

The techniques used  
to persuade  
audiences to watch  
the films essay  
sample



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The purpose of a film trailer is to convince an audience to pay to watch your film, yet often we don't realise the importance of the trailer. Film trailers give a particular target audience a taster of the film, convincing them that it is worth seeing, but if the trailer doesn't represent a movie well enough, then that film may not reach audiences of its full potential. We analysed *You've Got Mail* and *Matrix Revolutions*. '*You've Got Mail*' is a romantic comedy targeted at women.

The genre and characters will appeal to both teenage girls and older women, whereas *Matrix Revolutions* is a Sci-fi, targeted at older ages, particularly men because of the Sci-fi genre. However during the trailer there is a passionate kiss, indicating that there is a love story, therefore the trailer is trying to gain a larger audience. I don't think that the success of the trailer is what *Matrix Revolutions* relies on for publicity, because of the success of the prequels- *The Matrix*, the first in the trilogy and *Matrix Reloaded*, its sequel. Due to their success I think that their audiences will view the final sequel.

However, *You've Got Mail* was a new film, its theme is a simple, modernized traditional romantic comedy, and uses famous actors, Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan, as its unique selling point. We have seen these actors together in *Sleepless in Seattle*, a famous love story also using dramatic irony, by the same director, which it mentions in the trailer, gaining the attention of a wider range of audiences. *The Matrix Revolutions* trailer doesn't chronologically fit together, as *You've Got Mail* does. Instead it uses premonitions of the future, spectacle over narrative, using fast editing to tempt audiences with glimpses of the film.

In contrast, *You've Got Mail* uses a narrative with the shots, increasing the chronological order in the film, and so our expectations as the viewer are already set up. The *Matrix Revolutions* trailer begins out of focus, impressing the sense of a dream, or perhaps an insight to death. The view slowly comes into focus, zooming down, whilst spinning. Our first clear shot is of Neo (the audience knows immediately that he is the main character), opening his eyes. This gives an impression of a reality awakening, whilst the narrative (which the audience recognises as the Oracle's), is having a premonition.

Already the trailer is straight to the point, and in comparison to the prequels, it has an immediate effect, because the audience wonder why the screen appears so motionless. Alternatively, '*You've Got Mail*' uses narrative over spectacle. The opening shots are of Meg Ryan and Tom Hanks (the unique selling points) dressed in ordinary everyday clothes, having a surreptitious relationship over the internet. Already the audience can relate to the characters because of the way the characters dress in every day, ordinary clothes.

I think that a lot of the audience, being perhaps middle aged women identify with Meg Ryan- women who secretly seek more exhilaration in their lives, and find Tom Hanks attractive, therefore after seeing the first two shots have already been convinced that they will view the film, based on those reasons. During the *Matrix* trailer, the fast editing is a massive antithesis to the slow voice combined with opera in the background. It gives the impression of an action film with depth, because of the complex combinations neither giving away the ending nor depriving the audience of a taste of the action.

In contrast, the majority of the shots in *You've Got Mail* are medium close ups, establishing the characters: Tom Hanks, Meg Ryan, their friends, and of the computer, reminding us of the restriction in their relationship. This relates to the genre, and helps us to feel more relaxed whereas the fast editing in *The Matrix* is designed to keep the audience riveted. In *The Matrix* the sound effects are very mixed. We watch spectacle over narrative because the USP of *The Matrix* is the action and special effects.

The Oracle's dialogue- Everything that has a beginning has an end. I see the end coming. I see darkness. I see death. You are all that stands in his way. If you do not stop him tonight, then I fear that tomorrow might never come. ' The Oracle's dialogue is extremely thought provoking and influential. It represents the levels within the Matrix- philosophical theories such as ' What is reality? ' The Oracle was introduced in the first film- she is the all knowing, omnipotent character. Therefore, what she says goes. If she says the end is coming, the end is coming.

She is whispering to the audience, it helps us to feel more involved, but at the end, she is talking to Neo- ' If you do not stop him tonight, then I fear that tomorrow might never come. ' It implies that there is going to be an ultimate fight, between Mr. Smith and Mr. Anderson, and that the fight determines tomorrow, convincing the audience that the fight is worth viewing. The Oracle's premonition is confirmed when we see a shot of Neo and Mr. Smith, the agent enemy, poised to fight. I think that Agent Smith represents a typical man- or every man, because of his typical male name. ' Mr. Anderson, welcome back. We missed you.

This is a reference to the last film, reminding us of previous happenings. The spectacle will usually relate to the narrative, for example when the Oracle says she sees darkness, we see a corridor with a pitch black slowly enveloping the corridor. When the Oracle says, ' I see the end coming' Trinity takes off her glasses, looking worried. It creates a tension that makes the audience want to watch the film to relieve. ' It ends tonight. ' This is in reference to a final fight. It creates a cliff hanger and so persuades the audience to watch the film. It is after these words are exchanged that the fast editing begins.

Flashes of gunfire, bullets, opera and ultra slow motion are combined on screen to gain and hold your attention. What makes this contrast so fascinating is the combination of fight scenes and opera (which symbolises calm), at the same time. It emphasizes what is happening on screen, emphasizing the importance of the final fight- reminding us why we should see the film. Similarly ' You've Got Mail' uses a narrative in the background, however it is the traditional Man's voice, ' In a city where everyone is looking for someone, Cathleen and Joe have discovered that the best way to meet someone- is not to meet at all.

What they don't realise, is that they already have- in life they are at odds, on line they are in love. ' After learning that the characters know each other in reality, the audience realise that it becomes inevitable for them to traditionally fall in love and live happily ever after. The soundtrack is appropriate, and relates to the spectacle, for example, the song- Mr. Postman runs with the theme of mail, and when the song sings STOP! the music stops, and the man on screen holds out his hand.

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The Voice over also mentions the actors, after which those characters are displayed on screen, ' from the director of Sleepless in Seattle' informing us of the genre of film, implying that if you liked Sleepless in Seattle, then you will enjoy this film also. The shots are edited so they alter between the two main characters, for example at the beginning of the trailer, Meg Ryan (Cathleen) is reading out what she is currently typing ' I go on line, my breath catches until I hear those three simple words' camera switches to Tom Hanks, (Joe Fox) ' You've Got Mail.

This is an introduction to their similarities, and introduces the viewer to the dramatically ironic aspect. Throughout the trailer we see them in the same states of nervousness, asking advice from their friends, and dramatic irony is apparent when they're sitting back to back and they don't know who one another are, or when they're walking past each other, day dreaming about one-another- the audiences know what's going on, creating humour. The irony of their situation is emphasised with lines such as ' He could be the next person to walk into the store' then the bell rings and it cuts to next shot, building a cliffhanger.

The shots in the Matrix trailer are mainly to reintroduce the main characters and introduce the new ones. The trailer is made up of a montage of the crucial moments in the film. The long shots are of the villains and the close up shots are of the heroes, and I think that this is to help us to relate to the heroes, they are our friends and the villains our enemies, who in reality we keep our distance from. Mostly the shots of Neo are expressionless, and he wears a black suit complete with black sunglasses.

When his face is expressionless it makes him seem in control and calm and when he puts on his glasses he loses his identity. Neo always puts on his glasses to fight, and I think that this is meant to encourage the audience to accept that he turns into a human-robot, we can't see the expression in his eyes, and he changes his character when the glasses go on. I also think the same for Trinity's character, but she loses her gender as well as her expressions etc. However, I think that this is a disguise and has to put his glasses on because of the way the film was made i. e. when he fights, it's choreographed and speeded up, and so Neo's eyes would be constantly blinking.

The way in which Neo fights (his invincible power), and how he is combined with the fact that he is 'The One', and the only one who can stop Mr. Anderson's plans, makes him seem like a superhero- with his flying skills and his ability to dodge bullets. I also think that he is in a way representing Christ; his name is an anagram of One, his purpose is to save civilization and his status is ultimate. Throughout the rapid cutting, Opera is played similarly to when Opera is played when Christ is coming.

The shots are also about informing the audience about who the villains are and what we can expect, for example we know from the last film that it is a struggle against the machines and so we see shots of the machines flying, followed by fire, giving the impression that we should expect death and destruction in the film. There are also levels to the shots, for example we see a shot, from below shooting up, of Neo, in sunglasses, and we also see a shot of Agent Smith in sunglasses, shot from below, looking up.

We see each of them in over the shoulder shots, hands clenched and it echoes a Western, Cowboys and Indians film and also film noir. This implies that they are of equal strength, ability and the same character, creating a cliffhanger of who will win. The shots in You've Got Mail are mainly establishing shots, and aren't particularly varied, but they don't have to be because the shots aren't the USP unlike the matrix. It also uses extreme close up shots of the computer screen so we can read the emails, encouraging the audience to feel more involved.

Special effects in The Matrix Revolutions are of the famous bullet and fight scenes in ultra slow motion, relating to the sci-fi genre. Throughout the trailer there is running theme of a green tint, relating to the actual Matrix. The Matrix is a computer programme, an illusion for human beings that is read in letters which run down a screen- a code. The Matrix is coloured emerald, because on old computers the type was always this colour, therefore it makes sense that if the matrix- which rule the films, is in green, than this colour should theme the film.

Green also represents death and disease which is ironic because according to the Matrix, death and disease doesn't technically exist. You've Got Mail is of an opposite genre, and is based on reality as opposed to sci-fi, and so therefore won't use any special effects, however sound effects are used to bring the screen into reality, for example when they log online, you hear a dialing tone. Both of the films use pathetic fallacy.

The film is set in two basic locations in You've Got Mail- The bookshops, established by a shot of ' Fox Books' and ' The Shop Around The Corner'

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(which also informs us why they are at odds in real life), and in their homes on the computer- their internet relationship, and so we don't really see the weather, however when we do see a shot of them outside, its Autumn (the leaves are everywhere and the sun is shining), creating a positive atmosphere and emphasizing the humour and romance, whereas in The Matrix there is thunder and lightning and pouring rain when there are fight scenes.

The general mood of the film is negative and dark, linking to Film Noir, where it's constantly rainy, gloomy and nighttime. This is the general set of the main fight scene. The ' You've Got Mail' trailer ends with a close up shot of a computer screen, a mouse clicking on the words You've Got Mail, reference to the title. The Matrix Revolution trailer ends with the green letters, running down the screen- also reference to the title.

To conclude, I don't think that the Matrix Revolutions trailer needs to succeed because of the success of the prequels, however if the prequels didn't exist then I do think that it would achieve its potential audiences relying on its originality, and because of the contrast of spectacles of action against whisper and opera against gun fighting etc.

What really would convince me go and see the film however is to find out the result of the fight, and find out whether or not the Oracle's premonition was fulfilled, and so I think focusing the trailer on the final fight was a successful selling point. I wouldn't be so convinced that I should watch You've Got Mail however, but I do think that as a trailer it succeeds in selling the film. It applies well to the target audience and although we, the audience, already

know the ending, the trailer achieves making us want to know how the characters end up together.

The trailer managed to create a happy, positive atmosphere, introduce a lot of comedy, slip to the audience subtleties such as ' by the director of Sleepless in Seattle' and use original effects, that caught your attention and kept it, such as relating the music to what was happening on screen. I find it difficult to judge the trailers because after viewing both of the films, my opinion would be biased. Instead I'll say that You've Got Mail best advertises the film from scratch to its appropriate target audience, and is therefore the most successful trailer of the two.

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