

The Rhetoric of Transmedia Storytelling in Book Trailers Published on YouTube

By

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Submitted to the Faculty of Extension, University of Alberta  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts in Communications and Technology

March 9, 2015

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### **Acknowledgements**

Firstly, I would like to thank Dr. Margaret Mackey, Professor in the School of Library and Information Studies, University of Alberta, for supervising my project even though I was in the Master of Arts in Communications and Technology program. I appreciate the time you spent to review my work and your guidance and encouragement were invaluable. Your course, which I took as an elective, Library and Information Studies 585 – Multimedia Literacies, inspired me to learn more about paratext and led me towards this research topic. I would also like to thank Dr. Jessica Laccetti who taught COMM 597 – New Media Narratives and identified that my interest in book trailers was an area of research that would fill a gap in the field of transmedia studies. I am so thankful to Cohort 2013 for being a constant support throughout this degree. I've gained so much from our many conversations on and offline in addition to what we learned in class.

Finally, I would like to thank Sandra McFadyen and Fraser Forbes, Department of Chemical and Materials Engineering, for their assistance and supporting my commitment to this degree while working full time.

### **Abstract**

Everyone knows what a movie trailer is, but few people have watched or even heard of a book trailer. This study involved a content analysis of 30 book trailers published on YouTube by: Harper Teen, Penguin Teen, Random House Children, Simon & Schuster Young Adult, Little Brown Books (Hachette), and Fierce Reads (Macmillan). Rhetorical theory was applied as the lens of analysis to understand how publishers convey the ethos, pathos, and logos in this new digital medium for advertising books. Both qualitative data (content in the video) and quantitative data (metrics gathered by YouTube) were collected. The results showed that video allows for the strong presence of pathos, which is often understated or missing from back-cover copy or book synopses. The ethos is often inconsistently conveyed in book trailers and the logos is key to producing an advertisement that engages viewers, which may convert them into potential readers. A list of rhetorical recommendations was developed for future book trailer publishers to minimize the need for experimentation with the medium and as a first step towards establishing conventions for video book advertisements.

## Introduction

Movie trailers are a commonly consumed form of advertising, but what about book trailers? Book trailers are a newer medium of video advertising intended to entertain and entice viewers into reading the featured book. They were largely popularized in the early millennium and are being produced by publishers and authors to advertise their books online. So far there has been little research on this format of digital storytelling. A content analysis of 30 book trailers published on YouTube.com was conducted with five trailers selected from each of the formerly known, “Big Six”<sup>1</sup> publishers: Harper Collins, Penguin, Random House, Simon & Schuster, Hachette, and Macmillan. The aim of the study is to discover what content is included to develop a set of conventions for digital storytelling in book trailer format. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected in order to understand this newer form of advertising and to provide some insight into the viewers’ perceptions of the book trailers. Rhetorical theory was applied to determine the ability of the book trailers to persuade the viewers to engage with the video. Because book trailers are a growing medium for digital advertising, especially through social media, there are no established conventions for persuasive marketing such as: how the author should be featured (ethos), what type of music and imagery should be used (pathos), or what information about the book should be included (logos). The results of this study includes a set of recommendations for book trailer storyboards to create strong rhetoric that entices viewers enough to engage with the video (e.g. like, comment, share) and to leave viewers with enough information to decide whether they wish to read the featured book.

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<sup>1</sup> These publishers were formerly known as the “Big Six”, but are now known as the “Big Five” with the merger of Penguin and Random House in July 2013.

## Background

The first Book Trailer® was produced in 2002 by Circle of Seven (COS) Productions, a company based in Brentwood, California, with a second office in London, United Kingdom. The owner, Sheila Clover English, trademarked the term Book Trailer® in 2003 and defined it as “an acted-out dramatization of a book synopsis” (English, 2008, p. 15). The U.S. trademark states that a book trailer is: “promoting the goods of others by preparing and creating advertisements for books in the form of videos” (“Book Trailer,” 2003). Although “book video” is a more encompassing term for the different styles of video advertisements for books, the term “book trailer” will be used throughout this paper as an umbrella term instead because the media and academics are widely using it, and book trailers can be mentally associated with movie trailers to aid in comprehension for those for whom the concept is new. As Metz (2012) comments, “the awkward cousin to movie previews and TV teasers, book trailers have been around for a decade or so, offering glimpses of newly published books. Not that anyone noticed. If the concept has yet to make cultural inroads, the reason is obvious: Most book trailers are terrible.”

Book trailers are beginning to make cultural inroads as large publishers, production companies as well as independent (indie) authors or small presses are beginning to produce more book trailers. COS Productions has won several awards and produces book trailers for as low as \$250 to as high as \$15,000<sup>2</sup> (English, 2008, p. 45). Indies and small presses can create simple book trailers on their personal computers for a lower cost (e.g. the cost of the video software and hardware, the purchase of stock images, and the time commitment). Metz (2012) says, “Book trailers are made on the cheap — and they look it. Some are created in-house by publishers. The rest are generated by small production companies that charge anywhere from a few hundred dollars up to \$10,000.” The monetary investment in book trailers impacts the quality of the video.

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<sup>2</sup> Prices may be subject to change as numbers quoted were from 2008.

Book trailers are gaining popularity as they are being published on YouTube and shared on several social media websites such as Twitter and Facebook, both which have millions of users, a development that calls for an investigative study into the medium's content.

### **Literature Review**

A literature search has shown that few studies have been done specifically on how book trailers affect viewers. Only two studies were found: one was published in German, but no English translation could be acquired (Schafer-Hock & Hartmann, 2013), and a second study was published by Davila (2010) who surveyed participants on the content of specifically selected Young Adult book trailers. Many resources were found that provide technical instructions on how to create a book trailer (e.g. how to use the software), but this study focuses on the content of book trailers not the technical process of creation. How readers select a book is also a key issue. Research has shown that the reader's mood can effect their selection as does their desired experience and the cost in terms of time and money (Sheldrick Ross & Chelton, 2001). Book trailers may be a new method for readers to select books based on their current mood. The literature relevant to this study can be divided into three main categories. (1) Video marketing research with the subcategories of: marketing with online video, and YouTube marketing; (2) digital storytelling, paratext, and transmedia; (3) research on book trailers with subcategories of: the impact of book trailers on readers, book trailers in the classroom, and book trailers in the publishing industry.

### **Video Marketing Research**

**Marketing with online video.** Online advertisements are quickly becoming the medium of choice to drive both brand awareness and sales. Rick Bruner says, "there are clear ROI [return on investment] advantages to placing ads. We expect to see strong growth in the number of companies reaping the benefits of online video advertising in the coming months and years" (as



cited in Miller, 2009, p. 10). Miller (2009) writes that experts believe online videos are better at imparting brand awareness than traditional TV ads because “online viewers are more engaged than television viewers; [and] the Web is a more interactive medium than the passive viewing with television” (p.14). David Sevitt discusses three types of marketing videos: “conversion video”, “viral”, and “education video” (as cited in Nalty, 2010, p. 72). In the 1990’s, marketers used the term “viral” to describe marketing that would spread through word-of-mouth like a virus and from this the term “viral video” was born (Nalty, 2010, xvii). An “educational video” educates and may establish thought-leadership (Nalty, 2010, p. 74). while a “conversion video” has a clear goal and should drive users towards that goal through a call to action (Sevitt as cited in Nalty, 2010, p. 72). A book trailer is a type of “conversion video” and possible calls to action for publishers could be for example: “visit our website” or “get your copy today”. The goal of a book trailer is to ultimately convert viewers into readers.

With the Internet, communication is no longer limited to only one-way and this shift calls for changes in traditional marketing. The “marketing funnel” is a term used to describe a target-customer's path from “awareness” towards “loyalty” involving: (1) the consideration of many brands, (2) narrowing down the choices to fewer brands, (3) making a final choice, and then (4) making the purchase (Edelman, 2010). Because the Internet is a newer marketing medium, Edelman (2010) describes a new four-stage consumer journey including the: (1) consider, (2) evaluate, (3) buy, and (4) enjoy/advocate/bond stages (p. 65). The fourth stage is new as a result of the digital environment. Nalty (2010) places online video at the top of the “marketing funnel” in the “awareness” or “engagement stage” and states that many brands can benefit from awareness alone (p. 76). It is widely known that books are often read based on recommendation (Davila, 2010; Springen, 2012) and video is a new opportunity for advertising that can lead potential readers from the consider stage through to the evaluate, purchase, and

enjoy/bond/endorse stage. This final stage can include word-of-mouth marketing through social media for example.

**Word-of-mouth marketing.** The power of word-of-mouth (WOM) communication has been well recognized in consumer literature and prior studies have found that consumers perceive WOM as more trustworthy and persuasive than traditional media, such as print ads, personal selling, and radio and TV advertising (Cheung & Thadani, 2012, p. 462). Cheung and Thadani (2012) state that the Internet increased the influence of WOM on purchase decisions because it extended electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) communication to additional virtual settings. Edelman (2010) argues that marketers need to be aware not only of their owned media channels (such as websites) but also of earned media such as consumer-created channels (as cited in Krishnamurthy, 2005). For example, consumers can post their opinions, comments, and reviews of products on: blogs, discussion forums, review websites, e-bulletin board systems, newsgroups, and social networking sites (Cheung & Thadani, 2012, p. 462). Another advantage of eWOM communications is that they are more persistent and accessible, and pose unprecedented scalability and speed of diffusion, (Cheung & Thadani, 2012, p. 462). Cheung and Thadani (2012) examined 25 papers on eWOM communication for making purchase decisions and found that information usefulness has a direct positive impact on eWOM adoption, and that eWOM credibility has a positive effect on eWOM adoption (Cheung & Thadani, 2012, p. 463). In other words, the information usefulness (logos), eWOM credibility (ethos) and eWOM adoption (pathos) all affect the viewer/reader's decision. The Pew Research Internet Project shows that as of September 2013, 73% of online adults use social networking sites ("Social Networking Fact Sheet," 2013) and as this percentage increases, it creates more opportunities for publishers and other businesses to advertise through social media and increase eWOM marketing opportunities.

**YouTube marketing.** YouTube is a video sharing website created in 2005 by three former PayPal employees; it was acquired by Google in 2006 (“YouTube,” n.d.). The website has more than one billion unique visitors each month and allows visitors to discover, watch and share originally created videos; it also serves as a forum to connect, inform, and inspire people across the globe (About YouTube, n.d.). As of May 30, 2014, Alexa.com ranked YouTube the third most-visited website in the world after Google and Facebook (“Youtube.com,” n.d.). Users view an average of 9.75 pages per visit and spend approximately 18:30 minutes on the website (“Youtube.com,” n.d.), indicating that they spend a long time browsing and watching videos online. YouTube also acts as a platform for original content creators and large and small advertisers (About YouTube, n.d.). It is a cost effective way to drive awareness because there are no fees for publishing videos as there are for TV commercial spots (Nalty, 2010; Miller, 2009). YouTube reaches more adults aged 18 to 34 than any single cable TV network (Guimarães, 2014), which is an age demographic that reads Young Adult fiction. The majority of YouTube’s traffic comes from outside the US (80%) and it reaches 61 countries and is localized in 61 languages (Statistics, n.d.). This provides publishers with a far-reaching global audience for book trailers so readers can discover books published in other countries and publishers can advertise globally at a relatively low cost. It also allows publishers to reach niche markets because there are hundreds of communities built around certain themes or topics on YouTube.

Recent research focusing on the YouTube platform presents a challenge for interpretive consumer research because scholars have not yet refined specific methods for researching this new medium (Pace, 2008, p. 220). There have been several studies focusing on user-generated content on YouTube, however, this study focuses on professional content created by publishers (businesses) rather than independent social media users (i.e. the general public). Wu, Lirn, and Dong (2013) conducted a cross-cultural survey of 15 corporate video advertisements published

on YouTube. They took the top five videos (15 total) from FedEx, DHL, and UPS, which were the three leading international third-party logistics firms at the time the study was conducted. They found that “page hit popularity” and respondent agreement on effective advertisement characteristics positively related to sales, where the most-viewed advertisements experienced greater sales during the same periods of time (Wu, Lirn, & Dong, 2013, p. 546). Wu, Lirn, and Dong (2013) argue that firms should be aware of the benefits of advertising on YouTube (such as word-of-mouth marketing) and the risks, such as potential damage to their brand control and image if the copyrighted content is uploaded without authorization and/or modified by users.

There have also been studies that examine advertising on YouTube on health-related topics, such as drug awareness and smoking cessation. A study by Yang, Seo, Patel, and Sansigry (2012) evaluated the content of video advertisements posted on YouTube for the top-selling 25 prescription drugs identified in a one-month time period, which were categorized as regulated or unregulated by the FDA. They found that the majority of YouTube advertisements (88.6%) were FDA-unregulated and these videos were delivered to the public without the examination of the reliability of the content or associated consequences (Yang et al. 2012, p. 718). The researchers were concerned about the public viewing these advertisements, which appear to be educational videos, and argue that governmental regulatory agencies should establish guidelines to verify information appearing in FDA-unregulated advertisements, and that bodies like YouTube should control the content of drug advertisements, which may also be seen by audiences outside the United States (Yang et al. 2012, p. 721). While this prescription-drug study examined educational videos on YouTube, an anti-smoking study by Paek, Kim and Hove (2010) focused on conversion videos. Paek et al. (2010) conducted a content analysis on 934 anti-smoking videos on YouTube and coded the information for message sensation value, three types of message appeal including: threat, social, and humour; and they also collected YouTube audience data (e.g.

number of views, ratings, comments). Their findings showed that antismoking messages are prevalent on YouTube, the message sensation value is lower compared to televised commercials, and threat appears to be the main message strategy. The following content analysis conducted for book trailers uses a similar approach to Paek et al. 's (2010) study and will uncover findings and patterns in book trailers functioning as conversion videos.

YouTube organizes the video content by topic and communities emerge around different topics. BookTubers are video bloggers (vloggers) on YouTube who discuss books they have read in a book review type format (Perazo, 2014). As far as research could show, this community has not yet been documented or researched by academic sources in the English language. An online search showed that the largest group of BookTubers are often between 20 to 30 years of age and cover Young Adult fiction (Perazo, 2014; Abraham, 2014; Foley, 2014; Fernanda Navarro, 2014). BookTubers' goals are to open a dialogue with those who love to read and publishers view them as recruiters for new readers (Perazo, 2014). BookTuber, Macarena Yannelli, has the highest number of subscribers in Argentina with 2,000, and some BookTubers in Spain have up to 50,000 subscribers (Perazo, 2014). Marianna Gonzalez, 25-years old, from Mexico has 46,055 subscribers (I Am Unbroken Girl, n.d.) and BookTuber Sanne, a 25-year old based in London, UK, has 117,992 subscribers (as of December 28, 2014) (Booksandquills, n.d.). These BookTube communities subdivided by genre, such as Young Adult fiction or by language such as English or Spanish, demonstrate word-of-mouth marketing through social media, which increases the return on investment for publishers that produce book trailers. BookTuber video reviews are consumer narratives and "consumer narratives are acknowledged by marketing scholars as a form (even the core form for some of them) of expression of consumption (Shankar et al., 2001)" (as cited in Pace, 2008, p. 222). In order to determine the return on investment, it is necessary to measure the goal of video marketing (e.g., conversion video) by collecting website statistics, social media

“likes” or “thumbs up”, shares, and comments (Scott, 2009, p. 26). Scott (2009) explains that targeted web marketing can deliver useful content precisely when a buyer is searching for it or when browsing for entertainment, rather than being an advertisement that interrupts a TV program (p. 7). Book trailers and reviews posted by BookTubers are useful, entertaining content that can be found through searching or browsing. Scott (2009) importantly argues that YouTube videos should be a piece of a larger digital strategy, including email, search engines, blogs, and other social networks for example. In other words, publishers should use book trailers as one piece in a larger marketing strategy.

### **Digital Storytelling, Transmedia, and Paratext**

Multimedia and digital storytelling have changed marketing strategies because there are multiple channels and participation from the consumers. Henry Jenkins (2006) discusses the concept of “convergence culture” which he explains, involves the intersection of new and old media as well as grassroots and corporate media, and where the media producer and consumer interact (p. 2). He states: “By convergence, I mean the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behaviour of media audiences who will go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they want” (Jenkins, 2006, p. 2). As previously mentioned, media consumers are searching the Internet for desired entertainment experiences like book trailers. Jenkins (2006) explains that participatory culture contrasts with previously passive media spectatorship and consumers are now participants interacting with each other, which “creates buzz that is increasingly valued by the media industry” (Jenkins, 2006, p. 4). He argues that, “producers who fail to make their peace with this new participatory culture will face declining goodwill and diminished revenues” (Jenkins, 2006, p. 24). Jenkins calls on producers and/or businesses to embrace this new marketing culture. He notes: “In the world of media convergence, every

important story gets told, every brand gets sold, and every consumer gets courted across multiple media platforms” (Jenkins, 2006, p. 3). Book trailers are one type of media for marketing a book, but are often accompanied by other media such as a website and social media. The concept of convergence culture has been more widely termed “transmedia storytelling” in both academic and non-academic conversations (e.g. media and marketing companies). Jenkins (2014) explains that transmedia means “‘across media’ and implies a structured or coordinated relationship among multiple media platforms and practices” (Mann, 2014, Chapter 11, p. 244). This study focuses on the content of book trailers as a new medium in the convergence culture or transmedia landscape.

Book trailers are a form of digital storytelling that also functions as advertising for the text(s) being featured. Jeff Gomez of *Starlight Runner* cautions, “transmedia doesn’t replace marketing, it is infused into it, turning marketers into storytellers who are helping to enrich and expand the franchise” (Jenkins, 2014, p. 248). Gomez emphasizes that transmedia pieces are stories intertwined with marketing and they are not mutually exclusive. Jonathan Grey (2010) examines the role of paratexts as marketing “hype” in giving consumers a preview of the story/text. Grey (2010) says, “in preparing us for the text and offering our first encounters with it, entryway paratexts hold considerable power to direct our initial interpretations, telling us what to expect and establishing genre, style, attitude, and characterization” (loc. 1624). He notes that decisions on what to watch and not watch are often made while consuming hype and promos, from which the meanings of the text in question begin to be decoded (Grey, 2010, loc. 22). Grey (2010) defines hype as “advertising that goes ‘over’ and ‘beyond’ an accepted norm, establishing heightened presence, often for a brief, unsustainable period of time” (loc. 158). Since book trailers go beyond the norm for book marketing and often involve a sizeable investment of production time and financial support, they could be considered a form of hype.

Grey (2010) states that hype can determine genre, theme, and style for potential viewers before they become viewers and even for those who do not become viewers (loc. 423). Book trailers help viewers determine genre, theme and style and whether or not they want to become readers. Grey (2010) says, “many of us need only a few seconds, if that, to determine a text’s genre, as many subtle and overt clues – film stock, mode of acting, use of colour, rhythm of dialogue, and so on – immediately make sense to us based on our past viewing” (loc. 691). These types of overt clues will be used as qualitative metrics to examine the book trailer content in this study. Comparing to movie trailers, Lisa Kernan points out that movie trailers tend to concentrate their efforts on “(1) delineating a film’s genre, (2) celebrating and featuring its star(s), and/or (3) on providing an environmental sampling (as exemplified in the trite opening common to many trailers: “In a world where...” (loc. 1077). If this is applied to book trailers, it would be important for a trailer to establish the story’s genre, introduce the characters, and provide information about the setting/environment.

Book trailers are a form of paratext created for marketing purposes with the goal of selling books. Grey (2010) states that “the industry desperately needs its paratexts to work, since both industry and audiences habitually count on paratexts’ relative success or failure as an index to the success or failure of the text as a whole” (loc. 850). This would imply that the level of success of the book trailer may indicate how successful the book will be or is. Hollywood invests large amounts of money, time, and labor into marketing its products and “movie studios will budget \$10 million per film for producing the marketing” (loc. 1054). Publishers and authors are investing time and money into producing book trailers so it is important that these paratexts are successful and help sell books. Grey (2010) notes that, “movie trailers regularly attract more views on video-sharing sites than do even some of the most popular viral videos” (loc. 1476). Book trailers could potentially attract a similar amount of attention as viral movie trailers do.



Many paratexts fall under a company's marketing and promotions budget so the authors/creators may not be involved with the production, which produces ample opportunity for creative disconnects and uninspired paratexts that do little to situate the viewer in the storyworld (Grey, 2010, loc 4081). Looking at movie trailers as a similar to book trailers in format and the goal of getting viewers to seek out the full text, Grey says, "if Hollywood itself often proves to be a paint-by-numbers industry, with recombination and outright copying behind much of its production, the hype, promo, and synergy industries can be even more obviously standardized" (loc 1660). The goal of this research project is to produce a list of standards for book trailer content. For example, the seven elements of digital storytelling outlined by Lambert (2006), could potentially be applied to book trailer production. Lambert (2006) says that, a digital story should have: (1) a point of view, which outlines the purpose of the story from the perspective from which it's told; (2) a dramatic question, which sets tension in the story by identifying the problem(s) to be solved; (3) emotional content, which engages the audience through common emotions and themes (love, pain, humor); (4) voice, which helps the audience make meaning of the images, (5) the soundtrack, which sets the mood, (6) economy, which balances the auditory and visual tracks of meaning, and (7) the pacing sustains the attention of the audience by establishing the rhythm of the story (as cited in Dreon, Kerper & Landis, 2011). These seven elements fall with ethos, pathos, and logos of rhetoric and these qualities will be coded in the content analysis.

### **Book Trailers**

**The impact of book trailers on potential readers.** Only two studies were found examining the effects of book trailers on viewers/potential readers. One study was published in German and no English translation could be acquired. The second was done by Davila (2010) who conducted a foundational study on book trailers where she asked a focus group of 26

participants between 20 to 30 years of age to comment on the content of Young Adult book trailers in cinematic and slideshow styles<sup>3</sup>. Davila (2010) thinks that a book trailer is the filmmakers' translation or interpretive re-contextualization of the book and as a result some readers will not like the fact that the trailers can take away their ability to imagine the story world (p. 35). Springen's (2012) research supports this, as some children prefer to imagine their own version of characters in their heads; furthermore some film companies are concerned that readers may get confused by seeing a different set actors in the book trailers than those who may appear in movie versions if the book is made into a film in the future (p. 31). On the other hand, Davila (2010) says, when viewers fill in the gaps with their own idealized storyline, the promotional value of the trailer rises because viewers will likely read the book to confirm their expectations (p. 36). This is similar to the effect achieved in movie trailers that exclude information intentionally to leave viewers with the desire to see the film. Her study suggested that promotional book trailers can positively or negatively influence prospective readers' "*horizons of expectations* for young adult books" (Davila, 2010, p. 39). She found that: the who, what, and why are important in order to establish enough information for viewers to determine whether they want to read the book; potential readers may link the filmmaker's pacing of the trailer with the pacing of the novel; and she found no evidence that live-action trailers garner more interest among viewers than other formats (i.e. slideshow) (Davila, 2010, p. 40). Because there is scarce research on the content of book trailers and how they impact viewers, this research project aims to test Davila's conclusions using rhetorical theory and fill this gap in the research literature.

**Book trailers in the classroom.** A growing number of teachers are encouraging children – especially reluctant readers – to make their own book trailers and librarians are using book trailers as another way to talk about books with children (Springen, 2012; Walker, 2009). Walker

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<sup>3</sup> See the Research Design section for the definitions of book trailer styles.

(2009), a Manager of Library Services in an all-girls Catholic school in Australia, found that teaching students about book trailers showed how technology can be used to promote reading in school-aged children (e.g. year 7) and it resulted in collaborative learning. Dreon, Kerper, & Landis (2011) note that integrating digital storytelling into the classroom provides new opportunities for teachers to engage and assess students' reading comprehension and digital literacy. For example, when using digital storytelling with middle and high school students, Kajder and Swenson (2004) found that digital stories helped struggling readers envision text and offered a platform for visually communicating meaning. (Dreon, Kerper & Landis, 2011). In addition to increasing learning opportunities, Ragen's (2012) study of 60 boys aged 13 to 14 years in Brisbane, Australia, showed that creating book trailers as a school assignment while fostering creativity and developing digital literacy and critical thinking skills, is also an effective way to inspire a love of reading (p. 13). As a result of Ragen's (2012) study, a book trailer creation unit was planned for incorporation into the Year 9 English program to help reluctant readers rediscover reading.

Book trailers provide familiarity and a readiness to read by previewing back story, providing information about the characters – but not so much that it spoils the discovery process while reading – and it sets the scene with the background and point of view of the story as seen in live story circles or book talks (Gunter and Kenny, 2008, p. 90). *Digital Booktalk* is a web portal that features book trailers and associated activities to help readers select books (Gunter and Kenny, 2008). Gunter and Kenny's (2008) study revealed that the online *Digital Booktalk* can motivate students to read for leisure and increase their confidence in storytelling in front of the class (p. 93). The book trailers provide familiarity and a readiness to read by previewing back story, providing information about the characters – but not so much that it spoils the discovery process while reading – and it sets the scene with the background and point of view of the story

as seen in live story circles or book talks (Gunter and Kenny, 2008, p. 90). They found that books featured in trailers that were shown in classrooms were all checked out from school libraries days later (Gunter and Kenny, 2008). While book trailers can be useful for teachers and librarians as opportunities for educating, these studies also showed that they can encourage reluctant young readers to read the books featured. This presents Young Adult fiction publishers the opportunity to create book trailers that may capture reluctant or non-readers.

**Book trailers in the publishing industry.** Most book trailers currently published represent genre fiction and reside on YouTube (Walker, 2012). Walker (2012) says book sales are not directly reflected in YouTube views and that the viral book trailer is “a rare beast.” He quotes a New York Times 2010 market research report that revealed 0.2 per cent of readers surveyed discovered their last book through an online video (Walker, 2012). Dennis Johnson, Moby judge (book trailer awards), says the struggle stems from the fact that “publishers are not filmmakers, they’re not commercial makers. They really don’t know how to do it,” (as cited in Walker, 2012). This lack of expertise may explain why there are few book trailers in comparison to the number of books on the market and the lack of awareness of the general public that book trailers exist. There is a gap in the literature in regards to what content should be included in “good” or successful book trailers and it has resulted in a wide array of styles and quality. White (n.d.) explains: “as a newer marketing technique, there is not really any established etiquette or formula for making a book trailer. Consequently, a quick “book trailer” search in YouTube can result in amazing stop-motion videos, awful PowerPoint productions, and everything in between.” In other words, there is no consistency or standard of quality in book trailers as can be clearly seen in movie trailers.

Publishers are realizing that they are part of the entertainment business and that they can no longer market mainly to an “increasingly elite group of people who identify themselves as

‘readers’” (Dubelman, 2009). Allen (2009) argues that there is an opportunity to catch “non-readers,” those who proclaim not to read books, as well as people who read in a different genre than the book advertised in the trailer, or those who had not heard of the author before. The traditional publishing industry, according to Dubelman (2009), is “flailing in an era of shrinking attention spans,” and declares: “we need to embrace technology to tell stories in the myriad of ways that they can be consumed if we are to foster a new generation of readers and story tellers”. Because YouTube statistics are so high and video is increasingly being used for marketing, book trailers are one way that publishers can embrace technology and tell the stories in a digital and visual way to capture the attention of viewers within seconds or minutes.

Publishers have several considerations in regards to book trailers as advertisements including: marketing strategy, cost effectiveness, and how impact can be measured. Allen (2009) quotes several book-marketing executives in her article to show how publishers are using book trailers to create awareness for some titles. For example, Egmont publishing sends book trailers to buyers and reviewers to create buzz before they send them copies of the book, and Orion publishing sends book trailers on USB sticks to retailers as a “more interesting way to send material” says Julie MacBrayne, senior marketing manager for paperbacks (as cited in Allen, 2009). In terms of the popularity of book trailers, Rolf Maurer, publisher at New Star Books, believes that early adopters are still experimenting with book trailers and he predicts that within five years the book trailer will become commonplace online (as cited in Crompton, 2013). He says that publishers are beginning to appreciate the value of book trailers, especially those that go viral, and he foresees production budgets increasing to attract readers and potentially the film industry (Maurer as cited in Crompton, 2013).

As for the cost effectiveness of book trailers, Rachel Bailey from Egmont publisher says, “if you work with an agency it would cost £10,000–£15,000 for a video like [the one for] Gone.

It's not as expensive as an outdoor campaign, and more than website banner advertising” (as cited in Allen, 2009, para. 7). Egmont publishing invests in book trailers for bigger titles because it is a cost-effective marketing tool (as cited in Allen, 2009). Peter Collingridge from Apt, a design and marketing consultancy, notes that videos create word of mouth and that book trailers need a complete strategy and planning as they will not perform simply by being published online (Allen, 2009, para. 12). The cinematic book trailer is the most expensive to produce as it involves the employment of a camera crew, actors, scouting and possibly renting a studio or the setting, editing, and post-production. Based on COS Productions price quotes available on their website (as of January 12, 2015), the “Publishers Advantage” package, which describes a basic slideshow type book trailer is \$4,000 USD (Video Products, n.d.). The cost of a “Book Trailer” or cinematic type trailer is unlisted but is the most expensive. The cinematic trailer is most similar to the format of movie trailers so viewers are accustomed to consuming this type of media. Overall, book trailers provide a high return on investment for publishers because they are less expensive than other types of marketing campaigns and have the added benefit of creating word of mouth.

Another benefit of book trailers is that sales are easier to track online compared to print advertising because more specific statistics can be gathered and analysis can be performed faster (Allen, 2009). Digital content has longevity, most information presented on the Internet is archived and thus available for an indefinite period of time, and eWOM communications are more measurable and far more voluminous in quantity compared to information obtained from traditional contacts in the offline world (Cheung & Thadani, 2012, p. 462). If book trailers are published on YouTube, the statistics are gathered (e.g. views, subscriptions, shares, comments). Book trailers, while still a new medium that publishers are experimenting with, are increasing in production value and the return on investment for publishers, and are projected to become a more common form of digital marketing in the near future.

## **Summary of Literature**

The literature shows that online videos can be used to increase consumer awareness or engagement. With digital media, there is a new “enjoy/advocate/bond” stage of digital consumer behaviour, which leads to more word-of-mouth marketing (eWOM) online, such as through the BookTuber communities on YouTube for example. The YouTube platform is cost-effective, has a huge international audience, and makes statistical tracking of book trailer advertising easier. Book trailers help reach niche Internet users, and “non-readers” as a potential new market. Book trailers have been shown to increase children’s desire to read, their comprehension, and their digital literacy. Davila’s (2010) research showed that: the who, what, and why are important in order to establish enough information for viewers to determine whether they want to read the book. Publishers have identified a need for research on creating effective book trailers that persuade viewers to engage and potentially become readers and this study aims to fill this gap.

## **Theoretical Context**

### **Digital Rhetoric**

Rhetorical theory was applied to understand how the content in book trailers can persuade viewers to engage with the video and possibly become readers. Aristotle wrote, “rhetoric may be defined as the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion” (as cited in Craig & Muller, 2007, p. 123). He alludes to the ethos, pathos and logos of an argument when he writes that persuasion “depends upon the personal character of the speaker; [...] putting the audience into a certain frame of mind; and [...] the proof” (as cited in Craig & Muller, 2007, p. 124). The ethos refers to the speaker or source of the message, which for this study will be the author and publisher of the book as well as the narrator; the pathos refers to the emotional appeal to the audience, which in this study will be the auditory (e.g. music, sounds) and imagery (e.g. photos, actors, animation); and the logos being the message or argument, which in this case will

be selected plot points and marketing messages. This study's outcomes in the form of recommendations will suggest how publishers can maximize the persuasive power of book trailers as video advertisements.

The focus specifically falls within digital rhetorical theory, which is an extension of classic rhetorical theory to multimedia applications and includes visual rhetoric. Hocks (2003) explains that, "because modern information technologies construct meaning as simultaneously verbal, visual, and interactive hybrids, digital rhetoric simply assumes the use of visual rhetoric as well as other modalities" (p. 631). She defines digital rhetoric as a system of "ongoing dialogue and negotiations among writers, audiences, and institutional contexts, but it focuses on the multiple modalities available for making meaning using new communication and information technologies" (Hocks, 2003, p. 632). Book trailer creation may involve negotiations with the author, screenwriter(s), and publisher and uses new communication technologies to reach a digital audience. Zappen (2005) explains that digital rhetoric is an amalgam of discrete components rather than a complete and integrated theory, but these discrete components nonetheless provide a partial outline for such a theory, which has the potential to contribute to the larger body of rhetorical theory/criticism and the rhetoric of science and technology in particular (p. 323). This study looked at several discrete components of book trailers on YouTube and contributes to the larger body of digital rhetoric through a communications and technology-focused application. Furthermore, the YouTube user:

employs rhetoric (sic) techniques to convey the intended meaning to the audience. It is similar to the use of visual rhetoric as applied by advertisers (Scott, 1994a, b). Rhetoric is based on conventional means shared by the sender and the audience. In YouTube, the conventions are the meaning of the brands as generally conceived in the marketplace (Pace, 2008, p. 222).



Rhetoric involves not only the ethos, pathos, and logos of the content, but also the audience's understanding and perception (e.g. marketplace) of the content. Kernan (2004) writes "I find Aristotelian rhetoric fruitful in treating trailers because of its focus on persuasion. Trailers both tell and sell a film story, and the art of persuasion, rhetoric comprises both the means by which trailers sell films and an analytic method to examine the persuasive strategies and appeals to audiences within the trailers themselves" (p. 17). Like movie trailers, book trailers aim to tell and sell a story by persuading the audience, which involves "narrator and narrative [...] resulting in condensed layers of storytelling about storytelling that inevitably withhold more than they reveal—and the withholding can be just as revealing as what's shown or told" (Kernan, 2004, p. 55). Trailers both fulfill and withhold the satisfaction of the audiences' desire to know about a story and rhetorical theory can be used to find that balance, which could be considered an art.

Porter (2009) argues that it is essential to understand how digital delivery influences the production, design, and reception to achieve the rhetorical art of writing in the digital age (p. 208). He explains, "rhetoric, as *techne*, is the art of creating discourse, whether speech or writing, to achieve a desired end for some audience. Like all arts, it can be practiced badly or well" (Porter, 2009, p. 210). In other words, the goal is to examine the art of digital rhetoric so it can be practiced well in the future for the benefit of the investors and the audience. Porter (2009) elaborates that, "the *techne* for digital rhetoric includes both technical/procedural knowledge and knowledge of audience and effect (Lauer, 2004, p. 49), not merely know-how in the sense of mechanical production skills but rhetorical knowledge as well" (p. 211). Applying this statement to book trailers, the art of production involves not only mechanical or technical skills, but also knowledge of digital rhetoric. Porter (2009) says:

a useful rhetorical theory should raise significant questions and encourage productive thinking about how to communicate with others. The real value in developing a robust

rhetorical theory for digital delivery lies in production: How can this theory aid productive action? How can it prompt the critical thinking of writers/designers and help them produce better (more valuable, usable, and useful) online communications and thereby help people with their lives? (p. 221).

These questions regarding best practice in terms of communicating with others and helping publishers and authors produce better book trailers for viewer enjoyment using rhetorical theory is the focus of this study.

## **Research Design**

### **Content analysis approach**

A content analysis research design was employed with a rhetorical approach. A content analysis is a process where “the analyst engages in a reconstruction of manifest characteristics of text or image or both, such as the message’s construction, form, metaphors, argumentation structure, and choices. The emphasis is not so much on *what* the message says as on *how* the message is presented” (Neuendorf, 2002, p. 5). The book trailer’s narrative structure was analyzed to assess how the message is presented in the rhetorical context of the ethos, pathos, and logos. How the messages are delivered and how it affects the viewers was examined by identifying structural elements and the styles of argumentation (Krippendorff, 2013, p. 22). A focus group or questionnaire would have resulted in a narrow data set based on the specific content of individual book trailers. The purpose is not to collect data on whether viewers enjoyed a single trailer on a particular book, but rather to analyze what type of content appears in book trailers, and what is required to provide enough information to inspire viewers to engage with the content. Because the research conducted gathered publicly available information, the University of Alberta’s Research Board of Ethics determined that there were no ethical issues with this content analysis.

The following steps were employed as based on Schreier (2012):

1. Decide on the research question.
2. Select the material for analysis.
3. Build a coding frame.
4. Divide material into units of coding.
5. Try out the coding frame.
6. Evaluate and codify the coding frame.
7. Main analysis.
8. Interpret and present the findings (p. 6).

### **Step 1: Deciding research questions**

Which rhetorical components are needed to create a visceral experience that engages viewers to like, comment, share, and/or subscribe while providing enough information for them to determine whether they want to read the featured book? According to viewers, which style of book trailers are the most engaging? Which qualitative features are most often commented on in a positive manner? How can publishers create rhetorically persuasive book trailers with potential to turn viewers into readers?

### **Step 2: Sample selection**

After the research questions were identified, the videos were systematically selected for analysis. As Krippendorff, (2013) writes, “in a content analysis, systematic samples are favored [sic] when texts stem from regularly appearing publications” (p. 115). The study population came from six YouTube channels that regularly publish videos from the formerly-termed “Big Six”<sup>4</sup> publishers’ Young Adult imprints: Harper Teen, Penguin Teen, Simon & Schuster YA, Random

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<sup>4</sup> The “Big Six” are now known as the “Big Five” as a result of the merger of Penguin and Random House into Penguin Random house in July 2014. Because the merger is still quite recent, the marketing is still separate in several domains such as on YouTube.

House Children, Little Brown Books, and Fierce Reads. Five videos from each publisher were selected in chronological order starting from “newest to oldest” as posted on YouTube bringing the total sample to 30 book trailers. These videos were selected because these publishers have made a financial investment into book trailer production so they have a minimum standard of quality. Independently made book trailers would have involved too many additional variables to consider and thus the grounds of comparison would not have been equal. The book trailer sample was limited to Young Adult fiction, which is a genre of literature written, published, and marketed to adolescents (“Young Adult,” n.d.). It is worth noting, however, that a recent study shows that 55% of buyers of young adult fiction (aimed at ages 12 – 17) are 18 years or older, with the largest segment (28%) aged 30 to 44 (“New Study,” 2012). To determine the minimum sample size, the total number of book trailers in the young adult genre was examined on each publisher’s YouTube channel. The overview of the six YouTube channels can be seen in Table 1 below.

Table 1

*Total book trailer population for “big six” publishers in YA genre on YouTube*

<b>Publisher’s YouTube channel title</b>	<b>Number of YA book trailers published on YouTube (as of December 8, 2014)</b>
Harper Teen	This publisher did not have a playlist <sup>5</sup> of YA book trailers because the whole channel was dedicated to this genre. There were 254 videos published.
Penguin Teen	The “Book Trailers” playlist included 48 videos.
Random House Children	The “Random House Teens” playlist included 49 videos.
Simon & Schuster YA	The “Young Adult” playlist had 45 videos.
Little Brown Books	The “Young Adult Reads” playlist had 9 videos.

<sup>5</sup> A playlist in a term used on YouTube to organize videos into different categories, which in the case of book publishers described different types of videos.

Fierce Reads	The “YA Novels” playlist had 40 videos.
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The trailers selected for this study sample were published between June 1, 2012 and October 31, 2014. This timeframe was chosen because Little Brown Books had the fewest number of trailers (9) published in the Young Adult category. Five videos were selected from newest to oldest as posted on each publisher’s YouTube channel to capture a recent sample from each publisher rather than including the full sample from one publisher (i.e. nine videos from Little Brown Books). One exception to the chronological posting rule was Harper Teen, because five separate book trailers for the book titled “The Perfectionists” by Sara Shepard were posted in sequential order. This mini-series of book trailers was not examined as a whole because the total from each publisher was limited to five videos so this set of book trailers was eliminated from the study. The book trailers were limited to October 31, 2014 as the most recent publication date to give the minimum of a one-month period for statistical data to be collected by YouTube (e.g. number of views, thumbs up, comments, etc.) from the time this study was conducted in December 2014. In other words, book trailers published on YouTube after October 31, 2014 were not included. See the complete sample of the 30 selected book trailers in Appendix A.

Five types of book trailers were identified for the purposes of this study, based on English’s (2008) working definitions of book video styles, but modified to represent five distinct styles based on preliminary viewings of a random sample of book trailers.

Table 2

*Types of book trailers defined for the purposes of this study*

Type of book video advertisement	Definition
Cinematic book trailer	Employs actors to act out the story synopsis. Actors move and/or speak on camera as a character.

Slideshow book trailer	Text is displayed over background images, which do not involve moving or speaking actors.
Narrated book trailer	The narrator provides a synopsis accompanied by images.
Author interview	The author answers the questions of an interviewer (who is usually not present on camera) about the story.
Author vlog	The author speaks directly into the camera and discusses the story.

### Steps 3-6: Building a coding frame

**Qualitative.** The first method of data collection was a qualitative content analysis.

Qualitative content analysis is a “method for describing the meaning of qualitative material in a systematic way. You do this by assigning successive parts of your material to the categories of your coding frame” (Schreier, 2012, p. 1). A concept-driven coding frame was developed based on rhetorical theory. The units of analysis for the book trailers were divided into three categories: *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*. As previously mentioned in the “Theoretical Context” section, Aristotle explains that the *ethos* refers to the personal character of the speaker, the *pathos* puts the audience into a certain frame of mind/mood and the *logos* acts as the argument or proof (as cited in Craig & Muller, 2007, p. 124). Under these three dimensions, the sub-categories were developed through previous knowledge of viewing both movie and book trailers (e.g. title of book, author name, music, actors, plot points, website or social media hyperlinks). After the qualitative coding sheets were created, a pilot analysis of five book trailers, one from each publisher, was conducted to determine if any sub-categories were missing or if any sub-categories should be excluded. From the pilot analysis, more units of analysis were added to the qualitative coding sheet (e.g. the presence of a narrator in the *ethos* section, the sound effects in the *pathos* section, and the call to action, book release date and marketing information to the *logos* section). The coding sheets can

be found in Appendix B. The descriptions and definitions of the qualitative codes for ethos, pathos, and logos are as follows.

***Qualitative ethos codes.*** The coding sheet used for gathering qualitative data on ethos can be found in Appendix B. The qualities used to measure ethos were:

- When was the author's name included?
  - beginning of the video
  - end of the video
  - more than once (combination of beginning, and/or middle and/or end)
- How was the author's name included?
  - on the book cover
  - on screen as text only
  - on both the book cover and on screen as text
- Is any additional context/background about the author included?
  - New York Times Bestselling author
  - Bestselling author
  - Other
- If, and if so when, is the publisher's name included?
  - beginning of the video
  - end of the video
  - more than once (combination of beginning, and/or middle and/or end) or throughout
- How is the publisher's name included?
  - Name-only as text on screen
  - Appears in logo format

- Is there a narrator (rhetor)?
  - Yes
  - No
- Is the narrator a character in the story/book being featured?
  - Yes
  - No

*Qualitative pathos codes.* The coding sheet used for gathering qualitative data on pathos can be found in Appendix B. The qualities used to measure pathos are described here to aid with coding. The music was coded by main instrument(s) heard (e.g. piano, drums, acoustic guitar, electric guitar) because music genres are more difficult to pinpoint so the primary instrument(s) was used for consistency and repeatability. The mood was primarily determined by the music because even though the colours, tone of voice and pacing could all impact the mood, that would have been too many variables to consider simultaneously and would make identification more difficult and thus harder to replicate. The moods were narrowed down to a spectrum of five basic emotions – calming, exciting, threatening, happy, and sad – to provide consistent qualitative data that could be analyzed. If too many moods were included, it would be more difficult to code and analyze the data.

- Calming is defined as: “a quiet and peaceful state of condition; a peaceful mental or emotional state” (“Calm,” Merriam-Webster). An example of calm music would be a piano-based instrumental.
- Exciting is defined as: “to cause feelings of enthusiasm in (someone); to make (someone) feel energetic and eager to do something” (“Excite,” Merriam-Webster). An example of exciting music would be a fast-paced electric guitar instrumental.



- Threatening is defined as: “someone or something that could cause trouble, harm, etc.; the possibility that something bad or harmful could happen” (“Threat”, Merriam-Webster). An example of threatening music would be fast-paced drums.
- Happy is defined as: “showing or causing feelings of pleasure and enjoyment; pleased or glad about a particular situation, event, etc. (“Happy”, Merriam-Webster). An example of happy music would be moderate-paced acoustic guitar.
- Sad is defined as: “affected with or expressive of grief or unhappiness” (“Sad”, Merriam-Webster). An example of sad music would be slow-paced piano.

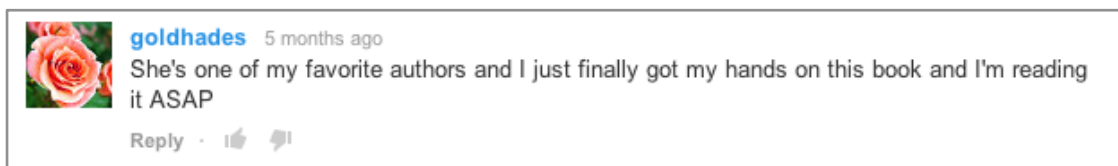
Determining the mood elicited by music is subjective, but because people have listened to music for centuries, the mood elicited from an instrument should come naturally, based on the body’s physiological reactions to the sounds. The basic mood spectrum selected for this study also constrains the options in an effort to ease the process of identifying the mood elicited from the music. While the primary instruments were used to determine the mood, if music is not present or alone cannot present a clear mood, the other pathos-related codes could be used. The sound effects were coded as present (yes) or not present (no). Examples of sound effects are: a sword being drawn, howling wind, a creaking sign swinging, etc. The visual effects were coded into photographs, animation, and illustration. Animation included moving images either hand-drawn or computer generated as well as moving text on screen. Illustrations were defined as hand-drawn or computer-generated still images. The actors were coded as present (yes) or not present (no). The pacing was coded as “slow” (three seconds or more per frame), “moderate” (between two and three seconds per frame), and “fast” (two seconds or less per frame). The colours were coded as “dark” (e.g. black, dark blue, dark red, gray), “bright” (e.g. white, light blue, bright red, yellow), and “natural” (e.g. as would be viewed in a photograph or film scene, natural sunlight or artificial light with natural colouring).

*Qualitative logos codes.* The coding sheet used for gathering qualitative data on logos can be found in Appendix B. The following qualities were all coded as present (yes) or not present (no): the inclusion of the main character(s)'s name(s); inclusion of background or status information about the main character(s) such as their age or occupation for example; inclusion of the setting either explicitly or visually; and the inclusion of the character(s)'s main goal to be achieved in the story. The number of plot points included in the book trailer was coded from one to six or more. A plot point was defined as a statement provided either through the narrator, actor or text on screen that included new information describing what happens in the story. The inclusion of a website was coded as present (yes) or (no) and specified further as to whether it was the publisher's official website, the author's website, a website dedicated to the book feature and/or its series, or another ("other") website, such as an affiliate publisher website (e.g. book community website). The presence of social media references were coded as "yes" or "no" and specified as to the platform namely, Facebook, Twitter, Goodreads, or "other". The presence of a call to action was coded as "yes" or "no" (e.g. get your copy today, find out more at www..., etc.). Whether the book's release date was included was coded as "yes" or "no"; the release date did not specifically need to be a date, for example, if the text on screen read "available now/today", it was coded as "yes". Finally the presence of additional marketing information was coded as "yes" or "no" (e.g. book reviews, placement in series, tagline, identifies genre, other).

After the qualitative coding sheets were completed, piloted and adjusted, the content of each of the 30 videos was examined in detail and the information was coded. The trailers were viewed without any prior exposure to the story and/or author. No extraneous research was conducted before viewing the video so that the trailer could be examined as the first source of information to learn about a book to potentially read. After the qualitative information was coded for the 30 videos, which required several viewings, the quantitative data was collected.

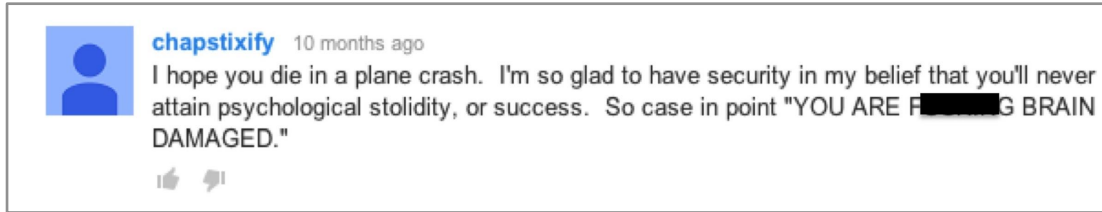
**Quantitative.** Quantitative data was collected in a second phase of coding an attempt to gain an understanding of the impact of the book trailers on the viewers. As Schreier (2012) states, “qualitative researchers think of interpretation as a process of actively constructing meaning [...] If meaning depends on context, context in fact becomes part of the data. This includes as full a context as possible” (p. 22). For this reason the quantitative data collected by YouTube was gathered and coded to gain further insight into the context of this type of advertising in this medium. Quantitative audience data provides insight into the level of viewer satisfaction and the consequences/effects of the messages (Krippendorff, 2013, p. 27). All the quantitative data was collected on the same day (December 22, 2014) within a one-hour time frame so that the videos would not have a longer time span to gain more data. The data collected in this one-hour time frame included the number of: views, thumbs up, thumbs down, and comments. The viewer comments were later coded as: positive, negative, neutral according to the ethos, pathos and logos categories.

The quantitative data gathered for ethos were the comments about the author, publisher, and narrator. The comments were coded as positive, negative, and neutral. An example of a positive comment about the author is:



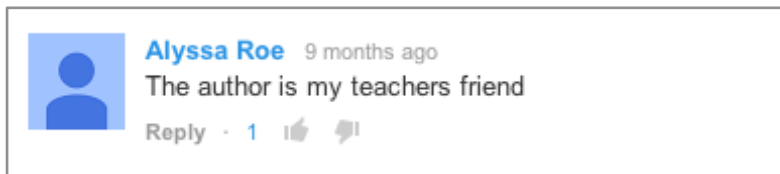
*Figure 1.* Screenshot from “Trailer for Now and Forever by Susane Colasanti” published on Penguin Teen’s YouTube channel.

An example of a negative comment about the author is:



*Figure 2.* Screenshot from “52 Reasons to Hate My Father by Jessica Brody” published on Fierce Reads’ YouTube channel.

An example of a neutral comment about the author is:



*Figure 3.* Screenshot from “CREWEL by Gennifer Albin” published on Fierce Reads’ YouTube channel.

The quantitative information gathered for the pathos included: the number of total video views taken from the area visible just below the video, the total number of “thumbs up” and “thumbs down”. Comments on the music, photos/illustration/animation, actors and pacing were also coded as positive, negative, or neutral in the same manner as those commented coded for ethos qualities. The total number of views was recorded from the section indicated in Image 4 below. It is the most accurate number because YouTube updates this number more frequently than in the “...More” section, which includes the other statistical information collected by YouTube (as seen in Image 5).



Figure 4. Screenshot from YouTube showing quantitative pathos data on lower right-hand corner.

The quantitative data collected for logos included: the length of the trailer, the presence of text in the description area under the video (yes/no), the total number of comments on the video, the number of subscriptions driven (if available), the number of shares (if available), and the category in which it was tagged on YouTube.

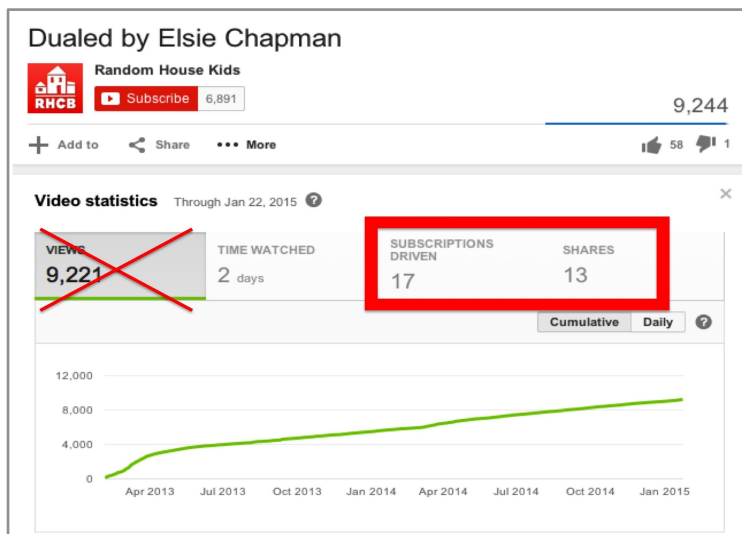
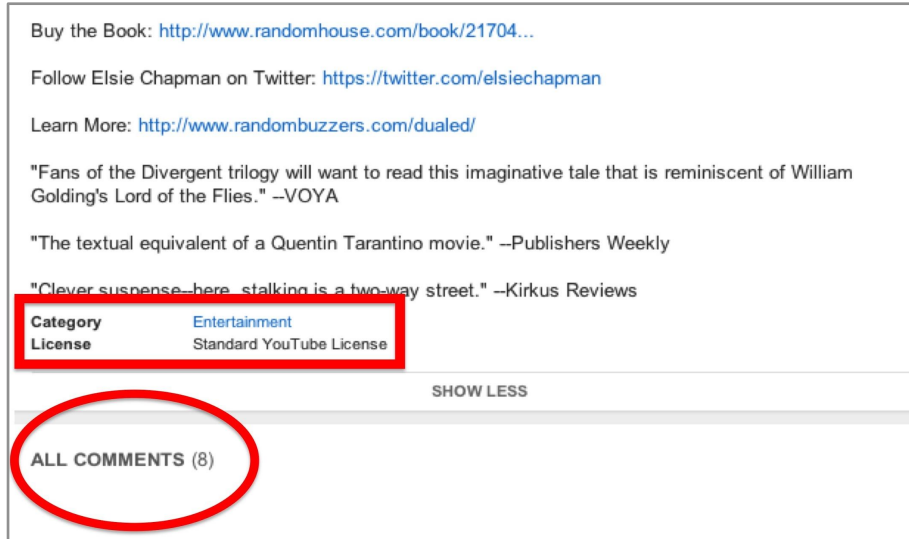


Figure 5. By clicking the “...More” button, the “statistics” are displayed as seen in this screenshot. From there the subscriptions driven and number of shares was recorded.



*Figure 6.* Screenshot from “DUALED by Elsie Chapman” published on Random House Children's YouTube channel to show the category the video was included in and where the total number of comments was collected.

The comments were coded as positive, negative, and neutral in regards to: the character; setting; plot; book and/or book series featured; whether the viewer “wants to read” is “currently reading” or had “already read” the book featured; the overall impression of the trailer; and opinion on the medium (e.g. book trailer, print or e-book, feature film, video or computer game, etc.).

Comments that could not be coded as positive, negative, or neutral, were coded as: “nonsensical or a language other than English”, or as “comments directed towards another commenter” or comments that were counted by YouTube because a viewer “shared the book trailer through social media”. The quantitative coding sheet for ethos, pathos and logos can be found in Appendix B.

### **Reliability and Validity**

The advantage of collecting data from YouTube is its stability and that future researchers could replicate this study using the same videos and coding sheets. The context will change however, because the video collects more statistical data over time (e.g. number of views).

Schreier (2012) states, “the criterion of reliability requires that your data and your findings are

free of error” (p. 26). Some qualitative researchers argue that the research is reliable as long as the researcher proceeded in a systematic way and all steps of the research are transparent so it can be easily seen how the conclusions were formed (Steinke, 2004, as cited in Schreier, 2012). Thus the methodology has been clearly iterated in detail. Schreier (2012) notes that qualitative research is valid when the phenomenon is studied in its natural setting and conclusions are based on the data collected (p. 27). This study examined the YouTube context and the conclusions drawn are based on the data collected.

### **Step 7: Data Analysis**

This study examined book trailers (advertisements for books) from a public source of information online (YouTube) and is concerned with social meaning by examining the viewers’ responses to the trailers, which requires some subjective interpretation. As Schreier (2012) explains, qualitative research is interpretive because it involves: understanding symbolic material that is not standardized so it requires some degree of interpretation, and personal or social meaning (Schreier, 2012, p. 29). According to Berelson (1952), manifest content is defined as simple, clear and direct where the meaning is likely to be agreed upon by different people, and latent content is more obscure and likely to have different meaning for different people (as cited in Schreier, 2012, p. 176). The qualitative manifest content in this study was coded to be simple, clear, direct and observable within each book trailer. The statistical quantitative data also functions as manifest content, but the viewers’ comments fall into the domain of latent content because the meanings behind what each viewer wrote may be an area of contention among different researchers. Madden, Ruthven, and McMenemy (2013) developed a classification scheme for YouTube video comments and analyzed 66,637 responses. The classification schema included ten broad categories: information, advice, impression, opinion, responses, expression of personal feelings, general conversation, site processes, video content description, and non-

response comments (Madden et al., 2013, p. 702-703). Because this study was not focused on the type of comments, but more on the nature of the comments, fewer categories were used to classify the comments on the book trailer videos. Comments were categorized as positive, neutral or negative in regards to the qualities measured in the ethos (e.g. author, publisher, narrator), pathos (e.g. music, sound effects, actors), and logos framework (e.g. characters, plot, book, book trailer). Madden, Ruthven, and McMenemy's (2013) "non-response comments" category was included because some comments were not in English or nonsense words/punctuation, and a "general conversation" category was included for whether viewers planned to read, were currently reading, or had already read the book featured. The steps involved in carrying out the data analysis were:

1. Summarizing the qualitative data (content within the video) in the *ethos*, *pathos* and *logos* categories in graphical format.
2. Summarizing the quantitative data (YouTube statistics and viewer comments) in graphical format.
3. Interpreting the data in the ethos, pathos, and logos categories to identify patterns and create recommendations for future book trailer standards and conventions.
4. Determining the viewer's choice for best book trailer based on the highest level of viewer engagement (e.g. views, thumbs up, subscriptions, shares, positive comments).
5. Determining the book trailer with the least viewer engagement (e.g. views, thumbs up, subscriptions, shares, positive comments).
6. Determining which video had the most rhetorical strength and least rhetorical strength based on qualitative and quantitative data.

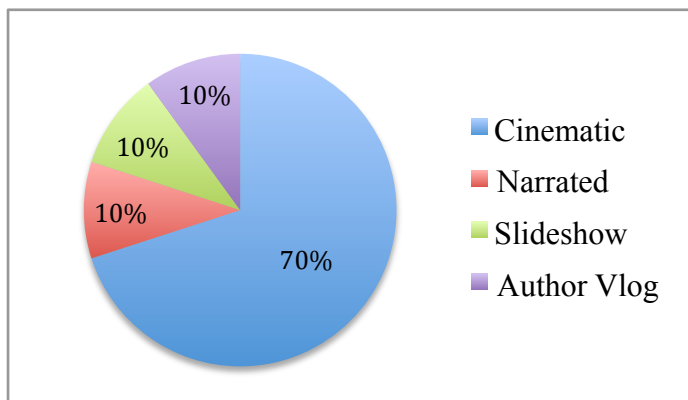


## Findings and Discussion

The purpose of this study was to discover what content is included in book trailers and what creates the most effective rhetoric for turning viewers into readers. The results are presented graphically followed by the discussion of the overall ethos, pathos, and logos, which will lead to recommendations for what content to include in future book trailers.

### Types of videos

The first finding was concerned with what type of trailer is most common in the selected sample.



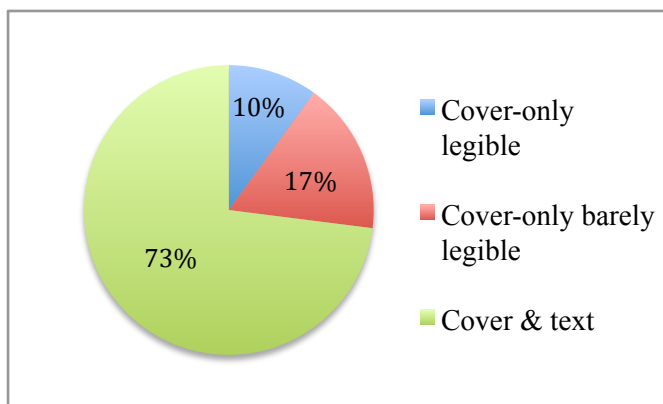
*Figure 7.* Type of book trailers in selected sample of 30 videos.

The most common type of book trailer in the sample of 30 videos was cinematic (21 videos) and there were an equal number of narrated (3), slideshow (3) and author vlog (3) videos, but there were no author interviews present in the sample. Davila (2010) found that the viewers enjoyed no particular style of book trailer more than another. This study showed that there was a clear preference for cinematic style trailers because combined, they received a cumulative total of 376,701 views, and viewers seemed to be least interested in author vlogs, which received only 1,335 views total for this type. The slideshow style trailers received 66,740 views in total, with one trailer accounting for 63,883 of the views and the narrated trailers received a total of 11,815 views. Because one trailer skewed the results for the slideshow style trailers' total views, it is

more difficult to determine from this sample, which style viewers preferred more between slideshow and narrative. It is also important to note that style is not a mutually exclusive variable in determining positive viewer reception as some cinematic trailers received lower numbers of views (e.g. 38 and 486) and a slideshow style trailer received 63,883 views. Therefore, this shows that the rhetoric may very well be the determinate as to whether a book trailer is well received by viewers.

### Analyzing Qualitative Data on Ethos

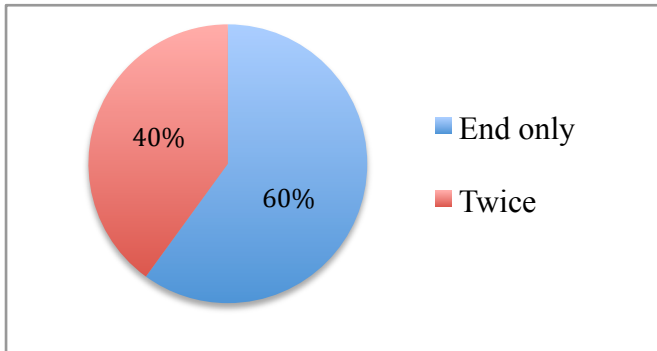
The three qualities that were examined in the ethos qualitative category were: the author, the publisher and the narrator. The quantitative data coded for positive/negative/neutral comments on the author, publisher and narrator.



*Figure 8.* Prominence of the author's name in the video.

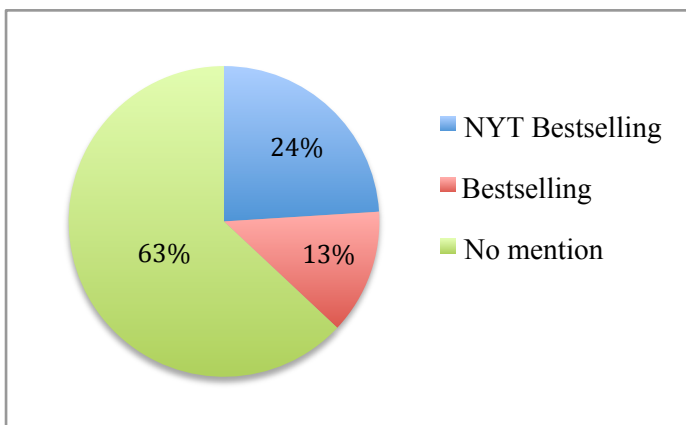
In the majority of book trailers (22) the author's name appears on both the screen as text and on the cover of the book. In eight of the book trailers the author's name was only presented on the book cover. In five of these eight trailers, the name of the author was barely legible on the book cover. For example, the font was small, blurry or did not stand out against the background colours of the book cover. These results indicate that it increases the author ethos if the author's name appears on screen as well as on the cover because the text on screen often has a higher

colour contrast and larger font so it is easier to read. If the author's name cannot be read, then the "who" is not well established.



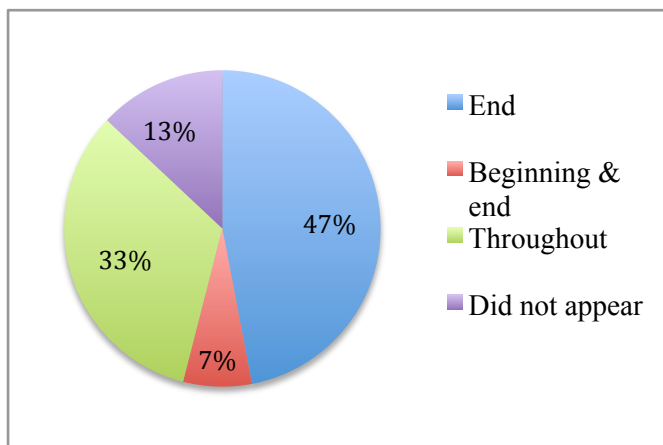
*Figure 9.* Frequency of author's name presented in the video.

The majority of the book trailers (18) only included the name of the author once at the end of the video. The other 12 videos included the name of the author more than once. Ten of these twelve included the author's name at the beginning and end of the trailer, and two of the videos included the name in the middle and the end. From this, it may be deduced that it increases the author's ethos if the author is named more than once in the book trailer. In classic rhetoric, especially in oral speeches, the author is often presented before the speech begins as it sets a foundation for the arguments to follow. Displaying the author's name again at the end of a book trailer increases the ethos because it reminds the viewers who wrote the book featured and gives them a way to find the book through an online search for example.



*Figure 10.* Establishing author reputation/background.

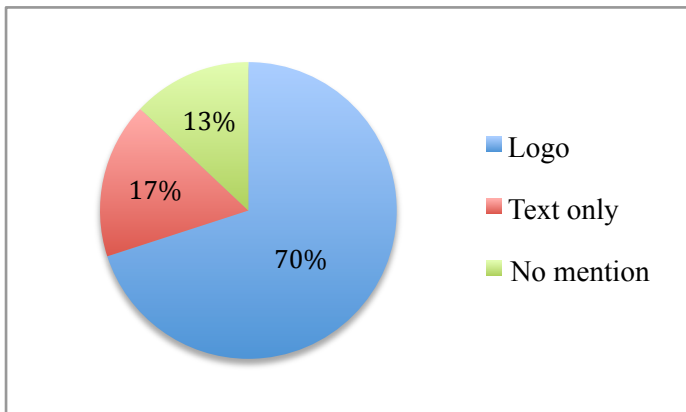
The majority of videos (19) did not provide any additional information to establish the author ethos. Seven videos mentioned the author obtaining sales on the New York Times Bestseller list. The final four noted that the author obtained bestselling status in general. Providing additional context or information about the author such as indicating their “sales status” or even mentioning “the author that brought you Insert-Title-of-Previous-Book” strengthens the author ethos.



*Figure 11.* Appearance of publisher's name and/or logo in the videos.

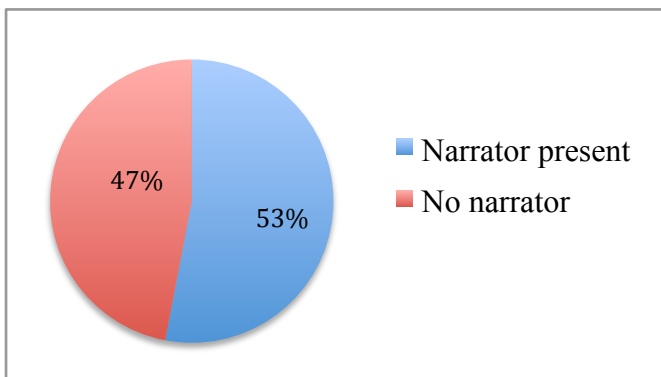
The majority of book trailers (14) named the publisher at the end of the video. In two videos, the publisher was featured at the beginning and end of the video. In 10 of the videos, the publisher's logo appeared throughout the duration of the video, which was done exclusively by two publishers for all five videos sampled from their channel: Penguin Teen and Little Brown Books. In the other four videos, the publisher did not appear at all. It is rhetorically strategic for publishers to include their name and/or logo in the book trailer because the publisher's name already carries a lot of weight in terms of ethos. These particular publishers are world-recognized as the former “big six”, now the “big five”. To exclude the publisher's name is a missed opportunity to convey ethos because the author has gone through a rigorous and lengthy selection

process to become traditionally published by a “big five” publisher. Thus the quality of the author is endorsed by the publisher. Penguin Teen and Little Brown strategically placed their logo in the top right corner of each book trailer, which establishes ethos and also gives the viewers a clear indication that it is a book trailer and not a movie trailer.



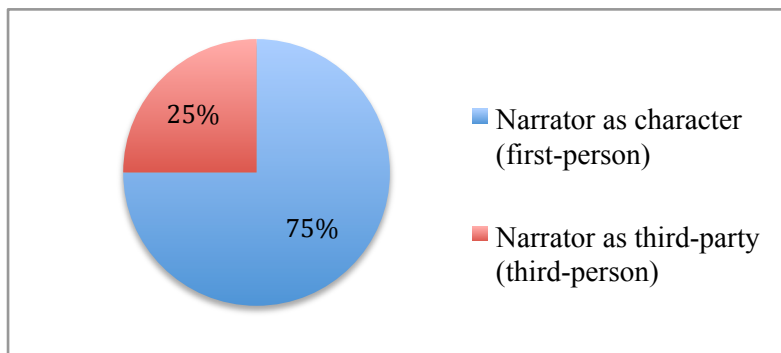
*Figure 12.* Publisher prominence measured by method of display.

In the majority of the videos (21), the publisher was identified through the use of a logo. In five of the videos the publisher’s name appeared only as text on the screen. In four of the videos, the publisher did not appear. Because the “big five” publishers are well-recognized brands, it creates the strongest ethos to include the logo, which makes the publisher visually recognizable. Including the publisher’s name as text-only does establish ethos, but lacks the rhetorical strength of the visual branding. Not including the publisher’s name is a missed opportunity to establish ethos for the book, the author, and the book trailer.



*Figure 13.* Presence of the narrator in the book trailers.

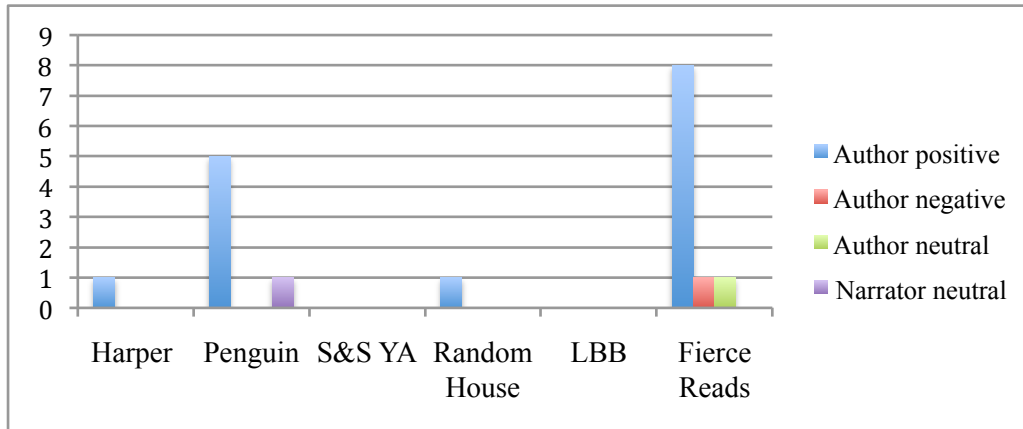
The majority of videos (16) included a narrator and 14 videos did not include a narrator. Of the 21 cinematic trailers, 12 included a narrator and one slideshow trailer included a narrator. As Kernan (2004) explains, “the trailer’s filmic narrator rhetorically inscribes an image of whom that “author” is addressing – or more specifically, persuading to see the film – a hypothetical addressee who helps us relate trailer form to broader social and ideological contexts” (p. 54). In other words, the narrator helps convey the message from the author to the audience by providing a gateway to the social context. Therefore, a narrator can assist with establishing ethos for the story by serving as a bridge between the author and the audience.



*Figure 14.* Point of view of the narrator.

In the majority of the videos with narration (12 out of 16), the narrators spoke in first-person as a character in the book. Four videos featured narrators who spoke in third-person as non-characters in the story. The narrators that were a character in the book provided more context for the story by conveying the age, gender, and tone of voice, thus contributing to the ethos of the story world. The narrator as a character provides stronger story ethos than third-party narrators as they are removed from the story.

### Analyzing the Quantitative Data on Ethos



*Figure 15.* Viewer comments on ethos (author, publisher, narrator).

Overall the number of comments on the ethos of the book trailers was low in this sample. Fierce Reads' viewers left eight positive comments about the book author, Penguin Teen had five positive comments about the author and Random House Children received one positive comment about the author. There was only one negative and one neutral comment on the author, and one neutral comment on the narrator. As the author is only named in most book trailers, they play a small part compared to the pathos and logos.

### Discussion on Ethos

Ethos is one of the three aspects of rhetorical theory that affects audience persuasion and it establishes the rhetor or the "who". Little Brown Books conveyed the strongest ethos in its videos because: the author's name has a repeated presence rather than appearing only once at the end of the video, three bestselling authors were featured, a narrator was present in the majority of its videos, and the publisher's logo appears prominently in each video in the upper right hand corner. Random House Children had the weakest ethos overall because: the author's name appeared no more than once at the end of all five trailers, the author's name appeared only on the cover in the majority of the videos and of those two had poor legibility, there were no bestselling

authors in this sample, the publisher's name was not included at all in two of the videos and only at the end as text on screen in the other two videos, and only one video included the publisher's name at the beginning and end in logo format.

**Recommendations for establishing ethos.** Based on these findings, it is recommended that the strongest ethos be established by:

1. Including the author's name more than once throughout the duration of the video.
2. Providing additional information about the author, such as the author's sales history, e.g. New York Times Bestselling, Bestselling, title of previous book(s) published, or debut-status.
3. Including the publisher's logo throughout the video (e.g. in the top right-corner) instead of only at the beginning or end.
4. Including the publisher's logo, name, and/or website at the end of the video. The logo increases ethos because the visual branding is recognizable.

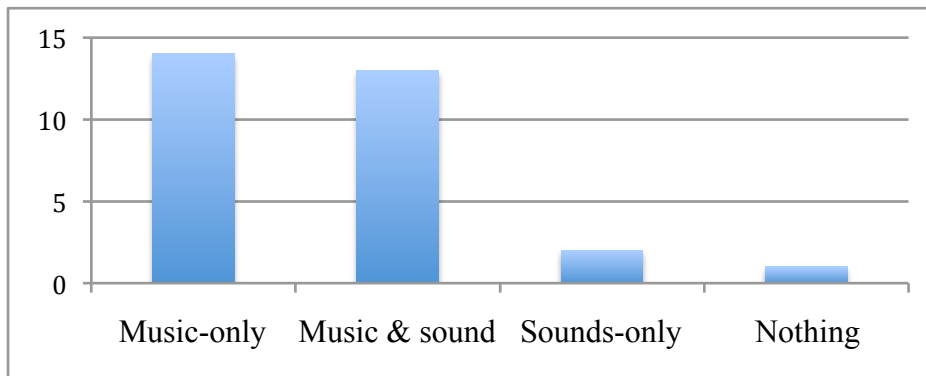
One cinematic-style book trailer published by Simon & Schuster established strong ethos as it included a sentence at the beginning of the trailer that read: "A feature brought to you by Simon & Schuster". This was particularly helpful for the viewers because it set the context of the origin of the media and it mitigated the chance that viewers might confuse the book trailer for a movie trailer. For example, another book trailer from Harper Teen: "Endgame is real. Endgame is now. Endgame has begun" used a newscast style video and some of the viewers were confused because it could have easily been mistaken as a legitimate news broadcast. The best method for establishing ethos should also fit with the pathos and logos of the book trailer.

### **Analyzing the Qualitative Data on Pathos**

The pathos puts the audience into a certain frame of mind and establishes the emotions. The indicators measured for this category of rhetoric were: auditory (music, sounds), mood

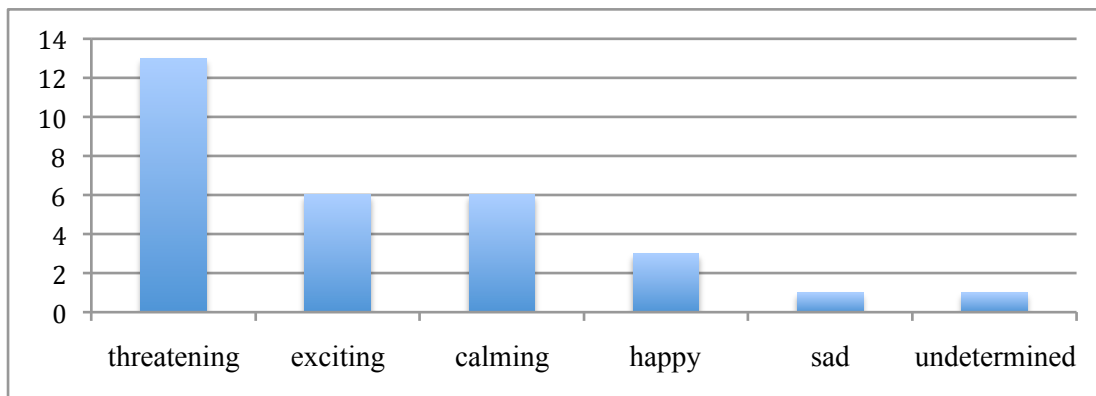


elicited by music, visual (animation/photos/illustrations, actors, colours), and the pacing (slow, moderate, fast).



*Figure 16.* Auditory cues (music and/or sounds).

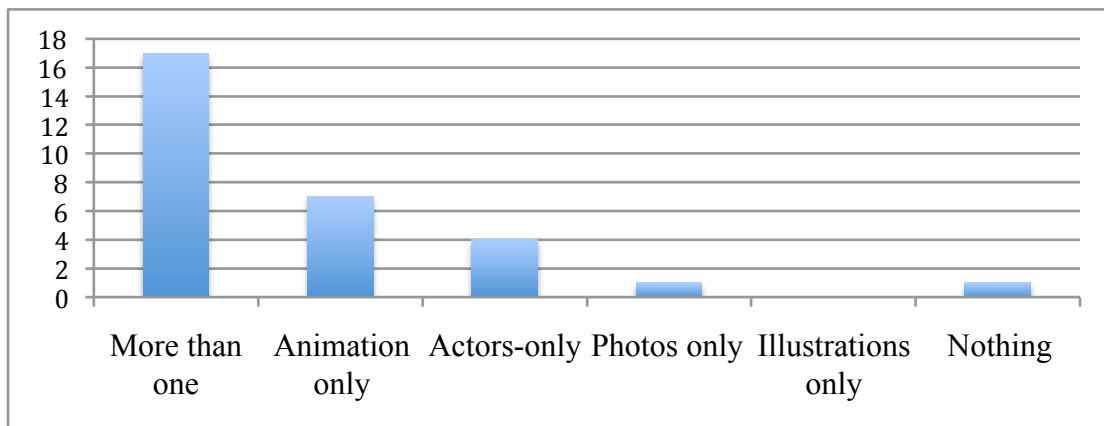
The largest group of the book trailers in the sample (14) used only music. Of the remaining videos, 13 used music and sound effects, two used sounds only and one video did not use any music or sounds. Music provided the strongest contribution to pathos as it affects the viewers' emotions. Sound effects combined with music provide viewers with two auditory cues and this additional information contributes to the pathos. Sounds help convey the pathos in the absence of music. Without any music or sounds, the pathos is much more difficult to determine.



*Figure 17.* Mood as determined primarily by music.

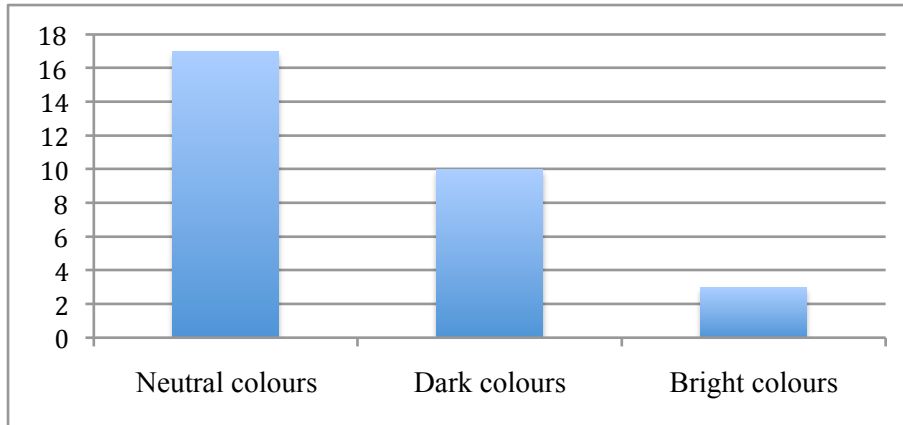
The most commonly conveyed mood was threatening as seen in 13 trailers. There were an equal number of trailers (6) conveying exciting and calming moods. Three videos conveyed a

happy mood, one video conveyed a sad mood, and the mood portrayed in one video could not be determined. The mood indicates the emotions elicited from the story content. The mood tells the potential reader how reading the story may make them feel and could help determine if they want to read the book and feel the emotions conveyed in the book trailer.



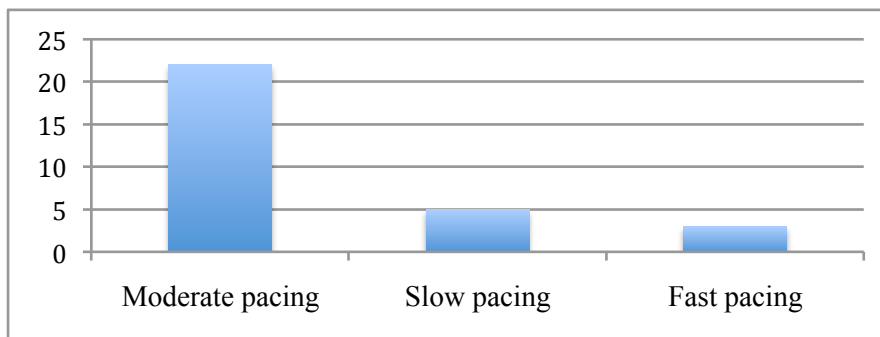
*Figure 18.* Visual (animation/actors/photos/illustration).

The majority of videos used more than one visual stimulus (17). There were seven videos that used only animation, four used only actors and one used only photographs. There was only one video that did not use these visual stimuli because it was an author vlog, “Ann Redisch Stampler on Afterparty,” where the author (not a hired actor) spoke directly into the camera. More than one type of visual stimulus aids in capturing the viewers’ attention and adds interest to the content. The most common pair of visual stimuli was actors and animation or photographs and animation. The animation in the majority of videos was limited to moving text on screen, which provided more information (logos) about the story. Only two videos in the sample were visually weak, and one video with “nothing” was a relatively static video with few frames as it showed the author in the forefront with a black studio background. It did include the book cover and the author’s name throughout; however, the text was not animated as did not move or change.



*Figure 19. Colours.*

The majority of the videos used neutral colours (17), 10 videos used dark colours and three videos used bright colours. Colours can be used to aid in conveying the mood of the story, but generally cannot do so alone. Dark colours can help convey a threatening or exciting mood and bright colours could convey a calming or happy mood. However, most book trailers did not use colours to contribute to the pathos because they were neutral.

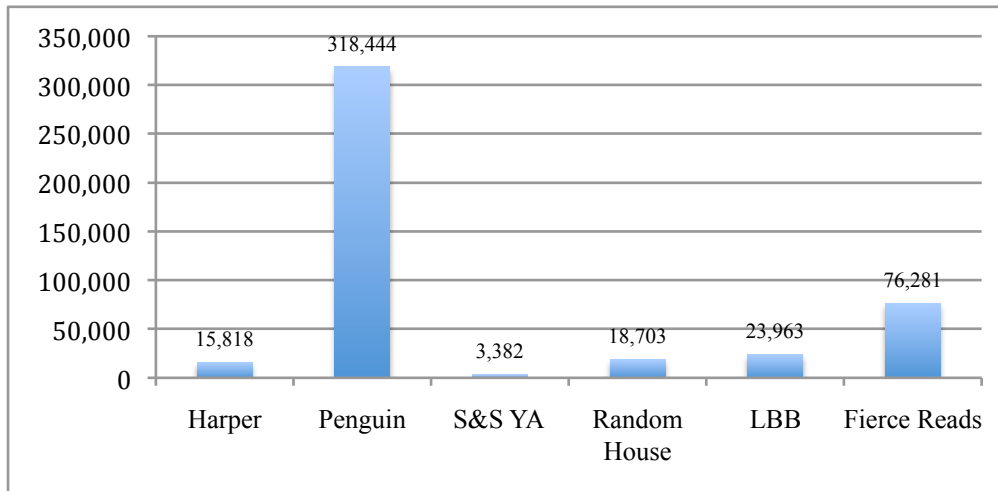


*Figure 20. Pacing.*

The majority of videos used moderate (22) pacing, five were slow-paced and three were fast-paced. As with colouring, pacing can contribute to pathos. For example, fast pacing can relay a threatening or exciting mood and slow pacing can convey a calming or sad mood. Davila (2010) found that readers may associate pacing with the pace of the story. Rhetorical analysis suggests that pacing could be used to convey the mood or pathos of the story and/or be used for

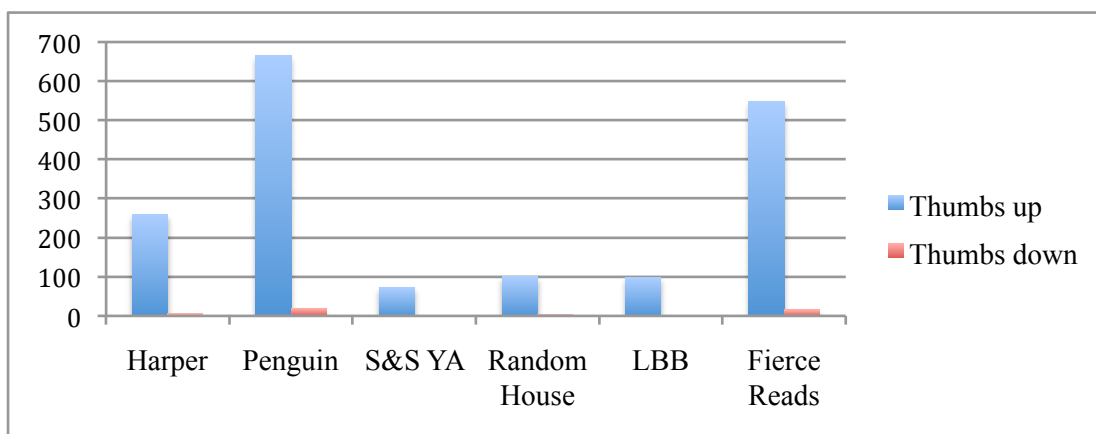
viewer engagement as fast-paced videos require a higher level of engagement and slower videos put less demand on the viewer's attention.

### Analyzing the Quantitative Data on Pathos



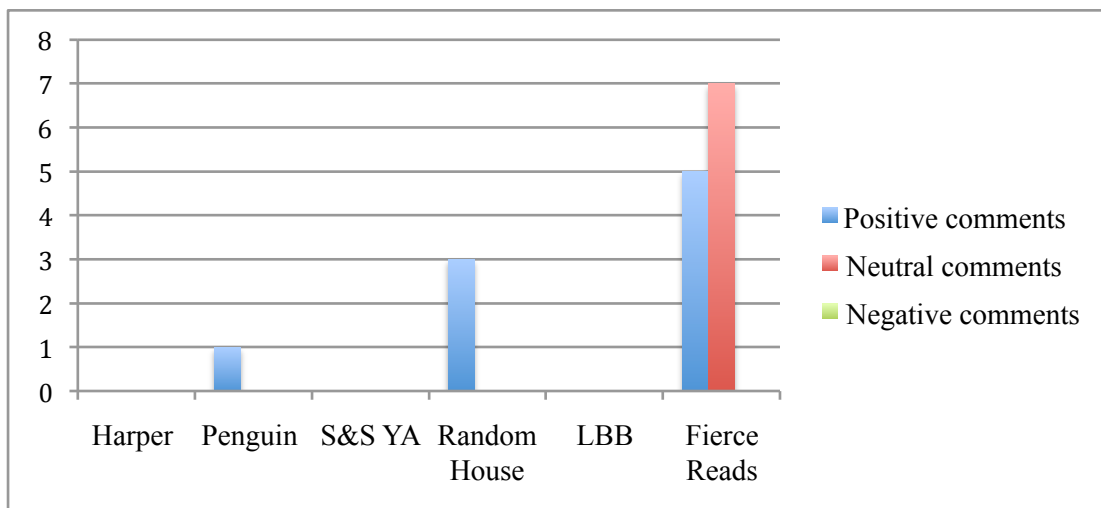
*Figure 21.* Number of views accumulated by each publisher's sample of five videos.

The publisher with the most video views (318,444) was Penguin Teen. The publisher with the least number of video views (3,382) was Simon & Schuster Young Adult. The number of views is one factor indicating the overall success of the book trailer's rhetoric as viewers will re-watch book trailers they enjoyed and may share the video with others.



*Figure 22.* Cumulative number of occurrences that viewers clicked "thumbs up" or thumbs down" on the five video sample for each publisher.

As Penguin Teen and Fierce Reads had the two highest numbers of total video views, they also had the highest number of “thumbs up”. Penguin Teen had 665 and Fierce Reads had 549 “thumbs up”, the majority of which (375) came from one video. Although Harper Teen had the second lowest number of total views, it garnered the third highest number of “thumbs up” at 259. The number of “thumbs down” for each publisher’s sample of videos was low: Harper Teen (5), Penguin Teen (20), Simon & Schuster YA (0), Random House Children (3), Little Brown Books (1), and Fierce Reads (16). Clicking the “thumbs up” icon on YouTube indicated that the users enjoyed or appreciated the video. Feldman (2011) describes the “thumbs up” and “thumbs down” as akin to “liking” or “disliking” a video. Because “like” is: “to enjoy (something); to regard (something) in a favorable way; to feel affection for (someone)” (“Like”, Merriam-Webster), this response falls under pathos or eliciting emotions in the audience. Feldman (2011) explains that “when you continue to get more views, the higher your online ratings will go and the more notoriety you will start getting.” Penguin Teen’s videos contain content that the viewers like as evidenced by the number of video views and number of “thumbs up”.



*Figure 23.* Cumulative viewer comments on pathos of five-video sample from each publisher.

In total, there were very few comments (16 in total) on all videos on indicators of pathos (visual, auditory, and pacing). The videos that received the most positive comments on the pathos were: Fierce Reads with five positive comments, Random House Children with three, and Penguin Teen with one. Fierce Reads also received seven neutral comments on the pathos, with six comments on one video “52 Reasons To Hate My Father”. There were no negative comments on the pathos in any of the 30 videos sampled. As the number of comments on the qualities of pathos for book trailers was low, it places more weight on the number of views, “thumbs up” to convey their like or “thumbs down” to convey their displeasure with the video content.

### **Discussion on Pathos**

The auditory and visual cues as well as the pacing contributed to the overall mood elicited by the video. While the majority of the videos: employed music and sounds effects, used more than one form of visual stimulus, had neutral colouring and moderate pacing, the most impactful contributing factor to the mood were the auditory effects. The Author Vlog that did not employ any auditory information other than the author’s voice “Ann Redisch Stampler on Afterparty” by Simon & Schuster YA made the mood of the book trailer indiscernible, and in turn the mood of the story is unknown. On the other hand, the “Flutter Book Trailer” by Random House Children used a high-pitched beeping sound that interfered with the viewing experience because it overwhelmed the other senses. It was necessary to mute the sound after the first viewing of the trailer in order to collect the data on other aspects. The visual imagery aided in setting the mood because the characters’ faces convey their emotions, as did the tone of their voices, the colour-scheme of the video, and the content of the photos/animation/illustrations which could demonstrate aggressive or tender acts for example. The pacing contributed to the pathos; however, the pacing could not be generalized to certain moods nor be attributed to the pace of the book. For example, videos with moderate pacing (the majority) set a variety of different moods

and one of the videos conveying a threatening mood had slow pacing. Ranking the pathos indicators from most impactful to least impactful on generating the story mood are as follows:

1. Auditory (music and sounds).
2. Visual imagery (photos/animation/illustration, colours, actors).
3. Pacing.

In regards to viewer engagement, the number of total views and “thumbs up” provides positive feedback to publishers that the audience enjoyed the content. Few viewers commented on the nature of the pathos, perhaps because it has a more subconscious effect on the viewer and it is more difficult to identify and explain.

**Recommendations for establishing pathos.** Based on these findings, auditory aspects of book trailers should be given a high priority as they play a major part in establishing the pathos.

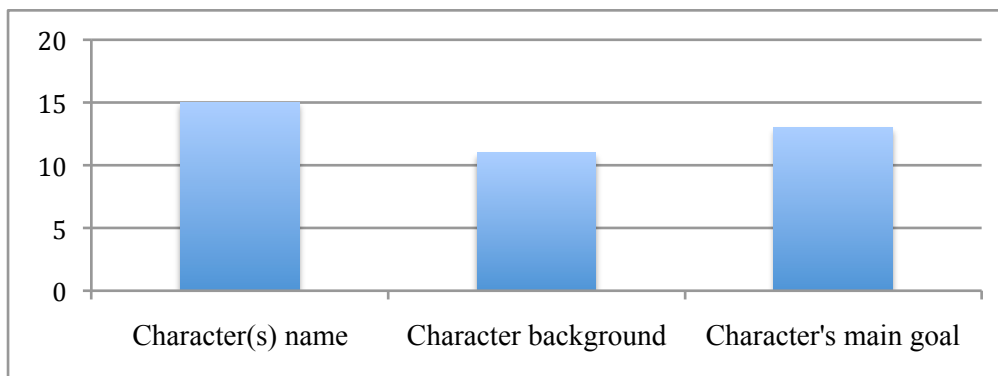
In order to establish strong pathos, it is recommended that:

1. Music be used as the primary mode of establishing the mood of the story. Sound effects could be used exclusively to set the mood, but it is more difficult to achieve because there are periods of silence. Sound effects could also be used in addition to music to create the highest level of auditory engagement with viewers.
2. A combination of more than one visual stimulus (photos, animation, illustration, and/or actors) helps to convey the mood of the story. For example, animated font can indicate a threatening mood using a slanted or “scary-looking” font, or calligraphic or “curly-looking” font can contribute to a happy mood. The actors can show emotions through facial expressions, tone of voice, and body language. Photos and illustrations can also depict actions with different figures and moods with colours and imagery. Two visual stimuli are more engaging and provide more cues to the viewer regarding the pathos.

3. The pacing can also impact the mood, but it has less influence. For example, a fast-paced trailer could be exciting or threatening and a slow-paced trailer could also be threatening or calming depending on how it is employed in conjunction with other visual and auditory cues.

For example, one book trailer had conflicting pathos. The book trailer “Crewel by Gennifer Albin” used bright colours, calming music and the actors were laughing and smiling, however the narrator talks about the plot, which sounds dark and cruel. In this case, the pathos/mood conveyed contradicts the story plot as dictated by the narrator. An example of a book trailer that used the qualities of pathos very well was “Execution by Alexander Gordon Smith”. The video is slow-paced and begins with scary sound effects (squeaking sign rocking back and forth), it uses dark colours, the setting is in a dark basement/underground with bloody-looking (red) writing on the wall, and shows images of skulls paired with electric guitar and drums. All these visual and auditory effects combine to create a very threatening story mood and thus strong pathos.

#### **Analyzing the Qualitative Data on Logos**

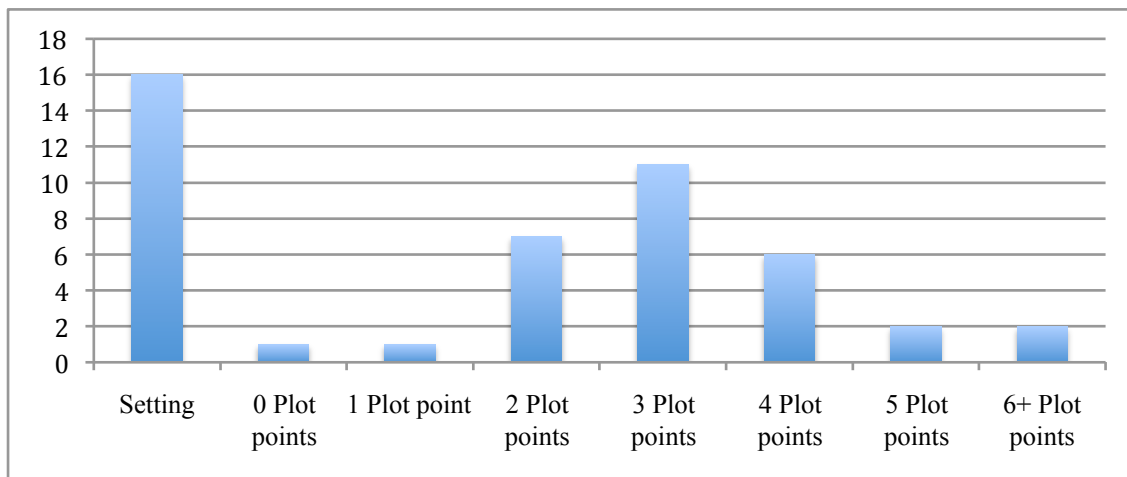


*Figure 24.* Character information present in videos.

Only half (15) of the book trailers mentioned the main character(s)’s name(s). Eleven trailers provided some context for the character’s background (e.g. age, status in society, etc.), and thirteen trailers gave some indication of the character’s main goal. These results were



surprising because most book synopses or back cover copy contain all three of these details. Not establishing the protagonist by providing basic information such as their name, who they are, and what their main goal is leaves the viewer with very little information about the book to decide whether they want to read the story.



*Figure 25.* Story context.

Just over half of trailers (16) give some indication (e.g. explicitly or visually) of the story setting. The most trailers (11) provided three plot points, seven trailers provided two plot points, six trailers provided four plot points. Overall, nine book trailers provided two plot points or less, but the majority (21) provided three or more. The results here were also unexpected as the setting is a key feature of the story world. Kernan (2004) notes that movie trailers heavily emphasize the setting using the common phrase “In a world where” (p. 60). The plot points provide key information as to what the story is actually about. As Davila’s (2010) study showed, identifying who, what, and why are pertinent for viewers to decide whether they want to read a book. As the majority of book trailers provided three or more plot points, a suggested minimum amount of information would be three plot points.

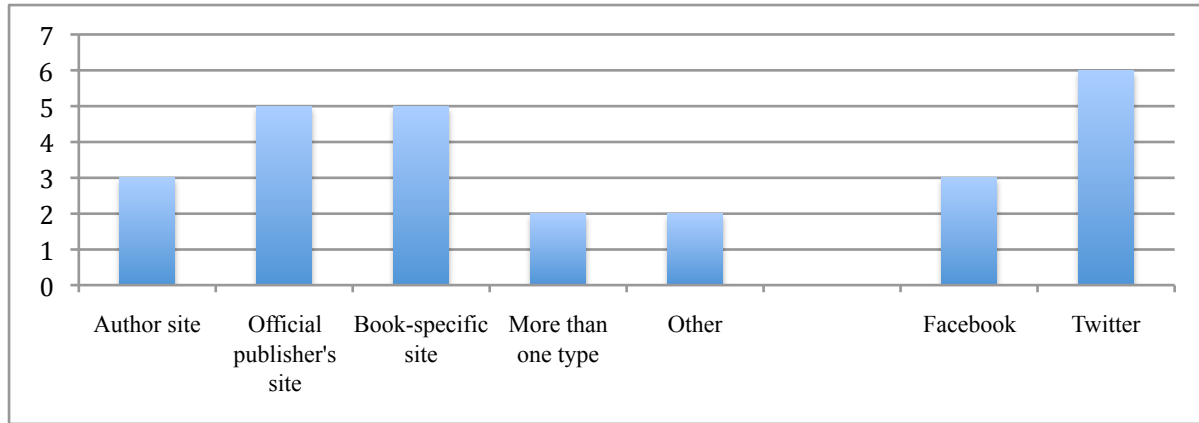


Figure 26. Digital hyperlinks (website and social media).

There were 17 videos that included a website in the video and 13 that did not. The most common types of websites featured at the end of the book trailers were the publisher’s official website (5) or a book-specific website (5). Only nine of videos included social media channels and the most common social media platform referred to was Twitter (6) with Facebook coming in second (3). As book trailers on YouTube are online, and more specifically on a social media website, the number of trailers that refer to other online media, such as a website or social media channel, was lower than expected. Each of the six publishers in this study has a company website at minimum and not including a hyperlink or reference in the book trailer is a missed opportunity to engage viewers further.

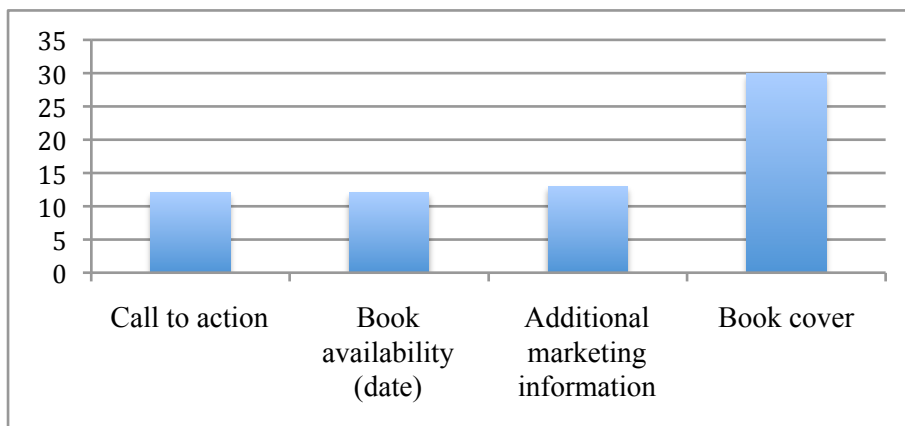
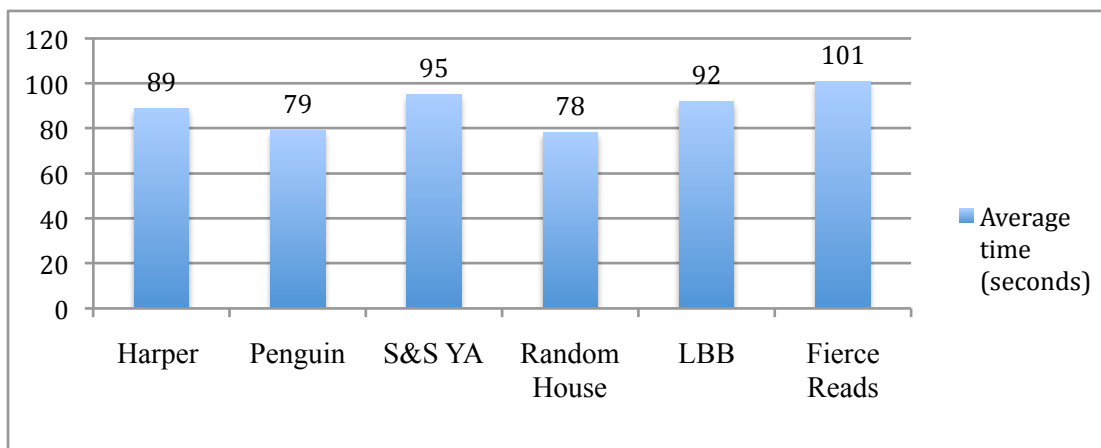


Figure 27. Marketing information provided.

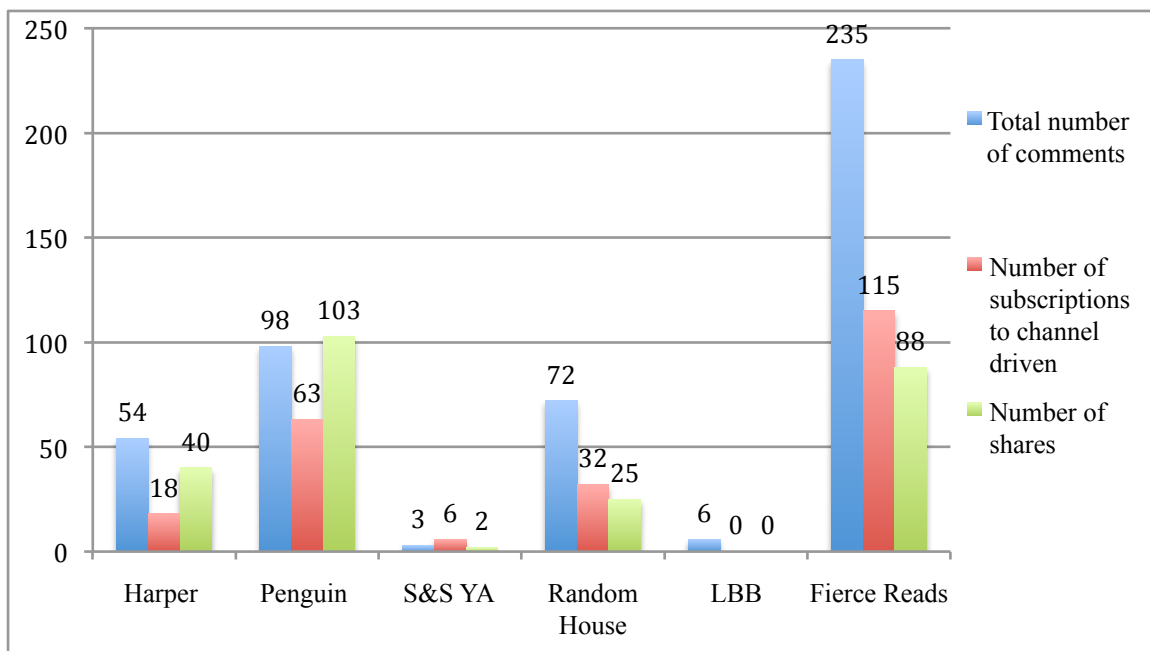
One feature that every book trailer in this sample included consistently was the book cover, which was most often shown at the end of the video. An equal number of trailers (12) provided a call to action and/or indicated when the book was available for purchase. There were 13 videos that provided additional marketing information (e.g. New York Times Bestselling Author, a tagline, or information regarding its placement in the book series). Of the 13 videos that used additional marketing information, six included book reviews. The goal of a book trailer as an advertisement (conversion video) is to engage viewers to become (convert) readers of the book featured. A call to action, the book availability, and additional marketing information are important opportunities for increasing the strength of the logos. A call to action provides the viewers with a clear next-step to take after viewing the video. It is particularly important to include the publishing date if the book trailer is to act as a marketing teaser to create buzz and intrigue about the story. Finally, additional marketing information such as sales history or identifying previously published works, functions as an argument as to why the viewer should read the book featured.

### Analyzing the Quantitative Data on Logos



*Figure 28.* Average length of trailers (in seconds) in this sample for each publisher.

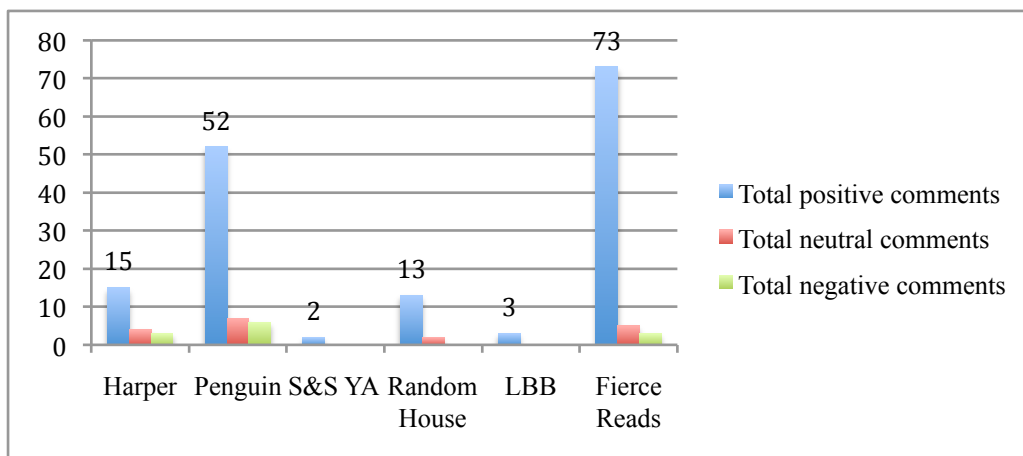
The average length of book trailers in this sample was determined by: adding the individual publishers' sample of five videos and dividing the result by five to create the average length for each publisher. From there the average length of the trailers produced by each publisher were added and divided by six (the number of publishers included in this study). The resulting average length of book trailers in this sample of 30 videos was 89 seconds or 1 minute 29 seconds. The average time of 1 minute and 29 seconds appears to be enough time to establish the ethos, pathos, and logos without being too short to compromise one of the three aspects of rhetoric. Nor too long to cause viewer disengagement or reveal too much about the story because what is left out causes viewer intrigue, which Kernan (2004) refers to as the “desire to know” (p. 55) and Davila (2010) calls “horizons of expectation” (p. 39).



*Figure 29.* Viewer engagement with video samples for each publisher.

Fierce Reads had the highest total number of comments (235), however, this number is skewed because one video alone received 210 comments and of those comments, 91 were posted by the author in response to viewer comments. The same video also generated 77 out of the 115

total subscriptions driven and 38 out of the 88 total shares. Penguin Teen had the second highest viewer engagement with a total of 98 comments over the five videos samples, 63 subscriptions and 103 shares. Little Brown Books disabled the statistical information for the number of subscriptions driven and the total number of shares, thus the values are zero for both aspects. Random House Children also disabled the subscription and sharing statistics for two of the five videos in this sample. Penguin Teen disabled the subscription and sharing statistics on one of the videos in this sample. Therefore, the disabled statistics created an unequal ground of comparison for the number of subscriptions and shares among the sample of videos from the six publishers' YouTube channels. From the results, it can be said that the number of comments correspondingly increased as the number of "thumbs up" increased. This indicates that viewer engagement is based on the strength of the video's rhetoric. It could be suggested (for future research) that there are different levels of viewer engagement. For example, minimal engagement is clicking the "thumbs up" for example; moderate engagement could involve two actions (e.g. "thumbs up" and commenting); and high engagement could involve three actions from clicking "thumbs up", leaving a comment, sharing the video, and/or subscribing to the YouTube channel.



*Figure 30.* Viewer comments.

Fierce Reads saw the highest total of positive comments (73), most of which came from one video and Penguin Teen had the second highest total of positive comments with 52. The majority of the comments related to the logos of the video rather than ethos or pathos as the results above also showed. Positive comments were often in relation to the story/book, the book trailer, or general statements of enjoyment. For example, on “Seconds Away by Harlan Coben” published by Penguin Teen the following three comments were posted:

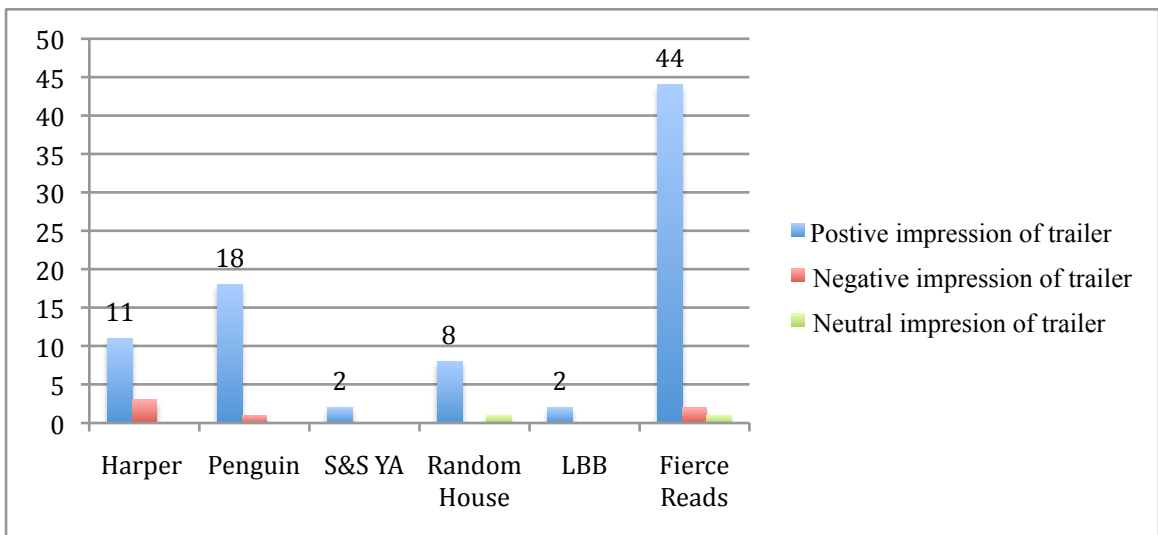
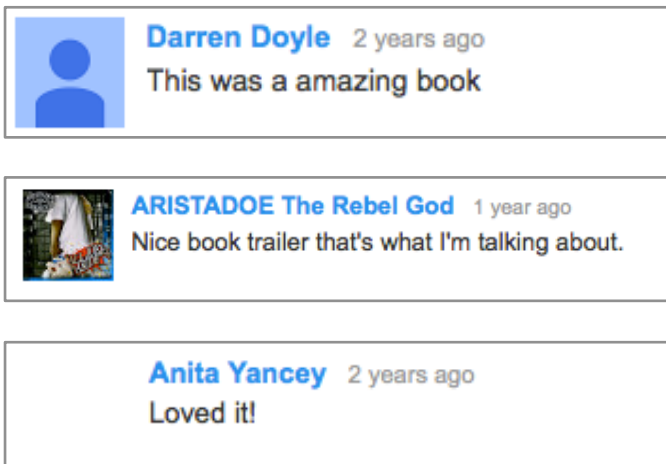


Figure 31. Viewers’ overall impressions of the trailers.

Fierce Reads’ viewers left the most positive comments (44) reflecting their opinion of the book trailer as a whole. Penguin Teen’s videos received 19 positive comments and Harper Teen’s

videos received 10 positive comments on the book trailer as a whole. Positive comments on the book trailer provide viewer feedback that the trailer achieved the goal of being an engaging advertisement. Negative or neutral comments also provide more detailed information about rhetorical aspects that were not as successful or could use improvement. For example, a neutral comment on “Endgame” published by Harper Teen posed a question in regards to the plot points:



An example of a negative comment on “The Young Elites” published by Penguin Teen was in regards to the book trailer’s rhetoric:

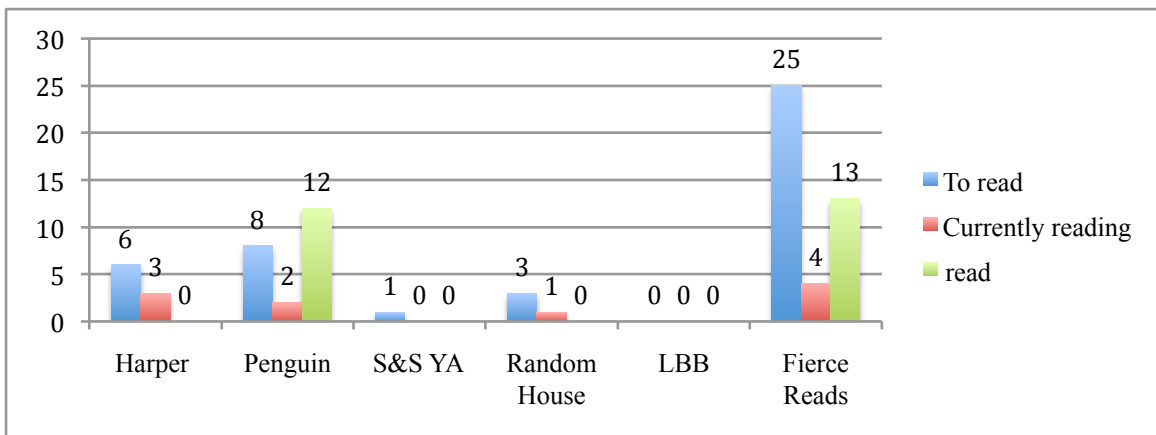
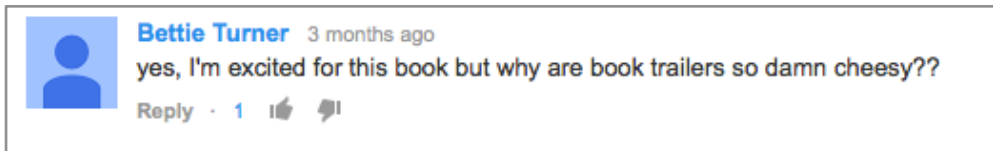


Figure 32. Whether viewers intended to read the book featured.

In the total sample, Fierce Reads had the highest number of viewers indicate that they wanted to read the book featured (25), had already read the book (13) or were currently reading the book (4). Penguin Teen had eight viewers indicate that they wanted to read the book, 12 that they had already read the book, and two who were currently reading the book. Comments

regarding the status of the viewer reading the book provide a clear indication of the book trailer's rhetorical success as a conversion video (advertisement). The viewers that comment that they want to read the book were potentially converted into readers and are likely visiting the book trailer for the first time. Those viewers that are currently reading the book or have already read the book were already converted and may have been searching for additional information about the book online or could be viewing the trailer again to comment and share. To gain further insight into viewer responses to book trailers, future studies could involve the researcher contacting the commenters (if possible through YouTube) and request that they participate in survey research.

### **Discussion on Logos**

The overall logos results were surprising. Only half or less than half of the videos provided basic information about the story including the character's name, background, main goal, the setting, and even main plot points. These aspects are found in the majority of book synopses, but they were not given the same level of importance in book trailers. One commonly shared feature among all book trailers was the inclusion of the book cover, which was most often displayed at the end of the video. Overall Fierce Reads had the highest level of viewer engagement because the videos sampled received: the highest number of comments, positive impressions of the trailer, and interest of the viewers to read the books. Fierce Reads' video, "52 Reasons to Hate My Father by Jessica Brody", received the highest level of viewer engagement out of all 30 book trailers sampled, arguably because this book trailer's format most closely resembled a movie trailer as the viewers frequently mentioned in the comments section, and the cinematic trailer is a format that viewers are accustomed to consuming. This trailer also had the added benefit of the author engaging directly with viewers who left comments.



**Recommendations for establishing logos.** The logos essentially accounts for the argument(s) and the ethos and pathos set the context for the logos. The logos establishes the story arch and setting. In order for a viewer to use a book trailer as a resource for determining whether to read a book, the logos needs to be persuasive. The logos was largely underutilized in the book trailers sampled, which may be due to the fact that it is a newer medium of advertising for publishers or as Dennis Johnson (book trailer awards judge) said, because publishers do not know how to create mini digital stories (e.g. movie trailers) (as cited in Walker, 2012). To establish strong logos, it is recommended that publishers include:

1. The name(s) of the main character(s).
2. An indication of the character's background (e.g. age, societal status, role, etc.).
3. A statement of the character's main goal to give the story purpose.
4. A minimum of three plot points to provide a preview of the story and/or character arc.
5. The appearance of the book cover at least once during the video. It is most commonly seen at the end to leave a final image in the viewer's mind.
6. A call to action, which presents an opportunity to encourage viewers to act and engage further with the content (e.g. visit the website or social media channel and/or purchase the book). A call to action should appear at the end of the video so viewers know what to do next.
7. Additional sales or marketing information that is also useful for viewers. For example, including the date when the book will be available, where the book can be purchased, the format it can be purchased in (print or ebook), a tagline that summarizes the story or book series, and/or identifying the genre or the target audience of the book. This type of information helps the viewer decide whether they want to read the book.

8. Hyperlinks to the publisher's, author's, or book's website and/or social media channel is recommended to encourage further viewer action. The most popular social media platform seen in this sample was Twitter.
9. A book trailer length of approximately 1 minute and 30 seconds, the average (in this sample), appears to provide enough time to convey key information viewers need to make a decision whether or not to read the book featured.
10. Including text below the video because it is also helpful for viewers to review before or after watching the book trailer. It could include the book synopsis, book reviews, a short author biography, information about when and where to buy the book (with hyperlinks), and hyperlinks to website(s) or social media channels with more information.

The logos should be strategically planned to provide the minimum amount of information a viewer needs to decide whether they want to read the book and some direction on what they can do next to find more information or purchase the book.

### **Discussion on Book Trailer Rhetoric Overall**

It is important to establish the ethos by including the name and logo/name of the publisher to provide context and give authority to the story featured. It also indicates the origin of the story so viewers know where or how to locate the book. Book trailers provide the added value of establishing pathos, which is missing from text-based book synopses and reviews, but it should not be the main focus of the video's rhetoric because pathos alone does not sell a story. This study showed that the logos was the rhetorical aspect where most book trailers fell short, as many trailers do not introduce the basic information of the story, but the logos is what sells or persuades the audience to read the book while the ethos establishes the origin and authority and the pathos elicits the story mood in the viewer.

**Book Trailer with the highest viewer engagement.** The book trailer that viewers had the most engagement with was: “52 Reasons to Hate My Father by Jessica Brody”, a cinematic trailer published by Fierce Reads.



*Figure 33.* 52 Reasons to Hate my Father by Jessica Brody - Book Trailer.

For the ethos: the author’s name was shown at the end of the video on both the cover and as text on screen, and the publisher’s name was included at the end as the logo. For the pathos: the video included music that elicited a happy mood, and it used two forms of visual stimuli: actors and photographs. For the logos, it included the: character’s name (Lexi), status (young heiress), setting (Beverly Hills), the main character’s goal (to complete 52 jobs assigned by her father in order to gain access to her \$25 million trust fund), and four plot points (1. father withdraws access to trust fund, 2. required to complete 52 jobs, 3. deal with intern her father hired to monitor her progress, and 4. prove to her father and the world that she won’t fail). A hyperlink to the author’s website for more information was also included. It had the highest viewer engagement with 39,666 views and 375 “thumbs up” (as of December 22, 2014 when the data was collected). The video was long at two minutes and 43 seconds, included a text description

underneath the video, and accumulated 210 comments (as of Dec. 22, 2014). The author, Jessica Brody, engaged heavily with those who left comments, which appeared to fuel viewer participation. The video drove the largest number of subscriptions (77) compared to the other book trailers sampled and was shared 38 times.

**Book trailer with the lowest viewer engagement.** The book trailer that viewers engaged with the least was: “Unmarked”, a cinematic trailer published by Little Brown Books.



Figure 34. Unmarked by Kami Garcia - Book Trailer.

In terms of the ethos, the author was named at both the beginning and the end, and her name appeared on the book cover and as text on screen. The publisher was included at the end of the video with a logo. For the pathos, the music used in the video was an electric guitar, which conveyed a calming mood. The video had the lowest viewer engagement with only 38 views and there were zero “thumbs up” (as of December 22, 2014). As for the logos, the last name of the secondary characters (Lockhart brothers) is given visually, and the status of the main character (demon-hunter) was given. There were three plot points included (1. a ghost tried to kill the protagonist, 2. mother died and was part of a secret society of ghost hunters, and 3. the protagonist joins legion when demon hunts her). The video was 57 seconds long, and did not

include any additional text below in the description. It did not generate any comments and the information for the number of subscriptions and shares was unavailable because the publisher disabled it from view to the public.

**Book Trailer with the strongest rhetoric.** The book trailer with the most rhetorical strength was: “Trailer for Half Bad by Sally Green,” published by Penguin Teen.



*Figure 35.* Trailer for Half Bad by Sally Green, published by Penguin Teen.

None of the book trailers sampled achieved the best in all three categories of ethos, pathos, and logos, but the book trailer for “Half Bad” did have a high number of qualities collected in each of the three categories of rhetoric. The author ethos for this trailer could have been stronger as the author’s name was only included at the end of the video and had poor legibility on the book cover due to the small font. However, the publisher’s presence was strong as the Penguin logo appears in the top right corner throughout the video and the narrator added value because he was the male character in the story. For the pathos, the drums in the background music set a threatening mood and the trailer employed two modes of visual stimuli: actors and animation. This book trailer received the highest number of views out of all the trailers sampled at 120,208 views (as of December 22, 2014) and the trailer also received 198 “thumbs up”, which was the highest

number on a single video in this sample. The trailer included several key indicators of logos including the antagonist's status (White Witch from Hell) and the setting (an isolated cage in the wilderness). It included three plot points: (1) the trick for the protagonist is to not mind about it hurting; (2) he is on the look out all the time for a mistake, a chance, an oversight, the tiniest error from the White Witch; (3) he keeps looking until he can succeed and get free. The trailer also included book reviews from bestselling authors, which acted as valuable additional marketing information. It also ended with the persuasive call to action "start reading today!" which also indicated that the book was already available for purchase. The trailer was one minute and five seconds long and included additional text below the video. It accumulated 25 comments, 40 subscriptions and 58 shares (the highest number for a single video in the sample). It was not selected as viewer's choice as it had a smaller number of total comments and subscriptions compared to "52 Reasons to Hate My Father" published by Fierce Reads.

**Book Trailer with the weakest rhetoric.** The book trailer with the least rhetorical strength was "FAMOUS IN LOVE by Rebecca Serle" published by Little Brown Books, which was more similar to a teaser than a trailer due to its short length.



*Figure 36.* Famous in Love by Rebecca Serle - Book Trailer.

Although the ethos and pathos were moderate, the logos was very weak. For the ethos, the author's name appeared more than once throughout the video and appeared on both the book cover and on screen. The publisher's logo was included throughout in the top right-hand corner. The electric guitar in the background music elicited an exciting mood for the story, but it only included one form of visual stimuli, which was animation. The video received 15,707 views (as of December 22, 2014), and gained five "thumbs up". The video did not include any information about the character, setting, goal for main character, and included only one plot point: "fall in love while the world watches". The only logos conveyed appeared as book reviews and a reference to Twitter. The video was only 15 seconds long. It did include text below the video, but did not receive any comments. The information regarding number of subscriptions and shares was not available as the publisher disabled it.

### **Limitations of this Study**

This study was limited to one genre of books: Young Adult fiction titles. Only six publishers were sampled and they are the largest publishers in the English language. The videos were only those published on YouTube and the selected sample size was 30 videos, which limits the ability to generalize the results. The interpretation of qualitative data, such as viewer comments is subjective, but the clearly stated methodology assists in establishing reliability and validity. The recommendations developed apply to book trailers created for the Young Adult fiction genre, but some may be transferable to other genres. Future studies could examine trailers in other genres and/or those produced by smaller or independent publishers or authors and on different video platforms.

### **Conclusion**

The traditional publishing industry is still trying to cope with and catch up to the increasing demand for e-books and other digital products. Book trailers are a new way for

publishers to take advantage of the digital medium to reach a wider international market, including niches on YouTube (e.g. BookTubers) and possibly “non-readers”. YouTube users can start conversations about the book in the comments section under the video and on other social media platforms, which increases word-of-mouth marketing online and provides publishers with viewer feedback. This research contributed to conversations on digital rhetoric and provided insight into how digital storytelling can capture the content of traditional printed stories in a persuasive manner. The majority of research on book trailers and viewer engagement has so far been focused in a classroom setting. There is a gap in the literature regarding which narrative structure and other rhetorical components combine to create a book trailer that inspires positive viewer reaction and a high level of engagement. This research will assist publishers in gaining higher return on investment for digital marketing because the complete list of recommendations (in Appendix C) that includes high-impact rhetorical conventions for creating book trailers could decrease the need for experimenting with the medium. The recommendations aim to help publishers (and authors) create book trailers that increase the entertainment value and viewers’ and/or potential readers’ level of engagement and ability to determine whether they want to read a book featured. In the future, book trailers could also be published on the booksellers’ websites to help prospective buyers determine whether they might enjoy the book. They could be displayed in bookstores where video-playing venues/equipment exist, and they could be played on TV as commercial breaks. This study showed how book trailer content may persuade viewers to engage online and potentially become readers.



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## Appendix B – Coding Sheets

### Coding Sheet 1 - Qualitative Ethos

<b>Name of publisher &amp; hyperlink to YouTube channel</b>	<b>Video 1 - Title &amp; hyperlink</b>	<b>Video 2 - Title &amp; hyperlink</b>	<b>Video 3 - Title &amp; hyperlink</b>	<b>Video 4 - Title &amp; hyperlink</b>	<b>Video 5 - Title &amp; hyperlink</b>
<b>Author name included</b> (start of video; end; or both)					
<b>Author name appearance</b> (on cover; and/or as text on screen)					
<b>Author background</b> (New York Times Bestselling; Bestselling; n/a)					
<b>Publisher name included</b> (start of video; end; or both)					
<b>Publisher appearance</b> (name-only as text on screen; name in logo format)					
<b>Narrator included</b> (Yes/No)					
<b>Narrator</b> (character in story; not a character)					

### Coding Sheet 2 – Qualitative Pathos

<b>Name of publisher &amp; hyperlink to YouTube channel</b>	<b>Video 1 - Title &amp; hyperlink</b>	<b>Video 2 - Title &amp; hyperlink</b>	<b>Video 3 - Title &amp; hyperlink</b>	<b>Video 4 - Title &amp; hyperlink</b>	<b>Video 5 - Title &amp; hyperlink</b>
<b>Music</b> (identify primary instrument(s))					
<b>Mood elicited from music</b> (calming, exciting, threatening, happy, sad)					
<b>Sound effects</b> (Yes/no)					
<b>Visual effects</b> (photographs; animation; illustration; more than one type)					



<b>Actors</b> (Yes/no)					
<b>Pacing</b> (fast, moderate, slow)					
<b>Colours</b> (dark, bright, natural)					

### Coding Sheet 3 – Qualitative Logos

<b>Name of publisher &amp; hyperlink to YouTube channel</b>	<b>Video 1 - Title &amp; hyperlink</b>	<b>Video 2 - Title &amp; hyperlink</b>	<b>Video 3 - Title &amp; hyperlink</b>	<b>Video 4 - Title &amp; hyperlink</b>	<b>Video 5 - Title &amp; hyperlink</b>
<b>Character name(s)</b> (Yes/No)					
<b>Character status/background</b> (Yes/No)					
<b>Setting</b> (Yes/No)					
<b>Goal for main character</b> (Yes/No)					
<b>Plot Points</b> (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6+)					
<b>Website</b> (Author, publisher, book-specific, other)					
<b>Social media</b> (Twitter, Facebook, Goodreads, other)					
<b>Call to action</b> (yes/no)					
<b>Book release date</b> (yes/no)					
<b>Marketing information</b> (Yes/No) (e.g. book reviews, placement in series, tagline, identifies genre, other)					

**Coding Sheet 4 – Quantitative Ethos, Pathos, Logos**

<b>Name of publisher &amp; hyperlink to YouTube channel</b>	<b>Video 1 - Title &amp; hyperlink</b>	<b>Video 2 - Title &amp; hyperlink</b>	<b>Video 3 - Title &amp; hyperlink</b>	<b>Video 4 - Title &amp; hyperlink</b>	<b>Video 5 - Title &amp; hyperlink</b>
<i>Ethos</i>					
<b>Comment(s) about author</b> (positive, neutral, negative)					
<b>Comment(s) about publisher</b> (positive, neutral, negative)					
<b>Comment(s) about narrator</b> (positive, neutral, negative)					
<i>Pathos</i>					
<b>Number of video views</b>					
<b>Number of thumbs up</b>					
<b>Number of thumbs down</b>					
<b>Comment(s) on music</b> (positive, neutral, negative)					
<b>Comment(s) on photos</b> (positive, neutral, negative)					
<b>Comment(s) on illustration</b> (positive, neutral, negative)					
<b>Comment(s) on animation</b> (positive, neutral, negative)					
<b>Comment(s) on actors/characters appearance</b> (positive, neutral, negative)					
<b>Comment(s) on pacing</b> (positive, neutral, negative)					
<i>Logos</i>					
<b>Length of trailer</b>					
<b>Text under video (Y/N)</b>					
<b>Total number of comments</b>					

<b>Subscriptions driven</b> (if available)					
<b>Number of shares</b> (if available)					
<b>Category tagged in YouTube</b>					
<b>Comment(s) nonsensical/another language</b> (positive, neutral, negative)					
<b>Comment(s) on character personality</b> (positive, neutral, negative)					
<b>Comment(s) on setting</b> (positive, neutral, negative)					
<b>Comment(s) on plot</b> (positive, neutral, negative)					
<b>Comment(s) on book/SERIES</b> (positive, neutral, negative)					
<b>Comment(s) on whether viewer plans to read the book</b> (to read, currently reading, read)					
<b>Impression of trailer overall</b> (positive, neutral, negative)					
<b>Comment(s) on sharing</b>					
<b>Comment(s) towards another commenter</b>					
<b>Comment(s) on medium</b> (positive, neutral, negative)					
<b>Production credits</b>					

## **Appendix C – Recommendations for Book Trailer Storyboards**

### **Recommendations for creating rhetorically strong book trailers**

Establish strong ethos by:

1. Including the author's name more than once throughout the duration of the video.
2. Providing additional information about the author, such as the author's sales history, e.g. New York Times Bestselling, Bestselling, title of previous book(s) published, or debut-status.
3. Including the publisher's logo throughout the video (e.g. in the top right-corner) instead of only at the beginning or end.
4. Including the publisher's logo, name, and/or website at the end of the video. The logo increases ethos because the visual branding is recognizable.

Establish strong pathos by:

5. Music can be used as the primary mode of establishing the mood of the story. Sound effects could be used exclusively to set the mood, but it is more difficult to achieve because there are periods of silence. Sound effects could also be used in addition to music to create the highest level of auditory engagement with viewers.
6. A combination of more than one visual stimulus (photos, animation, illustration, and/or actors) helps to convey the mood of the story. For example, animated font can indicate a threatening mood using a slanted or "scary-looking" font, or calligraphic or "curly-looking" font can contribute to a happy mood. The actors can show emotions through facial expressions, tone of voice and body language. Photos and illustrations can also depict actions with different figures and moods with colours and imagery. Two visual stimuli are more engaging and provide more cues to the viewer regarding the pathos.

7. The pacing can also impact the mood, but it has less influence. For example, a fast-paced trailer could be exciting or threatening and a slow-paced trailer could also be threatening or calming depending on how it is employed in conjunction with other visual and auditory cues.

Establish strong logos by:

8. The name(s) of the main character(s).
9. An indication of the character's background (e.g. age, societal status, role, etc.).
10. A statement of the character's main goal to give the story purpose.
11. A minimum of three plot points to provide a preview of the story and/or character arc.
12. The appearance of the book cover at least once during the video. It is most commonly seen at the end to leave a final image in the viewer's mind.
13. A call to action, which presents an opportunity to encourage viewers to act and engage further with the content (e.g. visit the website or social media channel and/or purchase the book). A call to action should appear at the end of the video so viewers know what to do next.
14. Additional sales or marketing information that is also useful for viewers. For example, including the date when the book will be available, where the book can be purchased, the format it can be purchased in (print or ebook), a tagline that summarizes the story or book series, and/or identifying the genre or the target audience of the book. This type of information helps the viewer decide whether they want to read the book.
15. Hyperlinks to the publisher's, author's, or book's website and/or social media channel is recommended to encourage further viewer action. The most popular social media platform seen in this sample was Twitter.

16. A book trailer length of approximately 1 minute and 30 seconds, the average (in this sample), appears to provide enough time to convey key information viewers need to make a decision whether or not to read the book featured.
17. Including text below the video because it is also helpful for viewers to review before or after watching the book trailer. It could include the book synopsis, book reviews, a short author biography, information about when and where to buy the book (with hyperlinks), and hyperlinks to website(s) or social media channels with more information.