

# TRANSMEDIA STORYTELLING ON TRAVELOGUE “ZIARAH SKATEBOARDING”: ARTISTIC JOURNAL ACROSS MULTIDISCIPLINE PLATFORM

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## ABSTRACT

Ziarah Skateboarding is a series of documentation or travelogue that tell stories about a journey to visit street skateboard spots, skateparks, and skateboard events around the world. The content has been published through multiple different platforms. This practice-based research uses transmedia storytelling concept to present the diversity of the story, throughout free online blog articles, subscription-based articles, self-published book and series of short documentary. Each medium has its own characteristic and reach a number of different audiences. The research process involves literature review, design thinking, collaborative work with text editor, graphic designer, and video production team. The results are very significant to understand the relation between transmedia storytelling and skateboarding related content.

**Key words:** Transmedia, Storytelling, Travelogue, Artistic Research, Artistic Journal, Skateboard Media, Ziarah, Skateboarding

## Introduction

In the era of convergence, transmedia storytelling has become inevitable. Today’s digital media and networked internet are limitless so content shared across medium and platform, reaching a diverse group of people. The term was introduced first by Marsha Kinder in the early 1990s and later popularized among academician and professional by Henry Jenkins. Transmedia after two decades of its emergence seems to be more popular concepts compare to their older concept of “multimedia” and “hypermedia”. Henry Jenkins emphasizes transmedia storytelling refers to a “story that unfolds across multiple media platforms, with each new text making a distinctive and valuable contribution to the whole” (Jenkins, 2006). The use of these creative tools should enhance the creation of new textual experiences.

Transmedia, on the other hand, evokes the issue of medium specificity (still very much in contention), without supporting one side or the other. It also evokes the historic transformation we are now experiencing, in which all movies, videos, TV programs, and music are being redefined as software or data, a conversion with seismic financial and cultural consequences (Jenkins, 2015). Sapardi Djoko Damono was one of the Indonesian scholars that pioneered the term where he published and popularized “alih wahana”, a similar concept which literature works are expandable into different platform and medium (Damono, 2018). Depita et al (2023) developed content where three different

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levels of storytelling were utilized to bring a sense of interactive in learning basic film lighting through medium of virtual reality. This condition has been embraced by a number of artist and media producer as they become more active jumping all over different platforms, in which this action was quite impossible to be done 5 to 10 years ago.

Skateboard media has changed dramatically over the decades. Brooke noted on his book that magazines like Thrasher magazine and Transworld Skateboarding were the main way skaters connected. These magazines have become the bibles of skateboard culture, full of photos, interviews, and a DIY (Do-It-Yourself) attitude that shaped generations (Brooke, 1999). Then came the VHS era, skateboard videos like “The Bones Brigade Video Show” (1984) turned street skating into an art form. The physical tapes were passed around like treasure, mixing raw tricks with punk music and creative filmmaking. Skateboard legends like Tony Hawk and Mark Gonzales were born from this era (Borden, 2019). Today, skateboard media is everywhere online. Websites like “Jenkem” and “The Berrics” keep the culture alive, while Instagram and YouTube let anyone share clips instantly. TikTok challenges and smartphone edits have made skateboarding more viral than ever. But even with all the changes, the heart of skateboard media stays the same raw, creative, and totally unstoppable (Jenkem, 2020).

This paper explores the concept of transmedia storytelling on journey developing content across different platforms with skateboarding as the main topic of discussion.

**Theory and Methods**

Transmedia storytelling refers to a narrative technique where a single story unfolds across multiple media platforms, with each component offering unique contributions to the whole. Unlike traditional adaptations, transmedia expands the story world through films, comics, video games, and social media, encouraging audience participation. Henry Jenkins, a leading scholar, describes it as a process where “integral elements of a fiction get dispersed systematically across multiple delivery channels” (Jenkins, 2006).

The Star Wars franchise amongst the most popular intellectual property (IP) that expands the universe’s history and side characters using transmedia storytelling (Johnson, 2013). Followed by the Harry Potter franchise that extends the story and its character beyond paper and screen. Through the Wizarding World theme parks and Wizardingworld.com audience can access exclusive backstories and interactive performance, blending the original content and digital engagement.

The author used practice-based research as a method to develop this work. This method has been used widely by creative individual and scholars in order to seek new knowledge with the basis of creative artefacts (Hockey J, 2003). This research starts with the questions on how to develop a transmedia storytelling that specify shares content about skateboarding? In what aspect of skateboarding, the story can be told using transmedia storytelling concept? And what are the platforms that fits to tell this kind of story?

The research process involves literature review, design thinking, collaborative work with text editor, graphic designer, and video production team. Even though the process of developing the overall project felt organic, but the author has the intention to expand the dedicated content in different platforms to reach more diverse audience. Content wise, skateboarding has a very diverse story to tell, from trick variety and tutorial to the journey of professional skateboarder. In this research, the author chose to tell story of a journey in visiting some skateparks, street skateboard spot and event related to the skateboard movement worldwide. This first series specifically tell the journey to several places in the U.S.

Travel journal or known as travelogue was chosen as an overall concept for this project, the nature of traveling from one spot to another spot has become an easy step to understand this project. From Herodotus to Marco Polo, travel journal has become a significant literary and historical records that highlights a fundamental first-person narrative documenting truthful encounter of people, places, and culture (Alu & Hill, 2018).

First season consist of five different stories visiting five different places, it's similar with the second season. Each place has become a chapter that is divided in the expanded version of the printed book, in total were 10 chapters plus 2 bonuses articles and 3 additional articles for introduction, guest introduction and epilogue. The documentary worked with the same concept, one episode tell story of one season, only on the third episode discuss the overall experience and sum up the whole concept.

### **Finding and Discussion**

Ziarah Skateboarding is a multiple year project, the concept is to document any skateboarding related event, skateboard street spot and skateparks from the perspective of the author journey while doing travelling. In the beginning this initiative has no rigid concept and more spontaneous type of storytelling, where there was no specific platform to follow. Along the way, the project has been evolving and utilize many different platforms, from free online blog articles, subscription-based articles, to self-published printed book and then series of short documentary.

Ziarah skateboarding was first published on March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019 through Wonder Skateboarding website. The first article told story about one of legendary Do-it-yourself skateparks in Portland, Oregon popularly known as "Burnside Skatepark", as it's located in the intersection of East Burnside and Southeast Grand. The article then followed by other four articles about skatepark and skateboard event across the United States, including "House of Vans" event in Detroit, "Lost in Skatopia" and other articles. It wrapped with total five articles published online via Wonder Skateboarding website and it marked the first season of the series. All the articles were mostly structured with 5-7 short paragraphs, enriched with photos and videos about the subject matters.

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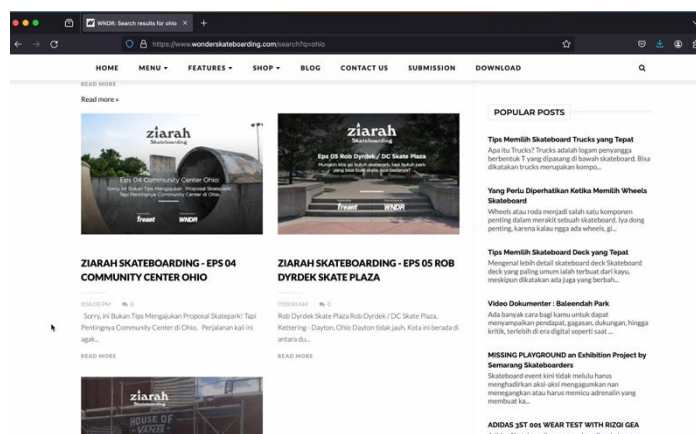


Image 1 Screenshot Season 01 (source: *wonderskateboarding.com*)

The second season published via different platform; the author chose a subscription-based platform called “Trakteer” for publishing the next season. It was a great new experience utilizing this new platform. Total there were 5 new articles and 2 more bonuses articles published through this platform. The platform help gain more diverse viewers and direct interaction with supporters, through this platform the author was also enabled to gain a small number of funds. On this second season, the article style is similar from the first season, an online blog post with approximately 3-5 minutes reading time. Articles structure into 5-7 short paragraphs with additional photos and videos reporting the specific place or event.

All the online article blog posts stopped in the beginning of 2022; the author let the project hiatus for a while so people could enjoy the existence online while still doing online promotion via social media. On this stage, there were some ideas on how to expand the content and get more diverse viewers. After went several discussions and considerations, the author decided to pull back to a concept of a traditional printed book for the next development process of this project.

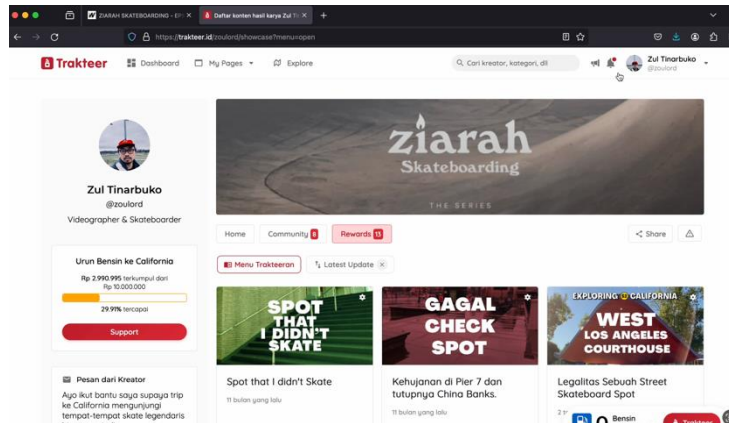


Image 2 Screenshot Season 02 (source: *trakteer.id*)

The design and development process of the book took one year to finished. It's finally until the beginning of 2024 the book was ready to be released. The title of the book is "Long Way to Get There: Jalan Panjang" a skateboard travelogue. The book consists of the two seasons article with total 10 articles plus two bonuses articles. To give more context why this project was expanded into a book the author added one introduction article of the book, a guest article from the founder of Wonder Skateboarding and also an epilogue chapter as a reflection of the whole experience working on the first two season. The book has total 110 pages, with the dimension of 19x26 cm, printed in uncoated papers with *riso* ink at Kunci Copy Station, Yogyakarta. The book was released during an art exhibition at Vast Store Yogyakarta, and was sold via online order as well as consigned to a number of skateboard shops in Jakarta, Bandung and Yogyakarta.



Image 3 Promotional post during book launching (source: *personal*)

After the book launching was done and books are available for sale, the author developed a series of video documentary about the overall experience of the project. This series of documentary has two purposes, to give a behind the scene look during the two years journey of traveling and as a promotional item for the books release. The documentary

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has 5-7 minutes of duration, with a two-interview style dialogue as the main narration and b-roll footages from the journey to enriched the storytelling. The author intended to produce three episodes of the documentary and published on YouTube. The first episode told a brief journey on the season one and second episode told the journey on the season two of the projects. However, on the second release of the episodes the book has already sold out. So, the third episode has not yet to be released. The third episode was intended to tell stories the transmedia journey and sum up all the whole project.



Image 4 Thumbnail for the short doc series published on YouTube (source: *personal*)

Among the different medium and platform, social media also played a crucial role in promoting the overall content. The author used Instagram as a platform to first share any updates on the first release of each content. Since the first inception with Wonder Skateboarding to the latest documentary release, most of the audience were informed through Instagram post. Therefore, all the post made for Instagram just for a direct promotional item for the project and there is no strong relation on the overall concept of the transmedia storytelling in this project.

The journey of transmedia storytelling can be seen below:

Table 1 Transmedia Storytelling Journey

No.	Year of release	Format	Medium/Platform	Link
1	2019	Free online articles	Wonder Skateboarding	<a href="https://www.wonderskateboarding.com/search/label/ziarah%20skateboarding">https://www.wonderskateboarding.com/search/label/ziarah%20skateboarding</a>
2	2020-2021	Subscription based articles	Trakteer	<a href="https://trakteer.id/zoulord/showcase">https://trakteer.id/zoulord/showcase</a>

3	2023-2024	Book/Zine	Physical release and Instagram post	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/C5AYbNiSaRF/?img_index=1">https://www.instagram.com/p/C5AYbNiSaRF/?img_index=1</a>
4	2024-2025	Short documentary series	YouTube	<a href="https://youtu.be/VmvZIURcy-E?si=7KNfkn-ckMHEGO8R">https://youtu.be/VmvZIURcy-E?si=7KNfkn-ckMHEGO8R</a>

## Conclusion

Transmedia storytelling offers a unique experience across different platform. Digital platform has the advantage to boost the overall experience. However, in this project the journey of expanding the story has gone through different mode of presentation. Not only through online digital media but also taking back down to traditional printed book. The concept was simple, as the core of this project is a written article so the content is more fluid to jump all over different platforms.

In order to answers the research questions, this project has been able to give a brief explanation on how to combine the concept of transmedia storytelling and skateboarding content by implementing a travel journal experience as the core content of the project. The nature of the content is expandable into different way of storytelling as well as different type of representation. The aspect of travel journal in skateboarding by far is one of the most fits content that can be expanded into different platforms. Skateboarding in popular media has some limitation in terms of developing the right way of storytelling. Skateboard video is among the most popular type of media representation for skateboarding, the documentation process of landing tricks in a street spot or skatepark is merely gravitated towards non-fiction storytelling and documentary type of filmmaking. Basic treatment of storytelling is somehow crucial to be implemented, such as the existence of characters, goals and obstacles but not become the core idea of this project. Each chapter on its specific place has a very unique circumstances, and to be able to repackage it into different platforms is the challenge on this project.

The decision to expand the core story of this project was more like intuitive rather than conceptual. All the platforms that were used in this project intuitively has the right meaning and characteristic to tell the story. As it's non-fiction based, the concept of travel journal or travelogue which has several chapters to expand has become a good starting point in exploring the combination of transmedia storytelling for skateboarding content. Future direction is to analyse the comparison engagement from each medium and platforms.

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