile content) also raises the question of how they are engaging with the core episodes themselves. Part of this potential, the part that demands a re-working of Jenkins's model, is the provision of new media as *alternative* televisual platforms. Anna Everett argues, '[N]ew digital media technologies make meaning not only by building a new text through absorption and transformation of other texts, but also by embedding the entirety of other texts (analog and digital) seemingly within the new' (2003: 7). Televisual content is not just being transformed into transmedia storytelling; it is also being placed wholesale within digital interfaces. The viewers can continue to watch content via their television set and a broadcast structure, but they also have the option of watching on other platforms, with all the potential benefits and drawbacks that those platforms bring with them. This is what can be understood as 'transmedia engagement'.

Transmedia engagement actually involves two interrelated processes, one that concerns the television industry and one that concerns the actual behaviour of audiences. The first could more aptly be labelled transmedia distribution and involves the placing of television content by a number of agents (both within and outside of the traditional television 'industry') on multiple platforms including television, the internet and the mobile phone. The second is more specifically labelled transmedia engagement and relates to the practices of audiences in this environment of transmedia distribution. Audiences can now move across media; they can watch some episodes of a television series on a television, some on their computer and some on their mobile phone; in extreme cases where viewing on one platform is interrupted this movement could take place within a single episode. This chapter will explore the first of these processes by examining the various sites on the internet and mobile phone where audiences can find television

episodes. It will construct a taxonomy of transmedia distribution practices that relates them to pre-digital practices and television industry structures. By understanding how transmedia distribution reshapes 'television', it becomes possible to consider how audiences experience the results of such distribution practices via transmedia engagement, the focus of Chapter 6.

Mobile and internet platforms are also increasingly being used to distribute user-generated content and original fictional content. The focus here, however, is on content that was originally broadcast via television and the multiple platforms on which it is now available[20]. Similarly, set-top boxes are increasingly allowing viewers to watch television content on demand. Often these are versions of broadcaster's online services that are merely made accessible via internet enabled games consoles such as the Wii and Playstation 3 or digital television providers such as Virgin Media. However, these services maintain the centrality of the television set. Because transmediality involves production, distribution and reception practices that move away from the television set, the focus in this chapter will be on the proliferation of online and mobile sites where viewers can watch content originally broadcast to television sets. It will equally not consider personal technologies such as the Slingbox that allow individuals to divert broadcast content to a computer via a web connection. Although offering an example of transmedia engagement, it does not function as transmedia distribution, operating on an individual scale, rather than an industrial one, as a kind of 'simulcast PVR'. The focus here will be on services that are offered *to* the viewer, rather than on technologies that allow them to manipulate the original broadcast stream themselves.

Whereas transmedia storytelling reveals how the nature of television content is changing, transmedia distribution reveals how the industry is changing. Over ten years ago, Timothy Todreas offered a glimpse of how digital technologies could reshape the nature of the US television industry, a glimpse that is proving prophetic in a number of ways, not just in the United States. He writes,

> The story begins with the defining structural feature in the television industry, the 'distribution bottleneck.' The distribution bottleneck is the stranglehold that stations and cable operators have had in the television business. Ownership of the bottleneck allowed the distributors of video to capture most of the profits available to the industry. (1999: 9)

Just such a bottleneck exists in the UK industry as well, with a small number of institutions (BBC, ITV, Channel 4, Five, Sky, Virgin Media) acting as gatekeepers, dominating access to the broadcast spectrum and the provision of content to audiences. These institutions decide which programmes are broadcast and, in the case of Sky and Virgin, which channels are made available to their subscribers. As Richard Halton, director of video on demand service Project Canvas, describes, 'If you want to be on a TV set

[in the United Kingdom] at the moment, you have to be a big broadcaster with Freeview or Sky' (Murphy, 2009: online). Todreas, however, argues that the internet in particular changes this:

> In contrast to the traditional television business in which content creators were dependent on producers, content creators can often make do without producers on the Web. If creators merely want a presence on the Web, all they have to do is to hire designers and programmers in order to build their own sites. (1999: 100)

He goes on to raise the questions, 'What happens when television loses its monopoly on video? How will the struggle between content providers shake out on a digital battlefield?' (104). This chapter will look out how UK television institutions are in the process of losing their monopoly as new sources for television content emerge, and the implications of this loss for our understanding of 'television'. The point of interaction between viewer and content, what, given the centrality of computers to transmedia distribution, could be called the 'interface', has become multiple. Does content that operates via transmedia distribution and engagement remain 'television' when it is removed from the television set and broadcasting? How is the nature of the 'television industry' challenged by the multiplicity of distribution avenues?

TRANSMEDIA DISTRIBUTION: THE (INTER)FACES OF THE TRANSMEDIA TELEVISION INDUSTRY

The notion of an 'alternative' to broadcasting has some precedence in the early days of the television industry. Episode novelisations were the most common official alternative to an original audio-visual text. James Chapman discusses the novelizations of the early *Doctor Who* serials, arguing, 'In the days before home video, and until the first serial was repeated on BBC2 as part of the season "The Five Faces of Doctor Who" in 1981, the Target novelisations were the closest that fans had to the original programmes' (2006: 26). When the story world of *Doctor Who* is not available through a television, the viewer could turn to a different media form, a novel. However there are fundamental differences between this example and more recent transmedia practices. The content of the novelisation is ultimately not identical to the content of the television series; it is not audio-visual and encourages a different kind of engagement; the book acts more as an adaptation or substitute than a true alternative. As Chapman points out, even the story is not necessarily the same: 'David Whitaker . . . when writing the first spin-off novelisation, omitted the first [television] adventure ["10,000 BC" or "The Tribe of Gum"] in its entirety' (2006: 26). The actual storyline of the novels differed from the storyline of the television text. Whereas there is evidence of novels acting as an alternative platform

that counteracts the technological limitations of the time, the use of the novel as a transmedia distribution platform is limited.

As domestic audio-visual technology evolved, the television industry began to make use of distribution methods that would make the actual content of television episodes (rather than substitutes) available to audience. The VCR and DVD player created a proliferation of ways that television content is distributed to audiences. Viewers were able to record television content themselves (see Cubitt, 1991; Gray, 1992) or purchase films and television programmes (see Klinger, 2006; Kompare, 2006; Hills, 2007). Although providing a clear history for the distribution and reception practices facilitated by the internet and mobile phone, these developments retained a focus on the television set and often involved long delays between a series' initial broadcast and the release of the VHS or DVD. Transmedia distribution and engagement de-centres the television set completely and shrinks this time lag. Viewers can now watch television episodes simultaneously (or near-simultaneously) to their original broadcast but without ever turning on their television set. This does not mean that the history of VCR and DVD distribution is unhelpful, indeed it often forms a useful context for considering subsequent developments, but there is a greater technological shift behind the emergence of transmedia distribution.

There is a certain element of technological determinism involved in the emergence of the internet and mobile phone as platforms for television content. The growth in popularity of broadband services to the point where they are now the standard way of accessing the internet and the increase in the size and quality of computer monitors have facilitated the possibility for broadcasters to make audio-visual content available via a home computer. There is now the technological infrastructure, on both a national and a domestic scale, to allow such data-heavy content to be transmitted and received. Equally the initial development of the mobile-phone network to create a larger capacity for data transfer and the emergence of phones that connect wirelessly to broadband internet services allowed the mobile phone to be transformed from a unit capable of conveying speech and limited text to one that is capable of carrying audio-visual material. The role that this technological development outside the television industry plays in determining how the internet and mobile phone are developed cannot be ignored. However, the way in which this capability has evolved into online and mobile televisual services indicates how those technological developments meet with existing industrial structures and the desires of the audiences.

Guerrilla Networks

One of the most notable characteristics of many emergent forms of transmedia distribution is that their development has been led by the audience. As Michael Curtin has observed, the industrial changes of the early

twenty-first century 'have been motivated in part by new competitors and new technologies, but just as important, they are spurred by the changing behaviours of audiences' (2009: 19). Audiences were beginning to practice transmedia distribution and engagement via 'guerrilla' networks long before broadcasters, echoing a number of pre-digital fan activities. Miles Booy describes how *Doctor Who* fans made audio recordings of early episodes before video recorders were available, an act that has now passed into 'official' archiving practice in their donation to the BBC (2010: 189). As with episode novelisations, this content is not identical to the original but provides an alternative within the domestic technology available at the time. The invention of the home video recorder allowed fans to overcome this technological limitation. Whereas availability of television content on commercial video tape was limited (see Kompare, 2006), the development of home recording technology allowed viewers themselves to record content, and so find an alternative to broadcasting, if not the television set itself. Camille Bacon-Smith discusses the development of US fan groups for British series *Blake's 7* (BBC, 1978–1981) and *The Professionals* (LWT, 1977–1983) during the early 1980s. At the time *The Professionals* had only had a limited airing in some areas of the US whereas *Blake's 7* did not air until the late 1980s. Despite this, videotape-viewing rooms at fan conventions had resulted in a dedicated fan community (Bacon-Smith, 1992: 115–121). These fans made use of (at the time) emergent technology in quite radical ways to record off-air broadcasts, make multiple copies of them (a laborious process that required access to a copy of the original from the UK, investment in a VCR that could play PAL video tapes at a time when VCRs were still new to the consumer market, and a video camera in order to make a copy) and create an unofficial distribution network that introduced science fiction fans to otherwise unavailable television texts. More recently, Derek Kompare has argued that the emergence of the television DVD boxset was a result of such fan practices, arguing that it 'has become a significant means to channel television fan engagement back to industry products' (2006: 349).

Unofficial distribution networks have become the most prominent example of digital transmediality's impact on the reception of televisual material. During the early 2000s a number of peer-to-peer file-sharing websites such as BitTorrent, Kazaa and, more recently, Pirate Bay emerged where viewers could download television programmes and films via the internet to their computer. Instead of broadcasters transmitting content through an aerial, cable or satellite dish to a television set, individual viewers retrieve content from broadcast streams, or often by intercepting the satellite feeds used to transmit master material across the United States, and upload them to the site. Other viewers then simultaneously download this content whilst also uploading it for other users resulting in a situation where the more users that are downloading the content, the faster the download becomes in what Jason Mittell terms 'a "swarming" cooperative distribution system' (2005:

online). More recently YouTube has also become a site for individual viewers to distribute broadcast content. In this case, content is 'unbundled' (Dawson, 2007), broken up into short segments to circumvent YouTube's policy of not allowing videos longer than ten minutes (see Marshall, 2009: 43).

These sites, or in the case of YouTube this particular audience activity, are not sanctioned by the television industry and so exist outside of its established economic and copyright structures and offer not only a different platform source (the computer rather than the television set) but also a different industrial structure and distribution network. They are operated by the audience, created by a desire for alternative paths of access to television content, and utilising the audience to allow the sites to run efficiently. The audience becomes central. If there are no users, it becomes impossible for anything to be downloaded. This viewer-led approach also distinguishes them from VCR- and DVD-based piracy networks. Content is placed on these distribution networks by individuals who are not part of a larger organisation and who, individually, make no money from it, with advertising fees going to the site owners rather than the uploaders. That content becomes detached completely from the television industry both in terms of how it is placed there and in terms of the interface through which the viewer accesses it.

Broadcasters—Catch Up

Historically it took the television industry a long time to begin to work against sites such as Kazaa and BitTorrent in ways other than trying to shut them down via legal proceedings (BBC News, 2005b)[21] or demanding YouTube removes copyrighted content. Although legal services for downloading music, such as MP3.com, Apple's iTunes and the now legalised Napster, have been in existence for a number of years, it has taken much longer for similar services to emerge in relation to televisual content. The situation has, until recently, mirrored Ian Dobie's view of the music industry in 2000: 'the demand for online music is blatantly there, but the supply is nowhere to be seen—the corporations continue to outlaw the illegal activity, but have provided no legitimate replacement solution until very recently' (Dobie, 2004 (2000): 208). From 2006 onwards, however, British broadcasters began developing online downloading services. Sky offered an initially limited service for its subscribers in January 2006 and was shortly followed by Channel 4, BBC, ITV and Five. Each broadcaster has a unique service that is positioned within their branded website but that offer similar distribution patterns. Viewers must visit an area on the broadcasters' websites where they can search for content by title, genre or original transmission date. They function predominantly as a 'catch up' for television broadcasting. In the case of iPlayer, 4 On Demand (4OD) and ITVPlayer, content is only available for a certain period of time, ranging from one week to one month, before vanishing[22]. Viewers do not pay for content

but, on ITVPlayer and 4OD, must watch adverts before and during the programme[23]. In the case of Demand Five and Sky Player, catch up functions through the sites' funding structures; after an initial period of a week, viewers must pay to 'rent' content. These services in themselves are limited, extending the window in which a viewer can access content but restricting that window.

For the BBC and Channel 4, the development of alternative points of transmedia distribution has been closely tied to public service broadcasting. James Bennett has argued that 'choice' has been a core part of the BBC's charters since the 1980s (Bennett, 2006: 269). While Bennett applies 'choice' to interactive television, it can also be seen in the development of transmedia distribution and engagement. By providing alternatives to television broadcasting, viewers are offered greater choice in how and where they engage with television. In its 2006 charter review, the BBC's remit cemented its relationship to digital technologies by including 'helping to deliver to the public the benefit of emerging communications technologies and services' (DCMS, 2006: 3) as one of its public purposes. This task has included facilitating the switchover from analogue to digital broadcast signals but has also involved the development of the BBC's website, www.bbc.co.uk. In its programme policy document for 2005/2006, the BBC stated, 'In the coming year bbc.co.uk will reduce the volume of content which is created specifically for the online service. Instead, cultural value will increasingly be delivered by offering on-demand access to BBC programming' (2005: 40). For the BBC, its development of an online downloading service was connected to its role as a public service broadcaster within a changing media landscape. The ambiguous and ill-defined 'cultural value' of its central ethos was seen as coming not from the provision of additional content but from creating additional outlets for content originally found on television and radio.

The BBC gave their download service, the iPlayer, a 'soft' launch in July 2007 with limited capabilities, followed by a full launch on Christmas Day and now offers a single virtual space where audiences can access all radio, and almost all televisual, content from the last seven days[24]. More so than with other broadcasters, this service has become an integral part of the BBC's identity. It has been heavily trailed, with various BBC personalities describing how it makes 'the unmissable unmissable'. Every trailer that runs on the BBC's broadcast channels is now accompanied by both an aural and visual cue, inviting the viewer to use iPlayer if they have missed earlier episodes. It is positioned centrally on the homepage of the BBC website and became a permanent link at the top of every page in the website's redesign in early 2010. The corporation's programme policies for 2008/2009 indicate the continued importance of such services with plans to allow viewers to embed content in their own websites as well as access iPlayer content via digital television services such as Virgin Media (BBC, 2008a), something that came to fruition in 2009. The BBC has positioned the iPlayer

as a central part of it service, alongside already established media such as broadcast radio and television.

Britain's second public service broadcaster, Channel 4, has also embraced new media platforms as alternative sources for television content and has specifically articulated its policies in terms of following its audience's lead. This manifested in a belief that the internet, and mobile phone, can provide audiences with access to televisual content whenever and wherever they choose. As the channel's chief executive, Andy Duncan wrote, shortly before the launch of 4OD, 'We have to be wherever the audience is, and available on whatever device they want to use' (Channel 4, 2006: 4). Duncan's aspirations have not quite come to fruition. The channel did launch an online downloading service in January 2007, becoming the first terrestrial British broadcaster to do so. However its claim to be 'on whatever device' that the audience uses has not materialised, with the Channel 4 mobile site only involving short highlight clips, rather than full broadcast episodes.

Commercial broadcasters have used almost identical rhetoric in the release of their products. Richard Freudenstein, Sky's Chief Operating Officer, launched Sky's online and mobile services by saying 'Families' entertainment needs are changing fast and audiences increasingly expect to be able to access content whenever and wherever they want' (Sky, 2006: online). ITV described the rebranding of its catch up service to ITV Player with the comment, 'It is part of our overall ambition to make our content as widely available for audiences through whichever platform suits them best' (2008: online) and used the same phrase when announcing its World Cup 2010 application that allowed viewers to watch games through their iPhone or iPod Touch (2010: online). Both public-service and commercial broadcasters alike now believe that they must exploit the potentials of new media technologies to provide a range of different forms of engagement that fit in with the audience's changing patterns of consumption. The development of the internet and mobile phone as televisual platforms has been a response to these perceived changes in consumption, changes that primarily manifested in the guerrilla networks discussed previously and emphasised greater choice of where, when and how audiences watch television. Instead of accessing BBC television content through a certain channel of their television set, viewers can now watch it through an online interface, via the broadcaster's website, on their computer.

Collaborations—Internet

In addition to creating their own discrete online viewing services, broadcasters in the United Kingdom have increasingly entered into collaborations with other companies, both inside and outside the traditional television industry. It is nothing new for British broadcasters to form

strategic relationships with each other, particularly for the development of new television services. John Caldwell describes the US industry as 'actually comprised of many very different local industries locked into a world of "willed affinity"' (2004: 45). Although Caldwell is referring to the affiliate system in US broadcasting, the idea of industrial relationships based on 'willed affinity' is also useful outside of a US-specific context and can be used to consider the shifting relationships between industrial players in moments of technological change or development. Sky and Virgin Media, the UK's two subscription-based digital television services, rely on a symbiotic relationship whereby broadcasters provide them with channels and they provide broadcasters with a technical platform (including distributing hardware that may be produced by themselves or by yet another manufacturing company) to distribute them; Freeview and Freesat, the United Kingdom's free-to-air digital services, brought together the BBC, ITV, Channel 4, Sky and infrastructure company Arqiva; BBC Worldwide (the BBC's commercial arm) co-owns the UKTV range of digital channels with Sky. The emergence of the internet as a platform for transmedia distribution has led to a resurgence in such relationships and, more importantly, these relationships are becoming more visible to the audience. In the United States, online viewing service Hulu is co-owned by NBC Universal, News Corp (Fox), Walt Disney (ABC) and private equity firm Providence Equity Partners (Hulu, n.d.: online), and similar relationships are forming in the UK. Traditionally broadcasters have bought content from producers (or produced content themselves) and distributed it via television channels, or now online services, that they own. They are the ones that sell advertising space and collect the licence fee or subscription to pay for the content. They are also distinct, with unique brand identities and located via different buttons on the remote control, or on different websites. Emerging online platforms, however, are bringing these otherwise distinct media institutions together in two key ways: collaboration with other broadcasters and established infrastructure companies, and the use of third party distributors.

Intra-Industry Collaborations

The first model, as also seen in the case of Freeview, is cross-industry collaboration both between broadcasters and with the industry's 'hidden' companies. In 2008, BBC Worldwide, ITV and Channel 4 proposed a cross-broadcaster online platform called Kangaroo. Such a platform would have brought content from all three broadcasters together in one online portal. This collaboration was radically different from the relationships these broadcasters had experienced during the broadcast era, which placed them in competition for viewers; instead they would be working together to bring audiences to a shared online space. In 2009 the Competition Commission banned the development of Kangaroo, citing such collaboration

as the key issue when they decreed it 'would be likely to lead to a loss of rivalry between the parties, amounting to a substantial lessening of competition (SLC) in the supply of UK TV [video on demand] content at the wholesale and retail levels' (Competition Commission, 2009: 7)[25]. Despite this assertion that such collaboration was anti-competition, the philosophy behind Kangaroo eventually came to fruition with the launch of SeeSaw in March 2010. SeeSaw offers a range of UK and US content from the BBC, Channel 4 and Five. Some content is available for free but the viewer must watch adverts. Other 'premium' content, mainly US content and flagship BBC programmes such as *Doctor Who*, *Spooks* and *Life on Mars*, are available to rent for 99p per episode without adverts.

The website positions itself in close relationship to Channel4's 4OD and Five's Five On Demand, with the Channel 4 section of the site branded as 4OD. However, the service is not operated by any of the major broadcasters. Instead, it is run by Arqiva, a communications infrastructure company that is normally hidden from public view, working only with broadcasters to provide access to the UK's transmission technology. As such it sits in a unique place within the UK television industry, between and above traditional broadcasters. With Seesaw, however, the company becomes, in effect, a 'broadcaster' itself; the BBC, Channel 4 and Five are merely content providers; it is Arqiva (through SeeSaw) that sells ad space and offers the content to audiences. The 'hidden collaborations' of broadcast television have not vanished with companies such as Red Bee Media who are not only responsible for the branding of many channels including the BBC, but also now provide a number of transmedia services such as designing the iPlayer or metadata service Teleview for ITV (see Red Bee Media, 2007: online; 2010: online). However, SeeSaw offers a shift in the visible television industry, with new industrial partners running in parallel and partnership with the established brands of television broadcasters. Viewers do not visit a BBC service and unknowingly benefit from an industrial collaboration. With SeeSaw they are visiting a 'new' interface, one that is simultaneously separate from traditional broadcasters and closely tied to them.

Third-Party Distributors

The second collaborative model of transmedia distribution involves new companies or those that are not historically associated with television broadcasting. TVCatchup, a website that provides access to all UK free-to-air digital channels one second after their initial broadcast, is one example of new companies that are emerging as distributors of television content. Such a service is relatively unique. It has been far more common for companies, most noticeably iTunes, YouTube and Blinkbox, to act as digital versions of high street entertainment retail or rental stores such as HMV, Blockbuster or online stores such as Amazon. The emergence of the internet as a platform for downloaded content has led to an expansion

of this online market and again companies from outside of the television industry have emerged as key players[26]. In 2005 Apple's iTunes and iPod began to support video content, and the US iTunes store started selling films and television episodes; the UK store followed suit two years later, in August 2007. Apart from illegal file-sharing networks iTunes is currently the only way for UK viewers to purchase and keep downloaded content. In contrast, YouTube has responded to viewers using its platform to distribute content outside of copyright by forging a number of relationships with broadcasters to provide both short clips and full episodes for free. Content is free but YouTube does not provide the ability to download or keep episodes. Blinkbox, meanwhile, offers film and television for rental or retail with some programmes being offered free and others for a small fee. In both cases these are not deliberate collaborations between multiple broadcasters and companies that can provide a distribution platform. Instead, each broadcaster forges an individual relationship with an already established online space (as a music store or user generated content site for example), in effect selling their content on to a third party to distribute for them.

What distinguishes the industry's use of iTunes, YouTube and Blinkbox from collaborations such as SeeSaw is how the organisational structure of these websites works to play down the content's broadcast source. Broadcaster specific sites such as iPlayer are naturally focused around content that is found on a particular broadcast channel and strongly branded as coming from that broadcaster; iPlayer is clearly the BBC and does not include programmes shown by any other broadcaster. SeeSaw equally uses broadcasters as a way of categorising content. Although viewers can search by series title or genre the homepage also directs them to a BBC, Channel 4 or Five area. However, third-party sites, like the high street shops that preceded them, organise content by broader categories such as genre, release date or price. In iTunes, for example, the viewer can go to the 'TV Channels and Studio' link in order to access content arranged by original broadcaster. However, this is only one of many ways that content is organised on the sites and it is hidden via a link from the homepage. The homepage itself organises content as individual series via genre, price or how recently it was released. In addition content is arranged by original broadcaster. Series such as *Desperate Housewives* and *Lost* are listed under ABC rather than Channel 4 or Sky. For the British viewer the categorising of content in iTunes does not necessarily correspond with where they would have found content on their television set.

The differences between these two forms of collaborative transmedia distribution indicate the complexities of branding, which Catherine Johnson has argued 'has emerged as *the* defining industrial practice' (2007: 6, original emphasis) of the contemporary television industry, in moments of transmediality. Broadcasters' branding must sit alongside and within branding of the actual interface that viewers are using. SeeSaw's

branding sits alongside the BBC's, Channel 4's and Five's; in third-party sites, branding comes into conflict. In iTunes, each season of *Doctor Who* is given a unique 'home page' listing all episodes in that season, and containing graphics relating to the series and features the BBC logo. On YouTube broadcasters have their own 'channel's which collate all their content together in a clearly branded space. This branding even extends into individual videos, with Channel 4 and Five placing their idents over each video's thumbnail and positioning branded graphics on each video's individual webpage. As Johnson, calling on Timothy Todreas, argues, such branding is reassuring, 'providing points of access that are recognisable and reliable' (6) in a television environment of ever greater choice. However, this broadcaster/series branding must compete with the branding of iTunes and YouTube. The iTunes store is accessed only by going through iTunes software. The visible presence of the user's iTunes library and the permanent header with links to the App Store and iTunes U constantly reminding the user that they are in iTunes' space, not the BBC's or ITV's. Similarly, YouTube's now distinctive logo is at the top of every page, competing with the individual broadcasters' branding. In the case of Blinkbox, there is no evidence of the content's original broadcast source at all. US content sits alongside UK content from a wide range of original broadcasters. Broadcasters such as the BBC, ITV, ABC or the CW vanish; they become content providers for third parties who act as the audience's interface with television content.

Collaboration—Mobile Phones

Collaboration with non-television companies is also at the heart of mobile television development. Historically, the television and mobile phone industries were focused on providing very different services. The development of the third-generation (3G) network with its capacity to deliver high-bandwidth, audio-visual content has given telephone manufacturers and network providers the opportunity to trade in televisual style content. This has been followed by a series of technological developments in handset design, the merging of telecommunications regulator OFTEL and various media regulators including the Broadcasting Standards Commission and the Independent Television Commission into OFCOM, and collaborations between communications companies and television broadcasters. In terms of users' interface with mobile technology, institutional collaboration has always been central. Global electronics manufacturers such as Nokia, Sony Ericsson, Motorola, Samsung and LG are responsible for developing handset technology. Separate companies, such as Vodafone, Orange, T-Mobile and 3, are responsible for selling access to mobile phone networks within national boundaries. The relationship between these two groups is necessarily synergistic; handset manufacturers must work with network providers in order for their products to be useful and network providers rely on

manufacturers to make the tools that allow their customers access to their networks. Such relationships are often highly publicised, for example when O2 gained exclusive rights to sell the Apple iPhone in 2007. For users, decisions over which handset to choose are determined by which models are made available by their chosen network provider as much as any specific features. This ethos of collaboration has been brought into the development of mobile phones as multi-media devices with the emergence of mobile television a result of actions on the part of the manufacturers, network providers and broadcasters.

Handset manufacturers have been responsible for the development of technology that actually allows mobile phones to act as media devices. Improvements such as increased connectivity, memory capacity, battery life and processing power, widescreen and touchscreen interfaces, surround sound and, most recently, high definition screens allows them to act as receivers of high quality audio visual material. This is reflected in manufacturer advertising, with smartphones such as the iPhone, Nokia's N-Series or Samsung's Wave phone emphasising media-related features[27]. Stephen Groening has described how advertising for Samsung's range of media mobile phones employed images related to television viewing, with viewers sitting back in a range of environments ranging from a street to a building site and relaxing in front of their mobile phone screen rather than a television (2007).

The technological development of mobile phones has run parallel with cross-industry collaborations between broadcasters and network providers. The UK's first full mobile television service was launched by Vodafone in November 2007 and featured mobile channels from broadcasters such as Sky and Channel 4. Content is streamed to mobile phones over the high bandwidth 3G network. Whereas broadcasters provided the content, a non-television company, Vodafone, offered the infrastructure to allow that content to be distributed to mobile phones. The remaining British network providers, Orange, T-Mobile, 3 and Virgin, followed shortly after with similar services. Max Dawson has argued that mobile content producers take two approaches to mobile content. In the first, content is 'miniaturized', a process whereby producers 'shrink established media properties to sizes, scales, and durations appropriate to the diminutive new devices' (2007: 234). In this type of content episodes are edited down to their highlights, the key narrative moments of a forty-two-minute episode being reduced to three or four minutes instead. Dawson's second approach to mobile television content, meanwhile, involves, 'the development of all new formats, narrative modes and visual styles' (2007: 235).

There is, however, within the UK at least, a third philosophy for mobile television narrative in addition to the two discussed by Dawson. It is also possible for a mobile phone to receive identical content to that available via television broadcasting without that content being 'miniaturized'. The HBO Mobile channel, which launched on the Vodafone mobile television

service in December 2005, offers an example of this kind of mobile television. Unlike the other channels offered, which provide short 'bites' of programming along the lines of Dawson's first model, the HBO mobile channel shows full, unedited episodes of HBO produced programmes such as *Sex and the City* (1998–2004), *Six Feet Under* (2001–2005) and *Curb Your Enthusiasm* (2000–2005). Similarly, unlike other mobile television channels, which mimic the flow of a broadcast schedule, these episodes are shown on a loop, with two or three episodes being repeated throughout the day. Whereas most mobile content, as will be explored in Chapter 5, offers an adapted version of recognisably televisual material, the HBO channel functions as a straight alternative to the television set. Instead of watching HBO programmes on broadcast channels such as Channel 4 (*Six Feet Under*) or the Paramount Comedy channel (*Sex and the City*), the viewer can choose to watch them via their mobile phone instead. More recently, the BBC has developed a mobile version of its iPlayer, allowing access to full episodes via a wi-fi connection or the 3G network. In this respect, the mobile phone is being positioned as an alternative screen to the television. As with the development of downloading services, the television set's position has become de-centred by the mobile phone, but this is only possible through non-media institutions entering into collaborations with established members of the television industry.

UNDERSTANDING TRANSMEDIA DISTRIBUTION

The interfaces through which a viewer can access television episodes have multiplied exponentially. To return to the example of *Doctor Who*, regardless of whether a viewer watches the full transmedia narrative, they still have a range of options open to them for where and how they watch the core television episodes. They could watch via methods that are familiar from before the emergence of digital technologies. They could watch the broadcast on a Saturday evening on BBC One, they could record it on their PVR and watch it later or they could wait, purchase the DVDs and watch it on their DVD player. However, each of these options still links them to their television set. If they have a computer they could also watch the broadcast version near-live via a catch up service like TVCatchUp, watch it up to seven days later via the BBC's iPlayer for free, rent an episode via SeeSaw, buy an individual episode via iTunes or access it illegally via a file-sharing site. If they have a wi-fi-enabled mobile phone or media player, they could access any of these whilst on the move. The viewer is increasingly given greater agency over where and how to access television episodes. As a result, the very nature of the television industry is changing. Companies that previously had nothing to do with television now sit next to established broadcasters; companies that were connected to those broadcasters now play different roles, taking on additional remits. These services fall into

the preceding four categories based on the kinds of relationships that are formed between companies and how those relationships are presented, via branding, to audiences. However, despite these differences, there are two core issues that apply across all these services and that set the transmedia television industry apart from the multi-channel but television set bound industry of the late twentieth century: the packaging of content and issues of legitimacy and authority. Both of these characteristics function differently in relation to different examples of transmedia distribution and ultimately raise the question of where the boundaries of the television industry now fall.

Rethinking the 'Television' Industry: Packaging and Funding Downloaded Content

The first characteristic that distinguishes the various distribution sites discussed previously is how content is packaged and how access to content is paid for. As has already been discussed, branding figures in a variety of ways across the sites. It is absent in peer-to-peer sites, reaffirmed in catch-up services, and in conflict with host branding in third party collaborations. At the same time, whether and how audiences pay for content indicates not only how different sites relate to broadcasters' positions within a broader media market, but also where the industry perceives the value of its own content lies. Mobile television services follow a conventional pattern that mimics that of subscription television. A certain amount is added to a user's monthly phone bill, or taken off their credit if they are pay as you go customers, and they are given access to a mobile television service for a certain period of time (usually a day or a month). Content is packaged as a series of channels, just as non-terrestrial broadcast television is, with the overall flow of the 'broadcast' stream being privileged. The viewer pays the same amount whether they watch a few minutes or a few hours within the time they have paid for. They tune in at a certain time and must watch whatever is made available by the broadcaster at that time.

Online services, however, offer a range of funding models that package television content not as a broadcast stream but as distinct units, usually defined by the season or the episode. Episodes may be available for free download (illegal file-sharing services), free for a short period of time with or without adverts (catch up services), rented for a small fee and a limited period of time (catch up services) or bought outright (iTunes or Blinkbox). In each case, however, the unit for 'sale' is the episode. This indicates a significant shift in the way that television content is presented to audiences. Two of the key defining models of television content that have been central to the development of television studies over the past three decades are Williams' theory of flow and Ellis' theory of the segment. These two models focus on the macro and micro of television

content. In Williams' theory, television becomes a mass of constantly changing images (1974: 93). In Ellis' model, television becomes a series of small units (scenes) that collectively build to form a programme, advert breaks and eventually the television schedule (1992 (1982): 116–122). Derek Kompare positions this packaging of content in contrast with the way books are published: '[W]hile the publishing model deals in media as discrete objects, the flow model is premised instead on the aggregate experience of television over time, rather than on individual texts' (2006: 346). He goes on to argue that the DVD box set turns television into a publishing industry (347).

Downloading offers a further reconfiguration of the way television content is packaged and presented to audiences. Viewers must still engage with a 'flow', that of a computer's start-up screens and the website's internal architecture of homepage and hyperlinks (see Seiter, 1999: 119), but this sense of flow is limited, and ultimately the engagement involved with downloading software is fundamentally different from Williams' model. There is little sense that there has been a 'replacement of a programmed series of timed sequential units by a flow series of differently related units' (Williams, 1974: 93). Within each website the viewer choose which part they will visit, which episode to watch. William Uricchio describes this difference, in relation to YouTube, as 'a shift from flow as default to flow as a condition that requires active selection' (2009: 33). Rather than packaged as part of a flow or as a series, content is packaged as discrete episodes[28]. Trailers for Channel 4's 4OD encapsulated this idea. The first conceived of the software as a vending machine with the 'viewer' walking away with a single programme text, represented by a single figure. Later trailers constructed it as a room full of videotapes or a corner shop, with programmes represented by everyday grocery items such as washing powder, beer and tinned vegetables.

Downloading services ultimately go a step further than even the VCR and PVR's capability to lift programmes out of a flow. Whereas theories of flow or the segment can be used to consider how television is experienced by viewers, it is far more useful to think of them in terms of understanding how broadcasters construct television. Both models describe the way that the television industry has organised content into a temporal structure, something that technology such as the VCR has subsequently been used to 'subvert' (Gray, 1992: 120). The PVR, although listing individual programmes, does not remove them from this flow. Electronic programme guides in fact make the flow visible, positioning each programme alongside those that follow it. Viewers may be able to lift programmes from that flow but they must still be aware of it; they must know when a programme is on in order to capture it.

In the case of downloading services, however, content is not provided this way; it instead appears in an archive or library format where everything is available all the time. There are no schedules[29]. Instead of knowing

the date and hour that a programme is on they simply need to know which website to go to or the name of it in order to search iTunes or the peer-to-peer networks. In this respect then, downloading services encapsulate the approach of writers such as John Caldwell who call for the recognition of television as rewarding 'discrimination, style consciousness, and viewer loyalty in ways that counteract the clutter' (1995: 26). With downloading, viewers *must* discriminate, they must be 'drawn towards specific programmes' (Grisprud, 1998: 29) because content is packaged as programme units, and not as part of a larger broadcast stream.

If downloaded content is packaged and experienced differently from traditional television content, can it still be considered 'television'? Paul Rixon argues that the context in which audio-visual material appears is crucial to how it should be defined and interpreted. Calling on Williams' flow theory and Nick Browne's theory of television as a 'supertext' of programme and non-programme content, Rixon argues that

> a television text is only experienced within the supertext—if watched outside of this it is not part of the television medium, it is a DVD or a video text. Programmes, by their nature, are designed with the flow in mind. The flow, in turn, is constructed to make the most of the programme. (Rixon, 2006: 29)

For Rixon, to remove a programme from the constant stream of unrelated, ephemeral images characteristic of broadcasting is to prevent it from being 'television'. However, this is a rather restrictive view of what television is, especially in the case of serial dramas such as *Spooks* and *24*, and instead creates categories that do not hold up to scrutiny. *24* is clearly different from a two-hour-long film with a discrete narrative or even a single television play, but in Rixon's model both film drama and television drama would be given the same label: 'DVD drama'. As Rixon himself states, programmes are 'designed with the flow in mind'. This structure does not disappear completely when they are removed from that flow, something Rixon recognises when he discusses the 'strange fade-outs and fade-ins' of missing advert breaks when US television is shown on British channels (2006: 1). Whether *24* is watched each week on Sky One, on DVD, or is downloaded, the content is still divided into episodic units which are structured both within themselves (even though that structure may not result in narrative closure) and as part of a larger season arc. Removing content from the broadcasting flow, or supertext, does not remove all of the fundamental aspects that distinguish television drama from other dramatic audio-visual texts such as films. It may not be *broadcasting* but that is not to say it is not *television*. The nature of the content as episodic and serial does not vanish when it is removed from the broadcasting. However, downloading does offer a distinct *packaging* of television, privileging the discrete unit over the whole flow.

Rethinking the Television 'Industry': The Authority of (Il)Legitimacy

If downloaded content can still function as 'television', who now acts as part of the 'television industry' given the multiplicity of television interfaces discussed previously? In the broadcast television era, the technological complexities involved in actually getting content to television screens put it far beyond the reach of many. In addition to production facilities, or the funds to buy content, it required a license from the government permitting use of part of the highly controlled television spectrum and access to transmission technology across a wide area. The multi-channel expansion of digital television did not change this on a fundamental level. Although it was technically possible for individual viewers to circumvent those structures to access content with illegal reception equipment (see Portin, 1984), it was impossible for them to become distributors themselves. New channels tended to be owned by existing broadcasters and so the actual sources of content remained relatively stable. The VCR brought about pirate distribution networks (see O'Regan, 1990; McDonald, 2007) but even these required access to machines capable of making multiple copies and a distribution network of backstreet vendors in order to reach anything near a mass audience.

Although the technological requirements for broadcasting limited who had access to this mode of mass communication, the presence of small-scale pre-digital guerrilla networks, such as Booy's *Doctor Who* fans and Bacon-Smith's *The Professionals/Blake Seven's* fans, indicate some sense of audiences seeking to redress perceived imbalances in the relationship between viewer and industry. These networks were completely unauthorised and remained clearly distinct from the 'proper' television industry, hidden away at fans' homes and at conventions. Transmedia distribution takes such acts into broader cultural practice, blurring the boundaries between official and unofficial, and traditional and non-traditional sources. This is particularly the case for the internet rather than the mobile phone. Although a Bluetooth connection can be used to transfer data over a small distance, it requires proximity that does not lend itself to the mass distribution that the 3G network does. The closed circuit nature of the mobile phone network makes it impossible for anyone other than official members of that network to distribute content via it. The open platform of the internet, however, makes it very easy for individuals to become distributors. Only a computer and some technical knowhow are needed in order to make content available to a potentially massive audience. The emergence of user-friendly upload sites such as YouTube and free software that converts recorded content into digital files makes the necessary technical knowhow available to even more people.

On the surface there appears to be a clear division between the television industry's legal activities and the illegal activities of unaffiliated or unauthorised websites such as Pirate Bay. The US industry in particular has responded vehemently to such activities, regularly sending out cease-

and-desist letters and prosecuting the main file-sharing sites for copyright infringement (see, for example, MPAA, 2009: online). A number of high profile court cases against music file-sharing sites such as Napster and Grokster and, more recently, Pirate Bay have similarly labelled unauthorised distribution as unlawful[30]. The UK government also clearly positions the downloading of copyrighted material from file-sharing networks such as Pirate Bay as illegal. The 2010 Digital Economy Act requires internet service providers to monitor customers' web usage and cut off access from persistent illegal file-sharers (see OPSI, 2010: online). However the boundaries of what services are 'legal' or 'legitimate' both in terms of legislation and broader cultural morals are not as clear as they may first seem.

The approach of the US and UK governments is not universal, and whereas downloading content outside copyright structure may be legally illegitimate, culturally it is less so. Complex discourses concerning the legitimacy of file-sharing networks are apparent in a number of national broadcasting contexts. In his discussion of intellectual property rights and digital television, William Boddy quotes a Disney executive as saying, 'We need to get a reasonably secure environment before 50 million Americans *get used to downloading their movies for free*' (2004: 153; my emphasis). The insinuation that consumers will become used to accessing entertainment content for free, and that such practice would then become unstoppable, indicates a difference between 'illegal' and 'culturally unacceptable' reception practices. Arguments against the UK Digital Economy Act question whether it contravenes European laws on privacy. Charles Dunstone, chairman of Internet Service Provider TalkTalk who, along with BT, mounted a challenge to the Act in July 2010 said, 'Innocent broadband customers will suffer and citizens will have their privacy invaded' (Barnett, 2010: online). Dunstone's complaint is more concerned with the policing of illegal file sharing rather than the labelling of such activity as illegal in the first place, but still demonstrates said policy's ethical murkiness.

Legislation such as the Digital Economy Act covers all entertainment forms, including television, film and music. However, the way in which the official television industry works economically complicates an easy comparison between television and other forms. With film and music the established practice has been to buy individual pieces of content directly. Each film, song or album becomes worth a certain amount of money and the consumer expects to pay that. Television, however, is not funded in such a direct way, and this raises particular issues of cultural legitimacy that do not directly correlate to issues of legality. Viewers may feel that content has already been paid for (either by license fee or by advertising deals) and so there is nothing wrong with them accessing it for free. Jason Mittell explores this argument in his account of accessing *Veronica Mars* via BitTorrent:

> If I had been on the ball and started watching Veronica Mars from the beginning on UPN, what value would have been gained by the industry? If it's not offered on a premium channel like HBO or a pay-per-view system, there is no direct cost incurred by watching a television program. Since I have never been a Nielsen family, my viewing habits do not factor into the elaborate exchange of audiences between networks and advertisers via the currency of ratings. (Mittell, 2005: online)

Martin, a participant in the focus groups run for this research, expressed a similar opinion:

> It's not like with a film where you have to pay to watch it. With TV it's going to be broadcast for practically free, except the TV license . . . if I downloaded *Spooks*, it actually makes absolutely no difference, they're still going to get the same revenue. I mean maybe they'll have less people watching therefore less advertising revenue blah blah blah but in reality that's not going to happen. (Martin, 18 years old, student)

Attitudes such as 'we've already paid for it', or that watching broadcasting does not seem to 'count' towards a programme's success, demonstrate how technically illegal acts do not automatically translate into wider cultural illegitimacy.

The problem with equating 'illegal' with 'illegitimate' in relation to online distribution becomes even more apparent when considering countries other than the UK and US. Paul McDonald points towards the value of illegal distribution networks in the establishment of video in countries where video distribution was limited for economic, political or religious reason, arguing, 'Piracy may therefore not only be an inevitable but also an essential part of the global video business' (2007: 210; see also O'Regan, 1991; Mittell, 2005). Digital distribution has only exacerbated the blurred boundaries between 'legitimate' and 'illegitimate' distribution. Salamander Davoudi and Tim Bradshaw report that

> Russia, China, Spain, Mexico and Canada were this year singled out by the US Congressional International Anti-Piracy Caucus as having the highest rates of copyright infringement, largely as 'the result of a lack of political will to confront the problem'. (Davoudi and Bradshaw, 2009: online).

In Sweden the 'Pirate Party' won seats on the European Parliament by campaigning for legalisation allowing file sharing (Schofield, 2009: online). In the Netherlands (the home of two focus group participants) downloading content outside of copyright for personal use is legal thanks to a 'home copy' clause in copyright law, providing the viewer only makes a 'few' copies (see Holwerda, 2009: online). In 2009 the Dutch government even

released a report supporting the value of file-sharing websites (van Beijnum, online: 2009). In China, shops full of downloaded or pirated DVDs for both film and television outnumber shops selling legal versions. Such shops are legitimate vendors, with illegal copies often hidden in drawers and back rooms, positioning unofficial sources as a legitimate part of the Chinese market[31]. Around the globe there are a vast array of perspectives on downloading via unauthorised means, many of which do not view it as an illegitimate activity. Contradictions are even apparent in the United States, with its seemingly clear cut copyright laws being broken by the very industry they are meant to protect. Michael Z. Newman quotes a number of examples involving industry personnel making use of file-sharing sites to promote shows:

> Episodes of *Pushing Daisies*, *Sarah Connor Chronicles*, and *True Blood*, which might appeal to young, affluent, and technically adept torrenters, have been leaked to the network to arouse buzz. If file-sharing is sometimes figured in the media industries as a criminal, even terrorist threat, it is sometimes also seen as good promotion. (Newman, 2009: online)

It is clear that the illegality of file-sharing sites does not prevent them from gaining some form of cultural legitimacy.

The complexities of transmedia television distribution's 'legality' or 'legitimacy' can lead to a situation where the viewer is unsure on whether they are acting within copyright law or not. In the UK, near-simulcast service TVCatchup has been plagued by uncertain relationships with broadcasters. First launched in 2007, the service was forced to close in February 2008 after complaints from broadcasters over the ability for viewers to record broadcast content from the website. It subsequently re-opened later in 2008 without the recording feature (West, 2008: online), although co-founder Adam Smith is planning on re-introducing it (Gilson, 2010: online). In its terms of service, TVCatchup claims to be 'perfectly lawful provided that members abide by the terms of service' (http://www.tvcatchup.com/terms.html). This rhetoric is often employed by owners of the file-sharing sites that act as illegal distribution networks. Any illegality is deflected from the site itself and onto the users and what they do with it. TVCatchup goes on to include a number of caveats that seek to limit the website's use to the UK only and protect itself from claims of copyright infringement:

> TVCatchup provides an online TV streaming service to users for personal, private and domestic use only, to qualified members who may only access the website from the area from within which the broadcast was intended to be viewed.

> All rights, copyrights and intellectual property are owned by their respective broadcasters and/or producers, and such ownership of all intellectual property belonging to others is duly acknowledged. (http://www.tvcatchup.com/terms.html)

In effect, if you've paid for your television licence and so can legally access broadcast content in the United Kingdom, TVCatchup see no reason why you should not do so through their website rather than through a television set and aerial. They clearly see themselves as offering a legal service. When asked about whether the new PVR service would use Digital Rights Management (DRM)[32], Smith said, 'There's nothing forcing us to do that, but we may do that just so that we don't we don't annoy too many people' (Gilson, 2010: online). As far as Smith is concerned, his dealings with copyright are merely in order to not 'annoy' people, rather than any legal requirement.

However, the broadcasters affected by TVCatchup's service have taken a different view. An unnamed spokeswoman for the BBC was reported as saying, 'We are concerned about the unauthorised commercial exploitation of our rights, and those of our contributors, by TVCatchup' (West, 2008: online). This notion of unauthorised distribution of content emerged again in June 2010 when the BBC, ITV and Channel 4 launched a joint court action to stop the service, saying that 'TVCatchup does not have a content distribution agreement in place to stream content from any of our channels' (Bradshaw, 2010: online). Here, a distinction emerges between legality and authorisation. While TVCatchup claim that they are doing nothing wrong, provided users have a television licence, the broadcasters are seeking to retain control over broadcast content and the platforms on which it is available. TVCatchup may believe they are operating within the law but they are not operating with the authorisation of the television industry. At the time of writing (June 2010) the outcome of the broadcasters' suit was unknown. However, its mere existence, and TVCatchup's fervent defence, indicates the complexities and uncertainties that digital technologies have placed upon the television industry.

The tension between 'official' and 'unofficial' sources of online television echoes Carolyn Marvin's work on new media of the late nineteenth century. She writes that:

> the early history of electric media is less the evolution of technical efficiencies in communication than a series of arenas for negotiating issues crucial to the conduct of social life; among them, who is inside and outside, who may speak, who may not, and who has authority and may be believed. (1990: 15).

She goes on to argue that this negotiation between who is allowed an 'official' place is shaped by protectionism on the part of established institutions:

> Electrical and other media precipitated new kinds of social encounters long before their incarnation in fixed institutional form. In their institutionally inchoate manifestations, they inspired energetic efforts to *keep outsiders out and insiders under the control of the proper people*. (16, my emphasis)

As yet, the efforts of the official television industry to protect itself and 'keep outsiders out' are not fully succeeding. Although a vast quantity of content is now available via official sources, unofficial sources have not vanished. The emergence of the internet as an alternative space for the distribution and reception of televisual content has led to a blurring of previously rigid boundaries around the 'television industry'. Services such as Pirate Bay are proud of their illegality. Services such as TVCatchup have a more ambiguous relationship to legality and authority; they may be one (technically legal) but are not the other (authorised by the owners of the content)[33]. This ambiguity makes the boundaries of the television industry increasingly fluid. Services such as TVCatchup, or individuals who upload television content to Pirate Bay and YouTube, are not officially part of the television industry. They have no relationship with the wider institutional structures such as production companies, infrastructure companies, service providers, advertisers or government regulators that traditional broadcasters do, nor do they take part in economic exchange with those partners. However, they still function as distributors of content; they act as part of the industry without holding a position within it.

This results in the presence of two television industries. The first is an expanded version of the industry familiar from the broadcast era. Broadcasters such as the BBC and ITV still act as the key content creators but now, as well as acting as direct distributors of their content, also form agreements with communication companies such as Vodafone and BT or internet consumer stores such as iTunes. The hidden companies of the television industry such as Arqiva have also become outward facing companies, serving viewers directly as well as facilitating the broadcasters. These new members of the television industry gain their positions by forging economic and political relationships with traditional content providers. However, alongside this expansion is the emergence of a second, shadow television industry consisting of companies that have varying relationships to legitimacy and the legalities of copyright. Some, such as TVCatchup, flaunt perceived loopholes within copyright laws whereas others, such as Pirate Bay, ignore them. They do not contribute economically to the television industries or the governments that license them. They are replicating the kind of 'shadow economy' that Paul McDonald argues occurred with video piracy: 'Like the legitimate video business, industrialised piracy operates through highly organised facilities for illegal production and extensive, transnational networks of distribution' (2007: 179). Although industrialised pirate networks can make use of platforms such as the internet (188)

there are also some differences. With online piracy DVDs do not change hands in exchange for money; sites are instead funded by adverts on the website or video feed. Similarly, file-sharing sites may have a formalised structure behind the scenes but the actual activity that takes place on them is not formalised. Content is not placed online systematically; it is anonymous individuals uploading content that they may have recorded from a broadcast stream or, in extreme cases, intercepted from a satellite link.

However, the most important distinction between illegal online television distribution and McDonald's study of pirate videos and DVDs is the confused discourses of legitimacy that surround them in countries that do not have restrictive official distribution networks. Anti-piracy campaigns and legislation that directly compare illegal downloading to bootleg DVDs and stealing are not universal, with some governments, and many individuals, actually supporting file sharing. It is the confused and contradictory discourses of authority and legitimacy that complicate the nature of the transmedia television industry. Despite not contributing to the political and economic workings of the television industry, these networks are still doing the same job as that industry (distributing television content to audiences) and are perceived by some as a culturally legitimate way of accessing content.

FROM TRANSMEDIA DISTRIBUTION TO TRANSMEDIA ENGAGEMENT

Transmedia distribution has resulted in an expansion of the spaces in which television is made accessible and the borders of the television industry becoming blurred. The fact that viewers can now access television via multiple sites, from a range of industrial and non-industrial sources, on various technologies naturally leads to changes in the reception practices of those viewers. In creating such services the industry has shifted the way that television content is presented. It is no longer necessarily part of a flow or packaged as a series; individual episodes are lifted out as discrete units of text. They have also, perhaps more significantly, de-centred the television set and broadcasting by opening alternative access points to content that would otherwise be available via the broadcast schedules. This has been a result of technological, industrial and social changes. Mobile transmedia distribution has been a predominantly industry-led initiative. In contrast, online transmedia distribution has predominantly been a viewer-led process, with traditional broadcasters being forced to respond to increasingly prevalent audience behaviours that threatened their ownership of content.

YouTube offers an individual example of this process, acting as both a guerrilla network and a third-party distributor of legal content. Initially designed to distribute user-generated content, it quickly became a site for copyright-infringing content, from fan videos and mashups to full episodes

broken down into ten minutes clips. Subsequently broadcasters negotiated deals with the website to place short clips online, resulting in Channel 4 and Five offering full episodes. This process highlights the challenge that the internet in particular has offered to the sanctity of the television industry. As Jean Burgess and Joshua Green have argued in relation to the US industry, 'many of these companies seem uncomfortable with their role as participants in a space where they don't exercise complete control over the distribution and circulation of their cultural products'. This discomfort, they argue, 'points to the uncertainty associated with the meaning and uses of YouTube' (2009: 5). This uncertainty is yet to be resolved and, whereas content is still discernibly 'television' rather than film or web drama, the authority of a site or company to act as a television distributor may be considerably less discernible. Illegality may not automatically lead to cultural illegitimacy.

The complexity of downloading's 'cultural legitimacy' within audience groups raises the need to consider not only transmedia distribution but also how audiences are responding to and using these forms of distribution, what I term transmedia engagement. For the audience, where and how to access television is a more complex question than it was prior to the emergence of the internet and mobile phone as platforms for television content. A viewer no longer has to turn on their television set to watch a television programme, they do not even have to go out and buy a DVD. They can instead turn on their computer, log onto the internet and download a programme of their choice whenever they wish to. They may do so via a broadcaster's service, via a third party that is separate from the content's original broadcast source or via an illegal file-sharing site. This raises the question (that will be explored in Chapter 6) of the value of these changes and what emerging audience behaviours and attitudes in relation to transmedia distribution can tell us about the changing meaning of 'television'.

3 Transmedia Audiences
The Consequences of Emergence

The television industry's exploitation of the internet and mobile phone as spaces for audio-visual engagement has, as the previous two chapters explored, created a significant shift in the media landscape in which audiences now live. Only a few years ago televisual narrative was restricted to a certain kind of content from a limited number of sources via a television set; now audiences face a wide array of choices in how, where and when they engage with it. The question then becomes, how are these technologies being integrated into daily life? What choices are audiences making and why? Such questions demonstrate the particular value in conducting empirical audience research during moments of change. Although it is possible to theorise from the texts how different elements of transmedia drama offer different forms of engagement, the ways in which audiences may actually take up these technologies is more complex than can be seen from textual or industrial analysis alone. As Roger Silverstone indicates in the 'incorporation' strand of his model of consumption, technologies 'may become functional in ways somewhat removed from the intentions of designers or marketers. Functions may change or disappear' (1994: 129), something David Morley has gone onto label a 'double life' (2000: 86). Hughie Mackay and Gareth Gillespie put forward a more reserved position, arguing that 'the appropriation of a technology cannot be entirely separated from its design and development: technologies are designed for a particular purpose' (1992: 699). A television, or VCR, or DVD or computer can only do certain things; there are some things they are physically and technologically incapable of doing. However, it remains difficult, if not impossible, to predict whether an individual will use a technology for its 'intended' purposes and, if not, what purposes they may use it for.

The technologies that are under discussion in this book, the internet and mobile phone, have been developed by the television (and mobile phone) industries as embodying Morley's model of a 'double life'. Both were originally imagined as communication tools but have since been adapted to function in the distribution and exhibition of moving images. As the previous chapter explored, in the case of the internet, it was users, not official 'providers', who developed the internet as a transmedia

distribution platform. The process by which both technologies' 'second lives' have moved from being radical to part of daily life involves a set of negotiations between what is presented to the user and what that user chooses to do with them. Those negotiations may, in fact, involve outright rejection. Whereas the television industry may position new developments as the 'future' of television, this does not necessarily translate into real, concrete changes in audience behaviour, as the Tardisodes discussed in Chapter 1 indicate. The unpredictability of audience behaviour means it is necessary to follow Sonia Livingston's assertion that the key philosophy of audience research, that 'no-one would presume the nature of audience response from knowledge of media content alone', must also be applied to issues surrounding new media (2004: 5). In order to explore how these changes are embraced by audiences it is necessary to twin the discussion of the previous two chapters with evidence from the audiences themselves and examine how technological changes are integrated (or not) into their daily lives and their understanding of 'television'.

The rapid pace of these changes, however, has significant methodological implications for the study of contemporary television and its audiences, and reinforces the need to be aware of the boundaries of such research, something that must be addressed before moving onto the audience research itself. No piece of audience research can ask everyone in a given audience group and so the researcher must make choices within their given circumstances. As David Morley discusses, 'Research is always a question of what you can do in the circumstances you face, with the resources available, which is most likely to get you something like the kind of data that you want. You're never going to get exactly what you want' (Morley, 2006: 69).

Whereas, on the one hand, the financial and time restraints involved in audience research lead to an inevitable limitation in the scale of research samples, on the other, the research question itself may result in a similar, justified restriction in terms of who contributes to a research dataset. In the case of the research discussed in the second half of this book, just such a limitation emerged. Texts and services involving transmedia gaming, mobile television and downloading were extremely new, with many of them only becoming available over the course of the research project[34]. As such they must be defined as emergent technologies, not yet widely adopted by the population at large. Rather than be a limitation, however, the nature of the research question (and the subsequent nature of the research sample) indicated two key issues relating to the moment of emergence and in fact provides greater illumination on the ways in which new technologies are impacting on audience engagement with television.

The first of these is in terms of who uses these technologies and the ways in which emergent technology is primarily associated with younger users. This is not something that is new to the adoption of the internet and mobile phone as audio-visual platforms but in fact can be traced through the history of media technology development and even echoes broader issues

within television studies such as the growth of 'quality' television. The second issue raised by the focus of this research concerns the complexities of researching emergent forms that, by definition, have not settled into mainstream usage and so are still in a state of flux both in terms of the services they provide and in how they are used. The rapid pace of change evident in the media landscape has significant implications for the kind of research that can be done when examining it. The new media and transmedia audience researcher must acknowledge that their two objects of study, the media environment (encompassing text, technology and industry) *and* the media audience, will not be the same throughout the duration of their research. This change is not necessarily something to fear, but offers an opportunity for a specific kind of research and the potential to answer a range of questions crucial to understanding the contemporary media landscape. This chapter will consider the methodology undertaken for the research explored in the following chapters and considers what the limitations of that sample can tell us about who the audiences for early transmedia texts were, the nature of emergence and the importance of focused study on such moments of radical change.

THE TRANSMEDIA TELEVISION AUDIENCE SAMPLE

Before examining the issues raised by the specific sample of audience members who contributed to the research here, it is necessary, for the purposes of transparency, to explain the recruitment and research methodology undertaken to find them. The research consisted of three individual audience studies involving questionnaires, diaries (see Petrie and Willis, 1995) and focus groups or interviews. The first two projects were based on the textual case studies in this research and as such were advertised via fan websites for *Spooks*[35], and both official and fan websites for *24*[36]. The projects also made use of the snowballing technique in that participants were asked to invite interested friends or family members to take part. Initial questionnaires were followed by diaries in which participants provided information about their weekly engagement with the programme and technologies being researched. The projects concluded with focus groups that explored the issues raised in the questionnaires and diaries in more detail. The third project was recruited through a further education college in the north-east of England and involved a series of focus groups and interviews with students and staff that explored the emergence of the internet and mobile phone as platforms for transmedia content without any particular focus on individual texts. As with the first two projects, participants were allowed to invite friends and family members, although this project, as there was no specific television programme attached to them, did not include the diary portion of the research. The timing of these projects is also worthy of note. The *Spooks* study ran first, beginning with the broadcast of the

programme's fourth season on BBC One in September 2005 and ending with focus groups in October and November 2005. The second, *24*-based project began in January 2006, when the fifth season began airing in both the US and UK, and ended with focus groups in September and October 2006. The final, more general project consisted of a set of focus groups and interviews in November 2006 and February 2007. The implications of the timings of these various projects relates directly to the methodological issues with researching new media audiences described previously and will be explored in more detail below.

The research followed a broad triangulation approach (Schrøder, 1999: 41; Rosengren, 1996: 28) in combining questionnaires and diaries that sought a limited amount of information (mainly relating to habits) from a larger group of participants with focus groups and interviews that elicited more complex responses but from a smaller number of participants. Consequently, the small sample size (a total of 118 participants completed the questionnaires, 52 of whom took part in the diaries and 38 of whom took part in focus groups and interviews)[37] could be counteracted by the level of depth with which that sample was researched[38]. Despite its size the sample offered a range of previous interest in the topics being researched. Some were fans of *Spooks* or *24*, some were not; for some, television (and *Spooks* or *24* in particular) was their key source of entertainment, for others it was one of many. In general, however, participants were those most likely to be aware of, or interested in, the development of new media technologies, either through their more intense engagement with a particular programme as a fan or through a more general interest in the media and media technologies. Most participants were British, although one focus group was run in Utrecht in the Netherlands. However, this was a small proportion of the research sample, and indeed their status within the Dutch national television audience is complicated by their practice of downloading, something that will be explored in more detail in Chapter 6.

There are, however, certain demographic characteristics that raise a number of theoretical issues concerning identifying the audiences for emergent media technologies. In most cases the demographic make-up of the focus groups was relatively even: 55% of the group were female, 45% of the group were male, and they came from a range of socio-economic backgrounds. Some participants were middle class, university educated and in white-collar jobs or planning to attend university imminently. Others were working class and had not attended university (or were not planning to). However, they were all white (although race was not a specific focus of any stage of the research) and all bar one were aged between 16 and 40[39], with the majority being under 30. It is this latter factor that raises a particular resonance with the historical development of new media technologies and the association of emergent platforms, services and forms with a young 'quality' audience.

THE TRANSMEDIA AUDIENCE: YOUTH AND 'QUALITY'

Whereas the skew in age of this research sample indicates the limitation of the sample and its application to a broader population, it also demonstrates a key feature concerning the emergence of new technologies that can be observed throughout media history: the association of 'emergent' media and young people. As Kristen Drotner has argued,

> Since the Second World War, young people in Western Europe, North America and Australia have had increasing time and money at hand for personal spending, and not least commercial media have singled out youth as a remunerative niche public—from the film, magazine and music industries of the 1950s through the boosting in the 1980s of teen TV (MTV and soap) onto today's plethora of computer games and irreverent lifestyle adverts. (2000: 149)

This 'singling out' of youth audiences can be found in a number of industry, academic and press discourses and practices throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In 1949 the British social research organisation Mass Observation conducted a survey into attitudes towards broadcasting, both in terms of the well-established radio and the 'new media' of television. Many of their findings are reminiscent of more recent assumptions about the internet and mobile phone. In particular, their research found that 'younger people are more enthusiastic about possessing a television set than older ones; 53% of the under 40s say they would like a set, as against only 35% of the over 40s' (Mass Observation, 1949: 3). Older audiences are positioned as more resistant to change and happier with media forms that they are more familiar with. Younger audiences are more willing to embrace such change and experiment with new technologies and modes of engagement.

This association between young people and new technologies continues into more recent examples of technological innovation and industrial practice. In the early 1980s, as the US television industry was responding to the emergence of cable channels that challenged the oligopoly of the big three networks (ABC, CBS and NBC), academic discourses turned to concepts of quality in order to understand the television programmes that sought to solidify the networks' positions. These discourses of quality, although primarily focused on textual characteristics, were equally concerned with the networks' privileging of a particular kind of 'quality audience' as a result of changes to television technology. Jane Feuer, in her work on MTM, argues that:

> [Fred] Silverman actually began the programming strategy that [Grant] Tinker would continue [at NBC]: the programming of 'quality' shows with low ratings in an effort to capture the urban, aged 18–49, high-income and well-educated audience *which was threatening to defect to cable and pay-TV*. (1984a: 25, my emphasis)

The motivation behind the development of programmes that became synonymous with the term 'quality', such as *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* (CBS, 1970–1977), *Lou Grant* (CBS, 1977–1982) and *Hill Street Blues* (NBC, 1981–1987), was the capabilities of cable technology to offer audiences an increased range of channels and programming away from network television. In ways that echo the development in the film industry of systems such as Cinemascope to compete with the arrival of television, the US television networks required something that would appeal to an audience with the disposable income that would make them attractive to advertisers but also grant them access to this new television technology. In particular, however, there is the assumption that this defecting audience would be 'urban, aged 18–49, high income and well-educated'. Elsewhere in Feuer's volume, Paul Kerr alludes to an assumed connection between technology and this younger 'quality' audience on the part of television manufacturers. He argues that it is 'unsurprising that it was *Hill Street Blues*' commercial breaks which were chosen by the sales department of Thorn-EMI as the site of the first advertisements for video software on American network television' (1984: 158). For the US television industry in the 1980s new technologies and an under-40 audience demographic were inextricably linked. Underlying their practice is the assumption that younger audiences will be attracted to new forms of engagement.

An assumed association between younger audiences and newer technologies continues in more recent academic and public debates emerging around the development of digital technologies. Discussions of media literacy that have increasingly examined digital technologies predominantly focus on younger audiences (primarily children)[40], positioning them as the dominant user group in considerations of how individuals learn to appropriate digital technologies. The concept of the digital divide, although often discussed in class terms, also contains a strong generational component:

> [T]he generational divide is typically interpreted to mean that people on one side of the gap—youth— have more access and a greater ability to use new technologies than those on the other side—the adults (and especially, older adults) who had the misfortune to be born before the advent of the Internet (Herring, 2008: 71).

Here, the link between new technologies and youth involves a necessary exclusion of older audiences, something evident in the comparative paucity of research into older users of new technologies when compared to research investigating younger people. Similarly, in more public discourses surrounding the fear of new technologies, it is younger audiences that are most commonly linked with the internet and mobile phone. Jean Burgess and Joshua Green, in their examination of YouTube, note the historical association between youth and new technologies in the moral panics that have accompanied almost every technological development:

> Images of youth have been closely associated with ideas about shifts in capitalism and the organization of social structures such as class, wealth distribution, and consumption practices (Murdock and McCron, 1976: 10), and where new media are seen as key disruptive agents, the two are often conflated. (Burgess and Green, 2009: 17)

This association, they argue, only continues with the development of YouTube:

> [I]n media coverage of YouTube, stories exhibiting the characteristics of a moral panic draw on and amplify two interlocking strains of public anxiety: youth and morality on the one hand, and new media and its effects on the other. (Burgess and Green, 2009: 18)

Whereas, on the one hand, such arguments are based on the assumption that young people are more impressionable, and so susceptible to danger within unknown technologies, they are, on the other, also based on the assumption that young people *will be using them*.

The television industry equally acknowledges an alignment between younger audiences and newer technologies. Channel 4's annual report for 2005 used statistics based on media consumption by young people to justify its development of new media platforms: 'For anyone under 25, television is no longer the default medium of choice for entertainment or information. Half of all 13 and 14 year-olds would rather say good-bye to television than the internet' (Channel 4, 2006: 4). The BBC's Victoria Jaye equally acknowledged that older audiences come to new technologies less naturally than younger audiences, and that public service broadcasters such as the BBC should play an active role in developing digital literacy amongst such older audiences. When discussing *The One Show* (BBC One, 2006–), a programme the BBC acknowledges as attracting an older demographic (BBC Commissioning, 2010: online), she said it

> was the one show that we said would help marshal mature audiences online and that's exactly what the website does. It's a friendly face to the web, it goes 'Hah', it greets you, it shows you how and it allows for deeper engagement if you're really up with it. So I think it's sort of a hand-holding role that the BBC has to play. (personal interview)[41]

Similarly, she discussed the online content surrounding *Strictly Come Dancing* (BBC One, 2004–) as part of a process to again broaden out the audience making use of BBC Online to include older women:

> It's absolutely attempting to marshal a mass audience online in the sense it's about saying 'this is a show that women 35 plus love'. Now they may not have a strong relationship with BBC Online but they have

> a very strong one with *Strictly Come Dancing*. And we really want to get them onto BBC Online to take that enjoyment, that engagement, further. (personal interview)

The fact that the BBC takes conscious decisions to use older-skewing programmes as a pedagogic tool for increasing digital literacy, and that such decisions are seen as part of its public service duty to the whole population of the UK, indicates as assumption that there is a *need* to do this for older audiences. Added to the proliferation of discourses concerning the natural 'fit' of younger audiences and new technologies and the tendency for early formats to skew towards younger audiences, this indicates how both the connection between 'new' technologies and younger audiences is positioned as relatively straightforward.

Such arguments are not purely theoretical or discursive, and a large amount of empirical research suggests a very real tendency for children and young adults to be more willing to explore the potential of new technologies than older adults. Whereas the Mass Observation study offers an historical perspective, more recent research has only reinforced this position. Sonia Livingstone, for example, used empirical evidence to argue that '[h]ouseholds with children generally own more ICT [Information and Communication Technology], and many media goods, especially those that are relatively cheap and portable are targeted at and adopted by the youth market' (2002: 3), and that, '[c]hildren and young people are widely perceived . . . as the youthful experts or pioneers leading the way in using the internet' (2009: 2). Similarly, research conducted by OFCOM in 2009 found that, in the UK,

> Young adults [aged 16–24] tend to have higher levels of access to many media devices than adults overall: household ownership of digital television (87% vs. 82%), the internet (71% vs. 62%), and digital radio (93% vs. 88%) is higher among young adults (aged 16–24) compared to UK adults as a whole. (OFCOM, 2009: 8)

The same research concluded that not only are younger users more likely to own such technologies, but they are also more likely to place significant value on them: '[Y]oung adults are more likely to say they would miss mobile phones, the internet and MP3 players than adults as a whole' (OFCOM, 2009: 4).

It is unsurprising, given this historical association between younger audiences and newer technologies, that the audience sample discussed here skews younger than the general population. Indeed it seems merely to reinforce such assumptions. Kristen Drotner even suggests that youth, media and change, as concepts, are inextricably linked: 'Youth and media are discursively connected through the metaphor of change which, in itself, is central to our understanding of modernity' (2000: 150). Drotner sees

parallels between the paths technologies take from their infancy into mainstream acceptance and the changes that occur between childhood and adulthood. Whereas the reasons for this connection may be more practical (younger people have more time on their hands, without the responsibility of work, running a household and possibly raising children themselves, and are excluded from a number of public leisure spaces such as pubs), there is clear evidence not only that younger audiences are positioned as the most natural users of new technologies but also that they actually are embracing innovative technologies more readily than their older counterparts. This is not, of course, universally true. A number of focus-group participants who were extremely interested in emergent technologies were over the 16–25 category that is primarily associated with the internet and mobile phone in the above academic and industry rhetoric. However, the small number of focus group participants over the age of 30, although limiting, is in fact reflective of broader trends in the emergence of digital media.

THE EMERGENT TRANSMEDIA AUDIENCE: INCONSTANCY

Whereas the demographic specificity of the research sample connects with assumptions about who the audience for emergent transmedia television is, the nature of the data itself indicates important insight into how that audience works through the moment of emergence. The emergence of the internet and mobile phone as transmedia platforms is part of a wider series of transformations in the ways in which audio-visual content is made accessible to, and accessed by, audiences. In particular these transformations are ongoing. The current media landscape is significantly different to the landscape in which this research was conducted, even though it ran only three to five years before writing. The nature of this rapid and intense technological change means that audience research has a particular value for our understanding of how such change is assimilated into the daily lives of its users. However, this value must come from an understanding of how any findings fit within a broader historical context, a context that may be specific to a relatively short timespan. Not only were these technologies and services new, but they were also, and continue to be, part of a constantly shifting media landscape, their status in relation to older, more established media forms such as television, radio and film, being renegotiated continuously. The question then becomes what value empirical audience research has during such times of intense change and what the consequences of such change can tell us about the paths new technologies take in their integration into daily life.

The issue of these technologies' emergent status became apparent during the second research project, on *24*, which ran between six months and a year after the initial *Spooks* project. Three participants, Beth, Charles and Harry, took part in both projects and subsequently in two different focus

groups, one in October 2005 and one in October 2006[42]. What became apparent in comparing the comments made by these participants was that their attitudes had changed considerably in the intervening time. As the status of the internet and mobile phone as media technologies had increased and they had become more widespread they began to find them more applicable to their daily lives. There was evidence that audience attitudes were changing, even over the short time span of a year.

Beyond these specific participant case studies, which will be explored in more detail subsequently, many participants in the focus groups commented on how new technologies are not met with instant cultural acceptance, but must instead negotiate for a place as an essential part of people's daily lives. This was a particularly strong topic of conversation in relation to mobile television and so predominantly appeared in the first focus group, which was attended by Beth, Charles and Harry, the only group to be run before mobile television became a reality. Eleanor, for example, described how, 'I'm not being funny, but ten years ago I wouldn't have thought I'd have a mobile phone or any use for it. It depends on how it changes culturally as well' (Eleanor, 28 years old, media worker, focus group 1). Debbie and Harry made similar comments:

> I had a phone and I could send text messages but now I can take pictures. I didn't miss it while I couldn't do it, but if I can do I do. (Debbie, 25 years old, civil servant, focus group1)

> At the end of the day it's all what's available and none of us will have [had] a mobile phone, what, ten years ago? And I don't think you'll find ten years ago we missed having one because we didn't know of them. Two years ago none of us would have had cameras on our phone but now if we've got a camera on our phone, we enjoy taking pictures . . . you don't miss it until you've had it. (Harry, 26 years old, unemployed, focus group 1)

The sample recognised that new media technologies go through a process in order to become a desired part of their daily life. This is not a new phenomenon, with the Mass Observation study of 1949 describing the 'inherent conservatism' of attitudes towards television (4). A new technology must be proven to be a useful part of daily life before it becomes fully accepted.

At the same time, however, these technologies often *do* become perceived as at least a semi-essential part of daily life. As Enid Mante points out in her discussion of internet use in the Netherlands and United States, '[W]hen people have used a service for some time, it becomes part of their daily lives and they cannot imagine life without it' (2002: 122). Similarly, Elaine Lally describes, through discourses of 'ownership', how technologies such as the home computer 'move from [being] anonymous and alien commodities to become powerfully integrated into the lives of their users'

(2002: 1). But this is not instant; time must pass before users 'cannot imagine life without' a specific technology. New technologies move from being a gimmicky fad to something perceived as useful and beneficial, and the way in which this happens is both an issue that anyone researching new media audiences must deal with and a potentially interesting avenue for audience research. Although this change in audience attitudes was not the focus of the research in this book, it is still something that effects any conclusions it can lead to. This effect is most clearly demonstrated by exploring those participants who took part in two focus groups, one year apart. Although there were a total of three participants, I will focus on Harry, who had the most dramatic change of opinions.

During the first group Harry was extremely dismissive of both mobile television and downloading, describing the former as 'a clever gimmick but unless you were someone who's into fads and, you know, wants to have the latest toy' (Harry, 26 years old, unemployed, focus group 1). Harry went on to acknowledge, rather unenthusiastically, that there might be a potential market for mobile television:

> I mean, I suppose, I'm not a fan myself, but if some people in the room, you're a *Neighbours* fan but you suddenly find yourself in a job where between 5:35 and 6:00 you're actually on a train it is dead time . . . and that's the only way you got to watch *Neighbours* or for, you know, business people the only way you got to watch the news.

However, despite this possible example of when it might be used, he himself is uninterested in it, instead projecting its use onto other people: 'I can't see it doing it for me but I can see it doing it for certain people'. Although he acknowledges that some people might use it, he is very dismissive of mobile television himself, seeing it as only appealing to those who are into the latest gadgets.

He maintained a similar position in relation to accessing television content via online downloading services. In the first focus group he attended, he simply stated, 'I've never downloaded and I don't have any intention to'. He then maintained this opinion even when pushed by Charles to find a situation where he would download a television programme:

Charles: In some cases you would consider it?
Harry: Downloading?
Charles: Or whatever.
Harry: No, I think if it's a new series or something that I've previously watched, say *24* for example, if I've watched two or three seasons on the telly and they bring out a fourth season but it's never going to be aired in this country, I would probably buy the DVD.
(Harry, 26 years old, unemployed; Charles, 27 years old, research scientist, focus group 1)

As with mobile television, Harry is not interested in the development of television-downloading services and cannot imagine them being of benefit to him.

In the second focus group he attended, a year later, his opinions had changed. He no longer rejected mobile television as a fad and a gimmick but could instead see a potential use value in it, not just for other people but also for himself: 'If the screen was big enough and you're on a train or a bus and you've got headphones and instead of reading a book or text or whatever if you can watch a film or something, sure' (Harry, 27 years old, project administrator, focus group 5). He is not unequivocally positive about watching television on a mobile phone, still retaining a sense of uneasiness over the size of the screen, but in general he has become much more open to the idea of using mobile phone technology in this way. His response is more enthusiastic than his initial assertion that it might be of interest to other people; he can now think of moments in his own life when there is the possibility of him engaging with television content in a way he would not have done a year before. After a year in which mobile television products expanded and became available on more and more networks, his impression of using a mobile phone to engage with televisual material had also changed and become more accepting.

He had an even more extreme reversal of opinion in relation to online downloading services. In the first group, in October 2005, he could not envision a situation where he would require or desire to access television content online. A year later however, the situation had changed:

> I was going to say that downloading would be good particularly for two things. With things like *24* and *Lost* that are serials and as we've already commented if you miss the first episode or one in the middle quite often, particular with something like *Lost*, you are lost and you don't know where you are. Recently we've not been watching *Lost* because we missed an episode and I know when we get broadband back properly, we're probably going to download the missing episode of *Lost* because Channel 4 make that available. So yeah, for something like that where you need to watch something every week and if you miss one, that's it, I think it would be very, very useful. (Harry, 27 years old, project administrator, focus group 5)

Downloading had gone from something he had little interest in to something that he would actually use. This quote indicates two specific changes in the media landscape and Harry's own relationship to it that suggest factors that contributed to this change. The first is the appearance of a specific situation where it would be of benefit to him. He had been unable to watch an episode of the highly serialised *Lost*, something that he felt was detrimental to his enjoyment of the series and was actually preventing him from watching future episodes. Downloading became a possible way of correcting his

missing knowledge of the *Lost* narrative and allowing him to continue his engagement with the programme. Even though a year previously he declared he would wait to watch a similarly serial drama, *24*, on DVD, he would now consider downloading. The second fact is his specific mention of the episode being provided by Channel 4. This suggests that if the media landscape had not changed between focus groups, if downloading had not begun to move into official spaces, he would not have been as interested in using such a service. This suggests that it is the combination of a disruption in Harry's viewing habits and a change in the way in which broadcasters offered him access to content that led to him re-evaluating his opinion of downloading.

NEW MEDIA AUDIENCE RESEARCH AS INSTANT HISTORY

These case studies indicate an issue for conducting audience research in relation to new media technologies. Harry (and Beth and Charles) did not change his mind for no reason, and there are a number of factors that may have played a part in reshaping his opinions of the internet and mobile phone as media technologies. There is of course the possibility that merely taking part in the first focus group may have affected his awareness and opinion of these technologies. In this respect, then, the differences in result between the two focus groups are related to a more general issue concerning the role the researcher plays in shaping the results of their research. As a number of writers have demonstrated, taking part in research has an impact of the lives of participants. Justin Lewis offers the clearest argument concerning this issue when he writes,

> People do not normally watch or talk about television in research conditions, so our quest for information is likely to intrude into the private worlds of the people we interview. However delicately we tread, our intrusion will inevitably change those worlds. (Lewis, 1991: 74)

A point was made of telling participants to not alter their media habits simply because they were involved in the project; however, the extent to which this did and did not happen is difficult to know. Research such as this has the potential to become self-fulfilling in the way that David E. Morrison describes the potential of focus groups to be 'conscious-raising exercise[s]' (1998: xiv). By taking part in the first focus group, and indeed the questionnaire and diary stages of the research, Harry's perspective of the media landscape may have been altered. In many ways this functions as a 'pre-literacy' stage. Sonia Livingstone, for example, describes the first element of media literacy, as used by regulator Ofcom, as 'being able to locate, find, access media communications information' (2005: 10). In this example, it is not Harry's access but awareness that may have been effected by the first focus group. Before he is able to access services such as mobile television or downloading,

he has to know about them. However, an increase in awareness does not automatically lead to a shift in attitudes or values; there are other factors, particularly in the case of new media technologies, to consider.

Socio-economic factors external to the research project may also have an impact on the evidence revealed at any given time that it is impossible for the researcher to counter. Life does not pause between stages of an audience research project; the personal circumstances of individual participants may change in ways unconnected to the research question. As Lewis argues, 'Audience research . . . does not take place in a vacuum. We are surrounded by the mighty structures of our cultures and our economy' (1991: 41). In the preceding example, Harry became employed between the first focus group and the second, a change in his daily life that may alter his use of media technologies. In economic terms, this does not seem to be the case with Harry. He completed an initial questionnaire before both projects and had owned exactly the same technology in the second that he did in the first. The change in how he spent his time once he was in full-time employment (presumably having less time to watch television) did not feature in his focus group responses and so the extent to which this was a factor cannot be determined. Such factors are naturally out of the researcher's control, but it is necessary to be aware that they may emerge during a project, and to determine the impact they may have on any results and conclusions.

What makes researching new media audiences more complicated is that in addition to these socio-economic changes, the object of study, the media landscape, is also undergoing rapid and dramatic change. At the time of the first focus group mobile television had only just been recently announced as an actual commercial product with Vodafone's mobile television service launching a few weeks later. A year later mobile television services for 3 and Virgin had been heavily advertised both in print and on television and so had become a greater part of the collective cultural consciousness. Similarly, in late 2005 the only way of accessing downloaded television content was to use illegal peer-to-peer file sharing networks, something that was not only against the law but also required the knowledge of which sites to visit and how to download content, information that was not readily available. By the time of the second focus group Channel 4 had begun to offer certain programmes, such as *Lost* and *Desperate Housewives*, through legal streaming services, Five offered its range of *CSI* programmes for downloading, and NTL (now Virgin Media) and Sky had both been advertising their own on demand services through either digital television or the internet. The media landscape in which the two focus groups took place had changed quite considerably, and so it is perhaps natural to discover that audience attitudes changed with it. This again raises notions of adult media literacy with viewers gaining knowledge of these platforms as they become more common and promoted by the industry. This is not to take a 'top-down' determinist approach and argue that the creation of new

media technologies somehow 'creates' audience responses. As discussed in the previous chapter, technological development can be led by viewers seeking out solutions and adapting existing technologies, as was the case with television downloading. Instead, it is merely to acknowledge that audience members are part of a shifting landscape and that their opinions may shift along with it.

But what does this mean for audience research? How can we research the attitudes and behaviours of new media audiences when these attitudes and behaviours can change so quickly? Ultimately the evidence of changing audience attitudes was not the main focus of the research and as such appeared as a secondary factor within the focus groups[43]. However, it does indicate a particular value of the research contained in the second half of this book. The findings that follow serve as a snap shot of a particular moment of change in the daily of use of media technologies. Researching the use of emergent media technologies ultimately forms what could be termed 'instant history'. As soon as the research is conducted it is immediately historical, and research done with the same group a few months later may yield very different results. But it is that very fact that gives it its value. Siegfried Zielinski makes a similar point in his preface to the English-language version of his book *Audiovisions*, which examines media in the early 1990s. Looking back at the work he writes, '[I]t was a lively reflection of the situation in which it had been written—the period of radical change that the media had been caught up in on the threshold of the 1990s. It was a quality that I wanted very much to preserve' (1999: 7). The value of charting a moment within a period of change is also applicable to the following research. Some services (such as downloading) have prospered and entered into the mainstream more fully. Others (such as mobile television) have floundered and broadcasters are still attempting to negotiate their place within the media landscape. In five years it will be impossible to examine how these technologies became integrated in the media landscape (or failed to) without issues of memory and nostalgia becoming more overt. It is hard now, as Lev Manovich argues, to research the emergence of cinema (2001: 6), or for people to say how the mobile phone became such an essential communication tool, or how the internet became such a useful resource and essential part of both home and work life. Audiences may not be able to fully articulate how such technologies became so central to their daily lives, they just know that they did. Whereas issues of memory and nostalgia do not disappear completely when talking to participants in the moment of change, they are lessened.

These notions of change and the importance of understanding such change in terms of media use and daily life is beginning to become apparent in work examining audiences, media and technology. Elaine Lally's examination of the home computer includes the observation that '[m]any of the participants in the present study who expressed little or no interest in the Internet when I first spoke to them in 1996 and 1997, were online

in follow up contacts within a year or two' (2002: 112). Although Lally does not fully map these changes, her research does indicate the changes in media use that may go on over a single year. Similarly, this approach has been found in work by Matt Hills into the cyclical nature of fandom. Hills describes this type of fandom as 'one that combines a self-reported level of affective "intensity" and activity with cyclical shifts away from discarded fan objects and toward newly compelling objects' (2005: 803). As with my research this is something Hills discovered unexpectedly, describing its appearance in his interview with one participant, Shaun, as his own, 'emotionally nourishing aleatory object' (814), thrown up by the chance of who he interviewed. Hills goes on to raise an important issue for fan studies that can be re-appropriated for the study of new media technologies: 'Cyclical fandom raises the question of temporality: How do fans move on from fan object to object rather than necessarily defining their fandom through one fan culture / object?' (819). So too is it possible to ask how audiences move on to accept new media technologies and integrate them into their daily lives. Susan C. Herring explicitly raises questions concerning the changes that technologies undergo in their emergence into daily life:

> Will today's young trendsetters become conservative technology users over time, as what was new becomes outdated? Do their usage patterns reflect a life stage that they will outgrow, but that future generations will repeat? Or will they carry their present perspectives over into their adult usage, fundamentally transforming patterns of Internet use? (2008: 71)

The research in this book cannot explicitly offer any answers to such questions because only three participants had the opportunity to express different opinions. What the evidence of those three participants can do, however, is highlight the possibility of considering the inconstant audience as both a problem and an opportunity. Although it raises issues for audience research over the specificity of evidence that must be addressed and accounted for, it also provides a valuable opportunity to observe how engagement with media is affected by changes in the context in which it occurs.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF EMERGENCE

What at first seem to be 'problems' with researching media technologies during their emergent stage (a limited research sample that may have constantly changing attitudes) can actually provide a number of insights into the ways in which new technologies become integrated into daily life. The association between new technologies and younger users may reflect empirically proven consumption patterns but also indicate assumptions on the part of the television industry about who will be using such technologies,

and so who they should initially be pushed towards. The changing attitudes demonstrated by Harry (and Beth and Charles) demonstrate the ways in which technologies must prove their value to the daily lives of their potential users. Technology does not become part of daily life instantly, and so studying moments of emergence can illuminate the ways in which this process is undertaken. Combined, these two consequences of emergence tell us something about who the audience for emergent transmedia television is: primarily younger and subject to shifting attitudes and behavioural patterns.

The demographically specific nature of this research sample and the evidence of changing attitudes also indicates a need to follow Shaun Moores' approach to audience studies as 'mean[ing] attending to the media's *multiple* significances in *varied* contexts of reception' (1993: 3, my emphasis), with the focus on the 'micro-settings' of television consumption (32). This is echoed in Lisa Gitelman's argument concerning the study the history of media technology: 'Media . . . are very particular sites for very particular, importantly social as well as historically and culturally specific experiences of meaning (2006: 8). Rather than making grand statements about television viewers as a whole, the research in this book allows conclusions to be drawn that are specific to not only these technologies and this particular audience group, but also a particular point in time of the technology's emergence. As such it is not only focused on a specific group of predominantly UK viewers, it is also focused on these viewers as the internet was becoming a legal source of television content after many years of being used for such purposes illegally and the mobile phone was being used to access televisual material for the first time. Its results and conclusions serve as a snapshot of this particularly changeable moment in the history of television and new media, and, like most audience research, should not be assumed as representative of the television audience as a whole or potentially even as representative of those participants' opinions now, several years after the final focus group. These conclusions must be assigned to the specificities of the make-up *and* timing of the research group.

However, this lack of wider representativeness should not undermine the value of the research itself. As the following chapters will go on to demonstrate, the emergence of new media technologies and the evolution of transmedia storytelling and engagement has had, and continues to have, a complex impact on the relationship between audiences and television drama. Whereas the attitudes of those discussed in the following chapters may have changed since this research was completed, their attitudes towards transmediality and television at the former's point of emergence can tell us much about how understandings of television change as the media landscape around it does. The second half of this book will now turn to examining three case studies of emergent transmediality (online gaming, mobile television and downloading) that, between them, represent many of the changes in viewing practices that emerged in the early twenty-first century. By considering how and why

audiences engage or disengage with these new ways of experience television drama, it becomes possible to explore how the meaning of television changes as it leaves the confines of the television set.

Part II

Audiences for Emergent Transmedia Drama

4 *Spooks* Internet and Digital Gaming
Immersion and Agency[44]

This chapter will explore a particular example of transmedia storytelling, the games created for the BBC series *Spooks*, to examine how audiences responded to the extension of a televisual storyworld into a more 'interactive' form. Of all the moments of transmediality discussed in this book, games are perhaps, on the surface, the most explicitly *different* from television drama episodes and involve a radical shift in viewer expectations and experience; they must go from watching a television episode to having to have direct input in a game. However, by being constructed as part of a transmedia drama they are also positioned as part of an integrated, coherent narrative experience. How, then, do viewers respond to the shift from viewing to playing? What can this shift tell us about engagement with gaming texts and about engagement with television drama? In considering these questions, this chapter will explore how theories of immersion and agency can illuminate both the differences between engagement with the same 'text' via a television and a gaming platform, and what audiences particularly value about both forms of engagement.

As the following chapters will demonstrate, the concept of immersion, for these viewers, was a central pleasure of watching television drama. It played a crucial role in their attitudes towards not only gaming texts but also the exploitation of the mobile phone as a platform for transmedia content and, to a lesser extent, downloading services. Theoretically, the term can be applied to multiple forms of engagement, a fact that becomes increasingly significant when considering the integration of different technologies that are capable of different forms of engagement, both complimentary and contrasting. It is therefore necessary to interrogate the concept and its application in this specific set of circumstances in order to establish how it can inform our understanding of the attitudes of the audience group in this research. In terms of gaming texts, such as those created in conjunction with *Spooks*, different forms of immersion are specifically placed alongside issues of agency and interactivity in ways that have previously been understood in terms of a binary of value, one that the evidence provided by participants in this research calls into question. This questioning was particularly apparent around two textual features

of the television series that had a complex transition to the format of the *Spooks* flash games: the relationship established between the viewer and fictional characters, and the narrative expectations the viewers brought to the series in its status as not only a 'quality' drama but also a 'spy' drama.

THE TRANSMEDIA *SPOOKS*, IMMERSION AND THE SPECTRUM OF INTERACTIVITY

The hour-long drama series *Spooks*, produced for the BBC by independent production company Kudos Film and Television and first launched in the summer of 2002, follows the activities of the counter-terrorist group working within MI5. In each episode a core team of intelligence officers, which regularly changes over the course of the series due to cast members leaving and new characters being introduced, must investigate and prevent a threat against the national security of the United Kingdom, ranging from political assassinations and treason to bomb threats and corporate espionage. Parallel to these central 'threat' narratives are a series of personal narratives examining the impact of working for the Secret Service on the personal relationships of the main characters. The series is positioned as a flagship for the BBC, taking a primetime slot and held up as an example of the Corporation's 'quality' programming (BBC, 2008b: 22).

At the start of the programme's second season, in June 2003, the BBC launched a series of 'Flash' games via the official website[45]. Whereas computer and video games have been the subject of a burst in academic research in recent years, Flash games have predominantly been ignored by games studies scholars, who instead choose to focus on the ontology of console and PC games and their similarity or distinctiveness from older media forms (see Aarseth, 1997, 2004; Eskelinen, 2001, 2004; King and Krzywinska, 2002; Atkins, 2003; Dovey and Kennedy, 2004; Juul, 2004). Elaine Chan and Peter Vorderer mention the existence of Flash games but only to ultimately reject them as an object of study:

> The technological requirements for these games, both in terms of hardware and bandwidth, are fairly low. The time commitment necessary for the player to learn how to play the game, play it, and reach an appropriate stopping point provided by the game (what we may consider a round of play) is also minimal; in general, the player can expect one round of play to consist of minutes, not hours. Additionally, because no other players are involved no pressure exist, other than events within the game itself, to constrain duration of play. In other words, it should be easier for the individual to quit the game at any time, or alternatively, to continue playing indefinitely. (2006: 77–78)

To a certain extent Chan and Vorderer's dismissal of Flash games is unsurprising. Their relatively limited visual style and narrative potential cannot be seen as closely related to older media forms such as the cinema. Equally they do not feature the range of gameplay found in console or PC based games. In many ways Flash games do not fit the models of computer/video games promoted by games studies and they do not quite fit into arguments concerning the relationship between games and older media forms that have typified the discipline. However, that does not make them unworthy of academic study, and in many ways parallels can be drawn between them and these other media forms.

Flash games are a prominent form of online entertainment, often offered for free on sites such as www.gamescene.com and www.flash-game.net. In addition many of the arguments presented as reasons to not examine Flash games, such as those by Chan and Vorderer, are inadequate. They are no less complex, in terms of graphics or gameplay, than early video games such as *Pong* (Atari, 1972) or *Pac-Man* (Namco, 1979), which have been the focus of academic research (see, for example, Newman, 2004: 35). Some Flash games in fact offer highly complex forms of gameplay which may take the player hours to complete, defying Chan and Vorderer's argument that a round of play will last only minutes. The *Hapland* trilogy of games, for example (http://www.foon.co.uk/farcade/), consist of a series of mystery scenarios in which the player must determine how objects on the screen react to being activated in order to successfully guide the central character to safety. There are between fifteen and thirty steps that the player must uncover in order to successfully complete the game, and each of these steps requires a considerable amount of trial and error in order to guess correctly[46]. Similarly, as Helene Madsen and Troels Degn Johansson have argued, such games have 'non-narrative rhetorical potentials' (2002: 74) that can provide as much meaning as more 'complex' games. As will be explored, the *Spooks* games do not offer this level of complexity, although their relationship to narrative will be explored in more detail below, but this simplicity may in fact be a particular appeal of them. Within the focus groups in this research, Debbie, for example, said that with Flash games '[y]ou can do the same thing over and over and you don't have to do everything to get to that one. You can spend ten, fifteen minutes playing the game and then leave it. It doesn't take very long to play any of the games; you don't have to give it, not that much time or commitment' (Debbie, 25 years old, civil servant, focus group 1). Flash games therefore offer potential pleasures and modes of engagement that are unique to their format, pleasures that have not yet been fully explored.

Flash games also play a crucial role in the television industry's development of transmedia storytelling, with most transmedia gaming texts taking the form of Flash games. This reliance can be directly associated to the issue of temporality discussed in Chapter 1 of this volume with the length of time it takes to develop a disc based game (years) making it impossible

to create one within the production timescale of a television series (weeks or months). Some television series have released PC or console games, most notably *24*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (WB/UPN, 1997–2003) and *Lost*. In the case of *24*, the game fills in the back-story to Season 3, which opens with Jack Bauer undercover with a Mexican crime family, but was released in 2006, two years after the season had ended. With the *Lost* game, the player becomes a previously unknown castaway, and there was little direct relation to any single episode. Whereas both games function as transmedia in terms of the series as a whole, they did not fall into the pattern of release discussed in chapter one. A Flash game, however, can be created in a space of time that is analogous to television production and as such are the dominant form of gaming for transmedia television texts[47].

The online *Spooks* games, called *Spy Academy*, consisted of a series of Flash-animated puzzles that test the player on their abilities to perform tasks seen in the programme. For instance, the first game, *Defuse*, requires the player to copy a sequence of lights in order to deactivate a bomb, an act that features in the final episode of the first series. Similarly, more common activities that the audience will be familiar with from multiple episodes of the series are presented in the games such as placing microphones to record conversations in a room (*Bugging*) or hacking into a computer system (*Firewall*). These games appear in two modes, 'quick' in which every game is made available or 'story' in which they are connected via a loose narrative, and each game is only unlocked once the player has achieved a sufficiently high score on the previous game. When the third season began airing in the autumn of 2004 the BBC launched a second style of *Spooks* game, this time via the interactive television series BBCi[48]. After each episode a continuity announcer invited viewers to 'press the red button' that launches BBCi. After a short pause the game would begin automatically and would run for approximately twenty minutes. For the initial five weeks of a season run, the player would take part in a *Training* game that consisted of a series of separate activities testing skills of observation, memory and deduction. During the second five weeks of the season the game switched to a *Mission* narrative in which tasks involving similar observation, memory and deduction tests were strung together with a brief plot. As with the initial internet games, the activities mimicked those seen in the episodes, but due to the technological differences between a television and a computer, were based around multiple choice questions that could be answered via a remote control.

The nature of these games, along with the differences in format between the internet games and digital games, can be observed by considering how they deal with the same activity: the control of a series of cars following a suspect. In the internet game *Car Tail* the player is shown a screen with a simple grid-like map. Different coloured lights indicate the suspect's car and the three MI5 cars. The suspect's car moves through the grid independently; the player must click on the MI5 cars and move them into a position

so that they can maintain a tail on the suspect's car without being within a direct line of sight for too long. The player is able to move any of the cars at any time as long as they are within the section of the map that they can see. In comparison, in the game within *Mission* that involves the tailing of a suspect, the viewer sees a combination of video footage and computer-generated maps. The video footage shows the view from the windscreen of a car as it drives down various suburban and country roads at night. At set points the image switches to a CGI map that shows the position of the suspect's car and four MI5 cars. The player is then given a multiple choice question concerning the direction one of the MI5 cars should take. They answer by pressing the corresponding number button on their remote control. The gameplay, and possible pleasure, on offer in the two kinds of game is different. At the mechanical level, the internet games are operated through moving and clicking a computer mouse or through certain keystrokes. Often the player is able to move an item within the frame, for example, when they guide a robot around a maze in the game *Gas*. In contrast, the television-based games involve the player pressing the number or arrow keys on their digital television remote in order to answer multiple choice questions. Although the player's action can change the image on screen they cannot move objects around the screen and for the majority of the games can only have any input, or 'play', at set moments. The games offer different kinds of physical interaction, what the player actually does and the kinds of response their actions receive, as well as different levels of interactions; in one the player is involved constantly, whereas in the other their involvement is sporadic.

The online flash games, and to a slightly lesser extent the digital television games, were positioned by the BBC as part of the transmedia text of *Spooks* along the lines of the model discussed in Chapter 1. Both fit into the narrative diegesis of the television series. The activities featured in the games mimic the range of activities seen in the programme and spy dramas more generally, including bomb defusal, car tailing and wiretapping. Additionally, both the online and digital television games are created to specifically fit with the look and style of *Spooks* as a television series and in this respect are created to appear as another part of the *Spooks* transmedia text. The digital television games open with a credit sequence featuring a collection of shots edited from the credits that open each television episode, complete with the distinctive vertical stripe graphics, title cards and music used in the series. With the internet games, this connection is mainly established through the design of the games' homepage. This page is designed to resemble an office space similar to that which appears in the programme, known as 'the Grid'. The camera positions the player as if they are sitting at a desk, with a computer, paper file, lamp and laptop in front of them. In the background, doors open onto a meeting room complete with table, chairs and, on the wall, the fictional crest for the security services that is seen in the television episodes.

The player clicks on the computer on the desk to activate a close up of the screen where they can access the game files, which in turn appear as computer folders and files. These games contain tasks that fit not only the wider generic patterns of the programme but also the specific events of individual episodes. They incorporate the portion of Jenkins's model of transmedia storytelling, in which a fictional world may be 'explored and experienced through game play' (2006: 96), as the viewer is positioned within a virtual version of the diegesis of *Spooks*.

Narrative coherence is not the only way that *Spooks* functions as an example of transmedia storytelling. A consistency of authorship is also apparent across the television series and the games in a particularly unusual way. Whereas Chapter 1 of this volume positioned the potential for an institution to act as the author of a transmedia text, in most cases the television episodes themselves are supplemented by some level of individual authorship; we know someone has made them. In a break from normal television practice, however, the episodes of *Spooks* feature no credits, with the opening title sequence merely providing the series title and the final shot of the episode cutting straight to a copyright card featuring the BBC and Kudos logos; it is *only* the institutions that feature as author. The television text of *Spooks* is authorless in much the same way as the non-televisual components of transmedia texts often are. The only indicator of where (or who) the programme has come from is the branding of the production company and broadcaster, which matches that of the games. Finally, the games were clearly positioned within the temporality of the series. The online games were released once an episode had aired and had the same lifecycle of 'newness' that the television episodes had. The digital television games, although fewer in number than the online games, were also tied closely to the broadcast schedule of the series. The viewer was invited to switch to them once an episode had aired and they were only available at that particular time. They literally functioned as a continuation of each episode's broadcast moment. However, whereas the games were clearly positioned as a part of an integrated transmedia narrative with the television episodes, the two formats still offer the audience two different forms of engagement, one that is ultimately tied up in the perceived value of different forms of media content. In particular the close relationship between the games and the television episodes highlights the relationship between two concepts that are particularly useful in considering focus group discussions on the games: immersion and interactivity.

Television Drama and Immersion

The concept of immersion is one that has been described in multiple ways. Raymond Williams's theory of 'flow', for example, suggests that the viewer gets immersed or swept away in a stream of images as they 'stay

with whatever channel they begin watching' (1974: 93). Roger C. Aden meanwhile discusses a kind of immersive lifestyle with fans completing 'symbolic pilgrimages' to enter 'an imagined promised land' (1999: 97–98). During this 'pilgrimage', Aden argues, fans have 'an individual flow experience' (162), and it is this that offers the model of immersion demonstrated in the focus group discussions conducted for this research. The concept of a 'flow experience' refers to Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi's theory of flow, or 'optimum experience', in which,

> [c]oncentration is so intense that there is no attention left over to think about anything irrelevant, or to worry about problems. Self-consciousness disappears, and the sense of time becomes distorted. An activity that produces such experiences is so gratifying that people are willing to do it for its own sake, with little concern for what they will get out of it, even when it is difficult, or dangerous. (2002 (1992): 71)

In this model, an individual's attention to a particular activity is so intense that the viewer become immersed in it completely, ultimately feeling 'a sense of exhilaration, a deep sense of enjoyment that is long cherished and that becomes a landmark in memory for what life should be like' (3).

In many ways this can be likened to theories about the immersive potential of literature. Marie–Laure Ryan, in examining engagement with novels, theorises immersion as requiring a reader to be simultaneously completely aware of the fictional text and completely unaware of anything else surrounding them: 'Through obliviousness, the reader detaches herself from her real-world surroundings and takes in the atmosphere of the fictional world . . . The oblivious mode of reading requires a point of view internal to the fictional world' (1995: online). For Ryan, then, immersion involves the exclusion of the world outside the fictional text and complete concentration on the world inside it, echoing Csikszentmihalyi's model. To be immersive a text must hold the reader's attention more than anything else. The reader (or viewer) must 'detach herself from the real world', and become lost completely in the fictional world presented to them.

This model of immersive flow has a complicated relationship to the act of watching television. Csikszentmihalyi specifically argues against television viewing as a flow experience, positioning it alongside drug use, masochism, extreme sexuality and gambling as activities that are contrary to the optimal experience of flow. He argues that 'watching TV is far from being a positive experience—generally people report feeling passive, weak, rather irritable, and sad when doing it', and that,

> [w]hilst interacting with television, the mind is protected from personal worries. The information passing across the screen keeps unpleasant concerns out of the mind. Of course, avoiding depression this way is

> rather spendthrift, because one expands a great deal of attention without having much to show for it afterward. (2002 (1992): 169)

This seems to contradict his earlier statement as 'information passing across the screen keeps unpleasant concerns out of the mind' seems only semantically different to 'there is no attention left over to think about anything irrelevant, or to worry about problems' (71). Other writers seem to support this distinction between television viewing and the kind of immersion found in the 'flow' experience. John Ellis's theory of the television 'glance', for example, denies the kind of focused viewing required in order for the viewer to become immersed in its texts. He argues that 'TV does not encourage the same degree of spectator concentration' that cinema does, that it 'is treated casually rather than concentratedly' (1982: 128). For Ellis, the ability of the television viewer to become oblivious to the world outside the television screen is extremely limited.

More recently, however, this position has been challenged. Camille Bacon-Smith makes an explicit connection between Williams and Csikszentmihalyi's theories of flow:

> While the use of the term 'flow' by both theorists seems to have been coincidental, that very coincidence points out the phenomenological similarity of the experience of television viewing and experiences which Csikszentmihalyi finds to be present in play. (1992: 128)

Will Brooker, meanwhile, has argued that excluding television from this concept of flow denies the immersive potential of watching it:

> This sense of immersion, where the everyday is transcended and the participant enters a different state of being, a form of communion with a text, a process and sometimes with other participants, seems to offer a fascinating approach to the experience of watching television: in particular the more intense viewing practised by fans with their favourite shows. (2005: online)

This promotion of an immersive experience is particularly seen in theories surrounding 'quality' television. John Caldwell explicitly identifies Ellis's glance theory as the model that has most 'sidetracked television studies from a fuller understanding of the extreme stylization emergent in television in the 1980s' (1995: 25). Caldwell instead argues that 'the viewer is not always, nor inherently, distracted' (27) and that 'spectatorship in television, can be quite intense and ingrained over time. Any definition of television based on the viewer's "fundamental inattentiveness" is shortsighted' (26). Indeed, the kind of 'compulsive viewing practices' that Mark Jancovich and James Lyons discuss (2003: 2) suggests a viewing experience that is more open to associations with theories of immersion. Television drama, particularly 'quality'

drama of the kind demonstrated by *Spooks* and *24*, can therefore be considered as capable of inviting an immersive experience for the viewer, one in which they become fully engaged with a fictional world.

What is particularly noteworthy with regards to the focus group discussions conducted for this research is this fictional world's *external* relationship to the individual. Again this is something that Csikszentmihalyi dismisses when he writes, 'A person who rarely gets bored, who does not constantly need a favourable external environment to enjoy the moment, has passed the test for having achieved a creative life' (2002 (1992): 171). However, other writers have acknowledged the benefits and pleasures of a specifically fictional, and external, world. Janet Murray, in tracing the history of immersive storytelling, has argued that such an experience corresponds to an innate, psychological and emotional need that can only be fulfilled through access to something that is 'other' to the individual, separate from their own life:

> The teddy bear provides comfort because the child projects upon it both his memories of the soothing mother and his sense of himself as a small being who can be cuddled and hugged. But though it embodies these strong subjective elements, the teddy bear is also a real object with a physical presence outside of anything the child imagines about it . . . A good story serves the same purpose for adults, giving us something safely outside ourselves (because it is made up by somebody else) upon which we can project our feelings. Stories evoke our deepest fears and desires because they inhabit this magical borderland. (Murray, 2000 (1997): 100)

In Murray's theory of immersion we require the ability to lose ourselves in fictional worlds in order to work through issues and emotions, with the storyworld providing a buffer to the real world. Immersion, for Murray, becomes an issue of emotional health which requires the reader or viewer escaping into a fictional world that is specifically different from the material space they live in.

The audience research conducted for this project supported theoretical models that associate television drama with a more immersive experience, particularly with respect to the 'otherness' of the fictional world. Andrew, for example, spoke about how he specifically prefers dramas, like *24*, that have an element of the extraordinary, something that is unlike his real life:

> I like things that aren't too grounded in reality, to be honest. I couldn't watch something like *EastEnders* or *Coronation Street*. Simply because I encounter enough irritating people wrapped up in themselves in real life. Whereas something like *24* is a chance to really, like, through the eyes of another person, live out all the exciting things we never get to do. (Andrew, 38 years old, lecturer, interview)

A similar comment was made in a focus group by Charles when he said, '[*24*] was something I'd escape into' (28 years old, research scientist, focus group 5). The television, and television drama in particular, is used by both Andrew and Charles to escape into a fictional world where they can momentarily forget about any issues in their real lives and instead live out a fantasy in someone else's. As one focus group participant, discussing the forensic crime show *CSI*, said, 'If you're watching something like *CSI* and trying to figure out how this person died, you're not thinking about your own life' (Carol, 17 years old, student and sales assistant, focus group 8). For these research participants television can be something with which they can achieve the detachment from the real world discussed by Ryan. The fictional spaces of television drama offer them a form of escape through an immersive experience.

Transmedia Gaming: The Spectrum of Interactivity

It is of course possible to demonstrate that video games can be just as immersive as television episodes. Claire, for example, when discussing mobile gaming, described how some games were 'just addictive, just the same thing over and over, I don't know, there's something about the same thing over and over you just want to get to the next bit' (18 years old, student, focus group 6). Her description of gaming as 'addictive' suggests a loss of control or awareness of the world outside of the video game, something that is reminiscent of Ryan's theory concerning the obliviousness of immersion. However, at the same time, video games, particularly those closely associated with the home computer and internet, gain an added dimension of expectation, within both theoretical considerations of them and the focus group discussions in this project. Games are perceived as more 'interactive' than television episodes, another term that invites a range of definitions and theories. James Newman describes interactivity as 'a simple, mechanical measure of inputting controls or commands in order to influence on-screen action' (2002: 409), an approach that proves initially useful in its simplicity. With television drama, although the viewer can change channels or turn the set off, there is not normally any action that the audience can perform in order to alter the content of the programme[49]. To follow this approach, computer games and television episodes within a transmedia text such as *Spooks* can be seen as clearly offering different but related experiences for the audience in terms of both the immersive and interactive experience they offer them. Where this 'similar difference' becomes more clearly divided is in the political currency assigned to the term 'interactive' and the values assigned to these two different forms of immersion. In particular, the perceived difference between playing a game and watching a television programme is intricately bound up with perceptions of the active/passive binary that informed early work on television audiences and debated the location of power in audiences' processes of making meaning from a

television text (see, for example, Hall, 1980; Buckingham, 1987; Lewis, 1991; Morley, 1992; Bird, 2003; Livingstone, 1998 (1990)).

However, these arguments become complicated when comparing television with more 'interactive' media. Beryl Graham, for example, writes, 'Perhaps a primary pleasure of interactivity is that of *control*, which is why the thwarting of audience control, or the realisation of "token" control, is a site of such *dis*pleasure' (1996: 171). Whereas the television audience's sense of control over the images presented to them is limited to changing channels or switching the set off, computer game players (or indeed general computer users) see their actions have a literal reaction on the screen. They move their mouse and an onscreen object moves. They press the correct combination of keys in a game and they 'win'. In turn, this raises ideas concerning the value of each media. As Ellen Seiter writes,

> In advertising, in news broadcasts, in education journals, the computer is often defined against, and pitched as an improvement on, the television set: where television viewing is passive, computer use is interactive, where television programmes are entertaining in a stale, commercialized, violent way, computer software and the Internet are educational, virtuous and new. (1999, 120)

Part of the value of computers and the internet is therefore tied up with their perceived level of interactivity and the subsequent connotations of increased audience agency. The internet is somehow 'better' than television, which is simply seen as something to fill void time (see Kubey, 1996). This even extends specifically to the playing of games, as Elaine Lally discusses:

> [T]he concepts of education and entertainment tend to become conflated around computer use, indicated in the use of the term 'edutainment'. There is a widespread belief that even game-playing is computer use and thus beneficial for children, assisting them to acquire generalized 'computer literacy skills'. (2002: 59)

The perception of games as 'interactive' associates the kind of immersive experience they offer with positive value. In comparison, the immersion of watching a television text is held up negatively as something wasteful.

However, taking a more nuanced approach to the concept of interactivity begins to complicate this binary of value, which posits games as 'interactive' and therefore 'good' and watching television as 'passive' and therefore 'bad'. Some writers have questioned the potency of the term 'interactivity', with Aphra Kerr, Julian Kücklich and Pat Brereton viewing it as 'a political, rather than a descriptive term' (2006: 72), whereas Nickianne Moody argues for the 'interactive myth' (1996: 60). Rather than determining whether a technological platform, or content, is 'interactive' or 'noninteractive', it is helpful to turn towards models of 'interactivity' that present

a more complex approach to it. Marie-Laure Ryan, for example, describes two types of interactivity: 'selective', which describes many activities including evaluating or interpreting a text, and 'productive', which deals more with active participation in a text's construction (2001: 211–212). These two types are 'distinguished on the basis of the freedom granted to the user and the degree of intentionality of his interventions' (205). Andrew Darley meanwhile takes this argument a step further by arguing that watching a film or television programme is interactive, it is just a *different kind* of interactivity compared to playing a game. Whereas a game offers a form of engagement where the player experiences '*vicarious kinaesthesia* . . . the impression of controlling events that are taking place in the present' (2000, 157, original emphasis), an audio-visual form such as television offers a greater level of 'semiotic resonance and semantic depth' (164).

In the latter, the audience's active role comes from the act of interpretation, an argument first put forward in Stuart Halls 'Encoding/Decoding' model (1980). Although the audience has less direct input on content when watching television, that does not mean they play no role in determining their engagement. Darley in fact goes on to argue that engagement with media that have traditionally been considered 'passive', such as film and television, can be seen as offering greater levels of interactivity than the more obviously 'interactive' form of the computer game:

> [T]he space for reading or meaning-making in the traditional sense is radically reduced in computer games and simulation rides. In this sense the much maligned 'passive' spectators of conventional cinema might be said to be far more active than their counterparts in the newer forms. (2000: 164)

In viewing 'interactivity' not as a monolithic concept, but as a spectrum that covers subtle distinctions between different activities based on both interpretation and physical action, it becomes possible to challenge the simple assignation of the status of 'interactive' or 'non-interactive', and consequently the similarly simple assignation of 'good' or 'bad', to the various elements of a transmedia text such as *Spooks*.

This is something that is confirmed within the audience research conducted for this project. Participants in focus groups discussed their engagement with the gaming elements of the *Spooks* transmedia text in terms of a combination of the kind of immersive experience desired from watching the television episodes, an experience that is ultimately specific to *Spooks* as a particular example of television drama, and the agency perceived as available through video games. However, most crucially, the participants' values with regard to the active/passive binary that is constructed in considering games in relation to television drama did not follow the concept that interactivity was automatically 'good'. The kind of engagement offered by a television programme was valued in its own right, as a 'good' form of

entertainment, offering acceptable and desired pleasures. The interactive immersion of gaming was not automatically privileged over the kind of immersion available from watching a television series; instead, a combination of the two was desired in different forms. If the more cerebral interactivity described by Darley, and more readily associated with the 'passivity' of watching television, was missing, then this audience group became less engaged with the gaming content. Merely being 'more interactive' (in the simplest sense) was not enough, something that became particularly apparent in discussion surrounding the textual characteristics of *Spooks* that research participants found most important to creating a sufficiently immersive text: the role of fictional characters and the complexity of its narrative structure.

'DELICIOUS OTHERNESS': FICTIONAL CHARACTERS AND IMMERSION

The emphasis within focus group discussions of the role of fictional characters and complex narratives in creating an immersive text echoes Michael J. Porter, Deborah L. Larson, Allison Harthcock and Kelly Berg Nellis's assertion that the two central characteristics of the television narrative are 'a heavy emphasis on character development and continuous storylines that flow between episodes of a series' (Porter et. al., 2002: 102). Sonia Livingstone even argues, 'Characters can be seen to carry the narrative, such that narrative or genre themes will be reflected in the construction and representation of the characters' (1998 (1990): 119). Characters play a crucial role in the construction of not only a fictional world but also the audience's relationship to that world. As Roberta Pearson has argued, '[P]roducers and viewers conceive of characters not as bundles of televisual codes but as fictional personas whose identities are defined by similar properties to those of actual persons' (2009a: 148). As such it is perhaps not surprising that they figured so strongly in focus group discussions.

The function of characters also illustrates the different forms of immersive engagement offered to the audience in a television episode and a computer game. In many console-based video games the player takes control of a character in the form of an avatar. The player then watches the avatar move from a detached point of view. As Barry Atkins writes when examining the *Tomb Raider* games, 'We may become deeply involved in the experience of watching or playing "as" Lara Croft, but we never undertake a magical transformation to "become" her . . . (we "look" not so much over her shoulder, but from above and behind)' (2003: 28). In many ways games such as the *Tomb Raider* series offer the same kind of third person engagement with character offered in other forms of fictional texts. At the same time, however, there are also a number of games where

the point of view of the player is shifted to a first person perspective, with a fictional character woven into the larger mythology of the game. As Atkins again describes, 'What the player sees is what the protagonist sees' (55). Characters can therefore be constructed in multiple ways by gaming texts. There can be a 'body', albeit a virtual one, that the player can see and move, or the player can be positioned behind the eyes of the game protagonist, seeing the action from their point of view. However, as Robert Buerkle argues, visual point of view does not automatically equate to the position the player has in relation to the narrative world (2008: 353). Buerkle instead argues,

> 'First-person shooters' like *Half-Life* actually provide the cleanest and most definitive example of second-person narration in contemporary media; in offering such a deliberately internal experience, *Half-Life* elides nearly any trace of [game protagonist Gordon] Freeman as a character outside of the player, and resultantly, all the information conveyed throughout the game is done so under the context of 'you' being Freeman, couched under the discursive statement 'this is happening to you'. (355)

The narrative address of the *Spooks* games, and the fact that due to their status as transmedia storytelling they are closely associated with television's narrative address, complicates Buerkle's concept of second-person narration. In particular, although arguing that character and player converge, Buerkle's analysis retains *some* presence of a fictional character; to use his *Half-Life* example, Gordon Freeman still exists. In the *Spooks* games the situation is different and Murray Smith's theory of character construction in film offers a useful starting point for understanding how they may offer different kinds of immersive experiences. Smith makes clear that he is writing specifically about engagement with cinema, arguing that '[w]atching a film in a cinema is not exactly like watching TV or reading a novel for technological, institutional, and "spectatorial" reasons' (1995: 12). However, as I have already discussed, television can be just as immersive as film, and the similarities between the two media allow his construction of three versions of engagement with fictional characters (76) to provide a way towards understanding the different viewing positions offered in a television series and a game. In turn, his model allows for a deeper analysis of the specific form of immersion found in television drama and ultimately desired by the participants in this audience research in the gaming elements of the *Spooks* transmedia text.

Smith rejects many psychoanalytic approaches that argue that viewers 'experience vicariously the thoughts and feelings of the protagonist' (Smith, 1995: 77), preferring Noël Carroll's theories based on Richard Wollheim's concept of the more detached 'acentral imagining'. In describing Carroll's work on engaging with horror films, Smith writes,

> When the spectator Charles sees a fictional character faced by the Green Slime—to use the dramatis personae of Carroll's analysis—he does not experience an emotion identical to that of the character. Rather than experiencing *fear of the Slime*, Charles experiences *anxiety for the character as she faces the slime*. (Smith, 1995: 78, original emphasis)

Smith goes on to describe the following three versions of engagement with character, each offering a weaker form than the last:

1. '[N]ot only do we mistake the representation for its referents, but we mistake ourselves for (or "lose ourselves in") the protagonist'.
2. We, as the audience, 'imagine what another person must feel like in their situation, without for a moment confusing ourselves with that other person'.
3. 'We might be said to imagine *ourselves in the situation* (as distinct from imagining *being the character in the situation*)'. (all Smith, 1995: 80, original emphasis)

Smith dismisses the first version because viewers lose any separation between themselves and the characters on screen, something Smith views as untenable. Instead, he further clarifies the difference between the empathetic second version and third version in which the viewer replaces the character with their own persona. What is particularly important in making this distinction is that, Smith writes, 'identification depends on the idea that the spectator's traits and mental states are modelled on those of the character, not that the character functions as a "holding bay" into which the spectator projects her own attributes [as in version three]' (1995: 80). In version two, the spectator never imagines themselves inside the fictional text. Fictional characters provide both a barrier to such forms of engagement and act as a way into alternative forms of engagement.

It is this second form of character identification that is evident in the television episodes of *Spooks* and that maintains the external 'otherness' of Janet Murray's model of immersion. In the television episodes of *Spooks*, the audience is clearly aligned with a core group of intelligence officers, beginning with the original trio of Tom Quinn (Matthew MacFadyen), Zoe Reynolds (Keely Hawes) and Danny Hunter (David Oyelowo)[50]. On a most basic level, identification with these characters follows Robin Nelson's argument that '[p]oint of view is established televisually by the simple means in the first instance of allotting more narrative time, and thus more screen time, to a particular character' (1997: 41). The audience becomes engaged with this particular set of characters because they are the focus and agents in the narrative of each episode. They are the ones we actually see and it is their actions that we follow through each episode.

The importance of character to becoming engaged with a fictional world was clear throughout the focus groups on both *Spooks* and *24*. When asked,

as an ice-breaker, to describe their favourite character or episode, all participants bar one (Charles) chose to discuss their favourite character[51]. One focus group participant, when asked why she continued to watch *Spooks* so adamantly, explicitly called on her attachment to the characters, saying, 'I can only imagine it must have been the characters because actually quite a lot of the time I can forgive a lot of problems with the plot if I like the characters and if I enjoy them' (Imogen, 23 years old, database administrator, focus group 2). For this particular member of the audience, it is the characters that provide her reason for returning every week to the point where she will happily ignore other aspects of the series that she does not like because of them. They are the source of enjoyment rather than the narrative development of each episode. Her initial questionnaire confirmed this importance, her list of things she liked about *Spooks* beginning with 'I love the characters'. It was further reflected in her diaries when she discussed being inspired to write fan fiction about the characters after particular episodes, her own way of expanding the characters' fictional lives. In fact the same respondent also discussed in the focus groups how the viewing in which she is most engaged and immersed is the second time she watches an episode, when she knows the plot and can instead focus on moments of character development.

In many ways the engagement that Imogen gets from *Spooks* is similar to Ien Ang's concept of 'emotional realism' in her discussion of the pleasure of watching *Dallas*. Ang argues that the pleasure experienced by audiences for *Dallas* comes from a realism that 'is situated at the emotional level: what is recognised as real is not knowledge of the world, but a subjective experience of the world: a "structure of feeling"' (1985: 45). The characters become important to her because she can relate to and understand the emotions they are going through. Although the world in which they live and work may be alien to her—not many people actually have to deal with espionage and regular threats to their personal safety—she responds affectively to that world. She may not personally know what it is like to be threatened but she understands the fear or apprehension it would elicit.

Another point that was evident in the focus groups is that this emotional engagement with the characters will often be twinned with a sense of identification or admiration. For example, as in the following two quotes:

> My favourite character is Ruth because I kind of want to be her because she doesn't get shot at and sits at a desk. (Debbie, 25 years old, civil servant, focus group 1)

> My favourite characters are the two geeky guys [Colin and Malcolm] because I think they're cool and I want to be like them. (Gabrielle, 28 years old, civil servant, focus group 1)

These two participants find characters that they aspire to be like, that have personality traits that they themselves would like to have, particularly engaging. Alongside this identification, almost everyone else in the focus groups

described their favourite character in terms that suggested an admiration for them, without the direct desire to emulate them. The description 'because they're cool' was particularly common, or to take these two quotes:

> [M]y favourite character is Ruth . . . because she's just so intelligent, partly because of the things she says . . . and she doesn't let herself you know go mad or breakdown or go out and do things for . . . personal reasons which I think most of the other characters do at some point. She's got integrity and I like that. (Imogen, 23 years old, database administrator, focus group 2)

> My favourite character in *Spooks* I think is Ruth because she's always calm and in control and comes out with these clever witticisms. (Neil, 17 years old, student, focus group 3)

For all of these viewers it is the characters with positive traits that they admire or may aspire to be like that they find appealing. What is crucial here is that the relationship between the viewer and characters is that of Smith's second form of identification, where viewers 'imagine what another person must feel like in their situation, without for a moment confusing ourselves with that other person' (1995: 80). They sympathise with and admire the characters in the programme, perhaps even wanting to emulate them, but never see them as a 'holding bay' (80) to project their own personality onto, as outlined in Smith's third version.

In the games, however, Smith's third viewing position is exactly the kind of engagement with character that is encouraged as the players are placed *as themselves* into the characters' position, merging the role and actions of the characters with their own skills and attributes. In both forms of game this is primarily done through the use of point of view. The games that originally aired on BBCi used direct address to the camera as the actors in the game spoke 'to' the player. In the games that originated on the web this is established through the design of the games that replicates the design of the series. As I have already mentioned, the player is positioned at a desk in the office space from the programme, literally taking the place of a character from the television series. They are then told to perform tasks that they will have seen the characters perform. The games also recreate the television characters' relationship with their superior when the character of Harry Pearce (Peter Firth) appears to guide and chastise the player, the same role he takes in the episodes. However, Harry is the only character that appears and it is the player's own identity that becomes the central character in the games. Instead of taking control of a fictional character, a 'body' other than their own, they must use their own identity, skills and abilities to perform the task required of them.

Despite the similarity in style and content to the television episodes, the games offer the player a different kind of engagement with the world of *Spooks* compared to the television episodes in terms of their relationship

to character, one that has less connection with the kind of immersive experiences discussed by writers such as Murray and Aden. In the television episodes, the audience is positioned to engage in the kind of 'identification' outlined in Smith's second version, where they are invited to imagine the situation from the fictional characters' points of view. The bodies and personalities of other characters are always present and the viewer takes pleasure from observing and empathising with them. In contrast, engagement in the games is closer to Smith's third version of identification in which we are asked to 'imagine *ourselves in the situation*' (1995: 80). The player places themselves in the situations they have seen the character in and they must respond to the circumstances created in the games as themselves. The player is the 'protagonist' of the game, not a separate, fictional character. In fact this lack of character for the player to embody is also unusual for a game that constructs some kind of narrative diegesis, with even first-person games normally involving some form of character, even if they are never seen[52].

What emerged from the focus groups, however, is that those who particularly engage with the characters do not want to replace them. Instead, they desired the 'otherness' of immersing themselves in an external fictional world such as the television text of *Spooks*. The following is a quote from a conversation between two members of a focus group who discussed not only their experience of playing the games currently available, but also discussed the kind of game they would like to be available:

Jennifer: Harry is the only one in it and we're spies. No, I would've liked to have seen something probably more like-

Imogen: Properly interacting with the characters would've been great . . . you could stop Tom from going mad because you wouldn't let him go out with Christine Dale or Dr Vicky.[53]
(Jennifer, 19 years old, administrator; Imogen, 23 years old, database administrator, focus group 2)

A similar opinion was expressed in a later focus group by Bronwyn when she discussed the transmedia games developed for *The Matrix*, something she went on to connect to the mobile television series *24: Conspiracy*[54]:

> [T]he disappointment people had when with *The Matrix* games, in that they wanted to be Neo, they didn't want to be secondary characters. And I think that's the same for *24*, if you're going to watch something to do with *24*, you'd want Kiefer [Sutherland, who stars in *24*], because that's really part of why you're watching it, because the plot in itself doesn't really make the programme. It does to an extent, but it's the relationship between—not just stardom, but characterisation as well. (Bronwyn, 34 years old, lecturer, focus group 6)

These participants want the fictional characters from the television series to remain and reject the kind of viewing position offered by the games in favour of one more familiar to them from the series. They do not want to position themselves within the diegesis of *Spooks*, but instead, as Aphra Kerr, Julian Kücklich and Pat Brereton have described, wish to experience 'the pleasure of leaving one's identity behind and taking on someone else's' (2006: 74). The games for *Spooks*, however, do not allow for this kind of pleasure, instead asking the players to test themselves without the safety net of a fictional character. There is no fictional persona or avatar for the player to inhabit; they must be themselves and only themselves. As the trailer for the games says, '[I]f *you* think *you're* up to the mark, train with the best', and the construction of point of view in the games invites the player to slot their own identity into the game. However, as Janet Murray has argued, 'When we enter the enchanted world [of a fictional narrative] as our actual selves, we risk draining it of its delicious otherness' (2000 (1997): 101). The appeal of *Spooks*, for participants in this research project, is the ability to immerse themselves in a world that is different to their own and populated by people who are not themselves. The characters provide a boundary between the viewers' identity and the world of *Spooks*; they are the portal through which the audience accesses the 'delicious otherness'. When the games break this boundary the audience becomes uncomfortable and, whilst revelling in the opportunity to exert control over the fictional world, also shrink away from the prospect of inserting themselves into it.

NARRATIVE AND IMMERSION

The second way that immersion in transmedia television drama figured in focus group discussions was in relation to the narrative structure of both the television programme and the games. As with the preceding discussions on character, participants in these focus groups privileged the immersive potential of the television text when discussing the *Spooks* games and felt the games were lacking in some way. In particular these audience members had created expectations based on their previous viewing of *Spooks* and knowledge of similar programmes that informed their involvement with the games. These expectations focused around two interrelated issues. The first of these was the status of *Spooks* as a spy drama; the second was its status as 'quality' drama and use of complex narrative patterns. Combined, these textual characteristics demonstrate how the narrative of *Spooks* works to invite a committed, immersed viewing position, something that then proved the second central way through which research participants discussed their attitudes towards *Spooks* as a transmedia text.

Generically, *Spooks* is most clearly identifiable within the history of spy narratives and connects to a history of espionage themed programmes such

as *Danger Man* (1960–1961, BCS), *The Avengers* (1961–1969, ABC), *The Man from U.N.C.L.E* (1964–1968, NBC), *Bugs* (1995–1998, BBC), *Alias* (2001–2006, ABC), and *24* (2001–, Fox) in a number of ways. Cawelti and Rosenberg, in their discussion of the spy novel, work from a basic definition of spy fiction as 'a story whose protagonist has some primary connection with espionage' (1987: 5) to develop a complex and detailed list of many different subgenres, narrative motifs and character types, some or all of which appear within spy texts (220). As they argue, 'the spy story is no longer a single generic pattern, but has become a complex family of genres' (53) containing elements ranging from assassination, disguise and torture to double agents and misinformation. The location of *Spooks* within the British Security Services provides the link with espionage and many of the generic activities of spy fiction appear throughout the series. Characters go undercover, engage in surveillance operations, are betrayed by double agents, assassinate and are assassinated. At the same time, though, *Spooks* also calls on many of the tropes of the detective drama, a similarity also noted by James Chapman, in reference to other spy dramas, when he argues that '[t]he boundary between the spy/secret agent genre and the police/detective genre is fluid and not always sharply defined' (2002: 20). In particular the programme places a strong emphasis on the solving of a central mystery, what Franco Moretti has described as 'the absence of the *fabula*, the leading event' (1983: 144). Usually this involves finding and interpreting clues or interrogating suspects in order to identify the source of a particular threat, something the characters do not know at the beginning of the episode but must know by the end. The characters of *Spooks* are detectives within an espionage-based world.

The most important generic element of *Spooks* in the focus group discussions, and in terms of what these discussions can tell us about the attitudes of this audience group towards the *Spooks* games, was its use of the missing 'fabula'. The series uses this to create a complex narrative, a puzzle that the audience solves alongside the characters but, in particular, a puzzle that is *cleverer* than the audience. As discussed previously, each episode of the series begins with a lack, a mystery that the central characters must solve. Often the answer to the mystery is hidden behind layers of misinformation and misdirection that the audience must work their way through in order to uncover the truth and solve the narrative enigma. As Cawelti and Rosenberg identify, this is a common trope in spy fiction. Moments where the viewer or reader is tricked into believing one thing about a situation or character only for the opposite to be revealed feature in countless examples ranging from *The Prisoner* ('The Chimes of Big Ben' tx. 08/10/1967, ABC) and *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier Spy* (John le Carre, 1974) to *Die Another Day* (dir. Lee Tamahori, 2002) and several episodes of *24*. Familiarity with these and similar past spy texts led to participants expecting that a complicated narrative where nothing is quite as it seems will be a feature of *Spooks*.

The ability to successfully trick the viewer was held up by participants as the defining evaluative criteria for their responses to the series with episode 2.05 of the series being held up in each of the focus groups directly concerned with *Spooks* (by Debbie, Charles, Imogen and Neil) as a favourite episode precisely because of its complex and deceptive narrative structure. In this episode the team are told to expect a drill on their emergency response procedures shortly before being informed that a dirty bomb involving deadly VX gas has exploded in Parliament Square. As a result the Grid is quarantined and the central characters of Tom, Zoe, Danny, Harry, Ruth (Nicola Walker), Sam (Shauna Macdonald), Malcolm (Hugh Simon) and Colin (Rory Macgregor), along with two external observers, Bridget Macey (Anabelle Apsion) and Mark Wooley (Mark Lewis Jones), must watch via video feed as dirty bombs explode in every major British city, the Cabinet and Royal family are killed, and the country descends into anarchy. Multiple, interconnected storylines follow attempts by Malcolm and Colin to re-acquire contact with the outside world once it is lost, Tom asserting himself as the group's leader and therefore de facto head of the Government, Danny and Sam worrying about their families who live in the cities that have been bombed, and Harry separating himself from the rest of the group when he realises he has been exposed to the gas. The tension between the officers and the observers increases throughout the episode as they become convinced, along with the audience, that the threat is not part of the planned drill and must be real. The episode reaches its climax in an attempt by Macey and Wooley to leave the quarantined area and Tom appearing to shoot Wooley. At this moment the power (which had been turned off) miraculously returns, Wooley is shown to still be alive and the entire event is revealed to have been a construction, that it was in fact the drill they had briefly been warned about at the start of the episode.

The narrative style of *Spooks* is one involving generic elements of misdirection along with the intertwining of multiple plotlines in the style of what Robin Nelson has termed the 'flexi-narrative' in which

> [a] number of stories involving familiar characters in familiar setting are broken down into narrative bytes and rapidly intercut. Any lack of interest of an audience segment in one set of characters or story-line is thus not allowed to last long as another story with a different group of characters is swiftly taken up, only in turn to give way to another before taking up again the first narrative, and so on in a series of interwoven narrative strands. (1997: 32–33)

Nelson's theory is concerned with how television drama narratives hold the viewer's attention, how they keep them immersed in the fictional world they present. By offering many different plotlines, which the audience must pay attention to in order to follow, *Spooks* invites viewers to enter a fully engaged form of spectatorship, where their whole concentration must be on

the text in order to make sense of it. When this is twinned with the expectations of a spy drama to keep the viewer guessing, this effect is multiplied. If the viewers watches *Spooks* distractedly they risk missing a key plot development or twist, therefore reducing their enjoyment of the programme.

This narrative complexity, and the use of plot twists such as the one just described, was often cited in the focus groups as a central point of engagement with the series, with the perceived intellectual difficulty of the series not only distinguishing it from other similar programming, but also maintaining these audience members' interest. For example,

> You have to pay a bit more attention to the details and what people are saying. (Debbie, 25 years old, civil servant, focus group 1)

> It's a bit more intellectually challenging . . . They don't spoon feed it to you, they don't repeat things . . . I think the point is you get a one off chance to spot something. (Charles, 27 years old, research scientist, focus group 1)[55]

> I think this [series] is a little more complicated, sort of more complex and more involved which is good because it's more interesting and, you know, clever. So I quite like it, I like the way it has got cleverer. (Kate, 42 years old, computer administrator, focus group 2)

These perceptions, that *Spooks* offers a challenging and complex narrative where the audience is required to pay close attention in order to follow what is happening, emerges from a combination of pre-conceived notions of spy fiction, that nothing is what it seems, as well as perceptions of *Spooks* specifically as 'quality' spy drama, perceptions that are built up over the duration of the series. Episodes such as the one described previously led to the focus group participants developing expectations of how the narratives of *Spooks* are constructed; in turn these expectations became a key point of engagement for them. They must become immersed in such narratives in order to fully understand what exactly is happening.

The importance of the expectations this audience group had developed from a mixture of generic knowledge and programme memory was also apparent in discussions about moments when the narrative failed to engage them. This especially manifested itself in moments when their expectations for a complicated, twisting plot full of red herrings and sudden revelations is undermined and they could guess what was going to happen next or how the episode would be resolved. One particular episode in the fourth series was considered to lack in this regard (Season 4, Episode 4 tx. 29/09/05, BBC One). In this episode Adam Carter (Rupert Penry–Jones) goes on an undercover mission with Middle Eastern people-smugglers. Whilst on the mission he is tasked with meeting a suspected terrorist, Mohammed Yazdi (Khalid Abdalla), and persuading him to work for MI5. The mission goes wrong and

Yazdi is forcibly taken into custody where he reveals that a foreign Prince (Silas Carson) resident in the UK is masterminding a terrorist cell. The Prince denies the accusations, and Yazdi is granted a meeting with him in order to prove his claims. At the meeting Yazdi kills the Prince because of his work against terrorists, which is revealed to have been his plan all along.

This episode received a considerable number of negative comments from those taking part in the focus groups, primarily because of the plot twist at the end of the episode when Yazdi is revealed to be an assassin and the MI5 officers are shown to have been duped by him. Unlike the revelation in the VX gas episode described previously, it was felt that this twist was too obvious and therefore failed to live up to the complicated narrative expectations the series had established up to this point. This quote is a typical example of this response:

> [I]t was blatantly obvious and you think well how can they be so clever for every other episode, have all these great ideas. They double check everything. They always, you know, cover their own backs and they just left themselves wide open and it was frickin' obvious and I'm not even a member of MI5. Really hated that episode because of that. (Charles, 27 years old, research scientist, focus group 1)

Audience members had expectations about how the narrative should work in the series, namely, that it should be cleverer than them and felt disappointed or became disengaged with the series when this did not happen. As Harry commented,

> Certainly this season I don't think has been as good as previous seasons . . . Usually they have to spell a twist out for me to notice it. But I'm getting all of them . . . I know how it's going to end before they've done anything. So for me, if I've figured it out, it must be easy. Whereas I didn't get that in the first couple of seasons. (26 years old, unemployed, focus group 1)[56]

When they perceive it as not being as intelligent as it should be, when the plot twists that they enjoy become contrived and obvious, they find themselves being distanced from the programme and lose enjoyment of it. The television episodes of *Spooks* were clearly valued by research participants for possessing the kind of complex narrative discussed earlier in this chapter as inviting an immersed viewing position. With the *Spooks* games, however, as with the lack of external characters, the narrative was also seen as preventing this kind of immersion.

Here is a conversation between myself and one of the participants that demonstrates the discordance between the narrative of the episodes and the narrative of the games. In this conversation the discussion focuses on a segment of the BBCi *Training* game in which the player is asked to examine

the rubbish of an employee of a suspect in order to determine the best way to approach her about providing evidence against him:

Jennifer: I think what we were trying to do was I sit there and go well what would be the most obvious thing, it wouldn't be the credit card bill that would be the most important things, so I'm going to go to the receipt from Budgens.
EE: So were you in a way following the logic of the programme where quite often it isn't necessarily the most obvious thing?
Jennifer: Yeah.
EE: Applying programme logic to the games?
Jennifer: And I was wrong! And it wasn't that logic at all. I was sitting there afterwards and I was thinking 'actually that was really stupid no I shouldn't have had that' but a piece of paper saying um, what was it, I chose her um list, her shopping list. It was so silly but my brain was trying to think of *Spooks* and it wasn't at all. (*Jennifer, 19 years old, administrator, focus group 2*)

Jennifer had tried to apply the kind of narrative logic that functions in the series, that the correct solution is unlikely to be the most obvious, to the games, but failed because of it. In order to 'win' the game, the player was expected to select more obviously information-filled items such as a copy of her financial records, which indicated she was well off and therefore unlikely to be bribed, and the *Radio Times*, which indicated her interest in current affairs programming to suggest that she may cooperate on ideological grounds. Jennifer, however, had used her generic knowledge of the spy drama and her memory of *Spooks* episodes to select the least likely source of information because in a genre where nothing is as it seems she expected elements in a game to not be as they seem, for the apparently innocent and everyday items to reveal a hidden secret when in fact they did not. The simplicity of logic in the games contrasted with the complexity of logic in the television series and subsequently led to a lower level of engagement.

These comments echo many of the arguments by writers on the difference between game narratives and older narrative forms such as television drama or film. The central debate during the emergence of games studies as an academic discipline was between 'narratologists', those writers who argue that games contain many of the narrative tropes of older media, and 'ludologists' (Wardrip-Fruin and Harrigan, 2004; Dovey and Kennedy, 2006), those who assert that narrative ultimately plays no role in the creation of a gaming text. This first position is typified in the work of Janet Murray who argues, 'Games are always stories, even abstract games such as checkers or *Tetris*, which are about winning and losing, casting the player as the opponent battling or environment battling hero' (2004: 2; see also Atkins, 2003: 144–145; King, 2002: 51; Ryan, 2001: online). One of the most prominent ludologists, Markku Eskelinen, meanwhile claims the

opposite when he writes that 'stories are just uninteresting ornaments or gift-wrappings to games, and laying any emphasis on studying these kinds of marketing tools is just a waste of time and energy' (2001: online; see also Aarseth, 2004: 51; Eskelinen, 2004: 36; Punday, 2004: 83).

Jennifer's disappointment with respect to the comparative simplicity of the *Spooks* games compared to the television episodes seems to provide evidence to support the ludologist approach that narrative is unimportant in games. Indeed, in comparison to the television episodes of *Spooks*, the narrative of the games is less complex, although it is crucial to recognise that a narrative is still present. Several of the internet games, collectively called the 'Assignments', were strung together to form a single mission. In the first game the player is told that they need to decode a telephone number that is being used by a suspect (*Trace*). They are only able to proceed to the next game when they have successfully completed the first. This second game is then presented within the context of the first: the player now has to 'clean up' an audio file that has been recorded from the telephone number they decoded in the first game (*Descramble*). The games go on to include tailing the suspect (*Car Tail*) and finally searching the rubbish in order to construct a profile of the suspect from what has been thrown away (*Garbology*). The ability to move onto the next stage and move further along the narrative path of the games is dependent on the player's ability to complete each task. As with a linear narrative form then, the player's actions have consequences, albeit limited ones. If they act 'correctly' and perform well they move onto the next part of the puzzle. If they fail they are stuck and told to try again, unable to unlock the next game until their performance improves sufficiently. Initially, these games were released one at a time over a number of weeks, reinforcing the linear progression the player takes through them[57].

A similar situation is evident in the games produced for BBCi. Whereas the first game is a series of discrete 'training modules' that introduce players to playing this style of game, the second *Mission* game followed a linear narrative structure. Each individual task had significance within that structure and had consequences on the player's ability to play later segments. After being tested on the history of the central villain in the story, former army Colonel Tim Briggott (Ken Bones), the player was instructed find a set of security codes that were then used to help undercover officer Emily Taylor (Ndeaye Ba) break into a research facility and steal sarin nerve gas. The next game involved following the group, via the car-tailing game described earlier, arresting Briggott (if successful) and recovering the gas. Each game bore direct relation to the previous and following games with a cause-and-effect structure. This was compounded by the fact that if the player failed to reach a set standard in the penultimate segment the game ended prematurely and the narrative was resolved with the failure of the mission, and in some circumstances the death of certain characters. The game reconstructed a linear narrative familiar from television programmes with actions leading to consequences in an ever advancing move towards a

resolution dependent on the player's skills. However, unlike the narratives in the television episodes, there is no layering of multiple storylines or unexpected plot twists. Instead, there is a single story which the viewer follows to one of a set of pre-determined conclusions.

The narrative structure of the *Spooks* games suggest a support of the ludologists' arguments concerning the lack of importance given to story elements in computer game texts compared to television episodes. However, the fact that this particular participant is *disappointed* in the narrative structure of the games indicates that issues of narrative were important to this audience group, particularly in moments of transmediality. Further focus groups supported this approach, with other participants also desiring a closer relationship between the games and the more immersive narrative of television episodes. The following two participants from focus group 3, in imagining the kind of games they would like to play, both desired a closer replication of the narrative events of the episodes in the games:

> I think if they said, like 'You can play this week's episode' I think I'd be quite, it'd be quite an exciting thing to do. Literally instead of just watching saying 'oh for goodness sake, if you just did that' you could actually do it. (Martin, 18 years old, student, focus group 3)

> I think that it would be cool, if every week when you played the game it was like 'in this week's episode you saw Zaf do this, now see if you can do it?' (Neil, 17 years old, student, focus group 3)[58]

This attitude was also reflected in later, non-programme-specific focus group discussions surrounding games as elements of a transmedia text. Robert, for example, commented, 'Some games don't actually follow the programme. I think the *Buffy* game is just Buffy going around the place killing vampires, there's no storyline to the game . . . I'd want it to tie into a specific area of the actual programme' (18 years old, student, focus group 6). Ruth made a similar comment in relation to the CSI game:

EE: How did it compare to the television programme?
Ruth: It was less appealing that I thought it might be.
EE: What was wrong with it?
Ruth: It's not the same, you go from scene to scene and you pick up clues and stuff like that but that's as far as it goes.
(Ruth, 35 years old, student, focus group 7)

These players clearly want the challenges presented to the characters in each episode to be recreated within the games. A general similarity between the activities they see in the television episodes and the subject matter of the games is not enough. Instead, they want the events of the episode to literally

be recreated in game format, for them to be given the chance to do what they felt the characters should have been doing.

Such comments hint that, for this particular audience group, the ludologists' approach towards the relationship between games and television programmes is too extreme for moments of transmediality such as the *Spooks* games. These participants do find narrative elements important to the construction of the games and as such reflect those writers who fall between the opposed stances of the narratologists and the ludologists. Jesper Juul, for example, whereas not equating games and other narrative forms as strongly as writers such as Janet Murray, does argue that '[g]ames and narratives share *some* structural traits' (2001: online, my emphasis) and, in a later work, that '[t]he interaction between game rules and game fiction is one of the most important features of video games' (2005: 1). For Juul, then, the importance of narrative in computer game texts cannot be ignored, and 'in many cases the player may play to see a cut-scene or realise a narrative sequence' (2001: online). This argument is confirmed by the participants in this research. They wish for the presence of narrative content, and when the games do not provide it they become disinterested in them.

At the same time, these responses also echo the model of transmedia storytelling discussed in Chapter 1 of this volume. For the participants, the emergent forms of transmedia storytelling demonstrated by the *Spooks* games were not quite transmedia enough. Whereas the games do fit within the narrative world of the television series, and fit Jenkins' model in that the series' narrative world is 'explored and experienced' (2006: 96) by viewers and provide information that is not seen within the series by showing by depicting alternative cases, the narrative connection is not enough. They desire a direct integration between the narrative of the television episodes and the narrative of the games, something that at this stage of transmedia storytelling development was not present. Transmedia stories can be seen as risking audience disengagement if they do not conform to a stronger sense of narrative coherence than that seen in the early *Spooks* games.

REMEDIATING EXPECTATIONS: CHARACTER, NARRATIVE AND AGENCY

Both the creation of fictional characters and the narrative structure were seen by focus group participants as central to their engagement with the gaming texts of *Spooks*, particularly in relation to issues surrounding their ability to become immersed in them. At the same time issues of character or narrative were twinned with issues of agency and control that are associated with the perceptions of computer game texts as 'interactive'. Imogen, as quoted earlier, commented, 'You could stop Tom from going mad because you wouldn't let him go out with Christine Dale or Dr Vicky' before going onto imagine the kind of game she would like to play:

> You know what would be great is if you had more than one mission . . . so it was like the series so you had these missions . . . but you know it was possible that . . . if you did something wrong for someone to die as it is in the series. But there are different avenues that you can go down . . . if you started off with whoever you had at the beginning of a series and then it was up to, depending on what you did as to whether they died or not. (23 years old, database administrator, focus group 2)

She wants to play a more complex game that gives her control over the fictional world of *Spooks*; she wishes to enter into the world of the series as an omniscient manipulator, able to tailor the text to suit her own ends. Martin made a similar comment: 'I think if they said, like "You can play this week's episode" I think . . . it'd be quite an exciting thing to do. Literally instead of just watching saying "oh for goodness sake, if you just did that" you could actually do it' (18 years old, student, focus group 3). Again there is a desire to exploit the different kind of interactivity offered by games in order to counteract moments of frustration with the television episode. The desire for an immersive world is twinned with the desire for 'vicarious kinaesthesia' (Darley, 2000: 157) that would allow them to manipulate that world.

In terms of the particular moment of transmedia storytelling demonstrated by the *Spooks* games, focus group participants desired *both* the immersive experience associated with watching television drama *and* the 'interactive' experience associated with games. In this respect, the audience attitudes towards the *Spooks* games are reminiscent of theories that develop from Marshall McLuhan's notion that 'we look at the present through a rear-view mirror' (McLuhan and Fiore, 1967: 74–75). A number of models have examined how new technologies are never really new, but instead emerge from older forms. Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin's model of 'remediation' is perhaps the most pervasive of recent works. They argue that '[o]ur culture conceives of each medium or constellation of media as it responds to, redeploys, competes with, and reforms other media', and that '[n]o medium, it seems, can now function independently and establish its own separate and purified space of cultural meaning' (2000: 55). For Bolter and Grusin new media forms do not appear in a vacuum but are defined through those that have come before them, a process that pre-dates the digital era (44). Although briefly mentioning human agents, Bolter and Grusin predominantly, as Lisa Gitelman argues, give the impression that 'media were naturally the way they are without authors, designers, engineers, entrepreneurs, programmers, investors, owners or audiences' (2006: 9). The evidence from the preceding discussions suggest that such a concept also needs to be considered more closely in relation to the ways that audiences engage with (and whether they accept) such texts.

Everett M. Rogers argues that the 'diffusion' of new ideas involves 'some degree of uncertainty' which 'implies a lack of predictability, of structure,

of information' (2003: 6). The unpredictability that emergent technologies create perhaps naturally leads to a reliance on something that is predictable. There is evidence of this in the 1949 Mass Observation survey concerning television. On the one hand, television was judged terms of cinema: '[P]eople expect television to turn their own sitting-rooms into a cinema' (22). On the other, it was articulated through radio: '[D]o we *want* to see the people who are broadcasting? (54 year-old company director)' (18). When faced with something new, whether it is television or online gaming, audiences seek to understand it through something familiar. This is particularly central to the understanding of transmedia texts. If texts on different platforms are produced in close relationship to each other, and presented as a coherent transmedia whole, then those relationships, and how audiences perceive them, become a crucial way of understanding their function. As the preceding discussions indicate, this is not a simple process and some aspects of it are more welcomed than others.

In terms of the *Spooks* games this process is, however, clearly two-way. Bolter and Grusin acknowledge this possibility within their model of 'remediation', using the example of the rise of computer generated images to argue that 'remediation operates in both directions: users of older media such as film and television can seek to appropriate and refashion digital graphics, just as digital graphics artists can refashion film and television' (2000: 48). A similar situation can be seen to apply to the *Spooks* games; just as the visual tropes of new media appear in older forms, so can the patterns of engagement offered in games be desired by audiences in television content, even if that desire is to be fulfilled via another platform. Whereas, on the one hand, focus group participants desired the tropes and structures of television to appear in games, on the other, the audience's knowledge of the potential of a gaming platform to provide them with greater control over their interaction with a fictional world leads them to desire that control. They seek to rectify moments that threatened their engagement with the text. They wish to combine the elements of the televisual text that they most enjoy with the qualities of gaming that would help them correct those elements of the programme they disliked.

However, by desiring *both* the interactivity of computer games *and* the immersion of television drama, these responses complicate the placing of television and gaming in a binary of values. The more 'passive'—although, as this chapter has demonstrated, this term is itself contentious—act of becoming immersed in a television drama is not seen by these participants as 'bad'; it is welcomed and often desired as a valuable experience in its own right. At the same time simply making an 'interactive' text is not automatically 'good', especially if it lacks the textual qualities of a television drama that invite immersion. The responses of this particular group of viewers to this particular example of transmediality offer a challenge both to the distinction between computer games and television drama episodes and to the value associations that accompany this distinction. It becomes apparent

that a more nuanced approach to understanding the relationships between elements within a transmedia text is required.

The predominantly negative attitudes expressed in the preceding examples are not necessarily inherently connected to the creation of a gaming text as a moment of transmedia storytelling. These examples highlight the importance of considering both the technological capabilities of individual platforms involved in transmediality *and* the textual characteristics of the content produced for them. The lack of external, fictional characters or any direct connection to the narrative complexity of *Spooks* is the result of how the content has been developed, not the gaming format or the internet and computer as a technological platform. In 2007, alongside Season 6 of the series, the BBC launched a new *Spooks* game that closely followed the events of the sixth season. In it, players still play as their own identities, but there is greater interaction with the other characters, and the tasks directly relate to the events of the television series, even featuring footage from individual episodes. In the first week's game, for example, the player directs Adam Carter to a hospital where a man who is ill with a contagious, deadly virus has gone, an event that occurs between the first and second episode. This game 'solves' one of the issues within the focus groups, that of its connection to the series. It is the way in which the initial transmedia games were constructed that resulted in the prevention of viewers experiencing the immersion familiar from television drama, not anything necessarily inherent in the technology as a platform for transmedia gaming content. As we turn to examine the way in which the mobile phone has also been exploited as a platform for transmedia content we can see this trend amongst emergent transmedia dramas continuing, a trend that demonstrates the crucial relationship between content and technology in determining the extent to which the immersive experience desired from television drama can be extended onto new media technologies.

5 *24: Conspiracy* and the Mobile Phone
Immersion and Immediacy

The mobile phone is not necessarily the first technology one would think of as a television platform. It is a tool for communication, not entertainment; it is a box in your pocket, not your living room. Despite these apparent differences, a range of televisual content, from news and sports to drama and comedy, became available on a mobile phone during the period of this research. This content straddles the boundary between transmedia storytelling and transmedia engagement. Predominantly short, downloadable clips, some, such as the Tardisodes, were expansions of existing television content and so functioned as transmedia storytelling; others were short preview clips for programmes such as *The X Factor* and so served as transmedia marketing. Simultaneously, more straightforward examples of transmedia engagement via mobile phones emerged as all of the major phone operators, including Vodafone, Orange, Virgin and 3 began offering streamed mobile television services. These streamed services contained content that had previously been broadcast, offering audiences the choice of watching television at home, or on the go. However, unlike gaming texts and online downloading, broader take up of mobile television has been slow, especially in Europe (see Forrester, 2008, 2009). This dismissal of mobile television was apparent in focus groups, and examining the reasons for this rejection highlights a number of issues surrounding this convergent move and indicates the importance of both technology and content in audience attitudes towards transmediality.

In many ways focus group discussions concerning the mobile phone as a platform for transmedia content echoed many of the discussions explored in the previous chapter on the *Spooks* games. The concept of immersion again appeared as a key form of engagement with television drama. However, the importance of immersion in these discussions was twinned less with issues surrounding agency and more with the temporalities of television broadcasting, in particular notions of 'liveness' and 'immediacy'. This is not to say that issues of agency disappear completely when considering the mobile phone and transmediality. Although the focus of this chapter will predominantly be on the creation of televisual-style audio-visual content for mobile phones, it will also briefly consider, for the sake of comparison,

mobile phone gaming. This comparison facilitates a greater interrogation of audience expectations for each content form, and contributes to understanding the attitudes of the audience group that feature in this research. As such, mobile games will be examined within the overall consideration of immersion which, as the previous chapter demonstrated, requires a necessary consideration of issues of audience agency. At the same time this chapter will continue to examine both the texts, through the case study of *24: Conspiracy*, and the technologies of transmedia drama, in this case the mobile phone. Audience attitudes and expectations towards mobile television related to both, further emphasising the way platform and content work together as new media forms emerge into audiences' daily lives.

BITE-SIZED: THE TEXTUALITY OF MOBILE TELEVISION

24: Conspiracy was one of the first and most prominent examples of televisual mobile phone content. Its source text, *24*, first aired on the Fox network in the US in October 2001 and was broadcast in the UK by the BBC the following March[59]. Sharing many characteristics and themes with *Spooks*, *24* follows the attempts by a fictional US federal agency, the Counter Terrorist Unit (CTU), and in particular agent Jack Bauer (Kiefer Sutherland) to prevent a number of terrorist threats towards the United States. Each season follows the events of a single twenty-four-hour period, with each one-hour episode running in 'real-time'. *24: Conspiracy* was produced by Fox and launched by Vodafone in January 2005 to their UK 3G customers, coinciding with the broadcast of the fourth season on British channel Sky One. The series consisted of twenty-four 'mobisodes' (a term that was used during promotion of the series; see, for example, Deans, 2005) of less than a minute that told a single narrative running separate from, but parallel to, the events of the television series[60]. As per the model of transmedia storytelling outlined in Chapter 1 of this volume, *24: Conspiracy* shared clear corporate authorship by Fox with its core television programme (the involvement of Vodafone being absent apart from as the service carrier) and slotted into the UK broadcast temporalities of the television episodes, with each episode being released soon after the television episode had aired. Unlike the *Spooks* games, the series functioned as an example of transmedia storytelling narratively not by allowing the viewer to 'explore' (Jenkins, 2006: 96) the fictional world of the series but instead as offering a glimpse of events that take place elsewhere in that world, a new narrative strand[61].

If transmedia gaming offers the most radically different content to television episodes, transmedia mobile content is perhaps the clearest example of how audio-visual transmedia narratives adapt to fit their host platform even if they are similar on a fundamental level. In doing so it raises broader questions concerning the creation of audio-visual content for mobile

technologies. On the most basic level, of being moving images with sounds, they are comparative to the content of the television series, but there are a number of key differences that affect the way an audience engages with them. This complicates Noël Carroll's argument that there is essentially no difference between moving image forms and that they should be considered as part of the 'evolution of the *moving image*' (2003: 266). Carroll's argument would collapse the differences between television and mobile television. However, whereas mobile television content is audio-visual, and shares some characteristics with broadcast television content, it does not conform to many other aspects of the television text and more particularly many of the expectations audiences have for the medium of television. This then raises the crucial question asked by John Kelly,

> Should we view mobile wireless devices principally as little, un-tethered TV sets, stereos, computer screens, and so on, in other words, a new channel for the distribution of content made for traditional and Internet platforms? Or, do we need to consider mobile devices (and the network behind them) as a new and different medium, with its own properties and potential? (2006: 69)

Can the televisual content available on mobile phones be considered 'television', or is it transformed by the viewing context and technology of the platform to the point where it must be reconstructed as something else?

I do not wish to fall too strongly into a technological determinist argument here. Klaus Goldhammer, for example, follows the tradition set down by Martin McLuhan's seminal argument (McLuhan 2001 (1969)) when he writes, 'The medium determines the message. There are vast differences between what can be displayed on a TV-screen, a PC-monitor or a PDA-screen' (Goldhammer, 2006: 36). He goes on to say, 'No matter what medium is used, it will always be necessary to format the content specially in order to fit the method of interaction of each device and its technical specialities' (40). As I will discuss in what follows, there is indeed one area in which televisual content is fundamentally *different* on a mobile phone, the presence of a smaller screen, but in many other ways there is no inherent reason why the content should be changed significantly. However, what is clear is that *24: Conspiracy* had been adapted to fit *perceptions* of the technology that it was meant to be viewed on, something that will be demonstrated through the following comparison between the two narratives. It is more helpful to follow Max Dawson's argument that comparisons between traditional television programming and mobile content should 'not simply reflect the essential technological characteristics of discrete media' (2007: 236). What is also clear, and what demonstrates that the technological determinist argument should not be ignored completely, is that the audience group being studied here perceived these differences both in terms of the texts and in terms of the technology itself. In particular these adaptations

did not fit with their expectations of a 'television' text, and as such played a crucial role in their perceptions of mobile television drama as a potentially immersive experience.

The Mobile Television Narrative

The most significant narrative trait of the television series *24* is its combination of an overt serial structure with the use of a 'real-time' format. Glen Creeber positions *24* as the epitome of the extended serial form in that its real-time quality

> explicitly set[s] out in advance its precisely defined beginning (zero hour) and conclusion (the climactic twenty-fourth episode) (See Brookes, 2004: 1–5). Consequently its gradual movement towards narrative closure distinguished it from the never-ending storylines of the series (or soap opera) by constructing a well-defined narrative arc that eventually promised some form of resolution and conclusion at its end (even if a sequel was already in the pipeline). (Creeber, 2004: 10)

Seriality functions in *24* to the extent that individual episodes blur together, the narrative functioning over a series of episodes up to the whole season. This is twinned with a complex multi-layered story that can be explored in terms of the debates surrounding quality television discussed in the introduction, the serial quality demanding committed viewing over a number of weeks. Robin Nelson's theory of the flexi-narrative becomes particularly relevant:

> A number of stories involving familiar characters in familiar settings are broken down into narrative bytes and rapidly intercut. Any lack of interest of an audience segment in one set of characters or story-line is thus not allowed to last long as another story with a different group of characters is swiftly taken up, only in turn to give way to another before taking up again the first narrative, and so on in a series of interwoven narrative strands. (1997: 32–33)

The flexi-narrative therefore consists of several narrative strands that are interwoven, designed to hold the audience's attention and interest. A similar argument is made by Janet Murray who also discusses the role the audience plays, in this case their increased television literacy, in the importance of this kind of narrative structure:

> [A]s the Internet becomes a standard adjunct of broadcast television, all program writers and producers will be aware of a more sophisticated audience, one that can keep track of the story in greater detail and over longer periods of time. Since the 1980s, when Steven Bocho introduced

> multiple story arcs with *Hill Street Blues*, television series have become more complex, involving larger casts and stories that take anywhere from one episode to several years to conclude. (2000 (1997): 85)

For both of these writers, contemporary television drama narratives rely on complex structures, involving several storylines and characters to maintain their audience's interest, something that the multiple interlinking narratives of *24* clearly demonstrate.

In order to explore this complex serial narrative nature of *24*, and its comparison to *24: Conspiracy*, I will focus on a comparative examination of the mobile series and the television programme's fourth season, which aired alongside the release of *24: Conspiracy* and has strong links, both temporally and narratively, with the mobile series. In the television series a number of narrative strands interweave throughout each episode, none of which are resolved in any single episode. The most prominent is the central main 'threat' storyline focused around the season's central villain, terrorist Habib Marwan (Arnold Vosloo), and incorporates the Secretary of Defence James Heller (William Devane) being kidnapped, the meltdown of a nuclear power plants, the bombing of Air Force One and an attack on the Chinese consulate, leading to the Chinese government seeking personal revenge on Jack Bauer. In addition, a number of more melodramatic storylines feature involving Jack's relationship with the Secretary of Defence's daughter Audrey (Kim Raver), the suicide of CTU head Erin Driscoll's (Alberta Watson) daughter and the estranged romantic relationship between two CTU workers, Tony Almeida (Carlos Bernard) and Michelle Dessler (Reiko Aylesworth) that had begun in Season 2. In any episode more than one of these storylines can appear. In Episode 20 ('2.00am–3.00am'), for example, the raid on the Chinese consulate begins the Chinese thread, CTU continues to search for Marwan, Audrey tells her paralysed ex-husband she will leave Jack for him moments before his condition becomes fatal, and Michelle speaks to Tony's girlfriend, forcing her to confront her feelings for him. In this one episode both 'threat' narratives are covered, one as an ongoing storyline and the other as a new storyline being introduced, and two personal narratives are explored.

One of the key pleasures that participants in the audience research focused on *24* gained from watching the programme was the opportunity to engage with such complicated, often challenging narratives. As one focus group participant said, 'There are relatively few things on television that chop and change and make sure that it keeps you interested in the main storyline behind it and therefore *24* is one those few programmes that does do that' (Beth, 28 years old, compliance officer, focus group 5)[62]. Similar responses were found in the initial web-based questionnaire part of my methodology. Littlesiuk explained what he particularly like about the programme: '[The] stories are excellent, packed with twists and turns that keep me guessing and it genuinely does have me on the edge of my seat' (18 years

old, male trainee filmmaker, web questionnaire), whereas Kaylla wrote, 'I like that they aren't afraid to do stuff that you won't normally see on other shows, like when they kill characters that people like a lot' (20 years old, female student, web questionnaire). *24* is distinguished by these viewers from other, less valued, television programmes by its complex narrative structure, in particular the way the narrative can change dramatically. Just as in Nelson's theory of the flexi-narrative and Murray's discussion of the televisually literate audience, *24*'s ability to change focus and bring in new narrative threads is crucial to holding the audience's attention.

Such complex narrative structuring, however, was not translated to the construction of *24: Conspiracy*, despite it maintaining a serial structure. In the first 'mobisode' an unidentified woman (Beverley Bryant) kills a man and proceeds to load information from a keycard in his possession and his palm print into a computer. The man's wallet identifies him as Donald Frick, an employee of the Department of Defence. The next three episodes shift location to the Washington, DC office of CTU where Director James Sutton (Steven Kramer) tells agent Martin Kail (Dylan Bruce) of Frick's murder and identifies his killer as Susan Walker, Martin's former partner and lover. The rest of the series follows Martin's pursuit of Susan before she persuades him that Sutton is working for Navi Araz (Nestor Serrano), a character from the television series, in a plan to steal keycards and palm prints from the four agents who have access to nuclear weapons. The series ends with Martin and Susan being brought back to the CTU office where Martin realises that Sutton is being set up by the real double agent, administrative assistant Kelly (Amy Rider), who has worked closely with Martin throughout the series. Kelly kills Sutton and procures all the codes and prints required to gain access to the weapons. As she is uploading the information Martin confronts her. He kills her but only after she has shot both himself and Susan. The final episode ends with Martin collapsing from a seemingly fatal wound.

In many ways *24: Conspiracy* follows the narrative themes of the main series. It is set in a different branch of the same government agency and the central plot is tied into the events of the television series, with references to the kidnapping of Secretary Heller, the characters of Erin Driscoll and Navi Araz, and the clear suggestion that the events are paralleling those in the television episodes. In addition many of the broader themes that appear both in the television series and spy texts as a whole are present. There is a threat to national security from a terrorist source, which the central characters must prevent using information gathered by surveillance and interrogation, just as in the television programme. There is also the use of misdirection and double agents, listed by Cawelti and Rosenberg as key elements of spy drama (1987: 220), as Sutton is initially suggested as the double agent working with Araz before it is later revealed to be Kelly. Where it differs from this textual precedence and historical generic context is in the way the narrative is constructed. The most obvious point of

difference is the fact that whereas *24* consists of twenty-four episodes of approximately forty-five minutes in length (excluding advert breaks), *24: Conspiracy* consists of twenty-four episodes of between forty-three and sixty seconds. There is considerably less time to construct the kind of layered narrative established in the television programme. The fourth season of *24* contained a threat plot consisting of five overlapping 'mini-arcs', a political plot involving Jack's encounter with the Chinese and the fallout of Air Force One being bombed, resulting in the replacement of the President by Vice President Logan (Gregory Itzin), along with three personal narratives that run parallel to the main storylines. *24: Conspiracy* consists of only one narrative thread. There is one villain (with one red herring), one threat and no personal storyline beyond a brief mention of Martin and Susan's past relationship. Everything that happens in each of the twenty-four episodes involves the progression of one storyline.

The focus group discussions of *24: Conspiracy* often involved issues surrounding its narrative and demonstrate the importance of providing a complex fictional and narrative world for audience immersion in drama. The shortness of the episodes was often cited as a problem with the series. As Charles said in one focus group, 'I think a minute is not enough time to build up enough suspense to make you want to watch the next one' (28 years old, research scientist, focus group 5). The length of time allowed for each episode was not considered enough time to establish a fully engaging narrative. Harry likened the series instead to trailers, although found it wanting even in this regard: 'It's a bit like watching *24* trailers. Trailers are that kind of length. Trailers are kind of exciting because they give you the really good highlights whereas this is forty seconds of bad acting and then one really bad cliffhanger . . . and it just didn't work' (27 years old, project administrator, focus group 5).

Whereas trailers function to arouse interest in a longer text, *24: Conspiracy* functioned only within itself and as such seemed narratively deficient for these viewers. Brian, for example, merely stated that 'the whole thing wasn't very complex' (24 years old, unemployed, focus group 5). Similarly, the lack of length was seen as a barrier to character development, something that was discussed in Chapter 4 of this volume as another key element of immersion in drama. Peter, for example, said, 'In twenty-four minutes I didn't get attached to the characters, it didn't really do much for me' (23 years old, archiver, focus group 4). The format of mobile television drama as 'bite-sized' episodes prevented full engagement because of the lack of time devoted to narrative complexity and character development.

The kind of simple narrative structure evident in *24: Conspiracy* was also raised as an issue in more general discussions surrounding the various types of mobile television drama available. The more general focus groups also discussed the highlight-style 'minisodes', but again the brevity of the narrative was raised as a contentious issue:

Rebecca: You have to get every little detail [from a television drama], you have to pay attention.
EE: So just getting the main plot points isn't enough?
Claire: No, you need the full episode.
Robert: In three minutes, you'll just get 'this person loves this person, this person's gone off to find this person, one person's shot someone'. In three minutes, 'one person's shot someone' and it's gone.
EE: It's not enough?
Robert: It's not drawn out.
EE: All the nuances?
Rebecca: Even if there's more than one storyline in each episode, each storyline isn't three minutes, it's longer than that so you don't really get the whole storyline.
(Rebecca: 19 years old, student; Claire: 18 years old, student; Robert: 18 years old, student, focus group 6)

As with specific discussions of *24: Conspiracy*, the participants in the preceding quote privileged the multi-stranded, complex narratives of programmes such as *24* and are less convinced by the shorter narratives of both 'mobisodes' and 'minisodes'. These discussions show that there is a need and expectation for the extended amount of time offered by a television series, which Glen Creeber argues is a defining factor of television drama:

> It could even be argued that long-form drama is intrinsically better suited to explore and dramatise the complexity of character psychology as a whole, at least compared with the contemporary feature film that seemingly needs to pack psychological change and development into an ever decreasing number of scenes and minutes. (2004: 6)

24: Conspiracy, however, breaks with this established tradition of long-form drama. The entire series is considerably shorter than a single episodic part of *24*. It therefore automatically does not have the narrative space to allow for the layered narratives and complex character developments that audiences value and expect from drama texts associated with *24*.

One final narrative aspect of *24* that does not transfer simply to *24: Conspiracy*, and consequently became an issue for some participants in this research, is the real-time quality of the television programme. The fact that *24* consists of twenty-four 'hour-long' episodes and covers twenty-four hours of story time is not only the central structural premise of the programme, it is also a key reason for engagement with it. As Jacqueline Furby argues, '[I]t is the programme's temporal structures that force the audience to view it as a compulsive text' (2007: 59); the real-time quality demands a concentrated, immersed viewing position for the *24* audience. In the results gathered from the initial web questionnaire 43% of respondents (19 out of 44) specifically mentioned the real-time format as a reason they liked

the programme. The ability for the programme to successfully continue a storyline within this real-time structure was also a way of evaluating individual seasons. As Harry said when talking about Season 4,

> It felt like [the story with Erin Driscoll and her daughter] was a time filler, as if the first couple of seasons they thought 'we have a 24-part plot, continuous storyline' and it was all planned out. It seemed like some of the latter seasons they thought 'well we've got this format now. There's got to be 24 episodes, there's got to be a cliffhanger at the end of each one, but we've only got twelve episode's worth of plot'. (27 years old, project administrator, focus group 5)

As with the discussion on *Spooks* in the previous chapter, Harry uses the expected structure of the programme in forming his opinion of each season; for him it is a central part of engaging with *24*. Whether it is described in positive or negative terms, the real-time aspect of the television programme is key to distinguishing it from other drama texts and plays a crucial role in how viewers engage with each individual season.

In *24: Conspiracy* the real-time format is absent; each episode covers a continuous period of story time but the series as a whole does not. Although it is not made explicit, a reference to Kelly having been aware of Martin and Susan's actions 'over the last twenty hours' in Episode 22 suggests that the whole series covers approximately one day. In order to cover twenty-four hours in only a total of twenty-one minutes of narrative[63], there are several jumps in story time between episodes. There is not the sense of each episode continuing where the last finished[64]. Instead the overall narrative of twenty-four episodes is split into twelve scenes, some lasting only one episode, others lasting three or four. This structure, however, is significantly different enough to be a barrier to audience engagement with the series because it does not meet with their expectations of any text related to *24*. As one focus group participant said, 'It removed the element of what *24* is' (Peter, 23 years old, archiver, focus group 4).

Discussions surrounding narrative in *24* and *24: Conspiracy* highlighted the discordance between what audiences expect from television drama, and *24* in particular, and what they are offered in the mobile series. Whereas they are used to engaging with complex narratives with several different plots and multiple characters, the mobile series only offers them one storyline and four main characters. Whereas they expect over forty minutes of text to allow them to escape into a highly developed fictional world, *24: Conspiracy* only offers them twenty-one minutes in total, split up into segments that are far too short for them to become fully engaged. Their expectations of television as a medium, and television drama as a particular form on that medium, are not met by the production of *24: Conspiracy* and consequently their potential engagement with it is severely challenged.

However, it must be recognised that although Max Dawson argues that *24: Conspiracy* is 'ideally tailored to the dimensions and technical properties of the mobile telephone' (2007: 237), there is no ontological reason related to the fact that it is available on a mobile phone that prevents whole episodes of *24* being transmitted. As discussed in Chapter 2, the HBO mobile channel broadcasts full episodes of programmes such as *Six Feet Under*, another hour-long 'quality' drama. The narrative format of *24: Conspiracy* is due more to a philosophy about how mobile phones would be used for audio-visual content, something that could result from the time it takes to download large clips via the 3G network, and possibly limited production resources. This philosophy echoes Jason Jacobs's argument concerning early television producers' view of television as an 'intimate' medium. He writes,

> These 'intimate' aspects of television drama—close-up acting, its interpretation and observations by the producer, and the close-up as the primary style of visualization—were really expressions of the limited critical thinking about television, rather than the actual limits of the medium. (2000: 123)

For Jacobs, there were certain attitudes towards early television broadcasting that influenced the kind of texts created for the medium, and a similar situation can be seen with regards to early mobile television. As he goes on to discuss, early producers 'tied the essence of the medium to a static conception derived from its technology: television had a "small" screen so, naturally, this demanded a "close-up" style' (2000: 123). A similar situation occurs with respect to *24: Conspiracy*. There is no inherent reason why mobile televisual content such as this could not follow the patterns established by traditional broadcast television, but assumptions about the capabilities of the medium to sustain a more developed narrative have led to the creation of texts that suggest that there is[65]. However, one factor that television on a mobile phone, unlike a television set, cannot escape is tied to the purpose of the mobile phone: the small mobile screen.

The Mobile Television Screen

The mobile phone is portable, its ability to be carried around anywhere being the defining characteristic that distinguishes it from tethered landline phones. As John Kelly argues, '[T]he only advantage mobile devices have is that they are in fact mobile' (2006: 74). The consequence of this necessity to be portable, however, is the need to be small enough to be carried easily, to be slipped into a pocket or bag; a phone cannot be a mobile phone if it is too large to be easily taken out of the house. Consequently not only is the phone as a piece of technology small; its screen, the most important

part of that technology as far as watching something on it, is also small. At potentially only two inches square, it is definitely smaller than a television set and even smaller than many other portable media devices such as the Playstation Portable or portable DVD players.

Research by Matthew Lombard has suggested that screen size can be a factor in how viewers engage with televisual images. In his experiment participants sat in individual booths watching content containing landscapes and people on a range of screens of different sizes. He ultimately concludes,

> When subjects watched . . . people on a television with a relatively large screen, they had more positive emotional responses to and impressions of the people they saw, had more positive impressions of the viewing environment, and chose to move less far away from the television image than was the case when they watched on a medium or small television screen. Subjects also enjoyed watching the medium and large television screens more than they enjoyed watching the small one. (1995: 315)

There are many key differences between Lombard's research and the research in this thesis. As this chapter will explore later, the association of mobile phones and public spaces was also a significant discussion point within the focus groups for this research, whereas in Lombard's research viewing was completely private. Equally, the content Lombard showed participants was not drama, but short news clips of presenters talking directly to the camera (297). However, his conclusions do raise the significance of screen size to viewers' perception of, and attitude towards, televisual content and suggests that such opinions require further interrogation. In order to watch television via a mobile phone the audience is required to engage with a much smaller screen than that of a television set and this subsequently becomes a key factor in their ability to engage with mobile televisual content at all.

Comparative screen size has been one area in which attempts to distinguish or define television as a medium in relation to cinema have been most prominent. Traditionally, television has been seen as the poor relation to cinema, unable to offer the immersive potential offered by sitting in a darkened room with the light of the projector throwing an image that consumes almost your entire vision. Rod Stoneman, for example, argues that '[c]inema possesses itself of a kind of visual and aural intensity', and that '[s]cale and size is supposed to be crucial in distinguishing cinema from television' (1996: 120). John Ellis also makes reference to the disparity in screen size between television and the cinema when he writes,

> [T]he TV image is virtually always substantially smaller than the cinema image . . . The TV image shows things smaller than they are, unless it is a close-up of a small object, or of a person in head and shoulders only, when they appear more or less their real size. Such simple observations

> have profound effect on the kind of representations and spectator attitudes that broadcast TV creates for itself. (1992 (1982): 127)

There is a tradition of comparing television to cinema, with the television screen falling short of the visual style and presence of the cinema screen partly because of its smaller screen. Martin McLoone sums this tradition up when he describes

> a view of the two media which has tended to favour cinema ahead of television, based on a set of aesthetic and cultural assumptions which, especially in Britain, have actually stymied the aesthetic development of television fiction in which cinema is essentially about 'the enormous width of history' and . . . television is essentially a 'talking heads' medium. (1996: 81)

McLoone himself, however, argues against this stance, calling it a 'false contrast' (81), and it is this point of view that is worth exploring in terms of audience attitudes and expectations for television drama.

What becomes clear in examining discussions of the mobile phone as an outlet for televisual content is that, for this research group, the 'smallness' of the television set in their living room is not a concern anymore and subsequently such ontological arguments have lost a certain amount of currency. Whereas sets undoubtedly cannot match the cinema screen, they have grown in size over recent years with widescreen sets of up to sixty inches now commercially available. More recently, with the release of the Sky high definition box and numerous high definition channels, the lower resolution of television compared to cinema discussed by Ellis (1992 (1982): 130) has been reduced dramatically, a position also argued by Noël Carroll (2003: 271). The emergence of high definition sets and channels indicates that many of the expectations in terms of the size and quality of image previously associated only with cinema may now be considered more closely with television. There is a need to recognise the importance of what John Thornton Caldwell calls 'televisuality' (1995) to audience engagement with television drama texts. Caldwell writes that 'style, long seen as a mere signifier and vessel for content, issues, and ideas, has now itself become one of television's most privileged and showcased signifiers' (5). He goes on to argue that 'stylistic flourishes had typically been contained through narrative motivation in classical Hollywood film and television. In many shows by the mid-1980s however, style was no longer a bracketed flourish, but was the text of the show' (6).

24 is a specific example of the visual excess discussed by Caldwell, in particular in relation to his theory of the videographic where the television image is manipulated graphically (1995: 134–159) and in which 'the representational image becomes pictorial artefact' (145). Daniel Chamberlain and Scott Ruston in fact argue that *24* 'may be the most videographic contemporary

dramatic television programme' (2006: 18). The physical manipulation of the television image is central to *24*'s aesthetic, with the image's very status as image being constantly highlighted. This becomes most apparent in the programme's use of the split screen. As significant an aesthetic trait as the use of real-time, *24*'s split screens have predominantly been discussed in terms of their narrative function, to 'cross space—and thus . . . to collapse space' (Lury, 2005: 171) for a range of purposes including showing parallel plots and both sides of a phone conversation (Allen, 2007: 39–43).

However, the series' split screens also simultaneously function on a purely visual level. The edges of both the frame and the individual images are made explicit and played with. The image is incongruous in itself, the audience is aware that the characters shown are normally not in the same story space. At the same time, the use of black, both around and between individual images that are smaller than the screen, highlights the artificial, constructed nature of that shot. In both cases the black border is uneven and the images inside it are of differing sizes, something that makes the artificial nature of the border more apparent (it could not, for example, be confused for the 'letterbox' style found on widescreen films). Visually, *24* makes its nature as television and not reality apparent. As Lury argues, the split screen is 'quite an aggressive technique. It indicates that the visual style is unambiguously self-conscious' (2005: 172). This fits perfectly with Caldwell's theory of televisuality, which he argues is precisely a '*self-conscious* cultural practice' (1995: 137, original emphasis). The image in *24* is presented as an image; the audience knows that what they are seeing is constructed and so the space and graphic manipulation of the television screen is brought to the forefront.

In the case of *24*, moments such as the split screen become valued and anticipated. Subsequently when televisual content, especially content associated with a particular television programme, becomes available on the mobile phone, its visual quality is something that becomes crucial to viewers' engagement with it. However, the self-conscious visual style of the television episodes is not carried over to the mobile series, with the visual style of *24: Conspiracy* indicating assumptions on the part of the producers about the type of programming that should be produced for the mobile phone's small screen, as in Jacobs' argument concerning early television (2000: 123). The first assumption is that mobile content does not require (or deserve) the high production values of the television series. There is no consistency in personnel either in front of or behind the camera; it is shot on video with the image seeming flatter and of a lower resolution, even within a small screen, than the television episodes; the mise-en-scene of the series also indicates lower production values, lacking the sleek, stylised architecture of the main series. The second assumption is that content for a smaller screen must be 'simpler' than that made for a television set. This is most apparent in *Conspiracy*'s lack of split screen, discussed previously as a central 'televisual' quality of the television programme.

Whereas this could too be a result of lower production values, it also indicates the kind of visuality thought possible on a smaller screen. Whenever there is a phone conversation between characters in *24: Conspiracy*, both sides of the call are shown through edits and overlapping sound, not through the split screen that would be an automatic choice for a similar scene in the television programme. This could easily be a result of the fact that the series was designed to be played on a mobile phone. When the television screen is divided into two or more individual images it is still possible to see both images clearly. When the mobile phone screen is divided, however, each image becomes that much smaller. In this respect *24: Conspiracy* does seem to account for the dimensions of the mobile screen, acknowledging that dividing it into even smaller shots would inhibit the viewer's ability to see what was going on[66]. The visuality of *24: Conspiracy* is shaped by a particular understanding about the technological capabilities of the platform it is designed on; it cannot, it seems, escape the presence of a small screen.

Throughout the audience research conducted for this book, this fact was a consistent reason for mobile television to be given less value than the traditional television set. On many occasions responses to questions concerning mobile television involved a simple, apparently self-explanatory, statement that the screen was too small:

> It's too small. Take a look at the screen, can you watch a TV show like this? (Peter, 23 years old, archiver, focus group 4)

> The screen's too small. It's like trying to watch a film on a portable DVD player, it's just impossible. (Edward, 17 years old, student, focus group 8)[67]

In these particular examples, the fact that a mobile phone screen is small is seen as an obvious reason for not wanting to watch television on one; these participants feel no need to explain their point of view further. This suggests that the idea that television drama requires a larger screen in order to be properly engaged with is an inherent assumption for many members of the modern television audience. They take for granted the fact that television drama requires a larger screen than the one offered on a mobile phone. In turn this highlights the importance of television as a *visual* medium of the kind discussed by Caldwell. Not only have television texts themselves embraced the visual capabilities of the medium, but the audience has also become accustomed to these capabilities. When a televisual product is placed on a platform that is perceived as hindering the ability for television to be visual, they are disinclined to engage with it.

This point was made more overtly elsewhere in the focus groups. Robert, for instance, alluded to this idea when he said that 'on a mobile phone it's on a tiny screen and it just doesn't look very good' (18 years old, student,

focus group 6). Although he did not draw attention to television as a visual medium specifically, he did hint that this was the main drive behind his opinion of mobile television by pointing out that, for him, a small screen 'doesn't look very good'. Martin, meanwhile, specifically mentioned the idea of visuality being an ontological part of television when he said, in response to the question of whether he would watch television on a mobile phone, 'I really have no interest in the future of mobile phones as a visual technology because, yeah, in the end small is not better when it comes to screens' (18 years old, student, focus group 3). For each of these focus group participants, television is associated with a particular type of image, an image that can only be fully engaged with on a large screen (or at least a screen larger than a few inches square). The values and expectations they had developed in relation to their engagement with televisual products were bound by their perceptions of its visuality. When it is transferred onto a technology offering a different kind of visuality, it became a particular reason for them not being willing to engage with it.

This opinion was even confirmed to some degree in the changing opinions of Charles, one of the participants who took part in two focus groups. In the first focus group Charles attended he commented,

> Phones and internet I can see because of the interactivity and the information gathering, things like the size of the screen don't matter so much. Now, there's like a trend, for the TVs have got bigger and then they went wide screen and got bigger still and then they went, like, to flat screens that can, like, be hung on walls and stuff and actually as far as the visual impact, . . . we're going to get stuff that's clearer on our TV than we'd be able to watch at the cinema . . . I think there's a lot less overlap between phones and television. (27 years old, research scientist, focus group 1)

Here, Charles observes the move towards larger television screens and finds the exploitation of mobile phones as platforms for televisual content incongruous with that move. His expectations concerning the type of visuality offered by television have changed and he cannot see a mobile phone offering anything appropriate. In the second group he attended he was more positive towards accessing television through a mobile but still remained wary when it came to the question of screen size. He made the following prediction:

> I know that some people have mobile TVs and people at the golf like to see themselves on TV or watch it to see what else is going on elsewhere. I can imagine the mobile phone doing quite well for that. I can also imagine future mobiles will have an option where you can actually plug it into your TV and watch it through your TV and that will be the equivalent of your Sky box, it will be a wireless Sky box and you'll be downloading stuff, like HBO. Same as Sky, it's a subscription service

> and you pay for that option. (28 years old, research scientist, focus group 5)

On the one hand, Charles has begun to see situations where watching television on a mobile phone may be appealing. However, he immediately develops this into a prediction that sees the mobile phone as an access point for televisual content but not as a visual medium to be watched in and of itself. He instead sees it as a box that can be attached to the larger screen of the television, still not fully embracing the screen of the mobile phone itself[68].

There are a number of textual factors, which relate to both the content of *24: Conspiracy* and to the technology of the mobile phone, that participants in this research found had an impact on their ability to engage with it. In particular the kind of immersive experience discussed in the previous chapter in which the viewer becomes engrossed, leaving behind their real-life issues and concentrating solely on a fictional world, is challenged by the textuality of *24: Conspiracy*. Unlike *24* in which they are required to keep track of multiple storylines that are extended across weeks, months or years, the single narrative thread of the mobile series did not give them the time or complexity that required sustained concentration. Similarly, the smallness of a mobile phone screen, especially in comparison with expectations concerning the growing size of television set screens, was seen as a barrier to engagement. The fact that many participants in this research felt that merely saying 'it's too small' was sufficient argument for not wishing to watch televisual content on a mobile phone indicates the importance of their expectations and assumptions surrounding the visuality of television drama. When the textual characteristics of television drama that these viewers desire are not replicated by *24: Conspiracy* they reject it and, simultaneously, mobile television more generally.

BURSTING THE BUBBLE: PRIVATE TELEVISION, PUBLIC SPACE

In addition to the various discussions concerning the textuality of content produced for mobile phones, the focus groups for this research also raised the issue of where and how mobile television would be watched, something that directly relates to the mobile phone as a technology. As well as expectations concerning the kinds of texts produced by and for 'television', there are also a number of cultural expectations concerning the viewing context in which television is received and engaged with, expectations that emerged in focus group discussions. The way in which a text is received can be as central to the viewer's engagement with it as the text itself; as Rod Stoneman notes, 'Viewing conditions do, of course, inflect the work of the text' (1996: 120). Apart from a few specific examples that will be discussed below, the viewing condition of television is firmly entrenched in the home; as Milly Buonanno writes, '[T]he domestic nature of television, then, is a

concept that is taken for granted' (2008: 13). Mobile television, however, offers a very different viewing context and understanding audience engagement with mobile television requires the consideration of the kind of spaces and contexts in which mobile television might be engaged with.

Television on a mobile phone provides a very specific kind of viewing context, one that is a result of the cultural expectations connected to the mobile phone. As Jussi Parikka and Jaakko Suominen argue, 'One of the most basic uses for mobile media technology has been fulfilling the uncomfortable or dull moments for individuals using public transportation (2006: online). Anna McCarthy has similarly argued that '[o]f all the public uses of television, the idea of TV as a way of passing time while waiting is perhaps the most pervasive one' (2004: 188), suggesting a possible collusion between the content of television and the technology of the mobile phone. However, because television has traditionally been associated primarily with domestic spaces the convergence between the space of the mobile phone and the space of television viewing, particularly of the 'immersed' type discussed in the previous chapter, requires further interrogation. In addition, these associations demonstrate that focus group opinions related to the viewing contexts of mobile television were based on expectations of the mobile phone as a *technology* and its potential to act as a platform for televisual content. Many of these comments were not directly related to *24: Conspiracy* (although they may have emerged from conversations on the series), but instead to issues surrounding the reception of television content on a mobile in general. Such discussions form a bridge between the text-specific discussions up to this point about the *Spooks* games and the mobile phone as *extensions* of the television set and the following chapter's more general discussion of transmediality (in particular the internet) as *alternatives* to the television set.

Television and Public Space

Anna McCarthy's discussion of 'ambient television' offers a helpful way into considering how the contextual environment of mobile television shapes its relationship to viewer engagement. McCarthy examines the presence of television in areas such as bars, shops and airports, where sets of varying sizes are integrated into a range of different public spaces, arguing that,

> the site-specific nature of many institutional and personal uses of TV means that it is impossible to single out one mode of spectatorship to define the relationship between screen and environment, regardless of the latter's particular features. Rather, the diffuse network of gazes and institutions, subjects and bodies, screens and physical structures that constitutes the televisual pace sustains quite particular effects in each place. (2001: 3)

For McCarthy, each space or place in which television is engaged with offers a different viewing context and a different set of viewing positions. The mobility of the mobile phone, one of its key ontological features, means that it can be used in a range of spaces and environments and so it encapsulates McCarthy's argument that not only does context and space have an impact on engagement with television, but also that different spaces will encourage different forms of engagement; some may invite immersion more easily than others. The difficulty in considering mobile television, however, is that it can be moved between spaces and engaged with in a variety of different environments; as Max Dawson has argued it could be considered 'site unspecific television' (2007a: 238). It is not as fixed as the viewing contexts covered under the term 'ambient television' are.

In addition, mobile television breaks from McCarthy's arguments in that, unlike much of the ambient television she discusses, it does not exist in the background of spaces. McCarthy argues that 'we frequently find ourselves waiting, eating, or shopping in TV's presence—although . . . we may not even notice the screen as we carry out these activities' (2001: 6). This is not the case with mobile television. It is not happening around us as we carry on with whatever daily tasks we are involved in. Instead, it must be called up onto a personal piece of technology, held in the viewer's hand, that is not purely designed to receive it. It is not selected for us by the owner of a restaurant and provided as entertainment that customers may or may not pay attention to; the viewer must choose to watch it. It does not disappear, as McCarthy argues ambient television does, and so creates yet another form of spatial relations between the viewer, the television set (or mobile phone) and the environment surrounding them. Watching television on a mobile phone is different from more established forms of public television viewing, for example, watching a football game in a pub, watching a television screen in a shop or watching the Wimbledon Championships on the large screens erected by the BBC in Covent Garden. In those contexts the viewer is part of a larger audience; like the audience member in the cinema they are watching the same content as the person next to them. There may be different rules of etiquette (you may cheer at a goal in a pub but are less likely to cheer at the climax of a film in the cinema) but the viewer is in the same kind of relationship with the images in front of them as the other viewers around them. It is a collective viewing experience and an immediate sense of community can be created.

As I have already discussed, however, watching television on a mobile phone involves focusing on a small screen, not more than two or three inches square. It is difficult to watch a mobile phone screen with anyone else and so there is no sense of communal viewing associated with it (see also Lievens et al., 2010: 86). Unlike the image of mobile phones unifying communities through communication and smart mobs, the 'eruption of subcultures' (Rheingold, 2002: xi) capable of full-scale political reform

(160), television on a mobile phone is isolating. If you are watching television on your mobile phone you are watching it alone but, being a portable device, the mobile phone is primarily used in public spaces. It has the potential to combine public space with private viewing and as such raises questions about the importance of private space to the specific act of engaging with television drama. There is a need to look more closely at the kind of viewing context audiences perceive in relation to mobile television and how this context affects their engagement with it. Central to understanding this is the fact that we are dealing with television specifically on a mobile phone. It is necessary to consider the kinds of spatial relationships expected from the mobile phone and explore the extent to which these can be aligned with engagement with television drama.

Bubbles: The Spaces of the Mobile Television

The effect that using a mobile phone has on an individual's relationship to space has been a central area of research into its function as a communicative technology. In one of the first pieces of empirical research to be conducted on mobile phones, the Sussex Technology Group looked at precisely this issue, using interviews to explore attitudes towards the mobile phone and public spaces. Their research, conducted in 1996, took place long before the emergence of 3G network technology, at a time when mobile phones only had the capabilities for calls and text messages. However, as the group themselves point out, many of the issues raised in the interviews remain relevant to our understanding of the perception of the mobile phone and can be seen as providing an insight into attitudes towards more recent developments concerning the use of a mobile phone as a form of audio-visual media.

One of the group's key findings is that users of mobile phones cross divisions between public and private space, combining the two into a new kind of hybrid space: 'When performing in public spaces we are individuals who are private (in our conversation), and public (due to our physical presence) at the same time' (Sussex Technology Group, 2001: 213). The act of talking on the mobile phone is at odds with the setting in which it is performed, one is intimate and personal, the other is open and public. A similar argument is made by Jukka-Pekka Puro in his examination of mobile phone use in Finland:

> One of the most distinctive characteristics of a mobile phone is that it privatizes public space. That is, as someone talks on the phone, one is in her or his own private space. Talking on the mobile phone in the presence of others lends itself to a certain social absence where there is little room for other social contacts. The speaker may be physically present, but his or her mental orientation is towards someone who is unseen. (2002: 23)

As with the research conducted by the Sussex Technology Group, there is a division created between what the mobile phone user is doing and the context in which they are doing it. The privacy of a personal conversation is contrasted with the public nature of the space in which a mobile phone allows them to have such conversations. Subsequently this technology radicalizes the user's relationship to space as it allows for previously separate spaces to come into conflict.

One way of articulating this radicalization is to turn to theories of the 'private bubble'. Michael Bull examines the use of mobile music devices such as the personal stereo in relation to how they alter the user's relationship to the space and environment around them. In particular he calls on the technology's role in creating private space, writing,

> The 'entitlement' to 'private space' is entrenched in Western thought, in principle at least since the Enlightenment. Operationalizing this idea of an individualized 'private space', however, increasingly involves the subject in an array of potential contradictions, both domestically and in 'public'. (2004: 276)

Bull goes on to argue that personal music technologies are increasingly being used to produce this prized private space, causing a re-conceptualisation of the boundaries between private and public space as individuals increasingly use sound to colonise small patches of communal environments:

> [H]istorically, the construction of a 'private bubble' of experience often required a level of silence, often institutionalized, as in prohibitions on talking loudly in library reading rooms or, more recently, in cinemas and concert halls . . . However, many are not seeking 'silence' but their own, very personalized noise or soundscape. (2004: 277)

Personal music technology can be used to create a protective buffer between the user and those around them. The listener is given control over their relation to the space surrounding them:

> Sound enables users to manage and orchestrate their spaces of habitation in a manner that conforms to their desires. The sound of the personal stereo is direct, with headphones placed directly over the ears of the user, thereby overlaying the random sounds of the environment passed through with privatized sounds. (283)

Bull makes brief mention of the mobile phone in his theory, arguing that it creates a slightly different formulation of the private–public space relationship. Instead of forming the small bubble of insular space created by personal stereos listened to via headphones, the mobile phone projects the

user's private space out into the communal environment whilst simultaneously shutting them off from that environment:

> What we are witnessing today is a profound change in the way many people engage with notions of the public. Mobile phones act to privatize public spaces (Puro 2002) as private discourse fills the street, classroom and every other conceivable public space. In so doing, speakers 'absent' themselves from the spaces they inhabit. In a world where most of us are talking to an 'absent other', the street becomes a potentially lonelier place (Harper 2002: 212). (2004: 287)

The Sussex Technology Group also alludes to this idea when writing that 'the increasing appropriation of the mobile for private purposes blows private talk bubbles into a public world' (2001: 212). By holding a conversation on a mobile phone, the user creates something private in a space that is otherwise public. Whilst they are in that conversation they are not in public, but have separated themselves off and used the technology to form a barrier to those around them in a similar way to the user of the personal stereo.

As both Bull and the Sussex Technology Group acknowledge there is a fundamental difference between the mobile phone and the personal stereo. The caller themselves may be focused on their own personal space and not on the public space around them, but the private bubble of their conversation intrudes back into the public space it is attempting to be separate from. Passers by can overhear the conversation (albeit only one side of it) and so the private bubble in this case is not truly private. Equally a telephone conversation is a two-way interaction, the person at the other end of the phone may very possibly be able to hear the sounds of the space the user is physically in. In using the mobile phone for communicative purposes the user becomes caught partially in a private bubble and partially in the public environment surrounding them. Their attention may be focused on the 'bubble' of space immediately around their body and the mobile phone, but their actions have an effect on the public spaces outside of that bubble.

Both kinds of 'private bubble' need to be considered when thinking about how mobile television use may be affected by issues of space. Mobile television straddles the two, not quite reaching the intrusive model of the mobile phone conversation but equally projecting itself into public space more than Bull's isolative model of the personal stereo. Although the technology of the mobile phone makes mobile television a personal form of reception, with the sound of mobile television being potentially isolated by headphones, the images, although too small for full communal viewing, may be visible to anyone close enough to the viewer; someone could glance over the viewer's shoulder and see what they are watching. As such then the viewer of mobile television is positioned in a space between that of watching television and that of travelling or waiting or other similar public activities.

This unusual relationship between viewer, text and space can be found to have an impact on how mobile television is engaged with. Of the seven participants taking part in the weekly diaries for the *24* project who had access to audio-visual content via a mobile phone, the majority (71%) reported only accessing such material at home. Only two (29%) reported using it in a semi-public space, although in both of these cases it was either work or school. None of the respondents claimed to use it in a fully public space such as a train or restaurant, the 'in between' spaces away from other telephone access that mobile phones are traditionally associated with. Despite the ability then for mobile television to be accessed anywhere, there is some evidence that it is not necessarily used in this way, with the majority of participants in this research preferring in fact to access it within spaces more traditionally associated with television, namely, the home (see also Dawson, 2007: 213; Lievens et al., 2010: 85).

This straddling of two spaces was also met by discomfort in the focus groups. Kate[69], who worked for a mobile phone company, was the only focus group participant who had actually watched mobile television in a public space, saying, 'If I'm on the train or something I watch clips off my mobile phone on the train'. However, she went on to clarify that she 'wouldn't pay for it' and that she only watches 'anything my company happens to be promoting that week' (42 years old, IT Consultant, focus group 2), hinting at a sense of obligation towards watching such content. Whereas some other participants[70] reservedly considered mobile television as a hypothetical service they may use (if it was free) in a specifically public space, the more common response was that of Imogen. She was happy to form the kind of bubble described by Bull, a bubble which no one can intrude into or share if she does not want them to, but she did not like the idea of that bubble leaking back into public space. She said, 'I tend to read and have my MP3 player on when I'm travelling for a long period of time . . . but I don't think I'd like to be sitting there watching something' (23 years old, database administrator, focus group 2). In the same focus group Jennifer also felt uncomfortable with the idea of those around her being aware of what she was engaging with when she said, 'I don't like the idea of watching something and there's people sitting next to me thinking "what's she watching on her phone?" It would creep me out' (19 years old, administrator, focus group 2). This sentiment was also expressed in other groups in which the context of engagement with mobile television was seen as too far from the context in which the viewer usually watched television for them to feel comfortable. In this case it was particularly in reference to the presence of other people, as Olivia commented, '[I] watch TV mostly alone, so still on a mobile you are watching it alone but you're probably doing it in an environment with other people' (25 years old, assistant production manager, focus group 5)[71].

For each of these participants, the expectations they have of engaging with television and the expectations they have of using a mobile phone

lead to conflict. This is something that is potentially specific to television drama, and it is here that a consideration of mobile phone gaming is helpful. Research into mobile gaming often focuses on games that explicitly make use of the technology's mobility, requiring their players to interact with the real environment as they interact with it virtually via their phone (see Ermi and Mäyrä, 2005: online; Parikka and Suominen, 2006; Ruston, 2006). The transmedia mobile games of *Spooks* and *24* do not fit this model of mobile gaming. In March 2006 the *24* mobile game was released to coincide with the release of the Playstation 2 game and consisted of a series of games, similar in style to the Flash games described in the previous chapter, in which the player was enlisted to act as a desk agent and control various field agents, including Jack Bauer, throughout a mission. In terms of *Spooks*, between October 2005 and April 2006 players could take part in a game in which they had to guide an agent, not an existing character, around their local city; however, this game was beset with technological difficulties making it extremely hard to play. Neil for example had been extremely interested in the game but unable to play it: '[It] sounds really cool, the way you access the GPRS, and access the game, but it didn't work on my phone' (17 years old, student, focus group 3)[72].

Whereas the individual games of *Spooks* and *24* were not known by focus group participants, mobile games were generally considered to be a more acceptable form of engagement in public spaces, perhaps as a result of the longer tradition of handheld gaming consoles. For example, participants spoke of the convenience of having games on a mobile: 'You've always got your phone, at least I have. And there's this game- I've just got a new phone and there's this game called *Blockbreaker* on it and it's just addictive' (Claire, 18 years old, student, focus group 6). Others meanwhile spoke about being 'gutted' when they accidentally lost a game that had been stored on their phone (Rebecca, 18 years old, student, focus group 6). Why then is it potentially more appealing to play a game when it might be overlooked by others than watching a television programme? As I discussed in Chapter 4, games offer a different form of engagement to television drama, with more emphasis on direct interaction than on an immersive relationship with character and narrative. It is necessary to consider the specific nature of engagement with television more closely in order to explore why television on a mobile phone is not as accepted by these viewers as gaming.

A specific pleasure associated with television, and *Spooks* and *24* in particular, that emerged in the focus groups was the kind of cathartic, potentially physical reaction viewers could have to some programmes. This became particularly apparent in a discussion during focus group two concerning the intense emotional reactions some viewers have towards television drama. One participant discussed her often extreme and physical reactions to television: 'I get very, very emotionally involved in programmes and I like, I do love it when they can do that to me and you can sit there and almost shout at the screen, and we're terrible for that in our

household' (Jennifer, 19 years old, administrator, focus group 2). There is a sense that, for this viewer, television drama can elicit a very real, visible reaction. Within the domestic space of the home this emotional outburst is acceptable, and unthreatening. Jennifer, for example, mentions it being a particular family trait and so it seems natural that she has little discomfort responding in such a way. However, when it is placed into the hybrid public/private space of the mobile phone, engagement with drama in particular becomes a form of public 'emotive performance' (Evans, 2010: online), something that can be embarrassing and a strong hindrance to engagement with mobile television drama. As Jennifer said later in the group, 'I do get very emotional about these programmes I like and I don't want to get emotional on the train' (19 years old, administrator, focus group 2). This fear is reminiscent of Richard Ling and Jonathan Donner's appropriation of Erving Goffman's theory concerning the distinction between 'front stage' identity performance and 'back stage' identity maintenance (1990 (1971)) in their discussion mobile phone conversations. They argue,

> For [Goffman], our public 'front stage' activities involved the management of our display. When in public, we are aware of how we present ourselves, our deportment and our façade. We are often minutely concerned with what he calls 'impression management.' By contrast, the back stage is where we can let the façade slip and we can engage in the more mundane maintenance of our image. We can check our hair, adjust our clothing and we can agree with others as to how to deal with a new version of the public performance. The mobile phone disturbs this bifurcation. (2009: 110)

Jennifer's fears over any emotive performance of engagement tie in with this division between what is felt to be comfortable behaviour within the safety of the home, but not in public spaces. When an activity that is associated with the former is suddenly brought into the latter, the situation becomes uncomfortable and off-putting.

Gaming, of course, may also elicit an emotional response such as joy when completing a level, or frustration at an inability to, but as the preceding responses indicated, it is more welcomed as an activity to engage with on a mobile phone. This suggests something specific about the emotional release of watching television drama that feels uncomfortable in public areas. This is possibly due to a lingering of the connotations challenged in the previous chapter. The more positive association of gaming with computers and interactivity potentially makes it a more acceptable activity to be seen to be taking part in. The association of television with passivity, or 'cerebral interactivity', however, seems to make watching it, and possibly visibly reacting to it, an uncomfortable proposition.

Anna McCarthy does acknowledge the potential discomfort created by putting television within a public setting. She writes, 'Private TV spectatorship

in public also produces a sense of being on display, paradoxically, of placing oneself under public scrutiny through a desire for privacy' (2001: 137). A similar point is made by the Sussex Technology Group when talking about mobile phone use: 'What is said then, as well as what is done, is regarded as part of "being on display" when the mobile is used in public' (2001: 209). This argument seems very appropriate to the fears focus group participants had concerning watching television in a public space. Not only, as Olivia discussed, is there the knowledge that you are surrounded by strangers, but there is also the fear that your reaction to the television content will draw attention to yourself and force you into a public performance that you would rather avoid. As the Sussex Technology Group go on to argue,

> The mobile phone places actions conventionally banished into the sphere of the intimate and private realm back into the realm of the public. Mobile phone users therefore have to—or choose to—negotiate speech acts in a sphere which is not clearly 'private' but which might not be 'public' either. (2001: 211)

Mobile television requires a similar negotiation from its viewers, but in terms of engaging with television drama, this negotiation is problematic and potentially less socially acceptable. The fact that television necessarily involves images, and that if those images were displayed on a mobile phone strangers would also be able to see them, along with the expectations of television drama to elicit an emotional response therefore clash with the expectations of the mobile phone to be available and used in public spaces. Not only is the textuality of the content of *24: Conspiracy*, and its relationship to the technology of the mobile phone, an issue that must be recognised in relation to this particular form of transmediality; the kind of viewing context offered to the audience must also be taken into account. The act of watching television drama was ultimately seen in focus groups as discordant with the public/private space of the mobile phone.

IMMEDIACY VS. IMMERSION: THE FUTURE OF MOBILE TELEVISION

As with the *Spooks* games, focus group discussions considered both textual (short narratives and limited visual interest) and technological (small screens and use in public space) factors in discussions surrounding mobile television and, again, as with the *Spooks* games, many of these factors were seen as preventing the viewer from having an immersive engagement with a text. There is some evidence that the attitudes explored in this chapter may be specific to the moment of research and may not necessarily be fixed. Some responses had to do with the specific construction of *24: Conspiracy* as a particularly bad, or less engaging, example of transmedia

storytelling. Harry, for example, despite not being particularly enthusiastic about mobile television, said in respect of *24: Conspiracy* that 'if it had been characters that are already established and you know, it's just what happens on their days off kind of thing, it might have been more watchable' (27 years old, project administrator, focus group 5)[73]. As in the previous chapter's discussion of the *Spooks* games and narrative, a closer link to the television programme may have had a more welcoming reaction. Felicity meanwhile, who took part in a general focus group and had not been aware of *24: Conspiracy*, said, 'If it was something I was into, say *24*, and it was something explaining something in *24* that you didn't get, I'd make myself find out' (20 years old, student teacher, focus group 8). Similarly, Martin and Neil discussed how they would be 'tempted' (Martin, 18 years old, student, focus group 3) to watch something in relation to their fan text of *Spooks*, so long as it was free. For these participants, they may be brought to mobile television for the right product, but their involvement with it as a format would be restricted to that product. If it was not available, or if its availability was limited, then their engagement would be equally limited.

However, the more technology-focused criticism of mobile television indicate how the emergence of the mobile phone as a platform for televisual content may impact on our understanding of 'television' as a medium and in particular engagement with drama on that medium. What became clear in several discussions was that mobile television could be seen as having an advantage when it exploited qualities of *both* the mobile phone and television broadcasting. Specifically, moments when television's 'perpetual presence' (Ellis, 1992 (1982): 134) is twinned with the portability of the mobile phone were moments when, for participants in these focus groups, it is advantageous to have televisual content available on a mobile phone. In many ways this leads us towards the following chapter's consideration of transmedia engagement and the potential for the mobile phone to act as an alternative to the television set. Unlike downloading, which occupies the same space (the home) as television, the mobile phone, because it is portable, can function as an alternative when there is no television.

Within focus group discussions, this function as an alternative was wrapped up in the combination of immediate access to a mobile phone and the immediate access to television broadcasting. This requires a consideration of television and issues of immediacy, a concept that will continue to be important as we shift towards exploring transmedia engagement in the following chapter. Jostein Gripsrud writes that 'immediacy or "liveness" is a key aesthetic value in television, it seems', going on to argue that '[t]he capacity for transmission of "reality in the raw" is what separates television from other media' (1998: 19). Noël Carroll similarly identifies television's 'capacity to broadcast events as they occur' (2003: 268) as an element that has traditionally distinguished it from cinema, writing that 'television, is always, so to speak, in the present tense, while film is always in the past tense' (269). The fact that television *can* show events as they are happening

has been seen as central to the understanding of what television is. Television, unlike film or literature, does not *require* texts to be complete and published before the viewer or reader gets access to them. The audience can watch television as it is being made.

Television's 'liveness' appeared in the few positive discussions concerning watching television on a mobile phone. Although Carroll goes on to point out that a lot of television content is not live (2003: 276) and is in fact pre-recorded (precisely the situation with most television drama), it was the live moments, events such as the news and sports, that supplied the primary moment in which the opportunity to watch television on a mobile phone became desired by those taking part in this research. It is the televisual moments that are tied up to a sense of the present, of occurring *now*, that fit most easily with concepts of the mobile phone. The mobile phone is seen as 'always there' and so can provide access to moments that will be gone by the time the viewer gets home to their television set. Harry, the most positive participant on this point, said,

> If you're on a train or a bus or something, and there's a sports event you're late coming home for and it's on the TV and it's a free method of not missing it then great. Again, if it's a long train journey and you want to watch a film or something obviously you're going to have you're phone on you but you might not have a DVD player or laptop or something. (27 years old, project administrator, focus group 5)

The second part of this quote does acknowledge the potential for watching pre-recorded content on a mobile phone, as a substitute for other media devices, but it is the ability to access events as they are happening that is the primary potential source of engagement with television on a mobile phone. By combining something that only television can do with something only (or primarily) a mobile phone can do the potential for mobile television to be engaged with effectively is increased. As John Ellis argues, 'Television's implicit claim is that it is everywhere where things are happening' (1996: 112); the mobile phone enables this statement to apply not only to the television broadcaster but also to the technology that television is received on[74].

However, this concept of mobile television as a facility to exploit television's liveness, its ability to show you what is happening *now*, automatically excludes television drama. Most drama is not live. It does not matter so much if you do not have access to a television at the exact time of broadcast for your favourite television drama, rather than half an hour later at the end of your journey. Martin said, for example, 'You'd record it if you're that desperate' (18 years old, student, focus group 3), and there are numerous ways to do so. The potential for engagement with the text is not lost by watching a recorded, or captured, version of it rather than the live, broadcasted version. There is not the urgency associated with needing to watch, or find out the results of, the local football match, a traffic report, or the

latest headlines when a major news event happens. Although there is an element of currency in relation to television drama, of having watched the latest episode of *24* when you go into work and see your friend who is a fellow *24* fan, it does not carry the same significance as watching a football match as it is happening. Far more important to those taking part in the focus groups for this research is to be in a comfortable, relaxing environment, an environment that invites the concentration and obliviousness required for immersion in a drama text. Rebecca, for example, had a reserved acceptance of mobile television but qualified it by saying, 'I wouldn't say no to watching it on a TV, I mean on a phone or a computer, but my preference would be the telly because you can lay back on the sofa and see the screen properly. It's just better' (19 years old, student, focus group 6).

Mobile television, however, does not facilitate a relaxing, immersive experience. In many ways it functions in terms of Margaret Morse's discussion of the experience of television, malls and freeways. Morse connects the three as 'locus of an attenuated *fiction effect*, that is, a partial loss of touch with the here and now, dubbed here as *distraction* (1990: 193, original emphasis). She goes on to describe this effect as distinct from theatre or cinema along much the same lines as Ellis's glance theory does: '[I]t involves two or more close objects and levels of attention and the copresence of two or more different, even contradictory metapsychological effects' (193). Although Morse's model defines television as a distraction from reality, rather than the other way around, that distraction is not total. It involves only a '*partial* loss of touch with the here and now'; the viewer's attention remains split between the world within the television screen and the world of their physical body. As she goes onto argue, in relation to driving a car along a freeway, '[A] sheet of glass alone is enough to provide a degree of disengagement from the world beyond the pane' (202). Just as the windscreen separates the driver from the world outside their car, the screen of the television set separates the viewer from the narrative worlds of its programmes, even whilst simultaneously drawing them in. Although the previous chapter demonstrated the immersive potential of the TV set, this becomes particularly relevant with mobile television and its association with public spaces where non-viewing activities intrude on the viewing space. The small screen means that a large portion of the viewer's field of vision is taken up with their surroundings, not the content they want to be focusing on. Viewers may be self-conscious of others looking at them, wondering what they are watching and whether they will call attention to themselves by visibly reacting.

This kind of split-attention was rejected by research participants. Olivia and Peter both made similar comments concerning what they saw as the required viewing context for becoming immersed in a television drama text such as *24*. Olivia said, 'I want to be able to sit and relax and watch TV. If you're out travelling, you wait on the train station for the train to come; you won't sit and relax because the train could arrive at any time' (25 years old, assistant production manager, focus group 4). Peter meanwhile

commented, 'I want peace, so I can focus on everything' (24 years old, archiver, focus group 4). This peace suggests that he wants nothing to interfere with his engagement with the programme; he does not want the distracted glance of Ellis's model (1992 (1982)) but instead wants something closer to the concentrated, uninterrupted gaze associated with the cinema audience. Similar points were raised by participants in other focus groups, with Eleanor also desiring the kind of concentrated viewing discussed by Peter for her engagement with *Spooks*: 'I wouldn't want to watch *Spooks* in that situation because . . . it's something you have to concentrate on' (28 years old, media worker, focus group 1). For these viewers there is a need for a viewing context that provides them with an environment suitable for immersion within the fictional world of *Spooks* or *24*. The spaces in which mobile phones or other portable media devices are expected to be used do not provide this environment. Felicity, for example, discussed in-car DVD players in a way that also indicated the importance of viewing context to engaging with television drama:

Felicity: I've got, you know, the new DVD players you're supposed to watch in the car and things like that, it just annoyed me. We travelled down south and I wasn't driving on the way back. [I was] watching a DVD and I couldn't do it, I had to put it back down

EE: Is it that the screen's too small and you're seeing stuff around it and getting distracted?

Felicity: Yeah.

(Felicity, 20 years old, student teacher, focus group 8)

Engagement with a drama text does not rely on the twin advantages of broadcasting and mobile technologies to be live and accessed anywhere. Instead, it is the kind of concentrated, immersive experience explored in the previous chapter that is desired from watching television drama. The participants in this research wish to view drama such as *24* and *Spooks* in a relaxing environment where they can concentrate fully on the complex narrative developments and visual style, not one where they are potentially squinting at a small screen and constantly wondering if someone is looking over their shoulder, or when their train is due. Whereas sports and news programming were seen as potentially benefiting from the immediacy of access to a mobile phone, drama was not. Research participants' expectations of drama such as *24* as an immersive experience were at odds with both the textual and technological construction of mobile drama such as *24: Conspiracy* thanks to the combination of shortened narratives, a small screen and the spaces with which mobile phone use is associated. Instead, mobile television forms an extreme version of Ellis's glance theory, with both textual and contextual factors providing too many distractions and not enough enticement for audiences to become fully engaged. The screen is

so small and the mobile phone is used in such busy, bustling contexts, that the possibility of immersion in the televisual text in front of you is seen as almost impossible.

In many ways, this highlights the difficulty of reconciling mobile technologies and televisual entertainment, particularly drama. Lisa Gitelman has argued that 'the success of all media depends at some level on inattentive or "blindness" to the media technologies themselves (and all of their supporting protocols) in favour of attention to the phenomena, "the content" that they represent for users' edification or enjoyment' (2006: 6). In the case of mobile television, the technology did not disappear; its limitations as a visual medium kept it too visible to these viewers. As John Kelly has argued, mobile devices are 'not "the show", it is more like the beeper that goes off while you are watching the show. Mobile interactions for the most part are distracting or assisting interactions' (2006: 76). Mobile phones (and other mobile media devices) are not, for the participants in my focus groups, conducive to a fully engaged, immersive television experience; they are the kind of distraction described by Kelly. It is not something they expect or desire to focus all their attention on for the prolonged period of time they expect and desire from television drama. There are too many factors affecting their relationship to the screen, and the fictional world it shows for them, to replicate the kind of engagement they expect and desire from television drama texts. Whereas the convenience of continuous access to a mobile phone means that it has advantages for engaging with television as an up-to-date information source, on those occasions where television is valued for its immediacy, this advantage does not extend to engagement with drama texts. The ability to get lost in the fictional worlds offered to the audience by television drama is limited by mobile television, and subsequently they have little or no desire to engage with it in this format. Although there is the potential within these groups to have more positive opinions of the mobile phone as an alternative for specifically non-dramatic content, as far as television drama is concerned, the audience is still firmly focused on the box in your living room and not the box in your pocket.

6 Downloading Television
Agency, Immediacy and the Transmedia Audience

So far this book has focused on extensions of the fictional worlds of *Spooks* and *24*. As discussed in Chapter 2, however, this is only part of the experience of emergent transmediality. It is also necessary to consider moments of transmedia engagement, moments that have less impact on the textuality of the content being watched (although that is not to say there is none at all) but instead have a significant impact on *how* that content is watched. This approach began to emerge in the previous chapter, with the more positive discussions on using the mobile phone as an alternative to the television set for watching news or sports content. In terms of drama, however, these positive opinions were still restricted by the discontinuity between the technology of the mobile phone and the kind of experience desired from dramatic fictional content. Although services such as the HBO mobile channel offer a fuller example of the mobile phone operating as an alternative source for television drama, the issues discussed in the previous chapter remain relevant. Screen size and the association with public spaces, for example, were not only raised in conversations directly relating to *24: Conspiracy*, but were also issues for more general discussions about the ability to use a mobile phone as a platform for televisual content. For engagement with drama specifically, even if the content is identical to that available elsewhere, the lower immersive potential of the mobile phone as a technology remains an issue, and there was a general aversion to the use of this technology in this way. It is instead necessary to turn to the internet to find a new media space that is truly functioning as an alternative to the television set.

The removal of television drama content from both the television set and television broadcasting technology raises important questions concerning both the definition of 'television' drama and the experience of watching it. Clearly watching an episode of *Spooks* or *24* on a computer or mobile phone is not the same experience as watching one on a television set, but to what extent is it different? Downloading both develops from, and is separate to, a history of technological intervention in broadcasting that began with the invention of the remote control and became solidified with the VCR. However, whereas downloading may share some qualities with

recording equipment, it is offering the audience something different; the experience of downloading television is both familiar and alien. The issues that have been of central concern throughout this book are brought into question again by the focus group discussions surrounding downloading services. How does the agency offered to viewers by downloading, to watch whatever they want, whenever they want, impact on the experience of watching television drama? By extension, how does this agency relate to the temporalities of television that are so firmly associated with broadcasting as, until now, television's primary distribution technology? To a lesser extent the issue of immersion, so central to the previous chapters' discussion of transmedia storytelling, is also raised here in the possibility it offers for viewers to ensure that they have access to, and can become immersed in, the entire text of a drama series. In addition, the 'permanent' access to content that facilitates this prolonged immersion subsequently brings the very notion of the 'television audience' into question. If individual viewers are watching the same programme on different technologies at different times, can they still function as a 'television audience'? Such an issue becomes even more complex when the presence of illegal downloading networks is recognised, something that has persisted despite moves by the industry to prevent them. If viewers are able to access content, via illegal means, from all around the world, then the connection between television viewing and nationhood must be re-evaluated.

It is first, however, necessary to point out the specific context of both the audience research and the theoretical discussions in this chapter. This research concerns transmedia engagement at its emergent moment; downloading services, as outlined in Chapter 2, have expanded and developed since this research was undertaken. There are consequently three specific characteristics that must be recognised. The first relates to the technology and services available to audiences. Online, audio-visual content is available via two means: streaming and downloading. With streaming, data is transferred to the user's computer as the content is being played, whereas with downloading, all data is transferred and stored before playback can begin. At the time of this research, only very limited content was available via streaming; the vast majority of content had to be downloaded completely before it could be viewed. The focus in this chapter is therefore on downloading, although distinctions between streaming and downloading technologies will be noted in the following discussion.

The final two characteristics concern the kind of content available and discussed in this research. Although downloading discussions were not always explicitly surrounding either *Spooks* or *24*—although in some cases they were—all participants, whether they actively downloaded or had so far been put off downloading because of its illegality or were unsure of how to go about it[75], discussed it in terms of drama programmes. This situation is not necessarily a result of the particular group involved in this research as it is reflected in information available about the downloading community

generally. In 2005, mid-way through this research, the top ten downloaded programmes in the UK consisted of nine dramas or comedy-dramas, ranging from *24* to *Lost* to *Desperate Housewives*, and one programme more clearly defined as comedy, *The Simpsons* (BBC News, 2005a: online). The final characteristic evident in emergent moments of transmedia engagement, then, is that the content in this is list is exclusively US produced; domestically made content was not associated with downloading until the emergence of legitimate services in 2007. Downloading was initially being used to access content not available through other means, or only available after a delay. This raises questions concerning the globalisation of television content and television distribution methods and the impact this may have on notions of a 'national audience'. Although a greater variety of content is now available through legitimate sources, the early years of downloading is defined by an emphasis on non-domestic, dramatic content.

When taken in connection with the previous discussion on mobile television it becomes possible to see a bifurcation within new media; technologies have certain properties that, at least in the emergent stage, predispose them to certain television genres. Whereas the portability and constant access available with mobile television was found to be beneficial for engagement with news and sports genres, the current narrative structure of its drama content and the viewing context associated with the technology of the mobile phone acted as a barrier to engagement with more immersive drama. With downloading, during the early application of the technology, it seems to be the reverse; it is drama that is the dominant genre. It is necessary to consider what it is about downloading that makes it so useful for the drama audience.

THE ARMCHAIR SCHEDULER: DOWNLOADING, AGENCY AND TIME

The most common theme in discussions surrounding downloading within my research concerned the perceived increase in agency that downloading offers viewers and the relationship between television and their daily lives. As I have already explained, in many ways the mobile phone could also be seen as a potential alternative to the television set, and it is from the previous chapter's consideration of mobile phone technology and television that a way forward in understanding downloading services can be found. That discussion established immediacy and liveness as qualities of broadcast television that mobile television is able to exploit. As John Ellis describes, 'The broadcast TV image has the effect of immediacy. It is as though the TV image is a "live" image, transmitted and received in the same moment that it is produced' (1992 (1982): 132). William Boddy, however, has argued that inventions such as the PVR, 'at least in the eyes of many current industry leaders and pundits [in the United States], are eroding the experience

of simultaneity and liveness that has been traditionally seen as . . . part of television's essential nature' (2004: 103). Downloading exacerbates this, presenting a significantly different relationship between content and the moment in which it is watched to that found in broadcast television, a relationship that undermines the importance of immediacy to certain televisual forms such as drama. The most obvious ontological point to make about services that allow the viewer to download television content is that they are not, and cannot be, 'live' and as such have a different temporal relationship to the viewer[76]. In fact the temporal structure of downloading services, both legal and illegal, is incredibly complex. The effect of this complex structure on the viewer's temporal relationship to television will be explored through audience research, but it is also necessary to begin by understanding how downloading can be defined in relation to both broadcasting and its closest technological allies, the VCR, and its modern equivalent the Personal Video Recorder (PVR), and the DVD.

Downloading services offer audiences access to large stores of content that they can access whenever they choose. A consequence of this archive structure is that broadcasting's sense of ephemerality or impermanence, which Matt Hills has argued has been central to the growth of television studies (2007: 43), is undercut. With broadcasting the images on screen are constantly changing, disappearing the moment they have appeared; without the aid of technology the viewer is unable to capture them or hold them still. With downloading, however, a television programme can now exist permanently as a file that can be accessed via a home computer at any time. As with the VCR, each programme becomes a more physical entity; with illegal networks they can even been burned onto a disc. Like a book or a DVD it can be taken off a (virtual) shelf and watched whenever the viewer wants to watch it. The key difference is that the content is provided by the broadcasters, not bought and collected by the viewer and they can therefore select from a library the size of Channel 4's archive or the BBC's weekly schedule. Content loses any sense of being 'transmitted and received in the same moment that it is produced' (Ellis, 1992 (1982): 132). It becomes, to use Lisa Gitelman's term, an 'inscription' that does not 'disappear into the air the way broadcasts do' (2006: 6). As with the VCR, it gains a more permanent existence in downloading than in the fleeting, momentary nature of broadcasting[77].

The constant presence and physicalization of television content by downloading services undermines the notion of television's immediacy, discussed in the previous chapter, and raises what could be seen as a shifting binary between that immediacy and viewer agency in the development of televisual technology. With broadcasting, when the viewer turns on their television images appear instantaneously. At the same time this sense of immediacy is twinned with a limited sense of agency or control over what those images are. As Amanda D. Lotz has observed, '"[W]atching television" meant selecting among the limited range of programs currently streaming through the set'

(2007: 77). Viewers are limited in when they watch each programme, but the programme appears instantly at that time. With a VCR the viewer can, to a certain extent, overcome this need to be in a certain place at a certain time through the practice of 'timeshifting' (see Gray, 1992: 120; Hargrave, 1995: 25; Gauntlett and Hill, 1999: 143), but this sense of timeshifting has limitations because viewers can only capture content that they have planned to capture in advance. Each time they want to watch a programme out of time with broadcasting they must set the recording device, but again, as with broadcasting, the images will appear instantly the moment they want to watch them (barring rewinding the tape of course). With a PVR the same thing happens; the viewer can watch recorded programmes whenever they like but they must plan in advance, although not to the extent that they must with the VCR because most services such as Sky+ allow the viewer to tell the box to record an entire series.

With downloading, however, the situation is significantly different. In order to access downloaded content the viewer must go through a set process that delays access to the final programme content. With illegal software and some services such as the iPlayer's offline viewing service, there is then an enforced delay while the programme is downloaded. Whereas there is no need for the awareness of television and advanced planning in order to capture a specific moment, unlike television and the VCR or PVR, they cannot be watched instantly. The viewer must go through a set process and wait potentially an hour before being able to watch the programme. Even in the case of services such as 4OD or YouTube, which use streaming rather than downloading, viewers may still have to endure pauses and delays, especially if their internet connection cannot download the content faster than it is being watched. In fact, in these cases the pauses become even more disruptive, as the episode suddenly freezes until the connection is restored. Downloading indicates a continuing shift and negotiation between immediacy and viewer agency. Broadcasting has greater immediacy, but the viewer has less control over what they can watch; downloading offers the viewer greater choice but less immediacy or reliability.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the way downloading provides television content, and the relationship it creates between viewer, broadcaster and content, is different to the broadcasting models of flow or segmentation in a way that goes a step further than the VCR. With downloaded content, the viewer does not need to use technology to 'subvert the schedules' (Gray, 1992: 120; see also Cubbitt, 1991: 36) because effectively there are no predetermined schedules to subvert; the temporal nature of television has been altered by the disruption downloading causes to its sense of ephemerality and immediacy. There is subsequently a need in this case to uphold Sonia Livingstone's position against the separation of 'use of media-as-goods and the reception of media-as-texts' (2004: 10) and to distinguish between 'television' as content and 'broadcasting' as technology. It then becomes necessary to attempt to understand how 'television downloading' (experiencing

the computer and internet as goods and services) functions as a viewing experience (receiving television drama as a text). It is clearly different from the established method of accessing televisual content. The power relationship between broadcaster and viewer in terms of who determines what is watched and when is shifted slightly, away from the former and towards the latter. Participants in focus groups and interviews picked up on this shift in particular, with the apparent agency offered by downloading being the main reason for its popularity, both for those who already downloaded and those who did not. Discussions highlighted possible reasons behind the fact that the development of downloading services was primarily viewer led. The rise of illegal networks and the industry's inability to restrain them suggests that the emergence of downloading served to rectify perceived problems with the pre-existing television structure. In particular, this manifested around a perceived 'failure' by television broadcasting to satisfactorily fit into their daily lives.

Daily Life and the Failure of the Television Schedule

Several writers have considered the role of television in mimicking and reinforcing the temporal patterns of daily life. Torunn Selberg writes, 'Watching television is part of our structuring of daily life in three dimensions: space, time, and social relations' (1998: 106–107). She goes on to specify, 'In different ways the mass media can assist us in keeping track of time. Television and radio give us exact time, and we use these media to keep the time' (107). Other writers, such as John Fiske (1987) and Tania Modleski (1983), link television-viewing patterns to the behaviours and routines of the home. As Fiske writes, '[T]elevision is essentially a domestic medium, the routines of viewing are part of the domestic routines by which home life is organised' (1987: 72). For Modleski this position can be taken further and seen in the actual construction of programming: 'I would argue that the flow of daytime television reinforces the very principle of interruptability crucial to the proper functioning of women in the home' (1983: 71). In particular, the fact that women must be completing domestic chores whilst watching television leads to certain formal tropes: 'The script writers, anticipating the housewife's distracted state, are careful to repeat important elements of the story several time' (73).

The way television broadcasting parallels perceived changes in the domestic environment throughout the day works to provide a sense of comfort for viewers. As Roger Silverstone writes, 'Bodies . . . require comfort and security, both material and symbolic. It is in the repetitiveness of the everyday, its very familiarity and predictability, that such securities are sought and sometimes found' (2002: 765). Television's role in the everyday, as discussed by Fiske and Modleski, can be seen to provide this repetitiveness and the security required for stable human experi-

ence. David Gauntlett and Annette Hill make a similar argument, writing that:

> particular TV programmes such as the news and *Home and Away* provide fixed marker points in the day, *reliable parts of the routine* which will be watched, of course, for their own value, but which also mark transitions from one stage of the day to the next. (1999: 27, my emphasis)

Throughout these theoretical models, daily life is seen as stable and predictable, with the way that television programmes are packaged, presented and ordered providing part of that rhythmic security.

This stability, in terms of both daily life and television broadcasting, is encapsulated in models of the television schedule. John Ellis closely ties the structure and function of the television schedule with the models of daily life and its relationship to television described above. He describes how '[t]elevision's managers, in an inheritance from the habits of radio, designed the evening output according to an assumed pattern of average national daily life' (2000: 43). The audience's temporal relationship to broadcasting is determined by perceptions of a stable, rhythmic daily life, and much of the research on the television schedule supports Ellis's position. Two empirical projects, one run in the VCR's infancy, the other once it was an established and widely used media technology, demonstrate that audience members may in fact adjust their daily routines around the television schedule (see Gantz and Zohoori, 1982: 269; Gore and Kearney, 1996: 56). Television broadcasting has been seen as both representative of the temporal patterns of daily life, mimicking them in its structure, but also as reinforcing them, providing a temporal template for the audience's activities.

However, in discussions for the research in this book the stability of daily life was challenged, with the often unpredictable nature of events potentially preventing engagement with television texts. Hilary, for example, commented,

> My life really is quite unpredictable in terms of what I do because I'm single; I don't know what I'm doing tomorrow, you know. And because I don't have any other demands on my time apart from work I can, at the drop of a hat say 'I'm going to go and see so and so' or go out wherever, in ways in which other people don't necessarily do, particularly in the week. So I don't really have a routine in terms of being at home at certain times and watching things at certain times. (35 years old, teacher, focus group 9)

Her general lifestyle prevents her from having a particularly strong daily routine that could accommodate television broadcasting. A similar comment about the erratic nature of daily life was made by Charles and Harry:

Charles: You don't know if you're going to be stuck in traffic.
Harry: Yes, you don't know if you're going to be stuck in traffic, you don't know if your mum's going to call.
(Harry, 27 years old, project administrator; Charles, 28 years old, research scientist, focus group 5)[78]

In both of these cases the kind of stability in daily life described by Silverstone is undermined. For these participants daily life is not necessarily stable and events may occur that have not been planned or expected. The relationship between the temporally rigid television schedule and the daily routines of the television audience is not straightforward or co-operative. Daily life can be unpredictable and, when it is, the television schedule is not equipped to allow for it[79].

Downloading was seen as a way to bend and adapt the otherwise inflexible temporal structure of television to the viewer's own ends. Keith, for example, commented, 'I want to be able to watch it where I want, when I want', going on to say in reference to watching *Stargate SG-1* (1997–, Sci-Fi) via downloading instead of his Sky subscription: 'It's like saying "ok, if you want to watch it, you have to sit down and watch it when we say" and I can't always guarantee that I'll be able to sit down and watch it like that' (33 years old, IT technician, interview). For Keith it is the temporal freedom offered by downloading, the ability to counter the consequences of broadcasting's immediacy, that is its greatest appeal. Instead of having to be sitting down at the moment of broadcast, he is able to access content in a way that fits into his daily life more easily. This attitude was also expressed by participants who, unlike Keith, had not yet actively started downloading. Ruth made a similar comment, stating, 'You wouldn't have to organise your life around the TV' (35 years old, student, focus group 7), whereas Bronwyn said downloading would give her 'control over my scheduling completely' (34 years old, lecturer, focus group 8). For all of these participants downloading offered them the opportunity to counteract the moments in which television failed to fit satisfactorily into their daily lives. The technology offers them greater agency and control, the chance for them to act as their own schedulers rather than having to rely on broadcasters.

To a certain extent these kinds of attitudes could be seen as being adequately managed with the time-shifting capabilities of the VCR. Despite researching in the late 1970s, when the VCR was an emergent technology, Gantz and Zohorri are amongst the first writers to recognize the 'timeshifting' potential of the technology, writing, 'It had been reported, for example, that the primary use of the video-cassette recorders (VCRs) is for time-shift viewing' (1982: 272). The association of the VCR with altering the viewer's temporal relationship with television broadcasting has gone on to remain a consistent theoretical argument throughout the technology's history and evolution into the Personal Video Recorder (PVR). Anne Gray discusses how, with recoding technology, '[t]he user

can subvert the schedules imposed by the broadcasting organizations' (Gray, 1992: 120), a position reinforced by David Gauntlett and Annette Hill when they write,

> It was important for [research participants] that they should see programmes, but being no longer tied to watching them at broadcast time meant that they were cut 'free' from the fixed schedules by which television previously, presumably, used to tie viewers down. (1999: 143)

The more modern PVR is seen by Lisa Parks as merely extending this possibility, arguing that it 'generates the possibility of greater viewer control over television's temporality, not only in terms of timeshifting content but also enabling the viewer to determine the schedule and regulate its flow' (2004: 136–137). In each of these approaches, technology is seen as allowing the viewer to gain control over the relationship between the (potentially unpredictable) routines of their daily life and the television schedule.

Many of these theories could clearly be seen as applicable to the aforementioned desires of audiences to control when they watch television content. If Keith knows he wants to watch *Stargate SG-1* but may not be in when it airs, he could always set his VCR or Sky+ box to record it. However, there is a key difference between downloading and older recording technologies that links back to the evidence in the focus groups concerning the challenge to models of daily life as stable. The temporal freedom offered by the VCR and PVR is limited; as technologies they are still unavoidably enmeshed with the television schedule. The viewer must take an action (pressing the record button or setting a timer for automatic recording) at a specific time that is determined by the broadcaster in order to 'capture' the material they wish to watch and they must still know and follow the schedule in order to be able to do so. It is in this that downloading offers the greatest challenge both to any comparison with the VCR but also to the level of agency viewers have over when they access televisual content.

Downloading makes every programme accessible at any time after it has been broadcast; there is no need to even be aware of when a programme is aired, it can be found and accessed through only rudimentary information about the type of content that it is. With catch-up services the viewer must know which broadcaster aired the programme in order to access the correct downloading software; however, if using illegal networks, iTunes or YouTube even this is not necessary, the content can be found by a simple title search. The ability for downloading to offer television audiences the ability to counteract those moments when daily life becomes unpredictable, to a greater extent than the VCR or PVR, was discussed by Harry and Charles in the continuation of the conversation quoted earlier:

Harry: Ok, if you know you're going to the pub or whatever you can set your VCR but—

Charles: You don't know if you're going to be stuck in traffic.

Harry: Yes, you don't know if you're going to be stuck in traffic, you don't know if your mum's going to call or whatever so you know it would be an opportunity to go back. Likewise if you go into the office or you go to your friends on the weekend and everybody's talking about it, you think 'oh I'd not heard of that programme' or 'I saw the trailer and didn't think it would be any good' but all your friends are 'it was the best programme I've ever seen', it could be a one off, a *Messiah* (BBC, 2001–2005) or something like that and everybody's talking about it and you think 'oh I might actually like to see that now I know that it's good'.
(Harry, 27 years old, project administrator; Charles, 28 years old, research scientist, focus group 5)[80]

Downloading ultimately offers a greater disruption to the temporal structure of broadcasting than earlier recording technologies, in turn offering viewers greater autonomy over their engagement with it. With downloading services they do not need to worry about making allowances for potential disruption to their television viewing routines, the content is there for them to access whenever they choose to.

On a connected note, the additional agency and control over the television schedule offered by downloading was seen by John as allowing him greater command over its vastness, or alternatively what could be considered its 'synchronic' nature involving multiple channels airing at the same time. He commented, 'There's so much television on, so much telly on, so much to choose from, so many other pursuits that it is a real investment to watch anything anymore, so it's really got to be something to make you do that. You know, it's just like, I haven't got time' (John, 34 years old, lecturer, interview). John's comment here is reminiscent of John Ellis's discussion of television's 'era of availability' in which, 'several channels broadcasting continuously jostled for attention' (2000: 40). Not only does the temporal structure of broadcasting determine when viewers can watch certain programmes, but it can also play a role in determining what they watch. If multiple channels broadcast programmes the viewer wants to watch at the same time they must choose between them. The VCR or PVR in turn only allows them to watch a limited number. Downloading, however, frees them from such clashes, again allowing the viewer to almost ignore the schedule completely and access content instead from an archived collection of material. It in turn signals the shift in Ellis's model from the 'era of availability' to the 'era of plenty' in which, 'television programmes (or as they will be known, "content" or "product") will be accessible through a variety of technologies, the sum of which will find consumers the new phenomenon of "television on demand" as well as "interactive television"' (40). As the volume of television content increases, downloading offers a clear and attractive alternative way for viewers to access as much of it as they choose.

It was the ability of downloading to allow viewers to navigate this vast television schedule with a greater amount of control over their temporal relationship with it that John articulated most emphatically in his interview, an attitude that reflected and summarized most of the focus group discussions on downloading:

> It's liberated me from the schedule and schedules. Because for all the choice we think we have, until recording media came available to us we were slaves to what they wanted to show us, when they wanted to show it to us. And I no longer have that restraint around me. Basically I can watch when I want and I love that. It's freed me. Whilst I'm still a slave to the television as a unit, I'm not a slave to those awful kind of schedulers. (34 years old, lecturer, interview)

John's comment demonstrates the effect of downloading on the audience's temporal relationship to television and the way in which it offers a serious alternative to broadcasting. Unlike using a VCR, when he would still be partially determined by what is broadcast, with downloading he has become 'freed' from the 'restraints' of schedulers. He even acknowledges the specifically temporal nature of this freedom. He is still a 'slave' to the television as an object in his home; it still determines his relationship to domestic space and he also discussed potitioning his lounge furniture around the television set. Instead, it is the ability to control *how* and *when* this engagement happens that downloading offers.

Despite being by far the most attractive quality about downloading, this freedom of choice was not welcomed unequivocally. Two participants, married couple Beth and Charles, expressed a concern that the emergence of downloading would threaten the established form of broadcasting, something that they did not want to happen. They were reluctant to fully embrace the kind of archival structure that services such as 4OD offered. Beth commented how,

> having recently moved we've only got a very, very snowy channel three [and no other channels]. We're bordering on no TV now. And in a funny kind of way it's been bliss. And I've actually really enjoyed the limited options we've had which is only channel three and you really have to want to watch it through the snowy picture. (28 years old, compliance officer, focus group 5)

Similarly, Charles commented about the difficulty that having many options presents him with, using his DVD collection as an alternative example:

> I know I have a huge number of DVDs and I know that there are ones in there that I will happily sit down and watch any time and even though I know there are ones in there that I will watch anytime and know that I

> will enjoy- I will struggle to choose that DVD because there's such a selection whereas with Sky or TV or whatever you do have a huge range of channels you could watch but they're all crap so actually you can distil it down into something a lot more manageable, maybe down to half a dozen. It's almost like going to your DVD collection and blindly taking a few off of it and going 'I have to choose from this six.' So you limit your choice. (28 years old, research scientist, focus group 5)

For both Charles and Beth the prospect of having access to potentially any television drama programme ever made is a daunting prospect, an attitude that in many ways echoes the argument made by Timothy Todreas that '[c]hoices in media products become overwhelming for two reasons: limited time and limited patience' (1999: 166). For Todreas, the role of media within leisure time means that people do not want the kind of unlimited choice that downloading could offer them. He argues, 'Searching through endless programs may be enjoyable for a few people, the cultural anthropologist or the procrastinating student. But, for most of us, it is a frustrating drain of energy' (167). As John Ellis argues in his theory of 'choice fatigue', that 'there are moments when choice is an imposition rather than a freedom' (2000: 171). Beth and Charles offer a clear example of this argument, preferring their television content to be presented to them in smaller, more manageable amounts.

Downloading services do, to a certain extent, function to shape viewer choice. More recent content is likely to be given prominent links on site homepages, while the services such as the iPlayer offer rudimentary recommendations based on what content a viewer chooses[81]. The page for *Sherlock* (BBC, 2010) will, for example, include a link to other detective dramas available that week. The BBC's Victoria Jaye indicated the value in combining the agency of downloading services with the broadcast scheduler's role in guiding viewers' choices:

> [W]e know that that experience on the iPlayer would be vastly improved with the ability of scheduling to hammock[82] audiences, to introduce them to programmes. While the net can do personalisation and linking there's nothing like a well curated offer. (personal interview)

Beth and Charles's fear over downloading suggests that there is still a place for broadcast television; it will not be destroyed by the emergence of downloading. However, broadcasting is becoming an option rather than a necessity for many viewers[83]. By offering a constantly available archive format, unrestrained by the temporal qualities of broadcasting, downloading is able to offer a viable and popular alternative to both the television schedule and older recording technologies that are unable to completely break free from it. It is perceived and valued as a 'liberator', allowing the viewer greater control over how and when they access television content.

Downloading and the Failure of Broadcasters

A sense that downloading allows audiences to gain greater control in the relationship between viewer and broadcaster also figured in discussions that highlighted the impact such services have on global television distribution. A second way in which downloading, in this case particularly illegal downloading, can be seen as different from other time-shifting technologies is its ability to provide access to programmes that are otherwise unavailable. If someone is unconcerned by the legal ramifications of accessing content outside of copyright control they will be able to watch almost any form of audio-visual content (film included, of course) produced and distributed anywhere in the world (provided the content is uploaded). In some national contexts this may be a consequence of infrastructural, political or religious restrictions on content. In his examination of the VCR and DVD market, Paul McDonald discusses how a number of countries such as Ethiopia, Israel and the Arab Gulf States, used video technology to overcome the limitations of their domestic broadcasting systems (2007: 82–85). The absence of Western content from Chinese television screens has equally led to a burgeoning pirate industry both in DVD shops and online.

The context of this research sample (the United Kingdom and, for two participants, the Netherlands) is a very different context, however, with censorship being relatively limited and certainly nowhere near the level seen in the countries McDonald examines. Instead, a different form of 'failure' in the relationship between the audience and broadcasting structures emerges: the failure of trust between viewer and channel. Timothy Todreas links broadcasters with the concept of brands, arguing,

> Put the programs together into a schedule or a cluster, however, and . . . [i]t becomes possible to name the cluster, create a visual logo and musical theme for it, differentiate it from other clusters, and, in time, create an image around it. In short, to brand it. (1999: 175)

Todreas goes on to argue that '[b]rands are trusted friends that you can count on to deliver a familiar product time and time again' (178). What became apparent in the focus groups, however, was that this was not always the case. As well as discussing the general mismatch between the routines of daily lives and the television schedule, there was also consideration of the perceived failure of the broadcaster to cater to the needs of their audiences.

Such a failure occurred in relation to the BBC's broadcast of the fourth season of *Spooks*. After the first episode was aired on Monday, 12 September 2005 and the second episode the following day, there was a break of over a week until the third episode aired on Thursday, 22 September, with the rest of the season airing each Thursday. This delay resulted in confusion for some participants in this research; the initial establishment of *Spooks* as airing on Mondays, something consistent with previous

seasons, was suddenly disrupted. There was no indication from the BBC after the second episode that future episodes would not air on Mondays as expected, and so viewers were required to search the television listings when the broadcast time was apparently suddenly changed. This situation was discussed in the first focus group which took place not long after the incident:

Eleanor: Haven't they changed the day? Didn't used to be on a Monday or Tuesday and now it's Thursday?
Charles: That was very confusing.
Eleanor: Would that make a difference?
Debbie: The first episodes were Monday/Tuesday.
Charles: And then it was a week on Thursday.
Beth: Because normally we look to the next Monday and we were like 'Where is it?' Is it missing a week and if you didn't have a TV guide and could flick through to another day you might think 'Oh they're missing out a week' and then you get out of it and you don't bother watching it.
(Eleanor, 28 years old, media worker; Charles, 27 years old, research scientist; Debbie, 25 years old, civil servant; Beth, 26 years old, compliance officer; all focus group 1)

These participants were clearly unhappy with the sudden and unexpected schedule change. They did not like that they had to hunt for the programme in a television listing, that it was not broadcast when they expected it to be.

This sense of failure was more common in relation to US-produced programmes, something that can also be observed in Annette Hill and Ian Culcutt's examination of Channel 4's treatment of *Angel* (WB, 1999–2004) (n.d.: online). Peter, for example, described the situation in the Netherlands:

Peter: Some channels are pretty inconsistent here, with their schedules but, like Net5 which broadcast *Alias* three years ago. Season one, they programmed it after a movie so the time it started kept changing and they pulled it off the schedule after fifteen episodes. And then last year they aired episode sixteen onwards, season one, at four am in the morning. It's really ridiculous. And now they started airing the season two episodes at midnight but-
EE: They're four years old.
Peter: Yeah. That's the reason that I download. They start a season here and you can only hope they finish it properly.
Olivia: If they start a series here.
Peter: Yeah.
(Peter, 23 years old, archiver; Olivia, 25 years old, assistant production manager, focus group 4)

There are two ways in which Dutch broadcasters are seen by Peter and Olivia to have failed. There is the possibility that some US drama programmes will not be aired at all, and even if they are there is no guarantee that the audience will be given access to the entire series. In the case of *Alias* (2001–2006, ABC) the transmission time was changed constantly and the programme pulled from the schedules before the series was over. In this particular case, the Dutch broadcasters did not create a stable schedule, or provide access to the entire series. This ultimately leads to a breakdown in the viewer's perception of the broadcaster as a reliable provider of televisual content. As Peter described, 'I don't really trust the Dutch TV [that] if I like the show that they will air it properly' (23 years old, archiver, focus group 4). Viewers become frustrated by the treatment of non-domestic content in global television markets. This is clearly a more crucial case with US-produced programmes, which are usually subject to delays in the UK and Europe of between four months and two years or may not be aired at all. However, as Paul Rixon has argued, US-produced drama and comedy are a central part of the British television landscape (2006: 1), and so the fact that downloading technologies are being used to access such content outside of broadcast structures indicates a potentially more general frustration with the patterns of global television distribution.

Moments when broadcast television was seen by my research participants to have failed to align itself with their daily lives could be countered by the opportunity to access material via an online, archival style source. When an event unexpectedly hindered a viewer's access to a programme, downloading could act as a backup, offering them content they would otherwise have missed. At the same time, the unstable treatment of bought-in drama by broadcasters could also be countered by downloading, albeit in this case from illegal sources. If viewers lost trust in broadcasters to provide them with the complete text of a programme downloading served as an alternative source to ensure their immersive experience was not hampered by only having seen part of the full text. Downloading was seen as providing the audience with a level of unprecedented agency, even when looking at older technologies such as the VCR, to act as their own scheduler, to determine their own, personalised television flow. Not only are they able to pick and choose from a large number of programmes and watch them whenever they want, but if they are willing to access illegitimate networks they can also gain access to an even larger archive of material, including material that might not be otherwise available to them. However, downloading's disruption of television's immediacy, and the increased agency it allows, has implications for television as part of a collective cultural consciousness. As Sean Cubitt argues in relation to the VCR, '[I]t alters the possibilities of identification with the screen, the implied unity of the audience, and even with ourselves' (1991: 37). As already discussed, downloading exacerbates many of the issues raised by the VCR. Whereas downloading offers the individual viewer greater freedom over their interaction with television, and in doing so offers them the opportunity to overcome perceived limitations of television's ability to fit into their daily

lives, it has significant implications for that individual's ability to function as a member of a television audience.

HEALING FRACTURES: DOWNLOADING AND AUDIENCE NETWORKS

In my earlier discussion on the role of television within everyday life I quoted Torunn Selberg's argument that '[w]atching television is part of our structuring of daily life in three dimensions: space, time, and social relations' (1998: 106–107). As I have explored, the agency offered by downloading allows audiences a sense of manipulating the time part of this formulation. This potential for agency has significant consequences for another part of Selberg's argument: the role of television in the structuring of daily social relations. Television provides a cultural commonality that can be a foundation for inter-personal relationships in both online and offline spaces. Manuel Castells argues, 'The Internet has been appropriated by social practice, in all its diversity' (2001: 118), something that includes television viewing. The social communication capability of the internet and the role of television in social relations suggest a potential for combination that is evident in the countless television-related fan websites and message boards. However, the additional agency of downloading requires this possible collusion to be examined further to consider the connotations that downloading has for concepts of the television audience, and in particular its impact on participants' perception of belonging to an 'audience'.

It became apparent during the focus group research that downloading elicited two apparently contradictory positions, both in those who did actively download and in those who did not. In the first, perhaps the most obvious, downloading was seen as divisive for the television audience, whereas in the second it was seen as a way for audience groups to come together, in particular across previously restrictive boundaries such as those between different countries. Downloading can both fracture the audience and also enhance and strengthen it, echoing Castells' argument that whereas some argue that 'the Internet is leading to social isolation, to a breakdown of social communication and family life', others point towards 'new, selective patterns of social relations substitute for territorially bound forms of human interaction' (2001: 116). However, it is not sufficient to dismiss this debate, as Castells does (117). Instead, it is necessary to understand how both positions may, in relation to television viewing, occur simultaneously and consider how it might be possible to reconcile them both with each other and with previous understandings of audiences and viewing communities.

Of course the idea that downloading can fracture the audience presupposes that there is an audience to fracture in the first place, an assertion that has been the focus of much debate within audience studies research. Some

writers perceive of the audience as multiple but reasonably concrete (Fiske, 1987: 81; Morley, 1992: 87; Moores, 1993: 1–2), whereas others challenge that position, arguing instead that the audience is an industrial construct (Ang, 1991: 2–3). On either side of the debate the concept of the audience is not clear cut or easily defined. However, what is important here is that from focus group discussions there was a clear indication that participants had a perception of the 'television audience' and the impact that downloading had (or would have) on their ability to be a part of it. Although the term 'audience' itself was not often used, there was still an understanding of it as an idea, with discussions on downloading being concerned with its impact on how they could use television within their social relationships. This chapter will not move on to debate the possible existence of the audience as an abstract or real concept, but will instead explore the impact of downloading on viewer's *perception* of belonging to an audience. It is guided by how they thought of 'the audience', something that was primarily defined through using television as a common cultural language within social interactions.

Fracturing the Audience: The Audience as Community

Jostein Gripsrud recounts the following story:

> In the late 1980s a well-known Norwegian composer of serious music was asked to make an engagement on a Wednesday evening. 'No,' he said, 'I can't, I've got to watch *Dynasty*.' The person inviting him out asked, 'But can't you tape it?' But the composer answered, 'No, I gotta get it live.' The remark was intended as a joke, but it was also meant to be taken seriously. That particular evening at about nine o'clock was the first time this particular episode was available to Norwegians, and if the composer postponed viewing until the next evening, he would not the next day be able to talk to others about it or understand what TV critics might have to say about the episode in Thursday morning's papers. (2004: 216–217)

Roberta Pearson makes a similar point when she describes the effect of her television being broken as a child: 'I have a vivid recollection of standing in the playground watching my friends sliding along an ice patch and shouting "Yab-adab-adoo." I had no idea what they were going on about and felt like a social pariah' (2004: 63). These anecdotes encapsulate one of the key functions television drama plays: its ability to become a cultural event; as Ellen Seiter has argued, 'television plays a central role as common currency, a *lingua franca*' (1999: 116, original emphasis). One of the key characteristics of television broadcasting is that thousands (or millions) of viewers are watching the same thing at the same time, as a conversation during one of the focus groups for this research demonstrates:

Neil: The thing is you can watch it with people, on your own, for example, you know if you watch *Spooks* or whatever-

Martin: And then talk about it the next day.

Neil: Yeah exactly. So you know you're both watching it together but apart.

(Neil, 17 years old, student; Martin, 18 years old, student, focus group 3)

This again raises the importance of immediacy, and its related concept of liveness, to understanding television downloading, although on this occasion it is in terms of the role it plays in creating viewers' sense of being part of a television drama audience. The discussion in the previous chapter on the mobile phone as a transmedia platform indicated that liveness and immediacy were less important for participants in this research for drama than for news and sports. However, the validity of the concept in understanding audience engagement with drama persists. Ellis describes how 'the notion that broadcast TV is live still haunts the medium; even more so does the sense of immediacy' (1992 (1982): 132), although he primarily sees this through tropes such as direct address and 'by echoing the presumed form of the TV audience within the material of the TV fiction itself' (135). This 'haunting', however, filters down into audiences' experiences with television. Elsewhere, Ellis argues, 'Television programmes were (and often still are) made for a particular moment in time and for a huge audience. The elements of the synchronic in their meaning systems is correspondingly important, and a large amount of television exists primarily for its synchronicity' (2005: 42). Although Ellis is discussing the reception of programmes years or decades after their production, this argument raises the close relationship between a programme and the moment of its transmission, a relationship that can be affected by a rupture of days or hours as much as years. Mimi White, for example, uses the broadcast of the final episode of *Cheers* (NBC, 1982–1993) to demonstrate how a sense of liveness can apply specifically to fiction as well as to catastrophic news events. She describes how 'the "historical" nature of the episode had everything to do with the show's currency for attracting audiences *at the moment it was aired*' (2004: 79, my emphasis).

Immediacy and liveness can be as important for an audience's engagement with drama as it is for more obviously 'live' programmes such as the news or sporting events. The narratives of television dramas, especially 'pure' serials such as *24*, are expanded and updated with each episode, and so there is a 'need' for viewers to have seen the latest instalment. Having seen the episode that is currently 'live' facilitates their sense of membership to an audience. Paddy Scannell, for example, discusses how one of the central tenets of Lord Reith's model of public service broadcasting was to 'promote a sense of social unity particularly through the live relay of those national ceremonies and functions' (2000: 48). By sending the same

image to every television set in a country, and having millions of audience members watching that image at the same time, television and radio had the opportunity to create a unified national audience. As David Morley argues, 'National broadcasting can thus create a sense of unity—and of corresponding boundaries around the nation; it can link the peripheral to the center; turn previously exclusive social events into mass experiences' (2000: 107). Timothy Todreas has also commented on how '[m]ost media products are consumed by large numbers of people. They may be consumed alone in the privacy of the home, but the experience is then shared. The hit show that was on television last night is discussed around the water cooler today' (1999: 181). To return to Ellen Seiter's terminology, as a '*lingua franca*' television creates a communal cultural landscape that helps define a national television audience. If everyone in a nation has access to the same content at the same time, they have a cultural vocabulary that they can call on, knowing that it will be shared by those around them.

Jostein Gripsrud ties the notion of an 'audience community' to the very nature of television broadcasting: 'Centralized broadcasting was both an answer to the need felt by central powers to reach all citizens with important information efficiently, and a highly useful instrument in the production of the harmonizing, stabilizing, "imagined community" (Anderson, 1991) of the nation state' (1998: 23). In Benedict Anderson's model of the 'imagined community' of the nation, '[the nation] is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion' (Anderson, 1991: 6). He goes on to argue that 'it is imagined as a *community*, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship' (7). As Gripsrud argues, the same could be said of the national broadcast audience. It is impossible for someone watching *EastEnders* when it is broadcast to know everyone else who is also watching *EastEnders* at that time. However, they will still be aware that other people are watching *EastEnders*; they are bound by the knowledge that they are partaking in the same activity as millions of others. The community becomes bound geographically (within the borders of where the BBC broadcasts *EastEnders*) and temporally (within the timeframe that it broadcast each episode).

Nick Couldry has argued the sense of 'liveness' that allows television to act as a 'lingua franca' has been extended into the development of the internet, both as a communicative tool and as a media source. He describes what he terms '"online liveness": social co-presence on a variety of scales from very small groups in chatrooms to huge international audiences for breaking news stories' (2003: 10). For Couldry the internet offers the same capacity for simultaneous communication (be that inter-personal or between media institutions and individuals) as broadcast television. The sense of belonging to a larger 'imagined community' style group engaging

with the same content (even if that content is conversations) persists into new media technologies such as the internet. However, downloading offers a breaking of both television broadcasting liveness and the online liveness of Couldry's model. With television downloading there is no need for viewers to be sitting in front of their computer at the same time; there is no interaction and, with drama especially, less of the urgency that would encourage the 'huge audience' for an online news broadcast.

Instead, downloading calls on earlier discussions surrounding time-shifting technologies, which have explored the clear possibility such technology has for challenging or even destroying this unity. Sean Cubitt summarises the situation as follows:

> If video intervenes in the flow of television, and interferes in the here-and-nowness it seems to radiate, one effect of that is that people don't even see the same programmes at the same time, cutting off much of the possibility of gossip and chat based on a particular broadcast item. (1991: 8)

He goes on to argue, 'The aura of live television, the uniqueness, the here-and-now-ness of the broadcast event is demolished by the use of the VCR' (35). The agency offered by technologies such as the VCR, and to a greater extent downloading, decreases the likelihood that everyone is watching the same thing at the same time. A similar point is made by Ann Gray when she writes,

> A very important part of the pleasure of television serials is the gossip about them the following day. Whilst VCR time-shifting allows more convenient and sometimes more pleasurable private viewing of these serials it means sacrificing the shared experience of viewing at a regular time of day. (1992: 199)

As with Cubitt, Gray sees the VCR as challenging the coherence of the national television audience described by writers such as Seiter and Morley. By providing the agency so desired by audience members during the focus groups for this research, downloading merely exacerbates this situation. Not only do audiences have access to a greater number of programmes over a longer period of time; they may even have access to programmes that have not been broadcast in their home country, something that will be explored in more detail in what follows. In doing this a central element of a viewer's perception of being part of 'an audience' is broken.

As both Cubitt's and Gray's quotes make clear, this broken element is the importance of gossip, of using television to structure and enhance inter-personal relationships. It becomes impossible to conduct a conversation with someone about television if you have not seen the same episodes of the same

programme. This was raised explicitly as a concern within the research for this book. John, for example, described a situation he had found himself in with a friendship group where their conversation was stilted by the various methods of viewing open to them:

> You know I was sat in the canteen and they were talking- it's so funny talking to two or three people and they watch programmes differently. You've got your old school who watch it terrestrially so they're inevitably further back. Then you've got the people who are downloading it so they're pretty well in advance. Then you've got people like me who are usually waiting for it to be out on DVD so I'm really the last to watch it and you've got all these different sources and it's rare that you're actually talking about the same episode. If you say to someone, 'did you watch *24* last night?' you have to qualify which episode, which season. (34 years old, lecturer, interview)

He expresses a concern that his ability to act as part of an audience for programmes like *24*, his ability to use television drama as part of his social interactions, is hampered by the fact that there are alternatives to the television broadcasting flow. Whereas elsewhere in the interview he was extremely positive about downloading and the freedom it offers him to engage with any programme at any time, here he is more reticent.

There was also concern expressed in the focus groups that this kind of situation might not only lead to a fragmenting of the television audience, but might also lead to those fragments falling into a hierarchy, governed by when viewers accessed programmes. Just as spoilers (information about future episodes) have been seen as creating and perpetuating hierarchies of knowledge within fan groups (see Evans, 2002: 27–29; Williams, 2004), seeing whole episodes before other members of a shared community could also have a divisive effect on relationships. This sentiment was expressed by Charles when he said,

> But I think you'll find there will be more kudos with having seen it first, when it was broadcast. Ok, imagine there was something like *Messiah*. Everyone's raving about it. But if you go home and think, 'maybe I'll download it but I won't get to watch it this evening, I'll watch it in a couple of days time' that conversation will have dried up and it might be a really good programme and I'm going to want to talk about it and everyone's just going to be 'yeah yeah we had this conversation two days ago. Slow aren't you? Bit behind the times', and I think there will be, yeah it will be useful for serials but I don't think it have the same appeal for the one off, at least not after a couple of times where you've been slapped down in the office for not having watched it in the first place. (28 years old, research scientist, focus group 5)

The ephemeral quality of television, its relationship to time and the disruption downloading can bring to this relationship, again becomes an issue for audience engagement with a text. Their sense of being part of an audience, of watching something alongside others (even if those others are unseen, in another house or another town), is broken by the act of downloading. In accessing a programme via downloading, out of sync with the moment of its broadcast, the viewer can be more convinced that they are the only one watching it. If the television audience can be seen as a community, a position that the role of television in gossip and conversation supports, downloading can, as Ann Gray argues about the VCR, become 'a practice which shatters this community' (1992: 215).

Healing Fractures: The Audience as Network

However, this need not necessarily be the case. In addition to downloading being perceived as potentially harmful to the sense of community and friendship that television can create, there was some indication within the focus groups that the opposite may also be true. In the preceding example concerning spoilers, there is also evidence that such information is used to promote transnational audienceship (Evans, 2002: 24–27). Similarly, whereas some participants in this research feared that the ability to download would hinder using television as a facilitator of conversation, others saw it as a way of encouraging it, with the inability to download instead forming a barrier to a viewer's ability to act as part of an audience. In this respect, participants echoed Camille Bacon-Smith's discussion of female *Star Trek* fans who use recorded episodes of the programme to initiate new members into the community and teach them the 'correct' way to watch the programme. Bacon-Smith recounts how by using VHS copies of the episodes, 'My mentor trained me to construct a viewing experience counter to traditional episodic patterns, one that connects each episode of a series in causal relation to every other' (1992: 126). In Bacon-Smith's example, recording technologies are clearly used to reinforce this particular fan community, to ensure each member has had access to the same content, an opinion that also emerged within focus groups in relation to downloading.

Harry, for example, articulated this position in an extension of his previous quote:

> If you go into the office or you go to your friends on the weekend and everybody's talking about it, you think, 'oh I'd not heard of that programme' or, 'I saw the trailer and didn't think it would be any good', but all your friends are, 'it was the best programme I've ever seen'. It could be a one off, a *Messiah* or something like that and everybody's talking about it and you think, 'oh I might actually like to see now I know that it's good', or something like a series- particularly I'd say a series because if everyone's talking about the first episode and you've

> missed the first episode you're thinking, 'crikey they liked it so much, they're going to be talking about it for the next twelve weeks, twenty weeks or whatever. I'm not just going to be lost for this evening, I'm going to be lost every time I speak to my friends, I'm going to not be part of this conversation for the next six months'. (27 years old, project administrator, focus group 5)

For Harry, downloading could be used to make sure that he had seen the same television content as others in his friendship group. In particular he calls on this attitude in relation to long-running serial dramas, the kind that John also used in his example and have already been discussed as requiring a certain level of viewing commitment in order to fully understand them. Unlike John, however, Harry sees downloading as a way of ensuring that he has seen the most up to date episode and can take part in ongoing conversations about it. Claire made a similar comment: 'It would be good with word of mouth because if somebody said to me, "Oh I missed *Lost* last night but then I downloaded it from the computer", I'd be like, "Oh that's really cool, there was an episode I missed last week", and I could go and get it' (18 years old, student/sales assistant, focus group 6). Again, downloading is seen as a facilitator to inter-personal relationships, enhancing an individual's ability to perform as a member of the audience for a particular programme.

In particular, downloading was seen as useful for cutting across national transmission boundaries. Sharon Ross considers the 'social audience' of television, which she describes 'as a collective; people "come together" (sometimes literally) to watch a show, guided in part by the work of the television industry' (2008: 7). In her conclusion, she quotes a number of non-US-based research participants who used internet fan groups to keep up to date with US programmes, with fan discussions giving them insight into which storylines to look out for when series air in their home country (Ross, 2008: 221). For these audience members, the internet is used to facilitate their subsequent viewing, which remains within their home viewing communities. They use the internet to access paratextual material (Grey, 2010), rather than the text itself. Illegal downloading offers a different form of viewing, and a different form of viewing group. As Ross recognises, '[W]hile being deprived [of access to content at the original air date] might help build a social audience online, most of my respondents would rather have access immediately themselves' (222). This need is fulfilled by guerrilla downloading services. Olivia, a participant in focus group four who lived in the Netherlands, accessed episodes of *24* through a downloading service for precisely this purpose. The fifth season of *24* began on the Fox channel in the US on 15 January 2006 and on Sky One in the UK on 12 February 2006. In the Netherlands, however, it did not air on RTL5 until 23 September 2006, over eight months after its initial broadcast. Dutch fans such as Olivia and Peter must wait considerably longer than US or UK

fans to access the same episodes. Peter downloaded the series mainly out of impatience at Dutch broadcasters, as discussed earlier in this chapter, and watched episodes at the same time as US-based fans because, as he said, 'I don't have the patience to wait. If I have the episode on my hard disk I don't have the discipline not to watch' (23 years old, archiver, focus group 4). Olivia, however, downloaded the series as it became available in the US, but then waited a month and watched it as it was being broadcast in the UK. In her initial questionnaire she explained, 'I download eps [sic] on US pace and try to watch it UK pace and watch it occasionally on Dutch pace and then buy the DVD's and watch it all again. :-)' (25 years old, assistant production manager, initial questionnaire), and indeed her diary entries for each episode were written shortly after the UK broadcast date.

In the focus groups she expanded on this point, and it became clear that, for Olivia, downloading was a way of facilitating her position within an online fan group. She spoke about how important having the opportunity to discuss the programme with others was to her engagement with it, saying,

> I do know it strengthens being a fan of *24* if you talk about it with others. Especially with- I like the first season but I watched on my own so I didn't have anyone to talk to about it. So the second season on the BBC board, talking to other people about it makes you more wanting to see it and discuss it and be more involved with it. (25 years old, assistant production manager, focus group 4)

For Olivia, the ability to discuss the programme was central to her enjoyment of it. Although she liked the first season, her engagement was tempered by the fact that she had no one to talk to about it. She used the BBC drama message board (which has subsequently closed down) to become involved with an online community of *24* fans and have the kind of engagement she desired. Because BBC One and BBC Two are both available in the Netherlands the group she became integrated with were watching the same episodes as she was. When BBC Two then lost the rights to broadcast *24* after the end of Season 2 to the UK only Sky, she turned to downloading to maintain her knowledge of the programme at the same rate as the British community she had become a part of: '[*24*] wasn't cut off, but it was cut off at the UK pace' (Olivia, 25 years old, assistant production manager, focus group 4).

Olivia's experience with *24* epitomises a problem for online fan groups that emerges from what Matt Hills has termed 'just-in time' fandom. Hills argues that

> practices of fandom have become increasingly enmeshed within the rhythms and temporalities of broadcasting, so that fans now go online to discuss new episodes immediately after the episode's transmission

> time—or even during ad-breaks—perhaps to demonstrate the 'timeliness' and responsiveness of their devotion. (2002: 178)

The speed and instantaneous nature of online communications allow online fan groups to discuss the most recent events in a particular programme. However, for the fan who is living in a country with a different transmission timetable, the implications of 'just-in time' fandom can be potentially catastrophic for their involvement with a fan group. Olivia's situation was precisely this. For the first two seasons of *24* she had access to the programme through the UK's television schedule and therefore had no problem interacting with a UK-based fan group. When the programme was moved out of her grasp, when the combination of UK and Netherlands broadcasters she had access to failed, she turned to an alternative source in order to remain 'in-time' with her *24* fan community friends. In her particular case, and as discussed in Chapter 2, this alternative was not illegal (as would be the case for British fans) because it is not against the law in the Netherlands to download copyrighted content[84]. Downloading provided her with a legitimate alternative source of televisual material, one that allowed her to remain 'in-time' with her *24*-based friendship group. Unlike Peter, who discussed how he downloads over forty programmes, Olivia only downloaded *24* and one other show, *The Unit* (CBS, 2006–) after it was recommended to her by her online friends. Her impetus behind downloading was therefore more about gaining access to a particular fan and friendship group, rather than an attempt to break free of the television schedule.

This kind of transnational reception, where downloading is used to watch a programme when it is only available in another country, was not restricted to members of overt fan groups. Brian discussed how he would like to be able to use downloading to access programmes shown only in Ireland, where he grew up and still had strong familial and friendship ties. Although he did not actively download, he said,

> One of the things I miss is [Ireland's] output. I have no idea of the home broadcasts and being interested in Irish issues, you know Irish television is probably the best place to find programmes about that and so I miss those. My mates are supposed to be sending over DVDs of stuff I've missed but they never do and I would love to be able to watch stuff like that over the web because there's no cable channels. (24 years old, unemployed filmmaker, focus group 5)

Brian's comment is reminiscent of David Morley's argument that '[h]ome is not always symbolised by any physical container—whether suitcase, building or coffin. At times language and culture themselves provide the migrant with the ultimate mobile home' (2000: 46). Morley goes on to argue that the construction of a national audience through the media can be exclusive of ethnicities other than the dominant:

> If the national media constitute the public sphere which is most central in the mediation of the nation-state to the general public, then whatever is excluded from those media is in effect excluded from the symbolic culture of the nation. When the culture of that public sphere (and thus of the nation) is in effect 'racialised' by the naturalisation of one (largely unmarked and undeclared) form of ethnicity, then only some citizens of the nation find it a homely and welcoming place. (2000: 118)

This effect may of course occur between ethnicities as ostensibly closely related as Britishness (or Englishness) and Irishness. For Brian, the appeal of downloading is focused on overcoming this exclusion and accessing the sense of 'home' described previously. By allowing him to access the same cultural texts that his friends and family in Ireland have access to, downloading would be able to reinforce his sense of Ireland as his 'home' and his place in the Irish television audience.

Manuel Castells' arguments concerning the impact of the internet on contemporary forms of sociability point towards further ways in which the potential for downloading to *form* audiences as well as break them can be understood. He argues that social relationships should increasingly be thought of not as 'communities' but as 'networks'. The former, he argues, are 'based on the sharing of values and social organization' (2001: 127), a model that can be seen to apply to the broadcast television audience. The concept of the 'lingua franca' indicates television's ability to create shared cultural codes whilst broadcasting institutions take a central social and cultural role in structuring those shared codes through the programmes they commission, produce and broadcast. A network meanwhile is 'built by the choices and strategies of social actors, be it individuals, families, or social groups' (127). It is this choice that indicates the difference between downloading audiences and broadcast audiences. The agency over which source to access televisual content from inherent in downloading (particularly illegal downloading) offers audience members such as Olivia and Brian the opportunity to form, or become part of, individual audience networks rather than the audience community determined by the social and cultural institutions (including broadcasters) of the country in which they live. Such networks may cross national boundaries and be distinct from others in the same household, family unit or face-to-face friendship group. It is defined by their *choice*; the parameters of a network are determined by who chooses to watch a particular series at a particular time, not by who happens to be given access to it. This choice is offered to them by downloading's potential to break down the temporal and national boundaries of broadcasting.

WATCHING NON-TELEVISED TV: DOWNLOADING AUDIENCES

Downloading television drama content from the internet is clearly not the same as watching it through a broadcast stream or flow. Although

downloading involves identical *content* to that found through broadcasting, that content is placed on a different technological platform, forming a different temporal relationship between viewer and text. Content does not stop being 'television'; viewers clearly identified downloaded television content as analogous to the content produced and broadcast by the television industry, but the way in which audiences' access it does change. It is instead the technology of *broadcast* television that is challenged, in particular in terms of liveness and immediacy. Downloading presents a further, but complex, challenge to the application of previously held theories of television as a medium within an increasingly transmedia environment. 'Television' in this case is not identified by the technology (a television set and aerial for example) but by the content and industrial structures behind that content.

It was the greater level of control over what content is accessed and when it is accessed that was seen in this audience research as offering the greatest appeal of television downloading. Whereas there were some fears over downloading replacing broadcasting completely, in general downloading services, with permanently available content, were welcomed for overcoming occasions when traditional broadcast structures fail to accommodate the potentially unexpected and disruptive nature of daily life and the sometimes disruptive treatment of programmes by broadcasters. The dominant appeal of downloading is directly related to what makes downloading different from older technologies. It can offer an individual control over their viewing experience that television broadcasting cannot. This added agency, however, had a further impact on how research participants perceived themselves as 'an audience'. Some felt that downloading shattered any sense of community surrounding television whilst other felt it reinforced it, allowing them to form audience networks of their own choosing.

How then can these two positions be reconciled? From the sample size in this research it is not possible to say with any kind of certainty which factors determine whether or not downloading is seen as enhancing or challenging a sense of audience unity. A number of factors could explain this split. It would be possible to consider whether or not an individual identifies themselves as a fan and engages in fan activities such as online communitie as a reason for viewing downloading as an audience enhancing technology, as with Olivia. Equally, it could be possible to consider that downloading is particularly appealing and unifying to diasporic communities, viewers such as Brian, who desire access to their home broadcast content. However, in each case there were participants who expressed similar views but did not fit any of these criteria. The final area that could be considered as a factor is whether the viewer accessed downloaded material through a legal or illegal source. In the case of both Olivia and Brian, their needs as a fan or immigrant would not be served in Britain through legal services, and they would only get what they desired from downloading by using illegal file-sharing networks. However, other participants who saw downloading

as potentially cementing their sense of being part of an audience, such as Harry and Claire, would be served by legal sources such as iPlayer, 4OD or iTunes.

Downloading can ultimately be seen as having *both* a fracturing and a unifying potential in terms of its role in an individual's perception of being a part of 'an audience'. For some it is seen as dividing the audience into disparate individuals; for others it helps them form new kinds of audiences, ones that are not defined by national broadcasting structures or whoever happened to be home and sitting in front of a particular channel at a particular time. Whereas it would be easy to view downloading as having the destructive ability that writers such as Sean Cubitt and Ann Gray see the VCR as having, the fact that downloading can offer access to a greater range of content, including content from global sources, it must be seen as having the possibility to also expand and reinforce an audience group. In particular, it is in the way in which the nature of the audience shifts towards Catstell's model of the network that indicates the break from traditional modes of reception. It is individual audience members that facilitate the creation of an audience group defined by shared interests, not wider social and cultural structures defining the audience by national boundaries.

Downloading is distinct from the previously discussed case studies in predominantly impacting on the reception of television drama as a whole rather than the individual relationship between a viewer and a particular text. However, as with the earlier text-specific chapters' discussions on transmedia storytelling in *Spooks* and *24: Conspiracy*, participants in my research clearly judged moments of transmedia engagement in relation to older media forms, in this case both the television and the VCR. There is some evidence of a split between those who were actively taking part in downloading through illegal services and those who were not downloading because of its illegality at the time of the research. The former group, including John, Keith, Olivia and Peter, all viewed downloading as an alternative to broadcast structures with all bar Olivia having abandoned broadcasting completely in favour of downloading. The latter group, for example Harry, Bronwyn and Ruth, primarily viewed downloading as an alternative to the VCR. For these participants, broadcasting itself was not challenged but their potential methods of engaging with and adapting it were. With both groups however, and in contrast to the reactions to the *Spooks* games and mobile television, this judgement proves favourable towards the new technology. Despite the conflict in terms of downloading's effect on their sense of 'audience', it was greeted by almost every participant with enthusiasm, making it clear that when a new media technology offers the possibility of being a reliable alternative when broadcasting fails viewers will gladly turn to it.

Conclusion

The emergence of modern transmedia practices, and in particular transmedia storytelling and distribution/engagement, during the early years of the twenty-first century has worked to remove the television set from its place as the only domestic point of access to audio-visual entertainment. Increasingly, television programmes are only a part of the experience of engaging with dramatic fictional worlds; more and more drama 'texts' are becoming multi-platform experiences, offering the viewer a variety of forms of engagement within the same coherent narrative world. However, it is not only the kind of content available to the audience that is changing; it is also the industry and the way that they are able to access television content that are changing. Even earlier technological developments that had significant ramifications on how the audience could watch such content did not offer such an extreme challenge to the cultural position of the set. The remote control and video cassette recorder (and its evolutionary successors the DVD and personal video recorder) maintained not only the central status of the television set but also the status of its accompanying apparatus, broadcasting. They were additions to the television set, altering the audience's relationship to it but maintaining its cultural importance; you could watch a pre-recorded video or DVD, or record content yourself but you were still bound to the set itself. Now, viewers do not even need to turn their television set on in order to access 'television'; they can instead turn to their computer or their mobile phone.

I began this book by considering the way that television has been conceptualised within academic research as predominantly either a form of technology or a kind of text. The development of transmedia content and viewing modes, however, demonstrates the need to re-evaluate this distinction, or perhaps redefine it, and in turn directs us towards interrogating other assumptions and associations that are made in relation to 'television'. In examining texts that are produced on multiple platforms but that are integrated to create a coherent fictional world, the relationship between content and technology, the creation of a 'platform', becomes central. A transmedia text is defined by both the text and the technology on which it is accessed, with both helping to shape each other and the experience of the

viewer. However, it is also necessary to consider the full impact of transmediality on audience engagement with transmedia dramatic content, something that has yet to be fully recognised. In looking at the audience research in the previous three chapters it becomes apparent that audiences' transmedia experience is not a uniform or stable one. Some elements of transmedia drama are more welcomed than others. In terms of drama specifically, elements are valued that would not necessarily be valued if this book was focused on news or sports programming. In examining the conclusions of each chapter, it becomes possible to consider what the development of transmedia drama, and audience members' reactions to this development, can tell us about what 'television' and 'television drama' means for this particular group of viewers in this constantly shifting media landscape.

IT'S ALL ABOUT TELEVISION

The fact that the television industry seems intent on finding alternatives to the television set raises the question of what, precisely, is wrong with 'television'? Is the term no longer useful for understanding how audiences are engaging with audio-visual entertainment? In the Introduction I explored the distinction between Jostein Gripsrud's firm, technology-focused definition of television (1998) and Noël Carroll's anti-mediumistic, content-focused one (2003). What becomes evident from the emergence of transmediality and discussions in focus groups is that a combination of the two approaches is needed. Some aspects of Gripsrud's model, primarily the domestic association of television (and in this case drama specifically), hold sway as the internet and mobile phone become platforms for televisual content. Others, however, are threatened, in particular the importance of broadcast technology and the television flow, by the emergence of transmedia engagement. Similarly, aspects of Carroll's argument, that the technological characteristics of television as a medium are historical, prove useful for understanding televisual content appearing on multiple formats. Other aspects—for example, how his approach would collapse the distinctions between computer games and television episodes—are less helpful for understanding the multiple forms of engagement available via transmedia storytelling.

Max Dawson has indicated a need to look for a re-definition of 'television' in his work on the emergence of small screens as televisual platforms: 'Television today more accurately refers to an ensemble of *site-unspecific* screens that interact with one another as viewers *and* forms traffic between them' (2007: 245, original emphasis). For Dawson, television is now not one screen but an amalgamation of many, with viewers and content travelling between them all. This kind of movement is inherent to transmedia practices; viewers travel across a range of technological platforms and media forms. Despite this, however, the 'meaning' of television develops certain

identifying characteristics that help audiences navigate moments of change. As a medium it can be identified as involving content that is created by an author (in this case the various institutions and personnel of the television industry who, even though alternative distributors may emerge, remain the dominant producers of content) placed onto a distribution technology and delivered to an audience. For participants in this research, 'television drama' is approximately defined by its ability to offer them an immersive experience with a fully realised narrative world involving external characters on a reliable and regular basis over a period of time that may then bring them together within a viewing community. However, what the individual components of content, author, technology and audience involve and in what combination may vary not only from national, institutional, or textual context but in the personal contexts of individual audience members. Even in the late 1990s, when recording devices and digital multi-channel technology was radicalising the television landscape, the concept of television as a medium retained a level of stability. It involved a certain group of companies creating a certain kind of content and delivering that content via a television set and broadcasting apparatus to their audience. Now, none of those things are stable. 'Interactive' gaming texts may become part of the television experience, possibly through the television set itself. The computer or mobile phone can be transformed into 'television' or stand as technologies in their own right, depending on how the user engages with them. As a result the 'medium' of television has become complex and multiple and indeed may continue to shift alongside technological developments for many years to come.

However, I do not wish to argue that television as it has traditionally been understood (a broadcast feed sent from a central institution via an aerial, satellite dish or cable to a television set in a living room) is dead. There were clear indications within the focus groups for this research that this meaning of television is both persistent and desired. As Ashley Highfield, the former Director of Future Media and Technology at the BBC, has said,

> BBC iPlayer will never be a replacement for the BBC's traditional channels. It is a complementary service that we expect will help keep BBC One, Two, Three and Four and their entire range of programming in front of an audience who may have less time or inclination to watch programmes live, or remember to record them, and who want to take them on the train, on their smart-phone, or even to bed with them on their lap top. (2007: online)

In addition, the ways in which research participants discussed emergent transmedia practices indicates not only the way in which new technologies become integrated into daily life, but also the value of 'traditional' understandings of media technologies to that integration. Milly Buonanno observes that the development of mass media over the twentieth century

offers a clear indication that different media technologies do not fight with each other:

> The fact that all four modern forms of mass communication [the press, cinema, radio, television] are present and well established in the world of today, alongside more traditional forms of communication (as well as the newest arrivals, the computer and the Internet) clearly demonstrates that these different forms are not substitutes for, but additions to, each other: they co-exist. (2008: 12)

As the participants in this research show, the development of the internet and mobile phone as televisual platforms does not make television redundant. Instead, they are integrated into a complex and shifting media landscape that includes both television and earlier media forms.

The key observation to be made about the attitudes of my research group towards transmedia drama is that technologies and platforms are not approached independently from each other but instead within a context of expectations and values created from experience with other media forms. Just as theorists such as Martin McLuhan, Carolyn Marvin (1990), Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin (2000), Anna Everett (2003) and Lisa Gitelman (2006) have argued that new media emerge from the context of old, the same approach can be seen to apply to audiences. The viewers in this research considered any new content platform in terms of that which they already knew. They judged them in relation to established forms of engagement, aware of their differing technological capabilities but maintaining awareness (and potential privileging) of what they were used to. This is especially the case with transmedia texts where the relationship between different technologies becomes much closer. The multiple platforms within a transmedia text are positioned in relation to each other and viewers' attitudes combine expectations of each technology. These expectations may support each other or they may compete with each other. In this particular case it is the television texts of *Spooks* and *24* that remain the central points of comparison. The transmedia elements of *Spooks* and *24* are created from a central televisual point and the audience evaluates new media elements in relation to that point. In this respect Jenkins's vision of a converged world, in which elements of transmedia texts have equal status (2006), does not currently exist; 'television', in these examples, remained the most significant element for this audience group. However, in exploring these 'remediated expectations' it becomes possible to observe how the meaning of television for these audience members is becoming increasingly complex.

What this research indicates is the specific value of television for these audience members. When asked about transmedia gaming in relation to a television programme, the games were held in comparison with a clear concept of television drama as an immersive, potentially cathartic experience within an external fictional world over a number of

weeks. When asked about 'mobile television' or 'downloading television' participants knew what kind of service they were being asked about, despite their newness; they took their understandings of 'television' and applied it to what they knew about the internet or mobile phone. In addition, downloading involves content that was originally created for, and broadcast via, television, further emphasising its central position. This understanding of television drama even applied to discussions concerning the *Spooks* games, and whereas I do not wish to suggest that these games should be identified as 'television', because that would unhelpfully reduce the many differences between them and television episodes, their close relationship to television as part of the transmedia text of *Spooks* should not be ignored either. During the focus groups, attitudes to the *Spooks* games were the result of expectations of both the interactive capabilities of gaming technology *and* television drama content. Television remains the principle point of comparison, but in some instances it is privileged over newer technologies whereas in others it is not. Hierarchies of value are created: gaming is better for provide the viewer with agency but lacks the immersion of television episodes, the television set is 'better' than mobile television, but broadcasting is 'worse' than downloading.

Everett M. Rogers argues that '[i]nnovations that are perceived by individuals as having greater relative advantage, compatibility, trialability, and observability and less complexity will be adopted more rapidly that other innovations' (2003: 16). What becomes clear from examining the attitudes, opinions and values of the participants in this research is that the first two of these characteristics are particularly important for understanding the emergence of transmedia practices and their integration into daily life. Rogers describes 'relative advantage' as 'the degree to which an innovation is perceived as better than the idea it supersedes' (15). This is apparent throughout the discussions in Part II of this book. Gaming is held up as having the advantage of allowing greater control over development of a storyworld; mobile television's limited advantage is seen in allowing access to time-sensitive television broadcasting when away from a television set; downloading was seen as having the greater relative advantage in offering viewers the ability to watch whatever content they wanted whenever they wanted to. At the same time, however, 'compatibility' also figured throughout these discussions. Rogers defines this as 'the degree to which an innovation is perceived as being consistent with the existing values, past experiences, and needs of potential adopters' (15). Throughout discussions, audiences applied a particular understanding of 'television drama' to their engagement with new media platforms in a transmedia drama text, with the concept of an immersive experience remaining key. Participants wanted gaming texts to retain the immersion of a television programme and especially fictional characters. Mobile television was rejected for being too different, in terms of screen size and viewing context, from television.

Downloading was welcomed for facilitating greater reliability and control over access to that content.

The combined importance, of both 'relative advantage' and 'compatibility', to the successful integration of transmedia practices into daily life demonstrates the simultaneously stable and fluid nature of television as a medium. Three key forms of engagement emerge as central to the way in which audience navigate the development of transmedia texts: immersion, agency and immediacy. These three, in various combinations relate directly to their expectations of both the technologies involved (in the case of mobile television generally and downloading) and the content produced for those technologies (in the case of gaming and mobile television drama) and manifest in the extent to which they are willing to make transmedia gaming, mobile television and downloading a part of their daily engagement with television. What the audience research in Part II of this book indicates is that throughout the rapid changes discussed in Part I, audiences retain an understanding of 'television' that serves as a key marker of evaluation as new services, content and media technologies emerge. If the new services can offer an improvement on what is seen as lacking in television broadcasting they are embraced; if they do not, they are not.

However, there is no longer any automatic connection between content, technology and how the medium of 'television' can be defined. The platforms of downloading and mobile television involve different technologies (the internet and a computer or the 3G network and a mobile phone) and, with downloading, may or may not be involve an 'official' television distributer. In these cases, it is the content that unites them as 'television'; each involves episodic, audio-visual drama that invites the audience to become immersed in a fictional world. The *Spooks* games offer an even more complex position. In the case of the digital television games the technology of television (a set, aerial, remote control and even broadcasting) remains, and there are certain televisual elements to the content (it is audio-visual and creates and shares generic and narrative properties with the television episodes), but a very different form of engagement is on offer. The online games involve neither the traditional technology nor the traditional content format of television but were still understood and evaluated by research participants within televisual terms. Processes of transmediality, whether it be transmedia storytelling or transmedia distribution/engagement, require the removal of any assumed inherent link between technology and text and a greater understanding of how one technology may be transformed into a platform for the content of another. Whereas 'television' once automatically meant engaging with broadcast structures via a television set, even when manipulating those structures with recording equipment, that is no longer the case. Audiences may continue to watch 'television', but they are not necessarily accessing that television through broadcasting or using a box connected to an aerial, satellite or cable. As a consequence, the definition of 'television' becomes multiple; technology may be the key factor in its definition, or content may be, or it may be an

uneven combination of the two. The notion of 'television' as *both* text and technology that has lost its significance within audience research and television studies must be acknowledged and re-established. Assumptions about what 'television' means, particularly in relation to the kind of technology it appears on, can no longer be taken for granted.

MAKING CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE INCONSTANT AUDIENCE

At this point there must be a word of caution. Each of the components that make up 'television' are undergoing rapid, unpredictable change and expansion. Every week new services appear and new appropriations of television technology are touted as the next revolutionary step in audio-visual entertainment. Transmedia narratives such as *Lost* (ABC, 2004–2010) and *Heroes* (NBC, 2006–2010) offered greater integration than the emergent examples examined here. Two of the case studies discussed in this book, *Spooks* and *Doctor Who*, produced more integrated transmedia components after the research was conducted. The BBC and ITV are now incorporating social networking sites directly in their programming, with text messages appearing onscreen during FIFA World Cup 2010 matches, and iPlayer allowing viewers to link their viewing preferences to Facebook and Twitter accounts. Mobile phone handset manufacturers are beginning to work on sending broadcast television signals live via the 3G network. Television manufacturers, broadcasters and video game companies are experimenting with 3D. Television sets are now connecting directly to the internet. The issue is not to predict where these developments will take the provision of television and transmedia entertainment but to acknowledge not only that that future is unknowable, but also the implications it has on understanding the present. The speed at which industry and audience practices are changing makes it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to present a definitive account of what 'television' means. Research on contemporary television texts, industry and audiences is becoming historical as soon as it is written, but it is precisely this fact that makes research into the nature of television and audience engagement with it so valuable.

But the constantly shifting media landscape is not the only issue involved in the study of contemporary television audiences and transmediality. The research discussed in Part II was conducted at a particular moment in time between September 2005 and February 2007. It is, as discussed in Chapter 3, specific to a particular moment in television and new media history. Gaming connected to television content may take on increasingly more characteristics of that television content and move towards more interactive forms of storytelling. It may, however, become simply a quirky, interesting attachment to more traditional content. In a few years mobile television may be obsolete or it may have become as central to the functions of the

mobile phone as text messages are today. Similarly, downloading (and connected 'on demand' services) may have radicalised how and when we watch television, or it may remain a useful but not widely used alternative for the technologically minded. It is also specific to a particular moment in the personal histories of each participant. Since the research was completed, it is highly possible that they gained access to technological forms they had not previously had access to or that their attitudes towards such technology may have changed. These changes may also be reflected on a more general level. As more people learn of a new technology and learn how to use it, prevalent attitudes may change. As the younger participants get older, for example, they may continue their interest in new media technologies, as may audience members younger than them. Will it be the case that in ten years the generational divide has aged by a decade or will a new generational divide have formed?[85] In terms more applicable to this research, in ten years the kinds of texts that are currently emergent may have become considerably more widespread and accepted and any kind of generational divide that appears in early adopters may have shrunk or vanished.

As a result this research has become instantly historical, serving as a snapshot of audience attitudes, opinions and values towards transmedia drama during a seventeen-month period between late 2005 and early 2007. There is a need to continue to ask questions about the impact of transmedia texts on audience engagement with television drama (along with other televisual and cinematic genres). There is a need to track how the meaning of 'television' continues to change and whether issues such as perceptions of immersion, passivity, immediacy and currency, highlighted by the three specific cases of transmediality in this book, also change over future years as technologies are developed further. The point is that it is impossible, at the current time, to know how the media landscape or how the relationship between audience, technology and content will change over the coming years. It is crucial to map the emergence of these technologies, and the values, attitudes and opinions of those who initially engage with them, to consider the impact they are having on engagement with television, and television drama specifically in this case. It is also important to use such early mapping as a reference point in the future. When any (or none) of the preceding scenarios occur it will be possible to see how they have come about, to see a snapshot of what the television drama audience thought about television at this particular moment in time. It is perhaps fitting to end an empirical analysis of television audiences as I began it, with the words of that audience, and the following conversation neatly sums up the purpose and need for this kind of research:

Louise: Yeah, you know, it goes back to what I'm used to and maybe times change and in ten, twenty years time—

Martin: We won't believe we even had this conversation.

(Louise, 26 years old, administrator; Martin, 18 years old, student, focus group 3)

Notes

1. See Bennett (2006, 2008a, 2008b) for a rare consideration of digital technology within the UK television industry.
2. See, for example, James Bennett's work on BBC coverage of the D-Day landings (2007).
3. It was subsequently made available to US audiences on the Season 4 DVD boxset.
4. The textual characteristics of the two series will be discussed in more detail in Chapters 4 and 5.
5. Episode numbers will treat the 2005 season as Season 1 which is actually the twenty-seventh season to be broadcast. This follows the pattern on the DVDs.
6. Fake websites were also created for the series *Lost* featuring companies that appeared in the programme and containing clues and hints to its central mysteries, for example, http://www.oceanic-air.com/ [accessed 18 June 2006].
7. Alternate reality games are games that present themselves as reality, usually involving a puzzle that the player must solve by finding clues in a series of fake websites posted on the 'real' space of the internet. These sites often mimic the style of real websites and have no indication on them that they are not legitimate.
8. 'Attack of the Graske' is also available at www.bbc.co.uk/doctorwho/games/graske/geoip/host.shtml.
9. 'Flash' refers to the software, Macromedia Flash, used to create and run these games. Generally they consist of a single screen and animation that the user controls with their computer mouse or keyboard. Although other software is also capable of creating and running similar games, Flash has become the colloquial way of distinguishing them from disc-based console and PC games or Massively Multiplayer Online Games.
10. After the end of the season the games (but not the videos) were made available on the BBC's official *Doctor Who* site, www.bbc.co.uk/doctorwho.
11. The BBC also broadcast commentaries for each episode of the second and third seasons. These commentaries closely resembled the commentaries traditionally found on DVDs. Since these commentaries provide details on how the programme was made as opposed to offering further engagement with its fictional world, they do not fit within this model of 'transmedia drama'.
12. Chapter 5 of this volume will explore some of the problems of audience engagement with mobile television in more detail.
13. Some elements are also available on more than one platform. In the interest of fulfilling the BBC's public service remit of being available to as many

people as possible, the interactive episode and mobile Tardisodes are also available online.

14. The most notable of which are the final two episodes of *Doctor Who* Season 4, 'The Stolen Earth' and 'Journey's End', where characters from both *Torchwood* and *The Sarah Jane Adventures* help the Doctor defeat Dalek-creator Davros.
15. The BBC America website for *Torchwood* featured a 'Captain's Blog' which provided additional narrative information for each episode written 'in character' by Captain Jack Harkness. For the second season, the BBC also developed a small-scale ARG game available at http://www.bbc.co.uk/torchwood/pastseries/ which has continued to be popular long after new episodes ceased airing (interview with Victoria Jaye). The *Sarah Jane Adventures* website features games, comics and 'The Attic', a chance to virtually explore Sarah Jane's home.
16. The start of the fifth season saw a new branding design to go along with the Eleventh Doctor (Matt Smith). The presence of the BBC logo remained the same.
17. When the BBC announced a new set of online *Doctor Who* games, referred to as 'interactive episodes', in April 2010, there was a much stronger sense of individual continuity in personnel. They shared the series' executive producer (Steven Moffat), were written by Phil Ford and James Moran, both of whom had previously written for *Doctor Who* or its spin-off *Torchwood*, and featured voiceovers from the actors playing the Doctor (Matt Smith) and his companion, Amy Pond (Karen Gillen) in the accompanying television series. This personnel continuity enhanced the institutional and series branding that was equally uniform across both the television episodes and the games (see BBC, 2010: online).
18. A similar comment was made by Andy Duncan with regards to Channel 4:

    > The success of 2005 has demonstrated the soundness of our basic strategy: sustain the quality and values of the core Channel 4 service; extend them to a broader family of digital channels; extend them again into the new media world. (Channel 4, 2006: 4)

19. Channel 4 have made similar statements. Chief Executive Andy Duncan wrote in the Channel's Annual Report 2005 that the emergence of the internet as a key engagement site was 'a wake up call to find new ways of expressing the values to which good public service broadcasting has always aspired' (Channel 4, 2006: 4). Commercial broadcasters ITV, Five and Sky have made no public statements concerning new media technologies but have developed a number of new services on them (see Chapter 2 of this volume).
20. For discussions of user-generated content, see Burgess and Green (2009) and Snickars and Vonereau (2009). For discussions on original web dramas, see Dovey (2011) and Evans (2011).
21. BitTorrent are now operating as a legitimate downloading source available to US internet users (www.bittorent.com). Kazaa still functions as a peer-to-peer downloading source and is ostensibly a file-sharing network for user-authored content and not legitimate downloading software. The capacity for sharing copyrighted material, however, still exists.
22. 4OD also makes some archival content available, though this is limited.
23. Whereas viewers can fastforward or rewind adverts whilst watching on a PVR, these adverts cannot be skipped, counteracting a key problem for the industry with PVRs.
24. The BBC also makes some content available live, via streaming, on their website. As of August 2010, this content was limited to news and sport.
25. BBC Worldwide, ITV and Channel 4 (along with Arqiva, BT and TalkTalk) have since begun working on Project Canvas, a collaborative set-top box video on demand service, which gained approval from the BBC Trust in June

2010 but is also facing complaints from broadcasters who are not involved, most notable Virgin Media.

26. Both HMV and Amazon sell music downloads via their websites. The US Amazon website has begun selling films and television episodes but, as of July 2010, the UK site has not.
27. A number of handsets including the Wave and Motorola Rizr came pre-packaged with Hollywood films on memory cards.
28. iTunes allows viewers to purchase whole seasons for less money than the sum of each episode. However, even when this is done, the episodes are separate files and so remain discrete.
29. This characteristic is shared by video on demand services.
30. See McDonald (2007: 178–211) for a detailed discussion of anti-piracy legislation.
31. See Mertha (2007) for an examination of intellectual property policy in China.
32. This is the process of encrypting audio and audio-visual content to prevent viewers from copying it.
33. This ambiguity also impacts strongly on reception practices. It is distinctly possible for viewers to unknowingly use a service that is not approved by the traditional television industry and that may or may not be legal. As a consequence, the agency of choice offered to viewers, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6, is tempered by a need to consider issues of authority and legitimacy.
34. Mobile television launched in November 2005, shortly after focus group 1. Legal downloading services did not start in the UK until Sky launched a limited service in January 2006 with the first terrestrial broadcaster's service, Channel 4's 4OD launching in November 2006.
35. The majority of websites focused on *Spooks* are Yahoo email groups. The project was advertised on: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/the_grid/, http://tv.groups.yahoo.com/group/MI-5/, http://tv.groups.yahoo.com/group/Spooks_PrivateTouch/ and http://tv.groups.yahoo.com/group/Spooks_RPG/. It was also advertised on http://spooks.johnsto.co.uk/forums/index.php, the only non-Yahoo based *Spooks* site. The official BBC drama message board closed in February 2005, before this project began, and so it was impossible to advertise the *Spooks* project through an official website.
36. The *24* project was advertised on the forums on www.fox.com/24 and www.skyone.co.uk, the official US and UK sites for the programme. It was also advertised on the most popular fan sites in both the US and the UK: www.24fans.com, www.24natic.co.uk, www.24fanatics.com and 'Inside *24*' (website no longer operational).
37. A total of 118 participants completed the initial questionnaire. Of this 118, 52 took part in a diary project (28 for the *Spooks* project, 24 for the *24* project). Thirteen participants completed a questionnaire, diary and attended a focus group. Since some participants became aware of the project after the diary stage but still took part in the focus group, they were given a questionnaire to complete before the group began. Therefore all 38 focus group and interview participants also completed a questionnaire.
38. It must be noted that the focus groups and interviews by far provided the most evidence that is used in the following chapters with the questionnaires and diaries ultimately serving as supporting or qualifying evidence for the issues raised in later stages of the research.
39. One participant, Kate, was 42.
40. See, for example, Ito et al (2009), Ito (2009), Livingstone (2002, 2009).

41. *The One Show* website was decommissioned in 2010 as the BBC reduced the number of programmes with additional, web-based content.
42. Beth, Charles and Harry in fact took part in the same two focus groups, groups 1 and 5.
43. There is of course the issue of the evidence provided by the three participants who took part in two focus groups. If they expressed different opinions in each group, which opinion should provide evidence for any conclusions? In the case of the evidence provided by Harry, Beth and Charles, I have predominantly used quotes from the second group they attended, focus group 5, as the most recent evidence available. The only exceptions to this are where specific issues (such as the *Spooks* games) were not discussed in that group. Where this has been done, however, a note will be made if the opinion quoted differs from that expressed in the first group.
44. Part of this chapter has previously been published as 'Character, Audience Agency and Transmedia Drama' in *Media, Culture and Society* 30(2), March 2008, SAGE Publications Ltd, All rights reserved. ©2008.
45. Shortly before the first series aired on BBC One, in May 2002, an interactive episode was launched on a website created for the series. Players acted as 'new recruits' and helped Danny Hunter (David Oyelowo) investigate a radical group that his brother, who never appears in the series, had become involved in. Timed to coincide with the episodes aired during the first season, the game closed in June 2002 and has not been made available since. Subsequently it was not discussed in the focus groups and will not be a focus of the following analysis. The website games described in this chapter are still available at www.bbc.co.uk/drama/spooks/games.
46. If the steps are performed incorrectly then it is impossible for the player to continue and they must start again. A walkthrough of *Hapland 1* showing the complexity of the game can be found at http://www.pcwize.com/hapland_walkthrough/.
47. PC and console games are a common extension of film releases. Again this can be seen as relating to the temporalities involved. Films take a longer time to produce (with blockbuster production schedules being comparable to game development) and so the release of a film and a game can be coordinated.
48. The *Spy Academy* games are available at http://www.bbc.co.uk/drama/spooks/games/ [accessed 15 August 2010]. In late 2005 the *Mission* game was also made available via the programme's website and functioned as a test for transmitting high bandwidth content over a broadband connection. It could subsequently be accessed by non-digital viewers who had a high speed internet connection. It is now available at http://www.bbc.co.uk/spooks/interactive.shtml [accessed 15 August 2010]. Both the *Training* and *Mission* games also ran via BBCi after the broadcast of season four in the autumn of 2005.
49. Reality television is of course an exception to this by inviting the audience to have input on the content of the programme. In drama, however, it is extremely rare, the only examples in recent years being a cross-over episode of *Casualty* and *Holby City* (both tx. 26/08/06, BBC One) where the audience could choose the recipient of a donor heart and episodes of *Family Affairs* (tx. 24/05/04, Five) and *Two Pints of Lager and a Packet of Crisps* (tx 10/05/2009, BBC Two) where the audience chose the outcome of love triangles.
50. *Spooks* has seen a number of cast changes. For purposes of this analysis, I will focus on the cast in Seasons 2 and 3, which coincided with the games under discussion.
51. Within the more general focus groups a different ice-breaker question was used, 'What is your favourite television programme and why?', since it was

not the case that every participant was familiar with a single programme example.

52. In most first-person games a character is named in the 'paratextual' (Genette, 1997; Grey, 2010) material of the game such as manuals and appears in cut scenes.
53. She is referring here to two romantic relationships that Tom Quinn has during the programme's second series, which contribute to his breakdown and exit at the beginning of series three, a narrative development she disliked. Debbie (focus group 1) expressed a similar opinion.
54. *24: Conspiracy* will be considered more closely in the next chapter, although the particular reference to the importance of characters is also applicable here.
55. As discussed in Chapter 3 of this volume, and unlike his comments in the following two chapters, Charles's comments here are from the first focus group since the *Spooks* games were not discussed in the second group he attended.
56. See previous footnote with regards to Harry's quotes being from the first focus group he attended.
57. However, once all the games had been made available it became possible to turn this off and have access to all the games at once, and consequently play them out of order, by playing in 'Quick' mode.
58. Neil's phrase 'now see if you can do it' suggests a possible complication of the earlier discussion concerning participants' desire to play as the characters and not as themselves. Neil took part in a different focus group to those participants quoted in this earlier discussion, and this issue was not explicitly discussed in the group he did attend. However, despite this, his comment still reinforces the overall desire expressed in focus groups for a greater connection between the games and the television series, with the focus here simply being on narrative events rather than fictional characters. The same opinion was expressed by Adam, Debbie, Charles, Faye and Eleanor in focus group 1.
59. From the third season onwards (2004) *24* was broadcast on satellite channel Sky One.
60. This is the most common format for non-gaming transmedia mobile content and includes *Lost: Missing Pieces* and *Prison Break: Proof of Innocence*.
61. For a brief time Vodafone also streamed a *24* channel, which showed the television episodes condensed into two to three minutes. These 'minisodes' echo a number of US sites that offer similar highlight clips of a number of shows (see Dawson, 2007b). These minisodes do not fall into the model of transmedia storytelling discussed in Chapter 1 since, whereas they are 'authored' by Fox, they merely replicate the narrative of the television episodes and are not released in time with the core episodes.
62. As per the discussion in Chapter 3, Beth's comments are from the second focus group she attended, which focused on *24* rather than *Spooks*.
63. The series is not a full twenty-four minutes long since each episode (minus credits and a short preview of the next episode) is approximately forty-two seconds, not a full minute.
64. Although some episodes do follow that format—for example, 'Minute Two', 'Minute Three' and 'Minute Four' cover the same conversation between James Sutton and Martin Kail—the majority of episodes do not.
65. Some filmmakers in fact embrace the low resolution, small screen of the mobile phone. Artists such as Daniel Florêncio (http://www.danielflorencio.com/Home.html), who produces work for the Current TV channel, and Romain Forquy (http://www.photocabin.co.uk/) utilise the specific technological 'limitations' of the mobile phone as a camera. Florêncio, for example, uses camera phones to acquire footage he would not be able to get with a

more traditional camera. Forquy meanwhile expresses a frustration at more recent phones that have improved resolutions and therefore more closely imitate the conventional camera.

66. The 'minisodes' shown on the Fox *24* channel did retain split screens moments but such moments were extremely hard to see and interpret.
67. Imogen (focus group 2), Hilary (focus group 9), Andrew (interview), John (interview) and Keith (interview) all expressed similar opinions regarding screen size.
68. This is something that has become possible in 2007 with the Nokia N series. The ability to attach the handset to a television and view photos or videos shot on it provides a key part of the company's marketing for the series (see http://www.nseries.com/index.html#l=products,n93i,demo).
69. Kate took part in the *Spooks* project and so was not asked during the weekly diaries as the service only became available between the diaries ending and the focus groups beginning. Louise was the only other participants in the focus groups to have watched mobile television, but she did so only at home and very rarely.
70. Adam (focus group 1), Charles (focus group 1), Martin (focus group 3).
71. It is worth noting that all three of these participants were female, and a sense of unease at watching television in a public space, such as a train, was less of a concern for male participants in the research, who were more focused on the physical discomfort of such spaces than the presence of strangers. Although the size of the research group precludes making a firm argument concerning gender on this point, it does serve as a potential indication for further research.
72. Neither the *Spooks* mobile game nor the *24* mobile game had actually been played by any focus group participant. The *Spooks* game suffered from technical difficulties that made it extremely hard to play and very expensive, whereas the *24* game had little promotion, being overshadowed by the Playstation 2 game that launched at the same time, and none of the research participants knew it existed.
73. Charles and Beth, in the same focus group, expressed a similar opinion.
74. Although it falls outside of the focus of this research, there is also the increased use of mobile phones to provide content for broadcast television. For example, mobile phones were used to capture pictures and video during the 7 July 2005 terrorist attacks on London. The BBC requested such content and then broadcast it both on their news website and televised news reports. The mobile phone is therefore truly allowing the television broadcaster to be anywhere someone with a video capable phone is.
75. The subsequent development (and popularity) of downloading suggests that these were a particular characteristic of when this research was conducted. Since 2007, not only have services become legal, but broadcasters have also heavily promoted their online services and sought to make them more user-friendly.
76. Streaming content may offer greater opportunities for 'live' broadcast, for example, during major news events such as the 11 September 2001 or 7 July 2005 attacks, or sporting events such as the 2010 FIFA World Cup.
77. The fact that downloaded content disappears from Catch Up services after a set period of time suggests that there is an attempt by broadcasters to retain the ephemerality of television broadcasting. In addition the catch up service also points towards television content's position as temporarily meaningful, its cultural currency, which will be discussed in more detail subsequently.
78. As per the discussion in Chapter 3 of this volume, Harry and Charles's quotes are from the second focus group they attended.

79. It should be noted that only one participant, John, had children. On the one hand, children may enforce a routine into daily life that would counter this argument; on the other hand, however, there is also the possibility that children could be an element of this disruption.
80. Sky do provide Sky+ customers with the ability to set their Sky+ box remotely via a text message from a mobile phone, allowing them to essentially have left the house and still be able to record a programme. However, this does not take into account several of the situations raised by Harry, for example, receiving a telephone call during a programme, or hearing about a programme after it has aired. In addition it still requires the viewer to be aware of the television schedule.
81. iTunes uses previous purchasing patterns to offer viewers a list of what other 'viewers also bought'. Timothy Todreas (1999) makes the argument that brands and stars will become particularly important within digital media and these too may prove to be part of downloading's organisational structure.
82. Hammocking refers to the scheduling practice of placing a new series between popular, established programmes. John Ellis refers to this practice as '"pre-echoes" and "echoes" (audiences brought in before and staying after top rating shows) (Ellis, 2000: 137).
83. The majority of diary participants in fact watched *Spooks* and *24* when broadcast (72%), although this may be explained by the emergent status of downloading at the time of the research and the lack of legal services. As discussed in Chapter 3, the study of emergent technologies requires a consideration of attitudes and opinions, rather than behaviour and use. Within the focus group, downloading was seen in an overwhelmingly positive light.
84. Olivia and Peter discussed the legal status of downloading in the Netherlands during the fourth focus group.
85. An OFCOM report published in August 2010 suggests that the generational divide may be closing, with over 50% of over-fifty-fives now using broadband internet (OFCOM, 2010).

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