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Workshop on the Creative Europe MEDIA MIPTV umbrella stand

REVAMPING HISTORY - HYBRID SERIES TO APPEAL TO YOUNGER AUDIENCES

Moderated by **Daniel Zimmerman** and **Yves Jeanneau**, media-stands.eu experts, with

Nicolas Lesoult, Les films de la Butte

Jean Mach, Mad Films

Nicolas Lesoult and Jean Mach are the producers of “The Butterfly Effect,” an innovative hybrid programme which attracts a younger audience than the usual TV documentary public to a history programme by using new ways of storytelling and animation. The programme has been co-produced by ARTE Junior and by SVOD platform CuriosityStream, which will broadcast the second season starting in January, and has been sold in 12 countries.

- “The Butterfly Effect” applies game animation to historical documentary to seduce an audience accustomed to the aesthetics of video games.
- The hope is that young people will learn about history without even being aware of it.
- While the show has so far been bought by channels targeting viewers in their teens, gamers can be up to forty years old, so this type of animation could find a broader audience.
- Each episode focuses on what happened in the past as well as what lessons from the past can be applied to today. The basic idea is that a single person can change the course of history.
- The format is 26 minutes.
- The selection of the right historical themes is key, so four historians work on developing the programmes.
- Reactions from buyers have depended on the culture of the channel; there has been some resistance to the unorthodox new format.
- Some historical themes are sensitive in certain countries, so a buyer may leave one or two episodes out of their purchase.
- Animation does travel a bit more easily than historical documentaries in general, and is easier to sell for young audiences.
- A programme that uses game animation should be directed by someone with a deep knowledge of design/technology. In the case of “The Butterfly Effect” the director is a top game designer.
- This type of animation is expensive to produce and every minute produced is used. ARTE Junior approved the programme in the pre-visualisation stage so that there was no need to go back and no images were lost. The budget for “The Butterfly Effect” was EUR 1.5 million for the first season and EUR 2 million for the second season, which included one episode in VR.
- Animation lends itself more easily to VR because it does not rely on the quality of 360° cameras.
- The VR episode produced for the second season of “The Butterfly Effect” was 8 minutes long instead of 26 minutes. Arte agreed to co-produce it.
- There is an interesting future in the cutting edge of documentaries, where docs are technically innovative and cross over with games.
- We can expect that more and more will be done with VR. Beside TV and digital platforms, there is an application to local entertainment (e.g. a show on whales screened at the local aquarium, which cannot host a real whale).
- The hybrid genre brings together different industries – games, documentaries, etc. in interesting new configurations.