Video Vortex Reader II

MOVING IMAGES BEYOND YOUTUBE

EDITED BY
GEERT LOVINK AND
RACHEL SOMERS MILES
INC READER #6

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INC Reader #4: Geert Lovink and Sabine Niederer (eds),
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ENGAGE IN DESTINY DESIGN: ONLINE VIDEO BEYOND HYPERGROWTH
INTRODUCTION TO VIDEO VORTEX READER II

GEERT LOVINK

'The automatic carriage-return on the typewriter, electronic central locking of cars: these are the things that count. The rest is just theory and literature'.

– Jean Baudrillard [1]

This second *Video Vortex Reader* marks the transition of online video into the mainstream. Staggering statistics of hypergrowth no longer impress us. Discussing a possible online video project for the first time in late 2006 in Melbourne with Seth Keen, the topic was still a matter of 'becoming'. One collaborative research project, six conferences and two anthologies later, the Video Vortex project seems at a crossroads. Massive usage is not an indication of relevance. Heavy use does not automatically translate into well-funded research or critical art practices. Is the study of online video, like most new media topics, doomed to remain a niche activity – or will we see a conceptual quantum leap, in line with the billions of clips watched daily? So far, there is no evidence of a dialectical turn from quantity into quality. It is remarkable how quickly both pundits and cultural elites became used to online video libraries containing millions of mini-films. In our 'whatever' culture nothing seems to surprise us. Who cares about the internet? Continuous technological revolution, from social networking to smartphones, seems to have numbed us down. B-S-B: Boredom-Surprise-Boredom. Instead of an explosion of the collective imaginary we witness digital disillusion – a possible reason why online theory has had a somewhat unspectacular start. The low quality of YouTube's most popular videos certainly indicates that this platform is not a hotbed of innovative aesthetics.

What are the concerns here? *Was will das Medium?* Are we condemned to fight over the exact percentage of user-generated content in comparison to remediated film and television material? Will online video remain a jukebox item that is passed from one social network to the next? Have we all switched from zapping to searching? Should we approach the potential of YouTube culture from the plasma screen angle? Is the final destination to be found in the living room, where the online video logic starts to compete with cable and free-to-air television? Is online video liberating us from anything?

Instead of trying merely to measure this ever-changing field, we can also try to define future scenarios. Let's dig into the destiny of online video and discuss three possible directions:

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1.   Jean Baudrillard, *Cool Memories: Volume 1*, trans. Chris Turner, London; New York: Verson, 1990, p.191.

1) Because of their financial and legal muscle, television and film industries will create a coalition with the aim of marginalizing online video platforms such as YouTube. This will not be done by taking them offline or through copyright court cases but by creating appealing online viewing applications that link the comfort of the home theatre with the mobility of smartphones. Easy-to-use payment systems and new models of advertising combined with internet fibres into home will do the trick. Online video as we know it right now is still too closely tied to the multitasking practices of the PC-bound computer user who, like a cybernetic commander, sits on a chair behind a desk. In this scenario online video is recognized as a disruptive technology-in-transition, that will nonetheless be unable to survive because its values are too deeply rooted in a white-male-geek culture that doesn't accommodate the busy lives of the billions who demand easy access to instant infotainment and seamless interfaces.

2) Following the rhetoric of heroism of the mighty battle of Old against New, many insiders believe online video will emerge as the great winner. Google, Facebook and Twitter are the media companies of the Web 2.0 era. But how will this corporate reality translate into future ownership of the visual? Cyber-evangelists emphasize the move away from dead content to interaction and aggregation. It is all about clicking, linking and liking, in short, 'the social' that generates value. The more visual material aligns itself with users by facilitating 'clouds of meaning', as YouTube and Flickr do, the more they will dominate the future media markets. The parasitic strategy which promotes 'free' and 'open' helps us to navigate the plenitude of images. The result is a culture of indifference towards retro-futurism. It no longer matters if content is old or new, as long as we exchange our micro-impressions.

3) In the third scenario we are already in the midst of a Hundred Years Civil War between platforms and corporations competing for the user's attention. As a never-ending event of non-compatibility and built-in obsolescence, we live in this techno-media drama as an epos without clear winners – unless the overall picture radically changes. Right now, market expansion in all directions is still possible through 'emerging' markets in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America. But this spectacular growth might fool us. The Attention War is real. We all participate by making choices – and contributing our micro-data to online video (or not) is only one of many platforms to which we dedicate our time. Online video is merely a manifestation of hardware, software and network configurations, an endless helical chain of codecs, protocols and models that generates its own 'auto poetic' aesthetics. In this case, 'new media' will co-exist next to television and film for some time to come. Digital convergence will only happen on a back office level. Concepts such as cross, trans, locative or geo media will be only short-lived business memes. In this Machiavellian view, media have no 'telos'. It is all about power and resources—a cynical play that most idealistic and utopian new media actors do not know about, or want to respond to.

This reader will offer clues that point in various directions, from comparative platform studies to a theory of windows and frames. Beyond theorizing possibilities, the texts found here move towards the description of concrete artworks and case studies. Regardless of the outcome of the above three scenarios, Video Vortex sends out a call to become platform-specific. What are the unique characteristics of online video? Is it the ability to link and comment on such files? Or rather the indifferent time and space coordinates of the visual experience? In his work *An Introduction to Visual Culture*, Nicholas Mirzoeff asks:

> Can the writing of the digital present and its implied futures only be accomplished by a counterhistory that refuses to tell a history of progress? How do we write a history of something that changes so fast it can seem like a full-time job keeping up, let alone learning the softwares? [2]

In an age where the gap between subculture and Main St. has closed, the avant-garde can only respond to yesterday's pop culture. Let's investigate the myriad smartphones, notebooks, laptops, car LCD screens, flip down monitors, portable video players, pocket PCs and handheld TVs. Beyond the often moralistic critique of gadget fetishism we need to upgrade and focus that which John Berger terms our 'ways of seeing', and start to describe what our contemporary culture actually consists of. We are simultaneously producing and consuming moving images wherever we are. Italian artist Albert Figurt has achieved this in his brilliant *Notre Cam de Paris* video.[3] We see tourists walking through the Notre Dame cathedral in Paris, filming and taking pictures. The video carefully observes the way the bodies of these camera laymen adjust themselves to the camera: arms moving and stretching in order to zoom in or out of the sculptures or glass windows they are trying to capture. Figurt makes us aware not only of the mass production of visual material but of the condition of the image as flexible techno-extension of the body.

Instead of travelling to and from a visual experience, such as the cinema or PC on a desk, we watch a film in the subway, car or airplane to kill time – and intensify our everyday life. The long predicted 'totale Mobilmachung' of visual culture has finally arrived. With the spreading of the videophone and MP4 players, the film-video-TV complex is now travelling with us and is becoming part of the intimate sphere of the Self. We carry the image device in our pockets, close to our body, and watch it within close range of our face. It is the intensity of this solitary watching whilst on the move, in bed, and at the kitchen table that is defining the online video experience.

So far it has not been the 'live' element that interests us here at Video Vortex. Live streaming, though technically within the realm of the possible, has not yet taken off. We watch clips, reports and movies in the time-space coordinates of our liking. Video has gone viral but has not yet deeply penetrated the social networking experience. Even embedded, video remains something outside that we recommend and 'like'. The worlds of user-generated content and the Skype telephone system have not yet met, even though both of them have hundreds of millions of users. The radical banality of Chatroulette has also not yet been seen as a video input signal. We could blame this on the poor image quality and

2. Nicholas Mirzoeff, *An Introduction to Visual Culture,* 2nd edition, New York: Routledge, 2009, p. 241.
3. http://vimeo.com/18662693.

the high drop-out rate, but more likely it is the single media ideology (in this case recorded video signals) most of us are encapsulated by that prevents us from making the perverse connections that are overlooked by business engineers.

During the first years of online video research, most attention was dedicated to Henry Jenkins' uncritical appraisal of 'participatory culture', and to the 'cult of the amateur' response. Despite the criticism supplied by figures such as Cass Sunstein, Andrew Keen and Jaron Lanier, the 'most watched' logic is still dominant in the academic cultural studies approaches. Instead of deploying pessimistic judgements against optimistic marketeer talk, it could be more interesting to closely investigate the messy online reality. In the early 1970s Jean Baudrillard defined mass media as 'speech without response'. These days, messages only exist if they are indexed by search engines, retweeted with shortened URLs, forwarded through emails and RSS feeds, liked at Facebook, recommended through Digg or, we must not forget, commented on the page itself. Media without response seem to be unthinkable. The second *Video Vortex Reader* takes you to this second stage of the online video experience. Enjoy!

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VISION POSSIBLE: A METHODOLOGICAL QUEST FOR ONLINE VIDEO

STEFAN HEIDENREICH

Beginnings

Early Cinema

Beginnings are delusive. When the Lumière brothers invented cinema, they were in a hurry – and not only because so many others were about to come up with the same idea. In fact, one year before their famous first screening in 1895, short movie clips were already on display in Edison's slot-machines, and Edison's engineer William Dickson had even proposed projecting these moving images. This could be considered another origin of moviemaking. But the story of cinema took another turn than that which the Lumière brothers anticipated. They were convinced that the moving image would become just another of the short-lived spectacles seen at fairs and markets. Their business idea consisted of the simple plan to reach as many areas as possible with traveling teams before competitors could show up, and before the attention of the public shifted to another attraction. So they conceived an incredible apparatus designed to record, develop, and project the short clips. They trained their cameramen and sent them out to all parts of the globe. That is the reason why there are so many very early films from different places on earth. But when the cinema became a big industry, the Lumière brothers were caught by surprise and dropped out.

Very soon after the Lumières' first movie projectors were set up in theatres, people started to screen programs of short clips. During the early years, cinema underwent considerable changes, not only aesthetically but also in the way movies were produced. The famous turn from documentaries to fiction is closely linked to demand surpassing supply. This, in turn, led to a wave of professionalization. Soon, early cinema looked like a clumsy predecessor of the smooth continuity introduced by the editing technology to come.

Early YouTube

Given the unpredictable history of moving images, can the history of early cinema teach us anything about the future of online video? The speed of globalization and the short duration of the early movies due to technical constraints are two of many characteristics shared by early online video and early cinema. Plenty of formal similarities can be found, from the short formats to the focus of attractions and mishaps. There are even similarities between the different genres assembled in the programs of early cinema and YouTube's classifications. [1] But mere comparison can be a trap, because the early phase of cinema did not disclose much about what happened to its future. Contrary to the assumptions of

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1.   See in detail Corinna Müller, 'Variationen des Kinopgramms. Filmform und Filmgeschichte', in Corinna Müller and Harro Segeberg (eds), *Die Modellierung des Kinofilms*, Munich, 1998, p. 43.

some media theorists, these initial moments – 'Urszenen' – do not reveal much about the future. Therefore, one might rather need to ask: What are the lies early YouTube is trying to tell us about the coming of online video? One fact seems certain: in the decades ahead, our contemporary online video culture and its gadgets will look as clumsy as early cinema appeared in comparison to what followed. In hindsight, all early films look like predecessors and incomplete exercises. If this is what we can learn from the comparison of early cinema and early YouTube, the main task consists of anticipating possible perspectives from which to look back to our present situation.

Method

After Interpretation

When investigating culture, one is accustomed to engaging in a process of interpretation. When researchers write about works of art, literature, theatre, music, or cinema they add layers of comments. They try to understand. But understanding is a strange activity. It requires something to be understood, and so it seems naturally to direct attention towards the past. Rituals of understanding seem to be tied to history. But historicization itself, as just one of many models of organizing an archive, spread to all kinds of disciplines only around 1800. 2 Throughout the 19th century, the memory and historicization of cultural heritage constitutes one of the crucial steps in establishing a legitimate national identity.

This shift is accompanied by another crucial turn concerning the invention of the subject in the modern sense. Institutional rituals of understanding were always grounded on the assumption of a divide between the figure of the creator and the passive believer. This divide reappeared under different names: artist vs. beholder, author vs. reader, god vs. believer. However, the divide has not been as wide at all times, and in relation to all institutions. Before 1750, the disciplines later to be replaced by the humanities taught rhetoric, dialectics, and grammar, which meant teaching to read and to write at the same time. When the humanities in the modern sense were established around 1800 they followed the exegetic model of theology. Ever since, it has been taken for granted that artists do not understand, whilst academics don't know how to write or paint or make music. And to return to the question of the subject, a term which had meant a person sub-jected to the state's power, now entered the scene of illumination and had to be educated in the newly devised read-only-mode.

The split between writing and reading eventually came to be viewed as an achievement of the academic reforms in the 18th century. From then on, academic education had to serve the institutional needs of the newly built nation states, shaping their cultural identity and providing for apt bureaucrats. The aesthetic education so emphatically favored by Schiller turned into a governmental effort. However, the discursive control enforcing the separation of practice and theory has weakened significantly in the last decade. With the declining power of the states one has to ask why we continue to have a cultural theory that follows the

restrictive mode of understanding only, and separates itself from practice. In fact, the present situation almost obliges the humanities to overcome the division between interpretation and production.[3]

Media Theory

In the mid-1980s, most likely at the peak of technological diversity amongst analogue, half-digital and fully digital new media, the traditional humanities in Germany were disrupted by a new focus on technology. Regrettably, what had the potential to lead us out of the trap of a backwards-looking orientation and the split between theory and production soon fell prey to the usual course of academic trends. Less than ten years after Friedrich Kittler introduced the new approach to German literature studies, he was forced to acknowledge the ubiquitous presence of the term 'media'. [4] Subsequently, the initial impulse was lost in the operational procedures of academic administration. The term media turned into a discretionary keyword without theoretical specificity, but with the powerful promise of generating money for re-search. And most of the books considering media theory fell back onto an intellectual terrain from which Kittler had initially tried to depart. [5] The philological method of interpretation and the self-restriction to history prevailed. That is the main reason why media theory rarely had much to say about media after 1950, let alone the internet. [6]

Yet, Kittler's initial impulse would have allowed for something more. The backbone of this approach was Kittler's newly established cross-breeding of Foucault's discourse analysis with a media theory as envisioned by Marshall McLuhan. Foucault focuses on epistemological and institutional settings and investigates figures or phenomena such as the author, the gaze, or the archive, according to their rules and practices. Technology remained a field which Foucault almost entirely excluded from his considerations. But the general approach of discourse analysis allows media and materiality to re-enter the picture. This is the use that Kittler makes of McLuhan's theory of technology. By stating that 'the medium is the message', McLuhan claims that any content may primarily fulfill the conditions of a specific technological setup. In that sense, McLuhan's approach resembles the perspective of Foucault, with the only difference being that the Canadian sociologist speaks of technology whereas the French philosopher speaks about discourse. Both meet in questioning the conditions for the existence of a statement, or of information.

One of the most striking failures of the theoretical approach of subsequent media theory was its inability to recognize the upcoming importance of the internet in the 1990s. Instead, most of the disciples of media theory bothered merely with technical considerations concerning the progress of computing powers. This led to the delusion that simulation would lead the

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2.   See Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*: *An Archaeology of the Human Sciences,* London: Routledge, 2002, pp. 235-240.

3.   The recent cuts in the funding of U.K. universities speak a clear language here. How to react to that, remains in question.
4.   Friedrich Kittler, *Aufschreibsysteme 1800/1900*, München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1995, p. 523.
5.   See Friedrich Kittler, *Austreibung des Geistes aus den Geisteswissenschaften*, Paderborn: UTB Einleitung, 1980, pp. 7-13.
6.   Geert Lovink develops this point in *Zero Comments*: *Elemente einer kritischen Internetkultur*, trans. Andreas Kallfelz, Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2008, p.145.

way, with the replacement of reality by a still-to-be-defined virtual world. Both the miscalculations of the near future and the ignorance toward the internet were rooted in the fallacies of a simplified idea of linear historicity and the progress in computing power. When the expectations of these theories proved inconsequential for the real world, most proponents withdrew to their academic careers, and returned to history, pre-history and an archaeology of media.

After Media
Media no longer determine our situation, as they did when Kittler first formulated his position.[7] This is not because they have lost their power to define. In fact, media have ceased to exist, at least in their plurality. There are not many media left, but only one medium, as different media have converged and fallen prey to a single network of computers. Therefore, the appearance of new media no longer continues to shape our situation. The media wars of the past are over. If we look at the basics of technology now, there is not much change ahead, and no diversity that would merit a closer theoretical observation. The current changes and developments are initiated by other factors like gadgets, network architectures, databases and applications.

Despite this post-media situation, the original impulse of media theory as an approach that enhances discourse analysis with a perspective on technology can still provide for a valid methodological basis. Of course, this method still comes with its own assumptions. One of the most discussed points of medium theory was its so-called technological determinism. The argument as such is based mostly on a misunderstanding. Saying that media define our situation does not equal the statement that they completely determine it. Defining in this respect rather means giving a systematic background for a variety of possibilities. The situation resembles an ecological system, where the conditions of climate and terrain define an environment for very many different species. In the same sense a technological system provides an environment for many different types of data, formats and contents.

On the other hand, early German media theory proposed a clear perspective on the relation of the social sphere to the media. At their fundamentals, the field of media were thought to be detached and independent from social activities. This is one of the core points at which media theory strictly separates itself from other related approaches, such as Bruno Latour's actor-network-theory. It is well known that one can describe any type of media as socially constructed. After all, technologies are invented, constructed, and built by humans. Therefore taking the media *a priori* seems to make a slightly unrealistic claim. However, considering the history of media, the claim can be supported by viewing the separation as an effect of a discursive break separating a discourse of technological invention from the social use later given to that invention. Historical evidence supports the claim that the discovery of a new technology was never dependent merely on human desire or social need, but mostly happened within a different discursive field before being more generally applied. The decisive step to bridge the gap between technical research and social practice required the figure of a

bricoleur who was active on both sides of the divide, as exemplified by Daguerre, Edison, or more recent figures such as Bill Gates, Steve Jobs or Mark Zuckerberg.[8]

Separating the two discursive fields of the social and the technological comes with the advantage of being able to observe both without interference. From this axiom, it follows that there is not something one could call a social use of media. Whatever social activities unfold in and through media essentially constitute a mis-use; or in other words, a practice contradicting the initial phantasies or purposes of technology. Far from postulating a strict technological determinism, the assumption of a technological *a priori* only prepares the ground upon which a great variety of data can circulate.[9] Instead of starting with a social *a priori*, one is able to describe the social sphere as a result of technologically shaped communication. Therefore media constitute the social sphere, and not the other way around. And media constitute a field of stability from which a coming environment can be imagined.

Hermeneutic Circle, Opposite Direction
Most roads allow for two-way traffic. The hermeneutic circle is no exception to that rule. One always has to enter the circle from a given present situation, with a certain intention and with prejudices about what is to be understood.[10] In the circle we go back and forth between the whole and the particular, the single work and its environment, and the work of art and the historical situation it finds itself in. In doing so, we aim to understand both better, and in the end also our own situation. Driving this circle backwards would involve reference to works to come, in their singularity as much as in their environment. Of course, the work does not yet exist; all we can do is to imagine it as a possible outcome. In order to facilitate that, one needs to anticipate an environment in which it could appear and survive. But this coming environment needs to be imagined, just as imagination is required to reconstruct the past.

The point of departure remains the same. But what needs to be understood lies ahead. Future as well as past situations constitute a horizon for understanding. Going backwards through the hermeneutic circle, we still operate in front of the same horizon. Does the coming landscape differ from the one we left? We look at both from our present situation: as much as we imagine the horizon of the past in order to understand past works, we may imagine a horizon of coming possibilities. In the end it is us, writing and reading, who by imagination understand something about the present. Seen in hindsight from the possibilities ahead we

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7.   Kittler's statement was that 'Media determine our situation'. See Friedrich Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999, p.xxxix.

8.   This of course contradicts Jonathan Crary's claim that the invention of photography was prefigured by a turn of attention: 'My contention is that a reorganization of the observer occurs in the nineteenth century before the appearance of photography'. Instead the argument would run the opposite way. It was the same use of technology that first created the conditions for the turn of attention towards the inner vision, as with Purkinje and Goethe, and then led to the random discovery of photography by various inventors at the same time. See Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990, p.14.

9.   This argument connects to a recent trend of materialist approaches within philosophy. Similar problems are extensively discussed, especially regarding the term arche-fossil, an artifact preceding all human perception, in Quentin Meillassoux, *After Finitude*, London: Continuum, 2008, p. 16.

10. See Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, London: Continuum, 1975, p. 270.

can not only conceive a possible work, but also look nostalgically back at our present. How clumsy and outdated will the coolest smartphone and the latest app appear when viewed 10 years from now? Perhaps this is what Maurizio Lazzarato means when he states: 'We need a nostalgia for the future'. [11] But this nostalgia should operate not within the realm of time, but within a sphere of possibilities. Our world creates relations of being that comprise a variety of possibilities. [12] One can imagine these possibilities without relying on a concept of history. They remain possibilities, with no time-stamp, as options for an undefined future. This imagination would allow us to turn a discipline of understanding hitherto solely preoccupied with things past, to engage with things to come.

In constructing a possible world we may need to pay attention to an often overlooked factor. Whenever we watch a video, our eyes always tend to follow the moving object; the unchanged background is largely neglected. That is one of the reasons why a cut from movement to movement escapes our attention. We have the impression of gliding smoothly over the visual disruption. The correlate to this attitude is the approach of trend-research, which focuses entirely on moving targets. But in order to see the full picture, and to be able to project from the present to its future possibilities, all those parameters that remain unchanged are as worthy of attention as are moving objects.

Environment

An Ecology of Communication

The term environment is not meant to evoke a strictly biological world, nor am I referring to the current metaphors of *bios* discussed in relation to theories of bio-politics. Nor is it used because it is simply 'one of the most expressive terms language currently has to indicate the massive and dynamic interrelation of processes and objects, beings and things, patterns and matter'. [13] Instead, I want to propose to return to the notion introduced by the biologist Jakob von Uexküll in his model of ecology. [14] In his sense, an environment connects the physical and material conditions with the sensual perception and actions of a living being. The environment consists of a world full of constraints and possibilities, perceived by the senses and the memory of a living organism. An ecological system is not meant to create an unspecified interconnectedness, but has a very precise definition.[15]

Technical media can be seen to constitute an environment in which data of different types circulate almost as living beings, specified by codes, protocols, and formats, and by the type of connection these establish with humans. The social sphere is not excluded from this world,

11. Maurizio Lazzarato, *Videophilosophie,* Berlin: b_books, 2002, p. 81.
12. Of course, a model of that type includes a different idea of temporality, which relates back to very old models such as Nicolas of Cusa: Trialogus de possest, 1460.
13. Matthew Fuller, *Media Ecologies: Materialist Energies in Art and Technoculture*, Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2005, p.2.
14. For an introductory reading see, Jakob von Uexküll, *Streifzüge durch die Umwelten von Tieren und Menschen* / Bedeutungslehre, Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1956, p. 30.
15. With political implications, as Giorgio Agamben has shown in *The Open*, Stanford, CA.: Stanford University Press, 2004, p.39.

but appears only behind the input and output of the circulation of information. Both data and humans are embedded in a situation characterized by technological, economic, and political conditions. These constraints affect the ecology of communication, just as the climate conditions affect the natural environment. This comparison implies that climactic factors are relatively impermeable to eco-systems, even though rare interdependencies might occur.

Reversible, Irreversible

The time of ecology differs radically from the modern idea of historical time, with its linear, progressive movement. Uexküll subscribes to the historical model put forward by Leopold von Ranke, according to which each epoch stands for itself, and applies it to his own concept of an ecological system.[16] This claim cannot easily be transferred to technological environments, as we see two distinct phenomena in relation to time and duration in this sphere. On the one hand, we do see progression in relation to technological developments. Moore's law, according to which the quantity of transistors that fit on an integrated circuit will double roughly every two years, is one of the most famous progressions. And even if his law does not hold true indefinitely, it is safe to assume that computers will increase in processing speed, rather than slow down. On the other hand, the biological elements of the equation, such as the human body, can be taken as more or less unchanged.

Between these two sides are a field of rapidly changing phenomena, of which some engage in a game of progress or at least claim to do so, others appear only temporarily, and others remain stable. Some events are irreversible, others are reversible. Thinking in terms of reversibility creates a very different idea of the future compared to the modernist myths of progress. A model of progress looks for irreversibilities only. But the imagination of a possible ecology of communication must build on the balance of reversibilities and irreversibilities.

Institutions and Economy

Imposing a fixed structure on time is linked, on a macro level, to the administration of the archive, and, on a micro level, to the division of labour. This has always been a matter of institutions: the temple, the state, or the company. One might even reverse this relation, and propose that institutions – both empires [17] and companies – were invented and could only exist as entities that structure and reign over time.

What has this point to do with online video? Video operates in time. But this time is not just there. It is created as an interwoven pattern of duration stretching over very different distances. As much as the length of the feature film was something that emerged at a certain point in cinematic history, the historical model of the description of film and other arts itself emerged at a certain moment in the past. Economic entities require a different approach towards time than institutions such as the nation state. Whilst, for the latter, historical time is almost a precondition of its own existence, the company needs only to secure an operational time that extends from investment to return.

16. Uexküll, *Streifzüge durch die Umwelt von Tieren und Menschen,* p. 150.
17. See Harold Innis, *Empire and Communication*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950.

From this basic relation derives a certain bias regarding content. Whilst the content of the classical arts, as theatre, visual art or music, always had to legitimize itself against the historical horizon – and the disciplines of understanding formed part of this process of judgement – the capitalist and commercial arts were legitimized through their success on the market. Both incentives clashed throughout the 20th century, leading to almost opposing aesthetic results. In the recent past a third model emerged, which followed neither the parameter of early 19th century state culture, nor the 20th century model of commercial culture.

Aesthetics and Production

Production Modes

Describing the development of Hollywood Cinema, Janet Staiger identified three major elements involved in what she termed the 'Hollywood mode of production'. These were: '1) the labor force, 2) the means of production, and 3) the financing of production'. [18] During the first four decades of the cinema industry, various modes replaced each other. Positions and professions such as cameraman, director, or producer imposed their own regimes upon the set. Out of engineering companies, cinemas, and distributors grew the larger institutions running the business. The names of the screenwriter, of the company, of the actor, and of the director are still advertised to the public, but mainly for marketing reasons. From short scenes, to staged events and chase sequences, narratives eventually turn into feature-length movies. As Staiger's model makes clear, technical changes were closely related to aesthetic and formal solutions.

The possibility of comparing these early forms to the short formats of contemporary YouTube video is indeed appealing. But such a simple comparison would lead to false conclusions. History does not repeat itself on every level. The forces that drive history are comparable, insofar as they depend on basic technological means and human desires. Therefore, uncovering patterns of repetition requires a degree of abstraction. It is possible to generalize Staiger's tripartite model of film production to online video, if we take 'generalize' to mean reconsidering her patterns and figures, comprehending the modes in more general terms, extending their application beyond the historical example and, if necessary, adding parameters omitted due to the specificity of early cinema.

This project becomes even more urgent as business models based on reproduction are replaced by economies of attention and participation. From the perspective of discursive media theory, the terms attention and participation do not arise independently, but rely on technological parameters. The focus on attention arises with a turn in the relations of supply and demand, which has suddenly shifted the bottleneck of scarcity to the user's side. Participation, and what is often called Web 2.0, depends on improved computing power on the server-side of networks. Thus, the terms participation and attention frame technical developments in anthropocentric speech. This is not to state that the terms are misleading,

but we do need to be aware that the turn towards attention and participation is not something that users all of a sudden voted for. Rather, it is an effect of an altered technical setup.

Aesthetics of Art

The production mode of art dates back to pre-industrial manufacturing, and managed to preserve manual forms of 19th century production against the upcoming commercial culture. Without the steady support of state-funded institutions such as the museum, the theatre, or the opera this mode would most likely have vanished. The state did not only provide the economic basis for art, but also the ideological and discursive frame. In a state-run system, ultimate value does not consist in marketable success, but in the admission of the author and its work to the institutions of national cultural heritage. Many of the myths of modernism are built on the figure of the starving artist, who achieves fame and glory after their death. Obviously, this story adapts Christian mythology to modern conditions.

At first, the moving image was not affected by the modernist conception of art, thriving in a commercial environment. It was only during moments of crisis that the aesthetic value of art was emphasized and activated. On these occasions, the regime of modernism was extended into cinema. The *film d'art* of early cinema borrowed plots from classical literature in order to entice a better educated public. However, this movement quickly failed at the box office. We are still waiting for something similar to happen on YouTube. However, the experimental films of the 1920s and 1930s which attempted to apply modernist aesthetics to cinema were more successful, at least viewed within the modernist framing of art. Directors such as Sergej Eisenstein, Hans Richter, and Dziga Vertov figure significantly in canonical histories of cinema to this day. There are even cinematic histories that openly neglect commercial aesthetics and restrict their view strictly to artistic modes of production. [19]

Lev Manovich attempts to transfer the operational mode of cinema to new media in general. 'The theory and history of cinema', he writes, 'serve as the key conceptual "lens" though which I look at new media'. [20] In fact, Manovich does not consider cinema in general, but focuses mainly on the experimental movie artists of the 1920s, such as Vertov. But that narrow focus overlooks one often disregarded fact: such movies were neither very successful, nor did they have a great impact on the development of film aesthetics. They remain an isolated side-stream of film production, mainly addressed to an art public. Art and avant-garde movies operate under the regime of history, which was inflicted upon art in the early 19th century and remained valid throughout the reign of modernism. Their aesthetic contradicts what established itself as the dominant form, and is still evident in contemporary cinema. Instead, avant-garde film-makers relied on the available and well tested modern methods of painterly abstraction and experimental style. And they achieved what they aimed for: no success in terms of revenue, but a secure place in the history of (art) cinema.

18. Janet Staiger, 'The Hollywood Mode of Production to 1930', in David Bordwell, Janet Staiger and Kristin Thompson, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960*, London: Routledge, 1988, p.89.

19. For example Gilles Deleuze, *The Time-image,* London: Athlone, 1986. No surprise, from him 'the history of cinema is a long martyrology', p. xiv.

20. Lev Manovich, *The Theory of New Media*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2001, p. 9.

Aesthetics of Commerce

The commercial mode of production initially emerged with technical media and the possibility of technical reproduction. This holds true for the printing press used for books, and for etchings. But the technical media in the age of capitalist production unleashed the ultimate productivities of this model only when gramophone and film turned music and images into industrially produced goods. The basic aesthetic constraint of this mode consists in the necessity to adapt to an industrial production scheme and to establish success in the marketplace. This concentrates cultural production upon popular forms, or generates the quest for new popular forms. The pressure to concentrate on successful formats soon led to a process of aesthetic and formal homogenization. Nevertheless, it took more than 20 years until the movie industry stabilized into the dominant form of the feature-length film. It is probably not mere accident that this took roughly one generation: it seems that only after one generation has been completely socialized within a new medium can an appropriate and optimized aesthetic response be found.

The now dominant Hollywood style of narration, with its smooth continuity, can be seen as a result of a process of adaptation intimately linked to the distribution system and the economic feedback given at the box-office. The system lacks the strong singular personality of the artist, even though the director imitates this figure to a certain degree. In contrast to the artistic mode, whose results can be described very well along an impulse of distinction, the commercial mode is completely encompassed by a process of adaptation.

Aesthetics of the Link

After the breakdown of both models – that of a dominant history and of modernism on one side, and the economy of reproduced culture on the other – we might well be witnessing another mode of production in the making. And, just as the commercial mode has not fully replaced the artistic mode, this new mode will not entirely replace the others. This new mode follows the logic of the link. It creates value through links and it operates as a facilitator of links. The only institution by which it is powered is the internet itself. So far it has had only a negative impact upon markets, and no perceptible impact upon the museum and art world. The inherent value would be characterized not by sales and revenue, but in the following formula: V=v,n,p, where V(value) is a product of 'its performance and application (v); the number of its multiplications and replica (n); the sharing rate of the value among the people involved in the process (p)'. [21] It is far from clear if this recent development eventually marks a transition to a different mode of production or will become a mere transient disruption to the commercial mode, to be integrated within it at a later point. [22]

Three different options seem to be available under the present conditions of the link mode. The first is the attempt to maintain the commercial model as its main source of revenue, the

scarcity of distribution, disappears. This could only be enforced by contra-factorial jurisdiction and would lead in the end to a more or less complete control of web traffic. Fortunately, the prospects for this attempt seem to be dire. The second way to handle the transition would be to affiliate web culture parasitically with the present economy. This would allow for the development of new cultural forms, albeit under the condition and the pressure of mass-distribution under which the current wave of participatory activities would most likely suffer tremendously. Instead of a user-generated culture we would see the rise of new dominant commercial forms in the near future. This process of commercialization and adaptation can already be observed at work. In a widely discussed post, Dan Greenberg [23] presented his strategies for the commercialization of online video. Next to an aesthetic that focused mainly on re-adaptability and a quick emotional response, the video has to be embedded in a wider network of links. This 'linkability' was regarded as the main source of success. This outcome seems to be the most likely, however, beyond those two already widespread modes, a third alternative comes into play. This builds on the continuous feed of data from participating and active users, leading to a collaborative visual production.

Thus, the possibilities of online video can be envisaged in three exemplary forms, which all might exist in parallel. There will be the parasite mode, which might borrow from the aesthetic of games and talk shows at the same time. Collaborative practice will be channeled into a fixed time structure in order to create marketable data. The event will be one of the few remaining points at which scarcity can be preserved. Therefore the event will be branded, and its time and image space sold to advertising companies. A second format will build on the increasing embeddedness of images in the real world. This process is facilitated by a growing segmentation of the image into a composite of various layers of metadata and links. The contents of the images will be made accessible by symbolic encoding, such as automatic tagging, face-recognition and other symbolic appropriations of the visual. Once we become accustomed to these images, it will be very difficult to recall a state when the visual world was not constantly warped by a layer of data. There remains the third possibility of a collaboratively created visual world. [24] This world would be built, like Wikipedia or the newer WikiLeaks, on the surplus-work of users. It will consist of a connected visual space, in which narrative and authorship may manifest themselves occasionally when needed. Depending on the survival of the institutions of historical time, one might even return to a historicization of this process in the name of art.

However, the coming images must not be left to the entrepreneurs and their quest for revenue. Today, almost any answer to the question of 'what should we do' is justified by economic purposes. Thinking about the future has, at least for certain classes, taken the form of a business-plan. It decays into short-term visions which treat the future almost as a kind of fate which will inevitably lead us to the next business opportunity. In its urge to anticipate

21. See Matteo Pasquinelli, *Animal Spirits: A Bestiary of the Commons,* Rotterdam: NAi Publishers, 2008, p. 96, in reference to Enzo Rullani's Economia della Conoscenza, 2004.

22. As data seems to indicate, see Lev Manovich, 'The Myth of user-generated content', Lev Manovich blog, 23 November, 2010, manovich.net/2010/11/23/the-myth-of-user-generated-content/.

23. Dan Ackerman Greenberg, 'The secret strategies behind many "viral" Videos', *TechCrunch*, 22 November, 2007, www. techcrunch.com/ 2007/11/22/the-secret-strategies-behind-many-viral-videos/.

24. See the section entitled 'The Art of World-Making' in Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture,* New York: New York University Press, 2006, p.113.

the next direction of big money, trend research completely overlooks and neglects the fact that there might be another answer. Fortunately, this is not the only perspective on things to come. Once, the question of 'what should we do' fell in the domain of ethics. And therefore thinking about the possibilities of video must not restrict itself to exploitable trends, but may also envisage a utopian perspective on visual possibilities, even if a vision of this kind may look almost as delusive as the beginning.

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FRAMES WITHIN FRAMES – WINDOWS AND DOORS

ANDREAS TRESKE

> Doors, windows, box office windows, skylights, car windows, mirrors, are all frames in frames. The great directors have particular affinities with particular secondary, tertiary, etc. frames. And it is by this dovetailing of frames that the parts of the set or of the closed system are separated, but also converge and are reunited. [1]

As Anne Friedberg stated in *The Virtual Window*, the frame within a frame or the shot within a shot is a 'common figure' in cinema. [2] The moving image is formally split into parts, re-composed and re-centred through an additional act of framing, that is equal to an exaggeration. The 'cadrage' (framing) includes a second 'cadre' (frame) replacing the traditional way of cutting to the object to be seen. The viewer does not enter the image by way of single 'cadrages'; rather, a multiplicity is presented online and is constantly available; not one window, but a sum of windows. While split screens have historically been used to mark and separate spaces in cinema, frames within frames create a new element in the narrative or fictional world.

It has become evident that, in the past, frames as both objects and as concepts have influenced the way that people have perceived, communicated, and acted. In this short essay, I will attempt to extend theories of cinematic framing to the presentation of the moving image in digital environments and devices. Here again, my interest in the impact of the diverse development of screens and the emergence of online video upon the composition and creation of moving images and narratives is focused upon the application of formal theoretical approaches to existing forms of online video and the interfaces through which videos are embedded or presented. Do we need to reassess the conception of frames as windows or doors when considering the position of the viewer in relation to online video? Does the act of framing remain relevant to online video, or is it merely an outdated theoretical approach?

In his first book on cinema, Gilles Deleuze describes the cinematic frame as an information system. As David Goldberg states, for Deleuze a *cadre,* or frame, in a film is a 'set which has a great number of parts, that is of elements, which themselves form subsets'. 'Actors, locations, sets, lighting, sound, angles, durations and special effects all constitute the information in the frame', which 'makes it legible, and something that bears potential meaning for the

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1. Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema I: The Movement-Image,* London: Continuum, 2004, p. 14.
2. Anne Friedberg, *The Virtual Window: From Alberti to Microsoft*, Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2006, p. 200.

viewer'.[3] From the point of view of film-making, framing refers to the objects in a shot. When setting up a shot, the frame includes a composed selection within its horizontal rectangle, thereby excluding other elements. The act of framing results from the personal choices and conscious processes of the film-maker, and affects the audience's cinematic experience. The image presented onscreen is effected through the size and shape of the frame, its definition of onscreen and offscreen space, among other factors:

> Whatever its shape, the frame makes the image finite. The film image is bounded, limited. From an implicitly continuous world, the frame selects a slice to show us, leaving the rest of the space offscreen. If the camera leaves an object or person and moves elsewhere, we assume that the object or person is still there, outside the frame. Even in an abstract film, we cannot resist the sense that the shapes and patterns that burst into the frame come from somewhere.[4]

The traditionally educated film-maker, a student of a film school or academy, will be taught to consider the frame as a window to the outside world – the world of the narrative, story, fiction. Of course, the concept of the frame as a transparent window onto an external reality is deeply influenced by André Bazin. Although this concept has come under critical attack since at least the 1980s, the concept of the frame has been revivified not only by Deleuze, but through our daily practice of conceiving of our interface with the world of information as a window.[5]

When making a film, one is confronted by the question of how to fill this window. One becomes aware of the window itself, as it becomes filled with forms, shapes and objects which are themselves composed of other forms, shapes and tones. The film-maker wants the audience to concentrate upon his or her specific arrangement, or composition. Sooner or later, however, the film-maker realizes that there is not only one window, but several. These windows are similar or absolutely different. There is not one window through which to look at the world, but a world full of windows – everywhere one sees windows, as already framed objects, or objects to-be-framed. In his classic 1939 article, translated as 'The Cinematographic Principle and the Ideogram', Sergei Eisenstein offers a directive regarding the frame or window a film-maker is working on.[6] In this article, Eisenstein was very much influenced by his research into Japanese culture. According to Eisenstein, the Japanese film-maker would use multiple shapes, rather than a single square, as a frame: 'the pupil cuts out from the whole, with a square, and a circle, and a rectangle -compositional units: He frames a shot!'[7]

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3. David Goldberg, 'EnterFrame: Cage, Deleuze and Macromedia Director', *Afterimage* 30.1 (2002): 8-9.
4. David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art: An Introduction*, New York: McGraw-Hill; 8th edition, 2007, p. 187.
5. Thomas Elsaesser and Malte Hagener, *Filmtheorie zur Einführung*, Hamburg: Junius Verlag, 2007, p. 48.
6. Sergei Eisenstein (1949), *Film Form: Essays in Film Theory*, New York: Hartcourt. Trans. Jay Leyda, 1969.
7. Eisenstein, *Film Form,* p. 41.

In essence, it is through cutting out that a shot is framed; the shot is the smallest unit of the film picked-out by the camera.[8] When setting up a frame in the process of film-making, one must always deal with the energy inside and outside of the frame. By 'energy', I mean the graphical or visual tension produced by the relation of the objects to each other: their forms and shapes, their relative sizes and tones, their proximity to each other. Distance is a further dimension. How will the object be placed? Will it appear to be close, or far away? What is the relation of the object on screen to the viewer in front of the screen?

In film or television production the size of a shot is defined in relation to the human body. Close-ups, medium shots and long shots are a set of precise points of cutting: a close-up always contains the head and shoulders of the subject, a medium shot cuts above or below the knees, and a long shot includes a full figure. German people involved with film sometimes refer to the medium shot as 'American', as the image border is exactly above the knee of the protagonist in the classic Western. Another kind of shot is called the 'Italian', as it shows only the eyes in extreme close-up, an image often used by Italian directors in the so-called 'Spaghetti-Western'. Of course, stylistic variations are always possible.

The more strongly an object is framed, the more it is separated, emphasized and focused. Whether a group of people is depicted in a single shot, as a whole, or whether the individuals are depicted singly, in separate shots and angles, is a matter of dramatic significance. The lines forming the rectangle of the frame can function to isolate each character, or not. For the film-maker, the problem of active framing is not what is inside the frame, but what is outside. The film-maker must create a frame that frames an outside – a world outside of the frame, in such a way that this outside world continues to exist beyond the lines of the frame. The sliced frame not only refers to the existence of an outside, but also to its absence.

Frames appear with the 15th century and with the development of one-point perspective. Leon Battista Alberti conceived of the Renaissance framing system as a means to rationalize vision through mathematics. One-point perspective was and is used to produce the illusion of a three-dimensional world on a two-dimensional plane. Paintings become transportable objects isolated from the walls around them. Ownership is declared for each painting. The framed object becomes a space of representation and a surface upon which the imagination works. The frame of a traditional painting is a clearly defined border. The lines of a frame are the reason

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8. In this context, it is worth considering a point made in a footnote of Sean Cubitt's *The Cinema Effect*: 'In a note to Nizhny's Lessons, Montagu comments on kadr, "This Franco-Russian word, etymologically connected perhaps with the graphic aspect of the shot, its composition and compositional limits, must never be translated "frame" (Nizhny 1962: 169, n.35), distinguishing in another note between 'The "frame" of a shot, its borders within which it is composed on the one hand; on the other the "frame" or single static image of which many compose the shot. Russians apparently sometimes use 'rama' (non-technically) for the second kind of frame, but they also use "vyrez" or "cut" for the section of the whole possible view-field extracted or "cut out" by such a frame" (ibid.: 171, n.46). On the one hand, the cut acts on the plane of the screen, isolating the scene depicted from what lies on the right or left, or above or below it. But on the other, the cut is a slice through the z-axis or axis of vision perpendicular to the picture plane'. Sean Cubitt, *The Cinema Effect*, Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2005, p. 390.

that we experience most pictures as closed spaces; the image or picture exists only inside the frame. Images in magazines, on television, on the walls of our apartments, and in museums all have closed, non-extensive, non-transparent borders. As Bazin writes, if there is an impression of spatiality included in the framed image, then this spatiality points towards the inside:

> Space, as it applies to a painting, is radically destroyed by the screen. Just as footlights and scenery in the theatre serve to mark the contrast between it and the real world if so, by its surrounding frame, a painting is separated off not only from reality as such but, even more so, from the reality that is represented in it. Indeed it is a mistake to see a picture frame as having merely a decorative or rhetorical function. The fact that it emphasizes the compositional quality of the painting is of secondary importance. The essential role of the frame is, if not to create at least to emphasize the difference between the microcosm of the picture and the macrocosm of the natural world in which the painting has come to take its place. This explains the baroque complexity of the traditional frame whose job it is to establish something that cannot be geometrically established - namely the discontinuity between the painting and the wall, that is to say between the painting and reality. In other words the frame of a painting encloses a space that is oriented so to speak in a different direction. In contrast to natural space, the space in which our active experience occurs and bordering its outer limits, it offers a space the orientation of which is inwards, a contemplative area opening solely onto the interior of the painting. [9]

For Bazin, the edges of the cinema screen are not equal to the frame of a painting – rather, they are analogous to the edges of a mask. In a similar vein, Noël Carroll differentiates photographs from paintings in the following way:

> You can always ask, of an area photographed, what lies adjacent to that area, beyond the frame. This generally makes no sense asked of a painting. You can ask these questions of objects in photographs because they have answers in reality. The world of a painting is not continuous with the world of its frame; at its frame, a world finds its limits. [10]

The distinction is clear. The moving image achieves its difference through the process of screening. The screen is not like a canvas, rather, for Carroll and Bazin it is a piece of reality that does not exist at the time of the screening. Deleuze picks up on and actualizes Bazin's central theory. For Deleuze, the frame is determined through the formation of sets or ensembles. The image on the screen is extracted from the rest of the world spatially, but more especially temporally. Shots express the qualitative change of sets. These sets divide and multiply. The movement-image is an image of changing space or space covered. [11]

9.   André Bazin, *What is Cinema? Volume 1*, trans. Hugh Gray, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967, p. 165.
10. Noël Carroll with Jinhee Choi (eds) *Philosophy of Film and Motion Pictures*, Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2006, p. 70.
11. Gregory Flaxman (ed.) *The Brain Is the Screen, Deleuze and the Philosophy of Cinema*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2000, p. 19.

Of course, from the perspective of a practitioner, the screen is graphically limited. But there are a variety of graphical techniques to break these constraints through positioning, size, tone and color inside the image or on the screen. The screen also breaks its boundaries through object movements and directional shifts inside the frame. As a simple example, let us imagine that we see an object moving from left to right. When the object reaches the right-hand border, our eyes will immediately jump back to the left side of the image, because we are used to writing from left to right and stopping at the right-hand edge of the paper. If the object moves from right to left, it takes the viewer longer to return to the image. If the object moves up, we continue to attend to the area above the frame, as this is always the region of our dreams; if the object moves down, we instantly jump back inside the frame. [12] We are tempted to compare the cinematic experience with our natural vision. In everyday life we can turn our heads or move in order to see beyond objects and borders. The frame of the cinema screen prevents us from taking this action and therefore forces us to imagine the outside the film.

A scene in Roman Polanski's *Rosemary's Baby* (1968) plays intriguingly with this limitation. The film's director of photography, William Fraker, recalls the scene in which Rosemary, who is played by Mia Farrow, allows Ruth Gordon to use the phone in the bedroom. Fraker himself attempted to frame the shot from Rosemary's position in the living room, as she looks through an open door to the woman making the call. However, Fraker writes:

> Roman looked through the viewfinder and said, "no, no, Billy. Move to the left". I moved to the left until all I could see were her feet hanging over the edge of the bed. I thought Roman was crazy until I saw Rosemary's Baby in a theatre, and watched some 400 people in the audience leaning to the right as though they were trying to look around the door jamb to see what she was doing. [13]

The composition of this shot in *Rosemary's Baby* builds a frame within a frame. Polanski reduces the space inside the image to strengthen the visual effect. The additional act of framing becomes equal to an exaggeration. There are numerous examples of this type of frame-within-a-frame composition in key scenes in cinema. In *Tystnaden* ('The Silence', 1963), director Ingmar Bergman uses the figure of frames within frames. He films through doorways, so that the vertical separations introduced by the doorways symbolize the emotional distance between the sisters who are the film's protagonists. The final scene in *The Searchers* [14] presents the viewer with a similarly constrained image. With the camera inside the farmhouse and Wayne outside, Wayne directs a final look back at the farmhouse – a look that also seems directed towards the spectator – before heading into the exposed landscape of the American West. Or, consider the shot in *The Graduate* [15] in which Mrs. Robinson seduces Ben Braddock. Her bent knee forms a triangle, a window through which we look

12. Johannes Müller, unpublished lecture notes taken by Andreas Treske, Munich: HFF, 1992.
13. Yazan Düd, 'Kareler 2: Rosemary's Baby', Eylem Planı – Bildiğim Kadarının Anlatabildiğim Kadarı, http://www.eylemplani.com/kareler-2-rosemarys-baby/.
14. *The Searchers* (dir. John Ford, 1956).
15. *The Graduate* (dir. Mike Nichols, 1967).

at Ben, the focal point. In this case, the composition is not based on the imprisoning and isolating effects of vertical and horizontal lines. The common element in all these scenes is that the frame within-a-frame both articulates and separates; facilitating a smooth transition between inside and outside.

In addition to the frame-within-a-frame, the multiple frame and multiple screen formats are able to juxtapose multiple points of view. As Friedberg notes, 'While the single-screen moving image offers multiple perspectives through the sequential shifts of montage and editing, the multiple-frame or multiple-screen moving image offers the same via adjacency and contiguity'. [16] In this context, a discussion of Mike Figgis' 2000 film *Timecode* is essential. In this film, Figgis constructs an experimental narrative from a screen divided into four frames. The story unfolds in parallel, with each frame showing different events in real time. The action culminates in a final scene in which all four frames, and all four narratives, come together. In the DVD version of this film, the viewer is able to interact with the film by choosing which frame will be accompanied by a soundtrack. In this way, sound opens up yet another dimension of the frames, as the viewer becomes aware of the way in which Figgis uses the sound to guide the viewer through the four parallel narratives.

To this point, the discussion has remained within the context of the 'classical screen'. And yet, modern visual culture is characterized by the existence of a virtual space enclosed within a frame, and situated within our everyday space. The frame, therefore, separates two coexisting spaces. [17] While television, video, telephone and the internet converge, multiple frames proliferate. Single screen devices already embed multiple screens. In a way, it is only the physical object that is single. A computer screen, a telephone, and a television each provide multiple frames through which to interact with sounds, images, or typographical elements. These windows can collapse into a single moving image, or expand into a sequence of adjacent multiple frames, either closely or loosely related to each other. A single image might be re-sized, so that it contains the dimensions of a full cinematic representation. The arrangement of single windows or framed images might be arranged in a simple, left-to-right reading order, or rearranged so as to simulate a three-dimensional space, from which one can select with the tip of a finger. In 2010, most web browsers remain in a two-dimensional presentation. Online video is represented by key frames or images, each of which is selected, marked and extracted. These images act as summaries of, placeholders for, and links to digitized moving images. They are both tagline and proposal. Beside these key frames are other boxes, which link to related images or moving image content. It seems logical to analyse such browser windows in terms of their graphical content, and the principles of graphic design. Nevertheless, thinking cinematically enables us to account for the fact that the frames within a larger frame – the browser – are placed in a meaningful relationship of adjacency. This relationship might convey information, aesthetic pleasure, or both. To better understand how this works, it might be helpful to consider another form of visual narrative – that of comics.

Will Eisner describes comics as sequential art: 'When part of a sequence, even a sequence of only two, the art of the image is transformed into something more: The art of comics!' [18] He elaborates upon the concept of a comic as a sequence of frames:

> The fundamental function of comic (strip and book) art to communicate ideas and/or stories by means of words and pictures involves the movement of certain images (such as people and things) through space. To deal with the *capture* or encapsulation of these events in the flow of the narrative, they must be broken up into sequenced segments. These segments are called panels or frames. They do not correspond exactly to cinematic frames. They are part of the creative process, rather than a result of the technology.

> As in the use of panels to express the passage of time, the framing of a series of images moving through space undertakes the containment of thoughts, ideas, actions, and location or site. The panel thereby attempts to deal with the broadest elements of dialogue: cognitive and perceptive as well as visual literacy. The artist, to be successful on this non-verbal level, must take into consideration both the commonality of human experience and the phenomenon of our perception of it, which seems to consist of frames or episodes. [19]

For the comic artist, the panel is a device that controls the flow of narrative. The panel is a container and a timer. Its border is an element of the visual language, the frame a structural support with an emotional function. And yet, the real border is the border of the page, the meta-panel that encapsulates the visual narrative as a whole: 'Comic panels fracture both time and space, offering a jagged, staccato rhythm of unconnected moments. But closure allows us to connect these moments and mentally construct a continuous, unified reality'. [20]

A browser constructing an online video site is influenced by variables such as user choice, tags and comments. The single video is framed in such a way that it is viewed in relation to a range of linked contents, as well as comments and quotations. It is framed to stay inside the window. As a frame, the browser provides a closed context; an area with a rigid border. It is a clearly marked entrance. The digital window provides a filter to narrow the ever-expanding universe of moving images. That is, the design of browser windows has failed to confront what actually happens after a user enters the space – the possibility of gaining access to an ever-multiplying number of windows. Some online video providers allow the user to look inside the video through image placeholders; others allow us to look at related preferences. New Apple Inc. applications use a graphical interface called 'Cover Flow', a sorting wheel of images in a 3D presentational context (as I may call it here) not only moves us towards the images, but moves these placeholders or openings towards us. Flipping and tipping on images, bookmarks, documents, or icons results in a leap of the graphical object or image representation

16. Anne Friedberg, *The Virtual Window: From Alberti to Microsoft*, Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2006, p. 202.
17. Lev Manovich, *The Language of New Media*, Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2002, p. 99.

18. Quoted in Scott McCloud, *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*, New York: Harper Collins, 1994, p. 5.
19. Will Eisner, *Comics & Sequential Art*, Florida: Poorhouse Press, 1985, p. 38.
20. Will Eisner, quoted in McCloud, *Understanding Comics,* p. 67.

as a window towards us and, even if this is not the case as yet, around us. Through the interaction with the device the frame of each single image is technologically overwritten, as our interaction simulates or replaces the movement of our head, as we seek to look around the corner. Now, a single fingertip enables us to look through the doorway, to gain access, in a sense, to that which Rosemary was prevented from seeing.

As new applications and devices are developed, frames are multiplying. Cinema evolves from a flat space with only one direction. Familiar formats, such as the cinematic moving image, are just one element within new databases and digital object – that which is shaped, formed, *gestaltet*. Rather than being destroyed, older formats will need to coexist, in a kind of modular, or set-like arrangement, with newer formats. In some ways, the merging of media has been observable for a long time. For example, linear narratives increasingly open themselves to spatiality. The limits of the frame are not respected anymore. Rather, open structures are favoured. Television series such as *Lost* expand the narrative universe in multiple directions. *Lost* does not seek to answer only one question, it consists of an ever-expanding universe of questions. Rather than distracting the audience, the confusion within this universe keeps the viewer in front of the screen. Through continuous and intensive mediatization, various forms increasingly influence each other. The lines between distinct media forms are blurring: movies are based on video games and games on movies; the question of sequence becomes irrelevant when cultural forms become modular.

According to Peter Greenaway, 'There is no such thing as a frame in the natural world – it is a man-made, man-created device', and, he continues, 'If the frame is a man-made device, then just as it has been created, so it can be un-created. The parallelogram can go.[21] As crude as it is, the system of one-point perspective became the ruling ideology, as I have described in relation to painting and cinematic space. In this essay, I have been concerned with the way that new digital forms multiply frames or windows, and blur the distinction between presentation and reality. Technical images draw attention to the act of framing itself. These frames or windows and doors might be best characterized as openings. These openings can act like windows or doors, but can also be frames with closed borders. These borders block the ability of the image to extend into an imaginary space. Their direction is always towards the inside. In this way, the frame's borders become decorative; an operation on a surface, a textured map, which is also an image.

A final phenomenon that deserves mention is the increasing transportability of the moving image. New devices such as the iPhone, iPod, and in particular the iPad constitute mobile physical containers or bodies for the moving image, whereas the cinematic screen has always been a geographically fixed location. And, whereas the analogue 35mm film of a single movie is about 30 kilometres long and weighs several kilograms, the mobile digital device can not only store several movies, it can access an enormous cinematic library. The iPad directs the viewer towards a multiplicity of meaning beyond the simple play function. Although many of

the possibilities inherent within these devices remain mere glimpses, already these devices are able to detect how they are held, and can arrange the screened information space accordingly. The screen in real space merges with the controller interacting with the game world.

How to fill the space opened by such devices is still the question faced by their designers, makers or producers. It seems obvious that the device and its location and usage will affect the forms it screens, plays, presents. Online video presents itself in small chunks. It will depend on the technical capabilities of the network what kind of chunks of information – and a movie is a big chunk of organized information – the device opens to the fingertip. In conclusion, I would like to cite a passage of Vilém Flusser's work that I believe reflects powerfully upon this issue:

Among other things, an image is a message. It has a sender and it searches for an addressee. This search is a question of its portability. Images are surfaces. How does one transport surfaces? It all depends on the physical bodies on whose surfaces the images are affixed.... Recently, something new has been discovered. Disembodied images, "pure" surfaces, and all the images that have so far been in existence can be translated (transcoded) into images of a new kind. In this situation, the addressees no longer need to be transported. These pictures are conveniently reproduced and transmitted to individual addressees wherever they might be. However, the question of portability is a little more complicated than it has been described here. Photographs and films are transitional phenomena somewhere between framed canvases and disembodied images. There is, however, one unambiguous tendency: images will become progressively more portable and addressees will become even more immobile. [22]

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21. Peter Greenaway, *Cinema Militans Lecture 2003*, 28/09/2003, http://petergreenaway.co.uk/
     essay3.htm.

22. Vilém Flusser, *Images in the New Media*, in Andreas Ströhl (ed.) *Writings*, Minneapolis:
     University of Minnesota Press, 2004, p. 70.

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WEB VIDEO AND THE SCREEN AS A MEDIATOR AND GENERATOR OF REALITY

ROBRECHT VANDERBEEKEN

In order to learn more about web video, this article does not begin with its peculiarities, but tries to grasp its cultural backdrop by considering the screen as a virtual invader in our daily lives, which sometimes even seems to assume control. It aims to challenge the claim that the audiovisual screen of television, cinema, video, and web video is but a window onto the world. A screen is not a neutral display of fact and fiction in addition to what a person can experience on their own behalf. Rather, it has a massive effect on the constitutive relation between a viewer and the world she or he lives in. It manipulates this relation in a double manner: it mediates our perception of reality, and it generates another reality in a new, mediated environment. Early film spectators once believed that they could become infected when they saw sick people on the screen; yet the days when the screen was clearly misunderstood to embody real objects are long gone. Today, the screen is no longer something special or strange 'out there', but rather something close to us, and everywhere. The screen has become humanized, it is now accepted as an ordinary part of our everyday environment. Because of this shift in the locus of our psychological perception, the screen becomes immanent and ubiquitous, and hence more influential. As a familiar object, the screen invades our existence both radically and constantly, and yet its influence passes unnoticed. At the same time, the screen is evolving into new technological forms that generate a remarkable and eye-catching reality of their own, a new world. Web video plays a significant part in this evolution.

The Screen as Mediator
Eclipsing, Interpassivity and Truth-procedures
What do we take as real nowadays? Ideally, an analysis of the influence of audiovisual media on our perception of reality should be based upon a comparison between our perception before and after the rise of audiovisual media. Of course, such an approach is problematic, due to the difficulty of retroactive reconstruction of past perceptions of reality.[1] What we do know, however, is that a general feeling of detachment has become predominant today: experiencing 'reality' includes the experience of the loss of reality – that is, the lack of a transparent, undeniable and convincing manifestation of reality.

In what sense does the screen, as that which inserts itself in-between subjects and their environment, create a loss of reality? In its innocent version, the screen is but a 'window on the world' that provides the viewer with audiovisual material, containing facts as well as fiction. Put differently, it is an extension of man that displays representations and interpretations of

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1. From a philosophical perspective, every perception of reality is 'mediated' in terms of embodiment, common worldviews, personal opinions, etc. In this article the term 'mediation' primarily revolves around the impact of audiovisual media.

the world we live in (facts), as well as visualizations of other people's fantasies (fiction). The problem with this definition is that the screen does not just provide additional information; it is not a neutral supplement to what we experience with our own senses. On the contrary, the doubling of visual representation implies severe conflicts and competition between the personal and artificial. Rather than just representing our world, audiovisual media radically mediates our perception of reality, including our perception of ourselves and our relation to others. To a large extent, the screen dictates how we perceive reality.

A first illustration of how the screen acts as a mediator can be termed eclipsing: the over-shadowing of experience by the artificial experience provided through audiovisual media. The screen exposes us to places we have never visited, so that when we actually do visit these places, such encounters initially seem unnatural, alienated, or fake. [2] The experience feels wrong because we are confronted with a double vision: the information we detect immediately with our senses versus the conceptualizations we recall from audiovisual media. Hence, the screen has made it largely impossible for us to experience famous places and people as they are: that is, unmediated. [3]

A second result of mediation is that which Slavoj Žižek and Robert Pfaller have termed 'interpassivity'. [4] This concept refers to the latent manipulation of the viewer. As an example of interpassivity, Žižek often refers to canned laughter on television shows, which both decide for the viewer what is funny, and stand in for our own laughter. The viewer, having delegated their agency to the media, remains completely passive. Audiovisual media such as television not only reassure the viewer that the world is (still) out there; they also provide a means to delegate or even dispense with personal activity and responsibility. As Žižek demonstrated in

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2. The video artist Marine Hugonnier made a nice documentary essay on this issue called *The Last Tour* (2004), a fictional documentary about the closing of the natural park around the Swiss Matterhorn. The idea is to shut down this mountain area and give it back to our imagination. In this way, after some time, it might be possible again to purely experience this area without spontaneously recalling touristic postcard-images that eclipse our personal perception with depictions of a Disney-like theme park. For an extract of the video see, http://www.marinehugonnier.com/.

3. Eclipsing is not exclusive to audiovisual media. Texts, novels or drawings also have an eclipsing function with respect to personal experience. However, the abundance of mass media visuals obviously generates such an overall impact that eclipsing becomes an explicit and widespread phenomenon. Also, in the case of text, we gather descriptions and ideas rather than straightforward visual representations and constructions. When textual information conflicts with the actual sensual information obtained in our encounters with people, situations or places that we have not previously experienced, we normally (ideally?) adopt a 'scientific', empirical stance and adjust our opinions to overrule the previously formed images. Such conflicts (which actually only 'eclipse' in a metaphorical sense) are clearly different from audiovisual eclipses because the latter largely obstruct an encounter with the initial, unmediated phenomena and thus impede sufficient falsification afterwards.

4. See Robert Pfaller, 'Interpassivity and Misdemeanors: the Analysis of Ideology and the Žižekian Toolbox', *International Journal of Žižek Studies*, 1.1 (2007): 33-50; and Slavoj Žižek, 'The Interpassive Subject', Centre Georges Pompidou, Traverses, 1998, http://www.lacan.com/zizek-pompidou.htm.

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his 2006 documentary *The Pervert's Guide to Cinema*, the cinematic screen is not a blank slate onto which we project our dreams and fantasies; it is a dark netherworld that shows the viewer what to fantasize about and how to think. It is the screen that moulds the subject, teaching it what to love, what to hate, and what to desire. The ultimate consequence is the shift from the active citizen taking part in life to the passive spectator locked into the screen. The problem with such a spectatorial mode is that, even in interim off-screen periods, we begin to look at our world from the outside in.

A third illustration of mediation concerns the function of audiovisual media as a 'truth procedure'. Whereas eclipsing concerns the transformation and augmentation of natural perception, and interpassivity describes the delegation of agency, this third process addresses our trust of the screen as an authority. That which is sufficiently visible within the news media is seen as that which both exists, and is true. Conversely, what is not mentioned in the media is not only forgotten and ignored, but also considered doubtful. After all, if it really happened, why is it not in the news media? Therefore, news media are not just reporters but are also privileged indicators of what really happens, thereby creating their own Photoshop reality, and not only in a literal sense. [5]

From a political perspective, understanding the news media as a truth procedure is highly significant. It is for this reason that most political conflicts turn into media battles. In such cases, the media are not only indicators but important actors. A splendid documentary essay addressing this issue is Johan Grimonprez's *Dial H-I-S-T-O-R-Y* (1998). [6] The film portrays a history of plane hijackings through the visual bombardment of a montage of found television images. Amongst other points, it shows how the earliest hijackings were used as a symbolic action to call attention to a political struggle. As the voiceover states, hijackings gradually became more and more aggressive in order to increase their impact, so that 'One has to get killed in order to get noticed by the media these days'. Considering that this video was released four years before 9/11, its visionary character is impressive. Given the increasing importance of political visibility in the news media, the Twin Towers attack seems to be the logical next step. It is provoked and propagated by the same media that fully controls its iconic

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5. On the initiative of the conservative Fox News TV-commentator Glenn Beck, thousands of people gathered in front of the White House in Washington on August 29th, 2010 for what was meant to be a 'restore honour rally'. Paradoxically, Beck billed his event as 'non-political' despite the fact that Tea Party celebrity Sarah Palin was the central guest. This event not only nicely illustrates that news media are a truth-procedure; they not only manipulate the news but are also capable of creating a new reality that corresponds with their insinuations. The magic power of the news media: words become images, images become a state of affairs. Strangely enough, despite the many things that go wrong today, hardly any good cause can mobilize protesters any more. But Fox TV's agitators can easily motivate lots of people to rally for empty issues (who is against honour anyway?) with the underlying goal of raising an audience for themselves (and to show on television how this audience is against the current government, unfortunately, without really knowing what that government really stands for). Weeks later, there finally came a counter protest. But this pro-Obama rally was also initiated by media celebrities: the TV comedians Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert.

6. The film can be seen online on http://www.ubu.com/.

recollection: we all recall the same images of the impact. At the same time, we often wonder: is this real, or is it Hollywood? Paradoxically, iconoclasm as a possible, critical strategy for the viewer to resist such media indoctrination is no longer an option here, for the subject already concerns a tabooed political and ideological iconoclasm.

Web Video as a Catalyst of the Virtual
Audiovisual online applications such as vlogs, webcams, podcasts, and user-generated video websites intensify the mediating impact of the screen, shifting it into a higher gear. Let us then consider web video's impact on the three phenomena discussed above. The phenomenon of eclipsing is intensified by web video reports – abundant, easily accessible, and largely free of charge – in a twofold way. In the global, unique and ungovernable spread of an enormous number of images, a huge amount of new visual information is produced about persons, places and events that were heretofore unnoticed or ignored. Put differently, web video enhances the representation of the multiple aspects of our daily lives in a recorded version, and hence increases the reach of the shadow the virtual casts over the real. But there is more. The novelty of web video is of course the opportunity to 'Broadcast Yourself', which generates a multitude of personal recordings on similar topics. For example, the web allows access to multiple travel logs of people visiting the same destinations; thus, a variety of amateur recordings of the same places of interest, accidents, concerts and other spectacles. [7] This personalized multiplicity might *prima facie* be understood as an antidote to the phenomenon of eclipsing, as it substitutes the singular iconic image with a multitude: a diverse database of information that clashes with the stereotypical media icon. For instance, instead of the typical picture postcard image of the pyramids, we now have thousands of images, shot from every possible angle and at almost every moment of the day, and always including other people within the image. Nevertheless, this democratizing multitude enforces rather than neutralizes eclipsing, as the image of the pyramids increasingly tends to coincide with the virtual imaginary generated by tourism and mass media. Put differently, because this multitude becomes so familiar to us, the authentic political, religious and social aura possessed by significant places threatens to disappear behind the iconic image. The site becomes a place for sightseeing and nothing else: a three-dimensional picture, totally absorbed into our public culture of spectatorship. [8]

Web video also advances the phenomenon of interpassivity. To give just a few examples: instead of travelling to congresses and conferences for 'live' participation, many people prefer to 'attend' the online streaming of the lectures in-between times; we watch web commentaries upon art exhibitions instead of visiting them ourselves; at birthday parties we allow online clips of people singing 'Happy Birthday' to sing for us; we put forward our views of political and social issues on vlogs while failing to act directly in the real world; we allow YouTube gags to replace our own jokes. In short, while Web 2.0 invites us to 'immigrate' to virtual worlds, first via funky avatars and later with our Facebook ego-profile, real-life interaction is delegated to a virtual substitute.

The fact that ever more people feel less inhibited about communicating personal information on the internet reinforces this virtualization. Whereas a vast amount of early web video was posted with nicknames and showed pets, cars, babies and so on, many people have turned the camera around, and are literally broadcasting themselves. Despite the active 'lean forward' attitude of editing, uploading, sharing, poking, connecting, replying and updating, our digital presence entails a vast amount of interpassivity: first-order experience is postponed, or even replaced by virtual activity. The younger generation is particularly vulnerable to alienation and detachment, as demonstrated by the *Hikikomori*, who are socially withdrawn Japanese youths. This is not only because young people are the largest consumers of online content, but because they have not had the chance to experience a truly non-digital life – unless, that is, their education included 'digital detox' days in order to avoid a complete loss of the real feelings of living.

However, as with eclipsing, the many-sided applications of web video not only stimulate the processes of interpassivity, but generate a whole new realm. Take the phenomena that might be labelled as 'digital shrink syndrome', so well illustrated in the video work *Because We Are Visual* (2010) by Belgian artists Olivia Rochette and Gerard-Jan Claes. By means of a collage of found vlog-footage, the artists depict a beautiful parataxis of the motivations for vlogging: the urge to be seen; the thrill of being part of 'the media'; the wish to be in touch with a virtual community; the need to complain to or argue with the anonymous 'big other'; self-realization. The artists also, however, depict the extent to which the webcam serves both as social substitution and as therapy. Another girl tries to prove her love for her girlfriend by expressing her emotions in daily vlogs. This visual version of the love letter expands its psychological complexity: besides the attempt to convince the beloved, and to convince oneself of one's powers of seduction, there is now the anonymous web community as a witness. The digital other is no longer just witness, but the actual audience that allows the vlogger to narcissistically demonstrate oneself as a passionate being. Here, the role of the beloved switches from the subject matter of the love letter, to an occasion for the lover to gain control. Instead of becoming lost in the desire for someone else, self-love increases. The beloved takes no part in the vlog, either because she is unaware of it, or because she does not exist. These are cases of interpassivity because they lead the virtual event to become the main goal, while the real life situation is reduced to an alibi. The virtual event gains independence from life: it turns into an artificial, yet psychologically necessary, structure that creates its own reward.

Finally, we confront the phenomenon of the truth-procedure. Obviously, amateur videos (albeit broadcast on television or available online) have a massive effect on media and politics – one need only think of Osama Bin Laden's video messages, amateur footage of 'terrorist'

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7. A video work that nicely illustrates this personalized multiplicity is *The Final Countdown* (2010) of the Belgian artist Koen Theys. It consists of a collage of YouTube clips featuring people replaying this famous pop tune. While every recording of the band Europe is omitted, the diversity of found footage remains extraordinary: parents filming their kids that vainly try to master a music instrument, play-backers performing in front of their webcam, music band rehearsals, orchestras playing a classical performance for a wide audience, etc.
8. The shift from public place into pictorial monument could be linked to the notion of simulacra. However, as will be discussed in the next part, there is a crucial difference. A simulacra is 'a copy of a copy', a self-referential piece of reality created by audiovisual media, as an example. By contrast, cases of eclipsing involve an epistemological shift, e.g. from an authentic place into 3D imaginary.

Still from *Because We Are Visual* (2010). Courtesy of artists Olivia Rochette and Gerard-Jan Claes.

attacks, or the incriminating documents on WikiLeaks. Whereas documentary film seems to have lost its truthfulness in the era of docusoaps, mockumentaries and reality television, amateur video often retains a nostalgic air of a truthful visual document. Footage such as the assault of Rodney King, which provoked the Los Angeles riots, has the air of an uncut and shocking reality, especially when we find such footage ourselves among the sea of videos on the web. What is special about web video documents is that their credibility depends on the viewer's willingness to accept their authenticity, as there is no guarantee that they are not staged or manipulated. Authenticity, then, become a matter of personal belief. In spite of their authority, we often distrust professionals paid by news services. Conversely, we are willing to believe amateurs because they are people just like us. In this respect, there is a crucial shift in the way the screen functions as a truth-procedure. The critical viewer developed a healthy suspicion of television networks – because we were dependent on their authority, mistrust became an important strategy. We learned to ask: What do they want us to believe? Are they holding back something? Is there an important lobby involved that tries to conceal information for the viewer? In the case of the web, however, the truth is often not just 'out there somewhere'; it is often simply there, repeatedly, right in front of our eyes.

The problem is that such encounters became a subjective matter. For instance, when we bump into a confronting web video report, this 'truth' is not revealed to us on a public level, as in the case of television. Despite the fact that a lot of companions online might have discovered the same information, its disclosure is not genuinely 'public' as, due to the solitariness of this experience, a collective response largely remains absent. Despite the frequently successful and important 'power to the people' ideology of the web, there is usually no actual outcry in which we can take part: no demonstrations in the streets, no journalists continuously investigating and reporting the issues at stake. Because of the lack of collective response, we are usually unable to really accept the disclosure of the confronting information, let alone to

act upon it. This is exactly why the institutional power of Wikileaks (and all the attention it gets from other news media) is so important, and also why it is so heavily under attack. It is simply too hard to deal with it on one's own. Instead, we indulge in the spurring movement of the web: we keep on clicking, investigating, searching for new information, until we forget what it was that we discovered. [9] We tend to ignore the uncomfortable truth. Or we resign ourselves to it, as one of the many dissonances of life.

For the most part, our browsing attitude seems to prevent us from putting two and two together: we gather bits and pieces of information, but forget to come to a conclusion. In a way, the surfer's experience often mimics CCTV. We are constantly observing everything, everywhere, but the incentive to reflect properly and respond accurately to what we are seeing remains absent. Despite the attempts of activists to organize grassroots movements, such as web communities fighting for web neutrality, and committed Facebook groups, the collective level remains virtual, a big but blind mob. Thousands of page views, yes, but nothing else – just an anonymous collection of individuals that silently share some information. As a result, world leaders such as President Bush and his 'weapons of mass destruction' or his denial of the U.S. Army committing torture can fool the public by claiming that 'further investigation is needed', even while the damaging information is out in the open on the web. World leaders and business oligarchs get away with their deceptions because there is no genuine collective response, only dissent between believers and non-believers. For many years, activists denounced the funding given by the Total Oil corporation to the military junta in Burma. Here is a clear-cut case for activism which would normally be quite effective; almost everybody is against this brutal dictatorship, and we all can easily take action by means of a boycott of Total Oil. Nonetheless, because of the abundance of news information, commercials and entertainment programs, the activist potential perished within a kind of collective amnesia. [10] The 'good cause' is shouted down by the clamour of the mass media. In sum, as a democratized medium, web video takes part in a process of the virtualization of truth. Ultimately, this leads to a situation of schizophrenia: a lot of hard facts circulate freely, but on an individual basis it is hard to accept them as such. The mediation of truth seems to have shifted from manipulation, to fragmentation, and finally to castration.

The Screen as Generator
From Document to Simulacra
How can the screen generate its own reality? First of all, screen images are in themselves new features: they are newly created elements that invade our world and provide virtual exten-

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9.   Thomas Elseasser has developed a clarifying analysis of the web user's paradoxical state of consciousness: 'Right next to the euphoria and epiphany, then, there is the heat-death of meaning, the ennui of repetition and of endless distraction: in short, the relentless progress of entropy that begins to suck out and drain away all life' See Thomas Elsaesser, '"Constructive Instability", or: The Life of Things as the Cinema's Afterlife?' in Geert Lovink and Sabine Niederer (eds) *Video Vortex Reader: Responses to YouTube,* Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures, 2008, p. 30.
10.   For more information: see the documentary *Total Denial* (www.totaldenialfilm.com) or go to video.google.com/videoplay.

sions. Concerning the ontological status of these images, it is important to recall the radical shift from seeing the image as a document to seeing the image as a simulacrum. In the early days of cinema, a film image was often conceived as a document of reality, it contained a 'true piece of reality'.[11] With the rise of video in the 1960s, the naturalist view returns with respect to amateur footage. Since Sony introduced the first handheld camera, the 1967 Portapak, a huge amount of amateur film has been shot, with the intention of creating a testimony of real life, by which I mean our daily reality, rather than the reality shown on film or in television. Since the early years of video, many artists have used the handheld camera in an attempt to expose mass media manipulation, for example by making guerrilla-TV, which is broadcast to a counter-public sphere. Or they used the handheld camera to explore the so-called 'extra-medial' – that is, life excluded from the big events in the news media, those left aside in remote areas and back alleys.

However, partly because of successful movies such as the *Blair Witch Project* (1999), the amateur image has completely lost the privileged status of documentary evidence. Meanwhile, all audiovisual images have become invested with the aura of animation. In the last decades, the omnipresence of the television image in particular has given rise to a common belief that film footage is not, and cannot really represent reality, since it is too self-referential. Rather than reality, the image refers only to other images and interpretations. Plato's concept of the 'simulacra' is often employed to emphasize this newly autonomous status of images. Whereas philosophers such as Friedrich Nietzsche and Jean Baudrillard ascribe the negative meaning of a distorted or lost reality to the term, Gilles Deleuze has foregrounded the positive dimension of the simulacra, as a vehicle of 'becoming' that is able to create new extensions of reality.[12] In a similar vein, Nicolas Bourriaud's essay 'Postproduction' discusses

Johan Grimonprez. Still from *Looking for Alfred* (2005). Courtesy of Zapomatik/Film & Media Umbrella.

a tendency arising within the fine arts in the 1990s.[13] According to Bourriaud, in this decade artists became 'prosumers': they consume in order to produce. In the very act of prosuming, artists are 'semionauts' that travel through different worlds of meaning. In a contemporary culture saturated with meaningful images, artists are like DJs that appropriate existing styles, cultural spheres, and images. They make their own playlists by means of cutting, pitching and cross-fading between images and meanings. An excellent illustration of this tendency is Johan Grimonprez's 2004 video *Looking for Alfred*. Although this work does not display any found footage, the images evoke the iconography of Alfred Hitchcock's films, by using his movies as a backdrop. They reveal the uncanny, authentic, and elusive spirit of Hitchcock by means of afterimages that comment on his movies, or even seem to take revenge upon them.

From Hyperreality to Emulation
While images come to constitute their own reality, they also influence off-screen reality. This brings us to a second illustration of how the screen acts as a generator. I have mentioned the phenomenon of eclipsing, which is an effect of the multitude of media that shape and filter the original event so that we can no longer experience it in an unmediated fashion. In philosophy, such epistemological twists may be referred to in terms of hyperreality, particularly in reference to Jean Baudrillard's restricted and negative articulation of the concept in 'Simulacra and Simulations'. In Baudrillard's view, the world we live in has been replaced by a copy world, a generic Disneyland, where we seek simulated stimuli.[14] Two distinctions within the concept of hyperreality are relevant to my argument.

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11. It would be a clumsy reduction to state that early cinema in general takes the film-image as a document. The French cineaste Georges Meliès, for instance, became famous for his experiments with the magical hocus-pocus potentiality of the film medium. Early cinema also includes many other examples of experiments with phantasmagoria and a so-called 'cinema of attraction'. On this point, see Tom Gunning, 'The Cinema of Attractions: Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant-Garde' in Thomas Elsaesser and Adam Barker (eds) *Early Film*, British Film Institute, 1989. It could be argued, on the other hand, that these 'attractions' were so effective thanks to the fact that the cinema-image had an enigmatic aura of realness in those days. Furthermore, the factual objectivity of a film-image was often taken for granted in the days of early cinema, which is clearly no longer the case in our contemporary post-cinema era. This naturalist view is, for instance, prevalent in the theatre work of Erwin Piscator from the 1920s. Putting the screen on stage, for Piscator, results in playfully letting real life enter uncut into the fictive spectacle in the playhouse. According to this view, the film image not only represents but also incarnates reality. Today, staging the screen, in the plays of the Wooster Group for instance, clearly has another function: the film-image becomes a scenographic prop, a walk-on, a fictional protagonist in the play.

12. See Friedrich Nietzsche, 'Reason in Philosophy' in *Twilight of the Idols*, 1888, http://www.handprint.com/SC/NIE/GotDamer.html#sect3; Jean Baudrillard, 'Simulacra and Simulations' in Mark Poster (ed.) *Selected Writings, Stanford: Stanford University Press,* 1988, http://www.stanford.edu/dept/HPS/Baudrillard/Baudrillard_Simulacra.html; Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, Columbia: Columbia University Press, 1968.

13. Nicolas Bourriaud, *Postproduction: Culture as Screenplay: How Art Reprograms the World*. New York: Lukas & Sternberg, 2001.

14. Jean Baudrillard, 'Simulacra and Simulations'.

Firstly, according to Baudrillard, the term hyperreality denotes the difficulty of distinguishing between reality and fantasy. However, since the depictions displayed by audiovisual media are not just fantasy but also include much accurate information as well as interpretations and commentary, the fundamental tension is of a different order. The combination of the natural perception of reality, the mediated perception of reality through the screen and the familiarity with realms of simulacra, results in the perception of reality as a hyperreality. This inevitably impedes a return to unmediated perception (eclipsing) but it does not imply that hyperreality is mere semblance in the form of an inflated version of reality. On the contrary, experiencing hyperreality can equally be an intensified and thus a very real experience in which exploration, recollection and imagination come together, and open up dimensions of perception that would otherwise be impossible to access. In this sense, hyperreality is the experience of a kind of super-reality in which a plenitude and diversity of reality are present. [15]

Secondly, Baudrillard includes certain constructed objects and events within the concept of hyperreality, such as Disneyland, which mimics fiction, or places such as Las Vegas or Dubai, which are intended to substitute for fantasy and imagination. In this way, Baudrillard not only places the exceptional similarity of these superficial places in a gloomy and moralistic perspective, he also compares two radically different dimensions: our modified perception of reality as a result of audiovisual media, and the materializations that are inspired by audiovisual media. These reproductions of virtual entities are literal illustrations of how the screen acts as a generator. They are attempts to create a reality that is more familiar, more 'real' than real, in the sense that it more closely resembles the reality we know from the screen. So, whereas Baudrillard argues that simulations such as Disneyland demonstrate that reality is becoming a fiction, the exact opposite is taking place: fiction is becoming real. Stated differently, the virtual produces a surplus of reality. In this respect, it is significant that Disneyland was constructed by film producers and set designers rather than architects.

What is special about such entities (the fake and real things generated by the screen) is their ontology: they begin as simulations of virtual objects and become emulations, which compete with reality instead of copying it. Emulations can therefore be understood as offering resistance to imitation, instead pursuing the creation of something radically new. In this respect, they embody an alternative reality situated between the virtual and the real. Or, we might say that they produce a surplus from that which is simultaneously really there and truly virtual by nature. Although the intention to create emulations can be found throughout art history, contemporary emulations embody extra dimensions. [16] A good example is the design of Dutch

architect Lars Spuybroek, [17] whose sculptures are to be understood first and foremost as virtual entities: the digital concept has ontological priority. The actual buildings are illustrations or instantiations of virtual spaces. Whereas simulations, as an authentic expression in a fake setting, result in a truth without reality, an emulation produces a new reality, a reality without truth. That is, it is not truly there. Or rather, it is there only as a diversion of the virtual in physical space.

From Virtual Reality to AR/MR
Besides simulacra and emulations, the screen may also be transformed into new modes of reality thanks to new media developments. As objects, the cinema and television screen have literally been invading our everyday world for decades. Whereas the audiovisual screen has become an ordinary, and even a vintage, object in our screen culture throughout the years, contemporary post-cinema developments revive the 19th century pre-cinema fascination for phantasmagoria. Throughout the history of technology, the 'shock of the new' has followed its own trajectory: the thrill of a ghost story has evolved from Chinese shadow play to magic lanterns; [18] the Eameses' multi-screen architecture to Virtual Reality. [19] As new technologies give rise to an all-encompassing screen that includes the television tube, the computer display, and the telephone among many others, the image frees itself from the traditional 2D screen. Whether it is due to small, built-in versions installed in all sorts of devices or to mega projections on façades of urban buildings, screens become increasingly mobile. The development of CAD software and graphics hardware enables the construction of computer-simulated environments that allow us to navigate inside an image by means of head-mounted displays, for example. Subsequently, the audiovisual image can be resurrected in our surroundings by means of spatial holograms or interactive projections, hence creating a post-virtual reality.

I will discuss three ways in which the invasion of images that have escaped the monitor screen manifests. Firstly, there are the developments in ubiquitous and mobile technology that are sometimes referred to as Web 3.0. If Web 2.0 stands for social software, the third generation covers, among other things, the development of new digital utilities like iPhones, domotics, search engines, smart cctv, wear-cams, and lifecasting. Due to these applications, the web will seem to colonize ever expanding territory of our daily world by means of wandering screens. At the same time, the traditional screen has become scattered and duplicated, as have its images. A second development is that of so-called augmented reality (AR). As a combination of the physical world and computer generated data, AR is a layered reality in which the screen disappears into the environment and vice versa. AR represents a radical turning point with respect to audiovisual media considered as virtual invaders. If the rise of

15. A good example to illustrate this is the video work *Plot Point* (2007) by artist Nicolas Provost. This piece consists of footage that is randomly filmed in the streets of New York without any staging or acting. Thanks to montage and the addition of audio, however, Provost manages to create a specific cinematic suspension. As a result, the video is completely penetrated with the atmosphere of popular movies and police series. Nonetheless, what we see is not just the streets of New York as a familiar film set but a city that discloses itself in an updated version, demonstrating how the originality of reality easily exceeds what we know from fiction.

16. As an example, recall the installations of the Japanese artist Ryoji Ikeda (www.ryojiikeda.com) or the digital paintings of Robert Seidel (www.robertseidel.com).

17. For images see www.nox-art-architecture.com.

18. For an instructive overview see, Tom Gunning 'The Long and the Short of It: Centuries of Projecting Shadows, From Natural Magic to the Avant-Garde' in Stan Douglas and Christopher Aemon (eds) *Art of Projection,* Ostfildern, Germany: Hatje Cantz, (2009), pp. 23-36.

19. For more information see, Beatriz Colomina 'Enclosed by Images: the Eameses' Multiscreen Architecture' in Stan Douglas and Christopher Aemon (eds) *Art of Projection,* Ostfildern, Germany: Hatje Cantz, (2009), pp. 36-57.

webcams transforms the living room from a private place into a public film set, with AR both public and private space becomes a 3D blue screen for a plethora of virtual features. Future developments of AR include computer screens that are gesture or eye-operated, so that control icons and program windows appear as virtual devices in real space (3D Web) or as interactive 3D virtual objects with adjustable shape and appearance.

So-called mixed reality (MR) represents a third development in the audiovisual media landscape. MR could be described as a new, synthetic environment with mixed objects and subjects, partly physical and digital. MR differs from AR not only because the layers are mingled, but because new features might pop up. For example, MR often involves hidden objects that are made visible by means of machine-eye vision, such as visual images in surgery that make use of medical scans, or visual images used in military warfare that are based on data from night vision equipment. Such high-tech devices do not generate analogue reproductions but register data and present it in coded visualizations. Often, the interactive system employs a GPS application which restricts its operational use to a particular location. In other words, like global positioning, MR can be omnipresent, which makes it difficult to distinguish from un-plugged reality. The virtual and the real become as one, generating 3D visibility in which digital features interact with audiovisual recordings. Therefore, MR takes the transformation of the 'lay-back' television watcher from 'lean-forward' web surfer a step further. Such immersive, generative and ubiquitous devices provide an opportunity not only to actively explore, but to modify, expand and create a new environment. This shift generates a radically new psychological condition: instead of withdrawing into a television or computer monitor, as a kind of Cartesian cocoon through which we live daily life from a secure yet uninvolved distance, we are challenged to become inventive actors within a mixed reality in which we have individual and instant access to numerous applications. This new psychological condition inevitably triggers a fusion: the experience of presence in an AR/MR confluence requires a hands-on agency that is not compatible with the rational and passive (self-)reflection of an observer. AR/MR agents eventually become one with robot vision and take part in the creation of a mediated and mixed world.

In conclusion, not only is the screen poised to disappear into the environment, we will also tend to become absorbed into the new pictorial environment generated by the expanded screen. A notion such as the passion for the virtual clearly connotes something different in this newer context. The laid-back enjoyment of escapism in a clean virtuality, containing no kernel of the real, now seems to be counterbalanced by the excitement and anxiety of the inescapable fusion of the real and virtual. This enigmatic amalgamate is invading our environment, and we are about to be locked into it.

Web Video as a Response, and an In-between
In closing, let us return to web video. Concerning simulacra as self-referential entities, the web in general, and web video in particular, intensify the culture of the copy, for it provides its users free access to an immense database of ready-to-use information. Shareware, open source software and digital piracy bring about the multiplication of duplicates, mutants and mashups. In this way, the intrinsic relationship of 'original' to 'imitation' is weakened, in a two-fold sense. First of all, in a digital realm, the significance of the initial material instantiation is

rendered obsolete – only image and meaning count. Second, doubled forms become equivalent. This is apparent in the case of self-made web video remakes. From the perspective of the individual, a re-editing or re-enactment of a web video might become more valuable and authentic than the original, not only because it is personalized, but because it contains extra layers of meaning. Appropriation and reproduction are creative acts that allow the singular to overcome the universal.

A brilliant illustration of this process is Zachary Oberzan's theatre performance *Your Brother, Remember?* (2010). As aptly described in the accompanying text of the play,

> Oberzan splices and dices home videos, Hollywood film footage and live performance. As kids in rural America, Zachary and his older brother Gator loved making parodies of their favourite films, most notably Jean-Claude Van Damme's karate opus *Kickboxer*, and the notorious cult film *Faces of Death*. Twenty years later, estranged from his family, Zack returned to his childhood home to re-create these films, shot for shot, as precisely as possible, but now seen through a twenty-year lens of emotional and physical wear and tear. [20]

At the end of the performance, after the audience have viewed a sparkling mix of remakes, either live on stage or on video, they are presented with the startling video of Jean Claude van Damme re-enacting Zachary's story. Suddenly, the order is reversed: the subjective survived and lives on. In cases like these, Baudrillard's looming phantom of the simulacra seems to have been superseded by the individual's compulsion to copy. The urge for repetition and redundancy, the so-called Freudian death-drive, here clearly functions as a vital and primal force of survival.

The phenomenon of hyperreality can also be extended to web video. Of course, the abundance of web video enhances the experience of our daily lives as a layered reality, replete with citations and references to our audiovisual culture. However, web video also triggers the phenomenon of hyperreality in a medium-specific way. The format of web video consists of small viewing boxes accompanied by dynamic information, such as intruding para-images, flickering hypo-text, and pop-ups. Hence, as a medium, web video encourages a new mental condition in which attention is spent upon monitoring heterogeneous and ephemeral information. The viewer needs the skills to skip irrelevant information and avoid distraction. At the same time one needs to be aware of details and momentary features. In short, the viewer's perception amounts to a vigilant, personal montage and assemblage of data and codes. This new condition implies a radical shift from what might be termed centralized attention to subtextual reading, both visual and literary. Given the many hours we spend online, this acquired condition of motley concentration is not easily dispensed with when we are offline, as we easily adopt a similar attitude of omitting and editing data according to our current needs and interests. This often results in a bizarre state of being in which we enjoy a kind of self-determination, gifted with a hopeful power to resist the art of manipulation, but at the risk of becoming lost in a disconnected and solitary live world.

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20. For more information and to see the trailer visit: www.zacharyoberzan.com.

Still from *Your Brother, Remember?* (2010). Courtesy of artist Zachary Oberzan.

Finally, web video is also a significant in-between in the overall evolution towards a mixed reality. The ability to 'Broadcast Yourself' is not only blurring the distinction between private and public, it connects people together in a public and virtual realm. And it does so in an incessantly increasing manner, constantly breaking down the limitations of time and space. For instance, vlogs can already be transformed in a kind of life-logging, Skype-sessions can

be exchanged for permanent live streaming on wandering screens, and, thanks to the new application Facebook Places, you can share where you are and who you are with in real-time using your mobile device. In 2007, Google Earth was launched, with the enthusiastic promise that the satellite-function will soon provide up-to-date and full coverage. In 2008, the TruVision T-5000 T-Ray Camera, capable of seeing through clothing and certain kinds of material infrastructure, was released for private sale. According to the promotional website,[21] the T5000 is compact, rugged, portable, easy-to-use and 'completely safe'. But what if this technology is combined with our public CCTV infrastructure, let alone an online platform like Google Earth? How then, will the full exposure of our private life be averted, if it turns out that the technical devices at our disposal really are so 'compact', 'portable' and 'easy-to-use'? In short, sooner or later, every user will become socially and psychologically confined within a complex mixed reality. But to end on a positive note, once we have become 'imprisoned', the same mixed reality could very well also bring some relief. Take Mohamed Bourouissa's experimental fiction film *Temps Morts* (2009). The film represents a correspondence between two people, one who is imprisoned and another who is not, as a montage of mobile phone registrations. With this film, Bourouissa presents a hopeful prospect: thanks to new media, detention is counterbalanced by a free and intensive circulation of communication, including images and clips of a world 'outside'.

21.   www.TruVision.com.

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THE DIVX EXPERIENCE

VITO CAMPANELLI

Since the launch of Napster in 1999, more than 10 years of the diffusion of file-sharing platforms have radically altered the modalities of distribution, and the fruition of cultural objects. [1] From this standpoint, the question that arises for me is: How is aesthetic perception affected by the altered distribution and production of cultural materials exchanged in P2P (peer-to-peer) networks? I believe that this issue can be approached from two points of view: first, these practices seem to preclude new forms of aesthetic experiences that I have termed 'disturbed'; second, it is also possible to observe an increasing taste for imperfection in the broader media system. By identifying the historical premises of these two developments, I want to trace the distinguishing features of the new aesthetic sensibility being formed before our very eyes. This analysis is dependent on a series of examples, each of which leads me to the hypothesis that a taste for imperfection is growing in all fields of visual culture, including cinema, art, pornography and advertising. As we credit truthfulness only to imperfect images and sounds, we have increasingly developed a sort of generalized distrust of the cold perfection of the cultural industries.

Imperfect Cultural Objects

Watching a movie downloaded from the internet offers a wide range of experiences. There are countless grades of quality available, all of which are strictly dependent on the processes a particular video file has gone through in order to be made ready for downloading and sharing in a digital environment. To make things clearer, it is necessary to make a distinction between files realized directly from an original support, such as Screener, DVD-Rip, Disk image, or HDTV-Rip, and the so-called *cam*. In the first case, what we usually have is a simple copy of material already in a digital format, which has been compressed through special codecs so as to be able to fit into the often limited bandwidth of a domestic connection. Camming is completely different: cam files are realized by recording screen images with a camera. Most of the time, cams are videos recorded by a compact digital camcorder inside a movie theatre, but there are many other different, and more imaginative, modalities. [2]

Cams are the product of a remarkable chain of processes intervening between analogue and digital formats. In fact, even if the shots are captured on film, editing and post-production now take place in a digital format. Subsequently, the digital images are re-converted to film, so

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that they can be distributed and screened in cinemas – cinemas in which 'pirate cameras' record the screened images, thus returning them to a digital format. This 'stolen' recording is later compressed into a file small enough to be shared over P2P networks. While there is not time, here, to discuss the heroic cinema-goer who 'conquers' the film by producing a personal copy of it, we should at least take a moment to credit him or her with contributing to the distribution of cultural forms. What is important, when discussing cams, is to understand the role of qualitative variables other than film compression modalities. More specifically, let's consider two factors in depth. First of all, the quality of the recording, which largely depends on the camera used, its position in the movie theatre, and the degree to which the camera can be held steady. The second factor is the presence of extraneous noise in the recording, which will be present unless the recording can be made through a direct connection to the audio source. Otherwise, the sound will be conditioned by the circumstances of the field recording, including the diffusion and refraction of sound waves by the physical architecture of the cinema. When watching a movie downloaded from the internet, the quality is always compromised by the file compression. When watching a cam, however, there are an even greater number of overlapping levels – far more than the creators of the film could have conceived or planned for.

Disturbed Aesthetic Experiences
One variable is the position of the camera inside the theatre. Obviously, a lateral position results in a rather unusual spatial perspective, especially with respect to the classical central framing model, which we have inherited from painting, the cinema, television and computer screens. According to this classical model, the spectator is ideally positioned centrally with respect to the item they are viewing. The lateral position which distinguishes some cam videos is usually considered the result of random factors, such as the cammer arriving too late to the cinema to take a centrally located seat. What must be emphasized is the extent to which these factors are outside the control of the film's director, and are instead the result of an external point of view upon the film. Another level superimposed on the film is the background noise which characterizes many cam videos. Generally speaking, audio quality depends on the positioning of the camera's microphone towards the loudspeakers in the theatre. And yet, however well it is positioned, the effect will be quite similar to placing one's head inside a box – the refraction of sound within the cinema produces a constant echo, which gives rise to the sense that the source of the sound is moving continuously closer to, and away from, the listener. The most striking aspect of the sound is, however, the background noise that mingles with the film's audio: laughter, handclapping, coughing and the 'Shushes!' one often hears at the cinema.

All these disturbances become part of the digital file which will be shared from computer to computer through a P2P connection. They are intrusions that, blended with the original work, create a new work. On the one hand, this could be taken to give rise to a feeling that one is watching the film inside a cinema. On the other hand, cams may be read in light of their intrinsic potential to superimpose original empathetic elements onto the film itself. This is a new *unicum*, in which individual authorship and collective authorship blend together in a completely random way – these new factors are unpredictable and unintended, yet unique, signs of a specific time and place. Here, I will focus my attention on the moment of fruition of cultural products shared on the internet. Domestic viewing of a film downloaded from the

internet is a familiar product of the 'home cinema' phenomenon. What distinguishes watching a movie downloaded from the web from other domestic formats such as DVD or Pay TV is the overall drop in quality of the experience. The cost of the compromise between quality and file size becomes clear to the individual when they actually play downloaded content. We might say that the less a user 'pays' in terms of time downloading a file, the more they will pay when watching it, due to the interference caused by the loss of data. And we keep on sharing 'corrupted' digital materials even while perfectly aware of their inevitable – we might even say, necessary – imperfection.

The absence of barriers to the free flow of cultural digital materials seems to have become a more important value than the quality of the aesthetic experience itself. In this light, I believe we should ask: What is the value of a disturbed aesthetic experience? There are many theories linking the sense of beauty to the presence of imperfection as an escape from insignificance, triteness, or indifference, as is the case in the work of the Lithuanian-French semiologist Algirdas Greimas, [3] for example. However, if we look to the past for historical precedents to help us understand present phenomena, we encounter real problems. What is new about the behaviours in play here prevents any direct connection with previous experience. I would like to suggest, therefore, that we need to focus on the *concept*, rather than the *agents*, of disturbance. If we think of the 19th century, and the disturbance to aesthetic enjoyment caused by industrialization, the birth of the metropolis, and the presence of masses of people, we quickly understand how familiar the concept of disturbance is within the history of aesthetics. As we know well, and as Baudelaire so wonderfully demonstrated, [4] the unease caused by the din of the modern city is also a source of inspiration, and even constitutes the opportunity for a new form of art. Following in Baudelaire's footsteps, one author who clearly understood the transformations triggered by modernity was Walter Benjamin, who developed the 'theory of the shock'; German poet Rainer Maria Rilke also attended to the unbearable noise and chaos of the metropolis – Paris, in his case. [5] However, considering the artistic avant-garde of the previous century, it is the Futurists that undoubtedly offer the most interesting insights into the aesthetic value of disturbance. I am thinking, here, of the importance given to noise in Futurist music, and more particularly of the painter Luigi Russolo's position. As expressed in *L'arte dei rumori (The Art of Noises)*, [6] Russolo's thesis is that the multiplication of machines entails an increase

3.   Algirdas J. Greimas, *De l'imperfection*, Périgueux: Pierre Fanlac, 1987.

4.   Baudelaire writes: 'I was crossing the boulevard in a great hurry, splashing through the mud in the midst of a seething chaos, and with death galloping at me from every side, I gave a sudden start and my halo slipped off my head and fell into the mire of the macadam. I was far too frightened to pick it up. I decided it was less unpleasant to lose my insignia than to get my bones broken. Then too, I reflected, every cloud has a silver lining. I can now go about incognito, be as low as I please and indulge in debauch like ordinary mortals. So here I am as you see, exactly like yourself'. Charles Baudelaire, *Perte d'auréole*, 1865, trans. 'Loss of Halo', in Charles Baudelaire, *Paris spleen*, trans. Louise Varèse, New York: New Directions, 1970, p. 94.

5.   Rainer Maria Rilke, 'Gong' (1925), in Stephen Mitchell (ed. and trans.) *Selected Poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke*, New York: Random House/Vintage, 1989, p. 282.

6.   Luigi Russolo, *L'arte dei rumori*, Milan: Direzione del Movimento Futurista, 1913; *The Art of Noises*, trans. Ben Barclay, New York: Pendragon, 2005, available at http://www.thereminvox.com/article/articleview/117.

in sources of disturbance, and a concomitant increase in our ability to distinguish between a multiplicity of noises. Rather than being simply imitated, Russolo insists that we must 'combine them according to our imagination'. [7] Clearly, for Futurists, disturbances are both a constitutive element of artistic practice and of the aesthetic experience itself. Another Futurist, Giacomo Balla, translates the concept of sound in visual terms, combining with and superimposing a broken line onto a curved one, so as to produce a 'line of speed'. This solution, along with the analogy between painting and music, are echoed in the work of Wassily Kandinsky. In his 1926 work *Punkt und Linie zu Fläche* (Point and Line to Plane), Kandinsky specifically refers to the dissonance between a curved line and a broken one, seen as an element of irregularity, of breach, of interference- basically, an element that interrupts perceptual continuity. [8]

Disturbed Aesthetics and Society

At this point, it should be clear that the concept of a disturbed aesthetic experience is not new at all. While admitting, as Lev Manovich claims, [9] that interference resulting from selective compression will tend to disappear as technology evolves, we must consider that we are currently faced with two different models of digital cultural production: on the one hand the 'model of perfection' represented by those digital supports, such as CD, DVD and Blu-Ray, that promise the best possible quality in terms of reproduction and archiving of digital data; on the other, the 'model of fluidity' which puts the value of exchangeability before that of quality. Such models assume, in addition, two politically antithetic positions: adhering either implicitly or explicitly to market rules; or the total denial of those same rules.

Within this struggle, it appears to be economic factors that play the most significant role. In fact, the cost of the more 'noble' or better quality supports leads large numbers of people to

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7.   Russolo, *L'arte dei rumori*.

8.   See Wassily Kandinsky, *Point and Line to Plane,* trans. Howard Dearstyne and Hilla Rebay, New
     York: Dover Publications, 1979. I discuss the subject of disturbance in aesthetic experience at
     length in *Web Aesthetics: How Digital Media Affect Culture and Society*,

9.   Manovich writes: 'rather than being an aberration, a flaw in the otherwise pure and perfect world
     of the digital, where not even a single bit of information is ever lost, lossy compression is the very
     foundation of computer culture, at least for now. Therefore, while in theory, computer technology
     entails the flawless replication of data, its actual use in contemporary society is characterized by
     loss of data, degradation, and noise'. Lev Manovich, *The Language of New Media,* Cambridge,
     Mass.: MIT Press, 2001, p.55. Manovich, with the words 'at least for now', refers to a near future
     in which new compression techniques will further limit the loss of data, or alternatively, the speed
     of the connections will make it unnecessary to compress a file before sharing it on the internet.
     In commenting on my presentation of an original core of this essay, during the international
     conference Video Vortex 4 (Split, 21-23 May 2009), Manovich pointed out that technology is,
     today, close to offering the transmission of video with a quality that tends to perfection through
     faster internet connections. However, these projects are still at an experimental level, and
     therefore have no impact on a significant mass of users and, even when they do, it is easy to
     imagine that they will create a new kind of digital divide between people (primarily U.S. citizens)
     admitted to the benefits of these new technologies and Third World users that will continue for a
     long time to exchange imperfect materials. Ultimately, until this scenario is realized in practice,
     we will continue to share 'impure' digital materials, recognizing the inevitability, almost the
     necessity, of this imperfection.

opt for the model of fluidity. This scenario highlights a breach in society with respect to aesthetic enjoyment itself. On the one hand, there is a more or less large group of individuals who can have access to aesthetic experiences that strive towards perfection. On the other hand, there are an increasing number of people who are obliged to cope with disturbed experiences. We are, therefore, witnessing new mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion with important differences from the recent past. Traditionally, the poorer classes have simply been excluded from full access to culture. The digitization of cultural products and their proliferation on the internet seems to complicate this reality. As long as they have a broadband internet connection, less wealthy people have a greater opportunity to access cultural products, even if those products are more imperfect due to amateur processes of reproduction and archiving of digital data.

Here, we face a reality that has many problematic aspects. P2P networks, along with other forms for the distribution of 'pirated' material, allow the cultural industries to spread the dominant cultural model to people and communities who might otherwise have been excluded from it, whether because of their social position, or because they have freed themselves from the slavery of television for the sake of more modern addictions. At the same time, an opposing force emerges: through P2P networks and those practices linking to what are laughably termed 'non-authorized copies', small dissenting minorities are given access to new and important forms of cultural production. Since these products have been created to oppose, or at least have been conceived outside the dominant moulds or ideologies, such products are systematically excluded from the major film distribution and international television networks.

Being able to access non-authorized sources allows us to hear voices alternative to those which bombard us from the mainstream. It also allows us to stay in touch with our cultural memory, over and above those rare occasions when a window opens in the traditional media and allows us a glimpse of something worthwhile. If I want to see a film by Lang, Vertov or Buñuel, why should I have to wait until some under-financed minor local film festival manages to organize a retrospective once a year? Indeed, why pay $20 to Amazon to watch the film, when I can simply type the director's name into eMule's search area, and see what other users have posted for sharing? In addition, video pirating can play an important role in encouraging the production of independent videos. As Tilman Bäumgartel reports, this is the case in South East Asia where there has, in recent years, been an incredible explosion of independent productions. [10]

A New Aesthetic Sensibility

It is perhaps possible to radicalize the symmetry between digital tools and independent productions. The hypothesis I would like to verify is that the use of digital tools in relation to cinema, and the consequent lowering of product quality, are not necessarily a consequence of the small budgets of young independent directors. Rather, I believe we are in the midst

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10. Tilman Bäumgartel, 'Media Piracy and Independent Cinema in Southest Asia', in Geert Lovink and
     Sabine Niederer (eds) *Video Vortex Reader: Responses to YouTube*, Amsterdam: Institute of Network
     Cultures, 2008, p. 266. See also Tilman Bäumgartel, 'The Culture of Piracy in the Philippines', in
     Shin Dong Kim and Joel David (eds) *Cinema in / on Asia*, Gwanju: Asian Culture Forum, 2006.
     Available at: http://www.asian-edition.org/piracyinthephilippines.pdf.

of a new aesthetic positioning – one which, as usual, is picked up by the antennae of artists before becoming obvious to all. [11] The first point to make is that, if economics were the only factors in play, we could not explain why several important European directors have made use of low-cost digital technologies when they had the economic means to be use the most sophisticated analogue technologies. Of course, one might object that in the most emblematic case, that of *Dogma 95*, the decision to flexibly interpret the ninth rule (that is, to see Academy 35mm film as the standard solely for film distribution), was dictated by the need to respect the third rule, which holds that shooting must be done with handheld cameras (not exactly an easy task with the heavy 35mm). One might thus be tempted to dismiss von Trier, Vinterberg, or Kragh-Jacobsen's choices to shoot in digital format as merely the result of the more manageable DV. One could also object that, in the case of the *Blair Witch Project*[12] or the more recent *Cloverfield*[13] it is only a narrative expedient. One could also talk of a purely stylistic exercise in the case of Giuseppe Bertolucci's *Probably Love*. [14] Indeed, we could continue indefinitely to provide reasons for directors' decisions not to use film, even when they could afford to do so. However, I believe it is quite clear that these are all conscious aesthetic choices, which have nothing to do with the finances available to the production. In my opinion, it is only by accepting the fact that both independent and mainstream directors are opting to use DV cameras and other low-level technologies with respect to international film standards as an explicitly aesthetic choice, that we can begin to understand the motivations behind such decisions.

Certainly, there is a broad fascination with everything digital. Perhaps, however, this is also an attempt to produce images which resemble those that are increasingly shaping the tastes of the general public. Indeed, the contemporary visual landscape is constituted by YouTube videos, films downloaded on P2P networks, television news footage from around the globe, the Islamic terrorist propaganda videos shown on Al-Jazeera, the Twin Towers footage shot on amateur video cameras by shocked bystanders, homemade porn videos posted by jilted lovers, and by the wobbly images produced by the millions of webcams pointing, it seems, at everyone, everywhere, these days.

Thus, we have a visual landscape characterized by low-resolution images, which are sometimes jumpy, sometimes grainy, and almost always badly lit. This is indeed a disturbed landscape, but one much closer to life than the images depicted in the glossy perfection of the medium of film. Immersed for hours on end in this continuous flow of low-resolution images, it is inevitable that our aesthetic tastes will be affected. Before our very eyes, a new aesthetic sensibility is being formed: one which favours speed, immediacy and realism over refined perfection; the documentary attitude over fiction; Lumière over Méliès. In sum, directors'

preference for DV over the traditional film camera makes sense as an attempt to be closer to reality - obviously not to reality itself, but to reality as it is appears to us through the media, and through digital media in particular. As it is the only reference we have, this reality should not be subject to judgement, but must be imagined and lived to the full, in the sense that its images must in some way be reproduced.

Brian De Palma's *Redacted* (2007) explores the 'non-truthful truth' of video and film images, and offers valuable reflections upon many of these points. Its brief opening sequence is paradigmatic: a smooth camera movement descending from above (a classic cinematic image) is overlaid with the recording date (a classic handycam image). Following this is a title in a semi-professional graphic, while the colloquial voiceover of a soldier (who is also the film's protagonist) states that he is the author of the recording itself; after which a highly amateurish tracking shot ends with the protagonists looking collectively into the camera; and finally with a freeze-frame. . As this *incipit* demonstrates, the film is something like a Hollywood milk-shake of DV footage, YouTube fragments, wannabe documentaries and indie parodies. What is particularly worth noting is De Palma's ability to capture the phenomenon which has so radically modified the aesthetic perception of film viewers; he plays at alternating and superimposing classic cinema aesthetics with the DIY aesthetic that has exploded along with the global spread of digital video cameras. De Palma is fully aware of the present dominant aesthetic. In fact, the very theme of the film, which is the war in Iraq, makes this play of alternating and superimposed aesthetics necessary, as the absolute untrustworthiness of embedded journalists has made it normal to look for bits of 'real' truth only in that unofficial footage 'grabbed' by brave reporters, often at risk of their own lives. At this point, we are used to attributing truthfulness only to low-resolution images, such as the grainy, blurred images from a mobile phone or from a tiny hidden video camera. De Palma demonstrates that he is fully aware of all this, and he stages an intelligent representation of our present circumstances.

Contemporary media art testifies to precisely this evolution of aesthetic taste. Here, we might consider Julien Maire's *Low Resolution Cinema* (2005), a project which presents an abstract vision of the geographical space of Berlin. [15] Using various techniques, including drastic resolution reduction, images are decompressed and projected into 3D space. This is achieved by a special projector using two black and white, half-broken Liquid Crystal Displays (LCDs), so that only the upper or lower part of the image is visible. The LCDs constantly move back and forth, towards and away from the projector's light source – which itself alternates between back and forth movements. The effect produced by this complex technique is of images so de-stratified that they evoke the scrolling lines of code seen in *The Matrix* trilogy, or the tight printing of characters produced on the scroll of a dot matrix printer. In *Low Resolution Cinema*, the perfection of cinema film images becomes a blurred memory, but the magic of cinema, that prodigious illusion produced by moving images, remains absolutely intact.

11. As Marshall McLuhan stated: 'The artist picks up the message of cultural and technological challenge decades before its transforming impact occurs'.
    Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, New York: McGraw Hill, 1964, p. 65.
12. *The Blair Witch Project* (dir. Daniel Myrick and Eduardo Sanchez, 1999).
13. *Cloverfield* (dir. Matt Reeves, 2008).
14. *Probably Love* (dir. Giuseppe Bertolucci, 2001).

15. See: http://julienmaire.ideenshop.net/project5.shtml.

Victor Liu's *Delter* (2002) offers us an explicit magnification of the rough nature of images in digital movement. [16] Liu produced software able to extract the data between two frames of an MPEG video. By visualizing only the inter-frames, the objects of the images that form the video become deleted, leaving only a weak trace, a phantom of the movement that was there. In this project, Liu therefore exposes the data structure that accomplishes the process of compression. He reveals a scheme that was created to be read and interpreted by machines alone. By observing this structure, it is possible to observe the phenomenon of man becoming machine (the last stage of our aim of replacing it), through the reconstruction of the whole movement in the images deprived by *Delter* of their own objects.

Another interesting project is Swedish artist Anders Weberg's *Unpixelated* (2009). The idea behind this artwork arises from the fact that in Japanese porn, it is required by law (article 175 of the Japanese Penal Code) that the male and female genitalia be blurred to obscure it from sight. The pixellation or mosaic blurring of the sexually explicit area is referred to as *bokashi*. Hence, in *Unpixelated*, Weberg utilizes software that reconstructs the blurred area on censored pornographic films, returning it to its original state. Once this software is applied, a mosaic blur is then applied to the rest of the image, leaving only the once censored pubic hair or genitalia to be viewed clearly. [17]

A Taste for Imperfection
If the analysis of these works seems to support the hypothesis that a taste for imperfection is spreading within all fields of visual culture, further confirmation comes from the rise of a new rhetoric based on the 'aesthetic of imperfection' in the field of advertising. One example is the Saatchi & Saatchi advertising campaign for Maryland Cookies: 'Imperfect, but you love them'. [18] Another is the Italian campaign for the new BMW series 5 'Nessuno è Perfetto' (Nobody is Perfect), which shows the car being admired by a woman with a large nose and another with a chipped tooth. [19] Yet another example is the touching praise of small flaws which make a person perfect in the 'Beautifully Imperfect' campaign, financed by the Singapore Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sport. [20] I have deliberately chosen cases from disparate areas of culture in order to demonstrate clearly the business world, too, is attempting to appropriate the concept of the truthfulness of flaws. The desire for irregularity, for the breaking of symmetry, characterizes the spirit of our times. If it is this that the public views as 'authentic feeling', we should not be surprised if communication experts try to dress their messages and products in a cloak of authenticity.

However, any analysis of pirated cultural products shared on the web is incomplete without an analysis of one of its statistically dominant forms: pornography. It is worth highlighting that the internet enables access to a striking number of materials for amateur production (whether they are shared with the approval of their creators and producers is another ques-

tion). In my opinion, these forms of production occupy a central position because they disrupt a model of sexuality based on the obsessive repetition of inconsistent narrative routines. Slavoj Žižek summarizes the formula effectively: a plumber knocks at the door of a lonely, sexually provocative woman who, after her sink has been fixed, suggests that there is *another hole* that needs to be fixed. [21] In its display of stolen private moments, and the rare forms of artistic pornography, amateur pornography restores the connection with the imagination that has been censored by mainstream pornography. In these cases, viewers are stimulated to try and imagine a narrative line that links what they see with what precedes that moment. They are therefore free to imagine the life of the protagonists, the events that took place before the explicit act they are witnessing. In other words, they are using their imagination. Such realities function as important antagonists to the porn industry's attempt to crystallize an aesthetic of desire.

As with news of the war in Iraq, the user of pornographic material seeks a little bit of truthfulness in low-resolution, amateur digital videos. As the feeling is that high-resolution porn videos are too distant from reality, the industry seeks to regain its market share by imitating the amateur aesthetic – thereby reinforcing the trend towards disturbed aesthetic experiences. It is possible to state that the praise of imperfection is increasingly the zeitgeist. Our time credits truthfulness only to imperfect images and sounds, developing a sort of generalized distrust of the cold perfection of the cultural industries, in fields as diverse as cinema, the news media, new media art, and advertising.

16.   http://www.n-gon.com/delter.
17.   http://www.unpixelated.org.
18.   http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vusmtmBRLWU.
19.   http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8NvBrsW17fM.
20.   http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4I3ZmNKYma0.

21.   Slavoj Žižek in, *The Pervert's Guide to Cinema* (2006) by Sophie Fiennes. A two-hour documentary scripted and presented by Žižek.

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REGARDING THE SEX, LIES AND VIDEOTAPES OF OTHERS: MEMORY, COUNTER-MEMORY, AND MYSTIFIED RELATIONS

SARAH KÉSENNE

According to Belgian painter Luc Tuymans, 'with the appearance of new technologies, you always get a pornographic element. There's always a desire to relate in a physical way to these technologies'. [1] Last year, when I read a terrifying story in the newspaper about a girl that killed herself after her ex-boyfriend sent nude pictures of her to classmates and friends, I recalled Tuymans' statement. We might take the net genre of 'ex–girlfriend revenge movies', which are sad imitations of celebrity sex-tapes, of which Paris Hilton's P2P (peer-to-peer) hit is probably the most famous example, as an extreme example of how our viewing is affected by shifting parameters of intimacy and remembrance. These 21st century pop videos are simultaneously shocking, touching and fascinating; exhibiting a bizarre mix of tenderness and cruelty, familiarity and exposure. And yet, this kind of user- generated content is rather typical for the increasingly 'mobile' internet. Rather than circulating on open platforms such as YouTube or Vimeo, these videos are sent between the portable communication devices of people who know each other. Even if they are published on the net, these videos are taken offline before the mainstream media picks up on the controversy. What *is* found online are soft porn imitations of ex-girlfriend revenge movies, the origins of which remain obscure.

Robert Devriendt, *Victimes de la passion*, 2010, Courtesy Galerie Baronian-Francey en Galerie Hervé Loevenbruck.

These imitations are imagined experiences of authenticity. They include normal girls in American living rooms, wearing girlie underwear and stripping, dancing, shaking, and imitating MTV clips. Sometimes, the girls talk back to the camera, often after being encouraged by the cameraman/boyfriend, who stays out of the frame. The suggestion is of a close bond between girl and cameraman, one of trust and playful desire, which is reinforced by the low-resolution webcam quality and the hand-cam shakiness. The attractiveness of these images arises from their suggestion of authenticity, and the pleasure of voyeurism. And yet, the promotional banner of a porn website makes the set-up all too clear: these living rooms are also porn sets; the girls porn actresses; their lovers bullies. In this way, we live the *mise-en-scène* of the everyday as a production line of appropriated media performances.

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1.   Jan Braet, '"Wat hab je nu Geschilderd?" "Niks!"', in *Knack*, 13 May, 2009.

The MPEG4 cell phone circles of teenagers are interesting sites of investigation because they point to contemporary ways of viewing and remembering. They reveal the way in which the contemporary meaning of transgression depends upon the degree to which networks are open or closed, and on the control and ownership of distribution channels. However, distribution continues to interact with the power of the image – both its morality and memory-function. If amateur images are at the nexus of this dynamic between economic and social relationships, ex–girlfriend revenge movies are even more radical points of convergence. To think adequately about the contemporary networked image, we need to go beyond classical concepts of cinematographic identification and activist politics of participation.

The Amateur Exception

What happened between browsing through our family albums at home, and clicking on Facebook images in our offices? Before they were put on the internet, amateur images constituted an exceptional 20th century viewing experience. When an image is put online, this exceptional quality is lost.

Mekhitar Garabedian, *M.VERDONCKLAAN*, 2003, video projection, DVD, 8'40". With Vergine Karaguezian, sound by 80000 (Kwinten Callens). Courtesy of the artist and hoet bekaert gallery.

Multiplication is a key feature of the photographic image. As we all know, just as Walter Benjamin predicted, the industrialized distribution of photographic images had a major impact on 20th century art. Through the publicity of print, news media and television, it became a mainstream, everyday experience to look at pictures of people one did not know. Each photograph thus holds the promise of total exposure and distribution, and of a separation between the sites of filming and viewing.

In the mass communication media of the 20th century, amateur images subverted this industrial principle of photography. Although private photos could be as exposed and heavily distributed as other images, they often stayed locked away in closets, albums and purses. The relation we had with these images was strong and intimate. We knew the people and the places in the picture, and the people who took the photograph. From a contemporary standpoint, 20th century amateur photography and film stand out as the last possible intimate and authentic viewing experience possible. These media *suspended* the total exposure of the photographic image; the meaning of amateur images was this unfulfilled promise of distribution.

User-generated content and social networking sites such as Facebook 'corrected' this situation. Today, amateur images no longer represent an exception to the photographic principles of multiplication and distribution. Let's say that the situation was 'normalized' into a state of total exposure. This raises several questions. Can there be intimacy in the viewing experience once amateur images have entered into the public space? Most of the time, our connection to the people and places in these pictures is entirely random. What kind of intimacy do we find in this new situation? What does it mean to look at your own posted private images? Can the current craze of amateur activity also be explained as a longing for the loss of 'familiar viewing'? And finally, can the renewed closure of networks provide what we are looking for?

Susan Sontag and 'Mystified Relations'

In her classic work *On Photography*, [2] American philosopher Susan Sontag concluded with a call for 'an ecology of images', censuring the visual stimuli with which a consumerist society assaults us. Twenty five years later, returning to the subject of visual representations of war and violence in Western culture, Sontag admits to the futility and impotence of her earlier demand. Soon after it was published in 2003, Sontag's *Regarding the Pain of Others* became a key text for art students. [3] In this later work, Sontag makes a sinister parallel, demonstrating how the Western gaze was determined by representative programs of suffering and war in Western art history. Sontag makes it clear that this analysis extends to photography in general: in the end, 'images of cruelty' exemplify the act of 'looking' itself; the subject/object relation in each image entails a voyeuristic stance.

Although it might seem outdated in relation to 21st century user-generated content, Sontag's focus on the viewing experience and the distributive principle of photography continues to be relevant to network culture. In essence, Sontag's work is an attempt to describe the mainstream Western viewing experience, which is defined by the worldwide distribution of media images. Sontag described how the Western television viewer is disconnected from the suffering of the people depicted in media images, leading to a conflict between watching and acting that causes apathy and frustration. [4] Sontag puts the very existence of any bond between the viewer and the subject of the image, including that of empathy or identification, into question. Instead, the relation the viewer has to media images is analysed in terms of distance and indifference. According to Sontag, we simulate a spatial relation between viewer and victim where there is none, a mystification that is immoral: 'The feeling of being present with the suffering of others, made possible by images, suggests that there is a connection between faraway victims and the viewer: this is mystification of what we really can do'. [5]

Sontag also denounces the 'immorality' of images which lead to the de-subjectification of what is depicted. Quoting Virginia Woolf's description of a corpse in a Spanish civil war photograph, which could be equally taken for a woman or a pig, Sontag points to the fact that suffering victims are powerless because they are unknown and nameless. In our visual culture, only celebrities are known by their names; all others are degraded to representatives of their race, age, profession or ethnicity. [6] It is thus clear that each photograph, due to its potential for distribution, has the power to make the subject it depicts into an anonymous object. As Sontag writes:

2.   Susan Sontag, *On Photography,* New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1977.
3.   Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, London: Penguin Books, 2004.
4.   Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, p. 97.
5.   Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, p.105.
6.   Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, p. 59.

The more faraway, exotic or unknown the place is, the more we will be confronted with recognizable death people, suffering and dying in a direct way... . We want to see faraway suffering. We don't want to see suffering that is near. The other is somebody who is seen, not somebody who sees. [7]

In this sense, undistributed analogue family pictures might be seen as the 'negatives' of news media images. The intimate experience of viewing family albums or home movies contrasts sharply with Sontag's description of the voyeuristic viewing experience entailed by war photography.

Although amateur images no longer constitute an exception to the photographic paradigm of exposure and distribution, most of us act as if nothing has changed. Facebook profits from this fiction of shared intimacy by turning a circle of friends into a pool of voyeurism and exposure. Such images result in a kind of simulated familiarity. These new shades of access, exposure and closure within private and public spheres are far from the intimate experience of viewing 20th century amateur images. It is precisely this 'suspended voyeurism' that was at stake in the public debate regarding the 'do's and don'ts of Facebook.

The Dos and Don'ts of Facebook
At a certain moment, one could hear discussion on streets, trains and in bars regarding the exhibitionism and voyeurism of making private pictures visible to colleagues and half-strangers. What is fascinating is the way in which the shooting, uploading and viewing of 21st century internet users is balancing the effects of the multiplication of viewing contexts. New production and distribution technologies, including lighter and cheaper cameras and free, fast and easy editing software and internet platforms helps to reunify the locales for filming and viewing.

Jasper Rigole, Paradise Recollected, Single Channel video, 8mm-film transferred to video, 33min, 2008.

Sontag has discussed the democratizing impact of 1960s film technology, which allowed war photographers using light, portable and cheap cameras to come closer to their subjects. Without the close-ups and 'on the spot' images these cameras made possible, Sontag points out, the impact of photographs of the Vietnam war on American public opinion could never have been so powerful. For Sontag, however, this closeness nevertheless creates imaginary relations between objects and subjects that block the progress towards real intervention.

One might say that contemporary technologies have lead us to a similarly ambiguous situation. Democratic recording and editing technologies do reunify the acts of viewing and film-

ing. Should we conceive of this process as the creation of endless possibilities for recognition and familiarity, or is this better described in Sontag's words, as 'a mystification of what we really can do'?

Roland Barthes' Counter-memory
Amateur pictures were exceptional in terms of memory: as the only photographs that could actually *be* memories, they served to connect pictures to real experiences and places. This was not true for most other photographic images. The lack of memory which goes with most photographs stands in the way of an intimate viewing experience. Yet it seems that a picture will do everything it can to give rise to a feeling of familiarity within the viewer. The potential for distribution inherent within the photographic medium comes with another consequence: that of counter- or blocked memory.

According to French philosopher Roland Barthes, photographic images are to a certain extent able to redirect, add, rewrite or replace memories. [8] Thus, Barthes' radical concept of counter-memory states that photographic images are able to simulate proximity to reality, or indexicality, and are able to block remembrance: *the counter–memory –image points to the fact that you remember something you did not experience*. When the image starts to behave like a memory, it is simulating the missing link between what you see and what you remember, and between the contexts of viewing and filming.

Sontag's concept of the mystified relation between television viewer and war victim may be articulated with Barthes' concept of counter-memory. Whereas Sontag condemns the fiction of the relationship between subject and object posited by the viewing of the photographic image, Barthes foregrounds the power of the image to give rise to a memory of what the viewer did *not* experience. Even while such imaginative mechanisms became implicated with the majority of viewing experiences, amateur pictures preserved the authenticity of viewing a photographic image. Uploading private pictures puts an end to this unique situation.

When the real experiences behind user-generated content are injected with the fictions of 'blocked memory' and 'mystified relations', the inevitable result is a voyeuristic playground. Now that they can be viewed by millions of strangers in a single click, amateur pictures have lost their exceptional power to create an intimate viewing experience as a ritual of remembrance. It is to be expected that images will increasingly manipulate our own highly personal memories of daily life; one can already see people assuming poses and cameras viewpoints they recall from films and other media. In the case of image recognition technology, memory becomes completely defunct.

We can see private images of strangers, and strangers can see our own private images. Without the connection to memory, it is impossible to predict how an image will be viewed. As Sontag states, 'There's no way to know what the effect of a picture will be'. [9] Is the current

7.   Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, p. 69.

8.   Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography,* trans. Richard Howard, London: Vintage, 1993.
9.   Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, p. 121.

'archive fever' a way to deal with these anxieties? Or are we done with 'the question of like-ness or unlikeness'? [10] Did the loss of these exceptional viewing conditions set loose the last hidden controversies of the photographic medium?

Sex, Lies and Videotape
In recent years, there has been a tendency for the increased closure of networks, as users have become more reflective regarding what to share online, and with whom. At first glance, this might seem to return us to the authentic, intimate viewing of amateur pictures in the previous century. For example, the countless MPEG4 and JPEG files of friends, family and lovers exchanged over mobile phone networks seem to stay very much 'in the family'. There is, however, no turning back; the transfer of images between camera, personal hard drive, and network will come to seem ever more natural and instantaneous in the future.

The highly personal testimonials produced in the early days of YouTube have given way to the kind of informational trash that one experiences as a dense, endless, fragmentary hallucina-tion. Newsreels, film trailers, porn teasers and other second-hand media are received on the same platform as educational films, as personal and private content departed for platforms such as Facebook. Meanwhile, the concomitant of the proliferation of networked media de-vices is a heightened awareness of privacy. Users begin to adjust and limit access to their uploaded photos, and make their content more difficult to find. We become better trained in the *mise-en-scène* of our media performance and presence on the net, playing our roles for an anonymous and imaginary global public.

Ex-girlfriend revenge movies also demonstrate the impossibility of returning to the past. The increasing closure of networks is subverted by its own means, as teenagers remix all the ingredients of contemporary viewing into a dangerous cocktail. Ex-girlfriend revenge movies tear apart the most intimate viewing experience one can imagine: a girl undressing in front of the boy she loves.

Ex-girlfriend revenge movies represent the fulfilment of the photographic promise of distribu-tion. As secret 'wallet pictures' of a naked girlfriend are made available to a broader public, they become de-subjectified; the object of a voyeuristic gaze. However, the relations between subject and object are not mystified as they are in the war photography discussed by Sontag. In the case of ex-girlfriend revenge movies, the immorality lies precisely in the fact that the viewers of the images do know the girl in some way. When the privileged access that one person (the boyfriend) has to the image is extended to a selection of 'acquaintances', the pact of the filming is broken. The exception previously constituted by the amateur situation is perverted by its own conditions. Just as Sontag claims, the distance between viewing and filming context does not allow a sentimental relation, so it is immoral to suggest that it does. The meaning of this image lies in the altering of a viewing experience from radical familiarity, to a radical, incestuous kind of voyeurism.

The photographic principle of 'blocked memory' also plays a part here. Ambiguous access entails confused functions of remembrance. Lack and presence of memory define the mean-ing of these visuals. The schoolmates of the girl have no memory of the scene, but they knew the girl. While being filmed, the girl must have been filled with fear of a future interpretation, a future screening by uninvolved viewers. Meanwhile, the porn surfer querying 'ex-girlfriend revenge movies' remembers the media controversy, and maybe his own amateur tapes, but has never seen the girl who is being imitated by the porn actress.

Ex –girlfriend revenge movies present themselves as the cruellest form of memory. Images intended to constitute highly intimate memories end up symbolizing blackmail, betrayal and revenge. Perhaps these are, in the end, closer to traces and testimonials of reality than the nostalgic fictions that were their original intent. They are images without memory. As Jean Baudrillard writes: 'Today it's the real and not the map whose vestiges persist here and there in the desert'. [11] According to the French philosopher, it is no longer necessary to look for manifestations of the virtual – we should, rather, be attentive for traces of the real. Ex-girlfriend revenge movies seem to be both a violent eruption of the real, and rituals of remembrance dedicated to the loss of the real.

Outro: Alternatives to Simulation?
This analysis has been grounded in the cultural moralism that has reigned over postmodern art theory since the 1960s, extending from Guy Debord's sharp, situationist, and anti-capital-ist analysis of the 'society of the spectacle' and Jean Baudrillard's theory of the Simulacrum. Both theorists conceived of a society in which the explosion of photographic images leads the signification of images to dominate all other forms of meaning, irrevocably distorting our relationship to reality. In an analogous but distinct way, Sontag's conception of the immorality of a mystified, simulated relation between a viewer and a victim polarizes reality and its simu-lation. Debord's, Baudrillard's and Sontag's images of a passive and frustrated viewer is con-tinued by contemporary network theory, in which the user is also depicted as subordinated to dominant ideological and commercial powers. For example, Geert Lovink has described the loneliness and narcosis entailed by social networking platforms. [12]

Is it possible to frame user-generated content differently? In *Le Spectateur Émancipé*, Jacques Rancière opposes the polarized separatism that characterizes theories of contem-porary experience. Instead, he puts forward a concept of an emancipated, active viewer. [13] His 'desimulation' is based on a critique of contemporary theatre and performance. The French philosopher claims that the democratic potential of the physical gathering of spectators and players is overestimated. In fact, he points out, theatre makers such as Artaud and Brecht were developing stage strategies to break the illusive immersion of the theatre viewing experi-ence to stimulate this revolutionary dimension of the gathered crowd. And yet, Rancière sees

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10. Florian Schneider, 'Theses on the Concept of the Digital Simulacrum', in Anselm Franke (ed.) *Animism (Volume 1),* Berlin; New York: Sternberg Press, 2010, pp. 54-56.

11. Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. Sheila Faria Glaser, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995, p. 197.
12. See for example: Geert Lovink, *Zero Comments: Blogging and Critical Internet Culture,* London: Routledge, 2007.
13. Jacques Rancière, *Le spectateur émancipé*, Paris: La Fabrique éditions, 2008.

no solution in the techniques of 'distance' and 'suppression of distance' they used. As an alternative, Rancière proposes a model in which democratic emancipation is not based on the group gathering but on the individual trajectory or narrative of everyday experience. He believes that freedom is located in the very capacity of the viewer to associate and dissociate:

> L'emancipation comme réappropriation d'un rapport à soi perdu dans un proces-sus de séparation. (...) C'est dans le pouvoir d'associer et de dissocier que réside l'émancipation du spectateur, c'est -à -dire, l'émancipation de chacun de nous comme spectateur. [14]

In addition, Rancière writes that,

> L'emancipation commence quand on comprend que regarder est aussi une action qui confirme ou transforme cette distribution des positions. Le spectateur aussi agit, comme l'élève ou le savant. Il observe, il sélectionne, il compare, il interprète. C'est ce que signifie le mot d'émancipation: le brouillage de la frontière entre ceux qui agissent et ceux qui regardent, entre individus et membres d'un corps collectif. [15]

In the abilities of the spectator to look and show, and in the intermingling of spectators and producers, Rancière sees emancipative power. This point of view deserves further analysis. How much of the 'spectator' remains in the paradigm of the 'user'? What kind of new relations between viewing, acting and thinking are out there?

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14. Rancière, *Le spectateur émancipé*, p.23. Author's translation: Emancipation, as a reappropriation of the relation with oneself, is lost in a process of separation. (...) The emancipation of the spectator resides in its ability to associate and dissociate, in other words, the emancipation of each of us as a spectator.
15. Rancière, *Le spectateur émancipé*, p.19. Author's translation: Emancipation begins when one understands that looking is also an act confirming or transforming the distribution of positions. The spectator also acts as a pupil or as a scholar. He observes, selects, compares and makes interpretations. That's what the word emancipation means: the interference of the borders between those who act and those who look, and between individuals and members of a collective.

OBJETS PROPAGÉS: THE INTERNET VIDEO AS AN AUDIOVISUAL FORMAT

GABRIEL MENOTTI

The boundaries of an audiovisual language are commonly defined by their platform of inscription, as in *film* or *video*. These physical underpinnings prescribe certain operations of production that are a product of determinate elementary characteristics of the medium. However, as different audiovisual media converge, the practices they foster become mingled. Even though some traditions of production persist, works made for cinema, home video, television broadcast and even mobile phones can now be manufactured in virtually the same way, using very similar technologies. As we adopt digital technologies for media production, what really seem to set the boundaries of an audiovisual format are the dynamics of consumption, understood not only as a particular viewing regime, but as the whole structure of diffusion employed – intentionally or not – into bringing the work to the public. This could be a crucial signal that, as media theorist Vilém Flusser states, it is the mode of distribution that transforms a work into a *praxis*. [1] Otherwise, we may be engaging with the more systemic notion of materiality proposed by N. Katherine Hayles: 'an emergent property created through dynamic interactions between physical characteristics and signifying strategies'. [2]

Nonetheless, platforms of inscription are losing the specificity entailed by a particular medium, and the system of diffusion and consumption is being transformed. Any parameter defined by the platform of inscription can be reformed by the interface of consumption. The place where this process can most easily be grasped is the World Wide Web, where the most diverse audiovisual pieces are transformed into 'internet videos' and subjected to the dynamics of digital social networks. The horizon of these networks, we might say, is the *Internet phenomenon*: 'the propagation of a digital file or hyperlink from one person to others ... organically, voluntarily, and peer to peer, rather than by compulsion, predetermined path, or completely automated means'. [3]

This essay attempts to characterize the *internet video* as a format in and of itself, typified not by a specific language or subject, but by its particular logic of distribution. This logic operates as a succession of *détournements*, which take an audiovisual form out of its original context and push it ever forward, re-signifying it progressively. This progression transforms excerpts of feature films, home videos, and other pieces into autonomous works, based on the au-

thorization of peers. Likewise, as they foster another, distributed regime of creation, internet videos call upon a different regime of visuality.

The Low Resolution Film Festival: A Research Methodology

Since not every audiovisual form found on the web shares the same paradigm or codification, one might wonder to what extent it is possible to specify a format based on the characteristics of the medium. This was one of the primary concerns in the conception of the Low Resolution Film Festival, a competitive exhibition of internet videos organized by the Brazilian film society Cine Falcatrua, and held in December 2005. The strategies employed in the Festival constituted the original subject of this research.

Cine Falcatrua (Portuguese for 'hoax' or 'scam') originated as a film society in the end of 2003. The group was formed by undergraduate students of the Federal University of Espírito Santo, who organized free weekly screenings of audiovisual works – mostly feature films downloaded from the internet, months before they were released in Brazil. In June 2004, this activity led to a cease-and-desist notice issued by Brazilian film distributors, along with a lawsuit against the University for copyright infringement. From this point on, even though it did not suspend its 'pirate' screenings, Cine Falcatrua began to organize events and workshops that explored other aspects of the dispute between traditional cinema and new media ecologies. The Low Resolution Film Festival was one of the first of these events.

Celebrating the 'almost-anonymity' of the internet and proposing to 'map all its original content and blame the guilty ones', the Festival might seem an unusual tool for the exploration of internet video. By 2005, when the Festival was held, video competitions focusing exclusively on online content such as *Fluxus* [4] and *Anima Mundi Web* [5] had been in existence for five years. However, contrary to events constituted by web-based exhibitions, the Low Resolution Film Festival proposed to screen internet videos in the offline structure of a conventional movie theatre. Within this architecture, the internet video would be isolated and framed in the same way of the fictional short, video art or any other standard format, and could therefore be defined in relation to them.

The decision to use this distinctive form of presentation for web video constituted the core strategy of the Low Resolution Film Festival. By placing unauthorized internet content in direct conflict with the hyper-regulated cinematographic institution, the festival emphasized the inherent characteristics of the format of internet video. The few parameters stated in the call for works concerned conditions of authorship and awarding, and the only explicit restriction was against 'screeners or Hollywood blockbuster CAM recordings'. Besides that, any video was valid within the normal limitations of the medium: the material should be found on the web, and should be sent for pre-selection by email.

1.   Vilém Flusser, *Towards a Philosophy of Photography*, trans. Anthony Mathews, London: Reaktion Books, 2000, p. 53.
2.   N. Katherine Hayles, *My Mother was a Computer*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005, p. 3.
3.   The definition is from Wikipedia: 'Internet Phenomenon', http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_Phenomenon.

4.   FLUXUS, http://www.fluxusonline.com.
5.   Anima Mundi Web, http://www.animamundiweb.com.br.

Among the participating works, there was a clear predominance of video remixes (musical or not), homemade performances (re-enactments, lipdubs, stunts) and out-of-context excerpts of movies, television shows and adverts – all forms of production favoured by the wide availability of digital equipments for video capture and editing. This material, which might be termed an online genre, suddenly exists in the contemporary media ecology, due to the fact that the network does not pose the same formal, legal and economic resistance of the established media channels.

In general, the festival's program was unpretentious, and accepting of amateurism. Even though both characteristics prevailed within internet video at that time, they certainly do not represent the limits of the medium. Certain works prepared with a lot of technical expertise by professional creators could only become public by way of the internet. Good examples are *The Mashin' of the Christ* (2004), [6] by the musical group Negativland, and *O Destino de Miguel* (2005), [7] made by young employees of the Globo Network. The former is a music video that uses scenes from Passion movies, while the latter is a short film entirely made of scenes of the feature *Shakespeare in Love* (1998), re-edited and redubbed by famous Brazilian actors. The expenses involved in distributing such pieces through traditionally regulated channels makes them unfeasible. Besides, there would be a huge unevenness between the volume of real production involved and the juridical marathon to negotiate image licensing. [8]

Works which use the internet as their means of distribution have to conform to the constraints of the medium – if not actively, at least as a collateral effect of their online propagation. Nowadays, when the medium restrictions are looser and even HD (high-definition) videos are streamed, it is more difficult to notice such effects. Nevertheless, they were clear in 2005, when normal Brazilian connection bandwidth did not exceed 256kbps. As a national production, *O Destino de Miguel* is highly representative: the film version found on the internet is compacted to a very low resolution (160x120 pixels) in order to allow online dissemination. We might argue, then, that this work is completely different from a supposed DVD variant, or a working file, which would have normal NTSC resolution (720x480 pixels).

Each version of the movie causes a particular effect on the audience, and these effects are in some measure determined by the restrictions of their platform of distribution. The higher resolution of the DVD allows for a more transparent image. Allied to the proficient voice dubbing, *O Destino de Miguel* possesses a professional aura, so that the film could pass for an official parody of the original *Shakespeare in Love*. The low-resolution version, on the other hand, foregrounds the processes that are constitutive of the image. As the pixels and compression artefacts become apparent, the normal separation between dynamics of materiality

and information is disturbed. The precarious movie image is suggestive of a degree of disorder between the layers of the circuit: whether it is the public audience or the video image, something is out of place.

However, just as it restricts the size of the video file, limiting its resolution and promoting a kind of aesthetics of compression, the web medium also defines the structure in which the video is shown. Normally, such a video will be viewed through a video player software window or portable media player viewfinder, small frames in which the low-resolution is not obvious. Thus, the difference between the web's and the cinematographic film's platforms of distribution seems to erase the difference between their respective versions, and the circuit disorder in web video is not clearly perceived.

By transmitting web videos on the 'big screen', the Low Resolution Film Festival aimed precisely to accentuate the singular aesthetic qualities of film and web video. Enlarged on the 'silver screen', the low-resolution image appears as a description of its constitutive process; far from the analogue outline of a figurative scene, it appears as an uneven field of colour blocks – which is precisely how the compression algorithm organizes the video information. This is similar to looking at a television screen under a magnifying glass; instead of viewing an enlarged image, we receive its analysis – a reticule of coloured points.

The other way the festival attempted to foreground the physical restrictions that the web medium imposes upon video was by organizing its competitive categories according to a fictitious 'kilobytage'. [9] Referring to the size of the video files in kilobytes, this classification is a parody of the traditional *métrage*, the length of a film in meters. As the *métrage* enables the duration of the projected movie to be calculated, it is an important means of organizing films both within the theatre program and the film projector's reels. Yet, this volume makes no difference on the internet. A web server is not limited by the number of hours of moving image it can stock up, but by the amount of data it can store and transmit. Thus, the time that matters on the web is precisely that of transmission, a direct function of bandwidth and file size – which in turn, is defined both by the length of the video and its resolution. As bandwidth and the duration of the video are the most determinate parameters in this operation, the best way to optimize web video distribution is precisely by reducing its resolution: a longer video can occupy proportionally less data, and thus be transmitted faster, if its frame size is smaller. Hence, the data size is the main reason why the restriction of resolution plays a signifying role in the existence of web videos. Therefore, it was defined as the classifying criterion for the participating works.

Found Forms, Propagated Information
Certainly, in a movie theatre, the internet video is in laboratorial condition. Its usual dynamics of consumption are destabilized; as these dynamics overlap with a video's mode of production, they define a good deal of the work's significance and value. After Duchamp, it could be said that internet videos are *objets trouvés* within the media ocean, re-found each and every

6.   'The Mashin' of the Christ', http://www.negativland.com/mashin.

7.   'O Destino de Miguel', http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tsa5id0Ywb8/.

8.   In this regard, J.D. Lasica uses the example of Jonathan Caouette's *Tarnation* (2003), a documentary whose production cost no more than $220. After paying for the rights of music and video clips so that the film could be commercially released, this figure rocketed to $400,000. See J. D. Lasica, *Darknet*, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2005, p. 84.

9.   A criterion that is also particular to *demoscene* competitions.

time they are watched. However, what differentiates a web video within the information land-scape is not the combination of an artist's gesture with the legitimizing power of the gallery environment, but the amazement that a spectator can feel as they watch a video. As viewers re-transmit the video to others, the substance of the video is transformed into continuous flux – something like an underwater current, indifferent to tidal forces.

By and large, internet videos share the condition of that which Duchamp termed a *ready-made* object. What defines their autonomy is a procedure of clipping and remediation, which has a lot to do with the potential for convergence of digital information networks. Most videos are nothing more than audiovisual fragments extracted from other channels and thrown onto the internet. In their natural environment, the video goes unnoticed: *Maldita Cachaça* [10] is just another bizarre news report; *Vaca Matrix* [11] one among many scenes of the feature film *Kung Pow! Enter the Fist;* [12] *Nintendo 64 Kid* [13] is simply the domestic record of a Christmas celebration. However, as they are extracted from their original channels and propagated through the unauthorized pathways of the internet, these fragments acquire another nature. Just as the new framing reshapes the video's meaning, it also affects the very disposition of the audience towards it. The public begins to regard the fragment as an individual form, distinct from its usual context. Likewise, the role of the audience is changed, as it becomes responsible for the dissemination of the images.

Upon finding a video on the internet, the spectator is immediately presented with the possibil-ity of distributing it further, by attaching it to an email, embedding it in a website, or creating another link. [14] In a medium that lacks sanctioned channels, and in which every user is a potential editor, this is not a frivolous decision. To propagate an internet video is substantially different from recommending (or not) a blockbuster to your acquaintances. Within the tra-ditional cinematographic circuit, personal campaigns do not have much power against the broadcast or film industry's multi-million dollar marketing budgets, unless they are mired in their own institutions, such as journalism. If one spectator pretends that a movie does not exist and hides it from his restricted social circle, the movie will still be available for viewing in multiplexes everywhere. In contrast, internet users actually carry out the distribution of a video. As they forward it, they create a particular circuit within a larger network. As the video can be better perceived in P2P (peer-to-peer) architectures such as the BitTorrent protocol, the public is not just the final receiver of information, but also constitutes its very carrier. Moreover, the viewer wields an active function in this transport structure – just as in a game of Chinese whispers. By choosing not to retransmit the video received, a user enfeebles its circuit of distribution, partially neutralizing the dissemination of the work. This kind of deci-sion receives its share of disapproval from the file-sharing communities' code of conduct,

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10. Maldita Cachaça', http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fk8cdaarjNs.
11. 'Vaca Matrix', http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=39dn9meNqHA.
12. 'Kung Pow!': E*nter the Fist* (dir. Steve Oedekerk, 2002).
13. 'Nintendo64 Kid', http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pFlcqWQVVuU.
14. It is interesting to notice how the practice of forwarding as a form of curating/indexing is also becoming crystallized in the increasingly popular platforms for *social bookmarking* (del.icio.us) and *tumblelogging* (StumbleUpon, Tumblr).

where it is termed 'leeching'. However, in general, leeching is precisely what happens: the general public does not care about forwarding information for its own sake, not because it is opposed to it, but because it is not committed to. The user simply adopts the stance of a normal spectator.

The agency through which a work passes each time it is forwarded is a positive one: not to *retain*, but to *let flow*. In this sense, internet videos are distinct from readymades, as every-day objects distinguished by the pedestal upon which they are placed, and by a definitive gesture. While the readymade's figure stands out against a profoundly altered background, an internet video is the result of the constant reconfiguration of figure and background by the small, recurrent gestures of a multitude of users. Such images appear less as forms than as information, and their function is eminently *phatic*, as they constitute their channel and maintain their public at the same time.

A Regime of Dissolved Authority

It seems remarkable that some works are, in an almost accidental way, able to overcome successive layers of spectatorial inertia in order to become *massive phenomena*. Such phe-nomena do not conform to the dispersed topography of the web. Quite the opposite: they contest such topography, creating a spatial norm where there are only plateaus, islands, and deteriorated terrains. In other words, the internet video describes the striation of the network structure. Such a way of occupying the medium is characteristic of computer viruses, which spread from one network to another, infecting terminal after terminal. This similarity in be-haviour has lead to the characterization of popular internet videos as 'viral'. However, there is a very important difference between viruses and viral videos: the mechanism for propagation of the virus is part of its nature, embedded in its code. A worm will forward itself automatically to all the contacts of the contaminated individual's email, in spite of the recipient's decision. The propagation of a video depends on the conscious action of the original recipient, and their will to become a transmitter.

Whatever it may be that motivates this action, it seems far too contingent to be systematized, especially in a work of this length. Nonetheless, it should be clear that this motivation is not inherent within the video piece or the channel, but within the user. The transmission of an internet video does not occur passively, by osmosis. It depends on the conjoined – albeit disarticulated – action of a series of agents. This more generalized procedure characterizes the internet video as a format. It is not a discursive practice but an assertive one, worthy of the title of curator, who endorses and revalidates the work. Even so, we could say that it is no less authorial than the original *détournement* that created the work in the first place, which it mimics in each stage. As she propagates a video, the user reframes it, accentuating its importance and increasing its presence. It is these successive re-framings that will produce the medium's procedural gestalt.

In this manner, the authorship of an internet video becomes diluted throughout the proc-ess of its distribution. The more it spreads, creating precedents for remixes, mashups, and alternative versions, the more the video becomes a collective, almost folkloric manifestation. One person might make an animation, send it to their friends, and find it a few days later in

a public discussion forum – its distribution completely beyond the maker's control. At this stage of the process, the term 'author' is a complete misnomer; the original creator suddenly occupies the position of yet another spectator. Within this process, the role of transmitters is so important that they assume a vague position of authority over the works. This authority is more easily perceived if we refer to the Low Resolution Film Festival in 2005, a time when the title of 'internet video-maker' was such a dubious one that I have been obliged to place it in quotation marks. The creator of a given video is sometimes inadvertent, but almost never acknowledged: the only reference to the origin of the work is to the channel through which it became public – often, popular indexing directories such as BoingBoing, [15] Fark, [16] or the Brazilian Kibeloco. [17] In this context, the legitimacy of audiovisual material depends on the density of its casting, which is peered rather than broad. Digital networks follow a very peculiar logic of popular authentication. Even the Google algorithm, which functions as an online North, is driven by it: a website gains search relevance the more it is linked by others.

As this mechanism collides with those of established channels, 'internet celebrities' appear within the pages of important New York newspapers. A classic collision is that of William Hung, a rejected contestant of television show *American Idol*. In 2004, the video of his failed audition appeared online, was viewed by millions of viewers, and made him more famous than he would have had he won the show. [18] Afterwards, Hung returned triumphantly to traditional media, received a recording deal and released three albums. Ironically, his success was provoked by the same images that the producers of *American Idol* had employed to dishonour him. Extracted from its original context, the video became a mechanism that transformed the failed singer into a celebrity. There is no doubt that the same sequence of images had become *a different thing*.

The Low Resolution Film Festival attempted to apply this dynamics of authentication to the cinematographic milieu. According to the festival's regulations, it was not necessary to be the author of a video to send it to the competition: it sufficed to *take responsibility for it* – a term that possesses a significant degree of uncertainty. If more than one person sent the same video, it instantly became a collective work. What was being judged were not individual creations, but different ways of exploring the internet.

Regimes of Active Visuality
In the years that followed the Low Resolution Film Festival, the increase of bandwidth, the creation of lighter video codecs such as Adobe Flash Video, and the growing popularization of services such as YouTube, [19] Google Video [20] and Vimeo [21] have begun to crystallize online audiovisual practices into an almost regular circuit. As the internet is turned into a widespread medium for audiovisual works, the definition of internet video as a process that describes its own informational distribution still holds true. The online work and its author seem to be increasingly fixed within standard channels of distribution. In a platform such as YouTube, all videos are linked to the user who publishes them, and this user is in turn is linked to other users, either as contacts or subscribers. Therefore, the main location of these works is in the user's page, which can be classified by a distinctive status such as director. The system creates logs of activity, and any dispute over originality can be resolved by referring to parameters such as the date of upload or the number of views. The platform, then, results in a certain degree of stabilization of identities.

As it accumulates metadata such as tags, comments and replies – in other words, as it becomes intertwined with the platform's own informational structure – a video is further localized. This can be extended to diegetic references to the platform's interface (resulting in meta-linguistic works such *Dave dancing at my bday party*); [22] as well as to the creative employment of its video database (for example, in the mashup project *ThruYou*); [23] its user community (as in the *lonelygirl15* web series); [24] or interactive possibilities (as in the infamous *Interactive Card Trick*). [25] In all of these cases, the video becomes inextricable from its original location, as any displacement would disrupt the work's particular significance and behaviour. The experience of *lonelygirl15*, for example, could never be conveyed without the illusion of intimacy created by the closeness to its user-character. In the same way, it would be pointless to download *Interactive Card Trick*, a work that resorts to YouTube's in-video hyperlink possibilities, and watch it in a conventional media player software – or, worse yet, in a Film Festival. The only effective way to propagate such videos is as a direct, online link to their URL. Therefore, it is effectively impossible to remove the videos from their original context, as they carry their context with them.

Embedding the videos in another webpage does not isolate them from a platform such as YouTube – quite the contrary. The image is overlaid by the site's watermark, advertisements, and links to other videos in its database. It is as if, through the embedded video, the whole of YouTube infiltrates a separate webpage. In this way, the invasive platform reinforces its authority over the works; an implicit form of control that is made explicit by its capacity to ban user accounts, take videos offline and block the access of certain countries. Could it be that the fixed characteristics of these platforms constitute the specificity of the medium, a kind of subgenre of internet videos? Or have the platforms as a whole attained the status of concrete technical objects, from which the awareness and value of individual pieces of work can no longer be detached? [26] One could presume that either hypothesis indicates the evolution of online media away from an unstable visuality into a new form of spectatorship. However, early modes of engagement with internet video were equally medium specific. The regime of dis-

15. BoingBoing, http://www.boingboing.net.
16. Fark, http://www.fark.com.
17. Kibeloco http://kibeloco.com.br.
18. 'William Hung She Bangs', http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zcc8dTqflh8.
19. YouTube, http://www.youtube.com.
20. Google Video, http://video.google.com.
21. Vimeo, http://www.vimeo.com.

22. 'Dave dancing at my bday party', http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pVm_HJ_ax8o.
23. *Thru-you*, http://thru-you.com.
24. *LonelyGirl15*, http://www.lg15.com.
25. 'Interactive Card Trick', http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tbEei0I3kMQ.
26. Gilbert Simondon [1958], *On the Mode of Existence of Technical Objects*, trans. N Mellamphy, London: University of Western Ontario, 1980.

solved authorities still characterizes another important platform for online media distribution: the 4chan image board. [27]Based on the Futaba Channel, [28] 4chan is a popular Japanese forum for image sharing. It was launched in October 2003, a couple of months before the term 'Web 2.0' was first published. [29] Currently, 4chan receives at least 1.5 million unique visitors a month. [30] In spite of being older than YouTube, it still retains a very loose regime of authority and participation. A striking difference between the sites is that there is no need to register to use 4chan, allowing users to post images straight away in any of its 44 boards. The images are published in the order of upload, creating a linear flow of threads that defies random navigation. In any case, the platform does not hold long-term archives: most of the boards are limited to eleven pages and, as soon as a thread reaches the bottom, it disappears completely. [31]

These restrictions lead to the site's simplicity of use and very high refresh rate. Having no database or community structure such as profile pages, 4chan exists as a lively arena of information. In minutes, the content of a board might have changed completely. Some images persist – but if they are always about to disappear, and the only way to make them endure is by bumping their thread, reposting or recreating them, to what extent should they be considered stable forms? Not surprisingly, a great deal of internet 'memes' – such as *LOLcats*, [32]*Rickrolling,* [33] and the *Advice Dog* [34] – originated in 4chan. However, in this natural environment, such folklore should not be considered auto-replicating, wide-spreading information. These images and their variations consist of nothing less than the very activity of the users as they participate in the channel. The lack of a registration requirement creates an additional difference between 4chan and other platforms for online media distribution: in 4chan, complete anonymity is the rule, not the exception. Hence, there are no individual images or authors, just the channel; no community, just a public. The authority of 4chan authority is not imposed in the same way as YouTube's, since it is the very activity of the public that secures the channel's integrity. The anonymous masses produce 4chan as they inhabit it, by viewing, transforming and reposting images. Once again, we are confronted with an essentially phatic form of mediated experience.

This regime of visuality becomes clearer in the nature of images such as the *Rage* comics [35] and *Tenso* sequences, [36] which are not intended solely to be viewed, but transformed and reposted. Their significance arises from this particular mode of propagation. An even bet-

ter example would be *Punho dos Brothers*, [37] a drawing of a fist made of ASCII characters, posted in user scrapbooks of the Orkut social network. It comes accompanied by a statement explicitly ordering the receiver to 'forward it to five brothers', or else they 'would be no brother' (sic). This is dynamic information, meant not only to be seen, but also propagated. Indeed, the process generated a number of variants, such as *Hadouken dos Brothers* and *Luís XVI dos Brothers*, with the same purpose.

From these examples, we can conclude that the particular paradigm foregrounded by the Low Resolution Film Festival remains a significant reference point for the investigation not only of online platforms, but of media in general. The circumstances of early internet video and the 4chan image board show that there is a correspondence between the dissolution of authority and the engagement of the public with the processes that constitute the channel. These situations entail different forms of mediated experience and objects, which should not be analysed according to the parameters used to judge more stabilized conditions, in which the distinction between the channel and the operations of the user are clear.

The peculiarities of internet videos acquire very different meanings if they are approached not as inherent characteristics of 'viral' works, but as a result of the dynamic engagement of a public with technique. To illustrate the contemporary relevance of such dynamics, it is worth mentioning that 4chan's creator Christopher Poole ('moot') was voted the most influential person of 2009 in *TIME* magazine's traditional election, beating the likes of President Obama and Oprah Winfrey. [38] To show how these dynamics disrupt our normal criteria of judgment and critique, it is essential to point out that the result of *TIME*'s election was caused by an exploitation of the voting system by 4chan's *anonymous* users. [39] Therefore, when we are aware of the concurrence between media paradigms, the difference between them can be illuminated – as the Low Resolution Film Festival attempted to do. When we ignore the concurrence, we run the risk of being seriously mislead and *owned* – just as *TIME* magazine was.

27. 4chan, http://www.4chan.org.
28. 2chan, http://www.2chan.net.
29. Eric Knorr, 'The Year of Web Services', *CIO,* Dec 15 2003: 90.
30. Joshua Benton, 'How 4chan shows the challenge of monetizing a big online audience', *Nieman Journalism Lab,* 17 Feb 2009, http://www.niemanlab.org/2009/02/how-4chan-shows-the-challenge-of-monetizing-a-big-online-audience.
31. 'FAQ', 4chan, http://www.4chan.org/faq.
32. 'I Can Haz Cheezburger?', http://encyclopediadramatica.com/Lolcats.
33. 'Rickroll', http://encyclopediadramatica.com/Rickrolling.
34. 'Advice Dog', http://encyclopediadramatica.com/Advice_dog.
35. 'RAGE', http://encyclopediadramatica.com/FU.
36. *[TENSO]*, http://sites.levelupgames.com.br/FORUM/RAGNAROK/forums/t/337660.aspx.

37. 'Punho dos Brothers": conheça os mais divertidos, http://virgula.uol.com.br/ver/noticia/lifestyle/2009/03/25/119623-punho-dos-brothers-conheca-os-mais-divertidos.
38. 'The World's Most Influential Person Is...', *Time Magazine*, 27 April, 2009, http://www.time.com/time/arts/article/0,8599,1894028,00.html.
39. Paul Lamere, 'Inside the precision hack', Music Machinery, 15 April, 2009, http://musicmachinery.com/2009/04/15/inside-the-precision-hack.

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FROM A PULL-DOWN SCREEN, FOLD-UP CHAIRS, A LAPTOP AND A PROJECTOR: THE DEVELOPMENT OF CLIP KINO SCREENINGS, WORKSHOPS AND ROLES IN FINLAND

ANDREW GRYF PATERSON

The pull-down screen, the fold-up chairs, the sound-system, laptop, projector and popcorn were all placed in the public underground passageway, in the hope of coaxing people out of their usual pathways, and encouraging them to sit down and watch video clips they might have never seen before. The billboard proclaiming 'Jii Hutikka's Clip Karavaani!' was the beginning of 'Clip Kino' in Helsinki: a self-organized social event consisting of screenings held in public spaces. Yet the event did not feature full-length or even short films, but video clips and documentaries found online.

Since this event in 2007, described above, I have initiated and facilitated similar events. This activity was and is motivated by my interest in participatory and social processes as an artist-organizer, and as a pedagogue of online and digital media culture. Between 2003 and 2005, I was involved in developing a pioneering online media-sharing platform called Aware, [1] and in designing and coordinating workshops encouraging people to upload images and videos to a shared database. Since 2005, the online environment for video has changed immensely. I have observed the nascent practices I explored earlier developing into mainstream practices – with venture capital, good interface design and technical prowess – to become an aspect of millions of people's everyday sharing, productive and consumptive media experiences online. As a facilitator who had organized workshops about media uploading and sharing, my interest in online media shifted towards an awareness of what is going on 'there': what you, I, they, and we are watching online; opening up discussions related to online media, copy and remix culture; but also in how to create a space for different groups to encounter each other, and reflect upon their practices and interests.

Currently, online websites such as Viral Video Chart [2] rank and keep track of videos in countless embedded posts to blogs, while curated video clip features now regularly occur in specialist media magazines and newspapers, for example in the U.K. newspaper *The Guardian*. [3] In response, artists and media researchers have formed new specialist forums for engaging and researching online video. Within my own field of interest, that of critical media culture, was a mailing list and a travelling conference initiated by the Institute of Network

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1. John Evans, Markus Ort, Andrew G. Paterson and Aki-Ville Pöykiö, *Aware* platform (2003-2005, offline since 2006), Helsinki, http://apaterso.info/projects/aware/aware_schematic.pdf.
2. 'Viral Video Chart', Unruly Media (2006-), London, http://viralvideochart.unrulymedia.com/.
3. 'Joy of Six' sport-clip series / 'Clip Joint' movie-clip series, Guardian Online (2007-), http://www.guardian.co.uk/sport/series/joyofsix, http://www.guardian.co.uk/film/series/clipjoint.

Cultures in Amsterdam. The series of conferences named Video Vortex [4] began in 2007, and shared Clip Kino's aim of bringing together varied perspectives and practices: artistic, aesthetic, research-oriented, reflective, exploratory, and experimental. Of course, an essential part of understanding what is 'there' online is watching video clips. In 2007, I imagined Clip Kino as a screening event that could bring people together to watch and come to understand online video. The following elaborates the development of Clip Kino, from that roll-down screen onwards, charting many of the different venues, contexts, themes and organizational forms which have moved Clip Kino towards a shareable set of roles, guidelines and ambitions that may be adopted and adapted by others.

Clip Karavaani, November 2007

During the 'Self-organising and Networking' course I was teaching at the MAA Art School (Taidekoulu) in Suomenlinna, Helsinki, [5] I gave six students an assignment. Inka Jurvanen, Emilia Liljeström, Sera Martikainen, Marianne Mäkelin, Mikko Mällinen, and Tessa Siira were asked to create an almost zero-budget 'clip-kino/micro-cinema' event to take place in public space, as part of the Valon Voimat (Forces of Light) Festival, held in November 2007. Over the 10 years it had been in existence, Valon Voimat had aimed to 'research the urban space and its use during the darkest period of the year', promoting site-specific urban interventions, specifically involving ephemeral and static light installations, fire-arts and mixed-media club events. [6] That year, the festival was focusing on site-specific works held near the city's single underground metro line.

Within this context, the student group formed a project called Clip Karavaani. They created a fictional master of ceremonies called Jii Hutikka (Finnish for Joe Tipsy), who despite never turning up for the events, had interest in hobo/nomadic lifestyles, caravanning, elk-hunting and avant-garde films. The theme chosen for all the Clip Karavaani screening events was 'road movies' and, behind the guise of Jii Hutikka, the students crafted an aesthetic, home-brew style of communication for a series of four 'cinema on the road' events, that took place over a one week period in three different locations: an underground metro passageway, a private design studio, and a public media library. [7]

To yield clips for presentation, the group entered the term 'road movies' into video sharing website databases, such as YouTube and Internet Archive. The screenings were curated by the group collectively nominating clips, which they then rated and edited into a screening order. Some clips were played according to the context of the location, such as the 'helsinki metro sunset' clip in the underground passageway; others, such as the 'kerouac reading on the road' clip, followed each event. Ripped from their original online viewing platform,

approximately 15 to 20 clips representing a very heterogeneous interpretation of the theme were played at each event. One member of the group lined up the video in the player, another adjusted the volume to suit. In the second and fourth Clip Karavaani events, a large white cardboard image of a pointing hand diverted passersby into the unusual fold. The audience for each event was about 10 to 20 people, and there was free popcorn for everybody.

The Clip Karavaani screenings followed a tradition of grassroots, specialty cinema clubs, and video activist screenings [8] using distributable formats such as Super-8, VHS and DVD formats. The 'one night only' nature of the Clip Karavaani events, including the forever-absent vagabond director Jii Hutikka, imparted a circus-like theatricality to the proceedings. The group's consideration of the relationship between context and content meant that Clip Karavaani bore similarities to the 'Social Cinema' project by Neil Cummings and Marysia Lewandowska, albeit at a smaller conceptual and technical scale. During the London Architectural Biennale in 2006, the Social Cinema project 'turned unbuilt spaces into auditoria', so that 'films about, set in, or commenting on London and its architecture were stunningly projected upon the city itself'. [9]

Outdoor screenings, often held as part of festivals or summer seasons, operate outside of the usual cinema, room or social hall context. A good example of the success of this model has been Rooftop Films in New York. [10] However, unlike these cinematic social events, the content screened during Clip Karavaani consisted solely of video that could be freely downloaded from popular media sharing platforms. [11] The screening list emerged from the video sharing database, according to a simple keyword search. Videos were returned according to the tags they had been given, and then according to the subjective choices made by individuals within the organizing group. What was shown in public was not determined by ownership or by negotiation of access rules, but by a search-engine and a subjective process of selection.

Seeders N Leechers R Us, January-March 2008

Clip Kino emerged from a residency application I made in March 2007 to Eyebeam Art and Technology Center, New York, [12] in which I proposed to facilitate a space for young people to show and celebrate online content. Fortunately, the application was accepted, and the project Seeders N Leechers R Us ran between January-February and May 2008. [13] Eyebeam was known for its progressive youth program, such as the Digital Day Camp, After-School Atelier and Girl's Eye View activities for middle and high school students. Since 2000, these

4.   Video Vortex (2007-), http://networkcultures.org/videovortex/.
5.   Andrew G. Paterson, Self-organising and Networking MAA Course, Taidekoulu MAA, Helsinki, October-December, 2007, http://orgcult.wikidot.com/selforg.
6.   Valon Voimat Festival (2007), Helsinki, http://www.valonvoimat.org/archive/HTML_2007/.
7.   Emilia Liljeström, Sanna Martikainen, Marianna Mäkelin, Mikko Mällinen, & Tessa Siira, 'Jii Hutikka's Clip Karavaani' project, Valon Voimat Festival, Helsinki, 21-28 November, 2007, http://apaterso.info/projects/clipkaravaani/.

8.   'How To Do A Video Screening' (last updated 2004), Video Activist Network, San Francisco, http://www.videoactivism.org/howscreen.html.
9.   Neil Cummings and Marysia Lewandowska, Social Cinema project, The London Architectural Biennale (2006), London, 17-24 July, 2006, http://www.chanceprojects.com/node/37.
10.   Rooftop Films (1997-), Brooklyn NYC, http://rooftopfilms.com/about_history.html.
11.   Videovideomaker websites, Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_video_sharing_websites.
12.   Andrew G. Paterson, Residency Proposal to Eyebeam Art and Technology Center (2006), New York, http://apaterso.info/projects/seedersnleechersrus/eyebeam-proposal.html.
13.   Andrew G. Paterson, 'Seeders N Leechers R Us' project (2008), Eyebeam, New York, http://apaterso.info/projects/seedersnleechersrus/.

activities had brought together artists, youth, and New York's dynamic cultural forms, such as remix, fashion and hip-hop. Experts in new media and technology, and in hacker, sustainability issues and open source culture in particular, were thrown into this mix. [14] This context, with reference to critical U.S.-based cultural and legal reformism, activism and education in copyright issues was used to develop the Clip Kino concept. [15]

The aim of the Seeders N Leechers project was to explore peer-to-peer (P2P) culture in collaboration with young people, with the title of the project taken from BitTorrent [16] protocol: the slang terms for key roles in P2P file-sharing refer to the original uploader who provides the original file as a 'seeder', and the downloader who 'leeches' the content from the network. The BitTorrent protocol is also a form of encoded cooperation: when you begin downloading a file, you are also by default helping others, by making the file more easily available to them. My hope was that the workshop, exploring and sharing of video clips between us as a group, would give us the roles of being 'seeders' and 'leechers' of content, shared through face-to-face interaction.

On arrival in New York, I structured a program of events for the teenage students-in-residence at the centre: Tahj Banks, Glen Moore, and Jayquan Harris from Brooklyn, and Wandy Marcano from the Bronx. All had attended the previous year's Digital Summer Camp workshops at Eyebeam, were aged between 17 and 19 years old, and were given a student salary for attending Eyebeam twice a week after school. Each week, for a period of two months, we held one 'leech' screening in between two 'seeding' workshop sessions. These sessions sometimes included other artist residents of Eyebeam, and involved discussion of media awareness, local and youth representations in online video, copyright, remix, and creative commons approaches to media, P2P networks, and how to organize a screening event. Furthermore, we shared links to videos, which we watched together in physical-material space. Over my period of residency, this process of exchange shifted from one that was initiated by me to one that was increasingly about the students sharing material with me, and then to others in Eyebeam.

The outcome of the workshop process was a Clip Kino screening event called Teen Mashup, of which all the content was curated and arranged by the teenagers. As the title of the event suggests, the screening consisted of videos chosen according to the teenage students' interests, and represented homemade music production, shock magicians on television, and

different hip hop or gang representations of New York. During this event, one of the audience members asked a student, 'Did you contact the video clip uploaders about whether it was ok to screen their video?' The answer ('no, we didn't because...') managed to satisfy the questioner, and indicated to me that the student had gained a level of online media literacy. The Seeders N Leechers R Us project extended the pedagogical aspect that had given rise to Clip Karavaani, in order to tackle the debates surrounding copy, file-sharing, and sampling cultures, and which helped to shape my future and current pedagogical activity.

Kirjasto 10, February-December 2008

After the Clip Karavaani project's choice of venues, Kirjasto 10 public library [17] in the centre of Helsinki appealed as a location in which we could hold regular screenings. The library focused on music and media, had installed audiovisual presentation facilities, and promoted itself as a place 'for consuming, creating and displaying culture'. [18] Having conferred with the Library's staff, I began a program of screenings in 2008 in the Kirjasto 10 venue entitled Clip Kino Helsinki. [19] Although there was no budget for these events, as a library user, I was allowed to use the facilities without charge. On all occasions except one, I invited contacts and colleagues to arrange 40-60 minute-long screening of video clips on a theme of their choice. Between video clips, the volunteer 'guest-host' curators [20] were expected to contextualize the clip, or explain their reason for selecting it.

Different themes were presented which were either geographically and socio-culturally specific (Australia-New Zealand, New York, Eastern Europe); media-specific (music representations, subtitled clips); genre-specific (youth, avant-garde art videos, animations, anarchist clips), or based on the topic of online media politics. [21] In many cases, the audience was determined by the theme or the curator selected. When I couldn't find someone to make an event—almost no one replied to the open call for 'guest-hosts'—I curated the event myself, in order to keep up with the negotiated calendar of events with the library.

I also knew that I was operating in a legal 'grey-zone', and was uncertain as to how I should publicize these events. In early-to-mid 2008, it was not clear to me whether it was legal to

14. Research in Education Project Archive, Eyebeam Art and Technology Center (2000-), New York, http://eyebeam.org/research/education.

15. For the background to these issues, see: Fair Use & Copyright Resources, Centre for Social Media (2005-), American University School of Communication, Washington DC, http://www.centerforsocialmedia.org/resources/fair_use/; Lawrence Lessig, *Free Culture: The Nature and Future of Creativity*, London: The Penguin Press, 2005, http://free-culture.cc/; Free Culture: Students for Free Culture (2003-), http://freeculture.org/; Kenneth McLeod, *Freedom of Expression: Resistance & Repression in the Ages of Intellectual Property*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007, http://www.freedomofexpression.us/.

16. Seeder and Leecher definitions on BitTorrent vocabulary, Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BitTorrent_vocabulary.

17. Kirjasto/Library 10 (2005-), Helsinki, http://www.lib.hel.fi/kirjasto10.

18. K. K. Salminen Lämsä, & M. Repo, 'Library 10 and meetingpoin@lasipalatsi: New Kinds of Library Services in Helsinki City Centre', *Scandinavian Public Library Quarterly*, No. 4. (2005): 20-23, http://www.splq.info/issues/vol38_4/vol38_4.pdf.

19. Andrew G. Paterson, 'Clip Kino Helsinki' project (2008-), various locations, Helsinki, http://clipkino.info/ or http://apaterso.info/projects/clipkino/.

20. Clip Kino Helsinki guest-host curators at Kirjasto/Library 10, between February- December, 2008: Projekti Sosiaalikeskus (FI), Joanne Richardson (RO), Wojtek Mejor (PL/FI), 'Orgcult' Students at Stadia Polytechnic: Toni Niemisalo, Akseli Virtanen Joni Happonen, Juhana Lindström, Santeri Pakkanen and Teemu Lipasti (all FI), Špela Semion (SI/FI), Kari Yli-Annala (FI), Ann Morrison (NZ/FI), Eyebeam Students-in-Residence: Tahj Banks, Glen Moore, Wandy Marcano, and Jayquan Harris (remote, all US), Guild of Bonsai Hackers (UN/FI), Sonja Baumer (remote, US), Andrew Paterson (SCO/FI).

21. Clip Kino Helsinki Archive webpage, http://apaterso.info/projects/clipkino/archive.html.

show videos located on a proprietary/privately-owned platform such as YouTube in a public institution. [22] What might be the social norms of behaviour in Finland within this age of audiovisual copyright? [23] For this reason, the Clip Kino Helsinki events were promoted within a trusted network of contacts via email, although the library also promoted the events on their webpage, electronic noticeboards, and information desks. Not surprisingly, attendance was low: sometimes as little as 3 people attended, but occasionally the audience numbered over 20 when the event was advertised especially well. In terms of audience numbers, the most successful event at the library (22 people) was Wojtek Mejor's presentation on the theme 'Animation from the East'. [24] Mejor designed a poster for the theme, and placed them at all the city's 'free' advertising locations. [25]

At the end of the project, my thoughts as a facilitator-producer were centred upon promotion: firstly, upon how to attract people to attend the events themselves; and secondly, upon how to encourage people to attend a library for a screening event. There were many related questions: Who is the person curating the screening? (I hoped this person attracted some friends, peer-group). How interesting is the theme? (I hoped the theme could attract a group of people interested or curious to attend a screening about it). What were people coming to see? (I didn't wish to reveal the titles via email or links that people could just look up online at home instead of attending). After facilitating 11 Clip Kino events at Kirjasto 10, despite the low attendance and publicity, I learned these were all important questions to keep in mind when organizing and promoting a Clip Kino event.

Emerging Media Platform, January 2009
By the end of 2008, I decided not to continue with the events in Kirjasto 10, choosing to focus upon other projects. I did accept invitations present the Clip Kino format in other contexts, which allowed the platform to develop. The first invitation to present a Clip Kino event outside Helsinki came in March 2009, and I was invited to organize an event in the Tampere suburb of Pispala. As part of the Vilkkari Off Film Festival, a self-organized event by the autonomous cultural centre Pispala Contemporary Art Centre, [26] I presented a session reflecting upon the development of Clip Kino, and a 'best of', of the videos I had seen. [27] This indicated to me

the value of a summary event at the end of each year of activity, reflecting upon the issues of organizing or presenting online video as public-use.

In May, a Clip Kino event was held within the 'Emerging Media Practices and Environments' symposium [28] at the University of Art and Design Helsinki. This occasion clearly made the case for the Clip Kino format as a research tool. As part of their doctoral research, Sanna Marttila and Petri Kola curated a screening with the theme 'Open Video', using clips to illustrate their argument. [29] A common feature of Clip Kino events is what might be called a 'broken screening': rather than a non-stop reel of video, there are gaps for context, introduction, comments, and opinions from both selector and/or audience to encourage the use of the format as a research and discussion tool. In reflection, Martilla and Kola emphasized the value of co-curating a screening to investigate the field of inquiry, and of the dialogue involved in selecting and ordering video in the service of an argument or 'illustration' of their research.

A third opportunity arose later in the year, when I was invited to present within an exhibition called Todellisuuden Taju (A Sense of Reality) at Hyvinkää Art Museum. [30] Curated by artist Teemu Mäki, the exhibition contained artworks both within the art museum and situated around the town centre, and included several public performances. The curatorial theme asked philosophical and political questions about our everyday lives: How do we actually live? What really happens? How ought we live? My self-defined challenge for the invitation was to select clips for a Clip Kino event around a theme suggested to me by Mäki's curatorial statement: 'Hyvinkää on 'poikkeuksellisen tavallinen' suomalainen pikkukaupunki' (Hyvinkää is an 'abnormally normal' Finnish town). I searched online video sharing sites for examples of the location-specific (Hyvinkää), and concepts of 'normal' and 'abnormal'. At the public screening event, with laptop, data-projector and speakers, I presented my selection to a small audience in the art museum: a mix of representations of place, but also of different subcultures online which 'spun off' from what I found, where I searched, what I linked to, and what I imagined before arriving to Hyvinkää for the first time. [31] This event illustrated the potential for the Clip Kino format to augment formats such as that of an exhibition with a layer of content that draws upon the broad range of the online media environment. In this case, there were mingled images of art installations, motor-sport, death metal and pop videos, documentaries of everyday life, commercial advertisements, and avant-garde art videos.

Towards the end of 2009, a new venue was found for Clip Kino Helsinki. The Ptarmigan Art Space, in the Vallila region of Helsinki, aims to 'house ideas that exist outside of the realm of the traditional and provide a space for adventurous and challenging scenarios. Whether it be

22. Since I learned with support and guidance of Heikki Poroila, Information Specialist (Music), HelMet / Vantaa Library, about the legal context in Finland of such screenings. The following statement was made available from December 2008: Andrew G. Paterson, 'Clip Kino Helsinki Legal Navigations', 11.12.2008, http://clipkino.info/extra/clipkino_legal_fi_english_111208.pdf.
23. Ville Oksanen, *Five Essays on Copyright in the Digital Era*, Helsinki University of Technology/Turre Legal, Helsinki, 2009. http://www.turre.com/publications/.
24. Wojtek Mejor, 'Animation from the East' Clip Kino event, Kirjasto 10, Helsinki, 28 May, 2008, http://clipkino/hosts/wojtek-mejor.html.
25. Wojtek Mejor, 'Spreading Posters in Helsinki' Google Map (2008), http://maps.google.com/maps/ms?ie=UTF8&hl=en&msa=0&msid=101316200690604386308. 00044e0c75ccf18c595a8&t=h&z=13.
26. Vilkkari Off Film Festival (2006-), Pispalan Nykytaiteenkeskus (Pispala Contemporary Art Centre), http://www.hirvikatu10.net I http://www.pispala.fi/vilkkari-off/.
27. Andrew G. Paterson, Clip Kino Pispala: Places of Communication, Pispala Nykytaiteenkeskus, Tampere, 7 March, 2009, http://www.clipkino.info/hosts/hirvikatu10.html.

28. Emerging Media Practices & Environments Symposium, ARKI Research Group, Lume TV Studio, University of Art and Design Helsinki, 27-29 May, 2009, http://arkisampo.uiah.fi/emerging/.
29. Petri Kola and Sanna Marttila, 'Open Video' Clip Kino event, Lume TV Studio, Helsinki, 25 May, 2009, http://clipkino.info/hosts/emerging_arki-taik.html.
30. Teemu Mäki (curator), 'Todellisuuden Taju' Exhibition, Hyvinkää Art Museum, Hyvinkää, 12 June – 30 August, 2009, http://www.todellisuudentaju.com/.
31. Andrew G. Paterson, 'Clip Kino Hyvinkää: Todellisuuden Taju' Clip Kino event, Hyvinkää Art Museum, Hyvinkää, 30 July, 2009, http://clipkino.info/hosts/hyvinkaan-taidemuseo.html.

performance, visual art, or interactive work, we hope for Ptarmigan to be a home for challeng-ing, innovative projects'. [32] The first Clip Kino event there was guest-hosted by Jon Irigoyen in November 2009, with the theme of 'Cyberpunk' [33]. Ptarmigan's random collection of second-hand chairs, the pull-down screen, laptop and borrowed data-projector, reminded me of Jii Hutikka. It seemed to me that his imaginary wanderings with Clip Karavaani, dreamed up by Taidekoulu MAA students two years previously, had come full circle. The exciting little venue of Ptarmigan, half-public and half-private, was a good place to situate Clip Kino for a while. Over the years, the different screening venues had only partly suited the format. But the mix of people who turned up to appreciate Jon's cyberpunk selection seemed about right: a mixture of friends, 'learned' enthusiasts, associates of the art space, some regular Clip Kino attendees, and some people who were merely curious

Multicultural Viewing, January 2010
In January 2010, Clip Kino Helsinki received its first sustained funding to produce events, thanks to a successful application to the Finnish Arts Council's multicultural arts fund. As grant applicant, I proposed to begin a new program of Clip Kino events in Helsinki over the year, which would bring together different cultural and sub-cultural backgrounds, and explore different themes and content. Furthermore, as in the case of Ptarmigan, the as-sociations of the host organization would bring guest-host screening curators with different agendas to the platform. The first event took place in March 2010, as part of the 'Herbologies/ Foraging Networks' program of the Pixelache Festival. [34] At Ptarmigan, Nina Nordström and I curated an event on the subject of 'foraging', either as finding wild food in the countryside, or dumpster diving in the city.

In April, Ptarmigan's London-based artists-in-residence Model Court showed scenes from films with legal themes, which inspired their practice of documenting and engaging with real life court representations. [35] Model Court had often presented their work in the format of clips, and their experience and approach elicited an extended discussion about how court proceedings are represented in film, with the background awareness that video materials from real life court cases are rarely accessible to the public. From my perspective, Model Court's event fitted easily into their usual contemporary art practice and communications, to the point that the Clip Kino model could be interpreted as a familiar curatorial framework.

In May, Sari Kivinen, an ethnic Finn raised in Australia and currently living in Helsinki, ex-plored the themes of identity construction, imitation and 'copies of copies' [36] in her Clip Kino

event. She shared an eclectic range of clips, including soldiers dancing like Michael Jackson, performance art parodies of Britney Spears, real life journalism on the 'Dog Girl', and Judith Butler's feminist theory of performativity. Later in the summer, Pispala Contemporary Art Centre organized and curated a Clip Kino event with the theme of the Boreal Forest. [37] The works selected included clips from popular Hollywood films, activist promotions, machinima, and forest workers' own recordings of their use of the machinery of the forest industry. This 'Forest 2.0' event included a jury who were invited to give comments and feedback upon the selections, encouraging other comments from the audience. The process of video selection, and one machinima clip in particular, were the inspiration for the organization's 'SecondFor-est' project, a Second Life model of a Finnish forest, and a virtual setting for discussion about the use of South-Asian migrant labour for berry picking in Finland.

The multicultural agenda, which supports multiple points of view, was manifest in two workshops held in Helsinki during 2010: one involved a youth centre and Finnish teenagers of mixed backgrounds, another involved asylum-seeking residents of an inner-city refugee reception centre. [38] The first event was a three month workshop and screening series called Katalyytti-clips, which explored online media cul-ture, as seen and found in video sharing websites, [39] with eight young Finnish men. Working with Nuorten Toimintakeskus (the

'Forest 2.0' Clip Kino event by Mikko Lipiäinen and Markus Petz, with invited jury and audience at Ptarmigan, Helsinki, July 2010.

Happi Youth Activity Centre) as a paid freelance youth worker, my objective was to find video cultures that could catalyze new youth media programs and workshops. This proc-ess followed a similar path to the Seeders N Leechers workshop in New York, which an emphasis on mashups, animations, machinima clips, and those related to pirate and copy culture. Two events resulted from these workshops. A screening event called Hapen Hevi-jamit (Happi's Heavy Jam) was initiated by a member of the group, Antti Ranta, who was organizing a live music event at the Centre. [40] In the interludes between young heavy/black metal bands from Helsinki playing on stage, videos were shown in a seating area located quite literally 'on the side' of the event. The second Katalyytti-clips event was a selec-tion of the most popular content found during workshop sessions, and included content

32. About Ptarmigan webpage (2009-), Ptarmigan Art Space, Helsinki, http://ptarmigan.fi/.
33. Jon Irigoyen, 'Cyberpunk' Clip Kino event, Ptarmigan, Helsinki, 19 November, 2009,
     http://clipkino.info/hosts/jon-irigoyen.html.
34. Nina Nordström and Andrew G. Paterson, 'Foraging!' Clip Kino event, Ptarmigan, Helsinki, 17
     March, 2010, http://www.pixelache.ac/helsinki/herbologies-foraging-networks/clip-kino-foraging/.
35. Model Court, 'Model Court presents', Clip Kino event, Ptarmigan, Helsinki, 7 April, 2010,
     http://clipkino.info/hosts/model-court.html.
36. Sari Kivinen, 'Copies of Copies' Clip Kino event, Ptarmigan, Helsinki, 19 May, 2010,
     http://clipkino.info/hosts/sari-kivinen.html.

37. Mikko Lipiäinen and Markus Petz, 'Forest 2.0' Clip Kino event, Ptarmigan, Helsinki, 28 July,
     2010,http://clipkino.info/hosts/forest.html.
38. Refugee Hospitality Club (Punavuori & Kallio) Facebook group, September 2009, http://www.
     facebook.com/group.php?gid=104158903532.
39. 'Katalyytti-clips' wikipages, Nuorten Toimintakeskus Happi wikpages, Helsinki,
     http://happi.nettiareena.fi/wiki/index.php/Luokka:Katalyytti-clips.
40. Petrus Ahola, Atte Collan, Karim Degheidy, Omar Fasolah, Mikko Pänkäläinen, and Antti Ranta,
     'Katalyytti-clips presents.. Hapen Hevijamit' Clip Kino event, Nuorten Toimintakeskus Happi,
     Helsinki, 04 July, 2010, http://clipkino.info/hosts/katalyytti-clips1.html.

that is generically popular with teenagers, such as mashups, absurd humour, flash- and extreme-loops, and 'films-in-5-seconds'. With a huge pizza order, and group of teenagers visiting from the youth centre in Tallinn, Estonia, the second 'Katalyytti-clips' event became a cross-national exchange of appreciation, enthusiasm, and 'one-up-manship' as to the worst music video ever. [41]

The second workshop took place over a one week period, in Helsinki's Kallio neighbourhood-based Refugee Reception centre, which mostly houses men in their twenties while their Finnish asylum or refuge applications are processed. In Helsinki, a loose volunteer network has been facilitated via Facebook. Entitled the 'Refugee Hospitality Club', the network offers occasional activities and goods to residents in the inner-city refugee reception centres. In October 2010, myself and friend Päivi Raivio, who are both members of the 'club' offered a Clip Kino workshop and screening event as a social activity to the residents. We spent time with the residents in the local library, searching for videos for an internal screening event, and for a possible public event for other members following posts on the Refugee Hospitality Club and Clip Kino webpages. We attended the library three times a week with 13 male residents of the centre, from Kurdish Iraq and Iran, Afghanistan, Senegal, Gambia, Somalia, Russia and Kosovo. Some of the men only turned up once, some came for more than one session. Over the sessions, the men shared with us and with each other, a varied selection of videos, including music (traditional, pop, ethnic and global), museum memories and postcard videos from their homelands, funny sketches such as Laurel and Hardy, sleepy-but-fierce 'babushka' and fighting stick men. [42] We had the impression that the group enjoyed the time spent watching and sharing videos, despite the communication limitations, and we managed to share laughs, and appreciation of the choices made.

Throughout 2010, the Clip Kino project was sustained by the multicultural award. It allowed for some remuneration for the time spent by myself and others organizing events, and offered a modest fee for 'guest-host' curators of Clip Kino events, and a small budget per event to print flyers or posters. It supported the extra time necessary to work with groups of people who were not part of my own social or professional networks, and facilitated the presentation of their selections from the audiovisual internet to a public of some sort. Social networking sites including Facebook and Twitter have been used to accumulate a list of people who follow the events. However, although the ubiquitous usage of Facebook for organizing events in Finland is undoubted, its effectiveness for actually bringing people to events is still open to question.

Nevertheless, the continuity of practice has successfully supported the negotiation of new venue options in Helsinki. Sites presenting various presentation and performance events emerging later in the year were bar-club Cafe Mascot, which supports left-field live music,

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41. Petrus Ahola, Atte Collan, Karim Degheidy, Omar Fasolah, Mikko Pänkäläinen and Antti Ranta, 'Katalyytti-clips presents.. Selections, reflections & projections' Clip Kino event, Nuorten Toimintakeskus Happi, Helsinki, 07 July, 2010, http://clipkino.info/hosts/katalyytti-clips2.html.

42. Refugee Hospitality Club, 'Kallio Reception Centre Selections' Clip Kino event, Kallio Library, Helsinki, 13 October, 2010, http://clipkino.info/hosts/refugee-hospitality-club.html.

and second-hand bookshop Arkadia International. In the future, when Clip Kino events are planned it will be possible to offer guest curators a variety of Clip Kino-friendly venues, which have different profiles of attendees, audiences and means of publicity. At the time of writing, there are 'winter buds' emerging in Turku (Åbo), current co-European capital of culture in 2011, where a facilitator-producer other than myself aims to take up the project of organizing a new series of events. As the initiator of an organically developed, open and evolving project, I have been waiting and hoping for such 'forking' to happen.

Clip Kino Guidelines for Organizing Screening Events

Over the years I have been organizing and facilitating Clip Kino events in Finland, the roles, relationships, responsibilities and expectations have evolved, but have also become clearer and more solid over time. To summarize some of the points made so far, there are four key constituents involved in the 'single screening' event process: the host venue; the organizer or facilitator; the guest-host(s) or curator(s) of the screening; and the audience.

The host venue is the physical location of the event. The venue may have the equipment necessary for a screening event, which includes a projector/LCD TV, laptop, adaptors, audio speakers or sound system if necessary, and ideally an internet connection. In addition, the host venue's network for publicity can make a big difference to the outcome of the event, depending on the match between the topic of the screening, and the members of this network.

The Clip Kino organizer, producer or facilitator (a role I have largely taken, even when taking other roles as well) arranges and secures the host venue, and ensures that the necessary equipment to make a screening event is available. Of course, this is achieved in negotiation and cooperation with the host venue. The organizer also manages general communications for Clip Kino publicity, including sharing login details for the website archive and administration or posting rights (for example, to Facebook) where appropriate. The organizer helps the guest-host or curator with skills and techniques for presenting, and raises the issue of the legal 'grey-zone' that exists in relation to common video sharing platforms. Lastly, the organizer may introduce and contextualize the event itself, take responsibility for gathering the list of clips to be screened, and make this available on the relevant Clip Kino archive within a week of the event.

The Clip Kino guest-host(s) or curator(s) of an event is responsible for sourcing 40-60 minutes of video from the internet, based on a theme or subject of their choice. Based on this theme, they then provide text and images to be used in publicity for the event one week in advance of the event taking place. If the event is a workshop, however, this will probably be arranged by the event organizer or facilitator. However, in selecting the clips for screening, the guest-host/curator agrees that if the video clips used are not already online, they will upload them before the event takes place. They should agree not to show materials which are illegal, such as racist images or hardcore pornography, or which violate human or animal rights. Thus far, due to the involvement of the facilitator with the guest-host as the event takes shape, it has not been necessary to make this requirement explicit. On some occasions, however, it has been useful to give advance warning if materials are unsuitable for underage audiences, or if they may shock or disgust audience members. It is worth reminding the

curator to respect the audience, who have turned up without knowing exactly what they are about to see. On the day of the event, the screening list is shared with the organizer so that it can be archived and published after the event has taken place.

Lastly, but no less importantly, is the Clip Kino audience. Because of variable guest-host/ curator(s) of the screening event, the audience will be different at each event. Sometimes, the audience will vary greatly, according to the theme, the guest-curator, the venue, the person's social network, the level of publicity for the event, and even the season and the weather. It is vital to keep in mind that the audience is attending the event for reasons that may in part be unknown, but usually also on the basis of trust, interest, enthusiasm, friendship, good will, open-mindedness, and curiosity.

Private Viewing in Public: the Example of Upload Cinema
Upload Cinema [43] is a project that is similar to Clip Kino in some ways, but different enough to offer a useful counterpoint to the narrative just outlined. I believe Upload Cinema indicates not only the popularity and potential success of online videos presented offline, but also clarifies the value of Clip Kino, despite the small scale it has maintained over the last couple of years. Upload Cinema is a social cinema platform which began in Amsterdam in October 2008, and has now spread to other locations, in The Netherlands especially. Initially, the project was developed by Barbara De Wijn and Dagan Cohen as a future use for the oldest film theatre in The Netherlands, De Uitkijk. The project is sponsored by the advertising agency Lowe/Draftfcb, and takes the bold step of using a real cinema as a venue. De Wijn and Cohen created a members-only viewing club, 'Upload Cinema', for screenings of online content, from YouTube in particular. 'Upload Cinema' has been a candidate for many different web and creative industry competitions. As noted in the 'background' webpage for their Webby Awards entry, their case is based on the shifting media environment and regeneration of 'old' forms: in The Netherlands, small cinemas have shrinking audiences, even while interest in film and film-making is increasing, not only in terms of distribution, but in terms of production and consumption. [44] There is a new theme each month at Upload Cinema, to which 'the audience can submit films; an editorial team selects the best and compiles a ninety minutes program, which is screened at movie theatres and special venues'. [45] Thus, the organizers benefit from selections made by an extended online audience. In other words, they use that which social media journalist Jeff Howe has termed 'crowdsourcing': 'the act of taking a job traditionally performed by a designated agent (usually an employee) and outsourcing it to an undefined, generally large group of people in the form of an open call'. [46] They are connecting their member's actions – browsing and watching clips online – with visiting their own website, and pasting in nominations for videos.

What I believe is common to Clip Kino and Upload Cinema is the motivation to drag the normalized 'private' activity of viewing and sharing downloaded content on one's own computer (at least in Western nations) into public space. Both turn private use of media into public use, and have the potential to increase debate and appreciation about that content. I have consistently framed the aim and activities undertaken by Clip Kino as pedagogical, in terms of 'media environment-awareness' or 'direct action media literacy'. I continue to use this approach as a format in my own teaching, and highlight this as a link at the top of the project's front webpage. [47] In my opinion, the face-to-face meetings of people plus screen have been an important and valuable feature of Clip Kino events. Despite minimal funding and low participation or attendance to events, it is the exploration of this factor of *presence* that has motivated to continue over the years; both in relation to online media, and in the encounter with another person's choices in relation to media.

On the internet, anonymous exchange and communications have pushed us in many fantastic trans-local directions, and released hyper-fast torrents of value, opinion and support through chat and discussion forums. Sadly, however, many abusive 'reply-comments' have also been shared. In contrast, the Clip Kino project aims to provide a social event platform for respectful sharing through on-site corporeal presence.

To conclude, Clip Kino constitutes a small, temporary offline space for encounters around what others (you, we) watch online. For myself, the experience of organizing or facilitating Clip Kino events for the last three years have kept me interested and 'contemporary' in relation to online media and its issues, as well as allowing me the pleasure getting to know many different individuals and groups in an offline context.

Clip Kino:
http://clipkino.info

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43. Upload Cinema (2008-), Amsterdam, Den Haag, Rotterdam, http://www.uploadcinema.nl.
44. Upload Cinema Webby Awards entry, background text (2009), http://www.entry-site.nl/ webbyawards/uploadcinema/background.html.
45. About webpage, Upload Cinema (2008-), http://www.uploadcinema.net/about.php.
46. Jeff Howe, *Crowdsourcing: Why the Power of the crowd is Driving the Future of Business*, New York: Crown Business, 2008. Original blog with similar name since 2006: http://crowdsourcing. typepad.com/.

47. Andrew G. Paterson, *Clip Kino Pegagogical Statement* webpage (2008), Helsinki, http://clipkino. info/pedagogical-statement.html.

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BETWEEN IPHONE AND YOUTUBE: MOVIES ON THE MOVE?

JAN SIMONS

Digital Movies: On- and Offline Venues

Through a fortunate coincidence – or was it really a coincidence? – the advent of 3G cell phones equipped with photo and video cameras occurred almost simultaneously with the rise of YouTube, one of the icons of Web 2.0. In 2004, two thirds of all mobile phones shipped worldwide were camera phones; YouTube was officially launched in the U.S. in November 2005, with local versions launched in Europe, Latin America and Asia in 2007. These two developments could not but meet, as the camera phone made every owner a potential film-maker, and YouTube provided a free platform to publish, distribute and exhibit self-made movies. The rest, one is tempted to say, is history. But is it?

On the one hand it is: in 2006 YouTube announced that more than 65,000 videos were up-loaded every day, and that it received about 100 million views per day. In 2010, YouTube is the largest online video provider in the U.S., with a market share of 43% and more than two billion views per day. It is the third most visited website on the internet behind Google and Facebook, with 70% of its traffic coming from outside the U.S. and hundreds of millions of videos viewed on mobile devices every month.[1] Of course, not all content on YouTube is produced by amateur film-makers and quite a lot comes from professional and commercial film companies and television broadcasters, much of which is copyrighted material uploaded 'illegally'. Although figures are hard to come by, DIY movies, many of which are made with cameras built-in to mobile devices or computers, seem to constitute the bulk of YouTube's supply.

On the other hand, the mobile phone movie has certainly found its way to other venues, such as a fast-growing festival circuit dedicated to cell phone movies, variously termed 'pocket movies', 'cellular movies', 'pocket cinema', 'Ciné Pocket', 'Movil Film', 'Mobi Fest', 'Shorts', to name a few. Just a few years after what was allegedly the first mobile phone movie festival, in Atlanta in 2004, almost every major city around the globe had its own mobile phone movie festival. In addition, many established film festivals, including the Sundance Film Festival, the San Francisco International Film Festival, the Tribeca Film Festival, the Edinburgh International Film Festival, the Rotterdam International Film Festival and even the Festival de Cannes opened sections dedicated to this 'new kid on the block'.[2]

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1. 'conScore Releases May 2010 U.S. Online Video Rankings', http://www.conscore.com/Press_
    Events/2010/6/comScore_Releases_May_2010_U.S._Online_Video-Rankings;
    Mark Metekohy, 'YouTube Statistics', on Viralblog, May 17th, 2010,
    http://www.viralblog.com/research/youtube-statistics;
    and, http://website-monitoring.com/blog/2010/05/17/youtube-facts-and-figures-history-statistics/.
2. Daniel Terdiman. 'A Celebration of Cell-Phone Film', *Wired* 30 August, 2004,
    http://www.wired.com/culture/lifestyle/news/2004/08/64698;
    see also http://mobifest.net/festivals/ or http://mobilizedtv.com/mobile-film-festivals.

Predictably, both local and international versions of these events were launched, spon-sored and promoted by cell phone manufacturers such as Nokia, the uncontested market leader in the 3G cell phone era prior to smartphones, with Samsung, Vodafone and others desperately seeking content for their hardware and services. Accordingly, these festivals opened their entries up to actual and potential DIY film-makers among the owners of 3G cell phones, as well as to 'directors, other professionals, students and spectators', in order for them 'to anticipate, explore and question this new field of creation', as the first edition of the Paris Festival Pocket Films in 2005 put it. [3] This formula is revealing in and of itself: the mobile film was an invention 'before the fact'. These terms and the events created around them did not refer to a newly emerging phenomenon that needed to be identified and labeled, but functioned to fill a void created by what was at that point, a new technology.

This rapidly emerging – and now gradually dissolving – festival circuit fulfilled two purposes, other than providing content for mobile phone manufacturers and telecom providers. First of all, it prevented the relatively conservative film culture from missing out on possible fu-ture developments opened by new technologies, some ten years after the changes brought about in independent film-making by the advent of relatively cheap and portable digital video cameras. In other words, it was hoped that the mobile phone camera could meet its own Lars von Trier. Indeed, in 2005 the South African film-maker Aryan Kaganof produced *SMS Sugar Man*, allegedly the first feature length movie entirely shot with mobile phone cameras. [4] Second, by opening cinema screens to entries by anyone who felt the desire to make their mobile phone movies public, the mobile phone festival circuit might allow the relatively closed milieu of film-makers and producers to follow the flow of an upcoming participatory culture, and create something like a 'Dogma 2.0'. [5]

However, with these two functions came a double agenda. The rise of the mobile phone film festival circuit can also be considered an attempt to incorporate new technologies and a select company of talented and innovative film-makers into the already existing structures and operations of cinema. The major strategic function of the mobile phone film festival circuit may very well have been to adapt the 'cinematographic field' to new technologies, players, and practices, and at the same time to seal it off against the 'cult of the amateur' that lead to the prominence of YouTube. [6] From a systems theoretical point of view, the

burgeoning of a mobile phone film festival can be seen as part of an adaptive strategy in which the 'institution of cinema' had specialized over more than a century: preservation through innovation. A response to YouTube, indeed. If this is true, one might ask whether the gradual dissolution of the mobile phone film festival circuit in the last couple of years is a symptom of the success of this strategy, or of its failure. Was the mobile film festival cir-cuit the avant-garde of a 21st century film culture, or the rearguard of a new digital media culture? Or, to rephrase the question in yet another way, do mobile phone films belong to cinematic or to digital culture?

Pocket Films: Movies at your Fingertips
In a modernist way of thinking, champions of mobile phone films expected that new tech-nologies would bring new modes of film-making and new, cinematic forms, formats, styles and stories. Mobile phone film festivals would provide professional, as well as prospective and wannabe film-makers, with a playground upon which to experiment with new tools, and to explore their affordances as well as their limitations. Since the mobile phone film was not an already existing type or genre of film, but rather an idea conjured up by the ar-rival and rapid distribution of the 3G cell phone, the first question to answer was: what is a mobile phone film? The answer turned out to be far from simple.

A glance at the 'Call for Entries' of some of the major mobile phone movie festivals reveals the confusion around the definition of mobile phone movies. The German *Mobile Film Festival* and the French *Festival Pocket Film* state that 'pocket films' or 'mobile films' are movies shot with mobile phone cameras ('films tournés avec téléphone mobile' and 'Filme … die mit einem Mobiltelefon gedreht wurden'), whereas the Toronto festival *Mobifest* de-fines mobile movies as 'made-for-mobile movies'. [7] Films made with mobile phone cameras are not necessarily made 'for' display on a mobile phone, even if this 'new tool' is, as the Paris Pocket Film Festival states in the announcement of its first edition in 2005, the first device 'that is camera, projector, and broadcast screen (*écran à diffusion*) at the same time'. [8] The same festival nevertheless presents a section 'Films pour Grand écran' (Films for the Big Screen' and 'Films pour écran de poche' (Films for the Pocket Screen), while the Canadian Mobifest has a category of 'Animation' next to a category 'Shot on Mobile'. These categorizations suggest that not all mobile phone movies are shot on mobile phones, and that not all mobile phone films are shot for the 'pocket screen' of the mobile phone. As French film theorist Roger Odin writes in an essay about the 'pocket film spectator', films shot with mobile phones are cinematic films, ('Les films tournés avec téléphone mobile sont des films de cinéma'), since they were conceived for the big screen. [9]

3.   'Cinema at your fingertips', Festival Pocket Films Paris, 2005 edition,
     http://www.festivalpocketfilms.fr/english/archives-98/article/2005-edition.
4.   Other titles also lay claim to the honorary title of 'first feature length mobile phone movie', such
     as Dutch film-maker Cyrus Frisch's movie *Why Didn't Anybody Tell Me It Would Become This
     Bad in Afghanistan* (2007). The first major movie to be distributed exclusively through mobile
     phones is (claimed to be) *Rage*, directed by Sally Potter and released in 2009. The confusion is
     probably due to the temporal gap between the shooting of *SMS Sugar Man* in December 2005,
     and its release in 2008.
5.   There is indeed a short-lived Dogma Mobile International Film Festival. On Dogma and Lars
     von Trier, see Jan Simons, *Playing The Waves: Lars von Trier's Game Cinema*, Amsterdam:
     Amsterdam University Press, 2007.
6.   Andrew Keen, *The Cult of the Amateur: How Today's Internet Is Killing Our Culture*. New York:
     Doubleday, 2007.

7.   *Mobile Film Festival*: http://de.mobilefilmfestival.com/teilnahmebedingungen.php; *Festival Pocket
     Film*: www.festivalpocketfilms.fr/rubrique.php3?id_rubrique=4&var_mode=recalcul; *Mobifest*:
     http://www.mobifest.net/home/.
8.   http://www.festivalpocketfilms.fr/archives/edition-2005/.
9.   Roger Odin, 'Le "Pocket Film Spectateur"', *Festival Pocket Films*, 2009, http://www.
     festivalpocketfilms.fr/communaute-42/reflexions/article/le-pocket-film-spectateur-par.

To complicate matters, although it is possible to shoot, show and distribute movies with a mobile phone – mobile phones allow users to upload movies and photos directly to YouTube, Flickr, or social networking sites like Facebook and MySpace – between shooting and showing, there is usually a stage of post-production and editing, for which mobile phones are not very well equipped. The German *Mobifest* allows mobile movies to be edited 'either on or outside of the mobile phone' ('Die Filme können innerhalb oder außerhalb der Telephone geschnitten werden') and the Brussels festival *Ciné Pocket* strongly recommends its prospective submitters edit their movies, which must be shot using a mobile phone, on their computers ('Mais il reste souhaitable de copier et de monter le film sur ton pc'). [10] Editing, however, means a lot more than the selection and arrangement of shots, and usually comprises the addition of sound, titles, color adjustments, filters, virtual camera movements, split screens, double exposures, and – since the computer is agnostic about the origins of the data it processes – the creation of special effects and computer generated images. In this case, what does the phrase 'made' or 'shot with a mobile phone camera' actually mean? Many of the entries of each of the mobile phone festivals are, as one of the aforementioned categories of the Toronto *Mobifest* made clear, animations that were entirely created on computers, not shot using a camera at all.

If production and post-production techniques do not provide a very strong basis for distinguishing mobile phone movies from other types of film, perhaps the mobile phone movie should describe 'movies made for the mobile phone'. The term 'pocket cinema' seems to point in this direction, evoking the portability, mobility, and easy digestibility of the 'pocket book', which we currently refer to as the paperback. Of course, any book can be published in hard cover as well as in pocket book format, and many classical texts have been published as cheap pocket book editions for a wide popular readership. But since the pocket book was designed to be carried around and read in circumstances that did not particularly favour a long and concentrated read, such as commuting, pocket books encouraged the emergence of easily digestible, highly formulaic and forgettable literary genres such as the detective novel, the thriller, and adventure, horror and romantic love stories. Although none of these genres is exclusively published in paperback format, these genres represent the prototypical content of the paperback, as is evident in any airport bookshop. The prominence of these genres in the pocket book department, however, has more to do with pragmatic considerations of literature most suitable for reading in particular circumstances than with the materials and technologies used for their production.

Could the same be said about 'pocket movies'? In principle, any movie could be displayed on a mobile phone screen, or any other portable device. Apple's (American) iTunes Store, for instance, offers movies, television shows, music videos and computer games for downloading and playback on iPhones, iPods and iPads, implicitly demonstrating that 'mobile movies' are no longer and actually never have been restricted to cell phones, although only the latter combine the functions of recording and screening movies. Nevertheless, nobody has ever called these downloadable objects 'mobile movies' or 'pocket movies', even when they are offered in a special iPhone or iPad format. Most of these films, television shows and music videos were produced for a theatrical release or for screening on a television set or home cinema technology with large, high-resolution screens, which will soon be able to compete with the quality of a cinema screen. As with the pocket book, for reasons that are partly technological but mainly pragmatic, these audiovisual objects, though in principle playable on mobile devices, do not qualify as pocket movies.

Although mobile devices are usually marketed and considered high-tech appliances, their image quality still lags behind the quality of cinema, television, and even computer screens. Not only is the size of mobile phone screens much smaller, they have a relatively low resolution, slow frame rate, and a limited color range compared to LCD and plasma TV screens, or the 'silver screen' of the cinema. Moreover, mobile phones and other portable devices are usually used to watch movies 'on the go', in circumstances quite similar to those in which people read pocket books: when waiting for a plane, a train, or a bus, during a journey, in the holidays, at a beach. That is, they are viewed mostly in situations that are not very suitable for total immersion into the fictional world of a feature film, or the extended argument of a documentary movie, because they are filled with competing sensations, such as distracting events, other people, tasks and duties that require attention, and poor lighting conditions, such as reflecting sun beams.

It is tempting to transform these technological and pragmatic limitations into medium specific aesthetics, which would specify the distinctive features of the mobile phone movie. In the early stages of the mobile phone movie, typically modernist attempts were made to identify these qualities. For example, Australian new media consultant and producer Juliana Pierce christened the mobile phone display 'the fourth screen', suggesting that movies had found yet another window next to the cinema screen, the television and video screen, and the computer screen. Pierce also observed that 'Wide shots, pans, surround sound, mood lighting and anything with too much detail is almost no go for mobile movies'. [11] According to German critic Reinhard W. Wolf, the small size of the mobile phone display makes the use of close-ups almost mandatory, while the low frame rate is prohibitive for fast editing and fast movements of both characters and camera, and the limited colour range imposes the requirement of working with large and brightly colored surfaces. [12] Moreover, since the sound capacities of mobile phones are also modest compared to the high fidelity equipment of today's movie theatres and home cinemas, and given the often noisy environments in which mobile phones movies are viewed, pocket movies should not rely on dialogue or intricate sound effects either. Given the circumstances in which mobile phone movies are most likely to be watched, and the technological constraints such as the limited storage capacity of most mobile devices and bandwidth of wireless internet connections (if available at all), it is not surprising that early critics recommended mobile phone movies be short and have a

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10. http://cinepocket.lescorsaires.be/spip.php?article40.

11. Juliana Pierce, 'Feature: The Fourth Screen', *Off The Air: Screenrights' Newsletter*, August 2005, http://www.screen.org/pdfs/about/offtheair/2005/ota0805.pdf.

12. Reinhard W. Wolf, 'Micromovies – Kurzfilme für die Westentasche, Teil 1', *Shortfilm.de Das Kurzfilmmagazin,* January 2, 2006, http://www.shortfilm.de/index.php?id=414&L=0&0=.

simple storyline with a clear, preferably surprising closure. As Australian film-maker Joe Miale pointed out, micro-movies should be 'caricature based' rather than character based. [13]

According to these recommendations, Isabella Rossellini's mini-series *Green Porno* [14] fits the bill for the perfect pocket movie. The two series consist of eight very short movies, each of them featuring Rossellini in the male part of a couple of insects, and explaining and executing the sexual act of that species. Rossellini wears simple, brightly coloured costumes, and performs in similarly simple and brightly coloured sets, so that the images are reminiscent of children's drawings, and appear to be a mixture of live action and animation. Each film ends with the fulfillment of the sexual act and its sometimes lethal consequences – a clear, sometimes funny, but always surprising form of closure. With this playful dialectics between childish representation and adult content, ecological education and pornographic curiosity, *Green Porno* allegorizes the tension between the new but technologically immature 'fourth screen' of mobile devices and its adult counterparts, cinema and television.

Although produced with the 'fourth screen' of mobile devices in mind, the *Green Porno* series exemplifies the ambiguous status of the pocket movie. It was not shot with mobile phone cameras, but in a professional film studio with professional film equipment. Neither was it made for exclusive distribution for mobile devices. The series garnered its fame in the independent film festival circuit, and is available only in streaming format from the *Sundance Film Festival* website and, as is to be expected today, on YouTube. [15] Rossellini herself is the offspring of the Italian neo-realist film-maker Roberto Rossellini and the Swedish movie actress Ingrid Bergmann, and became famous through her roles in films such as David Lynch's *Blue Velvet* and *Wild At Heart* and Dutch film-maker Jeroen Krabbé's *Left Luggage*. Thus, her *Green Porno* series was treated as an offspring of the cinema-as-we-knew-it rather than the harbinger of something new, [16] as are most micro-movies or pocket films. Or, to remain in *Green Porno*'s own terms, as a reproductive rather than procreative form.

Critics and producers such as Pierce, Wolf, and Miale might take the constraints of the mobile phone as the basis of a distinctive mobile phone movie aesthetics, yet this aesthetics is itself a relatively small subset of the stylistic and formal repertoire derived from the venerable traditions of classical Hollywood and European art cinema. [17] The mobile phone movie merely 'remediates' the familiar forms and formats of preexisting 'old media' of cinema and

13. Quoted in Terdiman, 'A Celebration of Cell-Phone Film'. For similar 'basics' of mobile phone film-making see Neil Curry, 'Film-maker Shares Secrets of Great Mobile Phone Movies', CNN, March 20, 2009, http://articles.cnnn.com/2009-03-20/entertainment/mobilemovies.toptips_1_mobile-phone-video-quality-regular-camera?-s=PM:SHOWBIZ.
14. *Green Porno,* Isabella Rossellini, Jody Shapiro and Rick Gilbert (Producers), U.S., 2008, downloadable at: http://www.sundancechannel.com/greenporno/.
15. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mkm3CCX1_xk.
16. *Blue Velvet* (dir. David Lynch, 1986); *Wild At Heart* (dir. David Lynch, 1990); *Left Luggage* (dir. Jeroen Krabbé, 1998).
17. For a more recent version of this argument, see Benoît Labourdette, *Tournez Un Film Avec Votre Téléphone Portable,*Editions Dixit, 2008.

television. [18] Film theorist Roger Odin highlights the remediating function of mobile phone films in general, and mobile phone film festivals in particular. For Odin, the mobile phone film remediates the loss of the indexical bound of the cinematic image to the real by heightening the viewer's awareness of the materials, techniques and procedures used in digital film production. In his view, the mobile phone movie is to contemporary mainstream cinema what avant-garde and experimental film was to the mainstream cinema of old. [19] The mobile phone movie's main function is to remind the spectators of contemporary digital cinema of Godard's famous dictum from the sixties of the previous century: 'Ce n'est pas une image juste; c'est juste une image'.

Although these attempts to formulate a mobile phone movie aesthetics tend to specify it in terms of the limitations of these movies' intended window of display, or its hoped for effect on the spectator rather than in terms of the mode of production, they cover a small portion of the whole spectrum of actual practices and virtual possibilities involved. On the one hand, these approaches fall victim to the superficial similarities between recording or watching movies on mobile devices and domestic or cinema screens. On the other hand, they cleave to the modernist idea that media technologies generate their own specific aesthetic properties and requirements. When approached from the perspective of digital media, mobile phone movies start to look quite different.

Moving Images: Images on the Move.
After Pierce's formulation of the fourth screen, critic Alex Munt has categorized the mobile phone display together with the computer screen as 'S' (for 'small') next to the 'M' (medium-sized) wide-screen television, the L (large) 2D theatrical cinema screen, and the XL (extra large) sized 3D cinema screens, as in Imax cinemas. [20] Yet another critic, Ted Brown, has classified the mobile phone display as a '"third" digital screen' that comes after the first, analogue, cinema screen, and the second, electronic, television screen. [21] Whether these forms of categorization take size or technology as the criterion for classification, they function first of all to demonstrate how futile, volatile and transient any divisions have become since screens began to leave their dedicated niches in cinema theatres and living rooms. At this point, screens have become so ubiquitous that any categorization that takes the cinema screen as its starting point looks like a hopelessly old-fashioned attempt to preserve the cinema's privileged status.

It is the omissions from these categorizations that are more telling: 'urban screens', the huge dynamic billboards that increasingly adorn the streets, squares, and public spaces in urban environments; 'skinned walls', or buildings with video walls; wide-screen televisions in public

18. The term 'remediation' is taken from, Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media,* Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1999.
19. Odin, 'Le "Pocket Film Spectateur"'.
20. Alex Munt, 'S, M, X, XL: The Question of Scale in Screen Media', *Flowtv* 6.8, http://flowtv.org/?p=809#.
21. Tod Brown, 'Isabella Rossellini Does Bug Porn', *Twitch,* January 1, 2008, http://twitchfilm.net/site/view/isabella-rossellini-does-bug-porn/.

spaces or public transport to transmit information, advertisements or entertainment; video walls used at rock concerts or sports events; the small screens of navigation systems; DVD players and game consoles in cars and boats to keep the kids quiet, or the guests busy. Times Square and Piccadilly Circus are no longer the only places 'augmented' with audiovisual information. In the rare cases in which there are no screens in one's immediate environment, one still has a mobile phone, iPod or iPad to turn to.

The reason for the selective blindness of the aforementioned categorizations is quite obvious: their primary criterion for selection was not size or technology, but content. The categories only cover screens that are used – or are described as being used – for the screening of movies, whether these are feature films or micro-movies. This categorization fails to do justice the contemporary variety of screens and content, and demonstrates how narrow one's view may become if new media are approached from the perspective of already existing media – media about to be 'remediated'. We have seen the proliferation of screens in homes, offices, shopping malls, stadiums, museums, bars, waiting rooms, airports, train stations, coaches, planes and trains. Screens come in all sizes and forms, and in private as well as public spaces. As the moving image itself leaves its dedicated habitats – the cinemas and living rooms – these become display windows, among many others. With this migration, the moving image acquires new forms and functions. Feature films and television shows become special cases of the ubiquitous and multi-functional moving image that has become the icon of today's 'visual culture'.

Ironically, outside the cinema or the living room, the moving image is often subject to technological, practical and pragmatic constraints quite similar to those identified for pocket films by early critics Pierce, Miale, and Wolf. Images displayed on mega screens, such as image skins and urban screens, often suffer from difficult to control lighting conditions, noise from their immediate environments, and competition from events, incidents, traffic, and other screens, all of which vie for the attention of the passersby. Relatively low resolution, low frame rates and poor lighting conditions make detailed images, panoramic landscapes, the use of subtle colours, fast camera movements and fast editing as much a 'no-go' as they were said to be for mobile phone movies. In addition, the images on these huge screens often come without sound, both because it would drown in the surrounding noise, and add to the often already loud noise in urban environments.

Moreover, the attention span of the urban passerby is perhaps even shorter than that of the mobile phone user. The city dweller tends to be 'on the move', and has to divide their attention over a multitude of sensorial, social, and commercial impressions at once: in a cognitive and perceptual sense, the urban passerby is permanently 'multi-tasking'. For quite similar reasons to mobile phones, then, the content displayed on such screens had better be short, bright, and instantly intelligible, and animations, commercials, and very short movies suit the conditions of mega-screens best. Thus, the constraints identified for mobile phone movies are not specifically bound to the technology or the size of the display, but rather to the practical conditions in which moving images are viewed. As a consequence, genres that used to lead a very marginal existence at best in cinema and television as we knew them have gained prominence on both mega and micro-screens. Animations, music videos, shorts, and commercials have become mainstream.

The multitude of screens that populate the world are no longer exclusively dedicated to movies, as they were when located in cinema theatres. Mobile phone and computer screens are mostly used for reading or typing SMS messages or emails, taking written or photographic notes, browsing the internet, playing games, making calculations, consulting maps, or searching for addresses or telephone numbers. Now, both mega screens and the micro-sized screens of mobile phones and portable devices are – as are those of desktop and laptop computers – used to display text messages, graphics, animations, photographs, maps, drawings, news reports, advertisements, entertaining distractions, traffic information, crowd control instructions at huge public events, live reports of sports matches or political rallies – along with art works, 'pocket movies', and other DIY products made and uploaded by whoever feels like sharing their talents with a larger audience. [22]

Of course, this ecumenical cohabitation of diverse content has been made possible by the digitization of most media. Because all these media share the same digital language of ones and zeros, they do not only co-exist, but begin entering into all sorts of new configurations, happily mixing and exchanging properties, procedures, forms and formats that used to be considered specific particular media. Digital technologies have turned computers into that which Lev Manovich has called a 'meta-medium' that not only combines 'cinematography, animation, computer animation, special effects, graphic design, and typography', but also make formerly 'autonomous' media exchange and remix 'fundamental techniques, working methods, and ways of representation and expression'. [23] Since the arrival of the Graphical User Interface (GUI), for instance, procedures that were formerly typically cinematographic, such as zooming and panning, were transferred to almost all applications. The representation of content in windows on computer screens allows users to scroll up- and downward, pan from left to right, and zoom in and out of particular details. In a sense, one could say that all media have become 'moving images'.

Cinema itself has been deeply transformed by this process of hybridization. It has become difficult to tell a frame's live action from its animated parts, sharp cuts between shots have been substituted with undetectable transitions between frames, and the art of editing is no longer to select and arrange shots into scenes and sequences, but to de-compose and re-compose, analyse and synthesize pixels and layers into dynamic images, of which every part can be changed separately and constantly, without regard for temporal boundaries. Since the beginning of film history, the shot or still photograph has been considered the basic unit of the cinematographic language – yet it no longer plays a significant role in digital image processing. A film semiotician would be hard pressed to apply Christian Metz's famous 'Grande Syntagmatique' – a taxonomy of film segments that are identified by clear temporal

22. See Jeroen Beekmans, 'Turing Times Square Into Art Square', *The Pop-Up City*, 21 December, 2009, http://popupcity.net/2009/12/turning-times-square-into-art-square/; Mirjam Struppek, 'Urban Screens – The Urbane Potential of Public Screens for Interaction', *Intelligent Agent* 6. 2: 'Interactive City', http://www.intelligentagent.com/archive/vol6_No2_interactive_city_struppek.htm.
23. Lev Manovich, 'Understanding Hybrid Media', 2007, http://www.manovich.net.

and spatial discontinuities – to today's movies. [24] Shots, sequences, and habitual ways of editing have not completely disappeared; the majority of contemporary Hollywood movies still use these methods. Yet, this way of editing has just become one option, a 'mode of narration' amongst many others.

So-called 'PowerPoint Movies' are examples of 'meta-movies' that draw on a mix of traditional and novel modes of narration. The most famous example is probably Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth*, [25] which includes graphs, maps, statistical information, photographs, drawings and movie images; Michael Welsh's educational YouTube movies *The Machine is Us/Ing Us* and *An Anthropological Introduction to YouTube* are also good examples. [26] Not surprisingly, PowerPoint movies can be found among mobile phone film festivals as well, such as David Bakker's *A Short History of Nearly Everything*, which summarizes the 624 pages of Bill Bryson's book in just four minutes, and was entered into the 2008 edition of the Groningen festival *Viva La Focus*. On a different note, the cell phone movie *Objets à Usages Multiples* is shot and edited in a rather conventional way, but satirizes the current convergence of media by showing everyday utensils being used for different purposes than those for which they had been designed. Of course, so is the 'smart' mobile phone itself, nowadays. [27]

Among many others, another example of 'remix' mobile phone movies is Henry Reichold's *Free Run*, submitted to the Paris *Festival Pocket Films* in 2007. [28] After opening with a documentary shot of a mass of passengers of the London subway leaving the elevator and walking towards the camera, we see a collage of moving and still images, films, photographs, animations, drawings and postcards of London landmarks and traffic, through which the protagonist navigates on a skateboard. This film cleverly summarizes the history of cinema: from the opening shot, which is an obvious allusion to the Lumière brothers' film *Sortie des Usines Lumière*, which itself epitomizes the industrial era, to the remix mode of the movie itself, and the highly individualized, idiosyncratic and subjective ways of locomotion of the skateboarder, which symbolize the post-industrial and postmodern era, and its digital information and communication technologies is represented by. *Free Run* demonstrates that nowadays, moving images are made equally with computers as with cameras, if not more so. Moreover, although submitted to a mobile phone film festival, *Free Run* certainly has not been made with a mobile phone, nor is there any reason to assume that it should be exclusively displayed on mobile phones. Rather, *Free Run* offers a 'pocket history' of the cinema.

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24. Christian Metz, *Essais Sur La Signification au Cinéma,* Tome 1, Paris: Klincksieck, 1983.
25. *An Inconvenient Truth* (dir. Davis Guggenheim, 2006).
26. Michael Welsh, *The Machine Is Us/Ing Us,* 2007, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6gmP4nk0EOE, *An Anthropological Introduction To YouTube,* 2008, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TPAO-IZ4_hU&feature=channel, David Bakker, *A Short History of Nearly Everything*, 2008, http://www.vivalafocus.nl/archief/2008/films/a-short-history-of-nearly-everything-3gp.
27. *Objets à Usages Multiples (Multi Purpose Objects)* (dir. Delphine Marceau, 2008). http://www.festivalpocketfilms.fr/films/article/objets-a-usages-multiples.
28. http://www.festivalpocketfilms.fr/films/article/free-run.

PowerPoint movies do, however, exemplify the transition to 'cinema outside the cinema' in another sense. Outside the walls of the cinema auditorium, the main function of (mixed) moving images is no longer to tell stories, to present characters with which an audience can identify, or to represent a world of events, adventure and romance in which an audience can be immersed. On the contrary, outside the cinema theatre, moving images are used to inform, to entertain, to seduce, to impress, to persuade or to shock. That is, their main task is communication rather than representation. Moving images have become part and parcel of an urban and architectural environment in which the 'lessons of Las Vegas' – where the design of a building serves to communicate rather than to reveal the building's structure and function, as the principles of modernist architecture would have it – have become general wisdom and where communication presides over representation. [29] And since the urban and everyday environment is full of stimuli that compete for our attention, communication on screens outside theatres or living rooms had better be bold rather than subtle: Eisenstein's approach of film editing as a 'slap in the face' for the spectator is more pertinent to contemporary visual culture than Bazin's concept of the film image as a reflective redemption of the real. And because the first thing an image has to communicate is that it is there in the first place, the medium has in a very literal sense become the message.

Research into *keitai*, that is, 3G phone use in Japan and South-East Asian countries such as South Korea, has shown that users send photographs or videos to peers, family members or colleagues to ask for advice on the choice of clothes, instructions for a task at hand, to bring an interesting event or amusing anecdote to their attention, or to simply let them know that they are thinking of them. In many of these cases, the particular content of these messages is less important than or even peripheral to, the actual intention the message is meant to express: communication presides over representation. [30] Again, this has less to do with the particular medium or technologies that are being used to produce and distribute them, but rather with the pragmatic and practical circumstances under which these images circulate and communicate.

iPhone and YouTube
Where does this leave the mobile phone movie, in terms of cinematographic type or genres of film? First of all, it seems quite obvious that the mobile phone movie partakes in a more general process of 'remediation' that is not restricted to cinema, but extends to media in general. The moving image has become one of the raw ingredients of the digital meta-medium: not only can it be mixed and mingled with all other media, but its production, storage, distribution, and exhibition are no longer tied to specific channels and windows. That is, mobile phone movies are certainly not movies produced with mobile phone cameras: the majority of entries of mobile phone movie festivals contain computer generated animations, special effects, and collages of non-cinematic pictures, graphics, texts, and typography. Nor are mobile phone movies especially suitable for display on mobile phones alone. Since the mo-

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29. Roberto Venturi, Denise Scott Brown and Steven Izenour. *Learning From Las Vegas: The Forgotten Symbolism of Architectural Form,* Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2001.
30. Mizuko Ito, Daisuke Okabe & Misa Matsuda (eds) *Personal, Portable, Pedestrian: Mobile Phones in Japanese Life,* Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2005.

bile phone display shares technological and pragmatic constraints with other non-cinematic screens, they circulate just as easily among urban screens, image skins, monitors in public transport, portable devices, and screens in public places and shopping malls. One reason for the gradual dissolution of the mobile phone movie film festival circuit may very well be the dissolution of the mobile phone movie into a more general digital media culture.

One aspect of the mobile phone film festival circuit that has received very little comment is the 'sociological' basis of its participants. Not only are the organizers and jury members of most of these festivals members of the professional media culture – be they film-makers or producers themselves, film critics, or curators of film museums – but the formats, modes of presentation and qualities of most of the entries into the festivals betray a more than amateur involvement in film-making. Although the professional backgrounds of the entrants are hardly ever mentioned, the video's titles, framing, editing, sound effects, and production values suggest that the competitors have had professional training, and experience in handling scripts, actors, staging, film equipment and editing software. In this sense, it is revealing to compare the entries into mobile phone festivals such as the Brussels *Cinépocket* or the Paris *Festival Pocket Films*, with the Groningen festival *Viva La Focus*, which recruits its submitters from the region of Groningen. Whereas the former festivals host movies of quite professional quality, the latter hosts movies of DIY makers, mostly high school students and other youths from the Groningen region. The relation of the former to the latter is that of Vimeo to YouTube: festivals moderated by professional gatekeepers versus an open platform, with no professional standards to filter its entries. It is probably not coincidental that mobile phone movies submitted to mobile phone film festivals can usually not be found on YouTube.

Insofar as the primary function of mobile phone film festivals appears to be to incorporate a new mode of film-making into that of traditional cinema, the festivals seem to be fighting a lost rear-guard battle. The mobile phone movie is part of a digital mediascape, rather than an expansion of, or appendix to, cinema. Odin's observation, recall, was that the 'pocket film spectator' is a reflective spectator who comes to contemporary mainstream cinema with questions in mind about the means and technologies of production. This means that the mobile phone movie and the mobile phone movie festival circuit is a playground, or training ground, in which prospective film-makers and film spectators can prepare themselves for the 'free run' into the future of digital meta-media. In that sense, the mobile phone festival circuit can be seen as an opening to the future, and its gradual demise a sign of its success.

On the other hand, the mobile phone film festival circuit can – and probably must – be seen as an attempt to draw a boundary between the professionals of the moving image making business and the rising tide of DIY film-making culture epitomized by YouTube. The message these festivals intend to broadcast is that, although economically and theoretically the practice of film-making has become within anybody's reach, it takes more than a mobile camera and cheap and user-friendly software to make interesting movies. In this sense, in spite of their open invitations to submit movies, these festivals are attempts to close off the ranks of the professionals to the DIY amateurs knocking at their door. In that sense, too, these festivals are a response to YouTube. It remains to be seen whether the gradual dissolution of the mobile phone film festival is a sign that this battle, too, has been lost.

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VIDEO ART DISTRIBUTION IN THE ERA OF ONLINE VIDEO

SANDRA FAUCONNIER

The Birth of a Video Distribution Collection

In 1978, Dutch television producer René Coelho made an unconventional decision that would change his life and career forever. He opened up his house in Amsterdam to artists, allowing them to showcase their work and receive assistance with production. These artists all had one thing in common: they worked with video, a medium not yet accepted by museums, festivals and other 'mainstream' art venues. René Coelho's home gallery, baptized Montevideo, would quickly grow into one of Europe's most prominent venues for experimental video and media art. [1]

René Coelho in Montevideo.

Montevideo, in its early days, must have felt like a community or club. It was a very active social hub, thriving upon a network of people who were deeply engaged with video art. Many international artists, including some who would become established in later decades, such as Bill Viola, Gary Hill and Woody and Steina Vasulka, visited Amsterdam and Montevideo in the 1980s in order to produce and present their work. [2] Of course, Montevideo also played an important role for Dutch video and media art. The organization had a strong relationship with AKI, the video art department at the art academy in Arnhem, from which many artists who graduated who would later become established names in the field. Montevideo also co-produced and presented many Dutch video installations.

Woody Vasulka in Montevideo.

The production and presentation activities at Montevideo were a first step; Montevideo also looked at other ways to promote and disseminate video art, and building a collection of single-channel video works and installations was a logical next step. From the beginning, it was a distribution collection: works were rented out to art venues all over the world and were presented internationally. In this way, Montevideo extensively promoted video art, and generated a bit of income for itself, as well as royalties for the artists in its collection.

Over the years, Montevideo and its collection merged with other institutions, most notably Time Based Arts, the video artist network related to Amsterdam's performance and contemporary art centre De Appel. In 1998, Montevideo/Time Based Arts was renamed the Netherlands Media Art Institute (NIMk). Since 1993, Montevideo – and later NIMk – have also been at the forefront of research into video art preservation. In 2010, NIMk is working on a third phase of the ongoing preservation of Dutch video art heritage, actively safeguarding its own and other institutions' collections. [3] At this moment, NIMk's distribution collection is the largest in Europe, and at the heart of the institute. The distribution collection consists of more than 2,000 titles of single-channel video works and installations by more than 500 international artists. Over the years, the organization has slowly expanded its activities to include other or 'newer' media arts: not only single-channel video and installations, but also internet-based, software- and hardware-based work. [4] However, this article will focus on single-channel video.

Cataloguing and Promoting Video Art

What follows focuses on the online presence of NIMk's collection in the context of current developments in networked media, including online video, Web 2.0 and shifts in copyright and the distribution of cultural content online. It is written from the perspective of an insider and employee of NIMk: I am an art historian who specializes in the online presentation of cultural heritage, and I work for NIMk's collection and Mediatheque. I have also been involved in the Culture Vortex research project, which is discussed further in a later section of this text, as coordinator for NIMk's research line.

Non-professional online access to NIMk's collection is complementary to professional, 'physical' distribution, which is NIMk's specialization. In the past, Montevideo and NIMk have

1. A very brief history of the Netherlands Media Art Institute is available on our website: Netherlands Media Art Institute, History NIMk, http://nimk.nl/eng/history-nimk. There is also an introduction to the history of NIMk's collection at: Netherlands Media Art Institute, History of the Collection, http://nimk.nl/eng/history-of-the-collection. Longer essays describing the turbulent history of video art in the Netherlands are Rob Perrée, 'From Agora to Montevideo', in Jeroen Boomgaard and Bart Rutten (eds) *The Magnetic Era*, Rotterdam/Amsterdam: NAi Publishers and Netherlands Media Art Institute, 2003, pp. 51-77 and Sebastian Lopez, 'Video Exposures: Between Television and the Exhibition Space' in Sebastian Lopez (ed) *A Short History of Dutch Video Art*, Rotterdam: episode publishers, 2005, pp. 13-24.
2. Information about past activities and events, and video registrations from Montevideo's and NIMk's history are available via NIMk's online catalogue: http://catalogue.nimk.nl.
3. Information about NIMk's video preservation projects and research can be found at, http://nimk.nl/eng/preservation/.
4. In 1990-1993, Montevideo organized *Imago,* a travelling exhibition of video and media installations, curated by René Coelho, which visited nine countries in Europe and Asia. Netherlands Media Art Institute, Imago, http://catalogue.nimk.nl/site/event.php?id=592. *Imago* included several interactive and hardware-based works, installations by Bill Spinhoven and Jeffrey Shaw, among others. During the 1990s, new media works became an increasingly prominent part of exhibitions organized by and at NIMk.
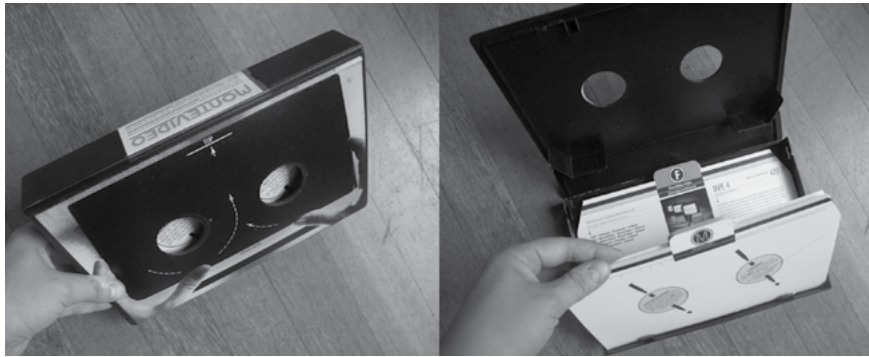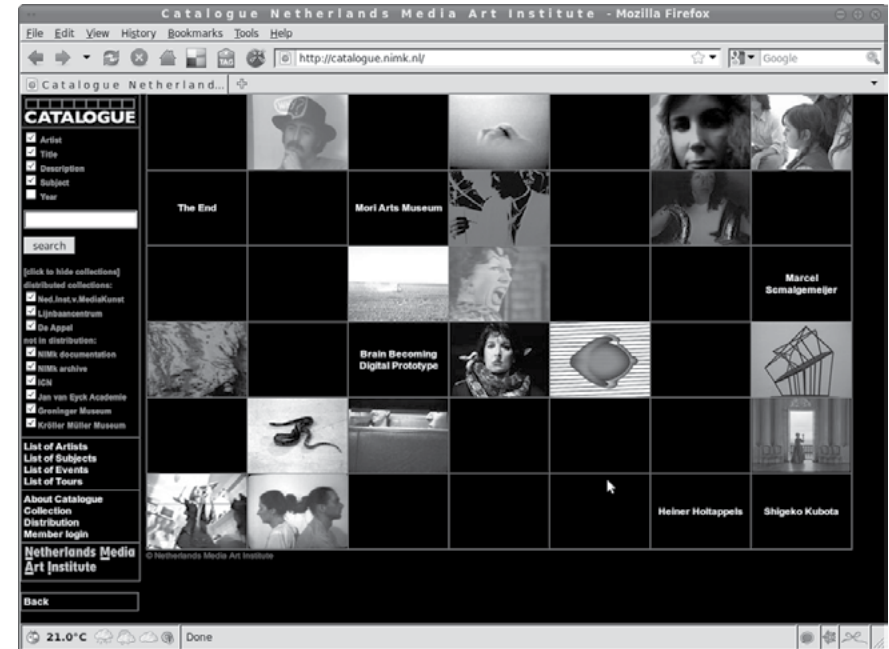
Montevideo catalogue by Gábor Bódy, 1984.

promoted the distribution collection via presentations, promotional videotapes and DVDs, and catalogues. Montevideo's first catalogue, which was of course initially produced in print, was designed by Hungarian director and video artist Gábor Bódy in 1984, [5] and was a work of art in itself: a U-matic videotape box filled with large 'library cards' describing artists and works in the collection. A second, more traditionally designed catalogue in book form was published in 1996.

Besides print catalogues, the organization also regularly produced (and still produces) preview tapes and DVDs of recent works in the collection, and organizes special events, screenings and – especially in the 1990s – travelling exhibitions of works from its collection. [6] Regular submissions to international film, video and media art festivals are also part of NIMk's promotional strategy.

In the 1990s, as networked media and especially the internet became increasingly important, NIMk expanded its mission to include the digital, online promotion and dissemination of its collection. As a supporting institution for media art, NIMk provides online access to its own collection and to the video art collections of various other Dutch cultural institutions. We use digitization and online access to make media art as visible and accessible as possible, to emphasize its importance, and to facilitate research and education – while respecting the specific characteristics and role of media art itself. The process of digitization in order to provide online access began in the mid-1990s. A custom-made collection management system was developed in Delphi, based upon a solid MySQL database.

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5.   Gábor Bódy's 'tape catalogues' are briefly described on Media Art Net, http://www.
        medienkunstnetz.de/works/kassettenkatalogen/ and can be seen as an early attempt to reconcile
        the use and specifics of a new artistic medium (video at that time) with a book format.

6.   *Imago* (1990-1993), mentioned in footnote 4, was the first travelling exhibition organized by
        Montevideo. The successor to *Imago, The Second, Time Based Art from the Netherlands*, started
        at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam and then travelled to Mexico, Taiwan, Japan, Budapest
        and Prague from 1997 till 2000. Netherlands Media Art Institute, *The Second, Time Based Art
        from the Netherlands*, http://catalogue.nimk.nl/site/event.php?id=612.

NIMk's online catalogue, http://catalogue.nimk.nl.

At the same time, a public interface to this content management system was built, first under the name Cyclope, later Catalogue. This public interface, NIMk's online catalogue, is now available on http://catalogue.nimk.nl. [7]

In 2002-2005, as part of the research project Content in Context, [8] NIMk digitized its distribution collection for viewing and DVD reproduction purposes. For this digitization process, the MPEG2 format was chosen, as it was and is still an acceptable viewing format, and is the right format to be used for DVD reproduction of the works. More recently, in 2007-2009, the Play Out project [9] has enabled even more works from various Dutch media art collections to be digitized and made accessible, including highlights from NIMk's reference collection and archive, ICN, de Appel, the Kröller-Müller Museum and the Groningen Museum.

NIMk's content management system, currently named WatsNext, and online catalogue provide access to the collection via lists of agents (people and organizations), subjects, and events, with corresponding artworks and documentation. Additionally, the content management system provides information accessible to NIMk staff only, such as the details of carri-

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7.   Some technical and historical background about NIMk's digitized collection, catalogue and
        collection management system can be found in Gaby Wijers, *Content in Context*, Amsterdam,
        2005, http://nimk.nl/_files/Files/contentincontext_wijers.pdf.

8.   Content in Context, http://nimk.nl/eng/content-in-context.

9.   Play Out, http://nimk.nl/eng/play-out.

ers (the physical 'containers' of the works, namely videotapes and files), distribution-related administrative information, and an address database.

In 2010, NIMk's online catalogue still very much reflects the idea of a printed video art catalogue; it is a static website with a late-1990s look and feel. Compared to many other video art distributors, however, NIMk offers a special feature: most works in the distribution collection can be previewed via the catalogue website. As I write, only 30-second excerpts of the works are publicly available, but, as I discuss below, it is hoped that this policy will change in the future. Since 2005, staff members and interns at NIMk have manually created short excerpts from all works. At first, the original MPEG2 excerpts were converted and published in RealVideo. In 2009, however, it became clear that many up-to-date browsers and computing platforms didn't support RealVideo by default anymore, and most of the excerpts were converted to Flash.

At the same time, the full-length MPEG2 videos were converted to lower-quality streaming MPEG4 files, with a watermark for password protected educational use. However, this educational online distribution service is not very broadly known or used at this moment. In addition, browser and plug-in support for streaming MPEG4 files is currently dwindling; the format was originally chosen because such files are more difficult to download, but is not a viable option for the future and the format is under revision at the moment. Evidently, NIMk keeps a close eye upon open source developments in video formats and codecs and alternatives to Flash, such as HTML5. Unfortunately, none is presently widely enough adopted across browsers and platforms; therefore, pragmatic solutions are chosen and in all cases, the priority is to make video files as widely accessible as possible.

Digitization of collections, and the production of a database and an online catalogue were first steps towards making the heritage of Dutch media art and video art more accessible and visible. NIMk has built a solid national digital infrastructure as a foundation for the dissemination of media art now [10] – but the next steps need to be taken, and many challenges remain.

Culture Vortex: User Research for an Online Media Art Catalogue
In the spring of 2010, NIMk participated in a research project entitled Culture Vortex, that deals with the online distribution of creative material. [11] The Culture Vortex project seeks the answers to two contemporary problems: What are viable distribution and business models which will help to generate income for an online cultural heritage? And, how can an audience be developed into an elaborate network culture, encompassing audiovisual collections and public institutions? For NIMk, this project came at the right time – NIMk's online catalogue for its collection, as described above, needs a design and strategic update, and was used as

a case study in this research project. NIMk is interested in making its catalogue richer and more dynamic, providing useful and eventually participatory features to its varied users. Furthermore, NIMk's distribution activities are challenged by current developments in online culture, and the organization is looking for ways to diversify and improve its distribution services.

The Culture Vortex project allowed NIMk to perform research into the relationship between its users and its collection and catalogue. In April-June 2010, NIMk interns Janneke Kamp and Lorena Zevedei used a variety of research methodologies to map the interests of several types of potential users of NIMk's collection. [12] It is less useful to think of users or the 'public' in abstract terms than as a very diverse network of stakeholders. For lack of more appropriate terminology, we will stick to the term 'users' for now.

People approach online video art for a variety of reasons, including their interests and orientation, whether professional or personal. Within these diverse perspectives, three main user groups can be distinguished:

– *Makers* (in NIMk's case: artists in the distribution collection) are the copyright holders of the work. They care very much about the context and quality of presentation of their work and hope to generate some income from their hard work.
– *Professionals* are usually mediators of the video work. NIMk works extensively with curators and programmers of other cultural institutions, film and media art festivals and other art events. Curators can turn to NIMk staff for personal advice on the selection of works, and eventually rent work from NIMk's distribution collection for presentation in their own events. Educators also fit into this category; lecturers and teachers in art history, cultural studies, media studies and other disciplines may want to include video art in their curriculum and present it during their lectures and study programs.
– *Non-professionals* are the diverse group of people who are not professionally involved in media and video art. However, many of these individuals are specialists or professionals in a related area, or will become professionals in the area of media and video art. These people are generally not interested in the politics and distinctions between institutions and collections, and might not care very much about the art world at all. But most people do enjoy interacting with culture in some way; many of them produce it as well. At some point in their lives and careers, they might develop an interest in, or be touched by certain cultural artifacts, including video art.

In the Culture Vortex research project, researchers Zevedei and Kamp used several methods to learn more about the three user groups described above. Desk research was undertaken in order to list, compare and evaluate similar online resources, including catalogues, archives

10. This infrastructure was built especially during the Play Out project, mentioned earlier.
11. Culture Vortex is a RAAK program – a collaboration between professionals from the public, cultural and educational sectors. Culture Vortex was initiated by the Institute of Network Cultures (Hogeschool van Amsterdam) and includes a consortium of various Dutch cultural institutes, including the Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision, NIMk, Virtueel Platform and Amsterdam City Archives. The Culture Vortex website and blog are on the Institute of Network Cultures website, http://networkcultures.org/wpmu/culturevortex/.

12. The research was conducted mainly from a workplace situated at MediaLAB Amsterdam, located in the Hogeschool van Amsterdam (HvA), a lab environment where students develop various interactive media projects. Janneke Kamp and Lorena Zevedei were coached by Margreet Riphagen from MediaLAB Amsterdam and Institute of Network Cultures, Sandra Fauconnier from NIMk and Aske Hopman, interactive media consultant and educator at MediaLAB Amsterdam.

and platforms of media art by other institutions and initiatives, in order to showcase best practice and look for inspiration. In addition, both researchers conducted interviews with several artists, both from NIMk's collection and beyond it: artists in distribution and not in distribution; upcoming and established artists; men and women artists; artists of various ages. An online questionnaire was provided to NIMk's 3,000 Facebook friends; 166 people responded. Usability tests of the current online catalogue were conducted at the Usability Lab of the Hogeschool van Amsterdam. Finally, a dense and very productive expert meeting was held on 3 June 2010, with the members of the Culture Vortex consortium and other expert invitees from the fields of Dutch new media, media art and cultural heritage.

While these research methods focused on NIMk's online catalogue only, many of the observations and findings of the project have foregrounded more general and strategic questions, both for NIMk's mission as an institute, and for the field of media art and culture as a whole. [13] The findings may change NIMk's relation to all three groups of stakeholders: makers, professional and non-professional users. The final sections of this essay reflect upon some directions NIMk sees for the future, emphasizing observations that will be useful and interesting to a broader audience as well. It is important to note that NIMk has not begun to develop a new online strategy for its collection at the time of writing; therefore, some of the potential described below remains unfulfilled, and some of the points reflect my personal opinion.

Some Observations and Directions
The Legacy of Web 2.0
In the Culture Vortex project, Zevedei and Kamp compared several media art collection websites, online archives and platforms. [14] What was striking was that most of these contained barely any typical Web 2.0 features, such as user profiling, free tagging and folksonomies, the ability to add comments and reviews, or to edit, reuse or embed content. This seems paradoxical. Many organizations in the broader cultural field, such as audiovisual archives, museums, libraries and general archives are already quite advanced in this area and have been very eager to jump on the Web 2.0 bandwagon. [15] Meanwhile, in the media art world, with its technically advanced artistic production and the tech-savvy staff in many organiza-

tions, the adoption of Web 2.0 features is far less apparent. I do not think this is mere coincidence: many people who are professionally active in media art are also quite aware of the complex political implications of Web 2.0 applications. For example, many of those who are present on social networking platforms for practical or research reasons remain very critical of them. This ambivalence applies to NIMk – for example, while the organization has an active presence on YouTube, Facebook and Twitter, it also hosts artists-in-residence Aymeric Mansoux and Marloes de Valk, who develop a critical response to Facebook games. [16] This is a pragmatic, rather than an ideological stance; hopefully, we will apply the same pragmatic and balanced attitude to the development of the new online presence of the NIMk collection.

In general, we are lucky that as of mid-2010, the hype surrounding Web 2.0 has waned at least a little. Some developments that were sped up by Web 2.0 are unstoppable, however, and have both positive and negative consequences. The possibilities for social networking online have become more diverse; an extremely wide variety of cultural activity is blooming on the web; and many (more or less knowledgeable, more or less informed) people are able to publish their work with ease. Other aspects of Web 2.0 plainly warrant suspicion: privacy issues, for instance, or the looming dispute over net neutrality, or the corporate monopolies or oligopolies, as in 'the googlization of everything'. All need to be watched closely. In any case, for a networking organization like NIMk, valuable lessons can be learned from both aspects of Web 2.0.

The Online Availability of Video Art
NIMk works closely with many of the artists represented in its distribution collection. What the 500+ artists in NIMk's distribution collection have in common is that they mainly work with video. Most have received formal training in an art academy, position themselves within the context of the contemporary visual arts, [17] and attach great importance to the quality and context of the presentation of their work. With this profile, NIMk's artists are seemingly quite different from the millions of active users and producers of online 'folk' video on platforms such as YouTube and Vimeo. In general, video art seems to strikingly distance itself from the low-threshold, gritty, vernacular cultural production on Web 2.0 video platforms. Yet, perhaps the distinction is not as sharp as it seems – for this reason, it is interesting to investigate the way in which video artists present themselves online. [18]

13. The research report of NIMk's contribution to Culture Vortex: Janneke Kamp and Lorena Zevedei, *Culture Vortex Program Line Public 2.0*, Amsterdam, 2010, http://networkcultures.org/culturevortex/2010/07/01/final-report/.

14. See the research report referred to in the previous footnote. Some of the evaluated websites belong to similar video distributors (Electronic Arts Intermix, http://www.eai.org; Video Data Bank, http://www.vdb.org; Lux, http://www.lux.org.uk), some are connected to general media art institutions and initiatives (Zentrum fur Kunst und Medientechnologie, http://www.zkm.de; Database of Virtual Art, http://www.virtualart.at; Rhizome, http://www.rhizome.org), some are Web 2.0 services used by artists or run by cultural institutions (Vimeo, http://www.vimeo.com; ArtBabble, http://www.artbabble.org).

15. Two examples of Web 2.0 initiatives by cultural institutes evaluated in the context of the Culture Vortex project are ArtBabble, http://www.artbabble.org, an artistic video platform maintained by various prominent art institutes internationally, and Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, ArtTube, http://arttube.boijmans.nl. Both are artistic, museum-led initiatives that aim to provide an alternative, and a curated answer to YouTube.

16. Mansoux's and de Valk's artist-in-residence project is entitled *Naked on Pluto:* http://nimk.nl/eng/naked-on-pluto.

17. This is closely linked to the mission of NIMk and (formerly) Montevideo, which places itself explicitly in the context of contemporary art – not experimental film, which is characterized by a different discourse and presentation circuit. During the past 10 years, NIMk has also increasingly positioned itself in the context of (new) media art, a domain that again maintains a different discourse from contemporary art: media art focuses much more on discussions about the role of media in society.

18. See, for instance, various essays and lectures by Tom Sherman, analysing the relationship between video art and vernacular (online) video. For instance Tom Sherman, 'Vernacular Video', in Geert Lovink and Sabine Niederer (eds) *Video Vortex Reader: Responses to YouTube*, Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures, 2008, pp. 161-168.

The video artists in NIMk's collection deal with the online accessibility of their work in quite different ways. They have very diverse ideas about content and presentation, about the role of the artist and of institutions, and about their options and possibilities when it comes to earning an income for themselves. Their attitudes vary from extremely protective to totally open. Some artists, such as Marina Abramovic, don't want their work to be available online at all. Some artists, such as Lernert & Sander, publish a lot of their work online – full-length, no excerpts – and are eager to use platforms like YouTube and Vimeo. Other artists withdraw their work from distributors and archives when they become established – for example, Bill Viola, whose early work was in distribution by NIMk and other international distributors, was withdrawn from distribution several years ago. Other artists, including Hooykaas/Stansfield, offer their entire oeuvre to archives. Many artists are convinced that online exposure will help them find more avenues for presentation and increase their income. On the other hand, they fear loss of income as well – they are afraid that low-quality, pirated copies will lead their own, uncontrolled life online via pirate and torrent sites, and that these will take the place of the 'real' work. [19]

In any case, most emerging and mid-career artists actively promote themselves online. A surprising number of them use platforms like YouTube and Vimeo. A quick, quantitative inventory of 72 recent artists in NIMk's distribution collection [20] (artists from whom work has been taken in distribution between 2005 and 2010) [21] provides some interesting insights. I checked whether each artist maintained a website where they show or document their work, and whether they use YouTube or Vimeo. Of these, 81% do have an artist website, 17% have a YouTube account, and 15% a Vimeo account showing full-length work. Surprisingly, these artists are not only the youngest, but can be found in all age groups, and it is mainly mid-career artists who structurally maintain an artist website. Most of the artists active on YouTube or Vimeo don't actively promote the availability of their work there, and not many receive comments from 'general' users. There are, however, a few notable exceptions. A good example is the British artist collective Semiconductor, whose work is technically and visually stunning. Semiconductor receive many admiring comments on Vimeo, many of them probably from viewers who might otherwise not visit or see Semiconductor's work in a contemporary art context. [22] A similar observation can be made of Dutch artists Lernert & Sander, who produce

music videos and short clips for television in addition to video art. Their short video works are humorous and accessible, but definitely not simplistic, and receive quite a bit of positive attention on Vimeo. [23] However, these two examples are exceptions; most artists active on Vimeo or YouTube have a small but dedicated following of 'fans' or keep their account very low-key and only use it for embedding the video in their personal website.

Ironically, NIMk itself is restricted in its ability to show video artists' work online, both by copyright restrictions and the artists' own wishes in terms of piracy and presentation quality of their work. As mentioned above, in its online catalogue, NIMk presents short, 30-second previews of all works in the distribution collection. However, usability research undertaken by Culture Vortex has confirmed earlier research and the common-sense view that both professional and non-professional users hope and expect to find full-length video. [24] As a widely accepted art form, video art is increasingly mentioned and taught in education, and is more and more frequently the subject of research and journalism. [25]

It is ironic that NIMk would run into trouble if it published full-length videos of established artists in its collection, whereas a semi-illegal website like Ubuweb [26] publishes some of these artists' works anyway. [27] Ubuweb is an interesting case: its 'rogue', and yet simultaneously high-profile and respected status, allows it to 'get away with' actions for which established institutions would be severely reprimanded or even litigated against. Ubuweb is highly regarded because of the extremely high quality content it serves in the area of experimental film, contemporary art, audio art and video art, and therefore many artists tacitly agree with having their work available there, even if it is blatantly pirated according to the letter of current copyright legislation. Perhaps it is even an honor to be included on Ubuweb.

NIMk has a strong tradition of following artists' wishes in terms of making video works accessible online, and has, with the significant change in the online video landscape, planned to take action to develop a more diverse and up-to-date policy. In the first months of 2011, all artists in NIMk's distribution collection will be once again presented with the announcement that we would prefer their work in NIMk's distribution collection be made available in its full-length version, but in preview quality and with watermark. Artists will of course have the opportunity to opt out of this, and to decide upon the level of accessibility for their work. In this way, NIMk hopes to encourage a slow but steady increase in the public availability of its collection, while still working very hard on helping its artists in distribution receive a reasonable income for their work via mediation for professional presentations.

19. The online accessibility of video art – the situation in 2009 – was described in the (Dutch-language) end report of the research project Play Out, which focused on uncompressed digitalization of video art but which also included some research on accessibility. See Gaby Wijers and Yola de Lusenet (eds) *Play Out*, Amsterdam, 2009, http://nimk.nl/nl/play-out-eindverslag; refer to pp. 11-12 for a short chapter on online access to video art. The essay concludes with the statement: 'We find ourselves at a turning point. It is high time to show, and open up, the Dutch video art collections'.

20. This small quantitative inventory was conducted by Sandra Fauconnier, and was performed after finalizing the Culture Vortex research by Janneke Kamp and Lorena Zevedei. The results have not been published earlier.

21. These works and artists – recent additions to NIMk's distribution collection – are listed on the NiMK website: New works in the collection, http://nimk.nl/eng/collection/new-works-in-the-collection.

22. Semiconductor is an artist collective of Ruth Jarman and Joe Gerhardt. Semiconductor, http://semiconductorfilms.com. Semiconductor on Vimeo, http://vimeo.com/semiconductor.

23. Lernert Engelberts and Sander Plug, http://weloveourwork.com. Lernert & Sander on Vimeo, http://vimeo.com/user1341816.

24. Kamp and Zevedei, *Culture Vortex Program Line Public 2.0*, p. 33.

25. Gaby Wijers and Yola de Lusenet (eds) *Play Out*, p. 12.

26. Ubuweb, http://www.ubu.com.

27. Some early performance works by Marina Abramović can be viewed on Ubuweb: Marina Abramović, http://www.ubu.com/film/abramovic.html. Some works from the 1970s and early 1980s by Gary Hill are also on Ubuweb, Film & Video: Gary Hill, http://www.ubu.com/film/hill.html.

Business Models: Memberships and Micropayments
In the meantime, the Culture Vortex research has generated a lively discussion about business models for video art and for online cultural heritage in general. New business models have become an important topic, both for commercial parties and for non-profit institutions. This is due to the fact that online media are challenging 'older', non-networked income models; yet this development is also informed by an economic and political climate in which public and private funding for non-profit institutions is dwindling. NIMk is also considering strengthening its distribution activities and finding new formats for presentation and income generation.

For NIMk, it has been very helpful to look for inspiration elsewhere. Many suggestions for alternative income models emerged from the Culture Vortex expert meeting held on June 3 2010. [28] This expert meeting, with participants from a variety of organizations in the Dutch cultural sector, was especially fruitful in generating creative ideas for features and business models for NIMk's collection. One participant, Jaromil Rojo, who is very active in open source development, presented a list of typical business models that exist for open source software, many of which can be translated to other fields. [29] For example, the main business model for open source software is so-called 'supportware': users don't pay for the software itself, but they do pay for technical support. In a similar way, an organization like NIMk could think about more creative ways to monetize its expertise – the specialized knowledge and service from its staff and network – rather than its assets, the collection itself.

Another spark of inspiration came from the popularity and acceptance of micropayments for online digital content. The use of micropayments has increased significantly in the past few years, especially for mobile applications, music and ebooks. In a similar manner, NIMk could think about producing and presenting specific, exclusive content online – partly with works from the NIMk collection, partly beyond – and to make these specially curated shows available for a small fee or micropayment. [30]

Membership models were also mentioned. According to this model, people who pay for a yearly NIMk membership would be granted access to a selection of exclusive activities, both online and offline. This is a strategy which might hold a lot of promise, but which also needs quite a bit of experimentation and fine-tuning. Are people willing to pay for online content in the long term? Even when an immediate benefit and connection to the makers is made clear (for instance, when renters or buyers are informed that a large percentage of their payment goes to the artists directly), it is not clear that people are willing to pay. However, a membership model would be a logical step for a networked organization like NIMk to take. Until a few years ago, a system of membership that provided discounts for technical assistance and the use of post-production facilities was already in place. Artists in NIMk's distribution collection automatically became members for free; others had to

pay a small yearly subscription fee. Such a model is probably quite logically translatable to the current situation and to online programs and services. [31] NIMk and other media art organizations distinguish themselves by the high level of technical and practical expertise they offer to artists and other professionals in the field. This expertise applies to other areas, such as scouting for new work by interesting artists, and curating programs about current topics or for targeted audiences.

Context and Mediation
The idea of creating more specially curated online programs and activities points to a special quality that many cultural institutions and initiatives share: they are often specialized, and possess a tremendous expertise, in one particular area. For example, some members of NIMk's staff keep a close eye on interesting new developments and promising young artists in the field of media art in the Netherlands. Other staff members – including the author of this article – possess a sound art historical background and are good at explaining media art to a non-professional audience, connecting it to contemporary art, technical developments and to emerging social phenomena. NIMk also has employees who are specialized in both theoretical and practical aspects of video post-production, open source software, video editing and preservation. In those instances in which NIMk lacks expertise in a specific area, the organization can count on its vast network of partner institutions and friendly individuals. The strength provided by these two assets – expertise and a great network – might become even more important in the future. NIMk might come to think of its collection as an opportunity to inform and teach people about media art and specific topics, and as a vehicle for social networking in the media art field.

Recently, NIMk has developed 'guided tours' through its collection. In the online catalogue, users can find specially curated selections of works about specific topics. Some tours were created on the occasion of a current exhibition at NIMk. [32] These tours are a first, experimental step towards developing more diverse ways to use NIMk's expertise and network to make its collection more interesting and visible.

In the near future, NIMk has plans to develop online resources, including a collection of articles and guided tours with and through its collection; and perhaps some educational texts or videos that introduce media art to a non-professional audience. With the Media Art Platform, an online social networking site for the field of media art field, [33] NIMk has experimented with a platform for the exchange of expertise and for networking. At this point, the attempt has been only partly successful, but many lessons can be drawn from the difficulties we have encountered. A renewed online strategy for NIMk's collection will ideally include both functions in a useful way.

28. Kamp and Zevedei, *Culture Vortex Program Line Public 2.0*, pp. 34-49.
29. Kamp and Zevedei, *Culture Vortex Program Line Public 2.0*, p. 51 for an overview of all open source business models listed by Jaromil.
30. Kamp and Zevedei, *Culture Vortex Program Line Public 2.0*, pp. 34-49.

31. Rhizome, http://www.rhizome.org, is a New York-based nonprofit media art website which has been working with a membership model for many years already – quite successfully apparently.
32. Netherlands Media Art Institute, Catalogue: Tours, http://catalogue.nimk.nl/site/tours.php.
33. Media Art Platform, http://www.mediaartplatform.org.
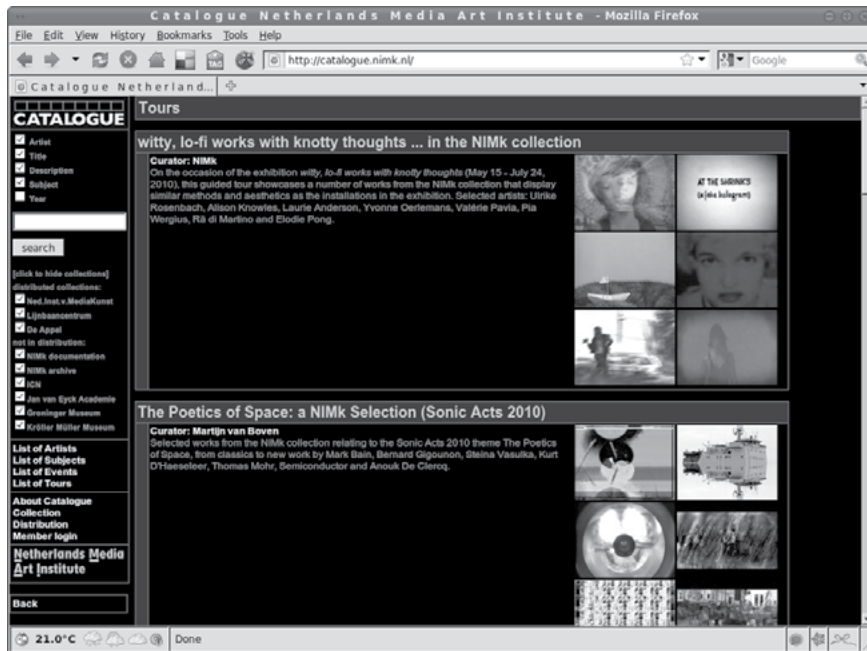
NIMk online catalogue, guided tours through the collection.

Middle Men

In the past decade, video art distribution activities in general have slowly declined. This is not only a reality for NIMk's collection but for other video art distributors. [34] A similar phenomenon is apparent in many fields that traditionally function as 'middle men', especially in music, the newspaper business and scientific publishing. [35] When content becomes more easily available online, it becomes less unique, and both makers and users benefit from a more direct relation that bypasses the mediating function of middle men. In media art, it is increasingly the case that curators and programmers of festivals, screenings and exhibitions will bypass distributors and contact and negotiate with artists directly. For artists themselves, this development has both advantages and drawbacks. It is great that their online presence gives them the opportunity to be visible and easy to find. At the same time, the need to arrange and maintain contacts with curators directly might increase their workload; distributors typically take a lot of this type of work out of an artist's hands and are often in a better position to negotiate reasonable artist fees. Furthermore, it would be beneficial for many

artists to have their work placed and contextualized within a collection, particularly if that collection is interesting or renowned.

Due to time constraints, the role of the curator has not yet been thoroughly researched by NIMk. At the time of writing, a questionnaire targeted towards curators and programmers for art venues and festivals is being undertaken, which seeks to find answers to a set of questions about curators' work process and interests. Which channels do curators mainly use for finding and evaluating artworks for their future shows? Does the discovery and selection of new work occur mainly via personal networking, physical visits to festivals, biennials and exhibitions, or does online research play a significant role? Are art journals and magazines still important, or is their influence declining? How can an organization such as NIMk be most helpful to them?

In any case, the Culture Vortex user research has confirmed to NIMk that its added value lies in the unique assets it possesses: expertise and networks, as described above, and in the quality that the NIMk label attaches to works in its collection. Whatever the outcome of the questionnaire submitted to curators, NIMk will probably benefit from renewed promotion of its collection, and of bringing it to the media art sector's attention again via specially curated programs, and via specific, personal services, both face-to-face and online.

In a renewed online catalogue, it would be very helpful for curators to be able to store their personal selections and preferences, and to be automatically alerted when new works from their favorite artists, or that concern their own specialist topics, are distributed. Perhaps it would be beneficial for curators and researchers to temporarily promote their own events and academic writing via NIMk's catalogue, if they are using work from the NIMk collection. For NIMk, this would showcase the breadth of potential applications of its collection; for curators and researchers, this is an additional means of promotion.

Non-professional Audiences

The research conducted in the Culture Vortex program also generated discussion and new ideas concerning the non-professional audiences that might be interested in NIMk's collection. Until recently, the online presence of NIMk's collection – the online catalogue – has been targeted mainly towards professional users. However, the NIMk collection contains work that might interest many people who would not call themselves art lovers, or who have never heard of NIMk. At the present time, all cultural organizations need to prioritize the effort to reach people outside the usual circles of art lovers and connoisseurs. They must make it possible to expose media art to anyone who might be touched by it – perhaps as an occasional, spontaneous and serendipitous discovery, but perhaps also in a structural way.

The introduction of media art to a wider audience can take place in a number of ways. For cultural institutions, it can be very beneficial and refreshing to organize activities outside their comfort zone, via unusual channels. NIMk has organized specially curated programs for cultural and music festivals. For example, in 2004 and 2006 NIMk introduced its collection to many thousands of people with a program entitled The Big M, which screened works from

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34. Many participants of the yearly video art distributors meeting during the International Film Festival Rotterdam 2010 shared this observation.

35. Helge Tennø is a Norwegian researcher who specializes in online marketing and who describes the changing markets (and often failing marketing strategies) in the cultural industry, in publishing and consumer products. Helge Tennø, http://www.180360720.no/ The changing field of scientific publishing – with the strongly emerging open access movement which bypasses the scientific publishing industry – is extensively promoted, researched and commented upon by Peter Suber, Lawrence Lessig, Stevan Harnad and others.

the NIMk collection inside a specially designed, inflatable tent. [36] We aim to repeat this type of activity in 2011 and later years; at this moment, NIMk is seeking funding to develop and program the Media Art Mobile, a foldable container structure in which workshops and screenings can be organized on location. [37] For the Media Art Mobile and for other uses, NIMk hopes to develop an accessible interface to its collection, through which it will be possible to discover works intuitively: works connected to a specific emotion or theme, for instance.

An integral characteristic of online video culture is the re-use and embedding of content. The success of services such as YouTube and Vimeo is to a large extent due to the ease with which people can embed video from these services in sites that are relevant to them, such as blogs or social networking sites. At this moment, no online collection of video art has this capacity, not even a pirate site like Ubuweb. It would be interesting for NIMk to seriously consider developing this capacity, at least in those cases in which the artist agrees to it.

Finally, many cultural institutions today are busy looking for new target groups. NIMk might consider the role of video art in newer or wider contexts: for example, on urban screens; or in situations in which people are simply 'killing time', such as healthcare or public transport, and can benefit from visual content with added value. But media art can also speak to very specific audiences: lately, a NIMk exhibition with sound art held at the 2010 Sonic Acts festival in Amsterdam triggered the attention of a group of otorhinolaryngologists (ear, nose and throat specialists). An upcoming exhibition that concerns games and public space might speak to a diverse audience of geeks and gamers.

Lessons for an Online Media Art Catalogue
What, then, are the most important principles to guide the development of NIMk's online collection? The following guidelines also reflect my opinion on what are the most valuable ways to deal with online cultural heritage in general.

Integration
In order to thrive, a specific cultural heritage needs contextualizing within art criticism, and within the social developments it thematizes or responds to. It is a challenge to ensure that our cultural heritage is appropriately contextualized: the success of online video platforms is partly due to the fact that the videos can be embedded elsewhere; the videos are also discoverable because they are part of playlists or can be found through recommendations. For online collections of cultural heritage, the challenge is to make the works as reusable as possible within current frameworks of copyright legislation. In this sense, NIMk can learn from online video platforms such as YouTube and Vimeo, and look at what is increasingly becoming common practice even for television broadcasters' online video archives. NIMk's collection should receive much more attention when videos, hopefully in full-length versions with artists' permission, can be embedded elsewhere, especially in weblogs and on social networking services.

We also need to ask whether it still makes sense to see a collection as a separate entity within an art organization's activities. For NIMk, the collection is part of almost all activities, and the history of the organization is intricately linked to it. Furthermore, research undertaken within the Culture Vortex project has demonstrated that many people don't find the collection's separate website, primarily because it is called 'catalogue'. And it is quite illogical that NIMk's main search engine does not produce results from the collection at all – only from the general website. It is important that an organization's website links to work in the collection as much as possible, and to use a collection and/or archive in a lively way, as a context for the present.

Networking and Interoperability
I have already described the importance of developing special, and sometimes exclusive, online programs in order to maintain artistic and cultural heritage. A collection can be kept fresh and lively when it is temporarily connected to developments elsewhere; for NIMk, this can take the form of specific artist presentations and curated programs about a variety of topics and in a variety of formats, probably with a scope that goes beyond NIMk's core collection. While broadening its scope, NIMk can emphasize its unique role as a quality filter and a network hub. A collection of works is a vehicle for social networking; making the life of a collection visible demonstrates its relevance to a broader context.

Furthermore, collections of cultural heritage are not islands. Between various collections, nationally and internationally, there are both commonalities and differences in interest and focus. Stronger networking between different resources and collections is a logical next step. For instance, it would be very useful for artworks in different collections to be interlinked more strongly, or to be able to discover and research the oeuvre of a single artist using information from many different collections at the same time.

Interoperability between online collections and archives has been on the agenda for quite some time. The Semantic Web held the promise of decentralized, automatic, machine-generated connections between websites in similar domains, yet this vision has proven to be unrealistic. [38] At this moment, several large-scale national and international projects provide interoperability between collections in a centralized way. The Europeana project is a good example of such an initiative. [39] In 2008-2009, NIMk participated in the GAMA project, a European gateway to archives of media art, [40] which provided valuable lessons in making our collection available in an international context and in creating an international infrastructure for media art. It would be very beneficial for a healthy public domain and network culture in general if decentralized models of connecting online heritage were to take root.

36. The Big M, http://nimk.nl/eng/big-m.
37. Mediaartmobiel Presentation, http://nimk.nl/eng/mediaartmobiel-presentation.

38. The World Wide Web Consortium's overview site for Semantic Web developments is available at World Wide Web Consortium, Semantic Web, http://www.w3.org/2001/sw/.
39. Europeana, http://www.europeana.eu.
40. Gateway to Archives of Media Art, http://gama-gateway.eu. GAMA is a search engine and website which provides access to media art from eight European organizations: NIMk, Argos (Belgium), Ars Electronica (Austria), C3 (Hungary), Filmform (Sweden), Heure Exquise! (France), Instants Vidéo (France) and SCCA (Slovenia).

Microformats are slowly beginning to play a role here. [41] Linked Data, a lightweight alternative to Semantic Web protocols proposed by Tim Berners-Lee in 2009, is also an interesting development to follow. [42]

Concluding Remarks

At this point in time, the principle conclusion I would like to draw is one mentioned previously: in a changing field of online video and the proliferation of user-generated content, art organizations and collections can act as a quality filter, a much-needed mediator, and a network hub. Although the current economic and political climate renders the position of many cultural organizations precarious and transitional, at this moment we are the only agents who can guarantee that online cultural heritage, and especially media art and video art, will remain accessible in a sustainable and beneficial manner. Commercial and/or semi-illegal platforms such as YouTube, Vimeo and Ubuweb, and the practices of file-sharing and piracy are of course also prominent providers of such heritage. Yet, it is highly questionable whether they are interested in the benefits for artists and society at large. Cultural institutions are much better placed to balance the interests of all the stakeholders involved, and provide a solid, long-term option.

Right now, many art organizations are looking at the changing landscape of networked technologies, and identifying challenges and developing suitable strategies. So is NIMk. As an intermediary for media art, NIMk adopts a pragmatic attitude when dealing with tensions between openness, publicness, ethical choices and accessibility. In our choices for technical solutions, we are pragmatic, without losing track of the ethically best solutions. In terms of content, we attempt to balance the interests of artists and the public. For makers, an important question at this moment is how to generate a sustainable income when artistic production, promotion and distribution go digital. For the public, a healthy, rich and qualitative public domain is at stake; it is beneficial for society in general, for education and research, when as much as possible high-quality cultural content is easily findable and discoverable, and preferably even available for free re-use and re-appropriation. NIMk defends both interests, which it actively tries to balance and reconcile, with a strong and prominent mission towards accessibility.

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41. See Microformats, http://microformats.org/. Some examples of microformats are hCard for describing people and their address information, and hCalendar to describe events.
42. Linked Data was promoted by Tim Berners-Lee at TED 2009: TED.com, Tim Berners-Lee on the Next Web, http://www.ted.com/talks/tim_berners_lee_on_the_next_web.html. See also Linked Data, http://linkeddata.org/.

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ARTFEM.TV: FEMINIST ARTISTIC INFILTRATION OF A MALE NET CULTURE

EVELIN STERMITZ

ArtFem.TV, Screenshot 2011. Images courtesy and copyright of individual artists.

ArtFem.TV[1] is a form of online television programming that brings together art and feminism. The basic aim of the video-based web portal is to foster the involvement of women in the arts, to nurture women's artworks and projects, and to create an international online television screen presenting the creativity, images and voices of women. ArtFem.TV is a non-profit, artist-run, Internet Television (ITV) and media art portal I founded in 2008, and have since then curated, edited and maintained as an artistic cyberfeminist project. ArtFem.TV is an artistic hyperspace for the images and statements of women artists that would be otherwise hidden on popular media sites.

The term 'feminist art' can be misleading, as the word feminism is often inaccurately connected to a struggle against men, but feminism is definitely not sexism. In relation to art, the term 'feminism' should be used in the sense of understanding art from a female perspective. Although this does not exclude feminist struggles, it is more concerned with the recognition of a female position, or rather a subject position. This position is constituted by a critical engagement with gender issues and views art as a socio-political matter. As an artistic cyberfeminist

project, ArtFem.TV empowers women artists, highlights their works within the context of gender issues, and broadens the discourse about art and feminism in a new media context. The question of a dedicated artistic space raised in 1929 by Virginia Woolf's 'A Room of One's Own' is reconsidered by cyberfeminists towards the end of the same century, and seen in the creation of this project. Furthermore, ArtFem.TV aims to subvert the commercialized systems and structures of broadcast television.

To understand the background of ArtFem.TV, it is necessary to examine the history of feminism in relation to art. Feminism and feminist art finally came to the forefront in the late 1960s, a time of liberation and political struggle, during which there was public debate that enabled a re-thinking of the position of women in society. Women were encouraged to act and react in public ways, and art, as a primarily public issue, became a powerful vehicle for feminist discourse. The main questions asked were: What makes women different from men?; and with respect to art, what makes women artists and women's art different from that produced by men? In their art, women reflected upon patriarchy in social systems, in history, in art history and in current affairs. While feminists fought an uphill battle, feminist issues gained prominence, first in the U.S., Great Britain and Germany, and have spread to many other nations and cultures since the 1970s.

In the 1970s, the so-called second-wave of feminism emerged, along with its message that 'the personal is political'. The position of women was seen to be inextricably linked to a patriarchal, commercialized, oppressive culture, and their social, sexual and personal struggles were seen to be embedded within such a culture.[2] In the 1980s, the conflict between the two basic approaches to feminism - integration and separation – led the focus to shift from equity to *difference*. This third-wave approach became strongly affiliated with the academy, and increasingly theoretical, as it developed into the academic research fields of women's, gender, and feminist studies. According to Charlotte Krolokke and Anne Scott Sorensen, third-wave feminists are 'motivated by the need to develop a feminist theory and politics that honour contradictory experiences and deconstruct categorical thinking... .They embrace ambiguity rather than certainty, engage in multiple positions, and practice a strategy of inclusion and exploration'.[3]

Third-wave feminism is inspired by and bound to generational shifts wrought by the new global world order, the fall of communism, new threats of religious and ethnic fundamentalism, and the dual risks and promises of new info- and biotechnologies. It is characterized by local, national and transnational activism in areas such as violence against women, trafficking, body surgery, self-mutilation and the overall 'pornofication' of the media.[4] Gender became a discursive practice in a social matrix, inclusive of the emerging movements of queer and transgender

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1.   www.artfem.tv.

2.   See Charlotte Krolokke and Anne Scott Sorensen, *Gender Communication Theories and Analyses: From Silence to Performance,* Thousand Oaks, London and New Delhi: Sage, 2006, p. 10.

3.   Krolokke and Sorensen, *Gender Communication*, p. 16. Krolokke and Sorensen also discuss the notion of 'transversal politics', writing that 'What defines transversal politics is not only the fact that differences in nationality, ethnicity, or religion - and hence in agenda - are recognized but also that a commitment to listen and participate in a dialogue is required', p. 20.

4.   Krolokke and Sorensen, *Gender Communication*, p. 17.

politics. From this perspective, there arose notions of cyborgs and avatars as new models of sex and gender made possible by new media. [5] According to Krolokke and Sorensen:

> While concerned with new threats to women's rights in the wake of the new global world order, it criticizes earlier feminist waves for presenting universal answers or definitions of womanhood and for developing their particular interests into somewhat static identity politics ... Third-wave feminists want to avoid stepping into mutually oppressive static categories, and they call for acceptance of a chaotic world, while simultaneously embracing ambiguity and forming new alliances. Thus, third-wave feminisms are defined not by common theoretical and political standpoint(s), but rather by the use of performance, mimicry, and subversion as rhetorical strategies. [6]

It is generally accepted that in the patriarchal heritage of Western culture, the preponderance of art made by males and for male audiences often transgressed against females, or used females as passive objects. The male studio system excluded women from training as artists, and the gallery system kept women from exhibiting and selling their work, as well as from being collected by museums (albeit somewhat less so in recent years). In an article written in 1971 titled, 'Why have there been no great women artists?', Linda Nochlin gave impetus to the publication of numerous histories of women artists. [7] The ensuing momentum towards feminist scholarship concerning women in the arts was tremendous, and afforded greatly overdue recognition to many women artists. Re-thinking the work of Rousseau and Kant, feminists began to identify canonical ways of thinking about what makes for 'greatness' in art, and recognized that 'this "greatness" always seems to exclude women'. [8] As Cynthia Freeland states:

> The feminist asks how canons have become constructed, when, and for what purposes. Canons are described as "ideologies" or belief systems that falsely pretend to objectivity when they actually reflect power and dominance relations... .Perhaps instead of creating a new and separate female canon, we need to explore what existing canons reveal. [9]

While the first two decades of feminist art are seen as a revolt against male artists and their politics of production and consumption, and target the male-created gaze and male-dominated society. Presently, female artists are concerned with the position of women and women artists in a socio-cultural context that is no longer defined as a revolt against patriarchal systems, but is accepted as a debate concerning the disclosure and deconstruction of sex and gender in a patriarchal system, and reflects both the construction and discourse of gender

ArtFem.TV, Screenshot 2011. Images courtesy and copyright of individual artists.

within an historical context. The diverse history of the relationship between feminism and art, and the vast body of work that has and continues to be created out of such socio-political and cultural contexts, led to creation of ArtFem.TV.

As a background on the technological avenue that lead to the development of the ArtFem.TV project, in 2006 I joined one of the earliest artist-run video art net portals [PAM] Perpetual Art Machine, [10] and became familiar with alternative forms of displaying artistic video works online. I found [PAM] a great invention and also a valuable community, facilitating global exchange between video artists and enabling their works to be viewed without complicated searches for video art. In the ensuing years, the video art platform CultureTV [11] emerged, along with other platforms such as Souvenirs from Earth TV, [12] a channel for film and video art, or UbuWeb: Film & Video, [13] all of which opened up new horizons for artistic online video. Technical implementations facilitated and supported this movement: upload and download transfers became cheaper and faster, and improvements in the compression of video data enabled better viewing quality. All of this increased my enthusiasm for video art on the net, and for creating a different net aesthetics, leading to ArtFem.TV in 2008.

The structure of ArtFem.TV's site design and its interface were developed as a collaborative work by Torbjoern Karlevid and Vincent Van Uffelen in the frame of their strategic design studio NOVA, [14] based in Austria and London. The structure of the site as an online media
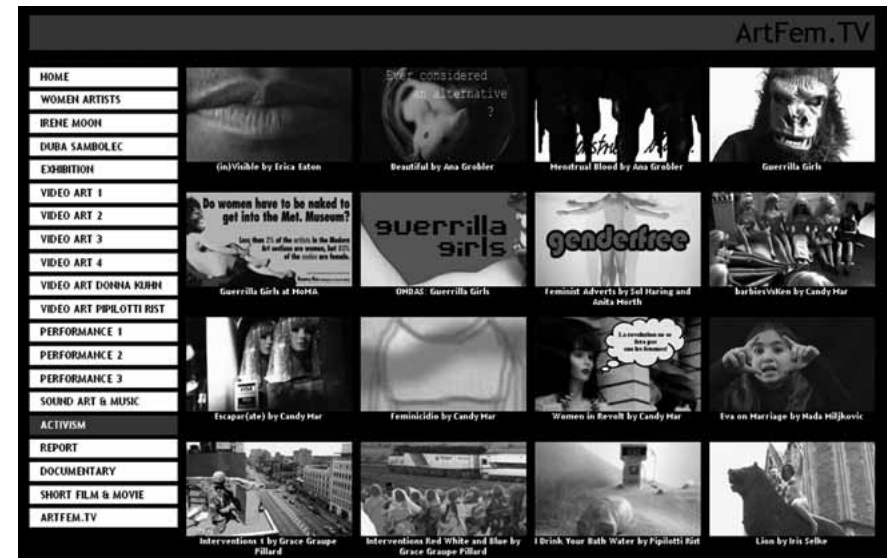
5.   Krolokke and Sorensen, *Gender Communication*, p. 18.
6.   Krolokke and Sorensen, *Gender Communication*, pp. 17-18.
7.   Linda Nochlin is an American art historian, university professor and writer of feminist art history studies. Linda Nochlin, 'Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?', *ARTnews* (January 1971): 22-39, 67-71.
8.   Cynthia Freeland, *Art Theory*, New York: Oxford University Press , 2001, pp. 88-89.
9.   Freeland, *Art Theory*, pp. 88-89.

10.   [PAM] Perpetual Art Machine, http://www.perpetualartmachine.com.
11.   CultureTV, http://www.culturetv.tv.
12.   Souvenirs from Earth TV, http://www.souvenirsfromearth.tv.
13.   UbuWeb: Film & Video, http://www.ubu.com/film/.
14.   NOVA, http://www.novainteractive.at.

platform is divided into several channels: 'Women Artists' presents portraits of the artists; 'Single Channels of Women Artists' showcases the artists along with a comprehensive range of their artworks; 'Exhibition' presents documentaries of exhibitions; and other channels entitled 'Video Art', 'Performance', 'Sound Art & Music', 'Activism', 'Report', 'Documentary', 'Short Film and Movie' present different aspects of women's artistic practice. Using buttons on the left of the screen, users can choose between these different channels. The design of the site is clean and reduced, to avoid an overload of information, and to foreground the video works themselves. The website itself is hosted by mur.a*t*, [15] an association that supports net. art by offering free web hosting for artists and their web-based projects.

In 2010, ArtFem.TV hosted about 400 video works by more than 90 women artists from around the globe, including video art works, performance art documentation and videos about artists such as Martha Rosler, Nina Sobell, and Pipilotti Rist . A variety of users from the fields of academic research and curating have responded to the site's feminist emphasis as a valuable resource. ArtFem.TV's website has been exhibited as an online installation at various festivals and venues, and presented at various symposia, [16] and not only within explicit feminist contexts so as to make feminist issues and feminist art as widely accessible as possible.

At its broadest lengths, the aim of ArtFem.TV is to offer insight into feminist issues and their relation to art, to as wide an audience as possible. Images support society and culture, but images also reference society and culture. Understanding media as social processes in addition to its status as conduits of communication or mechanical devices, it is possible to see the impact that media have upon changing cultural values and social practices in a globalized world. Media are an effect of economic systems and the forces of market production, which support and stabilize a traditional, ancient dyadic system of male and female by the exclusion of gender - ArtFem.TV attempts a cyberfeminist break with a male dominated net culture and media landscape, highlighting women's distinctive points of view in art and media works, as well as the accessibility and promotion of these works, in an inclusive, democratic way.

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15. Verein zur Förderung von Netzwerkkunst, Graz, Austria, http://www.mur.at.
16. See: http://www.artfem.tv/ArtFem_TV/, for a list of exhibition/festival/symposium presentations of ArtFem.TV.

CRASHING THE ARCHIVE/ARCHIVING THE CRASH: THE CASE OF SAW VIDEO'S MEDIATHEQUE

MÉL HOGAN

There is a looming paradox in the way culture is created, circulated, and conserved and preserved for posterity. On the one hand it is present, visible, and shared; on the other, it is of the past, stored away, and protected both against and for the future. In debates about the web's potential and its limitations, this paradox resurfaces time and again. Nowhere is this discussion more present than in attempts to characterize the online repository as archive, despite the invariably ephemeral nature of the digital. [1] To ground this paradox, and to reveal something more profound than mere 'tension' between the material and immaterial in the politics of preservation, I look to Canada's first large-scale online video art repository as a case study.

SAW (Sussex Annex Works) Video's Mediatheque was launched in 2003, and included 486 independent Canadian video art works in an online repository. Predating YouTube by two years, and reaching a terabyte of content, the Mediatheque is an important project, as it is located at the intersection of independent video art, internet studies, and archival theory. In 2003, the sheer volume of video in the Mediatheque 'made the internet tip', as the son of the project's digital archivist, Anatoly Ignatiev, so aptly described it. [2]

In May 2009, there was a server crash that made the project vanish, [3] as nothing of the back-end server was backed up. In June 2009, SAW Video's summer intern, Tiffany Tse, sent out a letter to video artists to inform them that both the SAW Video site and the Mediatheque portal had 'gone down'. The letter was written to explain the server crash, but also anticipated the Mediatheque's rebuilding. However, since this outreach effort, a notice has been posted on the SAW Video website that diverts users: 'Due to circumstances beyond our control, the Mediatheque will be down until further notice. We apologize for any inconvenience'. [4] Currently, in 2011, plans are underway to recreate *a* Mediatheque, but in a new light, rather than attempting to hastily reconstruct it based on fragments of what it once was. As the term 'circumstances beyond our control' implies, many factors are involved at different levels in the construction and maintenance of such a large-scale online archive. According to Douglas Smalley and Michael Lechasseur, technicians who worked on the Mediatheque project, a hard drive failure was the root of the server crash. While SAW Video is ultimately responsible

for the Mediatheque's crash, its reliance on external support invariably extends the responsibility, in the same way that the grandeur of the project, when it was up and functioning, was shared. However, no fingers have been pointed: the 'who' and 'what' of the crash became a mere by-product – if not an expected consequence – of the digital online realm.

Nevertheless, corporate affiliations and legal parameters are involved in the server crash, which is often relegated to a mere technical failure. This holds true not only for the Mediatheque, but for many if not all similar initiatives in Canada, such as Vidéographe's ViThèque. com and Vtape's artvideo.museevirtuel.ca – both of which remain largely under-documented. Until quite recently, these projects were delayed or (temporarily) offline, but no documentation is readily available to assess the problems they encountered or the solutions that allowed them to resurface. [5] Because of this lack of documentation, not much can be done to argue for a new approach to video preservation and distribution online.

The web has now been activated long enough to have large-scale projects come to life *and* come to crash. [6] Documenting the Mediatheque's demise, piecing together fragments of a lost digital repository, is an exercise that characterizes our era. As exemplified by the Mediatheque, and several other Canadian online video art repositories, there is no better time to explore the web's potential for defining and redefining the role of the online repository as archive, and its capacity for presenting new modes, models, and definitions of preservation. [7] Looking to older, pre-Web 2.0 initiatives also provides invaluable insight into the affective labour poured into these early archival renditions. [8] Finally, the urgency of such work lies in the state of these projects: because the Mediatheque is no longer online, it cannot generate the interest of artists, curators, historians, and researchers, despite its symbolic and cultural significance for Canadian video art history.

Between December 2009 and June 2010, I had the opportunity to discuss the Mediatheque project with many of the people implicated in the project, both currently and at its inception. Working with current SAW Video Director, Penny McCann, I co-curated a public screening of the now defunct Mediatheque collection at Groupe Intervention Video (GIV) in Montréal. The screening was held in November 2010, along with a 'live' month-long online showcase at wayward.ca. This off/online exhibit was intended to begin the revival of the Mediatheque, generate a wider discussion around the last decade of video art online from a predominantly Canadian viewpoint, and to further document the project. Here, I also aim both to revive

1.   See: http://www.ugent.be/en/news/bulletin/memory.htm and http://www.archipel-project.be/
2.   Anatoly Ignatiev, private correspondence, 2010.
3.   The Mediatheque has a soft launch in 2003, and an official launch in February 2004. For details see, http://www.ottawaxpress.ca/visualarts/visualarts.aspx?IDArticle=900.
4.   http://sawvideo.com/.

5.   http://artvideo.museevirtuel.ca/ remains offline (February 2011); http://vitheque.com launched in Montreal in May 2010 after years of delay. See photos of the launch at, http://www.flickr.com/photos/vitheque/.
6.   See Mél Hogan, 'Cashing and Crashing the Mediatheque' *FlowTV.org,* 21 May, 2010, Online: http://flowtv.org/2010/05/caching-and-crashing-the-mediatheque-mel-hogan-concordia-university/.
7.   See Felix Stalder, 'Copyright dungeons and grey zones', from: *nettime-I Digest, Vol 7, Issue 10, sent: 15 April, 2008.*
8.   For a definition of affect see, Brian Massumi, 'Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation', Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005.

and document the project, and to comment on the state of video art online as an extension and permutation of the archive, in a Canadian context and beyond. Documenting the Mediatheque's crash and its pending revival serves as a springboard into a larger conversation about the intricate and, as I argue here, paradoxical nature of online archives. More precisely, such projects demonstrate that the technical is always mitigated to some extent by and through the interplay of cultural, legal, and archival parameters.

Making the Cut: Becoming a Video Archive
Whether it is considered to represent an institution or a process, the word 'archive' is a disputed term. As I will argue here, one sense of the term informs the other. Broadly defined, the traditional archive is an ongoing intellectual effort to categorize, classify, organize, store, and preserve certain historical narratives, based on principles of acquisition and the appraisal of archivists. [9] The internet has transformed our conceptual relationship to the archive, as a space that can be entered, visited, perused, and where objects can be touched, seen, and experienced. To some extent, the qualitative time/space dimensions that defined the archive have been superseded by the qualities of speed, access, and online, networking capabilities. Many of the archive's foundational concepts are being reassessed: value, access, and preservation are not only re-conceptualized in light of online media, but are disrupting the meaning of their offline counterparts, too. In other words, the focus lies not in the material/immaterial binary, but in how the digital online invariably disputes and challenges the definition of the archive.

As there is no universal definition of what constitutes an archive, there is no objective way to assess the extent to which the Mediatheque *is* an archive. In Canada, there are no parameters that define an archive, and thus small and large-scale initiatives, both off and online, can claim to constitute an archive. Although some university archives, provincial archives, and Library and Archives Canada have legislated mandates that determine what will be collected, arts and community-based archives have no legal compulsion to exist and as such have not imposed structural or procedural rules or policies. [10] The openness of the concept of the archive is key to understanding the impact of online technologies upon the definition and role of archives and archivists.

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9.   For a few key theorists who question the role of the archive from post-colonial, queer, and feminist perspectives see, jake moore, 'Brief: Matricules (parts 1 and 2) Database and archive project: Studio XX the first 10 years', *DPI Online* 7, 11 October, 2006, http://dpi.studioxx.org/demo/?q=fr/no/07/brief-matricules-database-and-archive-project-studio-xx-first-10-years; Ann Cvetkovich, 'In the Archives of Lesbian Feelings: Documentary and Popular Culture', *Camera Obscura*, 17 (2002): 107 – 147; Anjali Arondekar, 'Without a Trace: Sexuality and the Colonial Archive', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 14 (2005): 10-27; Ra'ad in Janet A. Kaplan 'Flirtations with Evidence: The Factual and the Spurious Consort in the Works of The Atlas Group/Walid Raad', *Art in America*, 92.9 (2004): 134-139; Lisa Gitelman, *Always Already New: Media, History and the Data of Culture*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2006; and Marlene Manoff, 'Theories of the Archive from Across the Disciplines', *Libraries and the Academy*, 4.1(2004): 9–25.
10. See, Mél Hogan correspondence with Scott Goodine, Provincial Archives of Alberta personal correspondence, March 2007, from 'Archiving Absence: a queer feminist framework', MA Thesis, Concordia University, Montréal, 2008.

Arising from an initiative to account for and archive emerging video technologies, the Mediatheque pilot project, Independents On Line (IOL), was first proposed in 2002, and aimed to stream the work of independent Canadian video-makers and film producers. Drawing from the SAW Video collection, which spanned 20 years of video production in the Ottawa-Hull region of Canada, the IOL initiative would archive the collection through the digitization of approximately 500 works in one year. As the project gained momentum, its name was changed to 'Mediatheque' to reflect the bilingual intentions behind the project, and to meet funding requirements. On paper, just three months were allocated to what was a massive undertaking. In this astoundingly short time, a database had to be created, an interface designed, works digitized, works collected, contracts signed, partnerships solidified, among many other tasks. Due in no small part to the budgeting magic of Kevin Morris, the project director, the plan was realized. As Morris puts it, 'you've gotta work it – you've gotta juggle all the time and borrow from your own self'.

This original proposal by SAW Video to the Department of Canadian Heritage was to archive the SAW Video collection through the digitization of some of its older works in various video formats. SAW Video's works dated back to the late 1970s, and many were and remain stored in non-archival conditions, suffering from limited budgets, storage space, access to facilities and equipment, and know-how. According to Morris and the Mediatheque's appointed digital archivist Anatoly Ignatiev, the grant to build the Mediatheque was specifically for archival purposes. While SAW Video could not claim to meet any of the basic requirements of the material archive, it could and did demonstrate to its funders that the web offered an extension and substitute to material definitions of storage, preservation, and access. If more people were able to access rare works, the result would be a larger and less predictable cultural conversation. Preservation, in this case, was not primarily if at all about long-term care of the files, but rather about extending the 'lives' of the works showcased as facilitated by the online realm.

According to Morris, SAW Video was an unlikely recipient for this archival grant. Canada has a vast and rich video art history, much of which culminates in numerous locally-focused distribution centres. For example, the Centre for Art Tapes in Halifax, [11] VIVO in Vancouver, [12] VTape [13] in Toronto, Video Pool in Winnipeg, [14] Video Femmes in Québec, [15] Groupe Intervention Video and Vidéographe [16] in Montréal all had equally or more established video art collections. Vtape in particular was and remains the best-equipped institution for cleaning tapes, migrating works, format shifting, and for video material preservation more generally. The particulars that led to SAW Video receiving the grant over these other institutions remain unclear, and became as much a challenge as an opportunity for the recipients. But, according to Morris (who drafted the proposal, and whose views were later reinforced by McCann), the Mediatheque had appeal because it was pitched as an archive rather than a circulation

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11. http://www.centreforarttapes.ca/.
12. http://videoinstudios.com/aboutus.php.
13. http://www.vtape.org/.
14. http://videopool.typepad.com/video_pool_history/.
15. http://www.videofemmes.org/accueil/.
16. http://www.videographe.qc.ca.

tool; a showcase and display portal rather than a substitute for offline distribution. Thus, it may have been its positioning as a non-distributive entity that led SAW Video to be backed for the Mediatheque over other more 'qualified' distribution centres.

The proposal was to digitize its deteriorating material collection, with a focus on showcasing older local works, as a means of preservation, and to give many of the works a second life. However, the actual project strayed quite far from its stated mission. Consequently, it gave the notion of preservation an alternate meaning to that which was proposed and funded under the archival banner. Instead of limiting the project to the digitization of its collection, SAW Video opted to create a 'living archive' that redefined the central tenets of archiving: storage, display, and preservation. Spinning the idea of the archive to include the mobility of artists and the circulation of their works outside the region, Morris proposed a more flexible vision of the local, and of what the internet afforded in terms of a coherent artistic community. Morris also took into account the potential for artists to interact and participate through the Mediatheque, which was something that the traditional material archive did not emphasize. In short, how to maximize the web's potential for video art in Canada became a combination of the visionary drives of Lechasseur, Morris, Ignatiev, Smalley, and later, McCann, altered and adapted to the continuously changing technoscape. [17]

As is common to government-funded initiatives, the Mediatheque was also directed to function as an educational tool. In the follow up on the Partnership Grant Report from Canadian Heritage, several questions revolved around the use of the Mediatheque by educators, and their access to documentation about the works and the usage of the database. The Mediatheque was to have a component that would ensure its relationship to a broader (if not younger) audience, essentially proving its utility as a repository of rare and significant works that both promoted and conserved bilingual Canadian culture. To achieve this aim, it was essential to provide artistic, cultural, and historical context for the works. According to McCann, this important conceptual component of the database was never actualized to its fullest potential. Instead, context was relegated to an oversimplified drop-down list within the Mediatheque interface, without possibility to curate, organize or make cross-connections between works. So, whereas the first incarnation of the Mediatheque was instrumental in collecting, categorizing, and digitizing content for the collection, the curatorial potential of the web would be more fully realized in McCann's reconfiguration of the project in 2011.

To generate content for the living archive, SAW Video collected works through an open call directly from artists, video distributors, and co-ops across the country. [18] Of $350,000 dol-

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17. See Arjun Appadurai 'Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy', in M. Featherstone (ed.) *Global Culture,* London: Sage, 1990, pp. 295-310.
18. McCann explains that the open call was an issue for a site that defines itself as an exhibition space. Because the works were not curated or 'chosen', the works were by default organized according to traditional archival categories without much insight to the who and why of any particular work or any aforementioned idea of how certain works speak to one another. On the flip side, the open call meant the project was open to all video artists, amateur and established alike.

lars budgeted for the project, $100,000 dollars was dedicated to the acquisition of rights for showcasing the videos. [19] The enormity of this sum is reflected in the detailed attention paid to copyright and artists' fees in the elaboration of the project. What was described by McCann as a 'mad dash' for artists' fees ensued, as the Mediatheque promised artists a sum of $200 per video regardless of length, exhibited for a three-year period through the Mediatheque portal. [20] Artists were limited to 12 independent works on the original Mediatheque project. Completed, the project featured 486 works by 238 artists from across the country, of which 412 were 'local' and 25 were French titles. If Ignatiev's and Morris' memories serve right, few of the submitted titles were turned down from entry into the Mediatheque. Those that were not included were pieces that the committee felt unfit for presentation for either aesthetic or technical reasons, or videos pulled out by the creators themselves. However, the parameters according to which some works were rejected remain vague across the interviews conducted. While Morris claims that set standards were in place to ensure the quality of works, guidelines about this part of the process do not exist. Artists submitted works, new and old, and cashed in on the rare occurrence of being paid for un-curated and un-commissioned work.

The rest of the budget would pay for administrative and technical contracts, supplies and equipment, storage and streaming, digitization, training, and resource development. Despite this capital, stemming in large part from Canadian Heritage, the steps involved in organizing the Mediatheque project were numerous and gruelling, as there was no model upon which to base a project which was innovative by definition. Not only did a database of the works need be constructed and conceived, but contracts with the artists had to be drafted and signed. The technical and logistical aspects of the project were interdependent, and a great effort from both sides was required to catalogue, insert metadata, digitize, burn DVD-ROM copies, encode, and finally upload content to the site. Much of this labour had to be calculated in terms of 'minutes and hours' for various funding reports; a quantification which failed to account for the important affective basis of the project – the component that lingers on longest after the portal itself went offline.

The Mediatheque's digital archivist Ignatiev recalls coming to work at SAW Video before the internet was even installed. Just a few years later, he is credited with developing the digitization process for the project. Because the initiative was unprecedented, Ignatiev created a system through trial and error, testing compression and encoding rates and various formats. The final report on the project states that digitization occurred in 'real time', such that 10 minutes of footage would require 10 minutes to be converted, averaging approximately 5,000 minutes for the entirety of the collection, for an average duration of 10 minutes for each video. Burning the digital file to DVD, however, would require double the time per video, and encoding would demand as much as four times that amount. As is also stated in the report, these times

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19. According to the Executive Summary of the project, the total expenses of the project amounted to $570,614, with contributions from Canadian Heritage ($382,917), the Canada Council of the Arts ($25,000), corporate sponsor Xstream Labs ($90,600), and funds from fundraising efforts and SAW Video's operating revenues (estimated at over $72,000).
20. The length of videos determined their worth based on television broadcast rates – this is still the system in place for many screenings and festivals.

were calculated on the basis of the equipment available, and such times diminished as a second computer became available for processing. Yet, this second production post often led to errors in consistency: 'In terms of technicians, we discovered that more than one technician working on more than two workstations at a time leads to errors in meta-tagging, missing tape quality errors, incorrect adjustments during digitizing, etc'. [21] The human labour involved in such a large-scale online project cannot be understated, and in as much as human passion drove this project, human error is an important element to consider as well. With the advent of faster DVD burners, greater processing speeds, etc., the process would invariably become smoother, less costly, and more efficient as technician became more familiar with the technologies, processes, and tasks. By 2003, once the workflow was in place, a minute of video took on average one hour to go online from its original format.

Seven years later, wayward.ca curators (Nikki Forrest and I) in collaboration with McCann, had to access the DVD-ROMs – the material back up for the Mediatheque – in order to select works for the screening at GIV. For us, this was a moment that revealed much about the archival framework of the Mediatheque. The collection was in .avi format, stored on DVD, and all files played back properly on the computers at SAW Video. However, the material back up was quite unconventional: works were divided into parts, so that the 4.7 GB of space on each DVD in the collection was maximized. In other words, the size of the DVDs, not the video file size, determined its storage. Works that were larger than 4.7 GB were cut into segments and stored onto separate DVDs, with each segment carefully noted in Ignatiev's handwriting. Ignatiev's view on the matter was that these video files could easily be re-assembled using video editing software, in order to re-create the work in full. It was also a method that wasted no DVD storage space, so that fewer DVDs overall were used for the material storage of the Mediatheque collection. However, it also means that video works are fragmented, and more difficult to utilize from a curatorial point of view. Thus, the method raises interesting questions about the link between use – as a heterogeneous concept – and preservation tactics.

The video files for the Mediatheque currently exist in proprietary .avi video format, compressed for web streaming, and doubled to data DVD-ROM format in a higher quality .avi. A very small number of the works in the Mediatheque collection are distributed elsewhere, and because uncompressed screening copies were not part of the project, high quality 'originals' are not accounted for in the Mediatheque. In this sense, the Mediatheque project was one that viewed the online repository as an entity unto itself, rather than a mirror, complement, or addition to any material version of a collection. The Mediatheque, then, is a prime case study for an archive that functions on the basis of the web and privileges wide access over long-term material preservation of the files. This task was relegated to the artists themselves, who could either keep their own archives or have their works stored in official repositories.

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21. SAW Video IOL Final Report (no date), p.2.

Launching the Video Archive… Into Cyberspace
A local (Ottawa) internet start-up, iSi Global, [22] provided server management and free bandwidth for the project. In 2003, wide access meant access to bandwidth; however, the costs exceeded the financial capacity of any self-sustaining artist co-op. As iSi Global was the local representative for the software, the Mediatheque was to stream video using the Real Player plug-in. [23] In 2002-2003, the .avi format may have seemed as viable an option as the ubiquitous Flash does today. [24] However, corporate ties were essential to the project. SAW Video could not afford the streaming costs for a site that was visited by over 5,000 people a month, and for a demand for numbers of works in excess of 116,000. [25] This meant that a corporate partnership facilitated the project, with iSi Global allocating bandwidth for approximately 300,000 hits averaging 10 minutes each. [26]

The public launch of the Mediatheque took place in 2004, after a soft launch in 2003. Because very little video was streamed online in Canada at the time of the launch – widespread use of video online through YouTube would take place in 2005 – the project was as large in scope as it was highly anticipated. The final assessment by SAW Video describes the promise of the Mediatheque:

> we have built a backbone that can support virtually unlimited growth in the number of productions that can be streamed and the number of resources that can be added; that is, a deluxe system that can meet future needs and requests, and that can accommodate changes and improvements as demanded. [27]

The *Ottawa Xpress* report of the launch quotes Douglas Smalley, SAW workshop coordinator and technical assistant at the time, defining the Mediatheque as 'an archival repository of independent video art of all genres'. Smalley adds: 'Unless you go to screenings you won't get to see works of art like this anywhere'. [28] Thus, the rarity of the works and the singularity of the Mediatheque were highlighted through the successful launch of the first project of its kind in Canada.

Digital Value
The longevity of the project—six years online—meant that the repository would outlive the original three-year non-exclusive streaming contracts signed with artists. According to

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22. http://www.isiglobal.ca/.
23. http://www.real.com/.
24. http://gizmodo.com/5454115/first-youtube-now-vimeo-how-html5-could-finally-kill-flash-video.
25. Letter to artists from Penny McCann (no date). Letter given to me by Penny McCann at SAW Video.
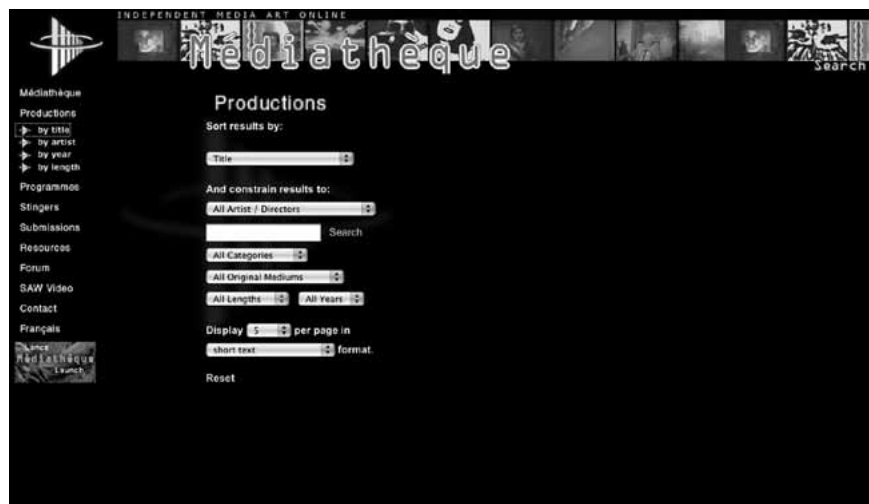26. Despite the server crash on SAW Video's end, SAW Video and iSi Global remain on good terms and are considering a future partnership.
27. Final IOL Report, p.7.
28. *Artswatch, 'SAW Launches Huge Website', March 4, 2004, http://www.ottawaxpress.ca/visualarts/ visualarts.aspx?iIDArticle=900.*

SAW Video's Mediatheque 'homepage' recuperated from the Wayback Machine. [29]

SAW Video's Mediatheque 'search and archive categories' recuperated from the Wayback Machine. [30]

SAW Video's Mediatheque "FAQ page" recuperated from the Wayback Machine. [31]

McCann, few artists decided to pull their works from the site upon termination of their original contracts: of the 486 works on the website, 300 remained. According to McCann, this number provides 'a substantial foundation upon which to build a permanent digital archive'. [32] Presently, the Mediatheque owns the non-exclusive rights – under copyright – to showcase the works online for an indefinite period of time, even while the site is down.

While copyright is not in itself a system for determining the remuneration of creators, it is certainly an important discursive element in determining the value of online media, including levels of access. Copyright also underpins much of the cultural specificity of access and preservation, which in Canada too often get subsumed under U.S. viewpoints. Canada's recently introduced Copyright Reform Bill C-32, which would weaken copyright law, has generated much debate in newspapers and blogs. [33] Although his arguments require more nuance in a Canadian context, one of the main issues connecting Lawrence Lessig's influential and impassioned critique of a permissions-based culture, and his argument for a compelling-distinction between artists who create for money and those who create for love [34] to various Canadian copyright theorists and activists such as Michael Geist and Laura Murray, is the

29. http://web.archive.org/web/*sa_/http://sawvideo.com. SAW Video/website design by Leif Harmsen. Permission to publish by SAW Video director, Penny McCann.
30. http://web.archive.org/web/*sa_/http://sawvideo.com. SAW Video/website design by Leif Harmsen. Permission to publish by SAW Video director, Penny McCann.
31. http://web.archive.org/web/*sa_/http://sawvideo.com. SAW Video/website design by Leif Harmsen. Permission to publish by SAW Video director, Penny McCann.

32. New Directions for the Médiathèque in 2006–2007, personal correspondence with Penny McCann (2010).
33. http://www.faircopyright.ca/, http://www.jeremydebeer.ca/, http://www.faircopyrightforcanada.ca/, http://www.michaelgeist.ca/.
34. See Lawrence Lessig, 'How creativity is being strangled by the law?' TED Talks, posted 16 March, 2007, http://www.ted.com/index.php/talks/larry_lessig_says_the_law_is_strangling_ creativity. html; 'The Read-Write Internet' in Lessig 2.0 blog, 17 January, 2006, http://www.lessig.org/ blog/2006/01/the_readwrite_internet.html; 'Creatives Face a Closed Net', *Financial Times,* 29 December, 2005, p.11, http://www.ft.com/cms/s/2/d55dfe52-77d2-11da-9670-0000779e2340. html; and *Free Culture: How Big Media Uses Technology and the Law to Lock Down Culture and Control Creativity.* London: Penguin, 2004.

notion and reassertion of fair and balanced copyright legislation.[35] This view understands the foundational philosophy of copyright as being about creation *and* access by future generations. Copyright is therefore deeply implicated in definitions of preservation and access online, and how these assign and delimit (digital) value.

In 1975, Canada became the first country to pay exhibition fees to artists, after successful lobbying by CARFAC (Canadian Artists' Representation / Le Front des artistes canadiens). CARFAC's lobbying also resulted in the federal Copyright Act Amendment, which recognizes artists as the 'primary producers of culture' and gives artists legal entitlement to exhibition and other fees.[36] Presumably, CARFAC and video art distributors across the country will detail online exhibition and screening fees in the near future. However, this issue remains contentious, given the grey zones within copyright legislation, and the lack of strategies for remuneration proposed by those who oppose the strict policing of the online realm. The lack of control over a Canadian context currently presumed possible on the web (by video art distributors more generally), including means to generate income for video artists online, keeps matters confused between the incredible potential of the web to provide unparalleled access, and the threat that open access poses to historical and cultural context, and value rooted in scarcity and authenticity.

Because there is generally a two-year window for video works to be featured in festivals and circulated by distributors, the value of the works is undoubtedly a factor in the artists' decisions to continue to showcase their work in the Mediatheque, without fee, after the third year.[37] The online environment prioritizes the circulation of culture and its preservation through popular use and open access and, and in many cases, through practices of appropriation and remix as both homage and critical response. Online culture is defined by what it privileges: the recursive nature of cultural circulation in and through the web is thus central to new definitions of preservation. This is made manifest by the Mediatheque, which showcased not only archival works, but undistributed and rare works that would probably never otherwise be seen by the general public or arts community. As no original screening quality

hard copy exists as part of the Mediatheque, to be materially conserved for posterity, preservation figures differently within this archive. In the case of the Mediatheque, if it is indeed an archive, preservation *is* access, despite what the archival ideal may be.[38]

According to Morris, however, the Mediatheque is a collection of 'loss leaders'; that is, the videos are offered for free online, so that they might lead the viewer to a larger body of the artist's work which could, in turn, stimulate income. However, as part of the crashed Mediatheque, these loss leaders are also imbued with the cultural capital emitting from the project's archival aura. The Mediatheque's video works have taken on a new value – that of inaccessibility – as part of this now defunct online repository of rare works. The crash, in essence, generates the cultural value of the collection.

There is consensus at SAW Video that, for the duration of its six years online, the Mediatheque was never fully embraced by the video arts community, either in its target region or beyond. While Morris explains this lack of involvement and appropriation by the community as mere disinterest in the web by video artists, many debates have since arisen from the idea of showcasing video art online, pointing to its growing popularity. Questions about maintaining, generating, and attributing value online, without efforts to redefine creativity and preservation in this new context, are paradoxical at best. Ironically, it is the crash that may ultimately generate more attention and accrue value to the collection, as archival value is largely informed by rarity, scarcity, and historical context.

Concluding Remarks

At the present time, McCann and SAW Video are actively seeking to restore the Mediatheque project. The loss of the original Mediatheque is important – yet so too is the project's potential future. In attempting to remodel itself, the Mediatheque is no longer alone; video streaming technologies have greatly improved, and venues have emerged, if not culminated in YouTube and Vimeo. Along with these new large-scale user-generated repositories come new modes of activating the archive, largely conceived through participatory, affective, and immaterial labour.[39] Based on the intensely draining experience of the custom-made and experimental archiving approach taken by Ignatiev and Morris in 2002, this newer trend towards diffuse and participatory contributions may be a welcome innovation.

As McCann explains, one of the goals for the new Mediatheque is to improve the resolution of the video works for online viewing.[40] While video streaming standards do not exist per se,

35. See Michael Geist (blog), http://www.michaelgeist.ca/; 'Preserving Printed and Digital Heritage', *BBC News* 22 January, 2007, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/technology/6287181.stm; and 'Geist: Software piracy charges against us unfair', *The Star*, May 9, 2010, http://www.thestar.com/business/article/807097--geist-software-piracy-charges-against-canada-are-unfair'. Also see Laura J. Murray 'Protecting ourselves to death: Canada, copyright, and the Internet', *First Monday, 9. 10 (2004), online :* http://firstmonday.org/issues/issue9_10/murray/index.html and http://www.michaelgeist.ca/.

36. http://www.carfac.ca/.

37. This second life for video art works is situated between the two-year festival/gallery circuit and works deemed historical or rich in archival value, such as collections from the 1970s, is one worth exploring in more detail, as it constitutes the entirety of the Mediatheque video collection. These works, flanked by assigned value periods, may point to one of the more important insights about online distribution and showcasing. Through this, digital value could be defined as a concept that accounts for the various 'lives' of media such as video, and perhaps, attribute value to these works in limbo–between these two periods. In this way, new and historical works online might be stripped of the value of their scarcity, while works older than the festival circuit allows, but far from historical, could gain digital value online.

38   See Geert Lovink, 'Back from Gent–Notes on Memories of the Future', net critique by Geert Lovink, 26 June, 2010, http://networkcultures.org/wpmu/geert/2010/06/26/back-from-gent-notes-on-memories-of-the-future/.

39   See Tiziana Terranova, *Network Culture: Politics for the Information Age*. London: Pluto Press, 2004.

40   However, despite wanting a Mediatheque showcasing better quality versions of the works, there were no originals demanded of the Mediatheque project, and so the small Real Player format are what is left. This could simply mean that future works are showcased using a better format and resolution, and that older works be left as trace and showcase of the Mediatheque's history.

Flash, HTML5, and other open video formats have greatly enriched the online (and mobile) video sharing and viewing experience. Of course, better quality increases the risk that the necessity and desire for a material collection and material circulation will be eradicated. The pros and cons of unfettered distribution, the value of video works circulating online, and copyright and artists' fees are issues that were rather more understated in 2002. This shift is one clear example of the interlocking natures of technology with cultural, legal, and political ideals, worth serious attention in future studies.

What has, and can, become of a project so 'ahead of its time' reveals a great deal about the possibilities and limitations of independent repositories within particular social and historical contexts, such as that of the legacy of video art in Canada. [41] In retrospect, what was conceived of as an online archive in 2002 may not have met all necessary requirements. Conversely, what may not have been an attempt to 'make history' in 2002 today seems a remarkable feat for SAW Video. [42]

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41 My point of departure for this issue is always the reflection posted here: Felix Stalder 'Copyright dungeons and grey zones' From: *nettime-l Digest*, Vol 7, Issue 10, sent: 15 April, 2008, http://www.nettime.org.

42 In response to this, wayward.ca will showcase online for one month ten works from the Mediatheque project and a screening is scheduled for November 2010 at Groupe Intervention Video (GIV) Montreal to discuss the future of the project.

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ETHICAL PRESENTATION OF INDIGENOUS MEDIA IN THE AGE OF OPEN VIDEO: CULTIVATING COLLABORATION, SOVEREIGNTY AND SUSTAINABILITY

TEAGUE SCHNEITER

'*When we are ancestors, we will be a product of our actions*'. [1]

We are in the midst of a pivotal moment for online video – the tools for creating and disseminating video online are now prolific, and video sharing sites have encouraged an entire movement towards user-generated content. Content, tools and platforms continue to proliferate, making the world of online video one of significant and ongoing change. A recent Nielsen report released this year revealed that approximately 70% of global online consumers now watch online video. [2] As video creation and video sharing become ubiquitous, the web has become a battlefield, with the constant conflict typically framed as a struggle for digital freedom against digital censorship. Online video has created an ecology of uncharted openness; punctuated by the fact that it has become common for people to share and create videos without the relevant copyright permissions. Governments [3] and companies attempt to restrict information and unchecked usage on the web, while independent organizations fight for freedom of information, transparency and fair use. In an important victory for free culture advocates, the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) this year won three exemptions to the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA), effectively 'carving out new legal protections for consumers who modify their cell phones and artists who remix videos – people who, until now, could have been sued for their non-infringing or fair use activities'. [4] The workings of the net seem to require constant sparring between those in possession of distinctive ethical value-systems: proprietary vs. open

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1. Honiana Te Puni Love & Neavin Broughton, 'Tuku Reo, Tuku Mouri: Information technology in the strategic revitalisation of Te Reo Maori o Taranaki (Taranaki Maori dialect) in Aotearoa New Zealand', *Information Technologies and Indigenous Communities Symposium*, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSI), Canberra, Australia, 2010.
2. 'How People Watch – A Global Nielsen Consumer Report', Nielsen Wire blog, 4 August, 2010. http://blog.nielsen.com/nielsenwire/global/report-how-we-watch-the-global-state-of-videoconsumption/.
3. According to the OpenNet Initiative's website: 'Drawing on arguments that are often powerful and compelling such as "securing intellectual property rights," "protecting national security," "preserving cultural norms and religious values," and "shielding children from pornography and exploitation," many states are implementing extensive filtering practices to curb the perceived lawlessness of the medium', *About Filtering,* OpenNet Initiative, http://opennet.net/about-filtering.
4. 'EFF Wins New Legal Protections for Video Artists, Cell Phone Jailbreakers, and Unlockers: Rulemaking Fixes Critical DMCA Wrongs', Electronic Frontier Foundation, 26 July, 2010, http://www.eff.org/press/archives/2010/07/26.

source, intellectual property protection vs. public domain, stringent digital rights management vs. digital commons, and open vs. restricted access.

In the midst of this sparring, the movement to embrace *openness* for digital tools for video is off to a running start. In 2009, the Open Video Alliance, a 'coalition of organizations and individuals committed to the idea that the power of the moving image should belong to everyone'[5] held its inaugural gathering, with 800 attendees in person and 8,000 online participants. The 2010 conference saw 950 attendees, 160 presenters, and, again, an estimated 8,000 viewers online. Also, in 2009, the Association for Moving Image Archivists initiated their first Open Source Committee, which focuses on developing open source solutions for digital moving image preservation and presentation on the web. These efforts are evidence of the increasing acknowledgement of the need to find answers to the vast range of often complex questions that emerge with online video technologies and shifts in practices of media consumption. The fact that video distribution and presentation is increasingly migrating online, a medium which by nature encourages openness and sharing, is re-structuring the processes of knowledge dissemination itself. Increasing access to media, as well as moves to create openness in coding and software that are behind video distribution online, are two important yet distinct sides of the same coin. However, in the midst of this *opening*, the rights of some internet users are being pushed to the side.

Indigenous media – that is, media created by and about First Peoples – can raise issues that do not fit as easily into the typical dichotomy between ownership and openness. This poses questions about the full, or uncritical, embrace of openness. If it is not properly managed, free, open, and highly mutable methods of video dissemination could have profound impacts upon Indigenous knowledge and media dissemination. In this article, I will mostly focus on archival videos that depict traditional culture, documenting cultural tradition, language, and storytelling. It is important to note that these potentially culturally sensitive images and forms are distinct from the content produced by various Indigenous communities and individuals who are presently creating moving images. Nevertheless, the two forms converge in their need to be self-managed and controlled by Indigenous practitioners.

The Age of Open[ing] Video
The attempts to create openness on the web – open sharing, open remixing, open networks, open democracy, open content, open licenses, and 'the commons' – may automatically seem like ethical practices, as they work in the interest of universal access to all human knowledge. However, when we take into account that there are, in fact, many diverse cultures – especially traditional and Indigenous cultures – struggling to maintain their *distinct* knowledge systems, which are engrained in distinctive cultural values and endangered languages, the idea of entering all knowledge into a vast soup appears more problematic, for much of the cultural context and tools for cultural interpretation are lost. There is potential for distinct cultural practices to become blurred, and for lack of context to lead to misinterpretation and even denigration of Indigenous cultures. In this era of rapid change – of climate change,

corporate takeover and technological advancement – Indigenous groups are fighting to preserve cultures, languages, ways of life, and knowledge systems that differ dramatically from non-Indigenous forms. Continuing to fight a pervasive history of misrepresentation and institutionalization of media on the part of museums and archives, Indigenous groups are not only reclaiming the means of production, but of preservation and presentation. The small and large-scale repatriation efforts undertaken by cultural institutions to return objects and documentation to the Indigenous communities in which they were created are a testament to the importance of Indigenous people controlling and managing their own heritage materials.[6] Some of this material, such as video recordings of sacred ceremonies, is not meant to be viewed by non-initiated people either within or outside the Indigenous community. So, when museums and archives make efforts to digitize films recorded by anthropologists, missionaries, scientists, photographers, or explorers and repatriate them to communities, if they make them accessible in ways that are counter to Indigenous knowledge formations, the same power imbalances can be reinforced. A long history of colonialism, bolstered via the control of media production and access, means that Indigenous and other marginalized media must be self-managed.

Because it is 'the commons'[7] that decide what resources should be shared as a society, in accordance with what is assumed to be good for a generalized public, the principles that emerge from the movement towards openness online do not necessarily suit Indigenous people, and their diverse ways of knowing and living. Within the rhetoric surrounding a video commons is a universalist assumption that all media should be freely available to all users. According to researcher Kimberly Christen, co-developer of two innovative digital archives designed around Indigenous protocols, 'In their critique of the current "romance of the public domain", legal scholars suggest that the prevalent commons talk, especially among the advocates of a digital commons, ignores the multiple disparities between those assumed to make up the commons'.[8] Christen goes on to point out that intellectual property regimes misrepresent the nature of knowledge allocation and distribution within Indigenous knowledge systems.[9] Many Indigenous cultures abide by cultural protocols, forms of cultural exchange, and knowledge management that can be significantly different from Western forms; for example these protocols may be collective, based on 'systems of accountability',[10] or connected to the land. For some Australian Aboriginal groups, certain knowledge, stories, songs, dances, and ceremonies are only meant for initiated members of the community, so that knowledge is classified according to the groupings of gender, age, and level of initiation.

5.   See the Open Video Alliance's 'About' page: http://openvideoalliance.org/about_ova/.

6.   Institutions such as the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Australia's National Film and Television Archive, and the Smithsonian Museum of the American Indian, are beginning to acknowledge the traditional owners of the material they hold in their collections. They are doing so by small and large-scale physical object and digital repatriation schemes, as well as working with Tribal advisors and collaborators.

7.   I am using the term 'commons' in the sense of universal participation.

8.   Kimberly Christen, 'Gone Digital: Aboriginal Remix and the Cultural Commons', *International Journal of Cultural Property* 12.3 (2005): 332-333.

9.   Christen, 'Gone Digital', p. 333.

10.   Christen, 'Gone Digital', p. 333.

There is also a cultural tradition of not speaking the name of loved ones who have died.[11] Additionally, the languages of many Indigenous groups do not have written forms, or are embedded within so much culturally specific knowledge that they are difficult to translate or make meaningful to outsiders. Thus, when we acknowledge the diversity of knowledge systems, and that those systems need to be differently and separately managed, the idea of sharing everything becomes not only unattainable, but undesirable. The need for cultural distinctiveness, cultural rights and cultural protocols suggests the need for coordinated, specific strategies for video presentation that may not fit harmoniously within the overwhelming outcry for universal openness. Not everything is meant to be shared, remixed, or turned into a meme.

It is perilous to assume that, since mainstream culture seems to be slowly migrating towards an acceptance of universal openness, *all* content will or should be Creative Commons, freely accessible, usable, shared, or remixed. However, as media tools and use proliferate both for Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, these protocols for viewing are shifting in relation to the technology. Indigenous online video demonstrates that cultural tradition and protocols are constantly in Flux, as are the digital commons themselves. To assume that technology is constantly evolving towards the future, whilst traditional cultures are in stasis, is fictitious. According to Christen,

> The allure of studying indigenous uses of new technologies lies in the juxtaposition of two seemingly contradictory elements: the past-oriented, romantic notion of indigenous peoples who are somehow in modernity but not of it, set against the future-oriented, equally romantic notion of new technologies as the signifier of a progressive, fast-paced, global modernity... .For a contradiction to be imaginable, it must function in a given set of standards and practices: this one says that indigenous people cannot be simultaneously traditional and modern, technologically savvy and politically astute, materially oriented and authentically indigenous. That logic is wrong. [12]

Online Indigenous media portals and digital archives have the potential to activate the simultaneity of tradition and ongoing change within contemporary Indigenous culture. When the tools are accessible, audiovisual objects such as videos, audio, and photos which document traditional (and ever-evolving) cultural practices and language can be easily shared online or offline by web-based technologies, thereby empowering and enfranchising Indigenous individuals and communities. As David Nathan notes, the online environment 'has reconstituted the balance between visual, oral and textual modes of presenting information in a way that

supports cultural perspectives'. [13] To take this point further, it might be argued that video and databases, being based less on the written word and more on oral and visual ways of knowing, are particularly suited to Indigenous knowledge representation and dissemination. The database allows for the organization of information in new and multiple ways, and thus allows Indigenous knowledge to be structured and presented on its own terms – whether visually, or according to metadata fields based on Indigenous knowledge. Additionally, improved metadata, enhanced by users with specific cultural knowledge, protects material against misinterpretation and misappropriation.

As the landscape of Indigenous video online is constantly in flux, we can ask the following questions: How can we make use of an ecology of openness while at the same time protecting Indigenous knowledges? In upholding protocols and restricting cultural information for specific groups, can we at the same time denounce censorship? How can we make an argument for Indigenous peoples (or ethnic groups) being able to maintain culture (by keeping certain parts of it for initiated members of the community) in ways that do not work against universal access to knowledge? Is open Indigenous video an oxymoron? The landscape of open video presents us with the possibility of offering Indigenous media on its own, ever-shifting terms. This article is only a small contribution to what must be a widespread, collaborative, inventive, and ongoing discussion between all stakeholders in online video. It seeks to open up critical areas of discussion about technical and cultural protocols of openness, property, and propriety.

The Proliferation of Indigenous Media
Indigenous communities and individuals have been engaging in media creation for decades, for more reasons than can be counted. Video has been used as a tool for human rights struggles, artistic expression, cultural and language preservation, and for delivering forth Native voices to and between local and global arenas. Despite the long history of media creation from countless communities, Indigenous issues continue to be marginalized within public debate, resulting in unequal distribution of resources and even human rights violations. Additionally, interviews; recordings of ceremonies, stories, songs and dances; documentaries; fiction films; video art; testimonies; animation; new media art, and many other forms of media creation, whether created by anthropologists in the 1890s or by Indigenous video artists today, all have an important place in the history of moving images that relate to Indigenous peoples, as well as the history of moving images more generally. These might include interviews, recordings of ceremonies, stories, songs and dances, documentaries, fiction films, video art, testimonies, animation, new media art, or other forms of media creation. To leave this content out of the collective memory, simply because of its politically charged or complicated nature, would be yet another iteration of colonialism. In most cases, material that is not appropriate for public display (which is usually not content created by Indigenous artists, but rather visual

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11. But with the advent of recording technologies and now new digital technologies, this practice continues to shift. For more on this, please see: 'On Not Looking: the Ethics of Aesthetics in Online Exhibits', Invited presentation as part of the University of Rochester's Visual and Cultural Studies Program's conference, *Visual and Cultural Studies the Next 20 years*, Rochester, NY, October 2, 2009.
12. Christen, 'Gone Digital', p. 318.

13. David Nathan, quoted in Martin Nakata, 'Indigenous Knowledge and the Cultural Interface: Underlying Issues at the Intersection of Knowledge and Information Systems', *IFLA Journal*, 28 (2002): 287.

images taken by anthropologists or researchers since the time of contact),[14] still has a need to be preserved and made accessible to communities themselves.

However, as the distribution of Indigenous media is becoming more and more common, the landscape seems to be shifting. The scores of Indigenous individuals, collectives and communities who are creating content more prolifically than ever before do not only have access to more avenues of distribution in the growing number of festivals and events centred around Indigenous media, [15] but also in the emerging use of online media. One historic yet recent example of this emerging use of online video took place in 2008 when independent Inuit film production company Isuma Productions went online with their interactive multimedia platform IsumaTV. [16] The platform was created out of a need by Inuit, Aboriginal, Métis and other First Nations film-makers to have independent means of distributing their work. Inequitable access to national distribution and broadcast licensing for Inuit or Aboriginal-language films in Canada makes it difficult, if not impossible, to have more films financed or produced. IsumaTV's multimedia platform for global Indigenous media, has a variety of content, functionalities, and projects. It allows users not only to record, store and present content, but to share and create an active community around Indigenous knowledges, languages, experiences, opinions, ways of life, and around issues that traverse the local and the global. Once called a 'YouTube for Indigenous media', it is now a trusted repository of important Indigenous language, cultural and political content, which in its first fifteen months had 7.5 million hits from over 40 countries. IsumaTV is innovative, in that it provides free tools for users to upload multimedia content posted to channels based on the categories of community, organization, artist, issue, or project, among others.

Although IsumaTV's Inuit and other First Nations users seem to be more interested in public access and openness than in private or limited access, the platform also has the capacity to make any information private. This capacity is only available to people who are designated 'members' of a channel: private channels allow information to be 'open' to a specific community of users but 'closed' to all other users. IsumaTV also offers tools to share content within the general public, or with a community of choice. Furthermore, IsumaTV is working on hybrid combinations of online and offline means of distribution, such as using local server networks to make sure that Indigenous people are able to access content in poorly connected areas. IsumaTV's moves to create increased openness via broadband solutions that improve access and allow users to define their own sets of openness demonstrates one way of negotiating the tensions that exist between access and restriction.

[Open] Indigenous Video

Within the more specific contest of online video, the seemingly inherent and at times overvalued concept of openness has important ethical implications for Indigenous content. Part of the mission of the newly formed Open Video Alliance is to facilitate the creation of 'a more decentralized, diverse, competitive, accessible, interoperable, and innovative future of video'. [17] The Open Video Alliance, a collective venture between an ad-hoc group of organizations dedicated to fostering the growth of open video, including the Yale Information Society Project at Yale Law School, Kaltura, who are the developers of the world's first full open source online video platform, the Participatory Culture Foundation, who are the creators of the open source Miro internet video player, and iCommons, hope to contribute to a much needed shift toward greater access and the free and open use of media in everyday life. In the context of Indigenous video online, the recent emergence of the concept of open video and its defining principles – such as combating censorship and upholding 'universal accessibility' – have important implications for Indigenous content, because of the aforementioned variety of knowledge systems and cultural protocols, which differ greatly depending on the community in discussion. Critical issues emerge when considering the potential free and open distribution of Indigenous online video content, including issues of the sacred, safety and security (especially when media tools are used during times of civil unrest), and Indigenous intellectual property differences.

These issues are highlighted in the case of images taken without permission which also violate Indigenous cultural protocols, such as films of sacred cultural ceremonies recorded by anthropologists, or pictures of deceased persons that are too 'sorrowful' [18] to view. Images of such a sensitive nature require a media landscape that provides autonomous control over this content to those pictured, or their relatives and ancestors, especially for the goal of making positive cultural or community use out of problematic material. The cultural, political and ethical dilemmas of moving images and their potential consequences demand understanding from online video practitioners. Thus, they might conceive of ways that open practices might help to actually expand cultural sovereignty, increase awareness in the field of online video, assist projects in becoming more sustainable, and enable such powerful modes of sharing and collaboration to encourage wider culturally and epistemologically sensitive access to Indigenous content.

Somewhat surprisingly, upon its birth, the open video movement had already begun to be a part of the conversation surrounding ethics and Indigenous content. The 2009 Open Video

14. A good example of this is when ceremonies are recorded without permission. One notable exception is in the situation of Aboriginal Australian visual media, images of individuals who have passed away become too painful to view, regardless of how the images were taken.

15. In 2009, Toronto's imagineNATIVE Film + Media Art Fesitval, now considered the world's largest and most prolific indigenous film festival, had a record number of attendees: 11,561 people in total attended festival events. Information from Violet Chum (Festival Assistant), e-mail message to author, February 26, 2010.

16. IsumaTV: www.isuma.tv.

17. Open Video Alliance public wiki, http://openvideoalliance.org/wiki/index.php?title=Some_principles_for_open_video.

18. While it's true that images of the dead can also be sorrowful in a western context, in those contexts this does not usually restrict their showing. However, in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, seeing an image of or speaking the name of a deceased person is usually not done out of respect, and because of an overwhelming feeling of pain felt by the grieving family. Many films in Australia are required to have a title card warning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to 'use caution viewing this film, as it may contain images or voices of dead persons', an act of respect for their cultural views.

Conference, in conjunction with the Open Video Alliance, hosted a panel entitled 'Human Rights and Indigenous Media: Dilemmas, Challenges and Opportunities'. An introduction was given by WITNESS Hub Manager Sameer Padania regarding the intersection of open video with ethical concerns relating to human rights, and more specifically to Indigenous rights. In the context of human rights video documentation, Padania raised the question of whether a culture of openness can be supported when it comes to concerns of consent, dignity, representation, and security for Indigenous communities. Subsequently, NYU's Faye Ginsburg spoke about the movement of media technologies into Indigenous communities, and the effectiveness of video for visibility, such as the use of camera by Indigenous groups as protection by recording injustice and mistreatment. However, she also acknowledged the danger of open video when it comes to cultural protocols that vary between Indigenous communities. As a first step, Ginsburg recommended conversation about what is ethically acceptable and what is not. Ideas regarding cultural protocols are proliferating, with the interest in ethics of presentation garnering interest and support. Quite a few academics and practitioners are focusing on this area, including Kimberley Christen, and the Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums, including their associated events. The issue has also been addressed in the cultural protocols developed in collaboration with the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies [19] and the Society of American Archivists.

The Problem of Access

Online public domain and open access information resources, knowledge, and media are proliferating. And yet, despite the intense focus upon openness – open content and open source – access to online video is actually closed in a number of ways to many potential Indigenous viewers, users and sharers. Currently, those most frequently accessing Indigenous media online are often researchers or non-native people with high-speed broadband or satellite connections. Many Indigenous people living in remote settings do not have access to adequate bandwidth to stream video at high-speed, and those in rural or urban settings sometimes do not have adequate access to computers. In Igloolik, a town with a population of about 1,500 in the remote Nunavut territory in the Canadian Arctic, maximum download speeds of 762 kb/sec are available at $400 Canadian per month: a rate that is 65 times *slower* than in Montreal or Ottawa at *five times* the price. And unfortunately, low bandwidth northern communities who are already *365 times* behind cities like Ottawa or Montreal in cost-per-kilobit see the size of this gap grow every year. [20] Limited technological infrastructure on reservations and in remote communities means that potential users and user communities attain limited benefit from innovations in online video. These same limitations also restrict offline, community-centred uses of video. [21]

This lack of media infrastructure, when combined with the remoteness of communities, has garnered some interest from researchers and even film-makers (such as those at IsumaTV), who are able to make a case for national and international philanthropic and university funding and resources. As a result of these partnerships, a number of *extra*-institutional digital places/archives for cultural heritage preservation have been emerging in the last few years, especially in Australia and North America. Culturally appropriate databases based on Indigenous knowledge systems have been created, built, and maintained both online and offline, in collaboration with archival professionals, information scientists, anthropologists and programmers. Many of these projects are increasingly open source, demonstrating the recognition of the need for sharing the tools that have been created specifically for Indigenous cultural heritage management, allowing an open system for creating the structure of ownership. These efforts have come at a time when there is an increasing awareness on the part of cultural institutions that Indigenous content belongs to its cultural owners, including a large number of repatriation efforts. However, like any other media, the magnitude of content exceeds the limited technological infrastructure possessed by many Indigenous communities, especially if there is no funded archivist or researcher to assist them. For most Indigenous communities, once content is repatriated, a lack of further resources prevents them from making it accessible.

The most ethically and epistemologically robust way to preserve Indigenous heritage is through community collaboration, especially in the design of the infrastructure and contextualization of the content. This is the case, for example, in projects developed by engineers, designers, ethnographers, and developers - including Ramesh Srinivasan, Kimberly Christen and her team, as well as others. [22] These innovative projects have been created out of the need for people to access content in culturally appropriate ways. They illustrate how both offline and online models are able to be maintained whilst upholding ethical and culturally appropriate presentation of media content. In 2003, development began for Mukurtu Wumpurrarni-kari Archive, an offline digital archive housed at the Nyinkka Nyunyu Art and Culture Centre in Tennant Creek, Northern Territory, Australia. The archive allows content to be uploaded, managed, shared and annotated through a specific set of cultural protocols designated by the Warumungu community. As a browser-based digital archive for multimedia content that emphasizes 'access', 'accountability', and 'cultural protocols' that drive the way people interact with content, Mukurtu is highly successful in its use of Warumungu cultural protocols to facilitate access to content. In using those protocols, the Mukurtu Wumpurrarni-kari website explains, 'the archive mirrors a system of accountability in which many people engage in the responsible reproduction and transmission of cultural knowledge and materials'. [23] Its database structure, user-friendly visual interface, and interactive features (such as a profile-based content delivery

19. *The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protocols for Libraries, Archives and Information Services* was published in 1995 by ALIA. It was endorsed by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Library and Information Resource Network (ATSILIRN), has been looked to in developing other protocols globally, and is available in full online: http://www1.aiatsis.gov.au/atsilirn/protocols.atsilirn.asn.au/index0c51.html.

20. Norman Cohn, *DIAMA: Digitizing the Inuit and Aboriginal Media Archive 2008-09 Final Report*, funding report, 1 August, 2009, p. 29.

21. Such as content management systems that are created only for local, community use.

22. See the project descriptions in: Ramesh Srinivasan, 'Tribal Peace – Preserving the Cultural Heritage of Dispersed Native American Communities'. Paper presented at the biennale *International Cultural Heritage Informatics Conference: Digital Culture & Heritage*, Haus der Kulturne der Welt, Berlin, August 31-September 2, 2004, www.archimuse.com/publishing/ichim04/4763_Srinivasan.pdf; Kimberley Christen et al., 'Digital Dilemmas, Cultural Solutions: the Mukurtu Wumpurrarni-kari Archive', project description, 29 January, 2008,. www.mukurtuarchive.org/doc/mukurtu_press_release_02_08.doc.

23. Mukurtu Wumpurrarni-kari Archive, http://www.mukurtuarchive.org/about.html.

system, and user-generated content groupings) allow users to navigate through content and arrange items according to their own categories, add tags and comments, and make their own access copies. These systems, by being restricted to members of the community, allow users to form their own safe public spaces around media content.

Extending upon the software created for Mukurtu, Christen and her collaborators subsequently created the Plateau Peoples' Web Portal (PPWP). Instead of a browser-based *off*line digital archive, PPWP is online, as the Plateau tribes are physically located across three states, and because the material users wanted access to was held at regional and national collecting institutions. This is an online digital archive space that allows Plateau peoples' cultural materials, which are held in Washington State University's special collections and in the Museum of Anthropology, to be curated by Plateau Tribes. [24] The PPWP website notes that the software, using extensive administration features, provides each tribe with 'control over their content, narratives, tribal knowledge, metadata fields and categories' so that 'Tribal administrators and tribal users can add additional knowledge to the portal materials on an on-going basis through the dynamic back-end features'. [25] Collaborators involved in both projects are currently developing the Mukurtu software tool into an open source, standards-based archive and content management tool geared to the specific cultural protocols and intellectual property needs of indigenous communities globally. [26]

Another innovative project created out of the need for specific cultural needs is A̲ra Irititja. A̲ra Irititja ('stories from a long time ago') is a community-based digital archive and software initiative designed at the request of Pitjantjatjara / Yankunytjatjara (A̲nangu) peoples in South Australia. [27] Officially commenced in 1994 to repatriate 'lost' material for A̲nangu, and to make it available and participatory at the community and personal level, the project has effectively drawn family and community members of all ages together, through the use of multimedia content. The innovative software is presented visually, organized according to Indigenous standards, in native languages wherever possible, and protects and/or restricts access to private and sensitive materials, such as images of people who have passed away, and information relating to men's and women's business. [28] Over time, other Aboriginal communities and related organizations, such as the Koorie Heritage Trust in Melbourne, the

Northern Territory Library System, and the Sisters of St John of God in Broome, have begun to use the A̲ra Irititja software in order to organize their own content.

To further its reach, this year the A̲ra Irititja project is launching server/browser-based knowledge management software that will be available for purchase to other communities internationally, and adaptable to their specific needs. The purchaser of the license will have control over software development, enabling extensive changes to be made to the interface, to data entry fields and to functionality, according to the specific needs of the community. For interested communities to make major adaptations to A̲ra Irititja, they of course need to have funding allotted to pay a programmer, train for community maintenance, and ideally to support members of the community, especially elders, to advise about cultural protocols. With the right support, communities will be able to make serious graphic and structural changes, as well as create individual 'profiles' under such headings as 'people', 'flora', 'fauna', 'places', 'events', 'activities', 'cosmological narratives', 'stories', and 'historical stories'. These headings can be deleted, added and re-named to suit the needs of any community. The new software also allows content to be categorized as 'open', 'sensitive', or 'sorrow', according to cultural protocols. And since the updated A̲ra Irititja is web-ready, content can be curated, and 'open' content may go online (but not necessarily be made 'public'), [29] whilst sensitive content will remain available only to community members where the software is running. The new software also enables archive users to annotate material with text or even with audio or video comments. This new functionality removes the necessity for the written word, and allows users to record their knowledge in their own words and language. This has the potential to encourage not only knowledge about multimedia content, but increase the archive of video and audio material of endangered Indigenous languages.

All three of these web-based archives for multimedia materials – IsumaTV, Mukurtu and A̲ra Irititja – exemplify the use of web-based database technologies and customized informational architectures to provide digital archives that foreground user-centred design, networking, and sharing potential. Though the software used for these projects is not specific to video, it represents some interesting moves toward increased sovereignty and collaboration using web-based technologies. It also demonstrates how internet access and online knowledge-sharing can contribute directly to Indigenous livelihoods and can actually be productively aligned with traditional Indigenous knowledge systems and protocols. Though adaptations to the architecture may still require the assistance of a software developer, both the A̲ra Irititja and Mukurtu archive projects are moving towards the development of tools that are economically sustainable, open source, or both, and thus may help serve global Indigenous communities. These efforts also demonstrate how local, community-focused projects are opening themselves up to more global forms of collaboration.

To summarize, as more and more Indigenous media makers create content, and as museums, archives, and other cultural institutions rapidly decentralize their collections and ac-

24. Plateau tribes are the Indigenous people of the Plateau or Intermontane region of western Canada and the United States.

25. Plateau Peoples' Web Portal, http://libarts.wsu.edu/plateaucenter/portalproject/design.html.

26. Check the Mukurtu website for updates regarding the new software tool: http://www.mukurtuarchive.org/.

27. For more Information see, www.irititja.com. John Dallwitz, Douglas Mann, Sally Scales, Sabra Thorner; Dora Dallwitz. 'A̲ra Irititja', Information Technologies and Indigenous Communities Symposium, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS), Canberra, Australia, July 14, 2010. Video documentation of the event available on the AIATSIS website: http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/research/symposia/Digi10/presenters.htm.

28. This cultural protocol has to do with Men and Women having different roles in society and in ceremonies; these roles vary from language group to language group. Some ceremonies are for men only, others are for women only, and both men and women have their own particular Spiritual and sacred objects: http://www.indigenousaustralia.info/culture.html.

29. If a community chooses, open content can be designated by senior elders or other knowledge holders. The new A̲ra Irititja will most likely be on an intranet - an online network that is kept private by multiple levels of security.

knowledge Indigenous protocols and rights to ownership through repatriation, there is an increasing need for tools and strategies to make fruitful use of the growing amount of content. In fact, the moves of A<u>r</u>a Irititja, Mukurtu and IsumaTV to think creatively about how their particular uses of technology might serve Indigenous communities globally brings to mind two Inuit principles in particular: *Qanuqtuurunnarniq* [30] is the concept of being resourceful to solve problems; *Piliriqatigiingniq* is the concept of collaborative relationships or working together for a common purpose. In the digital era, Indigenous peoples and their advocates are thinking resourcefully about future pathways, and exploring new methods and technologies to enable cultural and linguistic revitalization.

Indigenous communities have used video and online technologies to respond to challenges in representation, cultural preservation, language endangerment, and other political and cultural goals. The aforementioned projects are examples of how openness in sharing solutions and technologies can have positive effects for Indigenous knowledge, cultural sustainability, and cultural revival. However, although significant progress has been made, these efforts are dispersed and disconnected, and their impact has arguably been limited in comparison to the vast amount of global Indigenous-related video. The lack of a global alliance, shared tools, and standardized cultural and technical protocols that are able to cater to non-standard Indigenous cultural protocols is impeding further development. In order to make use of the technologies available, and to protect Indigenous cultural protocols and ways of knowing, the world of online video needs to invest in collaborations that will facilitate, develop and *share* sovereign and sustainable solutions. The benefits of congregating (if not entirely unifying) dispersed efforts into an alliance or network of interested parties (under Indigenous control with non-Indigenous and institutional supports or supporters from the online video and moving image archiving worlds) are great. There is also a need for an open source management system or tool for Indigenous video that is adaptation-ready. The Mukurtu team's development of the new Mukurtu software, which will be an open source standards-based archive tool for global use, shows that significant steps are being taken, but they require further support if the diverse communities across the globe are to benefit. Sustaining these projects is difficult, as they rely on governmental, philanthropic and university funding, which can be sporadic and limited.

Unfortunately, in the fields of moving image archiving or online video, the knowledge needed to digitally archive and make Indigenous heritage accessible is not yet widespread. [31] In North America, a strong start has been made with the aforementioned panels at the Open Video

conference, as well as the development of the Native American Archives Roundtable for the Society of American Archivists (SAA), and their subsequent work with supporters [32] on the *Protocols for Native American Archival Materials*. [33] However, as protocols and standards addressing Native American material are neither widely known or used by the moving image archives or online video community, nor specifically focused on online moving image material, there is still a gap to be filled, especially for cultural institutions that have holdings that relate or belong to Indigenous groups who would like to make the material accessible.

However, the networking and knowledge-sharing capabilities that the web affords do provide the opportunity to develop numerous partnerships between activists, advocates, researchers, archivists, elders, technologists, community members, and programmers. In order for Indigenous peoples to reclaim culture on the net, the new sets of video tools and practices being developed need to be more broadly accessible. To develop these tools and practices, it is necessary to encourage the development of a network which would draw together all constituents and stakeholders from the open video movement: Indigenous media, (Indigenous) intellectual property, information science, and Indigenous libraries and archives. [34]

Based upon the formal experiments and technical successes of recent local projects, the network would most likely have three essential features. A central node would exist as an online platform and have a channel structure to allow the formation of different knowledge communities/committees surrounding various issues, such as intellectual property and best practice. Secondly, a blog containing information on Indigenous protocols for archiving and access would expand in-depth knowledge on special interest areas to media workers developing local projects, and providing close-up snapshots of project achievements and innovations worldwide, as well as advocating for varied cultural needs. And finally, a series of training events and conferences would expand and share knowledge on a variety of topics. In addition, members of the network could write guest blogs for YouTube's politics blog, in order to share the importance of Indigenous ethics and online video, just as WITNESS and YouTube have formed a partnership to increase awareness of the role of online video in human rights advocacy. [35] These efforts would increase cultural understanding of issues pertaining to online video, and the use of open technologies to achieve cultural goals for com-

30. Chris Corrigan, 'What is Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit?', 16 August, 2010, http://chriscorrigan.com/parkinglot/?p=2875.

31. A blogger named 'Russell' on the archiving blog Records Junkie seems unaware of indigenous epistemological differences, and therefore does not see why indigenous content should ever be under restricted access: 'No one, Native American tribe or not, has any legal right to force the archives to limit access to the materials ... I do not believe that cultural awareness or sensitivity to cultural norms or mores should dictate 1) who owns materials from different cultures or 2) who controls access and use to these materials'. See: Russell, 'Who Owns Cultural Materials', Records Junkie, blog posted 30 January, 2010, http://recordsjunkie.blogspot.com/2010/01/who-controls-cultural-materials.html.

32. The development of the protocols was also supported by the Society of the Council for the Preservation of Anthropological Records, the American Indian Library Association, the International Indigenous Librarians Forum, and the American Association for State and Local History.

33. The *Protocols* were devised from different professional ethical codes from the Society of American Archivists, American Association for State and Local History, American Anthropological Association, and the Oral History Association; a number of significant international declarations recognizing Indigenous rights, including several now issued by the United Nations; and the ground-breaking *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protocols for Libraries, Archives and Information Services*.

34. Such as those involved in the American Indian Library Association; Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums; and the Global Indigenous Television Network.

35. See: 'Protecting yourself, your subjects and your human rights videos on YouTube', 21 June, 2010, http://youtube-global.blogspot.com/2010/06/protecting-yourself-your-subjects-and.html.

munities with distinctive cultural needs, as well as partnering communities with the software tools and programmers that are most suited to them. The network would be a way foster and integrate Indigenous knowledge into the field of online video. Although thus far its efforts have concentrated more on open access to media, the existing global Indigenous media network IsumaTV could be the perfect online site for gathering those with the specialized knowledge and common goals that are necessary for more epistemologically sensitive, collaborative, sovereign, and sustainable access to Indigenous video.

While it might be difficult to find the additional labour required to maintain this global network, in the long run the network would prevent unachievable and under-resourced 'reinventions of the wheel' at the local and global levels. Although such an alliance might appear to threaten the sovereignty of individual communities, archives and networks, the proposed network would allow distinct cultural groups to maintain their own protocols, while sharing methods, tools, systems, and best practices. The value of such a network would be its independence from anyone institutional context. As part of the network, each organization could choose their degree of involvement and collaboration with other groups, individuals and communities.

Conclusion
If we understand the age of open[ing] video as one of increased and *improved* access, it becomes possible to imagine open video and Indigenous video existing harmoniously. Is openness inherently a public good, or does it depend on the way openness is instigated? As content, tools and platforms continue to proliferate, the world of online video can adapt to meet the needs of Indigenous communities. This is especially necessary because the needs of such communities are neither uniform, nor perfectly conducive to open standards per se. In fact, they are incredibly diverse: protocols do not only differ from community to community, but from family to family. The needs and expressions of knowledge, tradition, and living cultures are constantly evolving. But as the possibilities of web-based customizable tools evolve with them, Indigenous people will have more power to decide what becomes openly accessible to the public, thereby exerting continuous self-determined ownership of their own histories and cultures. Online video practitioners have a cultural responsibility to respect and nurture the fact that Indigenous cultural heritage ultimately belongs to the knowledge keepers, elders, communities, and individuals who have maintained their own systems of knowledge for thousands of years.

Despite constant battles for funding, the aforementioned multimedia Indigenous heritage projects have devised creative solutions in order to address the needs for Indigenous self-determination and sovereignty. Collaborative and participatory activities around video and technology have the ability to stimulate social, cultural, political and economic growth in Indigenous individuals, groups, communities, and cultures. However, organizational and structural models of collaboration need to be developed to give critical (in both senses of the term) support to unstable open content creation, and the ideals and realities of access. Developing technical and cultural protocols for such a distinct, diverse, and critical set of content as online Indigenous video will require that we extend available tools to those who do not currently have access to them. In order to achieve ethical openness, we must invest in an online video ecosystem that cultivates collaboration, sovereignty, and sustainability.

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THE VIDEO AGENDA IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, OR, 'DIGITAL, SO NOT DIGITAL'

DAVID TEH

In the last decade, increasing access to digital video (DV) technology has transformed independent film practices in Southeast Asia. Not surprisingly, commentaries on the profusion of DV have tended to highlight the new conditions of production – the 'democratizing' effect of ready access to cameras and desktop editing software – or the new landscape of distribution emerging from piracy, the proliferation of festivals, and online networking. Both phenomena serve to make indie film much more visible in the region, and beyond it. But the aesthetics involved with this new DV activity are seldom the focus of critical attention. This oversight may be forgivable, considering the long shadow that older, pre-digital film aesthetics still cast over the field of moving images. Indeed, the most obvious tropes of a (Western) digital aesthetic – hypermedia, interactivity, recombinatory or network aesthetics – are largely absent. So what are the characteristics of digital video-making in Southeast Asia? How do they differ from other places? And how might these differences inform our understanding of what DV is, or could be, in a global context?

When digital films from this region do advertise their digitality, the result tends favour lo-fi over hi-fi; candid rather than 'staged' production; single-channel real footage over digital manipulation. In short, Southeast Asian video-makers seem either resistant or indifferent to the very aspects of the digital that have appealed to so many of their counterparts elsewhere in the world. With reference to recent video work from several Southeast Asian countries, I will try to identify some signs, both overt and implicit, of a digital consciousness in DV practices in the region. I will argue that the video agenda is shaped as much by the new economics of digital media – which are global – as by local realities and media histories, in which representation continues to outweigh simulation, and the presence of voice seems more pertinent than matters of form.

I will begin with a regional survey – a kind of field report – to highlight the widely varying conditions under which moving images are being made, and are finding their way online. Such a survey is necessarily rough and inconclusive, but it can at least suggest some directions in which to look for a regional digital aesthetic. Video Vortex readers will note that my focus is on offline activity: most of the artists discussed here consider themselves independent film and video-makers, a few are video artists; very few make what we would call 'networked art'. The reasons for this are several. In part, it reflects my own experience as a curator. But it also says something about the ends to which moving images in general, and digital images in particular, are being used in this part of the world. Media analysts have seized upon the impacts of digital media on the socio-political landscapes of Southeast Asia: viral SMS is transforming presidential politicking in the Philippines; in Indonesia, DIY porn made and shared on the iPhones of young celebrities yields scandals that embarrass the country's Islamic moral or-

thodoxy; Malaysian bloggers are forming alliances to defend their new public sphere against government intimidation and corporate media interests. Yet, the extent to which these developments might differ from those in other places remains to be seen.

Networked art, meanwhile, remains a fringe activity, barely visible in most of the region. Why have artists not taken to the web as a native medium? The reasons are diverse, and vary greatly from place to place. Art schools, where they exist, are dominated by modernist paradigms (as in Thailand and the Philippines) under which even video has yet to achieve much respectability or investment, let alone net art. Where new media have been prioritized, as in Malaysia, policies strongly emphasize their use for vocational training. And in other places, access to the requisite bandwidth – to say nothing of web literacy – is still a privilege enjoyed by few. So while the region as yet has no network video aesthetic, this is not to say there are no video networks. Artists and other video-makers are using the web assiduously for community building, research and inspiration, documentation and debate, and to connect with other artists and new audiences at home and abroad. Indeed, this social dimension could be the more telling – in some countries, class and social histories can be seen to have shaped the medium's role in contemporary culture more than technical, industrial or art histories. Indonesia's strong activist and alternative media networks are a case in point with their roots stretching back through the nation's birth in the 1940s and into the colonial era. [1] Their resurgence during the 1980s and 1990s provides an important template for today's video networks, where artistic and activist modes often merge. By contrast, in Thailand, where media activism has had less purchase on the public sphere, it has also remained largely estranged from art. Insofar as video networks exist in Thailand, they are a new invention and a site for middle class identification more than progressive social engagement. I will return to this comparison below, but a broader exploration of video networking in the region will have to await further study. For example, it would be fruitful to consider how, as bandwidth grows and video-enabled devices become ubiquitous, these social networks might need to be reconfigured. What will video networking look like after Web 2.0? Will we see the emergence of a regional media art clique, or will local dynamics continue to prevail over international trends?

If there is little regional coherence in the ways DV is deployed online, there are patterns emerging in the ways it is discussed. In particular, the expansion of indie film-making has ushered in readymade vocabularies from elsewhere. The marriage of regional studies with film and cultural studies yields predictable results: blinkered national-industrial historiography; fixations on narrative and popular subject matter; copious sociological studies of identity; a general allergy to 'art'; and so on. The annual Southeast Asian Cinemas Conference (ASEACC), roaming and independent, embodies both the openness and enthusiasm, and the limited critical arsenal, of the regional discussion. Precious little attention is given to matters of form. The fact that most of the material considered is made on video rather than film has done little to displace the governing premises of global (read: Euro-American) cinema

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1.   In the early 20th century, activist media were instrumental in adopting what would later become Indonesia's national language (Bahasa Indonesia, now spoken throughout this archipelago of over 700 language groups), based on the local form of Malay. See Adrian Vickers, *A History of Modern Indonesia,* Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005, pp. 60-62.

discourse. But rather than dwell on these limitations, we might instead ask a different question: For what other purposes are people using these media? For DV is used in ways that are specific to place, and this specificity has slipped through the discursive filter of film studies. I began to ask this question in my research for *Unreal Asia*, a program of video work from Southeast Asia that I co-curated with Gridthiya Gaweewong for the 55th International Short Film Festival in Oberhausen in 2009. This program posed questions that also frame the present essay: Is there such a thing as 'realism' in Asian moving image cultures? What would actuality look like – what would be its syntax on screen – if it was informed by Confucian family values, Asian paternalist dictatorship, the vicissitudes of migration and displacement, or the kinds of deep hybridity that characterize religious and ethnic life in this region? Informed by superstitious mediation, rather than optical rationality? And if film never quite had the 'indexical' relation to the Real it has enjoyed elsewhere, what then should we make of the preponderance of observational modes in Southeast Asian video-making, across documentary, fictional and experimental fields? Such epistemological considerations are especially pertinent in places where the appeal of video – and thus the spirit in which it is often embraced – is not so much that one can make moving images more readily, but that one might now make them at all, with film having been prohibitively expensive for most of those now using DV. It follows that studies structured by film's economies and aesthetics will be less useful than those that identify and proceed from a regional 'program' of DV itself. How does this technology channel lived experience, or for that matter, spiritual life? What can it show?

Regional Background

At the Video Vortex forum in Split,[2] I was asked to give some background about 'policies and strategies' affecting online video in Southeast Asia. This is difficult, for two reasons. One is that, in much of the region, there are no such policies, or at least, the ones that most affect online video were designed for older media (as with many national censorship regimes) or in another place (as with 'global' standards set by multinational media corporations). Where new media policies have emerged, they tend to be geared towards cultural policing, or are cosmetics applied to national economic facelifts. In any case, they do not reflect a consistent regional situation – and this itself points to a second, more profound problem: Southeast Asia does not really exist. Rather, it is a slippery, historical fiction born of the mid-century military exigencies of Western colonial powers. It makes little sense in geographical, cultural, religious, or linguistic terms. The 40 years of self-conscious regional association through ASEAN – no less a child of the Cold War – has brought little if any cohesion. Global capital tends to make these nations competitors, rather than a unified bloc.

It is not surprising, then, that Southeast Asia is characterized by a very uneven network geography. The terrain ranges from the wealthy island republic of Singapore, wired to the hilt and broadly post-industrial; through to developing/stumbling economies such as Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines; and to more or less closed or offline societies such as Laos and Myanmar. There is little to tie these places together structurally. The 'knowledge economy' means anything from outsourced animation farms and call-centres to the hopeful repackag-

ing of raw commodities for tourist or export markets. The rhetoric of creative industries, where it has landed, tends to be top-down and tokenistic if not downright fraudulent. In any case, the term is dying a quick and natural death – hastened by the global economic downturn – in places where 'industry', for most, still means the real leap from farm to factory. Just about the only structural attribute shared across this region is authoritarianism, which remains the rule rather than the exception, and there is no general correlation between freedom of expression and economic development. Much of the region operates under a perennial, thinly disguised state of exception, with repressive 'internal security' laws lurking just beneath the shiny, neo-liberal surface. Yet, authoritarianism does not always curtail alternative media activity, which often passes below the radar of state power. The chief problem here is perhaps not hardware but software: the state of education in general, and critical media literacy in particular, is dismal. It is likely that in the great, global, innovative and unwired future, Southeast Asia will have little if any say in how new technology is designed, developed and administered.

Authoritarianism seems to be most severe at each end of the infrastructure spectrum. Despite showing recent economic promise, Vietnam does not rank far above Laos and Cambodia thanks to decades of authoritarian communism. The state in Myanmar we might call 'freely repressive', as was demonstrated in the dreadful aftermath of Cyclone Nargis in 2008. Singapore is beginning to make gestures towards a careful, top-down liberalization, though its media controls are nothing short of Draconian. The web is expanding the possibilities for political discourse there, in an orderly, Singaporean fashion. And yet, when 'citizen journalist' Martyn See made Speakers Cornered, a video documenting a very tame public protest staged during the 2006 IMF/World Bank meetings, the video was banned, See's equipment confiscated, and See himself subjected to interrogation and fifteen months of police investigation. The work is available on YouTube, and depicts the awkward, passive-aggressive ballet danced between the paranoid state and its polite, repressed citizens – a ballet in which DV cameras are both dancers and choreographers.[3] The video was not conceived for the web, but is nonetheless very much a product of the net-video era, in which some distribution of controversial material is guaranteed in any place with (at least) liberal pretensions. The episode underscores one fact about the role of video in the region: the unfaltering importance of the camera as witness, a function it serves not just in sousveillance, but also in fictional, experimental and ethnographic film and video. And this ought to problematize the premature conclusion drawn by some screen culture theorists that the evidentiary moving image died when the digital was born.

Malaysia presents a more nuanced case: network expansion has been eagerly pursued as part of national economic planning, especially since the founding, in 1996, of the Multimedia Super-Corridor, and has coincided with the decline of the Malay majority that has governed since independence in 1957. With a growing interracial bourgeoisie less beholden to older, racially defined interests, the Malay political elite has been obliged to give online discourse more latitude than it has older media. However, Malaysia has the added problem of a state-sanctioned religious zeal – also on the rise in Indonesia – that polices cultural channels closely. Despite this control and strict media laws, the web sees some vigorous debate.

2.   http://networkcultures.org/wpmu/videovortex/past-events/video-vortex-split.

3.   http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aY1ilenkPaM.

In both Malaysia and Singapore, it's fair to say that the web enjoys more latitude than live culture; and that online, text enjoys more latitude than image.

Indonesia is the most interesting site for video activity, with an ever-growing constellation of local video clubs, community art and media groups and activist collectives. It was thus the obvious site for the Transmission workshop, a five-day camp focused on web-based video distribution. To my knowledge, Transmission was the only meeting with some regional scope. [4] This strength is mirrored by a rich blogosphere in Bahasa Indonesia, a language that facilitates translation with respect to both European languages (to which its Malay core has been permeable for centuries) and data, thanks to its Roman alphabet. Still, video's migration online has been slow, due in part to the country's scattered geography, but also to network instability which has made large uploads difficult for years, even in large urban centres. [5] The Philippines has similar problems with access, infrastructure and centralization. However, NGO (non-government organization) and activist networks have made some online headway there too.

However difficult it may be to define Southeast Asia, it may yet prove to be a meaningful frame for examining screen culture. But as yet, the subject is so under-studied and the field so nascent, that broad strokes are necessary to prompt further debate and research. While the technical and cultural landscapes are so varied, no formal or stylistic overview will be of much use. But we might try to discern the *video agenda* – or the 'program' of video – in this region. I have in mind here something akin to that which Vilém Flusser called the 'program of photography', though perhaps with less focus on the Apparatus and more on the Functionary and the Technical Image: an agenda visible not just within the frame of a medium in action, but in the socio-technical parameters within which video is made. It is these parameters that are likely to reveal some regional patterns. [6] Who has access to DV, as producers or consumers? How is it distributed, and how does it relate to other, older media? What does DV make possible that was not possible under earlier technical paradigms? And if this activity is so little informed by video's first-world history, or the special characteristics that mark a digital aesthetic in the West, what are the local conventions and histories that inform its production and secure its legibility? Before attempting to answer these questions from a regional standpoint, I will focus on the case with which I am most familiar, that of Thailand.

The Video Agenda in Thailand

By comparison with its neighbours, Thailand's infrastructure is not bad. Communications and transport were priorities of the U.S. military's Cold War gift economy, and continue to be essential for the sake of industry, trade and tourism. Even at Thailand's rural extremities, connectivity is fairly broad, if not particularly broad*band*. But looks can be deceiving: despite this infrastructure and its relatively free press for much of the 20th century, Thailand is one of the worst offenders when it comes to censorship of the web. This is especially the case since the rise of media tycoon and Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, and his subsequent military overthrow in 2006. In Thailand, the uptake of popular platforms such as web-boards, blogs, YouTube, and social networks like Myspace and Facebook has assumed epidemic proportions, but has secured only modest gains for the public sphere. Self-censorship is hardwired into the public culture; repressive measures are backed by all political parties and are typically enforced in the name of loyalty to the monarchy. One can hardly keep track of all the websites, individuals and online publications – both anonymous and high-profile – that have fallen foul of the country's medieval *lèse majesté* laws. As the country faces a looming royal succession crisis, censorship has become more acute, and the mass media are cowering from years of free-speech rollback. An intense struggle over broadcast infrastructure flared up during the recent political showdown that culminated with the military's bloody dispersal of red-shirt protestors from central Bangkok in May. This suggests that while online dissent is growing and closely monitored, its strategic importance is still secondary to that of broadcast media. It is a telling irony that one of few respectable intellectual journals in the Thai language, the leftist *Fah Deo Garn*, and its new offshoot *Arn* magazine, digest much of the critique that can only happen fleetingly online, yet they largely confine themselves to the less threatening scale of indie print media. [7]

When it comes to the moving image, Thailand's commercial movie industry is prolific, if not especially interesting, and provides many independent players with professional experience and income. DV has certainly broadened access to video, but the vast majority of video is made by the middle class, for the middle class. Economically and politically speaking, this group is far from homogeneous. Geographically it is more uniform, confined mostly to the larger cities, with little penetration of poor or rural communities. Ethnically, there is a notable preponderance – as elsewhere in the region – of the mostly urban descendants of diasporic Chinese, who enjoy some economic and educational advantage; but Sino-Thais are unlikely to identify as such, and even less likely to make films from that standpoint. Thailand has loose

4.   Held in Sukabumi (West Java), May 2008, http://transmission.cc/txap. For an overview of video's central place in Indonesia's emerging visual cultures, see Krisna Murti, *Essays on Video Art and New Media: Indonesia and Beyond*, Yogyakarta: IVAA, 2009.
5.   Nevertheless, the density and diversity of Indonesia's video networks are unparalleled in the region. For an overview, see KUNCI Cultural Studies Center and EngageMedia, *Videochronic: Video Activism and Video Distribution in Indonesia,* research report, Collingwood: EngageMedia, 2009.
6.   Vilém Flusser, *Towards a Philosophy of Photography,* London: Reaktion Books, 2000.

7.   This situation raises an interesting side issue, namely, that repression is carried on not according to the procedural push-and-pull of laws governing trade, publishing or free speech, but in the hysterical, symbolic/sovereign discourse of national emergency – the 'special case' that has become the norm – triggered by the ancient legal fantasy of an identity between sovereign and people (whereby a threat to his person is tantamount to a threat to the nation). To be fair, this blade cuts both ways, as in the country's duplicitous stance on intellectual property. The World Trade Organization provides (under TRIPS) for local exceptions to global IP protections in cases of 'national emergency', and it is this same sovereign exception that Thailand has exploited, for instance, in compulsorily licensing pharmaceuticals for the treatment of HIV/AIDS. It seems that access to information is, in some general sense, a *sovereign* concern, a proposition that deserves further study.

but enduring networks of indie film-makers, in which expertise, equipment and organizational effort are pooled and shared.[8] Many are plugged into international festival and funding loops, yet the principle audience is still local, and gathers around both grassroots and more commercial festivals. Online channels are far more important for community building and promotion than they are for the actual dissemination of DV work.

By comparison, 'new media art' is almost invisible. In a recent paper on new media art in Thailand, I could highlight only a handful of Thai artists working with new media in reflexive ways.[9] A paper on Thai internet art would have been a very brief affair indeed. Even the few who engage with network *thinking* seem compelled to 'realize' their ideas offline, in more tangible physical forms. Here, the pop-media projects of Wit Pimkanchanapong are exemplary. In these works, video, computer graphics and mobile and locative media converge not in virtual space, but in the very physical, social spaces of the shopping mall and the rock festival. Wit is Thailand's most conspicuous new media artist, but even in his practice, the web is only really a channel for promotion and documentation. Much of the work of conceptualist Pratchaya Phinthong, who would never claim to be a new media artist, revolves around social and technical systems of knowledge dissemination. In his 2006 installation *Alone Together*, Pratchaya created a quasi-domestic space in the gallery where visitors could watch cult and art movies from a DVD library, as well as duplicate films to take home, or add to the library from their own collection – a kind of offline peer-to-peer network. Again, new media thinking (in this case concerning international film piracy and its local market nuances) gravitates towards shared, physical space, and the face-to-face encounter.

Some analysis of recent video works – one mounted online, the other a 'capture' of online culture for offline exhibition – will illustrate the limitations that characterize network aesthetics in Thailand. The first was by the lauded indie film-maker, Anocha Suwichakornpong. The 2008 work *Kissing in Public* invited Thais to video themselves kissing in public, and to upload and share the video via a blog. Anocha made a pilot kissing short, to kick-start the project, which she described as 'an exercise in socio-cultural politics'. Video was cast as the witness, evidentiary and transparent: 'At the time where all eyes in Thailand and the media focus on national politics, we'd like to open up space, not only for debates, but real practices, on how the personal can and should be political, especially at this transitional period in Thai history'.[10] But the timing of this attempt to distribute authorship was awkward. To make the street the battleground for the defiance of social norms seems an oddly naïve choice, given that Bangkok's middle class – the only conceivable audience for such a work – was at the time rapidly becoming apathetic and desensitized to the street-protests that were shutting down parts of the city for months on end. That the site of this gesture would two years later become a literal battleground, claiming 89 lives, only compounds the irony. Why even put

this material online? A cynic might see the privileged *haute-bourgeoise* parading her liberal credentials for her backers on the international festival circuit, transgressing a cultural taboo that few of her compatriots seem to consider a problem. It is true that public displays of affection are considered improper in conservative Thailand; what is less clear is that anyone cares. Indeed, the idea did not exactly catch on; the only takers seem to have been a performance collective made up of young expatriates. Is this civil disobedience, or a form of elitist cosmopolitanism? If nothing else, it is a good demonstration of the narrow scope through which the network's potentials are seen.[11]

The lively indie film scene, of which Anocha is a leading figure, confirms this limitation. What is striking is that from this almost entirely digital field, the output is on the whole so *not* multi-mediatized, so *not* networked, so *not* interactive, so *not* non-linear, so *not* recombinatory or appropriative. That is, that 'digital' aesthetics, at least as they have been theorized in the West, do not seem to have gained a foothold amongst people using similar tools and software. Indie video-making tends to be personal, the work of an *auteur*, and appreciably less observational than elsewhere in Southeast Asia. To explain this fact, it helps to consider the peculiarities of documentary in Thailand. Classical documentary is done poorly and seldom, yet a few recent efforts deserve mention: a long-form take on the conflict in Thailand's southern provinces directed by Manit Sriwanichpoom, Ing K. and outspoken senator, Kraisak Choonhavan, *Citizen Juling* (2008); Panu Aree's *The Convert* (2006) about inter-faith marriage, also shot largely in the south; and Pimpaka Towira's *The Truth Be Told* (2007), a David and Goliath tale of a young journalist sued to within an inch of her life for defamation by the Thaksin regime. These are the best of a bad bunch. All were independent productions; all ended up in the cinema, but in festivals only; and none really aspired to wider, commercial distribution. All deployed a resolutely 'objectivist' documentary idiom, effacing the film-makers' authorial and editorial presence and eschewing voiceover, with plenty of mobile and handheld camera work; and all, it seems worth noting, are essentially *biographical narratives*. The epistemological assumptions of these works, the sort of viewing they imagine, are those of celluloid documentary film. This is a romantic-journalistic idiom that leaves intact the evidentiary claims of a medium it no longer actually employs – often without the rigour or transparency that bolstered such claims elsewhere. It seems that in Thailand, the moving image either channels the romantic vision of the bourgeois individual, aspires to the veracity or authority of a public record, or both.

8.   These pools are perhaps less formal, and certainly less ethnically diverse, than those highlighted by researcher Gaik Cheng Khoo in neighbouring Malaysia. Gaik Cheng Khoo, 'Just Do-It-(Yourself): Independent Filmmaking in Malaysia', *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 8.2 (2007): 227-247.

9.   Presented at the ASEAN Art Symposium, Silpakorn University, Bangkok, 2008.

10.   http://kissing-in-public.blogspot.com/.

11.   Cf. Malaysia, where the witticisms and visual puns of Amir Muhammad's video essays, for instance, prod at the lighter and darker sides of Malaysian political culture. His scripts (and subtitles) import the idioms of blogging, the timing and aesthetic of the chatlog. (See, e.g., his *Malaysian Gods*, 2009.) Yet as in Thailand, network aesthetics may not have penetrated much deeper than this. Recent online video projects such as *One Malaysia* (an array of artists and personalities fighting racism by pooling their sentimental nationalism), and an ostensibly political short film platform called *15 Malaysia*, plug into the viral and link-based economies of Web 2.0, and are emblematic of the emergent multi-racial cosmopolitanism (on which, see Khoo, *op. cit.*). The ethos here, like the state's, is more entrepreneurial than activist, harnessing the web as a PR vehicle and a site for ethical consumption, rather than a new logic of production, dissemination or aesthetics. An analogous program in Bangkok, meanwhile – the Thai Film Foundation's *Nothing to Say* (Pridi Banomyong Institute, October, 2008) – was a determinedly offline affair.

This partly explains, or at least corroborates, the unreflexive way in which video has migrated to the network. While digital video is increasingly viewed online, its aesthetics are generally not web-native. Its primary destination is still the indie film festival and, in some cases, the gallery. The interface it imagines is live, spatial and social, rather than remote, distributed and hypermediated. This is not due to a lack of equipment or skills, but to a hangover from old media that leaves the program of video harking back to a photo-journalistic past, and to the unfinished business – we might say the unrealized modernity – of indexicality. It is perhaps for this reason that Thailand's outstanding video-makers are those working deliberately at the blurred border between documentary and fiction, as in the community-embedded practice of Uruphong Raksasad, for example, or Apichatpong Weerasethakul's landmark ficto-documentary *Mysterious Object at Noon* (2000). This blurring may be traced back at least as far as 1970s social realism, and probably even further. [12] The country's leading video artist, Araya Rasjdamrearnsook, also tests documentary aesthetics, probing both the shock potential of the objective record, and the moving image's more subtle effects on truth and identity. [13]

In general, this blurring has been less about fictionalizing documentary forms – a play favoured by several prominent Malaysian video-makers – than it has been about the leakage of documentary modes and aesthetics into fictional forms of film-making. Yet both paths lead to the kind of *video vérité* that is often rewarded on the European festival circuit, where cinema is once again punctured by real life, by non-professional actors, and by a visible production apparatus. This candour is probably the chief characteristic linking moving image practices in Thailand to those elsewhere in the region. It resonates with the 'mixed reality' of pioneering celluloid film-makers such as Filipino Kidlat Tahimik, Indonesian Garin Nugroho, and Cambodian Rithy Pan; but also to the general flourishing, more recently, of observational video-making.

Bystanders or Observers?
Across Southeast Asia, the most obvious impact of DV technology is its different temporal economy: DV demands less discipline, and tends to allow its subjects to perform, their stories to unfold, in their own time. Scripts become more a series of propositions – starting points for a negotiation with reality – rather than a strict program to be executed. The camera tends towards interrogating its surroundings, rather than overcoding that environment with signification or narrative. DV's affordability has led to a surge of observational film-making, by artists and non artists alike. New windows have opened onto everyday life, and onto sites of conflict

12. David Teh, 'Itinerant Cinema: the Social Surrealism of Apichatpong Weerasethakul', (forthcoming).
13. Video has been present in the Thai art since the 1980s, but its historical proximity to performance (another neglected, fringe practice in Thailand) perhaps explains the paucity of real-footage and documentary video in Thai contemporary art to this day. While DV appears more and more in galleries, there are still very few calling themselves 'video artists', the medium instead having been absorbed – though tentatively and not everywhere – into the toolbox of the 'fine artist', without really challenging the art school's disciplinary structures.

and struggle. But if, as I have suggested, the video agenda still includes the witness function, this does not seem to have limited the different ways of looking entailed by DV practice in various places. A clear divergence is notable between Thailand and Indonesia, for example, one that may be characterized with the figures of the bystander and the observer. The bystander is incidental to the action; the observer is more like a monitor, a feedback conduit, and never neutral. The former inevitably carries the pejorative connotation of a passive sort of viewing, while the observational stance may be considered a more active footing on which to make images – a tendency much debated in anthropology, as the latter has been disabused of its earlier, objectivist aspirations. [14]

Viewing recent Thai video practice through this filter, one notices a very obvious trend: the Thais making and circulating videos, whether these are playful or po-faced, seem to share a sense of *impotence* in the face of their country's ongoing political woes. This will not surprise anyone familiar with the political inertia and disillusionment of the Thai bourgeoisie. Yet it is striking that for members of this class, a confident grip on the DV apparatus does not seem to improve their purchase on civic affairs. They are almost always positioned on the sidelines – as the term bystander suggests – in their treatment of political events. The Thai national character, a normative phantasm shared by foreign and Thai commentators, with few disagreements, is said to mandate indirectness. The result on screen is metaphor or allegory, ranging from the earnest to the puerile. When video-making does become confrontational it is liable to deteriorate into caricature and counter-propaganda, without the sense of purpose that makes good agit-prop *good*. The more typical response is to drop the seriousness.

The second work I will examine, while exemplary of political impotence, suggests that the observational tendency also takes specific local forms. There are two main components to Nawapol Thamrongrattanarit's six-minute video, *Bangkok Tanks*: [15] the background is a fuzzy television screen bearing the unmistakable talking head of Thaksin being interviewed on BBC World. This image is overlaid by an MSN Messenger chat log in Thai (with English subtitles), of a conversation amongst a group of high school students. The conversation took place on 19 September 2006 – the day when, with the country paralyzed by protests against Thaksin, the Thai military unseated him in a bloodless *coup d'état*. The kids pass on gossip and hearsay about the events unfolding in the city around them and, most disarmingly, they chat about its effects on them: they speculate about likely restrictions of media and communication channels; they joke about their alarmist parents and grandparents stockpiling domestic supplies; they rejoice at the prospect of a day off school. Remarkable for its candour, *Bangkok Tanks* purports to be a document, but not a documentary. The correspondence here between actuality and the moving image is incomplete: the latter pretends to show something 'as it was', the DV viewpoint fixed and uninterrupted, yet it makes no particular claim to transparency or objectivity. The credits tell us the text comes from a chat log on a given day; but we don't know if it is a slice of a single, un-staged exchange, or to what extent it has been edited, if at all.

14. On this debate, see for example Eliot Weinberger, 'The Camera People', in Charles Warren (ed.) *Beyond Document: Essays on Nonfiction Film,* Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1996.
15. *Bangkok Tanks* (dir. Nawapol Thamrongrattanarit, 2007).

The appearance of non-film ICTs (information and communication technologies), in this case the online chat, within the moving image is unusual in Thai indie video. Yet while it exposes a local culture of use, and the interplay of online with older media such as broadcast and word of mouth, the network does not actually *structure* the work at all – it is merely thematized in a single channel short video. The discernible digital manipulation of the moving image is not common either, at least outside the field of animation. Other photo-media, especially photographs and television, appear frequently within both narrative and experimental videos. But these other sources are seldom mainlined – that is, their frame almost always remains visible and distinct from that of the camera/screen. One might say they are *represented*, rather than *channelled*. This suggests that more direct appropriation – a cornerstone of DV aesthetics in other places – is somehow incompatible with the kind of authorship evolving around the medium in Thailand, and this is another reason *Bangkok Tanks* stands out. [16]

In most discussions of digital media, a hypermedia image is something other than an observational one, if not directly opposed to it. I would argue that Nawapol's video, although it channels multiple sources, is ultimately observational. It is a *non-evidentiary* recording of a historic moment, packaged as an irreverent oral history. If such pseudo-documentary strategies stand out in Thailand, it is because they do at least call into question the epistemological assumptions video inherits, but also adapts, from analogue film. There is less of a challenge, however, posed to networked media. The kids' indifference to the country's political implosion tells us nothing about the wider digital ecology in which their chat sits, one subject to endemic state and self-censorship.

In Thailand, the uptake of digital formats has not, by and large, been accompanied by a scrutiny of those tools, or of their specific politics and aesthetics. Networks provide a certain social context, rather than an actual *locus*, for the rising tide of DV activity. However, this is not the case everywhere in Southeast Asia, especially not where activist and community media networks are stronger. The opportunities the web presents for video-makers have been more fully realized in situations in which media literacy lies high on the socio-political agenda of users. Such networks are particularly strong in Indonesia. Interestingly, they have developed here as much through engagement with mainstream broadcast media culture as in opposition to it. A recent volume of articles by pioneering Indonesian video artist, Krisna Murti, gives some sense of the dynamism and openness of the younger generation. [17] Venzha Christiawan, a founder of the House of Natural Fibers new media lab in Yogyakarta (Central Java), favours the acronym DIWO – 'do it with others' – as if to raise the stakes of the DIY mentality that already prevails in Indonesian alternative media scenes. The thrust of such workshop-oriented organizations is not towards extending the audience for DV but, perhaps in keeping with an earlier spirit of post-broadcast media, to redefine the sender. If the video agenda in Thailand conforms to

16. In any case, the general paucity of digital appropriation is peculiar in a country renowned, in virtually every other medium – from comic books to statute law, from painting to industrial design, from music to fashion – for appropriation, copying, adaptation, piracy, knock-offs and just about every form of cultural pilfering imaginable. Perhaps the unimaginative recycling that reigns in commercial cinema has given appropriation a bad name.

17. Murti, *Essays on Video Art and New Media*.

what Castells called 'networked individualism' (a networked form, that is, of 'sociability'), the shapes it takes in Indonesia look more like what Ned Rossiter calls 'organized networks' - they are 'transdisciplinary distributive and collaborative'. [18] This distinction is broadly confirmed by comparing the authorial modes that prevail in each country.

By way of a speculative conclusion, I will propose one further filter for identifying a regional digital aesthetic: *voice*. Again, this term deserves a local spin, for 'voice' has a rather different inflection in places where oral culture still prevails, or at least where it has not receded in the face of modernity to the extent that it has in the West. That modernity has invested voice with the politics of identity, as something 'inalienable' belonging to the individual subject, gradually recognized and secured by the modern state. This politics of voice does illuminate important struggles in Southeast Asia, and *giving voice* is integral to the video agenda. It would not, however, prejudice these efforts to note that in places where a politics based on expressions of individual will is neither native nor entrenched – and where the state has largely been and largely remains its antagonist rather than its guarantor – the concept of voice denotes something far more quotidian, variable, and shared. In such contexts, voice is just as likely to be a vehicle for the proliferation and scrambling of identity codes. What might such a proliferation mean for a broader, regional video agenda?

Video Voice: Towards a Regional Program

I have suggested that the documentary form in Thailand betrays a certain 'biographic' romanticism. In Indonesia, DV has also borne witness to a flood of biographical material, but with telling differences: gone is the heroic subject, fighting losing battles with state, authority or prejudice; life stories are typically subjective rather than pseudo-objective; the subjects are ordinary rather than exemplary. Of the Thai documentaries cited above, all the film-makers are based in the metropolis of Bangkok, making films about provincial subjects. In contrast, Indonesian film-makers tend to opt for what is close to them, focusing on familiar and local subject matter. Their narratives are often incidental rather than deliberate, attuned to what Siegfried Kracauer has called the 'found story'. The latter are far too numerous to survey here; a few examples will have to suffice. Steve Pillar's *Irama Hari* (*Rhythm of a Day*, 2008) is a short, wordless documentary about Jakarta's street vendors, splicing the refrains with which they attract customers into a fugue of 'found sound'. *Andang Dan Sarjo* (*Andang and Sarjo*, 2004), by the Forum Lenteng collective, is an eight-minute oral micro-history, lifted from an everyday encounter (a haircut) with a mobile barber. And in *Pengajian at My School* (*Islamic Studies Club at My School*, 2007), four young girls interview each other about the need for more dynamic pedagogy in their religious education.

Although this selection indicates some bias towards socially marginal subjects, the latter usually relate to the film-maker, rather than to some heroic archetype, and their role is often participatory. To these, we could add countless videos generated in the workshops of

18. Manuel Castells, *The Internet Galaxy: Reflections on the Internet, Business and Society,* Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 129-, and Ned Rossiter, *Organized Networks: Media Theory, Creative Labour, New Institutions,* Rotterdam: NAi Publishers and Institute for Network Cultures, 2006, pp. 13-14.

Jakarta's biennial OK Video Festival, and from scores of similar initiatives across the archipelago. The authorial envelope is pushed by grassroots video clubs, NGOs and community video workshops – models unthinkable in the era of celluloid – or activist projects organized around specific issues of community concern. Of course, the preference for local immediacy is not accidental, and such organizations play their part in determining the video agenda. Yet in Indonesia, to put the DV camera in the hands of marginalized and poor people somehow seems an obvious thing to do; and whether these initiatives overstep class boundaries or not, the overall effect is a staggering multiplicity of voices. [19] In general, indie videos are not circumscribed by the imagination of an individual video-maker, in marked contrast to their counterparts in Thailand. Video's existential or phenomenological phase – exemplified by the experiments of, say, Bruce Nauman or Vito Acconci, and characterized by Rosalind Krauss as a kind of narcissism – seems to have been passed over in favour of a more popular mode privileging an actuality constituted socially, rather than individually. [20] Perhaps this represents a new kind of reflexivity: social media don't just *depict* the social, they begin to presuppose collective articulation. The 'program' of video here dilates to encompass its constitutive social bonds. Even if the latter are strongly informed by network technologies, online dissemination is perhaps neither necessary nor sufficient for the validation of this sort of production. Who needs networked video, when there are video networks?

The devolution of authorship is just one symptom of the proliferation of voices. Digital media also widen the range of tones available to the individual, as in the work of John Torres, an emerging digital auteur from the Philippines. Torres' images are remarkable for their unpolished candour. His unstaged, clearly non-industrial manner of production yields a kind of digital personal realism, distinct from the celluloid social realism that looms so large in the Philippines' film history. Torres' videos exemplify the economy of 'always-on' digital media, culled from a constant, unscripted recording of quotidian life. His DV camera sits within a wider ecology of convergent media – PCs, mobiles, dictaphones and voicemail, radio, television, karaoke, and the web – which are both channelled and represented in his loose, poetic narratives. For a film-maker whose subject matter is relentlessly personal, this de-gearing of authorial unity is pivotal. For while it may have the style of an *auteur,* Torres' *video direct* is marked by what Jacques Derrida terms *démultiplication*: a proliferation of channels, voices and tones. Derrida formulated this idea in an essay on 'the apocalyptic tone' in philosophy, and again in *The Postcard* – a book 'stuffed with addresses, postal codes, crypted missives, anonymous letters, all of it confided to so many modes, genres, and tones', in which he

adopts a diaristic, and at times a very personal voice. [21] In Torres' own very personal video-memoirs, we find a similar form of tactical distraction or *encryption*, a diffraction of identity in keeping with an era of total digital diffusion.

Consider Torres' response to a question from late critic and curator Alexis Tioseco, about the multiplying voices in his feature-length video, *Todo Todo Teros* (2006):

> AT: You have the narrative running through three channels – the voice-over, the on-screen text, and the images themselves. What inspired your use of on-screen text and is there a logic to its utilization? At times it contains the first person I … Is there a reason that you chose not to read these statements instead?

> JT: In the film I talk about being constantly under surveillance, so along with the characters, I try to communicate not just through voice but also through written word, SMS, song, performance, drawn images, and even gibberish/invented language… I don't know, maybe all the wiretapping and the "mother of all tapes" coming out in the news have prepared me to resort to this mode of storytelling (laughs). [22]

It is unclear what, exactly, Torres is implying about the relationship between 'surveillance' and the media he lists. Notably, however, the proliferation of formats is seen to promote identification between the film-maker and his subjects. The *auteur's* response to the end of privacy is, perhaps paradoxically, the media equivalent of speaking in tongues, a multi-vocal channelling that undermines the unity of a single, authorial voice.

In his recent 'Altermodern Manifesto', super-curator Nicolas Bourriaud observes that today's artists are 'starting from a globalised state of culture', one of the chief indices of which is language. Thanks to 'increased communication, travel and migration', he writes, '[m]ulticulturalism and identity is [*sic*] being overtaken by creolisation ... This new universalism is based on translations, subtitling and generalised dubbing'. [23] My own survey of DV usage broadly confirms this view; language and translation are pivotal sites of aesthetic play in DV practice Asia-wide. Yet I would *not* accept the conclusion Bourriaud wishes to draw from this: that hybridity ('creolisation') constitutes some kind of 'universal' project. For if digital media are facilitating translation and understanding, they are just as often used to *thwart* communication and foreground its failures.

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19. In addition to those already cited, key networks include community video facilitators Kampung Halaman and photo-media collective MES 56 in Yogyakarta, ruang rupa in Jakarta and Common Room in Bandung. The penchant for lateral social engagement may even be partly attributable, ironically, to certain policies of the authoritarian state. E.g., rural-urban exchanges, instituted by Suharto's militarist New Order government in the 1970s and 1980s, formed a kind of template for the strong NGO sector that was instrumental in bringing this regime down in the 1990s. These grass-roots networks had become channels for a generation of activists barred from direct participation in the political sphere. See Vickers, *A History of Modern Indonesia*, p. 197.

20. Rosalind Krauss, 'Video: The Aesthetics of Narcissism', *October* (Spring, 1976).

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21. Jacques Derrida, *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*, trans. Alan Bass, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987; and 'On a newly arisen apocalyptic tone in philosophy', in Peter Fenves (ed.) *Raising the Tone of Philosophy: Late Essays by Immanuel Kant, Transformative Critique by Jacques Derrida*, Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993.

22. Torres is referring to an eavesdropping scandal involving the Philippines President during an election campaign: http://www.criticine.com/interview_article.php?id=22.

23. Nicolas Bourriaud, 'Altermodern Manifesto', http://www.tate.org.uk/britain/exhibitions/ altermodern/manifesto.shtm. See also his catalogue essay in *Altermodern: Tate Triennial 2009,* London: Tate Publishing, 2009.

Such interventions against communication can be found in both Thailand and Indonesia. If DV gives new currency to the *vox populi* – a form linking journalism to ethnographic film and oral history – it is also frequently an accessory to the deliberate warping of such feedback, by artists seeking to prevent the ethnographic subject from communicating as such. Thai examples include Prateep Suthathongthai's *Explanation of the Word Thai* (2007) which features readings of Thai history in an ethnic minority language, rendered phonetically in subtitles; and Marut Lekphet's *Burmese Man Dancing* (2008), which takes Thai stereotypes about Burmese immigrants drawn from a *vox pop* survey and subjects them to an arbitrary translation into the unintelligible Symbol font. Both works turn on a translation that derails communication. In Indonesia, we find a similar typographic ploy in Muhammad Akbar's *Noise* (2008). In this work, the monologue of a Japanese exchange student is rendered – again, phonetically – in Sundanese, the widely spoken dialect of the artist's hometown, Bandung. In fact, this language's neglected script derives from Kanji, and thus has more in common with written Japanese than with Bandung's other, dominant scripts, Romanised Bahasa and Sanskrit-based Javanese. These works remind us that language can be both a lubricant and a retardant of inter-cultural exchange. [24] Voices are subjected to a kind of formal scrambling, recalling the cross-cultural slippage of karaoke - ironically, Asia's pop-cultural *lingua franca*. Against the hybridization Bourriaud sees as symptomatic of some new (but not that new) internationalism, I would posit instead a wider logic of *démultiplication*. In mistranslation, and de-couplings of the oral from the written, the video image finds greater amplitude – vocal rather than visual – without necessarily taking on the hypermediation associated with digital convergence elsewhere.

How might such practices reflect on the epistemological status of DV in Southeast Asia? If my earlier proposition of a 'non-evidentiary' recording is sound, then the proliferation of voices would serve neither communication nor representation, but perhaps a collectivization of history's emergent channels. That the output of such collective expression should be non-evidentiary suggests one possible framing for a regional video agenda: video-makers are refusing to play the game of absolute truth or indexicality. Rather than attempting to meet authoritarian discourse or official history on its own turf – to 'speak truth to power' – they prefer to put the new medium to work amongst themselves. This helps to explain why the output is overwhelmingly narrative – narrative knowledge, in these cultures, still reigns over analytic or theoretical knowledge – but also why it is so often observational, since one needn't feign objectivity when the object is one's own milieu. Finally, it suggests that for these users, DV's greatest potential lies in its capacity to plug into, and channel, the older, oral modes of exchange that mass and broadcast media have largely passed over.

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24. See also Ariani Darmawan's *Still Life* (made in 2006 with Hosanna Heinrich), in which miscommunication is a metaphor for inter-communal conflict, as four women have an absurd argument in four different languages.

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A CHRONICLE OF VIDEO ACTIVISM AND ONLINE DISTRIBUTION IN POST-NEW ORDER INDONESIA

FERDIANSYAH THAJIB, NURAINI JULIASTUTI, ANDREW LOWENTHAL AND **ALEXANDRA CROSBY**

In Indonesia, the relationship between social movements and the technologies of online video distribution has reached a very exciting phase.[1] The exhilaration felt in 1998, at the end of the repressive era of Suharto's New Order, created a unique sense of momentum for activists working with new technologies. In particular, the sense that video could directly impact local, regional, national and global politics remains strong. However, as activists begin to develop more tactical approaches to changing technologies, how their videos will be distributed becomes a recurring question. The many answers to this question arise from an array of conflicting interests, ideologies and identities emerging from what can no longer be viewed as a single unified movement. Yet, alongside this divergence of approaches is the convergence of existing forms of cultural production and distribution, mediated by advanced digital technologies.

Access to video production tools, the internet and mobile technologies, while still limited in Indonesia, is increasing dramatically. The proliferation of video production and the burgeoning online sphere has introduced new ways of communicating that intensify the connectedness of agents from from different settings – including those initiating movements for social change, and those who would have once been considered the subjects of such movements. The writers of this article come from two organizations, KUNCI Cultural Centre and Engage-Media, both of which are firmly placed within the movement for social change, actively manipulating emerging technologies for activist purposes. In our ongoing work, we have begun to chart how a range of activist organizations are engaging with online video technologies in the Indonesian context, addressing issues that emerge from the interplay between social movements and technology, and exploring the potential and limitations of online video distribution. We have worked with participants within Java and Bali, as video production and distribution activities are still concentrated in this part of Indonesia. Arguably, this is due to the uneven development of the country's communication infrastructure, which is very much bound by the scope of market activity. We are, however, aware that video-based activities are burgeoning outside these islands even as we write. While this account is limited in geographical scope, we hope that it becomes a solid point of departure for further research.

We begin with a brief history of video activism in Indonesia, showing how and why some of the offline methods of distribution have developed, and revealing the beginnings of some ways to map the different approaches to distribution. We then move into a discussion of online distribution, arguing that while the prospects for strongly networked digital distribution are immense, there are still many barriers, both technological and cultural in nature.

Video in Shifting Mediascapes

Many analyses have pointed to how technologies have helped to mobilize dissent within Indonesia's national political landscape, in particular leading to the demise of Suharto's three-decade authoritarian government.[2] One prominent example is the role the internet has played as an alternative civic space allowing political engagement to bypass the control of the nation-state.[3] Before the internet, however, video in its early stages was already beginning to alter the way that society constructed images of itself.

According to theorist of globalization Arjun Appadurai, it is through visual information produced within 'mediascapes' that audiences can experience and transform 'imagined lives, their own as well as those of others living in other places'.[4] In Indonesia, these mediascapes can be traced back to the early 1980s. At this time, video technology entered into and thrived among a new middle class, that was rapidly increasing thanks to an economic growth period resulting from the New Order's boom in state-sponsored natural resource exploitation. This period was marked by the popularity of 'imagined lives' on screen: Indian Bollywood movies, Hong Kong action series, and local films were consumed on Betamax and VHS video cassettes, and distributed by outlets called *penjualan/persewaan* or *palwa* (sales/rental). The consumption of these images contrasted sharply to the way video technology was simultaneously being manipulated by the state. Audiovisual content in Indonesia was implicated in the Indonesian nation-building project through the establishment of the first national television network *Televisi Republik Indonesia* (TVRI), and later by the launch in the late 1970s of the Palapa communication satellite. Both technologies became a means for Suharto's New Order regime to extend its political authority, sugar-coated with developmentalist logic.

Like many New Order cultural policies, however, the government's approach to video was fraught with contradiction. As stated in the preliminary study on the history of video in Indonesia, *Video Base*, the analogue video period lasting from the 1970s to the late 1990s was marked by the increased use of videocassette recorders (VCR), which the state decided had the potential to endanger its dominance. From that point, the New Order took anticipative measures to contain and control video-related practices, ranging from censorship and the introduction of new taxes on the sale and screening of video cassettes, to the classification of

1.   This article is a summary from *Videochronic: Video Activism and Video Distribution in Indonesia*, 2009, KUNCI Cultural Studies Center (http://kunci.or.id) and EngageMedia, a collaborative writing by Ferdiansyah Thajib, Nuraini Juliastuti, Andrew Lowenthal and Alexandra Crosby. The complete PDF version is available in both English and Indonesian from: http://www.engagemedia.org/videochronic.

2.   Krishna Sen and David T. Hill, *Media, Culture and Politics in Indonesia*, Australia: Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 195-217.

3.   Merlyna Lim, 'Lost in Transition: The Internet and Reformasi in Indonesia' in Jodi Dean, Jon Anderson and Geert Lovink (eds) *Reformatting Politics: Networked Communications and Global Civil Society*, 2006, pp. 85–106.

4.   Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalizations*, Minneapolis, USA: University of Minnesota Press, 1996, p.35.

videos to prevent piracy. [5] Aware that video is inherently a powerful medium of communication, the authoritarian government also exploited the new technology to sustain its hegemony by producing and disseminating images and information that reinforced its domination. This was conspicuous, for instance, in the anti-communist propaganda film *Pengkhianatan G30S/ PKI* (The Treachery of the 30th September Movement/Indonesian Communist Party), annual screenings of which were compulsory every September on national television, in commercial cinemas and in all Indonesian public schools. [6]

In the late 1980s, the production and consumption of analogue video images was increased by the advent of private television stations. The stations showed a variety of content, but the format that dominated were the serial dramas named *sinema elektronik* (electronic cinema) or *sinetron,* akin to 'soap operas'. The ubiquity of sinetron coincided with an increase in video-production practices. Krishna Sen and David Hill have shown that between 1991 and 1994, when the celluloid-based Indonesian film industries went into rapid decline, feature-length video production rose by almost 50 per cent. [7] Shortly after, in 1995, video production experienced another boost when digital video (DV) cameras were released onto the market for relatively low prices by manufacturers such as Sony, JVC, Panasonic, among others. [8] Being much cheaper than the previous analogue models, the recording technology became accessible to more diverse sectors of Indonesian society.

From this chronological account, we witness how everyday video practices in Indonesia display the interconnection of production, distribution and consumption. While we may be able to trace the linear development from analogue to digital technology, and from expanding television broadcast to increasing quantity of video production, the same pattern does not appear in all aspects of consumption and distribution. The pattern of video consumption and distribution, from video cassette technology, to laser disc, to VCD in about 1997 and then DVD about 2003, [9] engaged the public in an uneven way, rather than as a single audience. Only some steps in this development, such as the cheaply reproduced VCD, increased access for those from lower economic classes and those living in rural areas. Although the picture quality is significantly lower than DVD, VCD is still widely used in Indonesia because both the player and the disc are much cheaper. The mass distribution of pirated VCD and DVD materials under Indonesia's official legal radar has also extended the scope of consumption beyond the divisions of economic class. [10]

5.   Forum Lenteng, *Videobase: Video-Sosial-Historia,* Jakarta, Indonesia, Pusat Informasi Data Penelitian dan Pengembangan Forum Lenteng, 2009.
6.   Forum Lenteng, *Videobase: Video-Sosial-Historia*.
7.   Krishna Sen and David T. Hill, *Media, Culture and Politics in Indonesia*.
8.   Dimas Jayasrana, 'Fragmen Sejarah Film Indonesia', unpublished article, 2008. The summary text titled 'A Fragmented History: Short Films in Indonesia' is available from, http://www. clermont-filmfest.com/00_templates/page.php?lang=2&m=72&id_actu=494&id_rub=&mois.
9.   Dimas Jayasrana, 'Fragmen Sejarah Film Indonesia'.
10. Nuraini Juliastuti, *Understanding Movie Piracy in Indonesia: Knowledge and Practices of Piracy,* University of Amsterdam, unpublished thesis, 2008.

A new conjunction in video-based practices emerged in the approach to the 1998 political uprising, and in the recovery from it. This experience showed video-makers the power of audiovisual representation and dissemination to generate extensive socio-political changes, by mobilizing people in support of particular causes. The residue of Suharto's dictatorship, in which people's experiences and memories of being used as objects of repression were deeply inscribed, was that media participation and first-person storytelling became crucial agendas to pursue. Viewing video as a profound and flexible medium, activists are prompted to adopt it as a means of social recovery and transformation. Thus, post-Suharto Indonesia saw an unleashing of media production and distribution, both commercial and non-profit. With regional areas in Indonesia gaining more autonomy, calls for information decentralization and democratization became more widespread. Increasing consumption of cable television, computers, the internet and mobile phones, along with growing numbers of local stations, brought mediated events further into people's lives. From an activist perspective, this dissemination was perceived to have the potential to foster participation and broaden the agenda for social change. In this context, the DV camera functioned as a kind of personal technology that allowed the operator autonomy and power over the production of content, which spurred the practice of citizen media.

In the approach to the Reformation, the media explored for supporting the cause of social justice was not limited to video. On the internet, communication media such as chat rooms and mailing lists flourished as forums for discussion that could circumvent militaristic state repression. Also, under the umbrella of the anti-New Order movement and the discourse of change, several accomplishments were made by alternative print media in the form of community newsletters. [11] The forms of distribution taken by these oppositional media, informally and anonymously using existing social networks, contributed to the formation of the hybrid video distribution networks, which are discussed below.

Sketching a Map of Video Activism
Departing from the above historical outlook, we can begin to sketch a map of video activism in Indonesia today. The video-based activism observed in this project has taken a range of positions and includes individuals and groups from different social backgrounds, with different ideologies, approaches, sites of intervention and audiences. Here we identify three main practices that currently exist: (1) activism working to transform grassroots communities through participation in video production (from here on addressed as 'grassroots video activism'); [12] (2)

11. Nuraini Juliastuti, 'Whatever I Want: Media and Youth in Indonesia Before and After 1998', *Inter- Asia Cultural Studies* 7.1 (2006): 139-143.
12. The organizations that appear to have shared similar repertoires of grassroots activism are: Kampung Halaman, based in Yogyakarta, Central Java, works with youth living in what Kampung Halaman term the 'transitional districts' using participatory video; Etnoreflika, also in Yogyakarta, works among socially marginalized communities, according to their motto: 'cameras for the people'; Kawanusa has been based in Bali since its foundation in 2004; while Ragam was the initiative of documentary film-maker Aryo Danusiri, formed to promote video as a medium for cross-cultural exchange among different indigenous communities.

activism based on tactical [13] initiatives that produce video aimed at influencing public perception and key decision-makers (from here on addressed as 'tactical video activism'); [14] and (3) activism based on technological experimentation and deconstruction of imagery as a means for shifting the relation between the audiences and the medium (from here on addressed as 'experimental video activism'). [15]

It is worth noting here that the above distinctions are the result of an effort to envisage the different dimensions of video activism, rather than to pigeonhole them. [16] Rather than being mutually exclusive, these three realms of video activism are situated along a spectrum of discrete yet interwoven practices, which shift according to technological and ideological dynamics. However, we are interested in rendering these activities at their points of coalescence in order to relate these shifts to broader social movements.

The first group work and interact with specific communities to intervene at specific sites, while the latter two formations tend to be more mobile and flexible in their interventions. Although some groups adopting video-based approaches are independent entities, many of them are also embedded within other social change organizations that share common visions and agendas. [17] Some major political differences can also be identified from the distinct approaches of each group. In our focus-group discussion with video activists in Jakarta, Maruli from UPC expressed his concern about community video practices becoming a way of 'flirting with new media'. In a particular traditional community in Java, whose environment

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13. The term 'tactical video' here is an extension of Michel de Certeau's concept (1984), which distinguishes strategic and tactical actions in the domain of popular culture. Theorists and activists David Garcia and Geert Lovink extended de Certeau's concept of tactics to the field of media activism, by identifying a class of producers who amplify temporary reversals in the flow of power by exploiting 'spaces, channels and platforms', necessary for their practices. http://subsol. c3.hu/subsol_2/contributors2/garcia-lovinktext.html.

14. This grouping encompasses video-makers who are engaging with tactical uses of video content production and distribution. Included in this group are: Offstream, established by Lexy J. Rambadetta and focusing on documentary work; KoPI, which is based in Bandung, West Java, and also working in the documentary genre; Fendry Ponomban and Rahung Nasution, who, aside from forming Jaringan Video Independen (JAVIN), also independently produce videos with political content; Maruli Sihombing, who is active at the Urban Poor Consortium (UPC); and Gekko Studio, in Bogor, West Java, which concentrates on environmental issues.

15. This group includes ruangrupa, a Jakarta-based artist initiative founded in early 2000 in Jakarta; VideoBabes, formed by three female video artists based in Bandung, West Java. In Semarang, Central Java, Importal works to open alternative public space for video works. The final group in this category is Forum Lenteng in Jakarta which specializes with introducing video techniques among youths and collaborative development of audiovisual research methods.

16. In the interviews conducted, we asked the respondents where their activism fitted in with contemporary movements, and received many nuanced reflections. Only a few video activists could give a clear label to their practices, while most located themselves within a diverse range of movements and contexts.

17. For instance, Gekko Studio collaborates on projects with environmental NGOs, and Etnoreflika has partnerships with organizations assisting marginal communities such as street kids and sex workers.

was at risk due to plans to develop a cement factory nearby, community video organizers had chosen to work with the community to produce a video – a process that Maruli considered inappropriate considering the time available to produce a community-based video and the urgency of the situation faced by the community. This situation prompted Maruli to take the initiative to make an independent campaign video on the issue so that the information could start to circulate publicly, and advocacy for the case could be initiated right away. [18]

We raise this example to point out that the steps taken by Maruli and the grassroots video activists he criticizes, while different in form, need not be perceived in opposition to it. Such friction can be viewed as creating momentum towards a common end: the production of information that counters that distributed by the local government and the corporation developing the cement factory. Conducted simultaneously, video facilitation at a community level, production of socio-political content, and efforts to popularize video-based technologies constitute a new configuration in which video becomes a means to collectively transform society. The key question is whether the collective activism in this field can sustain the strategic interaction and communication among different factors required to open broader political opportunities. Can video-based activism in Indonesia form a coherent and supportive network? How might online tools be employed to assist in such a formation?

Most of our informants have shown hesitance toward, if not outright rejection of, the idea of working together as a single strategic network across the three categories we identified. The main reason identified for this hesitance was the limited capacity of groups to function as a network, especially when it comes to the availability of human resources. For example, Yoga Atmaja from Kawanusa pointed to the lack of available staff to open and manage networking activities, as the group is already exhausted by its existing commitments working with communities. More pertinent still are the significant political differences between the various groups. The organizations discussed here are in no way homogeneous, and run the gamut from alternative commercial enterprises, to medium-scale NGOs, to all-volunteer radical activist collectives. Additionally, issues of conflicts of interest between actors have often tainted existing networks or led to the disbanding of early network formations. While the technologies that enable the easy creation of sophisticated networks are available, without a shared political vision for the purpose of the network, it could not be successful; an affinity for the medium of video and a political commitment alone are insufficient.

Even so, the activists interviewed did not dismiss the possibility of partnerships with other groups with similar interests. However, how soon the relationships could be built remains uncertain, as a convincing video-networking model that can inform the activists of how to move forward is yet to appear. The success story of the student movement in toppling the New Order government in 1998, for instance, although organized through networks of disparate groups, is considered by many as too fluid to be characterized as an example of an established network.

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18. This video is available from: http://engagemedia.org/Members/maruli/videos/gunungkendheng1. avi/view.

Networking challenges are also evident within the global social-justice movement, with which many of the groups in this study intersect. As has been argued by Manuel Castells, [19] the global formation of social movements has been profoundly transformed by the intensification of communication. Traditional movement structures have been abandoned as new information technology allows for resource mobilization, information-sharing and action-coordination on a larger and faster scale. Furthermore, Jeffrey Juris [20] notes that the emergence of the cultural logic of networking among global social-justice activists, which is facilitated by digital technologies, not only provides an effective method for the organization of social movements, but also represents a broader model for creating alternative forms of organization.

However, the insights of such observers of global internet culture have not yet shed light on how digitally mediated social networking can be appropriated in non-Western countries such as Indonesia, where insufficient technical infrastructure and a range of different cultural backgrounds produce distinct challenges for social movements. Certainly, the underdeveloped internet infrastructure did not hinder the proliferation of political dissent in Indonesia in 1998. [21] And yet, the establishment of horizontal networking between activists in the digital sphere to sustain such dissent is not yet manifest, even though internet infrastructure is now far superior and much more widespread than it was in 1998. Bandwidth may still limit the possibilities of video, but most other media can take reasonable advantage of the current infrastructure. This lack of networking is indicated by the almost complete lack of hyperlinks between groups surveyed on their respective websites, even though hyperlinks have been available as a technology for more than 15 years. Clearly, the issue is not merely the availability of the tools, but the strategic and imaginative implementation of such. How can an approach to the technology that is more confident, playful, creative and grounded in local contexts be manifested?

Calibrating Hybrid Distribution Methods
Whether the responsibility for distribution is assumed by the video-makers themselves, supported by offline programs such as festivals, screenings or exhibitions, based on commercial opportunities, or developed through online channels, the challenges are significant. This discussion is based on the assumption that an established form of independent distribution is yet to be created in Indonesia. The groups studied view the possibility and necessity of such a model differently, simultaneously inventing new schemes, referring to systems already employed abroad, taking advantage of mainstream screening services, or even choosing not to distribute their work at all. The problem of distribution is inseparable from the challenges of access to technology. While the ideologies associated with each are interrelated, we approach the video distribution schemes in two sets of practices, offline and online.

Layar Tancap, Community Television and Other Offline Channels
In Indonesia, various offline methods of distribution are still more popular than online methods, both because of the limitations of internet infrastructure already outlined, and because of the rich culture of social events and communication that already exists across the country. Some of the most common methods of distribution are screening programs, festivals, exhibitions, television broadcasts, home-video distribution and hand-to-hand distribution.

For activists, alternative screening methods outside mainstream venues have been politically as well as practically motivated. [22] Screenings become peripheral projects, using a range of indoor sites as well as *layar tancap* (literally 'freestanding screen'), and are often held outdoors in sports fields or other open spaces. Combine Resource Institution uses this method and adds an interesting twist to it, by downloading related videos from YouTube to use in the screenings. Screenings are also held in foreign cultural institutions, independent cinema-houses, art galleries, campuses, political centres, village halls, or even more privately, among friends in boarding houses or family homes.

Some of the video activists, such as KoPI, Offstream and VideoBabes, frequently send their work to festivals and exhibitions in Indonesia and overseas. Some groups hold their own festivals: Kawanusa has been organizing the Community Video festival in Bali since 2007; ruangrupa in Jakarta has been producing OK.Video biannually since 2003. In the meantime, there are a very large number of video festivals operating around the world, and they often form a central focus for video-makers. The focus on this method, however, can prevent video-makers from formulating broader approaches to distribution. Online distribution of a video is sometimes an obstacle to being invited to festivals that, even in this age of massive online distribution, will sometimes refuse to screen films that can already be found online.

Television broadcast as a mechanism for distributing video has not been discounted by producers and distributors of non-mainstream videos. However, as indicated by Sofia Setyotrini of In-Doc (an agency working for the development of local documentary films), royalty fees for screening on television constitutes a considerable obstacle. National television stations do not provide royalties to independent video-makers because they regard the video material as non-profit in nature, and claim that video-makers should be grateful for the free access they gain to wider audiences. These reasons are accepted by some groups, such as Gekko, which views cooperation with television stations as an effective strategy for broadcasting environmental concerns.

Many video activists feel that distributing their work through mainstream and commercial channels undermines the antagonistic nature of their work, although this view has the flow-on effect of limiting their distribution. On the other hand, too much attention to the possibili-

19. Manuel Castells, *The Power of Identity*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1997.
20. Jeffrey S. Juris, 'Networked Social Movements: Global Movements for Global Justice', in Manuel Castells (ed.) *The Network Society: a Cross-Cultural Perspective*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2004, pp. 341-362.
21. Merlyna Lim, 'From War-net to Net-War: The Internet and Resistance Identities in Indonesia', *The International Information & Library Review* 35.2-4 (2003): 233-248.

22. One reason attributed to the number and variety of independent screening programs in Indonesia is the slowness of commercial cinema networks (e.g. 21 Group) to adopt digital projection technologies that would allow for the screening of video as well as film. This has meant that video-makers, whether activists or not, have initiated their own screening programs rather than rely on mainstream opportunities.

ties of using mainstream television as a distribution mechanism can overlook the potential of alternative channels currently developing on a local level, such as the burgeoning media of community television. [23] Between the ongoing discourses concerning community television and video activism, there exists some kind of communication gap. On one side, the community television organizers experience difficulty maintaining consistent programming due to a lack of supply of material; on the other, video-makers claim a lack of channels to distribute their works to the public. The creation of online databases of video content could greatly facilitate interaction between content producers and those running local television stations, particularly if both parties utilized technologies that made it easy to transfer large, high-resolution files, such as FTP and BitTorrent, so those downloaded videos could then be broadcast. Downloading a high-resolution, one-hour video might take a whole day, but this is still dramatically faster and cheaper than sending it via post, with the added benefit of a searchable database of content.

The economic dimension of offline distribution is also engaged by groups and individuals selling their work in the form of hard copy DVDs or VCDs. The Marshall Plan, an independent DVD label created specifically for Indonesian alternative films, readily took up this method, and has been creating video compilations which it distributes through its own networks and screening programs since 2008. However, some problems emerge rather quickly with this model. In order to be direct and open in the selling of independent videos in DVD format, the group faces daunting regulations. Dimas Jayasrana of The Marshall Plan explains that in distributing their products to outlet franchises that sell DVDs, 'The DVD products need to have a minimum of 1000 copies, meaning they need to be pressed commercially instead of duplicated on a small scale'. Furthermore, 'All the products need to have an attached tax ribbon issued by the Film Censorship Board'. Given that anti-censorship is a key feature of an independent video movement, censorship regulations thus become another barrier in circulating alternative video works to the public.

Most groups choose to tap into existing commercial distribution networks that simply ignore government regulations, such as those of Minikino, Boemboe Forum, HelloMotion and Fourcolourfilms. [24] By developing consignment systems with *distro* (independent music and clothing shops) or other alternative outlets such as bookstores, they are able to supply small numbers of copies according to demand. Given the bureaucratic challenges of legal legitimacy, this model suits the present situation better, however it doesn't necessarily enable video-makers to support themselves financially.

Another example of offline distribution is used by VideoBattle in Yogyakarta, which has been disseminating its video compilations as disc sets since 2004. VideoBattle selects and compiles five-minute videos from entries of any style in an effort to challenge preconceived 'genres'. The format used by Video Battle is VCD, due to its accessibility and low production cost, which means that the videos, branded in collectable sets, can be sold at low prices.

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23. For example, the emergence since 2002 of community television stations such as Grabag TV (Central Java), Rajawali TV (Bandung), and Bahurekso TV (East Java). See Hermanto, 2009.

24. Alex Sihar, 'Prospek Distribusi Film Alternatif di Indonesia', *Ikonik* 1 (2007): 33-42.

The video-makers selected are encouraged to duplicate and sell copies of the compilation for their own profit. While the VCD distribution VideoBattle offers is relatively limited, its open endorsement of duplication has contributed to its recognition not only within Indonesia, but also by international audiences including those in Australia and Europe.

Viewing the structural complexity of mass video distribution in light of their own limited resources, some activists develop distribution models based on personal or institutional relationships. One interesting form this has taken is the manual distribution method used by Offstream's Lexy J. Rambadetta who, apart from festival and television distribution, often uses a barter system rather than monetary exchange for his videos. Many groups also trade their own videos for those produced by other activists, generating an underground economy that keeps people up-to-date with trends in video content and style. This form of distribution is supported by a range of video library spaces, such as that maintained by VideoBabes member Ariani Darmawan at Rumah Buku in Bandung, where the public can consistently have access to recently produced work.

While small in scale, these hand-to-hand distribution methods take place frequently, and continue to develop as activists prioritize public access to a range of information. Rather than making them obsolete, online video distribution has the potential to enhance these methods and become part of the infrastructure of such initiatives.

Online Distribution: Prospects and Barriers
For many video activists in Indonesia, technical barriers have prevented the prioritization of online distribution. The greatest technical problem is limited bandwidth, particularly outside urban centres. Many audiences trying to view online video are faced with an intermittent stream of images, which is both tiring and boring. For the producer or distributor, uploading the video takes a very long time, and often fails altogether. These issues, however, are reflective of the common approach to online distribution. While there are many ways to use the internet as part of a holistic distribution strategy, the user expectation is built around a YouTube-style experience, in which videos are viewed immediately through a browser.
One massive challenge activists face is keeping up with rapid changes in the technological landscape. Internet usage in Indonesia has soared in the last decade. Data indicates that the number of users has risen from 1.9 million in the year 2000 to 25 million in 2007, assisted by the flourishing *warnet* (internet cafe) businesses and the deregulation of the 2.4 GHz band in Indonesia, which lead to the expansion of Wi-Fi access. [25] As of 2009, the number of users may well be up to 30 million. Of these, however, only 0.08 per cent have home broadband access, due to its relatively high cost. [26] A home connection may cost between 300-800,000 rupiah a month (US$30-US$80), which is more expensive, on average, than in places such

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25. Imam Prakoso, *Conditions of Communication Environment for Freedom of Expression in Indonesia,* Combine Resource Institution and Global Partner Associated, UK (unpublished version), 2008.

26. Marc Einstein, 'Predictions for Indonesia's telecommunications market', *The Jakarta Post,* 07/28/2009. Also available from, http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2009/07/28/predictions-indonesia039s-telecommunications-market.html.

as Australia, where the average income is far greater and internet speeds much faster. Most people access the net through the *warnet* or through cheaper dial-up connections, which are monopolized by the state-owned telecommunication company, Telkom. However, rapid changes to online infrastructure in Indonesia mean that statistics such as these are not relevant for long. The Indonesian Government has reportedly called for tenders to operate Worldwide Interoperability for Microwave (WiMax), [27] which may allow for speeds up to 60Mbps. Currently, WiMax in Indonesia has begun trials, but the official roll-out is uncertain. Yet, if the project is realized, it would dramatically change the online landscape in Indonesia and directly increase the viability of online video. While the technology is limited at present, both speed and access to the net have the potential to improve continuously. Video activists would do well to take full advantage of these future possibilities.

Aside from broadband limitations and the need to lower the cost of internet access, the ever-increasing size of video files is also a concern. While it is becoming easier to shoot very high-resolution footage, it is difficult to deliver high-resolution versions of long videos online in Indonesia, given the internet speeds. The fragility of Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP) as a transfer mechanism also hinders this, with connections often breaking down during upload. Both a conceptual and technical change in approach is required: on the technical side, to enable access and develop the skills to use technologies such as BitTorrent and File Transfer Protocol (FTP) for uploading and downloading larger videos; and on the conceptual or production side, to develop formats oriented towards the web that may be shorter in duration or that focus on the downloading rather than streaming of content.

This issue could also relate to the euphoria that often surrounds video production in Indonesia, which generally celebrates the spirit of do-it-yourself video-making, which relegates distribution and reception to the bottom of the video-maker's agenda. According to Hafiz of Forum Lenteng, this condition is symptomatic of a society that has only recently been liberated from a regime that strongly hegemonized information-production processes. Hafiz adds that attempts by community members to stream these activities towards more socially constructive practices are also increasing. Also, skills such as scriptwriting and editing are rare, and resources in Indonesian scarce. On the other hand, Ade Darmawan from ruangrupa points out that the limitations of online formats could actually inspire video-makers to explore new ways to create video content that is specific to an online viewing experience, so that they might abandon, for example, traditional narrative structures.

In some cases, the tentative attitude towards online video distribution can be traced to public perceptions of the rise of internet technology. For example, Kampung Halaman co-founder Dian Herdiany describes how members of some of the communities they worked with (especially parents) refused the group's proposal to install internet facilities in their village, and cited the risk of exposure to pornographic materials as a reason for refusing. In this instance, the moral panic saturating national debates about the internet had also influenced local communities. This case illustrates the difficulty in working across a wide spectrum of internet

literacy. Between those who are constantly exposed to the internet, such as activists, NGO workers, and media professionals, and those who are not, a cultural chasm exists – a local manifestation of what has been globally termed 'the digital divide'. [28] Despite the celebratory accounts of a global technology revolution, some local video activists respond quite critically to the prospect of online distribution. Yoga from Kawanusa points out that the inequality in access to information technology can, in turn, establish new power relations between information 'haves' and 'have-nots':

> Video distribution is prioritized among community members for its "ceremonial" aspects; to achieve public recognition of their work. They want their videos to be launched at an event attended by people they know. We are talking about people living in the villages. They don't have access to the internet, and perhaps they don't need to have any. Why publish the videos online if they don't know who is accessing them? If we insist on doing so, who will actually benefit? Of course, the answer is: those who are already literate.

In this sense, it makes sense for grassroots activists to prioritize offline connections. For many, the immediate concern is to have the video works collectively appreciated at the sites where they are made. But most activists consider facing the challenges of the internet as part of their social justice mission. Various critiques [29] regarding the risk of social divisions reproduced by unequal relations of knowledge and power point out that issues other than technology need to be considered in the attempt to democratize video for social change. Aspects such as the society's cultural readiness to interact with new media, the divergent economic settings of grassroots communities, and the various desires and approaches to consuming information are some of the issues that cannot be addressed simply by procurement of media technology or technical-content training. New media require advanced strategic applications.

The lesson from Indonesia is that the fluidity and flexibility of technology is instrumental to the various coalitions, movements, and identities in play. This has not only led to empowerment and democratization, but has also served to reproduce relations of dominance and exclusion, such as is promoted by fundamentalist religious groups. [30] Along with these trajectories, which are certainly incongruent with the goals of the activists discussed in this research, we can also anticipate increasingly banal content flooding the internet. The ubiquity of mainstream video sharing services such as YouTube and Facebook, and the rapid spread of 3G-based video on mobile phones, has become an arena so extensive that social-justice and environmental video content is outshone by terabytes of information. Posting work online is not enough for activist content; an audience must then view it – and then, ideally, take some form of action.

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27. 'RI to have WiMax Soon', *The Jakarta Post*, 19/05/2009/.

28. See David J. Gunkel, 'Second Thoughts: Toward a Critique of the Digital Divide', *New Media & Society* 5 (2003): 499–522.
29. See Sassi Sinikka, 'Cultural Differentiation or Social Segregation? Four approaches to the Digital Divide', *New Media & Society* 7.5 (2005): 684–700.
30. Merlyna Lim, 'Lost in Transition: The Internet and Reformasi in Indonesia'.

Many of the online videos that grab the public's attention are those that expose footage of corruption and dirty politics, violence and pornography. On one side, this new media landscape has been made manifest in the digital convergence currently prevailing in which 'amateur' video agencies, including forms of citizen journalism, increasingly flow across media, ranging from television and mobile phones to the internet. On the other hand, the forms, themes and content of these flows quickly become limited – if not homogeneous – as they are shaped by the expectation of immediacy and the available technological features. Through new distribution models, activists propose to punctuate these flows of amateur videos with social change content that already exists in offline forms so that audiences can become more receptive to the diverse range of video works available.

Regarding the issue of audience receptiveness to information through online video, Ade Darmawan from ruangrupa has called for more advanced strategies in designing online video interfaces. One strategy would be to employ a 'curatorial logic':

> Basically, online video sharing channels need to provide clearer frameworks to assist the audience in contextualising the work being presented. Given the immensity of content flooding the internet nowadays, how are we going to attract audiences relevant to specific topics presented in the videos? If there is no curatorial explanation, I think there won't be much difference in the experience from watching YouTube.

In addition to the need to democratize access through structural provisions, it is clear that strategies are required to address the particular cultural characteristics of the internet in order to not only allow, but also enable equal public participation. One element that is lacking is a local, successful example of online distribution being used to garner a wide audience or to generate real change, an example that others could find convincing and worth replicating.

Given this range of technical, economic and socio-cultural barriers in relation to online video distribution, the practices of Indonesian activists must be tactical. As far as having an online presence, almost all the groups represented in this research have their own website, and communicate through email, instant messaging, mailing lists, and forums as well as publishing weblogs. Kampung Halaman, Etnoreflika, Ragam, Gekko Studio, Offstream, Javin, UPC, and Forum Lenteng all use social networking sites such as FaceBook and Multiply, and upload content to existing online video sharing sites such as YouTube, Vimeo, and DailyMotion. Also emerging are more specific online video sharing spaces such as Video Battle, and EngageMedia.

Even within these common ways of using the internet, each group generates different cultural practices. To the grassroots video activist embedded in local communities, resource mobilization is focused on community empowerment. Even though the groups integrate information and communication technology into their daily activism, the basis of their interaction with communities is often based on face-to-face contact. Therefore, the distribution of the videos produced tends to also be through physical means. To realize the goals of online distribution requires additional support and access to hubs that would enable ongoing connections between the communities and diverse networks of global social movements.

For tactical video activists, online distribution is seen as one of many ways to launch their content publicly. Aware of the multiple barriers to reaching Indonesian audiences, activists turn to internet distribution to target audiences in other parts of the world. By uploading their work to their own websites or video services, whether on general-use sites such as YouTube, DailyMotion or specific ones such as EngageMedia, they remain optimistic about the available channels to garner international solidarity on the issues presented in their works. Moreover, these activists, as explained by Rahung of JAVIN, believe that by disseminating their videos to a global audience, they increase the opportunities to gain resources for ongoing production of social-justice videos.

Online distribution is strategically adopted by some experimental video activists who view distribution processes, both offline and online, as yet another way in which to experiment and interact with forms of media. Forum Lenteng, for example, encourages the community of participants from the Akumassa project to embed their videos in a dedicated blog and to add comments and notes to encourage discussion about the content. For online video sharing services, several new distribution schemes are being developed. In Yogyakarta, Video Battle is developing online methods to expand the distribution of their compilations, as one solution to the difficulties they experienced with offline distribution and to encourage more video art productions. The group is optimistic about online distribution, and has created a video subscription channel enabling video podcasting in Miro and iTunes, as well as the ability to watch Flash video versions directly from their website. [31]

The technical and cultural challenges discussed here are just some of the issues impacting the many methods of distribution demonstrated by the groups in this research. One of the commonalities between the video projects discussed and their distribution systems is that both explore new terrain for the groups and communities involved.

What Do We Want? When Do We Want It?

For various reasons, none of the groups presented in this research work together as a horizontal offline or online network in more than an informal sense. However, each set of video activists has formed a basis for collective action. In our thinking, if this collective framework could be harnessed to form a coherent network, the chance to create changes in the public sphere, or even at a structural level, would be greatly increased.

Although we are fully aware that working as a network does not guarantee a smooth process free from tension and conflict, we do think that both existing and new networks could be directed towards mobilizing resources to respond to the variety of obstacles to the production and distribution of video content. However, the fact that the technology exists and certain groups have an affinity for video is not enough to form effective networks. Networks must begin from common political goals and shared understandings, some of which we hope to have identified through this research. Online distribution tools and communication spaces can be an effective means to create network constellations, to form

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31. See: http://video-battle.net.

common identities and build collective endeavours that create the foundations for stronger movements towards social change.

Concerns over the lack of an effective model became one of the main obstacles in translating existing local frameworks into a network of movements. Ade Darmawan of ruangrupa, for example, has qualms about the idea of realizing a digitally based network without more groundwork, especially considering how new virtual communication is in comparison with traditional patterns of communication. This conclusion clashes with theories which view the internet as the perfect tool for facilitating the formation of a networking structure that supports a horizontal organizational logic. [32] To argue about whether offline or online development must come first would throw us back into the classic dispute concerning eggs and chickens. We feel that different technological applications need not be framed as substitutions for preexisting relationships; more often than not, online and offline modes can complement each other. It is interesting to compare the above projects to the Indymedia experiments, [33] which have been emblematic of the effective configuration of a wide-reaching social-justice network, using digital technology that complements and contributes to a movement's work as a whole. The Indymedia experiences of networking at a global level have demonstrated digital repertoires characterized by participatory principles, independent infrastructures, open-content and resource sharing, which have radically contributed to the strengthening of movements on the ground. How can we learn from the successes and failures of these previous attempts, and create future iterations of effective networking in Indonesia and beyond?

Networks are needed to enable people to come together to overcome many of the obstacles discussed above, as well as functioning as a strategic end in themselves. The networking framework can allow for diverse modes of distribution, that effectively respond to burgeoning forms of media convergence and the different capacities of participating groups and individuals. Networks should encourage the sharing of knowledge and skills and the pooling of resources, in order to enhance the effectiveness of political formations and to apply political pressure to achieve improved social or environmental conditions. In that sense, networks are both the outcome of improved communications and political effectiveness, and also the necessary basis for them.

A network of video-makers could enable the creation of a locally managed activist video sharing space, which might prove more responsive to local needs than the variety of international options and commercially oriented spaces. These possibilities will be explored as the experiences and insights of those experimenting with online spaces and their networking potential grow. We anticipate that the future of video activism will involve a strategic and tactical approach to online video distribution, as a way for video activists to move toward the

logic of networking discussed above. Neither one single approach to the internet, nor the creation of a single network, will improve the distribution and effectiveness of activist video in Indonesia. As the groups described in this research continue their important work of using video as means of addressing social justice, human rights, cultural and environmental issues, online distribution of such video will undoubtedly be part of their future. The last 10 years have shown that adjusting to internet-distribution models, for politicians, commerce, creative industries and mainstream media, among others, is absolutely necessary to establish and maintain a global and local presence. We believe the same to be true for activists.

32. See for example Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society*, Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1996; and Jeffrey S. Juris, 'Networked Social Movements: Global Movements for Global Justice'.
33. Jeffrey S. Juris, 'The New Digital Media and Activist Networking within Anti-Corporate Globalization Movements', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 597 (2005): 189–208. See also Victor W. Pickard, 'United yet Autonomous: Indymedia and The Struggle to Sustain a Radical Democratic Network', *Media Culture Society* 28 (2006): 251.

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STILL MOBILE: NETWORKED MOBILE MEDIA, VIDEO CONTENT AND USERS IN SEOUL

LARISSA HJORTH

In each location, what constitutes the 'online', and hence online video, is different. These are shaped by technological, socio-cultural, linguistic and governmental factors – to name just a few. In technologically innovative locations such as Seoul, where fourth generation (4G) mobile media has been a reality since 2006, participation in the online takes a particular form. For example, it is not uncommon to find public spaces such as subways filled with people watching videos on Digital Multimedia Broadcasting (DMB), commonly known as mobile TV or as 'Takeout TV' (TU Media).

By March 2010, more than 48 million people owned mobile phones in Korea [1] or, in other words, more than 90% of Koreans possess a mobile phone. A more recent trend is to own two phones, being dubbed the 'second mobile phone era'. [2] With approximately 94% of Koreans having a high speed internet connection [3] and being considered the leader in 3G (third generation) mobile technologies, [4] Korea provides a complex and technologically sophisticated model for 21st century technocultural practice. In 2005, South Korea (henceforth Korea) was the first location to launch and successfully implement DMB and thus the nation became a model for global stargazing for 21st century media. From older women congregating around one DMB watching television dramas, to young lovers watching music clips, to boys playing online games, the diversity of the multimedia experience of the online via mobile media is obvious. These types of mobile media practices demonstrate the creative ways in which online culture in Korea is embedded with the collective nature of spaces – be they public or private. One look around and we can see many forms of interaction with online content. These activities transgress the mobile and immobile, public and private, and the young and the old.

Seoul has long demonstrated a high degree of engagement with the multimedia capacities of mobile media – from camera phones, video and games – often resulting in the city being showcased as one of the greatest images of 21st century networked mobile media. A significant element of this revolution of mobile media and its attendant forms of engage-

1. KCC (Korean Communications Commission) May 2010, *Statistics of subscribers of wired/wireless communication service in Korea,* http://www.kcc.go.kr/user.do?mode=view&page=P02060400&dc=K02060400&boardId=1030&cp=1&boardSeq=29191.

2. JI Lee, 'Opening new era of 2 mobile phones per person in Korea', *Asia Economics* 2009, http://www.asiae.co.kr/news/view.htm?idxno=2009010207554653133&nvr=

3. OECD 2009, *OECD Broadband Portal 2009*, http://www.oecd.org/document/54/0,3343, en_2649_34225_38690102_1_1_1_1,00.html.

4. Research and Markets 2009, *South Korea-Mobile Market-Overview & Statistics,* http://www.researchandmarkets.com/research/915801/south_korea_mobi.

ment has been the rise of user created content (UCC) and user generated content (UGC). However, beyond this image of technologically savvy mobile media literates is a complex and culturally-specific model of online participation. From camera phone self portraits (*selca*) and DIY videos uploaded to the main social networking system (SNS) Cyworld minihompy, to online games played in computer rooms (*PC bangs*), the technoculture of Seoul provides a nuanced and vibrant online culture that perpetually engages with its offline practices. The specific growth and deployment of such media as camera phones by both industry and users in Korea has created a particular online culture with its own type of networked visuality. This technoculture weaves the online with the offline, the mobile with the immobile. One way of understanding this online phenomenon is through the difference between UCC and UGC. While the former denotes the user's agency in the creation process — that is, the user becomes a 'produser' [5] — the latter is marked by the user's role as a node in the circulation process. In short, UCC is made by the user, while UGC is circulated by the user.

In Korea, the rhetoric of UCC has been foregrounded since the demonstrations of 'people power' which led, for example, to the election of ex-President Roh in 2002, to the protests against the importation of beef from the U.S. in 2008, and which are evinced by democratic media such as *OhMyNews*, which pioneer models of citizen journalism. While Korea's model of networked, mobile media can be seen as indicative of the 'smart mob' [6] phenomenon, other narratives of media agency and civic engagement are being played out. I argue that these dominant and undercurrent narratives of online practice are best understood through the paradigms of UCC and UGC. In particular, through this paradigm I will discuss and contextualize the unique characteristics of Seoul's online video culture. In order to do so, I will first outline the specifics of Korean technoculture, such as the pivotal role played by the dominant social networking system Cyworld minihompy, and then camera phones, in the rise of online video. Following this will be a discussion of findings from preliminary fieldwork conducted in 2009 in Seoul to explore the reality of agency and performativity surrounding the online UCC and UGC.

Being Mobile: Locating the Korean Technoscape

In Korea, internet and mobile telephonic spaces are helping to progress Korean forms of democracy. For Korean sociologist Shin Dong Kim [7] and anthropologist Haejoang Cho, [8] the rise of a specific type of democracy in Korea has been supported in part by new technologies such as mobile phones. In particular, in Seoul one can find two types of youth sociality predicated around two convergent technological spaces: firstly that of the mobile phone ('hand phone' or *handupon*), and secondly that of the internet through virtual communities such as

5.   The word 'produser' denoting the synthesis of 'producer' and 'user'. Axel Bruns, 'Some Exploratory Notes on Produsers and Produsage', Snurblog, 3 November, 2005, http://snurb.info/index.php?q=node/329.
6.   Howard Rheingold, *Smart Mobs: the Next Social Revolution*, Cambridge, Mass.: Perseus, 2002.
7.   Shin Dong Kim, 'The Shaping of New Politics in the Era of Mobile and Cyber Communication', in Nyiri K (ed.) *Mobile Democracy,* Vienna: Passagen Verlag, 2003, p. 325.
8.   Hae-Joang Cho, 'Youth, Internet, and Alternative Public Space', presented at the Urban Imaginaries: An Asia-Pacific Research Symposium, Lingnan University, Hong Kong, 2004.

Cyworld's minihompys, and online multiplayer games often played in the social, communal spaces of the PC room, such as *PC bang*. This usage of technological spaces is *not* about substituting the virtual for the actual, it is rather about supplementing actual relationships. The relevance of the technology is intrinsically linked to the maintenance of face-to-face social capital.

As a burgeoning centre for innovative technologies and with a conspicuous usage of technologies in the everyday, Korea's capital Seoul could be viewed as a showcase of techno-nationalism. The projection of 'dynamic Korea' (the tourism slogan used from 2005–2007) is one that has fused the notions of Korea's power as a nation with that of technological innovation. With over 20,000 *PC bang* gracing the second levels of most commercial buildings, and with over one third of Korea's population spending hours everyday in Cyworld minihompy, one could be mistaken for believing that online identity and relationships were surpassing offline sociality. Although Koreans do, in general, place a great deal of trust in technological spaces such as the internet as sites for reliable information and democratic communication, the online is still no substitute for offline sociality. It should also be noted that this trust is linked to the fact that users have to lodge their offline citizenship details when joining an SNS like minihompy or online games.

For Kyongwon Yoon, the rise of *handupon* technology in Korea after 1997 was linked to the rise of youth cultures, and the often-subversive use that saw youth labelled 'Confucian cyberkids'. [9] Parallels can be made between the 'youth problems' associated with the rise of mobile technologies in both Korea [10] and Japan, [11] and the reorientation by government and industry to rectify the negative press. However, there is another side to the youth media 'problem'. As Cho has observed, the increasingly competitive culture around education and youth — in which only a few will succeed — has lead to a new generation of 'losers'. [12] Much of this competition is played out through media deployment: the successful ones use the media to enhance their upwardly mobile lives, whilst the unsuccessful often absorb themselves within media in which they can live out their desires and fears.

As Yoon's ethnographic study of young people's use of mobile phones noted, the mobile phone helps to reinforce physical contact and exchange. [13] In Hjorth's and Heewon Kim's ethnographic study on youth using Cyworld's minihompy community, it was found that virtual connecting was always about the need and desire to be *connected* on various levels and

9.   Kyongwon Yoon, 'The making of neo-Confucian cyberkids: representations of young mobile phone users in South Korea', *New Media & Society*, 8.5 (2006): 753-771.
10.   Kyongwon Yoon, 'Retraditionalizing the Mobile: Young People's Sociality and Mobile Phone Use in Seoul, South Korea', *European Journal of Cultural Studies,* 6.3 (2003): 327-343.
11.   Mizuko Ito, Daisuke Okabe, and Misa Matsuda (eds) *Personal, Portable, Pedestrian: Mobile phones in Japanese life,* MIT Press: Cambridge, MA, 2005.
12.   Hae-Joang Cho, 'Youth and Technology in Seoul', Inter-Asia Cultural Typhoon conference, Tokyo, June, 2008.
13.   Yoon, 'Retraditionalizing the mobile'.

never about *substituting* for face-to-face contact. [14] Thus, the overlap between virtual and actual was inevitably about offline relations and connections. For example, functions such as 'search people' allow users to reconnect with old friends they have lost contact with.

In Florence Chee's persuasive ethnography on *PC bang* and the politics of online multiplayer games, she argues that these spaces are *social spaces* that are viewed as 'third spaces' between home and work. [15] For Korean youth, most of who still live at home before getting married, these third spaces operate as private spaces in which to connect with other people. As Jun-Sok Huhh observes, *PC bang* ensured the success of online games in Korea by nurturing both the culture and the business side of the industry; thus the online game is seen as synonymous with the *PC bang*. [16] According to Hee-jeong Choi, the *bang* is an independent space for the sharing of ideas that is 'static in form, yet flexible in functionality'. [17] In other words, the *bang* does not have a predetermined purpose — instead, the occupants sharing the space actively determine its use. [18]

Given Korea's strong techno-nationalism, which boasts of some of the best joint government and industry policies, [19] much work has been done on making positive press between innovative media usage and Korean culture. The role of technology is bound up in the way in which Korea exports its mobile technology products such as Samsung and LG globally, as well as the way in which the local market of 48 million people consumes local technologies and service providers. Parallel to the industry and governmental regulations that nurtured Japanese local industries and ensured innovation on a global scale, the consumption of mobile technologies in Korea is tightly bound to explicit and implicit forms of nationalism. The hardware and software components are made in Korea, serviced by Korean telecommunication companies, and with conservative estimates of 78% penetration rates, the Korean mobile phone success story has taken global centre stage.

The dominant SNS, Cyworld minihompy, is a great example of an online space that not only intersects with the offline but provides numerous sub-spaces (or *bangs*) to archive and share

offline experiences. [20] From the uploading of *selca* with friends, to images and videos of food cooked or eaten, to virtual objects given to each other's miniroom (a virtual room in which friends' avatars can visit and share), Cyworld minihompy provides one centralized form of the online amongst all the other SNS services (i.e. me2day, which is like Twitter). As one of the longest standing SNS globally, Cyworld minihompy has withstood various trends and has maintained a stronghold in Korea. While 'global' sites such as YouTube and Twitter may be used, it is often the minihompy where UCC is shared and UGC disseminated.

Cyworld's success has been, in part, attributed to dominant lifestyle trends in Korea, such as the ubiquity of high-rise blocks of flats and the easy accessibility of broadband coverage. The importance of Cyworld is demonstrated by the fact that over one-third of Korea's 48 million people regularly use their own and visit their friends' minihompy. In Cyworld friends are called *ilchon*, a concept once used to denote one degree of distance from family members in a traditional Korean kinship (i.e. one's mother is one *chon*). Cyworld has re-branded its cyber-rooms with the notion of *ilchon* and non-*chon* to infer 'friends' and 'non-friends'. *Ilchon* can gain a greater degree of access to their fellow *ilchon's* information and be invited to visit their cyber-room; *non-chon* can only gain cursory access.

As a broadband 'centre' with the world's highest penetration rates and fastest speeds, Korea represents a prime example of innovative convergent mobile technologies. [21] The success of DMB and mobile media such as camera phones has seen Korean companies such as PandoraTV and afreeca allow users to have their own broadcast channel that they and others can view on their mobiles and computers. This growth in UCC content and distribution systems is also marked as a period in which Korean users are shifting from being defined by activities such as 'scooping' or *per-na-ru-gi* (i.e. copying or transferring of other people's content — UGC) to new patterns of actively creating their own content. [22] The coordination between mobile and computer usage of the internet to access and update SNS has seen the emergence of new forms of UCC in Korea. [23] This phenomenon is partly linked to changes in the expressive and communicative practices of users, as well as to the ways in which industry is trying to emphasize the importance of UCC. Indeed, for industry, UCC in its various forms still provides free content that can be used to gain the attention of audiences.

14. Larissa Hjorth and Heewon Kim, 'Being There and Being Here Gendered Customising of Mobile 3G Practices through a Case Study in Seoul', *Convergence,* 11.2 (2005): 49-55.

15. Florence Chee, 'Understanding Korean Experiences of Online Game Hype, Identity, and the Menace of the "Wang-tta"', presented at DIGRA 2005 Conference: Changing Views-Worlds in Play, Canada, 2005.

16. Jun-Sok Huhh, 'Culture and Business of PC Bangs in Korea', *Games and Culture,* 3.1 (2008): 26-37.

17. Jee-Hoang Choi, 'The City, Self, and Connections: Transyouth and Urban Social Networking in Seoul', in Stephanie Hemelryk Donald, Therese Anderson and Damien Spry (eds) *Youth, Society and Mobile Media in Asia,* London, New York: Routledge, 2009, p. 93.

18. Jee-Hoang Choi and Adam Greenfield, 'To Connect and Flow in Seoul: Ubiquitous Technologies, Urban Infrastructure and Everyday Life in the Contemporary Korean City', in Marcus Foth (ed.) *Handbook of Research on Urban Informatics: The Practice and Promise of the Real-time City,* New York: IGI Global, 2009, p. 27.

19. David. M. West, *Global e-government, 2006.* Providence, Rhode Island: Center for Public Policy, Brown University, 2006.

20. Unlike in many western contexts in which Facebook has dominated as *the* SNS, in Korea it has been Cyworld minihompy. Cyworld was started by four KAIST (Korean Advanced Institute of Science and Technology) graduates in 1999, using modest means. It was acquired by telecommunications giant SK in 2003 for $8.5 million USD. Starting with only 450,000 users in 1999, Cyworld minihompy's subscription has now reach more than 25 million users in March 2010 — or more than 55 times more users. Whilst minihompy's heyday has been and gone, it is still the dominant SNS.

21. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2006) *OECD broadband statistics:* http://www.oecd.org/sti/ict/broadband; OECD 2009, *OECD Broadband Portal 2009,* http://www.oecd.org/document/54/0,3343,en_2649_34225_38690102_1_1_1_1,00.html.

22. Soohyun Yoo, 'Online Community and Community Capacity', in Gerard Goggin & Mark McLelland (eds) *Internationalising Internet Studies,* Routledge: London, 2009, pp. 217-236.

23. S. J Yang and Y.J. Park, 'A Study on the Motivation and the Influence of Using Personal Community', *Journal of Consumer Studies* 16.4 (2005): 129-150.

However, even if it is made by users, in Korea UCC isn't necessarily user-driven. This has lead to a situation in which companies pay a so-called user to make something that looks 'authentically' UCC, which is then circulated as UCC that can indirectly advertise the company. Another model of this industry-driven UCC is the competition organized by public Korean bus companies, in which they advertised for users to create UCC around bus stories, in order to win various prizes. [24] In the case of public transport, it is not surprising to find a lot of UCC made within the spaces of both trains and buses, given that for most Seoulites traveling for at least one hour to and from work or school is not uncommon.

In fieldwork conducted in September 2010 (following up on research done in 2009), this difference between UGG and UCC was further highlighted through curious examples of UCC. When one thinks of UCC, one tends to picture the numerous viral images of singing and dancing we find on YouTube. However, in Korea, UCC has taken a slightly different route, in part engineered by the vicarious ICT (information and communication technologies) industries. For some, UCC is synonymous with UGC – there is much forwarding of favourite URLs about celebrities, or interesting hobbies like cooking. For others, UCC is an example of 21st century creativity — something they hold in great regard. When we asked respondents if they had made UCC, some had; others wanted to but had not. When asked why not, they replied that they felt their skills were not good enough. For these respondents, it was important that what they uploaded looked good, otherwise they wouldn't upload it. They noted that UCC takes much time and skill, and that they felt they couldn't compete with many of the experts making UCC. This discussion highlighted that in Korea UCC isn't characterized by DIY techniques; rather, it is a form of creativity that requires the skills of very talented individuals. The idea of needing much time, creativity and talent to make UCC in Korea has meant many young people feel unable to participate in the creation of online content. Instead, they happily forward other people's UCC. In the highly competitive world that is contemporary Korean society, many young people feel the pressure to succeed at everything they do. The idea that UCC could just be something one has fun with and plays with doesn't strike a cord with many young people. Instead, if you are going to participate in making online videos you need talent.

One young female respondent, a freshman, spoke about some of the seniors who had made some great UCC and then went on to establish their own media company. This company, M-MEDIA Works, [25] began being employed by companies to create mock UCC – that is, media that looks like UCC made by everyday users but is in fact commissioned by companies to sell something. From there, the company has gone on to produce music clips for famous singers in Korea. For this young respondent, these students' leap from amateur to professional via UCC was inspiring, and gave her significant insights into the changing nature of media techniques. Even she had been employed by a company, 7eleven, to write a pretend blog about some of their products. Since that job, she has become suspicious of the authenticity of so-called

'ordinary' blogs and UCC. This blurring between user-made and industry-made UCC is clearly spearheaded by the case study of the Korean girl doing a Lady Gaga song via an iPhone video, which has attracted much attention. [26] Is it a clever form of UCC? Or viral marketing for iPhone?

The particular and unique conditions for online video in Korea are shaped not only by socio-cultural factors, but also by the vicarious local ICT industries. Companies such as Samsung and LG have long been leaders in convergent ICT media, especially in terms of the mobile phone. The success of the mobile phone as a vehicle for producing and consuming content in Korea is unmistakable. It is not uncommon to see both young and old people participating in online media, especially videos, via mobile phones. For Jung Youn Moon, the subway is such an important space for various everyday activities that it can be seen as 'mobile bang'. [27] That is, it is a communal space that has numerous significant functions in the lives of Seoulites. Much of this is coordinated through mobile media to provide a variety of multimedia experiences and interactions. The rise of the camera phone in Korea has been pivotal in both changing and documenting shifts in everyday life in Seoul. Given that Korean companies such as Samsung were some of the first to pioneer high-resolution camera phones whose images could be easily sent to online sites such as minihompy, it is not surprising that Korea has witnessed an active networked visual culture. [28]

Picture This: Networked Visuality in Seoul
Since the first camera phone was introduced into the Korean market in 2002, the camera phone has evolved into an important part of everyday mobile media. [29] Parallels can be made between the rise of the webcam and 'reality' aesthetics associated with the handheld camera in television and film, and the rise of the camera phone and sharing internet communities such as Cyworld, MySpace and YouTube. As a convergent communicative media premised on the logic of gift-giving, the various ways in which camera phone images can be 'stored', 'shared', and 'saved' [30] are relevant to how the images are read and contextualized. With the low-resolution giving greater 'authenticity' and 'realism' to the 'voice of the people' aesthetic, [31] the camera phone provides a glimpse into the user's personal world — a genre and technique that remains consistent despite the rise of high-resolution and superior lenses.

24.   For examples of UCC competitions in Korea see the following: http://award.ts2020.kr/; http://ucckahp.com/ucckahp/; http://experience.koreabrand.net/season4_summary_01.asp?lang=en; http://tvpot.daum.net/project/ProjectView.do?projectid=419; http://www.metro.daejeon.kr; http://contest.jobkorea.co.kr/Contest/List.asp?cate=0109.
25.   www.m-media.co.kr/xe/about.

26.   http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nzh2UygPwDU&feature=player_embedded.
27.   Jung Youn Moon, *The Mobile Bang: visual depictions of the subway*, Master's thesis, RMIT University, June, 2010.
28.   See Dong-Hoo Lee, 'Women's Creation of Camera Phone Culture', *Fibreculture Journal* 6 (2005), http://journal.fibreculture.org; Dong-Hoo Lee, 'Re-imaging Urban Space: Mobility, Connectivity, and a Sense of Place', in Gerard Goggin and Larissa Hjorth (eds) *Mobile Technologies,* Routledge: London/New York, 2008, pp. 235-251; Dong-Hoo Lee, 'Mobile Snapshots and Private/Public Boundaries', *Knowledge, Technology & Policy,* 22 (2009): 161-171; Larissa Hjorth, 'Being Real in the Mobile Reel: A Case Study on Convergent Mobile Media as Domesticated New Media in Seoul, South Korea', *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies,* 14.1 (2008): 91-104.
29.   Lee, 'Mobile Snapshots and Private/Public Boundaries'.
30.   Mizuko Ito and Daisuke Okabe, 'Camera phones changing the definition of picture-worthy', *Japan Media Review*, 2003, http://www.ojr.org/japan/wireless/1062208524.php.
31.   Hjorth, 'Being Real in the Mobile Reel'.

In March 2006, Samsung released a ten mega-pixel camera phone in Korea that would revo-lutionize the 'digital divide' between the quality, and thus content, allowed by camera phones and stand-alone digital cameras. One of the dominant differences in the relationship between the two was linked to the depiction of, and association with, *official and unofficial occasions*. The camera phone was always there, both literally and metaphorically 'on hand' to capture the trivialities of the everyday. [32] By contrast, the high-resolution stand-alone camera was pur-posely brought along to events deemed 'special'. As Ilpo Koskinen has noted, camera phones partake in 'the aesthetic of banality'; [33] in other words, by taking images of the everyday, cam-era phones images represent a 'common banality' [34] that is ordered by 'vernacular creativity'. [35]

A second difference related to the *context* for sharing. As Mizuko Ito and Daisuke Okabe have observed in Japan, camera phone imagery are contextualized by what they see as the three S's: sharing, storing and saving. [36] Camera phones have 'sharing' built into their logic, with quick functions such as MMS (Multimedia Messaging Service), Bluetooth and the facil-ity of uploading to a blog almost instantly. By contrast, the digital camera had to be taken to an often stationary computer before the content can be uploaded. The launch of the ten mega-pixel camera phones represented the connection of these worlds. No longer would the camera phone images just be trivial and 'fun'; they had the potential to be printed in high-resolution, blurring the world between amateur and professional digital photography. The introduction, in 2007, of a new breed of quasi-professional camera phones that have profes-sional lenses and capabilities such as LG viewty, which allows users to create and edit movies and upload to UCC sites such YouTube, along with workshops and competitions for UCC, highlighted the visible push towards making Korea global leaders in UCC. However, despite all these advances in screen technology that provides users with state-of-the-art technology, the aura of banality – that is, low-resolution images of the everyday – still reigns. Such content predominates to the extent that the authenticity of UCC is still very much linked to the banality of its content and images. However, as noted earlier, often this banality can be deployed as a technique in industry created UCC.

The significance of camera phones in the rise of UCC can be noted in one of the biggest photo sharing SNS, Flickr. [37] Even though there are famous brands of stand-alone cameras,

the Apple iPhone is the most popular camera among Flickr users. [38] This popularity could be symbolic of SNS UCC in general. Moreover, given the prevalence of camera phones in contemporary networked visuality, one might argue that its particular characteristics are im-pacting upon photographic practice generally.

Dong-Hoo Lee's ethnographic work on camera phones usage in Korea has demonstrated that these practices can reinforce female empowerment, and allow for new ways of seeing and creating. [39] As Lee notes, by 2004 mobile phone penetration rates were around 75%, with 36.1 million people owning one or more handsets. The role of the phone and mobile media in Korean everyday life is all-pervasive, with users upgrading their phones every ten months on average. In 2004, 73% of the *handupon* sold were equipped with built-in digital cameras, and by the beginning of 2006 it was virtually impossible to buy a *handupon* without the inte-grated camera. As Lee and Sohn note, the changing representational codes and accessibility of image making and distribution technologies are affording opportunities to groups that were previously excluded from that domain of production, particularly women. [40] In their study, Lee and Sohn found that women were more active in adopting new multimedia functions of the mobile phone, and that their willingness to adopt such functions was significantly stronger than men's.

With Korea's status as the most broadband-enabled country in the world, the relationship between online and offline is seamless, even if offline communication is still valued more highly. Online virtual communities such as Cyworld minihompy are used by both young and old, and play a significant part in most people's everyday lives. The role of UCC and UCG in Cyworld is significant. Many of the still and moving images uploaded to Cyworld are done so via mobile phones. Online videos are watched and forwarded while users are on the move. These images are often forms of UCC that operate as snapshots of everyday life. According to Moon, [41] there are around 6.2 million photographs uploaded to Cyworld everyday, many of which are camera phone images. Through UCC, consumers become active co-producers of mobile media. [42] With the ubiquity of camera phones, images of the banal and significant can be easily taken, saved and shared at increasing speed. From citizen journalism, to the mimicry of media in the form of paparazzi-style shots of friends and everyday objects, camera phones play a pivotal role in the types of UCC images and video that are being shared.

However, after the arrest in April 2009 of blogger Park Dae-sung, known as 'Minerva', and also as the 'Prophet of Doom', for his posts that presciently commented on the financial ad-ministration of President Kim, many younger Koreans were suddenly seeing the democratic

32. Ilpo Koskinen, 'Managing Banality in Mobile Multimedia', in R. Pertierra (ed.) *The Social Construction and Usage of Communication Technologies: European and Asian Experiences,* Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2007, pp. 48-60; Lee, 'Women's Creation of Camera Phone Culture'.
33. Koskinen, 'Managing Banality in Mobile Multimedia'.
34. Mørk Petersen, *Common Banalities*, PhD thesis, ITU, Copenhagen, Denmark 2008.
35. Jean Burgess, '"All Your Chocolate Rain Are Belong to Us"? Viral Video, YouTube and the Dynamics of Participatory Culture', in Geert Lovink and Sabine Niederer (eds) *The Video Vortex Reader: Responses to YouTube,* Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures, 2008, pp.101-110.
36. Mizuko Ito and Daisuke Okabe, 'Everyday Contexts of Camera Phone Use: Steps Towards Technosocial Ethnographic Frameworks', in Joachim Hoflich and Maren Hartmann (eds) *Mobile Communication in Everyday Life: An Ethnographic View,* Frank & Timme: Berlin, 2006, pp. 79-102.
37. http://www.flickr.com.

38. Petersen, *Common Banalities*.
39. Lee, 'Women's Creation of Camera Phone Culture'.
40. Dong-Hoo Lee and Soo-Hyun Sohn, 'Is there a Gender Difference in Mobile Phone Usage?', in S.D. Kim (ed.) *Mobile Communication and Social Change* conference proceedings, South Korea, October, 2004: 243-259.
41. Iris Moon, 'E-Society: My World is Cyworld', *BusinessWeek Online*, September 26, 2005, http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/05_39/b3952405.htm.
42. Hjorth, 'Being Real in the Mobile Reel'.

space of the online transformed into a government-regulated dark space. According to some reports, Minerva was charged and acquitted for spreading false information that supposedly intentionally depressed market sentiment. [43] Minerva even predicted events in the foreign market, including the collapse of Lehman Brothers. It is in light of the Minerva incident that I conducted fieldwork in Seoul to see what users were thinking about participation in the online and the fate of UCC.

Snapshots: A Case Study of UCC and UGC by Users in Seoul

In September 2009, I visited Seoul to conduct fieldwork consisting of focus groups and one-on-one interviews with 50 users aged 18 to 35 years old. In September 2010, I returned to interview both previous and new participants about their online practices. In the second study the age group was widened to include respondents up to the age of 60. In the 2009 study, the spectre left by the Minerva incident was felt by some respondents who had, after the arrest, become hesitant to disclose too much personal information online. In over five years of study of media usage in Seoul, this was the first time that such tentative attitudes had been voiced.

In the 2010 fieldwork, the relationship between UCC and UGC became more apparent, with users clearly understanding the difference between the two, and industry increasingly trying to deploy UCC as part of its advertising strategy. The idea of industry-driven UCC could be viewed by many as an oxymoron; after all, isn't UCC supposed to be something that is user-driven and speaks of the user's thoughts and desires, rather than re-packaged industry advertisements? Put differently, isn't UCC supposed to be indicative of a 21st century push towards 'conversational' media, rather than of the 20th century pull of 'packaged' media?

One way to comprehend UCC is through the rise of personalization. According to Clay Shirky, the personal has been hijacked, shifting from a space between people to an adjunct of technologies. [44] Indeed, new media technologies such as mobile media and social media do deploy the notion of the personal in complex ways — from material customization of hardware and software to being, in a McLuhanesque sense, an immaterial extension of the owner. [45] These processes of personalization recruit new types of labour that are predominantly social, creative, affective and emotional. As Julian Kücklich observes in the case of gamers who modify games, the labour is underscored by a notion of 'playbour'. [46] Playbour, as a form of UCC, involves the active user/gamer's deployment of creative, emotional, affective and social forms of labour, which is then transformed into economic capital for the industry.

Epitomized by UCC, cartographies of personalization are best understood through the relationship between media convergence and intimacy. They are marked by the shift from the mobile phone, as a means of communication, to mobile media as a form of creativity and expression, and the consequent production of new forms of gendered intimacy and labour. Personalization is linked to, and expresses, the attendant and varied forms of social, geographic, technological, economic mobility. It also reflects emerging forms of gendered labour, and the more intimate or 'affective' forms of labour just described. Personalization takes material and immaterial forms that converge as they manifest at the micro level of the individual and the macro levels of communities, and national and transnational relations.

Through the rise of mobile media characterized by the appearance of the active user, new forms of mobility, intimacy and labour occur. The transformation of everyday users into photojournalists was highlighted by the rise of netizen media such as online *OhMyNews*, and the election of President Roh in Korea. These examples demonstrate shifts in labour and citizen agency, where unofficial imaging communities become part of official media expressions. As Manuel Castells et al. observe, 'communication can be both instrumental and expressive'. [47] With tools such as texting, emailing, camera phone imagery, video and sound, the mobile phone provides many vehicles for self-expression. These forms of expression play across individual, social and cultural levels at once. Such practices as texting can 'express social inequalities' [48] concurrent to creating 'an amplification of inner subjectivity'. [49] These practices can be found in online cultures, expressed in how and what people watch, make and share. The significance of personalization was apparent in the focus group sessions and interviews I conducted in 2009. Through mobile media, online videos are accessed by people of all ages, anywhere, anytime. As one male, aged 25, noted:

> I think in my opinion, the Korean environment of mobile or video is very developed. The mobile phone is very important to many people. It is part of their identity. Many people use it, regardless of age. Many Korean middle-aged people are very connected to internet through the mobile phone. It's cheap and many people are using the mobile and video. It is common to see young and old people using the mobile phone to view (online) videos. If they like it, then they comment and pass it onto friends.

One of the areas that led to discussions about UCC and UGC was the changing relationship between the amateur and professional. This was particularly the case in terms of power-blogging, in which blogs have so many followers that they become powerful enough to earn money for their makers. In Seoul, powerblogging is marked by the movement away from overtly political subject matter to a kind of 'personal is political' ethos, in which we find 'wifebloggers' blogging about such things as cooking. [50] Successful wifebloggers can not only

43. John Abell, 'South Korean "Prophet of Doom" Blogger Acquitted', *Wired*, April 20, 2009, http://www.wired.com/threatlevel/2009/04/south-korean-pr/.

44. Clay Shirky, 'Here Comes Everybody', presented at the Aspen Ideas Festival, June 30-July 8, 2008, Aspen Colorado, http://fora.tv/2008/07/06/Clay_Shirky_on_Social_Networks_like_Facebook_and_MySpace#chapter_01.

45. Larissa Hjorth, *Mobile Media in the Asia Pacific: Gender and the Art of Being Mobile*, Routledge: London, New York, 2009.

46. Julian Kücklich, 'Precarious Playbour: Modders and the Digital Games Industry', *Fibreculture Journal* 5, 2005, http://journal.fibreculture.org/issue5/kucklich.html.

47. Manuel Castells, M. Fernandez-Ardevol, Jack Qiu and A. Sey, *Mobile Communication and Society: A Global Perspective,* Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2007, p. 153.

48. Raul Pertierra, *Transforming Technologies: Altered Selves,* Philippines: De La Salle University Press, 2006, p. 100.

49. Pertierra, *Transforming Technologies,* p. 101.

50. Dong-Hoo Lee, 'Wifebloggers', *Crossroads,* Lingnan University, Hong Kong, June, 2010.

make money from the blogs but also gain contracts for books and television series. Power-bloggers are known for their 'professional' media, both still and moving. But the idea that these powerbloggers are professionals defeats the point. Rather powerbloggers, whilst making difficult things like cooking look easy, do so through the guise of the amateur. Here we see how the labour involved in powerblogging is absorbed into an image of playbour — when in reality, many wifebloggers have to be of a certain class to afford the time to powerblog. As one female respondent aged 32 stated:

> I started following a cooking powerblogger. What I liked about her was that she wasn't a cook — she was just a mother, just like my mother. They can use the online to not just be in their home but many people's homes. If they are really popular they can earn money through a book publishing deal. This has created a booming area in Korea — how to be a powerblogger. Many people want to be a powerblogger, but few can. It is very inspirational — my mother and aunt follow such blogs and also want to write one to earn quick money from companies that advertise on the blog... Sometimes the company tries to find some bloggers, good bloggers, and then just use the bloggers commercially because they can gain access to the right audience.

When asked about the difference between UCC and UGC, the discussion shifted to whether the online was viewed as an avenue for the expression of personal or public opinion. This also evoked the discussion of the need for increased media literacy in wading through the mass of online material. As one male respondent aged 22 observed:

> Many people today use blogs to share the content — what they are good at, or what they have. This can be videos they have made or watched and want to share. So basically everyone does it. The main drawback is that there is too much information. So you can't decide sometimes what to watch… sometimes you will just watch a few moments of many things… [*Interviewer: So it's hard to know what's good and what's bad?]…* Yeah, what's real and what could be false information. So I think this change requires people to be smarter and more sensible about when they use the information. I think that's a drawback…But that could be a good thing, it makes people smarter and sensible about information…It's also much easier to form an opinion online if there's less pressure. And I think that's a good change overall.

The above respondent's comments about watching little bits of many things reflects not only a general 21st century screen engagement characterized by what Chris Chesher calls 'glaze', that is, in between the filmic gaze and television glance culture regimes.[51] However, it is also indicative of *Chal-na-jok*: whilst *'Chal-na'* means 'instant', '*jok*' refers to a 'tribe' – a feature observed in the INNOCEAN report.[52] When asked about UCC in relation to creativity, one female respondent aged 28 stated:

On sites like me2day or Twitter so much information, writings or images are from someone's (mini)hompy or blog. I mean it's not original, just reproduced. This reproduction is a big feature of online content today. Often I get sent the same content from various people.

For another female, aged 22, online content was about selling a type of offline image. She noted the amount of time many of her friends spent uploading images and videos to their minihompy to give an image of a lifestyle. Another respondent, a male aged 24, concurred:

> I remember reading an article that says they don't post their daily lives. They post to make people believe that they have certain a lifestyle. For instance, most people don't take photos of some shitty restaurant. They only take pictures of some fancy places…

So despite the everydayness and banality of mobile media in its constitution of online content, much of the banality is actually rehearsed, conspicuous consumption. For another respondent, a female aged 33, blogging and being online was about the personal. She often uploaded content and posted purely for her own consumption. She also spoke of an example in which UCC inspired more UCC:

> There was a guy who became famous for imitating the famous singer Rain[53] by videoing himself dancing to his songs in the train and uploading them to sites such as YouTube and Naver *[the dominant portal site in Korea]*…Once he created one and became well-known he then made another. In the next one, people in the train now knew him from the viral video and they laughed and videoed him. This time there were various videos of the same event, taken by the many people in the train. I liked that it was about people sharing the joy of the experience.

Indeed much of the UCC on sites such as YouTube is about 'ordinary' users celebrating popular cultural vehicles such as music clips in their own way. Two of the key features of this UCC are both its 'vernacular' and 'situated' creativity.[54] By mimicking UGC like famous music clips of popstars, users can make UCC that speaks to many other users. For another user, the compulsion to personalize media and make UCC isn't just a fun thing but rather something she feels obliged to do. Here we see the other side of the gift-giving culture of online participation, whereby users have to add material and comments in order to maintain a presence online. This was highlighted by one female respondent aged 24, who stated:

> I am studying Media at University so I use the computer a lot and also my cell phone, I cannot live without my cell phone. I always turn it on and not only text messaging with my friends but also allowing things—dictionary things. I also use my Cyworld a lot and I can't live without it. Actually, in the daytime, I play with my friends and take pictures and at night I upload. I use it all the time. I have no choice. It is something my friends and I do. But I am only 'active' (i.e. making UCC and uploading) when it's relevant to me.

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51. Chris Chesher, 'Neither Gaze nor Glance, but Glaze: Relating to Console Game Screens', *SCAN: Journal of Media Arts Culture*, 1.1 (2004), http://scan,net.au/scan/journal.

52. DK Lee, 'Catch the digital new tribes, "Chal-na-jok"', Yonhap News, http://app.yonhapnews. co.kr/YNA/Basic/article/new_search/YIBW_showSearchArticle.aspx?searchpart=article&searchte xt=찰나족&contents_id=AKR20100417073700003.

53. 'Rainism' UCC in the subway, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iGA-UuddjX8.

54. Burgess, '"All Your Chocolate Rain Are Belong to Us"?'.

For another respondent, a female aged 27, her usage of, and participation in, the online had changed. While at one time she used minihompy to upload photos and videos, she now uses it for social reasons:

> I don't make UCC anymore. I used to use minihompy for expressing myself by uploading some photos because I like to take photographs and I want to store them in one space. So minihompy was used for an archiving and sharing space from around 2005. But after that, as minihompy became more popular I use that more essentially for social purposes.

Many of the respondents used both minihompy and peer-to-peer (P2P) to download videos and music. One female respondent, aged 31, spoke of her scepticism about such material:

> I see a lot of things where I'm not sure if it is UCC or UGC because you see a lot of people upload lots of images, and figures, and stuff. But most of them are usually using TV shows as their reference. Sometimes I'm not sure because it's such a recipe that it's hard to know if UGC material is originally UCC or something from a company. Many companies these days use ads that are like UCC.

Conclusion

Unsuccessfully introduced in 2006, the reintroduction of mobile video calling in 2010 has been more popular. It will be some time before we see the impact of this application on the types of online video people upload and share. On the one hand, we could argue that it will generate more familiarity and interest in using video. On the other hand, it could be argued that video will then be viewed as direct communication rather than as expressive, as much of the shared online video is today.

In this paper I have located Korean online video culture within its specific type of networked visuality. As I have argued, the technoculture that is Seoul weaves the online with the offline, the mobile with the immobile. One way of understanding this online phenomenon is through the difference between UCC and UGC. The UCC/UGC paradigm that underscores much of online video culture globally has a particular flavour in Korea. With a voracious industry and sophisticated technoculture, Seoul presents a curious landscape for considering the relationship of UCC to the user and industry. Rather than UCC being essentially user-driven, increasingly it is becoming industry-driven. While many users can't necessarily distinguish between UCC and UGC, the difference is being further blurred by advertising posing as UCC. This shifts the role and function of UCC dramatically, from being a tool for the user's expression and storytelling, to just another vehicle for advertising. This, in turn, shapes how users engage and relate to UCC and online video cultures.

In this paper I have discussed online video in the context of Seoul's vibrant technoculture and techno-nationalism, which has seen much of online video being watched and shared in hybrid spaces, such as the subway or *bangs*, or through DMB. The associated mobility afforded by DMB is indeed changing how and where users interact with online content. While the context provided by Seoul is unique, it also constitutes a signpost towards a particular direction for online video, in which both users and companies blur the boundaries between UCC and advertisements. This phenomenon will, in turn, bring new challenges to the ways in which users relate to the content and context of online video.

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DEGENERACY IN ONLINE VIDEO PLATFORMS

MATTHEW WILLIAMSON

At the 2010 International Experimental Media Congress held in Toronto, Canadian artist Michael Snow sat on a panel entitled 'The Place of Medium'. In response to a comment about his film *Wavelength* having been watched on YouTube 50,000 times, Snow compared watching his films online to seeing a ghost, and stated that those people had not actually seen the film at all. When discussing media migration, [1] the question of online viewing is lumped together with other concerns about form, but how is the line drawn between videos on one website or another? In our day-to-day interactions with online video, does it matter whether we are watching the ghost of Michael Snow's *Wavelength* on YouTube [2] or Tudou? [3] Can Keyboard Cat [4] be watched on break.com, ebaumsworld.com or collegehumour.com with the same effect? Are other practices, such as projects that comment on online culture, affected by who is hosting them? Surely if there is a case to be made for the significance of format in regard to Snow's film, there is one to be made for Charlie Schmidt and his deceased cat Fatso.

In many discussions of video sharing culture, the only service mentioned by name will be YouTube. YouTube is arguably the generic trademark for online video, yet it is far from generic. While it is reasonable to begin the discussion with YouTube, we have reached a point at which the plurality of hosting options, and the importance of these options to the whole of online culture, requires exploration. For a working definition of video hosting, Wikipedia provides a definition broad enough to encompass many sites, stating that: 'A video hosting service allows individuals to upload video clips to an Internet website. The video host will then store the video on its server, and show the individual different types of code to allow others to view this video'. [5] A fast and easy index of sites can be found on Wikipedia, [6] as can charts showing some of the differences between sites. [7]

Online video is used in a lot of different ways: vlogs, remixes, amateur special effects, and your mom's vacation videos will all find a home somewhere. Some of the larger video sharing sites play host to a great number of overlapping communities, but others will only tolerate specific behaviours and forms of video. For example, Flickr accepts video, but only if it is below 90 seconds in length.

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1. Alain Depocas, Jon Ippolito, and Caitlin Jones, (eds) *Permanence Through Change: The Variable Media Approach*, co-published by the Guggenheim Museum and The Daniel Langlois Foundation for Art, Science & Technology, 2003.
2. 'wavelength' (dir. Michael Snow, 1967) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lzPwuP6AmCk.
3. '波长 Wavelength.(Michael.Snow).1967', http://www.tudou.com/programs/view/UkBCsMeL6qI/.
4. 'Charlie Schmidt's "Keyboard Cat"! - ORIGINAL!', http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J---aiyznGQ.
5. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Video_hosting_service.
6. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_video_sharing_websites.
7. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison_of_video_services.

Clay Shirky's presentation at the 2005 *Long Now* conference [8] discussed 'degenerate' systems of classification and archiving: systems with a high level of redundancy, or overlap. Shirky offered the example of a city as a highly degenerate system. Rather than having one area for residents and one for business, people can work and live in a number of different areas. This means the city can accommodate the preferences of different people, and is resilient to re-zoning and other geographic changes. A second example offered by Shirky is the Rosetta Stone, which was discovered in 1799. As the stone has the same text written in three different languages, it possesses a degree of redundancy that eventually made it possible to recover the lost languages.

My own example, online video, possesses more degeneracy than it can handle. While YouTube has become the generic brand of online video, droves of video hosting sites cater to similar but overlapping groups of users. This degeneracy creates cultural artifacts that are themselves worthy of preservation and consideration. Why does a user choose one site over another?

These sites have numerous identical or similar features, functions and design elements that bind them together as a genre. Each, however, is the product of a complex negotiation of social, cultural and technological influences. In a work entitled *Here Comes Everybody* [9], Shirky describes three factors at play: a 'plausible promise, an effective tool, and an acceptable bargain for the user'. These terms — *promise*, *tool*, and *bargain*— used in the context of video are not necessarily the most authentic to his original coinage, but will be used throughout this essay (though not in that order) as they are useful in identifying the differences and similarities between online video sharing systems, between disparate platforms.

As Sean Cubitt has pointed out, 'there is no exchange of moving pictures without standardisation of the codecs on which the various proprietary players can function'. [10] Such is the importance of the video sharing service as a *tool*. Subtle technical differences in codec, scripting, and resolution can have enormous implications for the unique possibilities of a platform, and can have significant political implications. The users of X platform expect the convenience offered by Y platform. Because codec specifications are connected to many different organizations, each with their own agenda, they cannot be ignored in this discussion. And yet, because the impact of proprietary codecs are for the most part ignored by the user base of most sites, codecs only become involved in the negotiation between the user and the site when they are part of the underpinning of the community, such as with EngageMedia, a video sharing organization and website that is specifically devoted to social and environmental change. Nowhere can this be seen more clearly than in the recent divide that has emerged between HTML5 and Adobe Flash. While I will not discuss the finer points of that debate

here, the decision by Apple to not support Flash on its popular iPhone platform, [11] and the subsequent decision of a number of sites to experiment with HTML5, demonstrates how political the technical details of video formatting can be. Vimeo, Dailymotion, and YouTube have the resources to experiment with HTML5 so that they can gain market share by serving mobile devices, but smaller players may not have those resources. Those that operate with different goals have less to worry about, or can afford to wait until the technology becomes more popular. While standardization makes these exchanges possible, different configurations make each service unique.

As I opened with reference to the legendary Michael Snow – whose structural film *Wavelength* was the roundabout inspiration for this essay – this is an appropriate point at which to discuss the technological influences upon what might be termed 'structural online video'. There are many historical and contemporary examples of media art that play with the limits of the technology available. Two good examples of structural impulses on YouTube are 'The Shortest YouTube Video Ever' [12] and its companion 'Longest video on YouTube!' [13] Just as Snow's *Wavelength* centres on a long zoom into a photograph of the sea, the two YouTube videos mentioned take the technical limits of their medium to an equally absurd conclusion. The capacities of different codecs to limit file size also comes into play in the creation of online video, giving rise to a compression arms race for the longest video capacity. There are at least five videos claiming to be the longest, with the reigning champion clocking in at over 36 hours. On the other hand, the shortest video is limited by the constraints of video editing and exporting. As it is impossible to go below one frame, one user has created a video that plays upon the multiple meanings of the term 'short', [14] creating a video with the shortest height, rather than length – a move of which I am sure Snow would approve. Here we see the principle of degeneracy at work. The longest video on YouTube is 24 hours, and on Vimeo it is just two hours – but that is like comparing apples and oranges, for Vimeo's structural tendencies are towards production technology. Vimeo has positioned itself as a site for video enthusiasts, and as such the technical possibilities and restrictions are significant. For example, groups on the site are often devoted to specific cameras. This creates a number of videos that exist only to show off technological ability. [15]

The *bargain* aspect of online video is complicated, but one way to look at it is through the relationship between the site creators and site contributors. Relationships between users are incredibly important, but the primary contract underpinning all others is the end user agreements or terms of service. Terms of service documents are important for understanding how a service is guided by its owners, thereby leading and limiting the behaviour of the user base through official standards of conduct. Each service or site has its own agenda, which is often commercial, but can occasionally be altruistic. The agenda may be expressed in visu-

8.   Clay Shirky, 'Making The Digital Durable', The Long Now Conference, San Francisco, California, November 14th, 2005.
9.   Clay Shirky, *Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing Without Organizations,* New York: Penguin Press, 2008.
10. Sean Cubitt, 'Codecs and Capability' in Geert Lovink and Sabine Niederer (eds) *Video Vortex Reader*: *Responses to YouTube,* Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures, 2008, p. 46.

11. JR Raphael, 'Apples's iPad and the Flash Crash', http://www.pcworld.com/article/188185/apples_ipad_and_the_flash_clash.html.
12. 'The Shortest YouTube Video Ever', http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GVxhaBU7sOI.
13. 'Longest video on YouTube', http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VmoeXjsVzTk.
14. 'Shortest Video On YouTube!', http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M4Cw80OhBv8.
15. 'RED 4K TEST', http://vimeo.com/6618681.

ally implicit ways such as design, or through explicit content restrictions and terms of service policies. Differences can cut across long-standing political divides, evidence of which can be seen in open source discourse. Just ask EngageMedia, who have developed Plumi, 'a free and open source video sharing platform for building your own online video community'. [16] With tools such as these, micro-communities can run their own hosting services that never engage with the dominant practices of YouTube. There are no Keyboard Cat videos here.

To briefly consider a site with quite different aims, Pornhub provides a link to its '18 U.S.C. 2257 Records Keeping Requirements Compliance Statement', [17] as is required by all producers of pornographic content. This section of the site also notes that the owners of the site are not the 'primary producer[s]' of content on the website, and that the content is perhaps not '100% accurate'. They stress that they follow procedures to ensure that all content is provided by adults and depicts adults. They also provide links in their terms of service to laws regarding child pornography and assert the seriousness in which they treat this matter. Not all sites make their terms so obvious, yet this example helps underscore how officially encoded the behavioural limits are of these sites.

Discussing the differences between Facebook and MySpace, social media researcher danah boyd states that 'aesthetics are more than simply the "eye of the beholder" - they are culturally narrated and replicated'. [18] Although boyd is discussing a different form of social media, the importance of interface design and personalization options applies to the present subject, because the options offered to users by those who run the site represent the bargain every user enters into. Compared to the behemoth YouTube, which offers a wealth of personal information on the profile page, and customizable color schemes, other sites like Vimeo are clean and consistent. The example I will focus on here, Megavideo, is also designed with little opportunity for personalization or personal information, with only a list of videos, comments, friends and a few other personal details available. A large number of users have essentially blank profiles. Megavideo employs a three-tiered membership structure: Non-members, Members, and Premium. Non-members have access to a time-limited amount of video; they can watch 72 minutes of video before having to take a 52-minute breather. Members have the same limited access to video, but are able to post their own videos. Premium Membership offers a slew of benefits, including file hosting, ad-revenue sharing, and priority for streaming and converting video. Most interestingly, a Megaupload Premium Membership offers access to the 'rewards program', which offers points when people view your videos. Rewards are redeemed by decreasing the cost of membership and, at the highest levels, in cash. While this is not uncommon, it is important to consider in light of accusations against

16. http://www.engagemedia.org/about-us.
17. http://www.youporn.com/2257.
18. danah boyd, 'Viewing American class divisions through Facebook and MySpace', 'Viewing American class divisions through Facebook and MySpace', Apophenia Blog Essay, 24 June, 2007, http://www.danah.org/papers/essays/ClassDivisions.html.

the site for copyright violation. [19] A user named yuridvm currently has the most viewed video on Megavideo. Viewed more than two million times, the video depicts a trio of young men attempting to perform a dance move, and ends with one of the men landing on his face. This video also appears on YouTube, and at first sight appears to be much less popular on this site. However, closer inspection reveals that all of this user's videos are derived from popular 'viral' videos that are available on YouTube. It seems that the appeal of rewards points encourages a different type of sharing than is usually seen: the user is using curated material to increase their viewership. This example, among many others, demonstrates that Megavideo is a community that values 'stats' above all else.

At this point, we have a set of technological limitations backed up by a large body of legalese. In addition, we have a social contract, either explicit or implicit, which modifies the user's behaviour. The *promise* offered by a video service is the basic premise for participating. Some of the promise of a particular platform can be attributed to branding and managerial oversight. Given the complexity of large sites, where there might be a wide variety of reasons to participate, the size of the community itself can be a part of the promise. For example, sciencestage.com is best summed up by its tag line 'Streaming Knowledge, Advancing Careers'. The promise here is financial mobility, and the emphasis upon knowledge as opposed to information. Vimeo positions itself as a haven for original content, as their introductory statements make clear: 'Vimeo is a respectful community of creative people who are passionate about sharing the videos they make. We provide the best tools and highest quality video in the universe. See for yourself and Join today!' Launched in late 2004, Vimeo currently has a community of over 3 million users.

Henry Jenkins states that 'YouTube's value depends heavily upon its deployment via other social networking sites'. [20] This is equally true of other sites. Since the presence of online video pervades almost all corners of online activity, the promise can be something that is external to the site itself. The way that a particular online community views itself often has a large part to play. As we have seen with Megavideo, the incentive can be money, attention, or both, but there are other factors involved. As Isabel Pettinato states, 'a negligible number have achieved a place among the Top Ten of most-viewed videos'. [21] There are a number of tiers of participation and while getting over a million hits may be a goal for some, it is not necessarily the prize for all. If a video seems inane or banal to you, it probably means that you are not a part of the community. Participation and communication within these parameters are values in and of themselves.

19. wconeybeer, 'Streaming video websites creating new piracy challenge', http://www.myce.com/news/streaming-video-websites-creating-new-piracy-challenge-34604/.
20. Henry Jenkins, 'Nine Propositions Towards a Cultural Theory of YouTube', Henry Jenkins Weblog, 28 May, 2007, http://www.henryjenkins.org/2007/05/9_propositions_towards_a_cultu.html.
21. Isabel Pettinato, 'Viral Candy', in Olia Lialina and Dragan Espenschied (eds) *Digital Folklore Reader*, Stuttgart: Merz & Solitude, 2009.

The poem 'I love my Motherland' originated on the message board Tianya.cn, and quickly became a viral hit spawning many remixes. [22] This exchange, however, took place for the most part on Chinese video sharing sites Tudou and Youku, whereas there was much less of an impact on Western sites. Tudou.com is a video sharing site based in the People's Republic of China, and is one of the most popular non-English sites for video sharing. Their recent move into the creation of original content [23] for their own site – created in an episodic televisual style – shows that their interest is in a traditional broadcast relationship. A low viewership for a commercial program would be quite embarrassing, but in the face of this particular community, personal video sharing is less important. At the extreme end of this scale is Zeroviews. biz, a blog that shames YouTube videos that have not received a single view. Ironically, by promoting these videos, or even just by finding them, zeroview.biz negates their value as having been unwatched. [24] The specific promise of YouTube (broadcasting) steers expectations of high viewership. A zero views blog for Vimeo or Tudou would not nearly be as interesting, as the implicit arrangement is not predicated on popularity. [25]

The most obvious difference between platforms is language. For example, Rutube [26] operates in Russian, but popular memes like Standing Cat [27] and Double Rainbow [28] are still found there. Thus, sites do not exist in a vacuum, even across the easily prescribed boundaries of language. 'Lipdubs' which began on Vimeo [29], have spread across all platforms. The same can be said of popular YouTube memes such as Keyboard Cat and Double Rainbow. The waters are indeed quite murky when trying to differentiate between communities, and draw easy lines of classification. Even on sites considered 'mainstream', [30] these lines are blurred. In a study of anime music videos, Mizuko Ito has found that, although the practice of creating and sharing these clips had moved to other video sharing sites, [31] the centre of the community continues to be animemusicvideo.org. When community behaviours occur across a number of different sites, it is clear that community has become more important than medium.

Having considered a number of video sharing platforms, it is possible to see that the high level of degeneracy is key to the continued growth of online video as a cultural practice. In order to understand the effects of video sharing, it is important to observe it at a macroscopic level that takes into account all forms of practice. There is a danger in branding YouTube (or even one particular community on YouTube) as typical of video sharing culture. The choices available in video sharing sites are typical of 'long tail' economies. [32] In fact, freely available PHP scripts allow anyone who is reasonably tech-savvy to run their own video sharing website. [33]It is important to note that in each instance of this culture taking hold, there is a negotiation between the social and technological rules of participation.

Applying Shirky's concepts of *tools*, *bargain* and *promise* to the context of video helps to identify similarities across disparate platforms. The messy technological, social and emotional promises are the life or death of any site. The reasons not to be 'mainstream' have to be enticing, offering opportunities that cannot be reasonably attained elsewhere. As Shirky points out, 'it is now cheaper to keep things by accident than to delete them on purpose'. [34] The increased cost of medium specificity cannot be recouped by appealing to quality. The plurality of available circulation methods provided by different platforms means that concerns related to the medium have been superseded in importance by the needs of a community. In other words, the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few.

In response to Michael Snow's statement, Kevin McGarry states: 'As an immaterial thing, how a moving image looks constitutes what it is, and what concern could be more primary than what the thing is?' [35] Although I am not arguing for medium specificity, I am suggesting that 'what the thing is' is only as important as its availability. To be inaccessible is to be invisible. Moving to a landscape that takes media migration for granted offers video culture the opportunities for growth in audience participation and awareness that outweigh other concerns.

22. Fauna, 'I love My Motherland' Poem Rejected, Becomes Viral Hit', http://www.chinasmack. com/2009/stories/i-love-my-motherland-poem-viral-hit.html.
23. 'Tudou "That Love Comes" Original Drama Series Debut', http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/tudou-that-love-comes-original-drama-series-debut-105015184.html.
24. 'Zero Views: Blog Celebrates The Best Of YouTube's Worst', videos, http://www.huffingtonpost. com/2010/08/27/videos-0-views-viral_n_697455.html.
25. This recalls early self-referential video art, such as Vito Acconci's *Theme song*, at http://blip.tv/file/3608518, or Richard Serra's *Television delivers people,* http://www.tudou.com/ programs/view/c-R1GWCHAn8/.
26. rutube.ru.
27. стойкая стойка, http://rutube.ru/tracks/3687916.html?v=14cb1a677afea4a4009d2ef69acf8d27.
28. Двойная радуга, http://rutube.ru/tracks/3424781.html?v=8daab3c65a03f62bc44fdb13d71752 6c.
29. 'Lip Dubbing: Endless Dream', http://www.vimeo.com/123498.
30. Mizuko Ito, 'The rewards of non-commercial production: Distinctions and status in the anime music video scene', *First Monday* 15.5 (2010), http://www.uic.edu/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/2968/2528.
31. Edited anime television shows and movie set to music.
32. Chris Anderson. 'The Long Tail', *Wired*, October 2004,
33. http://www.mediamaxscript.com/Video-Hosting-Script.
34. Clay Shirky, 'Private, Public, and the collapse of the Personal', in Lauren Cornell, Massimiliano Gioni and Laura Hoptman (eds) *Younger Than Jesus: The Reader*. New York: Steidl & Partners, 2009.
35. Kevin McGarry, Medium Quality: The 2010 International Experimental Media Congress, 21 April, 2010. http://rhizome.org/editorial/3478.

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    video scene', *First Monday* 15.5 (2010), http://www.uic.edu/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/
    article/view/2968/2528.

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    May, 2007, http://www.henryjenkins.org/2007/05/9_propositions_towards_a_cultu.html.

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BLOCKING, TRACKING, AND MONETIZING: YOUTUBE COPYRIGHT CONTROL AND THE DOWNFALL PARODIES

ANDREW CLAY

As a media corporation, YouTube has a legal obligation to reassure other media corporations that it is doing everything it can to uphold copyright law, in the face of the infringement of YouTube users. When users remix commercial media content they are potentially contravening the company's terms and conditions and blackening YouTube's reputation as a secure site to do business. YouTube's Content ID system attempts to 'keep everybody happy' by facilitating the blocking, tracking, and monetizing of commercial assets uploaded by users who do not own the rights to them. For instance, Sony monetized the unauthorized use of a song by Chris Brown on the very popular user-generated 'JK Wedding Entrance Dance' video. In this case, Sony was a spectacular winner, but the system as a whole favours the rights-holder and dismisses the commercial rights of the remixer who has added value to the product through their creativity. Other examples of online video remix culture, such as the *Downfall* parodies, demonstrate how YouTube's system can break down. YouTube is part of a culture in which mediation is intensified, and in which people are encouraged to transform themselves into media. Not only can the culture of sharing be at odds with the culture of commercialism with which it attempts to engage, it can illustrate some of the important limitations of our ability to experience the world authentically and to pay sufficient attention to the forces of consumerism.

YouTube Content ID and the 'JK Wedding Entrance Dance' Video

In March 2007, Viacom filed a one billion dollar lawsuit against YouTube, alleging direct and indirect infringement of copyright. The latest ruling, in June 2010, went in YouTube's favour, with the judgement suggesting that the burden of responsibility for policing and monitoring copyright lies with the copyright holder. YouTube was judged to be immune from claims of copyright infringement by corporations such as Viacom under the 'safe harbor' provision of the 1998 Digital Millenium Copyright Act (DMCA), by virtue of its implementation of compliant 'notice and takedown' procedures. YouTube has been able to demonstrate that it operates legally, by responding promptly to official claims of infringement by removing or disabling the audio on videos. However, this does not mean that YouTube is passive or neutral concerning copyright infringement, or that its actions are without controversy. Whereas YouTube sees itself operating 'a creative ecosystem where everybody wins', [1] 'free culture' advocate Lawrence Lessig terms this a 'perverse system'. [2]

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1. Mary Gould Stewart, 'How YouTube Thinks About Copyright', http://www.ted.com/talks/margaret_
    stewart_how_youtube_thinks_about_copyright.html.
2. Lawrence Lessig, 'Re-examining the Remix', at http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/eng/lessig_nyed.html.

Viacom's litigation is the most public expression of conflict between the corporations and YouTube users who want, and are able, to upload copyright infringing material belonging to media industries such as television, music, and cinema. YouTube is caught between the competing demands of these entities: corporations feel uneasy about the lack of control, and users dislike corporations interfering.[3] Corporations take the position that their products are creating value for YouTube through traffic-driven advertising revenue, revenue to which they therefore claim some entitlement. Some corporations believe that they should be benefiting more substantially from YouTube, hence the size of the Viacom lawsuit, and the refusal of Warner Music Group (WMG) to re-negotiate its 2006 partnership deal with YouTube at the end of 2008, because WMG regards it as an under-valued revenue-sharing arrangement.

However, corporations may also have wider cultural concerns regarding how copyright infringement on YouTube challenges the way that corporations have traditionally been able to determine the reproduction and distribution of their own products. They might feel that the ability of YouTube users to copy, re-edit, and share audio and video creates a worrying cultural situation in which new contexts of use are afforded to consumers, enabling them to become producers of cultural objects outside of the monetizing traditions of corporate intellectual property. It is unlikely that corporations such as WMG would see YouTube as a 'vital cultural archive', or user video uploads of copyrighted works as 'fair use' within new forms of participatory and networked society.[4]

On the issue of copyright infringing videos, YouTube seems to prefer concord over conflict. It has attempted to create a stable business, increasing potential advertising revenue by developing tighter controls of uploads and extending its partnership arrangements with rights-holders. YouTube provides a manual DMCA takedown notice system using a 'Copyright Complaint Form' that anyone can use to request the removal of an uploaded video. It also runs an 'Audioswap' facility that offers the uploader an opportunity to automatically replace the audio track of a video with one approved by YouTube's content partners. The 'Partner Program' is used by YouTube to recruit content partners into revenue-generating opportunities that might circumnavigate infringement problems. YouTube partnerships allow the sharing of revenue between YouTube and the content partner by using tools such as 'InVideo' adverts overlaid over videos, banner ads, and other forms of marketing and branding.

More advanced tools are available for professional content producers to protect their intellectual property. The 'Content Verification Program' allows content to be verified and if necessary to use the information supplied to make bulk submission copyright complaints. The major tool used by YouTube against copyright infringement is 'Content ID', including 'Audio ID' and 'Video ID', which allows the swift removal of unapproved videos, and at the same time provides the opportunity to monetize infringing videos without removal. This facil-

ity marks a significant new development in the cooperative relationship between YouTube and media conglomerates. The Content ID system lets rights-holders decide whether to block the upload altogether, monetize the video, or track the video to gain information about how it is being used. The tracking is achieved by 'YouTube Insight', a reporting tool that identifies 'user sentiment' by recording views over time, analysing the most viewed parts of the video ('Hotspots') or the least interesting (the parts where people lose interest and close the clip down); provides demographic and regional viewing statistics; compares the 'claimed video' (such as an unofficial visual interpretation of a piece of music) with the official versions; and identifies which external websites the video is being embedded in, and the keywords used to find the video in search engines.

YouTube employs several mechanisms to identify the 24 hours of video material uploaded every minute, using reference files supplied by the participating rights-holders. Algorithms are used to convert complete video files into shorter, fixed-size datum files, or 'MD5 Hashes'. The hashes generated from new uploaded files can be compared to the database of reference hashes, allowing identical video files to be noted. Newer methods work in a similar way, providing 'fingerprint' files that match reference files to audio and video uploads that have minor degradations or discrepancies (such as moving image reversal). The fingerprint files are spectrograms: visual representations of the separated audio and video signals generated from algorithmic frequency variations over time.[5] If the system finds a match, it follows whatever rules are attached in the database. The database can be updated on a rolling basis according to the decisions made by the rights-holder, or to cope with different instructions in relation to different regions.

Mary Gould Stewart, a User Experience Manager at YouTube, has given an illuminating video presentation on this topic. In 'How YouTube Thinks About Copyright',[6] Stewart suggests that 'rights management is no longer simply a question of ownership', but is a 'complex web of relationships and a critical part of our cultural landscape'. Stewart maintains that YouTube is empowering content owners by providing a 'culture of opportunity', where 'progressive rights management and new technology' offer an alternative to simply blocking all re-use of intellectual property. YouTube's approach, she argues, sustains new audiences, art forms, and revenue streams that would otherwise be circumscribed.

In her presentation, Stewart refers to an example of which YouTube appears particularly proud, the 'JK Wedding Entrance Dance' video.[7] This video consists of a five minute real-time recording of the beginning of the wedding ceremony of Jill Peterson and Kevin Heinz, who were married in St Paul, Minnesota on 20 June 2009. The first upload by 'TheKheinz' was posted a month after the wedding, when the bride's father requested that the video be shared with relatives unable to attend the wedding. The video begins conventionally enough, with the closing

3.   Jean Burgess and Joshua Green, *YouTube: Online Video and Participatory Culture*, Cambridge: Polity, 2009, p.5.
4.   Paul McDonald, 'Digital Discords in the Online Media Economy: Advertising versus Content versus Copyright', in Pelle Snickers and Patrick Vonderau (eds) *The YouTube Reader*, Stockholm: National Library of Sweden, 2009, p. 402.

5.   Eliot Van Buskirk, 'YouTube Search-and-Delete Code Makes Money for Rights-Holders', 21 August, 2009, http://www.wired.com/epicenter/2009/08/how-copyright-holders-profit-from-infringement-on-youtube.
6.   See: http://www.ted.com/talks/margaret_stewart_how_youtube_thinks_about_copyright.html.
7.   http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4-94JhLEiN0&feature=related.

of the church's entrance doors. However, its departure from the norm of homemade wedding videos quickly becomes apparent, as R&B singer Chris Brown's track 'Forever' begins to play over the building's public address system, and the groom and best man throw their service sheets into the air and begin to dance down the aisle toward the camera.

Those familiar with 'surprise first wedding dance' videos taken at a reception will recognize this as a variation upon the tradition of a bride and groom secretly rehearsing choreography to entertain their guests and produce a memorable 'surprise' experience. [8] However, as the 'JK Wedding Entrance Dance' video continues, the scale of the choreographic preparation is revealed, as more and more of the wedding party become involved in the elaborate entrance dance, and the congregation catch the mood by laughing and clapping along. At first the entrants appear singly and in pairs, sometimes performing ambitious moves such as handstands and forward rolls, but eventually the whole entrance party can be seen swaying and swaggering in exaggerated imitation of dancers from R&B music videos as they make their way to the front of the church, with choreography responding to the changing pace of the rhythms in the song. Most of the dancers are wearing 'cool' sunglasses, and although the dancers and congregation that can be seen in the video are almost entirely white, there is clearly a lovable reference to this black music style, and the sentiments of the song are matched to the feelings of Jill and Kevin on their 'big day'. The overall effect of the video is joyful. The preparation and execution of the choreographed entrance is delightfully well executed, and the dancers' enthusiastic abandonment of the conventions of the wedding procession reaches a tearful highpoint with the entrance of the jigging bride.

The YouTube Content ID system identified the audio to the wedding video as belonging to Sony, and the instruction was to track and monetize the video as it stood, rather than block the audio track. Within the first two days the video was viewed 3.5 million times, by the end of the first week this had reached 10 million. In 2009, the video was the third most watched on YouTube, and was publicized by the appearance of Jill and Kevin, and a live recreation of their dance, on American television. In January 2010, the video had been viewed 41 million times. YouTube Insight created new marketing information for Sony, and identified a different demographic for the song. Click-to-Buy (CTB) links were run over the video and the opportunity to buy the track through Amazon and iTunes led the track to return to the top ten of the download charts 15 months after its original release. Sony also received a share of the revenue from Google text ads on the video's page itself. The CTB rate was double the average for the YouTube site as a whole and a 2.5 times increase on the Clickthrough rate (CTR) of the official 'Forever' music video (which is currently blocked in the UK). [9]

The 'JK Wedding Entrance Dance Video' demonstrates how online rights management is a 'complex web of relationships', as Stewart states. Chris Brown's 'Forever' began its life as a jingle for a Doublemint chewing gum commercial, and the gum can also be seen in the

8.   See for example 'best first dance brubaker', http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aeoi16lScf4.
9.   Chris LaRosa and Ali Sandler, 'I now pronounce you monetized: a YouTube video case study', YouTube Biz Blog, 30 July 2009, http://ytbizblog.blogspot.com/2009/07/i-now-pronounce-you-monetized-youtube_30.html.

official music video as a product placement arrangement, a consequence of Doublemint funding the recording costs to develop the music into a full song. In March 2009, and prior to the upload of the JK Wedding Entrance Dance video, Brown was charged with assault against fellow R&B singer and then girlfriend, Rihanna. Just two days after the Heinz's wedding, Brown pleaded guilty to the charges. Part of his sentence included having to attend domestic violence counselling. Brown's behaviour clearly did not affect the Heinz's choice of music for their occasion, but it has affected how they have reacted to the popularity of their video. In line with the normal system, the Heinzs were not included in the revenue generation arrangements made between YouTube and Sony. While they cannot benefit directly from Sony's music, they have 'monetized' their fame by creating a charitable website that channels donations to an institute that addresses the problem of domestic violence. [10] They have also created a piece of popular culture that has been referenced by mainstream television – a parody of the wedding entrance dance was incorporated into the 'Niagara' episode of the U.S. television comedy *The Office* in October 2009.

However, it is possible to challenge the cosy commercial relationships championed by YouTube. Lawrence Lessig's video presentation 'Re-examining the Remix' challenges YouTube's pride about its rights management procedures. [11] Lessig views the act of adding video imagery to music protected by copyright as a form of social creativity, a collective expression in which people communicate with others through symbolic performance and inter-video dialogue and imitation. Lessig conceptualizes two major cultures of creativity – commercial and sharing – and argues that the latter should not suffer from the former's strict copyright controls. Lessig suggests that we need well protected spaces of 'fair use', so as to respect the rights of the creator of remix. Lessig sees YouTube's Content ID system as a 'perversion of freedom' because it can perform a DMCA takedown that might well be challenged and overturned on grounds of fair use, which the system cannot recognize. YouTube's system effectively places the power of judgement mainly on automatic recognition of infringement and disregards the context of social and cultural sharing in which the copyrighted material might exist.

By erring on the side of the rights-holders by default, even when the remix may be legal under fair use provisions, YouTube's rights management systems are heavily weighted in support of commercial culture. In the case of the 'JK Wedding Entrance Dance' video, Sony waived their right to block the audio track and decided to wait for monetizing opportunities. Jill Peterson and Kevin Heinz's planning and rehearsal transformed a sober ritual into good-natured revelry, and a unique and special event with the help of a piece of commercial music. Once uploaded to YouTube, however, the Heinz's video became an object that could be commercially exploited by the-rights holder, while denying the couple any right to direct commercial benefit from their own creativity. A piece of music that began as a musical 'hook' for a chewing gum commercial became the soundtrack to a mediated DIY musical wedding ceremony, which itself became a 'music video' working for the profit of a media corporation. Around the grey, largely untested legal area of fair use, practice is actually unfair and iniq-

10. See: http://www.jkweddingdance.com/.
11. Lawrence Lessig, 'Re-examining the Remix'.

uitous in terms of the power relationship it institutes, whereby commercial culture exploits sharing culture using prohibitive copyright law – a practice that YouTube supports and implements with enthusiasm.

Constantin Film and the *Downfall* Parody

If Sony's video of a lively wedding entrance allows YouTube to claim a dubiously harmonious 'spreading of joy' for its rights management systems, there can be no doubt about the difficulty and conflict over YouTube's rights management for the *Downfall* parody videos. *Downfall* (*Der Untergang*), [12] a film about Hitler's final days, is an internationally co-produced feature film directed by Oliver Hirschbiegel for the German production company Constantin Film. For the last four years or so, hundreds of user-remixed clips from the film have been uploaded regularly to websites such as YouTube. The remix has most commonly taken the form of alterations to the English subtitles, which are re-written to replace the originals, leaving the rest of the clip unaltered. The scene that has been used repeatedly is set in the war room of the Führerbunker in Berlin, as Hitler discovers that he has lost the war, and excoriates his officers, calling them cowards and traitors. [13] Subjects of these parodies include American political figures such as Obama, Palin, and Clinton; issues in sports such as relegations and transfers in football; the latest technological gadgets such as the iPad; and events in popular music such as the death of Michael Jackson, or the split-up of Oasis. However, more local or personal subjects such as problems with car parking or council politics can also feature. In April 2010, Constantin Film requested a more systematic takedown of the *Downfall* parodies, which is possible using YouTube's Content ID technology. Even though it is likely that the remixes would be considered legal under fair use copyright legislation, YouTube acceded to the request. As we now know, YouTube just wants to keep everyone happy:

> Content ID has helped create an entirely new economic model for rights holders. We are committed to supporting new forms of original creativity, protecting fair use, and providing a seamless user experience – all while we help rights owners easily manage their content on YouTube. [14]

In public, Constantin Film are asserting their rights and discouraging unauthorized use of copyright. They say they feel ambivalent about the attention, as it publicizes the film, but has a negligible effect on sales. Having to monitor the uploads and respond to complaints and controversial uses of the clip has proven tiresome and, one suspects, damaging. [15]

Since the first remixes appeared on YouTube, Constantin Film have been issuing 'cease-and-desist orders' and have used selective manual DMCA takedowns. They have also had to respond to complaints from companies whose products have been ridiculed in the video. One such product was Microsoft's Xbox Live, the parody of which was the most popular *Downfall* video with over four million views at the time of its takedown in 2007. The video in question 'Hitler Gets Banned From Xbox Live' [16] was made by UK computing student Chris Bowley when he was 19. Bowley claims the idea came to him late one night as he was trying to sleep. He got up, and uploaded his video an hour later. Here was a spontaneous thought turned into action, as Bowley drew upon the experience of friends who had had their Xbox consoles turned off due to copyright infringement issues. The video is a bit of fun; instead of depicting Hitler as a Microsoft figurehead, he is transformed into an Xbox-using gamer victim, angry at Microsoft's drastic action against its consumers. The satire is quite gentle, yet Bowley was threatened with legal action by Constantin Film, presumably via a Microsoft complaint.

Unlike Sony, Constantin Film has shown no interest in monetizing its property. The company merely wants to block the use of its content. The company's more recent blanket approach to assert copyright control of *Downfall* can be viewed as an attempt to reassert control over their property in the face of embarrassing appropriation and time-consuming management of infringement. Above all, it may appear that the company is not in control of its imagery – which is ironic, given that the power of the clip is its depiction of a person who has so dramatically 'lost it'. Individuals who have worked on the film, such as director Hirschbiegel, have stated that they have no problem with the parodies. Hirschbiegel sees the parodies as an amusing adaptation of history for participation in contemporary culture, although he regrets that he does not receive any royalties from the parodies. [17] The reaction of online cultural interest groups to the systematic takedown of the videos has been largely negative. The company's decision has been characterized as misguided, heavy-handed, and a possibly illegal violation of fair use legislation. For instance, Nicholas Lovell of the games business blog 'Gamesbrief' has made a number of suggestions of the ways that Constantin Film could have monetized the parodies, such as building a YouTube channel, claiming revenue for them, using a Facebook fan page, and creating a website to host remix competitions. [18] However, this vision of friction-free 'convergence culture', which castigates Constantin Film for missing out on commercial opportunities, fails to acknowledge the larger issues that the company has had to deal with, and that could be exacerbated if the company were to be seen as directly profiting from the remixes.

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12. *Downfall* (dir. Oliver Hirschbiegel, 2004).

13. These remixes, known as '*Downfall* parodies' are also referred to as the 'Hitler Finds Out Meme', the 'Hitler Gets Angry Meme', or simply 'The Hitler Meme'. See, 'Downfall / Hitler Meme', http://knowyourmeme.com/memes/downfall-hitler-meme.

14. Shenaz Zack, 'Content ID and Fair use, Broadcasting Ourselves blog, 22 April 2010, http://youtube-global.blogspot.com/2010/04/content-id-and-fair-use.html.

15. Martin Moszkowicz (head of film and television at Constantin Film), AP press release, widely reported online, for example, http://mediaissues.org/2010/04/21/popular-internet-meme-removed-from-youtube.

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16. 'Hitler banned from Xbox live', http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x27sh3_hitler-banned-from-xbox-live_videogames.

17. Oliver Hirschbiegel, telephone interview with *New York* magazine, widely reported online, for example, http://www.switched.com/2010/01/18/downfall-director-loves-the-hitler-mashups.

18. Nicholas Lovell, 'Are Constantin Film the stupidest company in the entire world?', Gamesbrief blog, 21 April, 2010, http://www.gamesbrief.com/2010/04/are-constantin-film-the-stupidest-company-in-the-entire-world/.

Fair Use and Fair Dealing

Leaving aside the perceived economic benefits of a more permissive 'free culture' allowing for creatively building on what has gone before, as advocated by Lawrence Lessig, the major concern of the supporters of online user-participation has been that Constantin Film's systematic takedown could be illegal according to the fair use provision in U.S. copyright legislation that may allow for remix-type activity. In this respect, Brad Templeton, a former chair and current board member of the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) has been particularly prominent. The EFF is a U.S.-based non-profit organization that campaigns for civil liberties in relation to computing and telecommunications. In relation to user-generated video content, the EFF states:

> Online video hosting services like YouTube are ushering in a new era of free expression online. By providing a home for "user-generated content" (UGC) on the Internet, these services enable creators to reach a global audience without having to depend on traditional intermediaries like television networks and movie studios. The result has been an explosion of creativity by ordinary people, who have enthusiastically embraced the opportunities created by these new technologies to express themselves in a remarkable variety of ways.

Furthermore, the organization claims:

> The life blood of much of this new creativity is fair use, the copyright doctrine that permits unauthorized uses of copyrighted material for transformative purposes. Creators naturally quote from and build upon the media that makes up our culture, yielding new works that comment on, parody, satirize, criticize, and pay tribute to the expressive works that have come before. These forms of free expression are among those protected by the fair use doctrine. [19]

Fair use remains a grey area in American copyright legislation, but it is more permissive than the U.K.'s 'fair dealing' equivalent, which allows for criticism but not for parody. When assessing fair use of copyrighted material, one factor under consideration is whether the new work is transformative, as opposed to derivative, of the existing work. Cases of fair use have established parody as acceptable, where parody is defined as using a work in order to poke fun or comment on the work itself. Satire, however, is defined as using one work to poke fun or comment on something beyond the original work.

In fact, Templeton made his own exemplary fair use *Downfall* parody, 'Hitler, As "Downfall" Producer, Orders A DMCA Takedown'. [20] His declared purpose was to make fun both of the meme and of the actions of Constantin Film, in a video which re-imagines the bunker as the Constantin Film offices, Hitler as a company producer, and Hitler's generals as lawyers. The video attempts to enlighten the viewer about DMCA and satirizes the actions of the company using

19. Electronic Frontier Foundation, 'Fair Use Principles for user Generated Video Content', http://www.eff.org/issues/ip-and-free-speech/fair-use-principles-usergen.
20. See: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PzUoWkbNLe8.

the very clip they are trying to block. Templeton went out of his way to produce a clean video by buying a copy of the DVD, and copying it without circumventing the encryption. And yet, he nevertheless ended up predicting the 'downfall' of his own clip. His video was taken down by YouTube in April 2010. It was, however, reinstated when Templeton filed a dispute claim.

The fair use defence of parody seems to have worked in favour of those uploading Hitler meme videos, as many such videos are still available on YouTube. Constantin Film's public blocking response may well have sent the message that the downfall of the *Downfall* parody had begun, and the news may have discouraged further infringement, yet Constantin Film have not made any detectable progress in their attempts to end the use of their film. The downfall, in fact, was a temporary downturn, as many of the videos that were removed have returned. Furthermore, new parodies have been uploaded: there are clusters of videos about events that have occurred since April 2010, such as the World Cup in South Africa and the Deepwater Horizon BP oil spill.

Spoof, Parody, and Satire

Regarding parodic practices in online video, Rebekah Willett has claimed that parodies are playful transformations of the text, placed on the continuum between homage and satire. Satire, she states, creates distance from the original work, whereas homage imitates the text more closely. [21] Speaking literally, the *Downfall* parodies transform nothing but the subtitles, yet this itself is transformative: it creates substantial transformative distance from the host text, like a cuckoo in the nest. The original work functions as a pretext, a medium for speaking about other issues. The transformation in the *Downfall* videos is achieved by making a dramatic scene comedic. At the same time, as Virginia Heffernan observes in the *New York Times*, the parodies reveal *Downfall* as a 'closeted Hitler comedy'. Hitler, Heffernan writes, is played as 'flat-out melodrama' by Bruno Ganz's 'goofy, trembling, hopeless rage'. Through repetitive, contentious, and allusive iteration by the remix videos, *Downfall*'s realist humanization of Hitler is revealed as excessive melodrama. [22]

In relation to the question of whether or not the *Downfall* videos are parodies that comment on the work itself, or employ that work to satirize another issue, Templeton suggests that the transformative defence applies to all *Downfall* parodies:

> While my video obviously does qualify as criticism, even the videos about unrelated topics like X-box live are sending up the over the top nature of the scene, at least to a small degree, and illuminate the character of the scene in a new way, though that may not be their primary goal. [23]

21. Rebekah Willett, 'Parodic Practices: Amateur Spoofs on Videovideomaker Sites', in David Buckingham and Rebekah Willett (eds) *Video Cultures: Media Technology and Everyday Creativity*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, pp. 115-132.
22. Virginia Heffernan, 'The Hitler Meme', *The New York Times*, 24 October, 2008, http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/26/magazine/26wwln-medium-t.html?_r=2.
23. Brad Templeton, 'YouTube makes statement on Content-ID takedowns', Brad Ideas, 24 April, 2010, http://ideas.4brad.com/youtube-makes-statement-content-id-takedowns.

Thus, Templeton is implying that even though most of the *Downfall* videos are satirical and therefore might not qualify as fair use, they are in fact fair use because they build on and therefore *transform* the resonant exaggeration of the character's anger which is integral to the original work, and thus these parodies are not just a comment on another topic. This distinction is clearly debatable. And yet, as long as such debates remain untested in court, participatory video practice continues to challenge the YouTube ecosystem and vex those affected by speculative DMCA takedowns. Interestingly, as 'The Hitler Meme' has matured, it has become more overtly parodic. The self-named 'Der Untergangers' or 'The Downfallers' use an online 'Downfall Parodies Forum', subscribe to each other's channels on YouTube, and have expanded the remixes beyond the most commonly used clip to other scenes from the film. [24] Other videos use or reference historical films containing contemporaneous figures such as Stalin, or actual footage of Hitler speeches. In this way, attention is turned towards the film itself, and the story world surrounding it.

However, the *Downfall* parodies should ultimately be regarded as the product of satirical practice, as well as a long-running, faithful and prolific meme. The practice has endured because of the ease with which the original subtitles can be replaced, and the adaptability of the scene's narrative to the mapping of unrelated current events. It is like a mini-film, constituted of three acts: the delivery of bad news; the lengthy rant in reaction to this news; and then quiet resignation to the new situation. For a long while – for nearly the entire history of YouTube, in fact – the scene has managed to bear repetition thanks to the wit of the remixers, and the novelty added by new referents. The popularity of the parodies depends on a number of factors, including the timelines of the video, and the size of the groups to which the videos might appeal. The videos are particularly popular if they address topics likely to appeal to the groups most likely to view them. Thus, one of the most widely viewed *Downfall* videos, Chris Bowley's 'Hitler Gets Banned From Xbox Live', simultaneously taps into gaming and geek technology culture, and to the issue of Microsoft's response to the users of pirated software. The video includes plenty of references to authentic console and online gaming culture, such as the PlayStation3 console, and the need to have spent months 'finding the agility orbs on *Crackdown*'. These 'in-jokes' make the video appealing to insiders, without alienating wider audiences.

The removal of this video in 2007 is evidence that it caused irritation to Microsoft and Constantin Film at the time. However, these video practices are not a model for engaged and effective civic engagement and dialogue between citizens, governments and corporations. Consider the handful of *Downfall* videos that take the Deepwater Horizon oil spill as their subject. The disaster began on 20 April 2010, the day before Constantin Film initiated its blanket takedown. And yet, despite the global interest in this environmental catastrophe, the videos made by young, American 'Untergangers' have failed to capture significant audiences. They are unfunny, and inevitably treat a complex issue simplistically. The videos do not recognize that BP is a global corporation – all-too-conveniently blaming the 'Fucking Brits' – and do not

engage with the wider issues of deep water oil production and the forces that drive it. In the most popular video of the collection, 'Hitler rants about the Deepwater Horizon oil spill', Hitler is written as a concerned environmentalist who gets angry with incompetent officials about the death of his pet duck Sammy. [25] In other versions, Hitler's beach house is ruined, his planned holiday cruise is jeopardized, and he cannot help the cleanup operation because he is trapped in a YouTube video (this at least is witty). [26] Even if the videos were to be politically smarter, funnier, and more widely viewed, this would not make *Downfall* remixes politically efficacious.

Mediatized Creative Play for Sociability
In relation to the activities of the 'Untergangers', Willett studied a similar group of online video content generators. These are largely groups of young men making spoof videos of films and television programs and, as Willett shows, are displaying their cultural capital and showing off their production skills for the purpose of male bonding and identity construction. In effect, they had shifted some of their socialization through media from talking about a media product, as members of an audience, to making and sharing their own imitative media. As Willett rightly concludes, this is not the same as Henry Jenkins' 'convergence culture', for traditional media consumption is still important, and is consumed in parallel with the production of user-generated content. What Willett is describing is mediatized creative play for sociability facilitated by our changing relationship to technologies of media production, for the development of 'sharing culture'. The *Downfall* remixes, then, are not an example of Jenkins' convergence culture: amateur media practice converging with traditional media. Rather, they possess a supplementary, mediatized sociability: people drawing upon their own personal interests and experiences, and mediatising them. As social, sharing objects, the mutually opposed concepts of amateur and professional are not helpful when describing these videos. In contrast to the vast majority of people who continue to participate in both traditional and new media as non-producing users, these are people creating meaningful objects as aesthetic experiences about events and subjects they find worthwhile.

It is difficult to think of a film clip that has invited participation to the same extent as the *Downfall* clip. However, we might recall the major meme of pre-YouTube web video, the 'Star Wars Kid' (SWK), which showed 15-year-old Ghyslain Raza, whose private moment of imitating a Jedi warrior from *Star Wars* became very publicly remixed into other media. On this newer occasion, the offended party is not the private individual, but the production company Constantin Film. Both examples are sustained by a largely young, male subculture seeking the admiration of their peers, and wider fame. However, unlike the SWK culture, the *Downfall* or 'Hitler Gets Angry' (HGA) meme is not mere postmodern parody, but often clever and engaging satire. It is also a more conflicted example of remix culture because it began and continues within the corporate space of YouTube. HGA is not SWK, but it continues to

24. The Downfall Parodies Forum is available at http://s1.zetaboards.com/downfallparodies/index/. See YouTube user channels such as 'Sine! Cosine! Tangent!!!', http://www.youtube.com/user/Edudn01 and 'Downfall Parodies', http://www.youtube.com/user/hitlerrantsparodies.

25. Benad361, 'Downfall Parodies' channel. As of October 2010, the video had 51,000 views. See: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LICAosO79nA.
26. 'Hitler find out about the BP oil spill', http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YC5paVe1Fjw, 'Hitler finds out about the BP oil spill', http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9mDIUZy7omw, and 'Hitler is informed about the oil spill', http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_-y7Ri3EmMo.

highlight how the web can act as a playground for the re-purposing of traditional media, that chases 'the logic of late modernity as the personalization of media and the validation of individualism'. [27]

Stiegler, 'Attention Resources', and the Politics of Memory

Reference to the critical philosophy of Bernard Stiegler enables a consideration of the broader significance of video practices such as the *Downfall* parody. Stiegler predicts that the global teletechnologies will destroy our ability to reflect upon our world. [28] We are being reduced, Stiegler suggests, to a stock of 'attention resources' for the purposes of stimulating consumption, and we need to rejuvenate our sense of time to think, be free, and to take care using a new 'politics of memory', the temporal retention of experience. [29] Stiegler equates consciousness with cinematic montage, variously constituted by primary experience, secondary recollections of experience, and tertiary temporal objects, such as films and television programs. His concern is that industrially produced temporal objects from media corporations will come to constitute an increasing proportion of our experience of the world, thus harming our ability to experience the world authentically. [30] On a voluntary basis, cinematic temporal objects have monetized our 'free time', which is not 'free', in any case, but leisure as a form of labour. The consumer, as alienated proletariat, is unaware that they are buying industrially-produced consciousness. [31]

Stiegler argues that we need to counteract this industrialization of experience, and that the internet may contribute to this political goal, because it profoundly modifies the oppositional relation between the producer and consumer. A new industrial economy of memory may enable a transformative participation in the consumption and production of temporal objects such as film and video, facilitating a healthier relationship between the individual and the collective. In other words, internet technologies may allow the individual to contribute to a more dialogic production/consumption of experience. [32] Although this is a theoretical possibility, given the blocking, tracking, and monetizing ecosystem championed by YouTube, we should be circumspect about the development of read/write, participatory or 'sharing culture'. YouTube videos constitute a new form of tertiary external memory of experience and temporal objects. Rather than encouraging a truly transformative reciprocal culture of online

video participation, in which the individual and the collective can more harmoniously co-evolve, the relationship may become stalled in the power games of media corporations and traditional rights management. YouTube videos might circulate predominantly in a conventional culture of monetization, rather than in more alternative forms of meaningful dialogue. The *Downfall* parodies, which make use of corporate intellectual property in order to mediate everyday personal and collective experience, expose some of the fault-lines in YouTube's rights management. They do not work entirely in the favour of Constantin Film, nor entirely for the freedom of the user. One can't help thinking that, for all the joy created by Jill and Kevin Heinz's video, its memorialization of life is severely tarnished by its incorporation into the global economy of attention that has characterized the ecology of industrially produced cultural objects.

Conclusion

The conflict over participatory culture is in part due to the fact that 'media consumers want to become media producers, while media producers want to maintain their traditional dominance over media content'. [33] At the moment, 'commercial culture' seems somewhat at odds with that which Lessig terms 'sharing culture'. The rights management and copyright infringement systems used by YouTube are either ineffectual and possibly illegal, or overzealous ways of monetizing other people's creativity. Lessig's claim that the YouTube system of copyright control is 'perverse' is perhaps overstated, yet no more so than YouTube's assertion that they operate 'a creative ecosystem where everybody wins'. YouTube's Content ID system favours corporate needs over the wishes of ordinary users. It is a shame that the fate of the 'JK Wedding Entrance Dance' video lies with Sony and that the video's creators cannot monetize their own creativity beyond channelling charitable donations. Yet, YouTube's copyright control system is also a blunt instrument for dealing with fair use remixes of cultural objects, such as the *Downfall* parodies. The system does not allow Constantin Film to exercise control, and it both antagonizes remixers and leaves them in its thrall. The 'Untergangers', apparently as desperate for survival as Hitler himself, use strategies such as 'flipping' or 'mirroring', which avoids Content ID blocking by reversing the image; create multiple accounts in case of suspension; and provide detailed information on their channel regarding their fair use of copyright material. In this case, both sides of the remix divide can claim grievance.

In an interview, Richard Grusin has suggested that the 'key to the creation of the field of new media studies was the intensification of mediation at the end of the twentieth century, not its newness'. [34] Both the 'JK Wedding Entrance Dance' video and the *Downfall* parodies support this view. As Michel de Certeau claims, we have always been users in the practice of everyday life, if not of products then of the processes of individualized mass culture. [35] To this statement,

27. Andrew Clay, 'BMW Films and the Star Wars Kid: "Early Web Cinema" and Technology', in Bruce Bennett, Marc Furstenau and Adrian Mackenzie (eds) *Cinema and Technology: Cultures, Theories, Practices*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, p. 50.
28. Bernard Stiegler, *Technics and Time 1: The Fault of Epimetheus*, trans. Richard Beardsworth and George Collins, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998.
29. See Robert Sinnerbrink, 'Culture Industry Redux: Stiegler and Derrida on Technics and Cultural Politics', *Transformations* 17 (2009), http://www.transformationsjournal.org/journal/issue_17/article_05.shtml.
30. See Patrick Crogan, 'Essential Viewing', *Film Philosophy* 10 (2006), http://www.film-philosophy.com/2006v10n2/crogan.pdf.
31. See Daniel Ross, 'The Cinematic Condition of the Politico-Philosophical Future', *Scan*, http://scan.net.au/scan/journal/display.php?journal_id=99.
32. See 'Anamnesis and Hypomnesis', *Ars Industrialis*, http://arsindustrialis.org/anamnesis-and-hypomnesis.

33. Henry Jenkins, 'Quentin Tarantino's Star Wars?: Digital Cinema, Media Convergence, and Participatory Culture', Henry Jenkins Publications, http://web.mit.edu/cms/People/henry3/starwars.html.
34. Geoff Cox, 'On Premediation: Interview with Richard Grusin', http://www.anti-thesis.net/contents/texts/premediation.pdf.
35. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984.

I would add that media has always been social and participatory, only mediatized in different ways. In Stiegler's terms, we have always been technology, because he sees our very humanity as defined by the prosthetic use of technical objects to make a different life than that which is determined by our biology alone: 'in this sense we have always been media(ated)', and media are becoming increasingly closer to 'us'. [36] *Downfall* remixes allow people to turn their interests and experience, and indeed themselves, into media, as many of us do as part of our everyday use of online social media such as Facebook and Twitter. In Stiegler's terms, this experience might just be 'too fast', too individualized, and too easily exploited by, or incorporated within, corporate media. In this respect, it might be more appropriate to refer to 'content-generated users' (CGU) than to 'user-generated content' (UGC). This term acknowledges the extent to which we are either made by, or make ourselves in, the processes of mediation, and sometimes within remixes of commercial culture. As engaged couples plan their wedding ceremonies as if they were music videos, and people use *Downfall* as a proxy for their own views of an issue, it is clear that we are *made* by the content, and adopt new technologies at the same time as we are transformed by them. We have always been CGU, and our mediation will always appear novel - although not always as joyfully and harmoniously as YouTube would have us believe.

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36. Sarah Kember and Joanna Zylinska, 'Creative Media: Performance, Invention, Critique', in Janis Jefferies, Maria Chatzichristodoulou, and Rachel Zerihan (eds) *Interfaces of Performance*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2009, pp. 4-5.

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CULTURAL ANALYTICS AT WORK: THE 2008 U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ONLINE VIDEO ADS

TARA ZEPEL

Note: hi-res color versions of the visualizations in this article, as well as a number of additional visualizations related to this study are available at: lab.softwarestudies.com/2010/12/2008-us-presidential-campaign-ads.html

Culture comes in the form of data.

Data, data, data. We have lots of it. Today's techno-cultural landscape is characterized by a steep increase in the amounts of data captured, processed, archived and generated. Not only have the cultural storehouses of old gone digital, thereby creating a vast global database of existing cultural artifacts, we are constantly generating *new* cultural artifacts – cultural artifacts born digitally, in the form of data. Our global cultural database is exploding, and one catalyst for this explosion is the evolving medium of online video. This subset of the cultural database, which has been growing rapidly since 2005, has become a field of increasing critical curiosity alongside its expanding significance for artistic, social and political use. [1] In what follows, I will be proposing a research methodology appropriate to the scale and potential impact of online video. Over the past two years, the Software Studies Initiative at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) has been developing *Cultural Analytics,* [2] a new methodology for researching and teaching visual and interactive media. As a member of this initiative, I explore how this methodology might apply to the analysis of online video. To illustrate one potential application, I turn to a specific set of video clips used as advertisements during the 2008 U.S. presidential campaign.

During their campaigns, both Barack Obama and John McCain hosted their own YouTube channels, and used the online video portals to showcase speeches, interviews, commercials and debates. The adoption of this new medium as a political communication tool provides a unique and timely opportunity for exploring the cultural implications of online video: for example, for the way we understand form and visual design, and for the way visual rhetoric works on the socio-political scale of the internet. The preliminary analysis that follows looks at the role online video had to play in the campaigns by way of revealing differences and patterns in visual form, through two comparisons: 1) between advertisements originally designed for television and for web broadcast and 2) between advertisements for Obama and for McCain.

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1. Examples of this increasing critical curiosity include numerous web and blog commentaries, academic and industry organized conferences and a growing list of recent publications: *Video Vortex Reader* (2008), *YouTube: Online Video and Participatory Culture* (2009), *The YouTube Reader* (2010) and *Watching YouTube: Extraordinary Videos by Ordinary People* (2010).
2. http://lab.softwarestudies.com/2008/09/cultural-analytics.html.

The Data-Image

The millions of users creating, sharing, viewing, tagging and commenting on video through a multitude of online video sharing and social networking sites results in what can justifiably be termed a territory of online video data. Like much of the data in our digital cultural database, this data comes encoded in a form defined by the cycle of cultural production and consumption that characterizes contemporary social and technological infrastructure. We can think of this visual manifestation of data form as the *data-image*. The encoding process for the data-image is collective and dynamic. If offline moving-image content, both analogue and digital, engenders culture through the viewer's reception of the medium, then online moving-image content propagates culture through the user's direct interaction with the image and, because the image is in the form of data, through the user's direct interaction with data.

The story of the data-image doesn't end there. Based on this interaction, the web's participatory architecture builds metadata into the content of the image. As techno-doubters and techno-utopists alike have pointed out, the ability of viewer reception to affect the trajectory of cultural content is, in and of itself, nothing new. It is not that an ancestral version of the data-image was not possible in the age of offline media. What is unique to the cultural experience of online video production and consumption is the frequency of transformation. Because online media interaction and dissemination is literally written into the media content and can be quantitatively measured, the form that online media takes can assume *infinitely more iterations,* and this form is selected for and transformed at the pace of fibre-optic cables. This revs up both the speed and scale at which media interaction and form can lead to cultural ideas, flows and stylistic preferences.

Online Video: The Challenge of 'Watching' the Network

The availability of this amount of data, and of data that feeds upon itself, generates a repository of image-based cultural material unparalleled in size, and potential relations. This body of material proves challenging for our standard 19th and 20th century ways of representing and understanding culture, which typically involve the methods of close reading and/or comparative qualitative analysis of a relatively small sample set. Using these methods, how could we even begin to explore the type of cultural innovation associated with online video, which involves hundreds of billions – and soon trillions – of objects and histories, linked together on a global scale? Take the following statistic: as of May 2010, 24 hours of video are uploaded to YouTube every minute and, taken as a whole, the global community of users watch over two billion videos per day. [3] Any individual scholar, group of scholars, or even entire universities or think tanks, cannot possibly view all this material, parse it, or draw insightful conclusions about the relationships constituted by it based on anything but sheer intuition. Computers can.

Currently, many realms of scientific and social inquiry have embraced this solution. The sciences, business and government all rely on computer-based processing and analysis to explore similarly large datasets. The developing fields of information visualization, scientific visualization, and visual analytics are the outgrowths of computerized methods of analysis.

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3. http://www.youtube.com/t/fact_sheet, accessed September 25, 2010.

The commonality between these methods resides in the technique of visualization. Because of the breadth of its application and use, the term visualization eludes exact definition independent of context; in general, however, the visualization of large datasets involves mapping data onto a visual display for the purposes of discovering and/or communicating data structure. Thus, visualization holds tremendous aesthetic and cognitive possibilities for uncovering patterns and understanding relationships.

The arts and humanities have, however, begun to catch on. In the interdisciplinary field of digital humanities, people are using computer power to mine, process and represent large quantities of data. However, the cultural content selected for analysis is usually canonical texts: those deemed influential enough to be worthy of further investigating the rules and questions driven by *ex post facto* historical assessment. History is not objective. Moreover, very rarely does this cultural data excavation involve images, let alone video, and very rarely does it delve[5] into the wealth of contemporary cultural material.

Companies such as Amazon, Google and Neilsen do capture and visualize a subset of the exploding cultural database – data based on use. Amazon showcases this data in preference lists and recommendations, Google in the graphs and links found on Google Trends, and Neilsen in information available through BlogPulse. YouTube also has its version in the pull-down menu that is placed next to the view count. While these efforts are important and necessary for understanding the cultural content on the web, they stop short of pairing this reception-based data with data inherent to the characteristics and form of the content itself. If online video constitutes a new visual medium, might it not make sense to include the visual form of this medium within the analysis of data?

One reason for the absence of a broad scale cultural or stylistic analysis of new media content might be our assumptions about what it means to reflect upon the present. Currently available methodologies for arriving at cultural or aesthetic theory make it difficult to know whether it is feasible to cultivate a critical theory of cultural developments as they occur in real time.[4] The negative response centres on the argument that we need perspective to be critical, and that perspective necessitates temporal distance. I would call this argument opinion. Culture is changing, and the mechanisms of perception and analysis are changing with it. Why wait until a particular cultural form has played out, and then attempt retrospectively to fit cultural change into tidy and often arbitrary forms of classification? Why not embrace the variety and continuity of the present? And why, when cultural content and dynamics are so intimately tied to the residues of our interaction, should we wait to achieve a 'situational awareness' of our present, and by extension our future? How do we begin to explore, conceptualize, and reflect upon, in real-time, the artifacts and interactions that comprise today's techno-cultural datascape?

Welcome to Cultural Analytics.

Cultural Analytics as Cultural Exploration

As a methodology, Cultural Analytics offers a new paradigm for cultural analysis and information visualization. This paradigm matches the data-explosion of networked and ubiquitous cultural creation with the processing power of computers. This paradigm brings the cultural exploration of comparably large datasets in line with the techniques and methods of the most data-intensive scientific and business inquiries. This paradigm focuses on real-time visualizations of data that dare to ask challenging theoretical questions about the form and trajectory of current cultural artifacts, dynamics and flows.

Elements: Defining the Cultural Analytics Methodology
Cultural Analytics feeds off today's techno-cultural landscape. It borrows from methods for the quantification and analysis of data: statistical data analysis, information graphics, information visualization, scientific visualization and computer simulation. However, the following characteristics distinguish the cultural analytics paradigm from these related methodologies:[5]

1) Exploring and visualizing the global dynamics and flow of cultural form, ideas and change across multiple scales and on all possible dimensions. Such an approach is particularly relevant, if not necessary, in an era when cultural change, on global and local scales, occurs rapidly and through a complex network of technological and social mechanisms.
2) The use of very large datasets currently available on the web and/or in digital form.
3) A focus on visual and interactive media data including, but not limited to, film, animation, video games, comic, publication layout and design and websites.
4) A focus on contemporary cultural data and understanding the present with an eye towards the future. In other words, developing a real-time 'situational awareness' for 'cultural analysts'.
5) The use of all of the above to expand the boundaries of current cultural analysis, and investigate challenging theoretical questions with aesthetic, social and political implications for today and the future.

A Productive Pairing: Cultural Analytics and Online Video
 We can map each of the above traits of Cultural Analytics onto the territory of online video in the following way.

1) Online video proliferates. It is a cultural form based on the flow and sharing of ideas across a global network. Henry Jenkins grounds this capacity of online media in the ease of 'spreadability'.[6] Jenkins writes that 'It is through this process of spreading that

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4.   Geert Lovink, 'The Art of Watching Databases – Introduction to the Video Vortex Reader', in Geert Lovink and Sabine Niederer (eds) *Video Vortex Reader: Responses to YouTube*, Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures, 2008, p. 9.

5.   For a more detailed explanation of these traits as well as other characteristics of Cultural Analytics see Lev Manovich and Noah Wardrip-Fruin, 'Cultural Analytics: white paper', (May 2007, latest update November 2008), http://lab.softwarestudies.com/2008/09/cultural-analytics.html.
6.   The term 'spreadability', which refers to Jenkins' concept of 'spreadable media' is borrowed from Jean Burgess, '"All Your Chocolate Rain Are Belong to Us?" Viral Video, YouTube and the Dynamics of Participatory Culture', in Geert Lovink and Sabine Niederer (eds) *Video Vortex Reader: Responses to YouTube,* Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures, 2008, p. 102.

the content gains greater resonance in the culture, taking on new meanings, finding new audiences, attracting new markets, and generating new values'. [7] 'Spreadability' may also drive changes to cultural form. Cultural Analytics can map this and give us the visual language to open discussions about contemporary cultural change.

2) The staggering amount of data available on leading online video sharing websites provides the very large dataset. Yet, these large datasets are not always freely or easily accessible. YouTube Insight, a self-service analytics tool, does provide detailed viewing statistics, but this data is only available to YouTube users for the videos they have uploaded. Obtaining video shared by others is equally difficult. YouTube, Vimeo, Tudou and Youku all prevent the direct download of files. To obtain content data, third-party tools are necessary. Keepvid and Savevid, which allow you to download and save videos from video sharing and streaming sites, are two of the most popular. However, video sharing sites often block this software, along with any customized scraping scripts.

Copyright and licensing issues also pose difficulties. What content can be shared and by whom? How long is this content allowed to remain on video sharing sites? Who can access the associated data? An additional question is whether obtaining and distributing content as a form of data analysis falls within the realm of fair use. These are bugs for Cultural Analytics to work out. Fortunately, Cultural Analytics is philosophically open source and doesn't resign itself to using easily available data. It looks for interesting data.

3) Online video is visual data, making it particularly appropriate material for measurement by computer automated image analysis that then visualizes cultural patterns and change.

4) Online video is today's real-time cultural data. Online video sharing sites are updated in real-time, on a potentially global scale. Exploring this growth is a key first step to any comprehension or analysis of the continuously unfolding present.

5) What might be the challenging theoretical questions posed by new cultural medium of online video? Well, these are what Cultural Analytics provides the opportunity to explore.

Techniques: How to do Cultural Analytics

Obtain a large body of cultural data. Clean data is important. Now, you can begin the process of 'analytic browsing' and, I would add, analytic insight – that is, the kind of exploration and awareness that leads to understanding. The techniques for doing Cultural Analytics can be divided into two categories: [8] *direct visualization* and *digital image analysis alongside visualization of content.*

The dataset can be *directly visualized*, without additional computational analysis, by sampling or re-mapping existing visual data and its accompanying metadata – creation date, length of clip, keywords, category and so on. For example, if we apply this method to online video, we might take all the clips posted to YouTube on a given day and graphically organize them according to length, location, channel, and so on. Or, we might take a representation

of the actual media content in the form of sampled frame, and re-order them to visualize content in a new or distilled form (a montage of all frames, a series of frame slices, or a single frame summary of regularly sampled frames). [9] Figure 1 shows diagrams of two direct visualization techniques that are useful for analyzing video. Although these techniques may appear very simple, their ability to consolidate potentially hours of video content into a single image often leads to fruitful and original discoveries that may have remained hidden if video clips are only viewed one frame at a time, in sequential form.

FIGURE 1. Direct Visualization Techniques for Video.

Figure 1a. Montage Technique.
This technique involves sampling frames from a video clip and arranging these frames in a rectangular grid according to their original sequence. In this diagram, each numbered square represents a hypothetical frame sampled from a video. (The video on the left has 20 sampled frames; the video on the right has 17). Such re-mapping allows you to see the patterns in form and content across a video's entire duration in a single glance. This technique is particularly useful for comparing multiple videos at once.

Figure 1b. 'Summary Image' Technique.
This technique involves sampling frames from a video clip and then superimposing these frames on top of each other to create a single 'summary image'. If visual elements remain clearly discernible within the summary image, this means that they stayed in the same position for a significant portion of the clip. If the summary image appears uniformly blurred in color and texture, this is a likely indication that the visual elements in the original video constantly moved or changed.

Alternatively, we can *add the step of digital image analysis* and *visualize the results alongside the media content*. This allows us to explore the patterns in videos along potentially hundreds of visual dimensions: brightness, saturation, color and pixel difference between frames are just a few variables that are relevant to a study of online video. Imagine a visualization that reveals whether any of these measures change over the duration of a clip, or the duration of successive video responses to a video clip, or between content posted by professionals and by amateurs? The list of what such visualizations hold the potential to reveal is as endless as the possible combination of visual characteristics.

7. Henry Jenkins, 'Slash Me, Mash Me, Spread Me...', Confessions of an Aca/Fan, Henry Jenkins Weblog, 24 April, 2007, http://www.henryjenkins.org/2007/04/slash_me_mash_me_but_please_sp.html.

8. Lev Manovich, 'Visualization Methods for Media Studies', in *Oxford Handbook of Sound and Image in Digital Media, (ed.) Carol Vernallis* (forthcoming).

9. Brendan Dawes' *Cinema Redux* (2004) is an example of the montage method of direct visualization whereby an entire film is distilled down to a single image. See: http://processing.org/exhibition/works/redux/index.html.

A Sample Set: Using Culture Analytics to Re-present 2008 U.S. Presidential Campaign Ads

The pilot study chosen to test a Cultural Analytic approach to online video explores a small sample set, composed of advertisements produced by the Barack Obama and John McCain campaigns during the 2008 U.S. presidential race (see Table 1). [10]

TABLE 1. Sample Set of 2008 U.S. Presidential Campaign Ads.

OBAMA	TV	D1.	"No Maverick"	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NBtbG5xjFBY
		D2.	"Something"	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qxbGPDIVINM
		D3.	"Spending Spree"	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qwupV_02UOY&p=D8B82AAE571F72EF&playnext=1&index=27
		D4.	"This Year"	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y42RErUjfAc
	WEB	D5.	"Al the Shoe Salesman Gets a Tax Cut"	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=99HzP6BQm5Y
		D6.	"Proud of That Commercial"	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x5VaA6sMabk
MCCAIN	TV	R1.	"2013"	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tB3BNgdfEkI
		R2.	"Broken"	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yIJkmMR8Fek
		R3.	"Celeb"	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oHXYsw_ZDXg
		R4.	"Special"	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E08opP-qnQM
	WEB	R5.	"Dr. No"	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a3Zy50Dy6Zk
		R6.	"Strong"	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VVB5rd-azXM

Title and URLs for each of the 12 campaign ads analysed. Eight ads (four Obama and four McCain) were aired on television and distributed on the web. Four ads (two Obama and two McCain) were aired exclusively online. All ads in the sample were officially produced and made available by the campaigns with the exception of D6, which was produced by the Democratic National Committee.

The videos in the set include eight advertisements produced for television and also disseminated on the web, and four advertisements produced solely to be aired on the web. As a group, the clips run for a total of 413 seconds, and sampled at 12 fps, provided 4,960 frames for analysis. Since the goal of the study was to test the Cultural Analytics methods when applied to online video, the dataset is preliminary in size and in exploration, and thus not yet scaled to the magnitude of the larger datasets that characterize more developed Cultural Analytics projects [11] or the full potential of what the approach has to offer an analysis of the 2008 U.S. presidential campaign ads. However, before beginning to gather, process and

analyse vast amounts of data, it makes sense to play small, and scale up should the exploration of data prove interesting. It does.

The Context of the 2008 U.S. Presidential Campaigns

To say that the 2008 presidential campaign was an historic one is an understatement. Not only did the end result of electing the nation's first African American president change the game of American presidential politics, the build-up was equally revolutionary: the 2008 election cycle marked the first time both candidates were sitting U.S. senators; the longest campaign with the greatest gap between nominations and primaries; a record number of votes cast (131.2 million); [12] and the most expensive campaign in U.S. presidential history, with $745.7 million spent by Obama and $350.1 million spent by McCain. [13]

Equally notable was the candidates' use of the internet and Web 2.0 technologies. Although both Obama and McCain relied on today's wired and networked landscape to organize, advertise and communicate with their constituents, the Obama campaign is seen as the overall winner, with impressive results. At the 2008 Web 2.0 Summit shortly following the November elections, Arianna Huffington went as far as to assert that, 'Were it not for the Internet, Barack Obama would not be president. Were it not for the Internet, Barack Obama would not have been the nominee'. [14]

The implications for the way that presidential campaigns are run are profound. In 2008, the web became the complementary medium to broadcast television for political advertising. Since the middle of the 20th century, broadcast media had been the major factor at play in the media campaigns of the respective parties. [15] Until 2008, broadcast political advertisements had no significant online presence in any prior U.S. presidential campaigns for obvious reasons: YouTube and other online video sharing sites simply weren't around yet. The introduction of online video to the political campaign advertising repertoire in the 2008 presidential elections opened up a vast arena for communicating and receiving political messages. For one, using online video for advertising is cost-effective. Advertisements designed for broadcast on television can also be posted to the web and thus aired to a potentially larger portion of the population for a greater length of time. Advertisements can also be designed purely for web distribution, which cuts expenses significantly. The official material created for the Obama campaign that was posted on YouTube was viewed for a total of 14.5

10. Video clips of all advertisements in the sample are available on YouTube at the specified URLs. Further information including credits, original airdate and transcripts is available from *The Living Room Candidate,* http://www.livingroomcandidate.org, an online archive of presidential campaign commercials 1952-2008 organized by the Museum of the Moving Image.

11. See the Software Studies website, softwarestudies.com and Flickr stream, http://www.flickr.com/photos/culturevis, for examples of projects with significantly larger datasets (up to one million individual images) and more in-depth statistical analysis.

12. Federal Election Commission, '2008 Official Presidential General Election Results', 4 November, 2008, http://www.fec.gov/pubrec/fe2008/federalelections2008.shtml.

13. Federal Election Commission, 'Overview of Presidential Financial Activity 1996 - 2008', 2008 Presidential Campaign Financial Activity Summarized, Press Release, 8 June, 2009, http://www.fec.gov/press/press2009/20090608PresStat.shtml.

14. Claire Miller, 'How Obama's Internet Campaign Changed Politics', NY Times Bits blog, 7 November, 2008, http://bits.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/11/07/how-obamas-internet-campaign-changed-politics.

15. Lynda Lee Kaid, 'Videostyle in the 2008 Presidential Advertising', in Robert Denton and Robert E. Denton Jr. (eds) *The 2008 Presidential Campaign: A Communication Perspective*, Plymouth, United Kingdom: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2009, p. 209.

million hours. To buy this much time for broadcast on television would cost $47 million.[16] On YouTube, this expense is reduced to production costs, plus any costs for storage and streaming, which are currently minimal in comparison. It is worth noting that the use of online video also enables mass distribution of unofficial campaign material or negative advertising produced by the public. For the purposes of this sample study, however, we will be interested only in the official content created for the campaigns.

Given the historical importance of broadcast advertising as a communication tool in presidential campaigns, and the noted innovation of the 2008 U.S. presidential campaigns in embracing the web as a medium of communication, what are the aesthetic, cultural and political affects/effects of the use of online video for political advertising? How is cultural change manifest in online video – for example, does the use of online video for political advertisement result in changes to video style? Does it alter visual and/or political rhetoric? What about practices of reception? We can put forward hypothetical responses to these questions. Sometimes we can even 'sense' them. Cultural Analytics lets us trace and comprehend them.

Sample Set Visualizations
When we watch a political advertisement, we watch a series of moving image frames that change over the course of the video's duration. Each frame has a set of unique visual characteristics that we parse in succession, but always one frame at a time. Political remix videos allow us to see this succession in an alternate, or subverted, order. Yet, even if we change the order of succession, we still have no way to see the precise patterns in visual characteristics as they extend temporally over the duration of the clip. Perhaps we can mentally construct this representation for one 30 second commercial, but what if we want to compare such patterns across multiple commercials? The line graphs in Figure 2 offer one possible way of achieving this by visualizing simple but effective representations of a dimension of video that we can call 'visual change'. This includes the types of change commonly discussed in film and video production and theory, such as camera movement, shot types, and other cinematic techniques, as well as the graphical changes that became commonplace in the 1990s with the adoption of motion graphics and compositing software such as Adobe After Effects.

FIGURE 2. Comparison of Visual Change in Obama and McCain Video Ads.
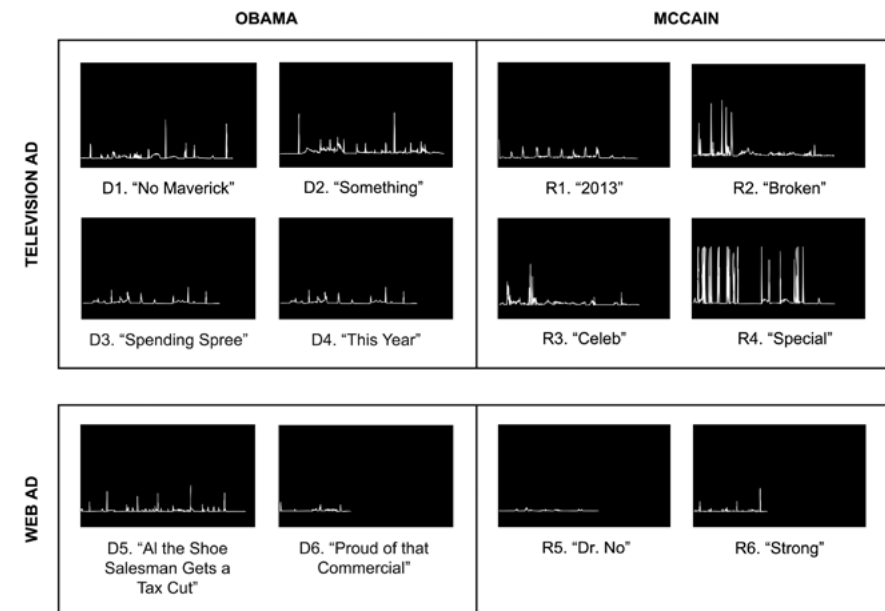
Frame difference line graphs for each of the 12 ads in the sample set.
x-axis: frame number
x-axis: pixel difference between consecutive frames

Using digital image analysis and simple software, we can measure the pixel difference between two consecutive frames, where pixel difference is a function of how many pixels change from one frame to another. The measurement can then be plotted in the form of a line that, like a seismograph printout, graphically displays the rhythm of visual change over time. A large spike marks a greater magnitude of difference between two frames and is a likely indicator of pronounced movement across a frame. This difference might correspond to a cut, a movement of the camera, characters, animated text, or graphics, or any other variety of visual change. Viewing these frame difference line graphs as a group allows us to see interesting broader patterns, namely:

1) Web commercials are more static than commercials made for television. As the line graphs immediately reveal, the web commercials have a lower frequency and magnitude of visual change.[17]
2) McCain's television ads are more visually dynamic. The line graphs for McCain's television ads spike more often and with greater intensity than those produced by the Obama campaign.

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16.   Miller, 'How Obama's Internet Campaign Changed Politics'.

17.   'Summary images' are not included here but can be accessed through the Flickr set referenced in note 11 of this article.

These two levels of visual difference discovered in the data appear in other dimensions of video style that, unlike movement, may be a bit more difficult to intuitively perceive when watching a moving image. Since images can be measured by a computer on hundreds of different visual characteristics, we can combine any two of these dimensions to create a kind of 'image map' – a 2D visualization that incorporates a combination of these measurements to diagrammatically represent the visual form of the image(s) analysed. Figures 3 and 4 show image maps that take regularly sampled frames (at 12 fps) from all of the ads and represent them together on two dimensions.

FIGURE 3. 'Image Map' Comparison of Web and TV Video ads.
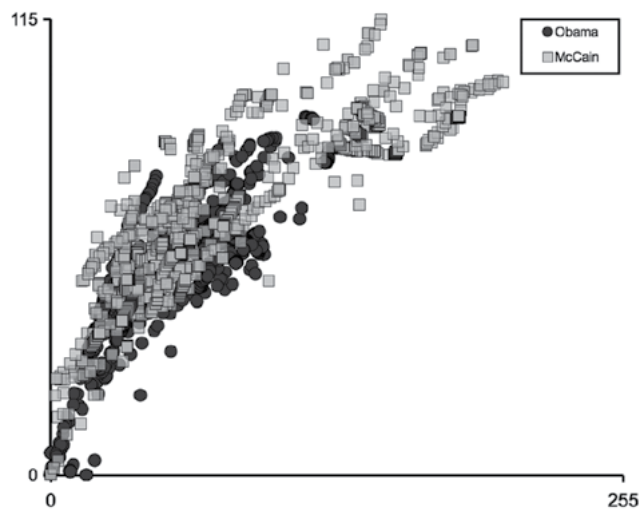
Figure 3a.
2008 U.S. Presidential TV Ads.
x-axis: A mean for all pixels' grayscale values in single frame.
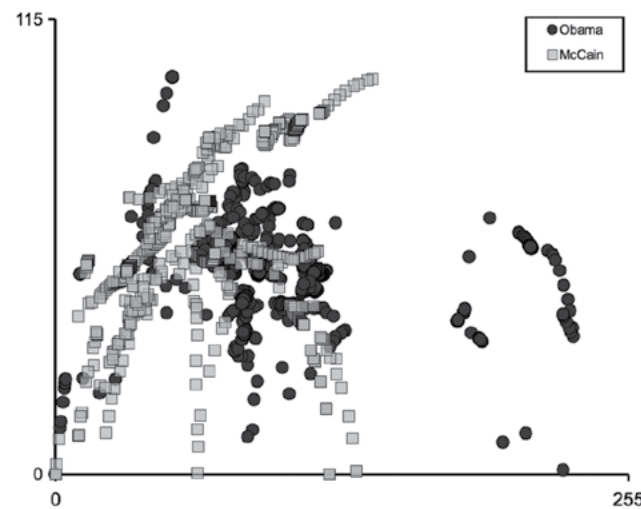y-axis: A mean of standard deviation of pixels' grayscale values in single frame.

Figure 3b.
2008 U.S. Presidential Web Ads.
x-axis: A mean for all pixels' grayscale values in single frame.
y-axis: A mean of standard deviation of pixels' grayscale values in single frame.

In Figure 3, the mean (average) grayscale values of all video frames are mapped against the standard deviation of these values. In other words, the x-axis represents the average brightness of an image, while the y-axis represents the range of all grey tones in an image, so that each point on the graph marks the intersection of these two measurements. Again, we can use simple digital image analysis to measure these visual characteristics, but what can a comparison of the numbers reveal?

The range of a binary grayscale is 0-255 where 0 is pure black, 255 is pure white and all values in-between are different intensities, or shades of grey. The further to the right of the graph

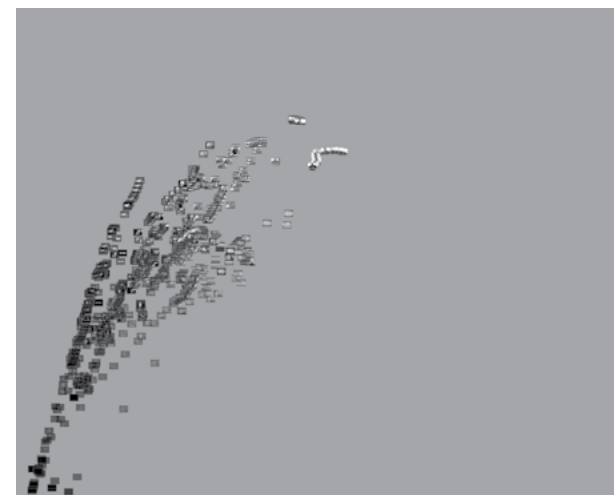FIGURE 4. 'Image Map' Comparison of Obama and McCain TV Ads.

Figure 4a.
2008 Obama TV Ads.
x-axis: A mean for all pixels' grayscale values in single frame.
y-axis: A mean of standard deviation of pixels' grayscale values in single frame.

Figure 4b.
2008 McCain TV Ads.
x-axis: A mean for all pixels' grayscale values in single frame.
y-axis: A mean of standard deviation of pixels' grayscale values in single frame.

a frame falls, the lighter the average value of the pixels comprising the image. Standard deviation – the value that dictates where a point falls on the vertical dimension in these graphs – is simply a measure of variability that shows how different a value is from the average. So, those data points towards the bottom of the graph could be said to refer to frames that have fairly typical (or expected) grayscale values whereas those data points at the top of the graph refer to frames where the intensity is further removed from the norm. Immediately, we notice a difference between Obama and McCain, and between web and television, as to where the frames fall along both the horizontal and vertical dimension. The distribution of frames drawn from television advertisements falls close to a clear trend line. There seems to be some normative combination of mean grayscale value and standard deviation that characterizes the ads designed for television broadcast. The web advertisements, however, are scattered, with no apparent core. Perhaps this is an indication that political campaign web ads do not yet have a normative visual language? This is not a hypothesis that can be tested with the small sample set gathered for the purposes of this pilot project, but it is certainly worth looking into.

Analysis using the techniques of Cultural Analytics can lead us to ask questions that are sometimes old, sometimes new, and sometimes reveal the old in a new light. The distribution of frames drawn from the television advertisements – that is, advertisements with a history of visual development – have a distinct core. There seems to be a pattern to the numbers. To make the visual characteristics behind these numbers a little easier to see, we can add the frames being analysed directly into the graph.

Figure 4 takes the image analysis data used in Fig. 3a to graph a comparison between McCain and Obama TV ads, breaks the dataset into two visualizations, and maps the image content with the analysis. The variance in visual style becomes almost immediately perceptible. The frame cluster in the top right corner of the graphs depicting McCain's television advertisements corresponds to uncharacteristically white frames that deviate significantly from the representative mean value characteristic of the majority of all frames (both Obama and McCain) that comprise the dataset. Here again, Cultural Analytics leads us to further avenues
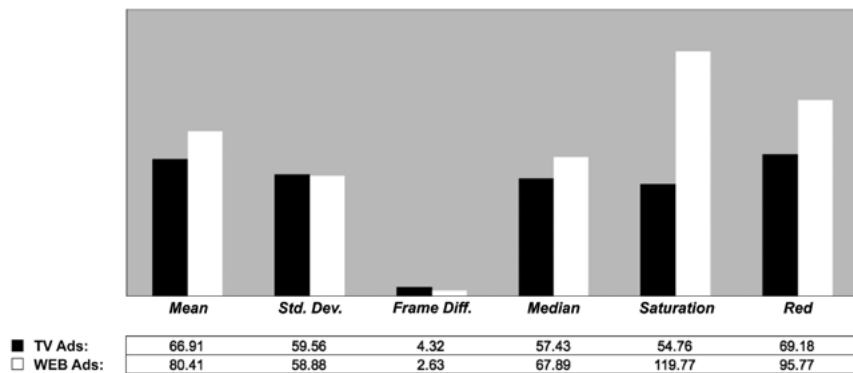
for exploration. What other visual dimensions, besides mean grayscale value and standard deviation, might contribute to the strong core we observe in the television-based campaign advertisements? Brightness? Color? Saturation? And what exactly is unique about this outlying subset of frames that fall at the extreme edges of this core?

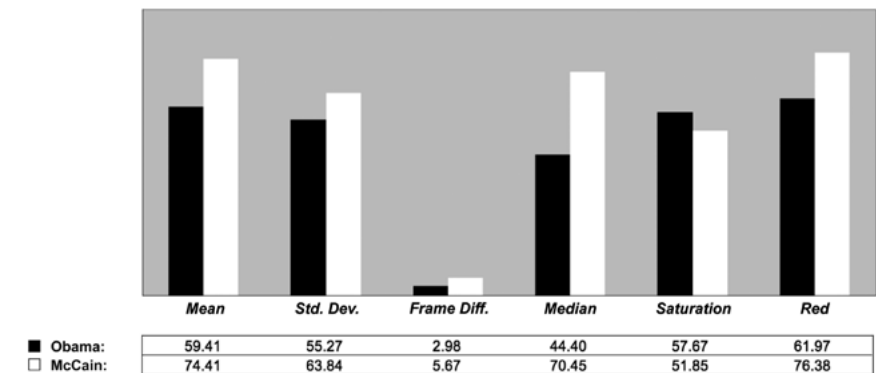*What Cultural Analytics Tells Us About the 2008 U.S. Presidential Campaign Ads*
Notice that the patterns that continue to emerge from the visualizations are related. If we compare patterns across a larger number of visual characteristics and condense our image analysis to sample-wide averages (Fig. 5 – 6), keeping in mind the comparatively detailed explorations discussed thus far, we can observe general trends in the visual form of the campaign advertisements across multiple dimensions of measurement:

1) While all campaign ads in the sample set were posted and distributed on the web, those ads designed for television broadcast are visually different than ads designed for web broadcast across a number of visual dimensions.

If the internet was indeed a revolutionary force in the 2008 U.S. presidential elections, then we might expect to see this reflected in the visual design of campaign advertising and communication. As the numbers reveal, we do. For all but one of the six visual characteristics represented in Figure 5, there is a measurable difference between television and web advertisements. However, the implications and parameters of the patterns that emerge from the data may deviate from our expectations about how the developing medium of online video should look and function. The pattern revealed – that web-based advertisements possess a quieter and more conservative visual language that those designed for television – is not a trend we would expect from the 2008 U.S. presidential campaign's innovative use of an online moving-image medium.

2) Comparing the television advertisements for both candidates leads to a similarly counter-intuitive observation: McCain's TV ads are more visually aggressive and radical in visual language than Obama's.

FIGURE 5. Visual Dimension Averages for 2008 U.S. Presidential Campaign Ads (TV vs. Web).

	Mean	Std. Dev.	Frame Diff.	Median	Saturation	Red
■ TV Ads:	66.91	59.56	4.32	57.43	54.76	69.18
□ WEB Ads:	80.41	58.88	2.63	67.89	119.77	95.77

FIGURE 6. Visual Dimension Averages for 2008 U.S. Presidential Campaign TV Ads (Obama vs. McCain).

	Mean	Std. Dev.	Frame Diff.	Median	Saturation	Red
■ Obama:	59.41	55.27	2.98	44.40	57.67	61.97
□ McCain:	74.41	63.84	5.67	70.45	51.85	76.38

Here again, the results of digital image analysis challenge our prior assumptions. Based on the political rhetoric, public opinion and party lines surrounding the candidates, we might expect that the media team for Obama, the younger and ostensibly more 'dynamic' candidate, might design commercial advertisements that showcase this dynamism. Yet, the visualizations I have presented indicate otherwise. At least for the small-scale sample set of this study, John McCain's television advertisements are comparatively more visually radical than Obama's. Could McCain be putting forward a 'maverick' political message in response to Obama's message of 'change?' Why is this pattern visible in advertisements produced for television and not those produced for the web? If we're interested in a real-time critical theory of online video, these questions are worth pursuing.

These observations are based on visualizations that explore just a few of many possible dimensions of the visual language available for political video advertisements. Analysing different characteristics, and combinations of these characteristics, may reveal different degrees of disparity. Furthermore, a more in-depth analysis of a larger dataset across a longer era of time may offer further insight into the changing form of the broadcast campaign advertisement. Fortunately, Cultural Analytics scales up to the macro-level. Imagine visualizing *all* U.S. presidential campaign advertisements, from their birth during the 1952 Eisenhower vs. Truman presidential race up until the present, and watching the unfolding of a media form over decades. Imagine extending this analysis beyond a single election cycle, so as to compare and observe how the introduction of an online video medium might have changed the visual language of political campaign advertisements. Imagine incorporating the unofficial online advertisements and video responses into the dataset. Imagine leaving the U.S. and analysing political campaign ads as they venture into the new web medium on a global scale.

Such visualizations would allow us to explore cultural dynamics as it happens, in real-time. Cultural Analytics lets us observe, with the support of quantitative analysis, what characterizes today's campaign advertisements in relation to those of the past. With observation, we can then ask: Does the visual style of web and television advertisements differ more significantly than the style of campaign advertisements broadcast in different election years? Is the visual rhetoric of a campaign correlated to a candidate's political leaning or to a given culture's visual ideals? Does the visual language of political campaigns translate globally and if so, does it flow with shifts in global politics? Most importantly, Cultural Analytics has the potential to help us ask these questions and even uncover new questions, which we may never have otherwise thought to ask.

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FREE, OPEN AND ONLINE: AN INTERVIEW WITH DENIS ROIO AKA JAROMIL

RACHEL SOMERS MILES

In early September 2010, Amsterdam-based artist, programmer and theorist Denis Roio (aka Jaromil) and I sat down for a conversation at the Netherlands Media Art Institute (NIMk) where he's been working over the past years in Research and Development. Having been deeply involved in the free and open source software community for over a decade as a coder/activist involved in a number of audio and visual projects, such as dyne:bolic, I wanted to speak with him about his experience with, and his perspectives of, the relationship between free and open source software and online video.

Rachel Somers Miles: Could you provide what you consider an 'alternative history' of software that manipulates and broadcasts audio and video?

Jaromil: I guess by alternative you mean 'not mainstream' and that will mostly translate to free and open source software in my past experiences. Of course, there is always something more alternative than the next alternative, so please consider that the account I'll give here is necessarily subjective.

Surely audio started being manipulated and broadcast on the internet way before video, and this is because of bandwidth and computing power limitations in earlier times. At the time RealAudio Player was launched around 1995 there were only few experiments on UNIX [1] platforms done with The Network Audio System (NAS) [2] on local area networks - audio was not compressed.

In a couple years, independent developers Scott Manley [3] and Jack Moffit started working on Icecast [4] and Liveice [5] realizing the first open source implementation of an audio streaming system using MP3 as a codec. [6] Still offering low usability - the tools were all text-based - they put together a system that was reasonably stable for absolving an ambitious task at that time, about 1997. Later on, these software and their developers converged in what is known today

as the Xiph.org [7] foundation, adopting the free Vorbis audio codec and the Ogg transport [8] as a backbone for the openness of the system. Today, they are no longer definable as an 'alternative effort', as they are establishing 'de facto' standards.

The usability issue was still crying for attention, while advanced functionality for radio stations as playlist management and mixing were completely lacking. We had been streaming using open source software with the Radio Cybernet [9] project for 2 years, when in 1999 I met August Black [10] and Markus Seidl, [11] conductors of fundamental radio. [12] With all our funny radio experiments we were all in need of more advanced audio streaming software, so we started doing it ourselves. One year later we released MuSE, [13] the first graphical application to mix and stream audio on the internet. The application has continued to grow until today, freely available on GNU/Linux [14] and Apple/OS X, thanks to several contributions. Now even more applications are available, inspired by our design of that first application.

Two interesting things about MuSe are worth mentioning. First, is that we conceptualized the software as an engine that should also be able to remix live streams, imagining a topology that was not just broadcaster-to-listener, but instead, letting every listener remix various streams and re-broadcast them. This was something like a 'rhizomatic delight' used in 2000 for the 'atlantic-transfer-jam' concert that had live bands, such as Shadow Tribe, improvising between Chicago, New York and Linz, looping sounds across the network in three separated concerts, but still at a very low quality for audio.

The second is that after two years of development in MuSE, I received an offer from Rob Lanphier of RealNetworks to 'buy dyne.org and the MuSE project', which I declined as it would have implied the software would become closed source and disappear from public domain. As I follow the ideal of freedom of speech, I believe free speech is also determined by the freedom of broadcasting tools. But of course, my idealism wasn't paying for the food, so the support of Public Voice Lab, [15] which has now become OS Alliance, has been crucial to continue such efforts. It was while working with them on the StreamOnTheFly [16] project that we developed dyne:bolic [17] as a one-click free streaming solution for online radios.

RSM: While you mentioned it earlier with respect to video, could you elaborate more on why you think free software for audio and video processing has come relatively late with respect to the rest of the history of free and open source software?

1.   http://www.unix.org/.
2.   http://radscan.com/nas.html.
3.   http://star.arm.ac.uk/~spm/.
4.   http://www.icecast.org/.
5.   http://star.arm.ac.uk/~spm/software/liveice.html.
6.   A codec for audio or video, for example, is a small program that enables one to listen to music or watch videos of a particular format. There are diverse formats for multimedia, thus often requiring the installation of a number of different codecs.

7.   http://xiph.org/.
8.   http://www.xiph.org/ogg/; http://www.vorbis.com/.
9.   http://radiocybernet.org/.
10.   http://aug.ment.org.
11.   http://funda.ment.org/biomexx.html.
12.   http://funda.ment.org/.
13.   http://muse.dyne.org/.
14.   http://www.gnu.org/gnu/linux-and-gnu.html.
15.   http://www.pvl.at.
16.   http://www.streamonthefly.org/.
17.   http://dynebolic.org.

Jaromil: I think it's because of the CPU power (central processing power) of the available technology – computers were not so powerful and the majority of the GNU/LINUX community was still busy on the development of networking protocols and other less visible things. In 2000, computers were enough to process network packets - and therefore operate broadcasting reflectors - but processing audio was way more expensive, without even mentioning video. Only institutions or companies could afford something like a Silicon Graphics and its C compiler - those weren't tools that an independent developer could have on his or her own desk, just the support of a community of enthusiasts.

So for me the reason is obviously that while technology became more advanced, processing power also became more affordable, and it took time for it to happen. The moment a technology becomes shared, democratized and made available to more people, a community can develop. Since free software is about community development, without this democratization of technology the work to develop software and the work to develop the community cannot happen. To me it's a very clear pattern: as technology is more available for grassroots agency, community development follows.

RSM: How do you see the role of the free and open source software community in the development of online video?

Jaromil: I think something very interesting has been happening in the last years. Ten years ago online video was a waste of bandwidth and wasn't really available to everyone, so it was less interesting - not many people wanted to experiment with it, just some could. One of the main reasons it is interesting today is that it finally has the potential to change the way we consume and produce television. Free and open source in video is unlocking a lot of creativity, not just in making tools available, but also in making them customizable, breaking fixed schemes and, as we see it happening more often, enhancing possibilities for participation.

What happens very often with modern technology is that we first have commercial implementations realized by those that actually see a business possibility there, that are capable of investing and expect an advantage from that. These investors will develop it faster and provide a solution that will stay established for at least five to ten years.

The difficulty comes when the long-term interest of such investments is effectively closing the possibility for people to appropriate technology, to customize it for their own community, and to grow their own economy around it. This is how multinational monopolies actually lead to economic conglomerates that establish political control on standards. They tend to enclose technological progress while spreading its use among large masses, for instance, the case of international corporations such as Adobe.

The so-called 'mega-corporations' are often lobbying to close access to technology development, even on a governance level. For instance, stakeholders in codec [18] products try to

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18.   Encoding and decoding algorithms for audio and video compression for instance, whose use is often encumbered by software patents.

influence the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) [19] to favour their closed technologies over open options when deciding upon standards. The fact is that this attitude of 'buying people in', rather than coexisting with variety, doesn't foster economic growth or quality in results. Often old and inappropriate, yet economically well-established monopolies, become tyrants that clog up innovation to perpetuate their own advantage, rather than playing in the interest of progress, and of the millions of consumers who could otherwise become producers themselves.

Within this context, online video has changed a lot in recent times because independent efforts nevertheless have come to exist and proliferate. The most significant one from 2000-2005 was lead by Chris Montgomery at Xiph.org a foundation based in Texas that developed the Ogg/Vorbis [20] standard for audio, and Theora [21] for video, distributing it under a BSD (Berkeley Software Distribution) [22] license, which is basically free software. They provided the possibility for small and medium hardware manufacturers to use free codecs inside their products without paying royalties on patents to multinationals. They also unlocked the possibility for software artisans to develop independently and sell their work along licensing schemes like the GNU General Public License (GPL), [23] which encourages people to distribute and even sell software without having to pay for royalties or patents.

Still, the video application panorama has space for more players, in particular those developing new schemes of interaction when processing video. We saw some early lone cowboy efforts such as Heroine Warrior [24] who developed Cinerella, and then more software efforts: LiVes [25] developed by Salsaman; Open Movie Editor [26] by Richard Spindler; KDN Live and the MLT multimedia framework (Media Lovin' Toolkit) developed by Dan Dennedy and his crew. [27] I'm also personally involved in FreeJ, [28] which we've been developing since 2000 to provide our community with a javascript environment to manipulate and stream video in real-time, and Frei0r, [29] a plugin framework for video effects that is already adopted by several applications on all major operating systems, including GNU/Linux, Apple/OS X and Windows.

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19.   http://www.w3.org/.
20.   http://www.xiph.org/ogg/; http://www.vorbis.com/..
21.   http://www.theora.org/.
22.   http://www.freebsd.org/.
23.   GPL stands for 'General Public License' and is a free copyleft license for software and other kinds of work created by the GNU Operating system. As stated on the GNU website, the foundations of a GPL license are: 'the freedom to use the software for any purpose; the freedom to change the software to suit your needs; the freedom to share the software with your friends and neighbors; and the freedom to share the changes you make'. http://www.gnu.org/licenses/quick-guide-gplv3.html.
24.   http://heroinewarrior.com/.
25.   http://lives.sourceforge.net/.
26.   http://www.openmovieeditor.org/.
27.   http://www.piksel.org/frei0r.
28.   http://freej.org/.
29.   http://frei0r.dyne.org.

In most cases with free and open source development we like to develop peer reviewed implementations that people can learn, study, adapt and redistribute. For example, there are a lot of people behind the effort of FreiOr who can then use these efforts in a situation they are locally involved in. Relying on such shared development efforts means relying on a globally shared research and development activity, a situation in which quality assurance is given by the interested peer review provided by the community of adopters. Here everything produced will be fed back into a pool of shared tools - it will be used in the future, reused and recombined, reducing the waste of duplicate efforts and naturally ensuring the quality of results.

RSM: Could you speak some more about the current atmosphere around the development of open video standards?

Jaromil: It is very interesting right now. Last year there was a large impact with the introduction of HTML5 [30] that became a contentious issue.

This new specification of HTML was created to tag video and audio, and stream it on the web. Within the definition of this new standard, media codecs had to be selected and indicated as mandatory for web browsers so that the web browsers could be HTML5 compatible - an industry standard requirement. Image tag compliancy is with JPEG, GIF and PNG normally. For audio and video, MPEG4 and H.264 were selected, while Ogg and Theora, as free and open source possibilities, were left behind in this decision.

This didn't make much sense to many developers because both MPEG4 and H.264 are heavily encumbered by patents, so whenever you use them you have no choice but to pay into the software patenting system, which is not even recognized as legally binding in European countries. The many people who had been active in developing reliable and available alternatives to the available patented technologies were outraged to see that a supposedly neutral public entity, such as the W3C, ignored the existence of the free and open source codecs they had been working on for years. This event obviously illustrated that W3C governance is influenced by lobbyists for partisan interests, but in this case, the W3C was not the only ruling authority and the voices that were raised finally made them review their positions.

RSM: What do you see as some of the other key issues with online video right now?

Jaromil: Another interesting issue right now is how enclosed infrastructure in use, like patented codecs, gets substituted by free and open source infrastructure as the latter becomes the most efficient and reliable. In this very moment those holding a monopoly with enclosed technologies do everything possible to keep enforcing their own standards. It's very interesting to see how nothing is purely technical or political, and to understand how public interest can be better represented when choosing technological standards.

RSM: Do you have a specific example of this?

Jaromil: Yes, try to put a video online and make sure that it can be played on every platform: Windows, Mac and GNU/Linux, and see if it will work. It's a very difficult 'migration' issue as the portability of standards meets the obstacles placed by corporate interests. As we play for the public interest (including that of small and little enterprises) the challenge consists in making open source standards recognized and implemented for all platforms. It's technically possible, yet politically very difficult to have a portable plugin for streaming video that works on every operating system, based on free and open source code. Such a plugin could be included by all browsers for free, so that web surfing would always mean painless playback of video.

RSM: Is this being worked on right now?

Jaromil: Yes. As a matter of fact, as we speak, the fruition of video on the internet is becoming easier and easier and is even unlocking the market for new players, but it took longer than expected - this could have happened 5 or 6 years ago. Meanwhile many other aspects have come into play. For instance, network distribution that needed to be optimized by peer-to-peer (P2P) algorithms such as BitTorrent. So, if you have a video that is being watched by many people at the same time, this video will be re-shared by those watching it in real-time without clogging up the bandwidth of the provider - a multicast distribution system that was designed decades ago, but that somehow never made it into everyday technology until today.

Actually it's remarkable what those programmers are doing, it's really advanced. And by 'those' I mean both the free and open source software community, and the developers of proprietary technology like the Flash player used by YouTube. Behind those technologies there are very advanced mathematical and logical implementations, which I hereby dare to define as beautiful in the way they are opening up access to more content production and its dissemination to large masses around the world - this is not just a technological revolution, but also a political one.

RSM: With respect to online video and the free and open software movement, what would you like to see happen in the next 5 years?

Jaromil: What I would like to see is definitely beyond what I can do myself. I wish that hardware manufacturers acknowledge the potential residing in the innovations brought by free software development. They should in fact see their own advantage in this, and understand that every user can also be a producer. This is not just a marketing strategy, but also a political issue affecting society as well as their sales.

I'd also like to see more device manufacturers start to use an 'open hardware' symbol [31] as one of the logos they use to display the device's compatibility, like the HD symbol used for high-definition. This would illustrate that devices are designed with the free and open source philosophy in mind, being adaptable and flexible for integration in further developments

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30.   See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HTML5.

31.   See: http://www.openhardwaresummit.org/.

and appropriated by communities of enthusiasts. Unfortunately most industry manufacturers currently see their own gain through limiting the possibilities of enthusiast communities to adapt their devices, and this I believe is a big mistake that will cost them the market in the long term.

As of today we can already find some positive trends in the direction of opening hardware. Many people buy certain devices because 'they can be hacked' and thus, can have more done with them. Speaking for one, I wouldn't have been able to develop the SyncStarter [32] while working at NIMk without having a device on the market based on GNU/Linux that could be reprogrammed. The ability to do this made everyone happy: me, because I was able to deploy my skills and adapt the device for the particular needs of my employer; and the company that produced it, because they included a GNU/Linux operating system on the device for free, instead of having to pay for years of development tailored to a single product.

RSM: In your understanding, experience and practice as an active member of the free and open source software community, can you describe what you feel are the over-all main contributions the community has offered, and continues to offer, to online video?

Jaromil: Here, I consider the contributions as a set of characteristics that are fundamental to the politics and philosophy of the free and open source software:

Interoperability
This is an approach to problem solving that the free and open source movement, as we know it today, has inherited from the so-called UNIX philosophy: to solve a big problem don't build a big solution, but break it down into pieces, and try to formulate a pattern language that suits both the description of the problem and that of the solution. By realizing a diverse set of tools that will inter-operate to reach the final goal it will be possible, later in time, to reuse this effort and recombine it to reach more analogous goals. Such an approach produces tools that can be specialized to solve simple tasks, but that are also generic enough to be combined in a set of diverse tools to reach more articulated solutions, without generating the need for new software or hardware.

Peer review
This is a common situation for free and open source projects, and is also found in other fields particularly where precision and specialization is necessary like in scientific research. Through fostering this kind of review practice, the free and open source community provides space to peer review the inner mechanisms (which in the case of video would be a compression or filtering algorithm for example), and if necessary, modify and adapt them to specific needs or more advanced hardware.

Avoid waste
Thanks to its free and open source nature, new software can easily adapt and reuse what has already been created and perfected. For instance, video software like LiVES [33] uses image manipulation tools from the 'ancient' ImageMagick [34] framework on single video frames, as if they were single images to be edited. This approach has enabled a non-linear video-editing program to use algorithms that were previously made and perfected over decades for photography, for their own purpose. In this way, LiVES has made hundreds of high quality effects from the tradition of digital photographic manipulation available to the users of a video-editing program.

Human resources
More than expensive hardware and support contracts with foreign helpdesks, free and open source licenses on software allow competence to be valued over infrastructure. This leads to the employment of local people able to adapt technology to local needs, rather than letting the global market adapt local needs to its offer. This is something I can relate to with my own position at NIMk, as can many other researchers and developers working inside similar organizations that are on the edge of innovation: we are constantly in need of being able to adapt our output to new ideas.

Transparency
Especially in the field of protocol design, free and open source research and development is leading to increased transparency in the field of codecs and transport video formats. Free software projects provide a reference for transports and video codecs that are free to reuse, while an increasing amount of hardware devices are supporting these formats, because they are convenient and efficient. The result is that encoding and playback of media doesn't depend on a specific manufacturer or software, finally making it possible to seamlessly move files around without the need for reconversion.

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32.   Syncstarter is a free and open source software used to sync the playback of video installations that require multiple videos on multiple screens. http://www.nimk.nl/syncstarter.

33.   http://lives.sourceforge.net/.
34.   http://www.imagemagick.org.

STREAMING COUNTER CURRENTS: 'W.A.S.T.E'

ALEJANDRO DUQUE

Our 'we' forms a loose and untraceable community no one can address or target. [1] It involves people and initiatives ranging from indymedia to ourmedia, democracynow to politube, candidaTV to bitnik.org, even when for only a few seconds the "#on-air" Twitter hash flashes. Those stream test-drives from pirated analogue signals of silentTV emissions ground a multitude of singularities fighting on the battleground of media+representation. 'WE' is an event taking place at the individual level while submitting misleading hardware addresses and locations. Our only common and stable boundary in such complex networks is the streaming server, [2] its furtive domain name or the I.P. number serving an undefined pool of wills. We Await...

We are blinded by the flickering light of YouTube, Seesmic, twitcam, Qik, live stream, justin, ustream, Revision3, Blip.tv, and Break.com. We see their feeds start arriving – no pain – straight to mobile devices. These, along with 3D video, are the latest platforms to be hyped, and will provide the largest market induced trends. Of course, they will be led by the mainstream broadcasting giants, along with hardware and software manufacturing companies, ranging from SONY to ARRI, and passing through Nvidia, Texas Instruments, AMD, MIPS, Android, Flash, Firefox, Opera, and Flumotion, to name just a few. A plethora of efforts, diving head-first into so-called Internet Protocol television (IPTV), video encapsulated through packets routed over mobile networks. Google's push forward through webm [3] protocol also signals that video will constitute a major component of what we once knew as the web.

Trend hunters behind the TED conference pin-point the 'aeffects' that online video has on the development of ideas through their branded concept of Crowd Accelerated Innovation. [4] This will shift crowdsourcing, the unfair technique of exchange exercised by gluttonous troglodytes and disguised by glossy Web 2.0 rounded templates, to the next level. Entrepreneurial reports [5] naively suggest that traditional target 'markets' are no longer watching television. Every day, they claim, more and more people are watching video online, even during so-called prime time. In sum, the web that was always considered as an alternative selling channel for television-based campaigns has become the place where advertising deploys its best moves. A clear sign is the arrival of a new kind of monster called GoogleTV, [6] here to

1. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/WASTE.
2. http://giss.tv:8000/; http://theartcollider.org:8000/ ; http://abrazo.servideo.org:8000/.
3. http://www.webmproject.org/.
4. http://www.ted.com/talks/chris_anderson_how_web_video_powers_global_innovation.html.
5. http://www.emarketer.com/blog/index.php/emarketer-webinar-evolving-online-video-landscape/.
6. http://www.google.com/tv/.

capitalize upon this already 'closing' gap between new and old media. For a decade now, the gap we have called the digital divide has been closing, as IT4D or IPTV lobby governments for pipeline infrastructure covering the planet – and if fibre won't reach, satellite will do. Codecs such as webm will finally realize the promise of the famous webTV of the late 1990s. Perhaps it is now possible to ask: has streaming media finally found its audience? [7]

Today, streaming is becoming obligatory for all the commercial players that constitute the broadcasting industry. For us, it is still the pleasure principle that impels our small community efforts. The list of 'marginal' participants in this feast is long, and identifying a few names here will not do full justice to the efforts of so many, who know very well what they have contributed. Just ask Pedro Soler, Antonia Fòlguera and Raul Marroquin about the day their worlds collided at horitzo.tv, [8] or August Black and Markus Seidl about their radio days while the first incarnations of MuSE [9] were being developed. So yes, it is our good fortune that the list is long, and what is even better, it constitutes a unique dispositif. [10]

> '..."Signal" in these cases is interpreted as "contact", and a phantasmatic projection of connection and interaction is projected onto the faintest of signals, aided further by the curious emergence of synaesthetic perceptions where minute changes in tone, rhythm or even wording can produce intense bodily sensations and responses...It is this libidinal drive for connection, identification and belonging that propels the development of new media and communication technologies...' – Eric Kluitenberg [11]

The rapid development of so-called "Free software" bridges our audio and/or video impulses. Anyone with a will, will be able to set-up a system and join the relay networks on his or her own using tools like Icecast [12], for one. Having access to such audiovisual technologies is not just a remarkable example of what we once thought the net could do – namely, help us reshape our societies – it also enables and strengthens forms of contestation. What follows, then, is an accidental list of streaming events that made a mark, and reoriented a particular approach to what is called video, on or offline. Anyone involved in open source video or audio streams could claim and construct a different story line, but the hope here is to include activities not always visible, but that nonetheless marked the last decade of online audio and video. [13]

7. http://www.nettime.org/Lists-Archives/nettime-l-0010/msg00204.html.
8. http://www.horitzo.tv/.
9. http://muse.dyne.org/.
10. In the sense of systems and deployments, as in Foucault's or Agamben's interpretation of the concept, but in a radical way. In Michel Foucault's words, 'the said as much as the unsaid'. See 'The Confession of the Flesh' [1977] interview with Michel Foucault, in Colin Gordon (ed. and trans.) *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings*, Brighton, Sussex: Harvester Press, 1980.
11. Eric Kluitenberg, "Distance versus Desire: Clearing the Electrosmog", http://turbulence.org/ blog/2010/11/29/distance-versus-desire-by-eric-kluitenberg/. Included on the Turbulence. org 'Networked Performance' blog, the text is extended from a talk given by Kluitenberg at the Impakt Festival 2010, Utrecht.
12. http://www.icecast.org/.
13. IMHO FWIW.

In 1997, a net.radio workshop lead by E-Lab, nowadays RIXC, [14] took place during a meeting called Polar Circuit (Tornio/Finland). The workshop introduced a commercial software called Real Producer, for which no Free/Libre alternative was available at the time. Anyhow, at the very least, the software allowed audio to be sent across the network. It was simple to operate, requiring only 56kbps of bandwidth to activate an 'on air' signal, and share a sound event over the internet in real-time, between one or two listeners. You might call it intimate media, but this approach proved that the positions of sender and receiver were interchangeable, breaking apart all established communication or media production models. The software was used by people from Riga to trace transcultural and artistic links with colleagues in Austria, the U.K, and New Zealand, among others.

In 1999, Orang, or the Open Radio Network Group, hosted live streaming from Paradiso (Amsterdam/NL) during the N5M3, [15] (Next Five Minutes 3), a conference on the Tactical Use of Media. This was not just a spontaneous action, it was the beginning of an ambitious effort to build a worldwide archive of Sound Art and other related files. The database grew exponentially, but later disappeared – the server was reported to have been 'hacked', and its information rendered unrecoverable. Among the many tactical media oriented people that took part in the above-mentioned meeting was Raul Marroquin, a key operator who still works on the project DeHoeksteen.live [16] through Salto, a digital television station in Amsterdam. Elsewhere on the internet, he is cutting across a variety of protocols, from http, SecondLife and Skype to Twitter, quik and IRC. His feverish rush for making live programs has dwelt in cables and improvised studios for decades.

In 2003, Okupa Futura (Asturias/Spain) received first-hand exposure to open source code for streaming media. An event organized by Hackitectura [17] used a 'squatted' architecture, as we were hosted by the multiple potentialities of a distributed T.A.Z, [18] crossing networks, and heading from immediatism [19] to immediacy. [20] The Placard [21] festival operates in a similar vein and spirit. Back in 2004 (Mulhouse/France) sound streams met video flows. This was the first time we had a stable feed using a GNU/Linux laptop running Gentoo, plus the well-known unstable software Pd (a.k.a PureData), which had just recently integrated video modules to encode video/audio packets. It took a good while to compile and install such objects, but we succeeded on both the tech and party fronts. The core infrastructure was ready.

14. http://rixc.lv/; http://rixc.lv/net.art.lv/index.php?obj_id=1029&kat_id=215 =.
15. http://www.n5m.org/n5m3/.
16. http://dehoeksteen.live.nu/.
17. http://mcs.hackitectura.net/tiki-index.php.
18. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temporary_Autonomous_Zone.
19. 'Immediatism is a political philosophy embracing the virtues of immediate social interactions with people as a means of countering the antisocial consequences of consumerist capitalism'. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immediatism.
20. 'Immediacy is a philosophical concept related to time and temporal perspectives, both visual, cognitive. Considerations of immediacy reflect on how we experience the world and what reality is'. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immediacy_(philosophy).
21. http://leplacard.org/.

At the end of 2004 and during 2005, the usual hackitectura suspects co-organized madiaq [22] and fadaiat. Following both events from a remote location was easy, as it was with a few hack-meetings that took place in Italy and Spain. All this led us to take steps towards building a similar infrastructure enabling the development of hacklabs, social centres, independent networks and open source software. This was to be done for, and from, the hemispherical south from the hand of the already present LUG (Linux User Groups) across the continent.

Screenshot of FLISOL.tv freej stream test.

In 2006, we organized a variant of the Festival Internacional de Installacion de Software Libre. This effort was named FLISOL.tv, [23] and was documented via wikis. We also provided IRC (Internet Relay Chat) support to encourage everyone involved with the Latin American Install Fest to adopt and use software called freej. [24] This was provided by the hackers at dyne.org, who were always ready to implement new features. One such feature allowed the selection of frame-rate so as to economize on bandwidth, which is crucial when one is behind a very limited data transfer link. [25] Thanks to another netizen known as Chaser we were able to run

22. http://mcs.hackitectura.net/tiki-index.php?page=MAPA:+cartografiando+el+territorio+madiaq.
23. http://www.flisol.info/FlisolTv.
24. http://freej.org/, this was the one line command to stream:
freej /dev/video0 -s 320x240 -T 6 -V -1 -i.
25. IRC chat with one of freej's developers:
[00:16]   <kysucix>   try latest svn for fps
[00:16]   <kysucix>   freej -f <fps> ...
[00:16]   <kdag>   jaja! perfect!
[00:16]   <kdag>   :)
[00:16]   <kysucix>   but it doesn't work with video
[00:17]   <kysucix>   test it because I havn't tested it yet :)
[00:17]   <kysucix>   wait I have to commit
[00:17]   <kdag>   ahh its fine, we need just streams no video :)
[00:17]   <kdag>   no rush
[00:17]   <kdag>   im here helping a kid in colombia with his freej install
[00:18]   <kysucix>   great :)
[00:18]   <kdag>   yeap, you will see, it will be a mad event..march 24
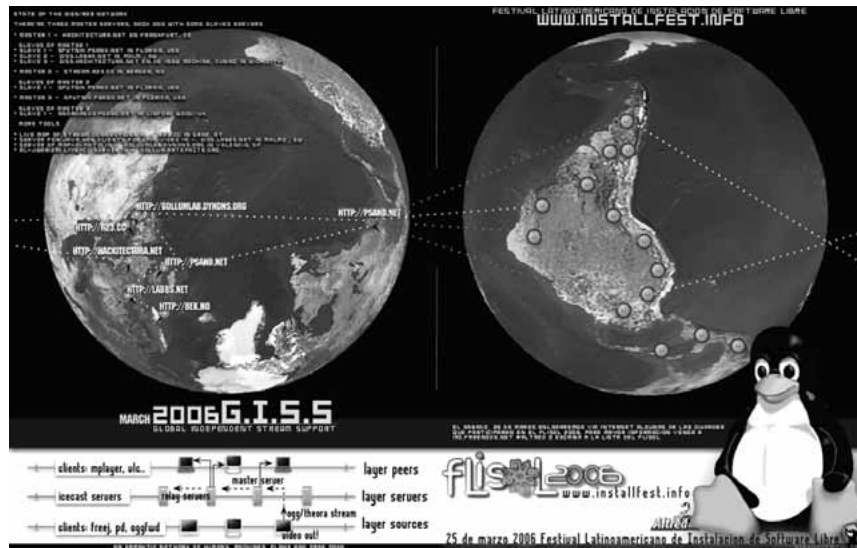
Poster for Festival Internacional de Installacion de Software Libre, 2006.

an Icecast server within the G.I.S.S [26] network, the first project ever to share bandwidth using a feature that can put each server on a relay.

This allowed the hosting of multiple streams or channels (from Colombia, Ecuador, Argentina, and Bolivia) while offering us enough bandwidth to permit connections to dozens of clients.

The G.I.S.S project was inspired by independent media networks such as indymedia.org. In Brazil, we have had estudiolivre, [27] a state supported initiative that aims to ensure that self-made media will extend beyond a techno-ghetto. Today, they continue to provide a streaming server to the members of the community, while documenting all the required know-how.

Streaming video began as a way to reclaim media, not just artistically, but politically. For some time, there was something we might call a streaming movement, yet the evangelistic and orthodox pose of a few 'radical' developers destroyed the chance for the movement to

embrace more participants and grow larger. Even today, in the days of Ubuntu, [28] we are not yet ready to be running and operating a Linux based system. A few years back, anyone using a Macintosh was banned and bullied by the typical Linux evangelist. In the last few years we have seen Adobe Flash take over through a few not- worth-mentioning commercial platforms. In any case, this state of things is temporary, as HTML5 now allows embedding tags for <video> and <audio>. Open source formats such as ogg/vorbis and ogg/theora, the same that wikimedia or archive.org use, can now be easily integrated into any web page.

We were also given the opportunity to stream the transmediale.08 and transmediale.09 (Berlin/Germany) conferences using FLOSS [29] codecs. [30] The stats [31] and the working group doubled, and the local television station merged with us to provide web-based real-time content along with their usual coverage. As before, we integrated an IRC chat window to the stream feed, facilitating the set-up to enable people in parallel rooms in places such as Colombia, Chile, Canada and several African nations to take part. The participation enabled by this open structure was at all times projected into the conference space. Rather than the usual situation of talking heads in front of a local audience, the interaction of people from across the globe gave rise to a third level of participation. For some in Berlin, such interventions were considered noise, interference or simply distraction. They were indeed a rupture. A good one.

In any case, conclusions were drawn very quickly, and perhaps because of a very traditional approach to web-based content, the online streams were jailed – not just inside the formal web page, but under a heavy and awkwardly designed festival homepage. It might take some years until we finally see the integration of streams within the flows of a shared discourse, both on the network and elsewhere. Telephones will surely play a part with their expanded '2-way' far-reaching elec-

Live stream during Transmediale 2009.

tric speech. Multiple and replicating channels for sound and video feeds might be just around the corner; YouTube will develop a mixer; some stuff will be live, other stuff will be archived. We will see a media loop hooking up different platforms.

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26. 'a multitude of individuals with different histories, background and nationalities (italian, french, spanish and spanish colonized, argentinian, chilean, mexican, colombian, brasilian, norvegian, slovenian, ...) joined together over the last three years to create a human-scale media and an empathic network of human experiences in different locations of the globe (mainly europe and south america), this informal structure took the name of G.I.S.S. (Global Independent Streaming Support). It is mainly run by free software activists, that lend some resources and servers to make it growing in terms of connections, but, keeping in mind that the media production unit must remain accessible to everyone (so, yes, a simple internet connection and a basic computer equipped with a microphone and eventually a camera is enough to become one of the broadcasting agents)', http://giss.tv.

27. http://estudiolivre.org/.

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28. http://www.ubuntu.com/.
29. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_and_open_source_software.
30. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Codec.
31. transmediale.09 streamed live to 1,029 individual clients (for a length of 15 minutes or more) during the festival. 527 clients tuned in to 15 minutes or more of the Auditorium (Conference) stream. 439 clients tuned in to 15 minutes or more of the Salon (K1) stream. transmediale.09 streamed to 52 different countries. 542 clients tuned in from Germany, 129 clients from the US, 51 from the UK, 40 from The Netherlands, 27 from Austria, 25 from Spain, 21 from Colombia, 18 from France, 15 from Switzerland, 3 from Kenya and 158 other clients from 42 other countries. transmediale.09 streamed approximately 23 events and 50 hours of footage live.

The shift from the basic infrastructures to the design of a RealTime-Interface to represent such communities continued to gain relevance. Such questions remain significant as none of the popular websites that commercially offer stream support can deal with more than one stream at a time in a clean and uncluttered front. Furthermore, there's no social integration offered by such .com platforms. They can call it 'social software' and trumpet 'sharing and openness', but this is as a way to cache their intentions to outsource and create revenue, while enslaving us through the use of their 'services'.

Today, we can all stream video using proprietary software, but our feeds will be overlaid by foreign clickable advertisements, our videos will belong to a corporation obeying easy to decipher principles: making profit from content generated by its audience. The procedures for setting up a free/libre streaming server with Icecast[32] are well documented online, and the bandwidth available today has no problem carrying a user's own radio and video program. The Xiph[33] video codec and transport layer known as .ogv/theora has finally been integrated into the core of many web browsers, rendering obsolete the need to install third-party plug-ins to view video online. For example, Google chrome, Firefox and Opera have this built-in capability.

An awareness of the ways that online video is commercialized might lead us to more fully embrace live streams, and reject the fever for archiving.[34] We need to stream against the database. Streams give real-time impressions and leave no traces at all; they are an undocumentable and ephemeral art practice. After all, streaming is far less complicated than traditional video-making. Live video is a performative and liberatory practice, free of the traditional forms of tyranny related to video:

– Rehearse.Record
– digitize.remaster.edit
– re.compress
– upload/host
– distribute/syndicate
– tag, index and archive

We need to stream counter-currents while fully distrusting the conditions under which our videos will be embedded elsewhere, and with a clear resolution to reject and make impossible any sort of recuperation, that will lock our senses again. Not as a fight against the system, but through it. Becoming-imperceptible:[35]

– turn [webcam/mic] ON
– stream (icecast FLOSS)
– re.act (look at the IRC feedback)
– turn [webcam/mic] OFF / go outerspace!

32.   http://www.icecast.org/.
33.   http://xiph.org/.
34.   http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archive_Fever.
35.   The term comes from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi, London: Athlone Press, 1988.

All that is left from this latter, raw approach could very well be the chat logs. One could easily save the streamed media content and offer an *à-la-podcast* repertoire for later viewing, yet this destroys the thrill of setting up a stream, as any technical problems are solved via text-based or other messaging systems. This rush is part of the fun, even of setting up a camera that records the movements of a passerby in a remote street. It's all about keeping it live: be it silent vision, or sharing news and views, or as-yet vague ideas for an art project to come.[36] Like the radio program broadcast at two a.m., it exercises freedom to communicate – no matter that the missive resembles a message like the one contained on the Arrecibo[37] string, or the one encapsulated and drifting inside a bottle.

It is the fact that we are incorporating real-time technology into participatory media that makes these projects so unique. From so-called net.radio and web.tv, to the over-hyped networked performance, streaming is about resonating spaces, allowing places to crossbreed, exchange, trigger and subvert order. To reject the repetition of the database is to fight against the tone and style of the industry of mass entertainment. Yes, this can indeed be classified as resistance – yet this time, the resistance doesn't expect to be located within the movements of protest and contestation, but simply left aside and forgotten in its own void. We Await Silent Tristero's Empire.

For such reasons, it is crucial that both software and hardware become part of the creative equation, and that our efforts don't fall prey to the make believe notions of net-neutrality and the 'social web', or end up being considered inoffensive or instrumentalized components one just needs to operate. At the end of the day, those commercial platforms will co-opt both our content and intentions. In 2007 a LiveCD[38] under the name of PlanktumII was produced to allow more people to participate during the FLISOL.tv streams. This simple, easily distributed 'dispositif' is just 400 megas, and includes the basic applications to set-up a stream. In 2010 a new version was developed with the intention of setting up a radio station for the Free Party festival Bogotrax.[39] It offered four different ways to set-up streams, with the internal video device as a webcam, the external video as in a miniDV firewire camera, with sound, or through a net.radio station supported by a playlist of free party tracks. A forthcoming version will take shape as a LiveUSB key for booting both Macintosh computers and PC-Compatibles along with the plethora of netbooks. There have been many LiveCD's before, with dynebolic[40] a certain precursor.

On the hardware side, there are a few devices that engage into plug-&-play 'streamability', such as the Locus Sonus Streambox,[41] which serves to maintain a soundmap[42] of open

36.   http://neoscenes.net/aud-vid/streams/index.php.
37.   http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arecibo_message.
38.   http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Live_CD.
39.   http://planktum.wikidot.com/.
40.   http://dynebolic.org/.
41.   http://soup.znerol.ch/en/node/73.
42.   http://locusonus.org/soundmap/.

microphones streaming 24/7 from different countries and continents. The Streambox is a box into which one merely has to plug in a microphone, internet and electricity in order to be 'on-air'.

Long-awaited mobile streaming is around the corner using open codecs, and the Android platform is a step ahead of this process. Current mobile devices offer enough computing power, and accessing enough bandwidth on such networks has become the main objective of those who profit big time from the internet (Google and telephone operators). We will soon see higher data transfer rates capable of supporting video on a consumer scale type of contract with the telecom operator.

Meanwhile, from our silent and underdeveloped world we play with IRC bots hooked to micro-controllers, [43] a remote control achieved by way of chat messages, and a webcam located at the other side of the planet. This game takes place under the name of halfBro and halfBro4500, and was deployed and tested during the transmediale festivals in 2008 and 2009.

Images of halfBro and halfoBro4500.

For the 'Utube', the 'twitler', and the 'fakebook', the 'social' means opportunistic crowdsourcing. Alternatives? There are many, from transmission.cc to miro, indymedia, archive.org, current.tv, politube, and enagemedia. The question is: Why do we have to work for free for the corporations that gain profits using our content? Pirate Media, Protest Media, Reclaim Media. This is not about a politically correct attitude, nor is it about designers from Brooklyn uniting for another revolution. This is a simple ethical turn, since we are made out of what we read, see, eat and use.

We have the option to operate and remain in a grey zone, to leave untrackable traces or, what is certainly more fun, misleading ones. Do avoid reading this as an attempt to completely insulate oneself from all networks; to some degree it is perhaps a voluntary exclusion, with the spirit and intention of sheltering online video so that it may grow deeper roots into our social layers.

Respeto y admiración a todos los desarrolladores que hacen posible el uso libre de sonido y video en la red.

Last day of streams for Transmediale 2009, closing the counter with my brother in arms Adam Thomas.

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43. arduino comparible: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arduino.

CAMERAS EVERYWHERE: UBIQUITOUS VIDEO DOCUMENTATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS, NEW FORMS OF VIDEO ADVOCACY, AND CONSIDERATIONS OF SAFETY, SECURITY, DIGNITY AND CONSENT [1]

SAM GREGORY

In shaky footage, police officers strike a man lying on the ground with their batons – and then begin kicking him.

With minor variations, this footage could have been (and indeed, has been) filmed in multiple places around the world in the past year. As I write this, a clip has come to light of policemen in East Timor punching and kicking a suspect they are arresting in broad daylight on a beach on the island of Atauro, near Dili. However, the case I am describing above is the 'Rodney King incident' - filmed in March 1991 on a street in Lake View Terrace, Los Angeles, by a citizen observer, George Holliday.

WITNESS was created just under 20 years ago, arising out of that moment. Captured by Mr. Holliday from his apartment window, the footage of Rodney King - an African-American man - being beaten by officers of the Los Angeles Police Department following a traffic violation is familiar across the world. To our founders – Peter Gabriel and the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights - it confirmed the power of video cameras in the hands of a bystander/witness. At the time, they asked the question: 'What if every human rights worker had a camcorder in their hand? What untold stories, what visual evidence, would be captured and shared?' Our assumptions were that you could enable a new way of mobilizing action for genuine change if you could place the capacity to film in the hands of the people who chose to be "in the wrong place at the right time" and were not just accidental observers – that is, human rights advocates and activists around the world living and working with communities affected by violations.

Lessons Learned from the Past – and Meeting Present Challenges

Our work since 1992 has focused on how to best to enable human rights defenders to use video in their advocacy and activism, and has integrated training and intensive support to local groups on their campaigns, as well as developing multimedia platforms for informed dissemination of human rights media. Along the way we have learnt that the technology in itself is insufficient in the absence of the capacity to film capably – or to tell stories effectively with the resulting material. Without technical training you can shoot raw video, but you cannot create the finished narratives that are of value in most advocacy contexts - outside of providing direct eyewitness material to the news media or circulating it to existing communities of interest. We have also had initial assumptions challenged that television would be as amenable and open to most human rights footage as it was to the Rodney King material - and that evidentiary usages of video would predominate. As a consequence, we have had to think about different audiences for advocacy video. We have seen that 'seeing is believing' does not necessarily apply in all instances, and that nuanced storytelling and incorporation of video into other advocacy strategies often produces the most effective results. Training on the strategic structuring, distribution and use of video documentation is as important – if not more important - than technical skill sets.

As a consequence of the difficulties of using video in the media and in judicial processes, WITNESS and its human rights partner groups have looked for new advocacy audiences for visual evidence and testimony. The majority of our work has focused on incorporating video into a range of human rights advocacy and organizing venues that have hitherto seen little use of video. We have done this in partnership with a range of locally-based human rights groups, which we support through the process of developing camera and production skills, and in developing and implementing plans for effective audience targeting, messaging, storytelling and advocacy distribution. WITNESS' work has always blurred the line between amateurs and professionals in terms of using video – training human rights workers, and now, increasingly, concerned citizens, to use video as an everyday facet of their work, a vernacular for effective communication, rather than attempting to turn them into high-end documentary film-makers.

Frequently our approach has focused on 'smart narrowcasting' [2]- speaking to a particular audience at a particular time, and seeking a distinct change in policy, behavior or practice. We work with partners to craft videos for sequenced and targeted distribution, and always as part of a continuum of action - and within a strategy rather than as a stand-alone product or event. Primarily the work has been in the middle ground between the extremes of undifferentiated mass media attention and direct evidence in the courts. These potential audiences might include:

1) Evidentiary settings such as a courtroom or international war crimes tribunal, where video could function as direct, contextualizing, or circumstantial evidence;
2) Quasi-judicial settings, including many of the bodies that monitor compliance with international human rights law but have limited enforcement power, including the UN Human Rights Committee, or other UN charter and treaty bodies, as well as institutions at a

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2.   A term suggested by Meg McLagan, 'Making Human Rights Claims Public', *American Anthropologist* 108.1 (2006).

regional level. For example, WITNESS recently worked with a group in Kenya, CEMIRIDE, to produce the first-ever video submission to the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights on a land rights case affecting the Endorois people of Kenya;

3) Direct-to-decision-maker contexts, meaning that in some cases video needs to be shown directly to a key decision maker or decision-making body so that they can 'witness' human rights violations or 'meet' the victims. For example, our partners have done screenings with senior officials of the International Criminal Court to convince them of the need to prioritize the recruitment of child soldiers in the eastern Congo in their investigations;

4) Community mobilizing campaigns in which video is shown within a community to mobilize it to take action on a specific issue, or to demonstrate the capacity of individuals and communities to challenge abuses and alter the context in which these abuses happen. An example here would be showing a video on voluntary recruitment of child soldiers in villages across eastern Congo to stimulate community dialogue around the circumstances in which this occurs, and the consequences for the children recruited;

5) Activist and participatory organizing within a community or virtual community of solidarity, increasingly via the internet, and integrating participant creation of video content.

Videos always provide a 'space for action' by the audience, encouraging them to participate in solving the problem.

Fundamental to all this campaign partnership work – as well as our extensive training work with broader human rights networks - has been a focus on three elements of video usage in human rights contexts: a) that it be ethical in its creation, storytelling and distribution; b) that it be effective in its advocacy usage, and c) that it does not recklessly endanger those who participate in creating it or who are filmed.

These concerns – which could also be expressed in terms of questions of authenticity, efficacy for action and safety – have only been magnified in an environment of radically increased participation in visual documentation and testimony of human rights violations.

It is this final element of safety, security and consent that this paper primarily explores – in a new environment of radically increasing numbers of creators of human rights content.

A Billion Potential Observers to the 'Rodney King' or 'Tiananmen Tank-man' of 2010
In 2010 we can reconsider the Rodney King moment, and WITNESS' genesis, in a new light. The growing reality of this decade is the possibility of not only every human rights defender having a camera in their hand, but that a significant and growing minority of *all* people have on their person the capacity to document or record human rights violations.

If we think back to March 3rd, 1991, multiple elements came together fortuitously to create what we now know as the 'Rodney King' incident. There was George Holliday, the accidental witness, with a camera to-hand. When he came to distribute the material, it's graphic nature, and its media saliency was of interest to the gatekeepers of distribution at that time - the network and cable television stations.

If 20 years ago a camera was a luxury item, now many mobile phones come with a video-camera built-in - and the most recent statistics show that there is now one cell phone ac-

count for every one and a half people on earth. [3] As a consequence, in many industrialized countries and in much of the Global South a growing number of individual citizens now possess the technological capacity to film using a cell phone or mobile device – which they carry with them at all times. Many other activists worldwide -- even in less cell phone friendly environments -- could be empowered with a device such as a Flip Video camera that records reasonably high-quality video images for less than $100. [4] We're in a world of a billion potential observers to the Rodney King incidents of 2010, or to the contemporary equivalent of the brave man confronting the tanks in Tiananmen Square in 1989.

As a consequence, technological capacity and the 'ready witness' are now commonplace. Simultaneously, the ability to share material without as many gatekeepers (at least around choice of issue - gatekeepers still exist around graphic nature or controversial political content) has increased with the advent of both online video sharing networks like YouTube and DailyMotion, and social networking sites like Facebook, Orkut, Twitter and others, as well as the 'i-witness' appeals of networks from CNN to the BBC. Not to be underestimated, there is also growing media literacy among certain sectors of a younger generation about how to create and share moving images.

This potential presence of a camera in every concerned citizen's hand creates powerful opportunities for the future of human rights video and human rights advocacy. At the same time, it raises significant questions of agency, action and audience. As we anticipate a continuing growth of cameras in the hands of potential witnesses and observers, it is time for the human rights community to work out how to grapple with, harness and engage with the potential of these tools to contribute to effective documentation and advocacy.

WITNESS' founder Peter Gabriel has repeatedly talked of his vision of Big Brother in reverse. This is a situation where, rather than Big Brother watching, there are a million Little Sisters and Little Brothers – each with the capacity to have their voice heard, to let no human rights abuse go undocumented, and to hold their oppressors accountable.

So what is out there now in terms of human rights material? I'm going to draw many examples from a recent WITNESS project– the Hub [5], a pioneering participatory media website for human rights launched as a subsection of the Global Voices blogging site in September 2006, and operated by WITNESS from late 2007 to early 2010. The Hub was conceived as an online human rights community focused around safety, context and action, as well as knowledge-sharing on what worked in using video and related tools for human rights advocacy.

A selection of some of the online videos which surfaced in both the pilot and the subsequent two years of the project gives a flavor of the human rights video documentation that is starting to be created as a result of technological ubiquity and electronic peer-to-peer and online distribution opportunities.

3. International Telecommunication Union (ITU) figures, November 2009, http://www.itu.int/net/ itunews/issues/2009/09/04.aspx.
4. For example, the Pure Digital Flip cameras that WITNESS currently provides to some trainees.
5. WITNESS Hub, http://hub.witness.org.

In Malaysia, in what has been called 'Squatgate', police filmed the humiliation of a semi-naked young woman of Chinese-Malaysian origin and emailed it to each other. [6] In Egypt, police sodomized and slapped detainees on cell phone cameras and shared it. [7] In China, anonymous watchers documented the scale of protest in small towns - challenging state control of public knowledge about dissent. [8] In Canada, First Nations protestors filmed their stand-off with government officials - while in repressive Guinea-Conakry in West Africa, footage showed the army firing on student protestors. [9]

In the United States, passersby on a subway platform used cell phones to capture the shooting of an unarmed African-American man by police. [10] In Guatemala and Cambodia, communities facing displacement from their land by mining and commercial development videoed their moments of resistance. [11] Activists attending key UN meetings took advantage of a digital camera to provide daily updates from the field to campaigners back home who were unable to be present - demystifying the process. [12] Leaders of the monks' protest in Burma spoke directly to the camera to share mobilizing messages one year on from the Saffron Revolution [13] - and a survivor of a still unpunished prison massacre in Brazil made an impassioned call for accountability 16 years on. [14] Sex worker advocates from Southeast Asia remixed and reworked popular songs and images from anti-trafficking campaigns into their own mobilizing films, [15] and labor advocates from Philippines incorporated video into their organizing in a hospital where nurses were forced to work excessive hours [16].

One of the most viewed and most notorious videos on the Hub is a redacted version of the footage shot by Egyptian police in which they humiliate a Cairo bus driver by slapping him

6.   Ethan Kiczek, 'Malaysia: Cellphone Video Captures Police Excess', WITNESS Hub, April 9, 2007, http://hub.witness.org/en/node/18.

7.   See for example Sameer Padania, 'Egypt: Bloggers Open the Door to Police Brutality Debate', WITNESS Hub, December 9, 2006, http://hub.witness.org/en/node/33.

8.   Sameer Padania, 'China: Government's Video-Censorship Foiled', WITNESS Hub, April 9, 2007. http://hub.witness.org/en/node/32.

9.   Sameer Padania, 'Massacre in Guinea Conakry, 2007', WITNESS Hub, September 17, 2007. http://hub.witness.org/en/node/619.

10. Priscila Neri, 'Mobile Phone Footage Shows Police Shoot and Kill Unarmed Man in California', WITNESS Hub, January 9, 2009. http://hub.witness.org/en/node/11825.

11. Sameer Padania, 'Violent Evictions at El Estor, Guatemala', WITNESS Hub, September 16, 2007, http://hub.witness.org/en/node/620, and Licadho, '7NG Company and Phnom Penh Authorities Intent on Inciting Disorder in Cambodia's Capital', WITNESS Hub, January 9, 2008, http://hub.witness.org/en/LICADHO1.

12. HR2Housing, Eric Tars of the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, 'CERD Day 2 - Feb 18 2008', WITNESS Hub, February 18, 2008, http://hub.witness.org/en/node/4064.

13. US Campaign for Burma, 'Burma: Leader of Monks' Alliance on the Saffron Revolution - Pt 1', WITNESS Hub, September 26, 2008, http://hub.witness.org/en/node/8864.

14. Priscila Neri, 'Brazil: Survivor of the Carandiru Massacre on 16 years of Impunity', WITNESS Hub, October 1, 2008, http://hub.witness.org/en/node/8884.

15. 'One Whore- APNSW STAR WHORES Karaoke', http://www.blip.tv/file/199048/.

16. Kodao Productions, 'STOP! 12, 16, 24, 32 hours Duty of Nursing Staff ! – TMCEA-AHW', WITNESS Hub, January 20, 2010, http://hub.witness.org/en/upload/stop-12-16-24-32-hours-duty-nursing-staff-%E2%80%93-tmcea-ahw.

repeatedly. These images, as well as other more graphic videos that include the sodomizing of another driver, were filmed by the police themselves. Subsequently they were used to humiliate the victims (for example, by sending the images to other drivers [17]) and to intimidate other people by demonstrating what would happen if they didn't follow police orders. They share many similarities with the psychology of what have been called happy-slapping videos (in which someone is caught by surprise and assaulted on camera): the triple humiliation of the assault, the act of documentation, and the subsequent preservation and distribution.

Similar cases have galvanized debate in Greece [18] - where two Albanian immigrants were forced to slap each other on camera (a case extensively discussed by Nelli Kambouri and Pavlos Hatzopoulos in the last Video Vortex Reader [19]) as well as in Malaysia (the infamous Squatgate case mentioned above) and a number of other countries (including, most recently, East Timor). And of course, footage is also shot increasingly by governments to document and apprehend protestors and dissidents. In the United States, there has been a contentious suit related to arrest of protestors at the Republican National Convention in New York in 2004, highlighting the contradictory accounts of these arrests that videos shot by both the New York Police Departments and activist provide- while more recently we can see official cameramen in the footage of protests from Burma, Iran and Tibet.

As can be seen from the examples cited above, in the growing world of human rights video online, it is both the abuser and the abused, the implicated and the observer who are documenting. The outputs are both produced and raw. There is a mix of 'witness journalism'- the raw footage from the sites of tragedy, whose variants news organizations are currently pursuing through their user-generated media programs. There are produced citizen or NGO advocacy videos that are constructed and edited together with a narrative or rhetorical framework. There is activist and human rights defender witnessing in less structured formats - but with advocacy and/or documentation intention. And there is also perpetrator-shot footage. It is a world of commentators and re-mixers, of virtual witnesses and viral witnesses - as much as it is a world of direct observers.

And the circulation of these visual images is pervasive. Last year I was sitting in a shared taxi in an authoritarian country in the Middle East, half-way down a long rural road. A man leaned back and offered his cell phone to me, asking: 'Change?' It seemed odd since my old Nokia was far less impressive than his latest Spiderman-themed phone. Then he started to show me the clips he had filmed or had received from others – including a series of 'happy-slapping' sequences. I realized he wanted to swap what I would term abuse videos.

17. Maggie Michael, 'Video Shows Egypt Prisoner's Humiliation', Associated Press, Washington Post, January 21, 2007, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/01/21/AR2007012100468.html.

18. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gCc7xc8hxDQ.

19. Nelli Kambouri and Pavlos Hatzopoulos, 'Making Violent Practices Public', in Geert Lovink and Sabine Niederer (eds) *Video Vortex Reader: Responses to YouTube*, Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures, 2008.

These videos also circulate to ultimate positive effect – in some cases, when they are assigned new meanings and new contexts and framings. In Egypt, bloggers and journalists lead by Wael Abbas [20] and Hossam el-Hamalawy [21] distributed the leaked cell phone videos to challenge repeated denials by the government of responsibility for police brutality and torture. By circulating the videos, and connecting online to both a local and international audience, they were able to generate media attention, and to force an official response. Although the government initially tried to discredit the activists, it was very hard to deny the truth of the images or the public exposure, and for the first time, there was an investigation into the conduct of police officers in two of the leaked videos - leading to a prosecution. [22]

Increasingly, one of the skill sets demanded of a human rights group conducting advocacy is the ability to mobilize, foment, aggregate, shape and/or curate this content created by others. So, in relation to WITNESS' new campaign models we are increasingly looking to this approach. For example, with our '100 Voices' [23] component of a campaign for the rights of the elderly in the United States - where participants in a campaign in multiple states are encouraged to create their own individualized video messages to specific legislators on key Congressional Committees relevant to legislation.

The circulation and re-appropriation of images shot by others is a key aspect of contemporary online culture – namely, its participatory nature which allows consumers to 'archive, annotate, appropriate and re-circulate media content in powerful new ways'. [24] Some of the most powerful political commentary in the US over the past decade has featured remixes of news, archival and user-generated footage, especially during the Bush Administration and its actions in Iraq. [25] Similarly, groups WITNESS has worked with at a local and regional level around the world have used karaoke remix formats to communicate effectively around human rights issues. One example of the karaoke remix style I've seen in Southeast Asia is a video by one of our Video Advocacy Institute alumni from the Asia-Pacific Network of Sex Workers that remixes U2 songs for sex worker advocacy. [26]

WITNESS itself has recently started to experiment with providing video for remix and re-use and looking at how collaborative creation can be used for advocacy. In one very open-ended experiment we provided footage for a video contest organized by Enough (an NGO that works to end genocide and crimes against humanity) in collaboration with YouTube's 'Video for

Change' initiative. The contest, entitled 'Come Clean 4 Congo', encouraged people to create videos highlighting the link between "conflict minerals" used in cell phones and the war in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). We provided a compilation of short footage clips shot by one of our partners in the DRC, depicting amongst other elements, conditions in militia camps, as well as in rural and urban areas. Where the footage was used it was often as emotive background or 'wallpaper' footage – for example, transposed onto a computer screen that is seen intercut with a young woman answering her phone to receive a text about the campaign in a video uploaded by YouTube user CheFoo10. [27]

We have also been working with the student anti-genocide coalition STAND on a more bounded remix experiment within their Pledge2Protect project. Here we provided a template re-editable video-making the call for effective legislation to prevent genocide - as well selected and carefully reviewed short clips from inside potentially genocidal situations worldwide. We then supported student chapters from around the US to create customized videos that spoke to the particular interests of their Senator, and that incorporated additional footage and local voices from their State. My colleague Chris Michael has written more about this project on the WITNESS blog. [28] In his words, 'We wanted to see how video could not only be made for a group of key decision makers – but individualized for each decision maker. We wanted to integrate video into this campaign to see how a decentralized, motivated network could quickly create, share and edit multimedia content targeted to key decision makers – in this case U.S. Senators'. [29] So, for example, students from, Florida, gathered not only their own voices to introduce the video, and made personal appeals to their and his Christian faith, but also identified Lost Boys from Sudan living in Jacksonville, Florida who could speak from their own personal experience in the video - making a direct request to their Senator. Videos from California and Wisconsin expressed personal thanks to their respective Senators for their actions to date through montages of high school and college student voices; highlighted prominent community figures who the Senators would know and respect (for example, a respected academic, and an award-winning humanitarian); and urged them on to do more. Other videos ranged from fully remixed videos to direct-to-camera video introductions and calls to action from student and influential community leaders in the Senators' states. [30]

Remix uses – like these, and like many others that are occurring - particularly challenge us to question how to balance creativity and effectiveness in a participatory environment with human rights concerns. From a human rights advocacy point-of-view, the positive dimensions of this are clear - as participation is at the heart of any mobilizing activity. For particular communities - for example, the so-called 'digital native' youth of today's connected Northern

20. For the video work of Wael Abbas see, http://www.youtube.com/user/waelabbas.

21. For the blogging and video work of Hossam el-Hamalawy see, http://www.arabawy.org.

22. For more detail see Al-Jazeera, 'Egyptian Policemen Jailed on Torture Charges', November 5, 2007, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OU6SY6VrwY0&feature=player_embedded.

23. Elder Justice Now, http://elderjusticenow.org.

24. Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*, New York: New York University Press; 2006, p. 18.

25. For examples of this genre see Political Remix Video, http://www.politicalremixvideo.com, including examples focused on the Bush Administration at http://www.politicalremixvideo.com/tag/bush.

26. Asia-Pacific Sex Worker Network on Blip.Tv, http://sexworkerspresent.blip.tv/ and 'One Whore-APNSW STAR WHORES Karaoke', http://www.blip.tv/file/199048/.

27. CheFoo10, 'Come Clean for the Congo', May 28, 2009, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JasbiUATEaE.

28. Chris Michael, 'WITNESS & STAND Partnership Spotlight: Pledge on Camera', WITNESS Hub, December 3, 2009, http://hub.witness.org/STAND-SPOTLIGHT.

29. Chris Michael, 'Pledge On Camera: How Anti-Genocide Student Activists are Ushering-In a New Era of Video Advocacy', WITNESS Hub, November 4, 2009, http://hub.witness.org/STAND.

30. To see a sample of the videos: Chris Michael, 'WITNESS & STAND Partnership Spotlight: Pledge on Camera', WITNESS Hub, December 3, 2009, http://hub.witness.org/en/STAND-SPOTLIGHT.

societies - the most active forms of participation are taking place in these online spaces and on these online terms. Additionally, there is a possibility to benefit from the creativity and capacity of a distributed network of peer production that can rework the 'raw' audiovisual material to appeal to diverse communities of interest, and within which the opportunity to be a (co)-producer rather than just a viewer may promote sustained engagement. The challenge lies in how this remix ethos relates to a human rights culture concerned for the dignity and integrity of victims and survivors and about the role of ethical witnessing – a culture that also has a strong sense of control over its material. Many may have enjoyed seeing George W. Bush remixed, but where would we draw the line?

A New Ethics of Ubiquitous Video
So how does and how could this evolving culture of online and ubiquitous video relate to human rights values and to human rights practice? What would it mean if the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) were written into the 'terms of service' and user interfaces of online video platforms and other Web 2.0 initiatives (as suggested by the blogger Dan McQuillan [31])? How could we place key human rights values at the forefront of people's minds as they turned their cell phones on each other to film and capture evidence?

Many of the values of online communities already fit closely with the values of human rights around freedom of expression (UDHR Article 19: 'Everyone has the right to freedom of expression…') and access to science and culture (UDHR Article 27: i) 'Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community'). However, instead of focusing on these already shared values, in this paper I want to focus on one idea that is the heart of human rights - namely respect for the dignity, agency, worth and integrity of every person, and particularly for rights-holders in the midst of crisis.

In this context, from a human rights perspective there are two sets of directly parallel concerns about an increased creation and circulation of visual imagery in a participatory culture of everyday witnesses - as well as in a world where image-making is not controlled by the government or 'professionals'. The first of these concerns relates to the potential increase in the absence of consent, or failure to secure fully informed consent, and of retaliation and repercussions to victims and human rights defenders whose words and actions can be circulated with greater and greater ease. A second, related concern is around psychological re-victimization and the preservation of human dignity. I will not reflect so much in this paper on an additional set of concerns which relate to how we protect the increasing number of people who take a stand for human rights (as human rights defenders) by creating visual media and circulating material via the internet as their primary advocacy tools. This is a subject of vital concern to WITNESS and others who uphold, support and protect freedom of expression, the right to communicate and human rights defenders' rights. However, this paper and its concerns are more focused on the people 'on film' rather than on those who capture images and events on video.

Human rights values emphasize the importance of the integrity and dignity of the individual survivor of abuse in line with the primary principle that every human being is possessed of 'inherent dignity' [32] - a concept that runs through every right included in the UDHR.

A particular concern in the victim/survivor-centred human rights model is the avoidance of re-victimization either directly or indirectly (as can happen when an image is distributed and exploited inappropriately). The most graphic violations - violent attacks, or even sexual assault – are seen as the material that most easily translates into a loss of dignity, privacy, and agency, and which carries with it the potential for real re-victimization. Individuals who are featured in videos who are not victims or survivors, but bystanders or witnesses, are also understood to be in positions of vulnerability and risk. Video distribution in and of itself can also contribute to creating further layers of victimization: The individuals in the torture videos shot by authorities are already being doubly humiliated - in the first instance by what happens to them in custody, and in the second, by the act of filming. They are then further exposed as the footage achieves widespread circulation.

Contemporary thinking on testimony, witnessing and trauma also places a heavy emphasis on the responsibility of the witness to abuse to represent it responsibly and with ethical integrity - to be, so to speak, the 'ethical witness'. As Frances Guerin and Roger Hallas note in the introduction to their recent book *The Image and the Witness* [33], 'images which appropriate and expropriate existing visual representations of public trauma respond to the immense ethical responsibility which burdens the image… Ethical responsibility to the integrity of the victim is one of the defining criteria of authentic witnessing to trauma. This is especially urgent when the sufferer is no longer able to speak. Thus, the one who carries the continued memory of suffering also carries the responsibility to do so in a manner that empathizes with, rather than violates, the silent victim'. It is incumbent on us to promote a culture of empathy and ethical sharing rather than perpetuating any violation of the 'silent victim'.

Both of the principles mentioned above – that of the integrity of the victim/survivor's experience, and that of the role of the ethical witness - are made problematic by the possibilities for remixing, re-appropriation and recirculation. These possibilities pull the material farther and farther from its source testifier and/or witness and from its original context - even as that process of translation may increase the chances that the footage will find an audience (even an unexpected one) that may be willing and able to respond.

WITNESS has wrestled for years with how to ensure that people filmed in human rights contexts understand how the video will be used, and the implications both positive and negative, devoting a whole chapter to the subject in the recent book, *Video for Change*. Our model focuses on supporting individuals to make informed choices about if, how, where and when their image is used. When that is impossible we support an assessment based either on objective, established principles (termed 'a professional practice') - or carried out by a

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31.   Internet.artizans, http://www.internetartizans.co.uk/.

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32.   Preamble to the UDHR, http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html.
33.   Frances Guerin and Roger Hallas (eds) *The Image and the Witness: Trauma, Memory and Visual Culture*, London: Wallflower Press, 2007.

well-informed individual who seeks to determine what a person who has not given explicit consent might be expected to grant ('a reasonable person' guideline). We also consider relevant international human rights and humanitarian law (for example, the Third Geneva Convention forbidding the exhibition of prisoners of war). It is an extremely thorough approach to informed consent that harks back to social science and medical protocols. WITNESS' policies – based on an ideal paradigm of consent -- encourage groups it works with (in an approach common to most human rights organizations [34]) to take into account principles of disclosure (where the individual is informed why they have been filmed and for what purpose); voluntariness (where the individual agrees to be filmed without pressure or coercion); comprehension (where the person filmed understands the implications of being filmed, how the video will be used, and particularly, the worst case scenario); and competence (where the person is capable of making these judgments).

Within these frameworks of consent, WITNESS always emphasizes that in a digital era it should be assumed that a piece of media *will* circulate if it is shown - even if only once. If it can be circulated, then it should be assumed that it will be seen by your oppressor or opponent. As a consequence our model relies upon presenting worst-case scenarios for impact, assuming that media will circulate, and seeking to enable genuinely informed consent to be given. The risks associated with shooting and circulating video have been clearly reinforced in recent events. In Burma, for example during and after the Saffron Revolution, when thousands took courageously to the streets, intelligence agents scrutinized photographs and video footage to identify demonstrators and bystanders. In Iran, the government took to crowd-sourcing identification of protestors via facial pictures grabbed from YouTube and placed on a website with a request to the public to identify them. [35]

The same circulatory risks apply (and will continue to grow over the next few years) in less prominent incidents of human rights documentation that do not make the banner headlines on CNN. So in rural eastern Burma, far from the urban protests seen on television, the ordinary civilian speaking out against government attacks on ethnic minority villages - for example, in the videos shot by WITNESS partner Burma Issues [36] - should assume that she could be *seen* and *heard* by the local military commander. And although one tendency of advocacy videos may be to make of the witness an iconic, emblematic figure, separated from an individual identity and standing in for a class of victims, Naw Paw Paw (not her real name), who speaks in two of the videos Burma Issues has produced, is not just a representative 'Burmese villager'. She is a school teacher from a specific community of people on the run in eastern Burma, speaking at risk of execution, displacement or imprisonment in a region where the military junta is currently conducting a devastating offensive. In a digital era, we should assume that once a clip re-circulates, and indeed even more so if it

34. See for example, internal documentation produced by organizations like Amnesty International.
35. For more information see Hamid Tehrani, 'Iranian Officials "Crowd-Source" Protestor Identities', *Global Voices*, June 27, 2009, http://globalvoicesonline.org/2009/06/27/iranian-officials-crowd-source-protester-identities-online/ and Gerdab website, http://gerdab.ir/fa/pages/?cid=422.
36. For example Burma Issues in association with WITNESS, 'Video from Burma: Shoot on Sight', http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SPSsKcpxJMk, April 18, 2007.

successfully re-circulates on any scale (and Naw Paw Paw's videos have been seen close to a million times on YouTube), then there is a good chance that the video will be seen by those in power - such as the military junta in Burma. This is why it is incumbent on the person filming to tell someone the worse case scenario, not the best case scenario, and enable them to make decisions on whether to speak, and what to include or exclude, and what measures to take to conceal their own identity. That is the only way for someone to give truly informed consent.

However, this 'worst-case scenario' model of consent is difficult enough to promote in the 'professional' documentary world (and also heavily contested [37]), as well as in the human rights community, and impossible to sustain in the online participatory culture context of user-generated media. Within our own practice, WITNESS can emphasize consent through front-and-centre prompts as people upload, via training materials that provide relevant guidance, and via a system of review on the Hub site that looks for obvious egregious examples of absent consent and danger to an individual filmed. But consent can never be assured in a world of uploaded content from relatively anonymous sources. So what comes next?

A Forward-looking Perspective from WITNESS: Which Ethical Frameworks and Technology Solutions Can Contribute to a Ubiquitous Video Culture of Dignity and Justice?

The use of video will continue to expand across the range of human rights documentation and advocacy activities, both professional and citizen, over the coming years. From WITNESS' vantage point at the intersection of human rights, media and technology, with allies and stakeholders from the worlds of local and global human rights organizations, social media, academia, technology, archive and documentary film, we see a pressing need for collective engagement between these disparate sectors to create a more conducive environment for impact-generating video – supporting changes in norms, policies and practices, and promoting effective solutions across disparate sectors.

As an initial starting point in our own work, we are focusing on how to ensure that the evolving online, mobile and ubiquitous video environment becomes safer for human rights defenders and for those who experience or witness human rights abuses. At the heart of this challenge is the question of how we establish online and participatory cultures that create and share social justice and human rights material in a manner that balances the right to privacy (and the integrity of the person) with the right to freedom of expression – balancing the urge to expose human rights violations with a consideration of the very real dangers to human rights defenders and victims or survivors. By its very nature, this will always be a dynamic and evolving process. But we have taken some initial steps to reach out to the human rights, technology,

37. Cf. Patricia Aufderheide, Peter Jaszi and Mridu Chandra, *Honest Truths: Documentary Filmmakers on Ethical Challenges in Their Work*, Washington D.C.: Center for Social Media, School of Communication, American University, 2009, http://www.centerforsocialmedia.org/resources/publications/honest_truths_documentary_filmmakers_on_ethical_challenges_in_their_work, and the documentary scholarship of Brian Winston, *Lies, Damn Lies and Documentaries,* London: BFI Publishing; 2000.

privacy law, and media literacy communities - as well as, most importantly, the online communities where video is being shared - in order to identify common ground in terms of ethical and normative frameworks, to see where there is scope for test projects, and to identify how we can all best communicate around these concerns.

With our respective expertise, experiences and vantage points, we hope to identify the optimal combination of norms and code/architecture, as well as potentially law and market approaches (to borrow from Lawrence Lessig's outline of potential regulatory approaches [38]) to promote a safer, more effective world of ubiquitous human rights video. Key to that combination will be finding a way to discuss how the ethical frameworks and learning around consent, safety and human dignity from established human rights practice – including those discussed in this paper – are accessible and relevant to broader online culture and the digital media literacy of a new generation of 'digital natives' worldwide. How does the 'professional' learning and experience of human rights organizations on an issue like informed consent translate into guidelines that will work in a space like YouTube, or into 30-second pieces of spreadable media that will circulate online? What role can human rights organizations play in terms of supporting focused curation of human rights material to promote understanding, literacy and debate around key issues of human rights protection in a Web 2.0 era, and in supporting test-case projects within their own practice that demonstrate what can be achieved - balancing participation, openness and safety? How do we develop broadly-agreed codes of conduct and ethics on online video and human rights that speak to the needs, constituencies and understandings of different sectors?

Much of this needs to be informed by collaboration and dialogue with the technology providers, both of hardware and software, online and in the mobile arena. These actors play a critical role in the growing ubiquity of video. In addition, it requires participation in the Web 2.0 spaces these providers facilitate. There are potential technology approaches and innovations within these spaces that can help address challenges around consent, representation and safety - balancing openness and transparency with a proactive response to real risks. These approaches include adjustments to site governance and review policies in video sharing sites and social networks to allow better handling of sensitive human rights footage. They also include the development, promotion and dissemination of learning materials, spreadable guides to security approaches, and tools that can better enable safe documentation. To give two examples, tools that enable concealment identity with blurring could be developed for devices that shoot video (for example, smartphone applications) as well as the platforms where video is shared. Likewise, user experiences in relevant human rights contexts could provide prompts on consent as a person films or uploads.

All this needs to be done while retaining a very concrete understanding of danger as experienced on the ground in real-life spaces (and not in our safer online environments), and an understanding of what constitutes truly informed consent. For although there may be a generalizing assumption that privacy is being de-emphasized in favor of openness and transparency (see, for example, recent debates prompted by the founder of Facebook observing that social norms are evolving towards more information sharing), the realities of human rights risk have not necessarily changed in tandem.

And doing this cross-sectoral work soon is critical - because soon we will have to translate these concerns and challenges into an environment of simultaneous live-cast rather than asynchronous, after-the-fact distribution. Already 'eventstreaming' [39] or 'live-casting', facilitated by technologies like Qik [40] and Flixwagon [41], permits live user-generated streaming [42] of media (including documentation of human rights abuses) directly from a cell phone or other mobile device to an online public. In this case, those human-based review processes that are currently used in some human rights spaces (for example, the process we used on the Hub) to sift through footage to assess potential risk to those featured will be impossible to maintain. These live-casting technologies will have powerful positive implications for sharing footage and engaging constituencies immediately, but at the same time consent and security norms will become even more critical once more video is streamed immediately rather than edited/uploaded after the fact.

At this stage in the movement towards ubiquitous video, it is vitally important to support emerging norms in online culture that promote respect, tolerance and an understanding of risks, as well as to think about how we take proactive educational steps to provide the next generation of digital natives with experience and understanding on these issues. This is a key need, only brought home more and more as we increasingly experience both globally-circulated human rights crises – Burma, Tibet, Iran – as well as a multitude of less prominent situations of human rights violations, via imagery and testimony circulated online.

To watch the video version of this article and to contribute to the conversation visit http://blog.witness.org/cameraseverywhere; we welcome your feedback and ideas.

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38.   Lawrence Lessig, *Code: And Other Laws of Cyberspace, Version 2.0*, New York: Basic Books, 2006.

39.   A term apparently coined by Duncan Riley, http://www.techcrunch.com/2007/06/30/eventstreaming-the-seed-of-a-revolution, Techcrunch, June 30, 2007.
40.   Qik, http://www.qik.com.
41.   Flixwagon, http://www.flixwagon.com.
42.   See also such current options as Stickam, Justin.tv, and Bambuser.

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SHOOTING FOR THE PUBLIC: YOUTUBE, FLICKR, AND THE MAVI MARMARA SHOOTINGS

ELIZABETH LOSH

In contemporary English, to 'shoot' has two distinct meanings: to use a camera and to fire a weapon. Of course, this supposed similarity between media practices and military might has a long rhetorical history, which is epitomized by lines such as 'the pen is mightier than the sword' or the phrase 'this machine kills fascists', once famously emblazoned upon the guitar of Woody Guthrie. It could be argued that the very term 'tactical media' carries similar connotations, suggesting an analogy between armed conflict and media gamesmanship fought, in the latter case, with cheap recording technologies, appropriated platforms, and viral online distribution. These are weapons to be deployed in situations of asymmetrical warfare against corporatized anti-democratic entities, although theorists of tactical media are careful to distinguish their unstable, temporary, polymorphous allegiances from the bi-lateral conflicts associated with nationalism or the zeal of the global religions of the codex.

The media deployed by different sides in these conflicts may have fundamentally different orientations toward testimony and evidence. Competing campaigns by pro-Palestinian activists and Israeli public relations specialists in the wake of the *Mavi Marmara* shootings attempted to use video and photo-sharing sites as platforms from which to persuade a transnational public. In the Turkish case, the rhetorical claims focused on testimony, in which a particular political subject can bear witness as an individual agent. In the Israeli case, claims emphasized the presentation of evidence in a seemingly neutral, technocratic display of disembodied objects, traces, and signs.

In an essay on 'Official Channels' in the first *Video Vortex Reader*, I argued that the state-sanctioned use of YouTube in e-government in the United States and Britain tended to reinforce the one-to-many structures by which liberal representative democracies functioned in the mass media era and government norms of bureaucracy, surveillance, and legalism. [1] Rather than celebrate the victory of YouTube's DIY culture over corporatized neoliberal agendas of command and control, I asserted that the *Staatswissenschaft* of contemporary Achenwalls could just as easily borrow the trappings of vernacular video to co-opt the political will of citizens and further the data-mining of information on these citizens' computers by third parties.

Since then, modern states around the world have borrowed Anglo-American YouTube techniques to buttress their authority. For example, a *New York Times* article from November

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1.   Elizabeth Losh, 'Government Youtube: Bureaucracy, Surveillance, and Legalism in State-Sanctioned Online Video Channels', in Geert Lovink and Sabine Niederer (eds) *Video Vortex Reader: Responses to YouTube*, Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures, 2008, pp. 111-124.

2008 describes how, after the election of Barack Obama, the campaign of conservative Is-raeli politician Benjamin Netanyahu borrowed 'colors, the fonts, the icons for donating and volunteering, the use of videos, and the social networking Facebook-type options — includ-ing Twitter', a service that very few Israelis would be likely to use, in 'a conscious effort by the Netanyahu campaign to learn from the Obama success'. [2] Thanks to a successful race, Netanyahu's Likud party rose to power, and the former head of state returned to the position of Israeli Prime Minister.

Netanyahu was already installed in office by the time Turkish nationals were organizing the so-called 'Freedom Flotilla', which was intended to break the three-year-old blockade of Gaza that had been maintained by the Israeli Navy on international waters while Egyptian officials had also agreed to keep the border closed on land. From the Israeli perspective, the blockade was intended to prevent the importation of weapons that might compromise their security and to economically punish anti-Israeli Hamas supporters, who had controlled the territory since winning a majority of parliamentary seats in Gaza in a 2006 election. Organizers of the flotilla hoped to shame the Israelis and to bring humanitarian aid to Palestinians cut off from Middle Eastern trade and desperate for medical, construction, and school supplies.

In preparation for an eventual confrontation between the six ships loaded with provisions and the Israeli military forbidding the transport, the Insani Yardim Vakfi IHH (a Turkish Hu-manitarian Relief Foundation) established a channel on the livestream.com service. [3] The IHH [6] was soon publicizing this online venue on multinational news broadcasts and inviting international observers to watch online. The IHH hoped that viewers would see this not just as an act of military oppression by the Israelis but also as an act of piracy on international waters, and they consciously set the stage to draw analogies with recent clashes with pirates off the coast of Somalia.

In the wake of the bloody consequences of boarding the *Mavi Marmara* on May 31, 2010, in which nine pro-Palestinian activists died (eight citizens of Turkey and one Turkish-American), the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) were soon disseminating online videos of their own to counter possible outrage. One of the most popular videos was on the IDF YouTube channel, 'Close-up Footage of the Mavi Mamara', [4] which to date has received over two million views. Unlike the widely watched raucous video recording [5] of anti-Israeli student demonstrations by the so-called 'Irvine 11' on February 8, 2010, who had repeatedly disrupted the speech of Israeli ambassador Michael Oren a few months earlier and fueled debate about the free speech

2.   Ethan Bronner and Noam Cohen, 'Israeli Candidate Borrows a (Web) Page From Obama', *The New York Times*, November 15 2008, sec. International / Middle East, http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/15/world/middleeast/15bibi.html?_r=1.

3.   IHH Insani Yardim Vakfi - live streaming video powered by Livestream, http://www.livestream.com/insaniyardim.

4.   'Close-Up Footage of Mavi Marmara Passengers Attacking IDF Soldiers', http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gYjkLUcbJWo&feature=youtube_gdata_player.

5.   'Uncivilized Tactics at UC Irvine (Rough Cut)', http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7w96UR79TBw&feature=youtube_gdata_player.

rights of Muslim students on American campuses, many of the most-watched video accounts of the *Mavi Marmara* shootings are eerily silent.

As Israeli military personnel swift-rope down to the deck of the ship from helicopters, viewers of 'Close-up Footage of the Mavi Mamara' can see projectiles being thrown at the soldiers and a swarm of swirling bodies in the chaos shot by the rocking camera. At second 22 on the IDF YouTube video, yellow lettering appears that says 'Soldiers being hit with metal poles and chairs'; a yellow circle and then a yellow ellipse appear to show where these events can be observed. By second 34 another yellow circle has appeared with yellow text reading 'Dem-onstrators throwing soldier off of boat'. About one minute in, another yellow ellipse pops onto the grainy black-and-white footage with the phrase 'Soldiers being hit with metal rods' nearby.

Providing clear indices to aid in the interpretation of potentially ambiguous visual evidence has become a common strategy in defending violence by agents of the state. Most famously, the footage in the criminal trial of the California police officers who were filmed beating docile drunk driving suspect Rodney King was subsequently remediated to justify the exercise of force. As Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw and Gary Peller point out in their analysis of the case, defense attorneys were successful in presenting a particular version of events to the jurors by slicing up the 81 second videotape into single discrete frames mounted on a white poster board. By combining still images with a neutral backdrop, the officers' lawyers both physically mediated the footage and in 'the same moment of *disaggregation ... symbolically mediated*' the videotaped evidence with 'the technical discourse of institutional security'. [6] What had seemed at first to show a shocking exposé of corrupt behavior was ultimately reduced to a didactic show of information graphics about proper state-sanctioned techniques of appropri-ate restraint.

The ability to remix and remediate digital content has been celebrated as a sign of the vigor of participatory culture and civic deliberation by American critics Henry Jenkins, Lawrence Les-sig, and Jay David Bolter. Of course, remixing and remediating content that might originally be captured in a continuous shot raises questions about the transparency of representation, particularly when the full video record combines the incriminating with the exculpatory, just as it often combines the shocking with the banal. Less obviously, these activities of repurpos-ing and re-contextualization recognize the extent to which our current situation within a poli-tics of what I have called 'mediated transparency and transparent mediation' draw attention to the contingency of all contemporary truth claims.

Even leaders in human rights non-government organizations (NGOs) have come to recognize the complications of what WITNESS head Sam Gregory has called 'witness journalism' rather than the more optimistic 'citizen journalism'. In a recent article entitled 'Cameras Everywhere: Ubiquitous Video Documentation of Human Rights' in the *Journal of Human Rights Practice*, Gregory explains his dilemma:

6.   Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw and Gary Peller, 'Reel Time/Real Justice', in Robert Gooding-Williams (ed.) *Reading Rodney King/Reading Urban Uprising*, New York: Routledge, 1993, p. 59.

Our work since 1992 has focused on how best to enable human rights defenders to use video in their advocacy and activism, and has integrated training and intensive support to local groups on their campaigns, as well as developing multimedia platforms for informed dissemination of human rights media. Along the way we have learned that the technology in itself is insufficient in the absence of the capacity to film capably – or to tell stories effectively with the resulting material. Without technical training you can shoot raw video, but you cannot create the finished narratives that are of value in most advocacy contexts ... We have seen that "seeing is believing" does not necessarily apply in all instances, and that nuanced storytelling and incorporation of video into other advocacy strategies often produces the most effective results. [7]

As Gregory writes, the 'potential presence of a camera in every concerned citizen's hand creates powerful opportunities for the future of human rights video and human rights advocacy. At the same time, it raises significant questions of agency, action and audience'. [8] In fact, it could be argued that what Gregory really presents is 'evidence journalism' rather than 'witness journalism'. After all, the apparatus of the digital video camera witnesses an event only to the extent that it can as a mechanical recording device. It cannot bear witness in the public space of forensic argument. As Derrida once claimed, judges, tribunals, and other arbiters of justice need those who attest to their own self-interested and singular presence at an event in order to participate in deliberation.

In the series of videos that were released on May 31, 2010, the IDF seems to be methodically presenting a legal case composed of a sequence of evidentiary moments. 'Israeli Navy Addresses a Ship in the Flotilla and Offers it to Dock in the Ashdod Port' [9] shows a military officer advising passengers of their legal rights and obligations. He speaks in English, and subtitles are appended to the video to make the official statement clear:

> Mavi Marmara, you are approaching an area of hostility which is under a naval blockade. The Gaza area, coastal region and Gaza harbor are closed to all maritime traffic. The Israeli government supports delivery of humanitarian supplies to the civilian population in the Gaza Strip and invites you to enter the Ashdod Port. Delivery of the supplies in accordance with the authority's regulations will be through the formal land crossings and under your observation, after which, you can return to your home ports aboard the vessels on which you arrived.

To this hyper-rational legalistic discourse, the *Mavi Marmara* responds, 'Negative, negative. Our destination is Gaza'. The video ends with this brief, contradictory reply.

Later in the sequence of the May 31st YouTube videos, the IDF released a video entitled 'Weapons Found on the Flotilla Ship Mavi Marmara Used by Activists Against IDF Soldiers'. [10] The explanatory caption claims that the video will show a 'cache of weapons including many knives, slingshots, rocks, smoke bombs, metal rods, improvised sharp metal objects, sticks and clubs, 5KG hammers, firebombs and gas masks', but the first piece of evidence shown in the video is a large pile of keffiyeh, traditional Arab headdresses that have become associated with the *Intifada* in the visual rhetoric of the Israeli government and its Western military allies. In the next shot, a crate of smoke torches is shown, but in the background the viewer can clearly see packages of water. This is followed by a confusing mass of slingshots and then two plastic bottles filled with stones. Toward the end of the video there are the types of weapons displays that a television viewer might associate with the successful 'bust' of a criminal enterprise: arrays of pipes, bats, and knives that are neatly lined up atop a green Hamas flag. In the YouTube video 'Footage from the *Mavi Marmara* Including Injured Soldiers and Items Found On Board', [11] the jumble of detritus includes bags of marbles, which are part of the rhetorical case presented. The faces of the injured Israeli soldiers are not visible; their wounds appear as more evidence to support the case presented by the IDF Spokesperson's Unit on YouTube.

The final video in the May 31st series seems to provide testimony rather than evidence to bolster the IDF case. However the face of the witness in 'Israeli Navy Soldier Describes the Violent Mob Aboard Mavi Marmara' [12] is obscured by digital blurring, and thus the viewers attention might naturally go to his broken arm in a sling, which provides evidence of his injury. It is worth noting that although other videos dispassionately describe the ship's passengers as 'demonstrators' or 'activists', this video characterizes them as a 'violent mob'. In an article in *The New York Times*, 'Videos Carry On the Fight Over Sea Raid', the newspaper observes that the rhetorical retaliation escalated in succeeding days. [13] In this 'fight', the Israelis quickly lost political capital: the mere fact of having so apparently edited the footage called its authenticity into doubt, and the Israeli commandos who stormed the *Mavi Marmara* seized digital photos and videos created by witnesses from the other side.

What is also striking is that many of the videos either use moving images alone, or only feature sound, which draws attention to the lack of sound synchronization in many of the IDF *Mavi Marmara* videos. By June 4th the IDF was actually posting a still photograph of the Israeli military person previously shown notifying passengers that they could peacefully deliver the supplies by land if they complied with his nautical orders. In the new version the still is mashed up with inflammatory dialogue supposedly from the *Mavi Marmara*. An unlikely assortment

7.   Sam Gregory, 'Cameras Everywhere: Ubiquitous Video Documentation of Human Rights, New Forms of Video Advocacy, and Considerations of Safety, Security, Dignity and Consent', *Journal of Human Rights Practice* 2.2 (2010). Sam Gregory's text is also published in this reader.
8.   Gregory, 'Cameras Everywhere', p. 5.
9.   'Israeli Navy Addresses a Ship in the Flotilla and Offers it to Dock in the Ashdod Port', http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qKOmLP4yHb4&feature=youtube_gdata_player.

10. 'Weapons Found on the Flotilla Ship Mavi Marmara Used by Activists Against IDF Soldiers', http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JvS9PXZ3RWM&.
11. 'Footage from the Mavi Marmara Including Injured Soldiers and Items Found On Board', http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aN3vlT2uh_U.
12. 'Israeli Navy Soldier Describes the Violent Mob Aboard Mavi Marmara', http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C9p5QT91QYs.
13. Brian Stelter, 'Videos Carry On the Fight Over Sea Raid', *The New York Times*, June 1 2010, sec. World / Middle East, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/02/world/middleeast/02media.html?_r=2&adxnnl=1&adxnnlx=1284832821-QIx62AT77LxfPB2eYFomEw.

of accented voices, badly edited together, declare 'Shut up, go back to Auschwitz', 'We have permission from the Gaza Port Authority to enter', and 'We're helping Arabs go against the U.S., don't forget 9/11 guys'. [14] The nasty insults emphasize a form of verbal violence that implicitly justifies Israeli retaliation. Shortly afterward, the IDF posted a blacked-out 'unedited version' that included five and a half additional minutes of audio from the exchanges between the ships, including a female voice arguing that the Freedom Flotilla was an all-civilian humanitarian enterprise. This less incendiary version received far fewer views.

In her work on jailcams and death row websites, law professor Mona Lynch has asserted that digital video disseminated to online audiences often takes on a third valence: one of nihilistic humor. [15] This jocular attitude about vernacular media creation differs fundamentally from the reinforced positions of either the Israeli's authority or the pro-Palestinian sympathizer's resistance. Such light-hearted commentary and cavalier digital manipulation often mocks that which anthropologist Meg McLagan, making use of a term put forward by Richard Rorty, has termed the 'sad, sentimental stories' considered central to enabling 'technologies of witnessing' to be an effective part of the 'visual culture of human rights'. [16]

The Israel Defense Forces maintain a parallel Flickr site, which also documented the boarding of the *Mavi Marmara*. It has a noticeably different tone from the more deferential YouTube site, and some of the titles of photographs actually indicate outright mockery of the *Mavi Marmara* passengers. For example, one photograph of a bearded man in a black t-shirt, which appears to be a still of video footage, shows him speaking into a microphone on which the white subtitle reads: 'Third time lucky, with the help of God, I will be a Shahid (Martyr)'. The photograph is sarcastically titled '"Peace activist" hopes to become a Shahid (Martyr)'. [17]

Unlike the IDF YouTube site on which comments are disabled, the IDF Flickr site allows viewers to post responses to the jumble of evidence shown in the frame. Thus skeptical visitors to the IDF Flickr site can respond to Israeli cynicism in kind with comments like 'It's some English text written on top of a static photograph, so it must be a completely truthful representation of what he was saying', and 'Sorry, can't hear what he says, so I can't judge the subtitles either'. [18]

The Flickr set of 'Weapons found on Mavi Marmara' [19] was obviously intended to quiet the international outcry that resulted from the death of the pro-Palestinian activists and present the Israeli military's case that they had to kill passenger-protestors because 1) they had

weapons that they could have used against the commandos or 2) they had weapons that they could have shipped to Gaza to support *Intifada*-related activities. But often the presentation of evidence on sites like YouTube and Flickr only invites spoilers who question the truth claims of digital content-creators. Much as YouTube sensations lonelygirl15 and other fictional bloggers were unmasked by those skeptics who scoured backgrounds in search of clues of authentic origin that might be left in the simulacrum presented, visitors to the IDF Flickr site were able to contest IDF claims and insist that some of the evidence presented was staged.

For example, a shot of night vision equipment and what the authorities claim is a rifle scope labeled 'Weapons found aboard the Mavi Marmara' [20] is largely a discussion among dozens of netizens about the photograph's metadata on Flickr and the fact that the timestamp on the image indicates a much earlier date in 2006. Although most ridicule the IDF with comments such as 'every moron, knows, that nowadays, every pic you make, has EXIF', some defend the IDF's record-keeping by arguing that the camera had probably been reset to its 2005 default date more recently in a simple oversight that many make in the era of mediated transparency and transparent mediation.

Digital historian Dan Cohen has argued that 'pickling' information about the original digital device on which a file was created could be important in preserving a more complete version of the historical record, whether it be the Blackberry of an important political figure or the computer on which a great work of literature was written. [21] In the commentary on the *Mavi Marmara* photographs, one participant copied out the entire digital signature of the photograph and traced the migration of the file from the Nikon that shot the image without flash to the computer with the Adobe Photoshop software that prepared the file for its Flickr debut. The trail was as follows:

> Camera: Nikon D2Xs
> Exposure: 0.003 sec (1/320)
> Aperture: f/4.5
> Focal Length: 38 mm
> ISO Speed: 200
> Exposure Bias: 0 EV
> Flash: No Flash
> File Size: 264 kB
> File Type: JPEG
> MIME Type: image/jpeg
> Image Width: 1196
> Image Height: 1800
> Encoding Process: Baseline DCT, Huffman coding
> Bits Per Sample: 8
> Color Components: 3

14. 'Flotilla Ship to Israeli Navy: 'We're Helping Arabs Go Against the US, Don't Forget 9/11 Guys', http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pxY7Q7CvQPQ&feature=youtube_gdata_player.

15. Mona Lynch, 'Punishing Images', *Punishment & Society* 6.3 (2004): 255 -270.

16. Meg McLagan, 'Introduction: Making Human Rights Claims Public', *American Anthropologist* 108. 1 (2006): 193.

17. Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, '"Peace activist" hopes to become a Shahid (Martyr)', http://www.flickr.com/photos/israel-mfa/4666114392/.

18. Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, '"Peace activist" hopes to become a Shahid (Martyr)', http://www.flickr.com/photos/israel-mfa/4666114392/.

19. Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Weapons Found on Mavi Mari' photograph set, http://www.flickr.com/photos/israel-mfa/sets/72157624179998488/with/4666114392/.

20. Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Weapons found aboard the Mavi Marmara', http://www.flickr.com/photos/israel-mfa/4662343805/.

21. Dan Cohen, interview, Washington D.C. May 27, 2010.

X-Resolution: 300 dpi
Y-Resolution: 300 dpi
Orientation: Horizontal (normal)
Software: Adobe Photoshop CS4 Macintosh
Date and Time (Modified): 2010:06:02 11:23:04
YCbCr Positioning: Co-sited
Exposure Program: Aperture-priority AE
Date and Time (Original): 2006:02:07 05:20:56
Date and Time (Digitized): 2006:02:07 05:20:56

In contrast to the Israelis' evidentiary protocols, the Flickr account from the IHH emphasized humanizing headshots in which the chief engineer of the ship was shown with a pacifier-sucking baby and an obviously secular passenger in a 'reliable goods' t-shirt and a colorful necklace. On the IHH Flickr photostream traditionally garbed men in skullcaps were shown praying, but others were shown leisurely chatting and relaxing in deckchairs, without any obvious religious mission, and with flags from several countries flickering in the breeze nearby.

After the ship was boarded by Israeli soldiers, a number of pictures of the wounded being treated were placed on the IHH Flickr site, which included a dramatic photograph of an Israeli soldier being treated by doctors who were among the Palestinian sympathizers on the ship. There were two other immediately striking aspects of the IHH Flickr set. First, the quality of the photographs was often aesthetically more compelling than the less artfully composed evidentiary IDF photos, as though well-composed shots would run counter to the Israeli government's claims for credibility. Second, the IHH used the copyright symbol prominently on their Flickr pages, which would seem to discourage fair use of the images, while the IDF chose to use a Creative Commons license that was more generous with its claims to intellectual property (in the months that followed, the CC license was subsequently removed from the IDF *Mavi Marmara* images).

Eventually the IDF posted new footage on YouTube, which was actually taken from the demonstrators' own cameras. For example, on June 2nd, the IDF posted a video called 'Flotilla Rioters Prepare Rods, Slingshots, Broken Bottles and Metal Objects to Attack IDF Soldiers'.[22] The 'demonstrators' in earlier videos have now become 'rioters'. Perhaps the most noticeable cut in the 'rioters' video is between 21:36 and 22:04, where it seems that the activists may have been gathered for prayer. By June 5th the IDF YouTube channel was emphasizing the sad ironies of lost possibilities and the wish for a different conclusion to the conflict on the high seas, one that imagines an alternative history for those from the *Mavi Marmara* who were now dead, wounded, or in custody. In the video of 'Passengers from Seventh Flotilla Ship Disembark at Ashdod Port'[23] we see obedient flotilla members disembarking non-violently from the *Rachel Corrie* ship. Unlike the people in the 'mob' or 'the rioters' depicted in other

IDF videos that show the *Mavi Marmara*, the *Rachel Corrie* video includes old women, pregnant women, frail men, and others who do not fit the image of jihadist radicalism that the IDF has associated with other participants in the flotilla attempting to cross the Gaza blockade. Actually, the YouTube message is really in the crowd's applause at the end, which reinforces the idea that the soldiers leading the passengers off the boat are behaving chivalrously and courteously in their interactions.

When those who survived the shootings were repatriated, the IHH Livestream site showed first-person accounts of victimization by recording testimony of survivors in their hospital beds intercut with footage of Israeli commandos with faces obscured by helmets and automatic rifles pointed. The survivors described loss of consciousness, drops in blood pressure, the pain of being handcuffed, and other aspects of their embodied experience as witnesses. In the immediate aftermath of the vessel's boarding however, this Livestream channel was largely devoted to news coverage rather than original content from the IHH, because their recording devices had been confiscated by Israeli authorities.

Even for activists, the evidentiary approach of using digital content can backfire. Although the famed 'Collateral Murder' video on YouTube from WikiLeaks[24] used similar subtitling, labeling, and visual targeting techniques as those deployed by the IDF, it was perceived as a credible depiction of the murder of two Iraqi journalists by U.S. soldiers and the wounding of children in a van driven by Iraqi civilians attempting to aid other civilians. Yet the ultimate remoteness and anonymity of the producers behind the WikiLeaks site and allegations about the moral character of its chief backer have since raised doubts about its ability to continue to bear witness.

Ironically, the internet may be a site in which testimony is less likely to be challenged than evidence. Online presentations of evidence often inspire nitpicking and the search for contradictory clues, while the mere words of an autistic person or a schizophrenic inspire admiration. Yet since the *Mavi Marmara*, the IDF continues to use editing techniques in other YouTube videos that are devoted to building a case by presenting overwhelming quantities of material evidence and providing obvious pointers to guide the viewing experience. For example, coverage that promised 'extended footage' titled 'Hezbollah Removes Weapons from Explosion Site in Al-Shahabiya'[25] uses a silent subtitled format with time code and circled sections to indicate where the viewer's eyes should be. With their onslaught of YouTube videos, the Israeli Defense Forces had hoped to bolster their case about the boarding of the *Mavi Marmara*. But the Israeli government made a fundamental mistake by assuming that pictures speak for themselves…or more specifically, that governments can speak for pictures.

22. 'Flotilla Rioters Prepare Rods, Slingshots, Broken Bottles and Metal Objects to Attack IDF Soldiers', http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HZISSaPT_OU&feature=youtube_gdata_player.
23. 'Passengers from Seventh Flotilla Ship Disembark at Ashdod Port', http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HtjWyweOFyM&feature=youtube_gdata_player.
24. 'Collateral Murder - Wikileaks – Iraq', http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5rXPrfnU3G0&feature=youtube_gdata_player.
25. 'Extended Footage (English): Hezbollah Removes Weapons from Explosion Site in Al-Shahabiya', http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rAUzs-4GM8k&feature=youtube_gdata_player.

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INCREASING THE VISIBILITY OF BLINDNESS: NATALIE BOOKCHIN'S MASS ORNAMENT

BRIAN WILLEMS

On Facebook, others can post pictures of you, tag your presence, and comment as they wish. These photos are added to your personal profile, thereby foregrounding the limits one (always) has to self-representation. This can cause problems. Friends from one milieu (work) are privy to tagged activities from another (play). On the one hand this is terrible; whatever control that was held over the different domains of life is decreased even further. On the other hand, however, this chaotic presentation of self comes closer to who we actually are, precisely because people other than ourselves have control. Social media can work to reveal aspects of ourselves that we would rather keep hidden, to which we would rather keep our 'friends', and ourselves, blind. It forces us, and others, to see a fuller picture of who we are. In this sense a site like Facebook, or the meta-information contained in the blogosphere, works towards a critical convergence, or what David Bordwell calls an 'intensified continuity', in which our blindness to who we are becomes more and more visible, for better or for worse.

I argue that social media like Facebook and YouTube have the ability to make that which Paul de Man would call the 'blindness of reading' visible. This qualitative difference is manifest through the ability to track, and hence see through tags and other meta-information, a number of connections between bodies that would otherwise remain hidden. What is important is to understand the manner in which these connections are made visible. I use two examples in order to discuss the visibility of blindness as it relates to YouTube in particular: first, Avital Ronell's argument from the early 1990s that video's inability to be read paradoxically visualizes the unreadable trauma of television; and second, the more contemporary example of Natalie Bookchin's *Mass Ornament* (2009), a piece of video art utilizing YouTube as an example of structuring a visualization of the unseen.

Reading, Trauma, Television
One way to approach the relationship between visibility and blindness is through the concept of *reading*. Reading is an activity that is both ubiquitous and challenging to pin down. The co-existence of ubiquity and ambiguity is paramount to the events of both reading and being-read. For Paul de Man, reading is never 'just' reading; it always refers to something beyond its direct referent. In the following, de Man discusses Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu*:

> The allegory of reading narrates the impossibility of reading. But this impossibility necessarily extends to the word 'reading' which is thus deprived of any referential meaning whatsoever. ... Everything in this novel signifies something other than what it represents, be it love, consciousness, politics, art, sodomy, or gastronomy: it is always something else than is intended. It can be shown that the most adequate term to designate

this "something else" is Reading. But one must at the same time "understand" that this word bars access, once and forever, to a meaning that yet can never cease to call out for its understanding. [1]

The doubled meaning of *reading* becomes apparent: it is both active (it does something, it refers to something else) and substantive (static, describing a state, like the verb *to be*). These two meanings cannot be reconciled; rather, their coexistence functions as an engine for the process of becoming visible. We must proceed very carefully here, for by discussing reading's existence as something else, *and* its being a call for a ceaseless incompletion of understanding, we are coming very close to saying nothing at all, of becoming trapped in a self-assured understanding of a certain kind of dialectics. Therefore an example is in order.

In March of 1991, in an early case of what Steve Mann has termed 'sousveillance', [2] George Holliday videotaped the beating of Rodney King by a number of Los Angeles police officers, four of whom were later brought to trial. The role of the video in this trial was paramount, and it forms the crux of Avital Ronell's essay 'TraumaTV: Twelve Steps beyond the Pleasure Principle'. [3] Here, Ronell focuses on the way in which the video of King occupies the position both of being something else, and of referring to that something else, just as reading does for De Man. In other words, what the Rodney King video actually shows is how hard the video itself is to see.

First, the video foregrounds the question of whether King's getting up from the ground was an aggressive gesture or not. Even though the gesture was recorded and the video was examined frame by frame in court, the 'truth' of King's gesture is still impossible to 'see' (although it was perhaps made difficult to see for reasons other than the truth). Second, by showing the impossibility of reading, the video assumes the active function of referring to something other than itself, to something more than the contents of the video. The video shows how King's gesture slips beyond the tag of 'aggression'. This is reflected in the way King himself occupies a similar double-position, for he needed to be something other than himself in order to be beaten: to justify the beating, King *needed* to have been on PCP (for which he tested negative) and 'buffed out' as one of the officers claimed he appeared. As Ronell argues:

> What does it mean to say that the police force is hallucinating drugs, or, in this case, to allow the suggestion that it was already in the projection booth as concerns Rodney King? In the first place, before the first place, they were watching the phantom of racist footage. According to black-and-white TV, Rodney King could not be merely by

himself or who he was that night. In order to break Rodney King, or break the story, the phantasm of the supplemented Other – on junk, beside himself, not himself, more than himself, a technozombie of supernatural capabilities – had to be agreed upon by the police force. [4]

For Ronell, one of the reasons that King was allowed to appear as a figure of displacement and projection in the early 1990s was because the video of the beating was located within the medium of television. Television, according to Ronell, 'exists in trauma, or rather, trauma is what preoccupies television: it is always on television'. [5] Trauma, too, is also unreadable in two ways: 'as a memory that one cannot integrate into one's own experience, and as a catastrophic knowledge that one cannot communicate to others'. [6] The video of King, projected onto and out of television, is what made the trauma of communication visible. This is because the video was assumed to record the reality of the event, as is evident in its use as a perfectly objective eyewitness in court. However, what the video actually revealed was that it could be shown, but not read. King had been recorded but he was not communicating, at least not in the expected manner. His gesture of getting up off the ground could not be determined by the court to be aggressive, or otherwise. And then, repetition of the recorded and replayable video on transient television only foregrounded the unreadability of television itself. As Ronell points out: 'I am not saying that video is the truth of television, nor its essence. Rather, it is what is watching television; it is the place of the testimonial that cannot speak with referential assurance but does assert the truth of what it says'. [7]

As a medium, television is always something other than itself, 'when it mimes police work or when, during the [first] Gulf War, blanking out in a phobic response to the call of reference, it becomes a radio'. [8] However, Ronell argues, the central question regarding video on television is the doubled active/substantive role of the medium of television. Ronell describes this dual role using the language of blindness: television '*showed* itself not showing, and *became* the closed, knotted eye of blindness'. [9] For Ronell, television is both something else and refers to something else, and this position is foregrounded, or made visible, by the call of video. The reading of King shows that the question of the ability to see relates to the medium of video. What the reading of King shows is that the question of the ability to see relates to the medium of video, a question addressed by artist Natalie Bookchin's in her work that uses YouTube videos as material.

1. Paul de Man, *Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke, and Proust*, New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1979, p. 77.
2. Steve Mann, 'Sousveillance', Wearcam.org, 2002, http://wearcam.org/sousveillance.htm. This example is actually an illustration of the second subtype of sousveillance Mann describes, 'out-of-band sousveillance'.
3. Avital Ronell, 'TraumaTV: Twelve Steps beyond the Pleasure Principle', in *Finitude's Score: Essays for the End of the Millennium*, Lincoln; London: University of Nebraska Press, 1994.

4. Ronell, 'TraumaTV', p. 307. This projection can also be seen as an example of what Frantz Fanon terms 'collective catharsis' in *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Richard Philcox, New York: Grove Press, 2008, p. 124.
5. Ronell, 'TraumaTV', p. 313.
6. Ronell, 'TraumaTV', p. 314. Slavoj Žižek calls trauma an 'unknown unknown' in counter distinction to the 'unknown known' of the Unconscious. Trauma is 'the violent intrusion of something radically unexpected, something the subject was absolutely not ready for, and which it cannot integrate in any way', *Living in the End Times*, London; New York: Verso, 2010, p. 292.
7. Ronell, 'TraumaTV', p. 316.
8. Ronell, 'TraumaTV', p. 316.
9. Ronell, 'TraumaTV', p. 316.

Visibility, Video, Girl-Kultur

In her 2008 work *Trip*, her 2009 work *Mass Ornament*, and her latest piece at the time of writing, *Testament* (exhibited October 2009-January 2010 at the Los Angeles Country Museum of Art), Natalie Bookchin has based her work on online video collocated around a number of related meta-tags. Her methodology is to choose and then explore these videos through the similarities and differences she finds that extend between people separated by time, space and culture. In *Trip*, Bookchin collates videos found on YouTube that feature road trips; from traveling with friends, to video of an improvised explosive device explosion in Iraq. What first seems to hold these disparate videos together is that they were shot from cars and other means of transportation. However, what emerges from the mixture of languages, cultures and situations, is that what has actually been recorded is an attempt – both failed and successful – to traverse borders, the inherent promise of every trip.

The focus here, however, will be Bookchin's *Mass Ornament*, a piece of video art which compiles YouTube videos featuring people dancing alone in a room. Bookchin reinforces the commonalities between the clips through the music she occasionally uses to accompany the images, including the song 'Lullaby of Broadway' from Busby Berkeley's 1935 film *Gold Diggers of 1935*, and pieces, mainly those of Wagner, from another film released in the same year, Leni Riefenstahl's work of Nazi propaganda, *The Triumph of the Will*. [10] In order to understand this work, and its relevance to reading and blindness, it is necessary to briefly discuss the text from which Bookchin has taken the title of *Mass Ornament*.

Siegfried Kracauer's essay 'The Mass Ornament' first appeared as a feuilleton in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* in 1927, and was later reprinted in 1963 in a collection which was titled after the essay. In 'The Mass Ornament', Kracauer states that it is the unconscious production of an era, rather than its conscious critical output, that can provide access to 'the fundamental substance of the state of things'. [11] Kracauer's example of unconscious production is the chorus girl or line dancer. 'These products of American distraction factories', Kracauer states, 'are no longer individual girls, but indissoluble girl clusters whose movements are demonstrations of mathematics'. [12] The group of line dancers Kracauer refers to, the Tiller Girls, were themselves English, the precision products of Manchurian ex-textile manufacturer John Tiller. [13] For Kracauer, they signify the way in which people (*Volk)* become the mass (*Masse)*. People, for Kracauer, are burdened with burdening others with meaning, while the mass 'are mere building blocks and nothing more'. [14] The mass is ornament, and 'The ornament is an

end in itself'. [15] The Tiller Girls are de-eroticized, their movements 'take place in a vacuum'; 'they are a linear system that no longer has any erotic meaning but at best points to the locus of the erotic'. [16] These 'girl-units', Kracauer states,

> drill in order to produce an immense number of parallel lines, the goal being to train the broadest mass of people in order to create a pattern of undreamed-of dimensions. The end result is the ornament, whose closure is brought about by emptying all the substantial constructs of their contents. [17]

They become 'purely' referential, taking on the double position of referring to the shape of a star, square or circle, and being that referent themselves. In this sense, following Kracauer's argument, they are vehicles of the unconscious, a medium allowing the un-thought elements of capitalism to seep through to consciousness.

For Kracauer, the solution to the ornament is not a return to nature or to 'the human', but a more extreme calculability, a stricter rationality. At the close of his essay, Kracauer uses rhythmic gymnastics as a failed example of such potentially extreme rationality, for it 'goes further and expropriates the higher mythological levels, thereby strengthening nature's dominance all the more'. Therefore, Kracauer writes, 'It is just one example among many other equally hopeless attempts to reach a higher life from out of mass existence'. [18] Rhythmic gymnastics does not fit the bill because it is too romantic, it lacks 'more' rationality. We can only move forward 'when thinking circumscribes nature and produces man as he is constituted by reason. Then society will change'. [19]

In part, Kracauer's description of the Mass Ornament recalls Elizabeth Losh's account of the protagonists of YouTube videos:

> There may be real human beings populating the audience constellations of YouTube, but they satisfy stock roles, such as griefer, self-promoter, parodist, pundit, and seconder of motions. In other words, YouTube is often a culture engine of popularity instead of populism, in which the power laws by which it functions largely protect the status quo rather than challenge it. [20]

10. *The Triumph of the Will,* (dir. Leni Riefenstahl, 1935).
11. Siegfried Kracauer, *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*, trans. Thomas Levin, Cambridge; London: Harvard University Press, 1995, p. 75.
12. Kracauer, *The Mass Ornament,* pp. 75-6.
13. Peter Jelavich, '"Girls and Crisis": The Political Aesthetics of the Kickline in Weimar Berlin', in John Roth (ed.) *Rediscovering History: Culture, Politics and the Psyche*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994, p. 226.
14. Kracauer, *The Mass Ornament*, p. 76.

15. Kracauer, *The Mass Ornament*, p. 76. Adolf Loos' *Ornament and Crime*, from 1908, should also be indicated here, although Loos adds a lack of moral evolution to those that are immersed in ornamentation. See Adolf Loos, *Ornament and Crime: Selected Essays*, trans. Michael Mitchell, Riverside: Ariadne Press, 1998.
16. Kracauer, *The Mass Ornament*, p. 77.
17. Kracauer, *The Mass Ornament*, p. 77.
18. Kracauer, *The Mass Ornament*, p. 86.
19. Kracauer, *The Mass Ornament*, p. 86.
20. Elizabeth Losh, 'Government YouTube: Bureaucracy, Surveillance, and Legalism in State-Sanctioned Online Video Channels', in Geert Lovink and Sabine Niederer (eds.) *Video Vortex Reader: Responses to YouTube*, Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures, 2008, pp. 111-112.

On the surface, Bookchin's video piece seems to agree with Losh's assessment, and to call attention to the dehumanizing aspect that Kracauer identified. Indeed, as Bookchin herself states in relation to her own work: 'The Mass Ornament reflects the abstraction involved in capitalist profit formation. Workers in a factory, like dancers in a stadium, laboured to produce surplus value that existed for its own sake'. [21] However, I believe that what is in fact evident is the more extreme rationality that Kracauer calls. In the hyper-structure of Bookchin's video collection of single figures dancing alone in their rooms, it is this more extreme rationality that allows the 'unconscious' aspects of contemporary culture to shine through. As in the example of social networking sites discussed in the opening of this essay suggested, extreme rationality can actually take the form of an extreme sociability. In order to understand the role of this kind of rationality, the structure of *Mass Ornament* will be described in some detail.

Bookchin's video may be broken down into the following four 'autonomous segments': [22]

A) Amidst a black background there appear first one, then two, then more, then fewer bedrooms in a horizontal row. As Bookchin says of the piece, the blocks appear across the screen as 'a chorus line but [they] also [reflect] the viewing conditions of YouTube, where videos are shown with an accompanying row of thumbnail images linking seemingly similar videos'. [23] There are no people in these rooms, although sometimes, when a video first appears, a hand can be seen quickly moving out of the frame, probably having just turned the camera on. Each of these pictures has the number of views put underneath it, recalling the function on YouTube. Some of them even report 'Removed by user'. They show a number of empty rooms, until a hooded figure enters.
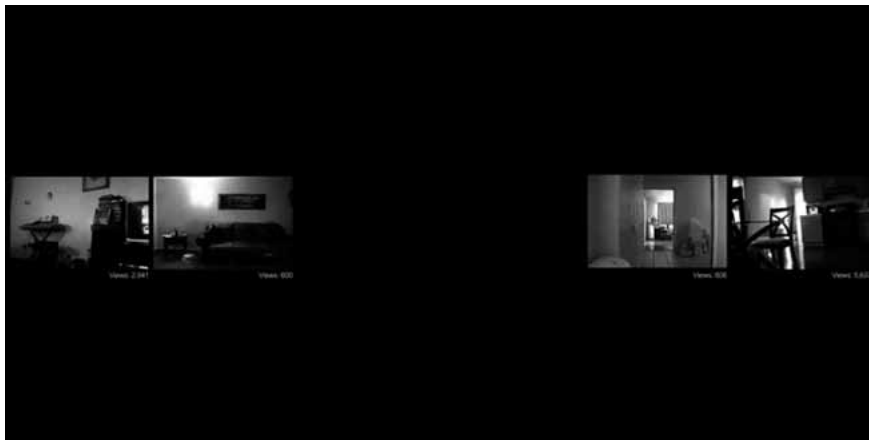

Mass Ornament (2009) - the setup. All images are courtesy of the artist.

21. Carolyn Kane, 'Dancing Machines: An Interview with Natalie Bookchin', *Rhizome.org*, 2009, http://www.rhizome.org/editorial/2653.
22. Christian Metz, *Film Language: A Semiotics of the Cinema*, trans. Michael Taylor, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991, pp. 24-28.
23. Kane, 'Dancing Machines'.

These frames abruptly disappear, in a cut to the title of the piece. The initiatory stance of this sequence is reinforced by the diegetic sound and music, which features an opera singer, television news and conversation, and the song 'Lullaby of Broadway', which will form a central motif for the whole video. The levity of this song, which was written in the midst of the Great Depression in 1935, at once hearkens back to the Roaring Twenties, which was perhaps the last time one could flaunt one's self without shame, and a mourning for the loss of those times – a send-off, or lullaby. A different era is now approaching, one in which a self-critical stance is paramount, as one is surrounded by so much suffering. This introduction to Bookchin's piece ends with its title, although the song begins again before we cut away from the title, signifying a new section is about to begin.

B) Next, one of only two optical devices that separate the images is used. As the music plays on, the title fades out and a new segment with a new format fades in: one image which is larger and in the centre of the screen. The content of this piece is a scene from an old movie showing a couple dancing. This single shot, which provides an autonomous segment in itself, then fades into a shot of a young woman walking up to her mirror, and adjusting her gold lamé belt. Reflected in the mirror is a computer, to which the young woman turns. This image is followed by a jump cut to five other women, in five other bedrooms, who all walk up to their computers and bend over to turn them on, supposedly completing the action that the first woman was about to begin. The next cut is to three slightly larger screens with close-ups of computer monitors and single arms waving up and down, as if disconnected from the body of a belly dancer.

What follows is a number of arrangements of people who are 'just about to dance': six images of mirrors, with women stepping in front of them, facing the camera. The music at the beginning of the piece is light, musical-like. There are then six images of women bending down into the camera, having just turned it on, their faces at times out of focus from coming so close to it. Then, three women, and two men, are shown in their five screens preparing to begin a dance. They are not dancing, but are braced for the beginning of their routine. In the next shot, we see five empty rooms, into which a person walks and turns to face the camera, then three girls who have their midriffs exposed; then nine screens show people backing away from the camera so their whole body can fit in the frame. Then twelve do. Then eighteen.
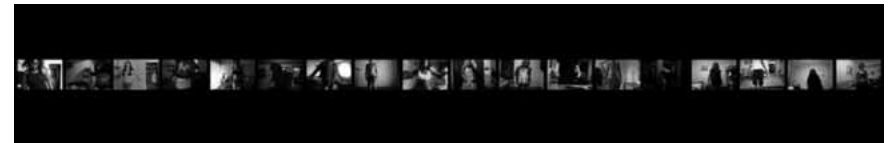
Eighteen Dancers.

C) A change occurs at about the 2'45" mark, signaled in a number of ways. The diegetic room noise takes over the lighter musical piece, and *Mass Ornament* takes on a more serious, and even sinister, tone. As the extra-diegetic music fades out, there is once again a single shot to focus on. As with the black and white image of the dancing shadows, there

is now a single shot in the centre of the frame. 'Lullaby' has finished and there are at first only diegetic sounds, and then a more sinister single synthesized note. What is seen is an image of a midriff in front of a television.

Two disembodied bodies.

This is a shot of a reflection of culture reflected in a midriff reflecting onto the video screen. On the one hand, this makes a rather trite statement about the role of the culture industry; on the other it returns us to Ronell's reading of the relationship between television and video. Ronell, recall, did not claim that video posed an ethical call to television, but that video helped to make the unreadable trauma of television visible. To put it briefly, in Bookchin's work, video makes 'YouTubed' connections between videos visible. These connections, mapped out in different 'semantic fields' [24] or tags, such as *midriff*, *mirror* and *turning on computer*, are made visible by the availability, replayability and connectivity of videos presented together on a video sharing platform such as YouTube or Vimeo. The ubiquity of these connections is partially assumed in this scene: people have 'always' been dancing in their rooms with the same gestures, influenced by television or another medium, but they were always hidden. It is only now that we can see them doing so, that the new, meaningful patterns of the culture industry may be understood.

Following this image, the 'Lullaby' music returns a few seconds before cut to three screens of scantily glad girls who are posing, then dancing for the gaze of the camera. Then we see three more doing the same - although now there are men included - and then three more. Then four, then three, then six, then nine. The memes of television are spreading, dehumanizing, 'ornamentizing'. The chorus music fades out. A single shot, with what sounds like an 'Arabic' piece of music, begins. [25] This new music ac-

24. David Bordwell, *Making Meaning*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989, pp. 105-128.
25. Bookchin used to have this video piece up on YouTube but it had to be removed, not because of copyright issues with the images, but because of the music. At the time of writing, the video appears only on Vimeo.

companies a single screen, with similar framing to the shot showing only a midriff and television; here, however, the dancer has her back to the camera, and her head is hanging down, supposedly to dramatically whip her hair up over her shoulders. However, as a *punctum* to this *subjectum*, a portrait hangs on the wall, as if to compensate for the body's facelessness. This pencil drawing shows the soft, innocent face of a girl with long hair. Whether this is the girl in the video is not really important. Rather, we see that the portrait has taken the place occupied by the television in the previous shot. If nothing else, the memes of the culture industry have been completely absorbed by the subject, and then by the two girls who subsequently appear on the screens next to this one, along with their own portraits. As these three become six, the 'tag' for portrait widens to include any kind of painting or reproduction, which changes the meaning from self-image, to the image in general. Then, some other 'tags': dancing in front of ironing boards, Christmas trees, and then computers themselves (in one of which it is possible to see that the person is watching a YouTube video).

D) At this point, at 4'03", and just past the half-way mark, the final segment is about to begin. Once again, the change is signaled by a single, larger frame in the centre of the screen. This shot shows a lone computer playing an unidentifiable YouTube video.

YouTube, alone?

As has been continuously signaled by the varying 'view counts' and 'removed by user' titles under all of the videos, the viewer is at this point seemingly being asked to reflect on the specific nature of the electronic medium through which these images are being transmitted. This is a scene of blame. The view count is 411,823, which is relatively high for these videos. The music also underscores the change, with an operatic voice accompanying the images of bodies and hands sliding along walls. The extra-diegetic sound fades out, so the sound of flesh against object can come forth. Rubbery hand against plastic-y cupboard. Then we return to mirrors, with the music turned low, and the sound of ungraceful feet pounding against cheap floors. Then we see images of stretching and waving, spinning and more sliding, pushing against walls and dancing against walls in

small rooms and tight, cramped corridors not conducive to dancing. Now, the 'Lullaby' is back. People are now jumping together and raising their hands in the air. For the first time, more than one row of screens appear, which then snake and twirl their way up the screen. Then, handstands and other attempts at gymnastics, as music from *The Triumph of the Will* plays over images of arched backs, indicating the complacency these acts of freedom have in a structure beyond (or behind) their movements. [26] Cartwheels and back flips, rather than dancing, symbolize the inclusion of rhythmic gymnastics into the fold of the ornament, which Kracauer warned against. The extra-diegetic sounds of tap dancing from an unseen performance accompany images of people doing the 'Macarena'. As the images begin to shrink, it is no longer really important what they are doing. There are no real clear tags tying these dancers together. They are just people alone in their rooms shaking their hips back and forth.

The following cuts once again feature dancers and the 'Lullaby' theme. Eventually, there is such an abundance of connections being made between videos, and so many videos with these connections, that the specific tags grouping these figures together become irrelevant to images too small to make out such details. This is an increased level of connectivity, of 'rationality' that, in Kracauerian fashion, reveals the larger issues that cause these images to appear together, rather than just their individual marks or motifs. The individual videos are becoming too small to see, and they disappear with the ending of the song.

Structure, Tags, Blindness
What is interesting about the structure of Bookchin's *Mass Ornament* is how clearly it is marked out, both through music and image, according to the classic three-act formula of Hollywood cinema: Induction/Setup, Conflict, and Closure (or Climax). Bordwell describes this structure in the following manner. 1) The Setup 'establishes the characters' world, defines the main characters' purposes, and culminates in a turning point near the half-hour mark'. [27] 2) The traditional second act is comprised of a 'Complicating Action' and 'focuses or recasts the film's central goals. Either the protagonist changes tactics for achieving her goal, or she faces an entirely new situation – a sort of "counter-setup"'. [28] 3) The Final act is the Climax. 'Often following the 'darkest moment', the scene in which a crisis forces the protagonist to take action, this section revolves around the question of whether or not the goals can be achieved'. [29]

In *Mass Ornament,* Part A functions as a kind of induction scene, whereas Part B functions as a setup: the real action of dancing has not begun, but we are introduced to the different

26. And remember that the National Party Congress held in Nuremberg in 1934 was mainly staged to be filmed. See Paul Virilio, *War and Cinema: The Logistics of Perception*, trans. Patrick Camiller, London; New York: Verso, 1989, p. 69.
27. David Bordwell, *The Way Hollywood Tells It: Story and Style in Modern Movies*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006, p. 36.
28. Bordwell, *The Way Hollywood Tells It*, p. 36.
29. Bordwell, *The Way Hollywood Tells It*, p. 38.

players. Part C is introduced with a conflict: the body before the television being shown on video. This could even be described as a 'counter-setup', in that we need to revise some of the preceding images in a more critical light. Part D offers a closure to the piece: a single video featuring a computer, alone, playing a YouTube video. The images eventually become too small to read individually, thereby becoming so intense that they foreground the process of viewing (reading) itself.

What is more interesting, however, is the relationship of *Mass Ornament* to Bordwell's main thesis, which is that modern cinema does not deviate from the classical structure per se as much as it exhibits an 'intensified continuity'. [30] Modern films, taken as roughly post-1960, are not less structured but rather hyper-structured; they do not eschew the three-act structure but rather follow it even more closely, providing an over-abundance of motifs and connections between acts. In a similar manner, Bookchin's video has an overabundant number of semantic fields linking one video to the other, so that the videos eventually become too numerous to pick out individually. This foregrounding is achieved not by making the tags more stable, but by exploding their referentiality through combination and selection. If Bookchin's video is able to make unseen connections visible, this is through intensification and combination, rather than paring down and separating. It is maximalism, not minimalism.

In *Mass Ornament*, the relation of visibility to meta-information is realized through greater structure, rather than less. In order to understand this relation Jan Simons' theory of tags and tagging will be discussed. According to Simons, the 'problem' with finding content using tags does not only lie in the system's inherent polysemy, homonymy and synonymy [31] – such as tagging a computer with 'apple' and then retrieving a piece of fruit – but rather with a lack of understanding of the intuitive way in which users tag their products. [32] The problem with tags is that they occupy the place of a double-bind: on the one hand they incorporate some of the ambiguity inherent within language; on the other they are one-word, limited utterances and are therefore seemingly devoid of grammar. [33] At the core of both this ambiguity and non-grammaticism is: a) the way that tags refer to things other than themselves; and b) the way that tags are themselves always something other than themselves. This dual structure is, recall, also emblematic of reading, and the strength of Simons' argument is the recognition that this ambiguity needs to be incorporated into the actual structures of tagging. [34] Because tags are usually created by non-expert, but fluent, users of language, tags themselves will incorporate some of the same ambiguities of language. It would seem logical, therefore, that tags will also incorporate and reproduce some of the same structures of reading. In order to illustrate this point, Simons ends his article with a paragraph highlighting the visibility of blindness:

30. Bordwell, *The Way Hollywood Tells It,* pp. 121-89.
31. Jan Simons, 'Another Take on Tags? What Tags Tell', in Geert Lovink and Sabine Niederer (eds) *Video Vortex Reader: Responses to YouTube*, Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures, 2008, p. 240.
32. Simons, 'Another Take on Tags?', p. 243.
33. Simons, 'Another Take on Tags?, p. 244.
34. Simons, 'Another Take on Tags?, p. 245.

Since taggers tap into the same cognitive and linguistic resources that allow for the impressive flexibility and adaptability of language, it is very unlikely that tagging practices will eventually converge in something like a controlled vocabulary. Tag-elese is not a "language without a grammar", but its grammar is largely concealed – or "repressed" as a Freudian would say – by the very design of tagging systems and – it should be admitted – by the very purposes proponents of folksonomies had in mind for tagging practices. Nevertheless, as the "purloined letter" in Poe's famous story, the grammar of tag-elese has been staring us in the face all the time while we were looking for it at the wrong place. [35]

While Simons' conclusion brings together a number of threads developed here, I believe his final use of Freud, and then of the example of 'The Purloined Letter' famously used by Lacan, misses the point in a slight but profound way. Simons states that we were looking for the grammar of tag-elese (the 'language' of tagging) in 'the wrong place', implying that if we were to look in the correct spot, we would be able to locate this allusive grammar. This spot is right in front of our noses, i.e. in the way tags themselves work. However, Poe's story, along with Lacan's use of it, is not about looking in the right place, as much as it is about how we can come to see that we are actually looking in the wrong place. This is what Poe's story seems to indicate: the best place to hide a letter is out in the open. The question that this raises is not how we see the letter, but how it is that the letter is ever missed. Or, put in the language of this essay, how is it that blindness becomes visible? Tags seem to be part of this equation because they *reflect* the ambiguity of language: yet, how is such reflection able to take place? Bookchin's *Mass Ornament* offers one answer to this question. The work's intensified continuity does not clarify anything at all; rather, it makes the blindness and ambiguity of the connections between videos visible. [36] Bookchin's piece points towards a new level of blindness particular to the internet; a quantitative increase that becomes qualitative, as it allows for a stricter and more 'rational' set of coordinates between these instantiations of blindness to come forth.

We can still ask, however, how it is that an ability to see the unseen can 'come forth'? In closing, I will briefly make use of a concept developed in the third section of Giorgio Agamben's essay 'What is the Contemporary?'. Here, Agamben defines the contemporary as a person who 'firmly holds his gaze on his own time so as to perceive not its light, but rather its darkness'. [37] For Agamben, the activity of seeing darkness defines the contemporary: 'those who do not allow themselves to be blinded by the lights of the century, and so manage to get a glimpse of the shadows in those lights, of their intimate obscurity'. [38] The role of the contemporary is, then, to turn towards this darkness: 'The contemporary is the one whose eyes are struck by the beam of darkness that comes from his own time'. [39]

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35. Simons, 'Another Take on Tags?, p. 252.
36. This is what Bordwell's 'recalcitrant data' wants to do, *Making Meaning*, p. 30.
37. Giorgio Agamben, 'What is the Contemporary?', in *What is an Apparatus? and Other Essays*, trans. David Kishik and Stefan Pedatella, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009, p. 44.
38. Agamben, 'What is the Contemporary?', p. 45.
39. Agamben, 'What is the Contemporary?', p. 45.

Much like the 'purloined letter', darkness is that which is already there, but remains difficult to see. Bookchin's work demonstrates how YouTube may be used to bring this darkness forward, to position the spectator in front of its black rays: through hyper-structuring and combination, it becomes possible to turn towards this darkness, and to make it visible.

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OUT IN PUBLIC: NATALIE BOOKCHIN IN CONVERSATION WITH BLAKE STIMSON

NATALIE BOOKCHIN AND **BLAKE STIMSON**

Natalie Bookchin and Blake Stimson first met in New York in the early 1990s when they were both affiliated with the Whitney Independent Study Program. This exchange took place over email, for the most part between their respective homes in Southern and Northern California during the summer of 2010.

Although she has a rich and varied artistic background, one theme that has regularly come to the fore in Natalie Bookchin's work is a concern with documentary. In some of her early work, this concern seemed to emphasize the inhumanity of recording machines in the way that Andy Warhol's, or perhaps Gerhard Richter's, work did. In a different way, the entire 'found object' tradition associated with Duchampian indifference, and still so manifest in much contemporary art, also seemed to feature in Bookchin's work. Here, we might recall an early piece for which Bookchin photographed everything she owned, object by object, down to the last paperclip; or perhaps, in a different sense, the *Universal Page* she created with Alexei Shulgin in 2000, which promised an algorithmically derived objective average of all web content. In one sense, her recent work of gathering videos from the internet might be said to continue in this vein—at least insofar as she is functioning as an aggregator of existing content drawn largely from YouTube, in a way similar to a service like Digg or any of the many interest or attention measuring functions of the web (not the least being Google and other search engines).

On the other hand, Bookchin's work possesses a strong, even impassioned, activist element of the sort consistent with the reportage tradition extending back to John Heartfield and Sergei Tretiakov, or Jacob Riis and Lewis Hine before them. For example, in the interview Bookchin and Shulgin published in conjunction with the exhibition of *Universal Page*, Bookchin spoke of that time as one that demanded 'superactivity' because 'there are vitally important things that need to be done' to 'resist total corporate, technological, and institutional takeovers'. In addition, her multiplayer game *agoraXchange* was created in collaboration with the political theorist Jackie Stevens, and called for 'an end to the system of nation-states, the demise of rules rendering us passive objects tied to identities and locations given at birth', and the elimination of 'those laws requiring us to live and be seen largely as vessels for ancestral identities'. And finally, there was her very funny announcement, in 1999, of her intention for a journal titled BAD (standing for Burn the Artworld Down) that was 'committed to the documentation of acts of terrorism and agitation against the institutional art world'. All of these works have performative dimensions to them, and as such call up a sense of tongue-in-cheek detachment from the subjects they purport to represent. Yet, to varying degrees, they also seem earnest and forceful political statements.

Blake Stimson: With all the political history that lies behind it, is 'documentary' a useful label to describe your work?

Natalie Bookchin: There's always been a strong documentary thread running through my work, and this has only increased in recent years. My work aims to make visible social facts, as well as my role in shaping and skewing those facts. In my newest projects I've been drawing from the archive of online videos – the stuff that at first glance might be dismissed as throwaway junk consisting of banal chatter and trivial displays of mass media mimicry. Yet I see it instead as a vast, largely untapped stream of constantly updated source material out of which I can document the present seen through the eyes of many others, and build new composite documents, rich with descriptive accounts and reflections of both current attitudes and social conditions. I'd say that the work is part of the Readymade tradition only insofar as the source material is found. But rather than presenting the footage as is, most of my work is in reshaping and reworking it into something new.

trip, from 2008, was the first piece I made from YouTube videos. It's a 63 minute video in which I edited and assembled dozens of traveling shots to create a road movie that followed the route of technology around the world, in other words, traveling only where others with their cameras and cell phones have already gone. Viewers move through a physically impossible geography connected by an always-present road, like disparate sites linked on the internet, across dozens of countries and borders, through war zones, tent cities, and tourist centres. Viewers see a world framed by the car window from continuously shifting perspectives of missionaries, truckers, soldiers, locals, tour guides, human rights workers, and tourists. The road acts as a kind of stand-in for the internet – a conduit for the circulation of images, attitudes, and goods around the world, occasionally stalled by conflict, but ultimately, like the rows of trucks plodding across borders that appear throughout the video, relentless and without an end.

BS: Terrific—'making visible social facts' strikes me as a great short definition for documentary generally, particularly insofar as 'social facts' can be distinguished from the social isolation of facts as such. It also seems spot on with my experience of pieces like *I am Not* or *Laid Off* or your work in progress on race, *Now he's out in public, and everyone can see*. What thrills me the most about these pieces has little or nothing to do directly with the found videos themselves as isolated facts unto themselves, but instead with the sociality you draw out of them. The videos are what they are: typically heart-wrenching signs of human suffering of a disturbingly common sort. Your authorial voice, on the other hand, comes through loud and clear as a form of mediation between the videos and in so doing, it seems to me, gives rise to both the 'making visible' you refer to and to a living, human form of sociality for the facts in question.

My sense is that there is a lot that can be said about that function and so I would like you to elaborate further about what it means for you and your sense of what it means for others, but before I pass this screen back to you I'll share one impression of mine. What seems so refreshing about your use of woman-on-the-street commentary is that it seems diametrically opposed to the sort used routinely by politicians, news media, and marketing departments in advertisements, anecdotes passing as news, individual exemplars of the effects of good or

bad policies, editorial contributors, focus groups, social media product updates, consumer feedback loops, crowdsourcing, etc. It seems nothing like a Tea Party event or an Amazon consumer review or a reader response to a piece on Fox News or *The New York Times*, for example, which any one of your source videos on its own might. Put more simply, it seems nothing like the vlogosphere from which you have drawn the videos. Can you say a bit more about your role as compiler and how it transforms the videos you take from YouTube and elsewhere?

NB: The videos come from online social networks, which offer exalted promises of creating social relationships and making the world more open and connected, but instead, produce a cacophony of millions of isolated individual voices shouting at and past each other. What I am trying to do through my editing and compilation is reimagine these separate speakers as collectives taking form as a public body in physical space.

Installation of *Mass Ornament*, 2009.

In *Mass Ornament,* a video installation from 2009, I edited videos of people dancing alone in their rooms, to create a mass dance reminiscent of historical representations of synchronized masses of bodies in formation, from Busby Berkeley to Leni Riefenstahl. I wanted the work to continually shift between depictions of masses and that of individuals. The dancers, alone in their rooms, seem to perform the same movements over and over as if scripted. But at the same time their bodies don't conform to mass ideals, and their sometimes awkward interpretations undermine the 'mass ornament' produced by synchronizing their movements. I added sounds of bodies moving about in space, thumbing, banging and shuffling, as well as ambient sound emphasizing geographical differences, from crowded urban dwellings to the suburbs. Dancers push against walls and slide down doorways, as if attempting to break out of or beyond, the constraints of the rooms in which they seem to be encased.

In *Testament*, a series I began shortly after I completed *Mass Ornament,* I started with an idea that I wanted to represent waves of language and ideas as they flow across the internet, like the shared movements flowing across the net in *Mass Ornament*. Once I choose a topic I want to explore, I look for patterns in the way people talk about it: the words they choose, their tone, their attitudes, the narrative arcs they follow. Sometimes I just look at single words or phrases. Other times I want extrapolations. While I am sometimes surprised, moved, or disturbed by what people have to say, just as often I'm not. They mimic the media – some-

times word-for-word, they vent, they advocate, they confess. They talk to the camera as if it were a friend, an adversary, or a mirror. For the most part people appear to be at home, giving unprompted monologues to an unmanned camera on their computers. Maybe they have no other platform. Maybe they are enticed by the opportunity to broadcast their thoughts to untold numbers of strangers. Though what they say may not always surprise, the fact that they are saying it in this environment and platform is pretty strange and compelling. We have entered another level of alienation when our equivalent of a public forum is a person alone in his or her room speaking to a computer screen. But, my work suggests, we are not alone in our need for public conversation and debate about the circumstances of our lives.

The source material is transformed pretty radically through my editing. I attempt to foreground instances where performances of identity and individual expression appear as social and collective enterprises, sometimes performed as a series of apparent scripts that people internalize, interpret, or enact for the camera. I edit for repetitions and patterns, and create a kind of mass choir out of seemingly individual expression.

In the newest chapter of *Testament*, titled *Now he's out in public, and everyone can see*, currently in progress, I am constructing a narrative out of found vlogs in which speakers describe and evaluate four very prominent African American public figures, as they recount a number of highly charged, racialized media scandals. I construct a narrative out of the assorted clips, interweaving multiple stories and descriptions as they intersect around themes of racial and class identity. Out of these clips, I create a collective performance that explores current popular attitudes, anxieties, and conflicts about race. In a time of instantaneous 24-hour news cycles, emotionally charged media stories spread virally across the internet and are filtered through social media sites where commentators make videos responding to, reenacting, remixing, and retelling the stories. The project seeks to examine these often polarizing responses, which dominate our media-driven conversations about race and class, driven and inflamed by fears over demographic changes, by tough economic times, and by reactions to the our first African American president. My aim is to create an installation that offers greater depth and a broader critical context to otherwise scatter-shot individual online voices by drawing links and making connections and locating tropes and commonalities between different individual rants, responses, and interpretations.

BS: You have used a number of metaphors to describe what you have generated through your selection and editing for repetitions and patterns—mass choir and Greek chorus, among them. The latter characterization is particularly appealing insofar as it suggests a separation of chorus from actors and harmonic parts from spoken parts. As I understand it, the chorus in the original Greek model often took on a separate theatrical role or voice as a kind of figure of the social as such— 'the "vox humana" amid the storm and thunder of the gods', in the words of one interpreter. If this analogy is correct, could you say a bit more about the separate meaning and significance of that choral voice that you have drawn together?

NB: That's exactly right. The work borrows from a Greek model of tragic theatre where the chorus speaks collectively, set apart from and reflecting on, the action of the drama. I like Schlegel's description of the Greek chorus as an ideal spectator who watches over and com-

ments on the action. Aristotle also suggests that the chorus embodies the reactions of audiences and the people against the kings and their misdeeds.

In the various chapters of *Testament*, I've created choruses of vloggers who comment on actions that have taken place off screen. This is especially apparent in *Laid Off*, where I've compiled and edited together videos in which people discuss losing their jobs into a kind of talking choir. The actors, that is, those that have produced the tragedy – heads of companies, Wall Street, Alan Greenspan, our political system – are not heard from directly. Instead, we hear from a choir of 'the people' or 'the masses', united in their language, as well as in their anger, frustration, and their despair over the economic crisis and its impact on their lives.
I should add that though they often speak in unison, the vloggers are still depicted as distinct individuals speaking in their separate and unique private spaces.

Installation of *Testament* showing a detail from *Laid Off*, 2009.

Although their experiences are shown to be collective – even the language they choose to describe their situation is similar – they aren't reduced to an abstraction in the way the Gods or the key actors are. They are not perfect machines, reciting in absolute unison, but instead unique individuals who interpret the choral script to fit their own story.

In *Now he's out in public, and everyone can see*, I represent greater discord among different choral groups. Although the various choruses still reiterate and respond to the primary actors - in this case the mass media - as well as to the secondary actors - the media celebrities - they don't speak in harmony. And some of what they have to say is pretty repellant as they recite and reenact themes they pick up from conservative actors like Fox News.

BS: When it is repellent, is the choral 'vox humana' still morally distinguishable from Fox's 'storm and thunder' and thus also sympathetic? In other words, is it a symptom speaking or is it the disease itself? What is the political role of your voice insofar as you are responsible for the choral unity of otherwise disparate repellent voices and the resulting gain of social and political emphasis or force?

NB: The choral voices work somewhat differently in the various projects – sometimes it's unified, and people appear to speak in unison without conflict. There the analogy of the collective as a choir performing against the backdrop of dominant forces is most vivid. Other times, the choirs aren't unified: in *I Am Not*, and in *Now he's out in public, and everyone can see*, individuals perform struggles over identity and self-identification, and there is no consensus. Someone once described *I Am Not* as a punk rock song – fast, intense, and compact – a 2-minute ensemble that creates a map with different points of identification around the word 'gay' and its associative identities.

Installation of *Testament,* showing *I Am Not*, 2009.

In Now *he's out in public, and everyone can see*, a longer and more elaborate chapter, I am looking at the way vloggers discuss a series of media stories involving four celebrated – and vilified – African American men. Each has been accused of occupying his powerful position under false pretenses and of holding a false identity, whether because of mixed ethnicity, apparent racial identification, relationships, appearance, public persona, or social class. The piece explores the ways that media propagated stories are embodied, articulated, and interpreted by vloggers. I highlight instances where it appears as if the men in question are being judged for having crossed a racial boundary, and look for moments vloggers attempt to define and articulate the limits and the boundaries of an authentic or acceptable black identity. Often the vloggers appear unaware of the racial aspects of their positions. I have a cluster of speakers recite the too familiar phrase 'I am not a racist, but…' followed by 'some of my best friends are…'. I form clusters of choirs around types of articulations, some of them familiar racist or anti-racist tropes, reading between the lines of vloggers' monologues, looking at subtexts that mask themselves as something else – as racialized – in a time some had imagined would be 'post-racial', making connections between seemingly disparate media stories and gossip. I think that by showing these articulations to be collective, rather than necessarily giving them political force for the cause, of say Birthers, or segregationists, it distills various positions and reveals them as scripted. I also depict a large dissonant choir, filled with disharmonious voices and discord. That still doesn't necessarily make some of the racist scripts or those that recite them sympathetic, but it reminds us that they are malleable formations – open to change and just one mode of expression in a large complex musical number.

BS: One of the most appealing aspects of all these recent works for me is the way in which they are at one in the same time scripted (and thus conceptually and rhetorically polished in the manner of Fox/RNC talking points cum mass-mediated commonsense) and emotionally raw and authentic. It seems to me that there are two ways this combination might be under-

stood: first, as the nexus of any effective propaganda (such as, at one end of the spectrum, the historic response to blood and soil imagery in Nazi Germany, for example, or, at the other end, the likely response to the recent television advertisements for the iPhone video-calling feature that have their emotional engineering down to a T); and, second, as the nexus of any and all effective emotional expression. We all need rhetorical and conceptual conventions to understand and communicate how we feel. This comes through strongly for me in *I am Not*, for example, where the rhetorical form of denial seems at once so conventional, so disturbing, and so human, and in *Laid Off*, which plays out the stages of grief in a manner that is both immediately predictable and profoundly heart-wrenching. Something related might be said about the work in *Now he's out in public, and everyone can see*. In each case, because your editing brings out choral expression around emotional keys, the humanity of the convention is foregrounded in such a way that it makes it hard for me to see them as strictly mass-mediated affect.

I take this accomplishment of yours to be very valuable because it escapes both the undue objectivism of sociological or statistical understanding and the undue subjectivism of the isolated individual exemplar. In this way it enables the beholder (at least this beholder!) to experience and respond to that emotion more substantively than otherwise. In other words, my own experience is one of coming away from your work with the sense of having a richer understanding of the human dimension of the various constituencies represented, and therefore a better sense of how I might respond as a critic or friend or otherwise. In this way it strikes me as a distinctive form of documentary. I'll try to elaborate on this last point in a question to follow, but for now could you say a bit more about the emotional complexity of these works? Particularly, could you say something further about the emotional valence of your voice? For example, if we were to say that you are performing the role of choir conductor, how would your performance compare to this or that bravura conductor's performance in which her emotion, energy, timing, expressive hand-waving, etc. are understood to successfully carry or direct or enlarge the performance of the group?

NB: I'm not really sure how much I can add to your very precise analysis. I've thought about my approach as very different from some other art works that also orchestrate archives of chatter and personal blogs online such as *The Listening Post* by Mark Hansen and Ben Rubin, and *We Feel Fine* by Jonathan Harris and Sep Kamvar. Both works use the tools of the statistician, algorithmically processing large quantities of online material to produce data visualizations and audio streams. While compelling in their depictions of the flow and magnitude of voices chattering across the internet, individual voices are all treated the same, subsumed in an undifferentiated whole. In my work, single speakers may be placed in a collective unit at different moments, but they aren't standardized or abstracted. The pathos and vulnerability – and the specificity – of their original expressions with their unpolished, clumsy, yet urgent intimacy, remains intact.

Through my edits, there is a movement between individual speakers and collective units, and viewers can linger over the details, the shared characteristics, and the differences among the environmental self-portraits the vloggers have produced. My edits build up to key movements with shared pregnant pauses, snide asides and interjections, emotional outbursts, and

personal insights or revelations. The movement between the isolated individual (isolated in their room, and in the video frame) and the much larger collective units may invite what you describe as your sympathy for (or identification with) the speakers regardless of the correctness or originality of their perspectives.

BS: Yes, I think you are right about the movement between the individual and the collective inviting (I would say 'enabling') my sympathy, and it does so in a way that the algorithmic works you cite don't even touch on. In the end, the distinction that concerns me may come down to a rudimentary modern/postmodern divide over the definition of the public or publicness. For example, we might take a Bergsonian like Brian Massumi to stand for the latter when he writes 'From the network's point of view, the human will is an interrupter', an 'irruption of transductive indeterminacy', an unformed 'raw material or natural resource', and Karl Marx to stand for the former when he writes, 'It is not the fact that the human being objectifies himself inhumanly, in opposition to himself, but the fact that he objectifies himself in distinction from and in opposition to abstract thinking, that constitutes the posited essence of the estrangement and the thing to be superseded'. That is, where Massumi casts the problem as one of the relation between individual nodes of human will and the collectivized abstraction of the network, Marx casts it as a matter of good and bad – or better, subjectivized and objectivized – abstraction.

In a nutshell, the experience I take your work to offer is something akin to the point of tension that Marx describes, and to be further afield from that taken up by Massumi. In other words, the experience offered by a piece like *Laid Off* seems to be one where the tension between the storm and thunder of the gods and the 'vox humana' is palpable, whereas in the algorithmic works you cite, human will registers only as a natural material expended in the free-market economy of the network. The critical difference between the two models to my mind is the difference between having you or the algorithm in the conductor's seat, or, put differently, it is the difference between the 'vox humana' and the 'vox mechanica'. Either way, it is an abstraction, but in one instance that abstraction is reaching towards class-consciousness and thus towards humanity, and in the other towards the false, machine-modeled naturalism of network or market time.

NB: Another way to put it is that I am trying to orchestrate a variety of quests to define and describe the self as a part of (and agent in) a larger social body. The tension is between this depiction of active attempts at self-identification and political subjectivity, and that of isolated individuals in an alienated space.

BS: Yes, terrific! It seems to me that the presence of your desire to orchestrate those quests, to give form and expression to their collective life, is what is so exciting and resonant and compelling about your recent work. In sum, I'd say that desire is the living embodiment of what I have been calling the 'vox humana' even when the chorus fails to achieve its humanity by merely mechanically parroting the storm and thunder of the gods.

This brings me to the promised further question about documentary. Documentary has always been socially minded and often that has manifested itself in forms that are meant to

realize that sociality themselves. We might think of the redistribution of the authority of representation from management to labour by the worker-photography movement in the 1920s and the public funding of various documentary projects in the 1930s, for example, or the grand efforts in the 1950s to use serial photography to represent social form in the *Family of Man* exhibition, Robert Frank's *The Americans*, and the first formulation of Bernd and Hilla Becher's life project, or the efforts to bring out multiple intersecting layers of psychosocial experience in the photographic essays of Allan Sekula, Martha Rosler, Mary Kelly, and others beginning in the 1970s. In each of these cases, the distributed, multipart form of the work itself served as both the bearer and the enactor of sociality or social being by making the relations between the parts, and of the parts to the whole, a central formal concern. In each of these examples it might be said that the form of distribution represented both passively reflects the social world it documents and actively reconstitutes, and thus transforms, that world. One of the features of your recent work that seems so appealing is the way in which it takes up the question of documentary as a question of distribution or socialization of form and reinvents it once again. You said before that your work 'aims to make visible social facts'. If you agree with my premise about documentary and its application to your work, could you speak further to how the multipart form itself achieves not only a revelation of social fact but also an enactment or realization of sociality itself? If you agree with my genealogy, how does it do so differently?

NB: Yes I see my project in part as an attempt to develop and invent new documentary forms. One obvious difference between my work and some of my precursors is that instead of hitting the streets to collect my footage, I go online and cull from what I'd describe as a continuous stream of video instant replays with analysis or commentary about everyday life. I'm documenting life mediated through other people's descriptions, creating both a document and an interpretation of current rhetoric, including how people speak in online space. My relationship to my subjects is further mediated by the camera and by the computer screen. While in some ways I have a greater reach – more mobility and easier access to the inside of people's homes across the country and the world – in other ways my distance is greater. This of course is a condition of our times, and it's one that is pointed to in my use of multiple screens of single people framed within their individual cells.

The serial form the work takes – that there are many speaking in unison about a particular set of conditions and circumstances – also suggests its sociality. I take many original 'I's and make them into 'we's. In this respect, my project is both documentary and aspirational, taking material already out there, and aspiring to make it more of a social experience than it currently is. The collective 'we' cuts through even aspects of life we often think of as most private, such as our psychic states and their treatment. In *My Meds*, clusters of speakers recited a long, rhythmic list of psycho-pharmaceuticals they were prescribed. On the one hand the piece reflects our heavily medicated society, but on the other, it shows how people now speak about what once was considered extremely private in new public forums, attempting to transform personal experience and trauma into something social and public. This is true as well in *Laid Off*, where people's private, personal experiences of the impact of the economy on their lives are made social and public.

The installation of *Testament* may also speak to your question of sociality. Unlike with viewing the source material, the installation tries to create both a physical and a social experience. Sound comes from different speakers at different moments, and the images, much larger than they are on a computer screen, appear in different parts of a room, on different walls or screens, requiring a viewer to move around the work and the room. Whereas the standard viewer of the source material is a single person at her computer, the installations enable a viewing experience that is active rather than passive, public rather than private, and social rather than isolated.

BS: Consistent with the best part of the documentary tradition, it seems like your position as an artist hovers somewhere between those of the anthropologist, the labour organizer, and the composer or dramatist. With that middle term in mind – organization – could you say something about how your upbringing has influenced your current work, focusing particularly, perhaps, on your uncle Murray Bookchin? He had an unusually long career that shifted in various ways over the course of the 20th century, but I'm thinking of a piece he wrote in 1995 taking on Hakim Bey and the later work of Michel Foucault, among others, in a manner that might be said to be characteristic of his thought as a whole. His main critical concern was with what he refered to there as 'lifestyle anarchism' or an anarchism that mistakenly and 'arrogantly derides structure, organization, and public involvement'. This tendency is only one small and relatively insignificant branch of what he referred to as 'ideological individualism', of course, but it would be easy to see how it overlaps with various tendencies in the art world such as those sometimes associated with the term 'relational aesthetics'. So, I guess I am asking you two things: to say something about how your family history formed your social thinking and how that social thinking sits in relationship to existing efforts made by artists to produce socially relevant or resonant art.

NB: The article you mention 'Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism' reflects Murray's frustration with the way he saw the term anarchism being emptied of value as it had come to represent a fierce individualism, more a fashion statement than a term grounded in the transformative social movements he held so dear. He began to distance himself from anarchism – didn't like to be referred to as an anarchist, as he had been for years.

I have always had great admiration for and attachment to Murray, his ideas, his incredible commitment, and his mind. He's part of a family history that I feel very close to, and includes my grandparents and great aunts, all very active in union organizing in New York City. My great aunts were smart, tough, and witty Russian women, living in Brooklyn, communists and members of The International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union. My parents, New Deal liberals, met and fell in love at a red-diaper summer camp in upstate New York, where they were both counselors. We grew up singing union songs and protest songs that my Dad played on the guitar (though as a teenager my interests switched from folk songs to Punk rock, equally filled with protest and anger, but maybe less directed!) During the summers we went to a Quaker camp in Vermont, where my Father worked as the camp Doctor in exchange for our tuition. The camp's emphasis was on cooperative work and living. I remember hanging out with – and being dazzled by – the Shabazz girls (Malcolm X' daughters), who were a little older than me and who also attended the camp.

As for where all this fits into existing art world efforts: it's pretty daunting to try to step back and place my work – especially current work – into a tread. Anyway, isn't that your job as art historian? I guess I'd like to believe that I work in the gaps, in the areas that are missing from current conversations. But here's an attempt: I have for a long time felt an affinity with most of the artists you've mentioned in your genealogy. As we talked about before, I am very interested in documentary and in interrogating and reworking of its forms, and so I am drawn to works like *Nine Scripts for a Nation at War*, by Ashley Hunt et al, Harun Farocki, Sharon Hayes, some work of Pierre Huyghe, Omer Fast, Eyal Sivan, Chantal Akerman, Zhang Ke Jia, Ken Jacobs, among many others. Chantal Mouffe's writing on agonistic spaces, and Rosalyn Deutsche's discussions of political philosopher Claude Lefort's ideas about radical democracy and public space have also been important to me.

BS: Well, truth be told, I'd rather my job not be artworld trend-tracking! Could you say a bit more about your role as a teacher? For example, what place if any does your role educating young people in an art school environment play in the social imagining that you develop so effectively in your recent work – in *Laid Off*, for example, or *My Meds*, or *I am Not*, or *Now he's out in public, and everyone can see*? For purposes of comparison I am thinking of Joseph Beuys and the role his notion of 'social sculpture' played in the context of his teaching, and later, his organizational work on behalf of the Green Party. Or we might think of others closer to home like Hans Haacke's career as a teacher at Cooper Union or Ron Clark's Whitney Program and the tremendous legacy they have had through their students. Or we might think of the plethora of recent DIY educational initiatives, like 16 Beaver in New York or the Public School in Los Angeles and elsewhere, or even the student protests, teach-ins, etc. that have emerged in response to the privatizing of the University of California and other institutions around the world. Is the social work of teaching connected to the social work developed in your recent art? What about the fact that, on some basic material, sociological, anthropological, and economic level, you are teaching art to artists? What role, if any, does that play in your work about race or employment or sexuality?

NB: I think of art making and teaching as fundamentally creative social practices. I teach from the position that most art making is collaborative, that in the current parlance, artists edit, remix and sample ideas, attitudes, and images, working from within culture rather than outside of it. I think some of the best work comes out of dialogue, critical awareness, and active engagement in the world.

It is really disturbing that art education – that all higher education in this country – has become prohibitively expensive, and that students are being shut out or are leaving school with enormous debt. We're witnessing a crisis in higher education that I think is going to reach a breaking point soon, although it's unclear how it will end. So, while I don't think the DIY initiatives replace college or universities, it is great to see them out there.

BS: Perhaps we should end with a general question about your role as a manner of anthropologist or ethnographer. I find this to be one of the most exciting aspects of your recent work because it seems to realize much of the promise of Malinowski's old 'ethnographer's magic' (or an accurate narrative expression of how the experience and affective orientation of a social group can be realized through the subjective impressions of the writer or artist) even as it avoids many of the pitfalls of counter-identification, scientism, primitivism, and the like that anthropology came to be wary of during its self-critical phase, for example, or that Hal Foster detailed for contemporary art in his study 'The Artist as Ethnographer'. Could you say something about your status as a participant-observer? That is, insofar as, on the one hand your participation is registered in the view count below the video postings of others and in your own postings in return, and on the other hand, your work is about reflexive observation: to what extent is back-and-forth, insider-outsider, intersubjectivity a constitutive meaning for your work? In other words, to what extent is the meaning and significance of your work about a way of relating to, and participating in, the attitudes, beliefs, and values of others as well as depicting those attitudes, beliefs, and values?

NB: I'll go back to a discussion of the function of the chorus in Greek theatre to answer your question. One of the roles of the chorus in Greek theatre was to act as a bridge between the audience and the actors, mediating the action between the two and interacting with both. In the choruses I create and the commentary I assemble, I variously present different positions, and speak through the assembled voices. In other words, at varying points in the different works, the chorus's commentary becomes my own.

Online documentation of *Mass Ornament*:
http://vimeo.com/5403546

Online documentation of *Laid Off*:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HoWzWrsugdY
http://vimeo.com/19364123

Online documentation of *My Meds*:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PzFhEdht5bo
http://vimeo.com/19588547

Online documentation of *I Am Not*:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8G78sFBPU_4
http://vimeo.com/19588631

NON-WESTERN AND GARLAND

LINDA WALLACE

As an artist and curator I greeted the eruption of the internet with enthusiasm, seeing it as a medium with specific qualities and materialities. By 1994 I was using email-address-like titles for an exhibition in Singapore, and the CeBit, Germany in 1995 heralded a trajectory where internet artworks formed an integral part of all my new media curated projects to come. My interest in the material possibilities of different media began with photography, 16mm film and super 8, to analogue Hi8 video, moving into digital photography, video and internet.

Two videos I made exemplify a moving towards this digital/online worldview. *lovehotel: formulation for the emergence of the new* (2000) combined Hi8 and digital video footage with a variety of texts written from 1994 to 1997 by frontier cyberfeminist Francesca Da Rimini focusing on her online experiences at LambdaMOO (founded in the early 90s, it is the oldest text-based virtual reality system to which multiple users are connected simultaneously); and *eurovision* (2001) which I saw as template for the possibilities of online video in terms of the intersections of narrative, composition and non/linearity.

My 1995 MFA looked at pre-internet art and technology in southeast Asia. I was curious as to what kind of spaces different technologies and mediums invited, particularly those relating to identity and geopolitics. These spatial and aesthetic qualities, opening up new ways of seeing-*through* the medium, formed the basis of my 2003 PhD dissertation and were also explored in curated projects such as *PROBE*, the first new media arts exhibition in China in 1999. Such questions continue today in my work. *non-western* was part of the exhibition of the Video Vortex event in Split in 2009, and what follows here is the gist of the presentation about that work and another project, *garland*.

I finished *non-western* in December 2008. It is a video for three-screen installation and is also on the internet where the five parts or 'chapters' can be accessed in any order, via five different websites.

The genesis for *non-western* goes back to March 2005 with *LivingTomorrow*. Produced as artist-in-residence at the Netherlands Media Art Institute (NIMk) it was a three-screen video database work with a random-access overlay. The idea was that one could access it directly from the server in gallery space but also bring it to an (urban) screen near you via the internet. *LivingTomorrow* pivoted centrally around the murder of Dutch film-maker Theo van Gogh by Mohammed Bouyeri in Amsterdam in 2004. I cut-up scenes from the American soap opera *The Bold and the Beautiful* and added my own subtitles to create a narrative that could be seen in any order. There were also images of the Dutch urban and rural landscape and those which spoke to the migrant culture I was surrounded by, and indeed part of – focusing on the swirling glorious colour and pattern in Muslim women's headscarves.

In 2006 in Berlin I made a short video *TOR*, looking into the largely immigrant faces of people in the home-crowd gathered to celebrate their win over Argentina in the semi-final of the World Cup. *TOR* begged the question: 'who, now are the Germans?'

non-western built on this interest in national identity and migration. In late 2006 I was invited into a project set in the 'Green Heart', an area bounded by Utrecht, Amsterdam, Den Hague and Rotterdam and stretching south to Gouda. Containing the remnants of what was once a strong farming community the Green Heart still feels a bit wild but is rapidly filling up with highways, train lines, electricity poles and new housing developments. What was striking was the almost total absence of migrants living there. *non-western* began as a response to this.

Early in 2007 I'd registered a number of URLs without knowing exactly why, with names like undergrowth.eu, the-shadowlands.eu, allochtoonen.eu. mysafehouse.eu and off-the-radar. com. These later became the 'chapter headings' of the five sections of *non-western*. At the time I was unsure of the spelling of allochtonen. Allochtoon, in Dutch, signifies 'foreigner', and allochtonen.nl was taken, however the mistakenly spelt 'allochtoonen' was available. Checking on the internet I found hundreds of cases of the same mistake, mainly made by other allochtonen. I registered the mispelling.

I started gathering fragments for the work, video footage from the train to Gouda from Amsterdam and also vast amounts of photographs that I'd taken in the area. I had the idea *to rinse this material through the internet*, give it a wash out there and then bring it back in to dry. The photographs were strung together into QT H262 movie files at various compression rates (ie high, medium and low), uploaded to YouTube - going through their proprietary compression - then downloaded and inserted into the work's video fabric.

In the first part of *non-western* these stills are accompanied by a voice, my voice, reciting the Nicene Creed, written in AD 325. I had my reasons. Mainly they were to do with the power of the voice, and how, in this religious context it can invoke embodiment of those past, and of communities past. It was to do with the relation of the voice to the embodied imagination. This incantation of the ancient Christian creed is set against images of what could be thought of as classic Dutch landscapes. The fact that the creed was adopted by the first ecumenical council in Nicaea, Turkey is a curious irony given that Turkish (and all) migrants in The Netherlands (NL) were being increasingly 'othered' in Dutch society – 2008 was the time of the rise and rise of Geert Wilders.

Fragments from the Dutch soap *Goede Tijd Slechte Tijd* were combined with facts found online to do with the attitude of the Dutch towards migrants. A few scenes from *Floris*, a Dutch series from the sixties directed by Paul Verhoeven, and starring Rutger Hauer as medieval knight, was added to the mix. A theme began emerging around the entity of Rutger Hauer, performing the quintessence of Dutchness. This was then enhanced by including a scene from another Verhoeven film, *Soldier of Orange,* where Hauer has to prove to the German occupiers he is genuinely Dutch by saying various difficult Dutch words.

And then there was *Blade Runner*. I would say that the whole work pivots on these included fragments. In the film from Philip K. Dick's book, Rutger Hauer plays replicant leader Roy Batty. Instrumentalising Hauer-as-replicant in this way in *non-western* calls into question what is Dutch and what is not, a debate which was then and is still raging in NL.

The image meltdown of the *Blade Runner* fragments occurred when the film changed formats/codecs and seemed to get jagged on the code signaling movement within the frame. I enhanced this accidental effect by running it backwards and forwards again in After Effects in high resolution. *non-western* plays with various codecs throughout the piece, plays with their translation from one to another and with the aesthetics of their misinterpretation. You could also say that this mistranslation serves to make the images strange, to 'other' them, to render them allochtoon(en).

non-western seemed to fall neatly into five sections. The URLs became chapter headings, and each was uploaded onto one of the five sites, able to then be viewed in any order. There was also the linear three-screen installation version.

The second project I will discuss is one curated by Marina Fokidis for the Pulse Art Fair NY in 2009. Participant artists had to devise a playlist up to 30 minutes of YouTube clips, blurring the roles of curator and artist.

How to approach YouTube? I had in mind a whole lot of different ways to go. I sat down in front of YouTube to begin, and absent-mindedly played a 'favourite' from my own YouTube site, the Laughing Clowns song *Eternally Yours*. YouTube, as it does, spat up a few suggestions based on my selection. I clicked through their suggestions, listening and looking at clips of bands from the eighties in Australia while still working on my paper list of where I thought I wanted to go. Soon I stopped writing ideas on the paper list and followed links. Selecting the song *I Touch Myself* by the Divinyls I was startled to find hundreds of versions of people covering the song, with attitudes ranging from hilarity to poignancy. Intrigued, I knew I'd found my playlist.

Then it was just a process of sorting and selection, settling finally on clips where people actually sing, not just mime. This song, with lyrics 'I touch myself, thinking about you' was seemingly a private fantasy rendered public. One after another people were seen in their rooms singing to an unknown you. There were also choirs singing the song, bands, tipsy singers in bars and at weddings, but mainly it was the solitary singer at home that interested me. Reaching out, sliding across windows and doors, seeking with their voice transformation through embodiment. The selection seemed to say a lot about YouTube, about the banality and ordinariness of most of the uploads but...the humanity!

I called the playlist *garland*, like a garland of flowers strung together on the same rope, echoing the internet's world of self-similarity, the same yet with variation, where being is pursued by automated software shadows.

Upon receipt of the playlists from the artists, curator Marina Fokidis immediately downloaded the clips and strung them together in video files for playing in the Pulse exhibition. Quite quickly clips were taken offline by users, not because they were on the playlists (at least I don't think so) but just because this is how it is with YouTube. Gaps and jumps began to appear in the 'live' playlists of all the artists. What would it mean to have re-uploaded the absent clips? Where and what was the real work? Was the video version played in the exhibition a *documentation* of an ephemeral moment in YouTube time, or was it the work itself? Or are the playlists themselves as they are now the real works, full of omissions and gaps, continually breaking down further over time? Perhaps in fact there are numerous versions of the playlists and of the entire exhibition, with exponentially infinite variations over time.

non-western by Linda Wallace, Dec 2008:
www.lindawallace.eu

garland playlist:
http://www.youtube.com/profile?user=randomrules09#p/p

WHEN FILM AND DATABASE COLLIDE

PERRY BARD
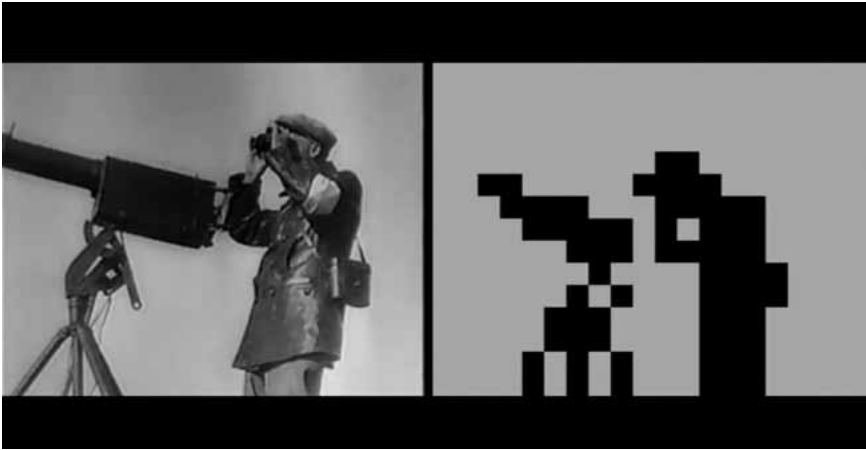
Upload to Shot 1166 by Greg Gallagher, USA.

'*Cinema continues to interest us for that which it is not*'. [1]

At the premiere of *Man With A Movie Camera: The Global Remake*, [2] a stranger in the park asked me what I thought the piece was about. Instead of responding I asked for his impression to which he replied 'There's an old film on the left, and on the right people are mashing it up'. I was relieved that in public space there was a reading for people who may never have seen Vertov's masterpiece. At the same time I found the inevitable comparison between left and right problematic.

Man With a Movie Camera: The Global Remake is inspired by and a tribute to Russian film-maker and theorist Dziga Vertov. It is a participatory video shot by people around the world who are interpreting the original script of his 1929 experimental documentary. Curious to know how the idea of a remake could be interpreted, I invited a range of possibilities on the intro page of the website. Contributors upload images to dziga.perrybard.net where the film is logged shot by shot. A scene index and tags allow users to select their shots while software developed for this project by John Weir [3] archives, sequences and streams their

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1. Benjamin Fondane, quoted in Annette Michelson, 'Film and The Radical Aspiration', in Gregory Battcock (ed.) *The New American Cinema*, New York: Dutton, 1967, p. 84.
2. The remake was first screened on a large public LED display as part of the Urban Screens Conference at All Saint's Garden, Manchester UK. 11-12 October 2007.
3. www.smokinggun.com.

submissions as a film. There can be multiple uploads for each shot, making infinite versions of the film possible. The software selects the shots on a daily basis.

I first began questioning what a remake might be after Bulgarian artist Boyan Dobrev and I replicated six minutes of *Man With A Movie Camera* for VideoArchaeology, a videoart festival held in the town of Sofia, Bulgaria. [4] While the contemporary version did produce a portrait of Sofia in the Vertovian tradition, the results seemed predictable. Simultaneously, I was collaborating with a community group to create a portrait of their community for the Staten Island Ferry Terminal Building. [5] When we were testing the public installation, people who were not in the video wanted to know how they could have a voice. To do that I needed a database. In *The Language of New Media*, [6] Lev Manovich proclaims Vertov the originator of the database. I stole his analysis.

In cinema most crimes are solved because life and Hollywood need alignment for television to be real. Vertov must have known that: his manifesto, which I consider to be contained within the titles at the beginning of *Man With A Movie Camera*, declares the film to be 'an experiment in the cinematic communication of visible events without the aid of intertitles, without the aid of a scenario without the aid of theatre'. This sounds like the definition of documentary. The film is subtitled 'an excerpt from the diary of a cameraman'. The first image sequence in the film is a superimposition: the upper third of the frame shows the man with a movie camera ascending a mound and placing his camera on a tripod, while the bottom two-thirds is a still image of the camera. Vertov's cameraman is filmed in the middle of traffic, in the middle of train tracks about to be run over by an oncoming train, climbing a smokestack to get an aerial view, suspended in a bucket over a dam, getting close-ups of a woman sleeping. His film is a performative ode to speed and to the industrial revolution, driven by footage that is sped up, slowed down, superimposed and pixelated in sequences of 2-frame shots. And how did he get that close-up?

'Freed from the rule of sixteen-seventeen frames per second, free of the limits of time and space, I put together any given points in the universe, no matter where I've recorded them'. [7]

This interpretive 'real' is fueled by Vertov's vision of a future in which an army of 'kinoks' (cameramen) will update world news every four hours. Today we have that army of kinoks, and YouTube is the world stage.

This 'real' as it is updated by participants on the website of *Man With A Movie Camera: The Global Remake* is also subjective. There are contemporary versions of the original: for example mobile phones, flip cams, webcams, and HD cams replace the 1920's film cam-

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4. VideoArchaeology: International VideoArt Festival, Sofia, Bulgaria, 1-22 October, 1999.
5. *The Terminal Salon*, 2000, under 'Public Art' at www.perrybard.net.
6. Lev Manovich, *The Language of New Media*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000.
7. Dziga Vertov, in Annette Michelson (ed.) *Kino-Eye The Writings of Dziga Vertov*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984, p.18.
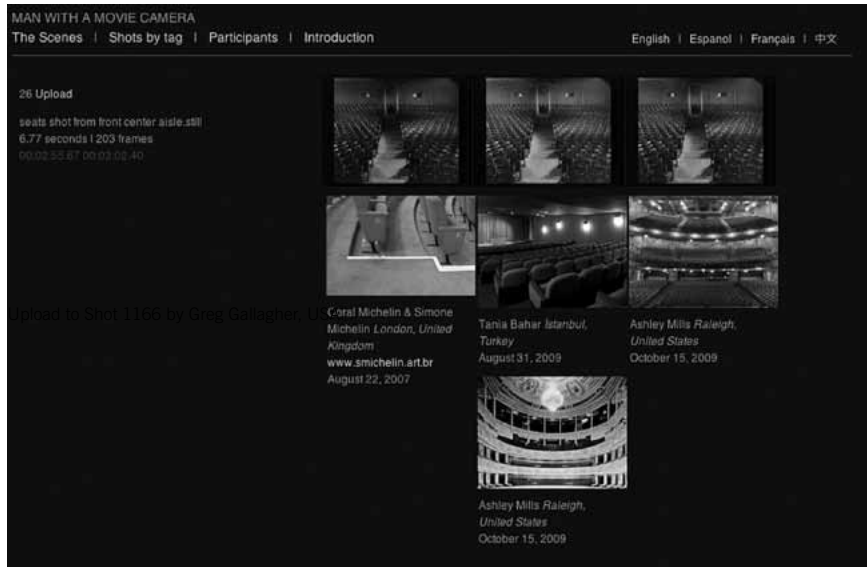
Upload to Shot 1166 by Greg Gallagher, USA.

era; an underground metro replaces a train (shot 1246); a screen grab of final-cut software substitutes for the editing room (shot 331). Today there are also camerawomen: shots 129 and 130 show a woman on a bicycle arriving to chauffeur a woman with a movie camera, matching the two shots in which Vertov's cameraman sets off for work with formal precision. Other gender-specific interventions include a video grab from *Mulholland Drive* [8] of two women kissing (shot 803), women getting married (shots 386-89), and the words Lenin Club replaced by Women's Club (shot 1085). There are stills replacing moving images, and vice versa. For shot 441, the close-up of an eye, 18 people have uploaded exact matches, but someone from Beijing also uploaded the close-up of a mouth. There are digitally constructed images: rectangles aligning to replicate the image of man with a movie camera (shot 1166); the modular animation of parts of a building interprets Vertov's superimposition of two halves of a city street (shot 290); the mound the cameraman climbs in shot 19 is replaced by a mobile phone displaying the video it captured. There is stark social reality: a woman in Bangkok sewing outdoors with a mask over her mouth (shot 589). There are lo-res and hi-def uploads, more evidence of today's socio-politico-economic conditions. The cameraman is the army of kinoks envisaged by Vertov and his montage, now software-enabled, changes on a daily basis.

When I launched the project in August 2007, I was focused on exploring the capabilities of the internet to achieve world-wide collaboration. I had divided the film into one minute scenes to facilitate browsing, and imagined uploads for every shot in Vertov's experimental documentary. Recognizing that most of my contacts are from the West, I commissioned foreign correspondents in parts of the world my communications don't reach: China, Ko-

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8.   *Mulholland Drive* (dir. David Lynch, 2001).

rea, Japan, Thailand, Pakistan, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Israel, and Lebanon. Their role was to translate the call into their languages and to organize uploads in their parts of the world. My first upload was not from a foreign correspondent, and came with an email with the subject heading 'Here's something I did'. It was a bare-chested man in a sports jacket dancing and lip-synching with an entire Scene (#13) in the background. I was afraid I had launched YouTube. I made my first rule: I couldn't upload myself. On 24 August 2007, someone uploaded an image of a cat in the title sequence. I banned it from the site, wanting to discourage similarly meaningless uploads, but I also made a rule that I would accept all uploads except those that completely disregarded Vertov's film.

With less than three months between the commission and the premiere in October 2007, the initial stages were an especially bumpy ride. The translation from film/video to the internet is still alien to older generations, as well as to many in non-Western countries. I received 32 emails in one day from someone in Tel Aviv who was learning to compress and upload files. In Belgrade, access was paid for by the hour, a major disadvantage for a project that needs browsing. On our end we couldn't handle one minute uploads: I had to ask people to resubmit their scenes as short clips, a tedious task (for them). Seeking more diverse uploads in the form of citizen journalism, I searched YouTube for people who had uploaded current events – soldiers in Iraq for example – asking them to put their uploads into the project, even suggesting where they might fit. I did the same when Hurricane Katrina hit. I sent blind emails to seemingly relevant organizations in Africa. None of these strategies worked; I still have only one upload from the entire continent of Africa, and this was submitted by a CBC reporter living in Montreal.

In 2008, as the remake was beginning to gather steam, I started giving workshops worldwide: they confirmed what we already know about the digital divide, a term we seem to have forgotten. In the 1990s, the phrase denoted a lack of access to the technology. While this problem still exists, the next step is imagining what can be done with it – a stage which requires knowledge and exposure. At a presentation I gave in the Information Sciences Department at Tsing Hua University in Beijing, the graduate students were fascinated that anyone would independently come up with such a project. In workshops in both Beijing and in Tokyo, I discovered that few students had ever uploaded video to the internet. Because these workshops were in the context of film classes, students had to learn to compress files. Those who later used their mobile phones as capture devices were thrilled by instant gratification; still, that use of the mobile was novel to them. In Bogotá, the workshop moved from the university classroom full of computers to a hallway in a different building where the connection speed made uploading possible. Though there was access to smart classrooms, these generally were not in Fine Arts or Film departments. I might add that all the above conditions still exist in parts of New York City where I live, but they are ignored by a general public in favour of the latest gadgets.

For months after the project was online, uploads were six degrees of separation. They came from film/video-makers I knew, people on common interest listservs, and from foreign correspondents I had commissioned. I myself was impressed by the matches or interpretations.
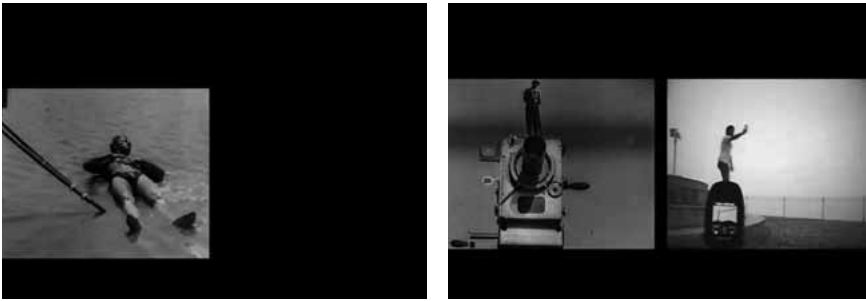
Scene 39, Shot 909.

Upload to Scene 2, Shot 19. Nelson Ricardo. Brazil.

A few years later there are uploads I would choose to eliminate. Here are my criteria: The uploads are either blurred or too dark to see (quality in the filmic tradition) or have a hazy or no discernible reference to the Vertov shot (quality in the conceptual tradition). In 2010, I created a new category allowing all uploads to remain part of the database. Those shots that don't meet my criteria remain visible in the scene index and tags, but are eliminated from the stream.

A new film streams daily on the website with Vertov's original on the left, the remake on the right. When there are no uploads for a shot, the right side of the screen remains blank. This space reconfigures the viewing pattern, shifting attention from a two window montage to the single window on the left, the right remaining an active absence in recognition of the missing upload. There are other significant absences or spaces in the project: one is the space around and between the original and the remake, which mutates according to the format of the upload; the other is the absence of representation from places in the world where there are no uploads. Almost three years later it is these absences that I find most telling. These are the spaces of engagement that determine the aesthetics of the piece, spaces I consider central to the remake.

While the uploads on the right are a developing database reflecting participation in the project, the spaces between and around both windows vary constituting physical evidence of the devices from which the uploads are made. Aspect ratios of 16:9 versus 4:3 alter the shape of the space, some participants crop their images. The dual-screen structure creates an uneasy alliance between past and future, the right window is a collision course of one night stands.

One of my favourite comments about this piece was from a critic, who said 'wiki doesn't work'. I've thought about it long and often. There seems to be a lot at stake here: the question of authorship, another model, a shift in perspective? The juxtaposition of film with database begs these questions. At the same time database cinema, social cinema, and participatory cinema pose other questions: What if Beirut bumping up against Bangkok doesn't make for continuity? What if the upload of seven consecutive shots by seven people from different cities and countries doesn't make for a uniform aesthetic? What if the software accepts uploads in all aspect ratios making no attempt to standardize them? What if a film is being authored collectively? What are the rules?

Upload to Scene 29, Shot 706. Soyun Bang. Korea.

In 'Sentences on Conceptual Art', Sol Lewitt writes: 'If the artist changes his mind midway through the execution of the piece he compromises the result and repeats past results'. [9] Questions concerning quality, aesthetics, the problem of democracy (curating a project that invites participation) – but especially Lewitt's words regarding the problem of repeating past results – were on my mind when I attended *Transmediale* in 2010. At a critical debate entitled 'Innovative Artistic and Economic Practices', seven of the eight panelists presented a variety of collaborative participatory projects. The event felt like an early 1970s love fest – without the benefits of an LSD capsule. As my mind wandered, I recalled Claire Bishop's article 'Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics'. [10] Acknowledging a 'long tradition of viewer participation and active spectatorship', Bishop questions the nature of the endeavors of 1990s gallery artists whose works involve creating social or participatory situations, and the praise given to them by Nicolas Bourriaud In his book *Relational Aesthetics*. [11] Describing these as 'feel-good positions', Bishop concludes that.

The tasks facing us today are to analyse how contemporary art addresses the viewer and to assess the quality of the audience relations it produces: the subject position that any work presupposes and the democratic notions it upholds, and how these are manifested in our experience of the work. [12]

9.   Sol Lewitt, 'Paragraphs on Conceptual Art', in Kristine Stiles and Peter Selz (eds) *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art*, Berkeley and Los Angeles California: University of California Press, 1996, p. 826.
10. Claire Bishop. 'Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics', *October 110* (Fall 2004): 51-80.
11. Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics,* trans. Simon Pleasance and Fronza Woods, France: Les presses du réel, 2002.
12. Bishop, 'Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics', p. 78.

I like to consider the aesthetics in *Man With A Movie Camera: The Global Remake* as that which is not articulated visually. It exists in the open spaces on the right, in the space between the original and the remake. It exists in the absence of uploads from parts of the world that are unrepresented and in the reasons for those absences. It exists in imagining a future, in spaces that trigger the imagination of the user and the spectator. Those spaces remain negotiable. They are the battleground of economics and of the imagination, they make visible the cultural context within which the work is being created - a public space open to all who have access.

The remake is the whole: it includes the left and right windows, the absence of an image on the right, the shifting configurations of those windows caused by uploads and the lack of them. Even the framing device - the black around the windows - is in a constant state of flux. The stream is unstable, changing on a daily basis. Continuity is replaced by conflict, meaning is constructed through the simultaneity of the two windows on the screen. It's a messy affair. Thus the aesthetics escape evaluation through authorship, through stylistic vocabularies normally associated with a specific discipline be it film, video or the database. What is here today will be different tomorrow. To appreciate the work must mean to appreciate change, instability. Maybe the aesthetics can be defined as what's left to be learned.

New York City is the ultimate experiment in international living - I'm reminded of it every time I ride the subway. The car is a container carrying people of every rank and ethnicity jostling against each other as the car moves along at a clip. Teens talking in their idioms across the aisle to friends they can't see, people singing alta voce to the tunes on their devices. It's an uncomfortable but synchronized experience similar to the stream of *Man With A Movie Camera: The Global Remake* - a temporal coexistence of images and styles from daily life. Or as Vertov would say 'the decoding of life as it is'.

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# YOUTUBE AS A SUBJECT: INTERVIEW WITH CONSTANT DULLAART

CECILIA GUIDA

Constant Dullaart (the Netherlands, 1979) is a visual artist who explores the contemporary language of images through the ironic re-contextualization of material found on the web. For Dullaart, whose works are widely discussed online and have been shown internationally, the web is a space, a landscape, and a world to investigate in all its variety, from a platform's 'default' style, to its content, its popularity, and its use. In 2009, Dullaart presented at Video Vortex #5 in Brussels, discussing his use of online video within his artistic practice. This interview, which took place by email in July 2010, takes up some of the ideas presented at that event, focusing particularly on Dullaart's series 'YouTube as a Subject'. Taking his work on the image of the YouTube play button as a point of departure, the conversation reflects on the theories of Marshall McLuhan, the perceptions of artwork on the YouTube platform, the contemporary position of the artist, the relationship between online and physical spaces, and the interaction of the audience in the era of 'participatory culture'.

Cecilia Guida: In your series of short videos titled 'YouTube as a Subject' (2008) no people are visible in the work. On a black background the familiar image of the YouTube play button falls off the screen, bounces as a ball, grows out of focus or changes colour with the sound of techno music. The button is at the same time the starting point and subject of the work. Through a simple and smart gesture you reflect upon the digitalization of our contemporary visual culture, and call the spectators' attention to meditate upon the relationship between the user interface and the moving image in logical and semiotic terms. For you, where did the idea for 'YouTube as a Subject' emerge?

Constant Dullaart: First of all I have to say that I disliked the YouTube design and video quality in 2005 when it started to come out—the chaotic site structure, the badly designed layout, and the obnoxious play button. After a few years it was clear that YouTube had won the battle of online video hosting companies, and it started to function as an archive (practical contemporary rights issues that avoid it from functioning in this way, and the 10 minute time limit aside), not only as a medium that was breaking with the authority of the expensive craft of the moving image professional. This caused me to wonder why the obnoxious play button had not been used as a subject since it was the first image people would see before watching all these important reference videos, art, wedding, news, etc. The play button is the starting point regardless of whether it's a meme video, a Joseph Beuys performance, a Warhol screen test, or an instructional video. Every single one starts with the same image.

CG: In the 1960s early video art united negative and positive criticism about the technology, and offered alternatives for a traditional approach to the medium. Fluxus artists were pio-

neers in these investigations. Among them, Wolf Vostell and Nam June Paik used techniques such as détournement, manipulation, repetition, slowing down and speeding up images, etc. in order to explore the technical limits and possibilities of the medium. In particular, Paik incorporated the ideas of Marshall McLuhan in his work, specifically exploring video as a form of social experiment to bring people closer together and a suitable medium for audience
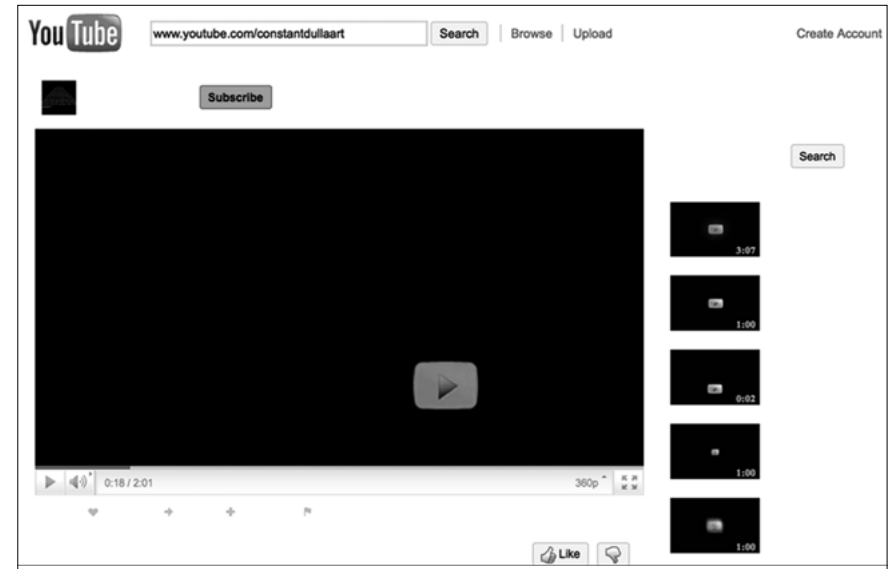
Series of videos 'YouTube as a Subject', 2008, from the Constant Dullaart's YouTube Channel.

'YouTube Collage', courtesy of the Constant Dullaart.

participation. Do you relate to these strategies of technical investigation, and to video as a form of social practice, in your work?

CD: Comparisons between media are often made around a whole range of issues, from the anxieties and fears during their establishment in society (such as the predominantly negative influence on children of video games, television, graphic novels or even books), to the celebration of a medium's influence on a better future, to the announcements of their so called deaths or exits from daily use in society.

To apply this comparison to an artist's research of a medium is a simple step.

For this artist's research, first, the technical possibilities of the medium are often explored, and art is made to exhibit these capabilities. These works tend to catch the attention of the general public more often in the beginning establishment of a medium. Why this works in this way exactly I have never understood. It seems like the medium is still suffering from a lack of original medium specific content, and needs to attract attention by showcasing its capabilities.

These conclusions are difficult to draw between the internet as a medium and older media such as painting. But the comparisons can be made between the birth of the film camera, the influence of photography on contemporary western image language, and very recently, video art. But then the internet contains several developing social media, like mail and text driven media, so it is hard to compare it to a single older medium, especially since it is so dynamic.

The second step would be to find the boundaries of the technical capabilities, whether it's human/user-related or medium-related.

The third step of this medium research would be to view the young medium on a metaphysical level: not only what is the use of the medium, but also how is it being used, and what is the meaning of this usage? After this, the medium's content could escape the process as described above and it should be able to be used with more authentic or medium specific content. An example to understand it would be the film-maker Andrej Tarkowski. As the formal and technical possibilities of the cinema movie had been researched in the 1920's, he found an 'adult' medium to work with knowing a lot of the medium implications and playing with it in more detail. He used the medium specific qualities to enhance the content and tell an authentic story disconnected from the medium itself. Let's say that for now in relation to internet: the medium is more interesting than most of its content.

My 'YouTube as a Subject' work can be seen as a reference to Marshall McLuhan's 'the medium is the message', although I thought of the work more as purely formal in the sense that the form was the content. You could say that if the form is the medium, then form became the message. But, I think this series of my work was not about the implications of the social web or of mass social online video hosting, it was not dealing with the hotness or the coldness of the medium as McLuhan would describe it. It was more about the specificity of one corporation existing within the medium. YouTube itself is not a medium. To have the work exist outside of YouTube was important to me. To collect my videos and contextualize them outside of YouTube (on an html page with embedded videos) meant it was about the player,

Ben Coonley's responses to 'YouTube as a Subject', courtesy of the artist.

and not so much about the social part of the website, to separate it more from 'the Medium is the Message' idea.

CG: When you posted 'YouTube Disco' (from the series 'YouTube as a Subject') on YouTube, Ilovetoeatmicedotcom alias Ben Coonley responded with the video 'Free Spin' which shows another element of the YouTube interface: the revolving dots that appear while a video is loading, with the voice of the host from the game show *Wheel of Fortune* and the clapping audience playing as audio. This video creates a dialogue with yours, and it is only one of seven video responses to your meta YouTube works. On your YouTube channel one can find these works together with enthusiastic, curious and doubtful comments. Making new videos as responses and commenting are ways in which users interact with the video content. How do you understand the meaning of 'to participate' in the context of the YouTube platform?

CD: How would it have been for Duchamp if his comment on the Mona Lisa would have been hanging directly next to the original painting in the Louvre? Would he have made a better comment? Would people have beaten him to it? Could you have made a better version? Could the works have functioned separated from each other?

The authenticity and authorship of the original seems to be less clear when a response or other version of the original starts to coexist, but the general impact of the shared idea becomes larger. The online tradition of linking back to the origin of the idea (the original post or video) is of course an important one, but sometimes the response is more valuable than the original. I am happy that because of this, what I see as the distorted value of singular authenticity is changing. On the YouTube platform, how people understand video responses and whether videos are seen as part of the general idea or the ripples on a pond created by an idea, actually depends on the site's structure. At the moment, mid-2010 after the latest YouTube re-design, it seems harder to find the specific video responses people have posted to another video, which is sad, but it is still possible, and I think the possibility to openly participate is very valuable.

CG: Deleuze and Guattari say that 'production is at once desiring-production and social production'.[1] This social-desiring-production is part of the user-generated content of the 21st

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1.   Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Continuum: London, 2004, p.325.
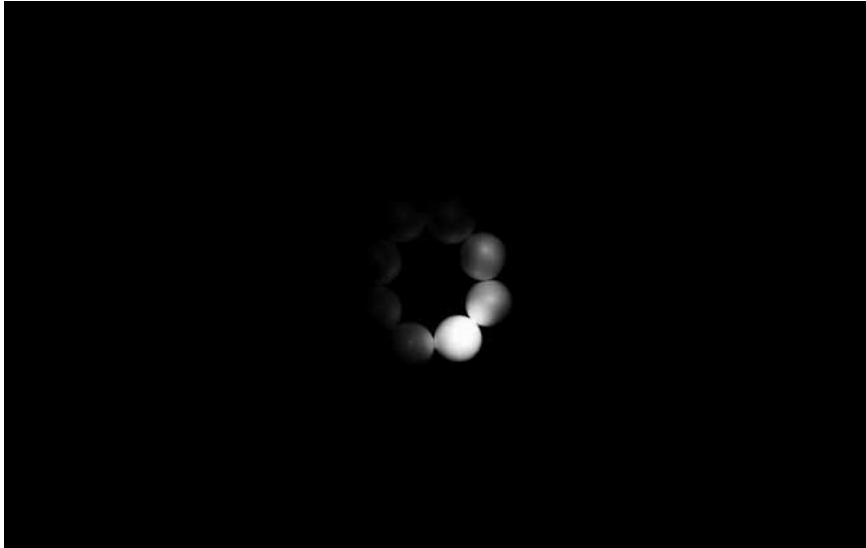
'YouTube as a Sculpture', 2009, in the group show Versions, at Netherlands Media Art Institute, courtesy of the artist.

century media world. In particular, YouTube is a 'space' for experimenting with new forms of cooperation between artists, and between artists and independent and amateur creators. In 'YouTube as a Subject', do you consider the collection of videos as art objects in and of themselves, or do you consider the responses/feedback that people make about the works on the YouTube channel as part of the work?

CD: I consider them part of the work. I feel honoured to have initiated a discussion that hopefully leads to the possibility to view YouTube for what it is, just a very large video hosting platform, like so many others, even a badly designed one. I consider the original work as a stone thrown into the social pond so to say, and am happy that I see the ripples continue (the social visual impact), it makes the original stone look bigger, and heavier.

CG: As a response to the reactions of your 'YouTube as a Subject' series you made the installation 'YouTube as a Sculpture' (2009). In this work, which was exhibited at the Netherlands Media Art Institute in Amsterdam for the group show 'Versions', a black fabric-covered room is presented in which a series of 20cm styrofoam balls hang in a circle that are illuminated by a rotating light moving from one ball to the next. Why did you decide to make a work similar to that of your online work, in the physical space of the museum? Physical and online spaces are different worlds requiring distinct languages to speak to a diverse audience. Do you feel that these two spaces are distinctly separate, and how do you see your work as connecting the online with the offline (museum/gallery)?

CD: Media iconographic images, like television test images for example, are always interesting to juggle between media. So many of these images are printed on clocks, t-shirts, mugs, etc. People seem to identify with them, the basic common icon that is shown, disconnected

from its content yet still medium specific. I wanted to solve the question 'how to show contemporary online art in a physical exhibition space' in an ironic, crude and simple manner, really physically showing an icon that would make people film the sculpture. I did not quote the contemporary online or software semantics in the physical realm, but I only quoted the visual appearance of one of the most influential gateways on the World Wide Web, YouTube. Visitors saw the sculpture and immediately thought of the YouTube loading balls, pulled out their video camera devices and then also uploaded their documentation back onto YouTube, contextualizing the documentation of the representation of an online experience all over again. I also partially curated the exhibition, and the theme was to see the comment as a medium, and how to view a change in commenting practice after having become part of popular culture and then translated in this physical space of art presentation.

CG: You are at the same time an artist, curator and lecturer, easily switching between online and gallery environments, and translating digital things into physical objects. Can one still speak of rules, divisions and categories in contemporary society where much is interconnected and mingled?

CD: The rules are there, I just think these limits exist to be broken. Basically, these socially implicated limitations prohibit and limit discussion. There is an end to specialization, and this end is where people will only operate in a tiny field and not learn from trying something outside of that field. This tends to make people lazy and dependent. Next to that I do not feel my work only functions best in one form, let alone the form of a commoditized product-based presentation.

CG: Would you consider YouTube a free territory when it comes to artistic practice? Is there another space now, another platform, that offers more creative freedom for artistic intervention and practice than strictly YouTube?

CD: No, I do not consider YouTube a free territory, it is very censured (copyright issues, nudity, etc.), there is a time limit, it is badly designed, it is not open and accessible from all over the world. I actually think Ustream or just using a search engine for privately hosted videos is unbeatable. This is just not as easy, and lacks the wonderful comment and search option. YouTube solved the issues of finding an easy way of uploading videos and converting them to appropriate and playable formats and was accessible through its crudeness. But this work was never meant to celebrate YouTube. YouTube is temporary, and its importance is made by its users, not by the form. The celebration is ironic. I hope YouTube will change for the better, or people will find their way out of this constricting, although wonderfully easy, medium again.

http://constantdullaart.com/
www.youtube.com/constantdullart

GLITCH STUDIES MANIFESTO

ROSA MENKMAN

'Collapse of PAL', an A/V performance by Rosa Menkman (2010).

PAL (Phase Alternate Line) 1963-2006.

Dear PAL,

In Copenhagen, Denmark, in a humble studio that was completely empty, besides the many screens and technologies that were apparently needed for the creation of DVB (Digital Video Broadcasting) television, I had the honour of performing your obsequies; your funeral rites. I was asked to reflect on your fragmented histories, your inherent characteristics and finally, your silent, yet somehow violent termination. [1]

I believe that I can only grasp your story as a consequence of media innovations, driven by a growing impatience to get faster and to progress towards perfection. However, the more I study your complex history, the more I learn about me; my preconceptions and expectations about you but also about your successors. How your scanning lines and other artifacts have become a beacon and how they resonate in my understanding and thinking of other, newer media. What your history teaches me is that your discontinuation is continued in my experience of new technologies; your history teaches me about my future.

Dearest PAL, I hope that while I performed your story, with all its unbearable tones and images, I captured at least some part of that indescribable history of which only you could tell the beginning and on end.

As evolution is paralleled by the multiplication of machines, I think I can only start to begin to understand the flow of this progress, by studying the history of breaks, like yours - in an art of artifacts. [2]

Warmly yours,
The Angel of History

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1. *The Collapse of PAL* is a real-time nationwide television performance that I presented at TV-TV on the 25th of May 2010, in Copenhagen, DK. In *The Collapse of PAL*, the Angel of History (as described by Walter Benjamin) reflects on the PAL television signal and its termination. This death sentence, although executed in silence, was a brutally violent act that left PAL disregarded and obsolete. However, the Angel of History has to conclude that while the PAL signal might be argued to be dead, it still exists as a trace left upon the new, 'better' digital technologies. PAL can, even though the technology is terminated, be found here, as a historical form that newer technologies build upon, inherit or have appropriated. Besides this, the Angel also realizes that the new DVB signal that has been chosen over PAL, is different but at the same time also inherently flawed. The impending question is if this progress also means improvement. Since May 2010, *The Collapse of PAL* has been performed and screened a couple of times in venues in Europe, the US and South America. A render of the first part of *The Collapse of PAL* can be found here: http://vimeo.com/12199201 .
2. Luigi Russolo, *The Art of Noises*, trans. Barclay Brown, New York: Pendragon Press, 1986.

The Art of Artifacts

Technological Progress is an Ill-Fated Dogma
In the beginning it was calm... Then humans built technologies and the first forms of mechanical noise were born. Since that time, artists migrated from the grain, the scratching and burning of celluloid (*A Colour Box* by Len Lye, 1937) to the magnetic distortion and scanning lines of the cathode ray tube (as explored by Nam June Paik in *MagnetTV* in 1965). Subsequently digital noise materialized and artists wandered the planes of phosphor burn-in, as Cory Arcangel did so wittily in *Panasonic TH-42PWD8UK Plasma Screen Burn,* in 2007. With the arrival of LCD (liquid crystal display) technologies, dead pixels were rubbed, bugs were trapped between liquid crystals or plastic displays and violent screen crack LCD-performances took place (of which my favorite is *%SCR2*, by Jodi / *webcrash2800* in 2009). Today artists even surf eBay to buy readymade LCDs with T-con board failure or photo cameras with loose CCD (charged coupled device) chips (the latter I too exploited in *The Collapse of PAL*, 2010).

While most of these artworks do not have a lot in common, all of them do show that this is the product of an elitist discourse and dogma widely pursued by the naive victims of a persistent upgrade culture. The consumer only has to dial #1-800 to stay on top of the technological curve; to ride the waves of both euphoria and disappointment. It is now normal that in the future the consumer will pay less for a device that can do more, but at the same time will reach a state of obsolescence faster. This quest for complete transparency (the perfect, invisible interface) has changed the computer system into a highly complex assemblage that is hard to penetrate, and sometimes even completely closed off. The system consists of layers of obfuscated protocols that find their origin in ideologies, economies, political hierarchies and social conventions. The user has to realize that improvement is nothing more than a proprietary protocol, a deluded consumer myth of progression towards a holy grail of perfection. Every (future) technology possesses its own fingerprints of imperfection, which I refer to as 'noise artifacts'.

The Art of Noise Artifacts
In information theory, noise possesses a very specific set of connotations, or even rules. In this theory, noise has been isolated to the different occasions in which the static, linear notion of transmitting information is interrupted. [3] In the digital, these interruptions can be subdivided into glitch, encoding / decoding (of which in digital compression is the most ordinary form) and feedback artifacts. Artists exploit these artifacts to make (reflexive) media specific

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3. Claude E. Shannon and W. Weaver, *The Mathematical Theory of Communication*, Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1949. I realize that Shannon's and Weaver's model is not a correct blueprint for communication. But because it is basic and doesn't focus on the transmission of *meaning*, the model makes it possible to leave semiotics or textual analysis out of the picture, at least for now. In this way the model can be used to research communication strictly from a formalistic point of view, which is in my opinion one part (the 'beginning') of the many different stratifications of glitch art.

art works; as is for instance done by Gijs Gieskes in his *Sega Mega Drive 2* (2007), Paul Davis in *Codec* (2009) and botborg's *Live at Ars Electronica Festival* video (2007). [4]

As might be clear from these artworks, the meaning of noise is more complex than can be explained by information theory; the 'meaning' of noise differs according to perspective. Etymologically, the term *noise* refers to states of aggression, alarm and powerful sound phenomena in nature ('rauschen'), such as storm, thunder and the roaring sea. Moreover, when noise is explored within a social context or in art, the term is often used as a figure of speech, and possesses many more meanings. Sometimes, noise stands for unaccepted sounds; for that which is not music, not valid information, or is not a message. Noise can also stand for an (often undesirable, unwanted, other and unordered) disturbance, or a break or addition within the linear transmission of useful data. However noise is defined, its negative definition also has a positive consequence: it helps to (re)define its opposite, which is the world of meaning, the norm, regulation, goodness, beauty and so on. [5]

Some artists intentionally elucidate and deconstruct the hierarchies of digital technologies. They do not work in (binary) opposition to what is inside the flows (the normal uses of the computer) but practice on the border of these flows. Sometimes, artists use the computers' inherent maxims as a façade, to trick the audience into a flow of certain expectation that the artwork subsequently rapidly breaks out of. As a result, the spectator is forced to acknowledge that the computer is a closed assemblage based on a genealogy of conventions, while at the same time the computer is actually a machine that can be bent or used in many different ways. Digital noise artifacts thus exist as a paradox; while they are often negatively defined, they also have a positive, generative or redefining quality. The break of a flow within technology (the noise artifact) generates a void which is not only a lack of meaning. It also forces the audience to move away from the traditional discourse around a particular technology and to ask questions about its meaning. Through this void, artists can critique digital media and spectators can be forced to recognize the inherent politics behind the codes of digital media. So, while most people experience noise artifacts as something negative (or as an accident), I am of the opinion that the positive consequences of these imperfections and the new opportunities they facilitate should be emphasized. Noise artifacts can be a source for new patterns, anti-patterns and new possibilities that often exist on a border or membrane (of, for instance, language). With the creation of breaks with the political, social, and economic conventions of the technological machine, the audience may become aware of its inherent preprogramd patterns. Then, a distributed awareness of a new interaction gestalt can take form.

Glitches vs. Glitch Art
I experience the glitch as a wonderful interruption that shifts an object away from its ordinary form and discourse, towards the ruins of destroyed meaning. My first encounter comes hand-in-hand with a feeling of shock, or being lost and in awe. But once I find myself within these ruins I also experience a feeling of hope; a triumphal sensation that there is something more than just devastation. A negative feeling makes place for an intimate, personal experience of a machine (or program), a system exhibiting its formations, inner workings and flaws. As a holistic celebration rather than a particular perfection these ruins reveal a new opportunity to me, a spark of creative energy that indicates that something new is about to be created. Questions emerge: What is this utterance, and how was it created? Is it perhaps...a glitch? But once the glitch is named, the momentum – the glitch – is gone...and in front of my eyes suddenly a new form has emerged.

The glitch has no solid form or state through time; it is often perceived as an unexpected and abnormal *modus operandi*, a break from (one of) the many flows (of expectations) within a technological system. But as the understanding of a glitch changes when it is being named, so does the equilibrium of the (former) glitch itself: the original experience of a rupture moved beyond its momentum and vanished into a realm of new conditions. The glitch has become a new mode, and its previous encounter has become an ephemeral, personal experience. Just as with noise, the word *glitch* in *glitch art* is used metaphorically and thus slightly different than the stand-alone technical term 'glitch'. The genre of glitch art moves like the weather: sometimes it evolves very slowly, while at other times it can strike like lightning. The art works within this realm can be disturbing, provoking and horrifying. Beautifully dangerous, they can at once take all the tensions of other possible compositions away. These works stretch boundaries and generate novel modes; they break open previously sealed politics and force a catharsis of conventions, norms and beliefs.

Glitch art is often about relaying the membrane of the normal, to create a new protocol after shattering an earlier one. The perfect glitch shows how destruction can change into the creation of something original. Once the glitch is understood as an alternative mode of representation or a new language, its tipping point has passed and the essence of its glitch-being is vanished. The glitch is no longer an art of rejection, but a shape or appearance that is recognized as a novel form (of art). Artists that work with glitch processes are therefore often hunting for a fragile equilibrium; they search for the point when a new form is born from the blazed ashes of its precursor.

Hot and Cool Glitches [6]
The procedural essence of glitch art is opposed to conservation; the shocking experience, perception and understanding of what a glitch is at one point in time cannot be preserved for a future time. The beautiful creation of a 'cool' glitch is uncanny and sublime; as an artist I try to catch something that is the result of an uncertain balance, a shifting, ungraspable, unrealized utopia connected to randomness and idyllic disintegrations. The essence of glitch art is therefore best understood as a history of movement and as an attitude of destructive generativity; it is the procedural art of non con-formative, ambiguous reformations.

4.   Gijs Gieskes, *Sega Mega Drive* 2, 2007, glitch/circuitbend Sega, http://gieskes.nl/circuitbending/?file=segamegadrive2; Paul Davis, *Codec*, 2009, compression algorithm, http://www.beigerecords.com/paul/defineyourterms/codec.html; botborg, Live at Ars Electronica Festival, 2007, live feedback, http://botborg.com/index.php?go=videoslive.

5.   Paul Hegarty, *Noise/Music: A History*, London and New York: Continuum, 2007, p. 5.

6.   Marshall McLuhan outlines a theory of 'hot' and 'cool' forms of media in Marshall Mcluhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, New York: McGraw Hill, 1964, p. 22.

However, I have also noticed that over time some of my own glitches have developed into personal archetypes; I feel that they have become ideal examples or models of my work. Moreover, I see that some artists do not focus on the procedural entity of the glitch at all. They skip the process of creation-by-destruction and focus directly on the creation of a new formal design, either by creating a final product or by developing a new way to recreate the latest glitch archetype. This can result in a plug-in, a filter or a whole new 'glitching software' that automatically simulates or recreates a particular glitching method, which then becomes something close to an 'effect'. Some forms of glitch art can thus become ideal examples or models that have gained a particular meaning and follow a certain discourse.[7]

This 'new' form of 'conservative glitch art' or 'hot glitch art' focuses more on design and end products than on the procedural and political breaking of flows. There is an obvious critique: to design a glitch means to domesticate it. When the glitch becomes domesticated, controlled by a tool, or technology (a human craft), it has lost its enchantment and has become predictable. It is no longer a break from a flow within a technology, or a method to open up the political discourse, but instead a form of cultivation. For many actors it is no longer a glitch, but a filter that consists of a preset and/or a default: what was once understood as a glitch has become a new commodity.

Glitch art is thus not always an art of the momentum; many works have already passed their tipping point, or never pass one at all. Glitch art exists within different systems; for instance the system of production and the system of reception. It is not only the artist who creates the work of glitch art who is responsible for the glitch. The 'foreign' input (wrongly encoded syntaxes that lead to forbidden leakages and data promiscuity), the hardware and the software (the 'channel' that shows functional[?] collisions), and the audience (who are in charge of the reception, the decoding) can also be responsible. All these actors and their perspectives are positioned within different but sometimes overlapping flows in which the final product can be described or recognized as glitch art. This is why an intended error can still rightfully be called glitch art from another perspective, and why glitch art is not always just a personal experience of shock, but also, as a genre, a metaphorical way of expression, that depends on multiple actors. Works from the genre 'glitch art' thus consist as an assemblage of perceptions and the understanding of multiple actors. Therefore, the products of these new filters that come to existence after or indeed without the momentum of a glitch cannot be excluded from the realm of glitch art.

The popularization and cultivation of an avant-garde of mishaps has become predestined and unavoidable. Even so, the utopian fantasy of 'technological democracy' or 'freedom', which glitch art is often connected to, has little to do with the 'colonialism' of these hot glitch art designs and glitch filters. If there is such a thing as technological freedom, it can only be found within the procedural momentum of cool glitch art – when a glitch is just about to relay a protocol.

7.   Rosa Menkman, 'A Vernacular of File Formats', August 2010, http://rosa-menkman.blogspot.com/2010/08/vernacular-of-file-formats-2-workshop.html.

Acousmatic Videoscapes[8]
Whenever I use a 'normal', transparent technology, I see only one aspect of the actual machine. I have learned to ignore the interface and all structural components in order to understand a message or use a technology as quickly as possible. The glitches I trigger turn the technology back into the obfuscated box that it already was. They shroud its inner workings and the source of the output under a sublime black veil. I perceive glitches without knowing their origin. This gives me and the audience an opportunity to concentrate better on their form – to interpret their structures and to learn more from what can actually be seen. An example of such a work is my video *Radio Dada* (2008).[9] I prefer to show this work and give the explanation of what technically happened only after a discussion of what the audience has seen and heard.

The glitches in *Radio Dada* create an acousmatic videoscape in which I can finally perceive an output outside of my goggles of speed, transparency and usability. The new structures that unfold themselves can be interpreted as a portal to a utopia, a paradise-like dimension, but also as a black hole that threatens to destroy the technology as I knew it. In the acousmatic videoscapes I make, I use critical trans-media aesthetics to theorize human thinking about technology, creating an opportunity for self-reflexivity, self-critique and self-expression.[10] I use synaesthesia not just as a metaphor for transcoding one medium upon another (with a new algorithm), but a conceptually driven meeting of the visual and the sonic within the newly uncovered quadrants of technology.

Critical Trans-media Aesthetics
Within software art, the glitch is often used to deconstruct the myth of linear progress and to end the search for the holy grail of the perfect technology. In these works, the glitch emphasizes what is normally rejected as a flaw and subsequently shows that accidents and errors can also be welcomed as new forms of usability. The glitch does not only invoke the death of the author, but also the death of the apparatus, medium or tool – at least from the per-

8.   Acousmatics is a concept originally described by Pierre Schaeffer, in *Traité des objets musicaux,* Le Seuil, Paris, 1966.
9.   Radio Dada can be watched on vimeo: http://vimeo.com/2321833. The video-images of Radio Dada are constructed out of nothing but the image created by feedback (I turned a high-end camera on a screen that was showing, in real time, what I was filming, creating a feedback loop). Then I glitched the video by changing its format to .avi (the cinepak codec) and subsequently exported it into animated gifs, which resulted in the loss of certain pixels and a very special video-texture. I (minimalistically) edited the video in Quicktime. Then I sent the file to Extraboy, who composed music for the video. The composing process started with a handheld world radio. Extraboy scanned through frequencies and experimented with holding the radio in different parts of the room while touching different objects. Eventually he got the radio to oscillate noise in the tempo that he perceived in the video. The added synthesizer sounds were played live to further build on the non-digital sound and rhythm. This was later contrasted with drums which were digitally synthesized and processed through effects with a very digital sound to them. Just like with the video, the digital and analogue media and aesthetics of sound are mixed into one coherent whole.
10. My Acousmatic Videoscape portfolio can be found at, http://videoscapes.blogspot.com/.

spective of the technologically determinist spectator – and is often used as an anti 'software-deterministic' form.

This fatal manner of glitch art presents a problem for media and art historians, who try to describe old and new culture upon a continuum, composed of different niches. To deal with these breaks, historians have repeatedly coined new genres and new media forms, in order to give these splinter practices a place within this continuum. As a result, an abundance of designations such as databending, datamoshing and circuitbending have come into existence, which in fact all refer to similar practices of breaking flows within different technologies or platforms.

Theorists have been confronted with the same problem. For them, terms like post-digital or post-media aesthetics frequently offer a solution. Unfortunately, these kinds of terms seem to be misleading, because in glitch art 'post' actually often means a reaction to a prior form. And yet, to act against something does not mean to move away from it completely – in fact, a reaction also prolongs a certain way or mode, at least as a point of reference. [11] An answer to the problems of both historians and theorists might be to describe glitch art as a procedural activity demonstrating against and within multiple technologies, which I call *critical trans-media aesthetics*. The role of glitch artifacts as critical trans-media aesthetics is twofold. On the one hand, these aesthetics show a medium in a critical state: a ruined, unwanted, unrecognized, accidental and horrendous state. These aesthetics transform the way the consumer perceives the normal (every accident transforms the normal) and describe the passing of a tipping point, after which the medium might become something new. On the other hand, these aesthetics critique the medium's genre, interface and expectations. They challenge its inherent politics and the established template of creative practice, while producing a theory of reflection.

Glitchspeak and Glitch Studies

Just as Foucault stated that there can be no reason without madness, Gombrich wrote that order does not exist without chaos, and Virilio stated that technological progression cannot exist without its inherent accident. I am of the opinion that flow cannot be understood without interruption, or functioning without 'glitching'. [12] This is why we need glitch studies.

Some people see glitches as technological, while others perceive them as a social construction. I think it is useless to place one perspective above the other. Glitch studies needs to take place in-between, both, neither and beyond. [13] Glitches do not exist outside of human perception. What was a glitch 10 years ago is, most often, not a glitch anymore - it might however have become a fetishized retro-commodity. This ambiguous contingency of the glitch depends on its constantly mutating materiality. The glitch exists as an unstable assemblage in which materiality is influenced by the medium's construction, operation and content of the apparatus on the one hand; and the work, the writer, and the interpretation by the reader and/or user – the meaning – on the other. Thus, the materiality of glitch art is not (just) the machine on which the work appears, but a constantly changing construct that depends on the interactions between the text and its social, aesthetic and economic dynamics – and, of course, the point of view from which different actors are able to make meaning.

Glitch studies attempts to balance nonsense and knowledge. It can be pursued through Glitchspeak, a vocabulary of new expressions, and an always growing language of digital culture. These expressions teach the speaker something about the inherent norms, presumptions and expectations of a language: what is not being said, what is left out. Glitch studies searches for the unfamiliar while at the same time it tries to de-familiarize the familiar. This study can show what is acceptable behavior and what is unacceptable, or outside the norm. To capture and explain a glitch is a necessary evil, which enables the generation of new modes of thought and action. When these modes become normalized, glitch studies shifts its focus or topic of study to find the current outsider in relation to a new technology or discourse. Glitch studies is a misplaced truth; it is a vision that destroys itself by its own choice of and for oblivion. The best ideas are dangerous because they generate awareness. Glitch studies is what you can just get away with.

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11. Lev Manovich, 'Post-media aesthetics', *disLOCATIONS*, Karlsruhe: ZKM, Centre for Art and Media/Centre for Interactive Cinema Research, University of New South Wales, 2001. Kim Cascone, 'The Aesthetics of Failure: "Post-Digital" Tendencies in Contemporary Computer Music', *Computer Music Journal* 24.4 (2000): 12-18.
12. Michel Foucault, 'First Preface to *Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique'* (1961). trans. A. Toscano, *Pli,* 13, (2002): p. xii; Ernst Hans Josef Gombrich, *The Sense of Order: A Study in the Psychology of Decorative Art,* London: Phaidon Press, 1984, pp. 124-125; Sylvere Lotringer and Paul Virilio, *The Accident of Art,* Semiotext(e): New York, 2005, p. 88

13. Lievnath Faber, Tim van der Heijden and Rosa Menkman, *In Between Manifesto.* May 2008, http://mastersofmedia.hum.uva.nl/2008/05/30/in-between-manifesto/.

Glitch Studies Manifesto

1) *The dominant, continuing search for a noiseless channel has been — and will always be — no more than a regrettable, ill-fated dogma.*
Acknowledge that although the constant search for complete transparency brings newer, 'better' media, every one of these improved techniques will always possess their own inherent fingerprints of imperfection.

2) *Dispute the operating templates of creative practice; fight genres, interfaces and expectations!*
Refuse to stay locked into one medium or between contradictions like real vs. virtual, obsolete vs. up-to-date, open vs. proprietary or digital vs. analogue. Surf the vortex of technology, the in-between, the art of artifacts!

3) *Get away from the established action scripts and join the avant-garde of the unknown. Become a nomad of noise artifacts!*
The static, linear notion of information-transmission can be interrupted on three occasions: during encoding-decoding (compression); feedback; or when a glitch (an unexpected break within the flow of technology) occurs. Noise artists must exploit these noise artifacts and explore the new opportunities they provide.

4) *Employ bends and breaks as a metaphor for différance. Use the glitch as an exoskeleton for progress.*
Find catharsis in disintegration, ruptures and cracks; manipulate, bend and break any medium towards the point where it becomes something new; create *glitch art*.

5) *Realize that the gospel of glitch art also reveals new standards implemented by corruption.*
Not all glitch art is progressive or *something new*. The popularization and cultivation of the avant-garde of mishaps has become predestined and unavoidable. Be aware of easily reproducible *glitch effects*, automated by softwares and plug-ins. What is now a glitch will become a fashion.

6) *Force the audience to voyage the acousmatic videoscape.*
Create conceptually synaesthetic artworks, that exploit both visual and aural glitch (or other noise) artifacts at the same time. Employ these noise artifacts as a nebula that shrouds the technology and its inner workings and that will compel an audience to listen and watch more exhaustively.

7) *Rejoice in the critical trans-media aesthetics of glitch artifacts.*
Utilize glitches to bring any medium in a critical state of hypertrophy, to (subsequently) criticize its inherent politics.

8) *Employ Glitchspeak (as opposed to Newspeak) and study what is outside of knowledge. Glitch theory is what you can just get away with!*
Flow cannot be understood without interruption or function without glitching. This is why glitch studies is necessary.

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THE THIN LINE BETWEEN ON AND OFF:
A (RE:)CYCLOTHYMIC EXPLORATION

ALBERT FIGURT

A : - Look me right in the eyes. What do you see?
B : - Myself.

The Pulviscular Eye

Every human being is an integrated cinematic industry. We monitor reality, record endless strips of routine events, store'em in our (visual) memory. At night this huge amount of raw material is compressed and re-arranged by the unconscious; from tireless but easily distracted cameramen we temporarily become unaware but rather specific directors/editors. Dream sequences are then projected onto the black surface of our closed eyelids; a private screening for a single spectator, a distillate of our deepest obsessions. Sometimes disturbing, often curiously forgotten as soon as we open our eyes and *log into* the real world, these fragmented solipsistic films remain *offline* shadows fluttering around solid waking life. We take for granted the subjective-point-of-view, quick-and-dirty, non-scripted and cut-less footage produced everyday on a biocamcorder basis; asleep, we wait for the noctu[inte]rnal show (nebulously narrative and filled with spatiotemporal & visual jumps) as a funny or scary remix of these unavoidable long takes, some sort of an automatic image-digestion side project.

Through cheap, easy-to-use and almost unintrusive prosumer videodevices, reality binocular surveillance is nowadays often squared by crude, handheld, seldom edited instant-movies. The everyman, finally equipped with one or more digital eyes, rediscovers himself as an independent cine-operator and starts to look at daily moments as possible clips to be collected and revised in a near future. Different from their analogical progenitors (homemade videotapes), these subterranean products are indeed quickly generated, modified and then shared *on* the net; as a result, a grainy and confused galaxy of ordinary gestures is painlessly assembled and disseminated, its creative possibilities residing in spontaneous and unpredictable post-production strategies. Symptomatic acronym détournement: if VHS (originally intended for Vertical Helical Scan) is now identified worldwide as Video Home System, why can't the Motion Picture Expert Group finally become a dispersed people's Memory Process Electronically Generated, to skim and confront our saturated media horizon with? The concrete world gets diluted on interchangeable binary strings, a soft grassroots CCTV system is anonymously established; never knowing where a camera could be, *offline* reality becomes stuffed with *online* holes, tunnels that directly replay you(r image) across the globe. Subconscious filtering labour is now collective, hazy déjà-vu taste characterizes Web 2.0 audiovisual experiences. Wanna look at something familiar with someone else's eyes? Or, conversely, wanna lend your visual files for strangers to evaluate? The physical realm is just a warehouse, sense and emotions are actually built on our mutual[ly] externalized sight/site.

From Beat to Bit

We're taught how to write, read and make calculations, but not how to look (at least, at the human-crafted mediascape we're just supposed to avidly consume). Even after a good century of moving image storytelling (with the parallel development and crossmediatic flooding of cinematic language), the average person is still not always encouraged to develop a relative AV literacy. So, when videopencils are unexpectedly delivered among users, their media exposure background is far more detailed as input than the possi(a)bility of them creating an informed, well-organized output. We've been nourished since birth with a constant and massive audiovisual stream, but it's not sure if we already experienced the possibility to scream our personal line, to optically say something. We've absorbed cinematic nuances that we're probably not aware of; at first glance we know how to distinguish a feature film from a documentary, or a spot from a video clip, but we're probably not able to explain exactly how: no problem, this self-taught awa[kening]reness can be fruitfully and retroactively stimulated once we prosthetically switch *on*.

Similar to what happened with the jazz revolution (where it took phonography and improvisation to bring music back to its original use as a playful and real-time artform), omnipervasive pulviscularecording will eventually break film/video's formal and arbitrary structures – their characteristics being randomly rearranged by inexperienced but genuine hands. Often without proper formal training, the be-bop pioneers were able to effectively shake the sc[lerotized]ore-driven occidental canon precisely by jumping into the abyss of sounds with aural sensibility as their only parachute; almost a century later, via countless, exuberant digital trumpets, optical jazz solos start to resonate in the infoscape while diegetic scr[ipt]uples melt into videostreams of (un)consciousness - relentlessy infiltrating & challenging the mainriver. The stylish camera-stylo radically metamorphoses into a camera-biro style, a way of taking [jazzy?] notes that echoes the primal ontology of video (to be – as opposed to cinema - a live technology, capturing time on the spot without necessary physical impression or storage). As a strong comunicative/rumina(c)ting attitude is gonna redefine/remix standard procedures, dialects and serendipities are expected to flourish at the border of academic art; videodialogues will become regular conversational practices, manifesting an increasingly d(uctil)ynamic and pi[dgin]ctographical taste. Translating perception into pure dataflows: neither big concern for authorship or aesthetics, nor *off*-broadway disciplined rebellion (in case, *on*-narroway is the target). After the debatable era of g[lamourous]athering, here we have some tasty but lumbering home-grown delicacies: updating from neolithic to paleolithic, it's time for an agriculture of the eye.

Tele-pyjama Parties

Starting from our very intimate surrounding, videosecretion is becoming the norm. Telepresence, in a very wide sense, coincides with telecommunications: fragments of you are all around me, just waiting to be detected. Videopresence has virtually existed since the advent of TV, but only recently has become usable for private interactions. Thanks to the juicy love-match between cheap webcams & affordable broadband connections, millions of people are nowadays videotalking. In this worldwide-scale immaterial cartography, screens seem to be the theoretical watersheds. But what's exactly behind and beyond'em?

Still from "Quixotic", an improvis(ualiz)ed short by @lbert figurt.
Cinema Solubile: celebrating 100 years of futurism with a 24-hour film marathon, Groningen 2009.

Introspective drosteffect from "Skype is the limit",
a multimedia project by @lbert figurt, Amsterdam 2010.

The eye is both a camera and a mirror; digital eyes are cameras, but in videochats they also become mirrors. Emerging *online* applications like Chatroulette, allowing the user to casually leaf through his peers, finally clarify that by using a webbie we turn into channels. Transmitting (from) our highly accessorized telerooms, flying over the internet by manoeuvring buttons in our lounge cockpit & spreading our post-chronobiological coordinates all around, we're dramatically exposed to the possibility of being 'nexted' or 'zapped'. My [third] eye is mounted on your laptop; when you call (or accidentally find) me, your [third] eye awakes in my laptop. Videochatting means opening tridimensional chasms in interlocutors' screens; our actual position rapidly packed and sent to the other, we scrutinize him via an extrusively rented pupil. Browsing potential videopartners is a very intriguing and terrifying re(a)lational sport - I stare at you looking at me while peeping at myself glancing at us two from the flipped desktopreview.

In just a few years, the fascinating wilderness of accidental framing is quickly vanishing. Re[cursive]flexi(a)bility is virtually assured; from a haphazardly expanded visual privacy we'll hopefully move to a more refined self-exposure (both in terms of light/frame composition and of visibility). Or maybe in the near future everything will be arranged webcamwise, allowing us to take care of only what is visible – the rest of our rooms, or life, abandoned and drowned in chaos. Videochat as voluntary, self-inflicted bigb(r)othering, ephemeral *online* data for anyone - or nobody; passing the days leaning out of public livecams (as ultimate windows on our screened existence), broadcasting our own lives. When the gadget is *on*, we're also *on*[line]; a form of subtle s(kype)talking - archiving others without directly pointing a camera

– can be the outcome, as well as plenty of astonishing videocadavrexquis or freaky youtopian hikikomori formats. The computer display as the paramount wonderland theatre: a mad reality-shake where everything can happen (better, be instantly reported & captured), giving rise to s[creenshot]ituationist docufictions.

Proletarian Cubism
Parallel - or maybe just complementary - to the eclectic stardom[estic] odyssey (occurring across extemporaneous arenas of connected laptops) is the proliferation of LCD surfaces of many kinds and dimensions in public spaces, especially relevant when these dynamic sources are embedded in private mobile devices. Already quite accustomed to human-made urban landscapes whose aftertaste is uncannily shaped by commercial stereotypes, we're indeed not too surprised or ravished if some big video projection or huge display adds an (audio)visual complement to the artificial playground. If cinema and TV rhetoric progressively advanced from drawing on the real to suggesting photogenic steps for its staging, an en-plein-air overlayed screening is just a coherent step forward in this blurring boundaries scenario. But when clusters of personalized miniscreens suddenly enter our lives, or when we enter one or more of them without knowing (or without caring too much), it's perhaps wort[ime]h to reflect on this molecular splintering of viewpoints.

At the end of a concert the musician announces his latest hit; everybody used to raise a lighter to warmly appreciate the long-awaited song, while in these days the flames' swarm is replaced by a videophone's, and the singer's image instantaneously explodes into kaleido-

Public webcam turned into a rudimental communication platform from "Skype is the limit",
a multimedia project by @lbert figurt, Amsterdam 2010.

scope fragments. Like many post-modern votive candles, digital eyes are launched above the regular view, fighting for a clear perspective, surrounding and optically hugging the target. Tridimensional vlogging syn[chronicity]ergy winds among the excited crowd, a new kind of spectacle is added to and superimposed on the first one. Video-bootlegging material that will soon be transferred *online* (usually without further sound or image adjustment), is in the moment narrowcasted at a small distance for indiscreet, shortsighted or lazy fans. Philosophically speaking, the LCD reveals itself as the m[ethonymical]atrix, or mother, of this inside-out and swapping gaze-o-rama; a small liquid crystal display (regularly attached and recently built into video/photographic equipment) that liberates the eye from a binding prox[emics]imity with the viewfinder, encouraging experimental and aleatory framing while simultaneously acting like a preview monitor. It seems like we're looking at a carved out portion of life, but what's really running over the display is an already digitized sequence of visual stimuli (i.e. liable to real-time zooming procedures in absence of an actual lens); a bunch of liquidata whose destiny - to be endlessly poured and sipped through com[putational]municating vessels – is figuratively inscribed in its original spouting form. Reality is not grasped by or represented in the miniscreen; it is filtered-processed-reproduced *on* it. Waiting for the upload, we're transmitting (while recording); reality is there, and we're centripetally or centrifugally doublechecking it (whilst immersed).

Offading Out

Just like many unintentional neuroticelebrities, at length we may find ourselves overwhelmed by a constant spectacularization of the contingent – the distinction between a narcissistic image-bulimic ecstasy and a paparazzi nightmare being not so clear. In the past we came out of our houses to breathe some fresh air, leaving technology behind and happily facing the probabilistic opportunities of the street; today we're surrounded by sensors and bugs (both external and wearable), at the point that the seemingly *offline* outside is in fact a dissimulated – not necessarily glorious – red carpet. Photocam-free parties are blooming here and there, as archaeological rem[emorial]edies to celebrate good ole' pre-recording-euphoria-times, when losing control went along with losing the memory of it the very next day. Metropolitan legends about remotely activated webcams leads to paranoiac sticky-tape-based habits, or even drastic hardware removals. The up-skirt shots phenomena (nonchalantly hunting for images below the lines of etiquette, midway between soft pornography and underwear mapping) is catalyzing unexpected audiences *on* the net.

Curtains are vanishing, or maybe it's just that we love to indulge in sm[ediated]ooth voyeuristic behaviour without accepting the (symmetrical) counterpart. A miniaturized camera mounted on a mobile phone is not just a powerful enhancement, but probably a hidden metaphor: we're expected to discuss video, to walk with the idea of video in mind and the possibility to effortlessy realize it in the pocket, to look at the video universe with more attention, but to also grasp the microcosm of our own daily events with an augmented lucidity – and possibly without the device. In the end, the unlimited productive & storing capacities guaranteed by digital reprovisual apparatuses, along with the web as the main platform for creative potlatches and scattered cooperation, could be a way to reposition ourselves both as producers and consumers within the AV mediascape; the way we look at the world (is it video's referent or viceversa?) will change accordingly. The *online* videoframework has not acquired a specific trajectory yet – it totally depends on us; suspended between a mere replica of today and recombinant meditations about yesterdays, it's heading a pluralized tomo(u)rrow.

Let's see.

APPENDICES

VIDEO VORTEX III
ANKARA

OCTOBER 10-11, 2008
LOCATION: CONFERENCE HALL, FACULTY OF ART, DESIGN
AND ARCHITECTURE, BILKENT UNIVERSITY, ANKARA

On October 10-11 2008, Bilkent University Department of Communication and Design, in cooperation with the Institute of Network Cultures, organized the 3rd Video Vortex event in Ankara, Turkey. Video Vortex 3 Ankara Edition featured a two-day international conference, an evening program, live performances and a new media art exhibition. More information is available at http://std.comd.bilkent.edu.tr/videovortex/.

Video Vortex 3 Ankara Edition is an extension of the Video Vortex project by the Institute of Network Cultures in Amsterdam and is a follow-up to the Amsterdam conference, held in January 2008, and the Brussels conference, held in October 2007. It continued and deepened the debates, while bringing together a wide range of scholars, artists and curators as well as lawyers, producers and engineers.

Themes of Video Vortex 3 Ankara Edition included: Navigating the database, p2p, art online, visual art, innovative art, participatory culture, social networking, political economy, collaboration and new production models, censorship, YouTube, collective memory, cinematic and online aesthetics.

> THURSDAY OCTOBER 9, 2008
10.00 – 12.00
Workshop: Open Collaborative Mapping/OLPC Project (Markus Schaal)

14.00 – 16.00
Video Art Screenings

> FRIDAY OCTOBER 10, 2008
9.30 – 12.00
Workshop: Video Blogging by Michael Verdi

13.30
Doors open, coffee and tea

14.00
Welcome by Andreas Treske, Head of Department of Communication and Design

14.15 – 16.30
Opening Session: Political Economy
Moderator: Sabine Niederer
Aras Özgün, Dominic Pettman, Kylie Jarret

16.30
Coffee, tea

16.45
Video Vortex Reader Launch by Sabine Niederer

17.00
Video Screening by Vera Tollmann, 'Always on your minds'

18.30
Exhibition and Reception

21.00
COMD 10th Anniversary Party

> SATURDAY OCTOBER 11, 2008
10.00 – 12.00
Participatory Culture
Michael Liegl, Martin Koplin, Andreas Haugstrup Pedersen

12.00 – 13.00
Lunch

13.00 – 15.00
Online Video and Blogging
Michael Verdi, Sarah Késenne, Basak Senova

15.00 – 15.15
Coffee, tea

15.15 – 17.15
Art Online
Moderator: Mehmet Sıray
Brittany Shoot, Gülsen Bal, Dan Oki

17.15 – 17.30
Coffee, tea

17.30 – 18.15
YouTube and Censorship: Turkish Case
Mehmet Ali Köksal

VIDEO VORTEX IV
SPLIT

OCTOBER 22-23, 2009
LOCATION: MULTIMEDIA CULTURAL CENTER, SPLIT

The Department of Film and Video at the Academy of Arts University of Split and Platforma 9.81 will organized the fourth Video Vortex event, in collaboration with the Institute of Network Cultures in Amsterdam. After previous events about online video and responses to YouTube in Brussels, Amsterdam and Ankara, this event focused on the moving image on the Web.

The themes of the international symposium include:

Telepresence and Web Aesthetics
Video meets Web aesthetics: how is the phenomenon of 'telepresence' incorporated in various art forms, such as music, theatre, visual arts, literature and cinema? What are underlying aesthetics and what are the specific interface contexts?

Social Cinema
Has cinema found its way onto the Web? Did it change the essential features of cinema? What are the new possibilities of collaborative production? Does the future of film museums and cinematheques lie in online cinematic databases?

Architecture and Moving Image
Online video offers an immense database of moving images, which could be displayed in urban public space. What are the existing cinematographic visions of the future of the moving image in public space? (In films such as Blade Runner, Minority Report, Children of Men, etc.) Which visions can be directly implemented, and which will remain film scenography?

Video Sharing
What are the standards and alternatives for sharing, licensing and hosting moving images on the Web? This theme explores issues around the distribution, licensing, collaborative production, and video hosting.

Technology and politics of the moving image
What is the future of visual browsers? How does moving image production relate to cultural, technological and political dominance? Open standards and codex politics. Surveillance issues.

Literature and video online narrative
Narrative strategies on the Web. From screenplay writing with hypertext, the broadcasted self and narrative avatars to collective narrative processes leading to Web literature, tag based video narrativity, public journalism and performative real-time literature.

During the Video Vortex in Split five cinema events were presented:
1) upload cinema 2) mobile phone cinema 3) social cinema 4) cinematic data base 5) performative cinema

> DAY ZERO: THURSDAY, MAY, 21, 2009
17.00
Screenings 1
Location: Kinoteka Zlatna Vrata
Trip – Natalie Bookchin (63 min.)
Q&A – Natalie Bookchin (Los Angeles), (20 min.)

19.00
Opening evening
Location: Multimedia Cultural Center
19.00 – Word of Welcome by Geert Lovink, Miranda Veljacic and Dan Oki
19.10 – Introduction speech by Lev Manovich (San Diego)
20.00 – Exhibition opening with food/buffet
21.00 – Emile Zile – Post-It Kino Performance
21.45 – Nenad Vukušic Sebastijan – VJ Performance

> DAY ONE: FRIDAY, MAY, 22, 2009
VIDEO VORTEX CONFERENCE
LOCATION: MULTIMEDIA CULTURAL CENTER

9.45 – 11.30
Tele-Image Research Strategies
Moderator: Sabine Niederer
Andreas Treske (Ankara), Nathalie Bookchin (Los Angeles), Dalibor Martinis (Zagreb)

11.45 – 13.45
The Database
Moderator: Tomislav Medak
Maarten Brinkerink (Amsterdam), Kuros Yalpani (Munich), Albert Figurt (Rome), Alejandro Duque (Zurich)

14.30 – 16.30
Video Art meets Web Aesthetics
Moderator Leila Topic
Vera Tollmann (Berlin), Vito Campanelli (Napoli), Sarah Késsene (Gent), Linda Wallace (Sydney/Amsterdam)

17.30 – 18.45
Screenings 2
Location: Kinoteka Zlatna Vrata
Shelly Silver – In complete world (53 min.)
Q&A – Shelly Silver (New York), (20 min.)

21.00 – 22.30
Screenings 3
Presented by: Dagan Cohen
Location: Kinoteka Zlatna Vrata
Upload Cinema, March 2009 Edition 'Engineering the Body' (90 min.)

> DAY TWO: SATURDAY, MAY, 23, 2009
VIDEO VORTEX CONFERENCE
LOCATION: MULTIMEDIA CULTURAL CENTER

09.45 – 11.45
Online Video Theories
Moderator: Geert Lovink
Jan Simons (Amsterdam), Gabriel Menotti (London), Amir Soltani (Manchester),
Stefan Heidenreich (Berlin)

12.00 – 14.00
Online Video Narratives
Moderator: Brian Willems
Jasmina Kallay (Dublin), David Clark (Halifax), Valentina Rao (Pisa),
Paul Wiersbinski (Frankfurt)

14.45 – 16.45
Politics of the Moving Image
Moderator: Petar Milat
Saša Vojkovic (Zagreb), David Teh (Bangkok), Ana Peraica (Split),
Antanas Stancius (Vilnius)

17.00 – 18.30
Social Cinema
Moderator: Dan Oki
Perry Bard (New York), Evelin Stermitz (Villach/Ljubljana), Dagan Cohen (Amsterdam)

19.00
Performance
Location: Multimedia Cultural Center
'Cym and the Aethernauts' (Walkersdorf / All over the world) (performance 30 min.)

22.00
Conference Party
Location: KOCKA CLUB

VIDEO VORTEX V BRUSSELS

NOVEMBER 20-21, 2009
LOCATION: ATOMIUM, BRUSSELS
IN COLLABORATION WITH THE CIMATICS FESTIVAL, KASK HOGESCHOOL
GENT AND CLEA
PROGRAM BY BRAM CREVITS AND STOFFEL DEBUYSERE.

Two years after its first edition, Video Vortex returned to Brussels, this time hosted in one of the great icons of mid 20th century modern architecture, the Atomium. It could be read as a re-baptism of this symbol of the atomic age into a symbol of network culture.

Over the preceding two years Video Vortex – focusing on the status and potential of the moving image on the Internet – had visited Amsterdam, Ankara and Split, growing out into an organised network of organisations and individuals. The second Brussels edition headed for an interim report and asked some participants of the first Video Vortex editions and publication, as well as new ones, to reflect on recent developments in online video culture.

Over the past years the place of the moving image on the Internet has become increasingly prominent. With a wide range of technologies and web applications within anyone's reach, the potential of video as a personal means of expression has reached a totally new dimension. How is this potential being used? How do artists and other political and social actors react to the popularity of YouTube and other 'user-generated-content' websites? What does YouTube tell us about the state of contemporary visual culture? And how can the participation culture of video sharing and vlogging reach some degree of autonomy and diversity, escaping the laws of the mass media and the strong grip of media conglomerates?

About Cimatics:
This 7th edition of the Cimatics festival again went at full throttle with contemporary image and network culture. As a festival for digital culture it puts the focus both on art, media, design and music in a mix of concerts, film-screenings, exhibitions, workshops, conferences, public interventions and parties. Cimatics 2009 was spread out all over the city of Brussels. For 10 days and nights it was be hosted by numerous venues, both underground and above. It intends to be a citywide international festival for advanced creativity, a node where grassroots, underground and pop or art become mixed in an exciting cultural mash-up.

> NOVEMBER 20, 2009: DAY I
13.30
Introduction by Geert Lovink

14.00
System Flaws and Tactics
Moderator: Andreas Treske
Liesbeth Huybrechts/Rudi Knoops, Brian Willems, Rosa Menkman, Johan Grimonprez
Video channels, platforms and formats impose strict structures on how you can interact with

them. This session is inspired by the inherent errors, disabilities and restrictions, often conducting our behavior but in this case inspiring and exposing new insights.

17.30
Q&A

20.30
Video Vortex Evening Program at Les Brigittines

> NOVEMBER 21, 2009: DAY II
10.00
Online Cinema
Moderator: Andreas Treske
Andrew Clay
Similar to his essay 'BMW Films and the Star Wars Kid: 'Early Web Cinema' and Technology' in the recently published 'Cinema and Technology', Andrew Clay provides an in-depth approach of online cinema.

10.45
Categories of Enactment / Strategies of Resistance
Keith Sanborn, Stefaan Decostere
Both lecturers have been contributing to the previous Video Vortex Reader. They are both artists and theoreticians and share a common attitude of resistance. In this session they will update and further expand their previous contributions to Video Vortex.

13.30
Artist Practices: (Sub)Versioning
Moderator: Vera Tollmann
Oliver Laric & Aleksandra Domanovic, Constant Dullaart
(Sub)Versioning – the contraction of the Situationist 'subversion' and the common IT practice of 'versioning' might best describe the practice of the artists in this session. They approach online video as a means for a subtle restructuring of existing popular media and a basis for investigating new modes of constructing and relating meaning brought about by the Internet.

15.00
Politics of Online Video
Moderator: Sabine Niederer
Simon Yuill, Elizabeth Losh, Stephen Crocker
In a dispersed society, with a seemingly vanishing of mass culture, online video is challenging traditional channels of public communication, oppositional media. A session providing us with some remarkable case-studies and research-projects about participatory communication, the White House and citizen journalism.

17.00
Closing Q&A
Evening invitation to opening night of Cimatics festival 2009 at Beursschouwburg with audio-visual concerts by AGF (DE) and TVestroy (CA).
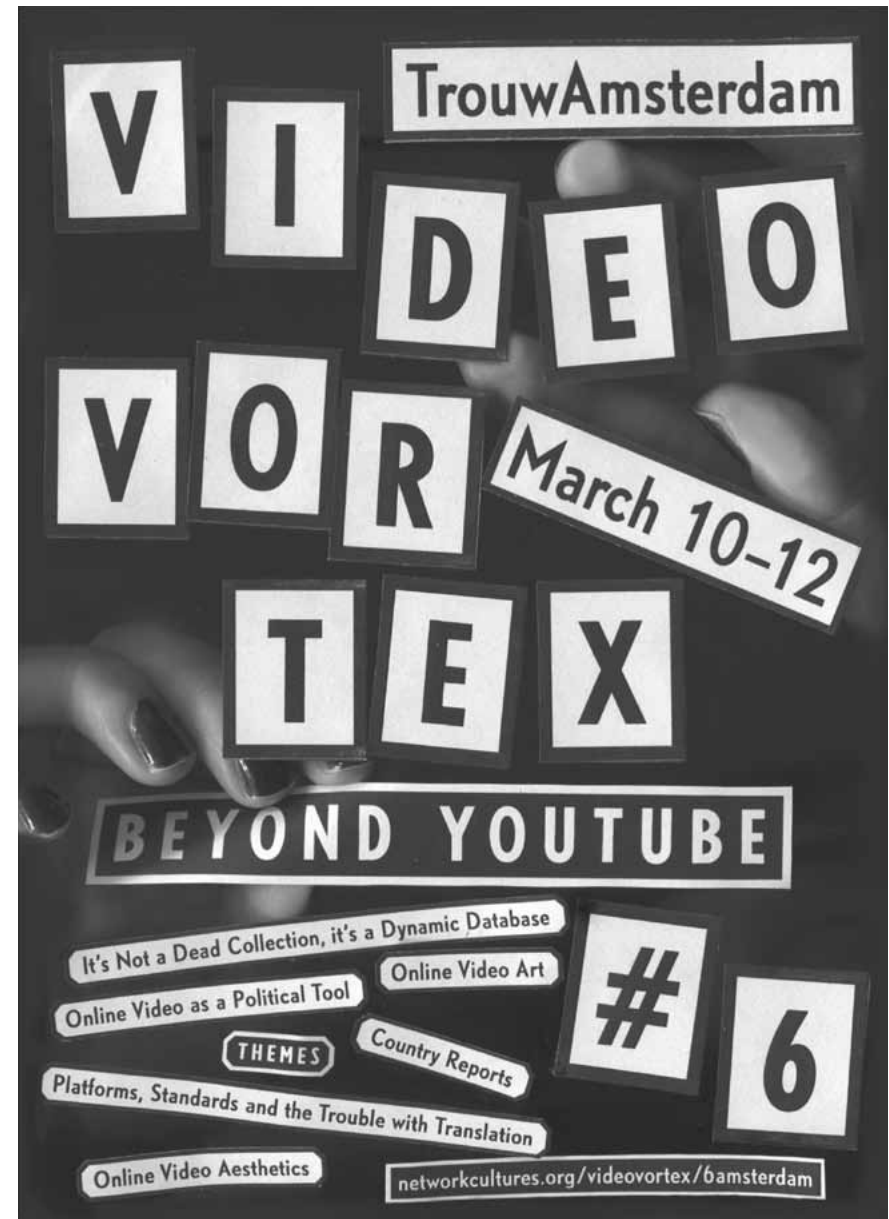
VIDEO VORTEX VI AMSTERDAM

MARCH 11-12, 2011
LOCATION: TROUWAMSTERDAM

Since its birth in 2005 YouTube has grown into an unstoppable force. In response to the overwhelming presence of this web giant, 2007 saw the first Video Vortex conference, with four more over the next three years. While influenced by the legacy of YouTube, online video has become omnipresent as part of the landscape of our digital culture, finding a home across diverse platforms and sites, and developing particular and peculiar aesthetics across the internet ecosystem. Two years later, the Video Vortex events come back to Amsterdam. Organized by the Institute of Network Cultures, and in a top cultural venue, Video Vortex #6 offers artist presentations (performances, screenings and talks), hands-on workshops, the launch of the upcoming *Video Vortex Reader II*, and a 2-day symposium.

> THURSDAY, MARCH 10, (NIMK)
TIME: 10:00 – 16:00 HRS
LOCATION: NETHERLANDS MEDIA ART INSTITUTE (NIMK), AMSTERDAM.

Workshop 1 – Remixing and Re-Use of Open Video Collections
In the context of the Open Images project (www.openimages.eu), participants of the Remixing and Re-use of Open Video Collections workshop will get creative with material from the Netherlands' public broadcasting archive, to make their own short videos. Led by Maarten Brinkerink of the Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision, and facilitated by artists Emile Zile and José Miguel Biscaya, creative students, media producers and video amateurs are invited to start reusing and remixing the growing wealth of open video collections that are made available online for use in inspired and inspiring video creations. During the workshop, participants will first become familiar with the Open Images collection, seeing what is available for re-use, and are then, through the guidance of workshop facilitators, offered a creative toolkit of possible styles and techniques they can use with the material to create and tell their own story using this found footage. The workshop takes place in collaboration with MediaLAB Amsterdam.

Workshop 2 – Animated Gif Mashup Studio
Led by artist Evan Roth, Animated Gif Mashup Studio invites participants to work collaboratively to create a single music video composed of their favorite animated gifs. During the workshop, Roth will teach participants about the open source animated gif mash-up software he built, how to search for animated gifs and how to put together their own animated gif compilations.

FRIDAY, MARCH 11, (TROUWAMSTERDAM)

10.00 – 10.15
Welcome and introduction by Geert Lovink

10.15 – 12.30
Online Video Aesthetics
Moderartor: Geert Lovink
Andrew Clay, Florian Cramer, Florian Schneider, Michael Strangelove
In response to the ubiquitous presence of video on an array of websites and platforms, this session seeks to explore the development of the diverse and distinctive aesthetics of online video. Tackling the tenuous relationship between amateur and professional video production, particularly with respect to the question of 'quality', have amateur and professional video grown closer further erasing the ability to distinguish between distinct visual tropes and operating within similar economic arenas, or are they still in competition? Furthermore, how do mechanisms of monetization on many video platforms effect the collision between professional and amateur content and its creation? What techniques aesthetics, genres, structures and practices exist in the realms of amateur and professional online video creation, and where through the maze of the internet are unique forms and practices emerging?

13.30 – 15.15
Platforms, Standards and the Trouble with Translation Civil Rights
Moderartor: Maarten Binkerink
Ben Moskowitz, Matthew Williamson, Holmes Wilson
Proliferating platforms and standards for video on the web offer the picture of a vast, and sometimes turbulent, sea for online video. The problem of translation across platforms and browsers that arise to due to conflicts in standards, and diminished access to content through language barriers, often restrict the possibilities for diverse and open video sharing. With this in mind, this session digs into the ins and outs of some of the main video sharing platforms analysing their distinct and competing characteristics; exploring standards for web video particularly in light of the advent of HTML5 and discussions of the Open Web; and a new tool for collaborative translation as videos bound across language borders. It is in these platforms, new standards and language translation tools that the current state of politics and possibilities for the growing ecology and culture of online video come to light.

15.30 – 17.00
Online Video Art
Moderartor: Josephine Bosma
Dagan Cohen, Ashiq Jahan Khondker and Eugene Kotlyarenko, Evan Roth
and Roel Wouters
Cinema screenings of online material, live video capture and Skype as a medium, animated GIF mashups, and collaborative networked video-making, arts practices all made possible with the changing technological landscape of video on the internet. Asking what is currently on the minds of artists who engage with online video, this session explores how moving images on the internet are being used in creative and innovative ways. What sorts of issues

are artists dealing with, what kinds of mediums and production methods are being used and developed, and what kind of work is being made? Through artist talks, this session seeks to illustrate the diverse practices and perspectives of artists working in the realm of online video.

17.00 – 17.15
Book launch
Web Aesthetics: How Digital Media Affect Culture and Society, by Vito Campanelli

> SATURDAY, MARCH 12, (TROUWAMSTERDAM)

10.00 – 12.00
It's Not a Dead Collection, it's a Dynamic Database
Moderartor: Rachel Somers Miles
Arjon Dunnewind, Sandra Fauconnier, Mél Hogan, Teague Schneiter, Catrien Schreuder and Annelies Termeer
Now that museums, distributors and TV channels have put their collections online, what is the next phase for these digitalized archives? How can 'the audience' be involved in order to avoid a dead online collection with zero comments? Moreover, what forms of social dynamism can be critically forged in the default rush towards greater participation? How to jump through the hoops of copyright legislation, format compatibility and the spatial culture of consumption and production? Who controls the database, and what are the different ethics involved in putting up content from artist collections to indigenous material? Once collaboration comes into play, what impact do conflicting skill sets, different modes of knowledge production and varying social desires have?

13.30 – 14.45
The World of Online Video: Country Reports
Moderartor: Andreas Treske
Koen Leurs, Ferdiansyah Thajib & Nuraini Juliastuti and Ebru Baranseli
What are some of the key current issues being faced by different countries in their use of online video? Moving beyond the oft-focused European and North American context, this session seeks to offer a detailed exploration of some of the hot topics, initiatives, and pressing needs of various countries in their development and use of video on the internet by centring on specific projects and case studies.

14.45 – 15.00
In Conversation with artist Natalie Bookchin
Natalie Bookchin's video installations explore new forms of documentary, addressing conditions of mass connectivity and isolation and exploring the stories we are telling about ourselves and the world. Using webcam footage and YouTube videos throughout her oeuvre, Bookchin poignantly uses video on the net and its revolving cultural, social and political terrain as material and inspiration for her work. In an onstage interview format, this presentation will offer a conversation between Natalie Bookchin and Geert Lovink about online video and her artistic practice.

15:15 – 17:15
Online Video as a Political Tool
Moderartor: Merijn Oudenampsen
Patricía Dias da Silva, Sam Gregory, And Lowenthal and Joanne Richardson
Video on the internet has opened up a powerful and important place for the widespread distribution of moving images for multifarious political purposes, from grassroots activism, citizen protest and human rights violation witnessing to government "outreach" (authoritative and otherwise) and corporate PR. With these multiple competing interests, this session asks what are the political strategies of online video? Furthermore, are there powerful platforms available for videos in the realm of activism? How do activists deal with and reflect on the nature of online video, with its guerrilla, amateur, viral, remix and lo-fi characteristics? How is online video being used as a grassroots political tool, and conversely what are the ways in which large institutional actors understand and use video as a tool to their own ends, often times against activist intentions? What are the ethics involved in making, sharing and using video on the net as a political tool, and what are the new ways of launching political content effectively when everything aims to be viral?

17.15 – 17.30
Book launch
Video Vortex Reader II: moving images beyond YouTube

20.30 – 23.00
VeniVidiVortex: Closing Party

STUDIES IN NETWORK CULTURES

Studies in Network Cultures is a book series that investigates concepts and practices special to network cultures. Network cultures can be understood as social-technical formations under construction. They rapidly assemble, and can just as quickly disappear, creating a sense of spontaneity, transience and even uncertainty. How to conduct research within such a shifting environment is a key interest to this series. Studies in Network Cultures are edited by Geert Lovink, and published by NAi Publishers, Rotterdam and the Institute of Network Cultures in Amsterdam.

NAi Publishers /Uitgevers

institute of network cultures

For more information please visit:
www.networkcultures.org/publications/studies-in-network-cultures

NED ROSSITER
ORGANIZED NETWORKS: MEDIA THEORY, CREATIVE LABOUR, NEW INSTITUTIONS
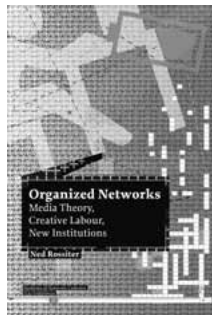
The celebration of network cultures as open, decentralized, and horizontal all too easily forgets the political dimensions of labour and life in informational times. Organized Networks sets out to destroy these myths by tracking the antagonisms that lurk within Internet governance debates, the exploitation of labour in the creative industries, and the aesthetics of global finance capital. Cutting across the fields of media theory, political philosophy, and cultural critique, Ned Rossiter diagnoses some of the key problematics facing network cultures today. Why have radical social-technical networks so often collapsed after the party? What are the key resources common to critical network cultures? And how might these create conditions for the invention of new platforms of organization and sustainability? These questions are central to the survival of networks in a post-dotcom era. Derived from research and experiences participating in network cultures, Rossiter unleashes a range of strategic concepts in order to explain and facilitate the current transformation of networks into autonomous political and cultural 'networks of networks'.

Australian media theorist Ned Rossiter works as a Senior Lecturer in Media Studies (Digital Media), Centre for Media Research, University of Ulster, Northern Ireland and an Adjunct Research Fellow, Centre for Cultural Research, University of Western Sydney, Australia.

ERIC KLUITENBERG
### DELUSIVE SPACES: ESSAYS ON CULTURE, MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY
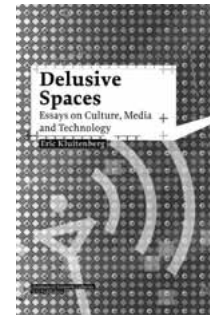
The once open terrain of new media is closing fast. Market concentration, legal consolidation and tightening governmental control have effectively ended the myth of the free and open networks. In *Delusive Spaces*, Eric Kluitenberg takes a critical position that retains a utopian potential for emerging media cultures. The book investigates the archaeology of media and machine, mapping the different methods and metaphors used to speak about technology. Returning to the present, Kluitenberg discusses the cultural use of new media in an age of post-governmental politics. *Delusive Spaces* concludes with the impossibility of representation. Going beyond the obvious delusions of the 'new' and the 'free', Kluitenberg theorizes artistic practices and European cultural policies, demonstrating a provocative engagement with the utopian dimension of technology.

Eric Kluitenberg is a Dutch media theorist, writer and organizer. Since the late 1980s, he has been involved in numerous international projects in the fields of electronic art, media culture, and information politics. Kluitenberg heads the media program at De Balie, Centre for Culture and Politics in Amsterdam. He is the editor of the *Book of Imaginary Media* (NAi Publishers, 2006) and the theme issue 'Hybrid Space' of *Open*, journal on art and the public domain (2007).

MATTEO PASQUINELLI
ANIMAL SPIRITS: A BESTIARY OF THE COMMONS
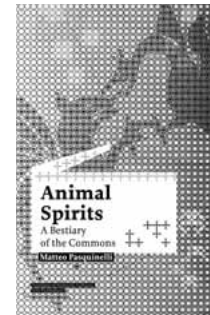
After a decade of digital fetishism, the spectres of the financial and energy crisis have also affected new media culture and brought into question the autonomy of networks. Yet activism and the art world still celebrate Creative Commons and the 'creative cities' as the new ideals for the Internet generation. Unmasking the animal spirits of the commons, Matteo Pasquinelli identifies the key social conflicts and business models at work behind the rhetoric of Free Culture. The corporate parasite infiltrating file-sharing networks, the hydra of gentrification in 'creative cities' such as Berlin and the bicephalous nature of the Internet with its pornographic underworld are three untold dimensions of contemporary 'politics of the common'. Against the latent puritanism of authors like Baudrillard and Žižek, constantly quoted by both artists and activists, Animal Spirits draws a conceptual 'book of beasts'. In a world system shaped by a turbulent stock market, Pasquinelli unleashes a politically incorrect grammar for the coming generation of the new commons.

Matteo Pasquinelli is an Amsterdam-based writer and researcher at the Queen Mary University of London and has an activist background in Italy. He edited the collection *Media Activism: Strategies and Practices of Independent Communication* (2002) and co-edited *C'Lick Me: A Netporn Studies Reader* (2007). Since 2000, he has been editor of the mailing list Rekombinant (www.rekombinant.org).

VITO CAMPANELLI
WEB AESTHETICS: HOW DIGITAL MEDIA AFFECT CULTURE AND SOCIETY
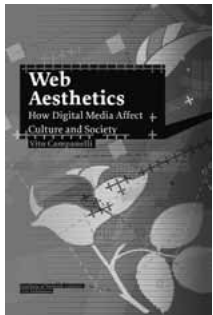
Online video, Web interfaces, file sharing, mailing lists and social networks are transforming our experience of the world. While the social dimension of these Web-related forms dominates public discourse, their aesthetic impact is largely ignored. In response, *Web Aesthetics* intervenes in the field of new media studies and art theory, proposing an organic theory of digital media aesthetics. Italian media theorist Vito Campanelli tracks the proliferation of Web technologies, platforms and software and offers a catalogue of aesthetic strategies to address their profound cultural impact. As Campanelli argues, when the Web is located inside sociocultural practices, processes and expressions, it becomes a powerful agent of aestheticization of life on a global scale.

Vito Campanelli lectures on the theory and technology of mass communication at the University of Naples–L'Orientale. He is a freelance curator of digital culture events and co-founder of MAO – Media & Arts Office. His essays on media art are regularly published in international journals.

JOSEPHINE BOSMA
NETTITUDES: ON A JOURNEY THROUGH NET ART
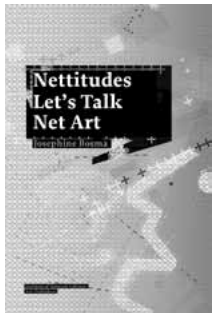
During the nineties net art burst onto the scene as a radical reflection on the role of technology in contemporary art. In Nettitudes Dutch art critic Josephine Bosma catalogues this tumultuous history as art became situated in the material dimensions of the internet, from the spectacular interventions of the first decade to today's dispersed practices, including online acoustics, poetry and archiving. Never the darling of the media art institutions and ignored by many curators and critics since its emergence, net art still persists as a 'non-movement' in the cracks of contemporary media culture. This book provides an analytical foundation and insider's view on net art's many expressions as it grapples with the aesthetic, conceptual and social issues of our times.

Josephine Bosma is an Amsterdam-based journalist and critic commenting on the fields of art and new media since 1993. One of the first to probe into and engage with the domain of net art, her pioneering work is published internationally in books, periodicals and catalogues.

THEORY ON DEMAND

FOR MORE INFORMATION SEE
http://networkcultures.org/publications/theory-on-demand/

Theory on Demand is a series published by the Institute of Network Cultures that draws from an archive of content production. The series takes its name from Print on Demand, a process in which new copies of a book are not printed until an order has been received. Every publication in Theory on Demand can be downloaded freely as a pdf, or can be ordered in print from Lulu or OpenMute.
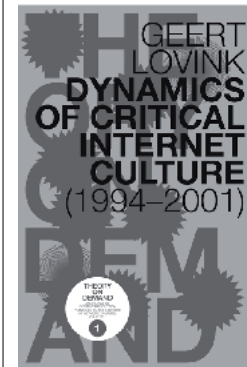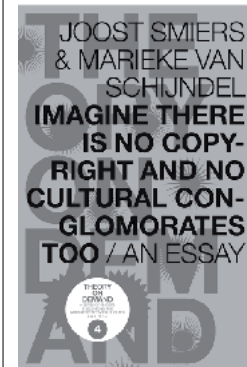
Issue no.01: **Dynamics of Critical Internet Culture** (1994-2001), by Geert Lovink. ISBN: 978-90-78146-07-0.
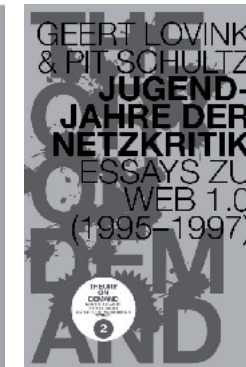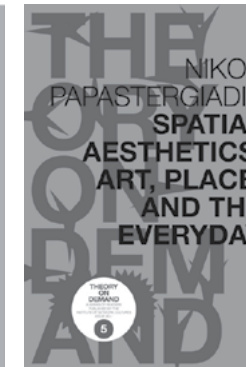
Issue no.02: **Jahre der Jugend Netzkritik:** Essays zu Web 1.0, by Geert Lovink and Pit Schultz. Forthcoming.
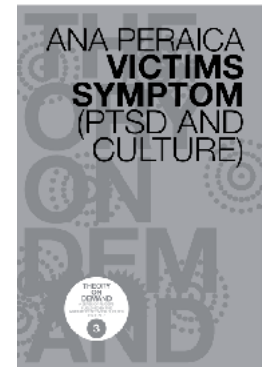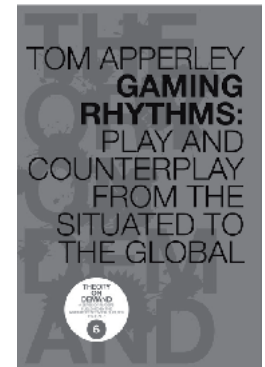
Issue no.03: **Victims' Symptom** (PTSD and Culture), by Ana Peraica. ISBN: 978-90-78146-11-7.

Issue no.04: **Imagine There Is No Copyright and Cultural Conglomerates Too** / An Essay, by Joost Smiers & Marieke van Schijndel. ISBN: 978-90-78146-09-4.

Issue no.05: **Spatial Aesthetics**: Art, Place, and the Everyday, by Nikos Papastergiadis. ISBN: 978-90-816021-3-6.

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institute of network cultures

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

Perry Bard is an artist living in New York. She works individually and collaboratively on inter-disciplinary projects for public space. She has exhibited video and installations internation-ally, in New York at the Museum of Modern Art PS1 Museum, Sao Paolo Biennial, Montreal Biennial, and Reina Sofia Museum Madrid. Her project *Man With A Movie Camera: The Global Remake* won Honorary Mention in the Digital Communities category at Ars Electronica 2008 , was presented at Transmediale 2009, File 2009, Media Forum at Moscow Interna-tional Film Festival 2009, Doclab at IDFA 2009, and has been installed in museums and galleries and on public screens worldwide. http://www.perrybard.net.

Natalie Bookchin is an artist whose video installations explore new forms of documentary, addressing conditions of mass connectivity and isolation, and explore the stories we are tell-ing about ourselves and the world. Her work is exhibited widely, including at LACMA, PS1, MASS MoCA, the Generali Foundation, the Walker Art Center, the Pompidou Centre, MOCA LA, the Whitney Museum, the Tate, and Creative Time. She has received numerous grants, including those from Creative Capital, California Arts Council, the Guggenheim, the Durfee, the Rockefeller, California Community Foundation, New York State Council for the Arts, Dan-iel Langlois, a COLA Artist Fellowship and most recently from the Center for Cultural Innova-tion. In 1999-2000 Bookchin organized <net.net.net>, an eight month series of lectures and workshops on art, activism and the internet at CalArts, MOCA in LA, and Laboratorio Cinematek in Tijuana . She lives in Los Angeles where she is co-Director of the Photography & Media Program in the Art School at CalArts. http://bookchin.net/.

Vito Campanelli is an Italian new media theorist who lectures at the Università degli Studi di Napoli 'L'Orientale'. His essays on media art are regularly published in international journals. He is a freelance curator and promoter of events in the field of digital culture and co-founder of the non-profit association MAO - Media & Arts Office ONLUS (http://www.mediartsoffice.eu). His most recent publication is the book *Web Aesthetics: How Digital Media Affect Cul-ture and Society* as part of the book series Studies in Network Cultures (Institute of Network Cultures, Amsterdam/NAi Publishers Rotterdam, 2010).

Andrew Clay is Principal Lecturer in Critical Technical Practices in the Department of Media Technology at De Montfort University, Leicester, UK, and has published articles on crime and masculinity in British cinema. He is currently researching and publishing on the theory and practice of online film with particular reference to YouTube social media sharing practices and new media developments such as open source cinema and post-television web video. He has adopted a number of social media tools in teaching and explores the pedagogical potential for hands-on experience of digital technologies in the study of media technology.

Alexandra Crosby researches Indonesian culture. She also writes, curates exhibitions and thinks up exciting collaborative projects. She recently coordinated Camp Sambel for Engage-Media. She is based on NSW's Central Coast, Australia, with her partner and son where she is finishing a PhD on cultural participation in Indonesian activist spaces.

Constant Dullaart born in 1979 in the Netherlands, is a Berlin-based artist/curator who works primarily on and with the world wide web. During his residency at the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam he curated several events in the surrounding city, such as the periodically held *Lost and Found* evenings (with his final event in the New Museum, NYC), *Contemporary Semantics Beta* in Arti et Amicitiae, and *Versions* in NIMk (Netherlands Media Art Institute). His work is shown internationally in places such as the Centre Pompidou in Paris, Art in Gen-eral and MWNM galleries in New York, the ICA in London, and NIMk, de Appel, W139, the Stedelijk Museum, Ellen de Bruijne projects, and Gallery West in the Netherlands. Dullaart lives/works in Berlin and Amsterdam. http://www.constantdullaart.com/.

Alejandro Duque spreading his time between Columbia and Switzerland, is an artist and cur-rent PhD candidate at The European Graduate School in Switzerland with research entitled: 'Gifted Malice, Kinship Through the Wires and the Waves'. Alejo dedicates his free/libre time to experiencing all possible ways for collaborative/participatory arts that celebrate cultural agitation across all possible networks and mostly in a South to East axis. His current interests deal with HAM radio, streaming media and satellite spotting. He is also an active member of networks such as Bricolabs and dorkbot, labSurlab and [k.0_lab] and is easy to spot on the IRC freenode network @ dspstv.

Sandra Fauconnier is an art historian specialized in (new) media art. She holds an MA in art history from Ghent University, Belgium, graduating with a thesis about internet art in 1997. She first worked as an educational technologist at Ghent University. Since 2000, she has been involved in several media art archives and collections. She was archivist for V2_ Insti-tute for the Unstable Media until 2007, responsible for the development of metadata models and terminology resources for V2_'s media art documentation. Sandra currently works for the collection and mediatheque of the Netherlands Media Art Institute, where she describes NIMk's distribution collection and works on terminology and dissemination. She also regu-larly writes and lectures about media art.

@lbert figurt is an Italian video-maker, musician and medialchemist. He holds a BA in cin-ema and has worked as a director and screenwriter both for TV programs and independent productions. Constantly undecided between doing and thinking, he recently developed (and he's busy testing) a "creativitheory escamo[n]tage" where performative lectures mingle with audiovisual essays. http://vimeo.com/albertfigurt.

Sam Gregory is the Program Director at WITNESS (http://www.witness.org) leading global organization training and supporting people to use video in human rights advocacy, where he supervises campaigning, training and policy leadership initiatives. He has worked extensively with human rights activists, particularly in Latin America and Asia, integrating video into campaigns on civil, political, social, economic and cultural human rights issues. In 2005, he was lead editor on 'Video for Change: A Guide for Advocacy and Activism' (Pluto Press), and in 2007, developed WITNESS' Video Advocacy Institute, an intensive two-week training program. Currently he is leading WITNESS' 'Cameras Everywhere' initiative on ubiquitous video. He is an Adjunct Lecturer in Public Policy at the Harvard Kennedy School, from where he graduated with a Master's in Public Policy. He was formerly on the Advisory Board of the Tactical Technology Collective, and is on the Advisory Board of Games for Change.

Cecilia Guida is an independent curator and PhD candidate at IULM, University of Milan, Italy. Currently, she is working on a research thesis on the topic of: the new public space of the Net as a political and social space, which connects to participative art practices. Cecilia was also an intern at the INC in 2010, focusing on the Video Vortex project.

Stefan Heidenreich born in 1965 in Biberach/Riss, Germany, lives in Berlin and works as writer, journalist and theoretician, and teaches at the Architecture Department of the ETH Zürich. His books include *Was verspricht die Kunst?* (The Promises of Art, 1998/2009), *Flipflop. Digitale Kultur* (Flipflop. On Digital Culture, 2004) and *Mehr Geld* (More Money, 2008). He is currently working on the book *Über Universität* (On University, 2011). http://www.stefanheidenreich.de.

Larissa Hjorth is an artist, digital ethnographer and senior lecturer in the Games Program at RMIT University, Australia. Since 2000, she has been researching gendered customizing of mobile communication, gaming and virtual communities in the Asia–Pacific — with studies outlined in her book, *Mobile Media in the Asia-Pacific* (London/ NY: Routledge). She has published widely on the topic nationally and internationally, in journals such as *Games and Culture*, *Convergence*, *Journal of Intercultural Studies, and Fibreculture* to name a few. She co-edited two Routledge anthologies, *Gaming Cultures and Place in the Asia–Pacific Region* (with Dean Chan), and *Mobile Technologies: From Telecommunication to Media* (with Gerard Goggin). In 2010 she released *Games & Gaming* textbook (London: Berg). Since 2009 Hjorth has been doing an ARC discovery fellowship with Michael Arnold exploring the role of the local and social media in the Asia-Pacific region, focusing cross-culturally on Tokyo, Seoul, Shanghai, Singapore, Manila, and Melbourne.

Mél Hogan is currently completing her research creation doctorate in Communication Studies at Concordia University in Montréal, Canada. Her research documents defunct, stalled, and crashed online video art repositories within a Canadian cultural context. (See online research curation: http://wayward.ca). She is also the Art Director of online and print on demand journal Nomorepotlucks.org and part two of two of the BRUCE video art duo. http://www.melhogan.com.

Nuraini Juliastuti is a co-founder and director of KUNCI Cultural Studies Center in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, an organization concerned with experimental approaches to cultural issues and advancing them into a wider critical movement through popular education practices. She lives and works in Yogyakarta.

Sarah Késenne holds a Master's in Art History and Film Studies at the Universities of Ghent and Antwerp in Belgium, and Bologna, Italy. She's currently working at Sint-Lucas Visual Arts Ghent (www.sintlucas.wenk.org), part of the Faculty of Arts and Architecture of KU Leuven Association, as a researcher and research coordinator. She has been involved in a few arts projects, teaching art theory courses at MAD Hasselt & TU Delft. She has written articles on African cinema, short films, video and music and is currently developing ideas for a PhD project. She lives in Brussels.

Elizabeth Losh is the author of *Virtualpolitik: An Electronic History of Government Media-Making in a Time of War, Scandal, Disaster, Miscommunication, and Mistakes,* and is the Director of the Culture, Art, and Technology Program at Sixth College in U.C. San Diego. She

writes about institutions as digital content-creators, the discourses of the 'virtual state', the media literacy of policy makers and authority figures, and the rhetoric surrounding regulatory attempts to limit everyday digital practices. She has published articles about videogames for the military and emergency first-responders, government websites and YouTube channels, state-funded distance learning efforts, national digital libraries, political blogging, and congressional hearings on the internet.

Geert Lovink is a Dutch-Australian media theorist and critic. He is Professor at The European Graduate School, Research Professor ('lector') at the Hogeschool van Amsterdam where he is founding director of the Institute of Network Cultures, and Associate Professor in Media Studies (new media program), University of Amsterdam. Lovink is author of *Dark Fiber* (2002), *My First Recession* (2003), and *Zero Comments* (2007). A fourth book in this series will be published 2011 by Polity Press. He recently co-organized events and publications on Wikipedia research (Critical Point of View), online video (Video Vortex), organized networks (Winter Camp) and the culture of search (Society of the Query).

Andrew Lowenthal has been a media and technology activist since 1998. He has worked with a range of online activist media projects - he was a long time coordinator and editor at Melbourne Indymedia, participatory media project lead at Tactical Technology Collective, and is co-founder and General Manager of EngageMedia.

Rosa Menkman is a Dutch visualist who focuses on visual artifacts created by accidents in digital media. With the idea that every technology possesses its own inherent accidents, the visuals she makes are the result of glitches, compressions, feedback and other forms of noise. Although many people perceive these accidents as negative experiences, Rosa emphasizes their positive consequences. By combining both her practical as well as her academic background, she merges her abstract pieces within a grand theory of artifacts (a glitch studies) that compromises both static works, texts and video performances. She has shown work at festivals such as Cimatics (Brussels 2008 and 2009), Blip (Europe and U.S. in 2009), Video Vortex (Amsterdam 2008 and Brussels 2009), ISEA (Dublin 2009), and File (Sao Paolo 2010). Menkman was also one of the organizers/curators of the successful GLI.TC/H festival that took place in Chicago in 2010. http://rosa-menkman.blogspot.com, http://GLI.TC/H.

Gabriel Menotti is an independent curator and producer engaged with emerging media circuits. He has been involved with pirate movie screenings, remix film festivals, videogame championships, porn screenplay workshops, installations with super8 film projectors and generative art exhibitions. Currently, he is a PhD candidate at Goldsmiths (University London) and the Catholic University of São Paulo. He also does 2D animation. http://bogotissimo.com/b2kn/.

Rachel Somers Miles works on projects and publications for the Institute of Network Cultures. She moved from Toronto to Amsterdam in 2008 to attend the Preservation and Presentation of the Moving Image Master's program at the University of Amsterdam, solidifying her interest in the theory and politics of archiving, and continuing to stoke her interest and involvement in (new) media arts/digital culture. She also obtained a Master's degree in Media Studies from Concordia University, Montréal. Exploring the different media arts and digital culture hubs of the Amsterdam-area, Rachel has worked at the Netherlands Media Art

Institute (NIMk) in the preservation and collections department, and also as a researcher for Virtueel Platform's series 'Project Observatory'. While at the INC she has worked on both the Studies in Network Cultures and Network Notebooks series, and is currently focusing her attention on the Video Vortex project.

Andrew Gryf Paterson is a Scottish artist-organizer, cultural producer and independent researcher, currently based in Helsinki, Finland. His work involves variable roles as initiator, participant, author and curator. Andrew works across the fields of media/network/ environmental activism, pursuing a participatory arts practice through workshops, performative events, and storytelling. Selected curatorial/organizational projects include: 'Herbologies/ Foraging Networks' program of Pixelache Festival (2010); 'Alternative Economy Cultures' program of Pixelache Helsinki Festival (2009); 'Add+PF+?' in the Pedagogical Factory program at Hyde Park Art Centre, Chicago (2007); 'Locative Media: On and Off the Beaten Track' for Leonardo Electronic Almanac, MIT Press (2006); 'Locative Media Workshop: Rautatieasema' for Pixelache Helsinki Festival (2004/2006). He is currently a doctoral candidate at Aalto University School of Art and Design, with the working thesis title of 'Artistic Practice as Fieldwork', and coordinator of Pixelversity education program (Pixelache Helsinki) in 2011. http://agryfp.info/.

Denis Roio aka Jaromil is an Amsterdam-based artist, theorist and programmer. Inspired by Richard Stallman's 'Free Software' liberatory ethics, he seeks to cross borders between art and code, social activism, and research and development, focusing on the recycling of technology and its accessibility. In the past years his publications have focused on computer viruses, piracy and privacy issues, freedom of speech and independent media practices. As author of the dyne:bolic operating system and several other software projects he has made important contributions to the development of the GNU / Linux platform. For a number of years Jaromil has been active in R&D for the Netherlands Media Art Institute and in 2009 was awarded the Vilém Flusser Theory Award at Transmediale Berlin.

Teague Schneiter is a media archivist and researcher whose work bridges online video, human rights, and moving image archiving. She is currently working as an Outreach/Archives Consultant for IsumaTV, an online interactive network for Inuit and Indigenous multimedia. Teague completed her Professional MA in Preservation & Presentation of the Moving Image at the University of Amsterdam in February 2010, graduating cum laude with a minor thesis examining the ethics and politics of the presentation of indigenous media online. Before IsumaTV, she worked within the Media Archive and participatory media website (The Hub) for WITNESS, an international human rights video-advocacy organization.

Jan Simons is associate professor in New Media at the University of Amsterdam. He has published on new media and film culture. He is the author of *Playing The Waves: Lars von Trier's Cinema Games* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2007). Currently, he is preparing a book on computer games and researching new interfaces.

Evelin Stermitz graduated with a Master of Arts degree in Media and New Media Art from the Academy of Fine Arts and Design, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, and also holds a Master's in Philosophy from Media Studies. Her works are in the field of media and new media art with the main emphasis on post-structuralist feminist art practices. Besides her artistic work,

Stermitz's research focuses on women artists in media and new media art. She founded Art-Fem.TV – Art and Feminism ITV (http://www.artfem.tv) – in 2008, receiving a special mention for ArtFem.TV at the IX Festival Internacional de la Imagen, University of Caldas, Manizales, Colombia, in 2010. http://www.evelinstermitz.net.

Blake Stimson teaches art history and critical theory at the University of California, Davis. His research focuses on the social life of archaic modernist values such as beauty and commitment for the world we find ourselves in today. Recent publications include *The Pivot of the World: Photography and Its Nation* (MIT 2006), *Collectivism after Modernism: The Art of Social Imagination after 1945* (co-edited with Gregory Sholette, Minnesota 2007), *The Meaning of Photography* (co-edited with Robin Kelsey, Clark/Yale, 2008), and *Institutional Critique: An Anthology of Artist's Writings* (co-edited with Alexander Alberro, MIT 2009).

David Teh works in the Department of English Language and Literature, National University of Singapore. He studied critical theory at the Power Institute, University of Sydney, receiving his PhD in 2005. Before moving to Singapore, David was an independent critic and curator based in Bangkok (2005-2009). His projects there included 'Platform', a showcase of Thai installation artists (Queen's Gallery and The Art Center, Chulalongkorn University, 2006); 'The More Things Change', The 5th Bangkok Experimental Film Festival (2008); and 'Unreal Asia', a thematic program for the 55th International Short Film Festival, Oberhausen, Germany (2009). David has contributed to numerous publications including *Art Asia Pacific*, *Art & Australia* and *The Bangkok Post*. His current research concerns contemporary art, film and new media in Southeast Asia. David was co-founder of the Fibreculture forum for internet culture. He is a member of Bangkok art collective, As Yet Unnamed, and a director of Future Perfect, a contemporary art platform based in Singapore.

Ferdiansyah Thajib is a researcher at KUNCI Cultural Studies Center in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. His subject interests cover media-technology convergence, anthropology of emotion, and critical sexuality studies. In the recent past he co-organized the local holding of *Q! Film Festival* in Yogyakarta, and has also collaborated in various projects such as working with EngageMedia as one of the field researchers for the Videochronic publication.

Andreas Treske is an editor, film-maker, and media artist living in Turkey. He graduated from the Munich Film Academy, Hochschule für Fernsehen und Film. From 1992 to 1998 he was creative art staff at HFF Munich, with extensive research on applied aesthetics for cinema and TV. From 1998 to 2010 he taught at the Department of Communication and Design at Bilkent University, Ankara, in film and video production and new media theory, acting as department chair from 2005 to 2010. Since the summer of 2010 he is Assistant Professor at Yasar University in Izmir, Turkey. He's shown his interactive media works and films at various international exhibitions and festivals, and co-directed the feature length documentary *Takim boyle tutulur* (Autumn 2005), shown in more than 50 Turkish cinemas. In 2008 he was picture editor of the feature length documentary "Mustafa", directed by Can Dündar, and organizer of the 3rd Video Vortex conference, in Ankara.

Robrecht Vanderbeeken obtained his PhD in Philosophy in 2003 at Ghent University with a dissertation that brought forward an analysis of the explanation of action from a philosophy of science's perspective. He has published widely in magazines, academic journals and books

on subjects ranging from metaphysics to aesthetics. He was a researcher at the Theory Department of the Jan van Eyck Academie in The Netherlands (2004-2006) and is/was a visiting lecturer at the postgraduate institute Transmedia in Brussels, the Higher Institute of Fine Arts (HISK) in Ghent, Sint-Lucas Academy in Ghent, and Brunel University in London. Since 2007 he has been a Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Faculty of Fine Arts (KASK) at University College Ghent. He is currently doing research on video and media art, and the cultural-philosophical implications of technological-scientific evolutions.

Linda Wallace has worked in many different media, including radio and sound, visual media, text and writing, art and curating. In 1995 she formed the company machinehunger. She holds an MFA (1995) from the University of NSW, Sydney, and a PhD (2003), from Australian National University, Canberra. Linda Wallace lives in Amsterdam, makes art, writes, and teaches Iyengar Yoga. She is currently working on a book. http://machinehunger.com.au.

Brian Willems teaches literature and film theory at the University of Split, Croatia. He is the author of *Hopkins and Heidegger* and *Facticity, Poverty and Clones: On Kazuo Ishiguro's Never Let Me Go*. His essays on the cross-sections of literature, philosophy and media have appeared or are forthcoming in *From A to <A>: Keywords in Markup*, *Battlestar Galactica and Philosophy*, *artUS*, *electronic book review*, *Poiesis*, *Symposium* and elsewhere. Willems poetry and prose has appeared, for example, in *The Antioch Review*, *Salzburg Poetry Review*, *Things Magazine*, *Identity Theory*, *Eyeshot.*

Matthew Williamson is an artist, once described as 'frustratingly engaging', who examines the cohesion between the internet and so-called 'real life'. While working in a broad range of formats from print to video, websites to electronics, his work is focused on the humorous relationships we forge with our machines. A graduate of the Ontario College of Art & Design and MFA candidate at Syracuse University, Matthew has shown work in Italy, the U.S.A, and Canada.

Tara Zepel is a researcher, theorist, intermittent artist, and a PhD student in the Art History, Theory & Criticism program at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD), where her work explores the intersection(s) between aesthetics, community and technology. Her current focus is on the networked aesthetics of ubiquitous computing and Augmented Reality. She is particularly interested in relations between art and technology that push conceptions of what is possible and the cultural/aesthetic implications that ensue. Prior to UCSD, Tara received a Bachelor's degree in Literature from Duke University (2002). She has also acted as a project manager in the art world and worked in production and post-production for independent films, but has always retained close ties to her passion for learning and sharing knowledge. http://artfuturenow.com.

Video Vortex Reader II
MOVING IMAGES BEYOND YOUTUBE
EDITED BY
GEERT LOVINK AND **RACHEL SOMERS MILES**
INC READER #6

Video Vortex Reader II is the Institute of Network Cultures' second collection of texts that critically explore the rapidly changing landscape of online video and its use. With the success of YouTube ('2 billion views per day') and the rise of other online video sharing platforms, the moving image has become expansively more popular on the Web, significantly contributing to the culture and ecology of the internet and our everyday lives. In response, the Video Vortex project continues to examine critical issues that are emerging around the production and distribution of online video content.

Following the success of the mailing list, the website and first *Video Vortex Reader* in 2008, recent Video Vortex conferences in Ankara (October 2008), Split (May 2009) and Brussels (November 2009) have sparked a number of new insights, debates and conversations regarding the politics, aesthetics, and artistic possibilities of online video. Through contributions from scholars, artists, activists and many more, *Video Vortex Reader II* asks what is occurring within and beyond the bounds of Google's YouTube? How are the possibilities of online video, from the accessibility of reusable content to the internet as a distribution channel, being distinctly shaped by the increasing diversity of users taking part in creating and sharing moving images over the web?

Contributors: Perry Bard, Natalie Bookchin, Vito Campanelli, Andrew Clay, Alexandra Crosby, Alejandro Duque, Sandra Fauconnier, Albert Figurt, Sam Gregory, Cecilia Guida, Stefan Heidenreich, Larissa Hjorth, Mél Hogan, Nuraini Juliastuti, Sarah Késenne, Elizabeth Losh, Geert Lovink, Andrew Lowenthal, Rosa Menkman, Gabriel Menotti, Rachel Somers Miles, Andrew Gryf Paterson, Teague Schneiter, Jan Simons, Evelin Stermitz, Blake Stimson, David Teh, Ferdiansyah Thajib, Andreas Treske, Robrecht Vanderbeeken, Linda Wallace, Brian Willems, Matthew Williamson, Tara Zepel.

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CREATE-IT
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RESEARCH

culture
vortex public participation in online collections

Hogeschool van Amsterdam
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SIA
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