"Kirk and Spock Did What?!?"
A Brief History of Fanfiction as a Tool for Learning to Write

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Name That Tune

- Listen to the music mashup and identify the source of as many theme songs as you can.
Are You a Fan?

- Doctor Who (2005)
- Star Trek (The Next Generation)
- Game of Thrones
- The Lord of the Rings
- Sherlock
- Harry Potter
Origin Story

Fanfiction Writer

What my friends think I do.

What my mom thinks I do.

What society thinks I do.

What my boss thinks I do.

What I think I do.

What I actually do.

All, but not limited to, the aforementioned things...
The Original AcaFan

Dr. Henry Jenkins
“transmedia storytelling” and “participatory culture”
Open Learning

Harry Potter

Doctor Whooves
Social Justice

Were you disappointed by a TV series? Book? Or film?

if you still love your fandom
discover fanfiction today
and have the story YOUR way
Research Questions

- Why do young people participate in online fanfiction communities?
- How and what do young people learn through their involvement in fanfiction communities?
- What role does mentoring play in participants' learning, and what does this mentoring look like?
Fandoms and Sites

Harry Potter

my Little Pony

Doctor Who

FanFiction.net
Methods

- 9-month ethnography
- 3 types of data
  - In-depth interviews with 28 fanfiction authors.
  - 5 months of participant observations of fanfiction discussion forums and story reviews.
  - Thematic analysis of 4,500 reader reviews coded from 262 fanfiction stories.
Findings

I've received thousands of positive reviews and some truly wonderful letters and messages from people who have been genuinely touched by my writing, and it's been a massive confidence boost that helped me get through university without quitting and still helps me today if I'm feeling down.

Fanfiction was what got me into writing in the first place. I'm planning on majoring in creative writing and more than anything else, fanfiction and the fanfiction community has informed my writing style and ability, and my reviewing/editing abilities. Workshopping with a larger community, which might be an alien experience for many entering my department, is almost a daily routine for me by now.

I write fanfiction because you can get immediate feedback from an active fandom. I have to play my part as well, and give back to the community.
Distributed Mentoring

- Abundance
- Availability
- Asynchronicity
- Affect
- Aggregation
- Accretion
- Acceleration
Abundance
Asynchronicity
Our Ongoing Mission

- Big data and visualizations of fanfiction stories and reviews
  - Review categories
  - Lexical diversity
  - Relationship strength
- Surveys
  - Fan motivations
  - Fan gatherings
- Interviews
- Theoretical work
Theory Into Practice

- In groups of 3-4 people, brainstorm fictional worlds you’d like to visit and/or stories that you’ve always wanted to “fix”

- Take several minutes, individually or as a group, to decide on
  - Main character
  - Other characters involved
  - Setting
  - Situation
  - Theme/Mood
  - Character action

- Share your ideas and offer suggestions
Additional Resources

- Journal of Transformative Works and Cultures
- Professor Henry Jenkins
- General fanfiction story sites
  - FanFiction.net
  - Archive of Our Own
  - Wattpad
- Fansplaining podcast