

**16 Across**  
**and**  
**Place, Play and Online Fiction in Practice and Theory**

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## **Abstract**

The creative work, *16 Across*, examines the possibilities of online fiction through practice. It comprises forty stories which take place over the course of a day late in March 2006. The stories are linked to a crossword that follows the shape of Adelaide's street layout. Each story acts as a clue to one of the words in the crossword grid, and takes place in the part of Adelaide corresponding to the location of that word. There is a considerable intersection of characters, places and times; specifically, where two clues overlap, there is an intersection between their respective stories.

The stories in the top left (north-west) corner take place in the very early morning, and the day progresses as the stories move towards the bottom right and late night; a forty-first story is set the following morning and, in the online version of *16 Across*, only becomes visible to readers who have successfully completed the crossword.

The exegesis investigates the history of online fiction, the developments which have brought it to its current state, and its possibilities for the future.

It places online fiction within a larger history of electronic fiction, and examines the differences between online fiction and offline fiction, whether electronic or paper. By looking at works which have made the transition between online and offline fiction, it examines how the experience of a reader of online fiction is different from that of a reader of offline fiction. It also looks at the technical and social contexts in which online fiction exists.

Finally, the characteristics which emerge from this examination are used to predict the directions, both creative and commercial, in which online fiction may move. It is suggested that the future of online fiction lies, to a great extent, with writing which is increasingly willing to blur the lines between games and stories or between work time and leisure time, or between fact and fiction, or between writer and reader.

## **Statement of Originality**

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being available for loan and photocopying.

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