

TV's next big experiment: 'choose your own adventure'

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Films like "Wayne's World" (1992), "Sliding Doors" (1998) and "28 Days Later" (2002) have toyed with the idea of multiple endings but none has allowed the viewer to shape the narrative in real time

For now, Netflix is calling the whole thing an experiment but the format could go beyond children's programming if enough of its 100 million subscribers respond positively.

The end goal could be a "House of Cards" where viewers can make President Frank Underwood nuke North Korea, or "The Crown," where they can have Elizabeth II abdicate.

"When you start thinking about it, and going deeper and more complex than what we've done here, it really starts to open things up, it's crazy the stuff you could do," said Towner.

"Think of a show like 'Lost'... Just knowing from the get-go it's going to be interactive, it affects the stories you would tell, how you tell them and how people would receive them."

Mostly one-offs'

Tony Gunnarsson, principal analyst at IT and telecoms consultancy Ovum, says he doesn't see the interactive experiment changing adult programming wholesale any time soon.

"Ultimately, I think this type of programming is probably going to be mostly one-offs. Certainly, Netflix is not going to have branching narratives on multiple series from now on," he told AFP.

The format has already produced the world's first truly interactive movie, however—"Late Shift" (2016) by Swiss start-up company CtrlMovie—which has played festivals across the world.

Viewers vote on the actions of the protagonist—leading to one of seven endings—using a smartphone app while the movie keeps rolling seamlessly for between 70 and 90 minutes.

"This type of content has not really been possible on a broad scale until now," Glenn Hower, a senior digital media analyst with research firm Parks Associates, told AFP.

"Sure, it could be done on DVD or Blu-ray discs, but the experience is typically slow and disruptive."

Hower said it would be interesting to see how the format could be incorporated into the booming [virtual reality](#) (VR) industry.

"Consuming VR-formatted content is highly personal as it is, and allowing a free or even semi-directed narrative gives consumers the opportunity to make this content even more their own."

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