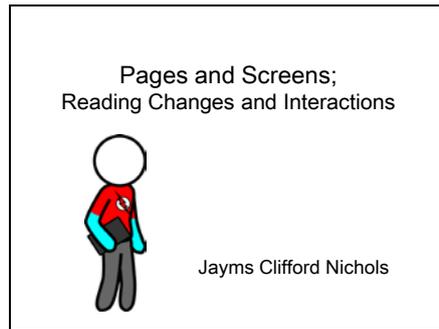
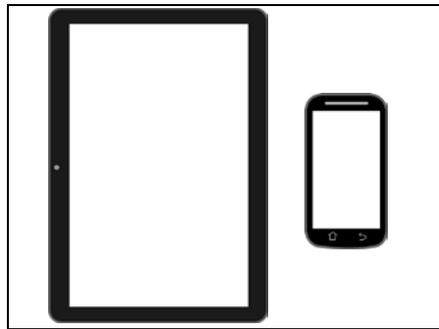


Slide 1



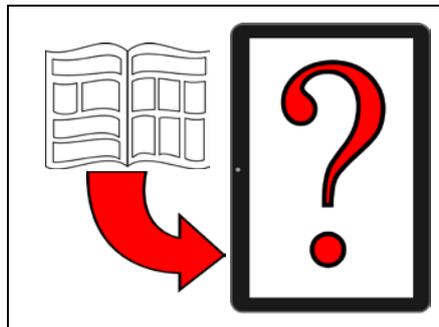
I'm a PhD student looking at digital comics on portable display devices, and most importantly how the interactive nature of these devices change the ways we read comics on them.

Slide 2



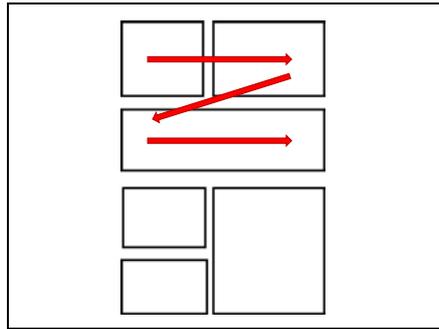
Emergent technologies such as tablets and smart-phones and a want for comics to be available digitally through the internet has lead to a series of changes to the ways we read and interact with comics.

Slide 3



With these changes comes a series of difficulties and challenges to the ways we display comics on screen. Particularly when repurposing print comics. It is these challenges that this presentation is about. With a focus on the use of the double page spread.

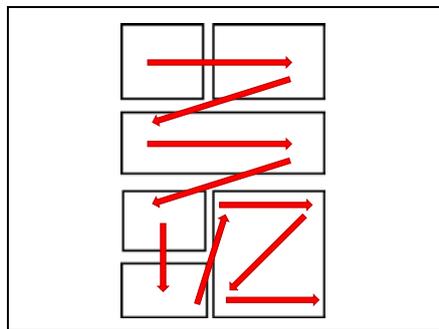
Slide 4



But before I start talking about this in detail it is important for you to understand why there is a challenge at all.

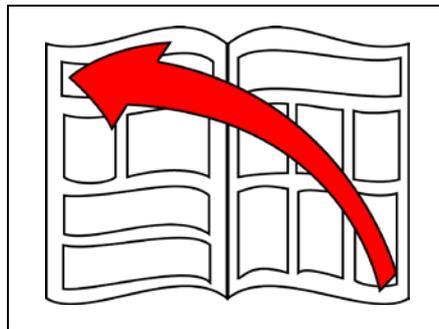
When we read a comic we follow a path from panel to panel across the page which links the individual images together into a story.

Slide 5



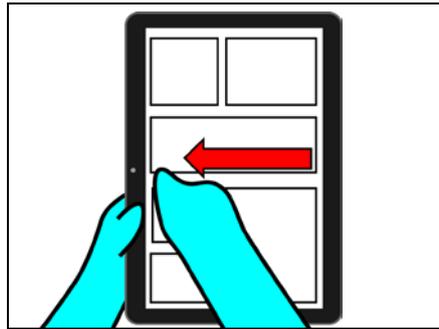
I refer to this path as the raster of reading. In western culture this raster runs from left to right, top to bottom and whilst it is sometimes subverted by the shapes and sizes of the panels it is always the thing that governs our progressing through the story.

Slide 6



Our absorption into the story is dependent on us being able to follow this raster without being interrupted and removing ourselves from it. In a print comic the only interruption is the turning of the page. And being a relatively redundant action; meaning one which is done with little conscious thought, it doesn't break the reading flow.

Slide 7



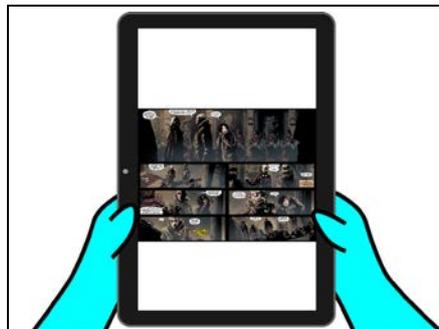
With a comic presented on a tablet the redundant action of turning a page is replaced by the similarly redundant action of swiping or tapping the screen. An action that Alan Peacock and I refer to as the naviscroll. Bolter and Grusin would describe this as an action of immediacy as there is little disruption to the reading.

Slide 8



However, when we reach a a double page spread where the raster stretches from left to right across two pages, we discover the challenge presented by the use of the device.

Slide 9



The double page spread appears in full in the centre of the screen. You can see the layout of the panels which makes up what McCloud calls the temporal map but the content is too small to read.

Slide 10



The result is that you have to perform the intrusive action of rotating the tablet to see the page more clearly. This action requires us to remove ourselves from the reading flow and breaks our absorption in the story. An action referred to by Bolter and Grusin as one of hypermediacy.

Slide 11



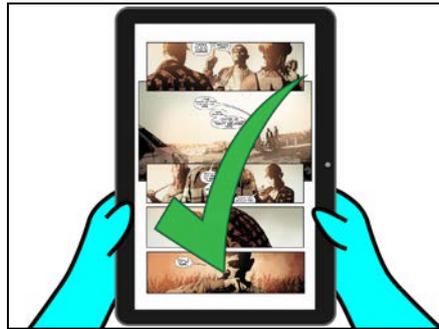
Often the further intrusive action of zooming or enlarging the image is required in order to read text. Further removing us from our absorption in the story and forcing us to focus on our interaction with the device.

Slide 12



The difficulty in repurposing print comics for the tablet screen is now evident. It is the size of the screen itself that poses the challenge to the absorption in the reading raster.

Slide 13



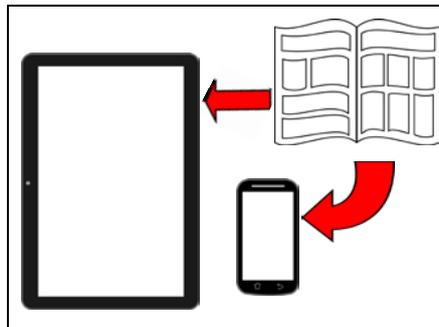
The area of the single print-comic page is well suited to the display of a tablet screen but because the pages are not displayed side by side difficulties arise when trying to display double page spreads. A layout much larger than a standard tablet screen.

Slide 14



I feel it is best not to show double page spreads on tablets at all but to develop a way to overcome the difficulties inherent in repurposing print comics for them.

Slide 15



Some efforts have been made to overcome the issues of displaying print comics digitally but these tend to be generalised to all digital devices and can still cause problems which affect the reading experience.

Slide 16



The primary method used to overcome the constraints of the digital screen is the use of panel-by-panel viewing in which each panel is shown full screen one at a time. This is all done automatically so that the user does not have to remove them self from the reading flow.

Slide 17



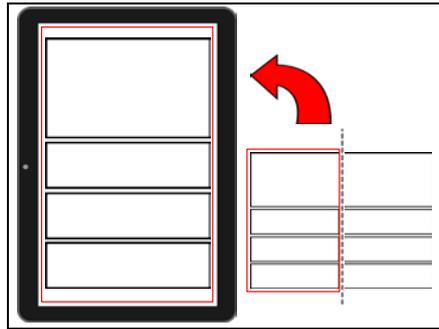
This is a useful display method for smart phones as the small screen size does not allow for full pages to be shown at a readable size.

Slide 18



However when used on the tablet screen it offers unnecessary constraints. The method removes the panel from it's relational place in the overall image map which changes the reading experience in ways it does not have to. .

Slide 19



A tablet does not need to take the individual panel away from it's surrounding panels to display it correctly so a new method needs to be considered which is separate from both the double page spread of the print comic and the panel-by-panel view of the smart-phone.

Slide 20



I would suggest that the content of a double page spread be redistributed in some way which is specific to tablet viewing. This would require further development by publishers but I feel that the tablet format deserves it's own consideration for displaying comics.