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Becoming Trivial: The Book Trailer

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Abstract

Despite the introduction of audiobooks and e-books, printed stories still are in high demand. However, in a globalized world which is more and more ruled by mass media and technology, it is increasingly difficult for writers and publishers to promote their books. The solution is almost ironic: popular media, which is assumed to decrease readership, is turned into a tool to increase the number of readers. In 2002 the book trailer emerged as a new web-based marketing strategy for the launch of new books. Since then the appearance of the book trailer has changed considerably. The article examines specific examples and highlights methods that establish the relationship between the content of the book and its representation in the book trailer. Although guidelines apply for the production of book trailers, such as constraints relating to time and content, there are no limitations for the imagination of the producers. A book trailer may be simple, supported only by music and pictures, but they may also be as complex as short films. Additionally, book trailers are not limited to the promotion of one specific genre or age group. Depending on the viral potential of social networks such as YouTube, Facebook, and Tumblr book trailers reach a global audience and, therefore, open up new markets. It can be argued, while book trailers have not yet reached the realm of the everyday, they will gradually come to the attention of academics and this article wants to present a starting point for this development.

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