THE FUTURE OF COMICS

comics in the digital age
WEB COMICS

the “new” comix
● not a new phenomenon - creators (mostly indie cartoonists as opposed to mainstream artists) saw the internet as a way of getting their work out to an audience

● **T.H.E. Fox** (1986) - published on Compuserve and Quantum Link

● **Where the Buffalo Roam** (1991) - published on FTP and usenet

● **Doctor Fun** (1993) published on the web

● **Netboy** (1994) published on the web

● Inherited the mantle of alternative & underground comix/comics

● Models: serialized narrative or “standalone” strip
WHAT

CAMO:

QUITE BEAUTIFUL

ISN'T IT?

THE
Excuse me! It's Carol, right?
I found this picture...do you know who the woman is?
I think her name may start with 'I'.
Where did you get this?
Ugh, it...it was twisted into a ball...in the box you gave me...
I know what was in there. I packed that box myself. This wasn't on the list.
Okay, but...look, does it matter? I just want to know what's in here.
Have a seat, please. I'll be back in a moment.
But...
MISERY LOVES SHERMAN

FRAN, WHY DID YOU SHRINK MY CLOTHES?

I WAS DOING YOU A FAVOR. YOU HAVE SO MANY PROBLEMS, I WAS JUST TRYING TO HELP YOU OUT.

THERE ARE ONLY CERTAIN THINGS I CAN HELP YOU WITH. I'M NOT A MIRACLE WORKER.

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

LOOK, I CAN HELP CHANGE WEIGHT, BUT I CAN'T CHANGE STUPID.

www.miserylovessherman.com

©Chris Eliopoulos 2009
What in the shit am I doing here.

It's a midnight launch! We're gonna get this shit, and play it all night.

Where does this fucking energy come from, Gabriel?

It's awesome. I've taught myself to sleep a little bit, every five guhzzzzzzzzz

Night is over now. Okay? It's morning.
Come on, Facebook. I know I shouldn't.

It's been so hard to stop, but she's falling for me, and I can't keep getting her hopes up like this.

Susie, you don't have to fall asleep alone.

Life is complicated. She's so warm against you. You both want it.

Maybe if I just make it clear it's not going to be a thing... Yeah, we'll just have a talk.

Susie, oh yeah. Mmm... Leave your webcam on so I can watch.

Okay, this feature is getting creepier and creepier.
WEBCOMICS BUSINESS MODELS

- No business model - creator isn’t in it for the money
- Advertising on website
- Republishing in trade paperback format (the online comics are simply advertisement)
- Syndication in newspapers or magazines
- Original art, merchandising, commissions
DIGITAL COMICS

mainstream on the web
Mainstream publishers attempting to replicate their product online

**Crossgen COW** (Comics on the Web)
- Subscribe to & view comics in a browser (HTML & Flash)
- 160 titles (4400 pages) when Crossgen went bankrupt in 2004

**Marvel**
- **Marvel Cybercomics** (1996 - 2000) - user controlled/partially animated, original titles that tied into main continuity
- **DotComics** - repurposing published comics for promotional purposes
- **Marvel Digital Comics Unlimited** - both original works and existing titles, web based, subscription based

**DC**
- **Zuda** - web based, webcomic ethos, creator contributed
DIGITAL COMICS PLATFORMS

the digital comics ecosystem
Phonogram Singles Club 01

Page 4

In the bedroom, the character says:

"It's a shame. I had such high hopes for the agency.

"I was so excited to work with you and make things happen."

Page 5

Another character responds:

"It was just a job, James."

"I know, but..."

"I mean, it's not like we always do things right."

"I just..."

"You did the best you could."

Page 6

The character continues:

"I wanted to make you happy."

"I wanted..."

"I thought I could..."

"I thought I could make a difference."

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PROBLEMS WITH PLATFORMS

- will there be a standard comic format that will work on any platform?

- Balkanization of digital comics - certain comics (in certain formats) from certain publishers only available on certain platforms

- Destructive to the user experience (why go digital when you can just go to the comic store and get whatever you want)

- Desktop (downloadable) vs. online - what happens when you don’t have an internet connection? DRM?
DIGITAL COMIC DEVICES

not just about the platforms
It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife.

However little known the feelings or views of such a man may be on his first entering a neighbourhood, this truth is so well fixed in the minds of the surrounding families, that he is considered the rightful property of some one or other of their daughters.

"My dear Mr. Bennet," said his lady to him one day, "have you heard that Netherfield Park is let at last?"

"Has it, ma'am?" replied he, "for Mrs. Long has just been here, and she told me all about it."

"Mr. Bennet replied that he had not."

"But it is," returned she: "for Mrs. Long has just been there, and she told me all about it."

"Do you not want to know who has taken it?" cried his wife importunately.

"No, no!" he answered; "I have no objection to hearing it."
**THE PLACE OF PUBLISHERS**

- Where does the publisher fit into all of this? Will publishers cease to exist?
- Direct comparisons can be made to the music publishing industry
- They hold much of the popular IP (characters, stories, settings, etc.)
- Publishers will partner with platforms or develop their own platforms
- Cease to be print publishers - become even more media/IP companies (movies, television, video-games, etc.)
PIRACY

- like all media - comics piracy exists
- loosely affiliated groups of scanners and uploaders
- small compared to music, TV, or movie piracy
- Some sites (and torrent trackers) have been pursued by comic publishers
- Piracy will become far more of a concern for publishers and creators as there is more of a shift towards digital distribution
FUTURE OF THE DIRECT MARKET

► Does digital mean the death of the LCS?

► With a shift away from the direct market (trade paperbacks & bookstores), was the writing on the wall for the LCS anyway?

► Role of the LCS: back issues, possible print on demand services, events (in-store signings)

► Diamond is definitely dead (but they were heading that way anyway)
CONSEQUENCES FOR THE CREATOR

- greater control over your work - potentially more revenue
- Death of traditional illustration techniques and methods?
- Death of original art sales?
- Death of collecting? With a digital comic, what do you have signed?
MOTION

moving comics