

Where In The World???

An ARG Mystery Exploring Culture Around the Globe

~ A Story and Gaming Concept Created by Erica Hargreave (May 2017)

Project Concept

'Where in the World???' is an Alternate Reality Game that is a spin off of the storyworld first built around Emme Rogers, Canada's Digital IT Girl and own Bridget Jones, a character that paved the way for characters on the web and one of the World's first transmedia characters of the digital age, and the continuing transmedia travel tale that is roamancing.com.

Think Carmen Sandiego meets 21st Century gaming and adventure.

Ever since Emme Rogers was a young lass, she dreamt about becoming an international spy. While other girls fantasized about barbies and becoming princesses, her heroines were the Charlie's Angels and dare I say it, Jessica Fletcher. She didn't need a knight in shining white armour, she was going to be James Bond's White Knight! One day she too would be traipsing the globe, like Carmen Sandiego, solving International Mysteries of her own! As she grew up, and her tom boyish figure developed a little more curvaceously, and she gained fanboys as a Canadian Digital Darling, her spy dreams were egged on, as her long list of would be suitors loudly dreamt of her donning a cat suit and becoming the next Emma Peel.

For all her prowess and athleticism, Emme is not the most coordinated individual and was, shall we say, a wee bit accident prone, so sadly the spy agencies never came a knocking. Who knows, some of this may have been due to Emme's active chatter about super sleuthy training, chasing after NISA agent, Benjamin Nu'du, and discussing her training in gentlemen's sword play. Go figure, maybe a Spy is not one of those jobs that you can get, by screaming out loud all over social media that that's what you want???. Either which way, whenever the Secret Service came a calling, it was never for her, rather to check in on a number of Emme's illustrious and questionably spy friends, not that they'd ever admit it. So no doubt the country's top spy agency had a file on her! But still no knocks on the door.

Emme's generally a glass half full kind of gal, and certainly was not going to let that hold her back from adventure, so she left her spy fantasies behind, 'growing up' to become a Roamancing.com international woman of mystery roamancing the globe! And as so often happens with so many in love, when she wasn't looking, BAM, she finds she's accidentally stumbled into an International mystery ... A mystery she can't solve on her own ... She needs your help! NOW, before it's too late!

This is an adventure where would be detectives from homes around the World will help search out clues, buried throughout the web, to help keep Emme safe, solve the mystery and win prizes along the way. If the arm chair detectives decide to follow the clues into real life and to places around the World, then they will be met with tangible real world clues to solve and ladders up in the game. This could include augmented reality scenes of the past and present viewed at specific locations through a tablet or smart phone, geo caching adventures and place in time immersive theatre experiences. We will explore the use of mobile technologies like Ingress to add a mobile virtual layer to the game that works with google maps.

So what are you waiting for? Hurry on over to romancing.com, find the clue, and help Emme out ... before it's too late!!!

Current Vision for the ARG

The Story / Mystery: Where in the World - Norway Edition

In order to access the potential for Canadian co-production funding and as a logical starting point for Emme to stumble upon an International Mystery that leads her to Norway, Emme uncovers an old copy of the Norwegian Canadian paper Noorana in a library archive in Vancouver. There she finds a peculiar ad that upon further investigation leads her to exploring Norway's history and culture in Canada - both now and then - with the help of other amateur sleuths (our game players) online. These clues could include famous Canadians of Norwegian decent, like the father of Canadian skiing Jackrabbit Herman-Smith Johannsen, skier Anne Heggveit, and figure skater Karen Magnussen; organizations like the Canadian Club of Norway, the Canadian Alumni Club of

Norway, the Canadian Norwegian Business Association, the Canadian Club of Western Norway, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church; as well as places, like L'Anse aux Meadows, Eau Claire, and Axel Heiberg Island.

As Emme and our online amateur sleuths follow the trail of clues this mystery ends up leading them across the Atlantic to Norway, where the mystery continues through the exploration of Norwegian present day culture, natural and cultural history, mythology, and Norwegian Romanticism. In Norway, the mystery will lead Emme and our online amateur sleuths to towns and cities throughout Norway, parks and historic sites, museums, festivals, and perhaps even on the reindeer migration.

Structure of the Game

As with many ARGs, the game will unfold both on the web and in real life. Clues and access points to the game will take players across platforms of media on the web, including different platforms of social media, blogs, forums, and on to sponsor and partner sites. This will allow people to join and participate in the game from wherever they may be in the world with their computer, tablet or smartphone. However, if they wish to advance faster in the game (essentially a ladder up in the game), they could show up at one of the real life places that the game leads them to, that has been geo starred, to discover augmented reality clues (that may be historic or mythological in nature) and geo caching experiences. Throughout the game, there will also be hints to real life events at specific places at specific times. These will also give players that show up a ladder up in the game and a real life opportunity to connect with other players in the game.

In terms of the Augmented Reality experiences, I am envisioning experiences that could be used by partner organizations to share stories from history or mythology that whilst hiding a clue, can also be used separate of the game, so that these organizations have the augmented reality experiences to use with their visitors long after the game is done, much in the way Maihaugen uses audio recording to tell stories of sites within the park during their low visitor season. Right now, I see these augmented scenes as a mixture of CGI and performances by real life actors, that will appear to visitors using the Where in the World

smartphone and tablet app at the specific locations. Currently I envision these as ghostly black and white scenes depicting moments in history or pieces of mythology. While each of these will be crafted as standalone stories for the partner organization (park, city, historic site, museum ... etc), they also all contain a clue that lead to another geocached clue on the site. To give the player that ladder up in the game, the geocached clue will include a call to action, getting the players to create their own online artifact in the form of a picture or video from the site, both proving that they were there and from a marketing standpoint acting as a shoutout to the partner site and another potential teaser to the game for the game player's online community.

How Will Players Access the Game

There will be many points of entry to the game that players can stumble upon. Some entry points will be through blogs and social media posts on Emme, Roamancing's, and other co-conspirators from around the World who will act as digital and real world instigators and antagonists within the game (both helping our would be detectives at home to find and solve crews and creating obstacles to slow them down, if they are progressing too quickly). Players may also stumble upon entries to the game, through clues on sponsors' / partners' sites. In addition, people may discover themselves in the game, whilst geocaching, having an Augmented Reality experience at a partner site, or while witnessing an immersive theatre experience from the game. Should they wish to join the game from these experiences, they will find an access point, in the form of a web address, QR Code, or some such.

Target Audience

Our target audience with 'Where in the World?' are adults with a love of travel, adventure and / or mystery, who enjoy an occasional bit of the ridiculous. In addition, to this audience, I will target gamers and fanboys / girls, who love to be immersed within a story.

The digital travel community I know well, and have been building in with Emme, Roamancing and myself since 2011. Roamancing has also been considered a leader in this community since I spoke at a UNWTO in Egypt in 2012 and did a real time storytelling demonstration for the conference that engaged people and other bloggers from around the World.

While I have a bit of a gamer / fanboy / fangirl following for Emme, as they like when she starts teasing with sweet tech and linux musings, I will want to actively build further into the gamer / fanboy / fangirl community.

Strategy for Commercialization

My long-term goal with 'Where in the World?' is to create a serialized ARG, where every year to two years, we release a new mystery to solve.

The plan would be to make the game a hot ticket storytelling item for brands (especially around travel). By participating as a sponsor / partner, clues could lead the participants onto the sponsor / partner's website, as well as to real world spaces or events of the sponsor / partner. Prizes within the game could also involve the different sponsors / partners.

Due to my work with Roamancing, I have been getting to know and work with different brands related to travel, as well as tourism boards, and have spoken with some of these entities about my long-term plans for Roamancing with this ARG, and they have been interested. Of particular interest has been Expedia, who has been involved in ARGs in the past, and is interested in possibly getting involved in another.