# NETWORKS OF EXCELLENCE

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15  A publication supported by Waikato Institute of Tech-
    nology in association with The Power Institute
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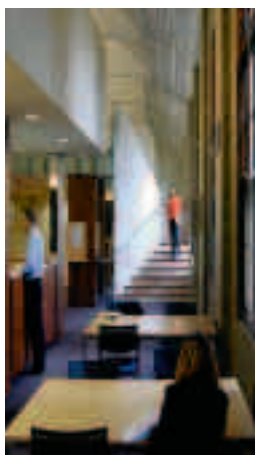
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NETWORKS OF EXCELLENCE

Welcome

As facilitators of the Fibreculture mailing list, we've noticed significant changes in the networked world of critical analysis since the Tampa crisis, September 11 and the Bali bombings. New media have lost their bravado and cavalier distraction; their 'newness' if you wish. The nineties dream of the world as a unified, integrated marketplace – or anticapitalist laboratory – has long faded away. These distinctions are now substituted by the metaphor – and reality – of war. This cultural shift can be traced in today's sober expectations of technology. The material in this publication provides another vocabulary and mode of expression for new media culture, beyond utopia and control.

The purpose of the Fibreculture network has been to open up new spaces for critical Australasian thought, writing and dialogue. Fibreculture is fostering a critical network where people are able to situate and distribute their work without the compromises that attend the usual channels of labour and expression. The institutional and economic agendas of the creative 'knowledge industries' have circumscribed innovation and tended to propagate unchallenging and conservative voices. Even in the arts, the energy of experimental and critical culture is often lost on the mass media. New media discourse, dominated by pseudo-scientific techno dreams, is in danger of isolating itself. The Fibreculture initiative calls out to network a different complex of values and practices, to stage confrontations and articulate controversial contemporary political topics such as the issue of refugees and migration.

Fibreculture insists upon the need to open public exchanges and engagements with New Media culture and politics. IT lift-outs are basically catalogues for the New Economy fetishes, providing mildly infotaining advertorial gloss. The spatio-temporal structure and economy of mainstream media consistently reduces the complexity of things. The audiences they share are credited with being, at best, merely responsive to these offerings – and at worst, entirely passive receivers. But we know this restriction is false. The media 'End User' in an educated community is not an 'end' at all, but a generative, critical node in a multitude that thinks otherwise.

This Fibreculture publication is another experiment in communication. It seeks to extend and translate online dynamics into the materiality of expression and habits of reading peculiar to the broadsheet. To our mind, this is the task of new media – to mediate conditions that enable the emergence of new genres and ways of doing, testing the limits and possibilities of culture and politics as they are situated in networked fields of tension and collaboration. New media is the name we give to the process of this transformation.

Fibreculture aims to address a gaping lack of informed critical writing on new media in Australasia. The current experience with new media technologies in Australasia is paradoxical. Use of new media technology is high and growing: for example, over half Australian homes have Internet access, and almost all medium to large businesses. DVD has been taken up more quickly than any other consumer format.

Australia and New Zealand have strong cultural industries – in education, media production (especially film-making) and public cultural institutions. They also have a strong services sectors in technology, but relatively little research and development. Recent changes, though, are institutionalising infrastructures that may see more research into new media technologies: the ICT Centre in Sydney, the Centre for the Moving Image in Melbourne, the rumoured Australian Media Lab, new media education in a range of disciplines from fine art, design, architecture, mathematics, computer science and the humanities. The slow roll-outs of broadband Internet, digital television and cable television are also changing the conditions for business, politics, education and IT.

However, the spaces for high level cross-disciplinary discussions about these developments is limited. The fantastic claims about new economy business models have self-destructed. Policy seems too often to be driven by technological determinism and the protection of vested interests. Corporate grabs for control over standards and intellectual property are largely unquestioned. While cultural workers and engineers, educators and policy-makers are all invested in these changes, there are few forums that bring these people together in systemic ways to ask questions about these changes. It is the aim of Fibreculture to overcome the divisions between high and low culture, so-called 'contemporary arts' and those who work with technology and last but not least between 'real' science and soft humanities.

This free newspaper, and the Fibreculture conference at the MCA in November 2002, are efforts in this direction.

The Fibreculture Newspaper Editors:

Chris Chesher   Gillian Fuller
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Geert Lovink   Esther Milne
Ned Rossiter   David Teh

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MEDIA ACTIVISM

!!!!!

Geert Lovink and Florian Schneider

A VIRTUAL WORLD IS POSSIBLE: FROM TACTICAL MEDIA TO DIGITAL MULTITUDES

We start with the current strategy debates of the so-called "anti-globalisation movement", the biggest emerging political force for decades. In Part II we will look into strategies of critical new media culture in the post-speculative phase after dotcommania. Four phases of the global movement are becoming visible, all of which have distinct political, artistic and aesthetic qualities.

PART ONE

1.   The 90s and tactical media activism

In the aftermath of the fall of the Berlin Wall the term 'tactical media' arose as a renaissance of media activism, blending old school political work and artists, engagement with new technologies. During the early nineties there was a growing awareness of gender issues, exponential growth of media industries and the increasing availability of inexpensive do-it-yourself equipment created a new sense of self-awareness amongst activists, programmers, theorists, curators and artists. Media were no longer seen as merely tools for the Struggle, but experienced as virtual environments whose parameters were permanently under construction. This is the golden age of tactical media, open to issues of aesthetics, experimenting with alternative forms of storytelling.

However, these liberating techno practices did not immediately translate into visible social movements. Rather, they symbolised the celebration of media freedom, in itself a great political goal. The media used, from video, CD-ROM, cassettes, zines and flyers to music styles such as rap and techno – varied widely, as did the topics. Commonly shared was a feeling that politically motivated activities, be they art or research or advocacy work, were no longer part of a politically correct ghetto and could intervene in pop culture, without necessarily having to compromise with the system. With everything up for negotiation, new coalitions could be formed. The current movements, worldwide, cannot be understood outside of the very personal and diverse cry for the digital freedom of expression.

2.   99-01: The period of big mobilisations

By the end of the nineties the post-modern 'time without movements' had come to pass. The organised discontent against neo-liberalism, global warming policies, labour exploitation and numerous other issues converged. Equipped with networks and arguments, backed up by decades of research, a hybrid movement - wrongly labelled by mainstream media as 'anti-globalisation' - gained momentum. One of the particular features of this movement lies in its apparent inability and unwillingness to answer the question that is typical of any kind of movement on the rise or any generation on the move: what's to be done? There was and there is no answer, no alternative - either strategic or tactical - to the existing world order, to the dominant mode of globalisation.

And maybe this is the most important and liberating conclusion: there is no way back to the twentieth century, the protective nation state and the gruesome tragedies of the 'left.' It has been good to remember - but equally good to throw off - the past. The question 'what's to be done' should not be read as an attempt to re-introduce some form of Leninist principles. The issues of strategy, organisation and democracy belong to all times. We neither want to bring back old policies through the backdoor, nor do we think that this urgent question can be dismissed by invoking crimes committed under the banner of Lenin, however justified such arguments are. When Slavoj Zizek looks in the mirror he may see Father Lenin, but that's not the case for everyone. It is possible to wake up from the nightmare of the past history of communism and (still) pose the question: what's to be done? Can a 'multitude' of interests and backgrounds ask that question, or is the only agenda that defined by the summit calendar of world leaders and the business elite?

Nevertheless, the movement has been growing rapidly. At first sight it appears to use a pretty boring and very traditional medium: the mass-mobilisation of tens of thousands in the streets of Seattle, hundreds of thousands in the streets of Genoa. And yet, tactical media networks played an important role in it's coming into being. From now on pluriformity of issues and identities was a given reality. Difference is here to stay and no longer needs to legitimise itself against higher authorities such as the Party, the Union or the Media. Compared to previous decades this is its biggest gain. The 'multitudes' are not a dream or some theoretical construct but a reality.

If there is a strategy, it is not contradiction but complementary existence. Despite theoretical deliberations, there is no contradiction between the street and cyberspace. The one fuels the other. Protests against the WTO, neo-liberal EU policies, and party conventions are all staged in front of the gathered world press. Indymedia crops up as a parasite of the mainstream media. Instead of having to beg for attention, protests take place under the eyes of the world media during summits of politicians and business leaders, seeking direct confrontation. Alternatively, symbolic sites are chosen such as border regions (East-West Europe, USA-Mexico) or refugee detention centres (Frankfurt airport, the centralised Eurocop database in Strasbourg, the Woomera detention centre in

the Australian desert). Rather than just objecting to it, the global entitlement of the movement adds to the ruling mode of globalisation a new layer of globalisation from below.

3.   Confusion and resignation after 9-11

At first glance, the future of the movement is a confusing and irritating one. Old-leftist grand vistas, explaining US imperialism and its aggressive unilateralist foreign policy, provided by Chomsky, Pilger and other baby boomers are consumed with interest but no longer give the bigger picture. In a polycentric world conspiracy theories can only provide temporary comfort for the confused. No moralist condemnation of capitalism is necessary as facts and events speak for themselves. People are driven to the street by the situation, not by an analysis (neither ours nor the one from Hardt & Negri). The few remaining leftists can no longer provide the movement with an ideology, as it works perfectly without one. "We don't need your revolution." Even the social movements of the 70s and 80s, locked up in their NGO structures, have a hard time keeping up. New social formations are taking possession of the streets and media spaces, without feeling the need of representation by some higher authority, not even the heterogenous committees gathering in Porto Alegre.

So far this movement has been bound in clearly defined time/space coordinates. It still takes months to mobilise multitudes and organise the logistics, from buses and planes, camping grounds and hostels, to independent media centres. This movement is anything but spontaneous (and does not even claim to be so). The people that travel hundreds or thousands of miles to attend protest rallies are driven by real concerns, not by some romantic notion of socialism. The worn-out question: "reform or revolution?" sounds more like blackmail to provoke the politically correct answer.

The contradiction between selfishness and altruism is also a false one. State-sponsored corporate globalisation affects everyone. International bodies such as the WTO, the Kyoto Agreement on global warming, or the privatisation of the energy sector are no longer abstract news items, dealt with by bureaucrats and (NGO) lobbyists. This political insight has been the major quantum leap of recent times. Is this then the Last International? No. There is no way back to the nation state, to traditional concepts of liberation, the logic of transgression and transcendence, exclusion and inclusion. Struggles are no longer projected onto a distant Other that begs for our moral support and money. We have finally arrived in the post-solidarity age. As a consequence, national liberation movements have been replaced by a by a new analysis of power, which is simultaneously incredibly abstract, symbolic and virtual, whilst terribly concrete, detailed and intimate.

4.   Present challenge: liquidate the regressive third period of marginal moral protest

Luckily September 11 has had no immediate impact on the movement. The choice between Bush and Bin Laden was irrelevant. Both agendas were rejected as devastating fundamentalisms. The all too obvious question: "whose terror is worse?" was carefully avoided as it leads away from the pressing emergencies of everyday life: the struggle for a living wage, decent public transport, health care, water, etc. As both social democracy and really existing socialism depended heavily on the nation state a return to the 20thcentury sounds as disastrous as all the catastrophes it produced. The concept of a digital multitude is fundamentally different and based entirely on openness. Over the last few years the creative struggles of the multitudes have produced outputs on many different layers: the dialectics of open sources, open borders, open knowledge. Yet the deep penetration of the concepts of openness and freedom into the principle of struggle is by no means a compromise to the cynical and greedy neo-liberal class. Progressive movements have always dealt with a radical democratisation of the rules of access, decision-making and the sharing of gained capacities. Usually it started from an illegal or illegitimate common ground. Within the bounds of the analogue world it led to all sorts of cooperatives and self-organised enterprises, whose specific notions of justice were based on efforts to circumvent the brutal regime of the market and on different ways of dealing with the scarcity of material resources.

We're not simply seeking proper equality on a digital level. We're in the midst of a process that constitutes the totality of a revolutionary being, as global as it is digital. We have to develop ways of reading the raw data of the movements and struggles and ways to make their experimental knowledge legible; to encode and decode the algorithms of its singularity, nonconformity and non-confoundability; to invent, refresh and update the narratives and images of a truly global connectivity; to open the source code of all the circulating knowledge and install a virtual world.

Bringing these efforts down to the level of production challenges new forms of subjectivity, which almost necessarily leads to the conclusion that everyone is an expert. The superflux of human resources and the brilliance of everyday experience get dramatically lost in the 'academification' of radical left theory. Rather the new ethical-aesthetic paradigm lives on in the pragmatic consciousness of affective labour, in the nerdish attitude of a digital working class, in the omnipresence of migrant struggles as well as many other border-crossing experiences, in deep notions of friendship within networked environments as well as the 'real' world.

PART TWO

geert lovink & florian schneider

media activism

Let's now look at strategies for Internet art & activism. Critical new media culture faces a tough climate of budget cuts in the cultural sector and a growing hostility and indifference towards new media. But hasn't power shifted to cyberspace, as Critical Art Ensemble once claimed? Not so if we look at the countless street marches around the world.

The Seattle movement against corporate globalisation appears to have gained momentum - both on the street and online. But can we really speak of a synergy between street protests and online 'hacktivism'? No. But what they have in common is their (temporal) conceptual stage. Both real and virtual protests risk getting stuck at the level of a global 'demo design,' no longer grounded in actual topics and local situations. This means the movement never gets out of beta. At first glance, reconciling the virtual and the real seems to be an attractive rhetorical act. Radical pragmatists have often emphasised the embodiment of online networks in real-life society, dispensing with the real/virtual contradiction. Net activism, like the Internet itself, is always hybrid, a blend of old and new, haunted by geography, gender, race and other political factors. There is no pure disembodied zone of global communication, as the 90s cyber-mythology claimed.

Equations such as street plus cyberspace, art meets science, and 'techno-culture'are all interesting interdisciplinary approaches but are proving to have little effect beyond the symbolic level of dialogue and discourse. The fact is that established disciplines are in a defensive mode. The 'new' movements and media are not yet mature enough to question and challenge the powers that be. In a conservative climate, the claim to 'embody the future' becomes a weak and empty gesture.

On the other hand, the call of many artists and activists to return to "real life" does not provide us with a solution to how alternative new media models can be raised to the level of mass (pop) culture. Yes, street demonstrations raise solidarity levels and lift us up from the daily solitude of one-way media interfaces. Despite September 11 and its right-wing political fallout, social movements worldwide are gaining importance and visibility. We should, however, ask the question "what comes after the demo version" of both new media and the movements?

This isn't the heady 60s. The negative, pure and modernist level of the "conceptual" has hit the hard wall of demo design as Peter Lunenfeld described it in his book *Snap to Grid*. The question becomes: how to jump beyond the prototype? What comes after the siege of yet another summit of CEOs and their politicians? How long can a movement grow and stay 'virtual'? Or in IT terms, what comes after demo design, after the countless PowerPoint presentations, broadband trials and Flash animations? Will Linux ever break out of the geek ghetto? The feel-good factor of the open, ever growing crowd (Elias Canetti) will wear out; demo fatigue will set in. We could ask: does your Utopia version have a use-by date?

Rather than making up yet another concept it is time to ask the question of how software, interfaces and alternative standards can be installed in society. Ideas may take the shape of a virus, but society can hit back with even more successful immunisation programs: appropriation, repression and neglect. We face a scalability crisis. Most movements and initiatives find themselves in a trap. The strategy of becoming "minor" (Guattari) is no longer a positive choice but the default option. Designing a successful cultural virus and getting millions of hits on your weblog will not bring you beyond the level of a short-lived 'spectacle'. Culture jammers are no longer outlaws but should be seen as experts in guerrilla communication

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Today's movements are in danger of getting stuck in self-satisfying protest mode. With access to the political process effectively blocked, further mediation seems the only available option. However, gaining more and more "brand value" in terms of global awareness may turn out to be like overvalued stocks: it might pay off, it might turn out to be worthless. The pride of "We have always told you so" is boosting the moral of minority multitudes, but at the same time it delegates legitimate fights to the level of official "Truth and Reconciliation Commissions" (often parliamentary or Congressional), after the damage is done.

Instead of arguing for "reconciliation" between the real and virtual we call here for a rigorous synthesis of social movements with technology. Instead of taking the "the future is now" position derived from cyber-punk, a lot could be gained from a radical re-assessment of the techno revolutions of the last 10-15 years. For instance, if artists and activists can learn anything from the rise and subsequent fall of dot-com, it might be the importance of marketing. The eyeballs of the dotcom attention economy proved worthless.

This is a terrain is of truly taboo knowledge. Dot-coms invested their entire venture capital in (old media) advertisement. Their belief that media-generated attention would automatically draw users in and turn them into customers was unfounded. The same could be said of activist sites. Information "forms" us. But new consciousness results less and less in measurable action. Activists are only starting to understand the impact of this paradigm. What if information merely circles around in its own parallel world? What's to be done if the street demonstration becomes part of the Spectacle?

The increasing tensions and polarisations described here force us to question the limits of new media discourse. In the age of realtime global events Ezra Pound's definition of art as the antenna of the human race shows its passive, responsive nature. Art no longer initiates. One can be happy if it responds to contemporary conflicts at all and the new media arts sector is no exception. New media arts must be reconciled with its condition as a special effect of the hard and software developed years ago.

Critical new media practices have been slow to respond to both the rise and fall of dotcommania. In the speculative heydays of new media culture (the early-mid 90s, before the rise of the World Wide Web), theorists and artists jumped eagerly on not yet existing and inaccessible technologies such as virtual reality. Cyberspace generated a rich collection of mythologies; issues of embodiment and identity were fiercely debated. Only five years later, while Internet stocks were going through the roof, little was left of the initial excitement in intellectual and artistic circles. Experimental techno culture missed out on the funny money. Recently there has been a steady stagnation of new media cultures, both in terms of concepts and funding. With millions of new users flocking onto the Net, the arts can no longer keep up and withdraw into their own little world of festivals, mailing lists and workshops.

Whereas new media arts institutions, begging for goodwill, still portray artists as working at the forefront of technological developments, the reality is a different one. Multi-disciplinary goodwill is at an all time low. At best, the artist's new media products are 'demo design' as described by Lunenfeld. Often it does not even reach that level. New media arts, as defined by its few institutions rarely reach audiences outside of its own electronic arts subculture. The heroic fight for the establishment of a self-referential 'new media arts system' through a frantic differentiation of works, concepts and traditions, might be called a dead-end street. The acceptance of new media by leading museums and collectors will simply not happen. Why wait a few decades anyway? Why exhibit net art in white cubes? The majority of the new media organisations such as ZKM, the Ars Electronica Centre, ISEA, ICC or ACMI are hopeless in their techno innocence, being neither critical nor radically utopian in their approach. Hence, the new media arts sector, despite its steady growth, is getting increasingly isolated, incapable of addressing the issues of today's globalised world, dominated by (the war against) terror. Let's face it, technology is no longer 'new,' the markets are down and out and no one wants know about it anymore. Its little wonder the contemporary (visual) arts world is continuing its decade-old boycott of (interactive) new media works in galleries, biennales and shows like Documenta XI.

A critical reassessment of the role of arts and culture within today's network society seems necessary. Let's go beyond the 'tactical' intentions of the players involved. The artist-engineer, tinkering on alternative human-machine interfaces, social software or digital aesthetics has effectively been operating in a self-imposed vacuum. Science and business have successfully ignored the creative community. Worse still, artists have been actively sidelined in the name of 'usability', pushed by a backlash movement against web design led by the IT-guru Jakob Nielsen. The revolt against usability is about to happen. Lawrence Lessig argues that Internet innovation is in danger. The younger generation is turning its back on new media arts questions and if involved at all, operate as anti-corporate activists. After the dotcom crash the Internet has rapidly lost its imaginative attraction. File swapping and cell phones can only temporarily fill up the vacuum; the once so glamorous gadgets are becoming part of everyday life. This long-term tendency, now accelerating, seriously undermines future claims of new media.

Another issue concerns generations. With video and expensive interactive installations being the domain of the '68 baby boomers, the generation of '89 has embraced the free Internet. But the Net turned out to be a trap for them. Whereas assets, positions and power remain in the hands of the ageing baby boomers, the gamble on the rise of new media did not pay off. After venture capital has melted away, there is still no sustainable revenue system in place for the Internet. The slow working educational bureaucracies have not yet grasped the new media malaise. Universities are still in the process of establishing new media departments. But that will come to a halt at some point. The fifty-something tenured chairs and vice-chancellors must feel good about their persistent sabotage. What's so new about new media anyway? Technology was hype after all, promoted by the criminals of Enron and WorldCom. It is sufficient for students to do a bit of email and web surfing, safeguarded within a filtered, controlled intranet. In the face of this rising techno-cynicism we urgently need to analyse the ideology of the greedy 90s and its techno-libertarianism. If we don't disassociate new media quickly from the previous decade, the isolation of the new media sector will sooner or later result in its death. Let's transform the new media buzz into something more interesting altogether - before others do it for us.

> **Florian Schneider**, film maker, journalist and new media producer, based in
> Munich, Germany. He is the organiser of the *Make World* festival (Munich, 2001)
> and the www.wastun.org television series on globalisation and social movements.

> **Geert Lovink**, independent media theorist and Internet critic, based in Sydney.
> Author of *Dark Fiber,* essays on critical Internet culture and *Uncanny Networks,*
> interviews with media theorists and artists.

BORDERPANIC: INTERVIEW WITH DEBORAH KELLY, ARTIST

Deborah Kelly has been making socially engaged artwork since 1983. Her projects address discourses of local and momentary histories and seek to intervene in representations of place and privilege. Recent collaborative projects include 'boat-people.org', graphic civil disobedience on refugees, mass actions on Aboriginal land rights, and the award-winning collaboration with Tina Fiveash *Hey, Hetero!,* which was shown in public spaces in Sydney, Adelaide, Melbourne and Wellington 2001-2002. She has given public lectures and workshops around Australia and in San Francisco, Los Angeles and Ottawa, and was invited in 2002 to attend an international political artists' residency in Florida by Martha Rosler..

MOLLY HANKWITZ: Your work has been critical of Australian practices which play up nationalistic attitudes. Do you see arts culture as striving to become post-nationalist?

DEBORAH KELLY: I don't know the answer to that. Mike Parr, who appeared live at *BORDERPANIC* on September 11, 2002, suggested that the nation-state has been completely reinscribed and reinvigorated in the wake of the previous September 11; that Hardt and Negri's post-mortem was premature. The amorphous Empire has regrouped around and behind national borders and interests. I'm not in any position to talk about 'The Arts' as a whole but the kind of cultural production I'm interested in certainly responds to and is entirely part of its material, historical context, and Mike's reading of the present rings true to me.

Tell me about the term 'borderpanic'?

I started using the term for a crew I'm part of called 'boat-people.org' to describe the tangled pathology of anxieties peaking after Tampa, the escape of 70 people from the Villawood detention camp in July last year, and, of course, the brilliantly engineered extrapolation of this 'hysteria' we witnessed in the federal government's 2001 re-election campaign. Boat-people.org has a site I write on, and the term seemed to have the reverb I was looking for to locate the object of our interventions. When Fiona Winning at Performance Space invited me to curate an exhibition looking at resistance to the Australian border regime, I wanted to expand the brief to include related, transnational themes. I thought *BORDERPANIC* was capacious & catchy enough to use as a title. It would allow us as curators to include work contemplating a range of related 'panicky' practices gaining momentum across the nation and the white world: the White Australia Policy, official amnesia...I could go on and on. Sadly. So *BORDERPANIC* the project aspires to observe 'borderpanic' the phenomenon, to interrogate it, to document responses to it, and primarily, to be a catalyst for ongoing social/cultural resistances. Fortress Europe, Fortress America, organised racism; these ideologies are armed, and rapidly spreading.

What has been the impact of the Australian border policies, globally? Could you gauge this in anyway from the work you have done?

That's impossible to say conclusively, but we did want the show to begin to address border issues, without trying to draw casual lines. The best words I have encountered on the project's impetus are from Shafiq Monis, one of the artists in the physical exhibition at Performance Space: 'Refugees like myself whose life was burnt to ashes and blown away with the wind decided to follow that wind and came to Australia hoping for a better future with freedom and peace. What we found is "borderpanic" between two worlds.' But, I can't really answer your question because we weren't canvassing how Australian government policies have affected other places. We were just looking at this simultaneous anti-immigrant shit; histories and connections, not drawing conclusions between them.

What is the philosophy that *BORDERPANIC* has taken towards refugees, refugee status or other aspects of the issue?

First of all, *BORDERPANIC* has not attempted at all to represent or define Refugees, but certainly many of the participants are engaged with border issues, with displaced and illegalised people drawing from their own lived experiences. Part of the point of *BORDERPANIC* is that we are all inside these discourses, whatever our histories.

That said, almost half of the people involved in the project are or were refugees. But there is a great variety. One of the net.artists, Horit Herman Peled, is an Israeli peace activist whose work investigates the burning borders between Israel and Palestine. Two of the artists, Humam and Jassim Al Abaddy, are incarcerated in Villawood Detention Centre, and others are on Temporary Protection Visas. Many are 'citizens' of various nations, implicating themselves in the discourses of exclusion and control, or like the wonderful painter, Gordon Hookey, in his *Ruddock's Wheel* series, bitterly contemplate Aboriginal dispossession and mistreatment of asylum seekers by people who claim to be 'civilised'.

Some of the participants are not even strictly 'artists'. We were interested to look across a range of cultural forms. Geert Lovink, who is a media scholar and theorist, for

example, had a slide installation documenting the recent 'no border' camp in Strasbourg.The video/radio artist Patrick Abboud made a sound piece featuring Angel Boudhjabia's performance poem, *I Am Asylum,* and JJJ Breakfast Show's Steve Kinnane's *Teddybears at Villawood* radio feature was another of the soundworks in the physical exhibition, as was the testimony of a person (who is anonymous for his safety) describing what he escaped to come here.

We also exhibited posters by activist artists in Germany,(*Kein Mensch Ist Illegal,* Kanak Attak) the US (Think Again) and Australia (No One Is Illegal, boat-people.org) which showed street level organised cultural dissent from border regimes, racism, and 'borderpanic'.

We were keen to share our own words and ideas, so definitions 'between people' were at the heart of the work. We were very keen to draw no special distinction between refugees, once were refugees, people whose ancestors were refugees, and people whose families have occupied one place for 40,000 years.

The Internet is often described as a 'borderless' medium. How has the Net helped shape the project?

We have been totally dependent upon it, especially email and discussion lists, in order to pull *BORDERPANIC* off! We became close to many of the people in the show, some of whom we haven't met, who live in Europe, the Middle East, the US and Canada. They are the artists with whom we have built friendships and collaborated with entirely in cyberspace. One of the artists, Sandy, in Berlin, whose contribution to the reader is a humourous account of not-being-Australian, and I had a really prolific online conversation, but we couldn't tell if we understood each other. I had to look him up and call him on the phone to cement our connection, which had seemed tenuous at best. So to answer your question, the Net has, as it is hyped-to-be, proved to be a most powerful networking and organising tool. Am I being a good marketer? (Laughter) There's also speed. I have only been working on the project since April. Zina came on board in July. Our tech access, especially Zina, the cyberqueen's online savvy, made it possible for us to make this super ambitious project work in a very short timeframe. But in terms of human-to-human communication, vision and voice retain primacy. No doubt there.

Will the exhibit travel? Will it/does it have political reach to White Australia?

We hope that the *BORDERPANIC* project can tour to various cities and include more participants, and expand the website to incorporate some of the brilliant ideas from the Tactical Media Lab. I'd love to help some of those concepts develop. We want to participate in creating an ongoing cultural forum for debate and organisation around these urgent issues. For any of this, we need venues, infrastructure, interested people. The Artrage Festival in Perth are holding a forum called *Beyond Borderpanic,* and a linked, three day Tactical Media Lab, so that will be the project's first step beyond Sydney. Right at the moment though, we need to recover!

As for its reach to the population for whom the border protection regime makes perfect sense – which originates in but isn't confined to White Australia – that's a really important question. I think *BORDERPANIC* aspires to be a lightning rod for gathering the momentum of dissent, for building and strengthening creative connections between cultural producers and social movements. It doesn't in itself aim to change Ruddock's mind! It's more a forum to give the resistance heart, to shout out, as Zina would say: 'Keep going, humanity!'

When we faltered, overwhelmed, we said to ourselves over and over: 'everything we do is inadequate to the task, but it's worth starting somewhere. *BORDERPANIC* is somewhere'.

>> *BORDERPANIC* the project is:
> an exhibition at Performance Space, Redfern
> a book, the *BORDERPANIC* reader
> a Tactical Media Lab and symposium at the Museum of Contemporary Art/Sydney
> a website: http://www.borderpanic.org
> a seminar, with Metroscreen: 'Backwards to White Australia?'
> a doco screening, *Holiday Camp*
> Mike Parr Live
> a postcard competition with Avant Card

>> Some urls:
> http://www.boat-people.org
> http://www.borderpanic.org
> http://www.abc.net.au/arts/design/stories/s455304.htm
> http://www.bsl.org.au/campaigns/refugeecard.html

MAORI.NZ
INTERVIEW WITH RICHARD ORZECKI

The Internet is based on inherently colonial metaphors. Only settler nations built on relentless land acquisition and *terra nullius* could design these virtual geographies: 'domains', 'multihoming', 'namespaces'. As Kroker and Weinstein observed back in 1994, the will to virtuality is also a colonial urge.

Now the Empire, as they say, is writing back. In New Zealand, the early '80's saw the beginning of the Kohanga Reo movement to teach Maori children their indigenous language. Maori was declared to be an official language in 1987. Now, there are over twenty iwi (tribe)-owned radio stations broadcasting on frequencies reserved by the government for the promotion of Maori language and culture.

The development of an indigenous Aotearoa/New Zealand presence online has progressed slowly but steadily, and much of the kudos can be placed with Ross Himona, who has been a tireless advocate for the role the Net can play in the preservation and development of Maori language and culture. When I last interviewed Ross in 1997, he floated the idea of a New Zealand Maori Internet Society. The NZMIS has since become a reality, and thanks to their work, the first second level domain specifically created for indigenous people has now been launched.

I talked with the current Chairman of the NZMIS, Richard Orzecki.

DANNY BUTT: Can you tell us about the NZ Maori Internet Society and its projects?
RICHARD ORZECKI: The New Zealand Maori Internet Society (aka Te Whanau Ipurangi) has been established for some five years. Its primary goal has been to make the maori.nz vision a reality, and a few dedicated people have had the capacity and dedication to bring this into being. So far, we have established the web site http://www.nzmis.org.nz and have invited Maori and other interested people to join a mailing list group to discuss issues relevant to Maori Internet use. Another objective has been to build relationships with other organisations in NZ such as the Internet Society of New Zealand and Domainz, the domain registry organisation.

You have successfully lobbied for a new second level maori.nz domain. What can this domain achieve? How does it relate to the iwi.nz domain?
The maori.nz second level domain has the potential to allow Maori to have a presence in the global village. I believe we are the first indigenous race to have this sort of presence. The initial driver for a Maori presence came from Te Kohanga Reo organisation (The Language Nest) where young Maori children learn Te Reo (Maori Language). Previously, there were no means of identifying Te Kohanga Reo as a Maori organisation.

The Internet Society of New Zealand did have an iwi.nz second level domain. This was a moderated namespace which meant that only registered iwi could apply and use the .iwi.nz. Currently there are only 13 names registered under the .iwi.nz. The maori.nz second level domain is unmoderated meaning anyone can use it on a first-in first-served basis.

We see our role today as promoting maori.nz to our people. The potential is huge: obvious areas would be in the areas of education, cultural tourism, health, arts, iwi and hapu and business. As this story is released 398 maori.nz names have been registered within the first month. A number of these names have been registered from overseas.

What's your view on the issues of cyber squatting that have accompanied the release of maori.nz? What about Pakeha owning maori.nz domains?
On September 5th the issue that came to the fore was scalping. A number of individuals purchased domain names for resale, in particular some purchased the iwi / tribal names of Maori people. For example, Ngati Porou has been purchased already (Refer web site: http://www.netnameexchange.co.nz).

Pakeha (Europeans) owning names has not become an issue as yet. I would say that Maori might question the reason why Pakeha may want to do it but this is another possibility of an unmoderated namespace. The Internet Society of NZ have stated that 'all registrants are required to state that they have the right to use the name/s they register, so the onus is on them to prove this if they are challenged'.

There is a legal precedent for this: the OGGI case was quite clear on their ruling (and incidentally, that was another world-first for New Zealand). See:

http://www.internetnz.net.nz/communications/media-articles-index.html

The original kaupapa (reason/purpose) was to have maori.nz for Maori people, as there has been nothing to identify us. In the end, I hope that whoever uses the name does so with respect and mana (respect) of what the name means to Maori. (This may only be a dream.)

What are the key issues facing NZMIS at the moment?
Our Executive has just come together in the last few months. The original founder Ross Himona and the past chair person Karaitiana Tauiru and our web master Te Rangikaiwhiria Kemera have been the kaitiaki (guardians) of the process to date.

The new committee believes we have a goal to move forward now in a positive and communicative way with all Maori, both in Aotearoa and outside the country. The issues are to also increase the membership of our mailing list, so that our people and other interested parties can keep in touch. We are also seeking additional sponsorship to help finance our activities in lieu of not charging a membership fee.

Thoughts for the future?
We want to help in the growth of the maori.nz presence on the net – to be advocates for our people's use of the net. As I was told recently no one 'plans to fail' they just 'fail to plan'. So watch this space!!

danny butt

media activism

8

> **Danny Butt** <http://www.dannybutt.net> is a facilitator for Fibreculture and lectures
> in Digital Media at the Waikato Institute of Technology.

Alexandra Crosby

NEW NETWORKS: ANAKSERIBUPULAU

'anakseribupulau' means 'Children of a Thousand Islands'. It is not a type of salad dressing. It is the name of a loose network of activists, primarily in rural areas, spread over the vast archipelago of Indonesia. Despite being from a huge range of different ethnic groups, different organising groups, and different age groups, those involved in anakseribupulau are linked in their efforts to promote environmental awareness and sustainability. Among others, their active projects include building community libraries in East Java, reforestation in Central Java, ocean protection in Karimunjawa, sustainable transport campaigns in the city of Yogyakarta, and the production of small self-initiated and self-published 'zines' all over the country. A project to create a website for anakseribupulau is currently in development. According to Exi Wijaya, a founding member of anakseribupulau, the main objectives of the project are 'to provide a learning resource, develop the potential of an existing community by facilitating its communications, and promote cross-cultural understanding between Australia and Indonesia'.

anakseribupulau began three years ago with the apparent 'opening up' of the political environment in Indonesia. During Suharto's thirty year regime, political pamphlets criticising the government and announcing actions were distributed as widely as possible, but as a protective mechanism, activist material did not contain names or addresses which could be linked back to groups or individuals. According to members of anakseribupulau, it was a very repressive period, during which many activists lived in fear. Of course, activists were communicating, but in a much more restricted, secretive, form, and they experienced constant intimidation from the military. The fall of Suharto in 1998 was a significant turning point. Activists began to feel more confident producing material that openly identified names, addresses, and contact details.

At this time, there emerged a discussion between groups of environmental activists simultaneously working on projects in different places in Indonesia. They decided to create a collective email account to facilitate communications, the password to which was disseminated by word of mouth. The idea was based on anarchist principles of open membership and free communication. The network was named anakseribupulau.

Intimidation still occurs. Members of anakseribupulau recently experienced violent threats from the military over an environmental campaign in Blora, in the province of Central Java. Activists were calling a public meeting about a gas leak on a plant owned by Exxon-Mobil. However, as the campaign began to gain momentum, organisers and their family members were threatened by soldiers. Because of its urgency and the potential danger to those involved, this kind of information is best disseminated by anonymous means. Activists and sympathisers were quickly informed of the situation via the collectively-owned anakseribupulau email account as well as other alternative media channels such as *Global Indymedia*. No individual could be held responsible for the campaign.

The inspiration and ideas that are shared via the anakseribupulau network are essential to many environmental projects throughout Indonesia. Another example is a community library network in Java, established to combat the ignorance encouraged by government censorship and economic depression. Facilitators communicate via the anakseribupulau network about swapping, reproducing, and transporting texts that are identified as needs of given communities.

Despite the advantages of Internet communication, there are huge frustrations in Indonesia with the limitations of the technology, especially feelings of disempowerment resulting from the majority of Internet resources being in English. Despite being the common language of over two hundred thousand people, Bahasa Indonesia is not one of the optional languages in opening even a common email account. The current techniques employed are also extremely vulnerable. The mediation of anakseribupulau relies on a shared sense of trust and the support of face-to face and telephone communication.

According to members of anakseribupulau, education and the environment are inseparable. As well as to facilitate communication between activists, the aim of the anakseribupulau network is to open people's perspective so that people can discuss environmental issues and find genuine solutions together. One of the groups that forms anakseribupulau makes a zine called *Media Lingkungan,* or *Media of the Environment.* People email, send, or deliver contributions to the groups headquarters in Yogyakarta, and the photocopied zines are produced with whatever money the collective can scrounge together at the time. No one is paid for their work or their time. There is no advertising, no business sponsors and very little editorial selection. Although the result has more spelling mistakes than glossy photos, the circulation of the publication is phenomenal. The zine has made it to Australia, Singapore, India and Malaysia where other activists have been keen to reproduce, appropriate, comment on and contribute to the publication. 'This…' it states proudly on the first page of the current issue, 'is a free, independent medium'.

The Internet is seen by anakseribupulau as just another forum to educate ourselves about how we can live together on this earth without destroying it or each other. As members of small local collectives, it is empowering to feel part of the large network of people working towards the same goals and to be able to critically discuss the realisations of those goals.

The plans for anakseribupulau are to make a bilingual site in order to offer an opportunity for young activists from Indonesia and other parts of the world to interact. Another potential application of the project, although not the primary one, is for travellers who wish to contribute to the societies and environments through which they are travelling. There are thousands of Australians backpacking through Indonesia as we speak and very few who have access to information about the multitude of activist projects in Indonesia.

While the organisation began in Indonesia, many Australians have been actively involved in anakseribupulau projects. One of the slogans of anakseribupulau is 'Tanpa Batasan', which translates as 'No limits, No borders'. Because ecological conditions affect the entire planet, our strategies for dealing with environmental issues must also go beyond the borders of states and ethnic groups.

While the potential of communication technology is often overwhelming, it is important to maintain a perspective of how this technology fits into people's lives. The consensus of anakseribupulau is that an inclusive, bilingual, inspirational forum for expressing responses to environmental crises is essential if we are to start shaping solutions. In a country such as Indonesia, where most people have never used a computer, 'cyberculture' is not about to replace real life communities. Besides immediate economic differences, there is not the cultural vacuum that we see in more developed capitalist nations such as our own. There is, however, a deep curiosity in the opportunity to share and create offered by new technologies. anakseribupulau is determined to take that opportunity.

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THEORY
THEORY
POLITICS
POLITICS

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Phil Graham
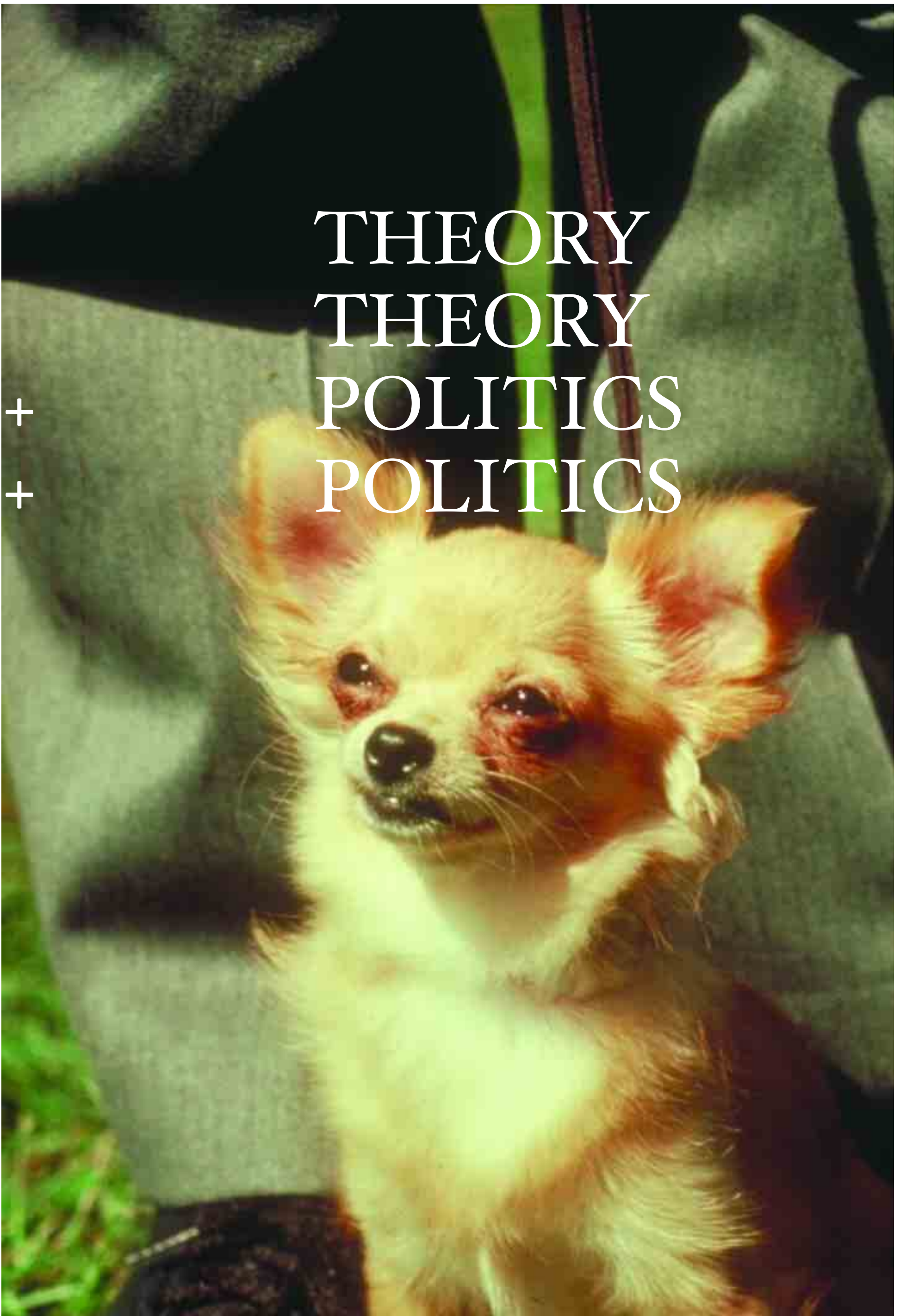
14 THESES

ON FUTURE RESEARCH INTO THE POLITICAL ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF NEW MEDIA

I borrow an epigrammatic mode of expression from Marx here, mostly for the sake of brevity and because the mode suits the nature of what I want to say. The following are testable propositions.

I New media are, by definition and primarily, new ways of relating. New forms of relatedness are necessarily overlaid upon older forms, giving rise to conflicts and crises of understanding. This is most obvious when the new medium is oriented towards control over the spatial element. Those using a new medium to propagate ideas and direct action across vast geographical spaces will invariably encounter cultural resistance.

II Cultural resistance is firstly axiological – that is, values-based. Human resistance is a function of a felt need for autonomy, or justice, or social equilibrium, or all three. Cultural disruptions from the effects of new media are manifestations of perceived threats to cultural autonomy in the determination of values; of a sense of justice in the formal and informal relationships between people; and of a clear historical tendency in social systems towards a social equilibrium between the separate and interdependent social values of space and time.

III A medium oriented towards controlling meaning over vast spaces will firstly seem as if it is oriented towards the time element. This is a perceptual illusion. Large social spaces are created at the expense of time between people. Hence time appears to be an object of destruction for these new media rather than the means by which larger, less stable social spaces are created.

IV This relationship will necessarily be confusing in any case. Since the advent of electronic media, the maximum speed at which content moves has been fairly stable. This might lead one to suspect that time has been steadily diminishing in importance since electric media. This is not the case, but it points to the very definition of the word 'media'. It suggests a necessarily historical orientation for research into the political economy of media.

V 'Old' media are not destroyed by the new. The new are parasitic upon the old to some degree. That much is clear. Broadcast television is a time-oriented medium. It is electronic ritual. The diffusion of video changed that to some degree. But the sense of communion and communality in a shared mass spectacle remains very much an essential part of the medium. Seen from one perspective, institutions are media. Some are more oriented towards the meaning of space, such as national governments; others are more oriented to the meaning of time, like the Catholic church. All media combine both orientations to some degree (positively or negatively). A functional perspective on media is therefore implied, since structural typologies can tell us little about social outcomes.

VI Genres are developed within institutions, and thus within the realms of vested interests and axiological biases. The sermon, for example, was developed within the church and evokes *Divinity*. The 'white paper' has developed in large national bureaucracies and evokes the values of *Expertise* and *Inevitability* (the latter in terms of future policy directions). Genres elicit and solicit expectations, including the expectation of evaluative biases. The close connection between institutions and genres therefore needs far more investigation, particularly from the perspective of *production*. Moreover, relational categories of media, genres, technologies, and institutions need to be developed. What is a medium from one perspective can be an institution from another; what is a genre from one perspective can be a medium from another. Technology is an equally slippery category that can and must be related to all the others: media, genres, and institutions are technologies in and of themselves, as well as configurations of technologies when seen from another perspective. A full account of genre will necessarily include all these aspects.

VII Because 'old' media are never entirely absorbed into the new, they do not disappear. However, their social functionality is affected. The invention of paper did not replace vellum, nor did the television replace radio or theatre, nor has the Internet replaced paper. Vellum remained, perhaps because of its sacrificial mode of production, as the sacred medium, as the definitive copy of the sacred texts, for many centuries after paper became available. This remains the case with certain documents. It would be easy to draw an identity between paper and vellum as sequential forms of print media. However, it would be a structurally true but functionally false identity. The cheaper cost of production for paper 'democratised' knowledge to some degree in the first instance. The prohibitive cost of vellum ensured a continued monopoly of sacred knowledge. The cheap availability of paper allowed the extant monopoly to extend its legal system across a much wider area. Widespread formal feudalism and its 'natural order' were impossible without paper and the agents of canon law in the church. The enlightenment and reformation were impossible without movable type. Printed media, taken as a typological whole, have no inherent and corresponding social effects.

VIII The Internet is not a singular medium, even though it is firstly an extension of print. The various aspects of the Internet can only be described as social phenomena in functional and generic terms. In this sense it is a stronghold of competing genres held in contradictory tension within discrete digital 'realms'. This gives the impression of 'convergence', but that is not the case for the most part. For example, the high levels of security required for banking and other more substantial financial transactions ensure that these will remain functionally distinct realms from, say, chat rooms or listserve groups. Interpersonal e-mail is an intensely personal yet ambiguous genre; broadcast listserves are highly impersonal. There is a functional pressure that is beginning to exert pressures on genres *within* genres, serving to force a distinction between them in new ways rather than to diminish the expectational salience and evaluative biases of any given genre. Rather than convergence, fragmentation, hybridity, and new generic forms are indicated.

IX The military is missing from most of what is said about new media (there are of course a few exceptions). No serious discussion of our new media can ignore the military aspect, which is what shaped the new media as a whole in the first instance. Politeness and civilised sensibilities perhaps prevent too explicit a discussion of such unpleasantness. Nevertheless, the role of the military and the 'management' of mass human destruction is a central focus for any further developments in media research. War and its associated atrocities are unlike random violence. War is an utterly rational undertaking. Today, it is a thoroughly mediated process of rationally organised murder, which is inherently irrational. These contradictions will be apparent in the mediation processes of the military.

X Critical theory ideally provides insight into the 'logic' of irrationality in social organisation, such as that connected with 'disorganised' violence, and also with organised, 'rational' violence (war). But armed with knowledge of irrational logic, the colonising forces of humanity operate with full impunity to capitalise upon that very irrationality. This is the valorisation of ignorance, which is plain to see almost everywhere today. Hence ignorance has a social value and can thus also count as an intrinsic part – as the negative moment – of any 'knowledge economy'. It may even count as the 'raw material' of knowledge.

XI Critical theory is technique and technology. It must therefore technologise the object from which it allegedly remains inseparable: social change. The ostensible purpose of critique is to firstly understand, and secondly to transform, the social world (Marx). In accomplishing the first step, critique automatically accomplishes the second. Immediately upon doing so, and by being 'progressive' and immersed in its object, critical theory tends towards its own commodification and provides a means of creating new and perverse fetishes (Stalin is such an example).

XII Genre hybridity and 'genre chaining'[1] are primarily inter-institutional phenomena. At first these will appear as a matter of convergence, like a kind of symbolic corporate merger. But this is to hide the fact that it is firstly an expression of institutional conflict over forms of symbolic regulation, which is what genres are. Today, governments are appropriating the genres of management. Businesses are producing policy. These cross-overs are expressions of conflict and political power. The phenomena of genre hybridity and chaining are most overt in the processes that promote claims of legitimacy in the public sphere. Being inter-institutional they are primarily inter-axiological.

XIII The relation between discourses, media, technologies, and genres can be expressed in terms of duration, as more or less stable patterns of production and reproduction of meaning over certain amounts of time. Discourses, by which I mean recognisable ways of construing the world according to the interests and values of a particular social group, appear to be much more durable than any genre, medium, or technology. Once again, the process of the institutionalisation of meaning is foregrounded. Discourses, media, technologies, and genres can be seen as relational categories, which nonetheless are in recognisably hypotactic relationships. The starting point will depend upon the phenomenon being investigated. A comprehensive relational account of these categories is necessary for a political economy of media in a predominantly digital media environment.

XIV Marx finds himself driven back upon space and time, as does Innis. This suggests to me that the classical categories of political economy were already worn flat by the mid-nineteenth century. The effects of the telegraph need to be taken into account to explain and understand Marx, his thought, his influence, and the social milieu in which he worked. This cannot be done in isolation. It is probably best approached by way of a synchronic 'snapshot' focusing on the use and discussion of telegraphic 'news' in such places as Vienna, London, Prague, New York, and Berlin. It should be noted that the telegraph emerged as a force at the very end of the European imperialist era. There is probably a close connection between the two. There is much to suggest that a 'global information overload' – and consequently new conceptions of global human interrelatedness – associated with the telegraph gave rise to the thought of Marx, Mach, Freud, Herz, Einstein, Wittgenstein, etc., all of whom were deeply concerned with the limits of expression.[2] The implication is that the fundamental relatedness of people, and between them and their environments, was called into question at that time. This is historically a function of new mediation processes.

XV Just as the church provided the universal spirit for the feudal age, the abstract value systems of business management provide the universal spirit in the current age. National forms of association are rooted in geography. Business and money recognise no such boundaries, and are therefore apparently transcendental. Managerialism expresses the religious impulse, which was always internationalist in its orientation. The struggles between nations and corporations for political and economic control take place in mediations. They will also be *dissolved* in mediations. Both systems may be destroyed in the process, thus giving rise to new institutions. The successful engineering of such institutions is most probably an impossible task.

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Notes

1   N. Fairclough, 'Discourse, Social Theory, and Social Research: the Discourse of Welfare Reform', *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 4.2 (2000): 163-195.

2   A. Janick and S. Toulmin, *Wittgenstein's Vienna* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973).

Dean Wilson

BENEVOLENT VISION?

PUBLIC CCTV SURVEILLANCE

Visual surveillance is now an omnipresent reality for urban Australians. In the 1970s and 80s closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras became a common feature in petrol stations, banks and private buildings to prevent robberies and identify offenders. In the past decade visual surveillance has steadily encroached from private commercial spaces into the public street. Concealed behind dark plastic domes, hundreds of surveillance cameras are now trained on shopping strips, central squares and main streets across Australia. These systems, known variously as 'town centre' or 'open-street' CCTV systems, are owned and managed by local councils. There are now thirty-four 'open-street' CCTV systems in Australia. In 1996 there were only thirteen.[1] Current indications are that open-street CCTV systems are poised to increase exponentially in coming years. We might well ask why it is that we are now being watched by hundreds of electronic eyes? And is this rise of mass surveillance a cause for concern? Are the eyes friend or foe?

Before searching for answers, it is important to understand how public surveillance functions. The usual way it works is this: camera operators, usually private security guards, are located in 'control rooms' where a bank of monitors displays live feeds from the cameras. The operators can pan, tilt and zoom digital colour cameras using a joystick. CCTV cameras usually have overlapping fields of vision, so 'suspect' individuals can be tracked across public space for considerable distances. The clarity of images is remarkable, so much so that camera operators can read the time off a bystander's wristwatch. Camera operators maintain regular contact with police, notifying local commands whenever they observe criminal (or potentially criminal) activity. Vision from the cameras is also recorded 24 hours a day.

Australia is not alone in the increased use of CCTV surveillance of public spaces. Similar surveillance systems are appearing in towns and cities across the Western industrialised world. Britain, Ireland, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, the USA, Canada and New Zealand are all witnessing a similar expansion of CCTV in public areas. The trend is most advanced in Britain, where a surveillance web of 530 town centre CCTV systems covers the country.[2] In Australia, as in other locations, CCTV is marketed as a technological antidote to the malevolent forces of danger and disorder threatening to envelop city streets and expel worthy citizens. For its advocates, CCTV is an unqualified force for the public good – it eliminates 'risk' from urban spaces, facilitating the repeopling of city centres by 'the community'. The introduction of cameras has been accompanied by the communal rhetoric of 'public safety', and comforting titles are bestowed on cameras to diffuse suspicion. Sydney has 'street safety cameras' while Melbourne has 'safe city cameras'. This public language of CCTV moves to neutralise negative conceptions of surveillance, to conceal the dark spectre of Orwell's Big Brother lurking in the shadows of public safety. It is a rhetoric proclaiming CCTV to be a benevolent eye in the sky – a technological guardian angel protecting 'us' from 'them'.

The assertion that CCTV can enhance 'public safety' is plausible enough. It is quite conceivable that many walking the city streets find this constant observation reassuring. But as sociologist David Lyon maintains, surveillance has two faces.[3] If CCTV eliminates risk and danger it also interrogates, controls and marginalises. CCTV can be a tool that sharpens social and economic divisions: one that disciplines and constrains. In this way CCTV is a microcosm of the cultural contradictions of late modernity; it is very much a creature of its times. In societies that seem inherently risky and unstable – where social and economic relations are free floating and contingent – there is a corresponding impulse to control, segregate, fortify and exclude.[4] Public surveillance is directed at one of the central dilemmas of our society: how to maintain the free-play of market forces while simultaneously governing and controlling social risk. CCTV is intertwined with the march of a global economy that has transformed our cities into 'brands' and sites of consumption.[5] The mission of CCTV is to make the streets comfortable risk-free environments for the valid consumer. And the undeniable symbolic message of the cameras is that it is safe to shop.

The securing of public space for valid consumers operates in tandem with the exclusion and displacement of 'flawed consumers'. The poor and marginalised are eradicated from public space – a succession of minor public order breaches accumulating into the free market 'crime' of possessing insufficient buying power. In this sense the description of public CCTV as 'mass surveillance' is somewhat misleading, as in practice CCTV is not the totalising gaze popular images of Big Brother suggest. The eye of the cameras is discriminatory and specific. One study in the UK found camera operators disproportionately focused on subjects who were young, black and working-class.[6] There is little reason to assume CCTV functions any differently in Australia. In some Queensland towns for example, camera operators talk directly to private security guards patrolling public spaces and with police armed with extensive 'move-on' powers. Those operating the systems informally confirm their main targets are youths and Aboriginal groups congregating in public areas.[7] Through these uses, CCTV is complicit in broader processes commodifying public space, erasing social difference and stigmatising the socially marginalised.

These are the 'two faces' of public surveillance. The safety and security of the surveilled public realm, promoted by the rhetoric of public safety, is intertwined with social and economic exclusion – the trading of diversity for homogeneity. This seems to be a trade most Australians are willing to make. In Britain, Germany and the USA there has been significant public debate and resistance to the emergence of mass public surveillance. In Australia however there has been, as one CCTV manager suggested to me, 'barely a squeak'. The limited objections to public surveillance, inevitably from civil libertarians, have relied on arguments that we need to protect individual privacy. Perhaps we do: but privacy is a nebulous concept and arguments based upon it provide an inadequate language for discussing mass public surveillance. Privacy reduces a social phenomenon to the level of the individual.[8] Any public discussions of public CCTV surveillance must therefore acknowledge that it is above all a social, rather than an individual, concern. And it is a discussion Australia surely must have, as the benevolent vision of CCTV has a malevolent underside. To date, we seem to be accepting this without complaint.

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Notes

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2   Wilson and Sutton.
3   David Lyon, *Surveillance Society: Monitoring Everyday Life* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 2001), 3-4.
4   David Garland, *The Culture of Control: Crime and Social Order in Contemporary Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 194.
5   Jon Bannister, Nicholas Fyfe and Ade Kearns, 'Closed Circuit Television and the City', in Clive Norris, Jade Morgan and Gary Armstrong (eds.), *Surveillance, Closed Circuit Television and Social Control* (Adlershot: Ashgate, 1998), 21-39.
6   Clive Norris and Gary Armstrong, *The Maximum Surveillance Society: The Rise of CCTV* (Oxford: Berg, 1999), 150.
7   Interviews conducted by author mid 2002; Queensland Police can be granted extensive powers within specified areas under the *Police Powers and Responsibilities Act (QLD) 2000.*
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Kathy Kang

MICROCOSMOS

AND MICROPOLITICS, OR THE POLITICS OF THE VIRTUAL

Microcosmos, set in the insect world, uses words sparingly. Voice-over cuts in for a moment early on: 'time passes differently here'. Its return, over an hour later and as day two begins, is brief: 'nothing will stop what's now in motion'.

If thinking is provoked by some primal irritant, that irritant is *not knowing what is now in motion.* Part of the problem is that thinking alters how the thinker is implicated in life's overall commotion. That is why machinic activity, including thought, remains in active mode, ever sidestepping the knowledge that there's no stopping what's now in motion.

And yet, few theories allow for thought itself being implicated in what it examines. Among those few, is Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's theory of desire.

In Deleuze's philosophy, the universe is composed not of things that become known by staying self-same, but of styles of becoming different from the self. Those styles, intercepting one another, make a folded time. This can be appreciated from mimesis. To have become imitated is to have been all along the burgeoning target or mark of that act, and as such to belong with the act in its moment of execution. The act exposes the supposedly pre-imitation and pristine item, as a blind. Mimesis, alteration, identifying and referencing: in the act, its object's previous pose as some uncontaminated actual thing is being exposed as a blind. Things are continually called, or touched, by their own future, a future that includes their replication/alteration and their (re)naming or unnaming. Actual things are always touched and called by 'virtual' things. The virtual and the actual are equal partners in composing the real.

The folding of time allows the motor-sensory apparatus of organic and inorganic machines to produce cuts of the real, splicing realms of the virtual (inside some fold) with the actual (outside). Throughout history this happened subliminally. For barely a century, motion-pictures have been initiating the species of their inventor in a repertoire of styles of re-cutting the real, styles of becoming. Spectators now routinely expect motion-pictures to exploit the folding of time. Take *Microcosmos:* the framing, shooting and montage port the viewer out of the habitual fold, into another. The spectator, considering itself human, experiences a bodily becoming-insect.

Facing a motion-picture display, a being that considers itself human, and perceptible, takes pleasure in bodily becoming-inhuman and becoming-imperceptible.

Becoming-inhuman proceeds by becoming-one-with-vehicle, becoming-animal/bird, becoming-projectile, becoming-probe, becoming-prehuman, becoming-superhuman or -cyborg, becoming-schizophrenic. Still, it's a rare motion-picture that will lead the paleskin male viewer – the viewer that considers itself not any special kind of human – to experience bodily becoming-woman, becoming-'minority', or in sum, becoming-unmanly. In that register, the initiation of the human into styles of becoming is stalled.

Blocking the path is a standard of the kind that creates a 'subjugated group', a group in which the addition of members does not make the group different from when it was smaller. The group grows without undergoing a qualitative change, because the new members must not disrupt the standard. Thus, the human family is a group to which one belongs, regardless of gender, skin-colour, culture, or minority traits, on condition that one *identifies with* men – pale-skinned, oedipalised, 'able-born' men situated in modernity. This is a

single-cut standard: attempt to rally the group around some conflicting species-ideal, and you are ostracised.

Not all groups have single-cut standards. There are so-called 'subject groups', that continue to become different from themselves as new members are added. The group's ethos lies not in what it means to belong and not-belong, but in the group's manner of exploring its future becoming. The Zapatistas, for instance, style themselves as a worldwide subject group. There is no Zapatista identity, no head office, leadership, or fixed territory. Participants agree only on a manner of collective decision-making, which values breadth of participation and is biased toward reaching consensus, minimising coercion. The Zapatistas' mode of collective decision-making tends to encourage self-defence, to block the formation of conventional armies and policing, and to disabuse the group of any aspiration to exercise power over a territory, a people, or an epoch.

The *autonomia* movement in Europe has always embraced the ethos of a subject group, rejecting the single-cut standard of the worker who submits to the party's (or any other) authority. In Australia, political subject groups have occurred as autonomist or anarchist collectives creating movable autonomous zones, and as networks spearheading issue-oriented campaigns. The campaign-network model's current tools include the internet, but the model predates personal computers (it was adopted in the campaign to end the Vietnam war). The model has two components. There is a sign-on statement, broad enough to rally diverse organisations that are sympathetic to the cause; and the network has an organisational consultation procedure and voting mechanism that put a stop to the stacking of meetings. The consultation procedure needs to be biased toward consensus decision-making, thus making the voting mechanism a less contentious issue, and leaving little room for factionalism and stacking.

For Deleuze and Guattari, capital and the single-cut standard arrive together in the history of *socialisations of desire.* Capital is the now-dominant form of 'socius', the register for organising bodies as conduits of desire. The organised desiring-body in capitalism is the subjugated group of the human. Prior to capital, the major forms of socius were territories of tribes or clans, and despotisms exacting tribute by tyranny.

Socius and organised body are always held together by some dominant spectacle. With the morphing of socius from territory into despotism, then into capital, spectacle has morphed from ritual body-marking, into the spectacle of punishment by the tyrant, then into the ubiquitous surveillance known as the panopticon.

Next stop, socius as movable autonomous zone, and spectacle as motion-picture display? Consider *Beneath Clouds* and *The Tracker,* films that share a striking spatio-visual savouring of time. Can they port the paleskin into the real country that is under continuing brutal occupation, the Australia whose people are the first Australians? Or consider crossover cinema with its frame-rupture between sitcom, blog, MTV, comic-strip or cartoon, and movie. Does crossover invite a politics desirous of the actual's free remixing with the virtual, a radical politics of frame-rupture? These questions are just surfacing. The political subject group, whilst active, is patient; time passes differently here.

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Jon Marshall

COMMUNICATION AND CONFLICT

Communication is usually held to be an unalloyed good. The greater the volume, range and speed of communication the better. Thus modern communications systems will supposedly lead us to peace and harmony, and possibly a 'global brain'. However, we may be heading towards greater conflict – especially if people do not realise some basic problems in communication.

If two groups of people and the systems within which they live do not interact, then they are unlikely to come into conflict. If they are brought together to communicate, then they can also come into conflict – they may discover their worlds are mutually incompatible and coexistence impossible. They may not, but as they have different cultures, interests and imperatives, some conflict is probable.

Even between people who are close, the expression of one person's views, or the way they communicate something, may appear to lead to a 'discovery' producing conflict. Is it always good for your spouse to tell you they have had a casual affair? Even if you think it might be good beforehand, the telling might change everything between you. Sometimes it can be better to keep silent.

Any definition of communication must avoid the fallacy of using that term to refer primarily to 'successful communication' with apparent mutual understanding and harmony. Such 'good communication' is a special case, it cannot be assumed to be the most common, or most important, form. Lies, misrepresentations, inaccuracies and misunderstandings, are not secondary or incidental. Communication is also not a simple transfer of meaning from one individual to another, it always involves interpretation. In 'good communication' a person will attempt to check that their interpretation vaguely corresponds to the other person's intention – but this involves that other person then interpreting that interpretation.

The interpretation of a message changes with the context, or 'framing', which is external to the message. As different people provide different frames, any message may have different meanings for its interpreters. Between different cultures, with habitual use of different frames, the chance of radically divergent interpretations increases. Instability of meaning, misunderstanding and variability is fundamental to communication. Misunderstandings lead to conflict. Therefore potential conflict is fundamental to communication.

One way of attempting to remove ambiguity from messages is through the exertion of force. We most commonly see this between parents and children, in which the child is told to do something and then guided (with varying degrees of violence) into performing the action. Such guidance is common when the power differential between participants is great, or when there are obvious problems in communicating. Clearly this use of force has the potential to lead to the situation being framed as hostile, and for conflict to result.

As a result, good communication is only possible between equals. People with authority mystify their authority to keep it safe, and those beneath them give their superiors what they want to hear, out of fear of the consequences if they don't. This often leads to a conflict between the group and reality, as decisions are based on distorted communications.

As speed and spread of communication increases, the more it gets locked into previous patterns and the current mode of framing. It becomes easier to mobilise and direct troops, or

terror, over greater distances, increasing the potential for war between groups previously indifferent to each other. Perhaps disastrously, troops will be directed by a distant centre rather than by local conditions – with none of the flexibility allowed by an intermediate hierarchy.

Similarly, the reiteration and world wide distribution of President Bush's denunciations of Saddam Hussein is unlikely to lead to peace, as both leaders have a huge audience before whom they can lose face. Anyway, we cannot assume that letting other people know what we think always mitigates conflict.

Perhaps we have avoided cataclysmic war in the last fifty years, not because of 'mutually assured destruction' – there have been plenty of times when the military did consider the use of atomic weapons, and plenty of false alarms which could have triggered a response – but because communication was recognised as inaccurate and slow. There was always delay between provocation, and 'confirmation' and response, which allowed the manoeuvres bringing peace. With immediate response there would be no time for reflection, or intervention, and no time to break a series of automatic reactions.

Volume of communication also causes problems, because as the volume increases so does the 'noise' (errors, apparent irrelevancies and so on). The greater the noise the greater the possibility of misinterpretation, and the greater the likelihood a person will not check that what they think is being intended, is actually being intended. With an increase in messages or noise, the greater the likelihood that the person, or organisation, will be overwhelmed and become paralysed – as seems to have been the case with the US intelligence services in failing to anticipate the attacks on September 11th, 2001.

Communication is framed by rituals determining who may speak and when, how long they can speak, appropriate styles of language, the patterns of deference etc. Normal volume for one group might be evidence of hostility to another. What is friendly in one group might be sexual provocation to another. A quick response may be considered genuine in one culture and superficial in another. In the modern English speaking West, people often regard obvious etiquette as artificial, inauthentic, impersonal, and even deceitful. We are required to communicate 'openly'. As the idea of framing suggests, it is impossible to communicate without some etiquette, and openness itself has to be indicated. This is usually done by violations of the rules of 'official' etiquette. We show genuineness by 'lack of restraint', by expression of strong emotion, by swearing and so on. These indicators also approximate the ways we indicate prospective violence, and so confusion can arise over the nature of the message. If such framing is easy to make (say by the presence of opposing politics), then the message can become framed as hostile, and hostility result.

Those who hold that communication is intrinsically a good thing, then, are always in danger or overlooking the violence of their own speaking position.

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jon marshall

theory + politics

Sean Cubitt

INFOGRAMS
[FIRST THOUGHTS ON THE WIRED HINTERLAND]

sean cubitt

theory + politics

1. A town is a slow movie
[This explains the city films of the 1920s: *Berlin Symphonie Einer Grossstadt, Paris Qui Dort, Man with a Movie Camera, Manahatta.* The slowness is apparent in the photography of Jacob Riis, Lewis Hine, Atget, Brassai: single frames from long, compendious films]

2. The faster the connections, the slower the motion
[Fat pipes mean less need to leave the house. Houses become multifunctional again, as they are in agricultural homes. Central business districts have less reason to exist, except as places to meet and attractors for inward investment, which in any case becomes redundant as real estate loses function]

3. Houses are storage media
[Moving house may be stressful but it is more common even than divorce. I pick a house according to whether it will take my books, videos, records. For others it will be toys, children, kitchens that need storing. Our houses are too slow for us. And after a night out, or a long day at work, they are always too far away. Why not store your sleeping body somewhere temporary. Why wait to get home to make love?]

4. Take your living room for a drive
[So expensive, and for large parts of their lives entirely inert, the private car is the single worst invention of the nineteenth century. Why travel everywhere with a three-piece lounge suite? Why not a shower?]

5. More waste, less speed
[Massively redundant storage, from car parking – two spaces per car plus footprint for those rare durations of movement – to endlessly reduplicated CD collections. Movement within space should not be confused with the movement of space. Peer-to-peer is the first economy of scale in shared storage since the invention of the public library, the single best invention of the nineteenth century (except the bicycle and the movie camera)]

6. Architecture aspires to the condition of design
[Its ephemerality, its mobility, wanting to be equally on-demand, equally indistinguishable from its medium – who bothers tell the graphic from the page, the casing from the vacuum cleaner? The car is the first step towards ubiquitous architecture but is dirty and has inadequate storage; in fact, it needs to be stored]

7. Down with the tyranny of architecture
[Buckminster Fuller was, as usual, wrong to despise politics. The Dymaxion is a configuration of power to the extent that it is disconnected from any network. Self-sufficiency is extreme vulnerability unless you are the boss. For the rest of us, strength lies in numbers, and numbers only exist as connections. Architecture is the environmental equivalent of statistics: aggregation, a photograph, remembrance of movement purchased at the price of pretending it is over]

8. Wherever you are on the net is the margin
[Hence the incompetence of control. Innovation is by definition eccentric]

9. Urbanism is the last bastion of totalitarianism
[Plan a city? Herd cats!]

10. Face-to-face is the most extreme form of communication
[Because of its rarity and value, it can no longer serve as a model for all human communication. Technological mediation is the norm, and exchange of funds is the commonest mediation – narrow bandwidth, high speed, no storage]

11. There are a million databases in the naked city
[There are no stories any more. Narrative was never as powerful as maps. Double entry book-keeping was a more significant innovation than the novel, which only pretended that humanitarian impulses still existed among the beneficiaries of industrialisation. There is more beauty in an axonometric of Concorde than the whole of the Booker Prize list]

12. Information wants to be free but is everywhere in chains
['No-cost' is an unreliable indicator, at least until we use accountancy that sums in environmental and social costs as well as the entry costs to consumers of self-styled 'free' programming. We pay for the advertising that pays for TV, and we buy the sets. We pay for the universities and software houses that provide the internet. We have no say in how they are run]

13. Freedom's just another word for nothing left to win
[Free subjects require free objects. Such objects must be free of the constraints of the commodity form – of course. But they should also be free of the *a prioris* of universalist rationality, of space and time. The chains of contemporary data flow are the chains of their indistinguishable dominant form, e-cash. The logic of collapsing privacy and intellectual property rights is the end of private property. Only then will information be in any sense free]

14. Distribution is strength!
[Privacy and private property require each house to have a shower, two showers, three. The history of bathing tells us how inefficient this is. We will not sacrifice our puritanism, but we can distribute showers where we need them: at work, at the pub, on the bus. Why store unused software on your own hard drive when you can download modules on demand?]

15. The public sphere with wheels
[Today buses are for poor people and it shows. The value-added bus has wireless internet, a shower, cappuccinos. For those of an energetic disposition, the nomadic server: satellite-linked bicycle with pedal-powered battery accumulators for lightweight frameslung laptop. Since work is structured individually and homes for nuclear families, drive-time becomes agora, but our only communication is by winking indicators, and our only media the totalitarian imbecility of drive-time radio, whose pundits ingratiate by presuming to imitate the taste of people they will never meet: Greenberg on Kitsch]

16. Where is the rural route of light?
[Cities of power, highways of fire, but where is the rural and what has it become? Neither conservation nor suburbanisation but connectivity. After Lenin, utopia is anarchy plus electronics]

17. Waste mining: hinterland fuel
[The most significant task of municipal authorities is waste management, mostly keeping it away from the wealthy. It is time to start mining the garbage, data trash, junk DNA, for the random evolution of mutant devices. We can begin with dark fibre and redundant functionality]

18. Geography is the network
[Administrative regions can be defined by contingent boundaries (river gorge, 49th Parallel), by media footprint (print capitalism), but best of all by semantic maps overlaid on communication arteries. Self-administered regions do not automatically set up pyramidal hierarchies. The organisation of space is space]

19. If you don't have a web presence, how do you know you exist?
[The necessary preliminary is motive: why learn to write, unless there is something you want to say? Mental obesity comes from consuming too many junk ideas and doing no mental exercise. Education is an intellectual gym. Medics only keep you alive: education gives you a reason to stay that way. Most ignorance is self-inflicted: ask any American]

20. The farmers and the artists must be friends
[Art has become professionalised, commodified and urban. It is too far from the studio to the gallery. Transnational art is entertaining but it is never local, even in New York. The contemporary is always elsewhere. The local is the privileged domain of the post-contemporary. The wired hinterland is the Southern hemisphere's privilege, to leapfrog the smokestacks, straight into the information gift economy]

21. Make room, take time
[The war for dimensionality, for fractional, mobile, hybrid spacetime, will not be won. Surrender is an option. Learn from the machines how to perceive otherwise. Learn from the database the alternative taxonomies. Unused information is just storage. Time is only the organisation of time: democratise the clock – asynchronous computing is the next tool]

22. Either freedom is a lie, or it is ontological
[We have to act as if the latter were the case, or we cannot act. But if freedom is infinite, we cannot pretend to control]

23. Wherever she hangs my hat is your home

24. Leave home

25. Enough is enough

26. It remains to make eco-media
[The theft of the term 'media ecology' is potentially a disaster. As long as the Green Parties repeat truisms about media, they will never understand them. Eco-media will not preserve the urban-rural binary: they will hasten its disappearance, not by burying the farm, but by farming the city]

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Lisa Gye

THE WORDS OF THE LEMUR

Greg Ulmer has been and continues to be concerned with the kinds of changes that take place as a result of a transition from a predominantly literate culture to an electronic culture. His primary concern has been a pedagogical one – that is, he is interested in how learning is transformed by the shift from the apparatus of literacy to the apparatus of what he comes to term 'electracy'.

LISA GYE: What is the theoretical hypothesis that supports the idea of electracy?
GREG ULMER: What literacy is to the analytical mind, electracy is to the affective body: a prosthesis that enhances and augments a natural or organic human potential. Alphabetic writing is an artficial memory that supports long complex chains of reasoning impossible to sustain within the organic mind. Digital imaging similarly supports extensive complexes of mood atmospheres beyond organic capacity. Electrate logic proposes to design these atmospheres into affective group intelligence. Literacy and electracy in collaboration produce a civilisational left-brain right-brain integration. If literacy focused on universally valid methodologies of knowledge (sciences), electracy focuses on the individual state of mind within which knowing takes place (arts).

Within what kind of historical context are your ideas developed in relation to electracy?
The way to orient ourselves to any question concerning our contemporary circumstances is by means of an analogy with the history of writing (grammatology). There are many examples of how new technologies disrupted established teaching/learning practices and motivated the invention of new practices. An historical example relevant to the disruption of the literate practices of the research paper and the written exam by the Internet is what happened to pedagogy when the printing press disrupted manuscript culture.

A. The research paper.
Education in the manuscript era involved someone who could read and write setting up shop as a "master." Pedagogy consisted of the master reading aloud—dictating—to the pupils, who wrote down what they heard. The course ended with the completion of the reading, and the pupils went away having made their own copies of the "book," to repeat the process. Print disrupted this arrangement by eliminating the need for copying. The students had a copy of the book at the beginning rather than at the end of the "course." The new question was: what to do with this new availability of information?
> Writing a research paper involves using argumentative logic (claims and proofs) and the essay form to transform information stored in libraries into individual understanding. It is an institutional practice designed to transfer knowledge from the collective archive to each new generation of readers. This is a legitimate practice for the literate classroom, disrupted by the posting of large numbers of "readymade" papers on the internet. The long-range solution to this problem is to invent pedagogies and practices native to the internet, which will not abandon literate skills, but integrate them into the new apparatus.
> What are the relevant features of the new apparatus? What pedagogy supports turning information stored in databases into knowledge via screens designed with graphics and hyperlinked globally? This question challenges contemporary educators to continue the process of invention undertaken by our predecessors during previous eras of technological shift. Several key features of new media orient us toward a new practice.

1. The interface giving learners access to information in electracy is customisable, so that the form and mode of organisation is particular to the learning style and sensibility of each user. In literacy, the categories of knowledge (concepts) are universal, one size fits all, and the learners must adapt their cognitive styles to the demands of alphanumeric discourse.

Implications for assignments? Plagiarism is useless in electracy since learning involves designing the user interface (website/database/expert systems) in a way specific to the unique, singular qualities of the learner's sensibility, experience, memory. The best analog for an electrate knowledge interface is that of "art," identifiable by the unique "hand" or "style" of its maker. Electrate knowledge has this kind of peculiar aesthetic quality of design or style expressing the persona of its maker.

Electracy? I developed a genre for this aesthetic approach to learning called "mystory" (after history and herstory) that allows learners to compose a cognitive map of their positions within the field of collective knowledge. Existing works are exploited as relays, from which the learners extrapolate to find their own positions (examples of student projects available on my website, web.nwe.ufl.edu/-gulmer/, click on "mystory/myseum"). This pedagogy focuses not on the reproduction of existing information, but on the creative process by which new knowledge is generated.

2. Another key feature of the Internet is the cut-and-paste capabilities of the tools, which call for an extension to general education of the collage-montage poetics invented within the vanguard arts and popular culture of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The singularity of the learners' interface works with extant materials in the database, using the "readymade" poetics of modernism as a rhetoric. Writing practice is a selection and combination extended from word archives to larger text and graphic segments. Composing online is similar to curating an exhibition.

B. The online exam.
The in-class, closed-book, essay exam is an extension into the print era of a feature of manuscript pedagogy. The practice was legitimate in manuscript pedagogy whose principal mode of presentation was oratory. Students learned how to memorise huge quantities of text (read in manuscript form). The system of topics enabled students not only to repeat the classics as citations, but to generate new speeches through selection, combination , and variation on the materials held in memory. With the coming of print and the rise of modern libraries this mnemonic training became obsolete. The written exam adapts some aspects of oratorical preparation, but without any of the memory training. The exam maintained an obsolete practice as a means to motivate study. Its persistence and even domination within schooling is one of the great failures of educational imagination in the modern era.
> Internet alternatives to exams and quizzes? Again, the point is the challenge to educators to invent that part of the apparatus for which we have responsibility—institutional practices. The method is to consider the function fulfilled by the exam. The issue for any apparatus is memory: the storage and retrieval of information, including a means for generating new compositions out of the extant archive. A pedagogy coordinates individual organic memory, machinic artificial memory, and collective accumulated knowledge. The exam functions to demonstrate the learners' control of this interface of person-machine-archive.
> The best existing practice available as a relay for an Internet practice to fulfill this function is "improvisation," as manifested in jazz or theater ensembles. The TV show "Whose Line is it Anyway?" is an entertainment example of the skill. The demonstration of competence does not involve reproduction of information. Instead, the student is given the information in question and asked to do something with it. This "doing something" of course must be taught and learned. The difference between improvisation and examination is the difference between play and interrogation.

What kinds of new practices does electracy make possible in the classroom?
In addition to generating new pedagogies by contrast with extant literate ones, electracy makes possible some new learning behaviors that do not have exact equivalents within literacy. Or rather, a feature of literate learning specific to science—the collaboration of research teams designing experiments that contribute incrementally to the growth of a collective body of procedures and knowledge—is augmented and generalised to all learning in electracy.
> The new skill that must be explicitly taught is "collaboration," and the new mode of consciousness-raising or reflexivity (self-knowledge) activated by this education is that of the group (between the individual and the collective community). One of the dilemmas or paradoxes of the literate era has been the condition of individually intelligent persons behaving stupidly as groups or collective entities (the notoriously fascistic nature of groups). A promise and challenge of electrate education is to invent a pedagogy for group learning and self-knowledge.
> Electrate pedagogy is based in art/aesthetics as relays for operating new media organised as a prosthesis for learning any subject whatsoever. The near absence of art in contemporary schools is the electrate equivalent of the near absence of science in medieval schools for literacy. The suppression of empirical inquiry by religious dogmatism during the era sometimes called the "dark ages" (reflecting the hostility of the oral apparatus to literacy), is paralleled today by the suppression of aesthetic play by empirical utilitarianism (reflecting the hostility of the literate apparatus to electracy). The ambivalent relation of the institutions of school and entertainment today echoes the ambivalence informing church-science relations throughout the era of literacy.

> Research Paper? replace with designing a personalised interface metaphor relative to one's "learning style" for accessing information. Composition as curating an exhibit of found materials/ideas. In principle, any bodily skill or craft may be mapped as an interface to access any body of knowledge (eg. basketball used to learn chemistry).

> Exam: replace with improvisation. Competence manifested as creative play with given materials.

> Scientific experiment: The collaborative nature of science extended by curating and improvising as relays for the emergence of group intelligence.

The practice I am exploring in my work in relation to this latter possibility (intelligent group subjects) is a syncretic internet-based "divination system" that does for contemporary global-American wisdom what the I CHING did for Ancient Chinese wisdom. This divination comedy is called the KaCHING.

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new media arts and reviews

interview with Kathy Cleland

Australian new media curator
Cybercultures:
http://www.casulapowerhouse.com/cybercultures

Kathy Cleland has been curating new media art since 1996 including the three 'Cyber Cultures' exhibitions (The Performance Space, Sydney, 1996; Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, 1997 and 2000). The 2000 program is currently touring to over 20 venues in Australia and New Zealand from 2001 to 2003. She has also curated ARTifical LIFE, a touring new media exhibition hosted by Artspace, Auckland and the Australian component of St@rt Up, a program of new media works for Te Papa Museum, Wellington.

In this exchange we discuss the advanced yet poorly funded condition of new media arts in Australia, a country which was at the conceptual forefront of cyberculture in the early and mid-nineties and, unfortunately, has so far been unable to transform its vital creative potential into sustainable structures.

GEERT LOVINK: Could you tell us about the state of the arts in Australian cyberculture?
KATHY CLELAND: The new media arts is an interesting area to be working in at the moment, there is a huge diversity of practice, and new technologies and software programs are coming on line all the time. This is certainly stimulating for artists and curators but it does cause a few problems regarding the exhibition and 'archiving' of artworks. Works that are even a few years old sometimes rely on particular software and hardware that is increasingly difficult to find. As part of the *Cyber Cultures: Sustained Release* program I curated, we exhibited a museum version of *TechnoSphere* (by UK artists Jane Prophet, Gordon Selley and Mark Hurry) which required a particular graphics card that is now obsolete. We eventually managed to track one down through second hand dealers. Other artists have built exhibition kiosks or housings for work that require very specific computer monitors. Curators and artists need to think about archiving the hardware and software necessary to run individual artworks and perhaps rather than new media artists just providing a CD-ROM with their work on it, they

may need to start thinking about their work as a complete package which includes the hardware and software required to run the work. Of course, many artists are not very keen on this option because of the expense involved but as computer equipment keeps coming down in price and machines are now becoming redundant in 2-3 years, I think this is an increasingly viable option.

What tendencies have you come across, while preparing the exhibition series? Looking at the topics and artists you chose, the shifting borders between "posthuman" body and the machine still seem to be important; so does artificial life with it "agencies". Why do new media artists stick to these rather scientific topics? Isn't cyberculture these days to be located elsewhere, in the mass use of Internet, mobile phones and computer games?
For me, the most interesting work in new media arts practice uses new technologies as integral components, not just in making the work, but also as part of the thematic concerns of the work. There is a lot of hype around new technologies that lends itself to explorations of futuristic themes such as the increasingly intimate symbiotic relationships between humans and machines and the development of new technological life forms and environments. You suggest that these are rather scientific topics and that is true, but they also have become key areas of concern for the broader population. Scientific and technological developments are debated in the popular media as well as in scientific journals, and science fiction scenarios have been explored in science fiction films such as *The Matrix, Gattaca, Total Recall,* the *Terminator* films etc. Sci-fi has shifted from being a geeky marginalised genre to being increasingly mainstream and this is also reflected in the interest of artists in scientific ideas and science fiction scenarios. *LumpCD* by Peter Hennessey and Patricia Piccinini, explores issues of genetic engineering and reproductive technologies and Jane Prophet's *The Internal Organs of a Cyborg* investigates the technologised cyborg body. Stelarc has been working in this arena for many years exploring various ways of augmenting and extending the biological body.

The mass use of the Net, mobile phones and computer games are also areas of interest for artists. There are an increasing number of artists who work on the web and as bandwidth increases and download times decrease, the web will be the preferred delivery format for a lot of work that is now exhibited via CD-ROM or directly from computer hard drives. Many of the artists in Cyber Cultures use the web as a primary component of their work. Melinda Rackham's work, *Carrier*, is web based, as is Ian Haig's *Web Devolution* which explores the hype and evangelism of digital culture. Anita Kocsis's work, "Neonverte", is 'grown' on the web in a Flash environment and then displayed as an immersive environment as a gallery installation. The Lycette Brothers' "UN-icon" was also developed for the web in both Shockwave and Flash formats. Other works such as "TechnoSphere" and John

Tonkin's *Personal Eugenics* are exhibited on-line, but also have gallery versions which allow for faster processing times and allow the artists to create more of an installation environment. Leon Cmielewski and Josephine Starr's work, *Dream Kitchen*, uses the format of a computer game and *UN-icon* and *Digital String Games* use aspects of games and play. Some artists have started making artworks or games for mobile phones and PDAs but at the moment these are very limited due to file size and memory limitations.

Wouldn't it be time for new media arts to disappear into the much larger context of contemporary arts? Or would you rather prolong the idea of a "safe haven" for artists who are specifically into technological experiments? Mainstream museums are not yet ready to curate new media works, I know. But will they ever be? Soon everyone will be familiar with the computer. Finally, cyberculture will lose its claim on the new. Would you be happy to wake up one day to find that new media arts has suddenly vanished and dissolved into other disciplines and practices? Which battles still need to be won?
As an art form, "new media art" is a bit of a clumsy term. People have been stumbling around over the last decade trying to find an appropriate label and I don't think we've got there yet! Early on there was "electronic art", then "digital art", then "multimedia art" and now "new media art", but what happens when the new media isn't so new anymore? The longevity of this term is questionable. There are also so many different types of practice in this area including performance, web, sound, installation, etc, that boundary lines are hard to define, particularly as artists from other disciplines are also using the new tools of digital media in their own work. New media art is characterised exactly by this hybridity. Nevertheless, I think that there is still value in maintaining the "new media art" discipline even if the definitions and terminology are very blurry and subject to change and evolution. In Australia I think the term will continue to have a certain currency for pragmatic reasons as long as the Australia Council has a "new media arts board".

There are only a few new media art curators, world-wide, and you are one of them. Where would you like to see this profession go? Is it all a matter of technology skills?
I'm not sure I would class it as a separate profession! It is certainly an area of curatorial practice that requires flexibility as the technology is constantly changing. It's not necessary to be a technology expert to curate in this area but a general understanding of how things work and the directions the field is moving in is important. At the moment there are some exciting developments happening with web based work and a movement away from CD-ROM to installations and immersive environments – getting away from mouse and keyboard as interface items. Technical support is very important –

sometimes the curator may fulfill this role but usually technical support is a separate role – gallery staff are having to become skilled in this area as so much contemporary art is making use of new technologies. In general, I have found the artists themselves to be the best technical experts!

In the early and mid nineties Australia had a sophisticated new media culture. This was mainly due to a generous, innovative cultural policy. Under the conservative Howard government funds have been cut. Are you nostalgic? Do you think all the money invested in electronic culture was well spent? Which cultural policy concerning new media would you be in favour of for the next five years?
Yes, a lot of money was invested by the Australian government in new media/technology initiatives but although some good things came out of that, there was also a huge amount of waste. CMCs (Collaborative Multimedia Centers) were set up but with a commercial focus and an awful lot of money was frittered away with very little to show for it in terms of outcomes. A couple of the CMCs like Ngapartji in Adelaide and Imago in Perth did demonstrate some commitment to artists but in general the whole situation was pretty depressing for artists and curators. If the money had gone to groups already showing a commitment in the new media/technology arena such as ANAT in Adelaide, dLux media arts in Sydney, Experimenta in Melbourne and Multimedia Art Asia Pacific (MAAP) in Brisbane, the outcomes would have been far greater. Funds devolved to the Australian Film Commission and the Australia Council have been far more productive in terms of new media art outcomes. These organisations dispersed the money to organisations and artists as project funding and I think the returns on these investments are always far greater than when the money is given to bureaucracies or corporations. Artists really make those dollars work hard!

Since most money has been going to offline "macromedia" artists and not to organisations there is not much of a structure within the Australian new media scene. It is really striking that there is no media arts festival, no new media centers and even a relatively underdeveloped Internet usage amongst artists and critics. Not much research and production is being done with the result that many Australian artists and programmers are migrating overseas. With the exception of the excellent (free) *RealTime* magazine there is not much media coverage for new media culture. It seems as if the arts are pretty much locked into its own funding ghetto, unable to communicate with broadcasting and print media. There is even a threat of generational isolation, with younger people getting involved in social and political issues such as reconciliation, the S-11 protests in Melbourne, and gathering at Newcastle's young writers' festival. This is my little rant. How would you

describe the situation?
In terms of print publication, *RealTime* has been fantastic but as you say, there is not much else happening in the print media – there is still a lot of resistance and a lack of interest and intelligent commentary in the mainstream and contemporary arts media. One of the most frequent questions I've been asked by arts journalists about new media work is, "Is it art?" – it's quite depressing! In the mainstream newspapers, the new media arts are usually ghettoised into the Technology section rather than the Arts section so that's another battle that is still being fought. The on-line situation is a bit more promising with local (Australian) mailing lists like *Fibreculture* and *empyre* exploring a range of issues important to cultural policy, Internet theory and the new media arts.

The annual *Electrofringe* event held as part of the This is Not Art Festival in Newcastle has been going from strength to strength in recent years showcasing the work of younger artists and cultural activists. New initiatives like the Australian Centre for the Moving Image in Melbourne and the BEAP (Biennale of Electronic Arts Perth) Festival are also very encouraging. There are also plans for a new wing of the Queensland Art Gallery which will focus on contemporary art, including new media. Nothing like that is currently planned for New South Wales, although every few years the Museum for Contemporary Art tries to resuscitate plans for a new screen arts venue – the problem is always funding – Sydney had the Olympics instead. The politicians all love sports!

Geert Lovink

Geert Lovink is a media theorist and Internet critic, based in Sydney. He is the author of *Dark Fiber* and *Uncanny Networks*.

I Link Therefore I am: digital design literacies

Review of RMIT research symposium, 16 April 2002
http://hypertext.rmit.edu.au/amerika/symposiu.html

Through the marketing hype of new media technologies, with their promise of "ubiquitous and transparent access" to 'content', presentations by six pre-eminent Australian and international theorists/artists/researchers, shine like beacons in the semi-dark.

Hosted by Adrian Miles (School of Applied Communication, RMIT), the full-day symposium featured presentations by Miles, Pia Ednie-Brown (Faculty of Constructed Environment, Architecture and Design, RMIT) and by Mark Amerika (net artist and visiting fellow from the University of Colorado). New technologies require new thinking and classifications. The practice-based research of each exemplified the new forms of creation using digital means.

Darren Tofts, Chair of Media & Communication Studies at Swinburne University, and artists Jenny Weight and Jeremy Yuille led the multidisciplinary team in a lively discussion about the variable, transmutable nature of new media, and the role of technology, the author and the reader in the translation/interpretation of information. An objective of the symposium was to examine the authoring of 'content' – which appears to be the ability to connect discontinuous elements into emergent wholes – and therefore digital literacy as the ability to read these connections. By shifting the focus from the link as important because of what it connects, to the act of linking itself, Miles' 'interactive cinema' is a good example of a new form of digital expression.

Coming from a (pre-Internet) media and cinema studies background, I can relate the link to the edit in film. But unlike the medium of narrative film, an interactive desktop-video form of self-publishing is non-linear, and has no fixed duration. With his innovative "vog" model (video web log), exploring digital literacy in a "networked, distributed, interactive environment" Miles uses clickable links and mouse-overs to create new works by re-assembling various sounds, images and textual elements. It is more like collage than the edit in cinema which operates to progress the narrative. In fact it is anti-narrative as it "foregrounds new wholes" which are determined by the viewer/user who can be thought of as a co-creator of the work.

Similarly, Mark Amerika uses his signature style of "surf – sample – manipulate" to create a form of net art which is a collaboration between the viewer and the author/s. In the case of his most recent work, *Filmtext*, superficially describable as an ambient game, the "collaboration" is not only between Amerika and sound composers, Twine, but also between Amerika, his philosophical precursors and the viewer who creates their own narrative remix out of the digital source material provided.

Web logs (blogs) are another manifestation of "hypertextual consciousness as a subjective, personal narrative remix – you program yourself to write yourself into being". This form of self-publishing is open to anyone with a PC and an Internet connection. Amerika puts a cabalistic twist on Descartes' argument regarding the ontological question of human consciousness, revealing the irony of the symposium's title – *I Link Therefore I am*. In contrast to the emphasis placed on the link and the continuity of hypertext – and its causal, logical even if non-linear order – it may be more a case of you are what you link.

Ednie-Brown's evocative visual images of microscopically-seen surfaces and poetic spoken-word style of presentation exemplified the alternative approach required in academia to contemplate the digital, residing in an abstract realm of experience that is tactile, elusive, aesthetically oriented and which, being pre-linguistic, is

Lara sees the South Seas

She may be a tank-top wearing, gun slinging adventurer, but Lara Croft, hero of the popular *Tomb Raider* series, is also quintessentially English: she lives in a large country house, with geriatric butler and posh accent to match. Like Lara, her opponents also tend to conform to racial stereotypes. Most clearly, they divide into Westerners represented as 'contemporary' (Lara, despite her manor, is equipped with modern weaponry) and people of colour portrayed as 'traditional'. Moreover, *Tomb Raider* sets this all too familiar dichotomy within a simulation of actual locations from around the world: *Tomb Raider's* levels are set in different locations around the globe. While this claim to depict the world is in some ways worrying, it also provides moments when the game's representation of the world ceases to synch up with other representations and experiences of the game's players.

In the course of playing the series, I've travelled to Venice, Tibet, London, Arizona, been up and down the Ganges, all from my couch. It's not that these game environments recreate actual places, but that the simulations refer to quite definite locations in definite cities. Level titles such as 'Venice' and 'London' claim a geographic specificity that is borne out by the gameplay: from the London subway, Lara climbs to the Egyptology section of the British museum; in Venice, she speedboats along canals before breaking her way into the Opera House.

It was curious then to return via this jet setting game to somewhere closer to home, which for me is Aotearoa. The level I was playing, one of the middle levels in *Tomb Raider III,* is set, rather vaguely, in the 'South Pacific'. However, on the start-up splash screen for these levels, beside images of an American soldier, Lara canoeing, and a dinosaur, a map of Papua New Guinea gives the level the veneer of specificity that marks other locations in the game.

The first thing to note is that geographic specificity does not equal temporal consistency: features of both *Tomb Raider's* locations and their inhabitants are often out of synch with the contemporary styling of Lara. This isn't a bad thing in itself – it's understandable that the game's producers have picked the most graphically or thematically appealing locations. However, after a few levels a pattern becomes discernable: the levels that feature contemporary clothing and settings are those located in Europe and America. English Lara only ever fights with a range of artillery and her Western opponents are, with the exception of the odd strongman who prefers a club, similarly well equipped. They also tend to be dressed in contemporary clothing: suits, army uniforms, or street-styled skiwear. In the jungles and mountains of the Pacific and Asia, the story changes. Tibetan priests wear robes and carry spears; Chinese warriors have 'traditional' costume and weaponry. The 'native' opponents of the South Pacific follow *Tomb Raider's* pattern of racial stereotyping, wearing feather headdresses and hiding blowdarts in their loincloths. White people, Lara included, are found around the globe, as part of industrial undertakings, often oil/mining projects, or armies – the South Pacific level features a crashed plane full of American(?) soldiers. White people turn up in all sorts of

not easily expressed directly through the medium of language. The way in which we interact with the content of media communications, and the way we express ourselves through it, is inextricable from the digital environment. "Every inch of the home contains potential for communication; the air is alive with action and we move with it. Objects become animated by inhuman agencies."

Our awareness of the transmutability of the content of digital technologies from one medium to another – such as an MP3 file which can be played and listened to as music – has radically challenged our concept of the nature and location of information. Weight, Tofts and Yuille, in their own unique ways, focused on the nature of technology and our cognition by proposing that the content is in the translation. Information we see on our screens when we surf the Internet is just the surface which needs translation or interpretation for it to have meaning to us. The content is made up of layers of coded information (html, which is necessarily textual, document code, assembly code, machine code) binary, digital zeroes and ones. It is the translation/interpretation that makes it meaningful; if it is not meaningful, it is not information.

Using her QuickTime movie artwork Weight demonstrated how Landsat's remote sensing data of the topography of the Gammon Ranges in South Australia was coded and translated to a beautiful painterly form, which can be appreciated by the human eye – as though created by a digital Mark Rothko. To me, Weight's work echoes the ethical debate currently emerging from discoveries made by the human genome project. If we can decode the information contained in our DNA, what does that mean about the nature of human identity. Are we more than the sum of our genetic information? The digital landscape is our habitat, but is information equal to reality?

Tofts questioned rhetoric from both academia and commercial stakeholders which places importance on the continuity of hypertext i.e. node and link in a symbiotic order and the inevitability of one leading to the other. Is it not also discontinuous – about heightened possibilities without extension? He challenged us to consider, for just a moment, what hypertext would be if it

were a quantum state, and to suppose that if all meaning were contained in the one symbol – say, an epigram – then the author's role would be to translate that for the reader in an act of elongated unwrapping. "There would be no links, no deference to a meaning outside itself; it would be a cybertext version of Shakespeare's 'universe in a nutshell'."

Yuille's presentation on the variability of new media and its differing platforms provided another more concrete example of the way in which all information exists in a virtual state until it takes form through a particular medium. We need only look as far as corporate intranets in our workplaces to see examples of interfaces which we use to construct, on the fly, valuable documents by extracting information from vast databases of incomprehensible, meaningless code. These databases need not be stored on the same server, let alone the same country.

This brings us to consideration of the spatialisation of information; "where is information? where is the Internet?". Yuille concluded that as digital information is not located centrally, literacy in a digital medium involves alchemy on the part of the author and reader.

Perhaps literacy in digital media requires skills similar to those possessed by the alchemists of the 16th Century. In *The Summary of the Rosary of Arnold de Villa Nova,* Arnold outlines the four principal methods required to master the magical art; Dissolution, Purification, Reduction, Fixation. It would be interesting to explore the case of 'everything new is old again' but that would be the topic of another symposium.

Maria T. Rizzo

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places, while people of colour seem tied to what the game constructs as their native lands.

To match their 'primitive' apparel, Lara's non-western opponents inhabit antediluvian landscapes. In the South Pacific, most startlingly, dinosaurs, including a huge T-Rex, roam free. For all the geographic difference *Tomb Raider* presents, Lara tends to move through the Asia / Pacific levels from jungle to stone buildings, often in a state of disrepair. There's always a sense of ancient civilisations that have decayed to the myriad of buildings overgrown with encroaching plants. These buildings are often suggestive of religious purposes – in Tibet, a monastery; in India, a temple where statues of deities come to life.

Levels set in the West, on the other hand, locate the artefacts that Lara seeks in the middle of institutions of scientific analysis: London's Royal Museum, or an alien spacecraft undergoing inspection in Area 51. In these western spaces, Lara operates mechanisms with things like buttons and keys. These sorts of rational instruments turn up in the non-Western levels as well, but they are often accompanied by more mysterious instruments – for instance, glowing stones that open doors. Again, a fairly familiar dichotomy is seen, between the 'irrational', 'mystic' and 'ancient' east / south, and the 'rational' and 'modern' west / north.

Even though *Tomb Raider III* is a contemporary production, it's really not all that surprising that the game features this sort of racial stereotyping. It is surprising, however, when the illusion of geographic specificity breaks down. The level's title has already suggested that the South Pacific might not be as particular as other levels. And, sure enough, *Tomb Raider* manages to concoct a Pacific that has never existed. It's a small stretch that these levels have Komodo dragons (indigenous to Indonesia) populating an island close to Papua New Guinea (New Guinea does have monitor lizards almost as large as Komodo dragons).

This geographic displacement is more evident in the appropriation of Maori design that also occurs in these levels. Maori carving and kowhaiwhai patterns decorate the huge buildings that dot this level. These arts are boldly appropriated – applied to stone buildings, and rearranged creatively. Huge bodiless faces, with moko, cover stone

walls. Kowhaiwahi patterns are rearranged into the squares that, due probably to the necessities of memory conservation, are repeated continuously. The final battle of the South Pacific levels takes place in a scrambled whare: with four columns of carvings similar to those of a whare nui, but hemispherical and with thatch walls.

The kowhaiwhai patterns and tattooed faces decorate the walls, like the posters in the subway or Area 51's computers. But with the difference that they belong in no way to the area that *Tomb Raider* is referencing. Maori don't blow darts; you're unlikely to see a komodo dragon in front of a kowhaiwhai pattern; and the island's shape is not mistakable for Aotearoa. *Tomb Raider* treats Maori designs as motifs, without even the brief contact with Aotearoa that Robbie Williams can claim.

Kowhaiwhai patterns and moko'd faces reappear in the last level of the game, when Lara's mission takes her to Antarctica, the continent where the meteor that provided the material for the artefacts crashed, and where, it turns out, the civilisation that created them existed. In the opening movie sequence, as nineteenth-century explorers discover the artefacts in an Antarctic ice cave, there have been glimpses of Maori carvings, hidden under ice. Now, approaching the end of the game, it is revealed that under the ice is the Lost City of Tinnos, deserted, it seems, except for giant mosquitoes and seal-like aliens. Vast bridges cross ice caverns; a maze of corridors and small rooms lead into vast chambers; a series of levers raise and lower platforms and open doors. And the walls are ablaze with kowhaiwhai. Once again, non-western culture is being presented as ancient, though in this case very impressive in terms of its engineering.

Unlike other people of colour, however, Maori are not represented: their culture is appropriated as decoration. An iconographic quiz is the only decoration on the walls that isn't Maori: Maori design isn't something to be interacted with, something that could be made legible to the audience of *Tomb Raider*. Or rather, to make it legible would be to threaten the dispossession of symbolic meaning that these artforms have undergone in their appropriation into the virtual environment. To acknowledge symbolic meaning would be, potentially, to draw attention to the absent Maori and their culture, to the social

structures within which these patterns have meaning. Maori are absent in the *Tomb Raider* world. They are a vanished people, present only through their cultural production, which, like the Maori themselves, has been displaced.

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much ado about somethin g

Review of *FreeNRG/Notes from the Edge of the Dance Floor*

FreeNRG/Notes from the Edge of the Dance Floor, edited by Graham St. John, (Altona Vic: Common Ground Publishing, 2001), 255pp., ISBN 1863350845. http://www.Humanities.com

In the contemporary climate of corporate industrial takeover, corporate high-crime, fictional wars and myriad scientific practices, which don't seem far from imprisoning us as "virtual refugees" in the most nefarious science fiction scenarios imaginable, Australia's boisterous psychedelic underground, as found in this book, is a little bit of radical imagination bound to go a long way. This is the DiY technotribal culture; grown up bored in the suburbs to inhabit the complexities of the urbs, only to find themselves utterly alienated and most at home protesting in the streets or blockading a uranium mine. In what appears to be a collection of frontline communiqués, the FreeNRG culture is recounted as an anarchy of well-informed, politicised, merry-treeplanting and doof-dancing technopranksters – those who openly revolt against corporate culture by virtue of their lifestyles, abjure the commercial rave scene and who are linked together by common causes of social justice.

Long inhabiting the aesthetics and lifestyles of the carnival and the circus, Australian anarchy is an artful and colorful tradition. In the contemporary idiom, it has become the philosophy of much of the countercultural and community-based use of new media technologies from servers to list cultures, cd burning and piracy. Within the radicalised dance culture, this manifests itself, in part, as communally-shared sound systems; speakers and turntables for collective use. All wired up and throbbing with techno music, the sound system is the inimitable crux of any technoparty; the spiritual centre for the ecstatic free-play of FreeNRG.

A new fun style of dissent? Sure, but this is also consciously a post-rave, post-structuralist subculture channelling the energies of an angry, raped, yet beautiful earth, its indigenous cultures and airwaves instead of inventing dogma or simply flaking out. FreeNRG events have deep ties to a collection of philosophical bases from paganism to proletarianism, to an accord with the land, and to peace and social justice. According to Emily Vicendese, reporting in *Tekno Renegade* magazine, "travelling in a campervan with the rest of the Space Trukin Crew from Melbourne, it became obvious that the red and barren earth is not a *terra nullius*". As government conspires with industry to condemn a nation to an intractable toxic and radioactive legacy, the counter-message is one of proactive enchantment: "we need to take responsibility for our land, to respect and revere the Earth, to see it with the eyes of its native caretakers – as sacred land."

Editing to underscore the magical and spiritual imperatives behind the activities, Graham St. John leaves no stone unturned (though he writes at the start that people looking for a history of electronic music will be disappointed), including detailed essays on the extensive 'zine and dance culture, and making a strong distinction between the FreeNRG movement, the emergence of doof, and its dodgy cousin, the commercial rave scene. There is documentation of the Abominable Knowledge Emporium, the Jellyheads, Barrelful of Monkeys, Green Ant Full Moon doof, Mutoid Waste Co., Stomping Monster doof, The Silos, Windmill-Flower and many others. Alive with harrowing accounts of raids and typically harsh arrests by Australian police,

TRISTERO PROJECT

TRISTERO is a 'mail-art' project in which online artists-in-residence creatively 're-cycle' unwanted digital material deposited by subscribers to the Tristero website <http://www.tristero.co.uk> It takes its name from an underground communication network in Thomas Pynchon's paranoid novella *The Crying of Lot 49* (1965), set prophetically in what would become the cradle of America's corporate IT complex. In this web-enabled artwork, the viewer uploads spam, random texts, or other digital detritus, only to find their fragments given a new lease on life in the artists' offerings. I spoke with artist Simon Biggs, and Steven Bode, who oversaw the project for the London-based Film and Video Umbrella.

DAVID TEH: The *Tristero* project enlists new media forms with which we're all familiar – email and the 'attachment' – the audience participates by throwing tid-bits snipped from their own computing environment into the mix. It must make an unpredictable palette for an artist. Have you worked on any other 'mail-art' projects? Why Pynchon?

SIMON BIGGS: I've never worked on a piece quite like this before. I have done works where "viewers" are brought anew to websites or where they are able to interact with one another in 3D "chat room" like spaces. These projects exist only on the web (and could only exist on the web) and they also take the form and protocols of the Internet and the web as their subject and internal structure.

Mind you, my primary interest is not how the web works but rather how it can function as a metaphor for my primary referent – the human condition. I suspect that Pynchon was motivated by similar concerns.

STEVEN BODE: *Tristero* is the third in a line of Film and Video Umbrella online projects where we have used some of the modes and conventions of the web as a starting-point for a series of artists' works. In "the.year.dot" (1999), we developed a specially designed search engine that crawled the web looking for sites that contained key words from the Book of Revelations. It was programmed to find the sixth word of the website text, grab the sixth image, jump to the sixth link (if there was one) and then bring these random fragments of material back to "the.year.dot" site. The contextualising metaphor here was one of exegesis, of submitting the proliferating field of the web to a pattern of revelatory meaning. A number of artists (six, of course!) were each handed the collected material, which they then used as the basis or the inspiration for their individual pieces.

Slipstream (2000/2001) unfolded around a further series of interventions, envisaging the Internet as a vast field of 'public space'. Nine artists had small-scale works secreted within a number of host sites, which ranged from a web cam in a local council car park to a pay-site for mobile phone ringtones. In these two projects, as indeed in "Tristero", serendipity has been a recurring motif – to some extent, because the projects echo conceptual ideas and strategies (artists' interventions, Fluxus-style happenings, mail-art etc) with an emphasis on spontaneity; but also, because the net itself is itself a perfect medium for happy accidents, for branching off one track and diverting onto another.

I've always been a huge fan of Pynchon's writing and the way in which his preoccupation with networks and interconnectedness prefigures so much contemporary reality. *The Crying of Lot 49*, with its secret underground mail system, was written at a time, during the early- to mid-sixties, when a number of artists were engaging in activities such as mail art. In the book, Pynchon describes a clandestine communications network which operates surreptitiously within the US postal system, but with its samizdat energies, its rainbow communities of interest and its paranoid, conspiratorial tendencies, what might as well

the essays portray their parties and "the edge of the dance floor" as a margin as vital to the lively exchange of data, goods and "other" information as they are threatening to the status quo. Public space belongs to the people.

The adventures of the techno scene are retold here with recurring concerns: 'what's next' and 'where to', should the party be closed down by cops? What is depicted is a newish cultural movement, neither solely a party nor rigidly a protest, recuperated by the young from other political histories and remixed into an Aussie version of the same. This is to be admired and reckoned with. The book is an at times excellent, at times quirky, yet originally anecdotal account of this "reclaiming" phenomenon. If "under the UV" is the hottest place for energy-exchange and open-source politics, the activism for this "wrong crowd" is simply, a virulent, eclectic strain of anarchism; a militant resistance to authority with roots in situationism, Bookchin, Chomsky, eco-feminism and the anti-globalisation movement. Feral, technosavvy, outraged, and determined, the dance culture transgresses at the mouths of the mines; in internationally recognised environmental actions such as Earthdream; or in the cracks of the city, in squats, or the many parks of *Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne, Sydney.*

Sustained in the music, on the airwaves, in the networks; in the styles of spelling, dress, poetry; in the refusal of structured time and the aesthetics of active organising, is a bristling critique of environmental abuse and colonialist practices. Supported are the indigenous and the homeless; the disempowered and the "other." Ironically, mainstream media, the excesses of Australia's most global cities and the cultural waste of the road is this movement's living inheritance. The aesthetic is to recycle, rethread, reemerge, reuse and reinvent media and lifestyles from the discarded jargon and refuse of the mainstream. Between sampling cultures and supermarket dumpster-diving to the Mutoid Waste Co. (an industrial sculpture collective) lies a most vivid philosophy of the irreverent blurring between art and life, where use meets need and need meets desire. Thus, the huge "stonehenge" monuments, made from painted automobile carcasses found dead in the desert by the Mutoid Waste Co., aspire to a very different "future".

Having deliberately separated from the once interesting, now popularised and commercialised rave scene – with its roots in the parent country of the UK, its heavy ticket prices, uncool alcohol consumption and waves of "professional" party-goers – FreeNRG people are turning awry, looking for a real utopia amongst themselves, here on the planet, and it is surely more likely to be found in a happy rejection of the dominant culture than it is anywhere else. Striking is the level of meaning in possible futures for the many, many disillusioned doofers. In interviews with the Labrats, creators of a futuristic solar-powered cinema and owners of their own sound system, there is no doubt. As the Labrats describe it, their lifestyle, free from rent and the confines of "normalised" society, allows them to engage with multiple communities, sharing their sounds, painting murals, and teaching "the ways of the force".

Graham St. John presents us with a "happening" of the people for the people; a kind of "cool" "grassroots" participation which has emerged, largely, from disillusionment and despair, but which thrives on its own intelligent creativity, its defiance. As switched-on by technology (music, culture jamming, laptops and mobile phones) as it is by solar cooking, hydroponics, and the writings of Hakim Bey, this is a post-colonial, post-structuralist "reality culture" – a socialised, radicalised, critical milieu. This book is an important collection of essays on the contemporary Australian underground.

Molly Hankwitz

Molly Hankwitz is a media artist and writer from the USA and Australia.

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be describing a version of the Internet, *avant la lettre,* if you'll excuse the pun.

Contrary to direct-marketeers' best efforts, junk email is received as a pre-eminently impersonal form. But uploading something to the *Tristero* strangely invests it, personalises it. It's then reconstituted as a piece of somebody's net.art work. How does the web perform/intervene in this cycle as a mediating technology?

SIMON: The web works as both the means for creating the structure within which the elements are brought into play and as the means of diffusion and the point of reception. The first step in this process is not made by the artist but by the individual who has chosen a particular element to upload to the *Tristero* site. The artists then come along and make their choices and integrate them into their own structures or strategies. I think this is no different than artists using montage or collage of found materials. That is an old tactic really.

STEVEN: I'd agree – pretty much all the aesthetic strategies here are prefigured in earlier art movements. Kurt Schwitters and his recycling of disregarded materials in his *Merz* paintings is also a clear point of reference. Digital technologies have made the technique of collage, for example, more speedy and seamless. You could say it was more about re-purposing some of the invention and spirit of those original conceptual strategies for the present day. Just another form of recycling...

Your interpretation of the "Tristero" emphasises the notion of recycling – it's a platform for the recycling of cyberjunk. Artworks involving waste very often highlight environmental themes. Are there environmental issues in cyberspace?

STEVEN: I was aware of an earlier digital arts project called *Digital Landfill* which obviously draws attention to these themes. Simon's piece for *Tristero*, echoes some of those ideas in creating a kind of zero-gravity landfill, in which all of the rubbish we surround ourselves with comes back to haunt us, flashing before our eyes. Every time I look at it, and how it's evolving, I think of astronauts in a space station, floating around in their capsule, sharing their living space with the waste that they

have generated. I guess we are only just coming to terms with issues of waste-management in cyberspace! Although all the junk that is deposited on *Tristero* is weightless and dematerialised, it too may come back to haunt us, in the sense that none of these files can ever truly be deleted. You may think you're getting rid of a lot of unwanted or embarrassing stuff, but even as you press 'auto-delete' or 'unsubscribe', those files can still be detectable and readable to someone somewhere. So, given the impossibility of ever destroying some of this stuff, why not recycle it?

Yet we rail against the barrage of 'unwanted' communication. But wouldn't our desktops be a bit dull in a world without spam?

STEVEN: It brings me back to that word serendipity again. 99.9% of the unsolicited junk we receive may indeed be completely useless, but if we only ever get sent material that we want, that simply confirms our already established worldview, where is the potential for serendipity, for chance, and change? It is a big question, in an age when media providers and media platforms are increasingly looking to serve niche subscriber audiences who can 'personalise' their access to media and filter their material accordingly.

Does net.art have to be interactive to be relevant?

SIMON: To use computers to make non-interactive art seems a bit redundant to me. The net functions as a diffusion medium where the computer is integrated into it, which also allows for interactive strategies to be used and particularly to set up interactive scenarios between real people, if remotely. My main interest in interaction is not that which happens between people and machines but that between people.

Does your 'creative re-purposing' feel like you're redeeming fallen data, or rescuing it in some way?

SIMON: No. It's just stuff. In a sense when I see this material flying around inside the 'machine' I made for *Tristero* I am entertained by how it has all become the same and meaningless. You could view the work as structuralist in the extreme, as the specificity of the content is neither here nor there.

STEVEN: That's a very Pynchonesque question: the idea of digital waste as data that's somehow fallen from grace! But then again, the use of discarded or throw-away 'low' materials has long been a feature of contemporary art.

Indeed, trash has long been a preoccupation of modern art – one thinks of the enigmatic *objet trouvé,* Rauschenberg's combines and the '10th Street look', or to take a more recent (though no less celebratory) example, the maquettes of Bodys Isek Kingelez. Do you see your *Tristero* as part of this tradition which revels in the discarded, or elevates it?

SIMON: I see my contribution as belonging to such a tradition. I guess if I was to look to suitable precursors I would suggest Rauschenberg, as you do, but also Schwitters' *Merzbau* – my interest in doing *Tristero* was this idea of creating a shared 3D space where stuff could be arranged by the act of 'looking', which is similar to what Schwitters was doing (although I hadn't thought of his work or this possible connection 'til now). I had, however, consciously thought about Braque's and Picasso's use of multiple perspective views of the subject and the use of appropriated material (such as newspaper cuttings). In some respects this was a jumping off-point for what I am doing, although my prime interest here is not the appropriation of existing material but the question of what happens when you can see things from multiple points of view at the same time...through the eyes of others. Similarly, my main interest in Pynchon's story was not the re-purposing itself but the messaging systems employed and what they revealed.

In the real world, waste is associated with luxury, abundance and fertility but also with contagion – does it carry these tensions into the online space?

STEVEN: One way of answering this question would be to say that since people started sending us their junk for *Tristero*, our server has been prone to many more viruses. So there are many real-world parallels here, maybe not so much to do with the material itself, but maybe more about where it's been.

David Teh

David Teh studies and teaches at the University of Sydney.

VO X.N ET.

compiled by Gillian Fuller

What is happening in new media in Australia and New Zealand? What directions are new media industries heading in? Where are the growth areas? What are the social, technological and policy challenges facing those who work in 'new media'? Fibreculture did some networking of its own to find out…

We approached 45 organisations in Australia and New Zealand. These organisations ranged from government bodies, commercial enterprises, non-profit peak electronic arts, community and industry organisations, activist collectives, educational institutions, application developers and telcos. Each of these organisations is, in the eyes of fibreculture at least, directly involved in the network of practices and technologies of new media. The trans-technocultural dialogue that emerges from our vox-net provides a snapshot of the Australasian new media scene in 2002.

The vox.net clearly displays the convergences and conflicts of a complex 'industry' that coheres in technological junctures across multiple networks of commerce/culture. Terms such as intellectual property, commercial viability and technological innovation recur but present distinct issues for our respondees. A preoccupation with access – to money, to space, to applications, to content, to users, granting it and getting it, also dominates the discussion. The vox.net has many threads. But as you peruse, you may want to read it for its omissions as well as its inclusions.

Many were approached, few replied.
Each organisation was approached initially via the phone and then sent a short e-questionnaire. The organisations quickly divided into those who knew us (mainly arts and academic organisations) and those who didn't (commercial organis-ations and government agencies and departments – if this distinction is actually still meaningful). In talking to the latter, the issue of access emerged again, but this time for fibreculture. This second group of commercial and government organisations were bemused, even confused, by the fibreculture concept, which was understood primarily as academic despite a consistent foregrounding of the diversity of list members.

For many of the organisations we approached, the same question kept coming up: how is fibreculture relevant to them? Why did fibreculture want to talk to them? What was the commercial angle? Why would a group of critical thinkers/practitioners be interested in their work on Internet regulation, extranet business solutions, communications policy? It was polite, it was often encouraging, but it was also clear that the interest wasn't reciprocated. Despite the best intentions, many institutions didn't reply. The reasons for this could be many but for whatever reason an engagement with fibreculture was not prioritised by many commercial and government institutions.

We went asking questions, but the questions have now been asked of fibreculture: in a commercial and government climate where instrumental reasoning reigns, where collaborations are product based and outcome focused, how can we establish our 'relevance'? Should we even be trying?

dLux media arts
http://www.dlux.org.au/

about
dLux media arts (formerly SIN – Sydney Intermedia Network – established in 1981) is an incorporated, not-for-profit association which encourages the development and critical discussion of innovative film, video, new media and sound arts by emerging and established artists in Australia, and actively promotes and exhibits this work to diverse audiences nationally and internationally. It is the only organisation in New South Wales which has the expertise to undertake such programs in a sustained and systematic way.

future directions
The hype/desire for infinite possible outcomes proves a driving force towards more complex programming methodologies, AI models, discussions, critiques and production, and an implementation of highly technical and complex structures/languages to achieve interactive outcomes within stated confines.

Visual art practice has embraced new technologies, political agendas and expanded cultural practices and evolved to a broad polemic of issues. Artistic, social and political theories and practices intersect.

current challenges
- how to program those enormous screens at football fields in intervals... and thus interface contemporary Australian thinkers with football culture at large.
- dedicated space would afford the organisation the time to make the links/program.
- lack of ongoing infrastructural support.
- lack of medium term commitment from funding bodies.
- lack of imagination

buzzwords
old media, manipulated, feature creep, temporary media lab, sample savvy, generative 3d video from audio, faster – cheaper – better, M.I.S (more infrastructural support), the broadband wagon

The National Moving Image Centre
http://www.mic.org.nz

about
Established in June 1993, The National Moving Image Centre is a non-profit organisation dedicated to the promotion of creative media arts in New Zealand. This is achieved by the exhibition and distribution of innovative and challenging film, video, installation and new technology art, visits by international artists and filmmakers, the supply of information to filmmakers and artists.

What we do:
- Workshops – 16mm film making, Website Authoring, Directing for Film & Intro to Digital Video.
- ShortFuse – a night of short films – Running bimonthly at the Classic on Queen St. Into its fourth year.
- Online Distribution Database – Independent video database, sampling the best of no-budget films to festival and event programmers overseas. – Operational November 2002
- Moving Image Gallery – Exhibiting

creative media art from New Zealand and the world.

- Digital Media Symposium – Annual conference on new-media art and practice
- Interdigitate – Biennial multimedia performance event.

- Editing Suite – Mac-based Edit suite with analogue & MiniDV input, twin harddrives, 384 MB RAM, and edit/design software
- Video Reference Archive – Over 2000 independent releases on VHS to watch on site.

future directions
The convergence with mobile phone technology. Increased use for of DVD distribution.

current challenges
Non profit funding sources.
Keeping up with relevant low budget production facilities for artists.

buzzwords
Interactive.

Australian Film Commission
http://www.afc.gov.au/

about
The Australian Film Commission (AFC) is the Australian Government's agency for supporting the development of film, television and interactive media projects and their creators. The AFC focuses its efforts on the independent production sector – companies and individuals who are not affiliated with broadcasters or major distribution and exhibition companies. The AFC provides advice to government, other film agencies, the industry and the public on policy issues impacting on the screen industries. The AFC also supports the collection, development and distribution of reliable information and research about the Australian screen industries. The AFC's client base is the Australian production industry at large by virtue of the key role the AFC plays in the life of the industry at the practical, policy and political levels.

future directions
Our organisation has embraced interactive digital media and provides extensive development funding for interactive projects across a number of platforms that include, but is not limited to, CD-ROMS, DVD, games consoles and online delivery. The AFC recently launched the Broadband Production Initiative which will operate over two years – it will greatly extend the opportunities for content developers and producers.

current challenges
The challenge we face as a national funding body is to maintain efficient funding support in accordance with changing technology in order to effectively and creatively administer the funds we hold.

To do this our understanding of the medium, business models and technology must maintain a relevance for policy creation and delivery of funds, information and assistance to our key clients and stakeholders.

buzzwords
Streaming, Broadband, Narrowband, Cross-platform interactive, Copyright Piracy Privacy Encryption accessibility Open source, Hybrid Analog / digital Interface, Netcast Immersive environment, Convergence

Australian Interactive Multimedia Industry Association [AIMIA]
http://www.aimia.com.au/

about
AIMIA was established in 1992 as the focal point for the digital content and interactive media industries in Australia.

The aims of the Association are:
- to support content creation and development
- to represent industry views to government
- to serve the information needs of state and national members through events, workshops and conferences and especially the National Industry Awards
- to provide members with advice and support
- to develop and maintain professional standards within the industry

future directions
We believe that the infrastructure/ regulatory issues for Australia are gradually being 'solved' and that a major issue for the future will be populating the networks with content. Our concern is that it be Australian content – and not 75% US content as it currently is.

current challenges
We need commitment from government and industry to take risks and invest in Australian content (education, entertainment, games, ecommerce) and the development of software applications to make these more accessible at reasonable cost.

We are concerned that the major media conglomerates don't completely control access to content using new technologies and that the strengths of the networked economy (free flow of ideas and information) is not inhibited by copyright overkill.

buzzwords
digital content, digital rights management, copyright, broadband, accessibility, creative industries, research and development, digital media lab

Australian Telecommunications Users Group [ATUG]
http://www.atug.com.au/

about
ATUG is committed to the development of fair and open competition in tele-communications services, as it believes competition serves users' interests best. It does this by promoting choice in services, which leads to better prices and better quality services.

The Australian Telecommunications Users Group was founded on a vision. "To achieve world class telecommunications services at world class prices for Australian businesses."

- SERVICES – Develop & deliver products and services which help members make the best decisions on telecommunications for their companies
- POLICY – Represent end user voice in technical & policy forums & directly to suppliers
- INFORMATION – Provide valued, accessible information
- NETWORKING – Create forums for information exchange

ATUG is a membership association with around 2,000 members.

future directions
You would need to arrange appointment with Managing Director of ATUG to discuss this along with meet with the various associations in the ICT Alliance.

future challenges
For the industry to overcome the downward spiral of the ICT economy along with political decisions made by our current government.

buzzwords
Please see IT Section of the various newspapers & publications.

Electronic Frontiers Australia
http://www.efa.org.au/

about
Electronic Frontiers Australia Inc. is a non-profit national organisation representing Internet users concerned with on-line freedoms and rights. EFA was formed in January 1994 and is independent of government and commerce. EFA is funded by donations from the public.

Our major goals are:
- to protect and promote the civil liberties of users and operators of computer based communications systems,
- to advocate the amendment of laws and regulations in Australia and elsewhere (both current and proposed) which restrict free speech and unfettered access to information,
- to educate the community at large about the social, political, and civil liberties issues involved in the use of computer based communications systems.

future directions
A confrontation between proponents of a proprietary, monitored and controlled Internet and the advocates of new frontiers of open source, free expression and enhanced privacy rights.

current challenges
Concerns and misinformation about the Internet by vested interests. Protecting civil liberties and freedom of speech in a climate of intolerance and extremism.

buzzwords
"War against terror"
"Cybercrime"
"Offensive Content"

Communications Law Centre
http://www.comslaw.org.au/

about
The Communications Law Centre is a non-profit public interest centre, specialising in media, communications, and online law and policy. It aims to be an innovative, professional and influential source of research, ideas and actions in the public interest on media and communications issues.

The CLC pursues its aims through: Oz NetLaw, a specialist Internet legal practice; research; policy submissions to public policy inquiries; professional training; teaching; participating in consultative and

co-regulatory forums; publications; and maintaining a specialist library.

future directions
- Rising demand for new content.
- Consolidation of telecommunications providers.
- Emergence of digital television providers when regulatory barriers removed.

current challenges
- Achieving appropriate regulatory framework for digital TV.
- Addressing aspects of social disadvantage in providing telecommunications and online services.

buzzwords
Access. Broadband. Content. Ownership.

Copyright Council
http://www.copyright.org.au/

about
The Copyright Council provides information and, in some cases, free legal advice about copyright. It produces a range of publications, including more than 50 information sheets available on its website, and conducts an annual training program. It also conducts research, and makes submissions and representations about copyright law and policy on behalf of copyright owners.

future directions
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current challenges
The major challenge for copyright is managing the publication and dissemination of copyright material in the online environment. Particular issues include managing and enforcing copyright on a global basis, taking into account different laws in different countries; controlling unauthorised copying (including "private" copying); the relationship between contractual obligations and copyright obligations; and the relationship between technological protection measures and copyright obligations.

buzzwords
(left blank)

OTEN-DE
http://www.oten.edu.au/oten/

about
The Open Training and Education Network – Distance Education (OTEN-DE) is a leader in open and distance education and training. OTEN-DE delivers a wide range of training and education courses through distance education and flexible delivery to technical and further education students, schools and outside organisations. It provides custom-designed workplace training for business clients and develops computer and satellite-based learning programs, and has a range of off-the-shelf training products which are available to other organisations. It is a national leader in the use of technology to develop and deliver high quality education and training.

future directions
ICT will underpin the future development of education in all sectors. It is providing an opportunity to rethink both pedagogy and

educational delivery mechanisms. It is now impacting on education and training as an industry and field of professional endeavour in the same way it has impacted on almost every other industry and professional field (although a little belatedly). Without doubt it will enhance the relevance and effectiveness of our current education and training systems

current challenges
It is not just our education systems and professional skills which need to change. Learners need to adapt to a new model and culture of education and training. This will not be easy as the current approach is based on a 200 year tradition. ICT provides many opportunities to transform traditional educational provision into more active learning but these opportunities will be lost if learners' expectations remain bound by traditional, passive methodologies. If new models of education are to succeed, much work needs to be done on what motivates people to learn. Hopefully peoples' interest in new media, and the increasing ubiquity of information and communications technologies, will contribute to this process.

buzzwords
Broadband, interoperability, learning objects, personalisation, lifelong learning

Animal Logic
http://www.animallogic.com
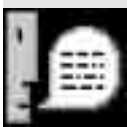
about
Animal Logic is a digital production company based at Fox Studios, Australia. An Australian owned company, Animal Logic provides a full range of services in visual effects, cgi and design for film, television, commercials and interactive media industries. With an emphasis on creative and technical invention, the company provides specialist personnel and technologies for its various markets and develops unique software solutions for the production of effects and animation. Feature film credits include Moulin Rouge, Rabbit Proof Fence, The Lord of the Rings: Fellowship of the Ring, The Matrix and currently Matrix: Reloaded.

future directions
During the 1990s we have seen a huge escalation in the use of digital production methodology and technology in all facets of media, certainly digital production tools have taken us into a revolution. We are still in the middle of the revolution and in the next ten years we are sure to see exponential advances that will make the advances of the last ten years look small by comparison

current challenges
Every project has its own challenges, whether they be creative, technical or financial, the role of our team here at Animal Logic is to overcome these challenges and create the best vision possible.

buzzwords
innovation, design, inspiration, collaboration, invention.
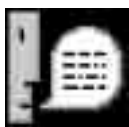
Crikey Media Pty Ltd
http://www.crikey.com.au/

about
Crikey is Australia's best known independent news website covering business, politics and media more aggressively than anyone else. It has 4500 paying subscribers who receive a daily 4000-word email. Crikey aims to "disclose, disclose, disclose" and break down power structures in Australia whilst poking fun at people who take themselves too seriously or abuse their position of power.

future directions
Email distribution is the key, display advertising is weak, a good data base and archive always helps.

current challenges
Renting an office, locking in longer term revenues, improving renewal rates, being more accurate and growing advertising revenues.

buzzwords
Churn, click through rates, page views, archive search, defamation, freeloaders, unique users.

On Line Opinion
http://www.onlineopinion.com.au

about
On Line Opinion is a not-for-profit e-journal of social and political debate. By publishing accessible research and opinion, and encouraging public response and engagement with the issues, OLO aims to produce a level of discussion of public policy that cannot be provided in other media. On Line Opinion is the first stage in an e-democratic development that seeks to harness new media to provide a direct public link between government and the people of Australia.

future directions
We accept that the future will be what we can make it. There are some powerful groups trying to do things with new media and ICTs that aren't necessarily appreciated by others with a different set of priorities for using the technology.

We hope that the new media can be harnessed to help solve some of these problems. Further, we believe it can improve everyone's opportunities for civic participation, and thereby help make the world (specifically, Australia) a more open, accepting, informed and democratic place.

current challenges
Obviously, the struggle for financial viability. Secondly, the struggle for institutional credibility and the corresponding societal presence. We believe technological limitations are small because the technology already exists to do what we want – we just have to develop the solutions when we can afford to.

buzzwords
e-democracy, e-governance, personalisation, security, privacy, participation.

Experimenta
http://www.experimenta.org/

about
where creativity and technology meet

Experimenta presents innovative events and exhibitions in new media and screen based arts. Featuring the work of emerging and established artists, Experimenta screenings, installations and performances are held in a variety of less conventional exhibition contexts.

By encouraging a convergence across a range of disciplines including interactive technologies, multimedia, music, virtual reality, animation and visual effects, Experimenta fosters artistic experimentation that extends the aesthetic and conceptual boundaries of digital art. Publications, forums and other discussion based events held by Experimenta encourage critical debate that considers experimental arts practice in a broader cultural context.

future directions
It is essential that the creative contribution that artists and filmmakers working with new technologies make to both the cultural and economic arena be recognised and supported – through government and private sources.

current challenges
The key challenge for a small to medium non-mainstream organisation is resourcing – continuing to present high quality events in the face of diminishing support necessitates greater focus on revenue raising and corporate sponsorship than is desirable.

buzzwords
interactivity, convergence, cross disciplinary, partnerships, innovation, skills development

Australian Key Centre for Cultural and Media Policy
http://www.gu.edu.au/cmp

about
To provide research which enhances understanding of cultural and media policy, and production institutions and processes. To serve the policy development, research and training needs of the cultural and media industries, government, NGO and community sectors in Australia. And to provide a basis for the collaborative internationalisation of best-practice research, teaching and training services in cultural and media policy and the analysis of cultural production.

future directions
While some new media is likely to push off in its own direction the future of new media is inextricably tied to its relation with old media. At the same time there is no one model for digital uptake: the kinds of digital uptake will vary among cultural forms but digital is a constant. Much innovation will be in the back end distribution selling and marketing as much as the front end of new media content.

current challenges
How to connect the information and entertainment economies. How to evolve a regulatory and investment climate conducive to the effective development of a multi-faceted digital television industry. How to reconcile new and old technology; emerging and more traditional work processes.

buzzwords
Creative industries, creative cities, interactivity, audience development, public domain, intellectual property

(e)-Vision Centre
http://www.evision.co.nz

about
(e)-vision is New Zealand's first and only not-for-profit new media centre. It was established in 1998 with the aim of raising business and community awareness of digital media as an exciting new area of economic development and community participation. Since opening its doors in the heart of Wellington's media precinct , on the corner of Blair and Wakefield Streets, it has been the prime venue for an innovative and ongoing programme of activities centred around digital media.

Its workshop programme includes practical classes in new media skills , e-business technologies, communication strategies including digital storytelling and on-line journalism , courses for Maori SME's among others.

Its events series explores new and creative ideas and thinking in the community across all spectra, and includes the Interactive Breakfast Series, 7x7 Ideas Forum, Pacific Link and an annual symposium exploring national issues pertaining to creative resources and thinking.

future directions
Communication, Art and Technology mixed with Science and Industry is providing a really important opportunity for much-needed cross-fertilisation. I believe this new mix is offering a new understanding of future directions for new media and ICT.

current challenges
Money, resources including equipment; lack of understanding of what we do and the significance of it to the wider population for economic development and understanding the future

buzzwords
Broadband, Digital Opportunities, Cross sector dialogue.

VITAL SIGNS

BORN DIGITAL

VITAL SIGNS

Vital Signs #3
In print and online
December 2002
www.records.nsw.gov.au/
publications/vs/aboutvs.htm

Strumpet

dandy

deep rogue

STRUMPET

www.records.nsw.gov.au/t-shirts

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www.records.nsw.gov.au

INCLUDING ARTWORKS BY
Denis Beaubois
Barbara Campbell
Leon Cmielewski/Josephine Starrs
Chloë Fitzjames
Jenny Fraser

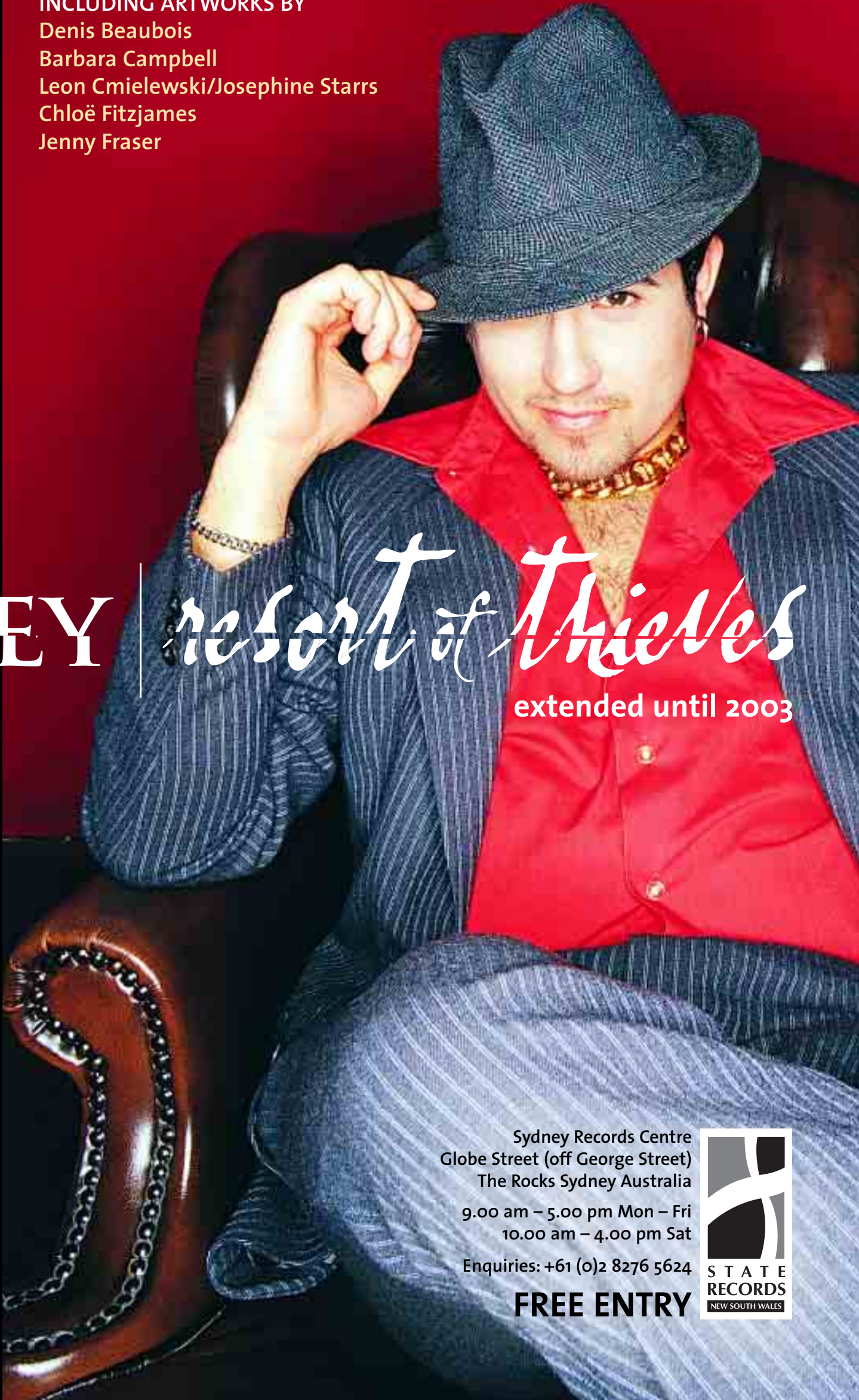SYDNEY | *resort of thieves*

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01  tnt13.paradise.net.nz (203.96.152.70)  135.069 ms  111.36 m
02  ge0-0-0-5.haley.paradise.net.nz (203.96.152.254)  177.973 m
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04  ge0-0-0.nzsx-core1.akl.telstraclear.net (203.98.4.3)  388.9
05  i-2-0.syd-core01.net.reach.com (202.84.249.181)  181.874 ms
06  gigabitethernet1-2.pad-core4.sydney.telstra.net (203.50.13
07  pos12-0.ken-core4.sydney.telstra.net (203.50.6.21)  222.22
08  gigabitethernet3-1.chw-core2.sydney.telstra.net (203.50.6.1
09  pos4-0.exi-core1.melbourne.telstra.net (203.50.6.18)  200.1
10  pos3-0.way-core4.adelaide.telstra.net (203.50.6.162)  217.4
11  fastethernet0-0-0.way4.adelaide.telstra.net (203.50.120.14)
12  intern-adel.lnk.telstra.net (139.130.136.38)  532.503 ms
13  llama-ext.va.com.au (150.101.94.27)  232.388 ms  241.201 ms
14  fa1-0.fibreculture.org (203.15.106.21)  238.008 ms  239.46
15  A publication supported by Waikato Institute of Tech-
    nology in association with The Power Institute
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