



THE FUTURE OF STORYTELLING°

PHASE 2 OF 2

THE FUTURE OF STORYTELLING: PHASE 2 is one installment of Latitude 42s, an ongoing series of innovation studies which Latitude, an international research consultancy, publishes in the spirit of knowledge-sharing and opportunity discovery for both established companies and emerging entrepreneurs.

Latitude°

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42°

MEDIA & CONTENT

INTRODUCTION°

NEW PERSPECTIVES ON STORYTELLING



At Latitude, we work with some of the foremost companies in media, technology, and advertising, helping them to grow their audiences through great storytelling. As the landscape evolves, we've been exploring possibilities for next-gen narratives—including how technology is enabling more immersive and interactive experiences with content and brands.

From our work, we know that the desire for new content experiences isn't niche; it's widespread and growing. It isn't something reserved just for fantasy and science fiction; it also applies to more "unlikely" genres like non-fiction and advertising. With that in mind, our goal is to help content creators and brand storytellers understand new possibilities for cross-platform and other tech-driven experiences, innovative character and storyline interactions, physical world integrations, and more.

There's still much to figure out, including how to overcome technology and content creation constraints, as well as the question of how best to measure a new breed of multi-platform experiences. (Is it by number of platforms used, desire for interactivity, the various ways these experiences impact our real lives, or something else?). We hope our work pushes us all a little closer toward answering these questions.

OUR QUESTIONS

A cartoon illustration of a woman wearing VR goggles speaking at a podium with multiple microphones, surrounded by several men in suits standing behind her. The woman is in the center, wearing a blue jacket and VR goggles with yellow lightning bolts. She is gesturing with her right hand. The podium is covered in a teal cloth and has several black microphones on it. Behind her are seven men in suits, some in blue and some in brown, standing in a line. The background is a simple brown wall with two microphones hanging from the ceiling.

1. What kinds of new story experiences and character relationships are people looking for?
2. How big are the opportunities for storytellers, including those in non-fiction and advertising?
3. Are there specific audience types for next-generation storytelling? How can we reach them?

HIGHLIGHTS°

For Content Creators

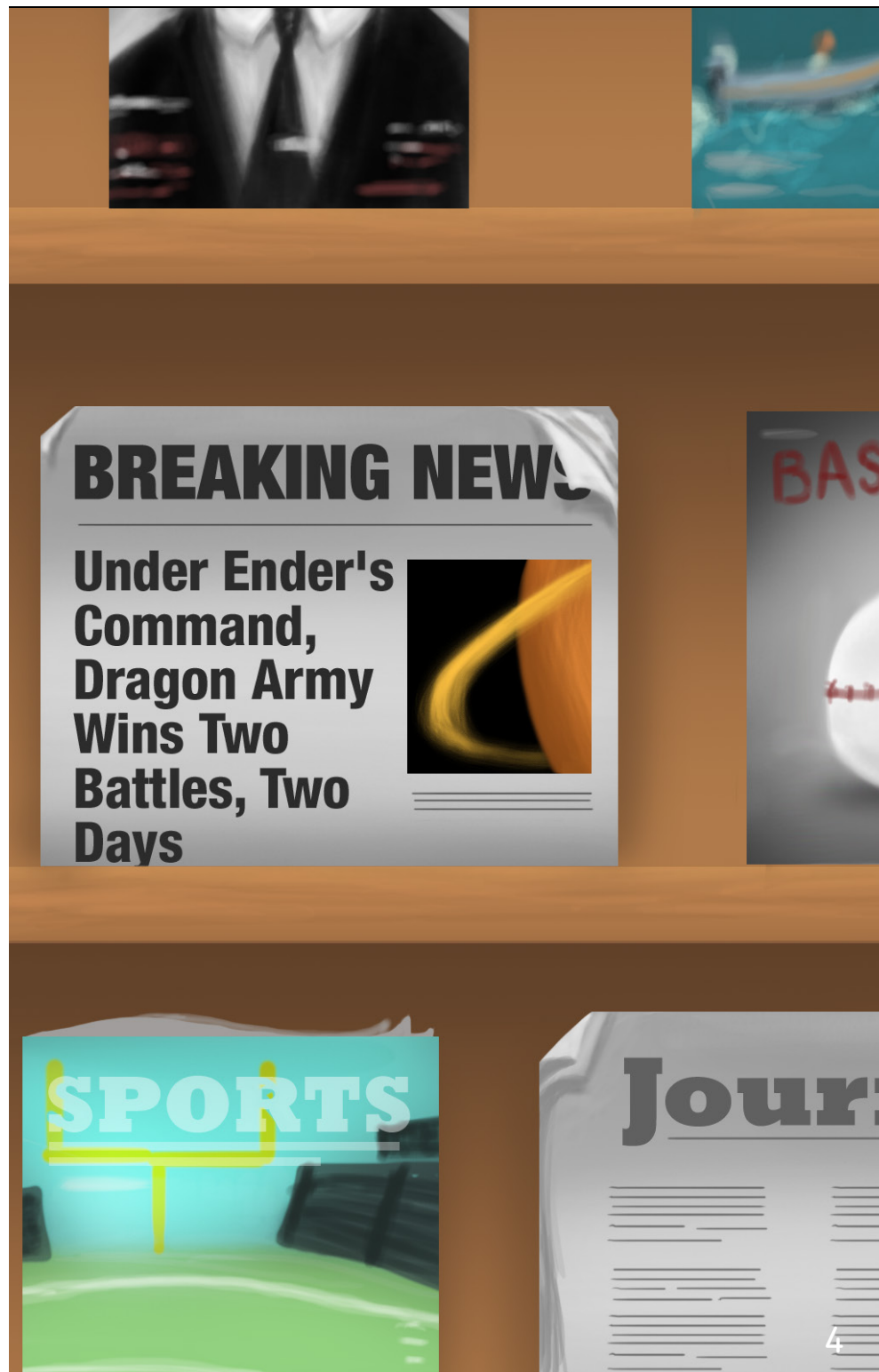
- **Level up on the character-audience relationship**
Audiences want to get deeper inside the minds of characters; they want to see things from their perspectives and, in some cases, develop personal relationships with them. Would chatting with a character on Facebook really be so different from chatting with a real friend there?
- **Push the limits of how, when, and where stories are told**
As characters become more “3-D,” why shouldn’t they live full, 24/7 lives? People are intrigued by the idea of real-time story-worlds where events keep unfolding whether or not we happen to be tuning in.

For Brands and Marketers

- **Embrace new narrative techniques, once and for all**
Audiences agree that there’s a big opportunity to make ads feel more like content people would naturally choose to engage with—by providing back-story about a brand or product, visually immersive experiences, game elements, and so on. (See p. 8 for details.)
- **Think of the real world as another platform**
These days, many of us carry around smartphones that not only work synchronously with other devices, but are capable of interfacing with real objects and places. Maybe the definition of “cross-platform” needs a makeover? (Retailers, this especially means you.)

For All Storytellers

- **Heed the second (and third) screens: here’s how**
When it comes to secondary devices, some might think it’s all been done before. (We beg to differ.) Top opportunities include interacting with characters, earning rewards, accessing bonus content, and more. (See p. 9 for the full list.)
- **Recognize many audiences and many ways to engage**
While it’s easy to generalize about “what audiences want,” people desire vastly different things from stories—such as very passive vs. highly interactive experiences. (See p. 11 for more on audience types.)



WE ASKED MORE THAN 1,200 PEOPLE ACROSS THE WORLD, “HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO EXPERIENCE STORIES IN THE FUTURE?”



Phase 1 (Previous): Idea Generation

In 2012, Latitude kicked off its Future of Storytelling initiative by interviewing pioneers in the media space to discuss current challenges and innovations within the industry.

Next, we conducted an online survey amongst 158 early adopters across the world to generate new possibilities for interacting with stories. Participants were asked to play the role of producer, choosing a narrative (a book, movie, plot-driven video game, etc.) that they know well, and re-inventing how audiences might experience that story. From these ideas, we developed the *4 I's of Storytelling* framework to illustrate key dimensions of future storytelling experiences.

Phase 2 (Current): Robust Quantification

From 2012-2013, Latitude surveyed 1,107 smartphone owners in Brazil, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Borrowing material generated in Phase 1 (e.g., future experience concepts, etc.), the survey aimed to quantify trends, opportunities, and key audience targets for second screen and transmedia storytelling across genres amongst a broader audience.*

A segmentation analysis was conducted based on respondents' need states and future desires, yielding 4 segments or "audience archetypes": Seekers, Relaters, Realists, and Players. Explore archetype data interactively at futureofstorytellingproject.com.

What's Next?

Understanding what audiences want today and anticipating what they'll want tomorrow is something we at Latitude do everyday. This study is just one chapter in our ongoing exploration of the future of storytelling. To continue discovering with us, visit futureofstorytellingproject.com and [subscribe to our newsletter](#).

*Phase 2 findings are not intended to be representative of the general population. Phase 2 data is based on participants living in Brazil, the United Kingdom, & the United States between the ages of 15-59 (n=1107). All participants were smartphone owners with basic cable and/or pay TV services (which could include streaming from the web) who watch at least 6 hours of TV content per week. At least 50% of participants from the UK & US were required to own a tablet.



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CHARACTERS CAN BECOME OUR FRIENDS

Character Connections are the Next Level of “Social”

We’ve all identified with characters’ specific challenges and aspirations, but we’ve done it mostly from a distance; they haven’t sought our advice or explained a complex relationship we’ve always wondered about. Audiences want more personal and fluid character encounters; 78% want to “friend” a character digitally (e.g., receive Facebook updates, text messages, etc.), with the ability to sway the character’s decisions—just as with a real friend. That said, people also want these relationships to affect their *own* lives, not just the character’s—by cultivating an open mind, teaching them, or motivating them in other positive ways.

Stories with a View: Seeing from Greater (or More) Heights

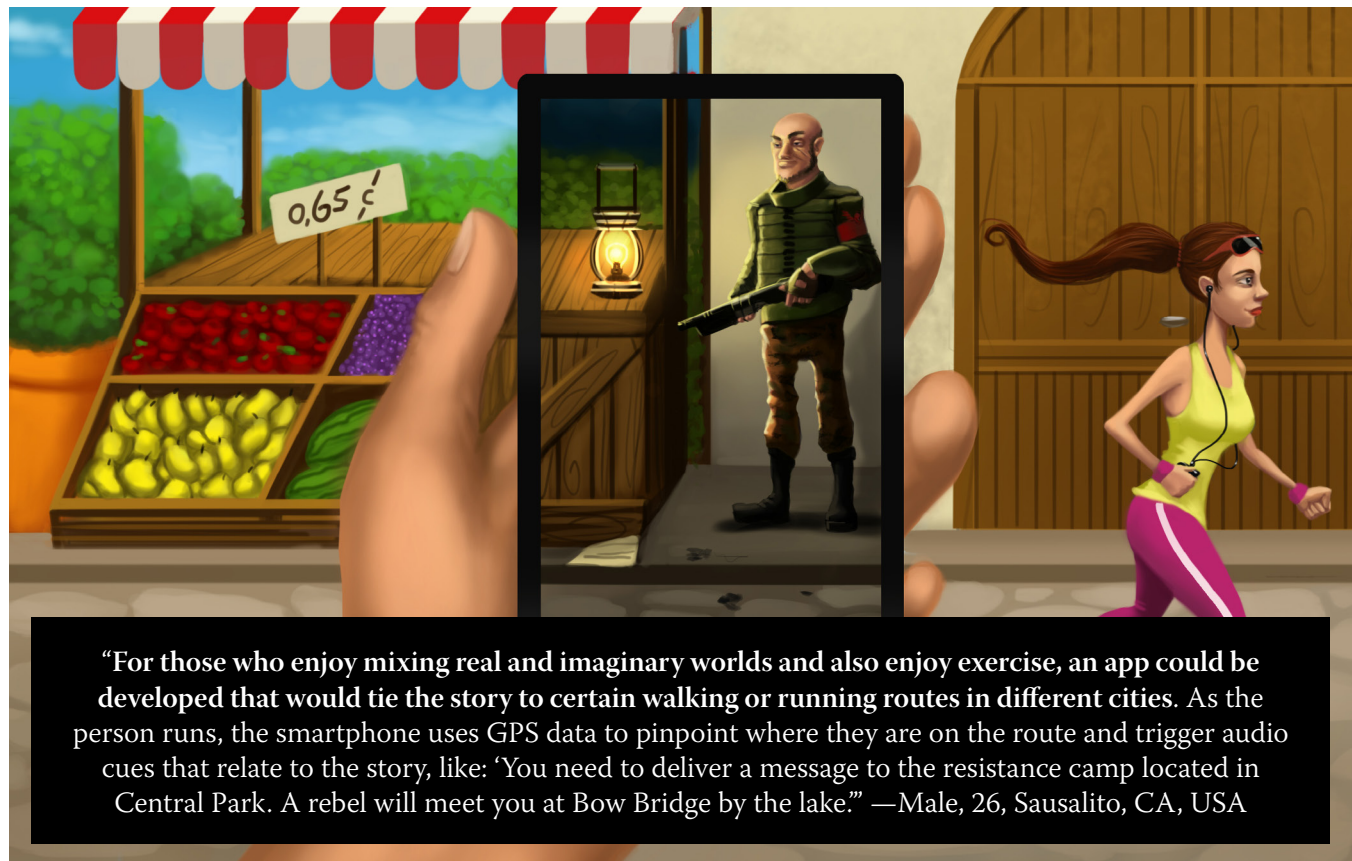
Enhanced perception is in demand; 87% crave the ability to see events through the eyes of a particular character or to switch between different characters’ points-of-view. (Some even want to see the real world from a character’s perspective.) How did people perceive Holden Caulfield? What would the Buddha think of Internet culture? People want the ability to spectate freely—without constraints like time or third person point-of-view. Not surprisingly, many want to see this applied to genres like drama and sci-fi, but non-fiction also presents clear opportunities: reality (29% of all participants interested), history (27%), documentary (25%), sports (19%), travel (16%), news (15%) and even advertising (13%).

“For Star Trek, the user could choose to experience things from different crew members’ perspectives; they could explore planets with La Forge’s eyes and see many colors; they could look through Data’s eyes, clicking on things around them to reveal information on specific subjects; they could ‘see’ emotions as Troi does, which I’m sure would be interesting—perhaps everyone would have an aura; and so on.”

—Female, 15, Pembroke, MA, USA

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STORYLINE INNOVATION: REAL-TIME & REAL GOOD



Play with New Possibilities, Like Parallel Worlds

Today’s “always on,” mobile culture provides more canvas for storytellers to work with; *we* can access content instantly, 24/7, so why shouldn’t content access *us* in the same way? As characters become more “real,” it’s only natural that they should go on living their lives even when we aren’t actively tuning in. When significant events happen, we might receive text messages from characters or push alerts from “official” news sources. In fact, 91% say narratives with a “real-time” story-world would motivate them to tune in more often to ensure they weren’t missing anything.

Do More Good in *This* World

Thanks in part to mobile technology, stories can be designed such that actions taken within the story-world have a positive impact in the actual world—for individuals or for society. (Turns out, running from zombies does have health benefits, and combating fictional, evil corporations can build real libraries in Zambia.) Good news: 88% want stories to help them learn about and support worthy causes.

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TO BOLDLY GO: BRANDED CONTENT & BEYOND

By Popular Demand: Innovative Advertising

Audiences are ready and waiting for marketers to come up with something truly fresh and inventive; 92% agree that there's a real opportunity for brands to borrow from entertainment-based narratives, making ads feel more like a story or a game. When asked how ads with more creative elements (see chart opposite) might impact their opinions about a promoted brand or product, participants reported that they'd be:

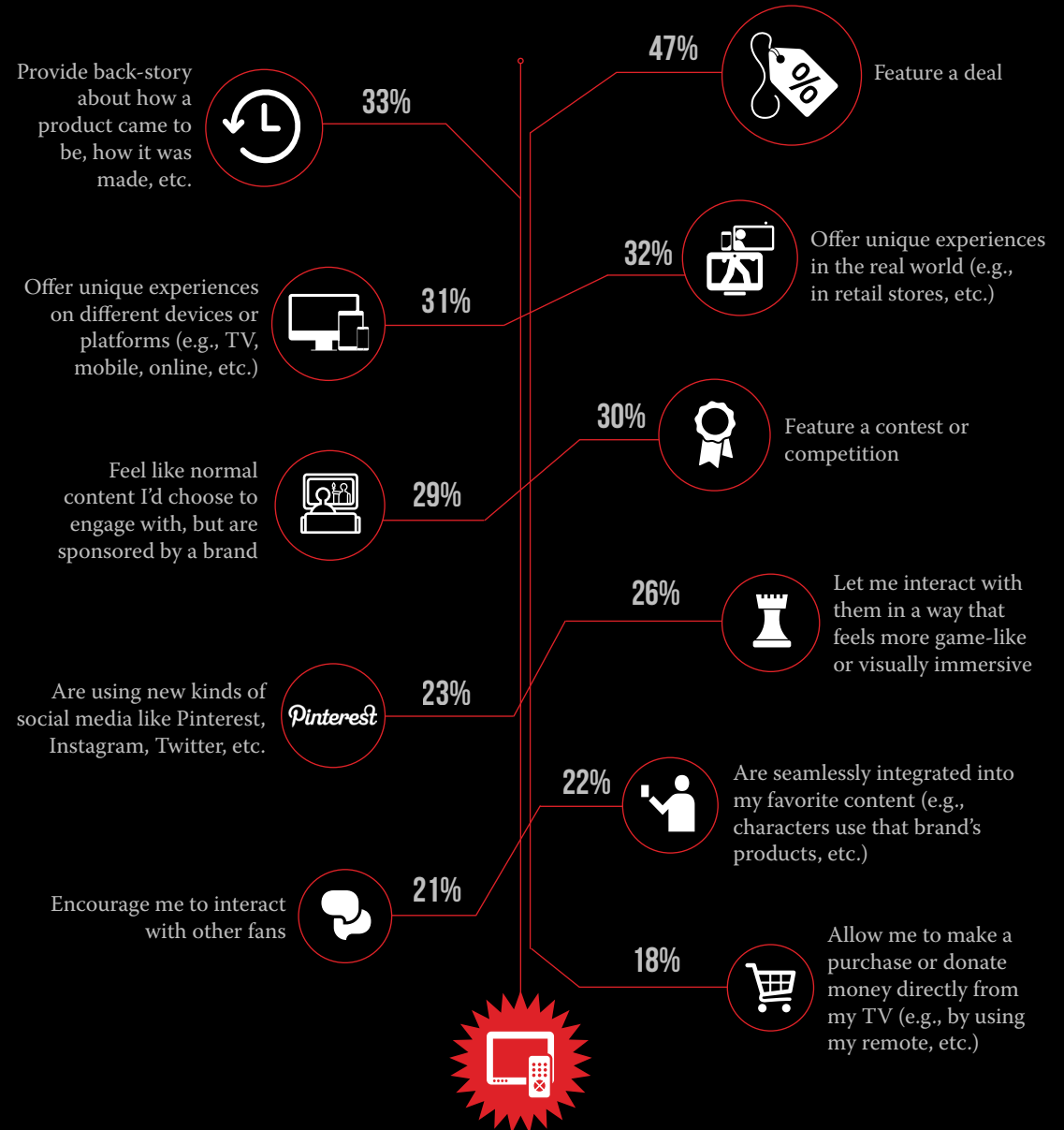
- more aware of it (38%)
- more likely to talk with others about it (38%)
- more likely to make a purchase (36%)
- more likely to visit the brand's website (36%)
- more likely to feel positively about the brand (34%)

Stories Could Be One-Click Storefronts

Brands have an opportunity to reach us through more seamless integrations with the content we're already hooked on. For example, 73% of people are interested in discovering real-world products or services at relevant points in a story. (Just click on that car for specs and pricing!) With real-time technologies like Shazam for TV, brands are already beginning to synch up the "Buy now" button with our favorite content—giving an entirely new meaning to contextual relevance.

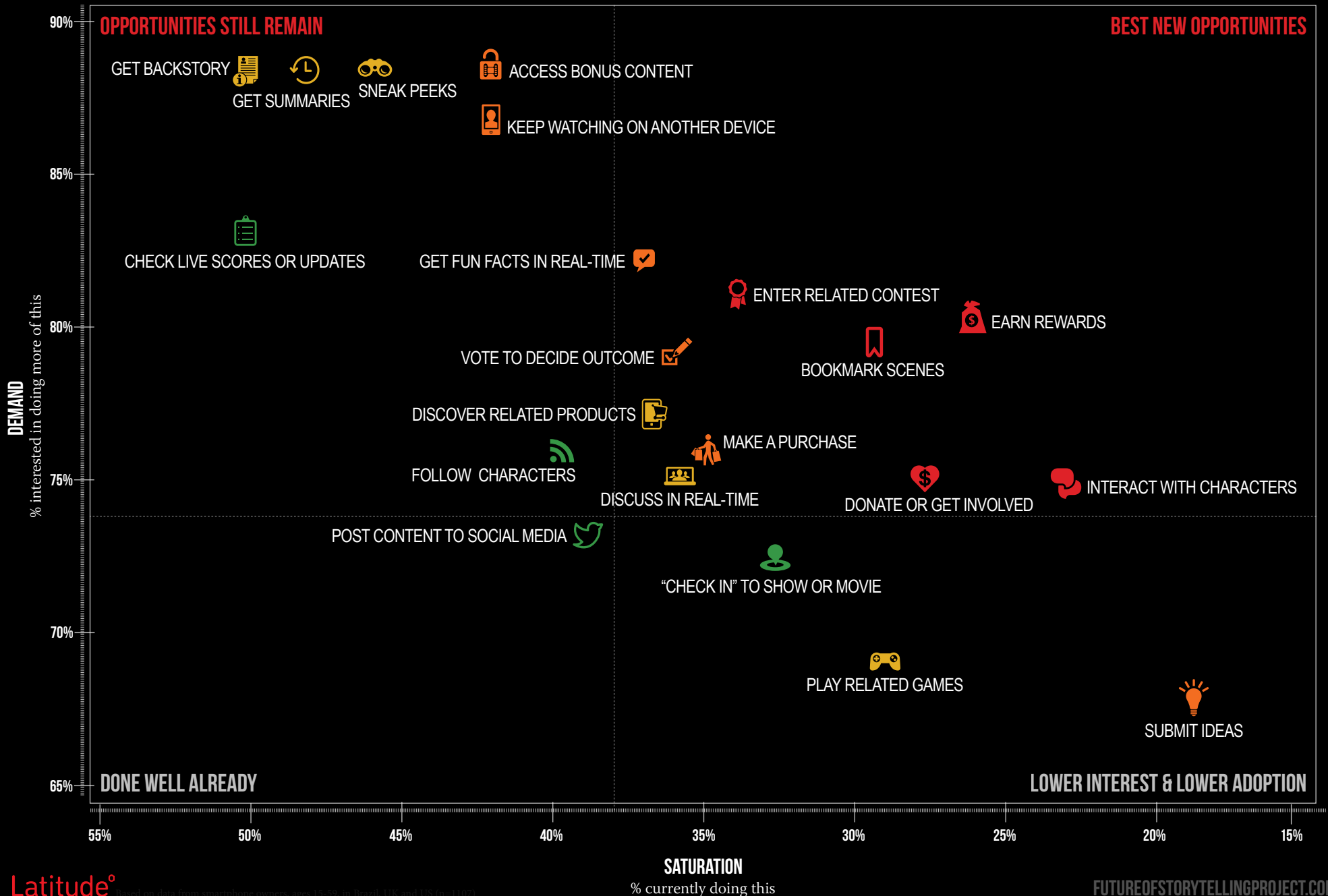
WHICH ELEMENTS SHOULD NEXT-GEN ADVERTISING INCLUDE?

I'd like to see more advertisements that...



TOP OPPORTUNITIES FOR SECOND SCREEN

Specifically in relation to TV shows, we uncovered how people are currently using secondary screens and which features or interactions they'd like to see more in the future. Overall, top opportunities tend to be "impactful" and goal-oriented, like earning rewards, making a purchase, or voting to decide a show's outcome. Other promising features relate to greater immersion: going "deeper into" a story by learning more about it, such as through bonus content or back-story for characters and plot events. *(Based on data from 1,107 smartphone owners in Brazil, the U.K. and the U.S.)*





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“MULTI-PLATFORM” NOW INCLUDES THE REAL WORLD

Get Real

For some time now, brands have been inserting themselves into story-worlds where it feels natural to do so. For example, souped-up Dodge Chargers and Darts have recently been sighted in Syfy’s hybrid game/TV show, *Defiance*, to serve a role that would’ve otherwise been played by generic, unbranded vehicles. Now let’s turn this idea on its head: by bringing the story out of the screen, incorporating actual environments like retail stores and museums—and even “real” happenings like [auto heists](#). Ninety-four percent feel that companies should treat the “real world” (e.g., places, people, or objects) as another platform that can interact with content they view on other devices.

Make Retail Part of the Story

“Real world” integrations stand out as a particularly compelling opportunity for retailers (and consumer goods brands), as many already inhabit physical locations. Consider a Manhattan retail store called [STORY](#) that changes its inventory every month to support a new theme or “story” (like color or love) and allows other brands to sponsor part of the conversation around this story with a physical presence in the store. [STORY](#) poses the question (and the answer): “Why *can’t* physical places like retail stores be part of the story?”

“For mystery or action narratives, it’d be neat if you could use an app that would import real world objects into the game. Say you have a suspect, and you need to run a background check right away. You need a laptop! Go to Best Buy, scan a laptop’s QR code, and boom!—you have a laptop imported into your game.” —Male, 23, Madison, WI, USA

WHO IS THE NEW AUDIENCE?

WHAT DO THEY WANT?

Based on a segmentation analysis of people's motivations for engaging with stories and their interest in various second screen experiences, we uncovered four audience archetypes: Seekers, Relaters, Realists, and Players. The graphic below maps the archetypes to Latitude's *4 I's of Storytelling*. (Darker shades of red indicate greater interest in each "I.") To explore audience data interactively or to discover your own archetype, visit futureofstorytellingproject.com.

IMPACT

The story affects my actual life, by inspiring me to discover more, make a purchase, better myself, or take action in some way.



INTEGRATION

The story plays out across platforms, or can interface with the real world.



INTERACTIVITY

I can interact with characters, the storyline, or other fans.



IMMERSION

I can go "deeper into" the story, by learning more about it or through heightened sensory experiences.



The *4 I's of Storytelling* (above) is a framework Latitude created by analyzing themes present in the future storytelling concepts generated by Phase 1 participants. It represents not only a desire to delve deeper into stories, but also to bring stories out of the screen—both literally and figuratively—to mingle with our actual lives.



SEEKERS



RELATERS



REALISTS



PLAYERS

PASSIVE

want to go deeper into the story world

ACTIVE

want to bring the story out into the real world

SEEKERS



This group is all about going deeper into the story, exploring different worlds, and learning new things—making them voracious information seekers. They want more back-story, more bonus content, more sneak peeks—more, more, more. And they want it without distraction; Seekers are least likely to use a second screen (for any reason — including looking up related content, emailing, shop-

ping, texting, etc.) simultaneously while engaging with a story, but they do express interest in checking out related content at other times.

Profile

- **Gender:** skews female
- **Age:** more 35-59 year-olds
- **Genres:** drama, mystery & crime
- **Second screens:** computer, tablet
- **Values:** escape via mention stimulation, focus, depth of experience
- **I's:** immersion

Top Future Requests

- Look up back-story about the characters, setting, or plot
- Explore or interact with the story's setting (e.g., explore a room or landscape, examine objects, etc.)
- Access more “sneak peeks” from episodes or sequels

What Brands Should Know

- Generally value learning and opportunities to go “deeper into” content
- More likely than other archetypes to pay attention to ads
- Appreciate humor and creativity in ads, as well ads featuring deals
- Rely strongly on friend recommendations & quality of a brand's reputation
- Often recommend products & services to friends, but place much less emphasis on social media relative to more traditional word-of-mouth methods
- Typically discover new content via TV commercials/promos & friends

RELATERS



An intensely extroverted coterie when it comes to content, Relaters want to discuss and share their favorite narratives with friends and family, in-person and online. Naturally, social media plays a key role for this group both in discovering and staying committed to content. Relaters aren't just looking to bond with other people, though; they enjoy forming deep, emotional connections with

characters, especially when these connections uplift or inspire them.

Profile

- **Gender:** roughly equal split between men & women
- **Age:** typically under 35, including many teenagers
- **Genres:** comedy, drama, reality
- **Second screen:** smartphone
- **Values:** sharing, optimism, relating
- **I's:** interactivity (with others & the story), impact

Top Future Requests

- Interact with characters in a way that's not pre-scripted
- See things from a particular character's perspective, or switch between different characters' perspectives
- See, hear, or touch the story-world (e.g., have an immersive sensory experience via virtual reality, 3D effects, etc.)

What Brands Should Know

- Generally value engaging with characters and socializing (especially via social media)
- Prefer relatable brands; they feel that what they buy plays a role in defining who they are
- Enjoy humorous ads, as well as game-like and visually immersive ones
- Rely strongly on friend recommendations via social media and frequently recommend to others this way
- Typically discover new content via TV commercials/promos & friends

REALISTS



The idea of integrating narratives into the real, physical world intrigues this down-to-earth crowd, especially if it leads to tangible or meaningful outcomes such as making a purchase, learning something new, or influencing how a story ends (e.g., by voting). Realists want stories that lead to personal growth, productivity, and all-around better living. With feet firmly planted in the real world,

they are more likely than other archetypes to gravitate towards non-fiction narratives.

Profile

- **Gender:** roughly equal split between men & women
- **Age:** more 35-59 year-olds
- **Genres:** documentaries, news, travel, advertising
- **Second screen:** computer
- **Values:** practicality, real-world relevance, self-improvement
- **I's:** interactivity (with the story), integration, impact

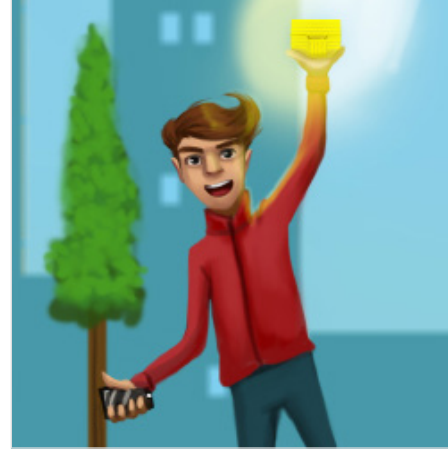
Top Future Requests

- Bring narratives out of the screen, into the real world, by involving actual places, people, or objects
- Discover new products or services through stories
- Learn more about the way characters live (or lived) & any larger historical or societal happenings surrounding the story

What Brands Should Know

- Generally goal-oriented (e.g., enjoy voting & contests, self-betterment, etc.)
- Feel TV is the anchor for social interactions & experiences on other devices; desire differentiated experiences across platforms
- Actively recommend brands via social media & other word-of-mouth
- Open to innovative advertising; many approaches work well
- Prefer ads that invite interest & don't try to persuade (e.g., branded content)
- Typically discover new content via official TV network sites & online ads

PLAYERS



These super-engagers are into just about everything—from following their favorite characters' Twitter accounts to becoming characters themselves. They crave interactivity, gravitating towards narratives with game elements and a spirit of adventure or competition. But why stop there? Players also want to take part in creating stories, such as by submitting ideas to writers or producers

or authoring their own narratives. They're avid multi-screener and mobile devotees (particularly attached to their smartphones and most likely to own tablets)—which may explain why they're extra enthusiastic about possibilities for integrating stories with the real, physical world.

Profile

- **Gender:** skews slightly male
- **Age:** more 18-34 year-olds
- **Genres:** diverse tastes including sports, comedy, horror, advertising
- **Second screens:** smartphone & tablet
- **Values:** enjoyment, agency, collaboration & competition, personal success
- **I's:** immersion, interactivity (with others & the story), integration, impact

Top Future Requests

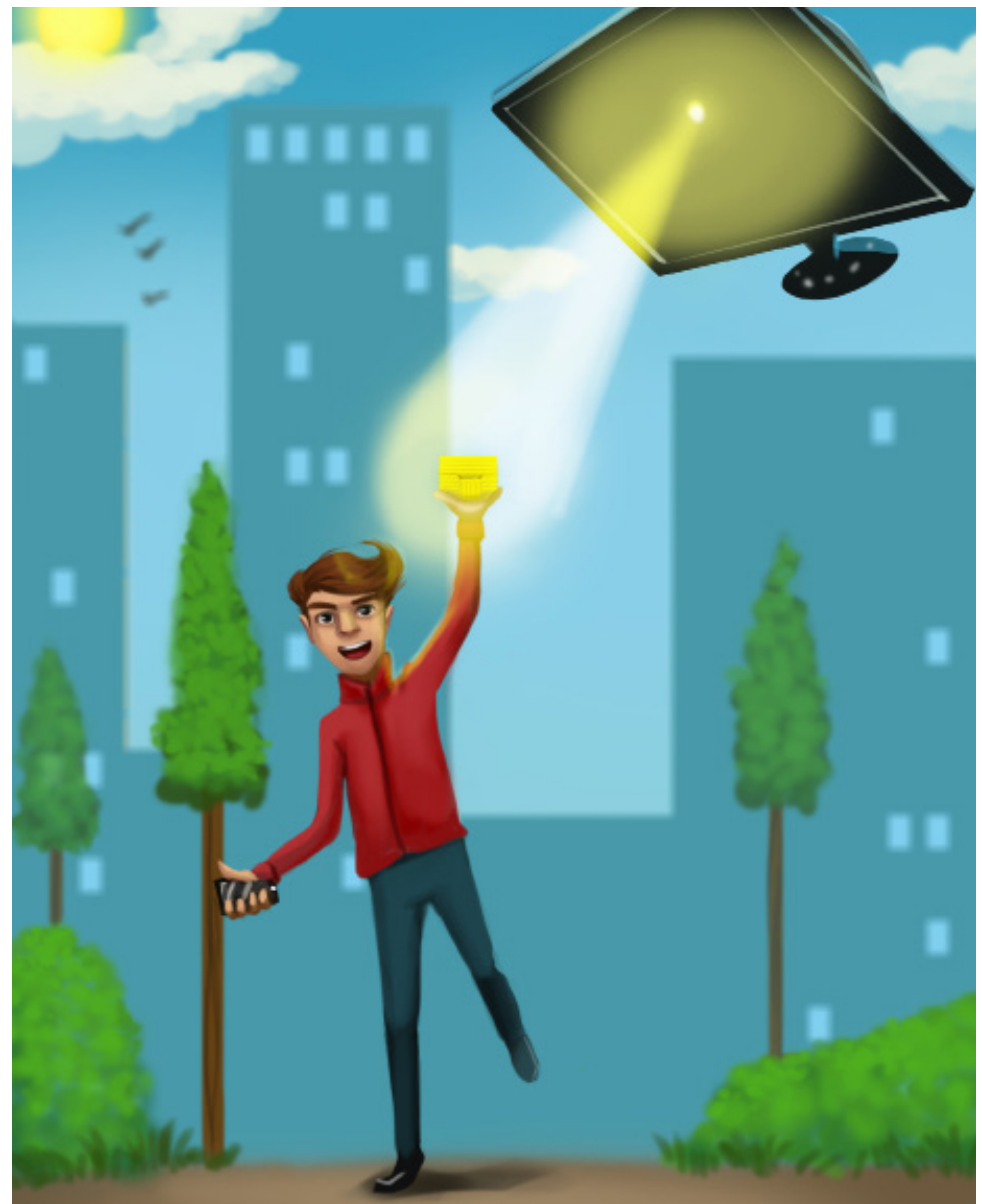
- Compete with other fans in a game scenario, or collaborate with them to actually write or produce a story
- Become a character
- Have real-world actions affect events within a story

What Brands Should Know

- Desirable audience (e.g., tech-y, highly social, etc.) but can be hard to engage
- Least "TV-centric" archetype; high level of comfort with other devices
- Value brands with a high "cool factor"; interested in real world integrations
- Prefer non-traditional ads (e.g., branded content, ability to help shape the story, contests, game elements, immersive visuals, social media tie-ins, etc.)
- Typically discover new content via social media & online forums



“I want technology to help me make sense of complex stories by providing family trees, characters maps, and biographies. My dream is that, when I encounter a character I don’t remember well, I won’t have to flip back hundreds of pages scanning for where they’ve appeared previously. Instead, I click on his or her name, and get a summary of everything I should know at this stage of the story, with no risk of spoilers.” —Male, 28, London, UK



“It would be really interesting if a TV show pitting two warring groups against one another could have battles and, ultimately, the outcome of the galaxy could be influenced by viewers—be it through games, real-life ‘quests,’ knowledge-based contests, and so on. I think sci-fi is a good fit for this because reality is very arbitrary there, and the rules can bend to accommodate interesting and compelling cross-media integrations.” —Male, 28, Cambridge, MA, USA

Latitude°

Latitude is an international research consultancy helping clients create engaging content, software and technology that harness the possibilities of the digital world.

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Latitude Studios, a branch of Latitude Research, reimagines the way research is traditionally communicated through an emphasis on storytelling and highly visual, interactive ways of conveying knowledge and insights. We tell stories, from the perspective of individuals and groups of people across the world, about how the Web can continue to change the way we live for the better.

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Illustrations by 2Minds Studio and Gregory Hartman for Latitude

How We Work with Clients

Latitude is a full-service, custom research consultancy. We help companies at the forefront of media, advertising, and technology better understand and engage their audiences across the following areas:

- Thought leadership & opportunity discovery
- Brand, marketing & social media strategy
- Content/programming strategy & testing
- Digital & mobile usability & UX design
- Advertising effectiveness & optimization

We're not just "number crunchers"; we're seasoned storytellers and media industry veterans. Get to know us better by subscribing to our newsletter: <http://latd.com/clients-us/#maillist>

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We work with companies to develop and execute studies that uncover new opportunities for growth, tied to emerging trends and user behaviors. Our signature Thought Leader Offering is designed to meet multiple stakeholders' needs while increasing our clients' industry standing through:

- Custom, multi-phased study designs that deliver on a range of goals
- Innovative qualitative-quantitative hybrid techniques
- Insight Reels™ for professional, video-based reporting
- Other engaging visual outputs for industry presentations
- Press release creation & PR support

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