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Comment: YouTube video annotations - where next?

Should be used to recreate Fighting Fantasy novels

by Stuart Miles published on 15 July 2009

The Met police department in the UK has come up with an innovative way of using YouTube's video annotations for an anti-knife crime campaign.

The concept is that users watch a video on YouTube and then can decide what action to take next thanks to the new feature from Google.

In the case of the video, it is whether or not to pick up a knife and then later stab someone. But as the consequences play out and the story twists and turns it made me think that it can't be long before someone creates a short movie of a similar effect - ie allowing you to choose the fate of the characters that you are watching.

In a further moment of geekiness, it then dawned on me that the same principle could be used to create a modern day version of the Fighting Fantasy novels by Steven Jackson and Ian Livingston.

The precursor to the video game (Livingston actually went on to set up Eidos), the books read by thousands of spotty teenagers in the 1980s allowed you to choose the story you wanted to read by opting to turn to different pages based on your actions.

In some cases the right answers were easy to spot, in others, like Scorpion Swamp for example, the wrong decision could see you going around and around in circles for hours if not days.

Take that model of the user being in control of the storyline and you could see yourself spending hours on YouTube watching a film that you've created by the choices you've made.



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The only surprise, is that it's been created by a clever creative type to stop knife crime in the UK, rather than by the porn industry to choose which "honey" you go home with.

Imagine if Fighting Fantasy was re-created Lord of the Ring Style on YouTube?

Geeky as it may sound I bet it would be a huge hit as viewers battled orcs, saved elves and went on their merry quest for treasure just by watching short clips and choosing where to go next.

But whether it's Hollywood or the Porn industry that gets there first, one thing is for sure, if someone decides to capitalise on the move, I bet it will be the talk of the industry.