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## **Case Study #2: Poguelandia**

Pogues or Kooks? The question that has held fans of the *Netflix* show, *Outer Banks* (*OBX*), stumped for two seasons has finally reached a potential conclusion. On February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023, *Netflix* hosted *Poguelandia*, an *Outer Banks* Experience in honour of the release of the show's third season. It invited US residents to Huntington Beach, California for a day filled with live music, food and a real-life look into the *OBX* world (Netflix Tudum, 2023). *Poguelandia* immersed fans into the show's narrative through its featured attractions which not only provided a broader look into the setting and the characters' experience but also new details for the upcoming season. The event also distinguished clear locations that linked back to the characters of the show, providing fans additional insight into the world of characters they have grown to love. Not only did *Poguelandia* generate excitement through its activities and experiences, but it also worked as an excellent platform for the cast and crew to interact with fans and make announcements for the future of this project. *Poguelandia* created a buzz about the latest addition to the narrative and brought it to life outside of the screens.

Prior to this, *Netflix* held ticket sales for the free event which sold out and had fans travelling from around the US to attend. Yet despite ticket success, *Poguelandia* had noticeable barriers. First, the event was only open to US residents which provided a geographical barrier for

fans who live outside of the country. Similarly, for those who did live in the US, there were no travel or accommodations available. On top of this, there was no form of live stream or online options for fans worldwide to participate in. The only form of interaction came from short videos on social media from the official *Instagram* account as well as any media created by attendees (Bitran, 2023). For future immersive events such as this one, it would be beneficial to create either a travelling platform for interactive events or more online interactions for global fans to participate in. Similarly, if the producers wanted to keep the event at one location, they could have increased the transmedia project by creating social media campaigns such as an *OBX* treasure hunt which could have not only created an additional element of worldbuilding to the narrative but could have also given fans a way to win themselves into the event. It would, therefore, add additional elements to the storyline and promote more participatory culture.

Outside of these barriers, the event was quite successful from both a transmedia and marketing standpoint. *Poguelandia* immersed fans into the unknowns of the *OBX* world which were only briefly touched upon in the show. For example, *Heyward's Seafood Co.*, a main character's family business in the show, provided food for the event while giving fans insight into its details which were previously left out in the narrative (Bitran, 2023). Similarly, the event also introduced new elements of worldbuilding through their introduction of the island's attractions such as *Kildare's Tattoo Parlor* and the *OBX* bulletin wall. Both of these attractions added a new layer to what was not included in the show itself and held clues for the upcoming season. The *Poguelandia* participatory culture was pushed even further with the help of *American Eagle* as a sponsor who helped fans turn themselves into true Pogues with their exclusive product line sold at the event. The use of these products added an additional level of immersion and truly allowed fans to feel as if they were in the show (Bitran, 2023). *Poguelandia*

served to be a successful transmedia project in the *Outer Banks* franchise as it not only pushed new worldbuilding elements but marketed the third season in a way that resulted in it being the most viewed show between February 20<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> with 154.97 billion views (Bell and Wallenstein, 2023).

*Poguelandia* serves as a great example of the potential future of transmedia. Although it does not fit the typical mode of what a transmedia project might look like, it provides an alternative look for the concept. Television and film dominate the world's consumption and if streaming services or production companies use the success of their products to promote them in immersive events it would create additional levels of worldbuilding, participatory culture, and marketing. Transmedia has the potential to change the way individuals view stories and provides another level of involvement that is typically overlooked in traditional mediums. Through live events or even online campaigns, narratives can be prolonged and create new worlds within the pre-existing ones. Although technology does play a large part in transmedia, these projects have been unconsciously taking place for quite some time. For example, in the music industry, artists have unconsciously presented transmedia narratives to their fans with their release campaigns, which have gained both music streams and fan interaction. That being said, if done right, transmedia has the potential to have longevity as long as both the world and its marketing campaign are built cohesively.

## References

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