

An abstract background composed of numerous overlapping, semi-transparent geometric shapes in various shades of brown, tan, and grey, creating a complex, layered effect.

# Play Chapter

## Video Games and Transmedia Storytelling

MEDIA IN TRANSITION 6  
APRIL 25, 2009

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**Transmedia Storytelling**  
**Business, Aesthetics and Production at the Jim Henson Company**

by

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# Four Areas to Cover

I. Transmedia Storytelling 101

II. Video Games in Transmedia Stories

III. Why Not Video Games?

IV. Transmedia Character Design





# I. Transmedia Storytelling 101

# What is Transmedia Storytelling?



“A transmedia story unfolds across multiple media platforms with each new text making a distinctive and valuable contribution to the whole.”

– Henry Jenkins

# Transmedia Storytelling vs. Adaptation

- Transmedia storytelling continues a narrative arc
- Simply retelling a story in a different type of media isn't transmedia storytelling, it's *adaptation*



**TRANSMEDIA**

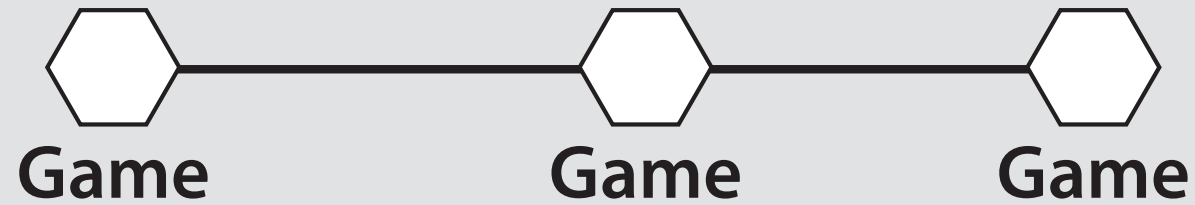


**NOT TRANSMEDIA**

7

# Adaptation

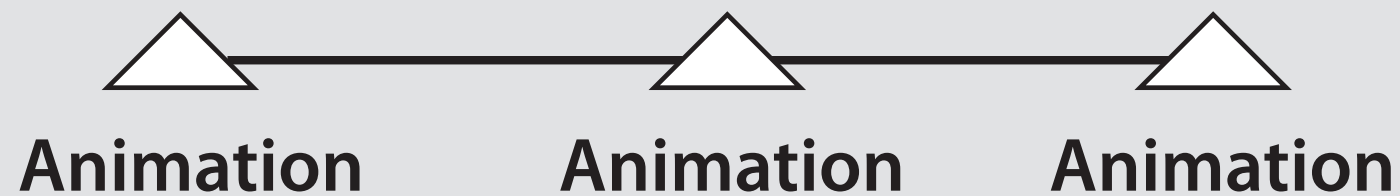
**STORYLINE**



**STORYLINE**

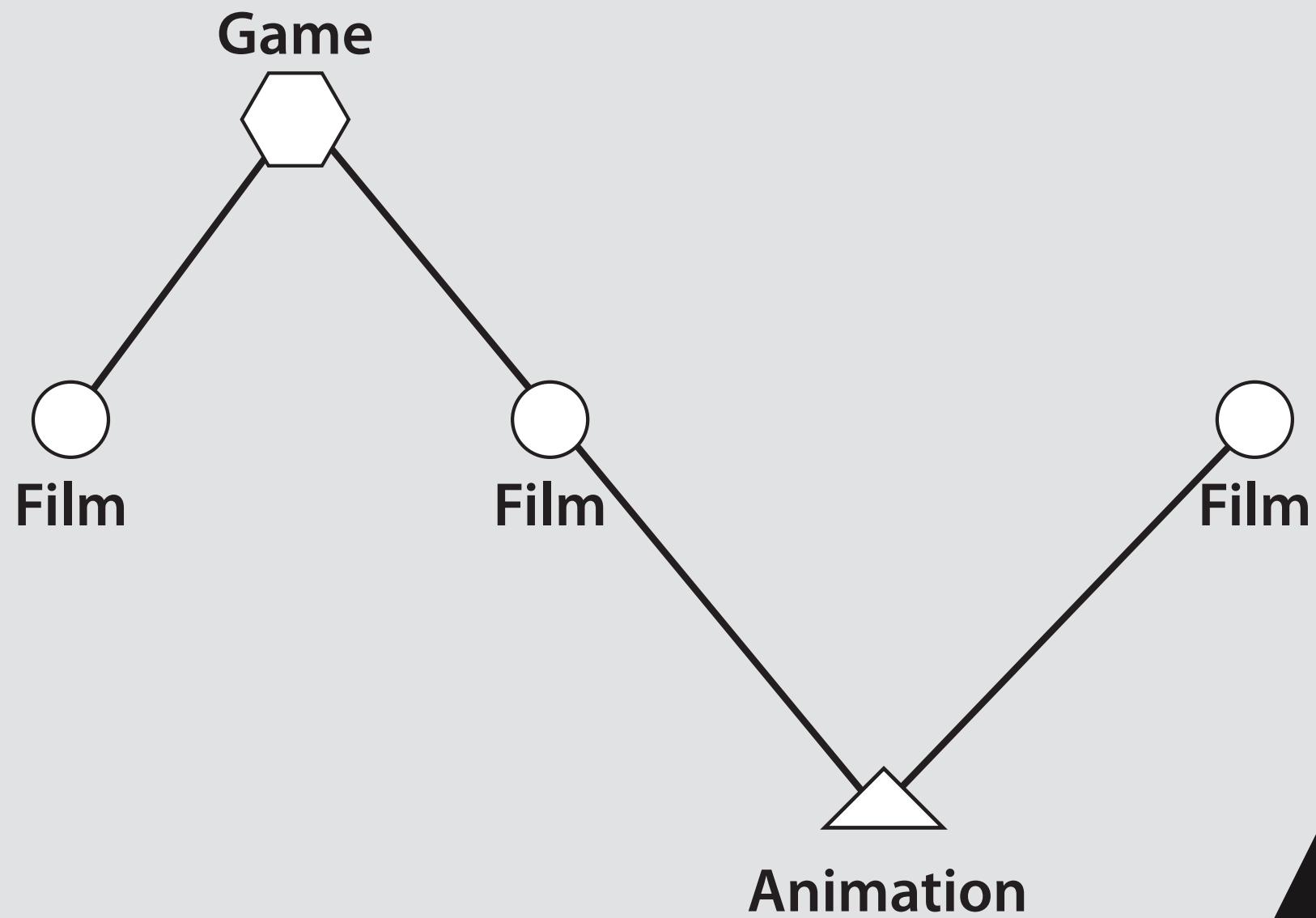


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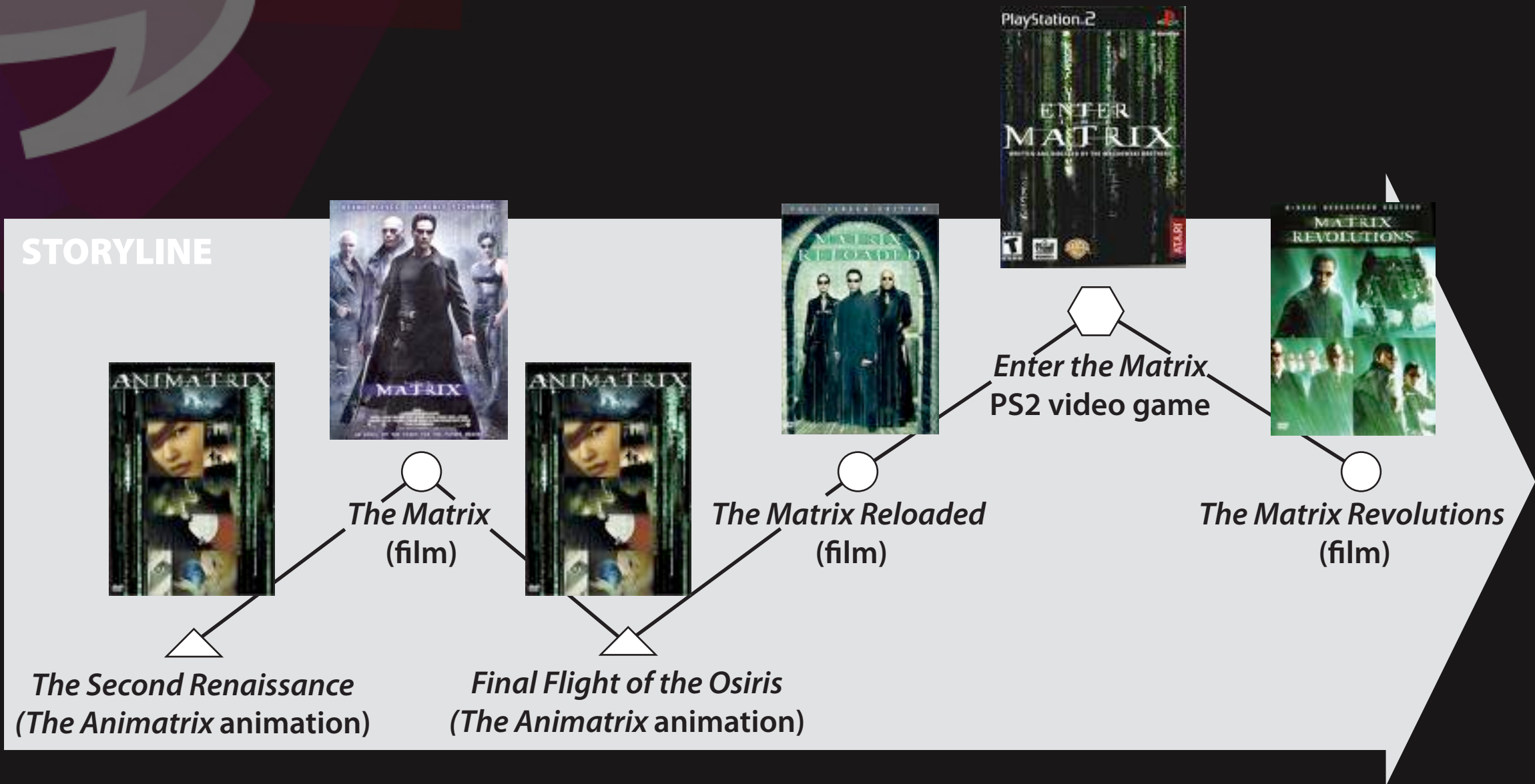


# Transmedia Storytelling

## STORYLINE

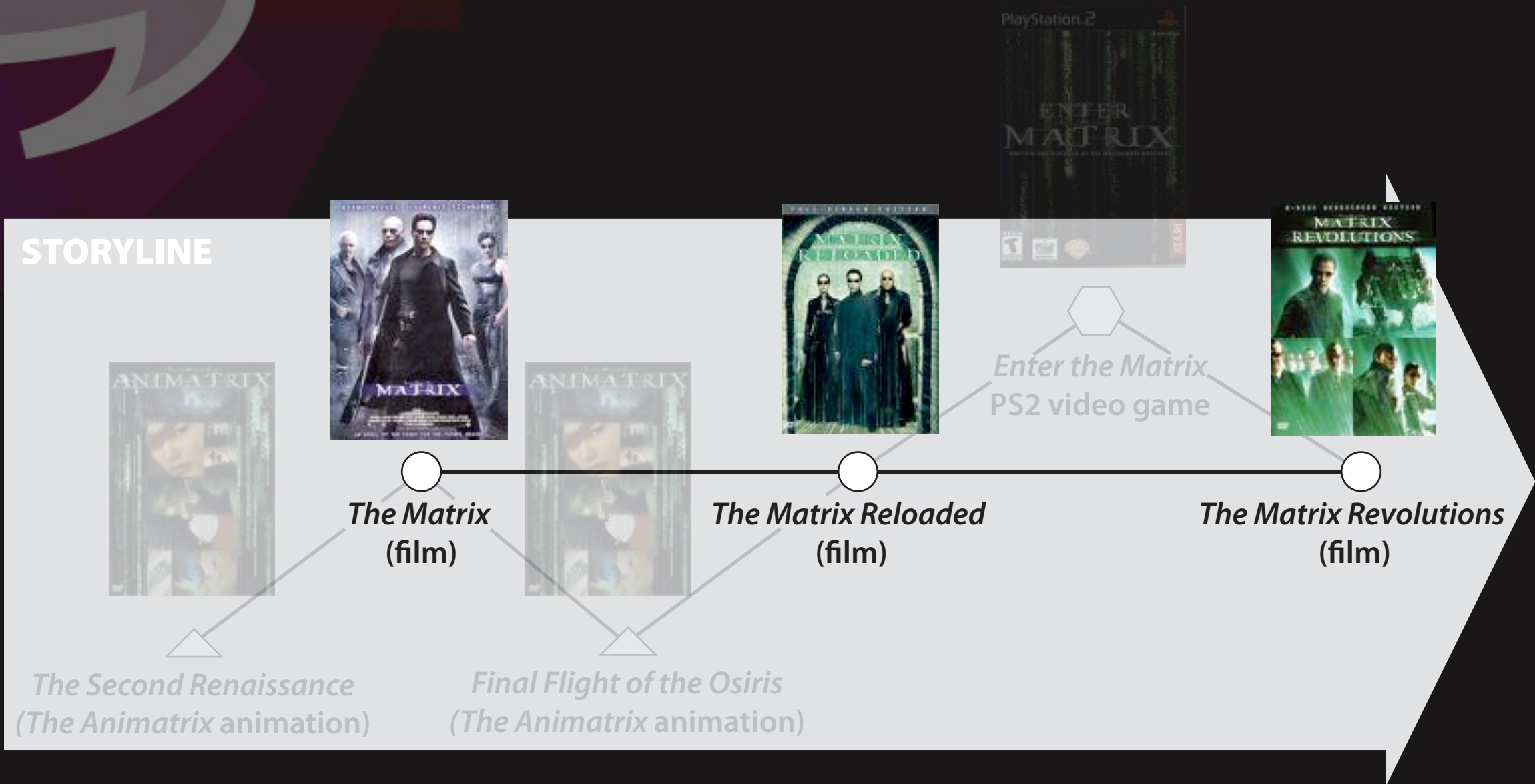


## STORYLINE





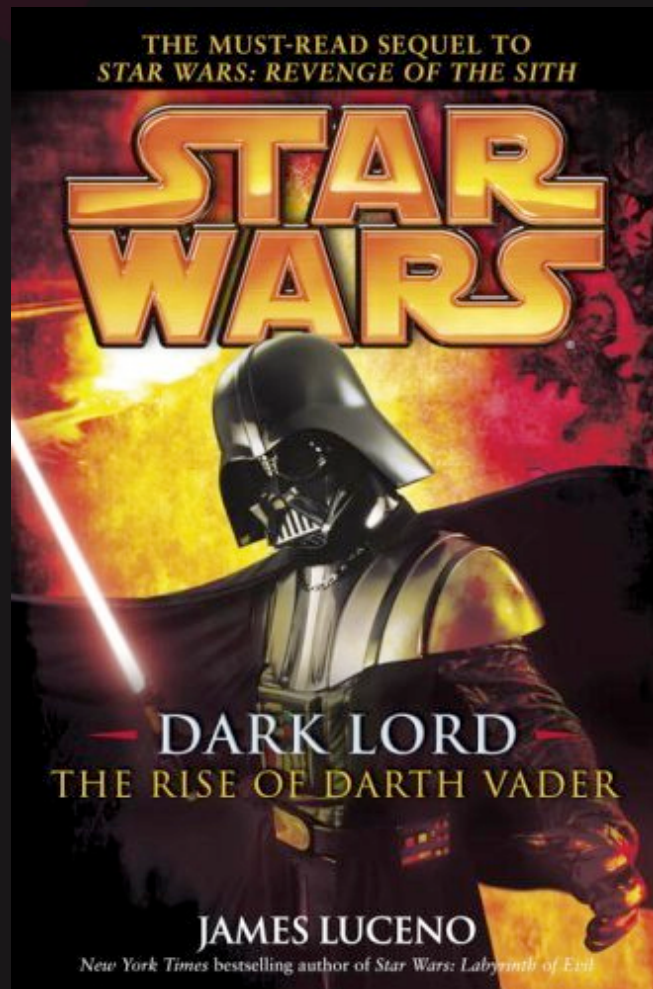
## STORYLINE



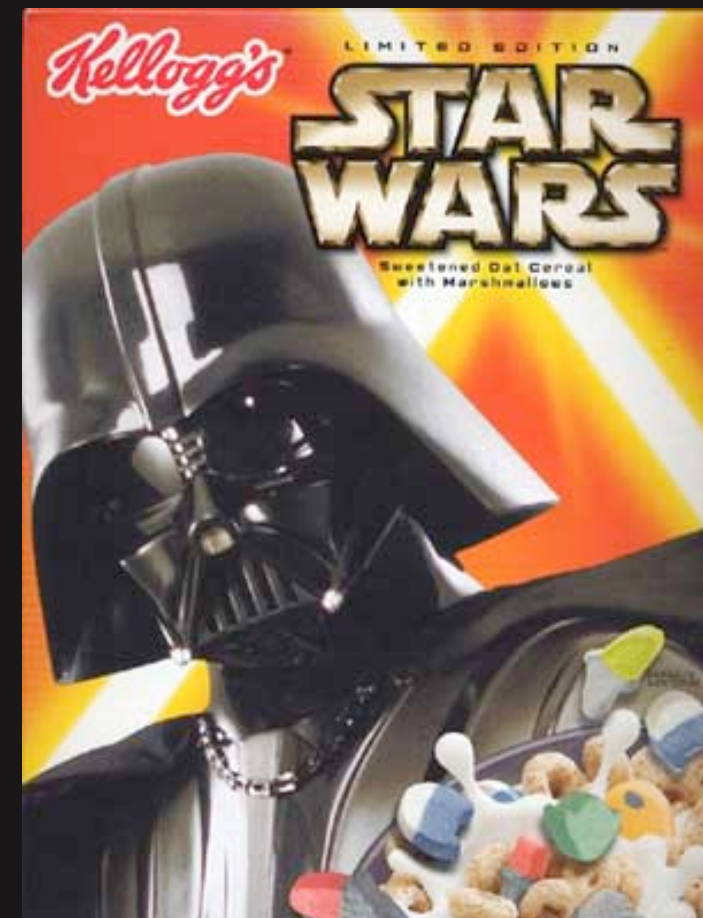


# “Distinctive and Valuable Contribution”?

- Solid addition to the story world
- Not just a cheap grab for additional cash

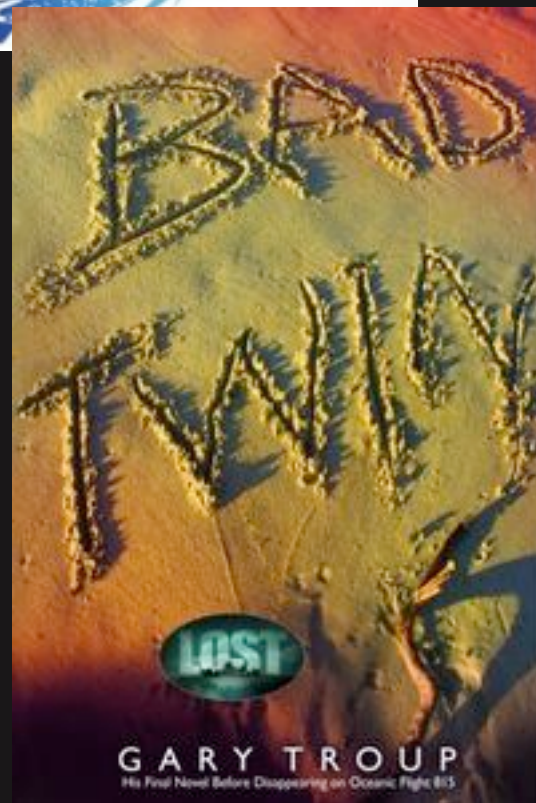
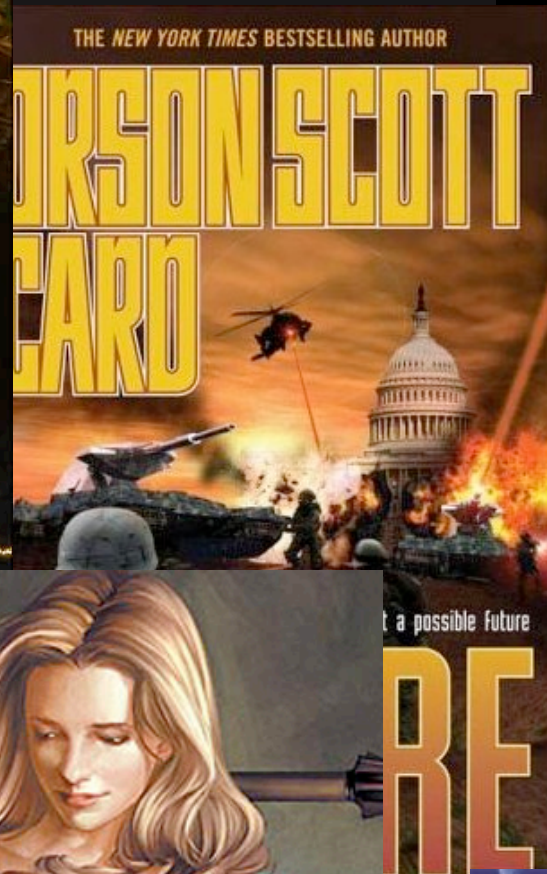
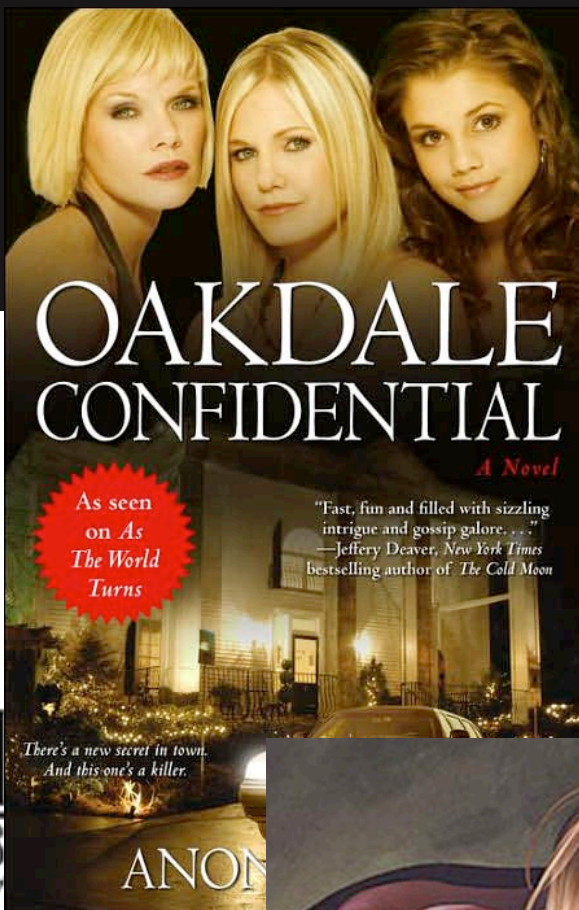


**TRANSMEDIA  
STORYTELLING**

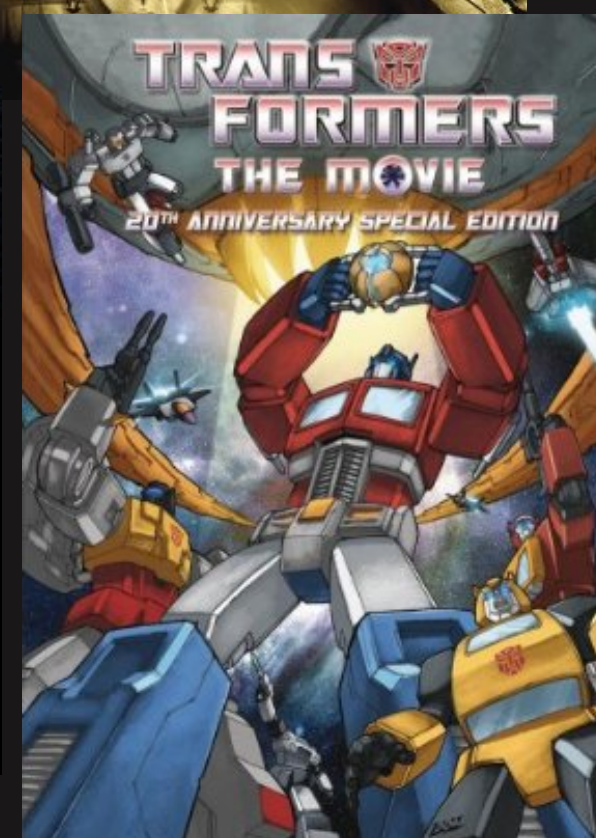
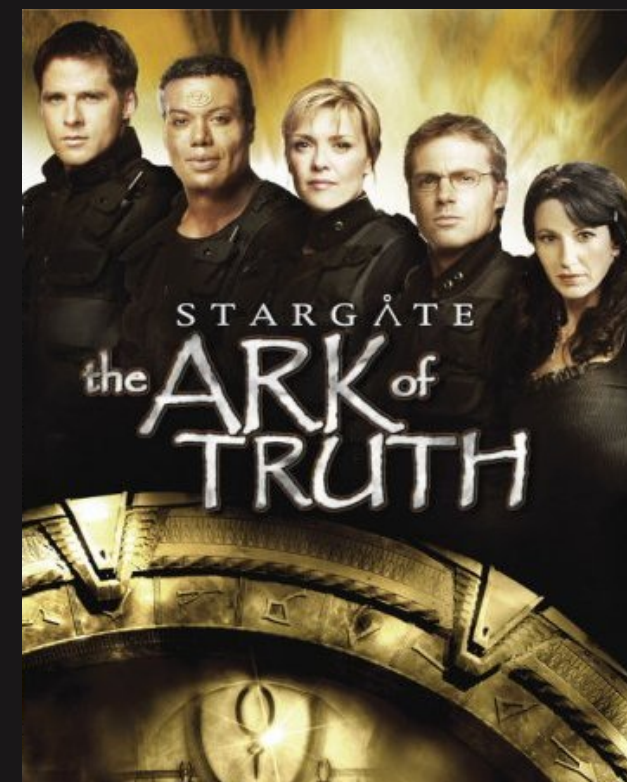
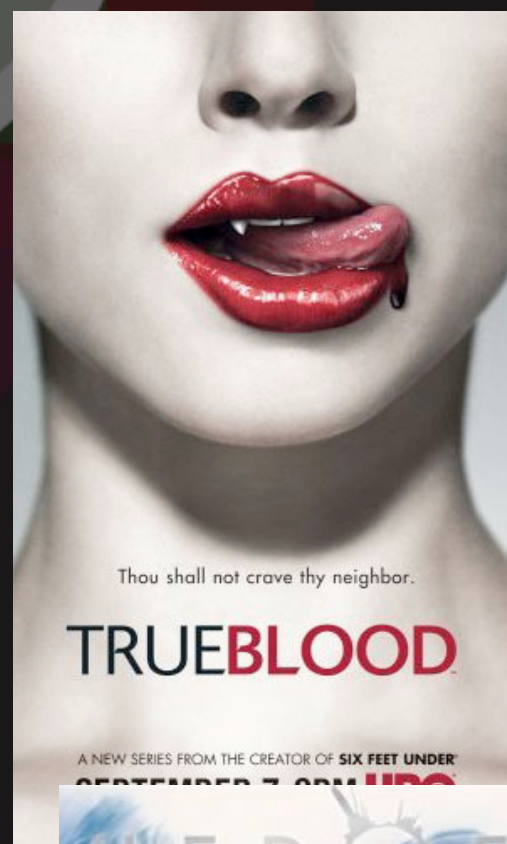


**TRANSMEDIA<sup>12</sup>  
BRANDING**







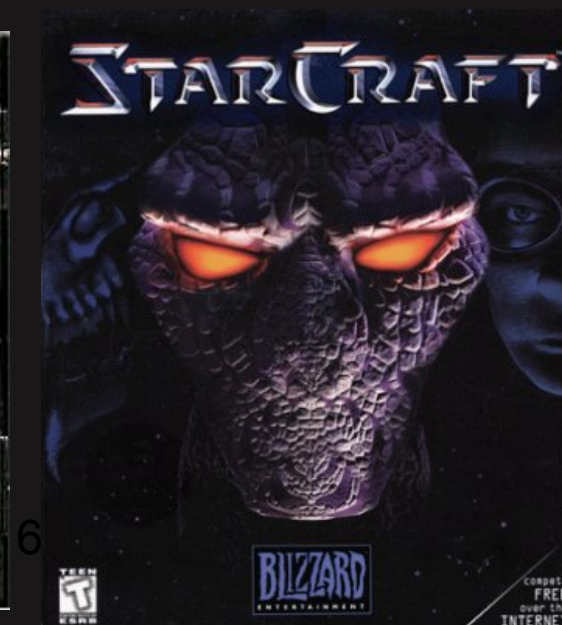
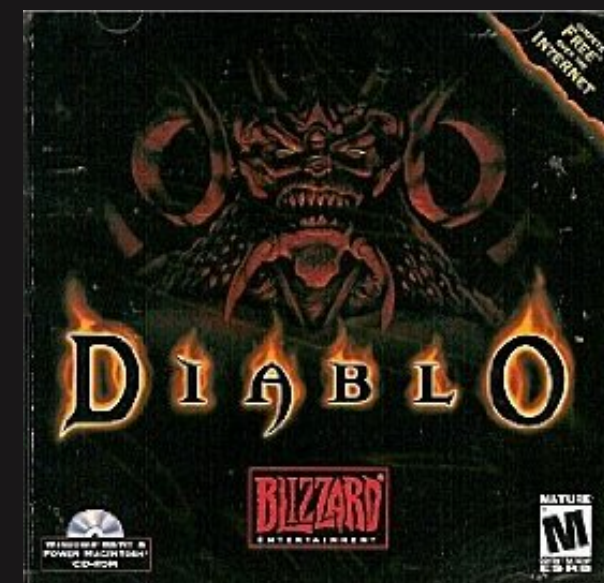
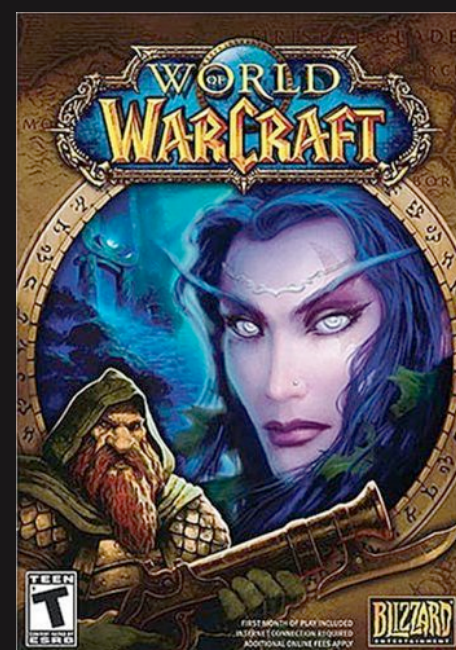
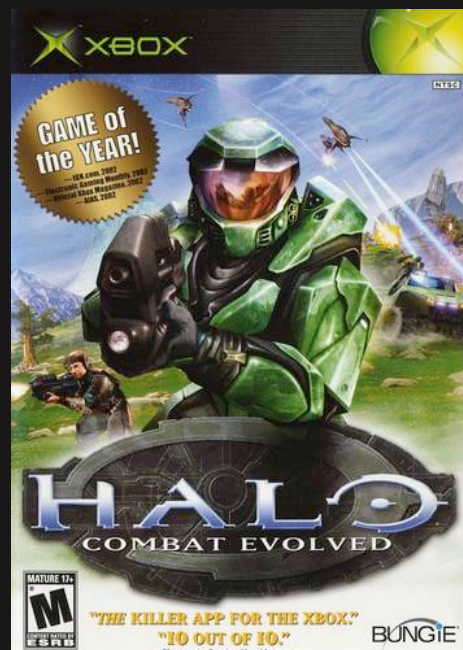
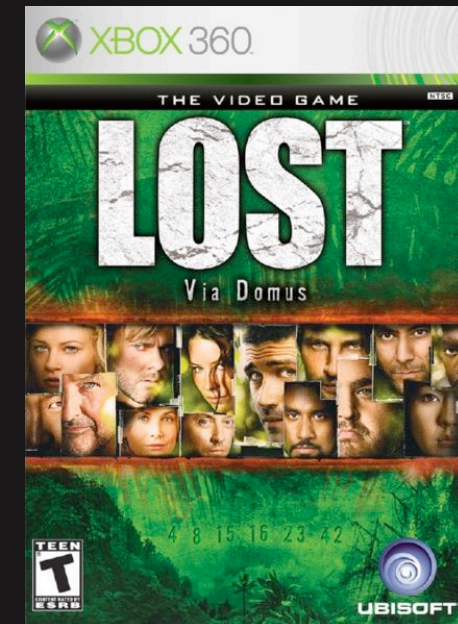






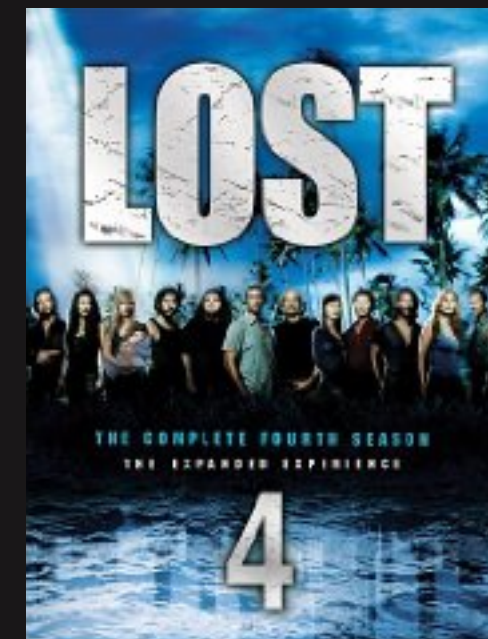
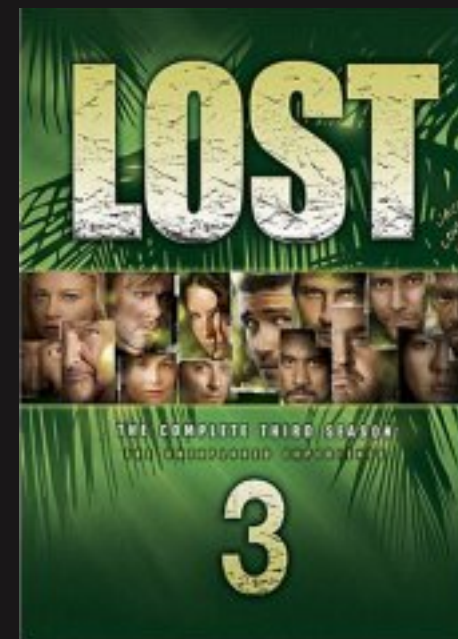
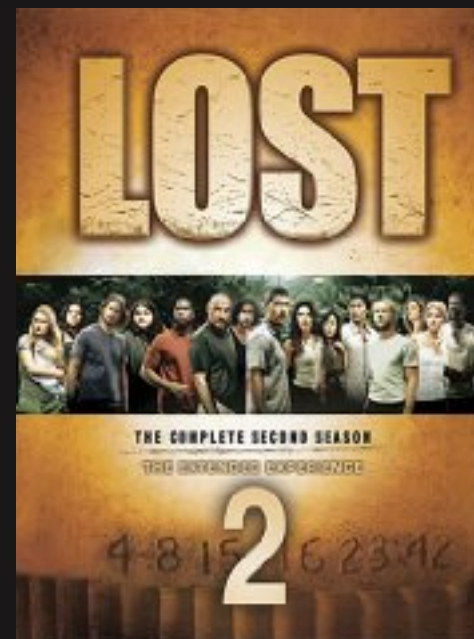
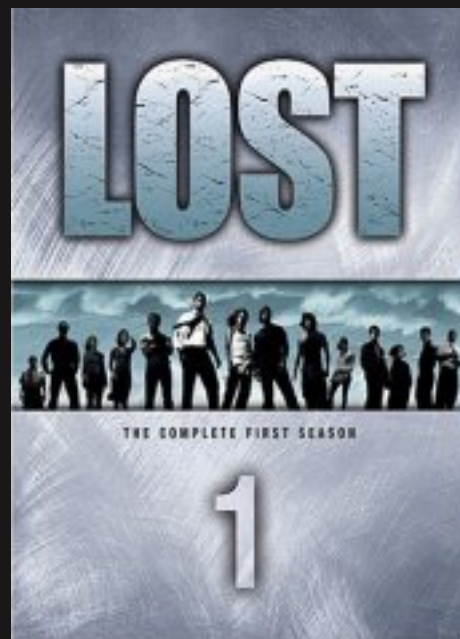
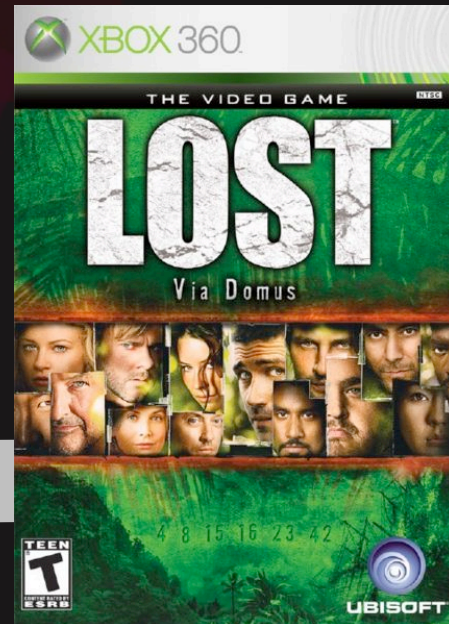
## II. Video Games in Transmedia Stories

















## FICTION TIMELINE

### Span of Years

- 10,000 (Novel) War of the Ancients Trilogy:**
- War of the Ancients Trilogy: The Well of Eternity (Richard A. Knaak)
  - War of the Ancients Trilogy: The Demon Soul (Richard A. Knaak)
  - War of the Ancients Trilogy: The Sundering (Richard A. Knaak)
- 1 (Novel) Rise of the Horde (Christie Golden)**
- 0 (PC Game) Warcraft: Orcs & Humans**
- (Novel) The Last Guardian (Jeff Grubb)
- 6 (PC Game) Warcraft 2: Tides of Darkness**
- 8 (PC Game) Warcraft 2X: Beyond the Dark Portal**
- 10 - (Novel) Day of the Dragon (Richard A. Knaak)
  - 18 - (Novel) Lord of the Clans (Christie Golden)
  - 19 - (Novel) Of Blood and Honor (Chris Metzen)
- 20 (PC Game) Warcraft 3: Reign of Chaos**
- 21 (PC Game) Warcraft 3X: The Frozen Throne**
- 23 (Manga) The Sunwell Trilogy**
- The Sunwell Trilogy: Dragon Hunt (Richard A. Knaak & Jae-Hwan Kim)
  - The Sunwell Trilogy: Shadows of Ice (Richard A. Knaak & Jae-Hwan Kim)
  - The Sunwell Trilogy: Ghostlands (Richard A. Knaak & Jae-Hwan Kim)
- 24 (Novel) Cycle of Hatred (Keith R. A. DeCandido)**
- 25 (PC Game) World of Warcraft**
- 26 (PC Game) World of Warcraft: The Burning Crusade**
- 27 (PC Game) World of Warcraft: Wrath of the Lich King**

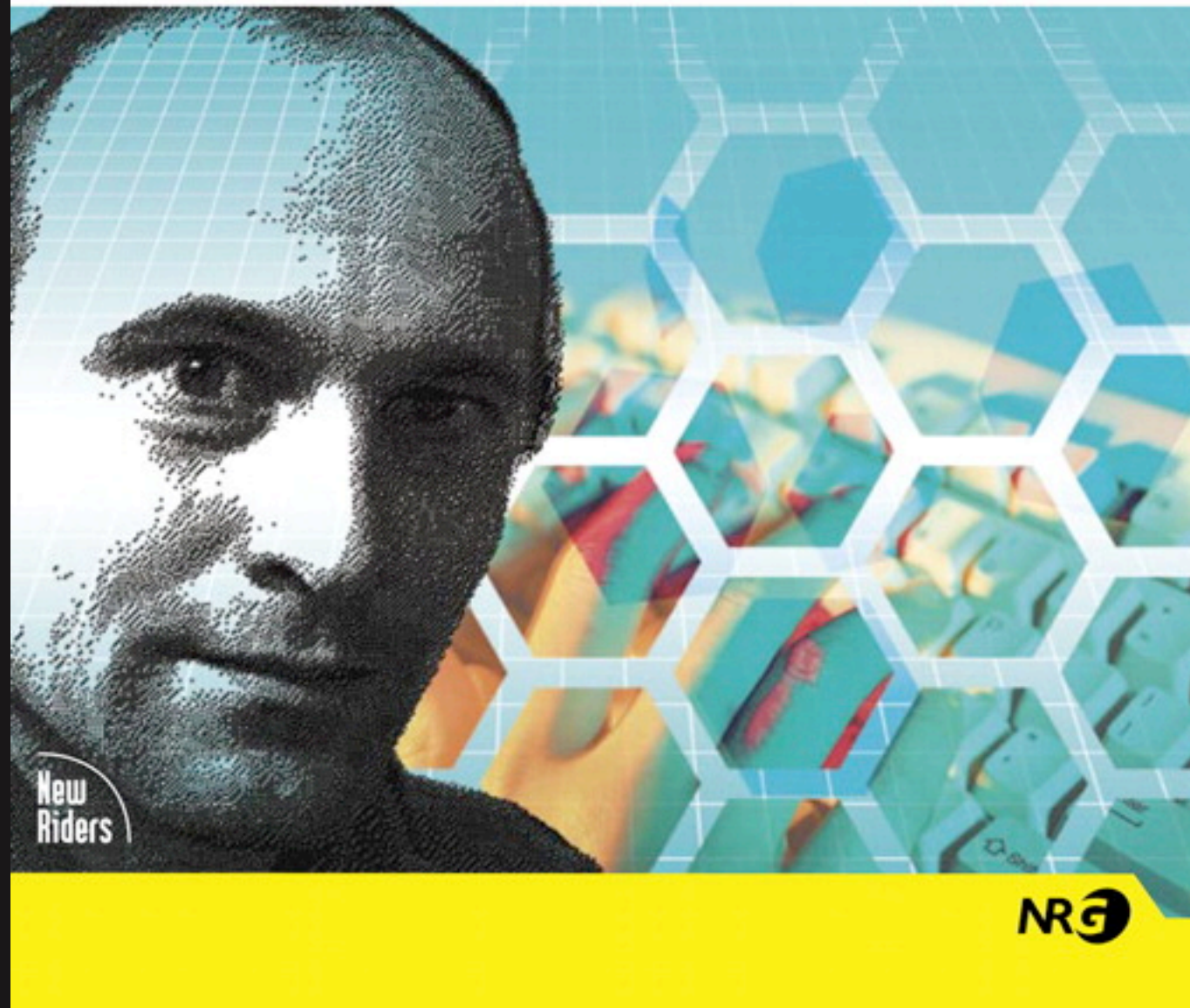






# chris crawford

## on interactive storytelling







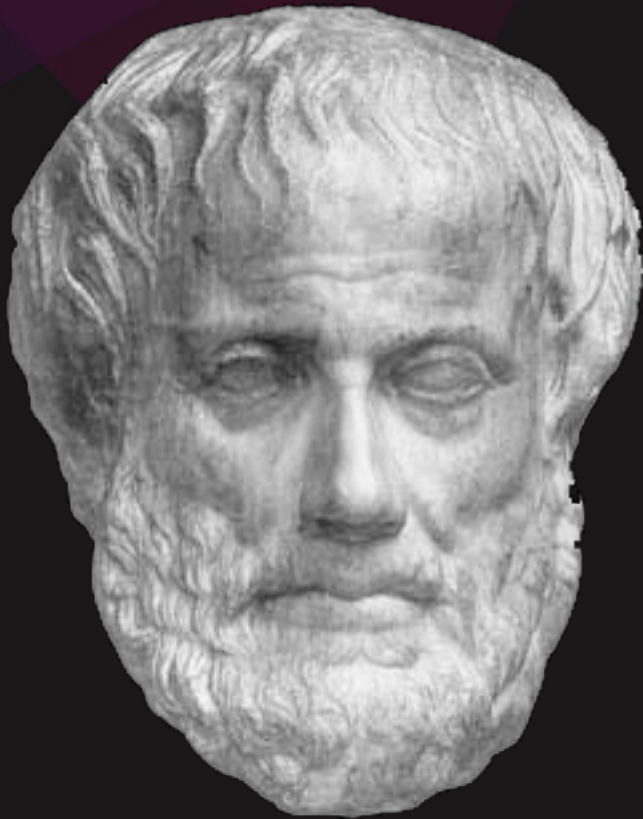








# Storytelling According to Aristotle



“Most important of all is [Plot,] the structure of the incidents. For Tragedy is an imitation, not of men, but of an action and of life, and life consists in action, and its end is a mode of action, not a quality... Without action there cannot be a tragedy; there may be without character. ...The plot, then, is the first principle, and, as it were, the soul of a tragedy; Character holds the second place.”

- Aristotle's *Poetics*

# From Plot to Character





# From Character to World





# Worlds Without Plot?



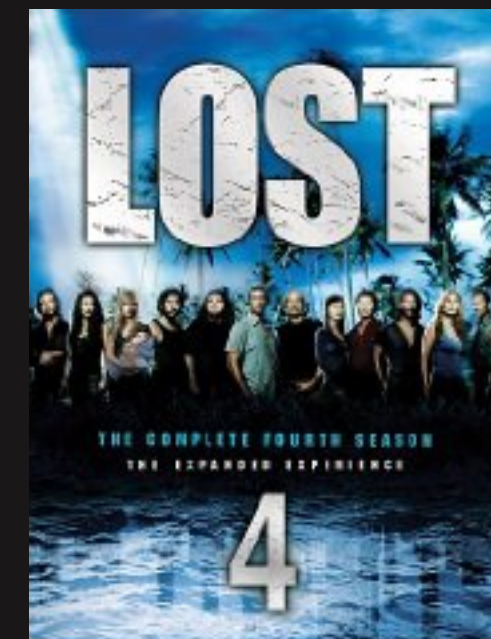
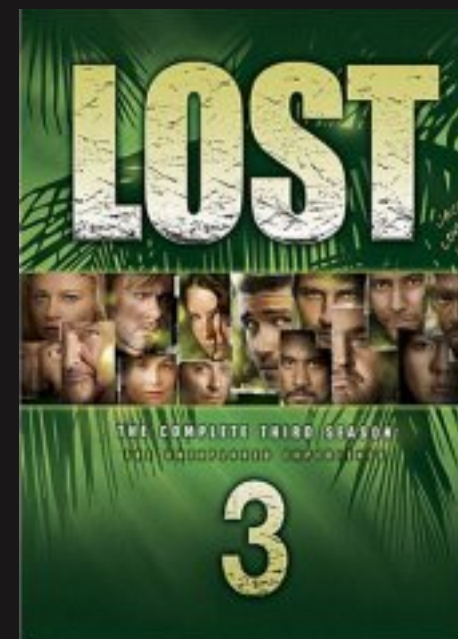
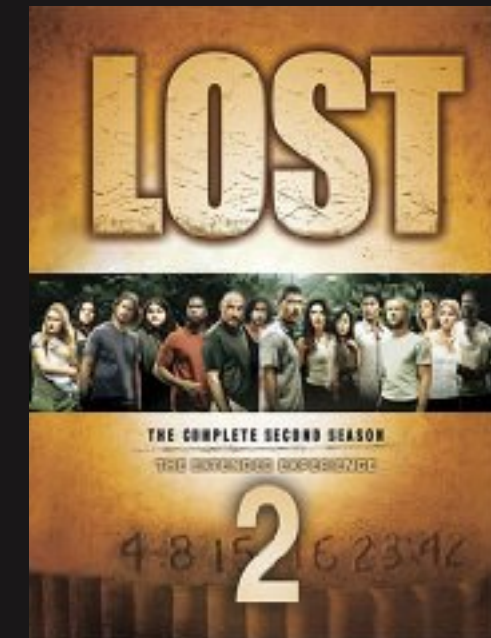
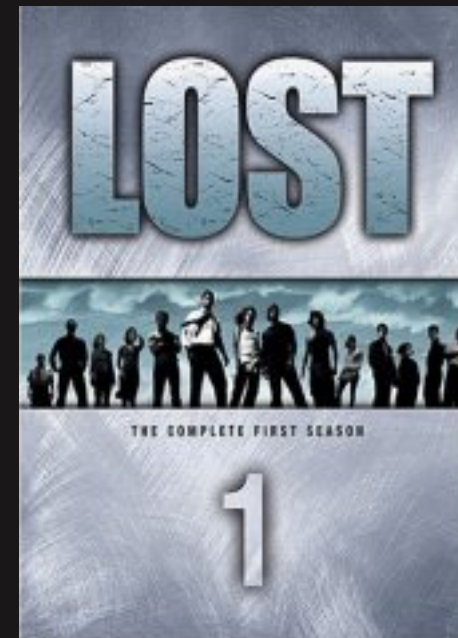


# III. Why Not Video Games?





~US\$250



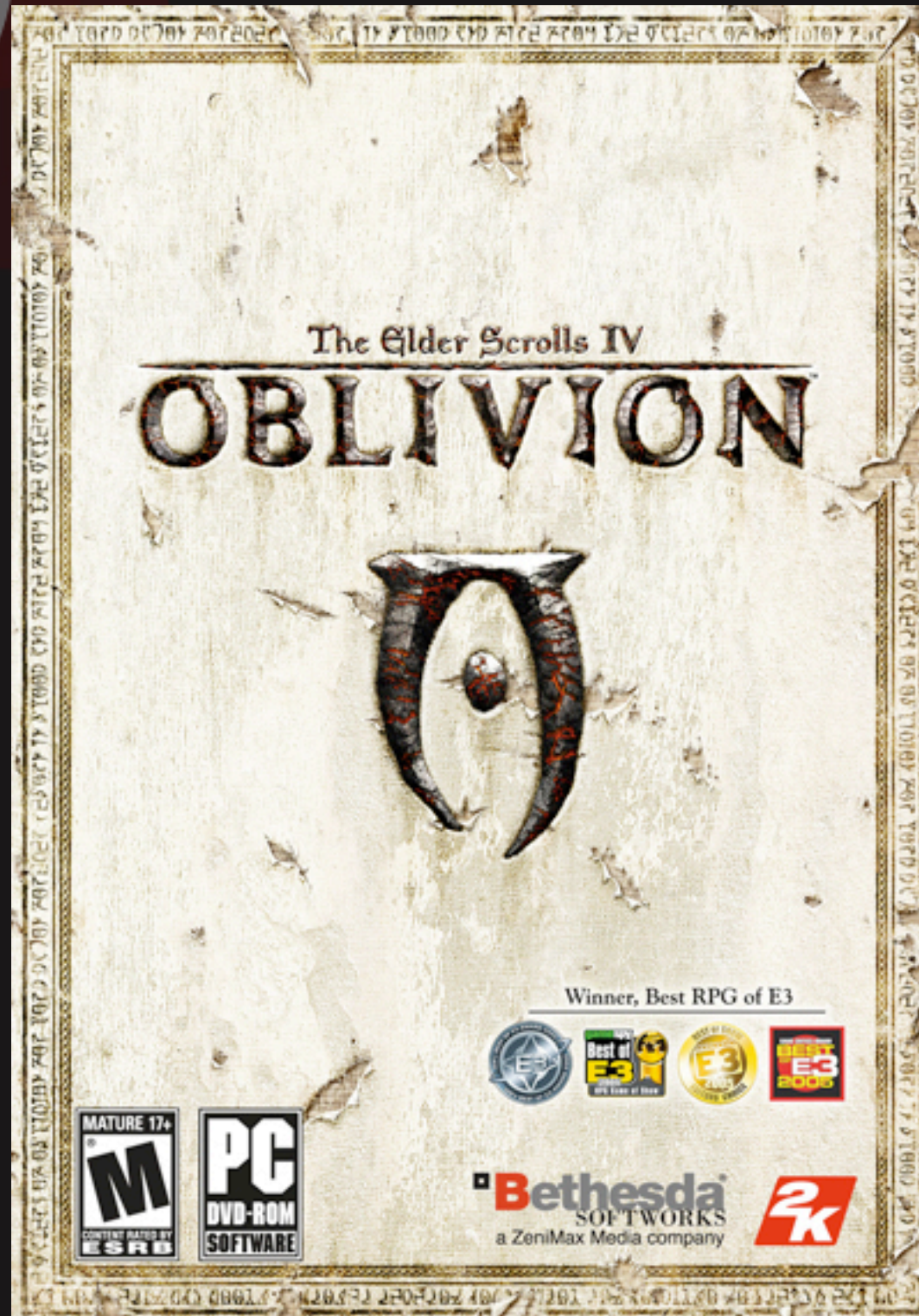
~US\$240





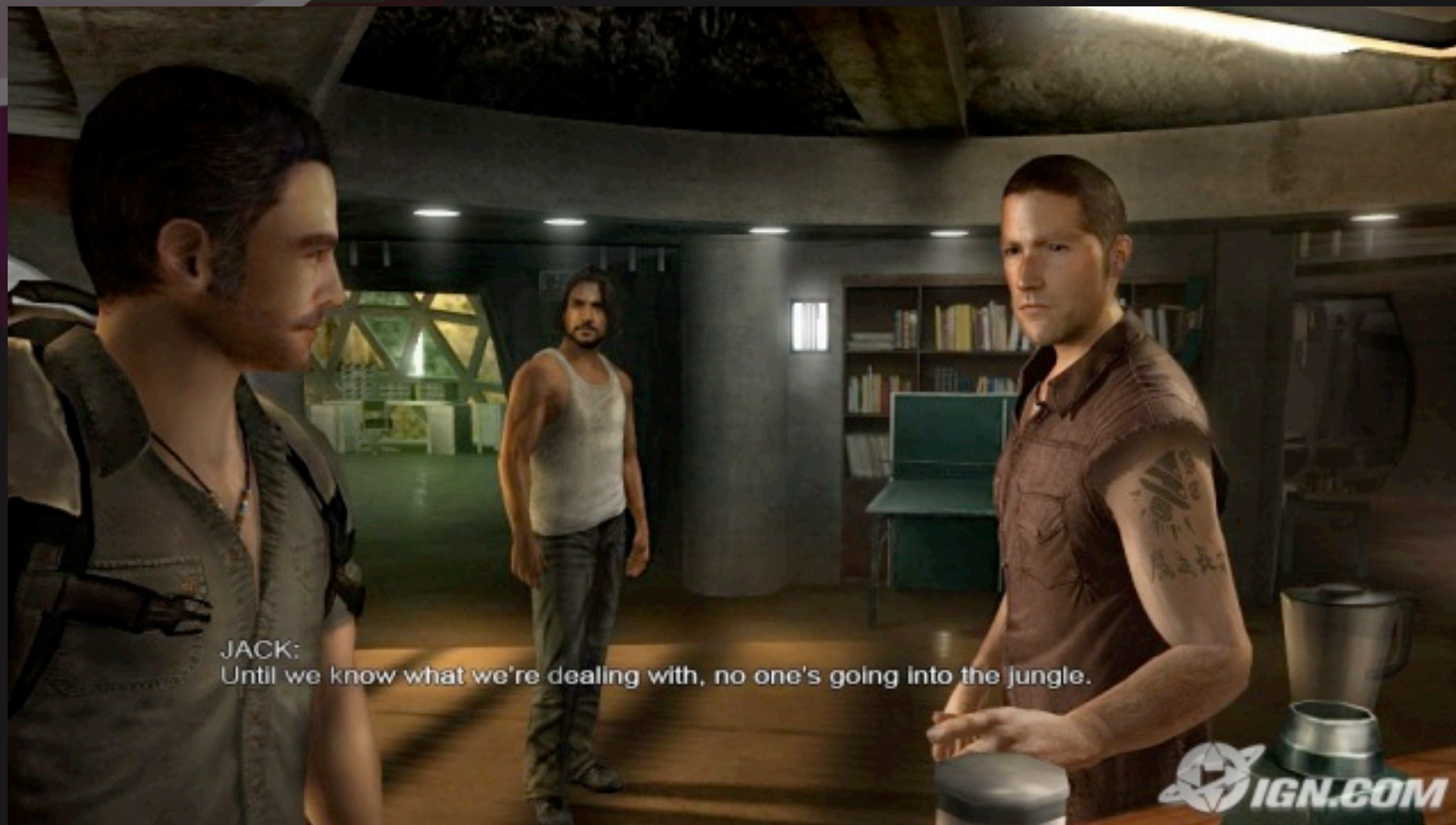
**~US\$100,000,000**



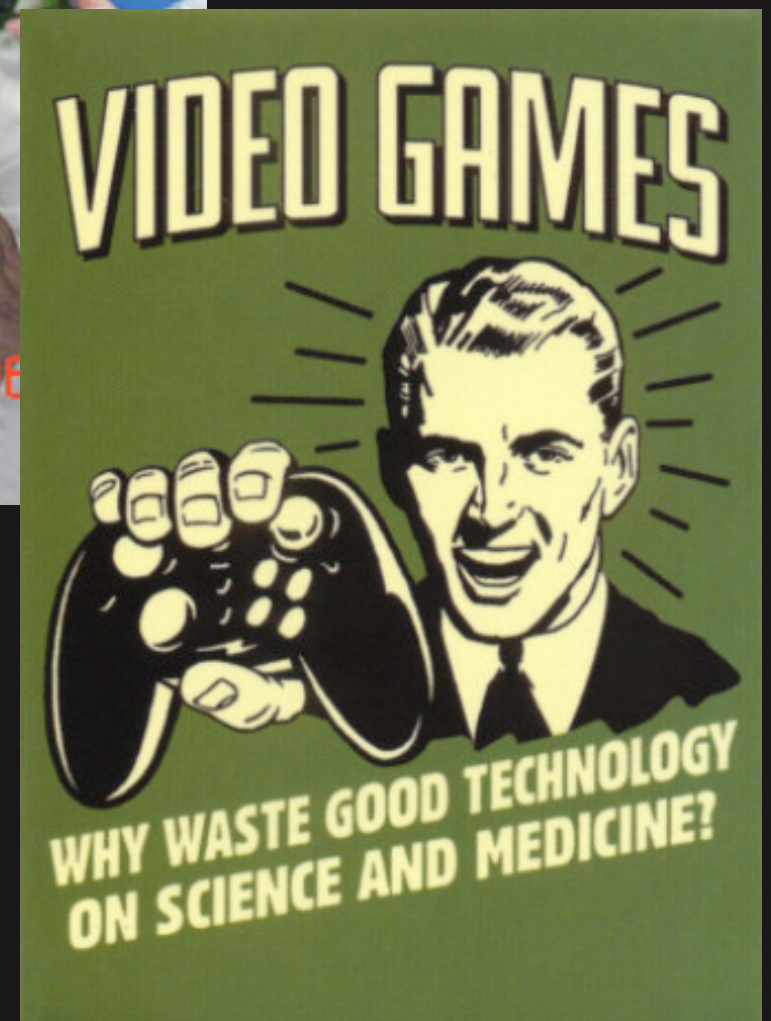


40+ hours

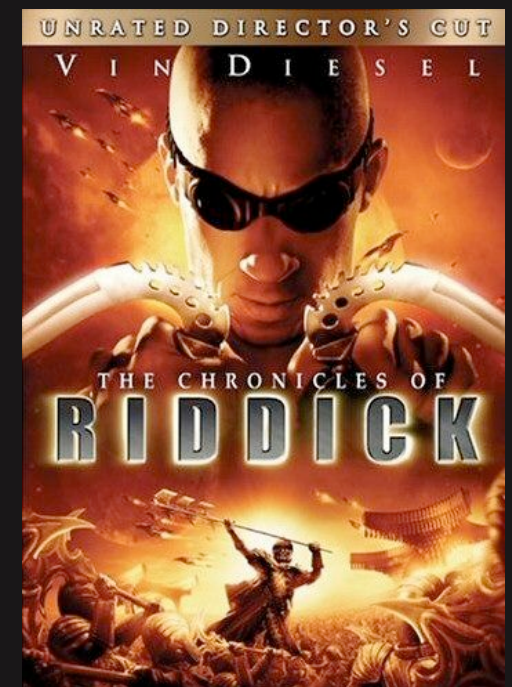
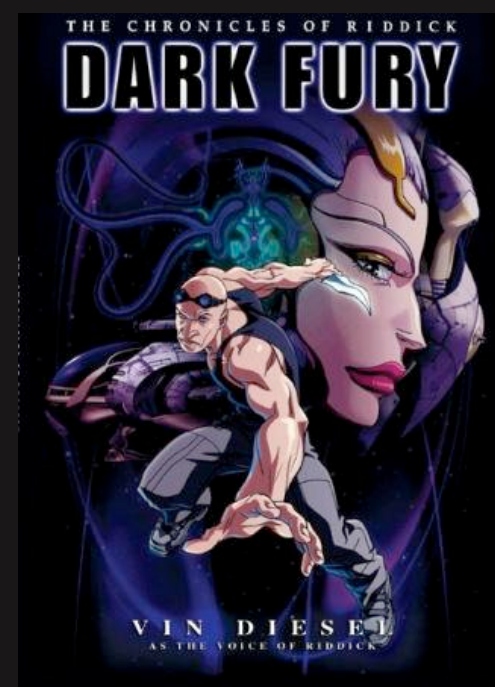
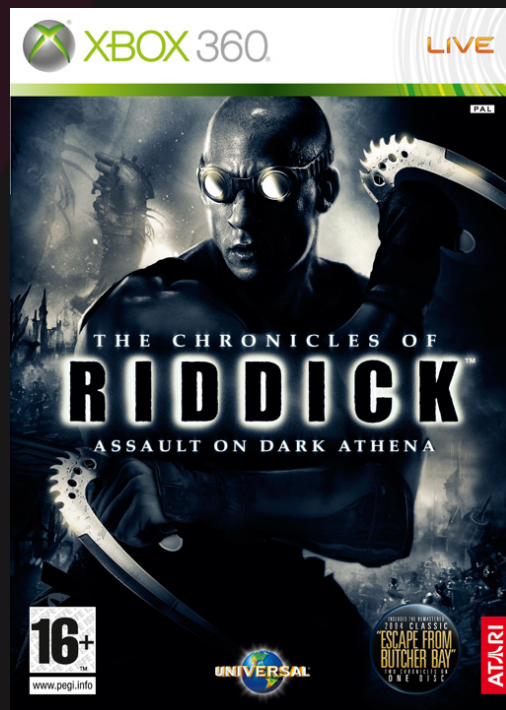
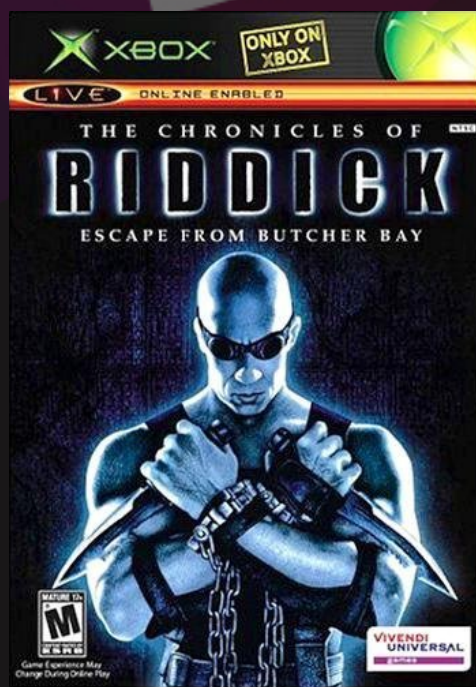
















**RIGHTEOUS KILL**

11:56

UV Flashlight

Clues to find:

- Police scanner
- Microphone
- Tweezers
- Bottle opener
- Clock
- Apple
- Reading glasses
- Two flashlights
- Magnifying glass
- Razor
- Key
- Trophy
- Drawing
- Two stamps
- Pencil

Clues remaining: 45

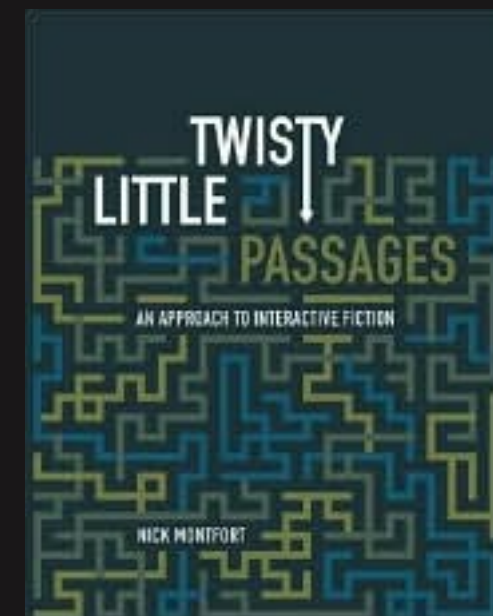
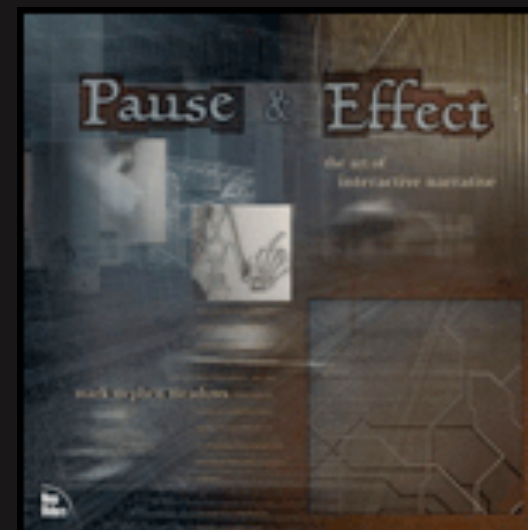
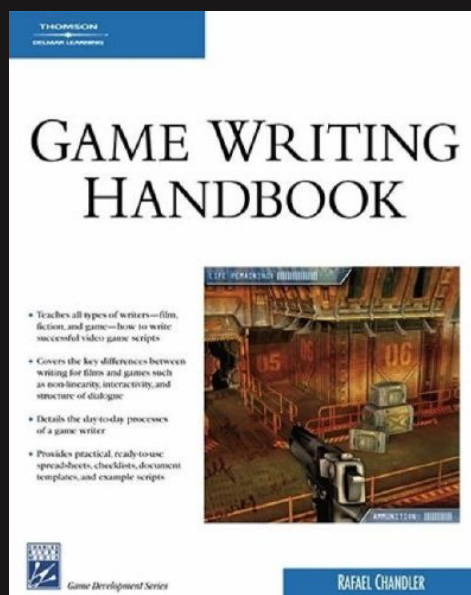
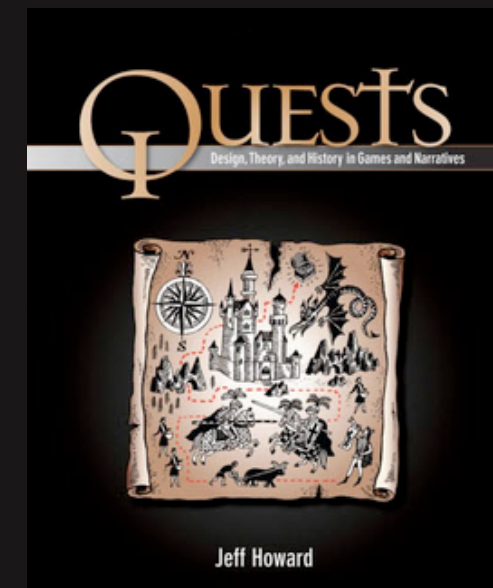
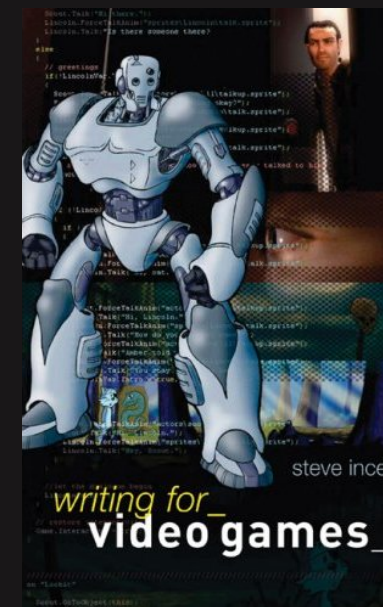
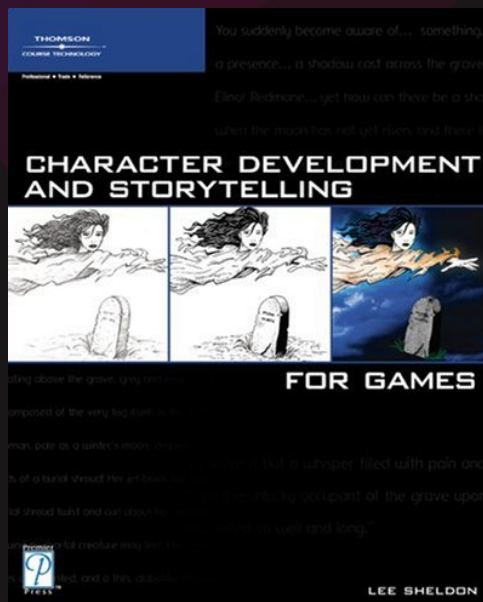
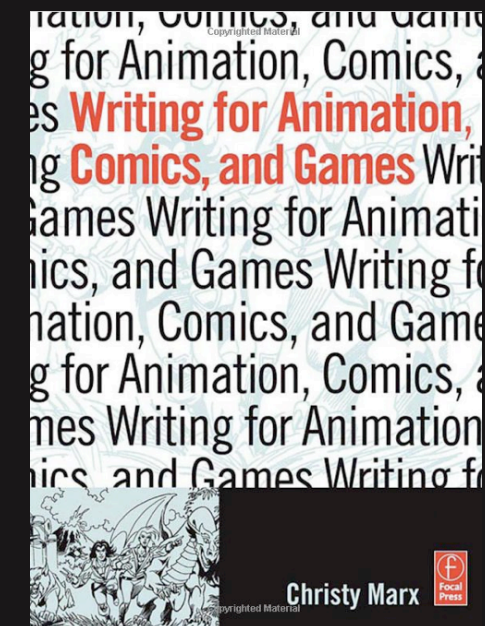
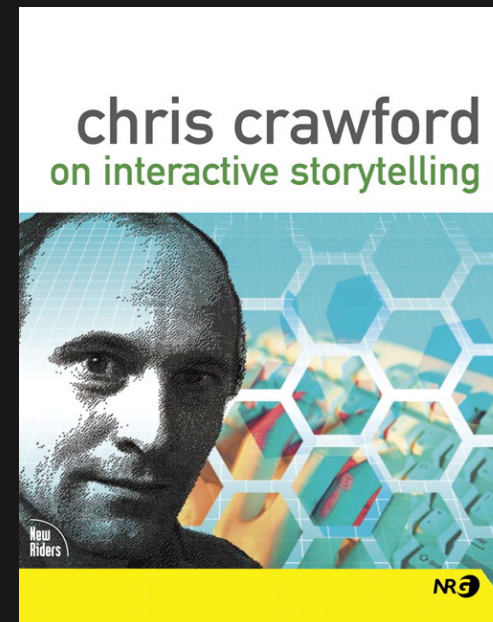
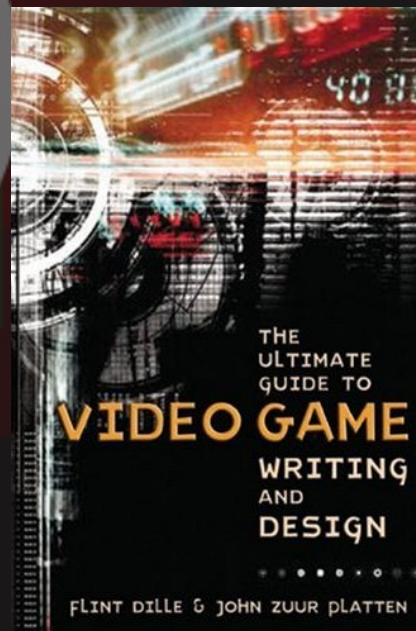
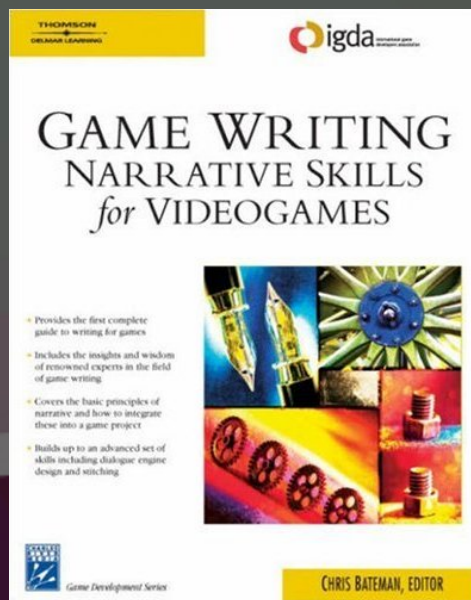
Pause

Options

Map









# IV. Looking Forward





# EVOLUTIONS /iSTORY

Join the next phase of Heroes Evolutions! You are the main character of an evolving interactive story. Meet the characters from Evolutions and the show, shape the rest of the Heroes story, and experience the Heroes universe first-hand! Check back each week for new chapters.

[HOME](#) • [ABOUT](#) • [CHARACTERS](#) • [RECAP](#)

## PINEHEARST - CHAPTER 2

### SURESH'S LABORATORY

Most laboratories are bright and sterile, especially one in which genetics is the prime subject, but when you walk into Doctor Suresh's laboratory, you feel more like you are walking into a dungeon. The room is dark and shrouded in shadows. Computer monitors offering research charts and data illuminate the darkened room in hues of green and blue.



Suresh is standing with his back to you as he focuses his attention on an examination table. There is something underneath a long sheet on the table. At first, you assume it is a cadaver being studied for his research, but then you see an arm move, falling off the table. There is a mild rustling as a low moan escapes from under the sheet.

"Doctor Suresh?" you call out.

Suresh straightens the sheet over whoever is on the examination table. You notice some strange discolored abrasions on the back of Suresh's neck. Then he adjusts his lab coat, once again covering his neckline before turning around.

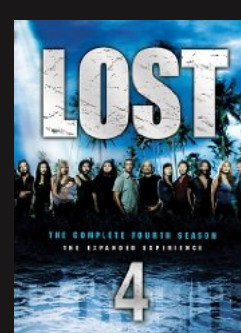
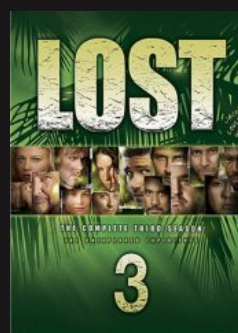
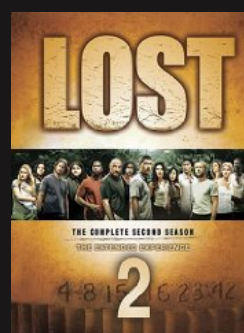
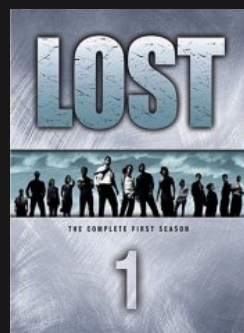
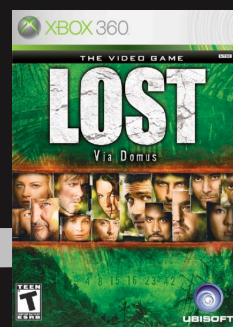
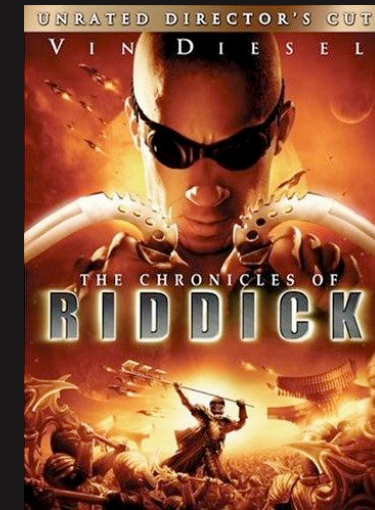
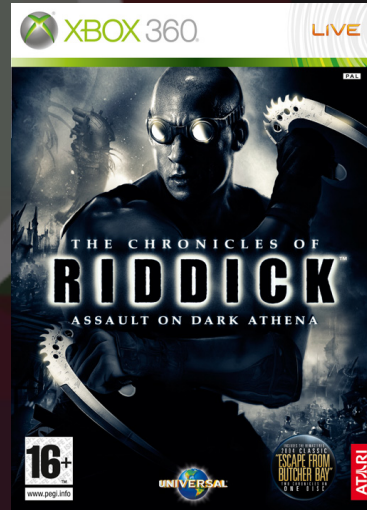
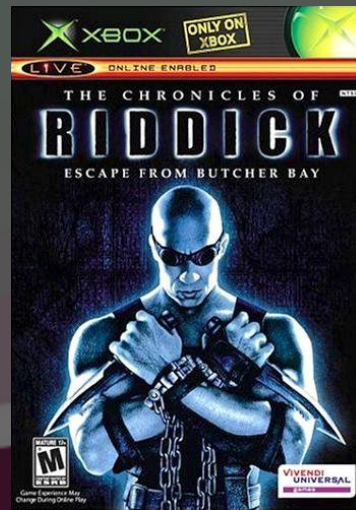
"What are you doing here?" Suresh asks. "I'm very busy. If this is about the attack, I didn't see anything. So you might as well focus your attention elsewhere."

- Ask about what's under the sheet...
- Comment on Suresh's appearance...
- Use friendly persuasion...
- Threaten to delay his work...







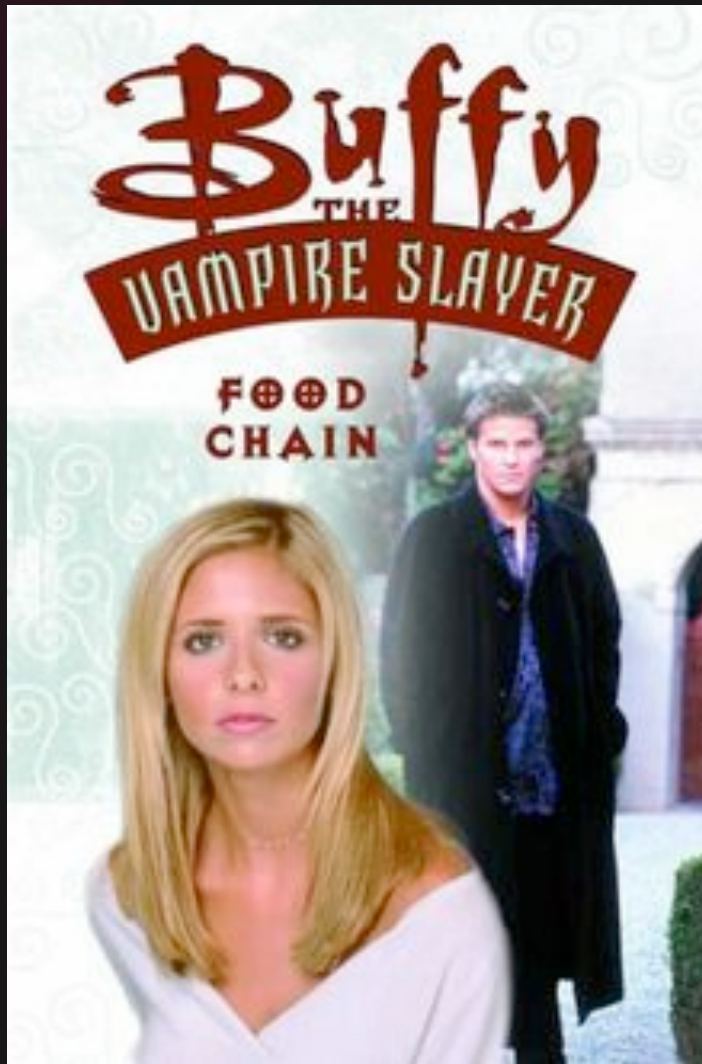




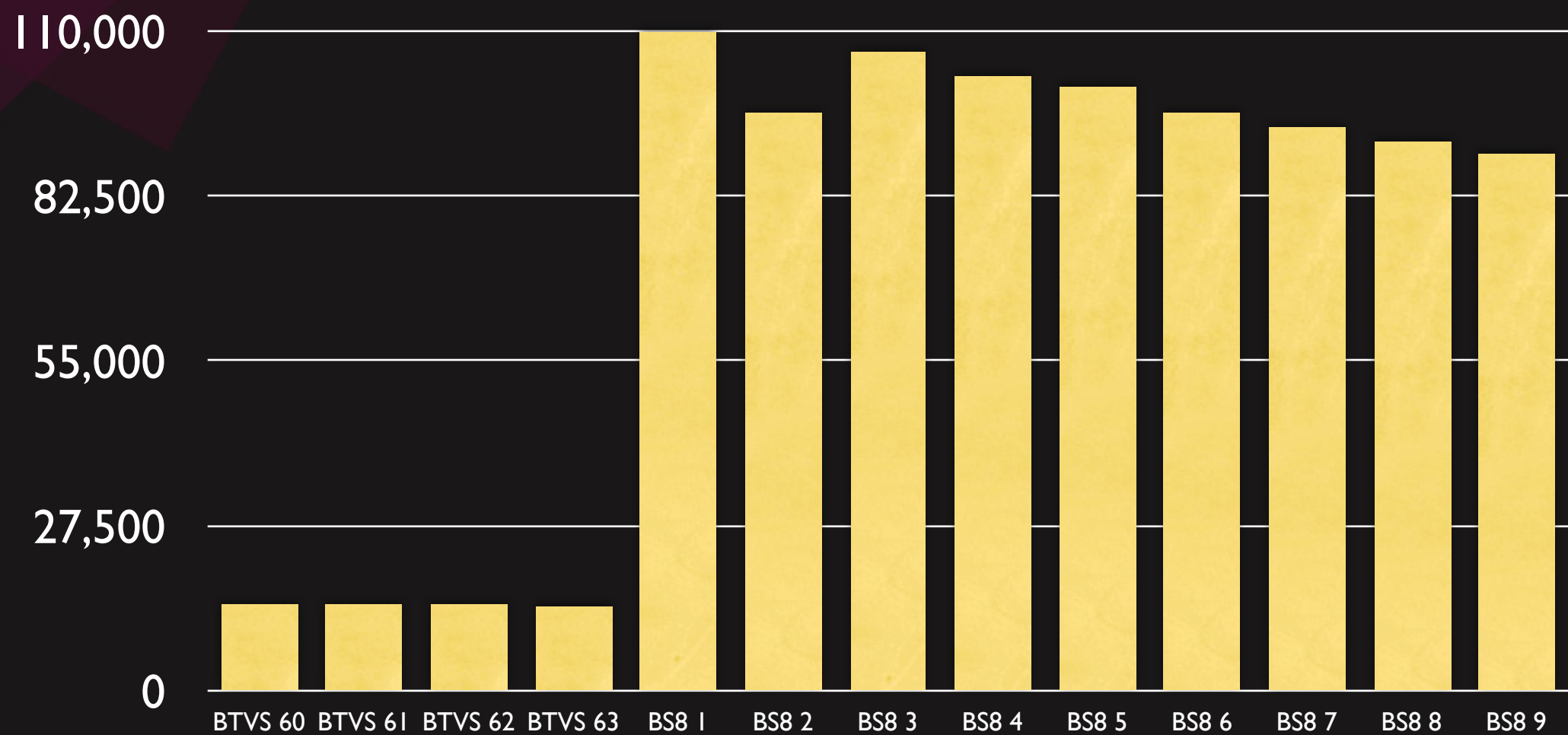




# The Value of Authority



# The Value of Authority







“Transmedia storytelling is the art of world making. 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.”

– Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture*



ACHIEVEMENT UNLOCKED  
memorized the entire STAR WARS universe



# Some Future Directions of Research



- How can digital distribution lower both the costs of video games and the resistance to exploration of video games by non-gamers?
- How to best balance interactivity with plot and character development?
- Where do video games fit in an ideal order of transmedia extensions?
- What is the ideal balance of cost, expected time spent and amount of narrative payoff?



# TRANSMEDIA STORYTELLING

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