

LAST DAYS

A new entertainment property by Chad Kukahiko

Project Brief:

“Last Days is the organic convergence of an episodic television show about survivors of a catastrophic pandemic fighting to stay alive in a post-apocalyptic United States, coupled with a multi-leveled web-site that together create a story that literally comes off the screen by providing a depth of interaction, immersion and play that allows each individual audience member to choose his or her own level of involvement.”

What would happen if the world as we know it was suddenly swept away by a horrifying pandemic that turned the afflicted into undead, man-eating killers? Would the precious few survivors fight and kill one another for every bit of food or shelter they could find or would they work together – perhaps even sacrifice themselves on occasion – to save as many of their fellow survivors as they could? The episodic television show Last Days and the web-site lastdaysjournal.com converge into a single immersive narrative that makes an impassioned case for the latter.

For the post-apocalyptic world at the heart of Last Days, the television show provides the **window** through which the audience may witness particular events, but the web-site provides the **door** through which the audience may step and thereby become a part of this world.

The following is a brief description of the show, then the site, followed by a short history of the project.

Show Logline:

“Four people from very different walks of life, scattered throughout the western United States are forced to decide for themselves how they truly value life and love as they fight for survival in a world decimated by a deadly pandemic.”

Show Synopses:

Last Days is a dramatic series about survivors of a horrifying pandemic that turns the afflicted into undead, man-eating killers. Through the varying stories of its four main characters – Ned in Los Angeles, Sandy in Utah, Kim in Seattle and Allan in Oregon – Last Days makes a heart-felt case for the intrinsic civility and humanity of man.

Ned, who had been a jaded worker-bee before the fall, finds himself in the middle of ground zero – highly-dangerous, undead-riddled downtown Los Angeles – and turns himself into a heartless killer in order to survive; but the appearance of an old love threatens to shatter his carefully constructed shell. Sandy, the smart and lovestruck teenager, finds herself trapped with the family of her high school crush, but in order to save them, discovers the confident, powerful woman she never knew was inside of her. Kim, the sober nurse, fights her way to a growing and optimistic community of survivors making the best of it in a local football stadium, only to witness the lengths of evil to which some men will go in order to attain power. Allan, a reflective wanderer before the fall, continues to wander after, and noticing that little has actually changed for him since the world fell apart he continues to search for some kind of meaning to it all.

As Allan's journal entries provide a kind of contemplative narration throughout, the different narratives weave together into a single story of ordinary people who when faced with super-extraordinary circumstances fight to maintain – or even refine if possible – their humanity.

Web-site Brief:

“The three distinct divisions of lastdaysjournal.com combine to create a virtual portal to an alternate post-apocalyptic world into which users – through a ‘survivor’ alter ego – may gauge their own level of immersion based entirely upon their individual interests and enjoyment, and through their interaction the users themselves determine the fate of this post-apocalyptic alternate reality.”

Site Description:

lastdaysjournal.com is a web-site with three distinct divisions which combine to provide a virtual doorway into the post-apocalyptic world of Last Days. These divisions are:

- A social-network – or the ‘Facebook’ for survivors of the zombie apocalypse.
- A news aggregator – or the ‘Huffington Post’ for survivors of the zombie apocalypse.
- A massively multi-player online role-playing web-game (or MMORPG) which allows players to get their hands dirty by getting into the nitty-gritty details of surviving the zombie apocalypse with a fun browser-based game.

Users with a variety of interests gauge their own level of involvement in each of these three different sections based entirely on what appeals to them. Whichever portion or portions of the site any one user enjoys responds to that user's activities, and through this user-interactivity the site gains shape and detail, ultimately giving the users themselves the power to determine the future of the Last Days world.

A Brief History of the Project:

On an October morning in 2005, Chad Kukahiko woke up from a dream in his tiny Koreatown studio near downtown Los Angeles with the hint of a story just beginning to take shape in his imagination. He began to outline the story with the intention of using it to write his third feature screenplay, but the outline grew and grew over several months until two years later he had an outline that could span several years of an episodic series, as well as the script of the pilot episode.

The original lastdaysjournal.com was launched shortly after the pilot script was written in October 2007 with no budget and few expectations, but the following month The Daily Egyptian, a student newspaper for SUI-Carbondale (Southern Illinois University–Carbondale), published an article about lastdaysjournal which sparked the site's first surge of hits and registrations. Within weeks zombie fans from as far away as Australia, the United Kingdom and Malaysia had signed up to the world's first social-networking site for survivors of the zombie apocalypse. Today there are a modest number of devoted user who together consistently maintain an eight-minute average time per visit and a five pages viewed per visit.

Over time, the project as a whole has attracted a handful of talented and devoted collaborators and expects to launch a beta site for controlled further testing by mid-spring 2009.