

## Research Assignment at the Crossmedialab

### Title

Interactive books: case Mr Finney

### Problem environment

People have always been looking for ways to enhance reader experience and interactivity of books and children's books. The increase in technology also allows us time and again to explore new media possibilities. Two types of 'movements' can be defined in this respect: 1) media tools for books, such as CDs with songs or special, hand-held e-book readers; or 2) books that blend in with other tools or books, such as experiments with mixed reality books, augmented reality and interactivity through iPhones or iPads. Little is yet known about their effect on, for example, narrative understanding and narrative experience, and the – emotional – relationship between parents and children.

The Crossmedialab is working together with the Missing Chapter Foundation within the framework of the cross-medial development of 'Mr Finney': a children's book written by Laurentien van Oranje. Mr Finney symbolises open-mindedness and curiosity, which are characteristics also observed in young children. Mr Finney's central message relates to the power of children to ask remarkable and vital questions about the features of our earth. Their voices are of particular importance because children and youngsters are the future. Mr Finney is a completely new type of character, both in word and image. Mr Finney is 'cool' and energetic, but he is also an adorable fish-creature. Mr Finney raises vital questions in a non-moralising way about the way we deal with our planet, and with him we are able to walk in the shoes of children. These are questions that often occupy the minds of adults, but they are afraid to ask. Children, on the other hand, are eager to ask such questions, but most of the time no one cares to listen. The stories appeal to the imagination: the young reader is carried away by Mr Finney's and the other creatures' exciting and unexpected adventures; grown-ups are being confronted in a comical way with the absurdity of the world, which they themselves have created.

The range of ideas surrounding Mr Finney can be summarised by the following basic assumptions:

- **Coherence & Uniformity**  
Mr Finney propagates clear and outspoken messages, which need to be unambiguous and recognisable. This can only be achieved with complete meticulousness, coherence and uniformity across all manifestations (the book, the website and the products) and between all the different facets – such as characteristic identity, image, colours, type of products, etc.
- **Durability & Responsibility**  
Mr Finney stands for awareness about the way we deal with our planet. In this respect, we always have to make choices and no one has all the answers. We should aim for a responsible and durable approach in all matters relating to Mr Finney – such as materials, packaging, production processes, etc.
- **Meticulousness & Quality**  
Mr Finney believes in a special world and consequently wants to propagate this belief in all areas. For this purpose, a meticulous approach and high quality standards are

essential, but it also requires authenticity, creativity and the ability to think and act outside the box.

- **Impact & Change**  
Mr Finney aims to explain a different point of view and wants to present additional arguments in the debate surrounding climate change and durability. All activities are consequently focused on creating an impact, one way or the other.
- **Openness and Combination of Forces**  
Mr Finney does not have a monopoly of wisdom. Nor does he have all the solutions. It is in everyone's interest to combine forces. In applying a targeted approach, Mr Finney also wants to offer a platform to all the relevant contributions to the debate. It requires a mentality of open-mindedness among all the parties involved.

### **Research question**

What cross-medial possibilities are available to make (children's) books interactive, and which of those resources are useful for Mr Finney?

### **Relationship with the Crossmedialab's research project**

This research is related to the 'Mr Finney' project at the Crossmedialab.

### **Business description:**

The Crossmedialab (<http://www.crossmedialab.nl>) is a workplace within the Faculty of Communication & Journalism for applied research into cross-media content. The areas of research include media, cultural heritage, marketing and education, and focus on individual experience of cross-media, organisational value exchange processes and societal developments concerning media literacy. Research is conducted through a series of projects carried out by project teams, in which students, lecturers and external researchers and business partners participate.

### **Desired researcher profile:**

You possess strong writing skills; you are pro-active and demonstrate a positive critical attitude. You have a broad interest in the research subject and you are ambitious. You enjoy working in a dynamic and challenging environment.

### **Contact information:**

Mentor: Niniane Veldhoen

Position: Lecturer

Telephone number: 030-219 3638

Email address: [niniane.veldhoen@hu.nl](mailto:niniane.veldhoen@hu.nl)

### **Project assignment 30 ECTS (Graduation Project)**

Examine the cross-media possibilities to make (children's) books interactive and enhance the reader experience, and create a useful format for Mr Finney.

#### **Project approach**

1. Literature study into reading behaviour among children and use of new media.
2. Collect and analyse 10 case studies on interactive children's books.
3. Design an interactive service for Mr Finney.
4. Conduct interviews with 5 experts about their thoughts and opinions on your design.
5. Create a demonstrator for your design or adapted design.

#### **Project results**

1. Graduation thesis
2. Report on the analysis of 10 case studies
3. Design and creation of an interactive children's book
4. Interviews with experts
5. Presentations at the Crossmedialab
6. Contribution to the 'LabRats' book series.

#### **Standard documents** (all can be found at <http://www.crossmedialab.nl/curious>)

- Doing your graduation project at the Crossmedialab
- Templates for a research proposal, a research plan and a research report
- Case analysis
- Literature references.

#### **Examples** (all can be found at <http://www.crossmedialab.nl/impact>)

- CELL Cahier – Wijs met Media
- Reports on Mr Finney Workshops
- Presentation 'Mijn verhaal met nieuwe media'.

#### **Respond**

Please consult the guidelines for graduation projects at the Crossmedialab to complete the required steps if you want to participate in this graduation project.

### **Project assignment 15 ECTS (Graduation Project)\***

Examine the cross-media possibilities to make books or children's books interactive and enhance reader experience, and create a useful format for Mr Finney.

#### **Project approach**

1. Literature study into reading behaviour among children and use of new media.
2. Collect and analyse 5 case studies on interactive children's books.
3. Design an interactive service for Mr Finney.
4. Conduct interviews with 3 experts about their thoughts and opinions on your design.
5. Create a demonstrator for your design or adapted design.

#### **Project results**

1. Graduation thesis
2. Report on the analysis of 10 case studies
3. Design and creation of an interactive children's book
4. Interviews with experts
5. Presentations at the Crossmedialab
6. Contribution to the 'LabRats' book series.

**Standard documents** (all can be found at <http://www.crossmedialab.nl/curious>)

- Doing your graduation project at the Crossmedialab
- Templates for a research proposal, a research plan and a research report
- Case analysis
- Literature references.

**Examples** (all can be found at <http://www.crossmedialab.nl/impact>)

- CELL Cahier – Wijs met Media
- Reports on Mr Finney Workshops
- Presentation 'Mijn verhaal met nieuwe media'.

#### **Respond**

Please consult the guidelines for graduation projects at the Crossmedialab to complete the required steps if you want to participate in this graduation project.

\* Note: the difference with assignment 30 ECTS lies in the number of examples to be examined and the scope of the chosen theme.

### **Project assignment 5 ECTS (Practical Assignment)**

Create a cross-media concept for an interactive version of the children's book Mr. Finney and build a demonstrator.

#### **Project approach**

1. Collect best practices and showcases of interactive children's books relevant to the assignment.
2. Describe a number of scenarios explaining the embodiment of different forms of interactivity.
3. Create an interactive version for 1 of the scenarios and build a demonstrator.

#### **Project results**

1. Best practices and scenarios
2. Demonstrator
3. Presentations at the Crossmedialab.

**Standard documents** (all can be found at <http://www.crossmedialab.nl/curious>)

- Zone of Proximal Media Development (*Idola van de Crossmedia*)
- Literature references.

**Examples** (all can be found at <http://www.crossmedialab.nl/impact>)

- CELL Cahier – Wijs met Media
- Reports on Mr Finney Workshops
- Presentation 'Mijn verhaal met nieuwe media'.