

Digital Media Project 1
Brief Writing for Assessment 1**Digital Media Project 1 Brief**

'Escape the Darkness' Mobile Game Application Advertisement

Part 1: Writing the Brief**Aim**

My aim in producing an advertisement for a mobile game application called 'Escape the Darkness' is to persuade more women to engage with this medium, and in particular, the escape room or puzzle-based gaming applications. The proposed persuasive video production will contain standard recorded footage, in addition to a number of animated and graphic design-based gameplay scenes.

In 2006, women comprised only 38% of gamers online, by 2014 that percentage had grown significantly to a staggering 48%. However, in the past six years, female gamer numbers have dropped by 7% to 41% (see Appendix A). Persuading female gamers to move into the mobile game application sector of the marketplace would not only ensure future parity between the sexes but widen a niche market area and target audience.

Objective

As a result of this project, I will develop a greater understanding of the video production process, which will include graphic design and animation elements, from a technical skills perspective and create a persuasive and engaging storyline for a specific target audience.

On completion of this course, I will be able to demonstrate improved video production, graphic design and animation expertise and knowledge, and ensure that all Occupational Health & Safety principles and other legal requirements, for example, music copyright, talent or location release forms are taken into consideration throughout the video production process. And lastly, through combining divergent and convergent thinking methodologies, demonstrate my ability to create a solution to an industry-identified problem.

Professional context

To generate the multiple medium concept for the proposed video production within the field of cinematography, I drew inspiration from several sources within the entertainment industry. The most influential practitioners being Christopher Nolan, Merve Tekin of 7 Hills Productions, PlayStation and Ubisoft North America.

Cinematography and Storytelling

Christopher Nolan has been confusing and misdirecting audiences with his circular or double-meaning storylines since his 1998 movie *Following*. Contemplation of his recent release *Tenet* and a second viewing of *Memento* led me to question the type of conversation my protagonist and antagonist might have with one another, a conversation on two levels:

1. Celeste believing that Jen is about to go on her first date with someone she has met online who is independently wealthy, an entrepreneur and who owns a castle.
2. Whereas Jen is just describing the *Dark Master* that she has been trying to trap and track within the 'Escape the Darkness' game, to avoid admitting her lack of a romantic interest.

Nolan's placement or blocking of his talent within a scene in combination with the shot size reveals not only the emotions, or status of the characters present, but also places importance on certain objects. Nolan, drawing the audience's eyes to the object, creates the surreal feeling that the viewer is another person in the room. In our advertisement, the viewer will hopefully feel like a fellow coffee enthusiast. The focus within the advertisement will be upon the protagonist and her iPhone as she plays the 'Escape the Darkness' game.

Merve Tekin of 7 Hills Productions has a unique way of generating intensity and interest across basic film scenes with dynamic speed changes in sync with a soundtrack or ambient sounds when shot at different angles and combined with natural light. The setting for the proposed advertisement changed from a 10 year school reunion, to an outside café (see Figure 1 below) to accommodate the speed and light-related Tekin effects.



Figure 1 - The Curious Caravan Café (The Curious Caravan 2019)

Graphic Game Design with Animation

PlayStation is the market leader when it comes to online gaming trailers, a fact that is evident when new gamers view the trailers and have difficulty separating the gameplay scenes from the real-life footage. A PlayStation trailer usually follows the same formula of high energy movement, with effective and interesting scene transitions that utilise bright saturated colour, graphic design, soundtrack, voiceover, and other ambient sounds. Ubisoft North America produces story trailers, that contain unconventional soundtracks and characters, as well as inspirational landscapes and character movements. The proposed advertisement will attempt to emulate PlayStation scene transition techniques between the cafe footage and the animation and graphic scenes, as well as Ubisoft's game design movement principles. For more information please refer to Appendix B.

Audience

The target audience demographic for the proposed advertisement is females with an average age of 37.5 years, who prefer to play games that are easy to use, and accessible on a device they already possess (Statista 2020b; Game Sparks 2020). This audience prefers to use their mobile smartphone to access a game, rather than a connected console due to their lifestyle and constraints on their time; they also enjoy playing puzzle or strategy-based games of a short duration, that pass the time and relieve their stress, and do not require any additional purchase of hardware or software (Game Sparks 2020; Freeman 2019).

Communication approach

The proposed video production is a persuasive advertisement that is designed to make its audience download and purchase the 'Escape the Darkness' mobile game application. The advertisement will be constructed to influence the audiences purchasing potential indirectly, putting them at ease with humour in place of the usual 'hard-sell' techniques. With this in mind, only the final scene inside the video production will contain a 'Call to Action' which will provide details to the user of where the mobile game app may be downloaded onto a smart device, for example, iOS app store, or the Google Play app store.

Outlet

The proposed advertisement will be distributed to game review sites and online video channels, in addition to, the 'Escape the Darkness' social media pages and official website. From a promotional perspective, if used as part of a marketing campaign, distribution will include ezines, television channels, subscription television services and other online advertising services. However, having the advertisement shared on social media through third-party endorsement of its audience should be the ultimate goal.

Method/Approach

This project involves the following:

Discovering the field:

- Mind mapping of various hobbies or areas of interest which lead to research from a societal point of view, that is, posing the question: *Is there a benefit to promoting the concept in mind to the greater community (or client)?*
- Smart device research into the advertising mediums used by mobile game application developers to market their product(s).
- Computer research into the advertising mediums used by console and PC-based software application developers to market their product(s).
- Investigation of game-related motion graphics, animation and live action style quality, advertising medium, and preferred platform, that is, smart device, console, or PC.
- Research location and placement of advertisements, for example, in-app, television (free-to-air or subscription), social media, cinema, or print-based.
- Identifying developers that excel at marketing their game products, for example, PlayStation.
- Identifying potential competitors and researching their marketing strategies and game advertisements.

Defining the problem:

Through the generation of this Project Brief, the following will be defined and should assist with future project-related issues:

- The project aim and its objectives.
- The proposed video productions target audience defined using a proto-persona technique in conjunction with statistical research.
- How the proposed video production will communicate to its target audience, and the medium to be used, that is, a persuasive advertisement.
- The distribution routes and marketing channels for the persuasive advertisement.
- Keeping the five steps of 'Design Thinking' in mind, the methodology required to deliver the finished persuasive advertisement.
- Software, hardware, and the finished persuasive advertisement technical specification requirements.
- A *Project Schedule* detailing at a high-level the various stages required to complete the project.
- Achieving seamless transition between multiple mediums within the same persuasive advertisement, that is, video footage, animation, and graphic design.

Brainstorming concepts:

The following require independent brainstorming sessions:

- The quality of game animation required to be incorporated into the finished persuasive advertisement.
- The advertisements story concept, tagline, and the characters.
- The advertisements shoot location.
- The advertisements length, that is, duration.
- The type of animation to incorporate into the advertisement due to time constraints.

Experimentation:

Presentation of two distinct storyboard concepts utilising the same tagline, within an advertising pitch format:

1. The Game of Love

This is a satirical story that plays with dialog that is full of double meanings. Jen is the protagonist and is addicted to a new mobile APP escape game called 'Escape the Darkness'. She is completely absorbed in the game as she sits in an outside Café all alone, ignoring the world around her (and the wait staff). Celeste, the antagonist, an old school friend who Jen hasn't seen in over five years since graduation, enters the café, spots Jen and precedes to invade her space, table and game play. After exchanging pleasantries, Celeste asks if Jen is married yet with kids. Jen hates being asked this question like so many women in their twenties, so says no, but when pressed tells a lie after spotting the Dark Master (an attractive looking wizard) in the game screen. A conversation is then had on two levels: Celeste believing that Jen is about to go on her first date with someone she has met online who is independently wealthy, an entrepreneur and who owns a castle with a maze. Whereas Jen is just describing the Dark Master that she has been trying to trap and track in the game, to avoid admitting her lack of a romantic partner. It ends with the tagline 'Make the dark master the new man in your life!'.

2. The Gamer Widow

A satirical story that plays with double-entendres as above. Jen is a Gamer Widow, and the first half of the advert shows her being ignored by her partner as he plays an ultra-violent shoot-em-up game via a console rig. She asks him to show her how to play, but he refuses, telling her 'You're just a girl'. She gives up and leaves. She finds herself in a café, alone and bored. Her phone beeps as an alert pops up on her phone - the Dark Master winking at her provocatively, and she presses the INSTALL button. Six months pass, and the now ex-boyfriend is at GAMERCON, there to watch the best players compete in a new game of strategy called 'Escape the Darkness'. Jen walks out to huge applause and adoration, her dumbstruck ex-boyfriend and his dorky mates stunned by her reversal of fortune. It ends with the tagline 'Make the dark master the new man in your life!'.



Figure 2 – 'The Game of Love' Example Storyboard (Author's own 2020, unpublished)

Final production of the creative artefact:

1. The creation of a satirical persuasive advertisement for a mobile game application in a standardised video 1920 x 1080 50 fpm MP4 format, following course lecturer feedback especially during the experimentation phase.
2. An Advertising Agency Pre-release Presentation to a client that comprises distribution information, and mockup examples of how the video will look on various distribution channels, for example, as part of a social media post.
3. A self-reflection on activities undertaken, in addition to a project evaluation.

Technical Specifications

Software requirements:

- Adobe Premiere Pro (cinematography elements)
- Adobe Photoshop (graphic design elements)
- Adobe Illustrator (logo graphic design elements)
- Adobe After Effects (animation elements)
- Adobe Acrobat (PDF conversion and hyperlink elements)
- Pixton (comic graphic images and animation elements)
- Prezi Next (presentation software)

Hardware requirements:

- 2 x Panasonic HC-VX1 4K Video Camera
- 2 x Volkwell Softbox Lighting Kit
- Rode Wireless GO - Compact Wireless Microphone System
- PC
- iPhone

The final video file format will be recorded and exported as specified below:

- Panasonic recording mode: 1080p/50p(28M), (28Mbps / VBR) and (1920 x 1080).
- Adobe Premiere Pro MP4 output mode: 1920 width x 1080 height, frame rate 50 and encoding format H.264.
- All graphical and animation elements will conform to minimum 300dpi and sized 1920 x 1080.

Presentation

The final MP4 video file will be placed inside my *Digital Media Project 1 – Assessment 2.2 – Final Creative Artifact & Project Reflection* ePortfolio page, accompanied by my project reflection and a mockup PDF Advertising Agency Pre-release Presentation. This presentation will contain a pre-release Advertising Agency pitch to a client that comprises distribution information, and prototype examples of how the video will look on various distribution channels, for example, on the 'Escape the Darkness' official website, as part of a social media post, inside an ezine, through in-app advertising (full page and banner), on a television screen, and as cinema advertising. An active link will ensure that the video is able to be accessed from the presentation, in addition to the ePortfolio page MP4 video file upload.

Timeline for proposed project work

Week 1 (21/09)	Generate a Mind map To assist with deciding upon the proposed project and story concept theme and underlying message.
Week 2 (28/09)	Create a Moodboard To visualise the proposed project and submit with Project Brief for Proposal Assessment 1.
Week 3 (05/10)	Prepare a Project Brief for Proposal Assessment 1
Week 4 (12/10)	Write a Synopsis/Outline and Script Put in place any required governmental documentation, for example, permits, select cast/crew and distribute release forms (crew, cast, location and music).
Week 5 (19/10)	Generate a Storyboard, Shooting Schedule, Call Sheets & other documentation Compile RECCE notes, Equipment & Props Listing, B-Roll Footage Listing, acquire equipment, props, products, costumes, and research weather conditions for the upcoming Production Phase.
Week 6 (26/10)	Create game animation scenes & organise Cast & Crew Preparation Day (25 October 2020) Includes makeup trial, hair trial, costume fitting, rehearsal/roundtable reading, workplace health and safety briefing, handout of Call Sheets and retrieval of signed Talent Release Forms.
Week 7 (02/11)	Production Day 1 (31 October 2020) Production Day 2 (1 November 2020) Set preparation, roundtable, shoot footage, check rushes, and manage backup/storage and submit Continuous Project Assessment 2.1.
Week 8 (09/11)	Post-production Assembly & Edit Includes adding the front end and credit sequences.
Week 9 (16/11)	Post-production Colour & Audio Correction Includes adding the voiceover, locking the picture, and creating the Advertising Agency Pre-release Presentation.
Week 10 (23/11)	Distribute video production & submit Continuous Project Assessment 2.2 Export into a 1080p HD file format, uploading MP4 to ePortfolio, embedding video on www.sarowland.com portfolio website and lastly organisation of a cast/crew screening.

Part 2: Reflection

Identification of Skills and Knowledge

Existing skills and knowledge

- High-level of competency utilising the following software products:
 - Adobe Premiere Pro (cinematography elements)
 - Adobe Photoshop (graphic design elements)
 - Adobe Illustrator (logo graphic design elements)
 - Adobe Acrobat (PDF conversion and hyperlink elements)
- Low-level of competency utilising the following software products:
 - Adobe After Effects (animation elements)
 - Pixton (comic graphic images and animation elements)
 - Prezi Next (presentation software)
- Only one year of prior knowledge in respect to cinematography techniques of video production. The creation of three short films, and five adverts as part of the *Bachelor of Digital Media* coursework which may be found on my portfolio website at www.sarowland.com (Author's own 2019, unpublished).

Required skills and knowledge

- High-level of competency utilising the following software products:
 - Adobe Premiere Pro (cinematography elements)
 - Adobe Photoshop (graphic design elements)
 - Adobe Illustrator (logo graphic design elements)
 - Adobe Acrobat (PDF conversion and hyperlink elements)
 - Adobe Effects and motion graphics skills.
 - Pixton Animation techniques.
 - Prezi Next presentation skills.
- Develop a deeper understanding of the cinematography process, camera angles, sound editing and colour correction.
- Good talent placement inside a scene from a blocking perspective.
- Good talent movement to assist with transitions between scenes.
- Learn how to direct talent more specifically to achieve required concept.
- Advertising Agency client presentation requirements.
- Learn how to incorporate different mediums into a single video file format seamlessly.

Appendix A

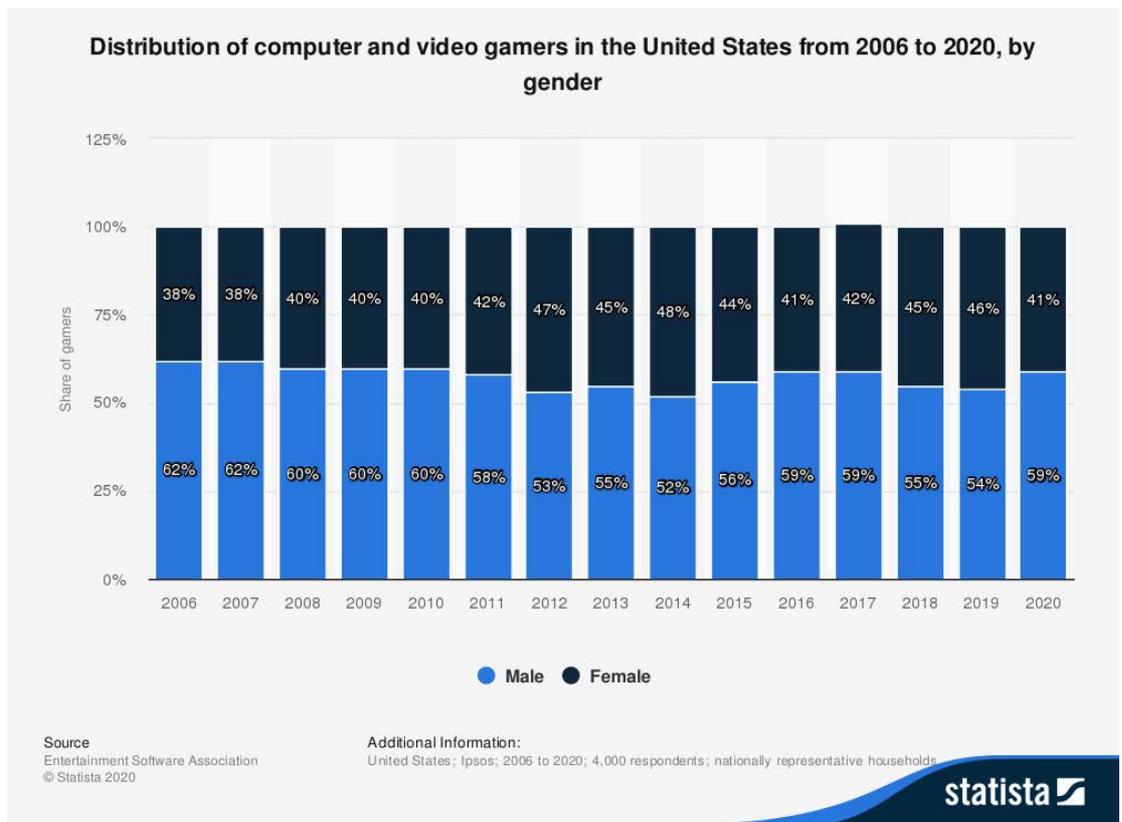


Figure 3 - Distribution of computer and video gamers in the United States from 2006 to 2020, by gender (Statista 2020a)

Appendix B

Communication Type: Persuasive digital media project

Mode: Video Production

Communication Purpose: Advertisement that persuades

My aim in producing an advertisement for a mobile game application called 'Escape the Darkness' is to persuade more women to engage with this medium, and in particular, the escape room or puzzle-based gaming applications. The video production will contain standard recorded footage of two women interacting in a café setting, in addition to a number of animated and graphic-based gameplay scenes.

Inspiration from other practitioners

PlayStation's (2020b) *FIFA 21 "Win As One" Official Launch* fast paced high energy commercial has great transitions between scenes, creatively done with the use of both movement: talent and props, and intense primary colour choices. The overload of loud music and colour on screen feels clannish and had me pondering about which team I would use as my avatar inside the game. The way the camera angle starts high, and then drops to below the talent creates constant movement on screen and shows the talent at the end as being 'larger than life' to the audience. Here is the link to the commercial: <https://youtu.be/wppi4Kjzubk>.

PlayStation's (2020a) second offering, the *Destiny 2: Season of Arrivals – Festival of the Lost Gameplay Trailer* combines its music soundtrack, voiceover, and other ambient sounds to perfection. The graphical overlay with white text has been set to the beat of the music to great effect, and its transitioning is highly effective. It's mix of live action and animation graphics is very impressive. Here is the link to the trailer: <https://youtu.be/XfFkV5Q5e1k>.

Merve Tekin of 7 Hills Productions is an experienced non-fiction storyteller with over 1000 reality show episodes under her belt. 7 Hills Productions (2017) *Coffee Shop* commercial transcends time with its change of speed repeatedly throughout the advert, which generates intensity and interest. The opening of the commercial is simplistic but effective, the simple streetscape and sounds associated, and the fact that the music isn't introduced until the camera has moved inside the coffee shop is a clever decision. Here is the link to the commercial: <https://youtu.be/Z6Dx-o3vfJY>.

7 Hills Productions (2020) second offering, the *La Tour* commercial had a funky time travel feel due to a mix of sped up and slowed down speeds, however, it is the directors use of light, and the angles the footage has been shot at, that make this an appealing advertisement to watch. Here is the link to the commercial: <https://youtu.be/xm-kqZvIDYI>.

Ubisoft North America are excellent story tellers, in fact, they release a story trailer for each of their new games. *Assassin's Creed Valhalla's* story trailer has been well thought out and is interesting to follow. The animation quality is still recognisable as animation, rather than live action, however its treatment of shadow movements across the characters faces and clothes is excellent (Ubisoft North America's 2020a). Here is the link to the story trailer: <https://youtu.be/WaOKSUIf4TM>.

Ubisoft North America's (2020b) second trailer, the *Immortals Fenyx Rising* trailer has a number of surprising musical choices which are designed to excite their audience, as well as a sassy looking hero who moves with surprising dexterity for animation. The landscape, or wide shots are inspiring during game play. Here is the link to the trailer: <https://youtu.be/qMHUHxHZhaU>.

Reference List

7 Hills Productions 2017, *Coffee shop commercial – 7 hills productions*, video, YouTube, uploading 28 December, viewed 3 October 2020, <<https://youtu.be/Z6Dx-o3vfJY>>.

7 Hills Productions 2020, *La tour (product video)*, video, YouTube, uploading 12 May, viewed 3 October 2020, <<https://youtu.be/xm-kqZvIDYI>>.

Freeman 2019, *One billion female gamers: how the demographics of play are shifting*, The Gaming Economy, TheGamingEconomy.com, viewed 3 October 2020, <<https://www.thegamingeconomy.com/2019/05/15/one-billion-female-gamers-how-the-demographics-of-play-are-shifting/>>

Game Sparks 2020, *The average gamer: how the demographics have shifted*, Game Sparks, Game Sparks Technologies Ltd, viewed 3 October 2020, <<https://www.gamesparks.com/blog/the-average-gamer-how-the-demographics-have-shifted/>>.

PlayStation 2020a, *Destiny 2: season of arrivals – festival of the lost gameplay trailer | PS4*, video, YouTube, uploading 2 October, viewed 3 October 2020, <<https://youtu.be/XffkV5Q5e1k>>.

- 2020b, *FIFA 21 – “win as one” official launch trailer | PS4*, video, YouTube, uploading 1 October, viewed 3 October 2020, <<https://youtu.be/wppi4Kjzubk>>.

Statista 2020a, *Distribution of computer and video gamers in the United States from 2006 to 2020, by gender*, United States, viewed 1 October 2020, <<https://www.statista.com/statistics/232383/gender-split-of-us-computer-and-video-gamers/>>.

- 2020b, *Distribution of video gamers worldwide in 2017, by age group and gender*, United States, viewed 1 October 2020, <<https://www.statista.com/statistics/232383/gender-split-of-us-computer-and-video-gamers/>>.

The Curious Caravan 2019, *The curious caravan, flowers and coffee*, Facebook, viewed 9 October 2020, <<https://www.facebook.com/thecuriouscaravan/photos/a.222192827943751/1409568055872883/?type=3&theater>>.

Ubisoft North America 2020a, *Assassin’s creed Valhalla: story trailer | Ubisoft [na]*, video, YouTube, uploading 29 September, viewed 3 October 2020, <<https://youtu.be/WaOKSUIf4TM>>.

- 2020b, *Immortals fenyx rising: official world premiere trailer ubisoft forward 2020 Ubisoft [na]*, video, YouTube, uploading 10 September, viewed 3 October 2020, <<https://youtu.be/qMHUHxHZhaU>>.