

# IP film development under the background of film and game linkage: cross-media narration and fan economic effect

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**Abstract:** In recent years, the linkage between film and game has become an important trend in the field of popular culture. IP film development arises at the historic moment in this background. It injects new vitality into IP through cross-media content presentation, and also brings new development opportunities for the film and television industry and game industry. This paper discusses the characteristics, advantages and challenges of IP film development under the background of film and game linkage, and analyzes the influence of cross-media narration on the narrative structure and aesthetic style of IP film, as well as the resulting fan economic effect. This article tries to provide new ideas and enlightenment for the IP film development under the background of film and game linkage.

**Key words:** film and game linkage; film development; cross-media; fan economy

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## 1 Introduction

Under the tide of the digital age, the cultural industry is experiencing unprecedented changes. Film & television and games, as the two major forms of mainstream entertainment, are deepening their integration, learning from each other, and promoting the development of each other. Film and game linkage, that is, the cross-media cooperation between film & television works and game works, has emerged at the historic moment, becoming a major trend of the current cultural industry. This linkage mode breaks down the barriers between different media and realizes the diversified development of IP, which not only brings new creative inspiration and commercial opportunities to the film & television and game industry, but also provides a more three-dimensional and immersive entertainment experience for the audience and players. In this context, the development of IP films has become an important direction of film and game linkage. Therefore, the in-depth analysis of the characteristics, advantages and challenges of IP film development under the background of film and game linkage is of great theoretical and practical significance for grasping the development context of cultural industry and promoting the further integration and innovation of film & television and game industry.

## 2 Development and characteristics of film and game linkage

### 2.1 The concept definition and development process of film and game linkage

Film and game linkage refers to the process of mutual integration and coordinated development between film & television works and game works. In this process, film & television and games realize the sharing and integration of resources through cross-media content creation, IP authorization, joint promotion and other ways, creating a new type of

pan-entertainment ecology. The development of film and game linkage can be traced back to the 1980s. With the rise of the video game industry, some well-known film IP companies have begun to try to link up with the games, and the game developers have also begun to integrate the movie elements into the games. Since then, with the continuous progress of game technology and the gradual maturity of the market, more and more movies and TV series began to get involved in the game field, and some well-known game IP also began to try the film & television adaptation. Since the beginning of the 21st century, the linkage of film and game has entered a new stage of development. On the one hand, the rapid development of digital technology provides a broader space for the linkage of film and game, making the integration of film and game more close and seamless; on the other hand, the awakening of IP awareness and the rise of fan economy also inject new impetus into the linkage of film and game, making more and more IP begin to try cross-media development and operation. In recent years, the linkage between film and game has become a hot spot in the cultural industry. Many game IPs have been successfully adapted into film & TV productions, and film IP has also spawned many games, reflecting the huge potential and broad prospects of this model [1].

## 2.2 Types and characteristics of film and game linkage

### 2.2.1 The types of film and game linkage can be divided from different dimensions

According to the direction of linkage, it can be divided into game-to-movie linkage and movie-to-game linkage; according to the form of linkage, it can be divided into content-level linkage and marketing-level linkage; according to the purpose of linkage, it can be divided into IP extended linkage and complementary promotion linkage. The linkage from game to film & television refers to the film & television adaptation and re-creation based on game IP; the linkage from film & television to game refers to the development of corresponding game works based on film & television IP. The linkage of content level focuses on the mutual reference and integration of content between different media, such as the narrative skills and audio-visual language integrated in games, or the interactive design and immersive experience of games adopted in movies; the linkage of marketing level focuses on the mutual promotion and attraction between different media, such as the implantation of game elements in film and television works, or the introduction of peripheral products related to film & television works in games. IP extended linkage aims to deepen the IP world outlook and characterization, expand the influence and appeal of IP, and promote the complementary linkage, so as to realize the mutual introduction of user groups and the common promotion of market share through the complementary advantages of different media.

### 2.2.2 The main characteristics of the film and game linkage

Film and game linkage is a way of cross-media content creation, which breaks the boundary between film and game, realizes the mutual reference and integration between different media, and brings a more three-dimensional and diversified entertainment experience.

Film and game linkage is an IP-driven business model, which takes well-known IP as the core, and maximizes IP value through cross-media content development and market operation, bringing new growth points for the film & television and game industries.

Film and game linkage is an ecosystem of fan economy. Based on fan groups and through the participation and interaction of fans, it realizes the co-creation of content and the sharing of value, forming a new form of social entertainment.

Film and game linkage is a technology-driven innovation trend. It relies on the continuous progress of digital technology, especially the development of immersive technologies such as virtual reality and augmented reality, and provides a broader imagination space and creative possibilities for the integration of film & television and games.

### 3 Application of cross-media narration in IP film development

#### 3.1 Connotation and theoretical basis of cross-media narration

Cross-media narration refers to the process of telling a unified and three-dimensional story world in a synergistic and complementary way through a variety of media platforms. This concept was first proposed by the American scholar Henry Jenkins in 2003, and was elaborated systematically in his book *Convergence Culture*. Jenkins points out that in the context of digital technology and media convergence, cross-media storytelling has become an emerging narrative paradigm and cultural logic. Different from the traditional single media narration, cross-media narration builds a huge and rich narrative system through the organic combination of multiple media platforms. In this system, each media platform plays a unique role, presenting different aspects and dimensions of the story world with its unique way of expression and aesthetic style. At the same time, different media platforms are interrelated and reflect each other, forming a three-dimensional cross, mutual text and mutual involvement relationship, jointly promoting the development of the story plot and the construction of the world outlook. The theoretical basis of cross-media narration can be traced back to the postmodernist narrative theory and intertextuality theory. Postmodernist narrative theory emphasizes the openness, nonlinearity and intertextuality of narrative, and believes that narrative is no longer a closed and single process, but an open and pluralistic network. In this network, different narrative segments and narrative voices are intertwined, and converse with each other, forming a polyphonic narrative structure. The theory of intertextuality emphasizes the mutual reference and influence between texts, believing that any text does not exist in isolation, but is inextricably linked with other texts. Different texts constitute a dynamic intertextual network by means of intertextual reference and mutual reference, showing the characteristics of multiple crossover [2].

#### 3.2 Innovation of cross-media narration in the narrative structure of IP films

In the development process of IP films, cross-media narration provides many possibilities for the innovation of their narrative structure. Traditional film narrative mostly adopts a linear structure, following a clear causal chain, presenting a relatively closed and complete story. Cross-media narration breaks this linear and closed narrative mode, and builds an open and three-dimensional narrative network through the collaborative interaction of multi-media platforms.

Cross-media narration expands the narrative time and space of IP films. Traditional films are limited by the length of screening time and screen space, and their narrative time and space are often relatively concentrated and limited. Cross-media narration can extend the narrative time and space into the film through the linkage of different media platforms, and build a larger and richer story world. For example, through network novels, comics, animation and other forms, the character background and world setting can be enriched; through AR, VR and other immersive technologies, the audience can continue to explore and experience the story world outside the film; through interactive forms of games and theme parks, the audience can participate in the construction and development of the story world. This cross-media expansion of time and space not only extends the narrative boundary of IP films, but also injects more imagination and vitality into them.

Cross-media narration enriches the narrative perspective of IP films. Traditional films mostly adopt an omniscient perspective or a single perspective to promote the development of narrative, while cross-media narration can present diversified narrative perspectives and voices through the switching of different media platforms. For example, movies can focus on the story lines of the main characters, while comics, novels and others can complement and enrich the story content from the perspective of supporting actors or villains; different media platforms can also present multiple aspects and dimensions of the story world through different narrative styles and aesthetic styles. This superposition and interweaving of multiple perspectives, on the one hand, injects more tension and complexity into the narrative of IP films, and on the other hand, it also provides the audience with a more three-dimensional and multi-dimensional viewing

experience.

## **4 Fan economic effect of IP movies in the background of film and game linkage**

### **4.1 Aggregation and expansion of IP movie fan base caused by film and game linkage**

In the development process of IP movies, the linkage between movies and games provides an important path and possibility for the aggregation and expansion of their fan groups. Through the cross-media interaction and collaboration between games and movies, the linkage between movies and games can effectively attract and gather the core fans of IP, further expand their fan base, and form a greater influence and appeal. Through the cross-media interaction and collaboration between games and movies, the linkage between movies and games can deepen the emotional connection between IP movies and fans, expand the audience group and influence of IP movies, stimulate the creativity and sense of participation of fans, and realize the diversified realization of IP fan economy. On the one hand, the game provides a more interactive and participatory platform, where players can strengthen the emotional identity and value resonance with the IP through the role playing and operation of the game, which can promote the communication, interaction and emotional connection between fans [3]. On the other hand, the game can be used as the leader and attraction of IP movies, attracting more potential audiences to pay attention to and understand the IP, and maintaining the enthusiasm and attention of fans after the release of the movie through continuous operation and update. In addition, the linkage between film and game also provides more opportunities for fans to participate in IP creation and construction, stimulate their creativity, and enhance their sense of identity and belonging to IP. Finally, the film and game linkage can realize the diversified realization of IP fan economy through various forms such as in-game purchase, virtual props, and peripheral products through the game data analysis, to provide the precision marketing and personalized services for IP.

### **4.2 The promotion role of fan engagement in IP film development**

In the context of film and game linkage, fan participation has become an important link and driving force of IP film development. Fans are no longer simply passive receivers, but active participants and creators of the IP world view and story content. Through fan creation, cosplay, MOD and other forms, fans can provide more diversified inspiration and materials for the story creativity, character setting and world outlook construction of IP movies. At the same time, spontaneous word-of-mouth and social marketing can effectively enhance the influence and appeal of IP films. Fans are also an important link between movies and games, promoting the cross-media integration and collaboration between film and games in creativity, technology, resources and other aspects. In addition, fan participation can help IP films to realize long-term operation and value extension, and build a sustainable fan economic effect through continuous interactive operation and diversified realization. In short, fan participation is comprehensively promoting the development and value realization of IP films, which represents the future development direction and innovation trend of the film & television industry.

## **5 Conclusion**

The linkage of film and game breaks the limitation of a single medium of film, expands the narrative space and expression form of IP film, and enhances the audience engagement and immersion through the introduction of games. At the same time, the linkage between film and game provides an important path for the aggregation and expansion of IP movie fans. Through interactive connection and fan creation, the emotional connection between IP movies and fans is strengthened, the enthusiasm of fans is stimulated, and the deep mining and sustainable development of IP value are realized through diversified realization. Fan participation has become an important link and driving force of IP film development under the background of film and game linkage. Fans actively participate in the construction of IP world outlook and value creation through fan creation, Mod production, cosplay and other forms, and inject strong impetus and

influence into IP films through spontaneous word-of-mouth communication and social marketing.

### **Conflicts of interest**

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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