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DESIGN FICTION FOR SOCIAL AWARENESS

A narrative project to communicate with Generation Z

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ABSTRACT

In the first decades of the new millennium, during which technological innovations are widely entering people's lives transforming behaviours and habits, a necessary reflection on the future social consequences of these changes assumes an increasing importance. The practice of design fiction aims to suggest a new way to prompt discussion about these possible futures, through the use of narrative and fiction as a support for design practice. Being a fairly recent tool, some of its opportunities and applications are still under development. As part of the ongoing research on the topic, this thesis suggests a possible application of design fiction to raise social awareness among the youngest generation, *Generation* Z, with the use of storytelling and a high involvement of the audience in the project. The technology this generation has grown with, especially social media, is exposing them to many risks, that could be avoided with a better awareness towards the problem. To test the premises, during this thesis an interactive narrative project has been developed. The project, *FutureMe*, is addressed to teenagers, with the purpose of raising their awareness towards the consequences of different behaviours on social media. The story has been realized on the social media Instagram and on a mobile website: it shows a near future situation in which three characters have to deal with current issues connected with their online and offline identity. Developed on three different narrative lines, the story and the ending can change according to the reader's decisions, in order to remark the effects that online choices can have in real life. The positive results obtained from the project's testing confirmed the effectiveness of using narrative-based design fiction artefacts to deal with topics of social awareness.

ABSTRACT
Italiano

In questi primi decenni del nuovo millennio, nei quali le innovazioni tecnologiche stanno entrando capillarmente nella vita quotidiana trasformando abitudini e atteggiamenti, ha assunto un'importanza sempre più rilevante una necessaria riflessione sulle future conseguenze sociali di questi cambiamenti. La pratica della design fiction punta a suggerire nuovi modi di intavolare una discussione, attraverso l'uso della narrativa come supporto al design, riguardo a questi possibili futuri scenari. Essendo uno strumento abbastanza recente, molte opportunità e possibili applicazioni sono tutt'ora in fase di sviluppo. Essendo parte della ricerca in corso sull'argomento, questa tesi suggerisce una possibile applicazione della design fiction per la sensibilizzazione sociale rivolta alla *Generazione Z*, la più giovane, attraverso l'uso della narrazione e di un alto coinvolgimento del pubblico nel progetto. La tecnologia con cui questa generazione è cresciuta, specialmente i social media, li sta esponendo a diversi rischi, che potrebbero essere evitati con una maggior consapevolezza dei problemi stessi. Per testare queste premesse, in questa tesi è stato sviluppato un progetto di narrazione interattiva, *FutureMe*, rivolto ai ragazzi, allo scopo di sensibilizzarli riguardo alle conseguenze che possono avere diversi tipi di comportamenti sui social media. La storia è stata realizzata per la piattaforma Instagram e per un sito web mobile; mostra una situazione proveniente da un possibile futuro prossimo nel quale tre personaggi devono gestire dei problemi attuali, connessi con la loro identità online e offline. Sviluppata in tre diverse linee narrative, la storia e il finale possono cambiare a seconda delle decisioni del lettore, al fine di rimarcare gli effetti che le scelte fatte online possono avere nella vita reale. I risultati positivi ottenuti nella fase di testing del progetto hanno confermato l'efficacia di usare una tipologia di design fiction basata sulla narrativa per affrontare problemi di sensibilizzazione sociale.

INTRODUCTION

Stories matter. Sharing stories is one of the oldest practices used to connect people and generations, and as technological progress introduces new media and forms of communication, storytelling has found new ways to be spread. Stories can help people grow and change their perspective towards the world they live in, by engaging and stimulating imagination. While this is true for every person, it's particularly important for young people, because they can help them shape their identity by confronting with something outside of their reality, and sometimes with those parts of themselves that they can see reflected in the story.

Seeing its start in 2005, design fiction is a fairly young practice, still growing and evolving with every piece of research about it. What began as a way to join design with science fiction was soon developed into a more complex discipline involving design research for possible futures and a general idea of "fiction", that was differently interpreted by every designer that chooses to approach it, captivated by the promising lead of a link between the two different worlds of design and fiction. The research scene has developed different opinions on the matter, particularly regarding some aspects of design fiction: its role inside design project or research, the meaning of the word "fiction" and the attitude toward the audience. After a careful consideration of the different perspective, for this thesis it has been chosen to explore

the possibilities given by a non technological approach to design fiction. In particular, what this work wants to test is its versatility for a project focused on social awareness.

The usage of social media, particularly between members of *Generation* Z (in 2020, children and teenagers), has been identified as a possible fertile ground to test this assumption. This new generation presents an unusual relationship with technology and social media, never observed before in the generations that preceded it, and the future implications of this fact are still unclear. Various disturbs connected with social media usage have been attributed to these "*Digital Natives*" (Prensky, 2001), from general addiction to Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) or cyberbullism. A future-oriented tool such as design fiction has the potential to effectively investigate this topic. Moreover, given the various and highly diffuse presence of narrative projects on social media, it is suggested that storytelling could be apt to transmit the message to this young target.

This thesis, being an experimental work with the aim to combine different fields, starts with the following research questions:

1. Is it possible to use design fiction to increase social awareness?

2. Is storytelling an effective way to communicate with *Generation* Z?

In research through design, answers to the research questions are obtained through a design-making process (Lindley, 2016). As part of the category, this work utilises the complete development of a project to put into practice and test with an audience the

validity of the research question.

This thesis is organized in three main parts. The first two lay the groundwork around the main themes, design fiction and social awareness, defining a theoretical basis for the project. The first chapter starts with an exploration of the state of the art on design fiction, to understand what this tool is, why it's been used and how, through the analysis of several case studies, with a focus on how design fiction approaches storytelling and how it involves an audience into design. The second one focuses on the chosen audience, *Generation* Z, in order to understand if and how the topic of social awareness could be relevant. The third part links together these two components of the preliminary research into the process and complete development of a design fiction project focused on social awareness.

Part 1. Design fiction Storytelling Audience involvement	**Part 2. Social awareness** *Generation Z* Social media usage

Part 3. Design project *FutureMe*
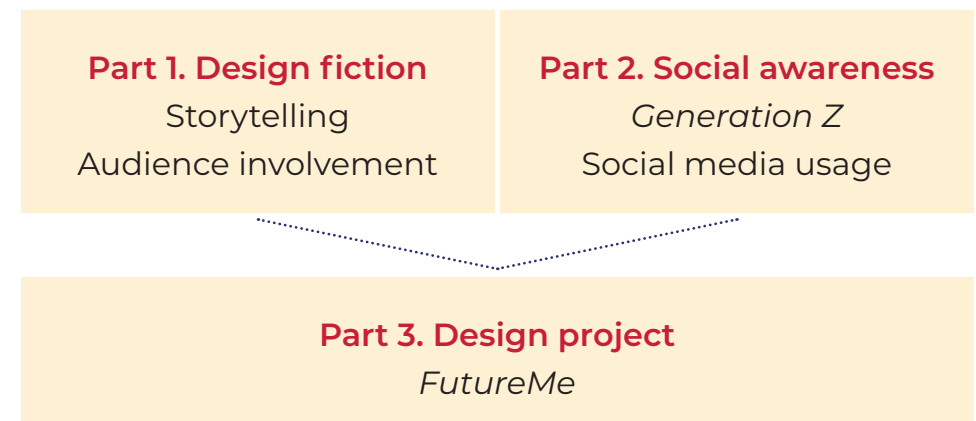
Chapter 1

DESIGN FICTION

1

1.1
State of the art

1.1.1
A controversial definition

The term Design Fiction was firstly introduced in 2005 by Bruce Sterling, a science fiction author, in his book *Shaping Things* (Sterling, 2005). He initially used it to define a specific kind of science fiction he wanted to write, a "*more practical, more hands-on*" one, that "*makes more sense on the page*" compared to traditional science fiction and its "*sense of the miraculous*" (Sterling, 2005, p. 30). The way he originally envisioned this new mixture of design and fiction would have been nearly indistinguishable from classical science fiction in the eyes of the readers, while actually being less focused on entertainment itself and more on exploring the "*technosocial conflict*" of his time (Sterling, 2005, p. 30). In 2009, he tried to better define the limits between design and fiction, and expressed how realistically-designed industrial artefacts could, in his opinion, be extremely useful in pushing

literature in a more mature and reflective direction (Sterling, 2009). However, it was only in 2012 that he came up with a final definition for his idea:

> "*Slate: So what is a design fiction?*
> *Sterling*: **It's the deliberate use of diegetic prototypes to suspend disbelief about change**. *That's the best definition we've come up with. The important word there is diegetic. It means you're thinking very seriously about potential objects and services and trying to get people to concentrate on those rather than entire worlds or political trends or geopolitical strategies. It's not a kind of fiction. It's a kind of design. It tells worlds rather than stories.*" (Sterling, 2012)

With this interview, Sterling introduced the most cited definition of design fiction, that has been used by all the researchers that followed to start their dissertation, even when they intended to criticize it. Comparing it with his initial theory in 2005, some major differences can be found. While he originally thought that design fiction was almost completely comparable to science fiction, because the "fiction" part (intended as "narrative") remained the core point, he later felt the need to separate the two, moving the focus from the story to the storyworld ("*it tells worlds rather than stories*") and focusing more on the design than on the fiction. In order to do that, he mentioned diegetic prototype as the focus around which the whole fiction revolves.

Sterling borrowed the concept of "diegetic prototypes" from David Kirby (2009), that introduced it some years before applying it to the world of cinema.

> "*I introduce the term 'diegetic prototypes' to account for the ways in which cinematic depictions of future technologies*

> *demonstrate to large public audiences a technology's need, viability and benevolence. [...]***These technologies only exist in the fictional world – what film scholars call the diegesis – but they exist as fully functioning objects in that world**." (Kirby, 2009, p. 41)

These prototypes, well contextualized inside the sphere of the film's narrative structure, are means by which a creator can stimulate a desire in the audience to see potential technologies become realities. While these technologies can be completely fictional, the fact that they are presented like practical objects with proper functionality can be, according to Kirby, an optimal way to test people's reactions towards them.

Before Sterling, the first to join Kirby's ideas on diegetic prototypes with the proto-concept of design fiction was Julian Bleecker (2009). In his *Short essay on design, science, fact and fiction* he looks at diegetic prototypes from a designer's perspective, as tools that can allow designers to better understand and shape possible futures. The use of fiction is also suggested as a possibly effective tool for prototyping ideas and showing them to the public. His theory is that all designed objects tell stories, through and by themselves, so using them as props in more complex fictional artefacts can be useful for the designer to explore these stories and communicate them to an audience:

> "*In this way design fiction is a hybrid, hands-on practice that operates in a murky middle ground between ideas and their materialization, and between science fact and science fiction.* **It is a way of probing, sketching and exploring ideas.**" (Bleecker, 2009, p. 8).

In 2013, Markussen and Knutz tried to frame Bleecker's "*murky*

middle ground" between reality and utopia inside the *possible world theory*, according to which fictions can be properly understood as "possible worlds", differing in some aspects from our real world (this concept will be better expanded in Chapter 1.1.2). They also admitted that design fiction gives rise to *"several different interpretations, ideologies and aims"* and that there *"is a need to increase understanding of design fiction as a research method and approach"* (Markussen and Knutz, 2013, p. 231). Tanenbaum acknowledges this debate as well, stating the need of clarifying some aspects of design fiction in order to improve its practice. To offer his contribute, he defines design fiction as a communication tool, a way of envisioning and building inspiration and motivation for design concepts (Tanenbaum, 2014, p. 23).

Another point of uncertainty between researchers is the relationship between design fiction and other future oriented practices: critical design, speculative design, future design. The exact definition and the reciprocal position (whether they coexist, or have a hierarchical relationship, or overlap) has been largely debated among researchers. It's relevant to acknowledge some of them: Dunne and Raby (2007), that firstly framed critical design; Auger (2013), that discussed design fiction in relation to speculative design; Linehan (2014) , that discussed the hierarchical relationship between design fiction and design futures; Tonkinwise (2015), that specified the reciprocal difference between all these practices and their specific features, pressing that

"Compared to Design Futures, Design Fictions are more visceral and emotive. Compared to Speculative Designs, Design Fictions are much more quotidian. Compared to Critical Designs, Design Fictions concern the surface experience of a

future normal." (Tonkinwise, 2015, p. 6).

Discussing the exact definition of all these practices goes beyond the purposes of this thesis, for which acknowledging the debate will be enough.

Beside their differences, they all have in common the idea of an "anti-solutionist" design, as Blythe (2016) defined it. He argued that too much design is just "solutionist": it tries to solve problems that don't exist, or ignores the complexity of personal, political and environmental issues. He defines it as a design that *"sells solutions and presumes problems"* (Blythe et al., 2016, p. 4968). As answer to this, he suggests an "anti-solutionist" design, that doesn't offer a solution and tries instead to work on the problem. He defines the examples he uses as critical design, design fiction, speculative design, showing in this way how this attitude can be the common ground of all these practices.

What already emerges from this initial analysis of the state of the art is that researches in time have taken many different positions around the exact nature of design fiction, making it **impossible to come to an univocal definition**. The possibilities of joining design, in all its forms, with fiction (a story, a storyworld, or a fictional future), are extremely various and can be applied, as I will show in the next sections, with many different tools for equally various goals. Therefore, **for this thesis I will not rely on a specific definition or interpretation**. Instead, my goal will be to understand, through the analysis of the various perspectives, how is it possible to apply this versatile tool to maximize its effectiveness for specific design goals.

1.1.2
The role of design fiction

During the fifteen years since its birth, design fiction has been used as a tool for various purposes, that differ according to the single researcher's opinion, perspective or field of application. All the approaches start from the idea that **traditional design and design research somehow fail to take into account all the factors that go beyond the mere solution of a presented problem** (Blythe's "solutionism"). Mostly, the roles that have been attributed to design fiction can fall into these two macro-categories:

- Design fiction as a **research method** to discuss the present by envisioning possible futures;
- Design fiction as a **tool to enhance communication** between the academic world and the public opinion;

The applications of design fiction inside design research has been studied deeply by Lindley (2016). He introduced three categories of design research: research *into* design fiction, research *through* design fiction, and research *for* design fiction (fig. 1). The first category defined the theoretical research about the topic, without involving any practice; the second refers to the production of knowledge resulting from a design-making process; in the third "research" refers to a contextual search that is conducted to support the design and production of a design fiction artefact.

It's important to specify that **design fiction never claims to have the ability to predict the future**. **Instead, it's always working on the idea that "possible futures" can be used as a tool to investigate the present.** This concept is well expressed by Dunne
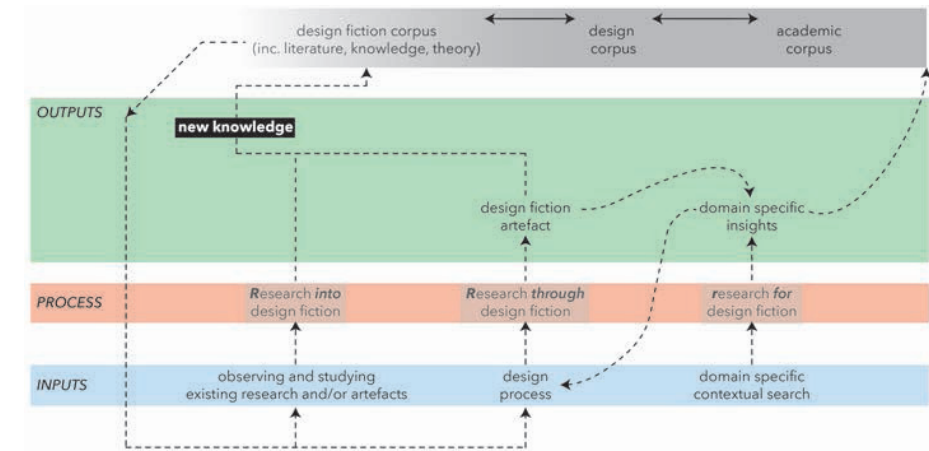
Interrelations between different categories of design fiction research

and Raby (2013) in *Speculative Everything*, where they focus on critical design, but through a model that can be easily applied also to design fiction: the Futures Cones (fig. 2). This diagram illustrates a number of cones fanning out from the present to the future. Each cone represents different levels of likelihood, starting from the central one, probable futures, and expanding to other two, plausible and possible futures. A final cone intersects the probable and plausible: the preferable futures.

> "This is the bit we are interested in. Not in trying to predict the future but in using design to open up all sorts of possibilities that can be discussed, debated, and used to collectively define a preferable future for a given group of people: from companies, to cities, to societies." (Dunne and Raby, 2013, p. 13).

Design fiction doesn't define what will be a preferable future, but it works on plausible and possible to elicit discussion about what could be this intersection cone. A further role of design fiction could also be to shape this future, through the analysis done with design fiction. By anticipating the (possible) adoption

Possible

Plausible

Preferable

Present

Probable
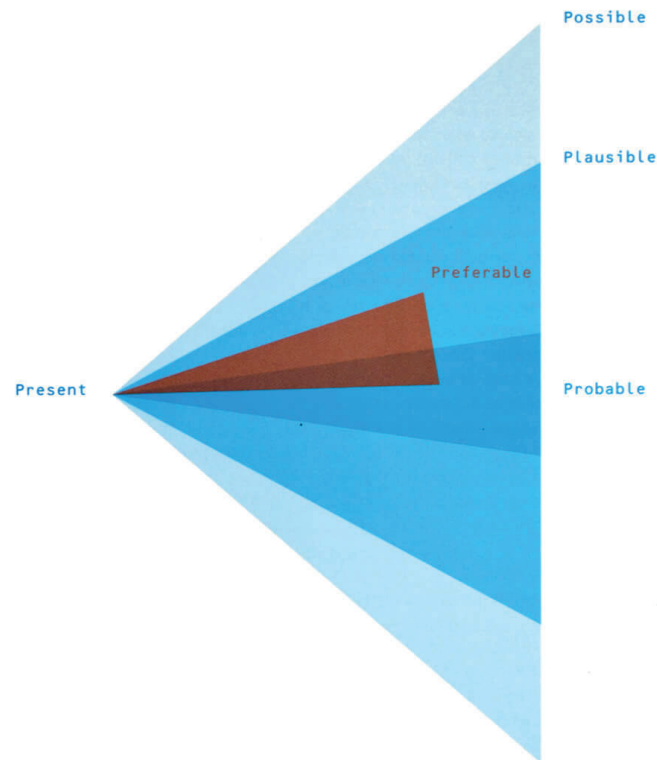
fig. 2 Dunne and Raby's Futures Cones

of a technology and opening the discussion about it, design fiction can be used to explore wider implications of adopting any kind of technology.

Lindley and Coulton, two of the leading exponents of design fiction, firmly believed in the power of these technological visions of the future:

> "*Design fiction isn't about predicting the future or creating utopian visions that promote emerging technologies. Instead, it provides a means for exploring the societal, technological, and political nuances of possible futures so that we can better understand our present.*" (Coulton and Lindley, 2017, p. 43).

The same approach is adopted by many other researchers, whether they agree on the idea of possible futures or they are just interested in exploring the speculative possibilities of fictional artefacts. Grand and Wiedmar (2010) believed in a design used to discuss the world's changes by analyzing the world as it could be, and provided a detailed toolbox to apply this kind of research. Linehan (2014) criticized the lack of envisioning of HCI (Human-Computer Interaction) researchers regarding sociological or psychological perspective, promoting this different kind of design as a mean to facilitate reflection on the implications of design. More recently, Rapp (2019) used design fiction to analyze broader implications of technology for behavioural changing: one of the features that he found most useful is the possibility to allow long-term adoption testing in a short time, exploring with fiction what during the usual testing process would have taken an high amount of time and resources.

While this approach interpreted the term "fiction" as an activity of worldbuilding and speculation, mostly related to the academic field, another part of research focused more on the communicative possibilities that fiction could offer to design. This idea was already central in Kirby's work on diegetic prototypes, as explained before: he claimed that a fiction built in that way was able to influence people's opinion and, consequently, technological development (Kirby, 2009). Bleecker also reflected on the fact that science fiction, from which design fiction takes form, was much more suitable than design research to make the knowledge circulate (Bleecker, 2009). Brown (2016) used it to talk with the industry world: he claimed "*it provides a way of thinking and talking about present day concepts, and present day constraints, without being overly concerned with contemporary challenges, or*

the requirements of academic validation" (Brown et al., 2016, p. 335). The two approaches could also complement each other, as shown by Tanenbaum's work (2016): he asserted the importance of taking this kind of research outside the academic field into a broader public discourse. According to him, **the role of design fiction is not only to explore the consequences of proximal futures, but also to act like a medium between the research world and the public opinion, to understand and eventually regulate the impact that possible futures can have on a broader audience** (Tanenbaum, 2016).

1.1.3
Worldbuilding and storytelling

There is not a clear consensus about what exactly constitutes the "fiction" part of design fiction. The double meaning of the world (either "something that is invented" or "literature that describes imaginary events", according to Oxford Lexico Dictionary) started a debate around the nature of the practice itself that goes back to its creation because, as mentioned before, Sterling himself took an ambiguous stance regarding whether this discipline was addressing the creation of a story or just a storyworld. According to his final definition from 2012, storytelling has no place in design fiction, that is just about the creation of worlds. In 2017, Coulton and Lindley expressed their total agreement with this position. In their opinion, diegetic prototypes are the primary focus of design fiction, and the best way to show their function is to place them inside a fictional world. Narrative, characters and plot would be an unnecessary addition, or even a distraction from this

focus (Coulton et al., 2017). They believed that **creating a world is the primary task of the designer when creating a design fiction.**

Most of the other researchers that worked on the topic, however, distanced themselves from this idea, making a claim for the **central role of storytelling inside a well-functioning design fiction project**. Basing their reflections on the idea of a "secondary world", a literary place where it's possible to achieve the suspension of disbelief necessary for the immersion of the audience, Jensen and Vistisen (2017) claimed that worldbuilding is just the first step in the creation of a good design fiction. To keep the audience involved, *ethos* and *logos* (provided by the secondary world) are not enough: it's necessary to introduce *pathos*, given by a narrative and a plot, that can create the emotions needed to move the audience. The diegetic aspect of the prototype, they note, relies on how it works inside the story, not inside the world.

A similar concept was expressed some years before by Tanenbaum (2014):

> *"The logics of the story are what give a design fiction its power, and I would argue that in the absence of those logics, a design fiction ceases to operate. [...] Situating a new technology within a narrative forces us to grapple with questions of ethics, values, social perspectives, causality, politics, psychology, and emotions"* (Tanenbaum, 2014, p. 22).

He also wanted to clarify that **design fiction is not a very detailed scenario acted by personas. The key discriminator**, in his opinion, **is the possibility left to the readers to interpret and understand the narrative, that is what, in the end, can provoke the desired reflections.**

An even more detailed study about the difference between a scenario and a design fiction, in terms of plot, has been done by Blythe (2017). Analyzing the recurrent plots in these two narratives, he aimed to increase awareness about these mechanics to create better design fictions. He defined the scenario's usual plot as *Overcoming the Monster*: the difficult aspects of everyday's life are considered to be the monsters, and technology (represented by the central product) is the hero that, in the end, manages to overcome these monsters. This structure, in his opinion, results too problem-focused, incurring in the risk of being criticized as "solutionist". The design fiction's plot, on the other hand, is defined as a *Voyage and Return*: the protagonist sets out on a journey to a new world and is introduced to practices and technologies familiar to its natives, but new to him. During the story, he learns to accept them as well, and returns in the end to the world he knows with a new awareness. This happens because design fiction aims to present worlds in which technology is part of a "new normal". The plot is crucial for the exploration of this "new" world, with the final purpose of raising questions about the traditional way to see technology (and, in addition, society itself).

Going back to the origins of design fiction, Bleecker (2009) was already appreciating the enrichment to design given by the use of stories. He pointed out that science fiction is actually way more apt that science (and design) both at imagining possible future worlds, without the constrictions given by facts, and at communicating them with other people as well. As cited above, he recognized to design fiction the enormous potential of making the knowledge circulate, by bringing technology out of a technical world into people's lives: *"The film becomes an opportunity to create a vision of the future but, perhaps more important, to share that*

vision to a large public audience." (Bleecker, 2009, p. 41), and in the end this is something that needs a narrative to be accomplished.

1.1.4
Designers and audiences

If storytelling is considered a central feature of design fiction, it's also important to ask to whom this story is told. For instance, consistently with their positions, Lindley and Coulton's projects are not designed to be shown outside of the academic field: with this type of audience, their approach of focusing just on the storyworld to build a coherent framework to their diegetic prototype have proven to be an effective *modus operandi*. However, as many researchers have observed, the possibility of using design fiction to start a conversation with a public outside of the scientific field is one of the main perks of design fiction.

Audience can play a passive or an active role inside a design fiction project. Kirby's (2009) diegetic prototypes and Bleecker's (2009) theories on science fiction and science facts, for instance, were meant to address a passive audience. Kirby talked about films and their influence on people, a topic taken up some years later by Tanenbaum (2017). Debating the topic of sustainability in interaction design, he argued that popular narratives about the future play a huge role in how people make decisions about sustainability. For instance, he analyzed some scenes from the 2015 science fiction film *Mad Max: Fury Road* (directed by George Miller) to understand how it changed people's perception of technology and environment, because *"a better understanding of how*

design fiction embedded in popular media influences and engages mass audiences is critical to understanding how our own work will be received." (Tanenbaum et al., 2017, p. 64). **This audience is the final target of the project, not an active part of it.** Their role is to understand the message given to them and participate to it in an indirect way, by reacting to it and by helping knowledge circulate. The same authors previously stated that exactly for this feature design fiction can be a good strategy to situate research about possible futures within a broader public discourse (Tanenbaum et al., 2016).

The audience starts to become more active when they have the possibility of being consulted about the design fiction project. In 2016, Dalton and his team experimented this particular role for the audience by designing a story to be shared on the online writing platform *Wattpad*: they aimed to explore a new way of using design fictions as a tool for discussion with a large global audience (Dalton, Moreau and Adams, 2016) (Appendix A - Case Study, henceforth CS, n. 1). Their story has been developed to meet *Wattpad* readers' taste (discovered through preliminary studies) and it contained different technological props to test people's reaction to them. Later, they analyzed the received views and comments to collect the results. In this case, audience was not directly involved in the design fiction artefact, but they people the possibility to interact anyway with the designers and their reaction to the product has been valued and tested. Another example of this partially active audience is given by Tanenbaum's researches in 2012. As a case study they used the Steampunk movement, showing it as an explicit model for how to physically realize an ideological and imagined world through design practice. In this case, the audience stops being a mere receiver and

starts to be considered as part of the research itself, because their active interest in physically realizing the imaginary world of Steampunk demonstrate how design fiction can benefit from the social meaning and value of designed objects (Tanenbaum et al., 2012).

In 2017, Tsekleves and his team experimented with an even more active audience. Aiming to study the ethical implications over health care technologies, they organized workshops to explore societal and ethical challenges of pervasive healthcare for elderly. In this case, people have been encouraged by the design team to take part in a co-design process to discuss their opinion about health care technologies (Tsekleves et al., 2017). The direct involvement of the audience in the creation process allowed the team to engage in more aware discussions that led to useful insights on the chosen topic.

Lastly, Nägele used a method called **Participatory Design Fiction (PDFi)**: "*a 4-stage process that assists a research team to derive design values and insights by working with marginalized and vulnerable individuals*" (Nägele, et al., 2018, p. 2) (fig. 3) (CS n. 2). This method's process is the opposite of what described before with the example of films. Instead of designing a product and showing it to an audience, the research team contacted their target users (people suffering from Urinary Tracts Infections) and asked them to envision their own possible future to show them how they would want to be treated, if they could have all the imaginable technology at their disposal. The team then proceeded with analyzing the results and even prototyped some of them, always with the directions of the fiction's authors. They found this method to be very effective with special needs users and pe-

Prologue: *Washington DC, 2050: Charlotte is working late again. She mostly works from home as a communication analyst, and lives in a modular home similar to her friends and most others in Washington D.C. The city is extremely overcrowded so highly functional and modular homes have been created to accommodate suitable living conditions. Insurance companies fight for better and healthier clients in this world to strike better deals. Charlotte pays a reasonable fee, like most others, for her medical insurance but because of her unique medical condition her home is installed with special features to accommodate her condition. For instance, her home includes a more comfortable bathroom and special remote linkage to Doctors and specialists.*

C: Charlotte, D1: First Doctor, D2: Second Doctor

fig. 3 Sample scenario from the participatory project *PDFi*

ople who normally don't feel listened to and, therefore, are not motivated enough in participating in regular UX (User Experience) studies .

Starting with a design fiction that wants to stimulate a reflection in a passive audience and arriving at a design fiction designed *by* the audience aiming to elicit a reflection *from* the research team itself, this section of the research has the purpose of showing how different degrees of involvement of the audience can lead to completely different design fiction projects. This last part of the state of the art on design fiction confirmed the idea that **trying to define one singular approach and one methodology to apply design fiction is not possible, since the versatility of the tool allows for a great variety of results depending on the chosen attitude.**

1.2
Applications

Given the variety of interpretations that exist on design fiction theory, the projects that resulted as physical outputs of these studies are also extremely diverse. Defining a project as a "design fiction" artefact is a statement that can be both true and questionable depending on the system of references that every researcher lays at the basis of their study. It goes beyond the intention of this thesis to define which case study can actually be labelled as design fiction projects and which cannot. More than what is design fiction, the purpose of this section is to understand what is considered to be design fiction by their own author, in order to understand how the possibilities of joining design and fiction have been explored during the years.

In this section a possible taxonomy of different case studies is suggested, based on where the focus of the project lies (the narrative world, the storytelling, the diegetic prototype, the audience's involvement). Besides being part of studies on design fiction, all the projects aim to show the future as everyday mundane life and enhance a reflection on what a given development could imply on various levels.

1. Imaginary abstracts and fictional papers
2. Fictional prototypes
3. Participatory design fiction
4. Emotional narrative

1.2.1
Imaginary abstracts and fictional papers

This category is the direct consequence of an idea of design fiction as a tool for research, to be therefore used mostly inside the academic field. These projects aim to provoke reflection in all the researchers that come across the papers. An early example of this approach is provided by Kirman (2013): with the paper *CHI and the Future Robot Enslavement of Humankind; A Retrospective* (CS n. 3), he and his team discuss the increasing importance of robotic machines in real life, but they provocatively do it "*as robots from the future*" (Kirman et al., 2013, p. 2199), concluding with their thanks to the HCI field "*for creating the inevitability of human enslavement by machines, and remind researchers to ask themselves this important question when explaining the contribution of their work to HCI: how does this work contribute to the future enslavement of humankind by evil robots?*" (Kirman et al., 2013, p. 2207). The final reminder is a clear summary of who they intend to speak to and with what purpose: to encourage researchers to consider the long-term implications of their studies, as well as the larger social and psychological changes that their approach could have. A similar purpose is researched by Blythe (2014), that introduced his idea of imaginary abstracts, "*describing prototypes that do not exist and studies that never took place*" (Blythe, 2014, p. 205), with the intent of analyzing if the research questions were worthy of being addressed or not, before proceeding with physical prototypes. Lindley and Coulton, in several of their studies (Lindley and Coulton, 2015, 2016b, 2016a; Coulton et al., 2016) have been using fictional papers or abstracts to explore the possibility of researches and technology before their actual
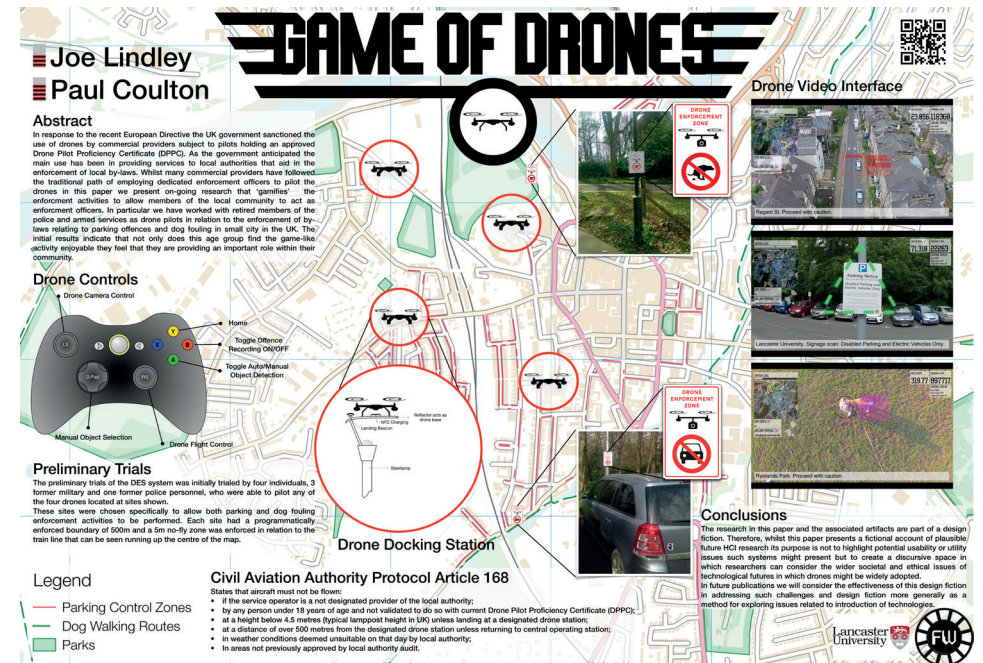
fig. 4 Summary board of the fictional paper *Game of Drones*

development. In 2015, they published their paper *Game of Drones* (CS n. 4), in which they explained a (fictional) gamification of the drone system used by police forces (fig. 4). The paper results to be completely plausible until, in the conclusions, they reveal the fact that it's a work of design fiction, that aims not only to study the potential usability of an actual gamification of the drones system, but also (and mainly) to give a hint about a possible world in which drones might be widely adopted. As the authors' themselves declared (Coulton and Lindley, 2017), **these academic fictional papers are world building exercises**, to which the presented artefacts (Kirman's robot association, Lindley and Coulton's drone system) are the entry points. **The focus of the project is not the prototype or the story (generally even avoided), but the slice of world that can be presented and used as a way to enhance an anti-solutionist reflection inside the academic field**.

1.2.2
Fictional prototypes

This second cluster is where design fiction comes closest to the concepts of critical or speculative design. The "fictional prototypes" are impossible or unreal projects that take some elements from current reality and imagine how they could be in a possible future. In this category, what could be a future everyday life takes the physical form of all the objects that constitute it. One of the most significant examples is *The living room of the future* (Coulton et al., 2019) (CS n. 5): the team of designers imagined what a living room could be in a possible future where home automation has become widespread and a range of Internet of Things (IoT) devices respond to people's actions inside the room, recording their data and changing the environment according to the received information (fig. 5). This work has been defined by its authors as "*Experiential Design Fiction*" (Coulton et al., 2019, p. 15): the fictional world is not only described, but partially recreated in the immersive experience of a possible mundane reality of tomorrow. An interesting feature of this project is also the key role that the audience plays in it: people have the possibility to directly enter inside the diegesis, experiencing the possible future, achieving an embodied rather than cognitive suspension of disbelief.

This cluster also includes all the projects that haven't been physically prototyped, but even if they remain inside of the research field they still present a significant contrast to the ones explored in Chapter 1.2.1. While the first category focused on the dynamics of the world, shown through some specific elements, in
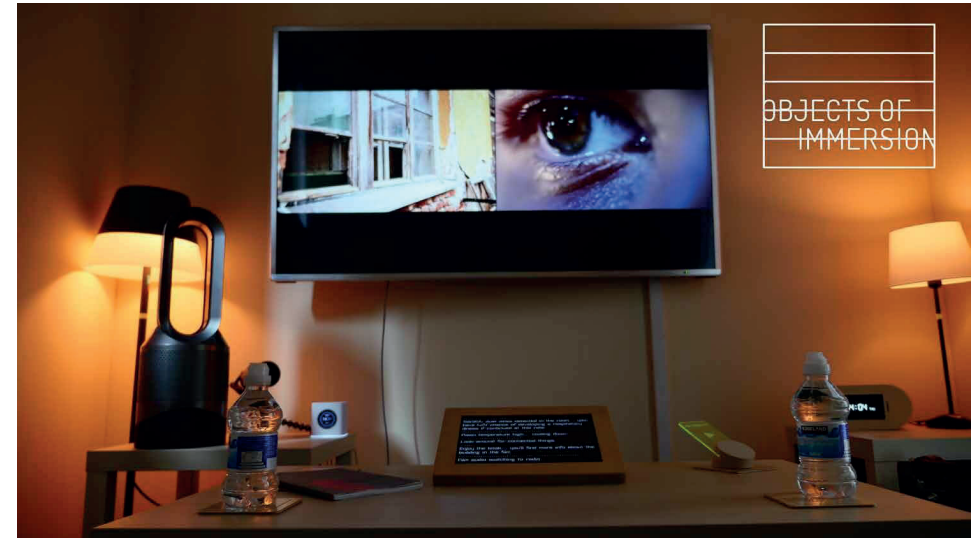
fig. 5 Photo from the exhibition *The living room of the future*

this one the focus is on the product, shown as a concrete proof of a blurred future world where technological innovations have led to some specific outcomes. In the project :*Blackbox*: (Tiberio and Imbesi, 2017) (CS n. 6), Artificial Intelligence (AI) advancements and a general negligence regarding personal privacy have led to the creation of a narrative device (the Blackbox) with the ability to process, interpret, understand and recollect human experiences, events, facts. **The existence of a dystopian world around the product is hinted to, but not explored, since what has to incite the reflection is the object itself and how it's used**.

Fictional prototypes are not necessarily objects. The research group *Near Future Laboratory* have used design fiction artefacts, as anticipated in Chapter 1.1.2, to cooperate with industries. Similarly with what was realized with *The living room of the future*, the project *An IKEA Catalog From The Near Future* (CS n. 7) consists in a fictional IKEA catalog, a container of life's essentials and accessories which can be extrapolated from today's normal into

Sample page from the fictional catalog *An IKEA Catalog from the Near Future*

tomorrow's normal (fig. 6). The final prototype, an actual printed catalog, has been developed during a workshop with the design team and their industrial clients, interested in analyzing how a widespread introduction of IoT could change people's home habits. At first glance, the catalogue offers a rather cosy futuristic vision, but looking at the copy it emerges a more equivocal and critical vision of IKEA not as home provider, but as a data collection entry (Brown et al., 2016).

With their differences, the projects established a series of pattern. First of all, it is relevant to notice how **the topics of IoT (and its stable introduction inside people's lives) and the connected privacy concerns has been a major focus for the attention of different researchers**. All the projects deal with possible futures, but what they are actually implying are current problems they feel to be relevant inside present reality. Design fiction assumes here the features of a real design with fictional content. While the audience can experience various levels of engagement, according to the purpose and the advancement's state of the project,

the worldbuilding part is not developed and the narrative part is completely missing.

1.2.3
Participatory fictions

In this typology, **design fiction is used as a method of co-design to elaborate solutions with the aid of the audience**. In Chapter 1.1.4, Nägele's (2018) method of Participatory Design Fiction (PDFi) was mentioned, in which a special need target (people with Urinary Tract Infections) had been encouraged to envision their situation as if they could have all the technology they wanted to create a situation that could help them with their condition. Similar ways to conduct UX researches can be traced back in many different studies, especially in the past few years (Tsekleves et al., 2017; Baumann et al., 2018; Maxwell et al., 2019; Rapp, 2019). While they differ for the content of their research and the target they work with, they all actively use what design fiction theorises to engage people into imagining possible futures. The audience they reach is usually composed by people that would have difficulties expressing their opinions in other ways. For the project *Telling the bees*, Maxwell (2019) and her team proved design fiction to be an useful approach for addressing complex issues, such as global environmental threats, with an audience composed of primary school children (CS n. 8). The activity they proposed them included drama, design, creative writing and 3D prototyping (fig. 7): through these tools, children had the possibility to understand the environmental ramifications of a world without bees and imagining what they could do (and design) to address the prob-

fig. 7 Sample images from the school newspapers created for *Telling the bees*
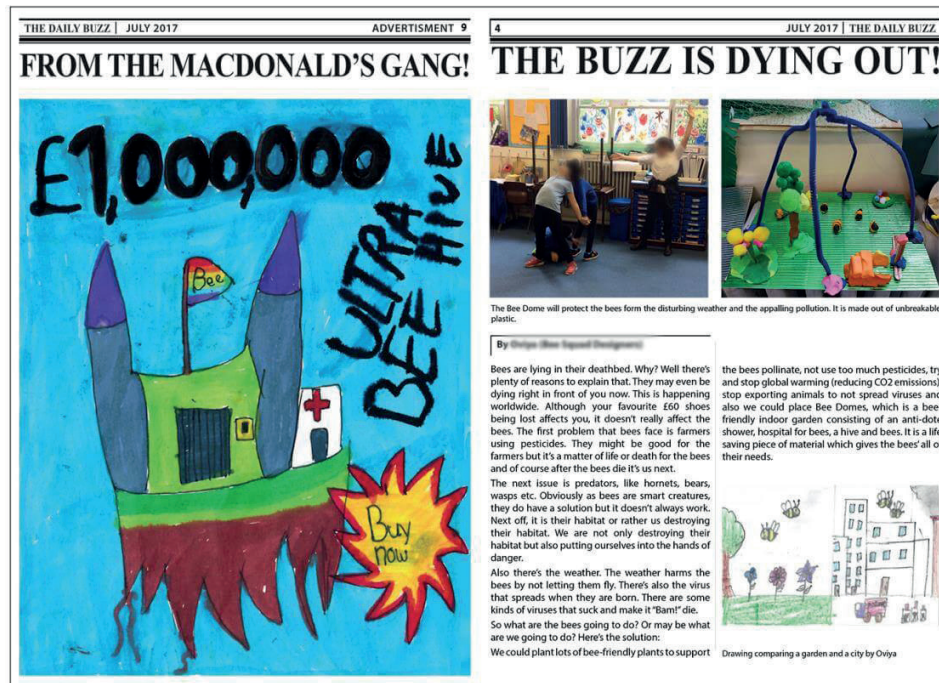
fig. 8 Prototype from the participatory design workshop *ProtoPolicy*

lem. While they found difficulties in designing effective diegetic prototypes with the children, the result of a fictional-oriented approach was considered to be very effective.

Tsekleves (2017) and his team used a similar approach, with their project *ProtoPolicy* (CS n. 9), to confront a completely different target and topic: they worked with older people to facilitate their participation in the social, ethical and legal debates relevant to emergent technologies in healthcare (fig. 8). In the conclusion of their research, they also found that involving elderly in projects that directly concern them can also have the effect of increasing their acceptance towards healthcare technologies and services. This idea is also the central focus of *Sankofa City*, 2018 (CS n. 10), a project that engages community residents of an African-Amer-

ican neighbourhood in Los Angeles in addressing their cultural displacement by designing a new technological neighbourhood with the team of designers (Baumann et al., 2018) (fig. 9).

These case studies proved a different possible focus of design fiction, not on fictional worlds or prototypes but on the audience and on the process of creating the fictional artefact. **The purpose of these projects is not to find a specific solution to the addressed problem, but to actively involve people in its possible solution.** The futuristic artefacts or the considerations that emerge from this process can then be used as a fertile ground to design products in the present, making the whole research an **alternative but promising UX research tool**.

fig. 9 Frames from the collaborative project *Sankofa city*

1.2.4
Emotional narratives

In all the previous case studies it is noticeable the almost complete absence of any kind of storytelling mechanism. Even if, as shown in Chapter 1.1.3, the presence of a story has been considered an important, sometimes essential, feature of design fiction, it can be rarely found outside the research field and in an actual project. While the plot component has been analyzed in entertainment products, mostly films, as in Kirby's studies and in the case of *Mad Max: Fury Road*, it has often been omitted in the hands-on applications. **This cluster includes these design fiction projects that**, although always involving the creation of possible worlds and the use of diegetic prototypes, **keep their fo-**
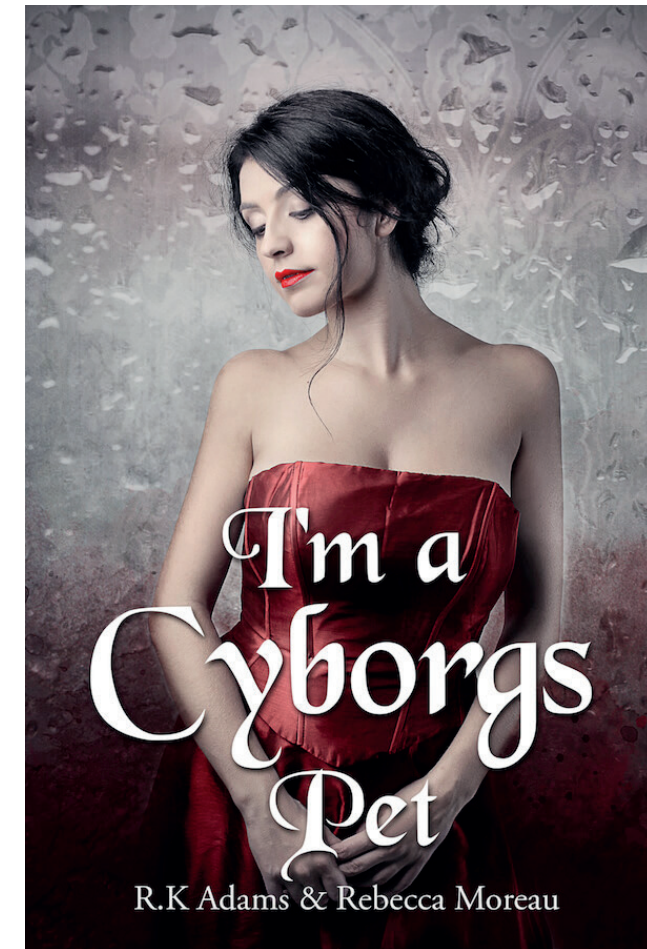
fig. 10 Cover of the novel of *I'm a Cyborg's Pet*

cus on the storytelling side, using it to engage the audience and convey the desired message. For instance, it has previously been mentioned a project published on Wattpad (Dalton, Moreau and Adams, 2016). The story *I'm a Cyborgs Pet: the thinking girl's guide to surviving a robot apocalypse* (CS n. 1) (fig. 10) has been defined by its authors as "Emotional Prototyping" (Dalton, Moreau and Adams, 2016, p. 368), because the use of the narrative can engage the audience on a level further than the rational. The purpose of this project is similar to the other, to investigate and reimag-

fig. 11 Screen from the film *Uninvited Guests*

loured smart objects to highlight their nature of placeholders (fig. 11). While, e.g., Tsekleves's participatory design addressed this same problem by involving the interested parties, in this situation the story creates an emotive connection that every person, regardless of whether they belong to the intended target, can feel. Without having to bluntly express them, the project raises questions about the quality of life that lay beyond an increasingly technological world.

ine current and future technologies. The difference lies in the emotional aspect, conveyed through a written story, that allows the audience to relate more with the suggested world than they would if simply shown a product without context. Every product they inserted within the story was studied to convey a specific emotional meaning, and the audience's reactions (collected in the comments section) granted the designers the possibility to observe the impact the product had and adjust it accordingly.

A similar concept has also been used in the short film *Uninvited Guest*, by Superflux (2015) (CS n. 11). This product tells the story of Thomas, a 70 years old senior living alone with a series of smart devices given to him by his concerned children. The film revolves around Thomas's struggles in dealing with the rules imposed on him by these objects, portrayed as generic brightly co-

	Fictional papers	Fictional prototypes	Participatory fictions	Emotional narratives
Outputs	Research papers or abstracts	Physical or digital artefacts	Scenarios, prototypes, discussions	Narrative artefacts
Field	HCI	HCI, IoT	(various)	(various)
Focus	Fictional worlds	Diegetic prototype	Ideation process	Storytelling
Audience	Researchers	(various)	Special needs target	(various)
Audience's role	Passive	Passive/ moderately active	Active	Passive/ moderately active

fig. 12 Case studies clusters: an overview

1.3

Future opportunities

1.3.1
Critical points

In its fifteen years of life, design fiction has struggled to find its place inside the design scene. While many possibilities and advantages have been shown, the researchers have also noticed various issues that could be holding back some wider and more effective applications.

Bardzell (2013), arguing about critical design, claimed that **its efficacy is severely undermined by the unclear methods and the difficulty in adopting the tool**. Considering the complexity that has emerged from this study, the same criticism could be applied to design fiction as well. His suggestion for design theorists and researchers is to improve the situation not by decoding what Dunne and Raby (or, in this case, Sterling) might have meant, but by actively developing designs in ways that could be effective for the desired purpose. This comment well addresses the discussion, because, as shown with the case studies, it's impossible to define a right and wrong method to apply design fiction *a priori*, since very different approaches have all demonstrated their effectiveness in different contexts. Rather than seeking a definition, the mere application of design and fiction together could lead to interesting and potentially innovative projects.

One of the main objections that have been raised towards design fiction projects is that not always their provocative intent effectively led to a precise result. In this regard, Tonkinwise claims that "A *thing, by itself, can never be 'disturbing' or 'provocative.' You are only allowed to use the words 'disturbing' and provocative' if you can find people willing to testify that they were disturbed and provoked."* (Tonkinwise, 2015, p. 9). It's already been discussed how audience plays an important part in design fiction, however many of the analyzed case studies don't actually consider people's opinions on their artefacts as an essential step of their process. Di Salvo (2012) insists on the necessity to use these forms of "anti-solutionist" design for more than provocation, in order to enable more meaningful engagement with the core of the problem. He also highlights **the high limitation than a design based only on speculation can have, compared with the possibility that it holds when an audience is involved**. Design fiction has the very interesting potential of creating a meeting point between an elitist field (academic research) and the general public through the correct application of storytelling, that in the entertainment field has proved its importance in influencing people's opinions. Keeping this practice enclosed in the academic circle, underestimating the importance of the narrative or assuming (without checking) people's reactions towards it closes up to the designer many interesting opportunities to strengthen the tool itself.

Another relevant critical point emerged from this research on the state of the art is its mainly technologically-centred approach. Most of the discussed project took place inside the context of HCI and discuss technological changes in future hypothetical society. In 2016, Blythe and Encinas mapped the areas in which design fiction was being applied at that point (fig. 13), suggesting that

the most frequently employed design fictions are broadly scientific, using a critical or ironical approach to future exaggerations (Blythe and Encinas, 2016). They suggest that design fiction could have great potential in other undiscovered "countries": for them, the "fields" of magic and ambiguity, as to say fictions that don't offer scientific or rational explanation, where the miraculous is considered just another everyday occurrence. In fact, people's expectations on the future aren't influenced exclusively from science fiction novels, as any technology that is futuristic enough blurs the line between science and magic.

Moreover, the purpose is to raise a discussion around future societal changes, a too narrow focus on technology can even overshadow all the context around it.

"*Putting technology at the center of anything is profoundly conservative. The only change is change to social practices*" (Tonkinwise, 2015, p. 9).

An exclusively technological approach to design fiction rules out all the sociological and psychological changes that would be interesting to study as important parts of these possible futures.

1.4.1 Project opportunity

Based on the selected case studies and on the discussion of critical points, a series of opportunities can be traced, regarding the methodology and the content of design fiction projects. To confront the case studies, a benchmark that analyzes the presence of a story and the role that the audience assumes inside them has been created (fig. 14).

The choice of these parameters has been made consequently to the preliminary research in Chapter 1.1. The first parameter maps the presence and the relevance of mechanisms of storytelling inside the project (in opposition to the mere creation of a fictional world); the second one categorizes the audience's role on a scale from passive (not interacting with nor consulted about the project) or active (consulted about and/or interacting with the project). **This benchmark shows an opportunity between projects with a high interaction with the audience and those that present significant storytelling features, suggesting what could be the methodological approach for this thesis's project**. The second factor is driven from the critical analysis about the
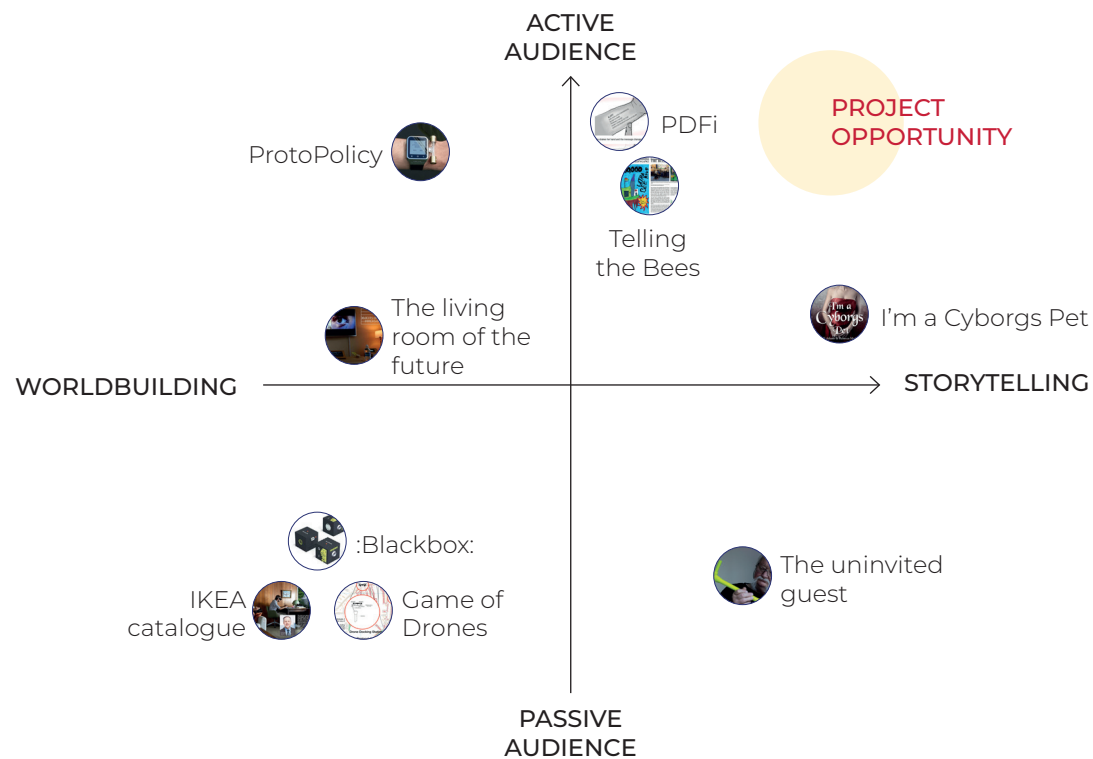
fig. 14 Benchmark of selected case studies and project opportunity

topics dealt with by design fiction. While the declared intention (Chapter 1.1.2) is to open a discussion about the wider implications that technologies can have inside possible futures, it has been noticed that an almost constant focus is placed just on the technological artefact itself, with at most some hints about the surrounding world. **This thesis's intention is to suggest an approach that shifts back the focus from the prototype to the human impact that it could have. For this reason, the suggested field of application for design fiction is social awareness.** The potential of engagement that a storytelling-driven project can have on the audience can be an opportunity to involve people in a reflection that is not focused on utopian or dystopian features of technological future worlds, but on the social components that are constantly revolving around them.

Design fiction
The highlights

⬤ Due to the many different approaches adopted by researchers, an univocal definition is still far from being formed;

⬤ Design fiction revolve around the concept of diegetical prototypes (i.e. hypothetical future technologies that exist and work inside a fictional world);

⬤ What design fiction has in common with critical or speculative design is its "anti-solutionist" nature, focused on raising problems rather than solving them;

⬤ Design fiction has been used as a research tool or to enhance communication between the academic field and the public opinion;

⬤ The term "fiction" defines the made up content of the world and/or the conveyed narrative;

⬤ Inside a design fiction project, the audience can play an active role (being consulted about and/or interacting with the project) or a passive role (none of the previous);

⬤ Some critical points of the current application of design fiction could be the complexity of the tool, the sterility of a provocation without consequences, the tech-centred approach, the lack of a good connection with the audience, the enclosure inside the academic field;

⬤ Some opportunities for future projects could be: for the methodology, an active audience's role joined with a high development of the storyline; for the topic, a focus on social awareness.

Chapter 2

GENERATION Z

Technological development had always had a strong impact on people's lives. Values, habits and behaviours of all generations are deeply influenced by technological progress in time. The theoretical base of generational cohorts is that external changes in social, political, economical or technological situation affects large group of people that went through them in a specific phase of their life. **Dividing people by generations allows researchers to analyze how historical events, geopolitical situation, economic and social shifts affect how people behave**. Regardless of the specific approach that various studies have on the matter, they all agree that technological breakthroughs are an important factor that affects the differences between generations (e.g. Barr, 2016; Claveria, 2019; Dimock, 2019; Kasasa, 2019). Using generations instead of age groups shifts the focus to the circumstances that lead a specific group of people to behave in a certain way, instead of limiting the analysis to the present behaviour. While younger and older adults may differ in their views at a given moment, generational cohorts allow researchers to examine how today's older adults felt about a given issue when they were young themselves, as well as to describe how the trajectory of views might differ across generations (Dimock, 2019).

There isn't an univocal definition for each generation, because many studies suggest different reasons for choosing one year

or the other as a discriminating factor. To simplify, **this thesis will refer to generational cohorts using the PRC (Pew Research Center) years definition** (fig. 15) (Dimock, 2019). Being an American study, they define *Millennials* as the generation that, the day it happened, was old enough to understand the historical and social importance of the 9/11 terrorist attack to the *Twin Towers* (even if vaguely, for the youngest members of the cohort), while *Generation* Z has no memory of the moment the event happened (Dimock, 2019). Another discriminating factor is the spread of smartphones: the first *iPhone* was launched in 2007, when the oldest *GenZer* (person that belongs to *Gen Z*) was only ten: that means that by the time they reached their teens, or even before that, *GenZers* knew constant connection via mobile devices as a natural part of the world (Dimock, 2019).

Technology is a very important factor into generational studies. New technologies are typically first adopted by the youngest generation and then, gradually, by the older, that are less apt to introduce novelties in their habits (Kasasa, 2019). For *Baby Boomers* it was the introduction of TV in their homes, while *Millennials* were the first to accept social network as part of their lives: after them, all the previous generations followed the trend. As TV had a huge impact on *Baby Boomers*' generation and established the basis for remarkable changes in society, in the same way *Gen Z*'s attitude towards Internet and social media is just the beginning of a series of changes that will happen in the future.

The focus of this thesis will be on *Gen Z*, because when talking about the relationship between people and technology, this generation presents the most peculiar features. Already in 2001, ***GenZers* have been defined "Digital Natives": people that are**
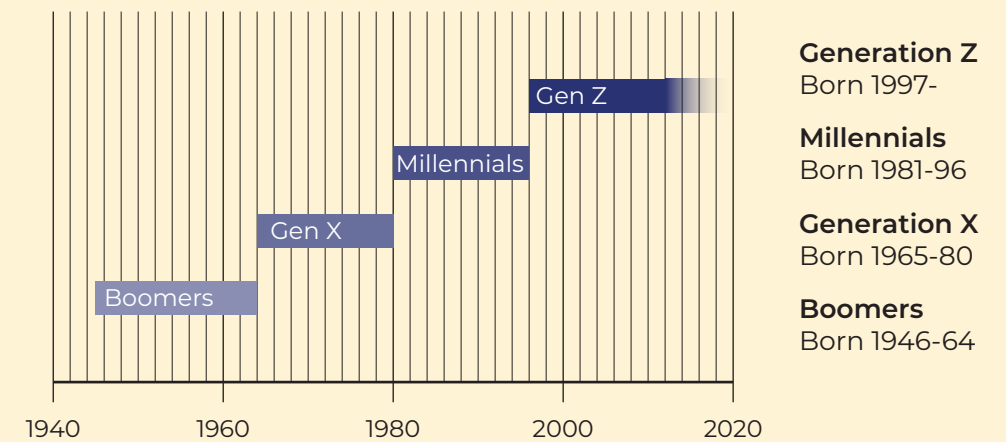
fig. 15 Generation cohorts years definition

born already connected (Prensky, 2001). Their relationship with technology is different from any of the previous generations, and the future implications of this bond are still unclear. As they enter adulthood, they will face challenges that none of the previous generations had to face, and this could be a very promising field to investigate using design fiction.

According to a study by The New York Post, today *GenZers* represent 32% of the global population (Spitznagel, 2020): they are mostly kids and teenagers, with an age span that goes (in 2020) from 0 to 22 years old. This is the largest generational cohort and it includes people in their growing years, so in a status of constant change: any kind of definition is a generalization that can vary considerably changing the specific age span or the geographical area. Most of the studies that can be found on the topic are American and their statistics are focused on American *GenZers*. This thesis, however, will focus mostly on an Italian audience. Very few studies have been conducted on Italian *Gen Z*, that represents 11% of the national population (less than the global average, since Italy has an old population), but it's an active and

important part of the society (BNP Paribas Cardif, 2019). Designing for an Italian target requires to understand where global tendencies can be applied to the local situation and where they differ, to act consequently. **The following paragraphs will discuss the general features of *GenZers* personalities, habits and behaviour, starting from the global trends, with a focus, when possible, on the Italian one, specifically to remark where it differs from the general situation**.

2.1
Personality traits

2.1.1
A global community that wants to change the world

Millennials, the first generation to discover the connecting possibilities of the Internet, was considered to be the most global generation. *GenZers*, however, took that record from them, as they grew up in a world full of international connections and circulation of news (Beall, 2017). As access to easy travels and quick speed band reduce the geographical bounds, *GenZers* develop their sense of community by laughing at the same memes or watching the same TV series or worrying about the same issue as their pe-

ers all over the word. They are the first generation that can have more similarities with people close in age in another country than with their parents (Beall, 2017). Interests and passions drive them to look online for people to share them with, creating a new sense of belonging that's not related to physical distance: **they have been called "global citizen", while *Millennials* were just "global spectators"** (Jenkins, 2017). They see themselves as part of the greater whole, and they are definitely more sensitive to global issues. They are growing up accompanied by an increasing concern about environmental crisis, and post-apocalyptic narratives have been so influential on them that they have also been called "the Post-Apocalyptic Generation" (Myers, 2017). **Environment and sustainability are important challenges for** *GenZers*, as exemplified in the figure of Greta Thunberg, the girl representing the voice of her peers in her fight for climate against older generations (Gontcharova, 2019). According to a report by Sparks&Honey (2015), 70% of *GenZers* say inequality worries them greatly, but also 60% of them say that they want do something to change the world they live in (that, compared to 39% of *Millennials* at their same age, it's a remarkable change).

2.1.2
The generation of inclusivity

According to Sparks&Honey (2015), **the right word for *GenZers* to approach diversity is not tolerance, but inclusivity**. Many things that were radical paradigm shifts for previous generations, like same sex marriages, an African-American US President, or the concept of gender as a spectrum, are just common truths for

GenZers (Folmsbee, 2017). According to PRC, they are the least racist, sexist and homophobic generation and the most well educated generation yet (Parker et al., 2019). The same report also states that GenZers are more likely than *Millennials* to say they know people that prefer the use of gender neutral pronouns. The majority of *GenZers* and *Millennials* consider the increased racial and ethnic diversity as a value for society, in contrast with older generations. Moving from America to Italy, a research conducted by *BNP Paribas Cardif* on Italian teens between 14 and 24 years old confirmed the global tendency of attention towards the environment and the inclusivity towards personal differences (60% of them stated that they consider confrontation between cultures to be a value for society), especially between teens that live in big cities (BNP Paribas Cardif, 2019).

2.1.3
Personalizing diversity

While from one side *GenZers* are looking for a global community, on the other they are also growing to care about each one's individuality. **In a world where being different is being normal, the key to find an identity is through personalization**. *GenZers* want to choose who to follow and what to be inspired from. They have a strong desire to establish quality connections with people: small group of friends, easily reachable through digital tools, are preferable to large crowds where they do not feel that they can talk and think freely. These restricted circles allow them to express and explore their personality (Nava, 2020). The need to belong is a very important factor for young people of all gene-

rations, but while *Millennials* fulfilled it by socially conforming with the rest of the world, *GenZers* feel the need to find the uniqueness in the conformity (Folmsbee, 2017). Social media expose them to such a broad variety of identities, interests, opinions or artistic expressions that the only way to stand out of the crowd is by being different, and that's why personalization is so important for *GenZers*. Finding their favourite *Instagram* story effect, using their specific set of emoji or GIFs, choosing what to watch or play or eat or listen, allows them to shape their identity and curate a "personal brand" with their online presence (Folmsbee, 2017). That doesn't mean that they are not inclined to conform, but they will try to adapt the general tendency to their unique identity: an example can be found in the popularity of social media challenges, something mainstream that everybody can follow by personalizing it, adding individuality to a common trend.

2.1.4
Young entrepreneurs and self learners

GenZers are personalizing not only their digital space, but also their educational path and their working opportunities. They are inventing new jobs and learning how to do them, without necessarily passing through formal education. According to Sparks&Honey (2015), being born in a world full of unstable realities is one of the main causes for *GenZers*' alternative choices in education and work. They know that what led *Boomers* and *GenXers* to success is already failing *Millennials*, and they are trying to find a new way around this problem. When discussing this generation's approach to education and work, it's important to consider that

in 2020 the oldest *GenZer* will be only 23 years old. While many of them are already working, the great majority is still in their infancy and teen years: considering their age, trying to establish a trend in *GenZers*' behaviour inside the workforce can be misleading. What studies can do, rather than merely describe the behaviour of the youngest generation in the workplace, is to try to understand their mindset towards the idea of work. It's interesting to notice how *GenZers* apply the concept of defining an identity through personalization also to their careers, or intentions towards them. **This need to stand out from a crowd by being different encourage them to think earlier about their interests and explore career possibilities before other generations did at their age** (Sparks & Honey, 2015). Formal education is not the only way to learn more about what they like: 75% of teens in the US think they can achieve a good education in other ways then college, and 70% are already working entrepreneurial, freelance jobs (Sparks & Honey, 2015). When schools and college don't offer what they need anymore, alternative training paths can include *YouTube* tutorials or on-demand learning (Jenkins, 2017).

In Italy, these general trends are a little less extreme, but still present: while half of teens aim to a stable employment, there is a third of them that see themselves working an active and independent job, as freelancers or in startups. The picture that emerges from this study is that of a proactive generation, with one out of three already working and a generally positive perception of the future.

2.2
Media habits

One of the most important factors that shaped *GenZers* behaviours and personalities is technology. This new generation has never known a world without Internet and social media, where being connected isn't just a part of life. Compared to generations that saw the rise of the Internet, they are less naive and less scared of it. They know that being connected and sharing information involves some risks and they think they have the tools to take precautions against them. They are growing up hearing about problems of sharing data, or privacy, and that makes them more sensitive about these issues than the older generations were when they first approached the web.

When the Internet started to be diffused, the debate began between the extremely positive and extremely negative view on this new tool: was it good and healthy to be connected? *GenZers*, however, were born in the following phase, and they never had the option "not be connected". **Technology is not good or bad, it just is**. The line between online and offline is often blurred for *GenZers*, and that's why it's important to understand their behaviours online, as they have a close connection with how they behave offline. For teens, all communication passes through social media. They read news on it, they stay in contact with friends and family, they explore their interests, they plan their careers. As social media are constantly changing, when designing for *Gen Z* it's important to stay updated on these changes and, consequently, on the effect they have on their users behaviours.

2.2.1
Smartphones and social networks

Smartphones are the *GenZers*' windows on the online world. 95% of teens report having a smartphone or access to one, and roughly 90% of them say they use it or almost constantly or several times a day (doubling the percentage obtained with a similar analysis just three years before, according to PRC) (Anderson and Jiang, 2018a). There is a majority of girls that reported to being near-constant online users (50% of girls compared to 39% of boys) (Anderson and Jiang, 2018a). Online time represents a significant part of *GenZers*' day. Most of the information they need passes through the smartphone screen. Engaging with *Gen Z* means meeting them where they spend most of their time, and that's on smartphones: desktop, laptops and tablet, while still very important, can't compare with the high use of these smaller devices. 52% of teens reports that **their smartphone is their most important Internet device** and, having to choose between it and their wallet, they prefer to leave at home the wallet rather than the phone (Herosmyth, 2018).

Without a doubt, one of the most important activity in this constant connection is messaging. **At least half of the online time is spent on messaging apps**, say 57% of *GenZers* (Herosmyth, 2018). Texting to friends doesn't substitute face-to-face talking, but it completes it. Given how used teens are to talk to each other through their phones, messaging apps (*Facebook Messenger*, *Telegram*, or *WhatsApp*, to name some) are good alternatives to social media to reach *Gen* Z. In Italy, one of the most used platforms is definitely *WhatsApp* (Incarbone, 2018). American studies almost

never mention it because they are not that common ("you install it when you go abroad" - Watts, 2015), but they are an essential part of the daily connection habits for Italian teens: almost nine out of ten rate *WhatsApp* as the social they use the most (BNP Paribas Cardif, 2019) and another 80% declare they use it multiple times in a day (Incarbone, 2018).

Between social media, all studies agree in proclaiming that *Facebook* has lost its first place in the list of most used platforms. **Facebook is considered by *GenZers* a place for old people**, where they can't control their feed and are not free to personalize the content they see, confirming the importance of personalization for them (Watts, 2015). Almost all the American studies consider *Snapchat* to be the ultimate social media for *GenZers* (Watts, 2015; Anderson and Jiang, 2018a; Herosmyth, 2018), for the almost completely young public and the impermanence of the content, but it doesn't have the same importance in Italy: less than an half of teens are registered to it and most of them say they almost never use it (Incarbone, 2018). Italian *GenZers* favourite social media, with the exception of *WhatsApp*, is definitely *Instagram*, used by 82% of teens (BNP Paribas Cardif, 2019). Almost three out of five use it multiple times per day (Incarbone, 2018). The other social media that has a certain relevance in teens' media habit is *YouTube*, attracting *GenZers*' attention with an immersive and video-centric approach. **The overall preference expressed for *Instagram*, the social based on pictures, and *YouTube*, the one based on videos, confirm their predilection for visual-oriented social media where it's possible to select personalized content, enjoy social cohesion with their peers and learn new things** (80% of *Gen* Z reports that *YouTube* has helped them become more knowledgeable - McKeon, 2019).

2.2.2
Less attention, quicker focus

The attention span of *Gen Z* is, in average, 8 seconds, lesser than *Millennials*' (12 seconds). The reason for this shorter time it's simple: **in a connected world drowning in data flows, it prevents them from hitting an information overload** (Ewert, 2019). In todays digital society, teens are exposed to a massive number and diversity of stimuli from various sources, from social media to advertisement. In order to avoid to actually overload the brain with much more information that it can process, attention span decreased, acting as a "protective shield" (Sparks & Honey, 2015) and allowing them to navigate in the sea of data by quickly changing their focus between one piece of information and the other. Multitasking is a key trait of *Gen Z* media habits, according to Beall (2017): in this way, they can quickly and efficiently shift between various tasks, keeping a low level of attention to each of them, just to be able to focus completely on a specific one when the need arises. Between posts and notifications, social media and messaging apps require their attention constantly: according to Sparks&Honey (2015), they feel compelled to answer texts or direct messages almost immediately, causing a never ending emotional investment. **To communicate efficiently with *Gen Z* on social media, the message has to be effective enough to catch their attention within the eight seconds of attention span, and interesting enough to keep it further**. Otherwise, it risks being lost in the vast amount of information that passes under their eyes every second of their online time.

2.2.3
Quality over quantity

GenZers are generally big fans of quality content, and given what said above on their attention span it's not a surprising fact. One of the main reasons for their shift from *Facebook* to other platforms, like *Instagram*, is that on the blue social they feel like they can't control the quality of content anymore. From family pictures posted by their older relatives to all the unwanted bidirectional friendships, *GenZers* are annoyed by all this content that's not valuable to them. While on *Instagram*, for instance, they can spend more time crafting a nice looking picture and selecting who and how to follow. They feel that high quality content is actually rewarded in terms of views and popularity (Watts, 2015). *Millennials* have been called an over-sharing generations: the first to enter the social media world, they felt empowered by the possibility of sharing posts and pictures with their friends, without thinking as much about the quality of the content. Having witnessed the results of *Millennials*' habits, **GenZers prefer to share less, but pay more attention to what they share**. Everything they post has to fit inside the personal brand they are creating by personalizing their content online (London, 2019).

The search for quality is not only applied to what they share, but also to what they look at, or buy. They are more cautious than previous generations: they think their technological skills can help them to divide what's trustworthy and what's not, in terms of brands, products, places or people (Patel, 2016). **They are selective customers, attracted by authentic and original contents and products**. Invasive advertising is their biggest enemy: like ev-

erything else, they like to personalize what and when to look at things, and that includes brands. They are not attracted by television-like passive advertising: half of *GenZers* said they wouldn't return to a website that didn't personalize ads to their preferences (McKeon, 2019). When reaching *GenZers*, the key is not trying to diffuse the information as broadly as possible, but targeting it in smaller, more crafted communications that can interest them for their quality content, authenticity and originality.

2.2.4
Praise of impermanence

Creating original content is surely a longer and more demanding work than going for quantity. Between Italian *Gen Z*, BNP's study has discovered that just 32% of teens declare to be very active on social media and less than one in five creates original contents (BNP Paribas Cardif, 2019). That's why *GenZers* like impermanence. Whenever they can't, or don't want to, craft the quality of their online presence, teens prefer it not to be permanent (Watts, 2015, about *Snapchat*'s stories). According to Sparks&Honey (2015), 55% of teens say they "don't like things that last forever online". The launch in 2016 of *Instagram* stories (that allow people to share content that will be deleted after 24 hours), and their quick diffusion amongst teenagers, are one of the proofs of this interest towards things that don't last. As previously said, *Snapchat* is amongst the most used social media in the United States, and it's entirely based on this concept. **Ephemeral content has many advantages for *Gen Z*: for example, it allows them to be more careful about who can see their content and when, or it**

protects them from internet bullies. But impermanence is also often used by brands or influencers that want to reach *GenZers*. For example, it can be used to show behind-the-scenes footage of their work or lives, encouraging users to tune in regularly (Contreras, 2017). Also in this field, original and authentic content is always preferred by teens than traditional ads. From who and for how long do they want their content to be seen? How do they want to be targeted for personalized ads? What kind of traces of their online time they want to leave behind them? **Privacy is one of the raising issues** in the recent decades, and it is definitely affecting *Gen* Z, more than it did for the generations before it.

2.3

Consequences

The controversy on what can be the psychological and social consequence of this new way of using technology is still going on, mostly because it's not possible to understand how today's teens behaviour will impact on tomorrow's adults. Some studies see just the negative effects of constant Internet connection on young people, highlighting the lack of physical relationships and the dissociation with the real world, and some others support the infinite new possibilities that this new generation is capitalising on. For good or bad, teens today are starting to face some consequences of the digital changes that happened in the last decade. **Social media are for teens a key to connect and maintain relationships, while being creative, express themselves and learn more about the world. However, they are also connected with more negative aspects, such as social anxiety, cyberbullying, pressure to respect certain standards and present themselves in a certain way**. All these controversial aspects have an impact on *Gen* Z mental well being, but teens themselves are not unanimous in defining the nature of these consequences. According to a research on American teens, the majority of them believe that social media has had a positive impact on various aspects of their lives, while less than half of them highlight negative feelings toward them (fig. 16): connection with friends, interaction with diversities and community support are amongst the reason to have positive feelings for social media usage, while negative ones are associated with drama, social expectation and populari-

Teens say social media helps strengthen friendships, provide emotional support, but can also lead to drama, feeling pressure to psot certain types of content

% of U.S. teens who say the following about social media
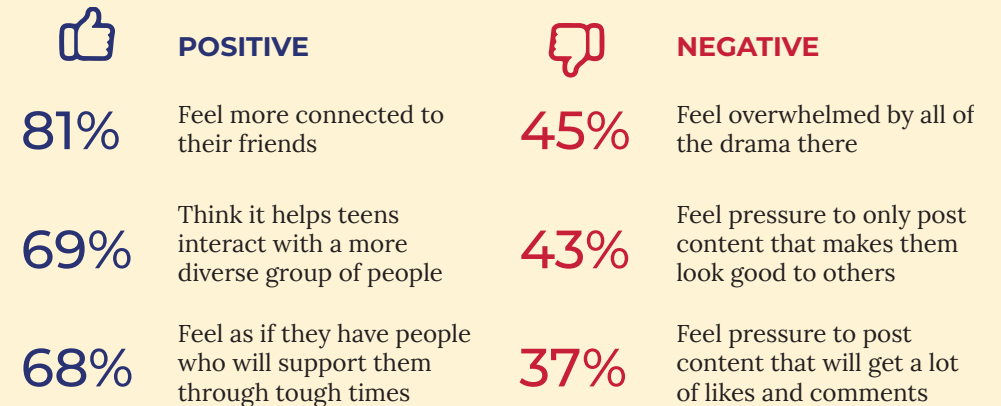
👍 **POSITIVE**		👎 **NEGATIVE**	
81%	Feel more connected to their friends	45%	Feel overwhelmed by all of the drama there
69%	Think it helps teens interact with a more diverse group of people	43%	Feel pressure to only post content that makes them look good to others
68%	Feel as if they have people who will support them through tough times	37%	Feel pressure to post content that will get a lot of likes and comments

Note: Respondents who did not give an answer are not shown.
Source: Survey conducted March 7 - April 20, 2018, by Pew Research Center

fig. 16 Teenagers feelings towards social media

ty (Anderson and Jiang, 2018b). Almost half of them believe social media has a neither positive, nor negative effect on people their age (Stein, 2019). In the following paragraphs I will briefly discuss these position, to understand their origins and how they have been addressed so far.

2.3.1
Connection and socialization

According to a PRC's study on American *GenZers*, teens who say social media has a mostly positive effect stress the increased

Teens are more likely to say social media makes them feel more included and confident rather than excluded or insecure

% of U.S. teens who say that social media makes them feel more...
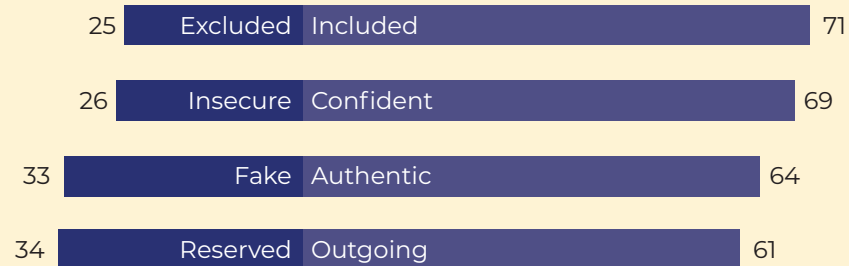
25	Excluded Included	71
26	Insecure Confident	69
33	Fake Authentic	64
34	Reserved Outgoing	61

Note: Respondents who did not give an answer are not shown.
Source: Survey conducted March 7 - April 20, 2018, by Pew Research Center

fig. 17 Perceived psychological consequences of social media usage

possibility of forming connection with others and claim a good impact on their mental health (fig. 17) (Anderson and Jiang, 2018a). **Being in touch with family and friends** is surely one of the most valuable qualities that Internet can provide them, as well as the possibility of knowing new people:

> *"I feel that social media can make people my age feel less lonely or alone. It creates a space where you can interact with people"* (Anderson and Jiang, 2018a).

Other than this, they report they appreciate the possibility to **have access to news and information or to entertainment**, to keep informed or learn new things. As said before, **creating communities between people with similar interests is very important for *Gen Z*, because they are safe spaces to express their individuality, and the digital environment can allow them to do just that**. 60% of American teens say they spend time with their

online friends every day, in online groups or forums. Also, two thirds of teens say Internet can help them interact with people from different background, sharing and confronting points of view, or supporting causes they care about (Anderson and Jiang, 2018b), all issues that are the central focus of *GenZers*' principles, as said in the beginning of this chapter.

2.3.2
Is *Gen Z* happy?

On the other side, studies from USA and UK (that I will further explore in this paragraph) found that *Gen Z* is not actually an happy generation. Loneliness, anxiety, depression, social pressure, even leading to suicide, are mental issue that have always existed, but they seem to be most affecting *Gen Z* and some of these effects can be traced back to a certain use of social media. It's undeniable that this new form of socialization is changing the way people, and particularly teens, feel about themselves and others. While they bring all the positive effects expressed before, the downside of too much exposure to social media can also be a reduced amount of socialization. Previously, the loneliest generation was considered to be the *Silent Generation* (people older than 75), but recent studies have overturned the situation: almost half of American *GenZers* feel lonely and isolated, and one out of five has no person they can talk to, surpassing any data registered before (Bowman, 2020). Another survey about happiness in the UK showed that **teenagers are among the least satisfied with their lives, and the highest rate of anxiety and health worries occur among teenage girls** (Barr, 2016). Italian researches only

partially confirmed this data: from BNP's study emerged that while 60% of participants feel happy, one quarter of them declared to be very unhappy, and most of them are girls (BNP Paribas Cardif, 2019). A spokeswoman of NSPCC, the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children in the UK, stated that:

> *"What we're seeing is a generation of children who are expressing much more clearly that they are just generally so unhappy with themselves and the situations around them. When it comes to low self-esteem, a lot of young people are putting that down to [concerns about] education, their future and the online world. Particularly the online world, and how it's following young people around – it's with them 24/7. Every time they switch on their phones they're getting messages about parties they haven't been invited to, or they're seeing photos of their friends doing things, or their whole self-worth is based on how many likes they're getting on Facebook. It absolutely permeates their sense of self-worth."* (Barr, 2016).

Gen Z is becoming the protagonist of a sharp rise in reported mental issues: teenagers are more and more looking for help to treat low self-esteem, anxiety, depression and self harm, in higher numbers than any other generation on record (Barr, 2016). Again, **girls have been proved to be more likely to show these symptoms that boys**: more than a third of girls in the UK reported feeling unhappy and worthless, more than double the amount of boys (Barr, 2016). According to the *American Psychological Association*, the suicide rate amongst teens has jumped 56% in the last decade, but *Gen* Z is also more inclined to report their mental health struggles than *Millennials* and *GenXers* (Spitznagel, 2020). As said before, *GenZers* are more sensitive than other genera-

tions regarding diversity and much more inclusive about their problems, and mental health makes no exception. Consequently, it's not absurd to assume that one of the causes of the increasing number of diagnosed psychological issues can be the slow fading of the stigma against them that prevented entire generations to talk freely about them. While these high numbers are surely a cause of concern, and have to be treated accordingly, the fact that teens are more and more open to talk about their issues and confront them is a positive start. In addition, studies haven't found a clear and univocal connection between loneliness level and frequent use of social media (Trinko, 2018): digital presence can be one of the factors, but it's most definitely not the only one.

2.3.3
Social media and social pressure

Not defining social media as the only cause for mental issues in *Gen* Z doesn't mean that the negative implications connected to a wrong usage of the Internet can be ignored. The PRC's study mentioned before asked teens their opinion about why and how much they associated negative emotions with the use of social media (Anderson and Jiang, 2018a). They didn't get an unanimous answer, but teens listed a series of issues that they perceived as distressing on social media. The top response was that **social media has led to more bullying and spreading of rumours**, followed by the idea that **social media can harm relationships**, more than reinforcing them, by diminishing the importance of human interaction, and the feeling that **social media distorts reality and gives teens an unrealistic view of other people's lives**. A lot of

the respondents stressed the concept of peer pressure: the idea that too much socialization, done in the wrong way, can be more harmful than positive, because it pushes teens into feeling bad about themselves. An intensive use of social media carries to the extreme consequences the traditional insecurities about social life that every age group has, but that affect young people the most. The discussed above natural desire to present themselves in a certain way as a form of self expression can be turned into a crushing pressure to always perform perfectly. **Social approval, in the digital forms of views or sharing or likes, can become essential for a young person self esteem, while every attack on the digital identity, from the negative comment to the more serious forms of cyberbullying, can have the opposite effect of undermining a teen's self-worth**. In Italy, almost half of teens regretted posting something online and 42% suffered or witnessed cyberbullying (BNP Paribas Cardif, 2019).

2.3.4
Cybervictims and cyberbullies

The term "cyberbullying" refers to a range of behaviours that people use to intimidate, shame or alienate another person online (Entwistle, 2019). While this problem affects every age cluster, it's particularly common amongst children and teenagers, now members of *Gen Z*. One of the reasons that make online bullying an extremely delicate issue is the fact that both victims and bullies are more likely to have suicidal thoughts and attempts compared to people their age subjected to bullism outside the Internet (Straub, 2017). **Social media works as an amplifier, so at-**

tacks can hurt more and shame can be felt more deeply. Actions can go from offensive name calling and spreading of rumours to stalking or sending unwanted pictures. Anonymity can encourage an already troubled individual to push some behaviour further that what they would do in person and, once someone begins, it's easier for other people to follow, inspired by a negative sense of community and able to rationalize it with a simple "it's okay because others are doing it" (Rutledge, 2020). Both the sufferer and the perpetrator are affected by the violent act: cybervictims tend to have increased rates of depression, anxiety and low self-esteem, whereas cyberbullies are more likely to have problems with outward aggression, hyperactivity and substance use (Aboujaoude, 2015). Cyberbullying is a complicated topic that would require a separate discussion, that goes beyond the scope of this thesis. Here I would like to focus on how the same mechanisms that, as stated before, can lead to a positive engagement on social media, if wrongly used can also provoke negative consequences. Trying to be unique can encourage positive self-expression, but can also trigger an aggressive and hateful reaction toward people that seem to be doing better than we are. Constantly exposing some pieces of ourselves to the wide stage of social media is an irresistible opportunity to shine, but with huge risks of attracting something we'd rather not see. This issue can become a significant problem for teens that spend so much of their time online and not always unplugging from everything is an effective solution.

2.3.5
Digital addiction

Are *GenZers* really addicted to their phones? According to Sparks&Honey (2015), 24 million Chinese people are said to be addicted to the Internet and 16% of young adults show sign of online addiction. **GenZers are willing to self-identify as digital device addicts** (Watts, 2015): they are more aware of the issue compared to older generation that maybe show similar symptoms (Beall, 2017). The situation of digital addiction amongst kids and teens is surely more complicated than a simple is or isn't, but *GenZers'* relationship with their smartphones is strong. They use them almost constantly, they fall asleep looking at their phones, or they don't because they are looking at them. They go online multiple time per day, checking their devices at least hourly, spending more time refreshing social media feeds than actually looking at the content, and they can manifest withdrawal symptoms if removed from the net for a long time (Jenkins, 2017).

The easy solution to internet disorders is too often considered to be just to cut up screen time, unplug from everything and embrace a digital detox that has been called "the new therapy" (Sparks & Honey, 2015). This solution stems from the logic that this amount of Internet use is generally bad, so detaching from it is generally good. Psychological researches are however suggesting that an absolute detachment from the online world doesn't address the underlying problems, issues that more often than not are not directly related to the amount of time spent connected. **The problem is not the device, but the way it's used: smartphones are not causes, but symptoms** (Lavenia, 2020). Especially

for *GenZers*, that often build entire relationships on social media connection, it's sometimes impossible to completely detach from them. It could even be dangerous if it leads to other issues, like social isolation (for example by not being included in group chats, where bonds with peers are formed) or FOMO (Fear of Missing Out), or simply not possible due to work or educational necessities. During a meeting to raise awareness about technological dependencies, a spokesman of the Italian association for treatment of technology addiction (*Di.Te. – Associazione Nazionale Dipendenze Tecnologiche Gap Cyberbullismo*) defined social exclusion as the next years teen's disease (Di.Te., 2019). As said before, for *Gen Z* online connection is as natural as physical connection: depriving them of their window to the world, even for a good reason such as trying to face the negative consequences of its use, is a risky move. **Digital socialization is as important as physical one and with the same logic can be done in a healthy or unhealthy way**. There is certainly a big difference between the two of them, and many aspects, like body language or physical presence can be lost in online communication, but many others are gained, like the frequency of the contact or overcoming the distance. These factors are not to be underestimated, because they can enforce the social network created around the individual. The thickness of the social network is not only determined by physical proximity, but also by the quality of the human connections that form it, no matter the channel used to create them (Di.Te., 2019).

2.3.6
Digital education: the case of FOMO

Online time is not lost time, and while data about how frequent *GenZers* stay online are important to understand the relationship that they are forming between their offline and online habits, they don't define the quality of neither of them. Of course, if the screen time grows in an amount that affect the person's health, it can be necessary to regulate it, even considering an occasional unplug. But **educating teens on how to behave on social media is more important than teaching them to disconnect**, because just disconnecting is not a long-term solution and it doesn't address the core of the problem. **Psychologists are urging people, parents and teens, towards a higher digital awareness**, that is to say a wiser use of the tools given by technology (Lavenia, 2020). The only way to do that is through a widespread digital education.

For example, the problems of teens affected by FOMO, that spend a lot of time checking social media to see what their friends are doing and feeling bad for not being there, can't be solved by imposing a maximum amount of time for checking their feeds, because they will spend the same time offline worrying about what they're missing. It could be useful to educate them to understand the difference between the lives they see online and the reality around them. Teaching them to use the tool they are going to use in any case is more effective than removing the tool, just to give it back after a while without addressing the underlying cause. *GenZers* are already starting to understand that there can be also a Joy of Missing Out (JOMO), that is not based on a complete unplug from everything, but on a balance between a stressful use

of the Internet and a happy one. The latter can be done simply listening to music, playing games, or watching videos, as means of escapism or self-expression (Stein, 2019).

A higher awareness of the risks of a wrong use of digital tools is not only useful for teens, but also for companies, brands or influencers. Understanding what are the psychological consequences of the content they are posting is necessary to create a good quality and long lasting connection with *GenZers*, and, as said before, this generation highly value quality in what they see. Capitalizing on trends, impressions and popularity may provide short-term engagement, but it isn't effective for long time relationships (Stein, 2019). FOMO is one of the symptoms that brands find particularly useful for marketing. This acronym defines not just the sense that there might be better things that they could be doing at this moment, but it is also the feeling that they are missing out on something fundamentally important that others are experiencing right now (Scott, 2019). It can be triggered simply by showing customers some great deal they are missing (while all other customers got it), or emphasizing deadlines and countdowns. Ads rely on this sense of urgency and atmosphere of exclusivity to attract potential customers, setting off the already existent sense of FOMO (Brown, 2019). While this behaviour proved to be effective in selling, it's not building a positive relationship with users, especially with *GenZers*, that are more sensitive than previous generations on topics like authenticity and reliability: it may guarantee the sell, but in the long time people are going to associate the negative feeling with the content, resulting in not being attracted towards it anymore. Moreover, relying on negative feelings to promote something, even if not done deliberately, creates an hostile environment online that risks having

long-term bigger repercussions on people's mental health.

The logic used here to discuss FOMO can be applied to many others of the digital problems that have been discussed in the previous section. Design plays an important role in this context, because from the general user experience to the last interface detail it has the responsibility to create inclusive spaces, where *Gen* Z can feel safe and socialize in an healthy way. Inclusive design doesn't only mean to meet the needs of people affected by physical problems like blindness or deafness, but also mental ones, that are less discussed but not less important. Especially if an entire generation, like it's happening for *Gen* Z, rely that much on their time online, and especially if it's affecting young people, still in their growing years. Understanding which design choices could be the causes for users discomfort (from simple negative feelings, to deeper mental issues) is essential to create better and safer experiences and connect in a long lasting way with the public.

Generation Z
The highlights

- Global connection, care for the environment, inclusivity and diversity are their key values;

- Personalization and self-expression drive their media habits and career paths;

- They spend their online time on smartphones, looking at messaging apps (*WhatsApp*, for Italians), *Instagram* or *YouTube*;

- With an average attention span of 8 seconds, authenticity and originality is essential to catch their attention;

- Social media have had both a positive impact on teens mental health (increased socialization) and a negative one (loneliness, anxiety, social pressure);

- The correct way to address problems created by a wrong social media use is raising awareness and a diffuse digital education.

Chapter 3

THE PROJECT

3

3.1
Design challenge and target definition

The two previous chapters constitute the methodological base for the project. The analysis on design fiction has explored the tool that will be used, starting from the opportunities that emerged from the analysis of the state of the art. The study on *Gen Z* has exposed an urgent issue that can be an ideal field to test design fiction, and a target that could be apt to receive the message.

This project aims to use design fiction, in the form of interactive narrative, as a tool to raise teenagers' awareness on the consequences of different behaviours on social media.

Since this is an experimental project, using all *Gen Z* as the audience for the story can be problematic for the reliability of the results: as said in the previous chapter, it's difficult to extract any specific data from such a diverse group of people. Therefore, **the specific target for this project will be Italian GenZers born approximately between 2000 and 2005**, a choice that will allow me to have more possibilities of interacting with the users and also to analyze a local reality often overshadowed by international

studies. In terms of the age, the selected target includes people who are between 14 and 19 years old today, in 2020: they are the oldest members of *Gen Z*, already looking at their futures, and therefore mostly affected by the issues raised in Chapter 2.3.

While the two previous chapters constitute the theoretical base, and can be also considered standalone studies on design fiction and *Gen Z* respectively, in this chapter I'm going to investigate the emerged issues in more depth, to suggest not a solution, but a possible approach to both focus areas. This project aims to be part of "Research *through* Design Fiction" (Lindley, 2016, p.4), according to which the knowledge about design fiction is obtained by practicing it, taking also advantage by Bardzell's (2013) suggestion about understanding critical design (or design fiction) by pursuing it. For this reason, this project's focus won't be only the outcome, but also the method used to accomplish the stated goal. The choice to realize an interactive project comes from the research hypothesis that an increased audience's involvement can improve the quality of design fiction, and the decision to design a narrative artefact is a consequence of both design fiction's studies on the importance of storytelling and from the hypothesis, that will be further researched in Chapter 3.2, that narratives play an important role for *Gen Z*. On the other hand, the idea of improving design fiction through an approach focused on social awareness has found fertile ground in the necessity of spreading consciousness about *GenZers* use of social media.

3.2
Research

3.2.1
How to speak to GenZ: narrative models

The first step for designing an effective fiction that can be used to speak to *Gen Z* is to **understand what kind of narrative models they have and what their approach to online storytelling is, particularly on social media**. Quantitative and qualitative research on this topic has been done by a survey that included both generic questions (to collect quantitative data) and open questions, in which the users were asked to input their preferences (to gather qualitative data). The survey has been distributed between October and November 2019 to the previously defined target (Italian teenagers between 14 and 20 years old). It has been shared partially on social media (mostly in *Facebook* groups), and partially in person, in high school classes and through personal contacts, by scanning a QR code (fig. 18).

After two general questions to frame the participants, the survey has been divided into **two main parts: "Narrative and media" and "Suggest me a story"** (cfr. Appendix B for the complete survey and the results). The introductory part aimed to understand the target in terms of age and gender. Most of the participants were part of the main age group already defined as focus of the study, however answers from 1997 to 2006 have been accepted as

Flyer with the QR code for the survey

well. About the gender, the vast majority of the responses (more than 70%) have been given by girls, an important data that could have influenced some of the other statistics obtained from the survey.

Narrative and media

The first part was focused on the relationship between the narrative content and the channel(s) that conveys it. The purpose of this part was to understand what kind of media teens associate with storytelling and what kind of narrative they prefer, in terms of interactivity, genre or topic. The two favourite channels for the enjoyment of narrative are TV series and movies (with most of the

participants saying they use them "a lot" and "enough", while there were no votes for the "never" option) (cfr. Appendix B – Question 3). Videogames, comics and podcasts are less common, with the most selected answers being "a little" or "never". Books, on the other hand, yield more discrepant results: the majority of the participants state they read "enough" and "a little", but one out of four sat they read "a lot", and the frequency is generally higher than other visual-based channels like videogames or comics. While this data confirms the general preference for visual-based content, it also shows a gap between interaction-based narrative and non-interactive narrative, favouring the latter; this is confirmed by the result of the next question, with 42% of the answers indicating **a preference for non-interactive narrative** (fig. 19).

Talking about social media, 70% of users think **it's possible to convey stories through social media** (fig. 20); the favourite platforms for this purpose are *YouTube*, *Wattpad* and *Instagram* (fig. 21). The high number of preferences given to written formats like books or *Wattpad* implies that, **even if images and video are generally more appreciated, when it comes to storytelling teenagers are still willing to engage in reading**. In regards to the content of the stories, it emerged that **teens show a preference for people's personal stories, especially teen fiction or stories about problems they can relate to** (cfr. Appendix B – Question 11). They have shown interest in a very wide variety of genres and topics, as long as these are original and entertaining.

As a side note, a secondary feedback about the platforms has arisen not from the survey itself, but from direct dialogue with the participants: some of them reported the lack of the platform *Discord* from the options presented in the survey. *Discord* is a

Which one of these option do you prefer?

Interact with a story
and influence it

Indifferent

**Relax and follow an
already defined story**

33%

25%

42%
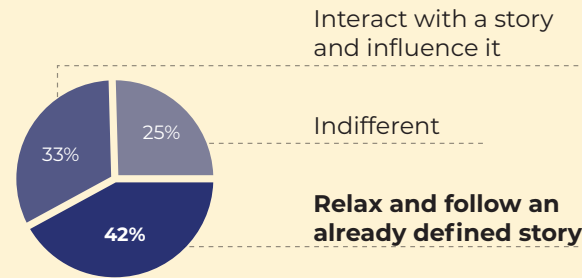
fig. 19 Question 4 from the survey on narrative models

Do you think that it's possible to tell stories on social media?

Yes

I don't know

No

70%

4%

26%
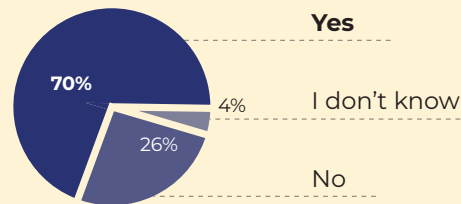
fig. 20 Question 8 from the survey on narrative models

What are, in your opinion, the best platforms to follow a story?

YOUTUBE   65%
INSTAGRAM   59%
WATTPAD   56%
EFP FANFICTION   16%
FACEBOOK   11%
TELEGRAM   8%
SNAPCHAT   2%
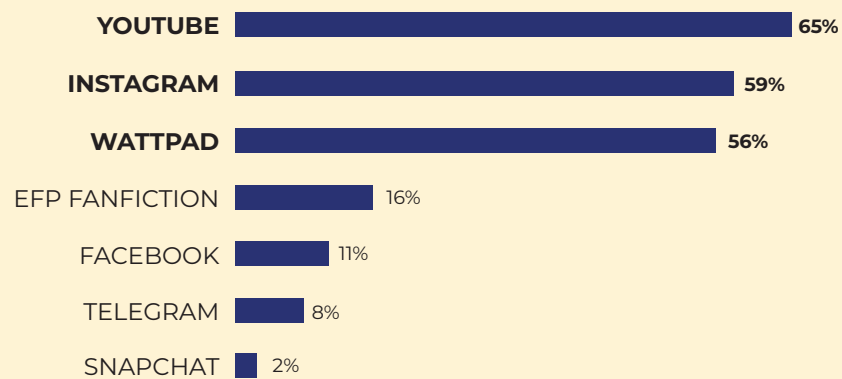
Note: The participants were given the possibility to choose multiple answers.

fig. 21 Question 10 from the survey on narrative models

voice and text chat platform, mostly used in the context of gaming, to chat, play with friends, create and host role-playing games among friends or strangers, or just for the possibility to create and personalise free servers to hang out and discuss a variety of topics without sharing contact information. It's often used also outside of the gaming field as a digital meeting place where teens can talk, form new groups and communities around stories and express their creativity with storytelling.

Suggest me a story

The second part of the survey aimed to understand what kind of stories they relate to. This section was the most connected to the scope of the research, understanding what are the common narrative models that teens have: in other words, what do they actually associate with the word "story". It asked them to input the title of a piece of media they associate strongly with the listed categories (books, movies, TV series, videogames, comics, podcasts), plus their specific preferences in terms of stories, characters and genres. **The survey's results have shown almost no common ground between the teens' narrative models.** The results were only partially influenced by November 2019 (month of the survey) latest trends, especially for TV series, but generally speaking the answers ranged between the latest teen novel to 20th century classics to less mainstream narratives. The only story that stood out in more than one category (books and movies) is J. K. Rowling's series *Harry Potter*, chosen 21 times as book and 8 as movie, which given its popularity is not a surprising data. Just another book has received a comparable amount of preferences, Anna Todd's *After* (with 13 mentions). Other movies that received a remarkable amount of nominations were *Titanic*, with 7, and A *un*

metro da te (eng. *Five Feet Apart*), with 6, while all the others were mentioned less than 4 times each. TV series was the category that had more answers, consistently with the preference previously given, while podcasts registered a very low number of answers, most of them being statements about not knowing what podcasts are. The same wide variety of choices was also found on the genre's choice: action/adventure was selected by 63% of the participants, followed by fantasy (47%) and crime novels (45%), but all the provided options received a significant number of votes and many people selected all of them, emphasizing the fact that **teens appreciate a very broad spectrum of genres and channels, as long as they find the content interesting and engaging**. Far from being surprising, this variety of narrative models confirms the trends of inclusivity and personalizing diversity (Chapter 2, part 1.2 and 1.3). In an almost unlimited sea of possibilities (where what can't be found on the Internet can be bought, and viceversa) the key to find an identity is through personalization, and this is also valid for narrative models. Different people will naturally identify themselves in different genres, platforms, contents, or maybe a little bit in all of them, spacing between everything and absorbing something from everything. Trends of the moment, like *Netflix*'s latest TV shows, or great classics like *Harry Potter*, are still a common ground everyone interact with in some ways, but beyond that there is a more personal and variegated research that led to the broad spectrum of opinions that emerged from the survey. By choosing the kind of stories they like to see (or read, or play), they confront themselves with the models around them and this way shapes their identities.

On the contrary, more specific results emerged from the selection of their favourite characters. Given the name of the char-

acter and their origin story, I further analysed the data based on the characters' gender, estimated age and role inside the story. Despite the fact that due to the number of answers this question received, amounting to little more than half of the total participants, it has no statistical relevance, it can still be useful for the purpose of this thesis. **From this study emerges that on average their favourite kind of character is the young male hero**. Almost half of the nominated characters are teenagers, more than a half follow the archetype of the hero and two thirds of them are male (cfr. Appendix B – Question 18). The age result is consistent with the stated preference of stories that talk about people their age, while the gender has to be related to the high number of girls that participated to the survey. It's significant because it means that despite the very broad spectrum of narrative models, the female part of the target finds heroes more compelling than heroines. A reason for this can be the general majority of complex and active male characters compared to female ones, especially in older narrative, but it can also be a stereotypical preference. In fact, beside the young male hero another relevant figure for the target is their romantic counterpart: the stereotypical character of the "bad boy". This figure, very common in Young Adult fiction (a category specifically targeted for teenagers), can represent for instance a character with a good heart but a rough exterior, or a villain with the potential to change, and it generally identifies with the romantic counterpart of the hero. An example is Hardin, from *After*, the guy that the hero Tessa falls in love with. Hardin's character was mentioned by 5 people as their favourite character, but almost 10% of the analyzed characters play a similar role.

Survey's results
The highlights

- Episodic narrative (TV series) represent the preferred channel for storytelling;

- A low level of interaction is generally more appreciated (just 33% of the participants prefer to interact with a story);

- The most requested features in a story are interesting content (65%) and immediate engagement (55%);

- Social media are considered a possible way to tell stories by 70% of participants. The favourite channels are *Youtube* (65%), *Instagram* (59%) and *Wattpad* (56%);

- Regarding the content, teenagers look for personal stories, teen fiction/coming-of-age stories, interesting or original stories, stories connected with their current problems;

- The favourite genres are adventure/action, romance, fantasy, teen fiction;

- The narrative models are extremely varied and include a very broad spectrum of genres, forms, channels and topics;

- The teenage male hero is the favourite kind of character by both male and female participants.

3.2.2
Case studies

The research shown in Chapter 2 proved that, in order to be effective, communication for *Gen* Z has to pass through the online platforms they follow. One of the survey's purposes was therefore to understand what it meant for them to feel engaged online through stories and what they look for in social media storytelling. Not only do they believe it's possible to tell stories through social media, but they consider it completely normal and already part of their online life. Online storytelling, however, can go beyond social media, and includes a constantly increasing range of possibilities that aims to maximize the involvement through original content, interaction, animations and, of course, personalization: from virtual and augmented reality to live videos, websites, bots, just to name a few.

Storytelling on social media

Social media storytelling is a broad topic that could include an extremely varied range of content, from personal stories to influencer lives, from brand-focused content to social awareness campaigns. To narrow it down, in this section I will use some of the results obtained from the survey (cfr. Appendix B – Question 9) in order to understand, through these examples, what kind of stories and means of narration the target considers to be effective on social media.

The first cluster of examples is taken from the social media *Instagram*. According to the survey, the two main kinds of stories teens follow on this social are personal lives of influencers or activists (they mentioned *Ludovica Pagani* and *Greta Thunberg*) and
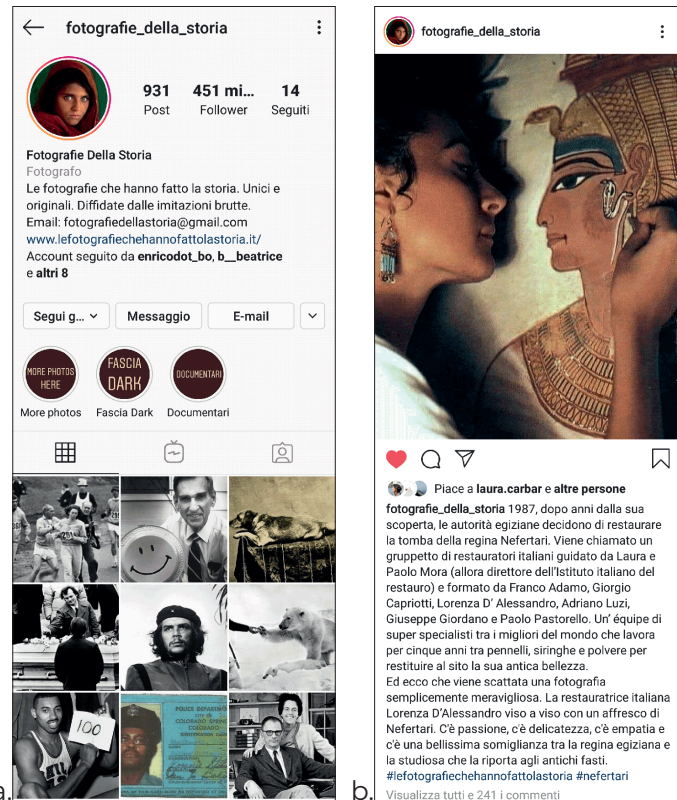
figg. 22a, 22b *Instagram* profile and post sample of *Fotografie della storia*
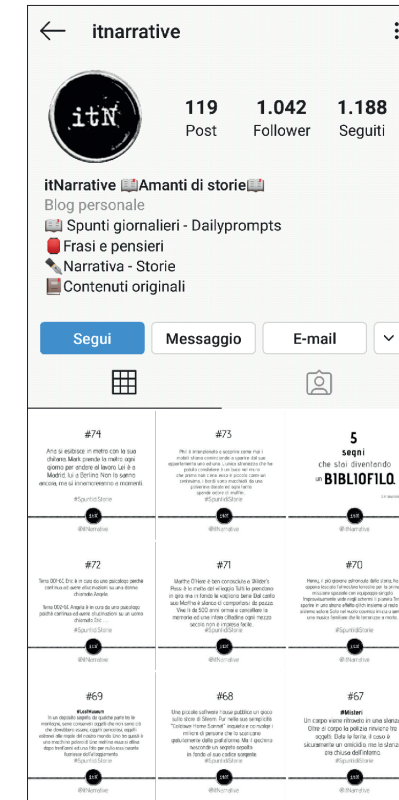
fig. 23 *Instagram* profile of *itNarrative*

profiles that convey more structured narratives, usually made of a collection of different stories on the same topic. For instance, the *Instagram* page *Fotografie della storia* (eng. *Photographs from history*) was mentioned (CS n. 12). The last profile starts from a general topic (important or curious historic photographs) and then develops the narrative by telling a short story in every post, each one related to the selected photo (figg. 22a, 22b).The episodic storytelling format connected to a general theme is very diffused on *Instagram*, because it allows both personal pages and brands to engage with the audience through storytelling and to keep their attention through time with a constant flow of post. It also presents some of the features that *GenZers* most appreciate

on social media: the presence of high quality images, the originality of the content and the engagement that springs from by interesting stories. Another similar example that has been mentioned in the survey is the *Instagram* page *itNarrative* (CS n. 13) (fig. 23), a page that collects a series of story prompts to encourage the users to create their own narratives and stories.

The second group of examples comes from *YouTube*, considered by most of the teens to be the absolute best social media for storytelling (cfr. Appendix B – Question 10). More than one person mentioned *Paranormal Zone* (CS n. 14), a *YouTube* channel that tells horror stories, haunting tales and contains also two original series, *The Midnight Hour* (figg. 24a, 24b) and *I segreti di Bor-*
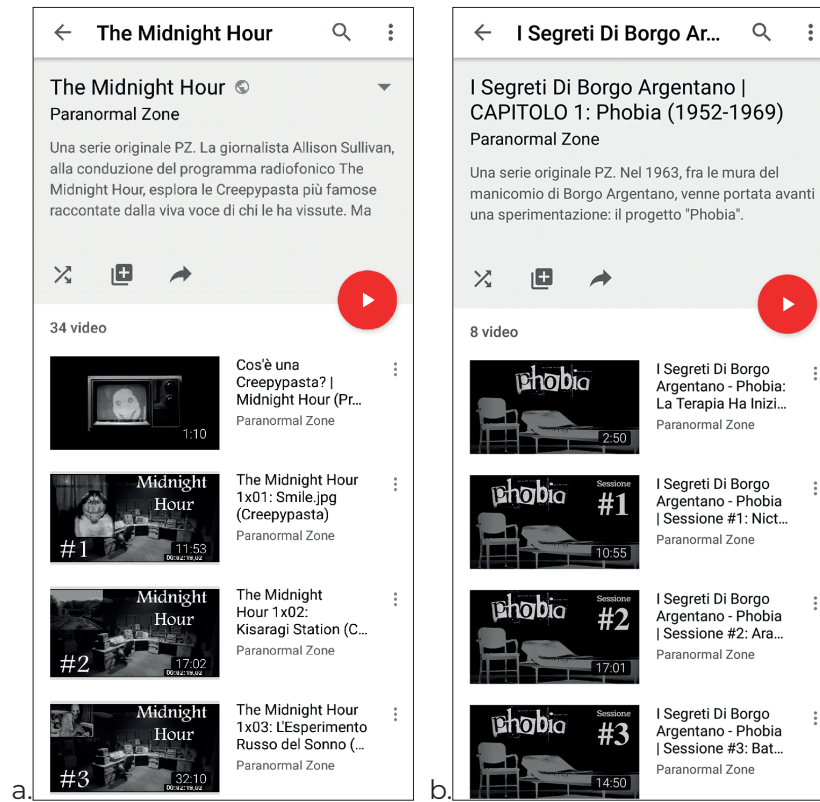
figg. 24a, 24b *ParanormalZone*'s original series on *YouTube*

figg. 25a, 25b *Luxastra* TT-RPG series, from *Inntale*'s *YouTube* profile

go Argentano (eng. *The secrets of Borgo Argentano*). The first of the two is a collection of Internet horror stories, dubbed in Italian, while the second one explores a singular horror story through a series of videos that divide the story in various episodes. Another interesting channel that was mentioned in the survey is *Inntale* (CS n. 15), an Italian *YouTube* project about TT-RPG (tabletop role-playing games, a game in which players assume the roles of characters and act out their stories, the outcomes of which are partially determined by chance, as by the roll of dice). Specifically, the narrative they refer to is a web series called *Luxastra*, an original RPG story invented, played and filmed by the *Inntale* team (figg. 25a, 25b). The purpose of this narrative is mainly entertain-

ment, but also to spread knowledge of RPG and the creation of an Italian community around it. The project, with the support of the fandom, has also been extended to other platforms like *Instagram*, *Facebook*, *Twitch*, *Discord* and even on paper with a published comic book based on the web series, following Jenkin's (2013) model of the gift economy: their audience freely decided to support through donations a content they considered worthy in order to help with the production of the project itself. While the main story remains on *YouTube*, the other channels are used to share extra content and to provide spaces for the community to gather: they proved that original content can find fertile ground on social media to grow and spread its message.

Social media storytelling has two main advantages: it's relatively easy to produce, since it relies on existing and functioning platforms, and immediate to share with other people, because it can take advantage of built-in functions of the social media itself. However, these same features can represent a limitation, because using existing platforms constraints the content into pre-made formats and it possibly subjects them to future changes of the system, that could alter the story itself (e.g. an eventual future rearrangement of the 3 columns grid of *Instagram* profiles could affect the whole existent narrative). If these features become too much of a restraint, interactive stories have to be conveyed in alternative ways.

Website storytelling

A more flexible system that frees the story from social media constraints could be the use of a website to tell it. Examples of this category include interactive narratives built on the same model of "choose your own adventure" books, or stories told through the page scroll function.

One of the most famous examples for the first group is *Depression Quest* (CS n. 16), an interactive fiction game where the reader plays as someone living with depression (fig. 26). This game, developed by Zoë Quinn in 2013 using the *Twine* engine (an open-source tool for telling interactive stories), aims to push the reader to identify with someone suffering from depression, with the double purpose of demonstrating the effects of the illness to those who don't understand it and encouraging people that are actually facing it by showing that they are not alone in their feelings. The narrative includes a series of everyday life events and tasks that the reader has to manage, considering the debilitating
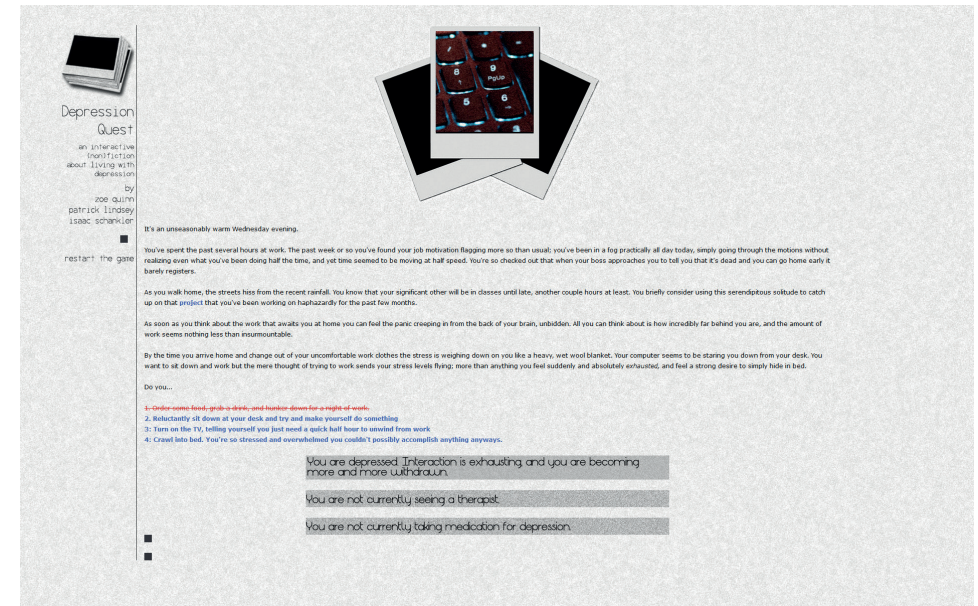
fig. 26 Starting point of the interactive fiction game *Depression Quest*

effect of the illness. This project is surely more intended for educational than entertainment purpose. Despite the very controversial responses that it provoked, that goes far beyond the scope of this thesis, it's certainly an interesting form of online narrative. Many other websites, made with *Twine* engine, follow the same basic structure, using mostly written narrative and multiple choice interaction to convey different messages or experiences. However, according to the research made on *Gen Z*, there are two factors that make this model difficult to spread through a young target: the high importance given to text (while a visual-based modality, or at least mixed, is definitely preferred by teens), and the hampered readability on smartphones, the main device they use.

Another more visual way to convey stories through websites is through 'scrollytelling', a term that has been used to define a particular way of telling stories that unfold with the scroll of the

page (Pettersen, 2019). The scroll is used to give people a sense of control, exploration, and discoverability. This typology of websites, in its beginning, was used to convey data visualization in an engaging way: therefore, this media heavily depends on the visual aspect, in regards to storytelling as well. It usually combines text, images, sounds and basic animation triggered by scrolling to create an engaging narrative. For instance, a case of a data visualization content adapted into 'scrollytelling' is the project *Poor Millennials* (CS n. 17), by Highline in 2017, that explains the difficult economic situation of *Millennials* through a dynamic content (fig. 27). The text is integrated with nostalgic video-game animations, pixelated graphics and other vintage visuals, designed to capture the sensibilities of *Millennials*.

An example of a website that tells an actual story through scrolling is *The Boat* (CS n. 18), an interactive graphic novel by Nam Le in 2015 that merges written parts, images and an intense soundscape into an immersive experience (figg. 28a, 28b, 28c). The project tells the story of a group of people forced to flee the Vietnam War by boat: the protagonist, 16-years-old Mai, is sent

a.

b.

c.
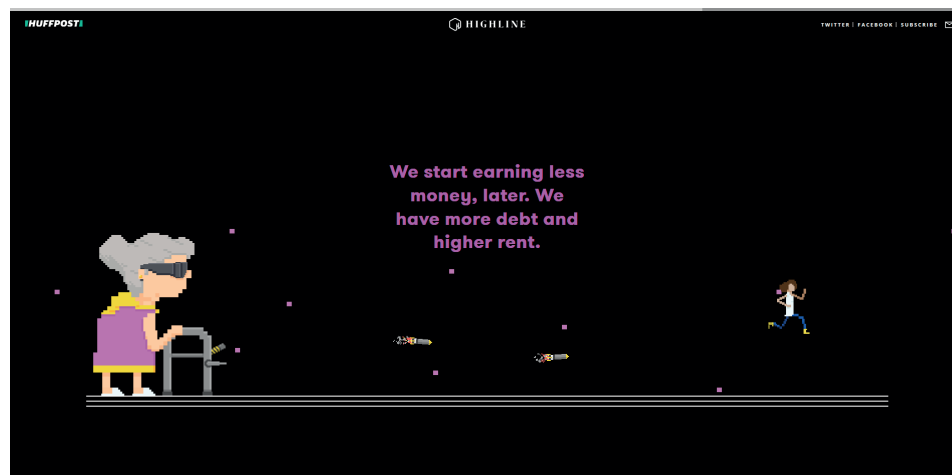
fig. 27 Screen sample from the website of the project *Poor Millennials*
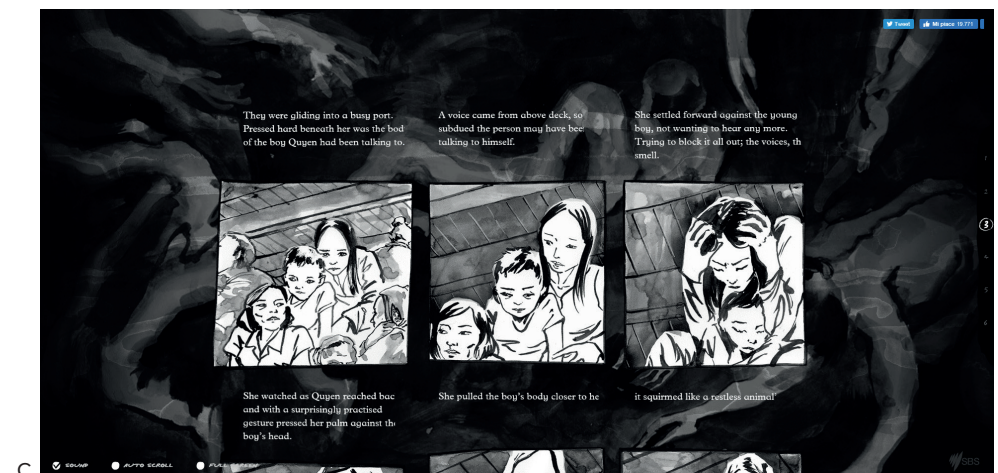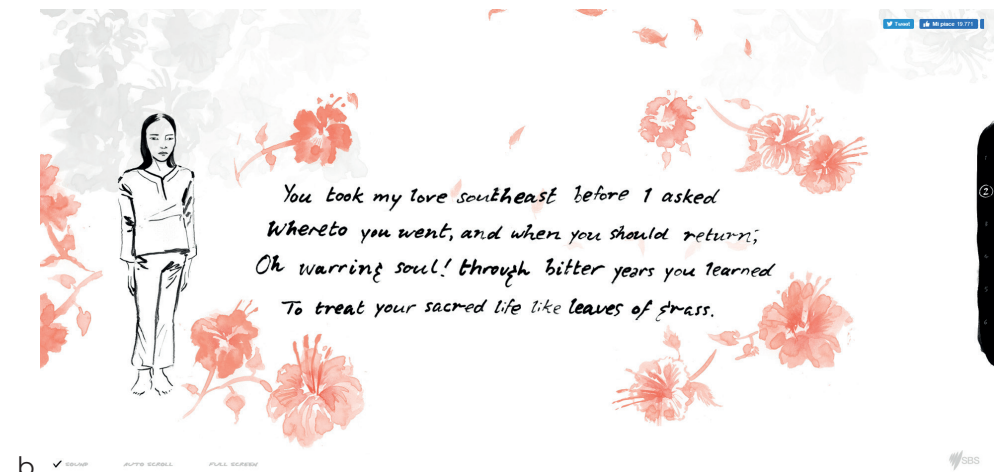
figg. 28a, 28b, 28c Screen samples from the website of the project *The Boat*

alone in a boat to what her parents hope will be a welcoming new home. The story is based on the personal experience of the writer, Nam Le, and the illustrator, Matt Huynh. Despite being set during an historical event, this project still feels very relevant in the current climate of asylum seekers that are forced to flee their countries, also by sea. The narrative is fixed and the reader can't interfere with it, but the visual effects given by the scroll of the page are enough to involve and surprise the audience.

A more interactive case study is given by the project *Re-Building Haiti* (CS n. 19), written by Jean Abbiateci and programmed by *The Pixel Hunt* in 2014. This website wants to involve the reader into the situation the haitian population has been facing since the 2010 earthquake (fig. 29). Quoting from the beginning of the game, "*Rebuilding Haiti is a matter of choice - often difficult ones. If you were in charge, what would you do? At the end of each of this story's chapters, you will face a dilemma - all your decisions will have consequences. And the piece's final part will take you in 2020, where you'll be able to see the future you have built for Haiti.*" (The Pixel Hunt, 2014). The engagement is obtained by making the reader identify with Haitian leaders, forced to take difficult decisions during hard times: every choice will eventually lead to both short and long term consequences, and even the ones that may seem reasonable can turn out to be completely disastrous. The project aims to show how difficult the situation was, and how easy it is to take rushed decisions without considering all the factors that can affect an already precarious country in a time of crisis. The story is told with a mixture of texts, videos, sounds and photos of the actual situation, making the whole website visually comparable to online newspapers, with the difference that the story itself can actually be influenced by individual choices.
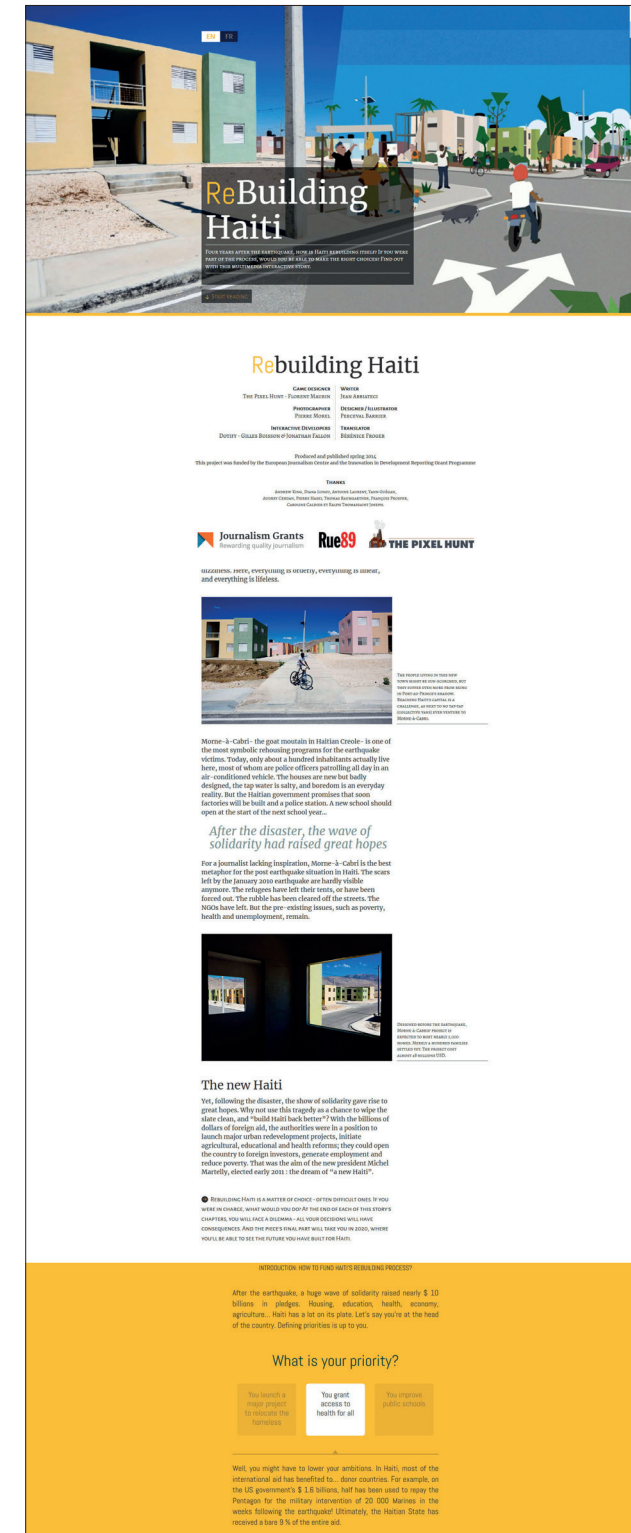
The interaction

fig. 29 Screen sample from the website of the project *ReBuilding Haiti*

Chinese perspective

a.

b.

Western perspective

c.
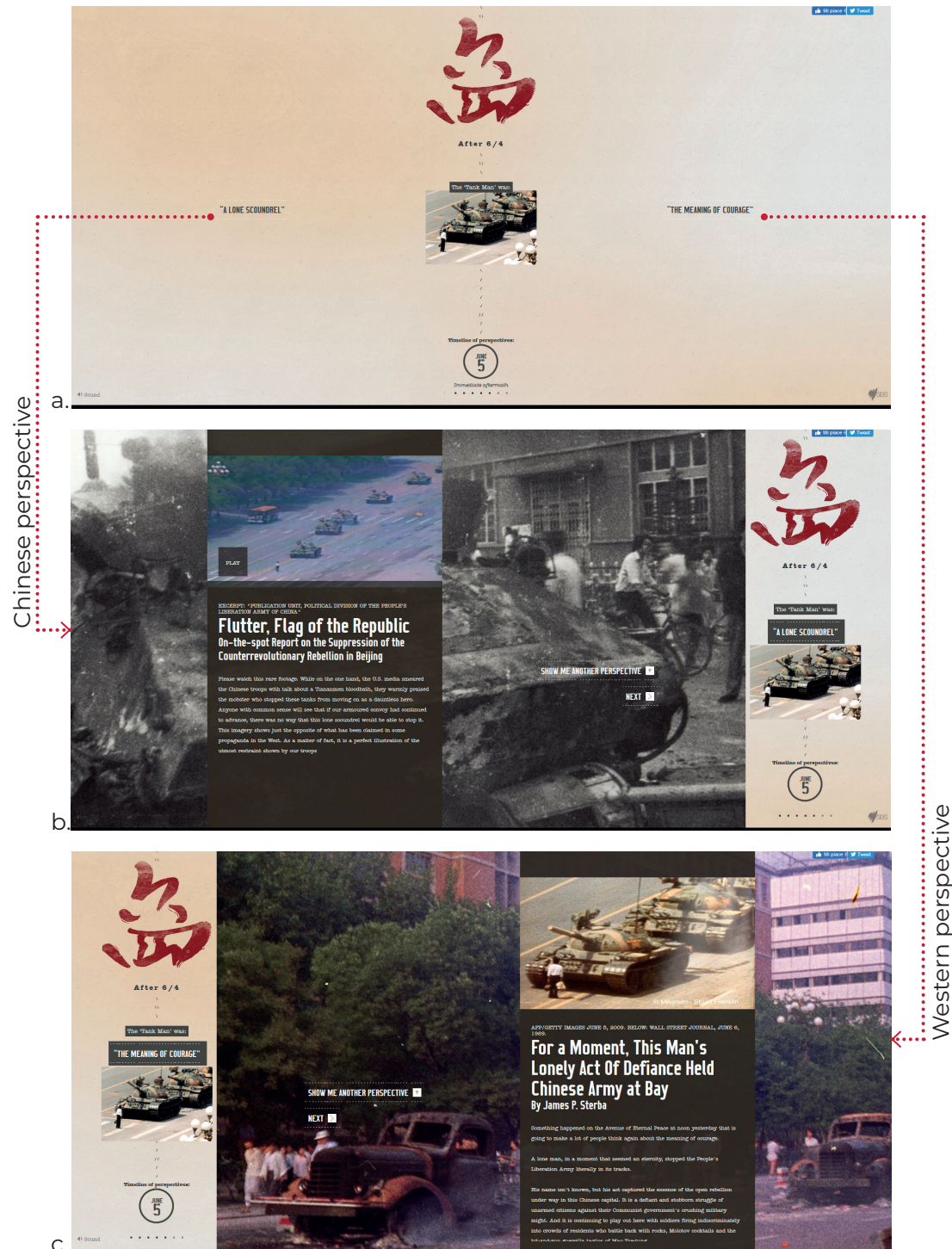
Talking again about historical events, in 2014, for the twenty-fifth anniversary of 1989 Tiananmen Square protests, SBS Australia has developed an interactive website called *After 6/4*. The project uses online storytelling to depict a history of censorship and forged perspectives (CS n. 20) (fig. 30a). Following a timeline, the reader is asked which one of the two points of view they have heard to describe a precise event: one perspective, from the inside of the country, delivers the facts as portrayed by local Chinese media (fig. 30b), while the other, from the outside, illustrates the historical events as they are internationally recognized (fig. 30c). The interaction proposed by the site allows the reader to navigate through the various interpretations of the same situation, understanding how much the point of view can affect facts in journalism and eventually questioning their previous way of thinking about the historical event.

Website based narratives have the potential to create a good level of engagement and a high flexibility in terms of content and interaction. The biggest disadvantage of this kind of communication, however, is that it requires a considerably higher investment in terms of time and money, compared to using an already existing social media structure. Moreover, if the message is directed to teenagers, these projects would need to ensure that the same complete narrative can be experienced on a smartphone (which not all of the mentioned case studies do), or run into the risk of being unable to reach their target.

Conversational storytelling

Apart from the aforementioned social media, the previous research on *GenZers* has shown that the most used apps on their smartphones are actually messaging apps. While these tend not

figg. 30a, 30b, 30c Screen samples from the website of the project *After 6/4*

to be the preferred media to share stories, the "conversational" possibilities in storytelling have recently started to be explored (Parr, 2017). For teens, chats are as important as face-to-face conversations to keep their social contacts: therefore, they are very familiar with the format and its specific language. Conversational storytelling aims to use exactly this familiarity to frame stories that could be interactive, light and easy to follow and completely apt to be delivered through smartphones.

Telling stories through chat has been done in two main ways, not differently from social media and website storytelling. The first way is to use an existing messaging app (mostly *Facebook Messenger*, but also *Telegram*, *WhatsApp* or even *Discord*): by adapting the content to the limitations of the supporting platform, projects can be realised quickly, cheaply and can be easily connected to a specific brand. This format, in fact, is very used by companies that want to implement their website or *Facebook* page with a personalized chatbot that, instead of simply providing information, can engage the user in a better way through storytelling.

The second method is to use traditional chat mechanisms inside smartphone-based games. In this way, the player can communicate with the characters through a chat as if they were their own contacts. The basic mechanism is that the story goes on through a guided conversation between a real player and a fictional character. Then, it's up to the game to decide if the person plays as themselves or if they're expected to identify with another character. For instance, in the game *SIM - Sara is Missing* (CS n. 21), developed by *Kaigan Games* in 2017, the player goes through someone else's (Sara's) phone, apps and chats: they have to talk
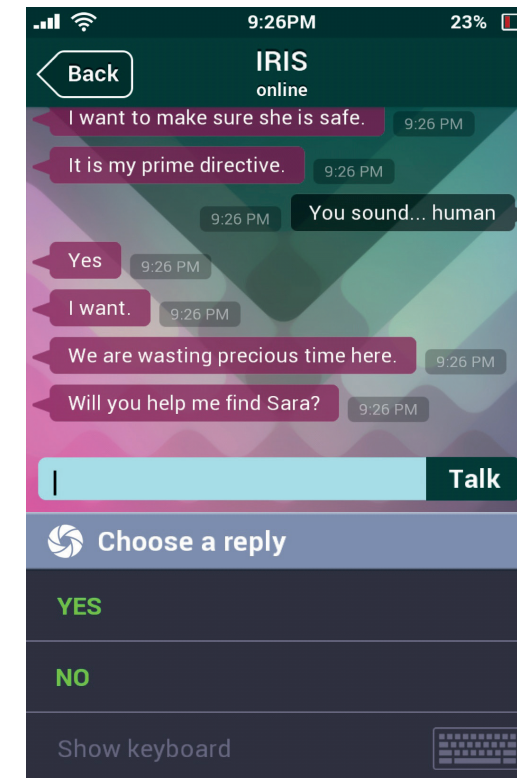
fig. 31 Screen sample from the app of the game *SIM- Sara is Missing*

with an AI (Artificial Intelligence) and Sara's friend in order to understand what happened to the real owner on the phone (fig. 31). In this case, conversational storytelling is used to reflect on the amount of personal life stored inside each one's phone, to the point that going through another person's chats and notes can be enough to understand who they really are.

The chat system can also be a pretext to make the user impersonate another character and further immerse themselves into somebody else's life. This is the case of *Bury me, my love* (CS n. 22), a reality-inspired interactive fiction designed for mobile phones developed by *The Pixel Hunt* in 2017 that throws the player inside the difficult situation of Syrian migrants. The game is based on
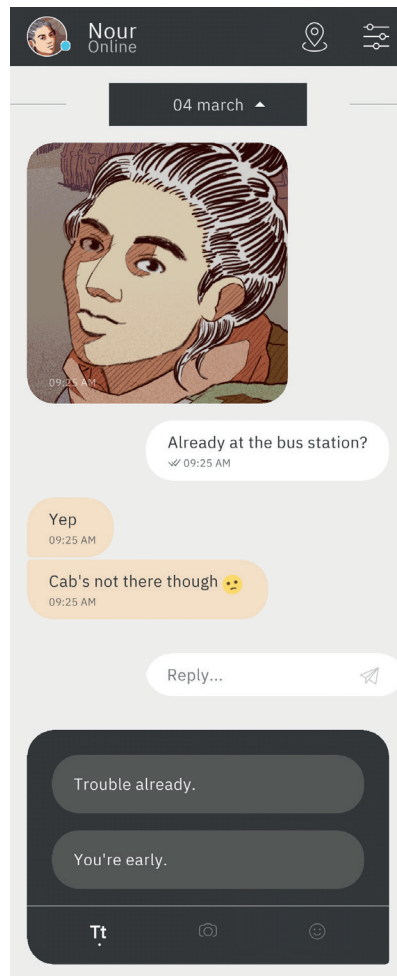
fig. 32 Screen sample from the game *Bury me, my love*

only one chat, between Majd (the character played by the user), a Syrian man, and his wife Nour, that's trying to leave Syria to reach Germany (fig. 32). As she travels, she will regularly look for Majd's advices, but she won't always follow the suggestions and she might also hide things from him, just as it would happen in real life. In the end, however, her fate depends on the player's decisions. Communication happens in pseudo-real time, making the story last for weeks, with the purpose of leading you to care

about Nour's fate, making the player wonder why she's not answering or what happens when she stops writing in crucial parts of the story. This messaging app interactive fiction is admittedly based on *WhatsApp* dynamics (The Pixel Hunt, 2017) and it is inspired by real stories of migrants texting their loved ones through their difficult journeys to safety. By simulating a real situation, the game aims to promote awareness about the reality of Syrian migrants and show how every single choice, no matter how small it seems, can ultimately lead to the life or death of those who undertake this journey.

Conversational storytelling represents a good opportunity to communicate with teens for different reasons, according to the specific media that is used to realize it. Firstly, it has the possibility of meeting them on messaging platforms they are already very familiar with. Secondly, it uses an immediate and easy language, that makes the whole experience more flowing and appealing. This element is very important, given the short attention span that, as presented in Chapter 2.2.2, characterises *Gen* Z. Finally, these stories are mostly designed for smartphone, which makes them ideal for a mobile-based generation such as *Gen* Z.

3.3

Framing the story

General data

TITLE	*FutureMe*
GENRE	Teen drama
AIM	Raise awareness of the consequences of different behaviours on social media, with a focus on cyberbullying
TARGET	Teenagers between 14 and 19 years old
MEDIA	*Instagram*, website, chatbots
CONCEPT	Use a diegetic prototype inside an interactive narrative to communicate with the audience and to prompt considerations about the defined issues
DIEGETIC PROTOTYPE	The app *FutureMe*
PLOT	A new app, called *FutureMe*, is able to predict to whoever tries it what they are going to post in the next years. Amber, a 16 years old girl trying to build an online career on her passion for drawing, discovers something she wasn't prepared to face: her future is about to become very dark. Between the help of the caring Cass, the advances of the charming Nick and some mysterious bullies that seem to never leave her alone, the choices that she and her friends make are going to shape their identities and futures, both online and offline

3.3.1
Core points

What emerged from the initial survey is that no matter the media or the genre, teens like to engage with stories they feel they can relate to: teen fictions, real life stories, stories that can help them grow. Focusing on this, and on the key values found from the general analysis on *Gen Z* (cfr. Chapter 2.1), the project will be based on two main values: **identity and choice**.

Identity

An identity can be found by confronting with others, learning to understand and accept the reciprocal differences, but it also involves the concepts of self-perception and self-expression. Teens on social media have to manage two or more identities: the one they show in real life and the one(s) they show online. Online identity can just be the result of breaking down different parts of the whole personality, and showing them on different platforms, according to their role: all the various social media require different identities (the "Dolly Parton Challenge" that went viral in the beginning of 2020 plays exactly on this concept: the same individual can express different sides of themselves depending on the context, because each social media is suitable for a distinct attitude. On a first glance they might look divergent, but they are still part of the same identity. A too strong connection between this offline identity and the way it's shown online exposes the subject to some risks, like the social pressure of not being able to fulfil the unrealistic standards sets from other profiles. On the contrary, the possibility of hiding behind a screen can also encourage people to completely separate their real and online

identity. It can be done as part of self-expression: for example, transgender teens may feel more comfortable showing their real gender online rather than offline, as a way to explore their identity. However, it can also become a problem if, by pretending to be someone else online, the physical person behind the screen is not recognized as a person anymore and cannot be held accountable. Haters often rely on the anonymity of the screen to express feelings they would have controlled in person, exactly because it's easy to forget that behind other people's profiles there is a flesh and bone person. **Online identities are all parts or expressions of the general individual's identity: a strict separation or a too strong connection between them can have negative repercussions on the person's life**. For this project, I will consider online identity not only as the personality shown on a certain social media, but also everything that's searched for, looked at or bought online. A separation of these parts is not possible anymore, as shown by the ubiquitous use of cookies and personalised ads (fig. 33): the person behind the screen is still one, and the way they navigate the Internet inevitably shows their identity.
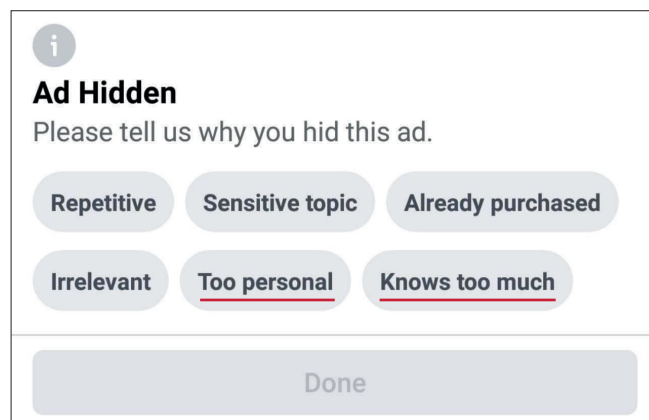
fig. 33 Facebook options for hiding ads

Choice

The consequences online identities can have on one's life are also connected with the second focus, the concept of choice, recurring element in various aspects of this project. Firstly, it's fundamental for the chosen topic of awareness of social media usage, because online behaviour is the sum of all the decisions taken inside and outside these platforms. DF is a possible way to explore the consequences of all those decisions, by creating a fictional scenario about a possible future. Secondly, in storytelling choice means interactivity, as to say the possibility to change the narrative itself according to the reader's decisions. Joining these two components, **in this project the story's interactivity will be used as a way to explore, through DF's possible futures, what can be the consequences of certain behaviours online or offline**.

3.3.2
Storyworld

Chronos - Time

The narrative world is a possible future of the world we live in. The story begins in 2030 and ends (with the final flashforwards) in 2040. This 10 years timespan of technological development allow to suppose, considering how things changed between 2010 and 2020, that the social dynamics are going to be slightly different, not to the point of being difficult to recognize for today's readers, but enough to amplify some of the key features and issues that are already present in our time, like the huge impact of social media usage on teen's lives or the technological progress regarding new systems that deal with personal information.

Topos - Environment

The environment the story is set in is very similar to the real one, where teenagers go to school, attend parties to socialize offline, and use social media to keep contacts online. The only differences are some technological developments that led to the existence of a more refined system of data analysis (epitomised in the app *FutureMe*, the use of which will be better explained later in the chapter).

Epos - Background story

Smartphone possession is universal and time spent online becomes more and more relevant in people's lives as time passes, especially for teens. Most of the social interactions happen there, as well as job choices or cultivation of personal interests. To solve the issue of the proliferation of different apps and social media, with the advent of big monopolies the main companies decided to merge all platforms in one, that includes all the functions that before were split into different social media (texting, sharing photos or videos, working, saving files and data). Everybody has at least an account on this social, that works as the online equivalent of an ID document and it's used for everything, from socializing to shopping or working. However, it's possible to add other more free accounts, to allow a certain level of screen anonymity. With the increasing amount of data that are input into these accounts, more sophisticated systems of data analysis have been developed by the main companies, to keep track of users data, all inside of stricter privacy laws about what information can be used and how.

Ethos - Value system

Having an account on this social network is necessary for all daily activities. Not existing on the Internet is the equivalent of not being alive. Social reputation is extremely important: being popular in person doesn't mean a lot, especially between teens, if it's not accompanied by fame online. To be unique is what everyone aspires to: each individual, in order to have a chance to shine, has to understand what differentiates them from others and profit from it. Personalization is not a need, it's an obligation, because not being sure of how to stand out from the crowd means being drowned by it. The youngest generation is entrepreneurial, and in this rush to start as early as possible there isn't much time for doubt or failure.

Telos - Life goals and objectives

Everyone wants to climb the popularity stair, but online reputation is extremely fragile and prone to the changes of mind of the masses. Everyone is struggling to be different from the others, because being the same means to disappear, but competition often leads to a deep envy and reciprocal destruction. For teens, this means an exaggerate pressure on finding their path as soon as they can and be an active part of online and offline society as well as they can.

Logos - Language

People, and teens in particular, are more used to socialize via chat than face to face. Body language has a grammar that the youngest are not completely familiar with: they prefer to interact through texts, integrating the missing nuances of the speech with emojis and GIFs.

Genos - System of relations

Social hierarchies are extremely important. Between teens and in high schools this is particularly obvious, but it can be traced in society in general. Gathering a community of people around themselves means having a constant source of support and validation that proves essential to overcome the pressures of the system. The power of the group has an extreme influence over how reputations are built and destroyed.

This world doesn't have the intention to be a prediction of the real situation ten years from now. For many aspects it's the same as the present situation, for others it's an exaggeration of current trends, for others (especially for technological development) is pure fiction. **The purpose of this narrative world is to be a symbolical and stylized representation of the concepts on which the project wants to raise awareness.** For this reason, many aspects of this world are left generic and unspecified. For instance, even if the target audience is Italian, the story doesn't take place in any specific nation: character names have English connotations, even if the story is written in Italian, to prevent its association with an univocal location. The same mechanism is applied to social media: it's not in the interest of the story to discuss what happens on a specific platform, because the focus is on the action itself, not on the media. While a visual reference to known interfaces is useful to facilitate easy recognition of a familiar mechanism, using directly *WhatsApp*, *Instagram* or *YouTube* interfaces risks creating the conditions for an excessive and useless focus on the brand itself. Therefore, social media are mostly a symbolic representation of the known platforms. Their importance is highlighted by the fact that **during the whole story there is no physical contact between any of the characters: all the social functions**

fig. 34 Inspiration moodboard for the storyworld

are performed with the mediation of the Internet. Dialogues are replaced by chats and social gathering are only seen in forms of posts, photos and comments. Physical interaction exists inside the storyworld, but it has way less relevance than its online equivalent: the characters are alone with their smartphones and through them they manage their social life, with all the positive or negative consequences that come from it.

The first visual representation of this world (fig. 34) uses shades of pink and violet to evoke a fictional, surreal world, and blue to reflect the solitude of the person stuck on a never ending introspection. There is also a reference to the passing of time, with the clock, to evoke the spectrum of an unknown future. Pieces of technology are not dominating the mood, but they still integrate teens' lives, from connecting with others to explore their passions. The protagonist is always the individual and how he/she acts with the devices.

3.3.3
The characters

Three main characters act inside this narrative world. The protagonist is **Amber**, a 16 years old girl with a big passion for drawing, that dreams to have a career as an illustrator and, in order to achieve that, starts to publish her works online, coming across compliments but also a lot of rejection and disapproval. The story starts with her and she's the common thread all the narrative lines share, but according to the direction the reader wants to take they will have the opportunity to better know the other characters as well. One is Amber's friend, Cassandra, called **Cass**. She's a confident girl that almost casually started to publish her videos and discovered her natural talent to influence people, even if she's not really sure about where she wants this to lead her. The other one is **Nick**, a 17 years old boy that starts to show interest towards Amber and is notoriously very popular, offline and online. He seems to have everything figured out, but as the story is going to reveal he's struggling to meet expectations set too high, and he found a negative way to take out his frustration online: using an anonymous account, he wants to take down Amber, that he both admires and hates for being more talented.

Each one of these characters have been associated with some consequences that can emerge from different online behaviours (fig. 35). **Amber and Nick are the two sides of cyberbullying, the victim and the bully, while Cass represents the community's side.**

- **Amber represents a cybervictim**: a very talented girl that's trying to build a positive reputation on the web, but the constant negative feedback can impact her mental health so much

	Amber	Cass	Nick
Represents	Cybervictim	Community	Cyberbully
Connected issues	Isolation, depression and suicide	Social exposure, power of the group	Identity dissociation, peer pressure

fig. 35 Key points represented by each character

that she is at risk of self-isolation, depression and even suicide.

- **Nick represents a cyberbully:** he feels a lack of true talent and struggles to find his direction in the world. Shielded by anonymity, that makes it easier to forget the humanity behind the screen, he feels empowered by attacking other people. While he thinks his behaviour has no real repercussions, it risks getting him nothing but angrier and lonelier.

- **Cass represents the power of the community**: she discovers her natural inclination to influence people with her online attitude, but even with the best intentions she could find herself not being able to manage her visibility properly, ending up overwhelmed by it.

In this project, Amber, Cass and Nick are also the personas, since they are built to represent the target itself. The initial survey has shown that an effective way to communicate with teens is by offering them the possibility to relate with the story and the characters. They appreciate stories they can feel close to their experience and characters that are going through problems they associate with. Creating a bond between the character and the audience is essential for the story to be engaging and effective. Therefore, characters have been built on the basis of the initial analysis on *Gen* Z and the survey to be narratively effective and to reflect those people that could benefit from the project.

AMBER WINGS
@blueamber

Internal world

AGE	16 years old
GENDER	female
PERSONALITY	distracted, shy, creative and sensitive about her works
CAPABILITIES	natural talent for drawing, very visual mind
INTERESTS	she uses her drawing as a way to express her world; beside drawing, she loves to read comic books or just to get lost in her thoughts

External world

FAMILY	lives with her parents, with whom she's not always able to open up, often pushing them away when she'd need them the most
ROMANCE	finds Nick very attractive, but doesn't think he could be interested in her
WORLD VIEW	pessimistic: the outside world is an harsh place
APPEARANCE	small girl, very short hair with a blue lock on the top, dark eyes; she wears glasses and loves to match them with black makeup and earrings
HABITS	school and homework are not that important, almost all her free time is spent either drawing or reading comic books and fantasising about them
EDUCATION	currently attending the third year of high school
WORK	dreams of building a career as an illustrator

Wants

- to use social media to realize herself
- to be accepted for what she is and recognized for what she likes to do

Pain points

- not being able to express herself freely
- not feeling part of society

" I just want to be accepted for who I am"

fig. 36 Character design: Amber

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CASS RIVERS
@cass_rivers

Internal world

AGE	16 years old
GENDER	female
PERSONALITY	sweet, caring, stubborn, sometimes attention-seeking
CAPABILITIES	natural entertainer, when she's passionate about something she can make people feel that way too
INTERESTS	her interests space from makeup to books and games, but whatever she's currently into she likes to share with other people and talk about it

External world

FAMILY	lives with her mum, that doesn't fully support her online exposure
WORLD VIEW	optimistic, sometimes naive: people are essentially good
APPEARANCE	long wavy red hair, green eyes, always smiling
HABITS	likes to play videogames, read and go shopping; puts a lot of effort into being good at school, not always with good results
EDUCATION	currently attending the third year of high school
WORK	she would like a career where she can feel she's making a difference, but she still doesn't have a clear idea

Wants

- to feel listened to
- to be able to help and support people she cares about

Pain points

- caring sometimes too much about external attention
- putting too much trust in people's good intentions

" I like to show myself on social media and I hope to create a nice community around me "

fig. 37 Character design: Cass

NICK ASHER
nickasher12 - anonymous

Internal world

AGE	17 years old
GENDER	male
PERSONALITY	charming, charismatic, extremely ambitious to the point of becoming jealous and aggressive to people he perceives as better than him
CAPABILITIES	to give an extremely confident image of himself, as to appear as someone able to excel in every field
INTERESTS	various interests, from social events to sports, but he's not really engaged by any of them and struggles to find what he's truly passionate about

External world

FAMILY	lives with his strict parents and two older brothers
ROMANCE	feels both attracted and annoyed by Amber
WORLD VIEW	disillusioned: the world will be nice to you just if you have what it takes to face it
APPEARANCE	tall, dark ruffled hair, considered to be very handsome
HABITS	he gives a lot of importance to succeeding at school, as well as in every social event he can get into
EDUCATION	currently attending the fourth year of high school
WORK	he wants to be successful, but he has no idea in which field or how. He feels very ashamed by this confusion, trying to hide it behind a forced confidence

Wants

- to be recognized as talented and successful online
- to hide from everybody all his negative feelings towards the future

Pain points

- afraid of not being able to find his true identity and passion
- seeing anonymity as a mask behind which hide safely

" I want to be the best, I will take down whoever gets in my way "

fig. 38 Character design: Nick (left)

fig. 39 Character design: Anonymous (right)

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BACKGROUND STORIES

Amber

Amber doesn't remember a part of her life when she wasn't drawing something on any available surface. In high school she met Cass, that supported her enthusiastically and pushed her to post her works online. Amber opened the account @blueamber to post her drawings, but alongside some scarce compliments (and Cass's support) she also received various insults. The haters initially focused just on her works, then started to attack her on a personal level. Amber had always been rather happy with her works, because she enjoyed the creative process much more than the result, but she wasn't prepared to face these kind of attacks from people that didn't even know her. She began to feel less confident about her passion first, and about herself later. At the beginning of the story, this situation has been going on for a while and she feels on the brink of a crisis.

Cass

Cass was a lonely child, so she began early to enjoy the company of her online friends, all these unknown people that actually wanted to talk with her, sharing hobbies and interests. In high school she met Amber, who made her feel like she was really listened to, and they immediately bonded. Amber was the one to firstly push her to post her videos online. They opened their accounts together, supporting each other. Cass had an almost immediate positive feedback on her videos: people liked the way she talked about things and she enjoyed their attention and the positive support they brought. Inebriated by the feeling, she kept doing it and in a short time she created a community of people that wanted to hear her reviews on the latest videogames she played, TV series she saw or brand of clothing she was wearing. Meanwhile, Cass was really shocked by the bad attention Amber was receiving, but she trusted that with time and ignoring the haters at the end good fans would have overcome all of them. At the beginning of the story, with FutureMe test, she starts to think that this aptitude could really be a part of her good looking future.

fig. 40 Character design: group picture

Nick

Nick grew up behind the shadow of his older brothers. Pushed also by his strict parents, he began to look at them with a mixture of admiration and envy, feelings that he started to associate with all the people he perceived as better than him, especially online, where he felt that everybody was just perfect. He wanted to excel in everything, without taking the time to stop and think what he actually felt passionate about. He quickly became very popular online, with his charm and social skills, and in school, where he participated in every activity. When he met Amber, he immediately felt fascinated by her, a feeling that with time evolved in attraction. However, when she started to post her works online, his inferiority complex kicked in, with the same mixture of attraction and hate that he associated with online profiles. He envied her talent and passion, the same qualities he so much wanted for himself. After trying the app FutureMe and seeing a negative future, he started to be afraid that all his high school success was going to end as soon as he got out. He impulsively began to tore down Amber's online identity with a secondary secret account, Anonymous, but since he still felt an attraction for her he also wanted to ask her out. At the beginning of the story he is keeping up with both behaviours, without seeing any contradiction, because he isn't able to associate her online and offline identity anymore.

3.3.4
FutureMe: the diegetic prototype

This is a DF project based on a different kind of narrative compared to the case studies mentioned in Chapter 1. **Instead of being focused on a product, its centre is a problem.** The diegetic prototype (in this case, an app) exists, but it's not the focus of the whole fiction: its main use is to trigger the challenge that will start the reflection on the selected topics. To use Blythe's concept, in terms of design this work is anti-solutionist (Blythe et al., 2016): it doesn't offer an answer to a problem, because its main function is to raise awareness about the problem itself.

The idea behind the whole story is that in a possible future will exist **an app, called *FutureMe*, that can analyze each one's online identity in its entirety (social media usage, texting, shopping, reservations, and everything else we do on the Internet) and, passing these data through an algorithm, can predict a person's future. This prediction represents online identity**: negative behaviours, that may seem negligible, will have negative consequences in the long-term, while a positive attitude will be reflected in an happy future. In the story, teens can find their daydreams about future relationships, friendships, careers, or just self-realization to be overturned, without understanding why, if they are not aware of their problems. They can recognize themselves in this future self, or not. A process of understanding the reasons behind an eventual dissociation can lead them firstly to identify their negative behaviours and secondly to do something about them. This app, like all the technology portrayed in the story, is not positive or negative, but it works as a mirror

to make people reflect on their identity. Is the online identity consistent with the one offline? If the two of them overlap too much the person can have difficulties to give the right importance to what they see online: they can end up being overwhelmed by media negativity or unreal standards. On the contrary, if the two parts are completely separated the person could not be able to recognize the humanity behind the screen, thinking that what happens online stays online, without consequences on the outside. The app's function is to push the characters (and the readers) to unconsciously reflect on this topic.

Each one of the character has a different result, when they try to use the app: it reflects what's going on in their lives, even if they don't notice it (fig. 41). Amber, that completely identified herself with her online career, obtains an interrupted future, that suggests her she's going to commit suicide in less than ten years, because she won't be able to react to the cyberbullying anymore. Nick, on the contrary, separates too much what he does offline with the fake identity (Anonymous) he built to vent his fears: he obtains a negative future that he doesn't recognize as his, because he still doesn't realize the negative impact of his actions both on Amber and on himself. Cass, the positive element, has a positive future, because she's unconsciously balancing her life, but during the story she also risks to be overwhelmed by her online life, realizing a more negative version of her apparently bright future.

	Amber	Cass	Nick
Online and offline identity	Too overlapped	Balanced	Too separated
FutureMe result	Interrupted	Positive	Negative

fig. 41 Relationship between identity perception and *FutureMe* results

3.3.5
Storylines, choices, endings

The story is formed by three narrative lines, a main one and two secondary ones. Each one tells the point of view of one of the characters, so each line works on one of the main topics: cyberbullying, identity dissociation, social exposure (cfr. Chapter 3.3.3). Amber's character is the main thread around which the narrative revolves: her interrupted future starts the whole story, as well as the possibility for the reader to discover the other two storylines. The basic structure of the story is the same, but the choices the readers make allow them to explore it from the different points of view, changing the way the plot develops. Every character faces the story from a different perspective: the victim's, the bully's and the community's. The characters' roles inside the narrative changes as well, according to the storyline: while Amber in the beginning is the hero of the story, she'll be the enemy in Nick's storyline and just an ally in Cass's one. Each character is the hero of their narrative path, and like in real life all the others look different according to this change of perspective.

As established at the beginning, one of the core points of the project is the fact that online choices have consequences also in real life. The interactivity of the story is a direct result of this assumption: different situations and endings have the precise purpose of showing the consequences of the decisions that have been taken during the story.

According to Campbell's hero's journey model (Vogler, 2007), the story structure can be analyzed in the following way (fig. 42).
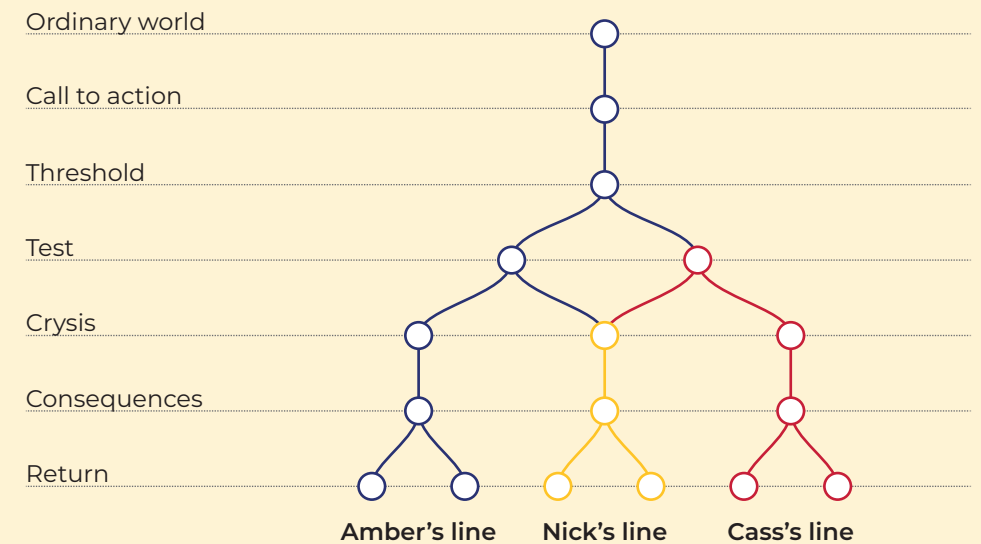
- **Ordinary world**
  Introduction to Amber's situation: the passion for drawing, the situation with her haters, the friendship with Cass;

- **Call to action**
  Cass invites Amber to try FutureMe;

- **Crossing the threshold**
  Amber discovers her interrupted future;

- **Test**
  The character fail in their first approach to the problem;

- **Crysis**
  Anonymous's identity is revealed and the characters have to face the situation, each one according their point of view;

- **Consequences**
  The characters decide how they want to react to the crisis;

- **Result**
  With a flashforward, it is shown how the choices taken previously led to a new balance.

fig. 42 Storylines scheme according to the hero's journey model

To increase the engagement, while the characters behave autonomously most of the time, **the reader is called to help the character in his/her focal choices**. All the characters enact familiarity with the reader, explaining their doubts and thoughts and asking for advice about what they should do next. Deliberately, it's never specified inside the story if the characters are talking to a friend or to someone they know or if they are actually talking to the reader: this assumption is left for personal interpretation. In the first case, the reader is just impersonating another not clearly mentioned character. In the second case, however, **the characters are breaking the fourth wall, involving the audience more deeply into their problems, making them experience the situation they are living in firsthand. The moments of interaction are placed on another level, compared to the rest of the narrative**. Also the time in which the reader intervenes inside the story it's left up to personal interpretations.

Each storyline can have two possible outcomes, a positive one and a negative one, for a total of six possible endings (fig. 43). The negative results implies that the character did not understand what was the core of the problem and, trying to improve the situation, ended up fulfilling the initial negative prediction (or, for Cass, discovering the negative side of what initially seemed positive). On the contrary, the positive result means that there was an understanding of the situation and some actions were taken in order to improve it. All the endings take place ten years into the future, at the same time of Amber's first use of the app, to show whether or not its result actually came true. For example, suggesting Amber to look for help will lead her to improve her situation, while the continued advice to self-isolate and just let it pass, in order to avoid the interrupted future, will

eventually result in a self-fulfilling prophecy. The purpose of this structure is to make the audience think about what kind of action have led the character to behave in a certain way, and how they personally can relate to the character's situations. To strengthen this message, the reader is also given the opportunity to retrace their steps from the beginning to try to reach a different ending.

	Amber's line	Cass's line	Nick's line
Topic	Cyberbullism: the victim's perspective (isolation, depression)	Cyberbullism: the community's perspective (social exposure)	Cyberbullism: the bully's perspective (identity dissociation)
Starting point	Beginning	Amber talks with Cass about her future	Amber and Cass meet Nick at the party
Positive ending	Amber is able to look for help	Cass manages to realize herself online and offline	Nick faces his negative behaviour and fixes it
Negative ending	Amber commits suicide	Cass gets too involved into her online life	Nick gets isolated and causes Amber's suicide

fig. 43 Story structure: focus concepts

3.3.6
Branching narrative

The story is divided into scenes, at the end of which there is a decision to make, the result of which can keep the reader on the same storyline or move them on another one. The narrator is external, but the point of view of each scene varies according to the relative storyline. Consequently, the choice that comes after a scene consists in the reader confronting the character whose storyline they are in.

The story is completely written in Italian, because it's addressed to an Italian target. For the full story in original language, see Appendix C. Here is presented a synopsis of the whole story in English (fig. 44).

fig. 44 Story's branching narrative
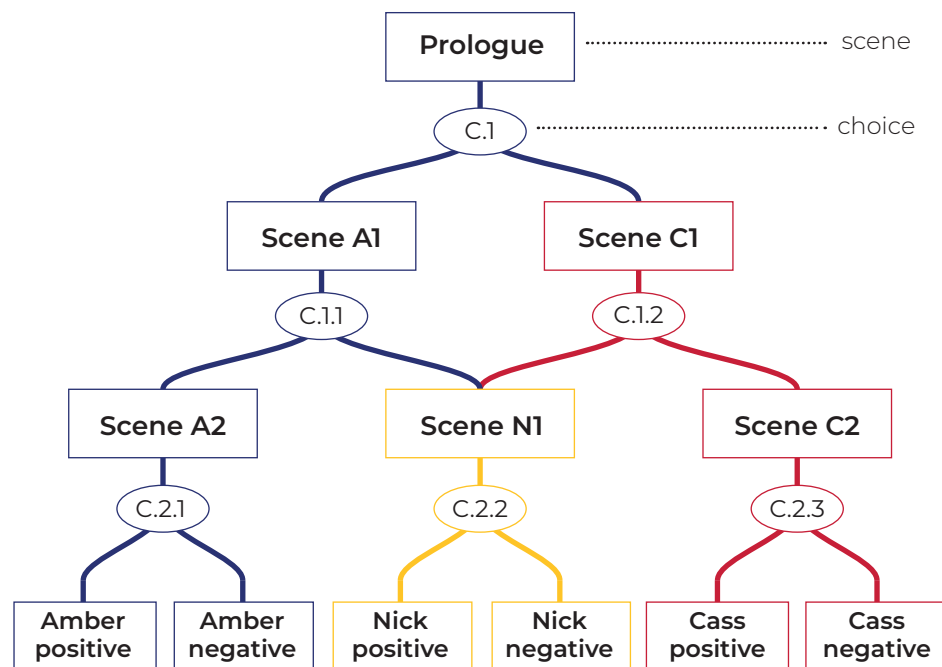
Prologue

We meet Amber, a 16 years old girl with the passion for drawing, her supportive friend Cass and an unknown hater profile through an online post from Amber. Amber confides to Cass that Nick, a popular guy from school, asked her out. Cass remembers that she already saw this coming through *FutureMe*, an app that can predict what you're going to post in the next years, and invites Amber to try it as well. Amber downloads *FutureMe*. She reads that the app will generate her future based on what she normally does online. Amber tries it, but her future results to be interrupted: it ends with a very dark drawing, accompanied by an comment from the hater Anonymous that incites her to commit suicide.

What will be Amber's reaction to the interrupted future?

Choice 1

Amber tries to change it by focusing on herself
▶ Amber storyline, scene **A1**

Amber talks to Cass about it
▶ Cass storyline, scene **C1**

Scene A1

Amber tries to focus on her works, but she's too upset and not satisfied with them and with herself. She doesn't publish her drawing, she just send it to Nick, who's writing her again to repeat his invitation to Saturday's party. Amber is not sure: her mood is too low, also due to the continuous hateful comments.

Will Amber go to the party?

Choice 1.1

Amber isolates herself
▶ Amber storyline, scene **A2**

Amber goes to the party
▶ Nick storyline, scene **N1**

Scene A2

Amber tries again *FutureMe*, hoping for a different result, but the interrupted future hasn't changed. She slowly slips into depression, ignoring Cass and Nick's texts and calls: she keeps thinking about that future. Anonymous insults her again, but makes a mistake and sends her the drawing she previously sent to Nick. Amber discovers that her hater is Nick himself and tries to confront him. Pressured, he eventually admits it, but he still doesn't take seriously her pain.

How will Amber react to this discovery?

Choice 2.1

Amber asks for Cass's help
▶ Amber - **positive ending**

Amber trusts no one anymore
▶ Amber - **negative ending**

Amber – positive ending

10 years later, Amber still has difficulties dividing the hopeless version of herself she saw in *FutureMe* with her current self. She publishes again the dark drawing she saw in *FutureMe*, but this time Cass's support prevents her spiralling down.

Amber – negative ending

10 years later, Amber is alone and she keeps thinking about the dark drawing she saw in *FutureMe*. She completely identifies with that hopeless version of herself online. The initial dark future comes true: after another hateful comment, Amber kills herself.

Scene C1

Cass thinks about Amber's problem: she offers her friend to

support her through her small but affectionate community, publishing a video about one of her drawings. The result is not the one she hoped for: Anonymous starts to insult Cass as well, and her future in *FutureMe* gets worse. Amber begs her to delete the video, to avoid the haters, and suggests she asks for the popular Nick's help, but Cass is not completely convinced.

Will Cass ask for Nick's or her community's help?

Choice 1.2

Cass asks for her community's support
▶ Cass storyline, scene **C2**

Cass and Amber go to the party to talk to Nick
▶ Nick storyline, scene **N1**

Scene C2

Cass makes Amber's story go viral and creates a support net around her friend. Through this, Cass's popularity rises as well. An hacker among her followers discovers Anonymous's identity and all the fans start to insult Nick on his profile. He writes to Cass asking her to stop them, trying to justify himself. Cass doesn't want to, but Amber asks her to leave him alone. Cass knows that she'll lose popularity if she appears weak with her community.

Will Cass contain the story or go after Nick?

Choice 2.3

Cass contains the story
▶ Cass - **positive ending**

Cass let her fan attack Nick
▶ Cass - **negative ending**

Cass – positive ending

10 years later, Cass became a published reporter and Amber an

illustrator. Cass's online community remained smaller but more faithful: when Cass posts about Amber's new art exhibition, they all show a lot of support. Amber's interrupted future is now just part of her art and Cass realized the best part of her future.

Cass – negative ending

10 years later, Cass has an apparently amazing online life and a lot of followers. However, she lost Amber's friendship after the situation with Nick. Suddenly remembering her, she looks for her online, finding out that she closed her account after a very dark post. She is about to write to her, but her new commitments distract her and in the end she forgets.

Scene N1

The party was a success. The next morning Amber texts Nick, happy for the nice evening, and she agrees to see him again. Nick thinks about his ambiguous feelings towards her, and about his *FutureMe* result, that was surprisingly negative. Pushed by jealousy towards her, he insults her again with his Anonymous account. Amber vents with him about her difficult situation with haters, making him questioning his actions, that he thought to be harmless.

Choice 2.2

Will Nick confess Amber to be Anonymous and delete his account?

Nick reveals his identity
▶ Nick - **positive ending**

Nick doesn't say anything
▶ Nick - **negative ending**

Nick – positive ending

10 years later, Nick visits Amber's illustration exhibition, seeing her for the first time after what he told her. He apologises again for his behaviour and compliments her success. Amber reveals that his honesty actually helped her grow and they friendly agree to meet again, leaving the past behind.

Nick – negative ending

10 years later, the future foretold him by *FutureMe* gets real: Nick finds himself alone and unfulfilled, haunted by other people's successes. Amber has never discovered his identity and got overwhelmed by the insults. In a last fit of jealousy, he comments her last post, as Anonymous did in the beginning, possibly driving her to suicide.

3.4

Prototyping

3.4.1
Media choice

Given the high importance that this device has for *Gen Z*, **Futu-reMe is a project designed entirely for smartphones**. The choice for the right channel has been made considering the results of the survey (see Chapter 3.2.1) and the research on online storytelling that followed it (see Chapter 3.2.2), combined with the necessities of the story itself, as resulted from the framing of the previous section. Therefore, **the project is introduced on *Instagram* and it develops through a website, using chatbots for the interaction**. The specific reasons behind these choices and how the project has been organized in each media will be explained in the following paragraphs (fig. 45).

Instagram: the entry point

Instagram has been chosen as a foothold for the story mostly for its high diffusion among Italian teenagers, as proved by both the research and the survey. It aims to ease the approach to the narrative by inserting it in a net that teens normally use. Through *Instagram*, the story can be followed, shared, liked or reached also through a series of hashtags, broadening the possible audience.

The entry point is an *Instagram* profile where the layout of the
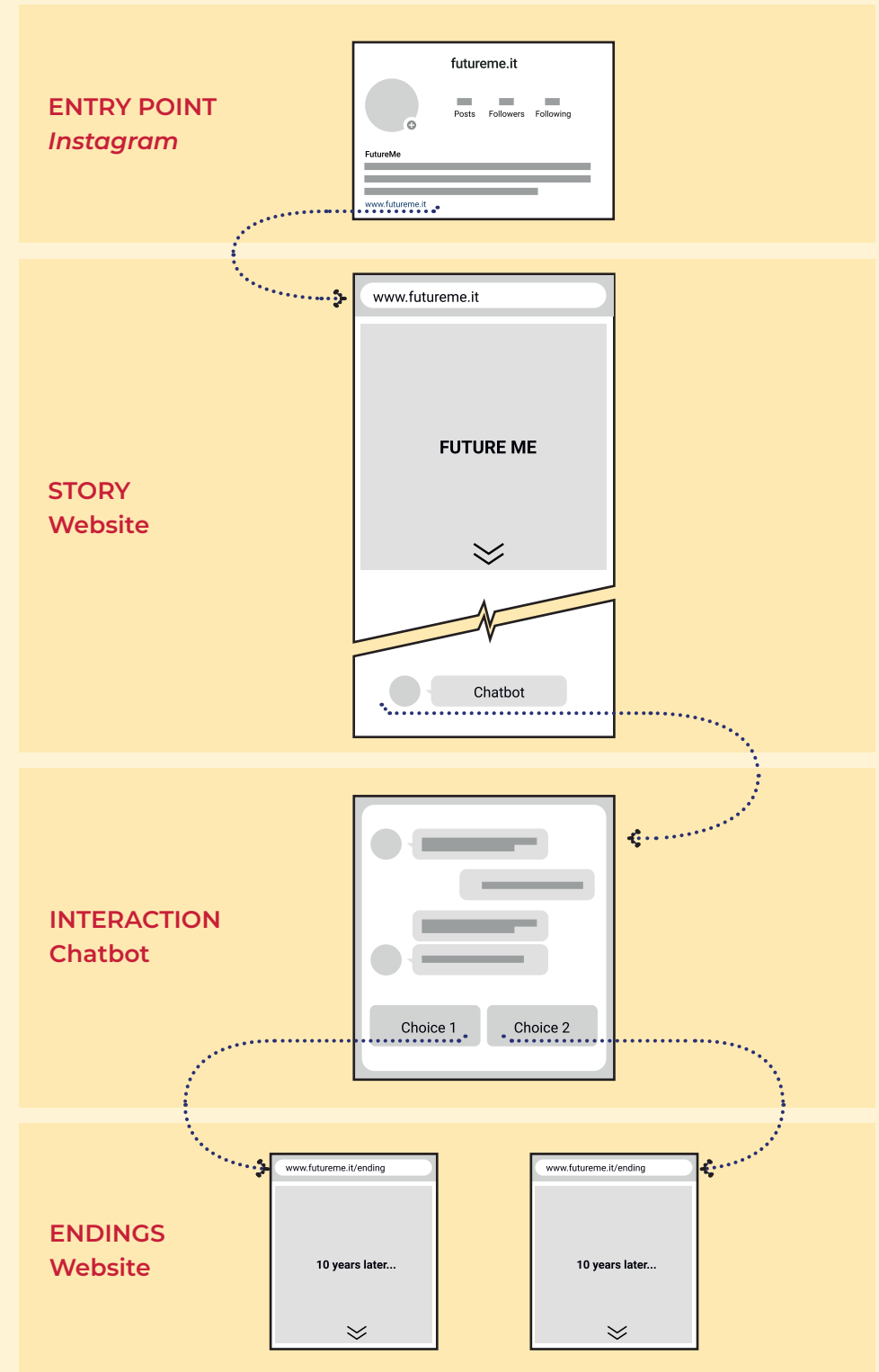
fig. 45 Project structure over different media

posts, their visual and written content and the sequence of fixed stories intend to catch people's attention and intrigue them enough to proceed with the actual story, linked in the description. Besides providing people with the link to the story, the profile is used to show hints of the content of the website: an engaging summary, some captions from the story, some visual hints and a brief explanation on how the interaction will work (fig. 46). The posts are used to introduce the characters, with images, descriptions and a selection of highly used hashtags, while the fixed stories portray a catchy summary of the story (longer and more visual than in the description) and some anticipations on its nature of interactive story, with choices and different endings. The reader is free to explore the profile as they prefer, reading the posts, checking the stories, or going directly to the link, as none of the information contained in this page is essential to understand the story.

Website: the narrative

The website conveys all the designed story: every page represents a scene and it can be simply navigated by scrolling it.

The reasons behind the choice of a website as the main media to narrate the story is firstly the high flexibility it offers, especially for framing the relationship between written and visual content and for developing the narrative branches as different pages. Moreover, it's easily accessible from the entry point and it doesn't need to be downloaded, as apps do, but it can be easily explored by every smartphone in every browser, adapting to whatever teens normally use. In fact, a very important point is that the whole website should be perfectly readable for mobile, since it's the device teens use the most. A future implementation of the project
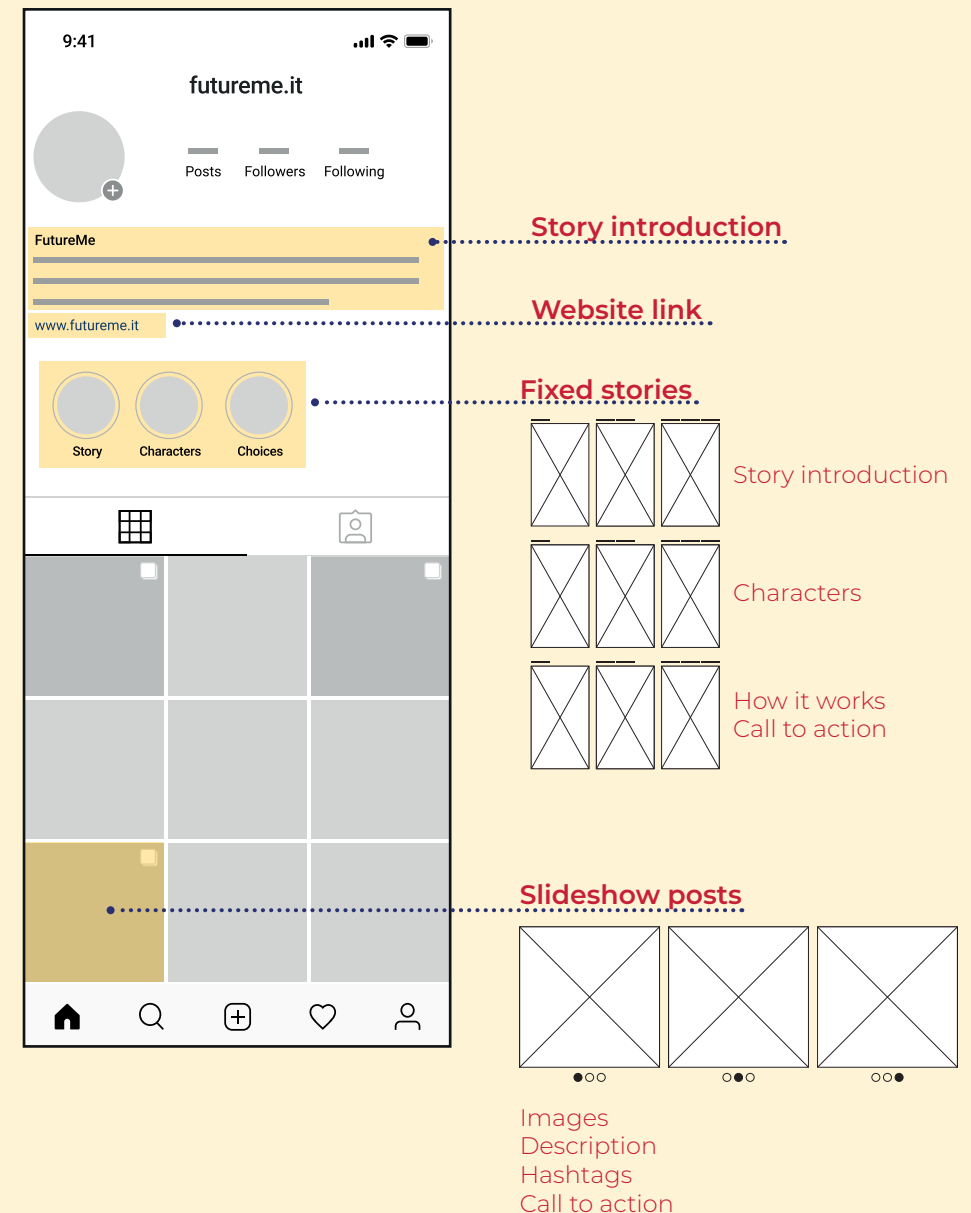
fig. 46 *Instagram* profile structure and content

may include a complete responsiveness also for medium and large screens, but when designing for *Gen Z* small screen should be the main focus.

Chatbots: the interaction

In order to move through the narrative lines, the website is integrated with a series of chatbots. As mentioned before, the mechanism of the choice lays on a further level than the story one, introducing the ambiguous figure of the reader as an integral part of the narrative. The form of chatbot has been chosen for the familiar relationship that it introduces between the two parts involved in the conversation, emulating the dynamic used normally in chats between friends. By seeing the character as their friend, the readers can be more engaged into their fate and encouraged to care about the advice they give them. This mechanism is inspired by the aforementioned case study *Bury me, my love* (CS *n.* 22).

The chatbots is found at the bottom of every page/scene and presents a series of options that in the end will lead to one out of two possible outcomes, and make the story proceed through the chosen branch. This is the part of the project that presents the highest level of interaction. If the website itself revolves around the concept of "identity", the chatbots integrate it by working with the idea of "choice".

3.4.2
Visual study

The story is narrated with plain text, used for characters' introspection, and fragments of social media (posts, chats, videos), used for social interaction. Dialogue becomes chats, meetings become posts. As anticipated in Chapter 3.3.2 (Storyworld), these elements are inspired from *Instagram*, *Facebook*, *YouTube* and *WhatsApp* to be easily recognized in their functions, but they are visually expressed in a more abstract way, to avoid any specific reference that would be useless to the story.

Colours

FutureMe's palette works around the three primary colours, each one associated with a character: blue for Amber, red for Cass and yellow for Nick (fig. 47). During the story, the colours' brightness varies according to the mood of the events: at first
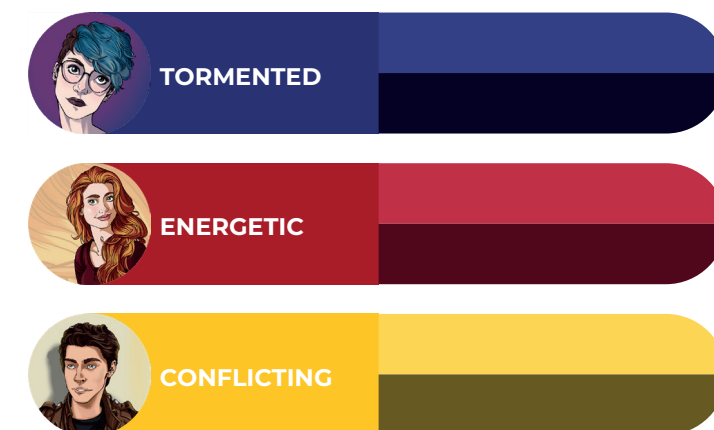
fig. 47 Colour palette and mood for each character

very bright, they turn darker and move to black when the situation becomes more critical, while they get bright again if the character's mood improves. Following the same logic, all the negative endings are portrayed in black, while all the positive ones are represented with the brighter version of the character's theme colour.

Given her tormented storyline, Amber's colour range is the darkest amongst the characters. Her colour is blue, to represent sadness and distance. It sometimes turns to a lighter shade, a calmer and peaceful colour, but it can also turn into a darker blue or even black, as Amber inner state gets worse. She is a very passionate character, but she's only associated with cold colours to represent the peace and tranquillity that her passion, in the best moments, can give her.

Cass is the energetic and caring element of the group. Her colour is red: it conveys a warmer passion, that usually brings energy and love, but can also get out of control and turn into anger: both these sides represent elements of Cass's personality, as during the story Cass often risks letting her energy change from positive to negative. Her final conflict concerns precisely her ability to control her (and her community's) rage against Nick. From pink to dark red, the colours associated with her are always warm and intense.

Nick's palette is ambiguous as the character is. The main colour, yellow, symbol of joy and confidence, reflects what the apparent personality of the character is. However, the imposing presence of this very bright hue aims also to be perceived as aggressive and connected with anxiety and fear. In its darker shades this colour brings with it a sour note of bronze, eventually leading to black,

to reflect the conflicting identity of the character, constantly moving from overconfidence to more tormenting and hidden fears.

FutureMe's brand image (fig. 52) combines all three palettes, with a prevalence of blue (for Amber's narrative remains important in every storyline), but still merging together all the character's personalities into one.

Drawings

Two drawing styles have been used inside the project. The first type is chosen to represent pictures, such as character's profile images and the photos they post (fig. 48). Every character's profile image reflects their colour palette and general mood (cfr. Chapter 3.3.3).

fig. 48 Character design: group picture

fig. 49 Amber's drawing, first version

fig. 50 Amber's drawing, second version (left)
fig. 51 Amber's drawing, third version (right)

The second type is used to represent Amber's drawings, since they are central for the story's development. The most important one is the one shown to her by *FutureMe*, in the prologue (fig. 49). In order to show how the situation has changed, the same drawing is presented again in every ending, with two variations, all in different contexts. All of them represent Amber's relationship with her online life, but each one from different perspectives. The first one is the initial situation: her feeling of being lost, alone and attacked whenever she is connected on social media (fig. 49). As her situation gets worse, she starts to identify herself completely with her online life: even the phone barrier between online and offline falls (fig. 50). Her suicide is a consequence of this situation, for she's not able to see anything and anyone outside of the darkness. However, there is a third version of the drawing: in the positive endings another layer is added between offline Amber and the small lost figure representing her online self. The drawing is actually a picture of a gallery exhibition, posted with the caption "Illustration from a world between real and digital" (fig. 51). Overcoming the conflict with her haters, Amber is able to detach herself from her online identity, turning her sufferance into self-realization: an healthy balance between real and digital, without a disconnection (as it happens in Nick's negative ending) and without being overwhelmed by the online identity (like Amber and Cass's negative endings).

3.4.3
Building the demo

In order to have the possibility to fully test it, the project has been completely realized as it was designed. Therefore, it consists in two parts:

- an *Instagram* profile: ***@futureme.it*** (fig. 53)

- a website: ***www.futureme.it*** (fig. 54)

The final demo of the project was developed by working firstly on low-fidelity (fig. 55a) and high fidelity mockups (fig. 55b), in order to develop and test different aspects of the design before the final product (fig. 55c). A complete collection of the wireframes can be found in Appendix C with the whole story in original language.
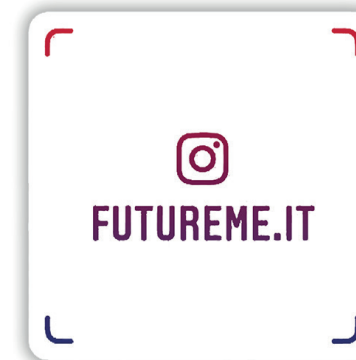
fig. 52 FutureMe brand image (right page)
fig. 53 Nametag for the *Instagram* profile (top left)
fig. 54 QR code for the website (top right)
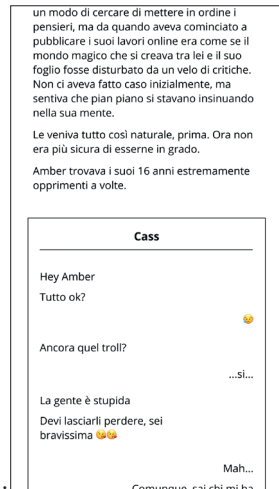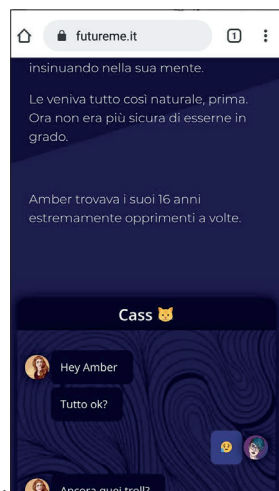
1. Low-fidelity mockup

TOOLS
Figma

FUNCTIONS
Define the structure of the pages;
Define the relationship between text and images;
Write the complete text for the story;
Define the content of the illustrations;
Test the functionality of the chatbots at the end of each page.

a.

2. High-fidelity mockup

TOOLS
Figma, Adobe Illustrator, Landbot

FUNCTIONS
Define the palette and the basics of UI;
Study the layout of the social media parts;
Test the readability of the whole content on smartphone screen.

b.

3. Demo

TOOLS
Figma, Adobe Illustrator, Adobe Photoshop, Wordpress, Landbot

FUNCTIONS
Test the project.

c.

fig. 55a, 55b, 56c Three-step process of building the final demo

mobile scrolling

fig. 56a, 56b Demo: from the *Instagram* profile to the website page

Amber rimase a fissare un attimo il messaggio, interdetta, per poi spostarsi sull'ultimo post generato dal sistema. Lo aprì.

blueamber
04.02.2040
Non ne so più uscire

anonymous Ammazzati

Dopo quello, niente.

Hey

© 2020 – Susanna Berra

Amber Wings

Hey

Vorrei chiederti un consiglio

Conosci quest'app, FutureMe?

Si, ne ho sentito parlare

No, mai sentita

Hey

fig. 57 Demo: ending of the prologue and call to action for the chatbot (left)

fig. 58 Demo: beginning of the first chatbot (right)

AMBER

CASS

NICK

La matita scorreva leggera sul foglio. Tracciava i contorni delle labbra, il profilo morbido del naso, l'arco delle sopracciglia.

Amber si specchiava ogni tanto nello schermo del telefono per cogliere qualche particolare nella piega blu del ciuffo o nel luccichio degli occhiali.

Cass non l'avrebbe capita, pensava, calcando con troppa foga il nero delle pupille. Lo sapeva già: Cass le avrebbe detto di stare tranquilla, che era solo un gioco, non c'era da preoccuparsi. Proprio lei, sempre a guardare chi e come commentava i suoi video, così attenta a tenere i suoi fan, a volte non riusciva a

cass_rivers
05.02.2030
Prima di tutto grazie mille a quelli che ancora mi seguono qui, sul mio Weekly Cass! ♥ Riposto questo video di qualche giorno fa perchè come alcuni di voi avranno visto sono stata molto attaccata per aver supportato **@blueamber**. Quegli insulti verso di me che avete letto sono solo UNA PICCOLA PARTE di quello che Amber riceve tutti i giorni 😡 Continuerò a postare i suoi lavori qui, tra i miei video, insieme alle mie solite chiacchierate. Se vi sono piaciuti i miei contenuti finora, vi invito a supportare la mia amica e SEGNALARE chi la insulta Grazie a tutti ♥ I'm a #blueamberfan 💙💙

anonymous Bel tentativo, tanto tu continui ad essere una sfigata e i tuoi video a fare schifo 😂😂

junebailey Ho guardato il profilo di Amber ed è bravissima 😍😍 #blueamberfan

nickasher12
25.01.2030
Quelle serate che... sì 😏
@blueamber
@cass_rivers

130 commenti

Nick si svegliò la domenica mattina con un gran mal di testa ma un certo buon umore.

Prima di alzarsi riguardò le foto postate la sera prima e le reazioni del suo pubblico. Come al solito, la sua affezionata community non si smentiva mai.

La serata con Amber era stata un successo.

Amber

Ciao Nick!

Volevo ringraziarti ancora per ieri sera

fig. 59 Demo: beginning of scene A1 (left)

fig. 60 Demo: beginning of scene C2 (middle)

fig. 61 Demo: beginning of scene N1 (right)

bite666 Ma li vedi i disegni della gente che sa fare le cose? Loro sono bravi tu fai solo schifo

blackwolf Io mi vergognerei a farmi vedere in giro con quel taglio da finta alternativa del cazzo

venomous_514 A volte guardo questi post e mi vorrei sparare

Continuava a ripensare a tutti quelli che le avevano scritto sotto i suoi ultimi post.

La vibrazione del telefono riscosse Amber dai suoi pensieri per riportarla alla realtà.

nickasher12 ti ha invitato ad un evento
✓ Partecipa   Non ci sono

Nick

Ciao 😊

Disturbo?

Stavi lavorando a qualcosa?

No tranquillo!

Le solite bozze, non è neanche venuto molto bene 😊

Che mi dici, ci hai ripensato per sabato sera? L'artista mi fa questo onore di venire con me? 😊

cass_rivers
05.02.2030
Artista emergente all'opera! Supportate il suo lavoro ❤️ @blueamber

unknown Non dirmi che dai retta anche tu a questa sfigata... ti stai riducendo proprio male 👎👎

unknown Fossi in te starei più attento a chi pubblicizzi

Invece dei suoi soliti fan, più scorreva i commenti più Cass leggeva insulti e prese in giro da diversi account, di cui unknown il principale. Non si aspettava un successo, ma neanche venire sommersa così... era questo quello che provava Amber ogni volta?

Amber

Te l'avevo detto... 😔

Che stronzi 😠😠

Mi dispiace molto aver tirato dentro anche te

So che ci tieni al tuo canale

Fai così, cancella quel video e vedi che torna tutto a posto

Ma stai scherzando??

No, davvero

Io già me li devo subire, inutile che metta di mezzo anche te

Apprezzo comunque il tentativo, grazie! Tra

fig. 62 Demo: sample from scene A1 (left)
fig. 63 Demo: sample from scene C1 (right)

memoria del telefono. Erano l'unica cosa che ormai pubblicava nel suo vecchio account, ormai quasi abbandonato.

blueamber
04.02.2040
Non ne so più uscire. È tutto nero.

anonymous Ammazzati

Ecco... si era avverato tutto. E in fondo, perchè no?

Se era l'unica soluzione che le rimaneva per uscire da quel buio...

Amber spense il telefono.

10 ANNI DOPO...

FUTURE ME

Sono passati già 10 anni dalla FutureMe challenge!

Nicholas, speriamo che tu abbia passato un bellissimo decennio!
Allora, ci avevamo azzeccato? 😉
Condividi con noi qualche foto su chi sei davvero diventato in questi anni 😊
#futureme
#futuremenow

Vedi i post precedenti

Guardando la notifica, Nick non riuscì a trattenere una smorfia di disappunto. Pensò che se i suoi follower del liceo avessero potuto vederlo ora, non l'avrebbero neanche riconosciuto. Non che gliene fossero rimasti molti.

Uno alla volta, i suoi vecchi amici avevano deciso che non era abbastanza per loro e se n'erano andati. Ma lui li vedeva ancora, attraverso le cose che postavano. Sicuramente pensavano di essere meglio di lui, con le loro carriere e famiglie felici. Tutte cose che anche Nick avrebbe potuto avere, se avesse voluto. Aveva semplicemente deciso di non farlo, ma avrebbe potuto essere migliore di tutti loro.

FINE

AMBER – FINALE 2

Vuoi provare a cambiare il futuro di Amber, Cass e Nick?

Torna all'inizio!

fig. 64 Demo: beginning of Nick's negative future (left)
fig. 65 Demo: ending of Amber's negative future (right)

3.5
The tests

3.5.1
An hypothesis of UX analysis

The optimal way to demonstrate the effectiveness of a project that aims to speak to a large scale audience, like the one developed for this thesis, would be to perform a series of tests to collect both quantitative and qualitative data about the impact it has on people. **In this paragraph I will suggest a hypothetical way to test this project to answer the question posed by the design challenge** and collect feedback to improve the tested design or future similar ones.

Quantitative data could be obtained sharing the project with a large number of people. They should be mostly part of the defined target to check the effectiveness of the premises, but it is also important to consider other age groups in order to check eventual unexpected results that could come from a different audience. A first result can be obtained just by noticing how many people, from the *Instagram* profile (the entry point), follow the experience until one of the endings. A significant amount of decrease registered for some of the steps (fig. 66) can be a sign that some parts of the whole experience were not as effective as planned. More specifically, extensive and useful data can be also collected analyzing the trends of both *Instagram* and the website. The *In-*

Target audience who:

was informed about the project
visited the *Instagram* page
visited the front page
used the first chatbot
reached an end
read it again

fig. 66 Phases to consider to evaluate the audience's engagement

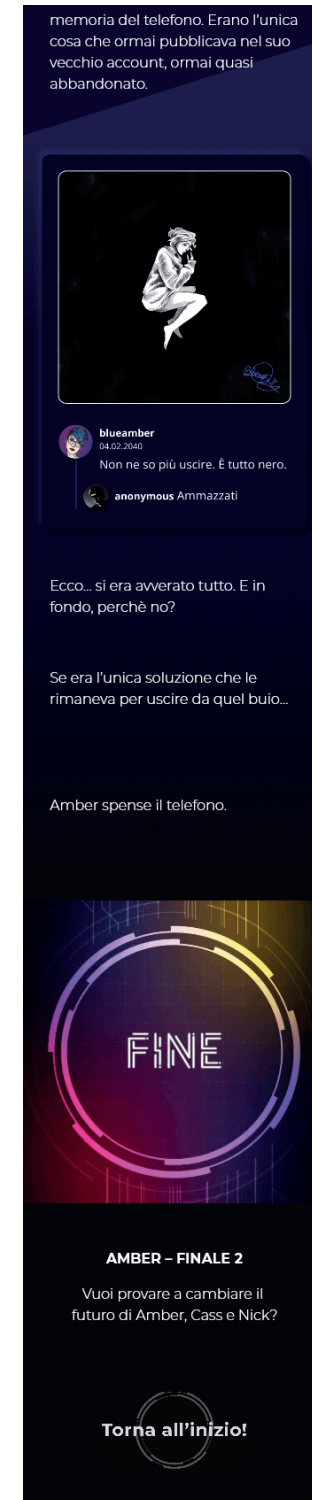*stagram* profile purpose is to direct the users into the website: the relationship between the numbers of visits or follows and the clicks on the link can indicate if it's engaging enough to encourage people to dig deeper into the story, or if it needs adjustments and clarifications. An analysis of the website's usage could detect the following elements:

- *percentage of people that used the first chatbots* ▶ effectiveness of the prologue in catching people's attention;

- *percentage of readers that successfully completed the first chatbots, opening from it one of the two paths* ▶ effectiveness of the conversational storytelling as interaction point;

- *number of visits for each storyline* ▶ reader's interest toward one or the other narrative path;

- *percentage of people that reached any ending* ▶ overall engagement of the experience;

◉ *comparison between how many people reached each one of the six endings* ► either a general tendency towards one specific solution to the raised issue, or an imbalance in the design of the various paths;

◉ *average permanence time for each page (especially for the front page)* ► number of actual readers of the story (compared to people that just scroll the page casually) and, therefore, project's ability to catch the interest of the target.

To complement this numerical analysis it could be useful to interview some of the people that participated to the quantitative test. A small number of unstructured interviews could test elements like the audience's interest in the covered topics (regardless of the project's output), their feelings through the story and the actual effectiveness of the storytelling method in raising these questions. This kind of UX analysis has the possibility to confirm the designer's initial hypothesis, making the project an efficient case study for future researches, or also to raise useful critics in order to improve the whole idea.

3.5.2
Testing the demo

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic that, in 2020, limited significantly the possibilities of testing the project, the aforementioned hypothesis remains mostly just an input for further improvements. For this thesis the most relevant data, useful to define a partial but significant conclusion to the research, have been collected through **a short test, composed by closed and open questions, that involved seven high school students between 16 and 18 years old**. They were addressed to the *Instagram* account and they were given no more indication, except a final link to the feedback survey. A complete collection of all the given answers can be found in Appendix D.

The test

SURVEY SAMPLE
Seven teens between 16 and 18 years old;

METHOD
A survey formed by close and open questions;

ELEMENTS TO TEST
Perceived effectiveness of plot, characters and endings;
Opinions on chosen media;
Level of interest in the portrayed issues;
General impressions and level of engagement of the project.

The target greatly appreciated the project and, on different levels, they have understood the message the story wants to convey.

"In my opinion, the story is pleasant, exciting and interactive, not obvious at all and dealing with current topics."
Giulia, 17 years old

"Engaging story that offers insights to reflect on our way to use social media, and how they can influence people's lives."
Giovanni, 16 years old

Regarding the narrative itself, an interesting data that emerged is that even with such a small group every ending was reached by at least one person. This shows that **the whole structure results to be balanced and that the target considers every direction to be plausible**, meaning that the representation of how the same problem can be addressed in different ways is found to be consistent and reliable. Six out of seven subjects also stated that they would be interested in exploring different endings, therefore the story was effective in catching their attention and keeping them engaged. **They all felt somehow represented by the events of the narrative**, even if on different levels, **and particularly by Amber's character**: this result is easily motivated by the amount of space dedicated to her figure during the story (she's a relevant part of every storyline, while the two other characters are mostly relevant inside their own storylines). The character preference also follows the data obtained in the initial survey, according to which more than half of the participants prefer the protagonist to other secondary characters.

Do you think that this story can be relevant for people your age? Why?

"Yes."
Giorgia, 17 years old, and Alice, 17 years old

"Yes, because it deals with very current issues."
Giulia, 17 years old

"Yes, because this problem is very present recently."
Greta, 17 years old

"Quite, because not everybody is interested in worrying about other people, and people too often are indifferent to these topics."
Cecilia, 17 years old

"Yes, because it's a situation in which everybody can find themselves, as victim or as bully, but also as spectator."
Vanessa, 18 years old

"In my opinion, the story is very relevant for teenagers. Topics like dreams, emotions, doubts, fear about what other people think or the digital world are all topics today's teens can fully relate to."
Giovanni, 16 years old

fig. 67 Target's feedback on the story's perceived relevance

Talking about the medium, **they all appreciated the interaction through chatbots and marked as effective the choice to use a website to convey the narrative**. They also positively evaluated the visual aspects of the project.

Concerning the issues the project wanted to raise awareness about, **the participants found these topics to be very relevant for them, and they all think storytelling is actually a good way to deal with them**: *"It's a suitable system to transmit the relevance of certain topics, but above all it makes the reader approach the issues*

leading also to personal reflections" wrote Giovanni, 16 years old. Particularly, **they found the story to be very relevant for people their age**: the reasons they offered to motivate this statement are the current topic, the ability to raise awareness towards it and the accurate representation of teens' feelings (fig. 67). Vanessa's comment ("It's *a situation in which everybody can find themselves, as victim or as bully, but also as spectator*", cfr fig. 67) also confirms that the configuration of the three characters, as defined in Chapter 3.3.3, results to be clear and relevant for the target.

Generally speaking, according to this test the project is considered from the target to be "*well developed*", and the only observation received regards the initial introduction ("*Maybe, you should specify a little better how it works*"): **while the main structure of the website works, some improvement could be done for the** ***Instagram*** **page that opens the whole project**.

Despite this test's inevitable limitations, as stated at the beginning of this section, it's important to notice that the target's feedback resulted to be very positive, with a general appreciation for the way the project deals with these delicate issues, showing how the audience can be apt to receive and appreciate this kind of fiction.

Chapter 4

CONCLUSIONS

During the course of this research, design fiction has proved to be a broad but promising subject of study. This "anti-solutionist" tool aims to prompt discussion about possible future realities through the use of fiction as a support for design practice. A research on the state of the art has revealed various opinions, as well as insight. It has been pointed out how some of its characteristics, like the restriction inside the academic field and the excessive focus on its applications for HCI, could have prevented the researchers to arrive to different but potentially interesting results. It has also been suggested that a way to apply design fiction to open a discussion with a wider public, one of the strongest perks of this tool, would be to increase the interaction with said public and focus also on developing a narrative, instead of merely on the creation of possible worlds. The second part of the research revealed an ideal topic for the application of design fiction: the necessity of increasing the awareness of *Gen Z* on sensitive issues regarding the use of social media. In fact, *Gen Z* has a peculiar and complex relationship with technology, for which extreme solutions like complete technological detoxes could even be harmful. Analyzing *GenZers*' approach to narrative worlds it has emerged that, similarly to the way they use social media, they look for a personalized experience. Their very broad variety of references on the topic reflects their need to interface with many different kind of stories to find something that can inspire them, show dif-

ferent perspectives on the worlds, and help them grow.

On these basis it was developed the design fiction project *FutureMe* to raise teenagers' awareness on social media usage through the application of interactive narratives. The project has been completely developed, from the construction of a possible future world to the writing of a multi-linear narrative, and it has been published on Instagram and on a website. The audience's involvement happened on three levels: first, they were the basis on which the three main characters were built, to maximise their identification with them; secondly, through a series of chatbots, the participants were called to interact with the story itself, changing its ending according to the decision they made; thirdly, they were asked to express their feedback on the project, to understand its actual effectiveness.

The results obtained from the state of the art, combined with the final feedback collected from the participants, allow to formulate an answer to the research questions identified at the beginning of this thesis. As also confirmed by the answers in the initial survey on narrative models, *GenZers* consider stories an integral part of their online life, especially on social media. The project *FutureMe* has shown how **the teenager target highly appreciates stories that deal with delicate but also current issues, for their capability of stimulating personal reflections in the readers.** Being this also the aim of a design fiction project, **it's possible to say that using storytelling in design fiction is extremely effective in generating a discussion. Moreover, stating the relevance of the project's story for people their age, the participants also validated the effectiveness of design fiction to increase social awareness**.

4.1
A possible future for design fiction

This thesis's purpose is to open a path for future researches on what has been proved to be a promising field: the use of the design fiction tool with a social intent, useful to begin a collaboration between the research field and the public. **More than detailed scenarios, the possible futures envisioned by design fiction could also become powerful UX tools**. In fact, design fiction projects have already been used with this role whenever an audience was asked to express their opinion on them. Understanding people's reactions towards hypothetical future social and technological changes might considerably help the designers to shape better present products and interfaces. This approach to design fiction could help insert in a broader scene all these projects that can otherwise fall into "solutionism". For this reason, shifting the focus from technology to the context inside which it's collocated, as this thesis intends to do with its focus on awareness on social media, could be a turning point for design fiction projects. An utopian or dystopian vision on future technology can easily fall into a judgement on the good or bad nature of said artefact, while an analysis on the social situation around it could show more impartially which are the features that could cause some problems and what could actually be helpful for people. Consequently, their reactions to it could constitute an useful instrument for UX research.

As good design fiction artefacts do, the thesis tries to envision a possible future for this versatile and mostly undiscovered tool, with the hope that it can help raise more questions and prompt the creation of more stories.

APPENDIX A
Case Studies

This appendix contains a collection of all the case studies that have been considered for the development of the work. The projects, divided in two main topics, have been useful to study the current state of the art of design fiction and interactive storytellig, and their analysis has been essential to define the placement of *FutureMe* through the evaluation of several factors.

The first cluster is **design fiction**. It contains all the case studies that have been used for the research shown in Chapter 1. From their analysis, a possible taxonomy for design fiction projects has been suggested in Chapter 1.2; fig. 68 shows the framework that has been used.

The second cluster includes the case studies considered for the research on **interactive storytelling;** for their extended discussion, see Chapter 3.2.2. The parameters used for their analysis are shown in fig. 69.

The projects are arranged in the same order in which they have been mentioned inside the text.

[Design fiction case study]

AUTHOR(S)	*[name of the author or authors]*
YEAR	*[project's year]*
SOURCE	*[link or citation where it can be found]*
CATEGORY	*[One of the following, as presented in Ch.1.2:* * 1. Imaginary abstracts and fictional papers;* * 2. Fictional prototypes;* * 3. Participatory fictions;* * 4. Emotional narratives]*
OUTPUT	*[the project's result]*
FIELD	*[to what design fiction has been applied]*
FOCUS	*[the most relevant element for design fiction]*
AUDIENCE	passive ⦾⦾⦾⦾⦾ active
FICTION	world ⦾⦾⦾⦾⦾ story

fig. 68 Framework for the analysis of the case studies on design fiction

[Interactive storytelling case study]

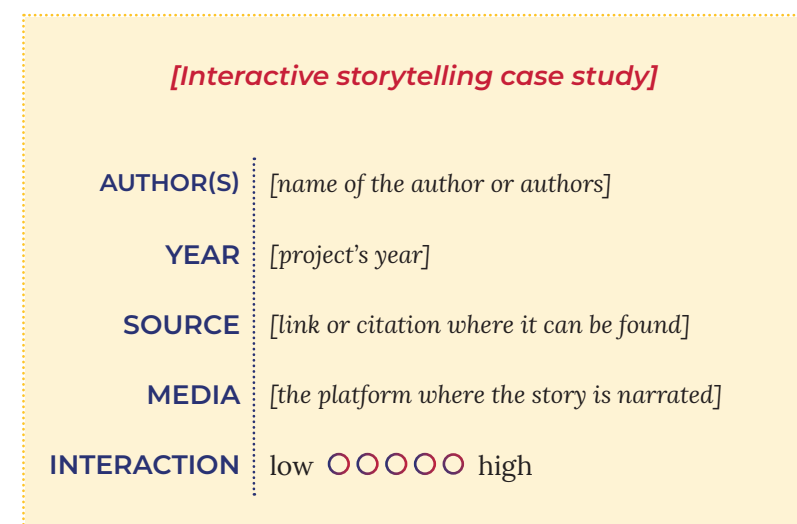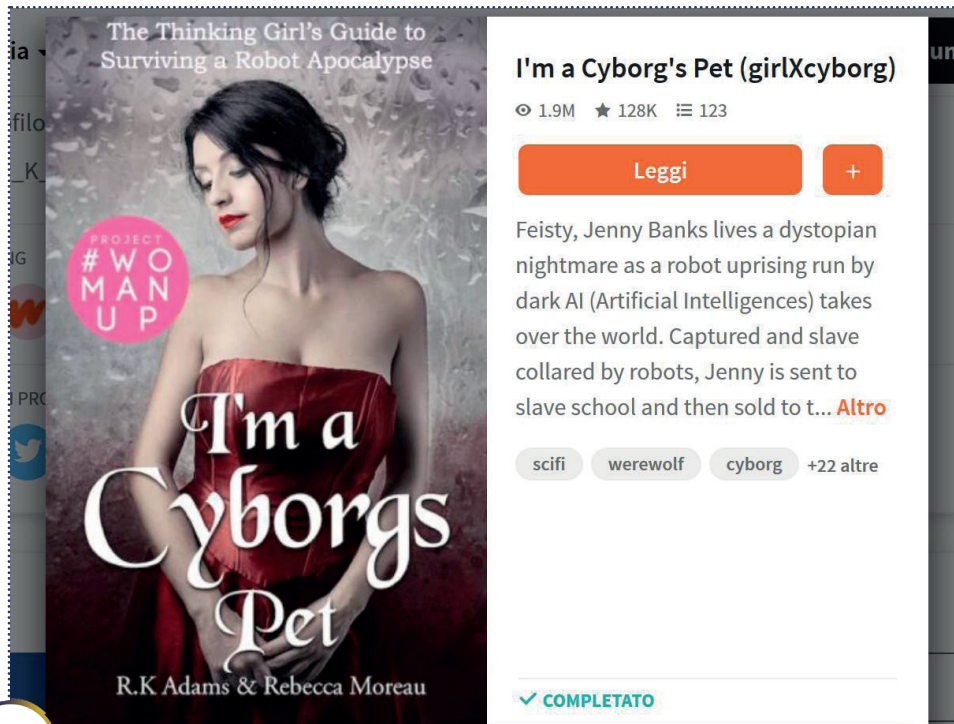|	
AUTHOR(S)	*[name of the author or authors]*
YEAR	*[project's year]*
SOURCE	*[link or citation where it can be found]*
MEDIA	*[the platform where the story is narrated]*
INTERACTION	low ⦾⦾⦾⦾⦾ high

fig. 69 Framework for the analysis of the case studies on interactive storytelling

▼ **fig. 70** Preview of the story *I'm a Cyborgs Pet* on *Wattpad*

▼ **fig. 71** Sample scenario from the participatory project *PDFi*

I'm a Cyborgs pet

AUTHORS	N.S.C Dalton, Rebecca Moreau, RK Adams
YEAR	2016
SOURCE	https://www.wattpad.com/story/47397263-i%27m-a-cyborg%27s-pet-girlxcyborg
CATEGORY	4. Emotional narratives
OUTPUT	Novel
FIELD	HCI, science fiction
FOCUS	Storytelling
AUDIENCE	passive ●●●○○ active
FICTION	world ●●●●● story
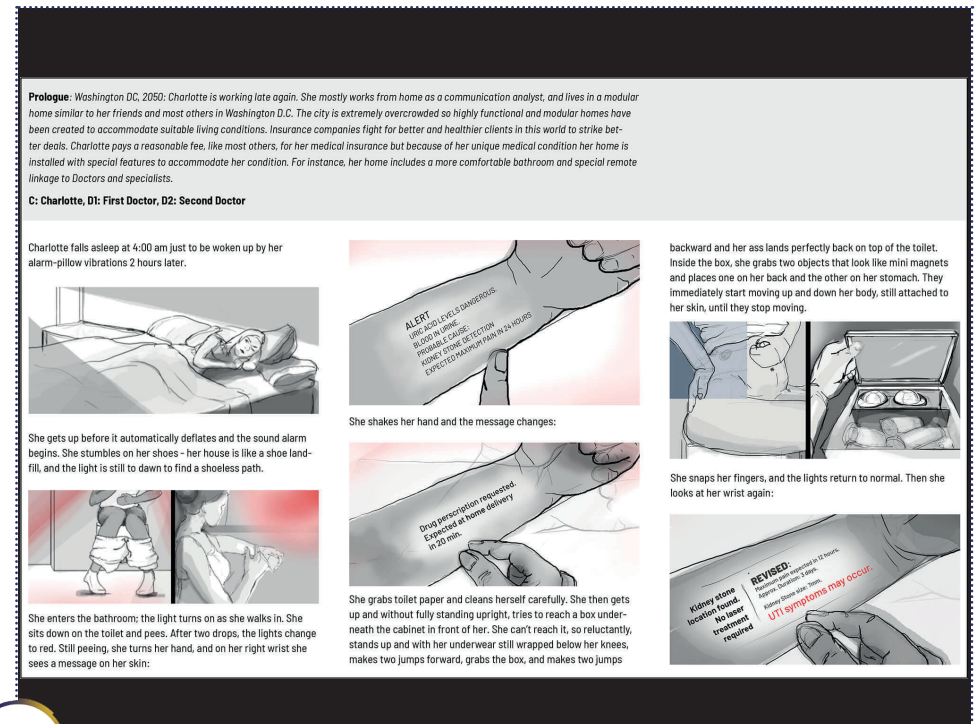
PDFi

AUTHORS	Larissa Vivian Nägele, Danielle Wilde, Merja Ryöppy
YEAR	2018
SOURCE	Nägele et al., 2017
CATEGORY	3. Participatory fictions
OUTPUT	Discussion and prototypes
FIELD	HCI applied to special needs users
FOCUS	Design process (workshop)
AUDIENCE	passive ●●●●● active
FICTION	world ●●○○○ story

▼ **fig. 72** Extract from the beginning of the fictional paper

3

CHI and the Future Robot Enslavement of Humankind: a retrospective

AUTHORS	Ben Kirman, Shaun Lawson, Conor Linehan, Dan O'Hara
YEAR	2017
SOURCE	Kirman et al. (2017)
CATEGORY	1. Fictional papers
OUTPUT	Academic paper
FIELD	HCI
FOCUS	Worldbuilding
AUDIENCE	passive ●○○○○ active
FICTION	world ●○○○○ story

▼ **fig. 73** Summary board of the fictional paper *Game of Drones*

4

Game of Drones

AUTHORS	Paul Coulton, Joseph Lindley
YEAR	2015
SOURCE	Coulton and Lindley, 2015
CATEGORY	1. Fictional papers
OUTPUT	Academic paper
FIELD	HCI
FOCUS	Worldbulding
AUDIENCE	passive ●○○○○ active
FICTION	world ●○○○○ story

▼ **fig. 74** Photo from the exhibition *The living room of the future*

▼ **fig. 75a, 75b** Images from the project *:Blackbox:*
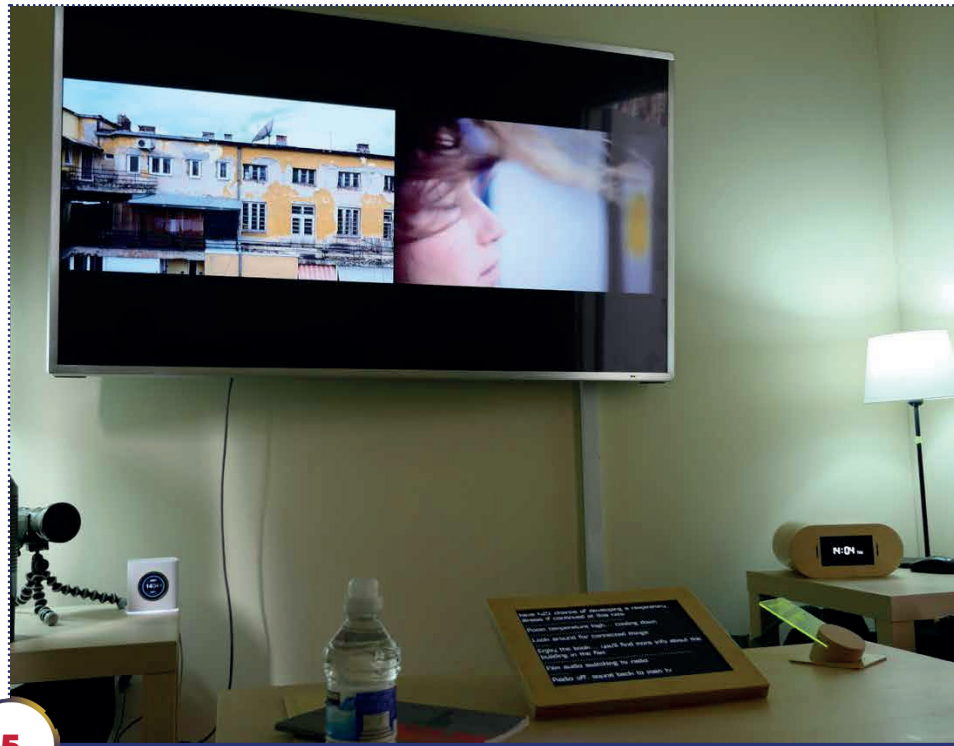
5

The Living Room of the Future

AUTHORS	Paul Coulton, Joseph Lindley, et al.
YEAR	2019
SOURCE	Maxwell et al., 2019
CATEGORY	2. Fictional prototypes
OUTPUT	Exhibition
FIELD	HCI
FOCUS	Worldbulding, prototype
AUDIENCE	passive ●●○○○○ active
FICTION	world ●○○○○○ story

6

:Blackbox:

AUTHORS	Alfonso Tiberio, Lorenzo Imbesi
YEAR	2017
SOURCE	Tiberio and Imbesi, 2017
CATEGORY	2. Fictional prototypes
OUTPUT	Academic project
FIELD	HCI
FOCUS	Fictional object
AUDIENCE	passive ●○○○○○ active
FICTION	world ●○○○○○ story

▼ **fig. 76** Cover of *An IKEA Catalog from the Near Future*

▼ **fig. 77** Photo from the workshop *Telling the bees*

An IKEA Catalog From The Near Future

AUTHOR	Near Future Laboratory
YEAR	2016
SOURCE	*http://ikea.nearfuturelaboratory.com/*
CATEGORY	2. Fictional prototypes
OUTPUT	Digital prototype
FIELD	HCI
FOCUS	Prototype and discussion
AUDIENCE	passive ●●○○○ active
FICTION	world ●○○○○ story
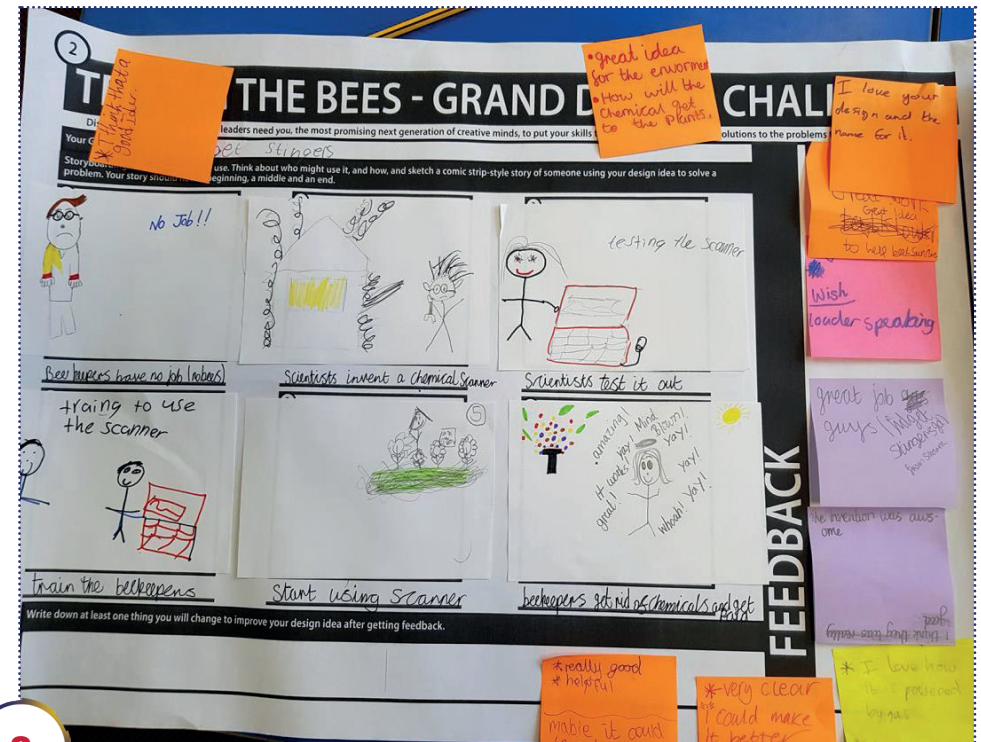
Telling the bees

AUTHORS	Deborah Maxwell, Toby Pillatt, Liz Edwards & Rachel Newman
YEAR	2019
SOURCE	Maxwell et al., 2019
CATEGORY	3. Participatory fictions
OUTPUT	Discussion and prototypes
FIELD	HCI, environment
FOCUS	Design process (workshop)
AUDIENCE	passive ●●●●● active
FICTION	world ●●●○○ story

▼ **fig. 78** Prototype from the participatory design workshop *ProtoPolicy*

▼ **fig. 79** Frames from the collaborative project *Sankofa city*

9

ProtoPolicy

AUTHORS	Emmanuel Tsekleves, Andy Darby, Anna Whicher, Piotr Swiatek
YEAR	2017
SOURCE	Tsekleves et al., 2017
CATEGORY	3. Participatory fictions
OUTPUT	Discussion and prototypes
FIELD	HCI applied to seniors
FOCUS	Design process (workshop)
AUDIENCE	passive ●●●●● active
FICTION	world ●●○○○ story

10

Sankofa City

AUTHORS	Karl Baumann, Ben Caldwell, Francois Bar, Benjamin Stokes
YEAR	2018
SOURCE	*https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MciXr-mf7JMg*
CATEGORY	3. Participatory fictions
OUTPUT	Video prototypes
FIELD	HCI and urban technologies
FOCUS	Design process (workshop)
AUDIENCE	passive ●●●●● active
FICTION	world ●●●●○ story

▼ fig. 80 Frame from the film *Uninvited Guests*

▼ fig. 81a, 81b *Instagram* profile and post sample from *Fotografie della storia*

Uninvited Guests

AUTHORS	Anab Jain, Jon Ardern, Jonathan Flint, Alexandra Fruhstorfer
YEAR	2015
SOURCE	*https://superflux.in/index.php/work/uninvited-guests/#*
CATEGORY	4. Emotional narratives
OUTPUT	Short film
FIELD	HCI applied to seniors
FOCUS	Storytelling, prototype
AUDIENCE	passive ●○○○○ active
FICTION	world ●●●●● story
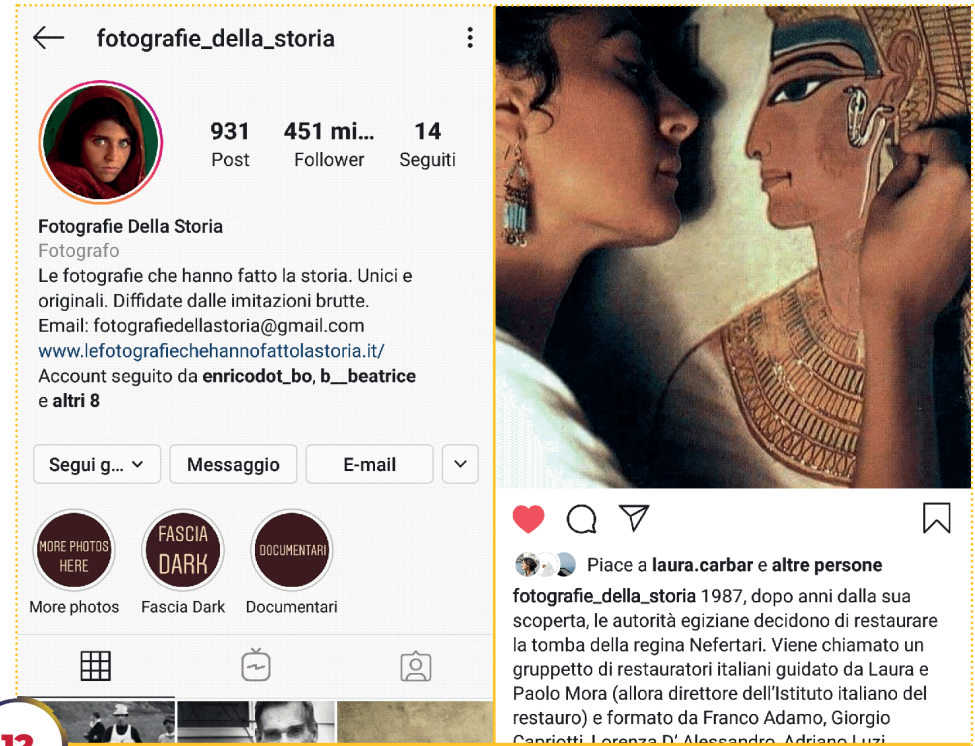
Fotografie della storia

AUTHOR	-
YEAR	2017 - ongoing
SOURCE	*https://www.instagram.com/fotografie_della_storia/*
MEDIA	*Instagram*
INTERACTION	low ●●○○○ high

▼ fig. 82a, 82b *Instagram profile and post sample from itNarrative*

▼ fig. 83 *Screen from the original series* The Midnight Hour *by ParanormalZone*
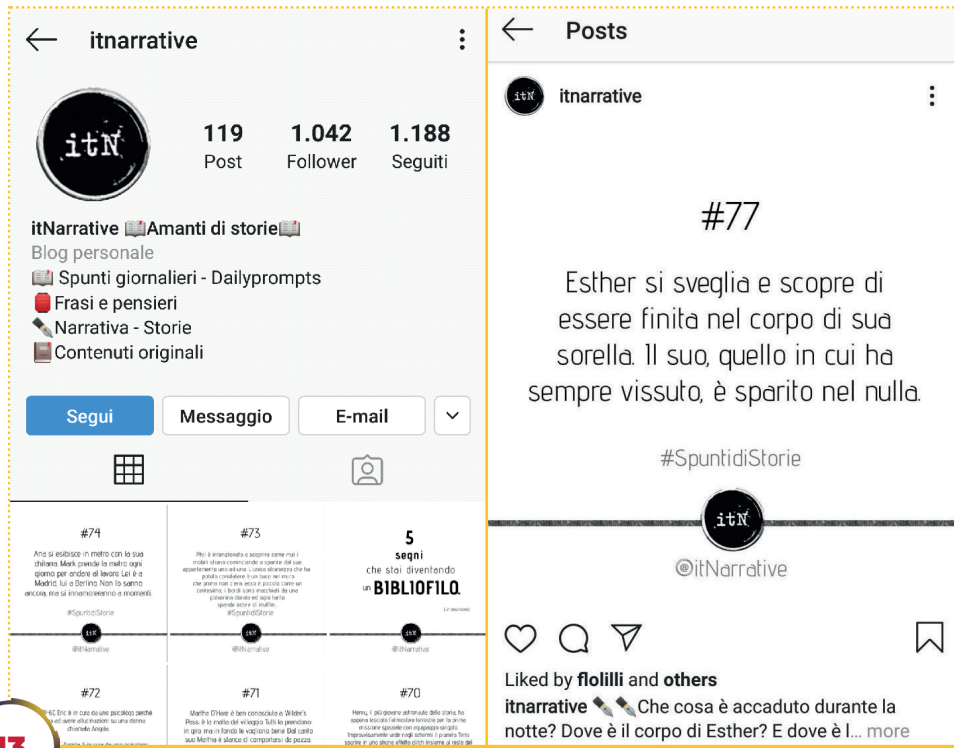
itNarrative

AUTHOR	–
YEAR	2019 – ongoing
SOURCE	*https://www.instagram.com/itnarrative/*
MEDIA	*Instagram*
INTERACTION	low ●●○○○ high

Paranormal Zone

AUTHOR	–
YEAR	2016 – ongoing
SOURCE	*https://www.youtube.com/user/Paranor-malZoneIT/*
MEDIA	*YouTube*
INTERACTION	low ●●○○○ high

▼ **fig. 84** Frame from the project *Luxastra* by *Inntale*

▼ **fig. 85** Starting point of the online game *Depression Quest*

15

Luxastra

AUTHOR	Inntale
YEAR	2019 – ongoing
SOURCE	*https://www.youtube.com/inntale/*
MEDIA	*YouTube*
INTERACTION	low ●●○○○ high
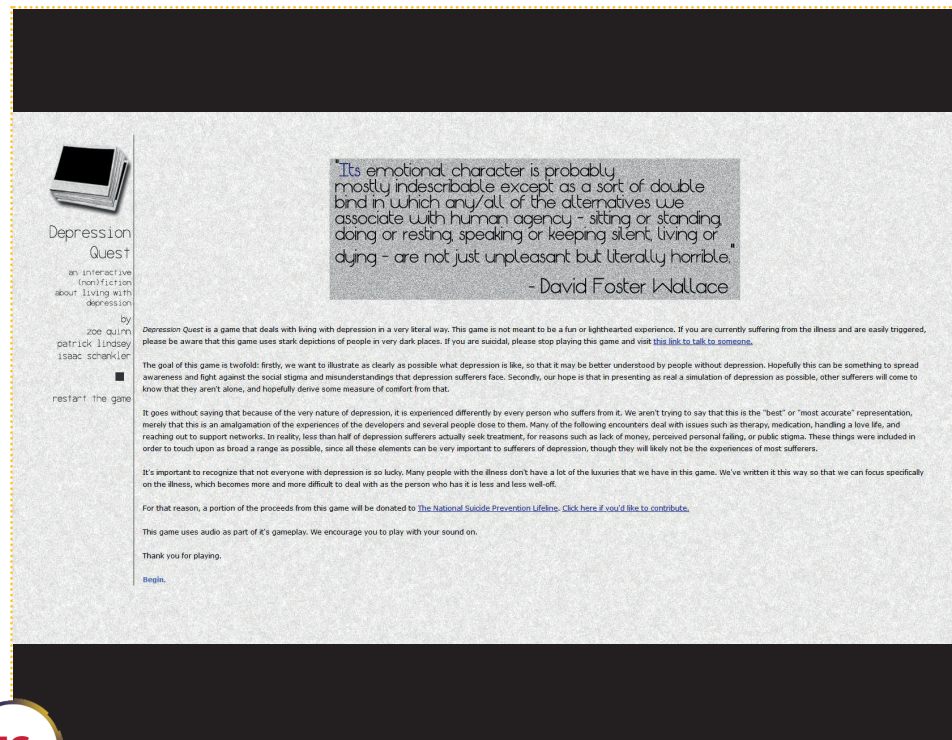
16

Depression Quest

AUTHOR	Zoë Quinn
YEAR	2013
SOURCE	*http://www.depressionquest.com/*
MEDIA	Website
INTERACTION	low ●●●●● high

▼ **fig. 86** Screen from the website of the project *Poor Millennials*

▼ **fig. 87** Starting point of the project *The Boat*
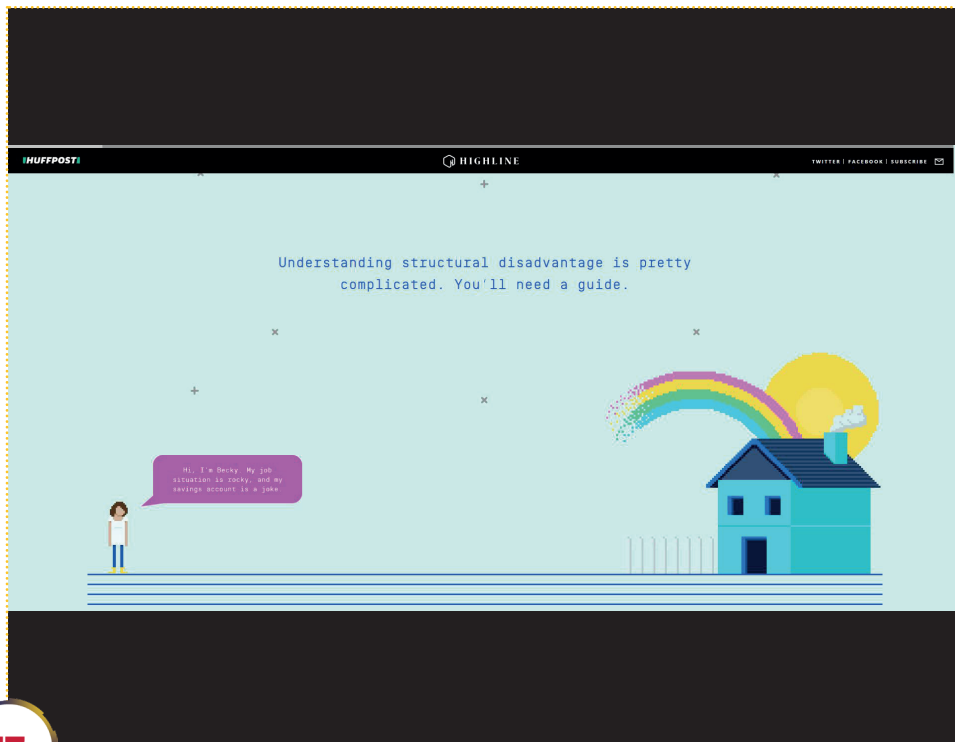
17

Poor Millennials

AUTHORS	Highline - Michael Hobbes, Jason Wong, et al.
YEAR	2017
SOURCE	*https://highline.huffingtonpost.com/articles/en/poor-millennials/*
MEDIA	Website
INTERACTION	low ●○○○○ high
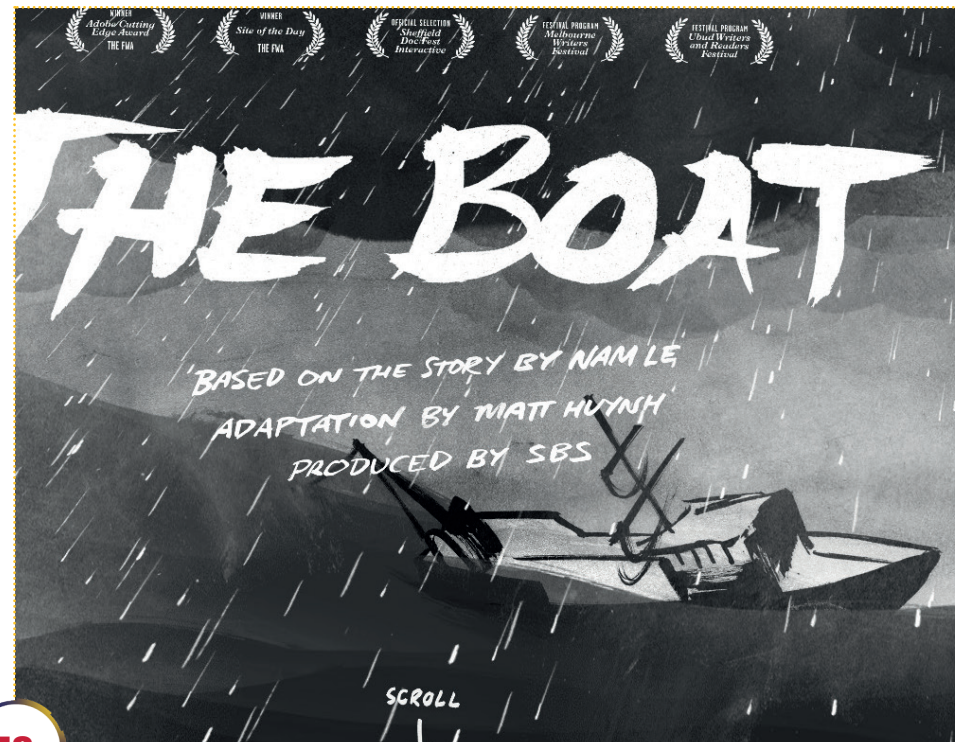
18

The Boat

AUTHORS	Nam Le, Matt Huynh, Matt Smith, Sam Petty
YEAR	2015
SOURCE	*http://www.sbs.com.au/theboat/*
MEDIA	Website
INTERACTION	low ●○○○○ high

▼ **fig. 88** Starting point of the project *ReBuilding Haiti*

▼ **fig. 89** Sample from the website *After 6/3*

19

Re-building Haiti

AUTHORS	The Pixel Hunt - Florent Maurin, Jean Abbiateci, Pierre Morel, Perceval Barrier, Dotify - Gilles Boisson & Jonathan Fallon, Bérénice Froger
YEAR	2014
SOURCE	*http://apps.rue89.com/haiti/en/*
MEDIA	Website
INTERACTION	low ●●●○○ high

20

After 6/4

AUTHORS	SBS Online - Jiao Chen, Ester Harding, Simon Koloadin, Rodrigo Vidal Dawson & Jiao Chen, Holz Media, Kingdom of Ludd
YEAR	2014
SOURCE	*http://after64.sbs.com.au/*
MEDIA	Website
INTERACTION	low ●●●●○ high

▼ fig. 90a, 90b Screens from the mobile game *Sara Is Missing*

▼ fig. 91a, 91b Cover and screen sample from the game *Bury me, my love*
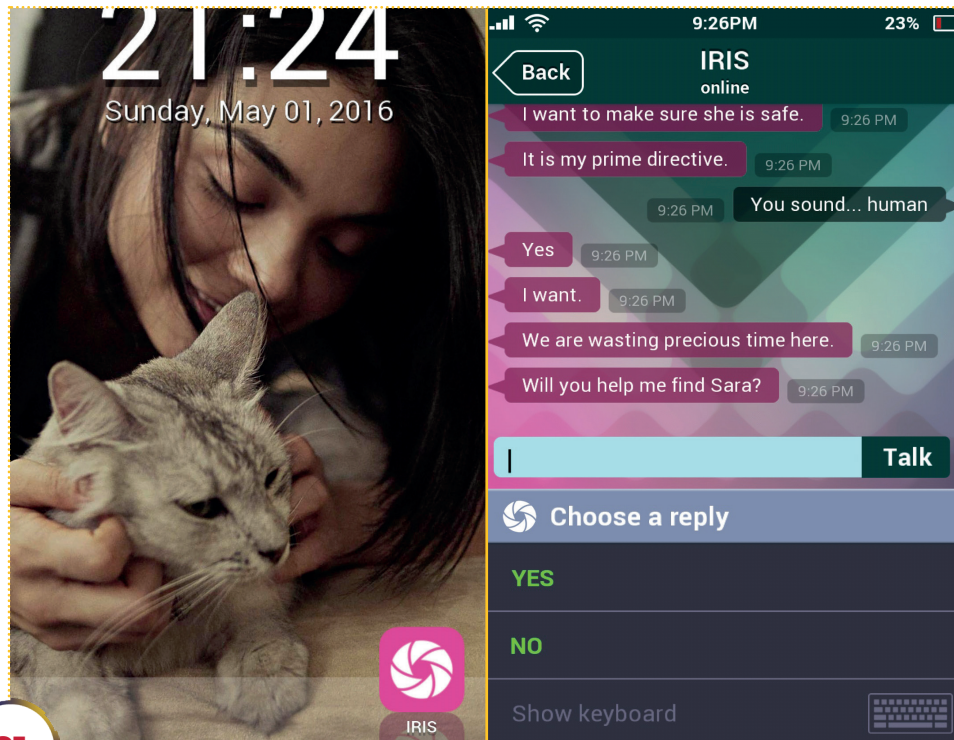
21

SIM- Sara Is Missing

AUTHOR	Kaigan Games
YEAR	2017
SOURCE	*https://saraismissing.itch.io/sim*
MEDIA	Mobile app
INTERACTION	low ●●●●● high
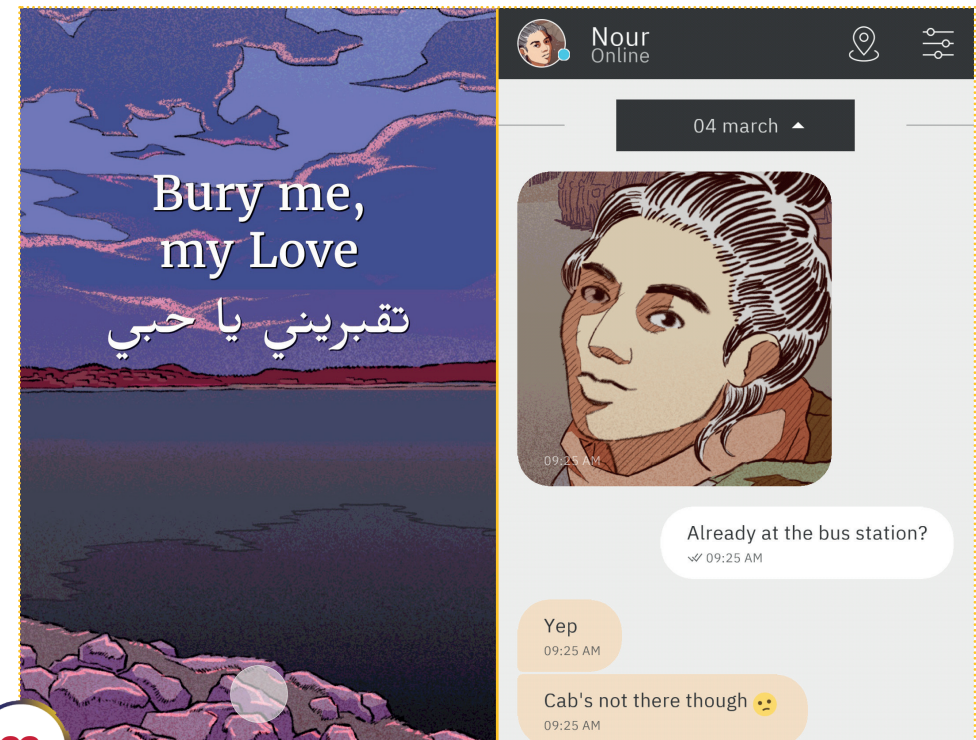
22

Bury me, my love

AUTHORS	The Pixel Hunt, ARTE France, FIGS
YEAR	2017
SOURCE	*http://burymemylove.arte.tv/*
MEDIA	Mobile app
INTERACTION	low ●●●●● high

APPENDIX B
The survey

The survey has been addressed exclusively to an Italian target: therefore, both the questions and the results are exclusively in Italian. Here they are presented in original language. For a comment in English on the relevant points emerged from the survey, see Chapter 3.2.1.

This section contains:

1. The survey's questions, as they were submitted to the participants;

2. A collection of the data obtained through the survey. In case of multiple answers, only the most relevant results have been reported.

Game of Stories

Ciao! Sono una studentessa di Design al Politecnico di Milano e per la mia tesi magistrale sto lavorando su un progetto legato alla narrativa per ragazzi. Se hai tra i 14 e 19 anni e ti va di parlarmi delle storie che ti piacciono e del tuo approccio alla narrativa (online e offline), aiuteresti molto il mio lavoro!
Il questionario ti richiederà solo qualche minuto di tempo.

*Campo obbligatorio

Informativa sulla privacy

Tutte le risposte che darai saranno confidenziali e completamente anonime, non essendo rilevante l'identità personale. I dati raccolti saranno trattati in forma aggregata e saranno utilizzati esclusivamente per fini di ricerca scientifica secondo le regole deontologiche e secondo le finalità riportate nell'informativa per i trattamenti di dati personali (http://bit.ly/gameofstory) - puoi uscire dal questionario in qualunque momento e nessuno dei tuoi dati verrà utilizzato.

Grazie in anticipo per l'aiuto! :)

Dopo aver letto l'informativa qui sopra, dichiaro che: *

○ Accetto di partecipare (prosegui con le domande)

○ Non accetto di partecipare (esci dal questionario)

In che anno sei nato/a?

○ 2000

○ 2001

○ 2002

○ 2003

○ 2004

○ 2005

○ Altro: _____

Genere

○ Maschio

○ Femmina

○ Preferisco non specificare

Avanti   Pagina 1 di 3

Narrativa e media

Quanto fai uso di ognuno di questi canali?

	Molto	Abbastanza	Poco	Per niente
Libri	○	○	○	○
Film	○	○	○	○
Serie TV	○	○	○	○
Fumetti	○	○	○	○
Videogiochi	○	○	○	○
Podcast	○	○	○	○

Quale di queste opzioni preferisci?

○ Rilassarmi e seguire una storia già scritta

○ Interagire con la storia e poterla influenzare

○ Mi è indifferente

Quanto sono importanti per te queste caratteristiche di una storia?

	Molto	Abbastanza	Poco	Non è importante
Coinvolgimento immediato	○	○	○	○
Brevità	○	○	○	○
Contenuti divertenti	○	○	○	○
Contenuti stimolanti	○	○	○	○
Possibilità di interazione	○	○	○	○

Ti capita di seguire storie sui canali social (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Telegram...)?

○ Spesso

○ Raramente

○ Mai

Se spesso o raramente, cosa hai seguito?

La tua risposta

Secondo te, è possibile raccontare storie sui social media?

○ Sì

○ No

○ Non saprei

Se sì, che genere di storie ti piacerebbe seguire?

La tua risposta

Secondo te, quali sono i migliori canali su cui seguire una storia?

☐ Facebook

☐ Instagram

☐ YouTube

☐ Snapchat

☐ Telegram

☐ Wattpad

☐ EFP Fanfiction

☐ Altro:

Indietro   Avanti   Pagina 2 di 3

Consigliami una storia

Per ogni categoria, qual è la prima storia che ti viene in mente? (Lascia in bianco se non ne conosci nessuna)

Libro

La tua risposta

Film

La tua risposta

Serie TV

La tua risposta

Fumetto / Manga / Graphic novel

La tua risposta

Videogioco

La tua risposta

Podcast

La tua risposta

Quali sono i tuoi generi preferiti?

- ☐ Avventura /azione
- ☐ Commedia
- ☐ Fantascienza
- ☐ Fantasy
- ☐ Giallo
- ☐ Horror
- ☐ Humor
- ☐ Rosa
- ☐ Realistico

☐ Storico

☐ Altro:

Quella storia da cui non ti staccheresti mai...

La tua risposta

Quel personaggio che ti affascina molto... (...e da che storia è tratto)

La tua risposta

Indietro Invia   Pagina 3 di 3

1 - In che anno sei nato/a?

242 risposte

1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	**2002**	2003	2004	2005	2006
2	1	3	14	26	56	37	50	50	1

2 - Genere

242 risposte

Femmina
172 voti

71,1%

2,5% Preferisco non specificare
6 voti

26,4% Maschio
64 voti
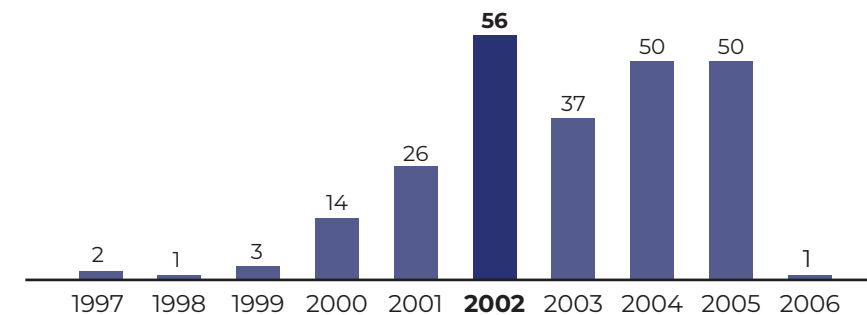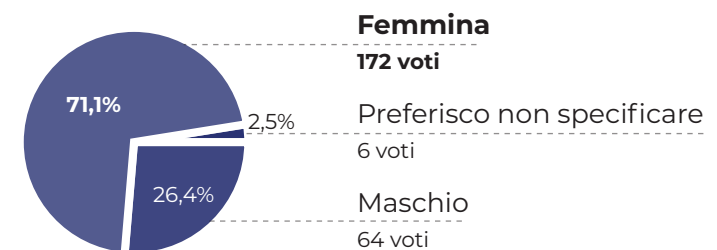
Narrativa e media

3 - Quanto fai uso di ognuno di questi canali?

	Molto	Abbastanza	Poco	Per niente
SERIE TV	52% 127	31% 74	13% 31	4% 10
FILM	41% 99	48% 116	11% 27	
LIBRI	23% 56	41% 99	30% 72	6% 15
VIDEOGIOCHI	15% 37	18% 43	43% 103	24% 57
FUMETTI	8% 20	11% 17	40% 96	41% 98
PODCAST	4% 10	17% 41	36% 86	43% 102

4 - Quale di queste opzioni preferisci?

241 risposte

Interagire con la storia e poterla influenzare
79 voti

E' indifferente
61 voti

Rilasssarmi e seguire una storia già scritta
101 voti

32,8% 25,3% 41,9%

5 - Quanto sono importanti per te queste caratteristiche di una storia?

242 risposte

	Molto	Abbastanza	Poco	Non importante
Contenuti stimolanti	65%	28%	5%	2
Coinvolgimento immediato	55%	35%	8%	2
Possibilità di interazione	20%	33%	30%	17%
Contenuti divertenti	19%	47%	26%	8%
Brevità	3 / 18%	42%	37%	

6 - Ti capita di seguire storie sui canali social (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Telegram...)?

242 risposte

Mai
84 voti

Raramente
60 voti

Spesso
98 voti

34,7% 24,8% 40,5%

7 - Se spesso o raramente, cosa hai seguito?

94 risposte

In fase di analisi dei risultati, le risposte a questa domanda aperta sono state organizzate in tre categorie (canali, generi e titoli), a seconda di come i parte-cipanti hanno interpretato la domanda. Il numero davanti alla voce o al grup-po di voci indica le volte in cui una determinata risposta è stata menzionata.

Canali

11 – YouTube
    Instagram
10 – *Wattpad*
3 - *Facebook*
2 - *Fanpage*
1 - Podcast (*Youtube*)
    Serie TV
    Pagine *Facebook* di brevi racconti

Generi

6 – Storie d'amore
4 - Gameplay
3 - Calcio/sport
2 - Disegni e fotografia
    Gossip
    Videogiochi
    Fumetti (Instagram)
    Fan Fiction
    Attualità
1 - Fantasy
    Racconti autobiografici (Facebook)
    Storie horror
    Libri comici
    Politica
    Influencer
    Alcolisti anonimi
    Storie sull'antichità greco-romana

Titoli

3 - Paranormal Zone (*YouTube*)
1 - Inntale (*YouTube*)
    @fotografiedellastoria (*Instagram*)
    @it.narrative (*Instagram*)
    Ludovica Pagani (*Instagram*)
    Greta Thumberg (*Instagram*)
    Malibu surf (*YouTube*)
    Bts burn the stage (*YouTube*)
    TLH, MLP (*YouTube*)
    Progetto Liminis (*YouTube*)
    La casa di carta (*Netflix*)
    Twilight
    Imasa

Queste risposte sono state utilizzate per la ricerca sullo social media storytelling.
cfr. Chapter 3.1.2

8 - Secondo te, è possibile raccontare storie sui social media?

242 risposte

69,8%

26%

4,1%

Sì
169 voti

Non saprei
63 voti

No
10 voti
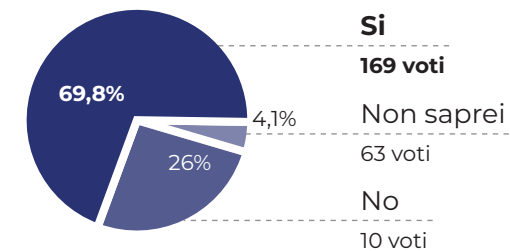
9 - Se sì, che genere di storie ti piacerebbe seguire?

115 risposte

In fase di analisi dei risultati, le risposte a questa domanda aperta sono state organizzate in due categorie (genere e contenuto), a seconda di come i partecipanti hanno interpretato la domanda.

Genere

9 - Romantico
Azione/Avventura

8 - Fantasy
Horror

6 - Qualsiasi genere
Giallo

5 - Teen fiction / formazione
Thriller

4 - Sci-Fi
Romanzi

Ironico/divertente
Gossip
Attualità

2 - Drammatico
Storico

1 - Paranormale
Romanzi erotici
Divulgazione artistico/storica
Fanfiction
Reality

Contenuto

13 – "Storie personali/di vita reale"

3 – "Non importa il genere, importa che sia interessante/originale"

2 – "Storie di attualità (inquinamento, riscaldamento globale...)"

1 – "Biografie di persone importanti"
"Possibilmente storie che stimolano il lettore ad andare avanti. Quindi amore, avventura e azione"
"Che mi ispirino e stimolino una crescita o che mi insegnino qualcosa"
"Romanzi o gialli, cose che ti stimolano psicologicamente"
"Fatti reali o storie che mi prendono particolarmente in cui posso ritrovarmi"
"Storie personali della propria vita, cosicché possano aiutare altre persone in situazioni simili o aiutare a comprendere gli altri"
"Storie che potrebbero informarmi sul futuro
"Storie formative"
"Brevi soprattutto legate alla musica"
"Su argomenti che mi interessano e piacciono"

"Le storie dei miei idoli"
"La mia vita"
"Storie coinvolgenti"
"Storie con un buon finale"
"Storie stimolanti e interessanti"
"Storie sul femminismo"
"Fantasy; sarebbe interessante un genere in cui l'interazione è chiave (e.g. video non elencati su YouTube, collegati tramite suggerimenti alla fine di ciascun video dando possibilità di scelta)
Storie di ragazzi della mia età e di come affrontano la quotidianità"

10 - Secondo te, quali sono i migliori canali su cui seguire una storia?

236 risposte

Canale	Voti	%
YOUTUBE	154 voti	65,3%
INSTAGRAM	138 voti	58,5%
WATTPAD	133 voti	56,4%
EFP FANFICTION	38	16,1%
FACEBOOK	26	11%
TELEGRAM	19	8,1%
SNAPCHAT	6	2,5%

ALTRO
AO3
Google
Modalità classiche (libri digitali o fisici)
Libri
Molti altri posti
Netflix
Podcast Spotify
Reddit
Tik Tok
Twitter
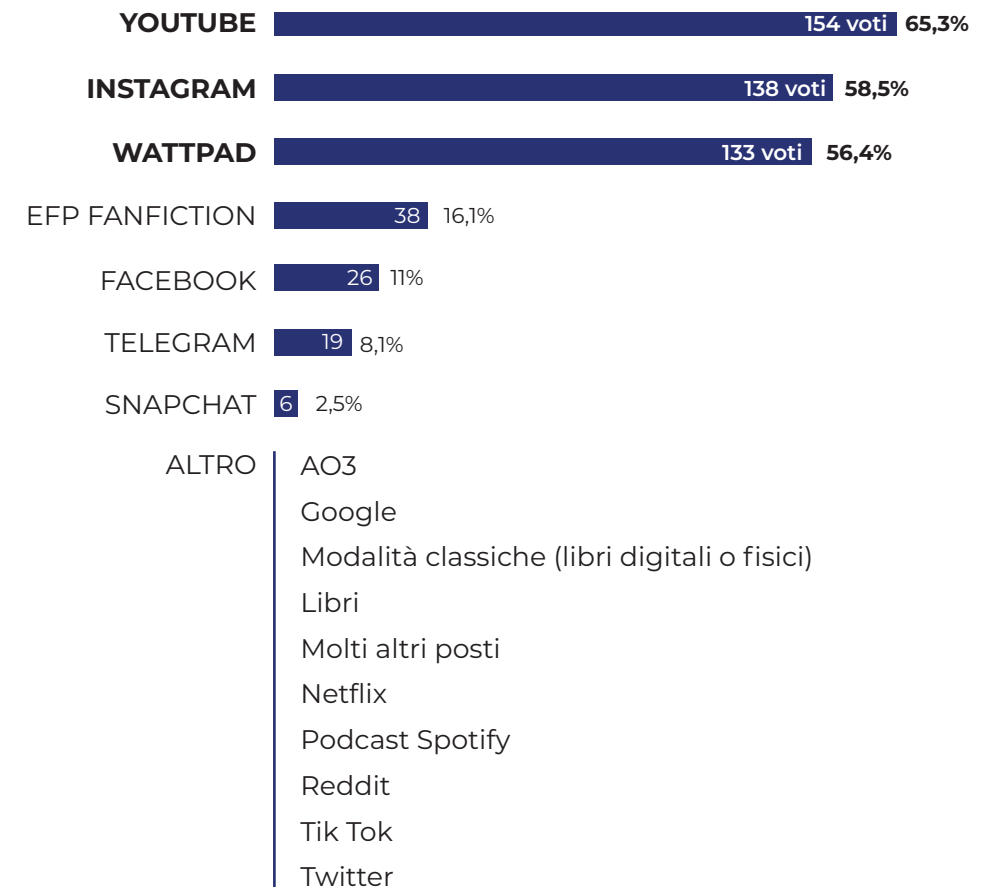
1 voto

Consigliami una storia

In questa sezione è stato chiesto ai partecipanti di inserire un titolo a loro scelta per ognuna delle categorie menzionate. Sono state segnate le risposte ottenute più di una volta con un numero davanti al titolo. Dato l'alto numero di risposte complessive, saranno di seguito riportati solo i titoli menzionati più volte.

11 - Libro

195 risposte

21 – Harry Potter
13 – After
6 – Percy Jackson
5 – Il signore degli anelli
4 – Wonder
    The 100
[...]

12 - Film

191 risposte

8 – Harry Potter
7 – Titanic
6 – A un metro da te
4 – Call me by your name
    Noi siamo infinito
    Il diavolo veste Prada
    Joker
    Jumanji
[...]

13 - Serie TV

213 risposte

17 – La casa di carta
    Stranger Things
12 – Gossip Girl
10 – Game of Thrones
    How I met your mother
7 – The vampire diaries
    Baby
[...]

14 - Fumetti - Manga - Graphic novels

117 risposte

23 – Topolino
13 – My hero academia
8 – Death Note
7 – Tokyo Ghoul
6 – Naruto
[...]

15 - Videogiochi

136 risposte

12 – Fifa
    Minecraft
11 – GTA
    Call of Duty
7 – Assassin's Creed
    Fortnite
[...]

16 - Podcast

54 risposte

5 – Venti
    Parliamo di cose (Jakidale)
2 – Scream
    Brodo di Becchi
[...]

18 - Quella storia di cui non ti stancheresti mai...

149 risposte

15 – Harry Potter
6 – After
5 – Percy Jackson
    Shadowhuntes
3 – Twilight
    Hunger Games
[...]

17 - Quali sono i tuoi generi preferiti?

240 risposte

Genere	Voti	Percentuale
AVVENTURA	**151 voti**	**62,9%**
FANTASY	113 voti	47,1%
GIALLI	108 voti	45%
COMMEDIA	85 voti	35,4%
HORROR	84 voti	35%
ROSA	80 voti	33,3%
REALISTICO	75 voti	31,3%
FANTASCIENZA	73 voti	30,4%
STORICO	57 voti	23,8%
HUMOR	48 voti	20%

ALTRO

Thriller

4 voti

Yaoi / Yuri
Dramma
Autobiografie

2 voti

Gossip
Liceale
Musical
Novels
Romanzi
Steampunk

1 voto
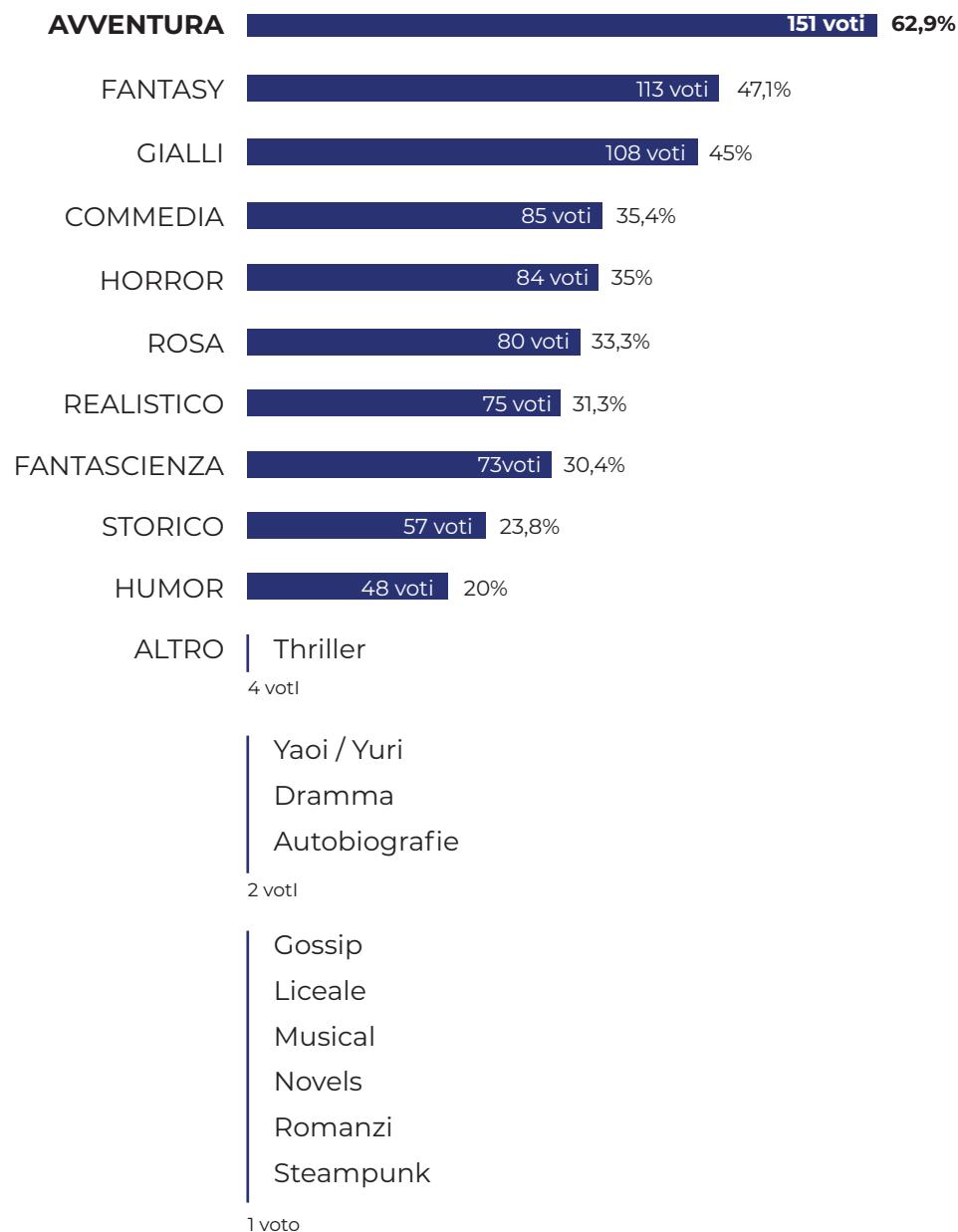
19 - Quel personaggio che ti affascina molto... (...e da che storia è tratto)

240 risposte

In fase di analisi dei risultati, le risposte a questa domanda aperta sono state ulteriormente catalogate in base al genere, all'età e al ruolo che il personaggio nominato riveste all'interno della storia. Di seguito si riportano i risultati, che mostrano una netta prevalenza di un personaggio maschile, teenager e protagonista della storia.

5 – **Hardin (*After*)**
    Hermione (*Harry Potter*)
4 – Harry Potter (*Harry Potter*)
    Sherlock Holmes (*Sherlock Holmes*)
3 – Beatrice Prior (*Divergent*)
    Derek Sheperd (*Grey's Anatomy*)
    Lelouch di Britannia (*Code Geass*)
[...]

GENERE

Maschio 66%
Altro
Femmina 33%

ETÀ

10-20 49%
50+
Altro
40-50 9%
30-40 9%
20-30 11%
19%

RUOLO

Protagonista 55%
Controparte romantica 10%
Altro 35%
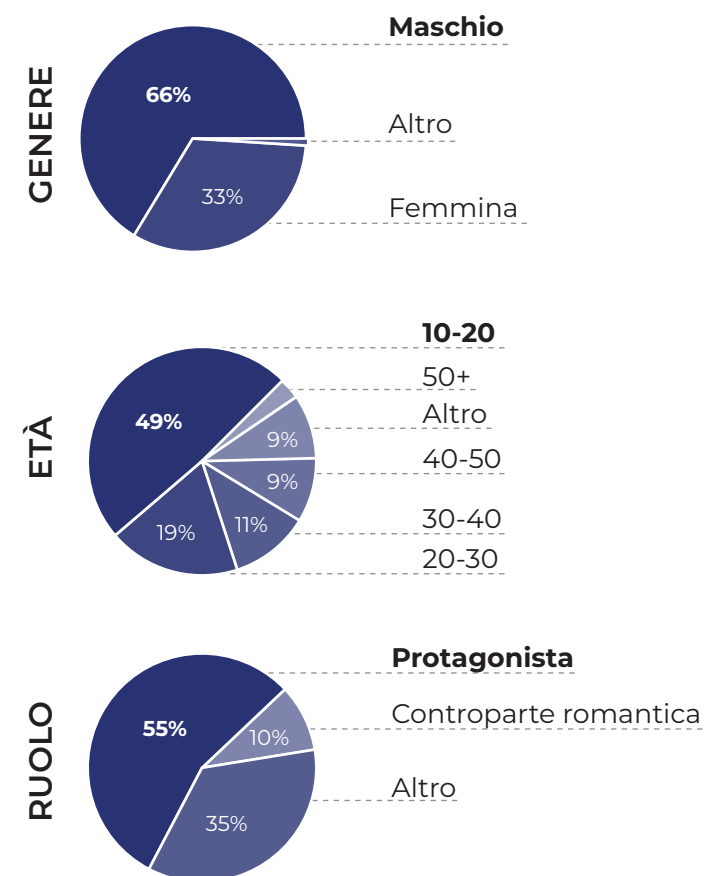
APPENDIX C
The story

The story has been addressed exclusively to an Italian target, and it has therefore been written exclusively in Italian. For a summary in English, see Chapter 3.3.6. Here, the whole story is reported in original language through the wireframes that were used to build the mockup. The narrative follows the scheme reported in fig. 92. Every scene is reported in its entirety, but due to the interactive nature of the chosen media (the chatbots) the choices have been summarized with the main problem and the two possible outputs.

```
                    Prologo ·························· scena
                       |
                      S.1  ······················· scelta
                    /      \
            Scena A1        Scena C1
               |               |
             S.1.1           S.1.2
            /      \        /      \
     Scena A2    Scena N1       Scena C2
        |           |              |
      S.2.1       S.2.2          S.2.3
      /   \       /   \          /   \
A-finale A-finale N-finale N-finale C-finale C-finale
positivo negativo positivo negativo positivo negativo
```
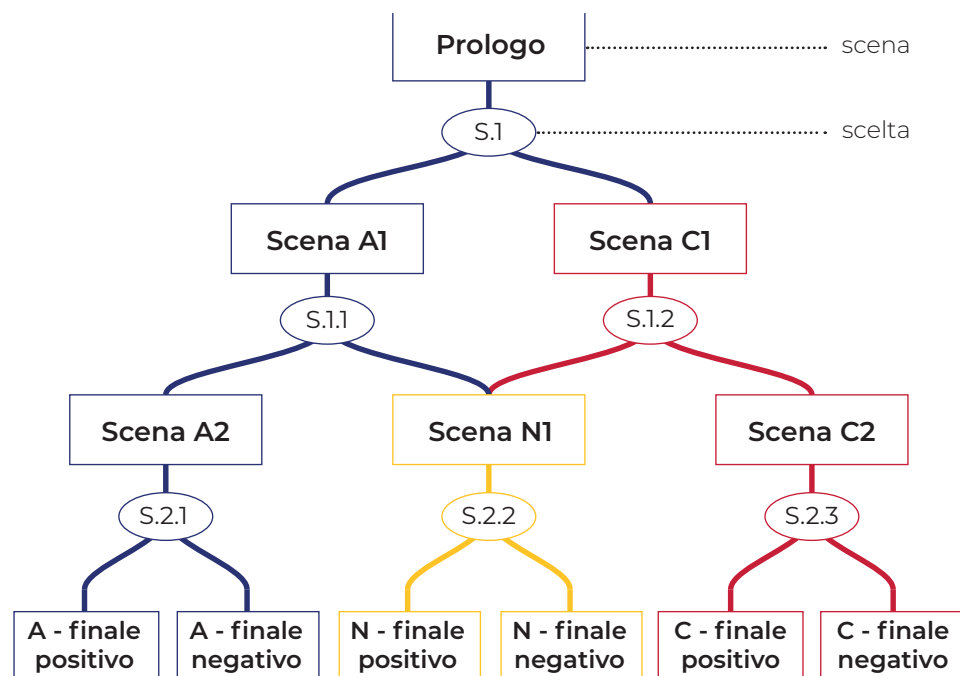
fig. 92 Story's branching narrative (italian version)

Prologo

04.02.2030
@blueamber
Cara me del futuro, non so se ti ricordi com'era avere 16 anni, ma ti assicuro che fa davvero schifo.

> **@cass_rivers**
> Vero?? 😌
>
> > **@blueamber**
> > Guarda lascia stare, sempre la solita situazione...
> > **@blueamber**
> > Poi ti spiego
>
> **@anonymous**
> Hai ragione fai davvero schifo
>
> > **@blueamber**
> > Ecco appunto
> > **@anonymous**
> > Fatti una vita sfigata
> > **@anonymous**
> > 🟢🟢🟢

Amber bloccò il telefono e riprese in mano la matita, ma non era semplice ritrovare la concentrazione. Di solito disegnare era per lei un modo di cercare di mettere in ordine i pensieri, ma da quando aveva cominciato a pubblicare i suoi lavori online era come se il mondo magico che si creava tra lei e il suo foglio fosse disturbato da un velo di critiche. Non ci aveva fatto caso inizialmente, ma sentiva che pian piano si stavano insinuando nella sua mente.

Le veniva tutto così naturale, prima. Ora non era più sicura di esserne in grado.

Amber trovava i suoi 16 anni estremamente opprimenti a volte.

Cass

Hey Amber

Tutto ok?

😔

Ancora quel troll?

...si...

La gente è stupida

Devi lasciarli perdere, sei bravissima 😘😘

Mah...

Comunque, sai chi mi ha scritto ieri sera??

?

Nick!

Nick? @nickasher22?
5°B, quello carino?

Si 😳

gif
Ma dai!
Cosa ti ha detto?

Non ho ben capito sai?

Mi ha fatto un commento strano sugli ultimi disegni che ho pubblicato

Tipo che se non stavo attenta sarei diventata più popolare di lui 😅

Dato il personaggio penso proprio che mi stesse prendendo in giro

Anche lui...

Comunque mi ha detto che stava organizzando un evento il prossimo weekend e mi ha chiesto se volevo andare con lui 😅

Gli ho detto che ci avrei pensato, ma penso gli dirò di no

Ci manca solo che vada a farmi prendere in giro anche lì...

Chissà poi perchè me lo ha chiesto 🤔

😱😱😍

Sta succedendo davveroooo

Cosa?

Nick ti ha invitata a una festa!!

Si ma...quindi?

Mi sembrava così improbabile che non volevo crederci 🥲

Non capisco 😅

Scusa, hai ragione

Qualche giorno fa ho scoperto quest'app strana

FutureMe

E' un giochino che ti fa vedere tipo cosa posterai nei prossimi anni

Te lo calcolano in base a quello che fai online di solito o qualcosa del genere

Tra l'altro che figo, io divento tipo un'influencer a quanto pare 😍😍🥰

C'è un sacco di gente che segue il mio canale e io metto tantissimi video

Sembro davvero contenta, e ci credo, la futura me ha una vita bellissima 😎

gif

Comunque dicevo ci sono anche dei post con te e Nick, che state insieme 😏

Mi è sembrato davvero assurdo al momento, però ora mi è tornato in mente

Che coincidenza che ti ha chiesto di uscire proprio oggi!

Io e Nick??? 🙀

Impossibile!

Poi gli dirò di no 😡

Non ne sarei così sicura 😉

Oh, fai anche tu il test!

Vediamo cosa ti esce

Io scommetto che ti metti con Nick E diventi un'illustratrice di successo!! 😎😎

Ahhhh sarebbe bellissimo

Anche se non so come potrebbe succedere, a quanto

---

pare i miei lavori alla gente fanno schifo... ormai mi scrivono anche in privato per dirmelo 😭😭

Quelli non li devi ascoltare!
Sei bravissima

Dai prova, che ti distrai un po' 🙂

📱 Download app 📱

Amber esitò un attimo giocando distrattamente con l'orecchino destro, come faceva sempre quando era nervosa. Ripensava alla strana conversazione della sera precedente.

Nick Asher era indubbiamente uno dei ragazzi più popolari di tutta la scuola, e anche online era una delle persone con più followers che conoscesse. Sembrava che tutti in giro sapessero chi era. Lo conosceva principalmente perchè gliene parlava Cass, ma al contrario dell'amica, ad Amber affascinava di più la sua innata capacità di riuscire in tutto quello che faceva. Qualcosa che a lei mancava totalmente, a quanto pare.

Scrollò le spalle e riguardò il suo disegno. No, oggi la motivazione per rimettersi al lavoro non c'era più, tanto valeva distrarsi con qualcos'altro.

Riguardò la sua conversazione con Cass. Ma si, perchè no?

Download app

FutureMe

Nel 2019, tutti si stupivano ancora per meccanismi come FaceApp... si gente, un'app può farti vedere come sembrerai da vecchio! Incredibile, vero?

Oggi, per il decimo anniversario della #faceapp challenge, abbiamo deciso di proporti la #futureme challenge!

Amber, sei curioso di sapere che cosa condividerai con i tuoi amici... domani? O

---

tra un anno? O dove potresti essere arrivata tra dieci anni?

Abbiamo sviluppato per te un algoritmo che si basa su tutto ciò che hai condiviso online nella tua vita, per farci un'idea precisa di chi sei, e su numerosi altri fattori che potrebbero andare ad influenzare la tua vita futura!

Per proteggere i tuoi dati e la tua identità, le immagini generate dal sistema spariranno automaticamente alla chiusura dell'app e niente verrà rilasciato all'esterno. Potrai comunque riprovare il test quando vuoi 🙂.

**Vuoi scoprire chi sarai?
clicca qui!**

Calcolo in corso...

Amber guardò distrattamente la rotellina del caricamento che girava, senza troppe aspettative, finchè le immagini non cominciarono a prendere forma.

Una copia del suo profilo personale si stava sviluppando sotto i suoi occhi, come se qualcuno stesse pubblicando i suoi pensieri e i suoi momenti al suo posto.

Sopra quelli vecchi, comparvero dei disegni nuovi. Piacevolmente sorpresa, Amber vide la qualità dei suoi lavori migliorare di post in post.

Inizialmente.

Poi le linee iniziarono a farsi più scure e contorte. I segni tormentati. All'inizio era un dettaglio appena visibile dall'occhio di Amber stessa, poi si faceva più evidente. Il flusso di pubblicazione cominciò a diminuire, fino a fermarsi.

Lo schermo subì un glitch.

ERRORE

Non è possibile generare un futuro più inoltrato.

Controllare gli ultimi dati pubblicati per maggiori informazioni.

Amber fissò un attimo il messaggio, interdetta, per poi spostarsi sull'ultimo post generato dal sistema. Lo aprì.

Disegno di una figura umana rannicchiata in posizione fetale, piccola al centro, su fondo nero

04.02.2040
@blueamber
Non ne so più uscire.

@anonymous
Ammazzati.

Dopo quello, niente.

Scelta 1
Come reagirà Amber al suo futuro?

Consigli ad Amber di concentrarsi sul suo lavoro

Consigli ad Amber di parlarne con Cas
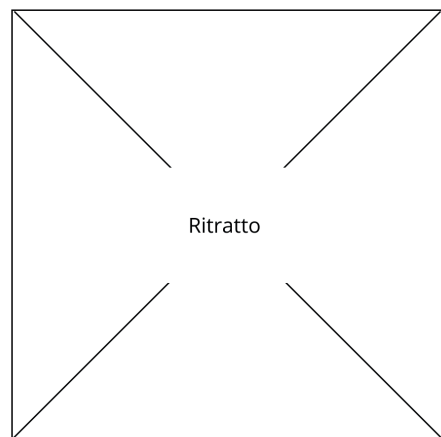
Scena A1

Scena C1

Scena A1

La matita scorreva leggera sul foglio. Tracciava i contorni delle labbra, il profilo morbido del naso, l'arco delle sopracciglia.

Amber si specchiava ogni tanto nello schermo del telefono per cogliere qualche particolare nella piega blu del ciuffo o nel luccichio degli occhiali.

Ritratto

Cass non l'avrebbe capita, pensava, calcando con troppa foga il nero delle pupille. Lo sapeva già: Cass le avrebbe detto di stare tranquilla, che era solo un gioco, non c'era da preoccuparsi. Proprio lei, sempre a guardare chi e come commentava i suoi video, così attenta a tenere i suoi fan, a volte non riusciva a capire quanto pesava ad Amber ogni volta che si esponeva e ne riceveva solo ridicolo.

Continuava a ripensare a tutti quelli che le avevano scritto sotto i suoi ultimi post

> **@hater1**
> A volte guardo questi post e mi vorrei sparare

> **@hater2**
> Io mi vergognerei a farmi vedere in giro con quel taglio da finta alternativa del cazzo

---

> **@hater3**
> Ma li vedi i disegni della gente che sa fare le cose? Loro sono bravi tu fai solo schifo

Quasi per distrarsi, Amber scattò un paio di foto al suo disegno e se le guardò un attimo. Avrebbe voltuo pubblicarlo, a lei piaceva, ma... se avessero ragione gli altri?

Di scatto, accartocciò il foglio e lo gettò via.

---

nickasher12 ti ha invitato ad un evento

[Partecipa]   [Non ci sono]

La vibrazione del telefono riscosse Amber dai suoi pensieri per riportarla alla realtà.

Nick

Ciao 🙂

Disturbo?

Stavi lavorando a qualcosa?

> No tranquillo!
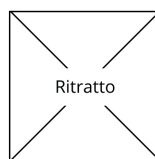
Ritratto

> Le solite bozze, non è neanche venuto molto bene 😄

gif

Che mi dici, ci hai ripensato per sabato sera? L'artista mi fa questo onore di venire con me? 🙂

Quel locale è davvero bello! Ci sono stato settimana scorsa, non so se hai visto i miei post

> Si ho visto...

> Ho anche sentito

> Dopo i tuoi post ne stanno

---

parlando tutti!

Fai tendenza 😂😂

gif

Troppo gentile 😉

> Comunque non lo so, penso mi sentirei un po' fuori posto in un'occasione del genere 😟

Ma no, figurati!

Se è perché non conosci i miei amici, invita anche Cassandra!

Però sono dei grandi, ti troverai bene 😎

Poi sei con me

Ci penso io a te 🙂

> *gif*

> Ti faccio sapere dai!

> Però non sono molto nel mood ultimamente 😔

Dai, ci tengo 😉

> Posso chiederti come mai ti interessa così tanto?

Non lo sai?

Ripensaci, per sabato! 🙂

Nick era davvero popolare.

Ed era davvero, davvero carino.

Se aveva scelto lei, allora dopotutto anche lei non era così male.

Però... Amber continuava a pensare a quel futuro maledetto, con i suoi post neri e il finale indefinito.

Se Nick era parte di quel futuro, come poteva essere positivo anche solo provare a conoscersi...?

> **@hater1**
> Sei una falsa fai schifo

> **@hater2**
> Ma quanto sei ridicola? Bho sconcertante

> **@hater3**
> Fatti una vita cessa di merda

> **@hater4**
> Non so se è peggio quando pubblichi questi disegni schifosi o la tua faccia

Scelta 1.1
Amber andrà alla festa?

Consigli ad Amber di rimanere a casa

Consigli ad Amber di andare alla festa

Scena A2　　　**Scena N1**

Scena A2

Ok, l'aveva fatto. Non era uscita con Nick. Non aveva pubblicato più niente. Non aveva reagito agli insulti che le continuavano a scrivere. Era stata attenta a fare tutto l'opposto di quello che era risultato da FutureMe.

Era ora di vedere cosa sarebbe effettivamente cambiato.

FutureME challenge!
Chi sarai?
Ritenta il test!
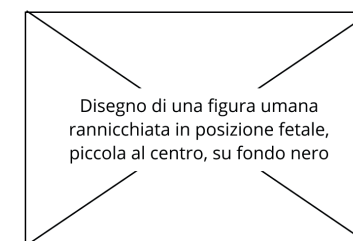
Disegno di una figura umana rannicchiata in posizione fetale, piccola al centro, su fondo nero

04.02.2040
@blueamber
Non ne so più uscire. E' tutto nero.

> **@anonymous**
> Ammazzati

I post ora mostravano una successione di eventi in cui Nick non appariva. Ma il risultato finale non solo non era cambiato di una virgola.

Com'era possibile? Cosa stava succedendo nella sua vita perchè dovesse tutto finire così?

Amber si chiuse in camera e si raggomitolò a letto. Forse se avesse ignorato tutto, sarebbe passato....

> 7 feb 🔽

📞 **2 chiamate perse - Cass**   7 feb
12.50

Cass

Amber

Rispondimi

Non capisco cosa succede

---
anonymous

Fai bene a non uscire di casa

Anche io mi vergognerei a farmi vedere in giro con quella faccia

Tanto fai schifo a tutti

"Ammazzati"

Meglio non sentire nessuno...

> 8 feb 🔽

📞 **5 chiamate perse - Cass**   8 feb
12.50

✉️ **3 nuovi messaggi - Nick**   8 feb
11.20

✉️ **8 nuovi messaggi - Cass**   8 feb
10.15

"Ammazzati"

"Ammazzati"

Come faceva una persona senza un volto o un nome ad entrare così tanto nella sua testa?

> 10 feb 🔽

Non hai nuove notifiche

> 12 feb 🔽

✉️ **1 nuovo mess. - anonymous**   12 feb
15.20

---
anonymous

Hey sfigata

> LASCIAMI IN PACE

Che belli i tuoi ultimi lavori

Bello schifo

Cosa fai, non rispondi?

Non è che se mi ignori sei meno sfigata

[Ritratto]
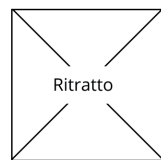
Ti sei pure messa di impegno a

---

fare sta merda?

Amber rimase interdetta.

C'era stato sicuramente un errore, non era possibile.

Lei non aveva mai pubblicato quel disegno. Anzi, l'aveva buttato subito, senza farlo vedere neanche a Cass.

A ripensarci, ad una persona l'aveva mandato...

---
anonymous

> ...Nick??

CONTINUA

---
anonymous

> Nick ma... sei tu?

> Non ignorarmi! Lo so che sei tu

> Sei l'unica persona a cui ho mandato quel disegno

> Vorrei solo sapere perchè!
> ---
> Rispondimi

anonymous è offline

Amber cominciava a sentir montare la rabbia. Dalla sua reazione era sicuramente lui, e non aveva neanche il coraggio di parlarle!

Nick

> Nick

Un contatto anonimo mi insulta mandandomi immagini che ho mandato solo a te

Hai per caso idea di come possa essere successo?

Ciao 🙂

Che strano! No, non ne ho idea

> Non sono dell'umore giusto

> O mi dai qualche spiegazione o faccio in modo che lo sappia tutta la scuola

> Vediamo se ai tuoi follower piace questa cosa...

Amber dai ma si scherza

Sono solo un paio di messaggi... cosa vuoi che sia

> ALLORA AMMETTI

gif

Che drama queen

Va bene che ti piace stare al centro dell'attenzione, ma non pensavo te la prendessi così tanto per uno scherzo

Alla fine ti ho solo fatto qualche osservazione

Se non sai accettare delle critiche non è colpa mia

> Accetto le critiche

> Ma avrei preferito riceverle in un altro modo

> Magari di persona

Io lo facevo per te, per dirti le cose in modo più delicato

Se vuoi che ti dica personalmente che mi fa schifo quello che fai non ho problemi

Mi fa solo ridere che tu pensi di essere chissà quanto brava solo per saper tenere in mano una matita

O forse fai bene a pubblicare solo dei disegnini schifosi, se mettessi tue foto sarebbe anche peggio 🤣🤣🤮

Ma allora... perchè mi hai chiesto
di venire con te a quella festa?

Non capisco...

Ti davo una possibilità di essere
un po' meno sfigata

Ma a quanto pare la signorina si
crede troppo superiore per
degnarmi della sua presenza

Potrei dirlo a tutti del tuo
account anonimo!!!

Fai pure, i miei amici già lo sanno

Ci siamo fatti delle belle risate 🤭

E tutta la gente online... crederà
a me o a te? 😉

Amber sapeva benissimo la risposta a quella
domanda. E non osava neanche pensare alla
shitstorm contro di lei se avesse osato
mettersi contro Nick pubblicamente. A
quanto pare tutti la pensavano come lui...

Non si era mai sentita così sola, contro tutti.
Forse anche Cass allora l'aveva sempre presa
in giro? A lei Nick era sempre stato
simpatico... probabilmente era anche lei dalla
sua parte. Tornava tutto. Aveva fatto bene a
non sentirla più...

Guardò il suo foglio, la sua matita, e di scatto
buttò tutto nel cestino. Qualsiasi gioia avesse
trovato un tempo in quegli oggetti ormai non
c'era più.

All'improvviso il futuro che aveva visto
dall'app non le sembrava più così estraneo.

Scelta 2.1
Come reagirà Amber a questa
scoperta?

Consigli ad Amber
di chiedere aiuto a
Cass

Consigli ad Amber
di non fidarsi di
nessuno

finale 1

finale 2

Amber - finale 1

FutureMe

Sono passati già 10 anni dalla FutureMe
challenge!

Ecco qualche post che aveva calcolato per
te il nostro algoritmo dieci anni fa...

Amber, speriamo che tu abbia passato un
bellissimo decennio! Condividi con noi
qualche foto su chi sei davvero diventato
in questi anni 😊

#futureme
#futuremenow

Amber si ricordava bene del futuro che le
aveva mostrato FutureMe. Era stato
l'avvertimento che le aveva permesso di
accorgersi in tempo del mare d'odio in cui si
trovava immersa senza rendersene conto, e
forse l'aveva salvata da qualcosa di peggiore.
Amber non sapeva neanche come li avrebbe
passati quegli ultimi dieci anni se non fosse
stato per il sostegno di Cass.

Ma anche dopo tutto quel tempo, ogni volta
che prendeva in mano la matita
inspiegabilmente la sua mano era guidata a
raffigurare sempre la stessa cosa: quella
figura avvolta dal nero, così piccola,
impotente e sola. Quella figura che in realtà
sapeva non essere lei, ma alla quale a volte
era impossibile sfuggire.

Ne aveva parecchi, di quei disegni, nei cassetti
della scrivania e nella memoria del telefono. E
pubblicati online.

Disegno di una figura umana
rannicchiata in posizione fetale,
piccola al centro, su fondo nero
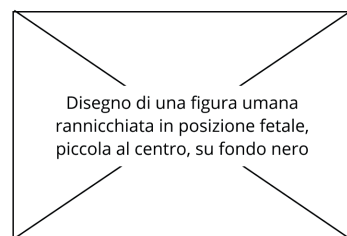
04.02.2040

@blueamber

A volte mi sembra di non saperne

A volte mi sembra di non saperne
più uscire

@cass_rivers
Sei più forte di quanto pensi, ce la
puoi fare! Ti chiamo, parliamone

Ma allora... forse non si era avverato
proprio tutto. E se fosse un'occasione per
ricominciare da capo?

Quando squillò il telefono, Amber fece un
profondo respiro e rispose.

FINE
Amber - futuro positivo

Amber - finale 2

FutureMe

Sono passati già 10 anni dalla FutureMe
challenge!

Ecco qualche post che aveva calcolato per
te il nostro algoritmo dieci anni fa...

Amber, speriamo che tu abbia passato un
bellissimo decennio! Condividi con noi
qualche foto su chi sei davvero diventato
in questi anni 😊

#futureme
#futuremenow

Amber non si ricordava da quanto tempo non
riusciva più a disegnare.

Sapeva vagamente che era stato dopo tutti i
problemi che erano venuti fuori nella sua
vecchia scuola, prima che si decidesse a
cambiare e ad allontanarsi da tutti, sperando
potesse servirle a distaccarsi da tutto
quell'odio. Invece l'odio era rimasto, solo che
non aveva nessuno con cui affrontarlo se non

---

sè stessa.

Ci aveva riprovato, a ritrovare nel foglio quella
calma e quella gioia che ci trovava da ragazza.
Ogni volta che prendeva in mano la matita,
inspiegabilmente la sua mano era guidata a
raffigurare sempre la stessa cosa: quella
figura avvolta dal nero, così piccola,
impotente e sola. Quella figura con cui negli
anni si era abituata a identificarsi: era
diventata, a tutti gli effetti, la persona che
aveva visto nella futura sè online e di cui
aveva avuto così tanta paura.

Ne aveva parecchi, di quei disegni, nei cassetti
della scrivania e nella memoria del telefono.
Erano l'unico disegno che aveva pubblicato da
anni nel suo vecchio account, ormai
abbandonato.
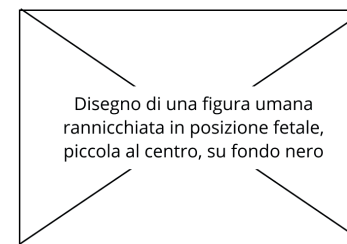
Disegno di una figura umana
rannicchiata in posizione fetale,
piccola al centro, su fondo nero

04.02.2040

@blueamber
Non ne so più uscire. E' tutto nero.

@anonymous
Ammazzati

Ecco... si era avverato tutto. E in fondo,
perchè no? Era l'unica soluzione che le
rimaneva per uscire da quel buio.

Amber spense il telefono.

FINE
Amber - futuro negativo

Scena C1

Sdraiata a letto, Cassandra scrollava attentamente i suoi feed, rigirandosi una ciocca di capelli rossicci tra le dita. Stava cercando ispirazione per un nuovo video che aveva in mente di fare da quando aveva provato FutureMe, e da quando Amber le aveva parlato del suo risultato.

Cass aveva iniziato a pubblicare i suoi video online su consiglio di Amber, che dopo una lunga e intensa discussione sull'ultimo gioco a cui Cass aveva giocato l'aveva quasi spinta a pubblicare su un suo canale. Avevano deciso di aprirli insieme, il canale di Cass e il profilo da illustratrice di Amber. Con un certo stupore, Cass aveva visto crescere un piccolo ma fidato gruppo di fan, gente che (incredibilmente!) si trovava ad essere attratta dalle sue opinioni e dai suoi interessi.

Non aveva veramente pensato che quei video potessero portarla da qualche parte, dopo il liceo: era Amber quella con le idee chiare, in fondo. Ma dopo aver visto sè stessa in FutureMe, non riusciva a scollarsi quell'idea dalla testa.

Amber

> Amber!

> Stavo pensando a quello che mi hai detto ieri sul tuo futuro

Si, ci stavo ripensando anche io

Uno dei miei simpatici commentatori mi ha scritto di nuovo 😳

Non so bene cosa pensare

> Potrebbe anche essere tutta una cosa a caso, eh

> Però nel mio futuro ho rivisto un po' di cose che effettivamente hanno senso

> Secondo me il tuo futuro è così negativo perchè l'algoritmo è stato condizionato da tutti questi commenti brutti

Si, anche secondo me può

essere una cosa così

Comunque vorrei farci qualcosa

> Giusto a proposito di questo, ho avuto un'idea!

> gif: enthusiast

Dimmi!!

> Non ho i follower di Nick Asher ma un po' di gente segue i miei video e sono tutti delle persone molto carine

> Stavo pensando che potrei tipo pubblicare qualcosa di tuo!

> Qualche video mentre lavori o cose del genere

> Ho trovato un sacco di video super belli, proviamoci anche noi ti prego 😍

Non so se espormi di più sia una buona idea 😅

> Non puoi mica smettere di fare quello che ti piace per loro 😉

> Daiiiii facciamo questo video

> Fallo per me 🙏

gif: rassegnata

Tanto finisce che mi convinci sempre 😂

> gif: sunglasses

A Cass piaceva molto la piccola community che si era formata intorno ai suoi video. Certo, non aveva il seguito di profili come quello di Nick, però le piaceva pensare che un giorno ci sarebbe arrivata anche lei. Le piaceva soprattutto l'atmosfera di confidenza che si veniva a creare, anche se ancora quasi non si capacitava che completi sconosciuti potesse piacesse ascoltare le sue opinioni. Era una bella sensazione, sentirsi ascoltata. Avrebbe voluto che anche Amber potesse provare un po' quelle sensazioni, mentre invece continuava a vederla svalutarsi così per tutti quei commenti anonimi.

Sì, si disse. Avrebbero pubblicato quel video.

Ritratto di Amber mentre viene disegnato
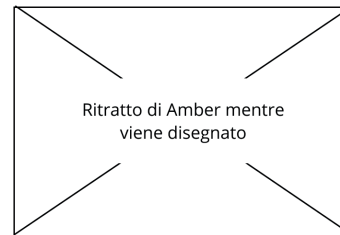
05.02.2030
@cass_rivers
Artista emergente all'opera!
Supportate il suo lavoro ❤️
@blueamber

> **@anonymous**
> 🤮🤮🤮

> **@anonymous**
> Non dirmi che dai retta anche tu a questa sfigata... ti stai riducendo proprio male 👎👎

> **@anonymous**
> Fossi in te starei più attento a chi pubblicizzi

Invece dei suoi soliti fan, più scorreva i commenti più Cass leggeva insulti e prese in giro da diversi account, di cui anonymous il principale. Non si aspettava un successo, ma neanche venire sommersa così... era questo quello che provava Amber ogni volta?

Amber

Te l'avevo detto... 😭

> Che stronzi 😡😡

Mi dispiace molto aver tirato dentro anche te

So che ci tieni al tuo canale

Fai così, cancella quel video e vedi che torna tutto a posto

> Ma stai scherzando??

No, davvero

Io già me li devo subire, inutile che metta di mezzo anche te

Apprezzo comunque il tentativo, grazie! Tra l'altro è stato molto divertente fare

questa prova

gif:

> Non esiste, stiamo affrontando questa cosa INSIEME adesso

> Dobbiamo andare avanti, non diamogliela vinta!

Sto cominciando a pensare che non ci sia molto da vincere qui

Forse dovrei solo rinunciare, alla fine se davvero faccio schifo a tutti dovrei solo smettere di pubblicare cose e risolverei il problema

Tu hai ancora dei fan affezionati

> Non fai schifo

> Intanto Nick ha chiesto di uscire a te, non a me 😌

> A proposito, che hai deciso per la festa?

Gli avevo detto che ci avrei pensato ma probabilmente no

Però stavo pensando che quasi quasi potrei chiedere aiuto anche a lui

Alla fine un profilo come il suo dovrà fare i conti con questi troll continuamente

Poi lui non oseranno attaccarlo

> Sai che potrebbe funzionare?

gif

Però facciamo così

Alla festa ci andiamo insieme, e tu cancelli quel video

E ripartiamo da zero entrambe

Che ne dici?

> gif

> Non mi piace l'idea di tirarmi indietro 😡

Fallo per il tuo futuro!

> E il tuo, di futuro?

> Il mio non cambierà certo per

qualche commento!

Pensaci, almeno

Fallo per me

gif

gif

Va beeeene

Ci penserò

Cass avrebbe voluto essere già quella ragazza felice e sicura di sè che aveva visto nel suo futuro per riuscire ad aiutare Amber senza tutte le incertezze che sentiva di avere. In fondo le aveva fatto un po' male sentirsi criticata così da gente anonima, non osava pensare come si sentisse Amber tutto il tempo.

Rivedere sè stessa le avrebbe dato sicurezza, ne era certa. Riaprì FutureMe e fece partire il ricalcolo.

Calcolo in corso...

Le immagini cominciarono ad apparire, a partire dai giorni seguenti e via via più avanti con gli anni. Vedeva ancora sè stessa con Nick e Amber, ma adesso anche i suoi post erano infestati dai commenti negativi. Più i commenti aumentavano, più i post diminuivano. Il canale veniva chiuso. Finchè alla fine, la Cass felice dei dieci anni dopo non era più lì a guardarla, sorridendo dai post futuri calcolati dall'app.

La cosa che spaventò più Cass, però, era il fatto che lei in quella sè futura ci si riconosceva bene. Un po' troppo bene. E avrebbe decisamente preferito non riconoscersi.
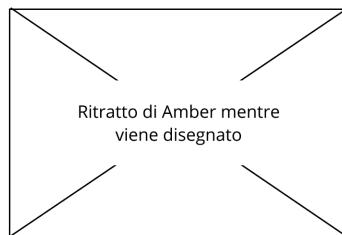
Scelta 1.2
A chi chiederà Cass?

Consigli a Cass di chiedere il supporto della community

Consigli a Cass di andare alla festa con Amber

Scena C2

Scena N1

Scena C2

Ritratto di Amber mentre viene disegnato

26.01.2030
@cass_rivers
Prima di tutto grazie mille a quelli che ancora mi seguono qui, sul mio Weekly Cass! ❤️
Riposto questo video di qualche giorno fa perchè come alcuni di voi avranno visto sono stata molto attaccata per aver supportato @blueamber.
Quegli insulti verso di me che avete letto sono solo UNA PICCOLA PARTE di quello che Amber riceve tutti i giorni 😡
Continuerò a postare i suoi lavori qui, tra i miei video, insieme alle mie solite chiacchierate.
Se vi sono piaciuti i miei contenuti finora, vi invito a supportare la mia amica e SEGNALARE chi la insulta
Grazie a tutti ❤️
I'm a #blueamberfan 💙💙

> **@anonymous**
> Bel tentativo, tanto tu continui ad essere una sfigata e i tuoi video a fare schifo 🤣💚

> **@fan1**
> Ho guardato il profilo della tua amica ed è bravissima 😍 #blueamberfan

> **@fan2**
> Brava Cass! Sei sempre la migliore! #blueamberfan

> **@fan3**
> Che odio quelli che vogliono solo insultare! Un bacione alla tua amica 😘 #blueamberfan

> **@fan4**
> Amber tieni duro! I tuoi lavori sono spettacolari 😍💙 #blueamberfan

---

> **@fan5**
> @unknown fai schifo tu 😡😡 #blueamberfan

Cass non poteva credere ai suoi occhi. Non solo il suo video aveva avuto un grandissimo successo, ma si stava diffondendo l'hashtag che aveva deciso di lanciare e il numero di followers stava continuando ad aumentare. Qualcuno in privato le aveva scritto per chiederle se Amber stesse bene, o come poteva aiutare.

Guardando il profilo di Amber, anche i suoi followers stavano aumentando. Un po' per volta, oltre ai commenti negativi cominciavano a notarsi anche persone che supportavano il suo lavoro, e lei personalmente.

Cass sapeva che la sua (non più tanto) piccola community non l'avrebbe tradita. Era bello vedere quanta gente si stava mobilitando per venirle incontro!

Continuava a leggere soddisfatta i commenti che la gente stava scrivendo sotto il video, quando alcuni in particolare attirarono la sua attenzione. La gente stava cominciando a cercare di capire chi era Anonymous.

Ma... com'era possibile?

> **@fan2**
> è assurdo che dopo tutto quello che dice certa gente rimanga anonima
> I'm a #blueamberfan
> **@fan2**
> Ragazzi ho tracciato gli accessi del profilo anonymous, corrisponde a quello di un certo nickasher12
> **@fan3**
> Anonymous sarebbe Nick Asher??? E io che lo seguivo pure 😱
> **@fan4**
> Anche io! 😳😡
> **@fan5**
> Facciamoci trovare tutti sul suo profilo, vediamo se a lui fa piacere che le persone lo insultino 😳😡 always #blueamberfan

Era rimasta senza fiato.

Nick???

Eppure, non c'era dubbio. Anche altre persone avevano provato a tracciare l'account e il risultato era sempre stato lo stesso: i profili nickasher12 e anonymous corrispondevano perfettamente. Era lui.

Cass stessa era da sempre una delle sue followers e ora si sentiva quasi stupida a non aver saputo indovinare che c'era lui dietro anonymous. Ma come avrebbe potuto? Per quanto ci pensava, non riusciva a darsi una spiegazione. Per quale motivo uno come Nick si era sentito a tal punto minacciato da persone come lei e Amber?

Ma, a pensarci... era lo stesso Nick che aveva chiesto ad Amber di uscire? Cass sentì montare la rabbia.

Nick

gif: hey

Hey Cass! Come stai? 🙂

Se non ti sei fatto sentire per scusarti puoi anche sparire

Non serve scaldarsi

Voglio solo chiederti di cancellare l'ultimo video che hai messo

Mi sta causando qualche problema

Non possiamo chiarirci tra di noi?

😂😂😂

Adesso ti causa problemi? Quando eri tu a insultare me e Amber invece non c'era nessun problema???

Forse ho un po' esagerato

Ma guarda che erano solo degli scherzi

Poi l'ho fatto per lei a rimanere anonimo, per essere più discreto

Però capisci, preferirei che questa storia non venisse troppo fuori...

Parliamone tra di noi

Mi sembri più ragionevole di Amber

CON CHE CORAGGIO LE HAI ANCHE CHIESTO DI USCIRE

Tu a lei non ti devi MAI PIÙ avvicinare, hai capito??

E va bene, mi dispiace

Non avrei dovuto scriverle quelle cose

No, secondo me tu non hai ancora capito davvero quanto hai sbagliato

Non puoi essere qualcuno dietro a uno schermo e pretendere di non essere la stessa persona dal vivo

Non funziona così

Ma se hai deciso che online vuoi essere una persona di merda allora va bene così. Ti meriti che anche il tuo profilo venga ricoperto di merda

Guarda, ho cancellato il profilo unknown...

Adesso sono solo io

Cancella quel video per favore...

Cass chiuse la chat con uno scatto di rabbia. Ma cosa si credeva, di potersela passare liscia così facilmente?

Amber

Nick ora vuole che chieda ai miei fan di lasciarlo in pace

Non posso crederci che pensi davvero di passarla liscia dopo tutto quello che ti ha fatto

Cass... vorrei solo mettermi questa storia dietro alle spalle

È strano... ora che so la persona che sta dietro a quelle frasi, non mi fa più così tanta paura

Anzi mi fa un po' pena

E non posso crederci che mi sia mai piaciuto uno del genere

Fortuna che non siamo andate alla sua festa...

---

chissà cosa aveva organizzato per prendermi in giro 😳

Già...

E pensare che io ti ho pure incoraggiata ad uscire con lui...

Mi dispiace 😖

Neanche tu lo sapevi 🙁

Non deve passarla liscia

La gente deve sapere chi è davvero la persona che seguono

Non possono cascarci come c'eravamo cascate noi

Non so, forse hai ragione tu

Però preferirei esserne lasciata fuori da questa storia

Davvero Cass, lasciamolo stare

Non voglio essere un'ingrata per il supporto che mi hai dato...

Però penso di aver bisogno di un po' di tempo per riflettere

Doveva davvero lasciare stare...?

Cass non sapeva se lo voleva fare. Non l'avrebbe ammesso forse neanche a sè stessa, ma quella sensazione di aver risolto la soluzione grazie ai suoi post la inebriava. Delle persone erano finalmente attente a quello che diceva. Aveva il modo di insegnare una lezione a chi aveva fatto male ad Amber. Se avesse incoraggiato le persone ad andare fino in fondo, Nick non sarebbe più stato credibile, e di sicuro non avrebbe più fatto male a nessuno. Lui diceva di aver capito, ma come poteva fidarsi? Se avesse rinunciato ora invece sarebbe stata lei a sembrare debole, indecisa. La Cass del futuro negativo. Non poteva farlo, lo doveva ad Amber di andare avanti.

Che strana sensazione, l'avere così tanta gente sconosciuta disposta a seguire quello che dici. Altro che parlare di libri o videogiochi. Qui la stavano davvero ascoltando, poteva quasi scegliere cosa far loro fare. Era così che si sentiva la Cass del primo futuro, sicura di sè, in grado di catturare l'attenzione, di farsi sentire...?

Cass - finale 1

> **FutureMe**
>
> Sono passati già 10 anni dalla FutureMe challenge!
>
> Ecco qualche post che aveva calcolato per te il nostro algoritmo dieci anni fa...
>
> **Cassandra**, speriamo che tu abbia passato un bellissimo decennio! Condividi con noi qualche foto su chi sei davvero diventato in questi anni 😊
>
> #futureme
> #futuremenow

Cass scartò distrattamente la notifica: era di fretta, doveva finire di preparare le ultime cose. Quel giorno c'era l'inaugurazione della prima mostra di Amber, e lei voleva essere pronta per farle un'ottima recensione.

Era strano, dopo tutti quegli anni, ritrovarsi lì, una giovane reporter e una promettente illustratrice. Al di là delle loro carriere, due amiche che avevano passato tante cose insieme durante gli anni.

Cass era contenta che dopo la storia di unknown Amber avesse smesso di farsi definire dalla sua vita online, e forse un po' valeva anche per Cass stessa. Aveva passato troppo tempo a pensare a chi fosse la Cass del futuro, solo per poi rendersi conto che quella che aveva visto era solo un'immagine di lei online. Aveva provato sulla sua pelle quanto fosse facile da dietro uno schermo dare un'immagine distorta o eccessiva di sè.

Era quello che aveva rischiato di fare lei con Nick. Stava per trasformarlo in un mostro, ma aveva ragione Amber: una volta visto chi c'era dietro la maschera, non poteva più farle male. Per fortuna si era fermata in tempo.

Ormai non ce l'aveva più con lui. Nessuna delle due l'aveva più sentito, ma Cass sperava avesse avuto qualche occasione di imparare dai suoi errori. Chissà che vita si era costruito ora.

Beh, era troppo in ritardo adesso per lasciarsi a tutti quei ricordi! Ora di andare.
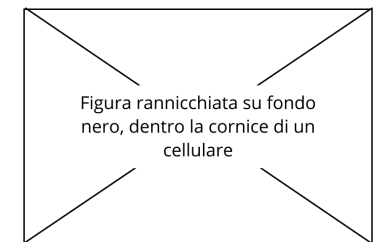
Figura rannicchiata su fondo nero, dentro la cornice di un cellulare

04.02.2040
@cass_rivers
Illustrazioni da un mondo sospeso tra reale e virtuale. Qualche scatto dall'inaugurazione della mostra della bravissima Amber Wings, in arte @blueamber!
A breve il video con la recensione completa, stay tuned 😉

> **@fan1**
> Sempre fantastica!
>
> **@fan2**
> Wow 😮 Siete troppo lontaneee non posso venire alla mostra! Cass aspetto il tuo video!!!
>
> **@fan3**
> Sono vostro fan da anni e niente, siete fantastiche tutte e due ❤️
>
> **@fan4**
> Complimenti ad Amber! Cass non vediamo l'ora del tuo nuovo video 😊

Cass era un po' fiera di sè per aver saputo tenere insieme una community di gente che

la sapeva sostenere anche se non la conosceva. Era sempre una bella sensazione.

Al resto avrebbe pensato più tardi! Adesso era ora di raggiungere Amber e festeggiare come si deve.

Cass spense il telefono.

FINE
Cass - futuro positivo

Cass - finale 2

FutureMe

Sono passati già 10 anni dalla FutureMe challenge!

Ecco qualche post che aveva calcolato per te il nostro algoritmo dieci anni fa...

Cassandra, speriamo che tu abbia passato un bellissimo decennio! Condividi con noi qualche foto su chi sei davvero diventato in questi anni 😊

#futureme
#futuremenow

La notifica di FutureMe colse Cass di sorpresa, era da parecchio che non pensava a quegli anni.

Chissà come stava Amber. Da quanto tempo non la sentiva! Si ricordava che avevano litigato dopo la questione di Nick Asher. Amber stata un po' un'ingrata, a prendersela così con lei dopo che aveva solo cercato di aiutarla. Era addirittura arrivata a dirle che si stava comportando come lui, cosa che ovviamente non poteva essere più lontana dal vero, perchè Cass aveva fatto esattamente l'opposto. Grazie a lei di Nick Asher non si era più sentito parlare, e dalle voci che giravano tra i suoi ex compagni di scuola, pareva che l'idolo del liceo non si fosse più molto risollevato dopo quella storia.

Chissà poi perchè Amber se l'era presa in quel modo. Forse era solo un po' gelosa del

fatto che finalmente lei, Cass, avesse un pubblico interessato a quello che faceva. E che pubblico! La sua community era cresciuta negli anni, dopo quella storia. La gente voleva vedere cosa faceva, cosa ne pensava delle cose, le chiedeva opinioni e prendeva ispirazione. Si era costruita con fatica una sua immagine, che potessero vedere tutti, e ormai mantenerla era quasi un lavoro a tempo pieno.

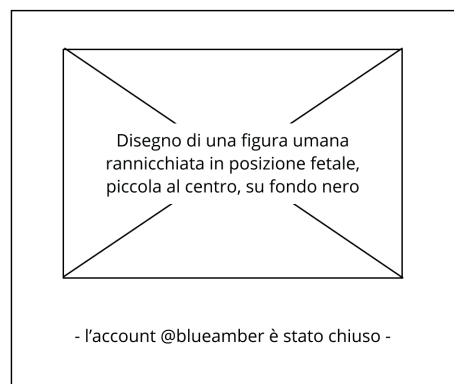Amber era sempre stata diversa, in quello. Non aveva capito quanto fosse importante l'immagine di sè che dava al suo pubblico. A Cass un po' mancava Amber. Chissà cosa stava facendo, cosa aveva pubblicato di recente.

L'ultimo post però risaliva ad otto anni prima.

Disegno di una figura umana rannicchiata in posizione fetale, piccola al centro, su fondo nero

- l'account @blueamber è stato chiuso -

Così ci aveva rinunciato alla fine. Forse aveva deciso di darci un taglio con i disegni e aprire un altro account, per ricostruirsi un'identità da zero. O forse l'aveva chiuso e basta. Quel disegno non era lo stesso che Amber aveva visto con FutureMe, nel suo futuro interrotto?

Per un secondo Cass pensò di scriverle, di sentire come stava. Ma no, sicuramente stava bene. Anzi, se l'avesse sentita avrebbero litigato ancora e Amber avrebbe criticato il suo stile di vita. E poi, a pensarci bene, doveva ancora finire di montare i nuovi video da caricare entro il pomeriggio, cosa avrebbero pensato i suoi followers se non fosse stata puntuale?

Cass mise via il telefono. Era davvero impegnata, ci avrebbe pensato forse un'altra volta.

Più avanti.

FINE
Cass - futuro negativo

Scena N1

Nick, Amber e Cass

06.02.2030
@nickasher12
Quelle serate che... sì 😜
@blueamber
@cass_rivers
130 commenti
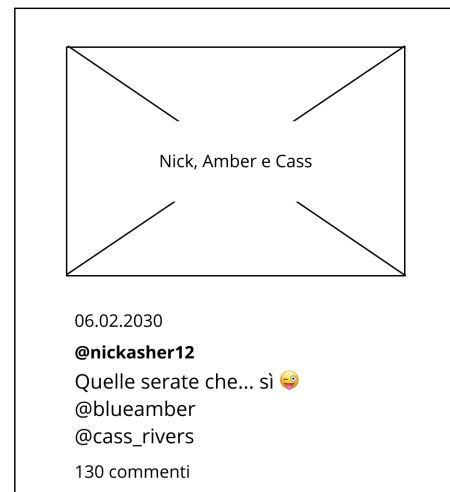
Nick si svegliò la domenica mattina con un gran mal di testa ed un certo buon umore.

Prima di alzarsi riguardò le foto postate la sera prima e le reazioni del suo pubblico. Come al solito, la sua affezionata community non si smentiva mai.

La serata con Amber era stata un successo.

Amber

Ciao Nick!

Volevo ringraziarti ancora per ieri sera

E' stata davvero una bellissima serata!

Mi sono trovata molto bene ☺️
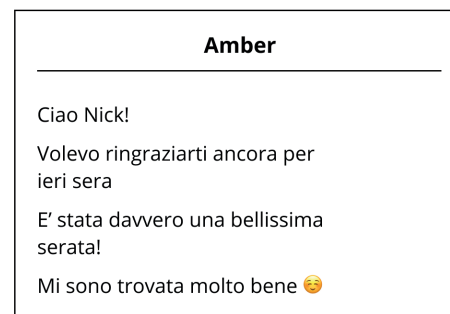
Nick guardò il telefono con un sorriso.

Amber

Buongiorno anche a te 😊

Bene, mi fa piacere!

Te l'ho detto che ti saresti trovata bene 😉
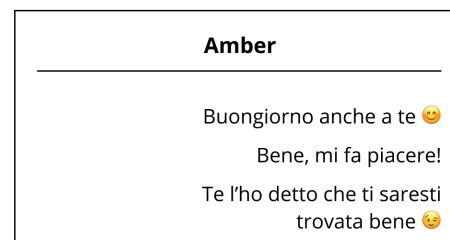
Come stai?

Ho avuto risvegli migliori 😂😂

Però sono di ottimo umore 😄

gif

Dovrei finire quei due capitoli da studiare per domani ma mi è venuta l'ispirazione per un paio di disegni

Come fai?? La mia testa si rifiuta di pensare adesso 😡

😂😂

Bisogna prendere l'ispirazione quando viene

E poi

No, è una cosa stupida

Daii cosa?

Beh è da un paio di giorni che nessuno mi lascia insulti vari sotto i post o per chat

Ormai ci avevo fatto l'abitudine, ma devo dire che è un piacevole cambiamento!

Mi è quasi tornata voglia di ricominciare a postare 😄

Mi fa piacere!

Che ne dici se ci vediamo domani dopo scuola? Magari ci andiamo a prendere qualcosa?

Dai, volentieri!

gif

Sai che c'eri anche tu, nel mio futuro di FutureMe?

😱

Davvero??

Anche tu nel mio!!!

Sarà stato un futuro bellissimo!

gif

Non fare la modesta 😉

Devo scappare, ci vediamo domani allora!

Quel maledetto futuro.

Nick avrebbe preferito che non fosse mai circolata FutureMe, o di non averla mai usata. Non si immaginava di ottenere quel risultato:

non era di certo quello che ci si sarebbe aspettati da uno come lui.

Nick si era ormai costruito a scuola e tra i suoi amici una certa reputazione di persona in grado di riuscire in tutto quello che faceva, cosa che lui si era ben guardato dal contraddire. Perciò non amava parlare del fatto che non aveva in realtà idea di quale fosse, tra tutte queste cose in cui riusciva bene, quella cosa che davvero gli piaceva fare. O che voleva continuare a fare uscito dal liceo. Avrebbe dovuto scegliere a breva ma... non ne aveva idea.

Non aveva mentito con lei, Amber era presente nel suo futuro. D'altra parte era già da parecchio che lo affascinava: la passione che metteva sempre in quello che faceva, quella sua risata irriverente come il tocco di blu nei suoi capelli.

Per quanto cercasse di scacciare dalla testa quel pensiero, ritornando con la mente alla serata precedente, non poteva fare a meno di pensare a quel maledetto futuro.

Lui e Amber insieme: ma al di fuori delle mura liceali la situazione era molto diversa. Lei, che lavorava per anni sulle sue passioni e otteneva degli ottimi risultati. Lui, in secondo piano. In fondo, Nick non era così sicuro che l'identità che si era costruito online in quegli anni potesse affrontare il confronto con il mondo estero. Poteva essere destinato a vivere sotto l'ombra di un successo più grande del suo? Che una come Amber potesse davvero avere più successo?

Poi, dai, Amber non era neanche così brava.

Di scatto, senza pensarci, Nick riaccese il telefono e passò velocemente al suo secondo account.

○ @nickasher12

○ @anonymous
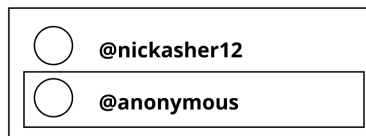
Amber
_____

Hey sfigata

Che belli i tuoi ultimi lavori

Bella merda

In fondo gli serviva giusto per rilasciare un po' di tensione, all'occorrenza. Se lei non sapeva, non avrebbe fatto male a nessuno.

Amber
_____

Nick

Scusa se ti scrivo già ma non so che fare

Cosa succede?

Pensavo avessero smesso e invece mi insultano ancora

Il messaggio di Amber sul suo account principale lo lasciò di sasso.

Di tutto si sarebbe aspettato tranne che quello.

Amber
_____

Tu come fai?

Hai un sacco di gente che ti segue, di sicuro ce ne sarà stato qualcuno che ti scrive queste cose

Come fai a ignorarli?

Amber ma si scherza dai

Non te la devi mica prendere per queste cose 😅

Non ci riesco

Non so come fa a conoscermi uno che di me vede solo quello che sono online

Però si sentono lo stesso in dovere di dirmi quanto faccio schifo in tutto

Scusami... ti devo sembrare super inappropriata, a mettermi dal niente a parlare di queste cose 😳

Però forse tu mi puoi capire

Tranquilla, con me puoi parlare di tutto!

Non devi prenderli sul serio,

---

davvero

E' solo gente che ha voglia di scherzare

Come possono scherzare con una cosa del genere??

Come fanno a scherzare con LA MIA VITA?

Non sulla tua vita dai 😅

Magari non gli piace solo quello che pubblichi

Si fa così, tanto per dire

Quello che ho pubblicato fa comunque parte della mia vita

Non sono un'altra persona solo perchè sono dietro a un post

Io sono qui e sono vera

A meno che... non abbiano ragione loro

Magari non valgo davvero niente e dovrei smettere

Tu che ne pensi?

Nick conosceva benissimo quella sensazione, e la odiava. Quel senso oppressivo di non valere mai abbastanza. Quello che non importa quanto ci provi, comunque là fuori c'è qualcuno più bravo, più bello, più simpatico... migliore. Sempre e comunque.

Non aveva davvero mai pensato che anche lei, nonostante il suo talento, si potesse sentire così. Non aveva neanche mai pensato che potesse sentirsi così per i suoi messaggi anonimi.

Amber
_____

Prima parlavamo di FutureMe

In uno dei commenti futuri, un profilo anonimo mi ha scritto che dovrei ammazzarmi.

Nick, tu pensi che possano arrivare davvero a cose simili?

Nick non lo sapeva. Però pensava che forse quella versione di sè che aveva visto nel futuro lo sapeva molto bene.

Scelta 2.2
Nick dirà ad Amber di Anonymous e cancellerà il suo account?

Consigli a Nick di rivelarsi

finale 1

Consigli a Nick di non dire niente

finale 2

Nick - finale 1

FutureMe

Sono passati già 10 anni dalla FutureMe challenge!

Ecco qualche post che aveva calcolato per te il nostro algoritmo dieci anni fa...

Nicholas, speriamo che tu abbia passato un bellissimo decennio! Condividi con noi qualche foto su chi sei davvero diventato in questi anni 😄

#futureme
#futuremenow

Nick quel giorno aveva deciso di fare un giro in una galleria d'arte. Non era una cosa inusuale, però quella sarebbe stata particolare per lui. Stava andando a vedere la prima mostra di un'illustratrice emergente, Amber Wings. In arte, blueamber.

Anche se erano quasi dieci anni che non la rivedeva, si ricordava bene di quella ragazzina con un ciuffo blu sbarazzino e una matita sempre in mano, un ricordo ormai sempre velato da un senso di colpa da cui non era

riuscito del tutto ad allontanarsi. Rimpiangeva diverse cose di quel periodo, ma non di aver chiuso il suo account anonimo.

Per anni si era chiesto chi fosse lui veramente, se il ragazzo popolare che sembrava riuscire in tutto quello che faceva o l'ombra che spiava i successi altrui dietro uno schermo.

Amber gli aveva fatto realizzare di essere entrambi. Ma di avere le capacità di affrontare anche il suo lato Anonymous.

Girando per le sale si stupì di non provare ormai più invidia ma solo ammirazione.
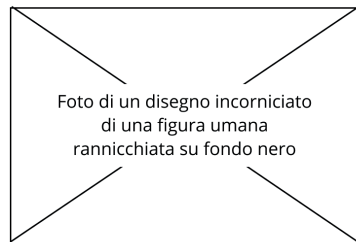

Foto di un disegno incorniciato di una figura umana rannicchiata su fondo nero

04.02.2040
@nickasher_12
Illustrazioni da un mondo sospeso tra reale e virtuale
@blueamber

Amber

Ciao Amber!

Volevo dirti che sono passato a vedere la tua mostra

Sei davvero diventata bravissima, complimenti!

Ho visto il tuo post!

Grazie per essere passato, sono molto contenta che ti sia piaciuta 😊😊

Mi sembra passata una vita da quando ci siamo sentiti

Siamo cambiati parecchio entrambi, eh?

Senti, scusami ancora per tutta questa storia

Anzi, devo ringraziarti per avermi fatto capire in tempo la persona che non volevo diventare

Sembra ironico ma in un certo senso mi ha aiutata ad andare avanti, sai?

Ammetto che ti ho un po' odiato

Ma ormai è passato

Ti farebbe piacere qualche volta trovarci a prendere un caffè e aggiornarci un po'?

Certo, va bene!

Sono contento!

A presto allora 😊

FINE
Nick - futuro positivo

Nick - finale 2

FutureMe

Sono passati già 10 anni dalla FutureMe challenge!

Ecco qualche post che aveva calcolato per te il nostro algoritmo dieci anni fa...

Nicholas, speriamo che tu abbia passato un bellissimo decennio! Condividi con noi qualche foto su chi sei davvero diventato in questi anni 😀

#futureme
#futuremenow

Guardando la notifica, Nick non riuscì a trattenere una smorfia di disappunto. Pensò che se i suoi follower del liceo avessero

---

potuto vederlo ora, non l'avrebbero neanche riconosciuto. Non che gliene fossero rimasti molti.

Uno alla volta, i suoi vecchi amici avevano deciso che non era abbastanza per loro e se n'erano andati. Ma lui li vedeva ancora, attraverso le cose che postavano. Sicuramente pensavano di essere meglio di lui, con le loro carriere e famiglie felici. Tutte cose che anche Nick avrebbe potuto avere, se avesse voluto. Aveva semplicemente deciso di non farlo, ma avrebbe potuto essere migliore di tutti loro.

La colpa era sicuramente di quella stupida ragazzina con cui era uscito non si ricordava neanche più quanti anni fa. Nick era stato gentile con lei, aveva cercato di non dirle cose che avrebbero potuto farla preoccupare, di tenerla al sicuro. Ma anche lei come tutti gli altri aveva pensato di essere superiore a lui e se n'era andata. Come se potesse davvero essere migliore di lui, l'idolo del liceo. Chi si credeva di essere?

Che poi, tutte quelle arie da artista incompresa per quattro disegnini di merda. Nick aveva continuato a guardare i suoi post negli anni. Quante arie che si dava. Sperava chiaramente di poter conquistare un po' il pubblico con una certa aria da finta depressa, dato che non era certo abbastanza figa per far colpo con foto personali.

Tutti quei disegni cupi e neri per far vedere quanto era profonda e tormentata, quando era ovviamente ancora solo una ragazzina che si credeva superiore a lui.

Figura rannicchiata su fondo nero, dentro la cornice di un cellulare
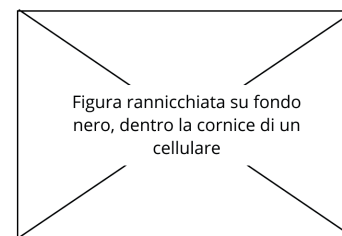
04.02.2040
@blueamber
Non ne so più uscire. E' tutto nero.

@anonymous
Ammazzati

Nick non la poteva proprio sopportare.

FINE
Nick - futuro negativo

APPENDIX D
The feedback

The survey has been addressed to seven italian teenagers between those who filled out the first survey on narrative models. The results have been collected in Italian language, as they are reported in this section. For a comment in English on the relevant points emerged from the test, see Chapter 3.5.2.

FutureMe - feedback

Grazie per aver letto la mia storia! 😊
Questo lavoro fa parte di un progetto di tesi magistrale all'interno del Politecnico di Milano.
Ti chiedo ancora qualche minuto di tempo per compilare questo veloce questionario sulla storia che hai appena letto, daresti un grande aiuto al mio lavoro! 😊

*Campo obbligatorio

Informativa sulla privacy
Tutte le risposte che darai saranno confidenziali e completamente anonime, non essendo rilevante l'identità personale. I dati raccolti saranno trattati in forma aggregata e saranno utilizzati esclusivamente per fini di ricerca scientifica secondo le regole deontologiche e secondo le finalità riportate nell'informativa per i trattamenti di dati personali (http://bit.ly/gameofstory) - puoi uscire dal questionario in qualunque momento e nessuno dei tuoi dati verrà utilizzato.

Grazie in anticipo per l'aiuto! :)

Quanti anni hai? *

La tua risposta

Cosa ne pensi di questa storia? *

La tua risposta

A che finale sei arrivato/a? *

☐ Amber - finale 1
☐ Amber - finale 2
☐ Cass - finale 1
☐ Cass - finale 2
☐ Nick - finale 1
☐ Nick - finale 2

Hai riletto la storia per arrivare ad un altro finale? *

○ Si (specifica nella domanda sopra anche il secondo finale ottenuto)
○ No, ma sarei curioso/a di farlo
○ No

Quanto ti sei sentito/a coinvolto/a dalle situazioni rappresentate? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Per niente	○	○	○	○	○	Molto

Che personaggio ti ha maggiormente interessato? *

☐ Amber
☐ Cass
☐ Nick
☐ Nessuno di loro

Cosa ne pensi della modalità di interazione tramite chatbot? *

○ Mi è piaciuta
○ Non mi è piaciuta
○ Altro: _____

Riguardo al media utilizzato per raccontare la storia, quanto è stata efficace secondo te la scelta di usare un sito? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Per niente	○	○	○	○	○	Molto

Se pensi non sia efficace, come mai?

La tua risposta

Quanto sei interessato/a alle tematiche trattate (cyberbullismo, identità online, uso dei social media, gestione della community online)? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Per niente	○	○	○	○	○	Molto

Pensi che lo storytelling sia un buon modo per affrontare queste tematiche? *

La tua risposta

Pensi che questa storia possa essere interessante per i ragazzi della tua età? Perchè? *

La tua risposta

Come valuti la rappresentazione grafica della storia?

	1	2	3	4	5	
Non adeguata	○	○	○	○	○	Molto efficace

Complessivamente, sei rimasto/a soddisfatto/a? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Per niente	○	○	○	○	○	Molto!

Se per niente o poco, cosa non funziona secondo te?

La tua risposta

Hai qualche osservazione o consiglio su questo progetto? *

La tua risposta

Invia

Giulia, 17 anni

Cosa ne pensi di questa storia?

Interessante.

A che finale sei arrivato/a?

Nick - finale negativo.

Hai riletto la storia per arrivare ad un altro finale?

No, ma sarei curioso/a di farlo.

Quanto ti sei sentito/a coinvolto/a dalle situazioni?

●●●●○

Che personaggio ti ha maggiormente interessato?

Amber.

Cosa ne pensi della modalità di interazione tramite chatbot?

Mi è piaciuta.

Riguardo al media utilizzato per raccontare la storia, quanto è stata efficace secondo te la scelta di usare un sito?

●●●●○

Quanto sei interessato/a alle tematiche trattate (cyberbullismo, identità online, uso dei social media, gestione della community)?

●●●●●

Pensi che lo storytelling sia un buon modo per affrontare queste tematiche?

Sì.

Pensi che questa storia possa essere interessante per i ragazzi della tua età? Perchè?

Sí perché tratta di temi molto attuali.

Come valuti la rappresentazione grafica della storia?

●●●●●

Complessivamente, sei rimasto/a soddisfatto/a?

●●●●●

Hai qualche osservazione o consiglio su questo progetto?

No è davvero ben sviluppato.

Giorgia, 17 anni

Cosa ne pensi di questa storia?

È interessante.

A che finale sei arrivato/a?

Cass - finale negativo.

Hai riletto la storia per arrivare ad un altro finale?

No.

Quanto ti sei sentito/a coinvolto/a dalle situazioni?

●●●○○

Che personaggio ti ha maggiormente interessato?

Nessuno di loro.

Cosa ne pensi della modalità di interazione tramite chatbot?

Mi è piaciuta.

Riguardo al media utilizzato per raccontare la storia, quanto è stata efficace secondo te la scelta di usare un sito?

●●●●○

Quanto sei interessato/a alle tematiche trattate (cyberbullismo, identità online, uso dei social media, gestione della community)?

●●●●○

Pensi che lo storytelling sia un buon modo per affrontare queste tematiche?

Sì.

Pensi che questa storia possa essere interessante per i ragazzi della tua età? Perchè?

Sì.

Come valuti la rappresentazione grafica della storia?

●●●●○

Complessivamente, sei rimasto/a soddisfatto/a?

●●●○○

Hai qualche osservazione o consiglio su questo progetto?

No.

Greta, 17 anni

Cosa ne pensi di questa storia?

Molto attuale.

A che finale sei arrivato/a?

Cass - finale negativo.

Hai riletto la storia per arrivare ad un altro finale?

No, ma sarei curioso/a di farlo.

Quanto ti sei sentito/a coinvolto/a dalle situazioni?

●●●○○

Che personaggio ti ha maggiormente interessato?

Amber.

Cosa ne pensi della modalità di interazione tramite chatbot?

Mi è piaciuta.

Riguardo al media utilizzato per raccontare la storia, quanto è stata efficace secondo te la scelta di usare un sito?

●●●○○

Quanto sei interessato/a alle tematiche trattate (cyberbullismo, identità online, uso dei social media, gestione della community)?

●●●●○

Pensi che lo storytelling sia un buon modo per affrontare queste tematiche?

Sì.

Pensi che questa storia possa essere interessante per i ragazzi della tua età? Perchè?

Sì perché è un problema che ricorre molto negli ultimi tempi.

Come valuti la rappresentazione grafica della storia?

●●●○○

Complessivamente, sei rimasto/a soddisfatto/a?

●●●●○

Hai qualche osservazione o consiglio su questo progetto?

-

Alice, 17 anni

Cosa ne pensi di questa storia?

Molto bella,interessante ed educativa.

A che finale sei arrivato/a?

Amber - finale positivo.

Hai riletto la storia per arrivare ad un altro finale?

No, ma sarei curioso/a di farlo.

Quanto ti sei sentito/a coinvolto/a dalle situazioni?

●●●●●

Che personaggio ti ha maggiormente interessato?

Amber.

Cosa ne pensi della modalità di interazione tramite chatbot?

Mi è piaciuta.

Riguardo al media utilizzato per raccontare la storia, quanto è stata efficace secondo te la scelta di usare un sito?

●●●●●

Quanto sei interessato/a alle tematiche trattate (cyberbullismo, identità online, uso dei social media, gestione della community)?

●●●●●

Pensi che lo storytelling sia un buon modo per affrontare queste tematiche?

Sì.

Pensi che questa storia possa essere interessante per i ragazzi della tua età? Perchè?

Sì.

Come valuti la rappresentazione grafica della storia?

●●●●●

Complessivamente, sei rimasto/a soddisfatto/a?

●●●●●

Hai qualche osservazione o consiglio su questo progetto?

_

Cecilia, 18 anni

Cosa ne pensi di questa storia?

Abbastanza avvincente.

A che finale sei arrivato/a?

Amber - finale negativo.

Hai riletto la storia per arrivare ad un altro finale?

No, ma sarei curioso/a di farlo.

Quanto ti sei sentito/a coinvolto/a dalle situazioni?

●●●○○

Che personaggio ti ha maggiormente interessato?

Amber.

Cosa ne pensi della modalità di interazione tramite chatbot?

Mi è piaciuta.

Riguardo al media utilizzato per raccontare la storia, quanto è stata efficace secondo te la scelta di usare un sito?

●●●●○

Quanto sei interessato/a alle tematiche trattate (cyberbullismo, identità online, uso dei social media, gestione della community)?

●●●●●

Pensi che lo storytelling sia un buon modo per affrontare queste tematiche?

Sì.

Pensi che questa storia possa essere interessante per i ragazzi della tua età? Perchè?

Abbastanza, perché non tutti hanno l'interesse di preoccuparsi per gli altri e spesso rimangono indifferenti a queste tematiche.

Come valuti la rappresentazione grafica della storia?

●●●●○

Complessivamente, sei rimasto/a soddisfatto/a?

●●●●○

Se per niente o poco, cosa non funziona secondo te?

Forse specificare un pochino meglio come funziona.

Vanessa, 18 anni

Cosa ne pensi di questa storia?

Storia coinvolgente che offre spunti per riflettere sul modo di utilizzare i social e come possono influire sulla vita delle persone

A che finale sei arrivato/a?

Amber - finale negativo.

Hai riletto la storia per arrivare ad un altro finale?

No, ma sarei curioso/a di farlo.

Quanto ti sei sentito/a coinvolto/a dalle situazioni?

●●●●●

Che personaggio ti ha maggiormente interessato?

Amber.

Cosa ne pensi della modalità di interazione tramite chatbot?

Mi è piaciuta.

Riguardo al media utilizzato per raccontare la storia, quanto è stata efficace secondo te la scelta di usare un sito?

●●●●○

Quanto sei interessato/a alle tematiche trattate (cyberbullismo, identità online, uso dei social media, gestione della community)?

●●●●○

Pensi che lo storytelling sia un buon modo per affrontare queste tematiche?

Sì.

Pensi che questa storia possa essere interessante per i ragazzi della tua età? Perchè?

Sì perché è una situazione in cui chiunque potrebbe trovarsi, sia dalla parte della vittima, sia dalla parte del bullo ma anche come spettatore

Come valuti la rappresentazione grafica della storia?

●●●●○

Complessivamente, sei rimasto/a soddisfatto/a?

●●●●●

Hai qualche osservazione o consiglio su questo progetto?

-

Giovanni, 16 anni

Cosa ne pensi di questa storia?

A mio parere la storia é risultata gradevole entusiasmante e interattiva, per nulla scontata e con argomentazioni attuali.

A che finale sei arrivato/a?

Cass - finale positivo.

Hai riletto la storia per arrivare ad un altro finale?

No, ma sarei curioso/a di farlo.

Quanto ti sei sentito/a coinvolto/a dalle situazioni?

●●●●○

Che personaggio ti ha maggiormente interessato?

Amber.

Cosa ne pensi della modalità di interazione tramite chatbot?

Mi è piaciuta.

Riguardo al media utilizzato per raccontare la storia, quanto è stata efficace secondo te la scelta di usare un sito?

●●●●○

Quanto sei interessato/a alle tematiche trattate (cyberbullismo, identità online, uso dei social media, gestione della community)?

●●●●○

Pensi che lo storytelling sia un buon modo per affrontare queste tematiche?

Assolutamente si. É un mezzo adatto per trasmettere la rilevanza di certe tematiche ma sopratutto fa si che il lettore si avvicini alle questioni avviando anche riflessioni personali.

Pensi che questa storia possa essere interessante per i ragazzi della tua età? Perchè?

La storia risulta a mio parere adatta alla fascia di età degli adolescenti. Argomenti come i sogni, le emozioni, i dubbi, il timore sul pensiero altrui, il mondo digitale sono tutti temi che riguardano appieno i giovani d'oggi.

Come valuti la rappresentazione grafica della storia?

●●●●○

Complessivamente, sei rimasto/a soddisfatto/a?

●●●●○

Se per niente o poco, cosa non funziona secondo te?

Ho trovato l'intero progetto ben fatto.

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