

Research on the Development of Transmedia Entertainment Ecosystem Based on Gaming IP

Shanshan Liu, Zexian Chen

School of Esports, Communication University of China, Nanjing 211172, China.

Abstract: After decades of development, games have occupied a place in the entertainment industry with their strong interactivity, immersion, personalization and sociality. Games are even regarded as an important area for the future development of the medium. Video game developers, Disney and Hollywood began to focus on games to add freshness to their original corporate IP. At the same time, the popularity of gaming IP has gradually increased. The major media also have great expectations for its film and TV adaptations. However, adapting interactive media to passive media to cater to the emotional dependence that players have formed is unstable for IP owners. Therefore, using transmedia to expand the development of games can quickly establish a cross-media ecosystem based on gaming IP in the entertainment industry.

Keywords: Gaming IP; Content Adaptation; Transmedia

Introduction

After decades of development, games have occupied a place in the entertainment industry with their powerful interactivity, immersion, personalization and sociality. Games are even seen as an important area for the future development of the medium. From the data point of view, the annual revenue has far exceeded that of music and movies. As people's interest in games increases, video game developers, Hollywood and Disney have begun to focus on games, using games to add freshness to their original corporate IP. At the same time, the popularity of the gaming IP has gradually increased. The major media also have great expectations for its film and TV adaptations. In 2019, "Detective Pikachu" broke the box office record for a video game movie. Well-known console maker PlayStation Productions also wants a piece of the nascent market. PlayStation is trying to build a Marvel-like studio to adapt related gaming IP^[1].

The increase in game streaming has expanded the ecosystem of gaming IP. However, game content adaptations have not always led to strong box office records, and even a string of failures have disappointed fans. However, with the rapid popularity of games, the adaptation of future gaming IP is still a powerful output channel for blockbusters. In addition, in the current critical period when the concept of metaverse was proposed and rapidly growing, the transmedia expansion of gaming IP will also create breakthroughs for the development of the entertainment industry. This article will discuss the development of gaming IP in the future media field from three aspects: the gamification refresh of original IP, the adaptation of game content, and the transmedia expansion of gaming IP.

1. Gamification refresh of the original IP

1.1 Use games to refresh corporate IP

The cultural influence of games has grown significantly over the past decade. Hollywood has also fundamentally rethought what gaming does to its IP. Popular IP must remain fresh if it increases in value, but time alone does not make IP more valuable. For example, Nintendo is instructive in maintaining freshness. Twenty years after the release of "Pokémon Red/Blue", Nintendo created an AR game based on augmented reality technology - "Pokémon Go". With the release of Pokémon Go, millions of consumers returned to the IP. Due to the overall expansion of the number of gamers, video games

are increasingly seen as a medium to build fans through storytelling. For example, Warner Bros' "Batman" game is more popular than Warner's other games. Likewise, many studios are now starting to use video games to promote their IP as an important promotional channel. For example, the studios behind Marvel, Star Wars, and American Comics are giving Fortnite their IP for free.

1.2 Once popular IPs are being replaced by games

Hollywood's core strategy for popular IP is a multi-generational appeal. For two decades, major Hollywood studios have focused on European stories from hundreds of years ago. The heroes and plots of these stories have declined over time in their appeal and acceptance to a new generation of audiences. Younger audiences are losing interest in the movie IPs their parents loved, such as Terminator, Independence Day and Men in Black. While Hollywood is still trying to give these titles a facelift, the effect of that effort has been largely ineffective due to the rise of a more globally appealing medium, gaming. So Hollywood is focusing on the new IP. Gaming IP will become a better choice.

1.3 Incubation of new gaming IP

Today's gaming industry is closest to the comics of the golden age, which created the characters and storylines that dominate the box office today. Comics is the richest source of intellectual property content today, producing a plethora of content and symbols, such as the heroes and villains of Marvel Comics. But only the characters who resonate most with audiences of them survive. Many character characteristics may be remixed or imitated during the creation process to create new characters. Therefore, in the film adaptation, Marvel Studios will test the popularity of the storylines in the comics through the audience and select the most suitable plots for transformation. Like comics, video games are creating a ton of content right now. In this process, new IPs will gradually appear and be accepted by modern young people.

2. Content adaptation of gaming IP

As games become mainstream in entertainment and more consumers spend their time in games, it becomes even more important to tell a compelling story in games. But telling a good story in a game is not easy. Movies, TV, and novels all have a clear thread. The audience only needs to follow the author's guidance from the beginning to the end to understand the whole picture of the story. But modern games are usually 15-200 hours in length. It is impossible to have only one main story for such a long period. Games often have multiple storylines and even many branch lines, making the whole story tree look complicated. If you want to adopt a game with a huge storyline, it is possible to delete most of the content. But this may lose some fans of the gaming IP, which will be the biggest challenge facing the adaptation of the gaming IP.

Even if game adaptation is a difficult thing, the huge number of fans of gaming IP is still very tempting for studios who want to make money from gaming IP adaptation. For studios with a large number of gaming IPs, it is particularly urgent to choose a correct guide for adaptation. Marvel movies of the glorious decades just prove this. The decision-makers for future gaming IP adaptations will be those who love video games and understand them deeply. Audiences will also gradually see more game adaptations. For example, Riot's Arcane animated series released in 2021 has achieved great success^[2]. The reason audiences can love this six-year-old animation work is the adaptation. The screenwriters, directors and artists of the gaming IP all grew up with the "League of Legends" game, and they have a deep understanding of the game's content. Successful game adaptations will also grow and gain audience recognition as the gaming industry expands^[3].

3. Transmedia expansion of gaming IP

The adaptation of game IP will indeed allow games to occupy more share in the entertainment industry, such as film and television. But adapting interactive media to passive media, trying to restore or expand the wonderful feeling created in video game characters and worlds, to cater to the emotional attachment players have formed is challenging. It may not bring quick revenue to the business or studio in a short period. But if you use a transmedia approach to expand the development of games, you can quickly establish a transmedia ecosystem based on game IP in the entertainment industry.

3.1 Transmedia Storytelling of Game Content

Transmedia storytelling is one of the most effective ways to expand the content of a game's story. Rather than telling the same story on different media platforms, transmedia storytelling separates the intricate story and provides various parts of the overall story based on how different media tell the story^[4]. For example, players can divide as many side stories as possible for interactive exploration in the game. The series of books can show the audience a relatively complete mainline content. In addition, the game community can also launch easter eggs for the content of the story fragments, prompting the audience to track each part of the story, thereby increasing fans' interest and participation in the gaming IP. For example, the Chinese online game "Legend of Sword and Fairy" has undergone several changes since its birth in 1995. In 2005, it launched a TV series adapted from its IP. The popularity of the TV series has made the game more than 80% on Steam % of the public praise.

3.2 Transmedia social display of gaming IP

Media companies are also looking for creative ways to socialize with their IP fans online and offline to realize the rapid expansion of gaming IP in the Transmedia field. Currently, Disney and Universal Studios are arguably the current leaders in the Transmedia space for media companies. They both integrate gaming IPs into their entertainment ecosystems. For example, many theme parks in Universal Studios are building a huge "Nintendo Paradise", and some game companies have also constructed offline immersive experience halls, such as Riot's dungeon for the "Arcane: League of Legends" animation. Especially after Fortnite hosted one of the biggest virtual shows in history in 2019, virtual entertainment events are on the rise. Disney also regards digital theme parks as an important direction for future development, which will provide a complete online and offline entertainment platform for the development of gaming IP in the Transmedia field.

Therefore, the Transmedia expansion of gaming IP is fundamentally a diversified development of the future entertainment ecosystem, using all media to tell more and more extensive and complex stories as much as possible. At the same time, media companies provide gaming IP owners with a huge entertainment ecosystem and a powerful social platform through acquisitions or cooperation with market leaders so that gaming IP owners and gaming IP fans have a closer connection^[5].

4. Conclusion

The development of gaming IP in the future media field is diversified. Large-scale media companies have realized that using gamification thinking expands the cultural extension of film and television works. At the same time, they combine their original entertainment platform with the community platform built by gaming IP to meet the needs of the most differentiated audiences to the greatest extent. The IP-based offline game scene and the linkage of online works will bring about common progress of games, film and television and theme parks. At the same time, the exploration of digital virtual paradise will also become the glue for the fusion of various media in the future, which will gradually improve the Transmedia ecosystem based on gaming IP.

References

- [1] Pan, Y, Choi, CY, Meng, Z. Research on the Development of One IP (intellectual. property) Animation & Game in Chinese Market[J]. International Journal of Internet, Broadcasting and Communication, 2019, 11(2): 67-75.
- [2] Ge, YT., The "League of Legends" cartoon is launched on Netflix and the IP ambition of the game adaptation into film and television [N]. First Financial Daily, 2021-11-24(A12).
- [3] Chen, G., Research on the development of game IP adaptation films [J]. Sound. Screen World, 2021(05):75-76.
- [4] Lei, YH., Yu, TT., From "Onmyoji" to see the cross-media narrative strategy. of domestic game IP [J]. International Brand Observation, 2021(14):71-73.
- [5] Lee, DE., The Strategy of Transmedia Storytelling using the Game IP[J]. Journal of Korea Game Society, 2017, 17(5).