

TOP STORIES

CBC moving into mid-season with interactive gemsby [Jesse Kohl](#)

CBC has gone live with an immersive online reality game to back the upcoming mid-season crime drama *The Border*, along with microsites for other upcoming premieres. But *The Border's* online engagement potential stands out from the rest. The idea is to drive viewers online to interact with an extension of the show itself, which is exec-produced by Peter Raymont (*Shake Hands with the Devil*) and confronts Canada's toughest border security issues.

Players can immerse themselves in the online story at cbc.ca/theborder, which puts the user through a first-person interrogation sequence. The video flow responds to the way users answer interrogators' questions. From there, the user acts out the rest of the online story through a series of games. Several of the games are locked until January 7, when the 13-ep show premieres in the Monday 9 pm time slot.

A yet-to-launch mobile contest invites people to use their phone cameras to capture "passport stamps" or "QR codes" that will be scattered across the country. They can then send the photo via mobile phone to a number on the microsite to get a text response. The process counts as one contest entry.

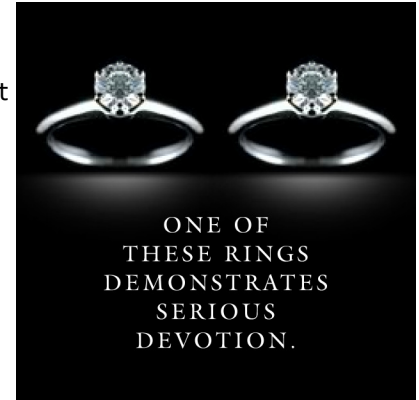
"The concept was simple, as relayed to us a few months ago by producers White Pine Pictures and Stitch Media," says Jam3media co-founder Mark McQuillan. (Toronto-based Jam3media handled creative, design, development and implementation, while Stitch Media's Evan Jones was interactive producer on the project.) McQuillan adds, "This site will certainly set the standard for immersive reality games, and is already beginning to turn heads in Hollywood."

With the US writers' strike continuing, *The Border* is pegged as a potential Monday night winner by some media buyers (see that story [here](#)), who noted the show won't be facing competition from *24* at the mid-season launch.

Basic (and less interactive) microsites are also live for the pubcaster's upcoming premieres, such as the hockey wives drama *MVP* (cbc.ca/mvp), which premieres Friday, January 11 in the 9 pm time slot, and *Sophie* (cbc.ca/sophie), a show about a newly single mom with a talent agency and a colourful entourage of friends, which premieres Wednesday, January 9 at 8:30 pm.

The net's *jPod*, the series based on Douglas Coupland's book about game designers, has got some cute interactivity built in to its microsite (cbc.ca/jpod). The show page, dubbed the *jPod Lounge*, links viewers to the already established book-related pages and the show's Wikipedia entry, as well as a highly addictive and (for longtime gamers) highly nostalgic 8-bit interactive game called *Defendoid* - which basically turns the user into a spaceship in order to blast away at floating aliens and such. The show itself hits Tuesday nights at 9 pm, starting January 8.

For a complete overview of the CBC's winter sked, see [MiC's November 21 coverage](#).

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