

TECH

# Video Games' Role in Transmedia Focus

by John Gaudiosi



Crysis 2

The panel will include THQ's Danny Bilson, Starlight Runner's Jeff Gomez, "Walking Dead" producer Gale Anne Hurd, "Heroes" creator Tim Kring and "Ghost Whisperer" producer Kim Moses.

Launching a video game like THQ and Kaos Studios' *Homefront* or Electronic Arts and Crytek's *Crysis 2*, it's no longer enough just to have the game on retail shelves. Much like Hollywood, video games have become franchises that cross over a variety of media. *Homefront* and *Crysis 2* both have comic books and novels out and the game makers are exploring television and film extensions for these properties.

There are still games based on big movies like Electronic Arts and Behavior Interactive's *Rango: The Video Game* and game properties like Konami Digital Entertainment's *Silent Hill* being adapted to film like Lionsgate Entertainment's *Silent Hill 3D: Revelation*. But the creative process has shifted recently so that screenwriters and game developers are thinking about properties from Day 1 as transmedia entertainment experiences.

Key creatives and executives at the forefront of the burgeoning transmedia movement will convene at the 2011 NAB Show to participate in a panel session titled "Transmedia: Telling the Story Through Narrative Content, Games and Real-World Adventures." The 2011 NAB Show takes place April 9-14 in Las Vegas.

The expert panel features some of the industry's leading voices in transmedia, including **Danny Bilson**, executive vp, Core Games, THQ; **Jeff Gomez**, transmedia producer and CEO, Starlight Runner Entertainment; **Gale Anne Hurd**, producer (*The Walking Dead*, *The Terminator*, *Aliens*); **Tim Kring**, multiplatform storyteller (*Conspiracy for Good*, *Heroes*) and **Kim Moses**, executive producer/director/writer, Sander/Moses Prods./Slam (*Ghost Whisperer*). Jenkins will moderate the NAB Show Super Session, which takes place Monday, April 11, from 2:30-3:30 pm.

"Transmedia: Telling the Story Through Narrative Content, Games and Real-World Adventures" will explore how to create an immersive and expansive cross-platform entertainment experience. Citing examples from recent and upcoming feature films, TV, augmented reality games, video games and location-based projects, panelists will examine the necessary ingredients of a fertile transmedia property, the impact of video games and multiplayer participation on storytelling and the need for fresh creative skill sets and new forms of collaboration.

"Transmedia is not an original idea -- *Star Wars* is a brilliant example of a transmedia property -- but it's something that THQ has now instituted for our core games," Bilson said. "Transmedia is about telling a story across multiple media in a way that extends the story, rather than repeating any part of it. It's about opening new avenues of exploration for fans of the franchise."

At THQ, Bilson oversees production and marketing across the company's core gaming product portfolio. Under his guidance, THQ is embarking on several cross-platform ventures, including the recent release of the *Homefront* game and graphic novel, and a partnership with award-winning director **Guillermo del Toro** for the transmedia property *inSANE*. Before joining THQ, Bilson provided creative direction for some of the most successful video games in the history of the industry, including *The Sims* (as co-producer), *Medal of Honor*, James Bond and the Harry Potter franchises.

Jenkins, author of the award-winning book *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (2006) has written and edited more than a dozen books on media and popular culture. As one of the first media scholars to chart the changing role of the audience in an environment of increasingly pervasive digital content, Jenkins has been at the forefront of understanding the effects of participatory media on society, politics and culture.

Gomez is an expert at incubating new entertainment franchises for cross-platform implementation. As CEO of Starlight Runner Entertainment, he leverages intellectual properties into global franchises that successfully navigate an array of media channels. Gomez has worked on such blockbuster universes as Disney's *Pirates of the Caribbean*, Microsoft's *Halo* and James Cameron's *Avatar*. He sits on the board of the Producers Guild of America East, as well as on the PGA New Media Council.



and two Academy Awards, and the sequel, *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*.

Kring's *Heroes* set the bar for multiplatform storytelling, inspiring 76 million fans to tune in across platforms and earning the Primetime Emmy for Interactive Television in 2008. In 2010, Kring received the Pioneer Prize at the International Digital Emmy Awards in recognition of his industry-leading creativity in multi-screen storytelling. He recently launched *Conspiracy for Good*, a global movement that allows the audience to become part of the story to create positive real world change, and he will begin production on his latest TV pilot, *Touch*, for Fox and 20th Century Fox TV later this year.

Moses is co-founder of Sander/Moses Prods., where she produces/directs/writes TV series, TV movies, feature films and reality programming for the world's major entertainment outlets. Under her digital media shingle, Slam Internet, she has co-created the total engagement experience, a business and creative model in which a television show, feature film or brand is the key component of a comprehensive entertainment experience using internet, mobile, publishing, interactive DVDs, video games, music and more, establishing an infinity loop that creates press buzz, new revenue sources and increases ratings.

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