

WEBCOMIC DESIGN “THE IMPORTANCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS” FOR TEENAGER

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Abstract: Environmental awareness is very important to be instilled in every individual, especially teenagers as the younger generation. Teenagers have never been separated from smartphones and the internet, and their reading habits have shifted to digital media. Therefore, information about the importance of environmental awareness can be conveyed in an interesting way with a webcomic. Webcomics are one of the most popular digital readings for teenagers because they are visually attractive to read, easy to access, and do not cost a lot to be able to read webcomics. From the questionnaire conducted, 52.7% of teenagers read webcomics 1-2 hours every day. The design method used in making this webcomic is a qualitative design method in which observations and interviews are conducted with resource persons who have experience in the field of webcomics. This webcomic design procedure uses the Bruce Archer method which is divided into three main stages, namely: analysis, creativity, and implementation. The webcomic creation followed the eleven elements of McCloud's comics. Meanwhile, webcomic character design uses five characters design tips by Ross Draw and several other sources. From written interviews with several comic artists who have officially published the webtoon, it can be concluded that visuals are the first thing readers see. As long as the writer can tell the story through pictures well, any drawing style can be used. In the reader questionnaire about the visual webcomic, the Korean Manhwa drawing style and the Japanese Manga style were in great demand by teenager readers. The result of this design is a media of information about environmental awareness that is attractive to teenagers. The webcomic will be published on the Line Webtoon Canvas platform.

Keywords: Environmental Awareness, Webcomic, Teenager

INTRODUCTION

Environmental damage occurs due to a lack of human responsibility in utilizing natural resources. Every human being has a responsibility to conserve ecosystems and improve the environment. Humans must also realize that the environment is a means of developing life that must be preserved [1]. Teenagers is an important period in which the values of life are formed so that it is the right time to educate the importance of environmental awareness [2]. Embedding environmental awareness is an effort to make young people good future leaders, planners, policy makers and environmental educators [3].

Comics are a form of communication media that can convey information through visuals. Comics have developed into a digital form and do not have to be printed in book form. One form of digital comics is webcomics which are published on the web so that readers can read them using the internet [4]. Webcomic has a platform in the form of applications that can be downloaded easily on smartphones. Supported by many webcomic platforms that give comic artists the opportunity to publish their comics and can be read for free [5]. The platform provides an honorarium to comic artists whose works are selected as official works [6]. To

become an official work of a platform is not easy because there are several factors that must be considered such as; consistent story line, visuals, readership, and upload time. Recently, in Indonesia, there have been many webcomic platforms that appear in various languages, including Indonesian.

Webcomics are widely read by teenagers. The reading habits of the global community in the form of digital reading in several developing countries are carried out by teenagers, namely 69%, who are active smartphone users [7]. Webcomics are also used to convey educational information such as marketing lessons [8], science [9], history [10], and cyberbullying [11]. However, there are still few who take the topic of environmental awareness education.

METHOD

This webcomic design procedure uses the Bruce Archer design method which is divided into three stages, namely: Analytical Phase, Creative Phase, and Executive Phase. These three stages outline some of the main steps, namely programming, data collection, analysis, synthesis, development, and communication [12].

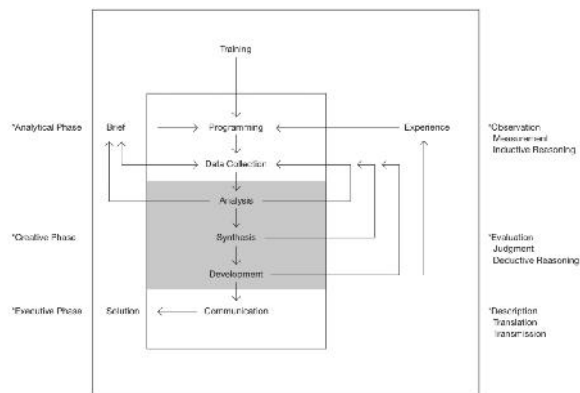


Figure 1. Basic Design Procedure by Bruce Archer, adapted from Dubberly (2004)

This procedure starts from the programming stage which aims to determine the problem. The problem that can be obtained is the environmental awareness of teenagers. Furthermore, data collection was carried out from teenagers as target audiences, professional webcomic author and artist, observations of popular webcomic, and journals that support webcomic topics and environmental awareness. In the analysis stage, the results of the data obtained are then sorted and regrouped according to certain criteria to then look for the link and its meaning. The design continues to the synthesis stage which combines the results of the analysis into one conclusion. The results of the synthesis are used to draft the content of the webcomic to be made. At the development stage, the prototype of webcomic is made which is going to be developed into several episodes using comic theory and the creation followed eleven elements of comics [13]. For the communication stage, the appropriate media selected to communicate the design results, which in this case is a webcomic. The webcomic will be distributed through the Line Webtoon Indonesia webcomic platform and promoted through social media.

Data collection focuses on three aspects, the image aspect, the creator aspect or the production aspect, and the audience aspect [14]. Every visual communication design work is made with the aim of communicating a message. Image aspect data or images are collected

from observation and recording from various reference sources to support the design of visual works. In this design the data were obtained through direct observation of several webcomic titles that are widely read by readers in Indonesia. Data regarding teenager's environmental awareness were obtained from related journals and articles. In making webcomic design work on environmental awareness involves several parties other than the author. Data on webcomics were obtained from written interviews with webcomic author and artist who are experts and experienced in the field of comics and webcomics. In making this webcomic design, data from the target audience is also needed which is teenagers who are interested in fantasy webcomics with the theme of environmental awareness. Audience data collection uses online surveys distributed on social media.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The design of this webcomic focuses on environmental awareness topics which include human impact on the environment and environmental preservation. Topics discussed were around pollution, waste, use of plastics, recycling, energy saving, and environmental preservation. Webcomic story content combines environmental awareness phenomena and action-fantasy fiction stories with a group of teenagers as the main character. In a questionnaire distributed to target readers, the fantasy genre webcomic was said to be attractive by most respondents because the fantasy genre has a wide range, also can be collaborate with other genres, and the story not tied to everyday realities such as the slice-of-life genre. Some of respondents thought that the fantasy genre can develop ideas from casual story into new things that are unique and interesting.

In the process of designing this webcomic, character design is also carried out. Good character designs have personality. Personality is needed to encourage the progress of the story so that character development occurs. The story has an important role in a character design. Determining the character's personality and story background before creating the character design itself will strengthen the character's design results [15]. Relatability is also very important in making a character. If the reader feels connected to the character's story, then the reader will understand how the character feels too. They put an interest in following the character's journey [16].

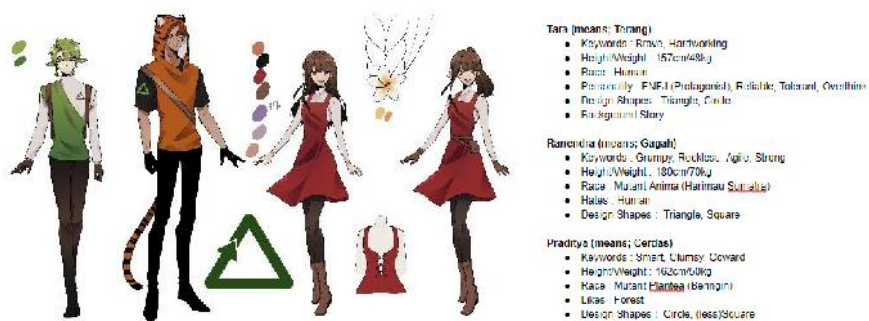


Figure 2. Characters Design and Personality Data

The webcomic created digitally using the Clip Studio Paint and Photoshop application with a maximum image size of 800 x 1280 pixels, a maximum file size of 2MB, and a total of all files up to a maximum of 20MB in JPG, JPEG and PNG formats. The stages of making a webcomic start from compiling a story with the 5W + 1H method, writing the storyline, drawing the story sketch, line-art, base colouring and finishing. The webcomic banner design focuses on three

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